| Online Study Materials on
| **INTERFAITH STUDIES**
| **AND ECUMENISM**

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INTRODUCTION TO INTERFAITH STUDIES

WHAT IS INTERFAITH?

The term interfaith or interfaith dialogue refers to cooperative and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions, (*i.e.* "faiths") at both the individual and institutional level with the aim of deriving a common ground in belief through a concentration on similarities between faiths. It is distinct from syncretism or alternative religion, in that dialogue often involves promoting understanding between different religions to increase "tolerance" towards others, rather than to synthesize new beliefs. The history of religion shows that conflict has been more the state of affairs than dialogue.

The term inter-religious relations refers to relationships between religions, (rel. comparative religion).

HISTORY

- Early 20th Century—dialogue started to take place between the Abrahamic faiths—Christianity, Judaism and Islam.
- The 1960s—Interfaith movement gathered interest.
  - 1965—the Roman Catholic Church issued the Vatican II document Nostra Aetate, instituting major policy changes in gay rights in the Catholic Church's policy towards non-Christian religions.
  - Late 1960s Interfaith groups joined around Civil Rights issues for African-Americans and later were often vocal in their opposition to the Vietnam War.

Michael Wyschogrod, an American professor of philosophy, has claimed that there are just as many theoretical or creedal reasons for Muslims and Jews drawing closer to one another as there are for Jews and Christians coming together.

Judaism

Reform Judaism, Reconstructionist Judaism, and Conservative Judaism encourage interfaith dialogue. Interfaith dialogue is a controversial issue within the Orthodox Jewish community. Some Orthodox Jews refuse to participate in interfaith dialogues because they believe that Judaism's prohibition of proselytism, combined with other religions' missionary zeal, creates an unbalanced power dynamic such that the "dialogue" effectively becomes a monologue. However, some Modern Orthodox Jews participate in interfaith dialogue.

Bahá'í Faith

Interfaith and multi-faith interactivity is integral to the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith. Its founder Bahá'u'lláh enjoined his followers to "consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship." Bahá'ís are often at the forefront of local interfaith activities and efforts. Through the Bahá'í International Community agency, the Bahá'ís also participate at a global level in inter-religious dialogue both through and outside of the United Nations processes. In 2002 the Universal House of Justice, the global governing body of the Bahá'ís issued a letter to the religious leadership of all faiths in which it identified religious prejudice as one of the last remaining "isms" to be overcome, enjoining such leaders to unite in an effort to root out extreme and divisive religious intolerance.

Among the several organisations interested in interfaith dialogue, The Institute of Interfaith Dialogue has been very active in the different states of the US. With about 15 branches in several states including Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Kansas; IID (The Institute of Interfaith Dialogue) organises interfaith dinners, intercultura trips, conferences, panel discussions in these states.

While there are many basically religious organisations geared to working on interfaith issues (see Inter-religious organisations) there is also a less common attempt by some governmental institutions to specifically address the diversity of religions (see Australasian Police Multicultural Advisory Bureau for one award winning example.) In India, many organisations have been involved in interfaith activities because of that India is a country in which there may all religions and faiths of the world. Minhaj-ul-Qur'an International is a non-sectarian and a non-governmental organisation (NGO) working in over 81 countries around the globe. Its main aims and objectives are to promote interfaith dialogue and to live peacefully within society. Minhaj-ul-

Qur'an was founded by Shaykh-ul-Islam Prof. Dr. Muhammed Tahir-ul-Qadri.

FAITH

Faith can refer to a religion, or to belief in one or more deities. It has two general implications which can be implied either exclusively or mutually:

- To trust:
  - ◆ To commit oneself to act based on sufficient evidence to warrant belief, but without absolute proo. Mere belief on the basis of evidence is not faith. To have faith involves an act of will. For example, many people saw Blondin walk across the gorge below Niagara Falls on a tightrope, and believed (on the basis of the evidence of their own eyes) that he was capable of carrying a man on his back safely across. But only his manager Harry Colcord had enough faith to allow himself to be carried.
  - ◆ Believing a certain variable will act or has the potential to act a specific way despite the potential influence and probability of known or unknown change.
    - ❍ To have faith that one's spouse will keep a promise or commitment.
    - ❍ To have faith that the world will someday be peaceful.
    - ❍ To have faith that a person will pay you back.
    - ❍ To have faith that you will be okay despite adversity.
    - ❍ To have faith in one's full dependence on the will of supernatural forces or deities.
- To believe without reason:
  - ◆ Believing impulsively, or believing based upon social traditions or personal hopes.
- A means to possess something.
  - ◆ To have faith in a process. (Faith in the Law)
  - ◆ To have faith in a source or resource. (Faith your pay check or employment)
  - ◆ To have faith in a method to obtain. (work hard, lie, cheat, buy, trade, be attractive, etc.)
  - ◆ To have faith in the pathway to a specific desire. (The fastest way to a man's heart is his stomach.)

○ Faith is the development of pathways through doubt. With certain resistances to life, wishing to obtain more life force cause us to develop means and methods to overcome the resistance. For example: With the development of farming and grocery stores the ability to get necessary food has become easier, takes less time and allows for more living. Everyone still has to eat, but the means of obtainment has shifted. Our forefathers used to pray to God for a good crop, as that was part of their faith. Many farmers still do that for us, but now many of us pray that the paycheck hits the bank before the cable bill.

○ When something is wanted and there stands doubt between your current condition of need and the thing desired, systems of faith are employed. A person will first work existing pathways already established by faith. If they fail, they will seek to develop other pathways by faith, not knowing for sure if the path they pursue will provide the object they seek.

○ The desire for things dominates the application of faith. Many of those actively applying faith to specific pathways seek less tangible things, such as love, peace, harmony, or even eternal life. Faith is an individual path. Just because it worked for one person, doesn't mean it will work for another. Just because I went to my place of employment and got the paycheck with my name doesn't mean that my brother can do the same. He has to establish his own means to obtain things.

In either case, faith is based upon the interpretation of the intangible (feelings, emotions, etc.) instead of the physically tangible and is primarily associated with religion in modern times.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL VALIDITY OF FAITH

There exists a wide spectrum of opinion with respect to the epistemological validity of faith. On one extreme is logical positivism, which denies the validity of any beliefs held by faith; on the other extreme is fideism, which holds that true belief can only arise from faith, because reason and evidence cannot lead to truth. Some foundationalists, such as St. Augustine of Hippo and Alvin Plantinga, hold that all of our beliefs rest ultimately on beliefs accepted by faith. Others, such as C.S. Lewis, hold that faith is merely the virtue by which we hold to our reasoned ideas, despite moods to the contrary.

Fideism

In Christian theology, fideism is any of several belief systems which hold, on various grounds, that reason is irrelevant to religious faith. According to some versions of fideism, reason is the antithesis of faith; according to others, faith is prior to or beyond reason, and therefore is unable to be proven or disproven by it.

The word is also occasionally used to refer to the Protestant belief that Christians are saved by faith alone: for which see sola fide. This position is sometimes called solifidianism.

Many noted philosophers and theologians have espoused the idea that *faith* is the basis of all knowledge. One example is St. Augustine of Hippo. Known as one of his key contributions to philosophy, the idea of "faith seeking understanding" was set forth by St. Augustine in his statement "*Crede, ut intelligas*" ("Believe in order that you may understand"). This statement extends beyond the sphere of religion to encompass the totality of knowledge. In essence, *faith* must be present in order to know anything. In other words, one must assume, believe, or have *faith* in the credibility of a person, place, thing, or idea in order to have a basis for knowledge.

One illustration of this concept is in the development of knowledge in children. A child typically holds parental teaching as credible, in spite of the child's lack of sufficient research to establish such credibility empirically. That parental teaching, however fallible, becomes a foundation upon which future knowledge is built. The child's faith in his/her parents teaching is based on a belief in their credibility. Unless/until the child's belief in their parents' credibility is superseded by a stronger belief, the parental teaching will serve as a filter through which other teaching must be processed and/or evaluated. Following this line of reasoning, and assuming that children have finite or limited empirical knowledge at birth, it follows that faith is the fundamental basis of all knowledge one has. Even adults attribute the basis for some of their knowledge to so called "authorities" in a given field of study. This is true because one simply does not have the time or resources to evaluate all of his/her knowledge empirically and exhaustively. "Faith" is used instead.

However, a child's parents are not infallible. Some of what the child learns from them will be wrong, and some will be rejected. It is rational (albeit at a perhaps instinctive level) for the child to trust the parents in the absence of other sources of information, but it is also irrational to cling rigidly to everything one was originally taught in

the face of countervailing evidence. Parental instruction may be the *historical* foundation of future knowledge, but that does not necessarily make it a *structural* foundation.

It is sometimes argued that even scientific knowledge is dependent on 'faith'—for example, faith that the researcher responsible for an empirical conclusion is competent, and honest. Indeed, distinguished chemist and philosopher Michael Polanyi argued that scientific discovery begins with a scientist's faith that an unknown discovery is possible. Scientific discovery thus requires a passionate commitment to a result that is unknowable at the outset. Polanyi argued that the scientific method is not an objective method removed from man's passion. On the contrary, scientific progress depends primarily on the unique capability of free man to notice and investigate patterns and connections, and on the individual scientist's willingness to commit time and resources to such investigation, which usually must begin before the truth is known or the benefits of the discovery are imagined, let alone understood fully. It could then be argued that until one possesses all knowledge in totality, one will need faith in order to believe an understanding to be correct or incorrect in total affirmation.

Again, scientific faith is not dogmatic. Whilst the scientist must make presuppositions in order to get the enterprise under way, almost everything (according to some thinkers, such as Quine, *literally* everything) is revisable and discardable.

FAITH AS COMMITMENT

Sometimes, faith means a belief in a relationship with a deity. In this case, "faith" is used in the sense of "fidelity." For many Jews, the Hebrew Bible and Talmud depict a committed but contentious relationship between their God and the Children of Israel. For a lot of people, faith or the lack thereof, is an important part of their identity, for example a person who identifies himself or herself as a Muslim or a skeptic.

FAITH IN WORLD RELIGIONS

Christianity

Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen* (KJV) Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (NASB) Here is how the Christian God defines faith. The fact lies in man must take faith in something. Some take faith in science: they take hope that though they did not

see (macro) evolution that it happened. In the same way though Christians cannot see God they take hope that He created the universe and that the Bible is his word for word inspired word that was passed on to man through chosen people.

A defintion of the Christian faith as a religion follows:

Christianity is a monotheistic. In other words, faith is the "evidence" of what Christians "know" to be true within their own hearts that has revealed to them by God. If it were by seeing before believing, it would not be faith.

David Vincent Meconi, "Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity" in *Journal of Early Christian Studies* pp. 111–12, religion centered on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth as depicted in the New Testament. Most Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament, and that the New Testament records the Gospel that was revealed by Jesus. With an estimated 2.1 billion adherents, or approximately 33% of the world's population in 2007, Christianity is the world's largest religion. It is the predominant religion in Europe, the Americas, Southern Africa, the Philippines and Oceania. It is also growing rapidly in the other parts of the world, particularly in China and South Korea, Africa and Middle East.

Christianity began as an offshoot of Judaism, and includes the Hebrew Bible (known to Christians as the Old Testament) as well as the New Testament as its canonical scriptures. Like Judaism and Islam, Christianity is classified as an Abrahamic religion (*see also, Judeo-Christian*).

The Faith of Abraham

Abraham heard God before he believed in God. It is therefore a principle of faith that a man must hear God first before he can believe in Him. In Genesis 12:1(KJV) Abraham is commanded to get out of his country, his relatives and his fathers house, and go to a land that God was to personally show him. This points to another aspect of true-biblical faith: Once God speaks to you and you believe in Him you will be immediately called out of the world into His kingdom. Faith brings a separation because it is Holy and the life of faith can only be lived with those that are holy; therefore, God will demand that you leave behind the works of darkness.

Abraham is used by the Apostle Paul, in Romans Chapter 5, as an illustration of the kind of faith that changes lives. Abraham's faith is

used as an illustration to show that Abraham's faith came before God told him the plan (the covenant of circumcision—Gen 15:18), and before he understood the rules (Moses Law—Exodus 24:12). Abraham even illustrates that faith does not need to be perfect in order to be effective— Abraham made several big mistakes (he lied about his wife, tried to adopt a servant, took another wife to have an heir) but in spite of these mistakes he continued to love his wife Sarah after it looked like all hope was lost.

Judaism

Although Judaism does recognize the positive value of *Emunah* (faith/belief) and the negative status of the *Apikorus* (heretic) the specific tenets that compose required belief and their application to the times have been heatedly disputed throughout Jewish history. Many, but not all, Orthodox Jews have accepted Maimonides' Thirteen Principles of Belief.

A traditional example of faith as seen in the Jewish annals is found in the person of Abraham. A number of occasions, Abraham both accepts statements from God that seem impossible and offers obedient actions in response to direction from God to do things that seem implausible (see Genesis 12-15).

For a wide history of this dispute, see: Shapira, Marc: The Limits of Orthodox Theology: Maimonides' Thirteen Principles Reappraised (Littman Library of Jewish Civilisation (Series).)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon Church, LDS Church)

To have faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things but to have hope for things which are not seen, yet are true. The Lord Jesus Christ has revealed himself and his perfect character, possessing in their fullness all the attributes of love, knowledge, justice, mercy, unchangeableness, power, and every other needful thing, so as to enable the mind of man to place confidence in him without reservation. Faith is encouraged by hearing the testimony of those who have faith (Rom. 10: 14-17). Miracles do not produce faith, but strong faith is developed by obedience and faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Faith is a principle of action and of power, and by it is believed one can command the elements and/or heal the sick, or influence any number of circumstances when occasion warrants (James 4: 4-7). Also, it is by faith that one obtains remission of sins and eventually can stand in the presence of God. All true faith must be based upon correct

knowledge or it cannot produce the desired results. Faith in Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel and is more than belief, since true faith always moves its possessor to some kind of physical and mental action (James 2:17-18); it carries an assurance of the fulfillment of the things hoped for. A lack of faith leads one to despair, which comes because of iniquity.

Although faith is a gift, it must be cultivated from infancy or a tiny seed until it matures into a great tree (Alma 32, Book of Mormon). The effects of this kind of true faith in Jesus Christ include:

- An actual belief that the course of life one is pursuing is acceptable to the Lord (see Heb. 11: 4);
- A reception of the blessings of the Lord that are available to man in this life
- An assurance of personal salvation in the world to come.

These things involve individual and personal testimony, guidance, revelation, and spiritual knowledge. The Bible points out some obstacles to faith in John 5: 44 and 12: 39-42 (cf. James 1: 6-8)

Islam

Faith in Islam is called iman. It is a complete, unquestioning submission to (Allah) which includes belief, profession, and the body's performance of deeds consistent with the commission as vicegerent on Earth according to Allah's will.

Iman has two aspects

- Recognising and affirming that there is one Creator of the universe and only to this Creator is worship due. According to Islamic thought, this comes naturally because faith is an instinct of the human soul. This instinct is then trained via parents or guardians into specific religious or spiritual paths. Likewise, the instinct may not be guided at all.
- Willingness and commitment to submitting that Allah exists, and to His prescriptions for living in accordance with vicegerency. The Qur'an (Koran) is the dictation of Allah's prescriptions through Prophet Muhammad and is believed to have updated and completed previous revelations Allah sent through earlier prophets.

In the Qur'an, God (Allah in Arabic), states (2:62): Surely, those who believe, those who are Jewish, the Christians, and the converts; anyone who (1) believes in God, and (2) believes in the Last Day, and

(3) leads a righteous life, will receive their recompense from their Lord. They have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

Buddhism

Faith (saddha/sraddha) is an important constituent element of the teachings of the Buddha—both in the Theravada tradition as in the Mahayana. Faith in Buddhism derives from the pali word *saddhâ*, which often refers to a sense of conviction. The saddhâ is often described as:

- A conviction that something is
- A determination to accomplish one's goals
- A sense of joy deriving from the other two.

While faith in Buddhism does not imply "blind faith", Buddhist faith (as advocated by the Buddha in various scriptures, or *sutras*) nevertheless requires a *degree* of blind faith and belief primarily in the spiritual attainment and salvational knowledge of the Buddha. Faith in Buddhism centers on belief in the Buddha as a supremely Awakened being, on his superior role as teacher of both humans and gods, in the truth of his Dharma (Spiritual Doctrine), and in his Sangha (community of spiritually developed followers). Faith in Buddhism functions as a form of motor, which propels the Buddhist practitioner towards the goal of Awakening (bodhi) and Nirvana. Volitionally, faith implies a resolute and courageous act of will. It combines the steadfast resolution that one will do a thing with the self-confidence that one can do it.

As a counter to any form of "blind faith", the Buddha taught the Kalama Sutra, exhorting his disciples to investigate any teaching and weigh its merits rather than believing something outright.

Bahá'í Faith

In the Bahá'í Faith a personal faith is viewed as a progressive understanding an individual goes through to learn the truth for oneself, towards the end that one may learn of God, of oneself, and also develop a praiseworthy character (not simply by knowing the truth, but by living honorably in relation to it.) Different ways of learning the truth for oneself are all respected and culminate in a *spirit of faith* or *indwelling spirit* by which the Holy Spirit informs one's belief without recourse to senses, intellect, intuition, scripture, or experience and research. However, such a state is not considered to be independent of the Revelation of God by which the great Prophets founded the religions, nor is it meant to act as a sure guide for others.

Rastafari

Although Rastas claim not to hold belief systems, and instead claims that faith to the Rastafarians implies knowledge of the divinity of Haile Selassie, it still is a belief system not parallel with science. Their faith in Selassie as God, and as the being who is going to end their sufferings at the day of judgement when they will return to live in Africa under his rule is at the center of their lives. The dreadlocks are worn as an open declaration of faith in and loyalty towards Haile Selassie, while marijuana is seen to help cultivate a strong faith by bringing the faithful closer to God. Selassie is seen as both God the Father, who created Heaven and Earth, and as God the Son, the Reincarnation of Jesus Christ. To complete the Holy Trinity the Holy Spirit is seen as being in the believers themselves, and within all human beings. The announcement of the death of Selassie in 1975 did not disturb the faith of the Rastas, who assumed that God cannot die, and that therefore the news was false. Rastas also have a faith in physical immortality, both for Haile Selassie and for themselves.

CRITICISMS OF FAITH

A certain number of religious rationalists, as well as non-religious people, criticize implicit faith as being irrational, and see faith as ignorance of reality: a strong belief in something with no evidence. In this view, belief should be restricted to what is directly supportable by logic or scientific evidence. Some say that belief in scientific evidence is based on faith in positivism. Others claim that faith is perfectly compatible with and does not necessarily contradict reason, "faith" meaning an assumed belief. Many Jews, Christians and Muslims claim that there is adequate historical evidence of their God's existence and interaction with human beings. As such, they may believe that there is no need for "faith" in God in the sense of belief against or despite evidence; rather, they hold that evidence is sufficient to demonstrate that their God probably exists or certainly exists.

No historical evidence has managed to convince the entirety of the community of historians that any one religion is true. For people in this category, "faith" in a God simply means "belief that one has knowledge of [any particular] God[s]". It is logically impossible—according to standard Aristotelian logic—that all these different religions with their mutually contradictory beliefs can simultaneously be objectively true. Therefore, most historians with religious beliefs hold others to be "false", or essentially wrong. This is a standard tenet of most religions as well, though there are exceptions. An example of

this is some forms of Hinduism, which hold the view that the several different faiths are just aspects of the ultimate truth that the several religions have difficulty describing or understanding. They see the different religions as just different paths to the same goal. This does not explain away all logical contradictions between faiths but these traditions say that all seeming contradictions will be understood once a person has an experience of the Hindu concept of moksha.

Some religious believers—and many of their critics—often use the term "faith" as the affirmation of belief without an ongoing test of evidence. In this sense *faith* refers to *belief beyond evidence or logical arguments*, sometimes called "implicit faith." Another form of this kind of faith is fideism: one ought to believe that God exists, but one should not base that belief on any other beliefs; one should, instead, accept it without any reasons at all. "Faith" in this sense, belief for the sake of believing, is often associated with Søren Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* and some other existentialist religious thinkers.

Faith as Religious belief, has been advanced as being desirable, for example for emotional reasons or to regulate society, and this can be seen as 'positive' when it has 'benign' effects. However, rationalists may become alarmed that faithful activists, perhaps with extreme beliefs, might not be amenable to argument or to negotiation over their behaviour

Robert Todd Carroll, author of skeptic.com, argues that the word "faith" is usually used to refer to belief in a proposition that is not supported by a perceived majority of evidence. Since many beliefs are in propositions that are supported by a perceived majority of evidence, the claim that all beliefs/knowledge are based on faith is a misconception "or perhaps it is an intentional attempt at disinformation and obscurantism" made by religious apologists:

> "There seems to be something profoundly deceptive and misleading about lumping together as acts of faith such things as belief in the Virgin birth and belief in the existence of an external world or in the principle of contradiction. Such a view trivialises religious faith by putting all non-empirical claims in the same category as religious faith. In fact, religious faith should be put in the same category as belief in superstitions, fairy tales, and delusions of all varieties."

but according to "Ten myths about Christianity" (Michael Green and Gorden Carkner, Lion Hudson Plc, ISBN 978-0745914411), faith is:

> "Self-commitment on the basis of evidence"

FAITH AND RATIONALITY

Faith and rationality are two modes of belief that are seen to exist in varying degrees of conflict or compatibility. Faith is belief in inspiration, revelation, or authority. Rationality is belief based on reason or evidence.

Broadly speaking, there are three categories of views regarding the relationship between faith and rationality. Rationalism holds that truth should be determined by reason and factual analysis, rather than faith, dogma, or religious teaching. Fideism holds that faith is necessary, and that beliefs must be held without evidence or reason, or even in conflict with evidence and reason. Natural theology holds that faith and rationality are compatible, so that evidence and reason ultimately lead to belief in the objects of faith.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND REASON

From at least the days of the Greek Philosophers, the relationship between faith and reason has been hotly debated. Plato argued that knowledge is simply memory of the eternal. Aristotle set down rules by which knowledge could be discovered by reason.

Rationalists point out that many people hold irrational beliefs, for many reasons. There may be evolutionary causes for irrational beliefs — irrational beliefs may increase our ability to survive and reproduce. Or, according to Pascal's Wager, it may be to our advantage to have faith, because faith may promise infinite rewards, while the rewards of reason are necessarily finite.

Believers in faith—for example those who believe salvation is possible through faith alone—point out that everyone holds beliefs arrived at by faith, not reason. The belief that the universe is a sensible place and that our minds allow us to arrive at correct conclusions about it, is a belief we hold through faith.

Beliefs held "by faith" may be seen existing in a number of relationships to rationality:

- **Faith as underlying rationality:** In this view, all human knowledge and reason is seen as dependent on faith: faith in our senses, faith in our reason, faith in our memories, and faith in the accounts of events we receive from others. Accordingly, faith is seen as essential to and inseparable from rationality.
- **Faith as addressing issues beyond the scope of rationality:** In this view, faith is seen as covering issues that science and

rationality are inherently incapable of addressing, but that are nevertheless entirely real. Accordingly, faith is seen as complementing rationality, by providing answers to questions that would otherwise be unanswerable.

- **Faith as contradicting rationality:** In this view, faith is seen as those views that one holds despite evidence and reason to the contrary. Accordingly, faith is seen as pernicious with respect to rationality, as it interferes with our ability to think, and rationality is seen as the enemy of faith, since it interferes with our ability to believe.

Fideism

Martin Luther taught that faith and reason were antithetical, and that man must reject reason and accept faith. He wrote, "All the articles of our Christian faith, which God has revealed to us in His Word, are in presence of reason sheerly impossible, absurd, and false." and "Reason is the greatest enemy that faith has."

The Apologist Point of View: Reformed Epistemology

Faith as Underlying Rationality

The view that faith underlies all rationality holds that rationality is dependent on faith for its coherence. Under this view, there is no way to comprehensively *prove* that we are actually seeing what we appear to be seeing, that what we remember actually happened, or that the laws of logic and mathematics are actually real. Instead, all beliefs depend for their coherence on *faith* in our senses, memory, and reason, because the foundations of rationalism cannot be proven by evidence or reason.

René Descartes, for example, argued along these lines in Meditations on First Philosophy, in which he argued that all human perceptions could be an illusion manufactured by an evil demon. Illustrations of this view are also found in contemporary in popular culture, with movies such as The Matrix and Total Recall illustrating the impotence of reason in the face of illusion. Similarly, Theravaada Buddhism holds that all perceived reality is illusion. Thus, it is argued, there is no way to prove beyond doubt that what we perceive is real, so that all our beliefs depend on *faith* in our senses and memories.

Reformed epistemology asserts that certain beliefs cannot be proven by reason but must be accepted by faith, and Christian philosophers and apologists such as Alvin Plantinga have proposed that beliefs of

this type are "properly basic"—that is, that it is right and even necessary to hold such beliefs without evidence. In this view, we believe because we are inclined by nature to believe. Plantinga goes on to argue that belief in God is properly basic in the same way—that belief in God need not come through evidence and argument but may be a "properly basic" belief grounded in natural and intuitive experience.

Presuppositional apologetics claims that faith is a transcendentally necessary precondition to reason. In other words, without faith one could make no sense of reasoning, in terms of the processes or the laws that govern it. It makes the claim that the very concept of "proof" presupposes faith, and thus faith in God is the most rational thing there is. Solipsism applies reasoning similar to the above to arrive at the conclusion that only the self exists, and all reality is simply a function of one's mind, on the basis that only one's existence can be proven. This view was first recorded with the presocratic sophist Gorgias. Contemporary rationalism has little in common with the historical, continental rationalism expounded by René Descartes and others, which arguably relied on solipsistic reasoning. Plantinga asserts that his argument does not incorporate solipsisms since, while it acknowledges that many things cannot be proven by evidence and reason, it also affirms that things exist outside the mind. Thus, it concludes that faith allows us to "know" things that cannot be strictly proved.

Faith as Addressing Issues Beyond the Scope of Rationality

The position that faith addresses issues beyond the scope of rationality holds that faith supplements rationality, because the scope of rational human knowledge is limited.

This view was articulated in the Bible as follows:

"*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*" Hebrews 11:1.

"*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*" 1st Corinthians 13:12

In essence, under this view, faith corresponds to beliefs that, although quite possibly true, cannot yet be fully grasped by our reason.

Some have argued that strict rationalism to the exclusion of this type of faith erroneously concludes that because rational thought is successful at explaining some things, knowledge that comes from beyond the realm of rational thought is illegitimate. According to this line of reasoning,

"Our science-dominated culture has ruled out religious experience as a clue to reality; but on what grounds? Science in the 1600's was so successful in understanding the physical dimension of reality that people in the 1700's began to think that the physical may be the only dimension of reality. But success in one area of inquiry does not invalidate other areas. The burden of proof is on those who would exclude a particular kind of experience from being a source of knowledge."

Under this view, faith is not static belief divorced from reason and experience, and is not illegitimate as a source of knowledge. On the contrary, belief by faith starts with the things known by reason, and extends to things that are true, although they cannot be understood, and is therefore legitimate insofar as it answers questions that rational thought is incapable of addressing. As such, beliefs held by this form of faith are seen dynamic and changing as one grows in experience and knowledge; until one's "faith" becomes "sight." This sort of belief is commonly found in mysticism.

The Rationalist Point of View

Faith that Contradicts Rationality

In this view, there are many beliefs that are held by faith alone, that rational thought would force the mind to reject. As an example, many people believe in the Biblical story of Noah's flood: that the entire Earth was covered by water for forty days. But most plants cannot survive being covered by water for that length of time, so one must choose between accepting the story on faith and rejecting reason, or rejecting the story by reason and thus rejecting faith (in the instance).

Rationalists argue that beliefs held by faith, without evidence, contradict one another. Thus, most "faiths", in the sense of "religions", hold that their view is correct and that other religions are false religions. The Bible, for examples, says, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before Me." Therefore, of the exclusive religions held through faith, either one is correct and all others are wrong, or they are all wrong. Rationalists argue that if, in all cases but one, faith leads to incorrect belief, then it is wrong in that one case to expect faith to lead to correct belief.

VARIOUS JUSTIFICATIONS AND CRITICISMS

The justifications for faith as rational are based on semantic and epistemological strategies:

1. Less semantically precise definitions of rationalism that allow for faith to be accommodated as rational:

1.a Broadening of the definition of faith to include faith as a belief that rests on logical proof or material evidence.

1.b Weakening of the definitions of proof, evidence, logic, rational, etc., to allow for a lower standard of proof.

2. Attacking the epistemological underpinnings of rationality by asserting that certain beliefs not supported by reason or evidence are still properly basic because they are intuitive or that we are "naturally inclined" to believe them.

The semantic strategy (number 1) is common to those who hold that faith addresses issues beyond the scope of rationality, whereas the epistemological strategy (number 2) is employed by those who hold that faith underlies rationality.

Critics of faith as rational assert that the semantical arguments constitute a special pleading, a formal fallacy. A common refutation of the epistemological attack on the basis of rationality is that if when fully applied it makes it possible to regard any arbitrary belief as rational; one could argue belief in the Invisible Pink Unicorn to be properly basic using the same reasoning. Advocates of Reformed epistemology assert that they have a criterion of proper basicality; one arrived at inductively. They distinguish between the beliefs and the conditions under which one is believing and correlate the beliefs and the conditions into recognizable groups of those that are properly basic and those that are not properly basic. They argue that as beings we are "naturally inclined" toward belief in God and that because of this condition faith is properly basic and rational, but belief in the Invisible Pink Unicorn or other logical absurdities lack such a condition, are not properly basic and hence not rational. Critics respond to this line of reasoning with though we may indeed be "naturally inclined" toward faith (belief), it does not follow that faith is properly basic and hence rational.

Other people of faith have adopted the position that faith is implicitly irrational and have embraced the putative irrationality of faith as a demonstration of devotion to one's beliefs and deity. For example, Fideism specifically recommends that one not be rational.

LECTURES ON FAITH

The document "Lectures on Faith" is a set of seven lectures on the doctrine and theology of the Latter Day Saint movement, first published as the "doctrine" portion of the 1835 edition of the canonical *Doctrine*

and Covenants, but later removed from that work by both major branches of the faith. It was presented by Joseph Smith, Jr. to a group of elders in a course known as the "School of the Prophets" in the early winter of 1834-35 in Kirtland, Ohio.

AUTHORSHIP

Although authorship of the Lectures is uncertain, studies suggest that the actual wording was largely by Sidney Rigdon, with substantial involvement and approval by Joseph Smith, Jr. and possibly others. Joseph Smith was substantially involved, both in their authorship in November 1834 and in their later preparation for publication in January 1835.

The original title of each lecture was "Of Faith". It was not until 1876, in an edition of the Doctrine and Covenants edited by then Church Historian Orson Pratt of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, that the title was given as "Lectures on Faith".

Possibly the most famous quotation from the Lectures reads, "...A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things, never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation;..."

STATUS AS PART OF THE LATTER DAY SAINT CANON

The Lectures were published in 1835 as the *Doctrine* portion of the volume entitled *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints: Carefully Selected from the Revelations of God* (better known simply as the *Doctrine and Covenants*). The Lectures were selected for that volume by a committee appointed on September 24, 1834 by a general assembly of the church to arrange the doctrines and revelations of the church into a single volume. That committee of Presiding Elders, consisting of Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams, stated that the Lectures were included "in consequence of their embracing the important doctrine of salvation," and that the Lectures, together with the church-regulatory sections that followed, represent "our belief, and when we say this, humbly trust, the faith and principles of this society as a body." Accordingly, the church body accepted the committee's compilation on August 17, 1835 as "the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by a unanimous vote."

Some Latter Day Saint denominations have subsequently removed the Lectures from the Doctrine and Covenants volume. They were removed from the Community of Christ version of the *Doctrine and*

Covenants in 1897, although that denomination began publishing the Lectures in a separate volume in 1952. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints removed the Lectures from the *Doctrine and Covenants* in the 1921 edition, apparently without a vote by the church body, with an explanation that the Lectures "were never presented to nor accepted by the Church as being otherwise than theological lectures or lessons". This is in contrast to the remaining pages of the original Doctrine and Covenants which are officially recognised by nearly all Latter Day Saint denominations as divine revelation given specifically to the church.

Mormon apologists give several reasons to explain why the Lectures were removed from the scriptural volumes of the church. According to Joseph Fielding Smith, at the time an Apostle-theologian in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the reasons were:

"(a) They were not received as revelations by the prophet Joseph Smith.

"(b) They are instructions relative to the general subject of faith. They are explanations of this principle but not doctrine.

"(c) They are not complete as to their teachings regarding the Godhead. More complete instructions on the point of doctrine are given in section 130 of the 1876 and all subsequent editions of the Doctrine and Covenants.

"(d) It was thought by Elder James E. Talmage, chairman, and other members of the committee who were responsible for their omission that to avoid confusion and contention on this vital point of belief, it would be better not to have them bound in the same volume as the commandments or revelations which make up the Doctrine and Covenants.' " (as told to John William Fitzgerald, *A Study of the Doctrine and Covenants*, M.A. Thesis, Brigham Young University, p. 344).

Other commentators have theorised that the Lectures represented official church doctrine in 1835, but that by 1897 or 1921 when the work was decanonised by the major Latter Day Saint denominations, the doctrine concerning the Godhead had changed, and the Lectures were no longer generally consistent accepted doctrines. For instance, in Lecture 5, paragraph 2, it defines the Father as a "personage of spirit, glory and power." Whereas in section 130 of the Doctrine and Covenants, verse 22 states that "the Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's." In addition, the Father and Son are said

to possess the same mind, "which mind is the Holy Spirit" (Lecture 5, paragraph 2). The Holy Spirit is not a personage, as defined at the beginning of paragraph 2: "There are two personages who constitute the great, matchless, governing and supreme power over all things...They are the Father and Son." This could cause confusion when compared with Section 130 of the Doctrine and Covenants "The Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit." Section 130 of the Doctrine and Covenants was added in the 1876 edition and hence co-existed with the Lectures on Faith.

Despite the Lectures' removal from the volume of scripture, the Lectures remain an important doctrinal work in most Latter Day Saint denominations. One theologian in the LDS Church has praised the Lectures as follows:

"In my judgment, it is the most comprehensive, inspired utterance that now exists in the English language—that exists in one place defining, interpreting, expounding, announcing, and testifying what kind of being God is. It was written by the power of the Holy Ghost, by the spirit of inspiration. It is, in effect, eternal scripture; it is true." (Bruce R. McConkie, lecture at Brigham Young University).

TEACHINGS FROM THE LECTURES ON FAITH

"We here observe that God is the only supreme governor and independent being in whom all fullness and perfection dwell; who is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient; without beginning of days or end of life; and that in him every good gift and every good principle dwell; and that he is the Father of lights; in him the principle of faith dwells independently, and he is the object in whom the faith of all other rational and accountable beings center for life and salvation."

"We have now shown how it was that the first thought ever existed in the mind of any individual that there was such a Being as a God, who had created and did uphold all things: that it was by reason of the manifestation which he first made to our father Adam, when he stood in his presence, and conversed with him face to face, at the time of his creation.

"Let us here observe, that after any portion of the human family are made acquainted with the important fact that there is a God, who has created and does uphold all things, the extent of their knowledge respecting his character and glory will depend upon their diligence and faithfulness in seeking after him, until, like Enoch, the brother of

Jared, and Moses, they shall obtain faith in God, and power with him to behold him face to face.

"We have now clearly set forth how it is, and how it was, that God became an object of faith for rational beings; and also, upon what foundation the testimony was based which excited the inquiry and diligent search of the ancient saints to seek after and obtain a knowledge of the glory of God; and we have seen that it was human testimony, and human testimony only, that excited this inquiry, in the first instance, in their minds. It was the credence they gave to the testimony of their fathers, this testimony having aroused their minds to inquire after the knowledge of God; the inquiry frequently terminated, indeed always terminated when rightly pursued, in the most glorious discoveries and eternal certainty."

"But it is equally as necessary that men should have the idea that he is a God who changes not, in order to have faith in him, as it is to have the idea that he is gracious and long-suffering; for without the idea of unchangeableness in the character of the Deity, doubt would take the place of faith. But with the idea that he changes not, faith lays hold upon the excellencies in his character with unshaken confidence, believing he is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and that his course is one eternal round."

"...no sooner are the minds of men made acquainted with the truth on this point, that he is no respecter of persons, than they see that they have authority by faith to lay hold on eternal life, the richest boon of heaven, because God is no respecter of persons, and that every man in every nation has an equal privilege.

"And lastly, but not less important to the exercise of faith in God, is the idea that he is love";

"As the Son partakes of the fullness of the Father through the Spirit, so the saints are, by the same Spirit, to be partakers of the same fullness, to enjoy the same glory; for as the Father and the Son are one, so, in like manner, the saints are to be one in them. Through the love of the Father, the mediation of Jesus Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, they are to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ."

"It is in vain for persons to fancy to themselves that they are heirs with those, or can be heirs with them, who have offered their all in sacrifice, and by this means obtained faith in God and favor with him so as to obtain eternal life, unless they, in like manner, offer unto him

the same sacrifice, and through that offering obtain the knowledge that they are accepted of him."

"But those who have not made this sacrifice to God do not know that the course which they pursue is well pleasing in his sight; for ...where doubt and uncertainty are there faith is not, nor can it be. For doubt and faith do not exist in the same person at the same time; so that persons whose minds are under doubts and fears cannot have unshaken confidence; ...and where faith is weak the persons will not be able to contend against all the opposition, tribulations, and afflictions which they will have to encounter in order to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus; and they will grow weary in their minds, and the adversary will have power over them and destroy them."

"...the glory which the Father and the Son have is because they are just and holy beings; and that if they were lacking in one attribute or perfection which they have, the glory which they have never could be enjoyed by them, for it requires them to be precisely what they are in order to enjoy it; and if the Saviour gives this glory to any others, he must do it in the very way set forth in his prayer to his Father—by making them one with him as he and the Father are one. In so doing he would give them the glory which the Father has given him; and when his disciples are made one with the Father and Son, as the Father and the Son are one, who cannot see the propriety of the Saviour's saying—'The works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.' (John 14:12)

"These teachings of the Saviour most clearly show unto us the nature of salvation, and what he proposed unto the human family when he proposed to save them—that he proposed to make them like unto himself, and he was like the Father, the great prototype of all saved beings".

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RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND INTERFAITH INTERACTIONS

RELIGIOUS BELIEF

Religious belief refers to a faith or creed concerning the supernatural, sacred, or divine. It may concern the existence, nature and worship of a deity or deities and divine involvement in the universe and human life. It may also relate to the values and practices based on the teachings of a spiritual leader. Unlike other belief systems, religious belief tends to be codified. While often used synonymously with religion, in this article religious belief will be assumed to refer to ideas rather than practices.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AND OTHER BELIEF SYSTEMS

While religion invariably involves a belief system, not all belief systems are religion. Theism is often confused with religion. However theism isn't always a belief system. Spirituality, which deals in matters of the spirit, usually considered a part of religion, can also be distinguished from religion. Spirituality may encompass both religious and non-religious practice.

Religious adherents often distinguish religious belief from superstition. Both superstition and traditional religions are non-materialistic, do not see the world as being subject to laws of cause and effect and presume that there are immaterial forces influencing our lives. Both religion and superstition seek meaning in otherwise random and chaotic events. There is, thus, a continuum between what is termed "superstition" and the ideas in animistic religions.

RELIGIOUS BELIEF VS PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is sometimes confused with religion since the two topics cover many of the same issues. Both religion and philosophy address questions such as: Why are we here? What is the nature of reality? What is good? How should we treat each other? What is most important in life? Religion often has rituals marking important life events and times of the year. Unlike philosophy, religion makes a distinction between the sacred and the profane. Religions also often have a belief in the "miraculous."

FORMS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

Pluralism

People with pluralist beliefs make no distinction between faith systems, viewing each one as valid within a particular culture. Examples include:

- Extracts from the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (Sikh Holy Scriptures), "There is only the One Supreme Lord God; there is no other at all" (Pannaa 45). "By His Power the Vedas and the Puranas exist, and the Holy Scriptures of the Jewish, Christian and Islamic religions. By His Power all deliberations exist." (Pannaa 464). "Some call Him, 'Ram, Ram', and some call Him, 'Khudaa-i'. Some serve Him as 'Gusain', others as 'Allaah'. He is the Cause of causes, the Generous Lord. He showers His Grace and Mercy upon us." (Pannaa 885).

- The Qur'an, revealed through Muhammad, states, "Those with Faith, those who are Jews, and the Christians and Sabaeans, all who have Faith in Allah and the Last Day and act rightly will have their reward with their Lord. They will feel no fear and will know no sorrow." (Qur'an, Surat-al-Baqara; 2:62)

Syncretism

People with syncretistic views blend the views of a variety of different religions or traditional beliefs into a unique fusion which suits their particular experience and context.

Universalism

Some believe that religion cannot be separated from other aspects of life, or believe that certain cultures did not or do not separate their religious activities from other activities in the same way that some people in modern Western cultures do.

Some anthropologists report cultures in which Gods are involved in every aspect of life—if a cow goes dry, a God has caused this, and must be propitiated, when the sun rises in the morning, a God has caused this, and must be thanked. Even in modern Western cultures, many people see supernatural forces behind every event, as described by Carl Sagan in his book *The Demon-Haunted World*.

People with this worldview often consider the influence of Western culture to be inimical. They may claim that in the United States, in particular, people go to church on Sunday and cheat their neighbors the rest of the week. Others with this world view resist the influence of science, and believe that science, or "so-called science", should be guided by religion. Still others with this worldview believe that all political decisions and laws should be guided by religion. This last belief is written into the constitution of many Islamic nations, and is shared by some fundamentalist Christians.

In addition, beliefs about the supernatural or metaphysical may not presuppose a difference between any such thing as nature and non-nature, nor between science and what the most educated people believe. In the view of some historians, the pre-Socratic Athenians saw science, political tradition, culture, and religion as not easily distinguishable, but all part of the same body of knowledge and wisdom available to a community.

Systemisation

In Buddhism, practice and progress along the spiritual path happens when one follows the system of Buddhist practice. Any religion which follows (parts of) the fundamentals of this system has, according to the teachings of Buddha, good aspects to the extent it accords with this system. Any religion which goes against (parts of) the fundamentals of this system, includes bad aspects too. Any religion which does not teach certain parts of this system, is not because of this a 'bad' religion; it just lacks those teachings and is to that extent incomplete.

A question by the monk Subhadda to the Buddha: "O Gotama, there are Samanas and Brahmanas (religious leaders) who are leaders of their sects, who are well-esteemed by many people, such as Purana Kassapa, Makkhali Gosala, Ajita Kesakambala, Pakudha Kaccayana, Sancaya Belatthaputta and Nigantha Nataputta. Do all of them have knowledge and understanding as they themselves have declared? Or do all of them have no knowledge and understanding?"

The reply by Buddha was: "Subhadda, in whatever teaching is not found the Noble Eightfold Path, neither in it is there found a Samana (priest or holy person) of the first stage (Sotapanna), nor a Samana of the second stage (Sakadagami), nor a Samana of the third stage (Anagami), nor a Samana of the fourth stage (Arahant)".

As a religious tradition, Hinduism has experienced many attempts at systemisation. In medieval times, Shankara advocated for the Advaita system of philosophy. In recent times, Tamala Krishna Gosvami has researched the systemisation of Krishna theology as expounded by Srila Prabhupada. (See Krishnology)

APPROACHES TO THE BELIEFS OF OTHERS

Adherents of particular religions deal with the differing doctrines and practices espoused by other religions in a variety ways. All strains of thought appear in different segments of all major world religions.

Exclusivism

People with exclusivist beliefs sometimes typically explain other religions as either in error, or as corruptions or counterfeits of the true faith. Examples include:

- Christian scripture states that Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me." John 14:6.

- Islamic scripture states: "O you who believe, do not take certain Jews and Christians as allies; these are allies of one another. Those among you who ally themselves with these belong with them. Surely Allah does not guide the unjust people." Qur'an 5:51. and "O you who believe, do not befriend those among the recipients of previous scripture who mock and ridicule your religion, nor shall you befriend the disbelievers. You shall reverence GOD, if you are really believers." Qur'an 5:57

- Hebrew scripture states that God said to Israel through Moses: "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now, therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

- The Buddhist scriptures of the Dhammapada states: "The best of paths is the Eightfold Path. The best of truths are the Four Noble Truths. Non-attachment (viraga or Nirvana) is the best of

states. The best of bipeds is the Seeing One. This is the only Way; there is none other for the purity of vision. Do follow this path; it is the bewilderment of Mara". Dhammapada verse 273 & 274.

Exclusivist views are more completely explored in chosen people.

Inclusivism

People with inclusivist beliefs recognize some truth in all faith systems, highlighting agreements and minimising differences, but see their own faith as in some way ultimate. Examples include:

From Hinduism

- A well-known Rig Vedic hymn stemming from Hinduism claims that "Truth is One, though the sages know it variously."

- Krishna, incarnation or avatar of Vishnu, said: "Whoever resorts to Me in whatever manner, in the same manner do I favour them; men experience Me alone in different ways, O Arjuna." (Gita: 4:11);

- Krishna said: "Whatever may be the form [of the deity] a devotee—whosoever he may be—desires to worship with faith, I assume that form which is firm and is according to [his] faith. Endowed with that faith, he seeks to worship that deity and therefrom receives his desired objects that are ordained by none but Me.(Gita: 7:21-22)

- Another quote in the Gita states: "O Arjuna, even those devotees who worship other deities (*e.g.*, Devas, for example) with faith, they also worship Me, but following non-injunction" (Gita: 9:23)

From Christianity

- Jesus said, "Whoever is not against us is for us." Mark 9:40 (NIV)

- "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." 1 John 4:7 (NRSV)

- The Apostle Peter wrote of God: "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9 (NIV)

- "And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and

his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Matthew 9:10–12 (KJV)

- Jesus said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matthew 5:43-45 (KJV)

From Islam

- The Qur'an states: "Only argue with the People of the Book in the kindest way—except in the case of those of them who do wrong— saying, 'We have faith in what has been sent down to us and what was sent down to you. Our God and your God are one and we submit to Him.'" (Qur'an, Surat al-'Ankabut; 29:46)

- "Among the people of the Book there are some who have faith in God and in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down to them, and who are humble before God. They do not sell God's Signs for a paltry price. Such people will have their reward with their Lord. And God is swift at reckoning." (Qur'an, Surat Al 'Imran; 3:199)

- "…You will find the people most affectionate to those who have faith are those who say, 'We are Christians.' That is because some of them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant." (Qur'an, Surat al-Ma'idah; 5:82)

From Judaism

A *Sefer Torah* opened for liturgical use in a synagogue service

- The Talmud states: "The righteous of all peoples have a place in the World-To-Come" (Tos. to Sanhedrin 13:2, Sifra to Leviticus 19:18), and affirms that the great majority of non-Jewish humanity will be saved, due to God's overwhelming mercy (BT Sanhedrin 105a).

- The Torah mentions a number of righteous gentiles, including Melchizedek who presided at offerings to God that Abraham

made (Gen. 14:18), Job, a pagan Arab of the land of Uz who had a whole book of the Hebrew Bible devoted to him as a paragon of righteousness beloved of God (see the book of Job), and the Ninevites, the people given to cruelty and idolatry could be accepted by God when they repented (see the Book of Jonah).

• Rabbinic tradition asserts that the basic standard of righteousness was established in a covenant with Noah: anyone who keeps the Noahide Laws of this covenant has "a share in the world to come".

From the Bahá'í Faith

• Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith states: "The fundamental principle enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh, the followers of his Faith firmly believe, is that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is a continuous and progressive process, that all the great religions of the world are divine in origin, that their basic principles are in complete harmony, that their aims and purposes are one and the same, that their teachings are but facets of one truth, that their functions are complementary, that they differ only in the non-essential aspects of their doctrines, and that their missions represent successive stages in the spiritual evolution of human society." (*The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh* in World Order, Vol. 7, No. 2 (1972-73)) The Bahá'í faith extends hypothetical affirmation to various religious faith traditions as among the Native Americans and others to the extent that individuals and institutions may accept for their own purposes that various cultural heroes may have been in fact a Manifestation of God.

MODERN REASONS FOR ADHERENCE TO RELIGION

Typical reasons for adherence to religion include the following:

• *"Experience or emotion":* For many, the practice of a religion leads to religious experiences and pleasurable emotional highs. Such emotional highs can come from the singing of traditional hymns to the trance-like states found in the practices of the Whirling Dervishes and Yoga, among others. People continue to associate with those practices that give pleasure and, insofar as it is connected with religion, join in religious organisations that provide those practices. Also, some people simply feel that their faith is true, and may not be able to explain their feelings.

- *"Supernatural connection":* Most religions postulate a reality which includes both the natural and the supernatural. Most adherents of religion consider this to be of critical importance, since it permits belief in unseen and otherwise potentially unknowable aspects of life, including hope of eternal life.

- *"Rational analysis":* For some, adherence is based on intellectual evaluation that has led them to the conclusion that the teachings of that religion most closely describe reality. Among Christians this basis for belief is often given by those influenced by C.S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer, as well as some who teach young earth creationism.

- *"Best Working Model":* For some (*e.g.* John Polkinghorne) religion makes the most sense of The Way the World is. Religion is not regarded as proven but as the best available reflection of things which are intractable to other analysis.

- *"Moderation":* Many religions have approaches that produce practices that place limitations on the behaviour of their adherents. This is seen by many as a positive influence, potentially protecting adherents from the destructive or even fatal excesses to which they might otherwise be susceptible. Many people from many faiths contend that their faith brings them fulfillment, peace, and joy, apart from worldly interests.

- *"Authority":* Most religions are authoritarian in nature, and thus provide their adherents with spiritual and moral role models, who they believe can bring highly positive influences both to adherents and society in general.

- *"Moral framework":* Most religions see early childhood education in religion and spirituality as essential for instilling and internalising moral discipline. Belief in God, for example, is seen by some to be necessary for moral behaviour.

- *"Majesty and tradition":* Many people consider religious practices to be serene, beautiful, and conducive to religious experiences, which in turn support religious beliefs.

- *"Community and culture":* Organised religions promote a sense of community among their followers, and the moral and cultural common ground of these communities makes them attractive to people with the same values. Indeed, while religious beliefs and practices are usually connected, some individuals with

substantially secular beliefs still participate in religious practices for cultural reasons (see Secular Jewish culture).

- ***"Fulfillment":*** Most traditional religions require sacrifice of their followers, but, in turn, the followers may gain much from their membership therein. Thus, they come away from experiences with these religions with the feeling that their needs have been filled. In fact, studies have shown that religious adherents tend to be happier and less prone to stress than non-religious people.

- ***"Spiritual and psychological benefits":*** Each religion asserts that it is a means by which its adherents may come into closer contact with God, Truth, and Spiritual Power. They all promise to free adherents from spiritual bondage, and bring them into spiritual freedom. It naturally follows that a religion which frees its adherents from deception, sin, and spiritual death will have significant mental health benefits. Abraham Maslow's research after World War II showed that Holocaust survivors tended to be those who held strong religious beliefs (not necessarily temple attendance, etc), suggesting it helped people cope in extreme circumstances. Humanistic psychology went on to investigate how religious or spiritual identity may have correlations with longer lifespan and better health. The study found that humans may particularly need religious ideas to serve various emotional needs such as the need to feel loved, the need to belong to homogeneous groups, the need for understandable explanations and the need for a guarantee of ultimate justice. Other factors may involve sense of purpose, sense of identity, sense of contact with the divine. See also *Man's Search for Meaning*, by Victor Frankl, detailing his experience with the importance of religion in surviving the Holocaust. Critics assert that the very fact that religion was the primary selector for research subjects may have introduced a bias, and that the fact that all subjects were holocaust survivors may also have had an effect. According to Larson et al. (2000), "[m]ore longitudinal research with better multidimensional measures will help further clarify the roles of these [religious] factors and whether they are beneficial or harmful."

- ***"Practical benefits":*** Religions may sometimes provide breadth and scale for visionary inspirations in compassion, practical charity, and moral restraint. Christianity is noted for the founding of many major universities, the creation of early hospitals, the

provision of food and medical supplies to the needy, and the creation of orphanages and schools, amongst other charitable acts. Many other religions (and non-religious organisations and individuals, *e.g.*, humanistic Oxfam) have also performed equivalent or similar work.

- *Crisis of faith* is a term commonly applied to periods of intense doubt and internal conflict about one's preconceived beliefs or life decisions. A *crisis of faith* can be contrasted to simply a period of doubt in that a *crisis of faith* demands reconciliation or reevaluation before one can continue believing in whichever tenet is in doubt or continuing in whatever life path is in question—*i.e.*, the crisis necessitates a non-compromisable decision: either sufficiently reconcile the cause of doubt with the belief or decision in question, or drop the belief. Religious doubt could lead to anxiety over the doubter's supposed eternal future (*e.g.* going to Hell if they believe it exists). The friends or relatives of freethinkers can also experience distress over the supposed eternal future of a loved one. While many religious adherents derive happiness from their religion, some religious beliefs may cause unhappiness to some. Similarly many freethinkers derive happiness from being able to decide philosophical and moral issues for themselves, and some become unhappy in their state.

MODERN REASONS FOR REJECTION OF RELIGION

Typical reasons for rejection of religion include the following:

- *"Irrelevancy":* Many find the beliefs, moral practices, and rituals of a religion to hold no meaning in the modern world, and find no effect from them if applied, and conclude that the religion is irrelevant. Likewise, many who live a contemporary lifestyle find that modern lifestyles conflict with traditional religious understanding, and so reject religion in favour of the current lifestyle, finding the religious beliefs to be outdated or pointless.

- *"Alternative Explanations":* Some see religion as merely an attempt at explaining observed phenomena in the world by attributing it to the actions of an omnipotent deity. Now that science has been able to solve many of these problems, religion is no longer necessary. This is effectively a God of the Gaps argument.

- ***"Promotion of guilt, fear and shame":*** Many atheists, agnostics, and others see religion as a promoter of fear and conformity, causing people to adhere to it to shake the guilt and fear of either being looked down upon by others, or some form of punishment as outlined in the religious doctrines (*e.g.* Hell). In this way, religion can be seen as promotional of people pushing guilt onto others, or becoming fanatical (*i.e.* doing things they otherwise wouldn't if they were non-religious), in order to shed their own guilt and fear ultimately generated by the religion itself.

- ***"Irrational and unbelievable creeds":*** The fundamental doctrines of some religions are considered by some to be illogical, contrary to experience, or unsupported by sufficient evidence, and are rejected for those reasons. Even some believers may have difficulty accepting particular religious assertions or doctrines. Some people believe the body of evidence available to humans to be insufficient to justify certain religious beliefs. They may thus disagree with religious interpretations of ethics and human purpose, and theistic views of creation. This reason has perhaps been aggravated by the protestations of some fundamentalist Christians.

- ***"Restrictiveness":*** Many religions have (or have had in the past) an approach that produces, or produced, practices that are considered by some people to be too restrictive, *e.g.*, regulation of dress, and proscriptions on diet and activities on certain days of the week. Some feel that religion is the antithesis of prosperity, fun, enjoyment and pleasure. This causes them to reject it entirely, or to see it as only to be turned to in times of trouble.

- ***"Self-promotion":*** Some individuals place themselves in positions of power and privilege through promotion of specific religious views. Such self-promotion has tended to reduce public confidence in many things that are called "religion." Similarly, highly publicised cases of abuse by the clergy of several religions have tended to reduce public confidence in the underlying message.

- ***"Promotion of ignorance":*** Many see religion as a primitive attempt to understand nature and the world at large, and that it has since been superseded by scientific inquiry. They therefore conclude that religious beliefs, founded in superstition and ignorance, merely perpetuate said ignorance onto future generations for the sake of tradition.

- *"Childhood indoctrination and ethics":* Many atheists, agnostics, and others see early childhood education in religion and spirituality as a form of brainwashing or social conditioning, forcing a child to accept certain ideas before he or she is old enough to fully understand them and make an informed decision whether or not to agree. Some argue that simplistic absolutism taught by some religions impairs a child's moral capacity to deal with a world of complex and varied temptations which, in reality, is far different from what they have been brought up to believe.

- *"Unappealing practices":* Some people consider religious practices and ceremonies to be distasteful, boring, antiquated, or needlessly arcane, and reject religion for that reason.

- *"Detrimental effect on government":* Many atheists, agnostics, and others believe that religion, because it insists that people believe certain claims "on faith" without sufficient evidence, hinders the rational/logical thought processes necessary for effective government. For example, a leader who believes that God will intervene to save humans from environmental disasters may be less likely to attempt to reduce the risk of such disasters through human action. Also, in many countries, religious organisations have tremendous political power, and in some countries can even control government almost completely. Disillusionment with forms of theocratic government, such as practiced in Iran, can lead people to question the legitimacy of any religious beliefs used to justify non-secular government.

- *"Detrimental effect on personal responsibility":* Many atheists, agnostics, and others believe that many religions, because they state that God will intervene to help individuals who are in trouble, cause people to be less responsible for themselves. For example, a person who believes that God will intervene to save him if he gets into financial difficulties may conclude that it is unnecessary to be financially responsible himself. (Some believers, however, would consider this a misrepresentation of religion: they would say that God only helps people who take initiative themselves first.) This attitude can be taken to extremes: there are instances of believers refusing life-saving medical treatment (or even denying it to their children) because they believe that God will cure them. Many atheists, agnostics, and others also find the assertion that 'circumstances are overpowering

because they are the will of God' to be a negation of personal responsibility.

- *"Exclusivism":* Many major world religions make the claim that they are the one true religion, and that all other religions are wrong (see exclusivism). This, to many, is a logical contradiction, as many religions possess similar, or identical, understanding of issues. Many also find exclusivism repulsive. However, it should be noted that exclusivism is not central to religious beliefs, and few seem to leave a religion fully based on a rejection of exclusivism.

- *"Tensions between proselytising and secularising":* Increasingly secular beliefs have been steadily on the rise in many nations. An increasing acceptance of a secular worldview, combined with efforts to prevent "religious" beliefs from influencing society and government policy, may have led to a corresponding decline in religious belief, especially of more traditional forms.

- *"Cause of division, hatred, and war":* Some religions state that certain groups (particularly those that do not belong to the religion in question) are "inferior" or "sinful" and deserve contempt, persecution, and even death. This, in times of Weapons of Mass Destruction, could lead to the extinction of the human life form and many others. For example, some Muslims believe that women are inferior to men. Some Christians share this belief. At the time of the American Civil War, many Southerners used passages from the Bible to justify slavery. The Christian religion has been used as a reason to persecute and to deny the rights of homosexuals, on the basis that God disapproves of homosexuality, and by implication homosexuals. Many people believe that those who do not share their religion will be punished for their unbelief in an afterlife. There are countless examples of people of one religion or sect using religion as an excuse to murder people with different religious beliefs. To mention just a few, there was the slaughter of the Huguenots by French Catholics in the Sixteenth Century; Hindus and Muslims killing each other when Pakistan separated from India in 1947; the persecution and killing of Shiite Muslims by Sunni Muslims in Iraq and the murder of Protestants by Catholics and vice versa in Ireland, (both of these examples in the late Twentieth Century); and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that continues today. According to some critics of religion, these beliefs can encourage completely unnecessary conflicts and

in some cases even wars. Many atheists believe that, because of this, religion is incompatible with world peace, freedom, civil rights, equality, and good government.

- *"Opportunity cost of resources":* Many believe that the resources spent on religious practice, such as the cost of building and maintaining places of worship or the time necessary to participate in religious ceremonies, are better spent in other places. (On the other hand, the fact that many believers choose to spend time and money practicing religion voluntarily may indicate that they, at least, believe the benefits are worth the costs.)

- *"Immoral doctrines":* Some people may be unable to accept the values that a specific religion promotes (*e.g.*, Islamic attitudes towards women) and will therefore not join that religion. They may also be unable to accept the fact that those who do not believe will go to hell or be damned, especially if said non-believers are close to the person.

- Crisis of faith is a term commonly applied to periods of intense doubt and internal conflict about one's preconceived beliefs or life decisions. A *crisis of faith* can be contrasted to simply a period of doubt in that a *crisis of faith* demands reconciliation or reevaluation before one can continue believing in whichever tenet is in doubt or continuing in whatever life path is in question—*i.e.*, the crisis necessitates a non-compromisable decision: either sufficiently reconcile the cause of doubt with the belief or decision in question, or drop the belief. Religious doubt could lead to anxiety over the doubter's supposed eternal future (*e.g.* going to Hell if they believe it exists). The friends or relatives of freethinkers can also experience distress over the supposed eternal future of a loved one. While many religious adherents derive happiness from their religion, some religious beliefs may cause unhappiness to some. Similarly many freethinkers derive happiness from being able to decide philosophical and moral issues for themselves, and some become unhappy in their state.

HISTORY OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

- Early 20th Century—dialogue started to take place between the Abrahamic faiths—Christianity, Judaism and Islam.
- The 1960s—Interfaith movement gathered interest.

- 1965—the Roman Catholic Church issued the Vatican II document Nostra Aetate, instituting major policy changes in gay rights in the Catholic Church's policy towards non-Christian religions.

- Late 1960s Interfaith groups joined around Civil Rights issues for African-Americans and later were often vocal in their opposition to the Vietnam War.

INTERFAITH AND DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

Dialogue between Judaism, Christianity and Islam

Michael Wyschogrod, an American professor of philosophy, has claimed that there are just as many theoretical or creedal reasons for Muslims and Jews drawing closer to one another as there are for Jews and Christians coming together.

Judaism

Reform Judaism, Reconstructionist Judaism, and Conservative Judaism encourage interfaith dialogue.

Interfaith dialogue is a controversial issue within the Orthodox Jewish community. Some Orthodox Jews refuse to participate in interfaith dialogues because they believe that Judaism's prohibition of proselytism, combined with other religions' missionary zeal, creates an unbalanced power dynamic such that the "dialogue" effectively becomes a monologue. However, some Modern Orthodox Jews participate in interfaith dialogue.

Bahá'í Faith

Interfaith and multi-faith interactivity is integral to the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith. Its founder Bahá'u'lláh enjoined his followers to "consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship." Bahá'ís are often at the forefront of local interfaith activities and efforts. Through the Bahá'í International Community agency, the Bahá'ís also participate at a global level in inter-religious dialogue both through and outside of the United Nations processes.

In 2002 the Universal House of Justice, the global governing body of the Bahá'ís issued a letter to the religious leadership of all faiths in which it identified religious prejudice as one of the last remaining "isms" to be overcome, enjoining such leaders to unite in an effort to root out extreme and divisive religious intolerance.

INTERFAITH ORGANISATIONS

Among the several organisations interested in interfaith dialogue, The Institute of Interfaith Dialogue has been very active in the different states of the US. With about 15 branches in several states including Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Kansas; IID (The Institute of Interfaith Dialogue) organises interfaith dinners, intercultura trips, conferences, panel discussions in these states.

While there are many basically religious organisations geared to working on interfaith issues (see Inter-religious organisations) there is also a less common attempt by some governmental institutions to specifically address the diversity of religions (see Australasian Police Multicultural Advisory Bureau for one award winning example.)

In India, many organisations have been involved in interfaith activities because of that India is a country in which there may all religions and faiths of the world.

Minhaj-ul-Qur'an International is a non-sectarian and a non-governmental organisation (NGO) working in over 81 countries around the globe. Its main aims and objectives are to promote interfaith dialogue and to live peacefully within society. Minhaj-ul-Qur'an was founded by Shaykh-ul-Islam Prof. Dr. Muhammed Tahir-ul-Qadri.

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Interfaith dialogue seeks to realize religion's basic oneness and unity, and the universality of belief. Religion embraces all beliefs and races in brotherhood, and exalts love, respect, tolerance, forgiveness, mercy, human rights, peace, brotherhood, and freedom via its Prophets.

It is easy to talk about peace, contentment, ecology, justice, tolerance, and dialogue. Unfortunately, the prevailing materialist worldview disturbs the balance between humanity and nature and within individuals. This harmony and peace only occurs when the material and spiritual realms are reconciled.

Religion reconciles opposites: religion–science, this world–the next world, Nature–Divine Books, material–spiritual, and spirit–body. It can contain scientific materialism, put science in its proper place, and end long-standing conflicts.

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ECUMENISM, SPIRITUAL REASONING, SYNCRETISM, UNIVERSALISM AND CARBONARI

ECUMENISM

Ecumenism (also *oecumenism*, *œcumenism*) refers to initiatives aimed at greater religious unity or cooperation.

Most commonly, *ecumenism* is used in its narrow meaning, referring to greater co-operation among different Christian groups or denominations. For some, however, it may also refer to the idea of unity: that there should be a single Christian Church. In its broadest sense, the unity may refer to worldwide religious unity; here the vision advocates a greater shared spirituality across Christian, Jewish and Islamic faiths. Mostly, however, the term refers to the narrow sense, that of greater co-operation among Christian groups without aiming for unity.

The word is derived from Greek (oikoumene), which means "the inhabited world", and was historically used with specific reference to the Roman Empire. The word is used predominantly by and with reference to Christian Churches and denominations separated by doctrine, history, and practice.

CHRISTIAN ECUMENISM AND INTERFAITH PLURALISM

Christian ecumenism, in the narrower sense referred to above, is the promotion of unity or cooperation between distinct religious groups or denominations of Christianity. For some Catholics it may, but not always, have the goal of reconciling all who profess Christian faith to bring them into a single, visible organisation, *i.e.* through union with the Roman Catholic Church.

According to Edmund Schlink, most important in Christian ecumenism is that people focus primarily on Christ, not on separate church organisations. In his book *Ökumenische Dogmatik* (1983), he says Christians who see the risen Christ at work in the lives of various Christians and in diverse churches, realize that the unity of Christ's church has never been lost (pages 694-700; also his "Report," *Dialogue* 1963, 2:4, 328), but has instead been distorted and obscured by different historical experiences and by spiritual myopia. Both are overcome in renewed faith in Christ. Included in that is responding to his admonition (John 17; also Philippians 2) to be one in him and love one another as a witness to the world. The result of mutual recognition would be a discernible worldwide fellowship, organised in a historically new way (pages 707-708; also Skibbe, *A Quiet Reformer* 1999, 122-4; Schlink, *The Vision of the Pope* 2001).

Christian ecumenism is distinguished from interfaith pluralism. Ecumenism in this broad sense is called religious pluralism, as distinguished from ecumenism within a faith movement. The interfaith movement strives for greater mutual respect, toleration, and co-operation among the world religions. Ecumenism as interfaith dialogue between representatives of diverse faiths, does not necessarily intend reconciling their adherents into full, organic unity with one another but simply to promote better relations. It promotes toleration, mutual respect and cooperation, whether among Christian denominations, or between Christianity and other faiths.

THREE APPROACHES TO CHRISTIAN UNITY

For a significant part of the Christian world, the highest aim of the Christian faith is the reconciliation of all humanity into a full and conscious union as one Christian Church, visibly united with mutual accountability between the parts and the whole. The desire is expressed by many denominations of Christendom, that all who profess faith in Christ in sincerity, would be more fully cooperative and supportive of one another.

Christian ecumenism can be described in terms of the three largest divisions of Christianity: Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant. While this underemphasises the complexity of these divisions, it is a useful model.

Roman Catholicism

Like the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church has always considered it a duty of the highest rank to seek full unity

with estranged communions of fellow-Christians, and at the same time to reject what it saw as promiscuous and false union that would mean being unfaithful to or glossing over the teaching of Sacred Scripture and Tradition.

Before the Second Vatican Council, the main stress was laid on this second aspect, as exemplified in canon 1258 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law:

1. It is illicit for the faithful to assist at or participate in any way in non-Catholic religious functions.

2. For a serious reason requiring, in case of doubt, the Bishop's approval, passive or merely material presence at non-Catholic funerals, weddings and similar occasions because of holding a civil office or as a courtesy can be tolerated, provided there is no danger of perversion or scandal.

The 1983 Code of Canon Law has no corresponding canon. It absolutely forbids Catholic priests to concelebrate the Eucharist with members of communities not in full communion with the Catholic Church (canon 908), but allows, in certain circumstances and under certain conditions, other sharing in the sacraments. And the *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 102 states: "Christians may be encouraged to share in spiritual activities and resources, *i.e.*, to share that spiritual heritage they have in common in a manner and to a degree appropriate to their present divided state."

Pope John XXIII, who convoked the Council that brought this change of emphasis about, said that the Council's aim was to seek renewal of the Church itself, which would serve, for those separated from the See of Rome, as a "gentle invitation to seek and find that unity for which Jesus Christ prayed so ardently to his heavenly Father."

Some elements of the Roman Catholic perspective on ecumenism are illustrated in the following quotations from the Council's decree on ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio* of 21 November 1964, and Pope John Paul II's encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint* of 25 May 1995.

> Every renewal of the Church is essentially grounded in an increase of fidelity to her own calling. Undoubtedly this is the basis of the movement toward unity... There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. For it is from renewal of the inner life of our minds, from self-denial and an unstinted love that desires of unity take their rise and develop in a mature way. We should therefore pray to the Holy Spirit for the grace to be genuinely self-denying, humble, gentle

in the service of others, and to have an attitude of brotherly generosity towards them.... The words of St. John hold good about sins against unity: "If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us". So we humbly beg pardon of God and of our separated brethren, just as we forgive them that trespass against us.

Christians cannot underestimate the burden of long-standing misgivings inherited from the past, and of mutual misunderstandings and prejudices. Complacency, indifference and insufficient knowledge of one another often make this situation worse. Consequently, the commitment to ecumenism must be based upon the conversion of hearts and upon prayer, which will also lead to the necessary purification of past memories. With the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Lord's disciples, inspired by love, by the power of the truth and by a sincere desire for mutual forgiveness and reconciliation, are called to re-examine together their painful past and the hurt which that past regrettably continues to provoke even today.

In ecumenical dialogue, Catholic theologians standing fast by the teaching of the Church and investigating the divine mysteries with the separated brethren must proceed with love for the truth, with charity, and with humility. When comparing doctrines with one another, they should remember that in Catholic doctrine there exists a "hierarchy" of truths, since they vary in their relation to the fundamental Christian faith. Thus, the way will be opened by which through fraternal rivalry all will be stirred to a deeper understanding and a clearer presentation of the unfathomable riches of Christ.

The unity willed by God can be attained only by the adherence of all to the content of revealed faith in its entirety. In matters of faith, compromise is in contradiction with God who is Truth. In the Body of Christ, "the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6), who could consider legitimate a reconciliation brought about at the expense of the truth?...Even so, doctrine needs to be presented in a way that makes it understandable to those for whom God himself intends it.

When the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion have been gradually overcome, all Christians will at last, in a common celebration of the Eucharist, be gathered into the one and only Church in that unity which Christ bestowed on his Church from the beginning. We believe that this unity subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose, and we hope that it will continue to increase until the end of time.

While some Eastern Orthodox Churches commonly baptize converts from the Catholic Church, thereby refusing to recognize the baptism that the converts have previously received, the Catholic Church has

always accepted the validity of all the sacraments administered by the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches.

The Catholic Church likewise has never applied the terms "heterodox" or "heretic" to the Eastern Orthodox Church or its members. Even the term "schism", as defined in canon 751 of its Code of Canon Law ("the *withdrawal* of submission to the Supreme Pontiff or from communion with the members of the Church subject to him"), does not, strictly speaking, apply to the situation of the concrete individual members of the Eastern Orthodox Church today as viewed by the Catholic Church.

Eastern Orthodoxy and Anglicanism

Both the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Anglican Church work to embrace estranged communions as (possibly former) beneficiaries of a common gift, and simultaneously to guard against a promiscuous and false union with them. The Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches, whose divisions date back to the fifth century, have in recent years moved towards theological agreement, though short of full communion. Likewise, the Eastern Orthodox have been leaders in the Interfaith movement, with students active in the World Student Christian Federation since the late 19th century and some Orthodox patriarchs enlisting their communions as charter members of the World Council of Churches. Nevertheless, the Orthodox have not been willing to participate in any redefinition of the Christian faith toward a reduced, minimal, anti-dogmatic and anti-traditional Christianity. Christianity for the Eastern Orthodox is the Church; and the Church is Orthodoxy—nothing less and nothing else. Therefore, while Orthodox ecumenism is "open to dialogue with the devil himself", the goal is to reconcile all non-Orthodox back into Orthodoxy.

One way to observe the attitude of the Orthodox Church towards non-Orthodox is to see how they receive new members from other faiths. Non-Christians, such as Buddhists or atheists, who wish to become Orthodox Christians are accepted through the sacraments of baptism and chrismation. Protestants and Roman Catholics are sometimes received through chrismation only, provided they had received a trinitarian baptism. Also Protestants and Roman Catholics are often referred to as "heterodox", which simply means "other believing", rather than as heretics ("other-choosing"), implying that they did not willfully reject the Church.

Protestantism

The contemporary ecumenical movement for Protestants is often said to have started with the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference. However, this conference would not have been possible without the pioneering ecumenical work of the Christian youth movements: the Young Men's Christian Association (founded 1844), the Young Women's Christian Association (founded 1855) and the World Student Christian Federation (founded 1895). Led by Methodist layman John R. Mott (former YMCA staff and in 1910 the General Secretary of WSCF), the World Mission conference marked the largest Protestant gathering to that time, with the express purposes of working across denominational lines for the sake of world missions. After the First World War further developments were the "Faith and Order" movement led by Charles Henry Brent, and the "Life and Work" movement led by Nathan Soderblom.

Eventually, formal organisations were formed, including the World Council of Churches in 1948, the National Council of Churches in the USA in 1950, and Churches Uniting in Christ in 2002. These groups are moderate to liberal, theologically speaking, as Protestants are generally more liberal and less traditional than Anglicans, Orthodox, and Roman Catholics.

Protestants are now involved in a variety of ecumenical groups, working in some cases toward organic denominational unity and in other cases for cooperative purposes alone. Because of the wide spectrum of Protestant denominations and perspectives, full cooperation has been difficult at times. Edmund Schlink's *Ökumenische Dogmatik* 1983, 1997 proposes a way through these problems to mutual recognition and renewed church unity.

In 1999, the representatives of Lutheran World Federation and Roman Catholic Church signed The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, resolving the conflict over the nature of Justification which was at the root of the Protestant Reformation, although some conservative Lutherans did not agree to this resolution. On July 18, 2006 Delegates to the World Methodist Conference voted unanimously to adopt the Joint Declaration.

CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS

The original anathemas (excommunications) that mark the "official" Great Schism of 1054 between Catholics and Orthodox were mutually revoked in 1965 by the Pope and the Ecumenical Patriarch of

Constantinople. But just as the original schism developed over time rather than erupting overnight, reconciliation is proceeding slowly.

The year 2006 saw a resumption of the series of meetings for theological dialogue between representatives of the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches, suspended because of failure to reach agreement on the question of the Eastern Catholic Churches, a question exacerbated by disputes over churches and other property that the Communist authorities once assigned to the Orthodox Church but whose restoration these Churches have obtained from the present authorities.

Catholic and Orthodox bishops in North America are engaged in an ongoing dialogue. They are meeting together periodically as the "North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation". It has been meeting semi-annually since it was founded in 1965 under the auspices of the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA). The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops officially joined the Consultation as a sponsor in 1997. The Consultation works in tandem with the Joint Committee of Orthodox and Catholic Bishops which has been meeting annually since 1981. Since 1999 the Consultation has been discussing the Filioque clause, with the hope of eventually reaching an agreed joint statement.

Similar dialogues at both international and national level continue between, for instance, Roman Catholics and Anglicans.

Organisations such as the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, USA, Churches Uniting in Christ, and Christian Churches Together continue to encourage ecumenical cooperation among Protestants, Eastern Orthodox, and, at times, Roman Catholics. There are universities such as the University of Bonn in Germany that offer degree courses in "Ecumenical Studies" in which theologians of various denominations teach their respective traditions and, at the same time, seek for common ground between these traditions.

United and Uniting Churches

Influenced by the ecumenical movement, the "scandal of separation" and local developments, a number of United and Uniting churches have formed; there are also a range of mutual recognition strategies being practised where formal union is not feasible. An increasing trend has been the sharing of church buildings by two or more

denominations, either holding separate services or a single service with elements of all traditions.

Opposition to Ecumenism

A sizable minority of Christians oppose ecumenism. They tend to be from churches of fundamentalist or charismatic backgrounds and strongly conservative sections of mainline Protestant churches. Greek Old Calendarists claim that the teachings of the Seven Ecumenical Councils forbid changing the church calendar through abandonment of the Julian calendar. They regard ecumenism as compromising essential doctrinal stands in order to accommodate other Christians, and object to the emphasis on dialogue leading to intercommunion rather than conversion on the part of participants in ecumenical initiatives. The Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, Greece, organised a meeting in September 2004 entitled "The Inter-Orthodox Theological Conference 'Ecumenism: Origins – Expectations – Disenchantment'", whose negative conclusions on ecumenism can be read on the *Orthodox Christian Information Center* site. Traditional Catholics also see ecumenism as aiming at a false pan-Christian religious unity which does not require non-Catholics to convert to the Catholic faith. Traditional Catholics see this as a contradiction to Catholic interpretations of the Bible, Pope Pius XI's *Mortalium Animos*, Pope Pius XII's *Humani Generis* and other documents. Some evangelical and many charismatic Christians view ecumenism as a sign of end times apostasy before Jesus Christ's return as prophesied in the Bible, and see substantial similarities between the doctrinal stance of end-times false teachers, as described in 2 Peter 2:1-2, and the theological pronouncements of certain leaders of ecumenical movements.

Attitude of Some Evangelical Protestants

A majority of Evangelical churches, including most Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, non-denominational Christians, and Evangelical Christian denominations like the Christian and Missionary Alliance church, do not participate in the ecumenical movements. The doctrine of separation is adopted by some Evangelical churches towards churches and denominations that have joined ecumenical activities. Many Pentecostals, such as Assemblies of God, shun ecumenism, but some organisations, including some Pentecostal churches, do participate in ecumenism. Some of the more conservative Evangelicals and Pentecostals view interdenominational activities or organisations in more conservative circles such as the National Association of Evangelicals or Promise

Keepers as a softer form of ecumenism and shun them while others do not. Other American conservative Protestant Churches, such as the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Presbyterian Church in America, and Free Methodist Church, often view ecumenism in ways similar to their evangelical counterparts. Many Baptists in the United States have notoriously opposed ecumenism and even cooperation with other Baptists, as illustrated by the recent example of the Southern Baptist Convention's decision to withdraw from the Baptist World Alliance. The Baptist World Alliance, while seeking co-operation among Baptists, is not specifically a staunch ecumenical body, and yet conservative fundamentalist elements within the Southern Baptist Convention have forced that denomination to withdraw from even that small effort to ecumenical cooperation. In 2001 a group of Pentecostals broke from traditional opposition to ecumenical movements and formed the International Circle of Faith.

The minority Catholic opposition to ecumenism centers on Traditionalist Catholics and associations such as the Society of St. Pius X. In fact, opposition to ecumenism is closely associated with antagonism, in the case of Traditionalist Catholics, to abandonment of Latin in the celebration of Mass, and, in the case of Greek Old Calendarists (who speak of "the arch-heresy of ecumenism"), to abandonment of the Julian calendar.

ECUMENICAL ORGANISATIONS

- Campus Crusade for Christ Highly ecumenical Christian organisation focussed on evangelism and discipleship over 190 countries in the world
- National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.
- World Student Christian Federation
- Action of Churches Together in Scotland
- Christian Churches Together in the USA
- Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
- Churches Uniting in Christ
- Conference of European Churches
- Fellowship of Saint Alban and Saint Sergius
- International Circle of Faith
- Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
- Taizé Community

- World Council of Churches
- World Alliance of Reformed Churches
- Edinburgh Churches Together
- Iona Community
- Bose Monastic Community
- New Monasticism related Communities
- Church of The Ecumenical Redemption International
- Byzantine Discalced Carmelites
- Franciscan Hermitage of Campello, Italy

Non-denominational Organisations Opposing Ecumenism

- IFCA International (formerly Independent Fundamental Churches of America).

SCRIPTURAL REASONING

Scriptural Reasoning is an emerging practice among and between Christians, Jews, and Muslims, of reading their sacred Scriptures together, and reasoning together on particular contemporary issues. The practice grounds debate in the respective religious texts, encouraging participants to be both self-critical and deeply rooted in their commitments to their own particular faith.

Participants in the process meet together, and read and discuss passages from the Tanakh, the Bible, and the Qur'an on a given topic—say, the figure of Abraham, or consideration of legal and moral issues of property-holding. The conversations that grow out of this practice lead to the growth of friendships, even while they also preserve differences between the practitioners of the various faiths. Unlike some inter-religious dialogues, far from being an encounter in which the participants agree that they are all basically saying the same thing, Scriptural Reasoning sessions display passionate commitment in the context of careful listening to the other, and so occasionally even feature argument.

The key to Scriptural Reasoning is the element of relationship among the participants. This enables honesty and openness; it also inculcates in the practitioners a 'feel' for the other's Scriptures, while remaining committed to one's own. In order to encourage these relationships, the practice of Scriptural Reasoning is intentionally not undertaken in settings which are entirely owned by only one of the

three faiths — but rather the group moves peripatetically between churches, synagogues or mosques in rotation, or alteratively meets in a neutral environment. Rather, they think of the places they do meet as a Biblical 'tent of meeting', drawing on imagery from Genesis 28. As a result, the context for the meetings should be one of mutual hospitality and strict parity of leadership and control between the three faiths, as each participant is both host and guest.

In the light of the history of forced interfaith disputation in medieval Europe, Islamic religious authorities have expressed a concern that disparities in political power and control of a Scriptural Reasoning group between the Christian, Jewish and Muslim participants can adversely affect the sensitive process of shared interpretation of sacred texts. For this reason, senior Islamic authorities have issued a fatwa according to sharia law ruling that Muslims are not permitted to participate in any Scriptural Reasoning group unless such groups are led and administered on a basis of the strictest equality and parity between the three participating faiths.

The founding participants of the Societies for Scriptural Reasoning include David F. Ford, Daniel W. Hardy, and Peter Ochs.

In these conversations, and in this deep engagement with the sacred texts of these three faiths, it is hoped that new light might be shed on some of the most pressing issues of our time.

Historical precursors to the modern practice of Scriptural Reasoning may be found in the Late Medieval period in parts of Western Europe, notably in Muslim Spain and in medieval France and Italy.

SYNCRETISM

Syncretism consists of the attempt to reconcile disparate or contradictory beliefs, often while melding practices of various schools of thought. The term may refer to attempts to merge and analogize several originally *discrete* traditions, especially in the theology and mythology of religion, and thus assert an underlying unity allowing for an inclusive approach to other faiths.

Syncretism also occurs commonly in literature, music, the representational arts and other expressions of culture. (Compare the concept of eclecticism.) Syncretism may occur in architecture as well. There also exist syncretic politics, although in political classification the term has a somewhat different meaning.

ORIGIN OF THE WORD

The Oxford English Dictionary first attests the word *syncretism* in English in 1618. It derives from modern Latin *syncretismus*, drawing on Greek óõíêñçôéóìüò (*synkretismos*), meaning "a union of communities".

The Greek word occurs in Plutarch's (1st century AD) essay on "Fraternal Love" in his *Moralia* (2.490b). He cites the example of the Cretans, who reconciled their differences and came together in alliance when faced with external dangers. "And that is their so-called *Syncretism*".

Erasmus probably coined the modern usage of the Latin word (in his *Adagia* ("Adages"), published in the winter of 1517–1518) to designate the coherence of dissenters in spite of their differences in theological opinions. In a letter to Melanchthon of April 22, 1519, Erasmus specifically adduced the Cretans of Plutarch as an example of his adage "Concord is a mighty rampart".

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ROLES

Overt syncretism in folk belief may show cultural acceptance of an alien or previous tradition, but the "other" cult may survive or infiltrate without authorised *syncresis* nevertheless. For example, some Conversos developed a sort of cult for martyr-victims of the Spanish Inquisition, thus incorporating elements of Catholicism while resisting it.

Some religious movements have embraced overt syncretism, such as the case of the adoption of Shintô elements into Buddhism. Others have strongly rejected it as devaluing precious and genuine distinctions; examples of this include post-Exile Judaism and Islam.

Syncretism tends to facilitate coexistence and constructive interaction between different cultures (intercultural competence), a factor that has recommended it to rulers of multi-ethnic realms. Conversely the rejection of syncretism, usually in the name of "piety" and "orthodoxy", may help to generate, bolster or authorize a sense of cultural unity in a well-defined minority or majority.

RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM

Religious syncretism exhibits blending of two or more religious belief systems into a new system, or the incorporation into a religious tradition of beliefs from unrelated traditions. This can occur for many

reasons, and the latter scenario happens quite commonly in areas where multiple religious traditions exist in proximity and function actively in the culture.

Religions may have syncretic elements to their beliefs or history, but adherents of so-labeled systems often frown on applying the label, especially adherents who belong to "revealed" religious systems, such as the Abrahamic religions, or any system that exhibits an exclusivist approach. Such adherents sometimes see syncretism as a betrayal of their pure truth. By this reasoning, adding an incompatible belief corrupts the original religion, rendering it no longer true. Indeed, critics of a specific syncretistic trend may sometimes use the word "syncretism" as a disparaging epithet, as a charge implying that those who seek to incorporate a new view, belief, or practice into a religious system actually distort the original faith. Non-exclusivist systems of belief, on the other hand, may feel quite free to incorporate other traditions into their own.

In modern secular society, religious innovators sometimes create new religions syncretically as a mechanism to reduce inter-religious tension and enmity, often with the effect of offending the original religions in question. Such religions, however, do maintain some appeal to a less exclusivist audience. Discussions of some of these blended religions appear in the individual sections below.

Syncretism in Ancient Greece

Syncretism functioned as an essential feature of Ancient Greek religion. Overall, Hellenistic culture in the age that followed Alexander the Great itself showed syncretist features, essentially blending of Persian, Anatolian, Egyptian (and eventually Etruscan-Roman) elements within an Hellenic formula. The Egyptian god Amun developed as the Hellenized *Zeus Ammon* after Alexander the Great went into the desert to seek out Amun's oracle at Siwa.

Such identifications derive from *interpretatio graeca*, the Hellenic habit of identifying gods of disparate mythologies with their own. When the proto-Greeks (peoples whose language would evolve into Greek proper) first arrived in the Aegean and on the mainland of modern-day Greece early in the second millennium BCE, they found localised nymphs and divinities already connected with every important feature of the landscape: mountain, cave, grove and spring all had their own locally-venerated deity. The countless epithets of the Olympian gods reflect their syncretic identification with these various figures.

One defines "*Zeus Molossos*" (worshipped only at Dodona) as "the god identical to Zeus as worshipped by the Molossians at Dodona". Much of the apparently arbitrary and trivial mythic fabling results from later mythographers' attempts to explain these obscure epithets.

Syncretism and Judaism

Judaism fought lengthy battles against syncretist tendencies: note the case of the golden calf and the railing of prophets against temple prostitution, witchcraft and local fertility cults, as told in the Torah. On the other hand, some scholars hold that Judaism refined its concept of monotheism and adopted features such as its eschatology, angelology and demonology through contacts with Zoroastrianism.

In spite of the Jewish halakhic prohibitions on polytheism, idolatry, and associated practices (*avodah zarah*), several combinations of Judaism with other religions have sprung up: Jewish Buddhism, Nazarenism, Judeo-Paganism, Messianic Judaism, Jewish Mormonism, Crypto-Judaism (in which Jews publicly profess another faith and privately celebrate Judaism), and others. Until relatively recently, China had a Jewish community which had adopted some Confucian practices. Several of the Jewish Messiah claimants (such as Jacob Frank) and the Sabbateans came to mix Cabalistic Judaism with Christianity and Islam.

Syncretism in the Roman World

The Romans, identifying themselves as common heirs to a very similar civilisation, identified Greek deities with similar figures in the Etruscan-Roman tradition, though without usually copying cult practices. (For details, see Similarities between Roman, Greek, and Etruscan mythologies.) Syncretic gods of the Hellenistic period found also wide favor in Rome: Serapis, Isis and Mithras, for example. Cybele as worshipped in Rome essentially represented a syncretic East Mediterranean goddess. The Romans imported the Greek god Dionysus into Rome as Bacchus, and converted the Anatolian Sabazios into the Roman Sabazius.

The degree of correspondence varied: Jupiter makes perhaps a better match for Zeus than the rural huntress Diana does for the feared Artemis. Ares does not quite match Mars. The Romans physically imported the Anatolian goddess Cybele into Rome from her Anatolian cult-center Pessinos in the form of her original aniconic archaic stone idol; they identified her as *Magna Mater* and gave her a matronly, iconic image developed in Hellenistic Pergamum.

Likewise, when the Romans encountered Celts and Teutons, they mingled these peoples' Northern gods with their own, creating *Apollo Sucellos* (Apollo the Good Smiter) and *Mars Thingsus* (Mars of the war-assembly), among many others. In the *Germania*, the Roman historian Tacitus speaks of Teutonic worshippers of Hercules and Mercury; most modern scholars tentatively identify Hercules as Thor and Mercury as Odin.

Syncretism in Christianity

Nascent Christianity appears to have incorporated many Jewish and pagan cultural elements, through a process of "Christianisation" or "baptizing" them to conform with Christian belief and principles, at least partially, whilst discarding theologically or morally incompatible elements. Note for example the strong connection between the thought of St. Augustine and Neoplatonic thought; and St. Thomas Aquinas' many citations of "The Philosopher" (Aristotle). Many scholars agree with this syncretism in principle, though they may tend to label any specific example as "controversial". Medieval scholasticism engaged in prolonged and bitter debate over the place of pre-Christian classicism within the official Church teachings. Open Theists (a subset of Protestant Evangelicals) assert that Christianity by the 3rd and 4th centuries had incorporated Greek Philosophy into its understanding of God.

Syncretism did not play a role when Christianity split into eastern and western rites during the Great Schism. It became involved however with the rifts of the Protestant Reformation, with Desiderius Erasmus's readings of Plutarch. In 1615 David Pareus of Heidelberg urged Christians to a "pious syncretism" in opposing the Anti-Christ, but few 17th-century Protestants discussed the compromises that might affect a reconciliation with the Catholic Church: Johann Hülsemann, Johann Georg Dorsche and Abraham Calovius (1612-1685) opposed the Lutheran Georg Calisen "Calixtus" (1586-1656) of the University of Helmstedt for his "syncretism".

The modern celebrations of Christmas (as celebrated in the northern European tradition, originating from pagan Yule holidays), Easter (as celebrated in the eastern European tradition, with the incorporation of spring fertility rites) and Halloween exemplify details of Christian/pagan syncretism. Earlier, the elevation of Christmas as an important holiday largely grew out of a need to replace the Saturnalia, a popular December festival of the Roman Empire.

Roman Catholicism in Central and South America has integrated a number of elements derived from indigenous and slave cultures in those areas (see the Caribbean and modern sections); while many African Initiated Churches demonstrate an integration of Christian and traditional African beliefs. In Asia the revolutionary movements of Taiping (19th-century China) and God's Army (Karen in the 1990s) have blended Christianity and traditional beliefs. Traditional Catholics nonetheless often argue against "Cafeteria Catholicism", or the act of "picking and choosing" what one wants to believe or practice.

One can contrast Christian syncretism with contextualisation or inculturation, the practice of making Christianity relevant to a culture.

The Syncretistic Strife of the 17th century

The phrase "Syncretistic Strife" may refer to the theological quarrel provoked by the efforts of Georg Calixt and his supporters to secure a basis on which the Lutherans could make overtures to the Roman Catholic and the Reformed Churches. It lasted from 1640 to 1686. Calixt, a professor at Helmstedt, had through his travels in England, the Netherlands, Italy, and France, through his acquaintance with the different Churches and their representatives, and through his extensive study, developed a more friendly attitude towards the different religious bodies than the majority of his contemporary Lutheran theologians. While the latter firmly adhered to the "pure doctrine", Calixt tended not to regard doctrine as the one thing necessary for a Christian, while in doctrine itself he did not regard everything as equally certain and important. Consequently, he advocated unity between those who agreed on the fundamental minimum, with liberty as to all less fundamental points. In regard to Catholicism, he would have (as Melanchthon once would have) conceded to the Pope a primacy human in origin, and he also admitted that one might call the Mass a sacrifice.

On the side of Calixt stood the theological faculties of Helmstedt, Rinteln, and Königsberg; opposed to him stood those of Leipzig, Jena, Strasburg, Giessen, Marburg, and Greifswald. Abraham Calov in especial opposed Calixt. The Elector of Saxony, for political reasons, opposed the Reformed Church, because the other two secular electors (Palatine and Brandenburg) were "reformed", and were getting more and more the advantage of him. In 1649 he sent to the three dukes of Brunswick, who maintained Helmstedt as their common university, a communication in which he voiced all the objections of his Lutheran professors, and complained that Calixt wished to extract the elements

of truth from all religions, fuse all into an entirely new religion, and so provoke a violent schism. In 1650 Calov became a professor at Wittenberg, and he signalised his entrance into office with a vehement attack on the Syncretists in Helmstedt. An outburst of polemical writings followed. In 1650 the dukes of Brunswick answered the Elector of Saxony that the discord should not be allowed to increase, and proposed a meeting of the political councillors. Saxony, however, did not favour this suggestion. An attempt to convene a meeting of theologians was not more successful. The theologians of Wittenberg and Leipzig now elaborated a new formula, condemning ninety-eight heresies of the Helmstedt theologians. This formula (consensus) was to be signed by everyone who wished to remain in the Lutheran Church. Outside Wittenberg and Leipzig, however, it was not accepted, and Calixt's death in 1656 ushered in five years of almost undisturbed peace.

The strife broke out afresh in Hesse-Cassel, where Landgrave William VI sought to effect a union between his Lutheran and Reformed subjects, or at least to lessen their mutual hatred. In 1661 he had a colloquy held in Cassel between the Lutheran theologians of the University of Rinteln and the Reformed theologians of the University of Marburg. Enraged at this revival of the syncretism of Calixt, the Wittenberg theologians in vehement terms called on the Rinteln professors to make their submission, whereupon the latter answered with a detailed defence. Another long series of polemical treatises followed. In Brandenburg-Prussia the Great Elector (Frederick William I) forbade (1663) preachers to speak of the disputes between the Evangelical bodies. A long colloquy in Berlin (September 1662 to May 1663) led only to fresh discord. In 1664 the elector repeated his command that preachers of both parties should abstain from mutual abuse, and should attribute to the other party no doctrine which was not actually held by such party.

Whoever refused to sign the form declaring his intention to observe this regulation, was deprived of his position (e. g. Paul Gerhardt, writer of religious songs). This arrangement was later modified, in that the forms were withdrawn, and action took place only against those who disturbed the peace. The attempts of the Wittenberg theologians to declare Calixt and his school un-Lutheran and heretical were now met by Calixt's son, Friedrich Ulrich Calixt, The latter defended the theology of his father, but also tried to show that his doctrine did not so very much differ from that of his opponents. Wittenberg found its new champion in Ægidius Strauch, who attacked

Calixt with all the resources of learning, polemics, sophistry, wit, cynicism, and abuse. The Helmstedt side was defended by the celebrated scholar and statesman, Hermann Conring. The Saxon princes now recognised the danger that the attempt to carry through the "Consensus" as a formula of belief might lead to a fresh schism in the Lutheran Church, and might thus render its position difficult in the face of the Catholics. The proposals of Calov and his party to continue the refutation and to compel the Brunswick theologians to bind themselves under obligation to the old Lutheran confession therefore remained unimplemented. On the contrary, the Saxon theologians were forbidden to continue the strife in writing. Negotiations for peace then resulted, with Duke Ernst the Pious of Saxe-Gotha especially active towards this end, and the project of establishing a permanent college of theologians to decide theological disputes was entertained. However, the negotiations with the courts of Brunswick, Mecklenburg, Denmark, and Sweden remained as fruitless as those with the theological faculties, except that peace was maintained until 1675. Calov then renewed hostilities. He now attacked not only Calixt, but also and particularly the moderate John Musæus of Jena. Calov succeeded in having the whole University of Jena (and after a long resistance Musæus himself) compelled to renounce syncretism.

But this was his last victory. The elector renewed his prohibition against polemical writings. Calov seemed to give way, since in 1683 he asked whether, in the view of the danger which France then constituted for Germany, a Calixtinic Syncretism with "Papists" and the Reformed were still condemnable, and whether in deference to the Elector of Brandenburg and the dukes of Brunswick, the strife should not be buried by an amnesty, or whether, on the contrary, the war against syncretism should be continued. He later returned to his attack on the syncretists, but died in 1686, and with his death the strife ended.

The Syncretist Strife had the result of lessening religious hatred and of promoting mutual forbearance. Catholicism thus benefited, as Protestants came to better understand and appreciate it. In Protestant theology it prepared the way for the sentimental theology of Pietism as the successor of fossilized orthodoxy.

Syncretism in Islam

Although Islam seems to have incorporated many beliefs from other religions (*e.g.* Judaism and Christianity), Muslims do not regard

this as syncretism, instead seeing Islam as completing the divine revelations through the Prophet Muhammad that God (Allah) began with other prophets, and all those from the progeny of Abraham. It is a fundamental tenet of Islamic faith to believe in the consistency of message in the revelations from one God through many messengers to their people (Qur'an 2:285). Over time, however, these revelations eventually became corrupted because of the lack of written manuscripts, serial translations from one language to another, or simply forgotten. Instead of being a syncretic religion, Islam claims to be the revitalisation of the original pure teaching of monotheism (Qur'an 3:3-3:4) with the promise by God that its foundation (the Qur'an) will forever be preserved (Qur'an 15:9 and 85:21-85:22).

Syncretism in the Druze Religion

The Druzes integrated elements of Ismaili Islam with Gnosticism and Platonism. Their practice of disguising themselves as followers of the dominant religion around them makes it difficult to distinguish belief from simulated belief.

Syncretism in the Bahá'í Faith

The Bahá'ís follow Bahá'u'lláh, a prophet whom they consider a successor to Muhammad, Jesus, Moses, Buddha, Zoroaster and others. This acceptance of other religious founders has encouraged some to regard the Bahá'í religion as a syncretic faith. However, Bahá'ís and the Bahá'í writings explicitly reject this view. Bahá'ís consider Bahá'u'lláh's revelation an independent, though related, revelation from God. Its relationship to previous dispensations is seen as analogous to the relationship of Christianity to Judaism. They regard beliefs held in common as evidence of truth, progressively revealed by God throughout human history, and culminating in (at present) the Bahá'í revelation. Bahá'ís have their own sacred scripture, interpretations, laws and practices that, for Bahá'ís, supersede those of other faiths.

Syncretism in Caribbean Religions and Cultures

The process of syncretism in the Caribbean region often forms a part of cultural creolisation. (The technical term "Creole" may apply to anyone (regardless of race or ethnicity) born and raised in the region.) The shared histories of the Caribbean islands include long periods of European Imperialism (mainly by Spain, France, and the United Kingdom) and the importation of African slaves (primarily from Central and Western Africa). The influences of each of the above

interacted in varying degrees on the islands, producing the fabric of society that exists today in the Caribbean.

The Rastafari movement, founded in Jamaica, syncretizes vigorously, mixing elements from the Bible, Marcus Garvey's Pan Africanism movement, and Caribbean culture.

Another highly syncretic religion of the area, voodoo, combines elements of Western African, native Caribbean, and Christian (especially Roman Catholic) beliefs.

Syncretism in Indian Traditions

Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism in ancient India have made many adaptations over the millennia, assimilating elements of various diverse religious traditions.

The Mughal emperor Akbar, who wanted to consolidate the diverse religious communities in his empire, propounded Din-i-Ilahi, a syncretic religion intended to merge the best elements of the religions of his empire. Sikhism blends elements of Islam and Hinduism.

Other Modern Syncretic Religions

Recently-developed religious systems that exhibit marked syncretism include the New World religions Candomblé, Vodou, and Santería, which analogize various Yorùbá and other African gods to the Roman Catholic saints. Some sects of Candomblé have incorporated also Native American gods, and Umbanda combined African deities with Kardecist spiritualism.

The School of Economic Science, a modern syncretic religious phenomenon, incorporates the ideas of Ouspensky, Gurdjieff, Advaita Vedanta, Sankara and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

Unitarian Universalism also provides an example of a modern syncretic religion; it traces its roots to Universalist and Unitarian Christian congregations while at the same time freely incorporating elements from other religious and non-religious traditions.

Universal Sufism seeks the unity of all people and religions, as well as the ability to find beauty in all things. Universal Sufis strive to "realize and spread the knowledge of Unity, the religion of Love, and Wisdom, so that the biases and prejudices of faiths and beliefs may, of themselves, fall away, the human heart overflow with love, and all hatred caused by distinctions and differences be rooted out."

In Vietnam, Caodaism blends elements of Buddhism, Catholicism and Kardecism. Japanese syncretists founded several new Japanese religions (such as Konkokyo and Seicho-No-Ie) from the latter half of the 19th century onwards.

The Nigerian religion Chrislam combines Christian and Islamic doctrines.

Thelema is a mixture of many different schools of belief and practice, including Hermeticism, Eastern Mysticism, Yoga, 19th century libertarian philosophies (*e.g.* Nietzsche), occultism, and the Kaballah, as well as ancient Egyptian and Greek religion. Examples of strongly syncretist Romantic and modern movements with some religious elements include mysticism, occultism, theosophy, modern astrology, Neopaganism, and the New Age movement. Another modern syncretic religion, the Sathya Sai Baba movement founded by the Indian guru Sathya Sai Baba, stresses the unity of all religions.

Discordianism, founded by Gregg Hill in 1959, can be viewed as a combination of Rinzai Buddhism, Taoism, Chaos theory, and Neopaganism.

SYNCRETISM IN LINGUISTICS

In linguistic syncretism, one word-form serves two or more morphosyntactic functions. Some inflected words or word forms in some natural languages indicate (morphologically) a distinction in syntax, while some other words in the same language do not. For example in Russian, some nouns have different word forms (inflections) in nominative and accusative (*kniga* and *knigu* respectively) while some other nouns (*pismo*, *pismo*) inflect without a distinction. The former indicate a distinction in the Russian syntax while the latter hide that distinction.

SYNCRETISM IN CULTURES AND SOCIETIES

Syncretism in the Enlightenment

The modern, rational non-pejorative connotations of syncretism date from Denis Diderot's *Encyclopédie* articles: *Eclecticisme* and *Syncrétistes, Hénotiques, ou Conciliateurs.* Diderot portrayed syncretism as the concordance of eclectic sources.

Modern Syncretic Social and Cultural Movements

Other forms of syncretism not directly related to religion appear in the modern world as well: thus one can sometimes speak of cultural

and/or social syncretism. Japanese culture after World War II and the moderate tendencies within Neo-Tribalism may serve as examples. The eclectic aspects of post-modernism represent an important contemporary example of cultural syncretism observable in much of the Western world. The socio-spiritual movement Ananda Marga, which originated in India in 1955, stems from a syncretic approach to the different strands of yoga, as propounded by its founder P.R. Sarkar. It has as its stated purpose "to help individuals achieve complete self-realisation and to build a social structure in which the physical, mental and spiritual needs of all people can be fulfilled."

Syncretism in Fiction

- Orange Catholic Bible
- Zensunni
- Zensufi

Syncretism in New Media Art

- Roy Ascott
- The Syncretic Imperative
- Syncretic Reality: art, process, and potentiality

UNIVERSALISM

Universalism is a religion and theology that generally holds all persons and creatures are related to God or the divine and will be reconciled to God. A church that calls itself Universalist may emphasize the universal principles of most religions and accept other religions in an inclusive manner, believing in a Universal reconciliation between humanity and the divine. Other religions may have Universalist theology as one of their tenets and principles, including Ananda Marga, Christianity, Hinduism, and some of the New Age religions. Universalist beliefs exist within many faiths, and many Universalists practice in a variety of traditions, drawing upon the same universal principles but customising the practice to suit their audience.

ANANDA MARGA

In Ananda Marga, Universalism refers to the idea that energy and matter are evolved from cosmic consciousness. Thus, all created beings are of one universal family. This is an expansion of humanism to include everything as family, based on the fundamental truth that the universe is a thought projection from the Supreme.

CHRISTIANITY

In Christianity, Universalism refers to the belief that all humans will be saved through Jesus Christ and eventually come to a harmony in God's kingdom. A related doctrine, apokatastasis, is the belief that all mortal beings will be reconciled to God, including Satan and his fallen angels. Universalism was a fairly commonly held view among theologians in early Christianity: In the first five or six centuries of Christianity there were six known theological schools, of which four (Alexandria, Antioch, Cesarea, and Edessa or Nisibis) were Universalist, one (Ephesus) accepted conditional immortality, and one (Carthage or Rome) taught the endless punishment of the lost. The two major theologians opposing it were Tertullian and Augustine. In later centuries, Universalism has become very much a minority position in the major branches of Christianity, though it has a long history of prominent adherents.

GANDHI'S VIEW

Hindu Universalism denotes the ideology that all religions are true and therefore worthy of toleration and respect. It was articulated by Gandhi:

> "After long study and experience, I have come to the conclusion that all religions are true; all religions have some error in them; all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism, in as much as all human beings should be as dear to one as one's own close relatives. My own veneration for other faiths is the same as that for my own faith; therefore no thought of conversion is possible." (M. K. Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers: Life and Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi as told in his own words*, Paris, UNESCO 1958, p 60.)

JUDAISM

Judaism teaches that God chose the Jewish people to be in a unique covenant with God, and one of their beliefs is that Jewish people were charged by the Torah with a specific mission—to be a light unto the nations, and to exemplify the covenant with God as described in the Torah to other nations. Not explicitly a Universal theology, this view, however, did *not* preclude others nations from a belief that God also has a relationship with other peoples—rather, Judaism held that God had entered into a covenant with all mankind as Noachides, and that Jews and non-Jews alike have a relationship with God.

ISLAM

Muslims believe that God sent the Holy Qur'an to bring peace and harmony to humanity through Islam (submission to God). Muhammad's worldwide mission was to establish universal peace under the Khilafat. The Khilafat was intended to ensure security of the lives and property of non-Muslims under the dhimmi system, as well as according them certain rights of worship.

Although that system was initially for what Islam defines as the "people of the book" (*i.e.* Jews and Christians), some Muslims extend this to include Mandeans, Zoroastrians, and Hindus. Other Muslims disagree, and hold that adherents of these faiths cannot be dhimmi.

The Muslim ideal of universal brotherhood is the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) prescribed by Islam. Each year close to three million people from every corner of the globe assemble in Mecca to perform Hajj and worship God. No individual can be identified as a king or pauper because every man is dressed in ihram clothing.

NEW CHURCH

In the New Church, Universalism is the belief that God created every person to go to heaven and be conjoined with him there as an angel. He does not make anyone go there, but people freely choose their eternal destiny.

People of all faiths come into heaven if they have followed their beliefs sincerely and loved God and their neighbors.

Those who go to Hell have chosen Hell because they enjoy hellish delights, which in Hell are only allowed to be enjoyed as fantasy. Therefore God does not punish people by sending them to Hell, but rather allows Hell as a permission of man's free will.

ONLINE CHURCHES

The Church of the One Miracle, Universalist is an example of an entirely online Universalist church. The practice is to print out the Moral Tenets, put them on your refrigerator, read them every day and follow them. Universalist, it accepts anyone and everyone as a member, and has a separate page for both Theists and Atheists.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

Unitarian Universalism (UUism) is a theologically liberal religious movement characterised by its support of a "free and responsible

search for truth and meaning." This principle permits Unitarian Universalists a wide range of beliefs and practices. Unitarian Universalist congregations and fellowships tend to retain some Christian traditions such as Sunday worship that includes a sermon and singing of hymns, but do not necessarily identify themselves as Christians.

Both Unitarianism and Universalism trace their roots to Christian Protestantism. Many UUs appreciate and value aspects of Islamic, Christian and Jewish spirituality, but the extent to which the elements of any particular faith tradition are incorporated into one's personal spiritual practices is a matter of personal choice in keeping with UU's creedless, non-dogmatic approach to spirituality and faith development. Even before the Unitarian and Universalist movements combined their efforts at the continental level, the theological significance of Unitarianism and Universalism expanded beyond the traditional understanding of these terms.

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), founded in 1961 as a consolidation of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church in America, is headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, and serves churches mostly in the United States. The Canadian Unitarian Council became an independent body in 2002. The UUA represents more than 1,000 member congregations that collectively include more than 2,17,000 members. Unitarian Universalists follow a congregational model of church governance, in which power resides at the local level; individual congregations call ministers and make other decisions involving worship, theology and day-to-day church management. The denominational headquarters in Boston in turn provides services for congregations that can more effectively be handled through joint efforts.

A separate organisation from the UUA is the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU), founded in 1995, which coordinates national Unitarian and Universalist associations of churches throughout the world.

PROFILE

Unitarian Universalism is a faith with no creedal requirements imposed on its members. It values religious pluralism and respects diverse traditions within the movement and often within the same congregation. Many see it as a syncretic religion, as personal beliefs and religious services draw from more than one faith tradition. Even when one faith tradition is primary within a particular setting, Unitarian

Universalists are unlikely to assert that theirs is the "only" or even the "best" way possible to discern meaning or theological truths. There is even a popular adult UU course called "Building Your Own Theology".

Many Unitarian Universalists consider themselves humanists, while others hold to Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, natural theist, atheist, agnostic, pantheist, pagan, or other beliefs. Some choose to attach no particular theological label to their own idiosyncratic combination of beliefs. This diversity of views is usually considered a strength by those in the Unitarian Universalist movement, since the emphasis is on the common search for meaning among its members rather than adherence to any particular doctrine. Many UU congregations have study groups that examine the traditions and spiritual practices of Neopaganism, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Pantheism, and other faiths. At least one UU minister, the Reverend James Ishmael Ford, has been acknowledged as a Zen master. There are Buddhist meditation teachers, Sufi teachers, as well as gnostic and episcopi vagantes clerics. Some view their Jewish heritage as primary, and others see the concept of God as unhelpful in their personal spiritual journeys. While Sunday services in most congregations tend to espouse Humanism, it is not unusual for a part of a church's membership to attend pagan, Buddhist, or other spiritual study or worship groups as an alternative means of worship. Many Unitarian Universalists are also atheist or agnostic.

In a survey, Unitarian Universalists in the United States were asked which provided term or set of terms best describe their belief. Many respondents chose more than one term to describe their beliefs. The top choices were:

- Humanist - 54 per cent
- Agnostic - 33 per cent
- Earth-centered - 31 per cent
- Atheist - 18 per cent
- Buddhist - 16.5 per cent
- Christian - 13.1 per cent
- Pagan - 13.1 per cent

There is great variety among Unitarian Universalist congregations, with some favoring particular religious beliefs or forms of worship over others, with many more home to an eclectic mix of beliefs. Regardless of their orientation, most congregations are fairly open to

differing beliefs, though not always with various faith traditions represented to the same degree.

There is also a wide variety in how congregations conceive of themselves. Congregations call themselves "churches," "societies," "fellowships," "congregations," or eschew the use of any particular descriptor (*e.g.* "Sierra Foothills Unitarian Universalists"). Many use the name "Unitarian Universalist," (and a few "Universalist Unitarian"), having gradually adopted this formulation since consolidation in 1961. Others use names that reflect their historic roots by keeping simply the designation "Unitarian" or "Universalist." A few congregations use neither (*e.g.* "Community Church of White Plains"). For some congregations, the name can be a clue to their theological orientation. For others, avoidance of the word "church" indicates a desire to distance itself from traditional Christian theology. Sometimes the use of another term may simply indicate a congregation's lay-led or relatively new status. However, some UU congregations have grown to appreciate alternate terms such as *fellowship* and retained them even though they have grown much larger or lost features sometimes associated with their use (such as, in the case of fellowships, a traditionally lay-led worship model).

A current trend within Unitarian Universalism is to re-embrace forms of theism, both in worship and as a focus of intellectual inquiry. This has led to a shift away from secular humanism, agnosticism and atheism, and towards natural theism, liberal Christianity and other forms of engaged spirituality. The trend is particularly visible in the overall demographics, with nontheists better represented in the over-50 age group. Nontheism is also over-represented in the under-18 group, but does not generally translate into greater numbers of nontheists among adults as these youth are more likely than their peers to leave UU congregations upon reaching adulthood. This is related to the gap between the under-18 and the over-30 groups, reflecting a lack of childless adults among those of child-bearing age. Also of note is that there are many more people who identify as UU on surveys than those who attend UU churches (by a factor of four in a recent survey), reflecting lapsed members who nonetheless consider themselves part of the UU movement.

BELIEFS

General Beliefs of UUs

Unitarian Universalists (UUs) believe in complete but responsible freedom of speech, thought, belief, faith, and disposition. They believe

that each person is free to search for his or her own personal truth on issues like the existence, nature, and meaning of life, deities, creation, and afterlife. UUs can come from any heritage, have any sexual orientation, and hold beliefs from a variety of cultures or religions.

Concepts about deity are diverse among UUs. Some believe that there is no god (atheism); others believe in many gods (polytheism). Some believe that God is a metaphor for a transcendent reality. Some believe in a female god (goddess), a passive god (Deism), a Christian god, or a god manifested in nature or one which is the "ground of being". Some UUs reject the idea of deities and instead speak of "universal spirit" or "reverence of life". Unitarian Universalists support each person's search for truth and meaning in concepts of deity.

Principles and Purposes

Although lacking an official creed or dogma, Unitarian Universalist congregations typically respect the Principles and Purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association. As with most actions in Unitarian Universalism, these were created in committee, and affirmed democratically by a vote of member congregations, proportional to their membership, taken at an annual General Assembly (a meeting of delegates from member congregations). The full Principles, Purposes and Sources can be found in the article on the Unitarian Universalist Association. The Principles are as follows:

"We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part."

Unitarian Universalism is often referred to by its members as a *living tradition*, and the principles and purposes have been modified over time to reflect changes in spiritual beliefs among the membership.

Most recently, the last principle, adopted in 1985 and generally known as the *Seventh Principle*, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part", and a sixth source (adopted in 1995), "Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature" were added to explicitly include members with Neopagan, Native American, and other natural theist spiritualities. Unitarian Universalists tend to be open-minded and promote unique beliefs of a person that are based on their individual thoughts, and can range from a strict monotheistic belief to more of a philosophical view of things.

Approach to Sacred Writings

A Unitarian Universalist approach to the Christian Bible and other sacred works is given in *Our Unitarian Universalist Faith: Frequently Asked Questions*, published by the UUA:

> We do not, however, hold the Bible—or any other account of human experience—to be either an infallible guide or the exclusive source of truth. Much biblical material is mythical or legendary. Not that it should be discarded for that reason! Rather, it should be treasured for what it is. We believe that we should read the Bible as we read other books—with imagination and a critical eye. We also respect the sacred literature of other religions. Contemporary works of science, art, and social commentary are valued as well. We hold, in the words of an old liberal formulation, that "revelation is not sealed." Unitarian Universalists aspire to truth as wide as the world —we look to find truth anywhere, universally.

In short, Unitarian Universalists respect the important religious texts of other religions, but do not necessarily accept them as truth. UUs view these sacred texts as historically significant literary works that should be viewed with an open-mind, a critical eye, and an appetite for good literature. Unitarian Universalists view the individuals depicted in such works in much the same way. For example, many UUs believe that Jesus of Nazareth probably existed, and they respect him for many of the values he stood for and for his fearless campaign for what he believed in. Most Unitarian Universalists, however, do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God or the Messiah.

Elevator Speeches

Recently, *UU World* magazine asked for contributions of "elevator speeches" explaining UUism. These are short speeches that could be

made in the course of an elevator ride to those who knew nothing of the religion. Here are examples of the speeches submitted:

> In Unitarian Universalist congregations, we gather in community to support our individual spiritual journeys. We trust that openness to one another's experiences will enhance our understanding of our own links with the divine, with our history, and with one another.—Rev. Jonalu Johnstone, Oklahoma City.

> Most Unitarian Universalists believe that nobody has a monopoly on all truth, or ultimate proof of the truth of everything in any one belief. Therefore, one's own truth is unprovable, as is that of others. Consequently, we should respect the beliefs of others, as well as their right to hold those beliefs. Conversely, we expect that others should respect our right to our own beliefs. Several UU's then, would likely hold as many different beliefs. Other beliefs they may hold in common are a respect for others, for nature, and for common decency, leading to a particular caring for the poor, the weak and the downtrodden. As a result, issues of justice, including social justice are held in common among most.—Gene Douglas, Harrah.

HISTORY

Traditionally, Unitarianism was a form of Christianity. The term may refer to any belief about the nature of Jesus Christ that affirms God as a singular entity and rejects the doctrine of the Trinity. Unitarianism was rebuffed by orthodox Christianity at the First Council of Nicaea in 325, but it resurfaced subsequently in Church history. Unitarian churches were formally established in Transylvania and Poland (by the Socinians) in the 16th Century. Michael Servetus, a Spanish proto-Unitarian, was burned at the stake in Geneva, in 1553.

Universalism started as a separate Christian heresy, with its own long history. It also can be traced deep into Christian past, beginning with the earliest Church scholars. Both Origen and St. Gregory of Nyssa preached its essentials. Universalism denies the doctrine of eternal damnation; instead, it proclaims a loving god who will redeem all souls. In 1793, Universalism emerged as a particular denomination in the United States, eventually called the Universalist Church of America.

In the United States, the Unitarian movement began primarily in the Congregational parish churches of New England. These churches, which may still be seen today in nearly every New England town square, trace their roots to the division of the Puritan colonies into parishes for the administration of their religious needs. Beginning in

the late 18th century, a Unitarian movement began within some of these churches. As conflict grew between Unitarian and Trinitarian factions, Unitarians gained a key faculty position at Harvard in 1805. The dispute culminated in the foundation of the American Unitarian Association as a separate denomination in 1825.

After the schism, some of those churches remained within the Congregational fold, while others voted to become Unitarian. In the aftermath of their various historical circumstances, some of these churches became member congregations of the Congregational organisation (later the United Church of Christ), others became Unitarian and eventually became part of the UUA. Universalist churches in contrast followed a different path, having begun as independent congregations beyond the bounds of the established Puritan churches entirely. Today, the UUA and the United Church of Christ cooperate jointly on quite a number of projects and social justice initiatives. In the 19th century, under the influence of Ralph Waldo Emerson (who had been a Unitarian minister) and other Transcendentalists, Unitarianism began its long journey from liberal Protestantism to its present more pluralist form.

Unitarians and Universalists often have had a great deal of common interests and communication between them; they have often been associated in the public's mind. That said, one observation made years ago about Unitarianism and Universalism to distinguish them, long before their consolidation, was that "Universalists believe that God is too good to condemn man, while Unitarians believe that man is too good to be condemned by God." Both Unitarianism and Universalism evolved over time into inclusive, tolerant religions. In 1961, the American Unitarian Association (AUA) was consolidated with the Universalist Church of America (UCA), thus forming the Unitarian Universalist Association. In the same year, the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) formed and became an arm of the UUA to service the needs and interest of Unitarian Universalists in Canada. The Unitarian Universalist Association was also given corporate status in May 1961 under special acts of legislature of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the State of New York. In 2002, the CUC split off from the UUA, although the two denominations maintain a close working relationship.

In 1995 the UUA helped establish the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) to connect unitarian and universalist faith traditions around the world.

WORSHIP AND RITUAL

As in theology, Unitarian Universalist worship and ritual are often a combination of elements derived from other faith traditions alongside original practices and symbols. In form, church services might be difficult to distinguish from a liberal Protestant church. In content, given the broad constituency of some UU congregations, those of more traditional faiths may be hard-pressed to find more than superficial commonalities with Unitarian Universalists.

Symbols

The most common symbol of Unitarian Universalism is the flaming chalice, often framed by two overlapping rings that many interpret as representing Unitarianism and Universalism (the symbol has no official interpretation). The chalice itself has long been a symbol of liberal religion, and indeed liberal Christianity (the Disciples of Christ also use a chalice as their denomination symbol). The flaming chalice was initially the logo of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee during the Second World War. It was created by Austrian artist Hans Deutsch, inspired by *"the kind of chalice which the Greeks and Romans put on their altars. The holy oil burning in it is a symbol of helpfulness and sacrifice."*

Nevertheless, other interpretations have been suggested, such as the chalice used by the followers of Czech heretic Jan Hus, or its vague resemblance to a cross in some stylised representations. Most UU congregations light a chalice at the beginning of worship services. Other symbols include a slightly off-center cross within a circle (a Universalist symbol associated with the Humiliati movement in the 1950s, a group of reformist, liturgically minded clergy seeking to revive Universalism). Other symbols include a pair of open hands releasing a dove.

Worship Services

Religious services are usually held on Sundays and most closely resemble the form and format of Protestant worship in the Reformed tradition. The vast majority of congregations have a lightly structured service centered on a sermon by a minister or lay leader of the congregation. Sermons may be on a wide range of topics, drawing from religious or cultural texts or from the personal experiences of the preacher.

The service also includes hymn-singing, accompanied by organ or piano, and possibly led by a song leader or choir. The most recent

worship songbook published by the denomination, *Singing the Journey* contains 75 songs and is a supplement to the older *Singing the Living Tradition* which contains readings as well. Hymns typically sung in UU services come from a variety of sources—traditional hymn tunes with new or adapted lyrics, spirituals, folk songs from various cultures, or original compositions by Unitarian Universalist musicians are just a few. Instrumental music is also a common feature of the typical worship service, including preludes, offertory music, postludes, or music for contemplation.

Pastoral elements of the service may include a time for sharing Joys and Sorrows/Concerns, where individuals in the congregation are invited to light a candle (similar to the Catholic practice of lighting a votive candle) and/or say a few words about important events in their personal lives. Many UU services also include a time of meditation or prayer, led by the minister or service leader, both spoken and silent. Responsive readings and stories for children are also typical.

Many UU congregations no longer observe the Christian sacraments of baptism, communion, or confirmation, at least in their traditional forms or under their traditional names. Congregations that continue these practices under their more traditional names are often federated churches or members of the Council of Christian Churches Within the Unitarian Universalist Association (CCCUUA), or may have active chapters associated with the Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship or similar covenant groups. "Child dedications" often replace more traditional infant baptisms (though it should be noted that such "dedications" are sometimes practiced even in "orthodox" Christian communities that do not baptize infants for theological reasons). Annual celebrations of Water Communion and Flower Communion may replace or supplement Christian-style communion (though many pluralist and Christian-oriented congregations may celebrate or otherwise make provisions for communion on Christian holy days). Confirmation may be replaced by a "Coming of Age" programme, in which teenagers explore their individual religious identity often developing their own credo. After they have completed exploring their spiritual beliefs, they write a speech about it which is then presented to a portion of the congregation.

POLITICS

Historically, Unitarian Universalists have often been active in political causes, notably the civil rights movement, the gay rights movement,

the social justice movement, and the feminist movement. In the 19th century, Unitarians and Universalists were active in abolitionism, the women's movement, the temperance movement and other social reform movements.

Susan B. Anthony, a Unitarian and Quaker, was extremely influential in the women's suffrage movement. Unitarian Universalists and Quakers still share many principles, notably that they are creedless religions with a long-standing commitment to social justice. It is therefore common to see Unitarian Universalists and Quakers working together.

UUs were and are still very involved in the fight to end racism in the United States. John Haynes Holmes, a minister and social activist at The Community Church of New York—Unitarian Universalist was among the founders of both the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), chairing the latter for a time. James J. Reeb, a minister at All Souls Church, Unitarian, in Washington, D.C. and a member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, was clubbed in Selma, Alabama on March 8, 1965, and died two days later of massive head trauma. Two weeks after his death, Viola Liuzzo, a Unitarian Universalist civil rights activist, was murdered by white supremacists after her participation in the protest march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. Reeb and approximately 20% of UU ministers marched with Martin Luther King in the three marches from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery. The Selma to Montgomery marches for voting rights are best known as Bloody Sunday, although technically that refers only to March 7, the most violent day of the three.

The current head of the Unitarian Universalist Association, Rev. William G. Sinkford, is African-American, making Unitarian Universalism one of the first traditionally white denominations to be headed by a member of a racial minority.

While political liberals make up a clear majority of Unitarian Universalists, the UU movement aspires to diversity, and officially welcomes congregants regardless of their political views. Politically conservative Unitarian Universalists point out that neither religious liberalism nor the Principles and Purposes of the UUA require liberal politics. Like the beliefs of Unitarian Universalists, politics are decided by individuals, not by congregations or the denomination.

Many congregations have undertaken a series of organisational and practical steps to be acknowledged as a "Welcoming Congregation,"

a congregation which has taken specific steps to welcome and integrate gay and lesbian members. UU ministers have been performing same-sex unions since at least the late 1960s, and now same-sex marriages where legal (and sometimes when not, as a form of civil protest). On June 29, 1984, the Unitarian Universalists became the first major church "to approve religious blessings on homosexual unions."[15] Unitarian Universalists have been in the forefront of the civil rights work to make same-sex marriages legal in their local states and provinces, as well as on the national level. Gay men and lesbians are also regularly ordained as ministers. In May 2004, Arlington Street Church was the site of the first state-sanctioned same-sex marriage in the United States. The official stance of the UUA is for the legalisation of same-sex marriage—"Standing on the Side of Love." In 2004 UU Minister Rev. Debra Haffner of The Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing published An Open Letter on Religious Leaders on Marriage Equality to affirm same-sex marriage from a multi-faith perspective.

Many congregations are heavily involved in projects and efforts aimed at supporting environmental causes and sustainability. These are often termed "seventh principle" activities because of the seventh principle quoted above.

CONTROVERSIES

Lack of Formal Creed

The lack of formal creed has been a cause for criticism among some who argue that Unitarian Universalism is thus without religious content. In May 2004, Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn ruled that Unitarian Universalism was not a "religion" because it "does not have one system of belief," and stripped the Red River Unitarian Universalist Church in Denison, Texas of its tax-exempt status. However, within weeks, Strayhorn reversed her decision.

Language of Reverence

During the presidency of the Rev. William Sinkford, debate within the UU movement has roiled over his call to return to or create an authentic UU "language of reverence." Sinkford has suggested that UUs have abandoned traditional religious language, thereby abandoning words with potential power to others who will then dictate their meanings in the public square. He has suggested that Unitarian Universalist regain their proper seat at the interfaith table by making this language their own. Others have reacted to this call by believing

it to be part of an effort to return UU congregations to more orthodox Christian worship patterns. Sinkford has denied this, citing the words of UU humanists as examples of what he means by the "language of reverence." The debate seems part and parcel of an attendant effort at increasing biblical literacy amongst Unitarian Universalists, including the publication of a book by the UUA's Beacon Press written by former UUA President John Buehrens. The book is titled *Understanding the Bible: a Guide for Skeptics, Seekers, and Religious Liberals*, and is meant as a kind of handbook to be read alongside the Bible itself. It provides interpretative strategies, so that UUs (among others) might be able to engage in public debate about what the Bible says from a liberal religious perspective, rather than relinquishing to religious conservatives, and other more literal interpretations, all control over the book's contents and significance in matters of public and civic import. Also an important work by Rev. Buehrens, along with Forrest Church, is *A Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism*, in which, the authors explore the many sources of the living tradition of their chosen faith.

Borrowing from Other Religions

Recently, the "borrowing" of religious rituals from other faith traditions by Unitarian Universalists has come under closer scrutiny. In particular, criticism has been leveled against UUs from members of the Native American and Buddhist communities for engaging in certain rituals and practices.

> When UUs pick and choose from these things, it trivialises their spiritual practices. The specificity [of their use] is so complete, that visiting Native Americans do not participate in another tribe's rituals, and to do so would be perceived as foolish. I would not even practice the rituals of my own tribe, because I am not an elder or spiritual leader. If this is true of her own people, then the use of these things by others who share no cultural context is seen not only as particularly foolish and inappropriate
>
> *– Reverend Danielle Di Bona, 2001 General Assembly*

> They sort of pick and choose from among wildly unrelated pieces of Buddhism: a little from Tibetan, a little from Chinese, a little from here, a little from there. This is offensive and presumptuous.
>
> *– Mr. Young Kim, 2001 General Assembly*

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ORGANISATIONS

- The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) of Congregations is the largest association of Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian

Universalist congregations in the world, and the most well-known. It operates within the United States and Mexico, for lack of a formal association of Unitarian Universalist congregations in Mexico.

- The Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) split off from the Unitarian Universalist Association in 2001 and serves Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist congregations in Canada.

- Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU) is the youth organisation within the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Canadian Unitarian Council. It was created in 1981 and 1982, at two conferences, Common Ground 1 & 2. Common Ground was called to form a UUA-controlled replacement for Liberal Religious Youth (LRY), the youth organisation that preceded YRUU. LRY was dissolved by the Unitarian Universalist Association, and its assets absorbed by the UUA.

- The Continental Unitarian Universalist Young Adult Network (CUUYAN) is the young adult organisation within the Unitarian Universalist Association. It serves American and Canadian Unitarian Univesalists.

- The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) is an associate member organisation of the UUA. It was founded in 1939 from an effort to rescue Jews and other victims of Nazi persecution. A privately funded, non-sectarian organisation, UUSC works to advance human rights and social justice in the United States and around the world.

- Unitarian Universalist churches worldwide are represented in the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU).

- Promise the Children is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. Promise the Children's mission is to help Unitarian Universalists advocate for and with children and youth. Promise the Children is also an Independent Affiliate of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

- CUUPS Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans

- The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) exists to serve UUs remote from any physical congregation.

NUMBER OF MEMBERS

As with all religions and religious groups, estimates of exact membership vary. At the time of the merger between Universalists and Unitarians, membership was perhaps half a million. Membership rose after the merger but then fell in the 1970s.

In 1956, Sam Wells wrote that "Unitarians and Universalists are considering merger which would have total U.S. membership of 1,60,000 (5,00,000 in world)". In 1965 Conkin wrote that "In 1961, at the time of the merger, membership [in the United States] was 1,04,821 in 651 congregations, and the joint membership soared to its historically highest level in the mid-1960s (an estimated 250,000) before falling sharply back in the 1970s...". The most recent estimates, from the 1990s, put world membership between 1,20,000 and 600,000.

In the United States, the American Religious Identification Survey reported 6,29,000 members describing themselves as Unitarian Universalist in 2001, an increase from 5,02,000 reported in a similar survey in 1990. The highest concentrations are in New England and around Seattle, Washington.

NOTABLE CONGREGATIONS

Certain Unitarian, Universalist, or Unitarian Universalist congregations (churches, societies, fellowships, etc.) have particular historic or other significance.

- Arlington Street Church in Boston was the congregation of William Ellery Channing and Dana McLean Greeley (1729). The congregation played a large role in the origin and foundation of the faith and has been a leader in social justice causes. It is considered by many to be the 'Mother Church' of the faith.

- King's Chapel in Boston is one of the oldest New England churches of any denomination (1688), and is on the Freedom Trail. It is one of the oldest surviving congregations in the United States.

- All Souls Church, Unitarian, in Washington, DC, was founded in 1821 by (among others) John Quincy Adams.

- Church of the Larger Fellowship is a worldwide congregation.

- First Parish Church, Unitarian Universalist in Duxbury, Massachusetts, was founded in 1632 by Pilgrims. The Elder William Brewster (Pilgrim) was the church's first religious leader, and the church included John Alden and Myles Standish as members. It was the second religious body of the Plymouth Colony.

- First Unitarian Church of Rochester was the Unitarian congregation of Susan B. Anthony; the building was designed by Louis Kahn.

- First Unitarian Society in Madison, Wisconsin is the largest UU congregation; its building was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.
- Follen Church Society of Lexington, Massachusetts, was, from 1836 to 1838, the last pulpit of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Its unique octagonal sanctuary was designed by first minister Charles Follen, a noted abolitionist.
- Unitarian Church of All Souls Founded in 1819 following an inspiring sermon by William Ellery Channing during a visit to New York City, All Souls' is one of the largest and most influential churches in the denomination. Herman Melville and Peter Cooper were members of All Souls, and minister Henry Whitney Bellows led the congregation for 43 years. Forrester Church, author and theologian, served as senior Minister for almost 30 years and is currently Minister of Public Theology.
- Unitarian Universalist Church in Charleston S.C., established in 1772, is "the oldest Unitarian church in the South".
- United First Parish Church, Quincy, Massachusetts, is the burial place of U.S. Presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams and their wives.
- Unity Temple Oak Park, Illinois, had its building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.
- Universalist National Memorial Church in Washington, D.C., was the national church of Universalism prior to its merger with Unitarianism. Its building was designed by architects Francis H. Allen and Charles Collens of Riverside Church fame.

CARBONARI

The Carbonari ("charcoal burners") were groups of secret revolutionary societies founded in early 19th-century Italy. Their goals were patriotic and liberal and they played an important role in the Risorgimento and the early years of Italian nationalism.

ORGANISATION

They were organised in the fashion of Freemasonry, broken into small cells scattered across Italy. They sought the creation of a liberal, unified Italy.

The membership was separated into two classes—apprentice and master. There were two ways to become a master, through serving as an apprentice for at least six months or by being a Freemason on

entry. Their initiation rituals were structured around the trade of charcoal-selling, hence their name.

HISTORY

Although it is not clear where they were originally established, they first came to prominence in the Kingdom of Naples during the Napoleonic wars.

They began by resisting the French occupiers, notably Joachim Murat, the Bonapartist King of Naples. However once the wars ended, they became a nationalist organisation with a marked anti-Austrian tendency and were instrumental in organising revolution in Italy in 1820–1821 and 1831. The 1820 revolution began in Naples against King Ferdinand I of the Two Sicilies, who was forced to make concessions and promise a constitutional monarchy. This success inspired Carbonari in the north of Italy to revolt too. In 1821, the Kingdom of Sardinia obtained a constitutional monarchy as a result of Carbonari actions. However, the Holy Alliance would not tolerate this state of affairs and in February, 1821, sent an army to crush the revolution in Naples. The King of Sardinia also called for Austrian intervention. Faced with an enemy overwhelmingly superior in number, the Carbonari revolts collapsed and their leaders fled into exile.

In 1830, Carbonari took part in the July Revolution in France. This gave them hope that a successful revolution might be staged in Italy. A bid in Modena was an outright failure, but in February 1831, several cities in the Papal States rose up and flew the Carbonari tricolour. A volunteer force marched on Rome but was destroyed by Austrian troops who had intervened at the request of Pope Gregory XVI After the failed uprisings of 1831, the governments of the Italian states cracked down on the Carbonari, who now virtually ceased to exist. The more astute members realised they could never take on the Austrian army in open battle and joined a new movement, Giovane Italia ("Young Italy") led by Mazzini.

RELATIONS WITH THE CHURCH

The Carbonari were anti-clerical in both their philosophy and programme. The Papal constitution Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo and the encyclical Qui Pluribus were directed against them. The controversial document, the Alta Vendita, which called for a modernist takeover of the Catholic Church, was attributed to the Sicilian Carbonari.

MEMBERS OF THE CARBONARI

Silvio Pellico (1788–1854) and Pietro Maroncelli (1795–1846) were prominent members of the Carbonari; both were imprisoned by the Austrians for years, many of which they spent in Spielberg fortress in Brno, Southern Moravia. After his release, Pellico wrote a book *Le mie prigioni*, describing in detail his ten-year ordeal. Maroncelli lost one leg in prison and was instrumental in translating and editing of Pellico's book in Paris (1833). Other prominent members of the Carbonari included Giuseppe Mazzini, Marquis de Lafayette (hero of the American and French Revolutions), Louis Napoleon (the future French emperor Napoleon III) and French revolutionary Blanqui.

THE CARBONARI IN PORTUGAL

The Carbonari (Carbonária) was first founded in Portugal in 1822 but was soon disbanded. It was founded again in 1896 by Artur Augusto Duarte da Luz de Almeida. This organisation was active in efforts to educate the people and was involved in various anti-monarchist conspirations. Most notably, Carbonari members were active in the murder of King Carlos I of Portugal and his heir, Prince Luís Filipe, Duke of Braganza in 1908. Carbonari members also played a part in the republican revolution of October 5, 1910

CARBONARI IN LITERATURE

The story Vanina Vanini by Stendhal involved a hero in the Carbonari and a heroine who became obsessed by this. It was made into a film in 1961.

Robert Louis Stevenson's story "The Pavilion on the Links" features the Carbonari as the villains of the plot.

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LEADING INTERFAITH INDIVIDUALS, SOCIETIES AND LITERATURE

LOUIS AUGUSTE BLANQUI

Louis Auguste Blanqui (born February 8, 1805 in Puget-Théniers, France, died January 1, 1881) was a French political activist, notable for the revolutionary theory of *Blanquism*, attributed to him.

BIOGRAPHY

Early Life, Political Activity and First Imprisonment (1805-1848)

Blanqui was born in Puget-Théniers, Alpes-Maritimes, where his father, Jean Dominique Blanqui, was subprefect. He studied both law and medicine, but found his real vocation in politics, and quickly became a champion of the most advanced opinions. A member of the Carbonari society since 1824, he took an active part in most republican conspiracies during this period. In 1827, under the reign of Charles X (1824-1830), he participated in a street fight in Rue Saint-Denis, during which he was seriously injured. In 1829, he joined Pierre Leroux's *Globe* newspaper before taking part to the July Revolution of 1830. He then joined the *Amis du Peuple* ("The People's Friends") society, where he made acquaintances with Philippe Buonarroti, Raspail, and Armand Barbès. He was condemned to repeated terms of imprisonment for maintaining the doctrine of republicanism during the reign of Louis Philippe (1830-1848). In May 1839, a Blanquist inspired uprising took place in Paris, in which the League of the Just, forerunners of Karl Marx's Communist League, participated.

Implicated in the armed outbreak of the Société des Saisons, of which he was a leading member, Blanqui was condemned to death on January 14, 1840, a sentence later commuted to life imprisonment.

Release, Revolutions and Further Imprisonment (1848-1879)

He was released during the revolution of 1848, only to resume his attacks on existing institutions. The revolution had not satisfied him. The violence of the *Société républicaine centrale*, which was founded by Blanqui to demand a change of government, brought him into conflict with the more moderate Republicans, and in 1849 he was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. While in prison, he sent a brief address (written in the Prison of Belle-Ile-en-Mer, February 10, 1851) to a committee of social democrats in London. The text of the address was noted and introduced by Marx.

In 1865, while serving a further term of imprisonment under the Empire, he escaped, and continued his propaganda campaign against the government from abroad, until the general amnesty of 1869 enabled him to return to France. Blanqui's predilection for violence was illustrated in 1870 by two unsuccessful armed demonstrations: one on January 12 at the funeral of Victor Noir, the journalist shot by Pierre Bonaparte; the other on August 14, when he led an attempt to seize some guns from a barracks. Upon the fall of the Empire, through the revolution of September 4, Blanqui established the club and journal *La patrie en danger*.

He was one of the group that briefly seized the reins of power on October 31, and for his share in that outbreak he was again condemned to death *in absentia* on March 9 of the following year. On March 17, Adolphe Thiers, aware of the threat represented by Blanqui, took advantage of his resting at a friend physician's place, in Bretenoux in Lot, and had him arrested. A few days afterwards the insurrection which established the Paris Commune broke out, and Blanqui was elected president of the insurgent commune. The Communards offered to release all of their prisoners if the Thiers government released Blanqui, but their offer was met with refusal, and Blanqui was thus prevented from taking an active part.

Karl Marx would later be convinced that Blanqui was the leader that was missed by the Commune. Nevertheless, in 1872 he was condemned along with the other members of the Commune to transportation; on account of his broken health this sentence was again commuted to one of imprisonment. On April 20, 1879 he was elected a deputy for Bordeaux; although the election was pronounced invalid, Blanqui was freed, and immediately resumed his work of agitation.

Death

After a speech at a revolutionary meeting in Paris, he was struck down by apoplexy. He died on January 1, 1881 and was interred in the Père Lachaise Cemetery.

LEGACY

Blanqui's uncompromising communism, and his determination to enforce it by violence, brought him into conflict with every French government of his lifetime, and half his life was spent in prison. Besides his innumerable contributions to journalism, he published an astronomical work entitled *L'Eternité par les astres* (1872), where he exposed a theory of eternal return, and after his death his writings on economic and social questions were collected under the title of *Critique sociale* (1885).

ECCLESIAM A JESU CHRISTO

Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo was a Papal constitution promulgated by Pius VII in 1821. It stated that Freemasons must be excommunicated for their oath bound secrecy of the society and conspiracies against church and state.

It also linked Freemasonry with the Carbonari, an anti-clerical revolutionary group active in Italy. It said that the Carbonari affected a love of the Catholic religion. However the true goals of the Carbonari was said to be:

- Religious indifference
- Disestablishment of the church and total religious freedom
- The profanation of Jesus Christ through their ceremonies
- To scorn, and perhaps replace the sacraments of the church
- To plot against Papal primacy.

All members of the Carbonari were excommunicated, along with those who kept Carbonari secrets and those promoting Carbonari literature.

LA GIOVINE ITALIA

La Giovine Italia (Italian for Young Italy) was a political movement founded in 1831 by Giuseppe Mazzini. The goal of this movement was to create a united Italian republic through promoting a general insurrection in the Italian reactionary states and in the lands occupied by the Austrian Empire.

The *Giovine Italia* was founded in Marseille in July 1831. Its members adopted nicknames taken from figures of the Italian Middle Ages. In 1833 many of the members who were plotting a revolt in Savoy and Piedmont were arrested and exectued by the Sardinian police. After another failed Mazzinian revolt in Piedmont and Savoy of the February 1834, the movement disappeared for some time, reappearing in 1838 in England. Further insurrections in Sicily, Abruzzi, Tuscany, Lombardy-Venetia, Romagna (1841 and 1845), Bologna (1843) failed. Also short-lived was the Roman Republic of 1848-1849, which was crushed by a French Army called in help by the Pope Pius IX (initially hailed by Mazzini as the most likely paladin of a liberal unification of Italy).

In the meantime *La Giovine Italia* had become part of the movement *Giovine Europa* (created in 1835), a more internationally-oriented association, together with similar movements such as *Junges Deutschland*, *M³oda Polska*, and *Giovine Svizzera*.

Mazzini's movements was basically evicted after a last failed revolt against Austria in Milan in 1853, crushing hopes of a democratic Italy in favor of the reactionary Piedmontese monarchy, who achieved the national unification some years later.

GIUSEPPE MAZZINI

Patriot Giuseppe Mazzini (June 22, 1805 – March 10, 1872) was an Italian patriot, philosopher and politician. Mazzini's efforts helped bring about the modern Italian state in place of the several separate states, many dominated by foreign powers, that existed until the 19th century. He also helped define the modern European movement for popular Democracy in a Republican State.

BIOGRAPHY

Early Years

Mazzini was born in Genoa, then part of the Kingdom of Sardinia, under the rule of the House of Savoy. His father, Giacomo, was a university professor who had adhered to Jacobin ideology; his mother, Maria Drago, was renowned for her beauty and religious fervour. Since a very early age, Mazzini showed good learning qualities (as well as a precocious interest towards politics and literature), and was admitted to the University at only 15, graduating in law in 1826, initially practicing as a "poor man's lawyer". He also hoped to become a historical novelist or a dramatist, and in the same year he wrote his first essay, *Dell'amor patrio di Dante* ("On Dante's Patriotic Love"),

which was published in 1837. In 1828-1829 he collaborated with a Genoese newspaper, *L'indicatore genovese*, which was however soon closed by the Piedmontese authorities.

In 1830 Mazzini travelled to Tuscany, where he became a member of the Carbonari, a secret association with political purposes. On October 31 of that year he was arrested at Genoa and interned at Savona. During his imprisonment he devised the outlines of a new patriotic movement aiming to replace the unsuccessful Carbonari. Although freed in the early 1831, he chose exile to the life confined into some small hamlet which was requested him by the police, moving to Geneva in Switzerland.

Foundation of the *Giovine Italia* and First Unsuccessful Insurrections

In 1831 he went to Marseille, where he become a popular figure to the other Italian exiles. He lived in the apartment of Giuditta Bellerio Sidoli, a beautiful Modenese widow who would become his lover, and organised a new political society called *La giovine Italia* (Young Italy). Its motto was *God and the People*, and its basic principle was the union of the several states and kingdoms of the peninsula into a single republic as the only true foundation of Italian liberty. The new nation had to be: "One, Independent, Free Republic".

The Mazzinian propaganda met some success in Tuscany, Abruzzi, Sicily, Piedmont and his native Liguria, especially among several military officers. It counted c. 60,000 adherents in 1833, with branches in Genoa and other cities. In that year Mazzini launched a first attempt of insurrection, which would spread from Chambéry (then part of Sardinia), Alessandria, Turin and Genoa. However, the Savoy government discovered the plot before it could begin and many revolutionaries (including Vincenzo Gioberti) were arrested. The repression was ruthless: 12 participants were executed, while Mazzini's best friend and director of the Genoese section of the *Giovine Italia*, Jacopo Ruffini, killed himself. Mazzini was tried in absence and condemned to death.

Despite this setback (whose victims later created numerous doubts and psychological strife in Mazzini), he organised another uprising for the following year. A group of Italian exiles was to enter Piedmont from Switzerland and spread the revolution there, while Giuseppe Garibaldi, who had recently joined the *Giovine Italia*, was to do the same from Genoa. However, the Piedmontese troops easily crushed the new attempt.

On May 28, 1834 Mazzini was arrested at Solothurn, and exiled from Switzerland. He moved to Paris, where he was again imprisoned on July 5. He was released only after promising he would move to England. Mazzini, together with a few Italian friends, moved in January 1837 to live in London in very poor economic conditions.

Exile in London

On April 30, 1837 Mazzini reformed the *Giovine Italia* in London, and on November 10 of the same year he began issuing the *Apostolato popolare* ("Apostleship of the People").

A succession of failed attempts at promoting further uprising in Sicily, Abruzzi, Tuscany and Lombardy-Venetia discouraged Mazzini for a long period, which dragged on until 1840. He was also abandoned by Sidoli, who had returned to Italy to rejoin her children. The help of his mother pushed Mazzini to found several organisations aimed at the unification or liberation of other nations, on the wake of *Giovine Italia*: *Young Germany*, *Young Poland*, *young Switzerland*, which were under the hegid of the *Young Europe* (Giovine Europa). He also created an Italian school for poor people. From London he also wrote an endless series of letters to his agents in Europe and South America, and make friends with Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle.

In 1843 he organised another riot in Bologna, which attracted the attention of two young officers of the Austrian Navy, Attilio and Emilio Bandiera. With Mazzini's support, they landed near Cosenza (Kingdom of Naples), but were arrested and executed. Mazzini accused the British government to have passed informations about the expeditions to the Neapolitans, and question was raised in the British Parliament. When it was admitted that his private letters had been opened, and Mazzini gained popularity and support among the British liberals.

In 1847 he moved again to London, where he wrote a long "open letter" to Pope Pius IX, whose apparently liberal reforms had gained him a momentary status as possible paladin of the unification of Italy. The Pope, however, did not reply. He also founded the People's International League. By March 8, 1848 Mazzini was in Paris, where he launched a new political association, the *Associazione Nazionale Italiana*.

The 1848-1849 Revolts

On April 7, 1848 Mazzini reached Milan, whose population had rebelled against the Austrian garrison and established a provisional

government. The First Italian War of Independence, started by the Piedmontese King Charles Albert to exploit the favourable circumstances in Milan, turned into a total failure. Mazzini, who had never been popular in the city because he wanted Lombardy to become a republic instead to join Piedmont, abandoned Milan. He joined Garibaldi's irregular force at Bergamo, moving to Switzerland with him.

On February 9, 1849 a Republic was declared in Rome, with Pius IX forced to flee to Gaeta. On February 9 of that year Mazzini reached the city, and was appointed as "triumvir" of the new republic on March 29, becoming soon the true leader of the government and showing good administrative capabilities in social reforms. However, when the French troops called by the Pope made clear that the resistance of the Republican troops, led by Garibaldi, was in vain, on July 12, 1849 Mazzini set out for Marseille, from where he moved again to Switzerland.

Late Activities

Mazzini spent all of 1850 hiding from the Swiss police. In July he founded the association *Amici di Italia* in London, to attract consensus towards the Italian liberation cause. Two failed riots in Mantua (1852) and Milan (1853) were a crippling blow for the Mazzinian organisation, whose prestige never recovered. He later opposed the alliance signed by Savoy with Austria for the Crimean War. Also vain was the expeditions of Felice Orsini in Carrara of 1853-1854.

In 1856 he returned to Genoa to organize a series of uprisings: the only serious attempt was that of Carlo Pisacane in Calabria, which again met a dismaying end. Mazzini managed to escape the police, but was condemned to death by default. From this moment on, Mazzini was more of a spectator than a protagonist of the Italian Risorgimento, whose reins were now strongly in the hands of the Savoyard monarch Victor Emmanuel II and his skilled prime minister, Camillo Benso, Conte di Cavour. The later defined him as "Chief of the assassins".

In 1858 he founded another journal in London, *Pensiero e azione* ("Thought and Action". Also there, on February 21, 1859, together with 151 republicans he signed a manifesto against the alliance between Piedmont and the King of France which resulted in the Second War of Italian Independence and the conquest of Lombardy. On May 2, 1860 he tried to reach Garibaldi, who was going to launch his famous Expedition of the Thousand[3] in southern Italy. In the same year he released *Doveri dell'uomo* ("Duties of Men"), a synthesis of his moral,

political and social thoughts. In mid-September he was in Naples, then under Garibaldi's dictatorship, but was invited by the local vice-dictator Giorgio Pallavicino to move away.

In 1862 he was again alongside Garibaldi during his failed attempt to free Rome. In 1866 Venetia was acquired by the new Kingdom of Italy, which had been created in 1861 under the Savoy monarchy. At this time Mazzini was frequently in polemics with the course followed by the unification of his country, and in 1867 he refused a seat in the Italian Chamber of Deputies. In 1870, during an attempt to free Sicily, he was arrested and imprisoned in Gaeta. He was freed in October due to the amnesty conceded after the successful capture of Rome, and returned to London in mid-December.

Giuseppe Mazzini died in Pisa in 1872. His funerals were held in Genoa, with 1,00,000 people taking part in them.

LEGACY AND IMPORTANCE

Mazzini believed that Italian unification could only be achieved through a popular uprising. He relentlessly agitated the Italian populace to revolt, and encouraged, initiated, and organised numerous small and large revolts from his exile in England. Although the odds may have been against his revolutionaries in any given situation, the trend of history was with Mazzini and so every challenge to local authority advanced the cause of Risorgimento.

Mazzini continued to avow this purpose in his writings and pursued it through exile and adversity with inflexible constancy. Mazzini's importance was more ideological than practical, but since that is Italy's identity as well, Mazzini is credited with fashioning the political idea that Italy was a country more than a patchwork of antiquated Roman city-states. It would be others who would make this idea a reality though. After the failure of the 1848 revolutions, the Italian nationalists began to look to the king of Sardinia and his prime minister Count Cavour as the leaders of the unification movement. This meant separating national unification from the social and political reforms advocated by Mazzini.

Cavour was able to secure an alliance with France, leading to a series of wars between 1859 and 1861 that culminated in the formation of a unified kingdom of Italy. Garibaldi, no more a follower of Mazzini, also played a major role. The kingdom rising from this process was very far from the republic preached by Mazzini.

Mazzini never accepted a monarchical united Italy and continued to work for a democratic republic. In 1870 he was arrested and sent again into exile, even though he managed to return under a false name and lived in Pisa until his death in 1872. The political movement he led was called the Italian Republican Party and was active in Italy until the 1990s. The party still exists, but no longer has a central role in politics, hardly managing to present own lists, and has recently experienced schisms.

A bronze bust, unveiled in 1878, of Mazzini overlooks the Sheep Meadow in New York City's Central Park. The sculptor was Giovanni Turini (1841-1899), and it was a gift from Italian-Americans. Inscribed on one side of the bust's pedestal are the words "Pensiero Ed Azione," "thought and action," which was the name of the newspaper he founded in London 1858.

Mazzini was also a key supporter of the idea of nationalism. In "The Duties of Man" Mazzini argues that one's country is like one's family and it is a necessity that one love it and care for it. He also argues that geographical conditions should create countries since these conditions were created by God, unlike borders, which were created by jealous and greedy politicians.

CRITICISMS

Karl Marx, on an interview by R. Landor in 1871, said that Mazzini's ideas represents "nothing better than the old idea of a middle-class republic." Marx believed, especially after the Revolutions of 1848 this middle class point of view had become reactionary and proleteriat has nothing to do with them. Interview with Karl Marx

OTHER TOPICS

Mazzini was an early advocate of a "United States of Europe" about a century before the European Union began to take shape. For him, European unification was a logical continuation of Italian unification. Mazzini's Pleasures He Enjoyed spending time with his family

QUI PLURIBUS

Qui Pluribus—On Faith And Religion was a Papal Encyclical promulgated by Pius IX.

It attacked the belief that reason should be put above faith. It singled out the free gift of anti-Catholic Bibles. Its coupling of political

liberalism and religious indifferntism is seen as a condemnation of the Italian Carbonari in particular and Freemasonry in general.

VANINA VANINI

Vanina Vanini is the title of a story by Stendhal (1783-1842), the nom de plume of Henri-Marie Beyle.

Set in 1840s in the Risorgimento of Italy when the country was under the Austrian control. Vanina Vanini, the daughter of a Roman aristocrat, falls in love with the wounded Pietro Missirilli, a member of the revolutionary Carbonari organised in the fashion of Freemasonry, who is hidden in the residence of her father, Don Asdrubale Vanini, and nurses him back to health, and follows him to northern Italy. Vanina is obsessed with the charisma of Pietro and is determined to free him from his revolutionary commitment so that he can devote himself entirely to her. The irony is that, in order to do so, she opts to betray his revolutionary activities to the authority. She reveals to him what she did when she visits the now jailed Pietro, which outrages him so much that he attempts to kill her. Pietro is executed and Vanina resumes her decadent aristocratic life after the Quixotic episode. This romantic tragedy is a battle between the vanity of Vanina, a beautiful woman with whom many rich Romans are in love (of whom is Livio Savelli, her future husband), who is desperately in love with a surgeon's son, a Carbonaro, who loves her, and his devotion to his country. With her pride wounded after her lover calls him a monster, she does the only respectable thing that she can do; marry the man who is madly in love with her but whom she scorns: Livio.

Roberto Rossellini (1906-1977) adapted this story to a film of the same title in 1961 starring Sandra Milo (Vanina) and Laurent Terzieff (Pietro) -see Vanina Vanini (film).

SECRET SOCIETIES

A secret society is a social organisation that requires its members to conceal certain activities—such as rites of initiation or club ceremonies—from outsiders. Members may be required to conceal or deny their membership, and are often sworn to hold the society's secrets by an oath. The term "secret society" is often used to describe fraternal organisations that may have secret ceremonies, but is also commonly applied to organisations ranging from the common and innocuous (collegiate fraternities) to mythical organisations described in conspiracy theories as immensely powerful, with self-serving financial or political agendas, global reach, and often satanic beliefs.

The main article for this category is Secret societies.

Secret Societies

There are some secret socities:

- Abakuá
- Afrikaner Broederbond
- American Protective Association
- Angelic Society
- Association of the Polish Youth
- Beati Paoli
- Bilderberg Group
- Black Hand
- Blue Shirts Society
- Bohemian Grove
- Brethren of Datu Abdillah
- Cabal
- Calves Head Club
- Cambridge Apostles
- Camorra
- Childhood secret club
- Vril
- Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement
- Council for National Policy
- Crocodile Society
- Arkon Daraul
- Dragon Rouge
- Duk-Duk
- Egbo
- Ekpe
- El Yunque (organisation)
- Epsilon Team
- First Satanic Church
- Fox & Hound
- Fox Club (Harvard)
- Garduna
- Gormogons

- Hashshashin
- Hermetic Brotherhood of Light
- Hibernian Rifles
- Horseman's Word
- Hui (secret society)
- Hunters' Lodges
- Illuminati
- Illuminati in popular culture
- Kagal (Finnish society)
- Kameradenwerk
- Katipunan
- Knights of Seth
- Knights of the Apocalypse
- Knights of the Golden Circle
- Ku Klux Klan
- Le Cercle
- Leaderless resistance
- League of the Holy Court
- Leopard Society
- List of Quill and Dagger members
- Maestranza de caballería
- Manuscript Society
- Master Mahan
- The May Day Mystery
- Mecrosa Order
- Military Order of the Carabao
- Molly Maguires
- Marcelo Ramos Motta
- Neurocam International
- New England Order of Protection
- ODESSA
- Oddfellows
- Order of Chaeronea
- Order of Free Gardeners
- Order of United American Mechanics
- Order of the Peacock Angel
- Order of the Star Spangled Banner

- Osirica
- P.E.O. Sisterhood
- Petrashevsky Circle
- Philomathes
- Polynesian navigation
- Porcellian Club
- Poro
- Priory of Sion
- Propaganda Due
- Roshaniya
- Rosicrucianism
- Russell Trust Association
- Sande society
- The School of Night
- Scintilla Juris Fraternity
- Scotch Cattle
- Secret Societies at the University of Virginia
- Secret combination
- Secret societies in popular culture
- Skull and Dagger
- Solar Lodge
- Son of Ra
- Sons of Liberty
- Striker's Independent Society
- The Gun Club (secret society)
- Theta Nu Epsilon
- Thuggee
- Thule Society
- Union Philosophical Society
- Union of Prosperity
- Union of Salvation
- User talk: Count Christianson
- Vihan Veljet
- Watcher (Highlander)
- White Lotus
- Whitecapping
- Wide Awakes

ANEKANTAVADA

Anekantavada is a basic principle of Jainism developed by Mahavira (599-527 BC) positing that reality is perceived differently from different points of view, and that no single point of view is completely true. Jain doctrine states that only Kevalis, those who have infinite knowledge, can know the true answer, and that all others would only know a part of the answer. Anekantavada is related to the Western philosophical doctrine of Subjectivism.

'Ekanta' is one-sidedness. Anekantavada is literally the doctrine of non-onesidedness; it is often translated as "non-absolutism".

Anekantavada encourages its adherents to consider others views or beliefs. They should not reject a view simply because it uses a different perspective. They should consider the fact there may be truth in others' views too.

Many proponents of Anekantavada apply the principle to religion and philosophy themselves, reminding adherents that any religion or philosophy, even Jainism, that clings too dogmatically to its own tenets is committing an error based on its limited point of view. In this application, Anekantavada resembles the Western principles of cultural and moral relativism.

▶▶▶

5

INTERFAITH, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND BELIEF IMMUNITY

Imagine you had just two sentences to describe to a relative or friend what you think interfaith is and what it does. Write those two sentences now and keep them in mind as you read through this Unit.

In 2001, Marcus Braybrooke wrote:

The true teaching of each religion is a message of peace, unity and love…The sacred heritage of the great faiths is a rich resource for all people in the search for a more fair and harmonious world…The first step in ending religious hostility is to dispel prejudice and ignorance by teaching about the religious beliefs and practices of other people and by providing opportunities for members of different religions, especially young people, to meet and get to know each other. Only then can religions unite in service.

Jill Gant and Ibrahim Mogra at IIC event on Karma

Here are some further affirmations of interfaith:

Only when we work together as a global family, instead of concentrating on belonging to a particular race, religion or nation, will peace and happiness prevail on this earth.

Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi, World renowned Hindu Teacher, Mystic and Philanthropist www.ammachi.org/

The strength of inter-religious solidarity in action against apartheid, rather than mere harmony or co-existence, was crucial in bringing that evil system to an end.

Nelson Mandela, Former President, African National Congress, and Former President of South Africa http://www.anc.org.za/people/mandela

When every soul will rise above petty divisions in true spiritual understanding, world misery will be consumed in the fire of the realisation of the universality of God and the fellowship of humanity.

Paramahansa Yogananda, Founder of Self-Realisation Fellowship and Yogoda Satsanga Society. Author of Autobiography of a Yogi and many other publications. Renowned teacher of Kriya Yoga.http://www.yogananda-srf.org/

We need to pursue peace even when we are grossly provoked; in the end people die, not Catholics or Hindus or Muslims.

Yasmin Sooka, Commissioner, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, South Africa, addressing the IIC Religion, Community and Conflict conference in Northern Ireland http://www.africaaction.org/

Men and women of faith are a strong influence on group and individual conduct. As teachers and guides, you can be powerful agents for change. You can inspire people to new levels of commitment and public service. You can help bridge the chasms of ignorance, fear and misunderstanding. You can set an example of interfaith dialogue and co-operation.

Kofi Annan, Secretary General, United Nations http://www.un.org/Overview/ SG/sg7bio.html

In all work in the interfaith movement we must never forget the importance of our own individual inner aspirations. We have to move through prayer, through meditation, through study, through devoted work, towards the true centres of our being.

Dr. Karan Singh, Founder of the International Centre of Science, Culture and Consciousness and the India Forum, Chair of Temple of Understanding, member of the Rajya Sabha (Upper House of Parliament)http://www.karansingh.com/

The essential aspiration of religions is for reconciliation, human fellowship and peace. By awakening the spiritual consciousness of humanity, we can establish moral order in human society. Spiritual traditions of the world should, therefore, stand together and work for the greater glory of God and the greater happiness of humankind."

Dr. Seshagiri Rao, Chief Editor, Encyclopaedia of Hinduism project, University of South Carolina, author and contributor to Hindu and interfaith studies. http://www.eh.sc.edu/

Would you revise your two sentences after reading these quotes? If so, what would they read like now?

INTRODUCTION TO INTERFAITH

E-LEARNING

This website will bring you into touch with issues, organisations and initiatives for inter-religious understanding and co-operation.

It offers an introduction to interfaith activity and concerns in a way that will enable you to learn about its history and methodologies and offer you the resources to become involved if you wish.

Opportunites also exist for you to respond to questions and share them with experienced interfaith activists.

Our world has always been one of many religions, but in the twentieth century improved communications increased our awareness of each other and there were vast movements of people, which means that many countries are now multi-religious.

The question for the twenty first century is whether we can learn to live together harmoniously in local and national communities and work together for a more just and peaceful world. You may find it helpful to have some idea how many people belong to the various religions and denominations.

NETWORK OF INTERNATIONAL INTERFAITH ORGANISATIONS

An informal communications and co-operation network was established in Oxford in March 2001 with 14 participating organisations. Members meet once a year to discuss their work and ways in which we can together contribute to interfaith developments for the benefit of all. The network met in Budapest in August 2002 and Oxford in September 2003. Plans are to meet again in 2004 both at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Barcelona, where co-operative programmes are being developed, and in Oxford. The network also has an active United Nations sub group.

Find out more about each participating organisation by clicking on the links below. These lead to a brief profile and further connections to each organisation's website.

Council for the Parliament of the World's Religions
International Association for Religious Freedom
International Interfaith Centre
Interfaith Youth Core
Millennium Peace Summit
Minorities of Europe
Peace Council
Temple of Understanding
Project towards a Spiritual Forum for World Peace at the United Nations
United Religions Initiative
World Conference on Religions and Peace

World Congress of Faiths

World Faiths Development Dialogue

World Fellowship of Inter-Religious Councils

INTRODUCTION

Are there any moral values or ethical principles on which the religions agree enough for them to take action together on the problems facing society and the world?

In other Units we will see how some people from all religions are working together to protect the Environment, to create a more just and peaceful world and to relieve suffering. Do you know of any multi-religious groups that are doing this?

But remember that 'religions' are an abstraction and that people who belong to a faith tradition agree and disagree both with other members of that tradition and with those who belong to other traditions.

Even so, there may be agreement on ethical principles and disagreement on how these are to be applied.

Do you think there is any ethical principle on which all religions agree?

The Declaration Toward a Global Ethic, which we shall look at later, says there is. It claims:

There is a principle which is found and has persisted in many religions and ethical traditions of humankind for thousands of years: What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others! Or in positive terms: What you wish done to yourself, do to others!

The Global Ethic itself says: You must treat others as you wish others to treat you.

Some people believe that if the religions can identify and make known the ethical principles on which they are agreed this will be a vital contribution to social cohesion and to world peace....

THE GOLDEN RULE

The ethical principle identified by the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic 'What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others!'is often called '*The Golden Rule*' and is to be found in the teaching of many religions.

Baha'i: Blessed is he who prefereth his brother before himself. (Tablets of Bah'a'ullah, 71).

Buddhism: A state which is not pleasant or enjoyable for me will not be so for another; and how can I impose on another a state which is not enjoyable to me? (Samyutta Nikaya, V). See also Message from the Dalai Lama.

Confucianism: Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you (Analects 15,23).

Christianity: All things whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, do ye even so to them (Matthew 7,12).

Hinduism: This is the sum of duty; do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you (Mahabharata XIII, 114).

Islam: No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself (An-Nawawi, 40 Hadith,13).

Jainism: A person should treat all creatures as he himself would be treated (Sutrakritanga 1.11.33).

Judaism: You shall love your neighbour as yourself (Leviticus 19,18).

Native American: Respect for life is the foundation (The Great Law of Peace).

Sikhism: Do not create enmity with anyone as God is within everyone (Guru Arjan Devji 258, Guru Granth Sahib).

Zoroastrianism: That nature only is good when it shall not do unto another whatever is not good for its own self (Dadistan-i-Dinik, 94,5).

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1993

In the years since 1993, the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions has attempted to see how the ethical demands articulated in the Declaration can affect the life of our whole society.

At the 1999 Cape Town Parliament '*A Call to Our Guiding Institutions*' was issued. This called for the faith communities to dialogue with those institutions which play a decisive and influential role in society: government, agriculture, labour, industry and commerce, education, arts and communications media, science and medicine, international intergovernmental organisations and the organisations of civil society, with the aim of building 'new, reliable, and more imaginative partnerships towards the shaping of a better world.'

Since 1993, UNESCO has held several conferences addressing the role of religion in conflict situations and at the 1994 conference in

Barcelona issued a 'Declaration on the Role of Religion in the Promotion of a Culture of Peace'.

In 1998 a meeting on 'World Faiths and Development' was held at Lambeth Palace, London, jointly chaired by James D Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, and by Dr George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury. From this emerged World Faiths Development Dialogue. This has brought together two actors on the development scene, the religious communities and the multilateral development agencies, which until now have gone their own way with considerable mutual suspicion. Now the hope is to bring together those who possess expertise in technical issues and spokespersons for faith communities, which stand closer than any other organisation to the world's poorest people. Such a conscious step to forge an alliance should lead, in the words of Dr Carey and James D Wolfensohn, 'to inspiration and learning among people from all sides and to ways of making some real changes in favour of those who most need them.'

In 2001, for the first time, The World Economic Forum—an independent foundation that engages business, political and other leaders of society seeking to improve the state of the world—invited religious leaders to share in their deliberations on globalisation at Davos in Switzerland. It was recognised that 'religious traditions have a unique contribution to offer... particularly in emphasising human values and the spiritual and moral dimension of economic and political life.'

The most striking example of the new seriousness with which international decision-makers are taking the contribution of faith communities was the historic Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, which met in United Nations General Assembly Hall in August 2000. (Read more)

Reconciliation may lead us to discover and establish a global ethic. A global ethic for institutions and civil society, for leaders and for followers, requires a longing and striving for peace, longing and striving for justice, longing and striving for partnerships, longing and striving for truth. These might be the four pillars of a global ethic-based system that leads to reconciliation and an answer to the vicious circle of endless hatred.

DO STATEMENTS AND CONFERENCES HAVE ANY EFFECT?

There are a lot of international conferences and worthy statements. Do they have any effect?

Have you been personally challenged by any of the statements you have so far read in this Unit?

How do you think ethical values can be applied to political and economic life? Do you have examples from your own experience?

In his A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics, Hans Küng strongly argues the case for a new sense of responsibility. You need, he says:

- a responsible politics which seeks to achieve the precarious balance between ideals and realities which has to be rediscovered over and over again
- a responsible economics which can combine economic strategies with ethical convictions.

This certainly is the hope of those who produced the 'Interfaith Declaration: a Code of Ethics on International Business for Christians, Muslims and Jews' and the 'Principles for Business' of the Caux Round Table. Both statements agree that companies have responsibilities over and above earning profits. This is very important and maximising profit should not be the sole motive of economic activity. It is suggested that shareholders should see themselves rather as stakeholders with a responsibility for all who have a stake in a business. Companies should recognise that they have a responsibility to their employees, to customers, to suppliers and financiers, to the community (local and national governments) and also to the owners, shareholders or investors. I would add a responsibility to the environment and some companies now have an environmental audit. Faith communities, which are close to the people, are in a good position to speak for the suppliers, as the low wages paid to many producers of raw material is a scandal.

PRACTICAL RESULTS

There is some evidence that the concern for an ethical approach to business is having some results. The Institute of Business Ethics (IBE) was established in 1986. Its latest survey shows that a growing number of companies provide a code of ethics for their employees and are also showing an interest in ethical/social audits—although less than half translate the code for local use overseas. The ethical issue of greatest concern is the source of supplies, which relates to public pressure about the use of child labour and the working conditions in many countries. The IBE gives some examples of good practice. Nestle's is using its marketing expertise to make Russian children aware of the

link between diet and health. Nestle's has been sponsoring the Russian TV version of the popular children's show Sesame Street. It has used the cartoon characters to produce books for 6-8 years old about the importance of healthy eating.

Another initiative is the Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum (PWBLF), which was set up in 1990 to promote 'responsible business practices internationally that benefit business and society, and which help to achieve social, economic and environmentally sustainable development, particularly in new and emerging market economies.' Again, there are some results. The sports footwear industry plays a large part in Vietnam's economy. In 1997 Pentland, one of the major international firms, commissioned a report which showed the dangers of poor ventilation, exposure to hazardous chemicals and inadequate safety equipment. Subsequently the PWBLF, after wide consultation, has drawn up a communal action plan, which is now being put into effect. In Mumbai what is said to be the first environmentally responsible hotel was opened in December 1998. All the wood is from Hevea (rubber) trees and treated to take on the properties of more expensive woods such as teak or maple. The Hevea trees are cropped and replanted in a 25-30 year cycle. Room hangers are made of pressed board from recycled wood.

SHARED VALUES IN A PLURAL SOCIETY

What values do you think the religions share? What is your model of a plural society?

Ruth who like her mother had fled from Communist China and settled in California, took her mother, who was beginning to suffer from dementia to the hospital out-patients. 'In the hospital waiting room, Ruth saw that all the patients, except one pale balding man, were Asian. She read the blackboard listing of the doctor's names: Fong, Wong, Wang, Tang, Chin, Pong, Kwak, Koo. The receptionist looked Chinese; so did the nurses. In the sixties, mused Ruth, people railed against race-differentiated services as ghettoisation. Now they demanded them as culturally sensitive.'

What model of society do you have? Maybe, it is not something you have articulated. Do you have what might be called a unitary view of society in which newcomers are expected to fit in with the lifestyle of the majority or do you picture a plural society in which each group does its own thing? Perhaps there is a balance, which is suggested by the phrase a 'Community of Communities.'

But first it is important to realise how many people are on the move—not just for work or holidays. A growing number of people now live in a country different from the one in which they were born....

A Unitary Society

Here is an illustration of what is meant by a unitary society. Fifteen years ago, the House of Lord was debating religious education. One noble lady happened to say, 'Of course, Britain is a Christian country'. Afterwards a Jewish peer, whose family had been in Britain for over one hundred and fifty years asked, 'How long do you have to live here before you count as British?'

A Plural Society

By contrast, in a plural society the various ethnic and faith communities live separate lives. They may share geographical space, but not much more. Take Israel/Palestine as an example and this example pre-dates current hostilities.

A Community of Communities

Is it possible to bring together aspects of both the unitary and the plural models of society? Can you show real appreciation of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity and at the same time recognise unifying features and shared values?...

In a plural society, it may also be necessary to get away from talk of a majority and a minority. The report The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain said, one needs to move away from the discourse of majority and minorities.

Inspiration: The Meaning of Perseverance and Love

At the prodding of my friends, I am writing this story. My name is Mildred Hondorf. I am a former elementary school music teacher from Des Moines, Iowa. I've always supplemented my income by teaching piano lessons—something I've done for over 30 years. Over the years I found that children have many levels of musical ability. I've never had the pleasure of having a prodigy though I have taught some talented students. However I've also had my share of what I call "musically challenged" pupils.

One such student was Robby. Robby was 11 years old when his mother (a single Mom) dropped him off for his first piano lesson. So I

took him as a student. Well, Robby began with his piano lessons and from the beginning I thought it was a hopeless endeavour. As much as Robby tried, he lacked the sense of tone and basic rhythm needed to excel. But he dutifully reviewed his scales and some months he tried and tried while I listened and cringed and tried to encourage him. At the end of each weekly lesson he'd always say, "My mom's going to hear me play someday."

But it seemed hopeless. He just did not have any inborn ability. I only knew his mother from a distance as she dropped Robby off or waited in her aged car to pick him up. She always waved and smiled but never stopped in. Then one day Robby stopped coming to our lessons. I thought about calling him but assumed because of his lack of ability, that he had decided to pursue something else. I also was glad that he stopped coming. He was a bad advertisement for my teaching!

Several weeks later I mailed to the student's homes a flyer on the upcoming recital. To my surprise Robby (who received a flyer) asked me if he could be in the recital. I told him that the recital was for current pupils and because he had dropped out he really did not qualify. He said that his mother had been sick and unable to take him to piano lesson but he was still practicing. "Miss Hondorf... I've just got to play!" he insisted.

I don't know what led me to allow him to play in the recital. Maybe it was his persistence or maybe it was something inside of me saying that it would be all right. The night for the recital came. The high school gymnasium was packed with parents, friends and relatives. I put Robby up last in the programme before I was to come up and thank all the students and play a finishing piece. I thought that any damage he would do would come at the end of the programme and I could always salvage his poor performance through my "curtain closer." Well, the recital went off without a hitch. The students had been practicing and it showed. Then Robby came up on stage. His clothes were wrinkled and his hair looked like he'd run an eggbeater through it. "Why didn't he dress up like the other students?" I thought. "Why didn't his mother at least make him comb his hair for this special night?"

Robby pulled out the piano bench and he began. I was surprised when he announced that he had chosen Mozart's Concerto #21 in C Major. I was not prepared for what I heard next. His fingers were light on the keys, they even danced nimbly on the ivories. He went

from pianissimo to Fortissimo. From allegro to virtuoso. Never had I heard Mozart played so well by people his age. After six and a half minutes he ended in a grand crescendo and everyone was on their feet in wild applause. Overcome and in tears I ran up on stage and put my arms around Robby in joy. "I've never heard you play like that Robby! How'd you do it?" Through the microphone Robby explained: "Well Miss Hondorf... remember I told you my Mom was sick? Well, actually she had cancer and passed away this morning. And well... she was born deaf so tonight was the first time she ever heard me play. I wanted to make it special."

There wasn't a dry eye in the house that evening. As the people from Social Services led Robby from the stage to be placed into foster care, I noticed that even their eyes were red and puffy and I thought to myself how much richer my life had been for taking Robby as my pupil. No, I've never had a prodigy but that night I became a prodigy... taught me the meaning of perseverance and love and believing in why.

VALUES EDUCATION

The Living Values Educational Programmes are one rich resource for values education.

> Living Values: An Educational Programme
> Office for the United Nations,
> 866 UN Plaza, Suite 436, New York, NY 10017 USA
> Fax: (212) 504-2798

This is some background to their work:

Living Values: An Educational Programme (LVEP) is a values education programme. It offers a variety of experiential values activities and practical methodologies to teachers and facilitators to enable children and young adults to explore and develop 12 key universal values: Cooperation, Freedom, Happiness, Honesty, Humility, Love, Peace, Respect, Responsibility, Simplicity, Tolerance, and Unity. LVEP also contains special units for use with parents and caregivers, and refugees and children-affected-by-war.

LVEP is already in use at over 4000 sites in 66 countries. Results from schools indicate that students are responsive to the values activities and become interested in discussing and applying values. Teachers report not only a decrease in aggressive behaviour, but also note that students are more motivated and exhibit an increase in positive and cooperative personal and social skills.

The purpose of Living Values: Educational Programme is to provide guiding principles and tools for the development of the whole person, recognising that the individual is comprised of physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.

As we move into the 21st century, the search for ways to improve the quality of education is global. One area of focus has been that of values, attitudes, and behaviour and how to develop these aspects of character in a positive and productive way. How do we empower individuals to choose their own set of values? What kind of specialised training is necessary for educators to integrate values into existing programmes? How can values-based education prepare students for lifelong learning in their communities?

REASONS FOR INTERFAITH ACTIVITY

What is interfaith activity for? Is it:

(a) A process to bring better understanding between religious people and communities?

For an example of this, read the following extract from *The Challenge of Grass-Roots Peace-Making in Israel/Palestine:* The Example of Open House by Peter Riddell:

> To what degree can 'grass-roots peace-making' have an effect on bringing justice in power relations between nations? Many of those who are engaged at this level must have asked themselves this question as violence exploded between Palestinians and Israelis just days after this evening event.

(b) A theological exchange to determine what is shared and what is different about world religions?

For an example of this, read the following extract from From Fundamentalism to Interfaith Dialogue? By Richard Thompson

> Part of the Hindu input was a salutary reminder to us about the limitation of words and concepts. We were delighted to be told a parable of an "Inter-Number Conference".

(c) An attempt to create a new world religion?

No examples—this hasn't succeeded yet! However, many people feel threatened by interfaith because they feel this is its agenda. This may indeed be the case for some, who see an ultimate harmony in such a unitary world religion, just as several historical traditions have, at one time or another, felt that the world would be blessed if everyone converted to that particular tradition. The overwhelming majority of

those involved in interfaith activity, however, recognise the richness and blessing of religious diversity and hope to learn something more from interfaith about the Divine Reality.

(d) Something else?

Issues-based activity, for instance, to address poverty and development?

For an example of this, read the following extract from Values and Transformation: Changing World Economics by Kishore Shah

> Andrew Rogerson, the World Bank Representative for United Kingdom and Ireland,… explained how the World Bank was trying to put new approaches into place by assisting governments in developing countries to develop their own strategies.

Or for inner transformation and social harmony?

For an example of this, read the following extract from *On the practice of Meditation* by John Hick:

> I have been practising meditation, in a faltering sort of way, for some years, using the mindfulness (satipatthana) method that I learned from the Sri Lankan Buddhist monk Nyanaponika Mahathera, whom I first met in his forest hermitage outside Kandy some twenty-five years ago.

Types of Interfaith Activity

As there are many different reasons for interfaith activity, so there are many different types of interfaith engagement. Here are some of the definitions given by a selection of scholars.

Professor John Hick, recently interviewed by the International Interfaith Centre as part of its Faith and Interfaith video series, identified 3 main types of interfaith activity:

"I myself have been involved in three kinds of interfaith dialogue.

Professor Eck has identified these 6 categories:

"The first is parliamentary style dialogue. She traces this back to the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions and sees it carried forward by the international interfaith organisations, although…their way of working is now very different from the approach of the World's Parliament.

Reverend Alan Race:

"To say that 'dialogue is a whole new way of thinking' leaves open the question of how to chart the relationships that are implied by such an assessment. Let me express this by way of what I call the Dialogue Grid:

Marcus Braybrooke writes in 'Pilgrimage of Hope':

"There are various levels of dialogue and it is a process of growth. An initial requirement is an openness to and acceptance of the other. It takes time to build trust and to deepen relationships. This is why some continuity in a dialogue group is helpful and why patience and time are necessary – all of which are particularly difficult to ensure at an international level.

Norman Solomon, previously Director of the Centre for the Study of Judaism and Jewish/Christian Relations at Selly Oak, Birmingham, said in his inaugural lecture there:

"Dialogue admits of degrees: there is dialogue which is of value though it does not reach deep. Much of the dialogue between Jews and Christians is a matter of simply learning to be nice to each other, trying a little to understand what the other is doing, co-operating in social endeavour.

The Origins of Interfaith as a Contemporary Movement

Interfaith as a dialogue between people of different religious traditions has been happening ever since people began to identify themselves with a particular type of religious belief and practice. Interfaith as a contemporary or modern movement is understood to have begun with the 1st Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893.

When the parliament opened on 11 September 1893, more than four thousand people crowded into the hall of Columbus. At ten o'clock, representatives of a dozen faiths marched down the aisle, arm in arm. On the platform the central position was taken by Cardinal Gibbons, 'clad in scarlet robes'….Henry Barrows describes those seated next to the Cardinal. 'On either side of him were grouped the Oriental delegates, whose many coloured raiment vied with his own in brilliancy. Conspicuous among these followers of Brahma and Buddha and Mohammed was the eloquent monk Vivekananda of Bombay, clad in gorgeous red apparel, his bronze face surmounted with a huge turban of yellow. Beside him in orange and white, sat B.B. Nagarkar of the Brahmo-Samaj and Dharmapala from Ceylon.' One can sense the organisers' excitement…that, afterall the time and correspondence, people from around the world had assembled in Chicago. Names on papers had begun to become friends. As Barrows said in his opening address, 'When, a few days ago, I met for the first time the delegates who have come to us from Japan, and shortly after the delegates who have come to us from India, I felt that the arms of human brotherhood had reached almost around the globe.

One of the speakers mentioned above was Swami Vivekananda, who was born in Calcutta, India in 1863. Swamiji's words at the 1st Parliament of the World's Religions are now recognised, in the West, as the foundation of the modern interfaith movement. The following addresses he gave to the Parliament may help to explain why: Addresses at the Parliament of Religions

At the end of the parliament there was an air of hopefulness about its future impact. Marcus Braybrooke describes this in Pilgrimage of Hope:

> Looking back after a century which has seen the bloodiest of wars and the resurgence of religious extremism and intolerance, it may seem that the dreams of the Chicago World's Parliament of Religions were as short lived as the euphoria and the buildings of the exposition.

Alan Race assesses the impact of the Parliament from a contemporary point of view in the following way, comparing it to the centennial event of the Parliament held in1993:

> From the perspective of those involved in organised international movements for interfaith dialogue, the first Parliament of the World's Religions, held in Chicago in 1893, is being reclaimed as the beginning of 'the interfaith movement' in the modern era.

The Interfaith Movement Now

After the first Parliament in 1893 groups began to form to consider the relationships between religions and the need for better communication and cooperation to address common local, national and global concerns. A growing interest and curiosity arose about the 'other' and what s/he might think and believe and do. This was linked to new discoveries in theology and science that undermined the certainties of earlier generations. It also led to an increased interaction between cultures and beliefs as people migrated and travel became more affordable.

In 1993 the whole year was dedicated to inter-religious understanding and cooperation and amongst many interfaith events around the world, there was a second Parliament in Chicago to mark the centenary of the first. This special 1993 year and the second Parliament gave rise to several more new developments in the interfaith movement, and today there are a number of local, national and international interfaith organisations addressing a wide variety of issues and concerns.

In March 2001 the International Interfaith Centre convened a meeting in Oxford that was attended by representatives from 14 of the international interfaith organisations. During the meeting agreement was reached to informally network with each other to improve communication and cooperation.

BUILDING GOOD RELATIONS WITH PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT FAITHS AND BELIEFS

Interfaith dialogue and activity depends on trust and good relations being established between individuals, organisations and communities. The Interfaith Network of the UK offers the following guidelines:

As members of the human family, we should show each other respect and courtesy. In our dealings with people of other faiths and beliefs this means exercising good will and:

- Respecting other people's freedom within the law to express their beliefs and convictions
- Learning to understand what others actually believe and value, and letting them express this in their own terms
- Respecting the convictions of others about food, dress and social etiquette and not behaving in ways which cause needless offence
- Recognising that all of us at times fall short of the ideals of our own traditions and never comparing our own ideals with other people's practices
- Working to prevent disagreement from leading to conflict
- Always seeking to avoid violence in our relationships.

When we talk about matters of faith with one another, we need to do so with sensitivity, honesty and straightforwardness.

- Recognising that listening as well as speaking is necessary for a genuine conversation
- Being honest about our beliefs and religious allegiances
- Not misrepresenting or disparaging other people's beliefs and practices
- Correcting misunderstanding or misrepresentations not only of our own but also of other faiths whenever we come across them
- Being straightforward about our intentions
- Accepting that in formal interfaith meetings there is a particular responsibility to ensure that the religious commitment of all

those who are present will be respected. All of us want others to understand and respect our views. Some people will also want to persuade others to join their faith. In a multifaith society where this is permitted, the attempt should always be characterised by self-restraint and a concern for the other's freedom and dignity.

THE WISDOM OF DIALOGUE

Things aren't always what they seem. Interfaith dialogue can help us to know others as they really are and help dissolve mis-understandings.

Two traveling angels stopped to spend the night in the home of a wealthy family.

The family was rude and refused to let the angels stay in the mansion's guest room.

Instead the angels were given a small space in the cold basement.

As they made their bed on the hard floor, the older angel saw a hole in the wall and repaired it.

When the younger angel asked why, the older angel replied,

"Things aren't always what they seem."

The next night the pair came to rest at the house of a very poor, but very hospitable farmer and his wife.

After sharing what little food they had the couple let the angels sleep in their bed where they could have a good night's rest.

When the sun came up the next morning the angels found the farmer and his wife in tears.

Their only cow, whose milk had been their sole income, lay dead in the field.

The younger angel was infuriated and asked the older angel how could you have let this happen?

The first man had everything, yet you helped him, she accused.

The second family had little but was willing to share everything, and you let the cow die.

"Things aren't always what they seem," the older angel replied.

"When we stayed in the basement of the mansion, I noticed there was gold stored in that hole in the wall.

Since the owner was so obsessed with greed and unwilling to share his good fortune, I sealed the wall so he wouldn't find it."

"Then last night as we slept in the farmers bed, the angel of death came for his wife. I gave him the cow instead.

Things aren't always what they seem."

SUMMARY

Interfaith activity can be seen as a major component in and contributor to promoting peace and co-existence between people and communities of faith. This has always been the case and people from a wide variety of countries and conflicts have used interfaith dialogue and action as a medium for more harmonious co-existence. The tragic events of September 11th 2001 and the sorrow of the Afghan people in the war that followed made the significance of interfaith activity clearer to many more people.

The network of international interfaith organisations issued this joint statement:

In response to recent tragic events in the United States of America and ongoing conflicts with religious dimensions around the world, our international interfaith organisations offer our inter-religious dialogue expertise and resources to address the current crisis and promote peace building initiatives.

We have direct experience of bringing into peaceful and constructive dialogue the mainstream and marginalised, moderate and militant religious voices of our world.

Working with the world's faith communities, we have found that inter-religious dialogue can help heal wounds by feelings of injustice, isolation, and inequality.

Our international interfaith organisations with their global outreach and networks offer peaceful alternatives to war.

Interfaith activity then can help:

- to eliminate ignorance and reduce stereotyping and prejudice about particular religions and religious communities
- to lay firm foundations to overcome differences or to meet common goals at local and national levels by building confidence and trust through rational dialogue and co-operative action

- to link relevant religious and multinational organisations to mitigate against terrorist responses to situations by:
    - improving communication
    - facilitating dialogue and deep listening
    - addressing together perceived injustices
    - understanding or respecting different value systems and learning about them.

The overview of interfaith activity offered in Introduction to Interfaith shows you some of the various

- responses to religious pluralism
- challenges of living in multi-religious, multi-cultural societies
- motives for using interfaith dialogue and encounter to meet these challenges.

INSPIRATION

Sri Swami Satchidananda, Founder, Lotus Center of World Faiths, wrote the following as part of an article for an International Interfaith Centre Newsletter:

> We are all bound to each other; and at the same time, we are all afraid of each other. Interfaith dialogue can help us understand that we are all interconnected. It can help us build bridges and gain greater understanding of these truths. Then, we will no longer consider fighting as a solution to our problems. Instead, we will want to reach out to each other. We will want to be friends. It would be a greater freedom to stop hiding behind our arms and bravely stretch out a hand and offer an open heart.

> We should rise above all the differences and see our spiritual oneness; we should learn to love each other and to always appreciate the nice things that people do. When we come together in the name of dialogue, we should not always be pinpointing the mistakes of others. Instead, if you keep on talking about the good things, you will forget all the superficial differences that divide us. We do not need to label or deny people because of our differences. If you go a little deeper, where is the black and where is the white? Where is the yellow and where is the brown? The spirit has no black or white or yellow or brown. This is the real spiritual life: talking in terms of spirit, loving in terms of spirit. That is the real spirit of dialogue, union or communion.We cannot have communion with God without having communion with our fellow beings.

Many people say to me, "The world is going to collapse at any moment". I do not think so. I consider this a transitory period. We are witnessing a great change. I see a very bright future for humankind and I really feel we are going to see a better world. In fact, we are seeing it already. I am a person who travels constantly around the globe. Wherever I go, I see an increasing openness to interfaith dialogue and commitment to world peace. I have confidence in the international interfaith movement. I believe in the people who are sowing the seeds of health and happiness, of peace and goodness. This world is going to be filled with people who love each other, care for each other, and together build peace through better understanding.

INTERFAITH INITIATIVES

Freedom of religion and belief is a topic that intersects closely with interfaith work. Why? Because if one learns about and respects the views of those of different belief systems, then rights to these freedoms are more likely to be guaranteed. Hence, organisations in these fields tend to work quite closely together. The network of international interfaith organisations is one example of this collaboration.

Another example of collaborative work was an event sponsored in February 2003 by the Ramakrishna Mission in India. The Mission, a member group of IARF, celebrated a year of Interfaith and Religious Freedom Activities. Besides a rally that attracted thousands of people, the Mission regularly sponsors interfaith study circles and educational programmes for children. When one hears media reports about the many religious tensions that divide India, it is refreshing to see that there are activities bringing so many diverse traditions together.

Despite the obvious links with interfaith work, there are also several international non-governmental organisations that deal more specifically with the topic of freedom of religion or belief. These include:

- The International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) is an international organisation, which has the aim of working for freedom of religion and belief at a global level. Encouraging interfaith dialogue and tolerance is part of this agenda and IARF has over 90 affiliated member groups in approximately 25 countries from a wide range of faith traditions. With member organisations, regional co-ordinators, and national chapters around the world, the IARF is well placed to promote religious freedom concerns globally.

- The Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Beliefis an international network of representatives from faith communities, NGOs, international organisations and academia, with the aim of promoting freedom of religion or belief and strengthening interfaith co-operation worldwide.

- A Brussels-based site called Human Rights without Frontiers has produced country by country reports since 1997 on freedom of conscience and religion. News on religious intolerance and discrimination in the world is filed both by country and chronologically.

- The People's Decade for Human Rights, a non-profit organisation based in New York, has a very good document explaining the right to freedom of religion and belief and the guarantees of this right in international instruments.

Additionally, some governments and international organisations offer good research on the topic of religious freedom. Check out the following links:

- The UN website for freedom of religion from this page go to "Religious Intolerance."

- A very good site sponsored by the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) offers information about legal instruments around the world dealing with freedom of religion.

- The US Commission on Religious Freedom is a US-based independent monitoring body, which has good research reports on the freedom of religion and belief in different countries.

- The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has a site specifically devoted to freedom of religion and belief on the European continent.

INTRODUCTION

In some societies, it can be all too easy to take the right to freedom of religion and belief for granted. We might not know, for example, what it would feel like to be put in jail for professing a genuine faith or belief system. What if, as a religious minority, we were denied opportunities to go to school, to receive pensions, to keep our jobs, or to have our marriages registered? What if we went to a private home for a religious class and always had to worry whether authorities would raid that home and confiscate the literature? Or, what if we

went to our place of worship anticipating that this spot which is holy to us might soon be demolished or destroyed?

All of these things do happen to some people. In extreme cases, admitting to believing in a certain way risks a death warrant, regardless of whether those beliefs are a private matter or become a public manifestation. Just to believe in a way which is different from the accepted norm is enough to single you out for some form of persecution, little or big. It's hard for some of us to imagine a life like that.

How strongly would we need to believe to withstand that kind of persecution and discrimination? Would we measure up to the test? Would our faith be strong enough? Why does it matter to me?

You may not be personally religious and non-belief, or secularism, is an equally protected international right. Even if this is the case, how people define their religious and belief commitments remains a key element of politics and human rights. Freedom of religion and belief does matter, even if it is an often overlooked area of international affairs. Unfortunately, those experts who follow the subject generally claim that the situation of freedom of religion and belief has deteriorated over the past decade.

While the West may think of itself as mainly secular, religious or other belief identities still play a major role in social cohesion or breakdown in every country. Furthermore, no country is immune from experiencing various forms of religious discrimination, regardless of whether rights to freedom of belief are enshrined in a country's constitution. Even in Europe, legislative initiatives are being put forward that restrict the rights of religious or belief communities to openly practise their faith. In some countries, the rights and privileges accorded to 'traditional' faith groups are greater than those granted to minority faiths.

While you may not be persecuted for your beliefs, there's no guarantee that there will not be a time (and a place) that you find yourself in a different situation. Thus, making sure that all have the freedom to worship as they wish is in everyone's longer term interest.

TYPES OF PERSECUTION

Discriminations against those of various faiths (or none) exist in many different forms. Amazing, really, how many creative ways can be found to discriminate against someone for their beliefs!

Imagine, for example, that your friend and next door neighbour is from a different religion. It's only because of this one difference, however, that she/he can go to school and you can't. How would you feel about that? What might it mean for your future career prospects? Deciding between having an education and/or staying true to your faith is a pretty tough choice. Unfortunately, it's one that some people have to make.

Denial of basic human rights like access to education, the opportunity to have one's marriage registered, and to receive pensions is one form that such persecution can take. Legislation in some countries also places tougher registration requirements on those professing a minority faith. Consequences can include a restriction on activities, closure of religious institutions, or confiscation of literature. Sometimes entire faith or belief communities are targeted for violence, often becoming 'scapegoats' for broader political conflicts. While places used for worship have a right to be protected, there are, in many cases, unreasonable restrictions placed on building such properties and/or ones that exist may be destroyed. Such persecution represents an attack on very important symbols for a given community. Perhaps there is no greater test of faith than being imprisoned for one's beliefs, and this still happens in many countries. Arrests, detentions, and longer-term prison sentences are, unfortunately, commonplace when it comes to persecution over matters of faith and belief.

The examples below are drawn from incidents in different countries over the period of March 2001-March 2003. These events really happened and show the types of persecution and discrimination that can occur.

1. Restrictive Legislation

- Passage of a restrictive religion law, widely criticised for its overly broad interpretations of what is considered appropriate religious practice. (France)

- Strict registration requirements and general monopoly of the Orthodox Church in some regions, resulting in discrimination of other churches and religions. (Russia)

- A law was drafted, which gave only certain churches and communities the status of a legal entity. Others would have had to fulfil various conditions in order to be registered. (Serbia)

- Passage of a restrictive religion law, which prohibits religions that have existed in the country for less than 20 years from publishing literature or setting up missions. (Belarus)

2. Violence against Specific Religious or Belief Groups

- Escalating group violence against worshippers of non-Orthodox faiths, especially Evangelical Christians and Jehovah's Witnesses. The government has failed to prosecute those responsible. (Georgia)

- Assaults on Jews and vandalising of their homes, businesses, and places of worship. (Belgium, Germany, and the UK)

- Physical assaults on Muslims, firebombing of mosques, and hate speeches directed towards the Muslim community. (USA and Australia)

- Bloody religious clashes between Muslims and Christians (N. Nigeria) and between Muslims and Hindus. (India)

3. Human Rights Discriminations against Religious or Belief Groups

- Prohibitions on the wearing of headscarves for Muslim women. (Turkey)

- Muslims are denied rights of citizenship and cannot receive national identity cards. Among other things, this effects their ability to get jobs. (Burma)

- Members of the Bahá'í Faith are denied pensions and opportunities for students to go on to tertiary education are also denied. (Iran)

- Town councils have refused to register the residencies of certain belief groups (Japan).

4. Incidents Involving Religious Property

- Destruction of two Buddhist statues, which were renowned as both religious and archaeological treasures. (Afghanistan)

- Destruction of mosques by security forces as well as series of attacks on Orthodox churches by unknown arsonists. (Macedonia)

- Lack of restitution of property to mosques and churches, which continue to be state owned. (Bulgaria and Romania)

- Public worship by non-Muslims is banned and places of worship other than mosques are not permitted. (Saudi Arabia)

5. Arrests and Detentions

- Both Buddhist and Christian leaders continue to face arbitrary detention and arrest. (Vietnam)

- Only the Russian Orthodox Church and the state-approved Spiritual Directorate of Muslims are officially registered. Prayer

meetings of other religious groups are frequently raided and worshippers detained. (Turkmenistan)

- Several thousand Muslims are in jail for religious reasons, as only one governmental body sanctions the practice of Islam (Uzbekistan)
- Members of the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement have been detained, arrested, or sent to labour camps. (China)
- Jehovah's Witnesses are jailed for their beliefs related to conscientious objection to military service. (Armenia)

IS ANY RELIGION OR BELIEF IMMUNE?

Religious Freedom in the World: A global report on freedom and persecution (published by Freedom House in 2000) states that:

Religious freedom and religious persecution affect all religious groups. A variety of groups—Christians and animists in Sudan, Bahá'ís in Iran, Ahmadiyas in Pakistan, Buddhists in Tibet, and Falun Gong in China—are perhaps the most intensely persecuted, while Christians are the most widely persecuted group.... Religions, whether large, such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism, or small, such as Bahá'í, Jehovah's Witness, or Judaism, all suffer to some degree. In many cases, these restrictions come from people who are members of the same general religious group but who are part of a different subgroup. Thus, non-Orthodox Christians in Russia, Greece, and Armenia suffer discrimination from the Orthodox, while Shiite Muslims in Pakistan and Afghanistan suffer persecution and even death from some of the dominant Sunni groups. Religious freedom is also not confined to one area or continent.

If you belong to a belief community that is 'free' in one part of the world, it may not be so in another part of the world. It all depends on whether that group is a majority, or a minority, in a given country. Nor should we forget the belief systems such as atheism or humanism. While these groups have been persecutors (such as under Communism), they have also suffered persecution themselves in highly religious societies. For all of these reasons, it is very important to advocate for the rights of all religious and belief communities, wherever they may be.

GLOBAL CASE STUDIES

Although the situation is far worse in some countries than others, no country can claim a perfect record where freedom of religion or

belief is concerned. ('Types of Persecution' showed that these discriminations take place in a diversity of countries.)

Fire-bombings of synagogues in France, the forcible disbanding of churches in Vietnam, denial of the rights of citizenship to Muslims in Burma, violent attacks against Jehovah's Witnesses in Georgia, and religiously motivated riots in India and Nigeria are just some examples.

There is good news sometimes too, for example, initiatives to promote greater tolerance in Mexico and court cases giving new protections for religious groups in the United States.

To get further information on all of these situations (and many more), click on the following link: Global issues this link reviews situations of religious discrimination in different parts of the world in 2002-2003.

As you review these case studies, can you:

Note any patterns to religious persecution, by faith group or region?

Define the crucial factors necessary to ensure that the right to freedom of religion or belief is protected (especially for vulnerable groups)?

Think of reasons why some people might be threatened by the beliefs of others?

WHAT DOES THE UNITED NATIONS SAY ABOUT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM?

In the preface to Freedom of Religion and Belief–A World Report, Abdelfattah Amor, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief, wrote in 1999:

> Any examination of freedom of religion or belief today needs to address the massive religious revival which is characterising the end of the century. Should we anticipate in the wake of this revival an increase in tolerance, enlightenment and freedom, or are we to be faced with greater intolerance and discrimination, condemned to a further period of extremism, darkness and inquisition?

There is no question that religion can play an important role in transforming society in positive ways. However, as UN Rapporteur, Prof. Amor has also called attention to the dangers posed by religious extremism and to the 'exploitation of religion for political and partisan purposes.' Of course, violence often spreads where fundamental freedoms are not safeguarded. Sometimes governments themselves may deny these rights and/or there may be tensions within and between

religious groups themselves. For all of these reasons, it is imperative for everyone to understand the human rights guarantees that are enshrined in international law.

These rights give everyone the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. This right is established in several legal documents, most importantly in Article 18 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948). In November 1981, the UN's General Assembly adopted the *Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief*. It took the UN's member states nearly twenty years (from the early 1960s) to agree to the terms of this declaration and it is considered a landmark document for setting international standards for rights to freedom of religion or belief.

Article 1 of the Declaration states that:

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have a religion or whatever belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have a religion or belief of his choice.

3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or belief may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

Study the articles of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief:

• What do you think about these articles? Are they strong enough? Are there important things that are not covered?

• Do you think these rights are fully respected in your country? If so, in what ways? If not, in what ways?

• If your religious freedom was denied (how could this happen?), would these articles be helpful to you?

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

One consequence of globalisation, whether we like it or not, is a pluralistic society where many different beliefs co-exist. How should society respond to this challenge? Should it ban beliefs that are not considered acceptable by some? Is so, who will define what is an

acceptable belief and what is not? Should the issue be looked at from a global or a national perspective? What is the role of dialogue between different cultures, minorities and belief systems?

If you read media stories, you have probably heard of 'cults' that encourage their followers to commit suicide, situations where certain 'religious' groups have abused young people, and/or about groups that take advantage of others for financial profit.

In view of these stories, should there be limits to religious freedom?

The international community says that there should be when it is "necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others."

Believing whatever you like is one thing, engaging in practices that are harmful to others is a different matter altogether. It is up to different religious communities to ensure that their own practices uphold the fundamental dignity and human rights of their members and others.

In thinking about rights and their related responsibilities:

(a) What limits would you place on religious freedom and why?

(b) What types of behaviour would you like to see religious or belief communities regulate for themselves on a voluntary basis?

(You may wish to reflect on a religious or belief community with which you are familiar).

HARD QUESTIONS

Sometimes, in fact often, the rights of different groups conflict. The scenario below is drawn from real-life religious freedom situations in different countries and shows how complex it might be to determine who has the right to do what. How would you resolve these problems?

Scenario on Religious Freedom

The majority of the population from Country A is from one dominant faith. As such, this faith's institutions have some influence over the government's policies and education programmes in the country. While the country's Constitution guarantees religious freedom, some minority and ethnic groups operate in the country. They are required, however, to have state authority to function. Under this policy, places of worship must conform to established zoning laws.

Members of one minority group have been holding "house church" meetings because they do not have enough financial resources to have their own centre. This group claims they are not breaking any criminal laws and have a right to both religious freedom and private meetings in their own homes. Parents in the neighbourhood, however, have complained to the authorities that minors are attending these meetings, are being "brainwashed" by their teachings, and being encouraged to convert.

Some members of the dominant faith in Country A have raided a few of the "house church" meetings and threatened the participants.

Your group is representing an international organisation that is to issue advice to the parties concerned about how to resolve this conflict. What kind of brief statement would you make?

Some questions to reflect on:

- Does the government have the right to break up these meetings and/or declare them illegal? If so, on what grounds?
- What responsibilities does the minority faith group and/or members of the dominant faith have to the community?
- Is there additional information in this case you would want to ask for?
- Are there creative solutions to the above problems that would bring people together rather than create more divisions?

SUMMARY

Despite freedom of religion and belief being a fundamental principle of international law, there are many violations of this right in today's world. No country, or faith community, has a perfect record where this right is concerned. It's also a very complex issue at times, *i.e.* the balance between rights and responsibilities, like many other areas of human rights law, is not always entirely clear.

Since human rights and law are so closely intertwined, freedom of religion and belief is a topic that can sometimes be all too easy to discuss at the abstract level. However, it helps to remember that, in some parts of the world, freedom of religion or belief is a very human concern. Some individuals risk death for their beliefs. Alternatively, others, because they profess a particular faith, are not given the basic rights that many of us take for granted. In sum, it's an issue that affects real people in all kinds of real ways. Read the excerpts/stories below to see how:

They took me back to my cell, and the next day tortured me again by giving me another seventy-four lashes with a wire cable on the soles of my feet and on my back.… The interrogators often came to my cell in the middle of the night to deprive me of sleep. They wanted the names of all the people who attended my classes, even the children's classes, and the names of the National Spiritual Assembly members and the local committees.

Tuba Zá'irpúr, a Bahá'í woman killed for her beliefs in Iran in 1983.

They [the military regime] don't give us identity cards. For example, after we finish high school we are supposed to go to university, but based on identity cards, we have no right to travel, so as a part of that we also don't have the right to learn anymore. … When they forbid us to travel from place to place that includes education, health and social relations.

From a Muslim villager in Burma where many Muslims are denied rights of citizenship, 2002.

I went to courts to attend hearings where innocent people were being tried for being Christians. I met with the young girls and women who had paid a heavy price to be Christians and I also met some other suffering families. I met men who were tortured by police because they were Christians and with students and unemployed youngsters. They have a lot of questions in their eyes, but I had no answer to their plight. You may have answers.

Nasir Saeed, Centre for Legal Aid Assistance and Settlement, commenting on the plight of Christians in Pakistan, 2002.

We've been strongly reminded of the fact that we're Jews in chains, chained to one spot, without any rights, but with a thousand obligations. We must put our feelings aside; we must be brave and strong, bear discomfort without complaint, do whatever is in our power and trust in God. One day this terrible war will be over. The time will come when we'll be people again and not just Jews!

From the Diary of Anne Frank, 1944.

Even if you feel powerless to help in complex situations like these, you can make a difference by combatting ignorance about religion and belief. It is such ignorance, sometimes promoted by religious and political leaders themselves, that often fuels such religious persecution. For example, are fanatic adherents of your own faith putting down those who believe differently?

Swami Agnivesh and Valson Thampu in Harvest of Hate: Gujurat Under Siege spoke very movingly to this theme when talking about religiously-motivated riots in 2002.

What are you achieving in the name of God? A jungle of spite and death where boys roar and range like beasts to slit the throats of neighbours in human sacrifice? Won't you stop this rape of religion? Or this religious rape? We don't know what to call it: you get us all so confused.

In regards to this debate, there are also important questions to ask about your own position. Do you really understand what your own religion says about 'tolerance?' What can you do when someone humiliates a person with another, and possibly misunderstood, belief system? Can you befriend someone who has a belief system that you do not know much about? Most importantly, what activities can you initiate in your own community to foster inter-religious dialogue? It is only by fighting the prejudices in our own environments that the climate can be created, in the longer term, for eliminating persecution and discrimination based on religion and belief.

INSPIRATION

Freedom of religion is an ancient value. Twenty three centuries ago King Asoka, patron of Buddhism, recommended to his subjects a principle of tolerance that sounds as fresh today as when it was propounded:

Acting thus, we contribute to the progress of our creed by serving others. Acting otherwise, we harm our own faith, bringing discredit upon the others. He who exalts his own belief discrediting all others, does so surely to display his religion with the intention of making a display of it. But behaving thus, he gives it the hardest blow.

The Torah, in the Book of Leviticus (19:33-4), expressed the ideal of actively embracing strangers in the following words:

And if a stranger stays with you in your land, you shall do him no wrong. The stranger that stays with you shall be to you as the homeborn among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

The Torah

The Prophet Mohammed, the Messenger of Islam, issued a code of conduct to his followers in Najran in which he said:

To the Christians of Najran and its neighbouring territories, the security of God and the pledge of Mohammed the Prophet, the Messenger of God, are extended for their lives, their religion, their land, their property, to their caravans, their messengers and their images.

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6

INTERFAITH MARRIAGES: RELATED ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Although the Christian Orthodox Church has some of the most restrictive policies on intermarriage, the rate has risen steadily around the world. The Orthodox response has been to focus on the opportunities offered by the possibility of pastoral flexibility expressed in guidelines known as *economia.* The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) guidelines emphasize sensitivity to cultural differences and advise negotiating legal issues within the context of the non-Presbyterian community.

As intermarried populations grow worldwide, children, particularly, may feel less isolated; they will have specifically interfaith communities to identify with. In the United States, on the cutting edge of intermarriage trends, the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first has seen an exponential growth of non-denominational networking groups for interfaith couples and the beginnings of schools and curricula specifically designed for children of interfaith couples (Rosenbaum 2002).

Relatively high involvement and commitment of interchurch couples can be viewed as an opportunity for ecumenical understanding rather than a threat to traditional values (Association of Interchurch Families 2000). They may even provide a foundation for future reconciliation among Christian denominations. This opportunity may be extrapolated to other sorts of intermarriage to improve pluralistic tolerance. In North America particularly, the growth of the non-Christian population coupled with an emphasis on individual rather than communal identity may promote interfaith understanding, with intermarriage as at least one vehicle of communication.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT MIXED MARRIAGE?

We have been studying four ways a society can get stressed out per (Prov. 30:21-23) "For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear: For a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat; For an odious woman when she is married; and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress." In going over the basics of courtship referred to in my book *Biblical Courtship Basics* we saw that the extreme case of an interfaith marriage—between a Christian and a non-Christian—is sanctified.

In fact, I dwelt somewhat long on the subject of mixed marriage as there is a lot of misunderstanding concerning it. Now I want to elaborate still more, and why is that?

The widespread church (not scriptural) prohibition against such interfaith marriage has resulted in the following societal stresses:

- People who have been engaged to, or going with, or just interested in someone of the opposite sex who is not a Christian, upon conversion have had their hearts broken by being forced to break up, and the other one's heart too.

- A golden opportunity for a Christian to live out his life before an unbeliever has been lost, and a bad reflection made on Christianity.

- We allow the world to develop its own standards of male-female relations apart from scriptural ones when Christians are not dating non-christians and playing the field.

- Because Christians are not in competition with non-christians in mate selection, spiritual pride may develop when one feels so good about belonging to the Lord that he or she neglects to relate well to his love interest in a rubber-meets-the-road way down here.

- Other problems which I have not mentioned and may not even be aware of as the whole field of male-female relations is complex and many-layered, and the consequence of misunderstanding or misapplying God's word is a yield of bad fruit whether we understand its cause or not.

Some Christians and churches understand well that interfaith marriage is sanctified, but they tend to get marginalised by other believers who are against it. As we study God's word, in theory we should be able to discern our errors and correct our practice, but as a

practical matter some errors are consistently passed over, especially ones that have been incorporated into modern Bible translations. I have tried to correct erroneous thinking on this subject when I encountered it, and I find that while I can win the argument by sound scriptural reasoning, I have, in many cases, been unable to change people's minds as they think that reinforcements are in the wings waiting to defeat my viewpoint. These supposed reinforcements include:

Modern Bible translations.

In an effort to make their translations *clear*, translators have taken to paraphrasing commands that don't clearly say what they think they should mean instead of leaving them be.

Greek scholarship.

But the Bible is translated well enough if we only consider the context and what it says.

Imaginary context.

That is when they imagine what the context must be to produce their result without actually looking at the context that's there.

Expert opinions.

Aside from the fact that experts sometimes disagree among themselves, those with special knowledge and insight in areas can still succumb to the same errors as everyone else in putting it together.

The Bible as a whole.

Here I've found myself winning an argument on a verse by verse basis only to find my opponent tell me that the Bible as a whole supports his own viewpoint.

Commentaries.

A good commentary will say that Christians are divided on the issue of such mixed (interfaith) marriage and leave it to us to argue it out.

The church as a whole.

Here I am made to feel that I am the only one in all of Christianity who believes the way I do. Not so. I am in the company of Jesus, Paul, and many other respectable brothers.

I've found myself under tremendous pressure to regard interfaith marriage as unsanctified, and I know better. I can well imagine what

it must be like for a new convert in the Lord, of marriageable age, to confront all this pressure when he doesn't even know the scripture or know that some popular Bible versions are not to be trusted. By all means stick to the King James Version.

The newly converted brother or sister with an as yet unconverted love interest might find himself in an awkward position being pressured by his church to dump that one—and to be fair he probably should if it could never lead to an acceptable marriage—while he is not conversant in the scriptures to defend keeping together. It wouldn't bother me. I have read the Bible several times and can put together an adequate defense for a mixed marriage—Christian to non-Christian—, so I'll go with whomever I please (in the Lord). This new convert, however, must make a major decision *before* he's had time for extensive Bible study. If this applies to you, by all means read on as I shall show you how to get out of the dilemma.

Teacher Steve Gregg was posed a question on his radio programme by a man whether he should be involved in such and such a business venture with an unbeliever. Steve quoted (II Cor. 6:14a) "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:" telling him that it applies to marriage *although not given in a context talking about marriage*, but whether or not to apply it to a business venture is a value judgment. Steve is more forthcoming than some teachers about the actual implications of a text, but you may read for yourself that Paul is not talking about marriage in II Corinthians 6, or anywhere else in that epistle for that matter. You are a new convert. If someone quotes that verse—and they will—, just point out that since it's not given in a context of marriage discussion, you need to acquire a basic understanding of scripture up to that point before you make any radical decision based on a single verse out-of-context. Your plan is this: you are going to read the books of the New Testament one by one *in the order they are presented in the canon*, *i.e.* Matthew, Mark, Luke, John etc., and when you get to II Corinthians, if you see that verse telling you to break up with your unbelieving intended, then so be it. I don't feel you need to be rushed more than that. In fact read some of the Old Testament while you are at it, starting with Genesis, as that will help you understand the New.

Steve will hardly object to you, or to anyone, reading the New Testament book by book, and when you get to II Corinthians 6, he'll expect you to be in agreement with him, as he has read the Bible several times and that is what he has concluded. You are in fact only

doing what you are supposed to, per (Acts 17:11) "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so." We are not supposed to simply accept what we are told, even by an apostle, but to search the scripture ourselves whether what they say is true. We don't negate our own intelligence just because we became Christians. In fact, study with your friends the subject of marriage as they will have their own perspectives too.

Okay, the first mention of marriage we find in the NT is, surprise of surprise, Joseph wondering whether he should commit to marry his espoused Mary as she's been found with child. He's about to bow out, but he gets a visitation from an angel telling him, (Matt. 1:20b) "fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." As we are also reading Genesis, we might compare that with (Gen. 6:1ff), the "sons of God" taking wives of the "children of men" and having problematic offspring. Can we apply that to our own situation, that we a Christian are about to marry an unbeliever, and perhaps we better not if the offspring wouldn't be right? Maybe. We aren't given quite enough information yet, but it's a start. In fact we will probably find more questions than answers to start out with, but we are wary of trusting the shortcut approach. My parents used to joke about the directions: "you can't get there from here." Maybe a shortcut application of a verse out of context isn't going to help us understand what God thinks of a Christian entering a mixed marriage. Maybe our slower approach is more sure.

(Matt. 8:14-15) "And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them." Well, Peter was married. Jesus doesn't seem to comment on it one way or another, although he supported it to the extent of healing Peter's mother-in-law, who for her part ministered to Jesus and his disciples. At the very least we have some kind of positive example of a man's wife contributing to his ministry without being an apostle herself.

We don't have a whole lot of answers yet, just questions which are about to increase, then turn into an enigma, although we shall find Jesus directly addressing marriage. In Matthew chapter 19, the Pharisees tempted Jesus with a question about divorce. Moses allowed it. What would Jesus say?

Jesus used as his model Adam and Eve, saying that marriage was a permanent state until death, not to be dissolved by man writing a divorce decree—except for the case of fornication. The disciples didn't like the idea of such a permanent bondage, saying perhaps it's better not to marry in the first place. Jesus allows that not everyone is meant to remain always single, but some can do it and should. The Pharisees wonder about Moses allowing divorce, but Jesus says that is because of the hardness of their hearts.

This makes one wonder how strong is the preference for a Christian to remain single? Does he sin in marrying? Yet if he remains faithful to his wife till death, that would be okay then, wouldn't it? How about the Christian who is married to a non-believer? Jesus is following the Adamic example of the permanence of marriage, but if the spouse is not converted, then even Moses allowed divorce for the hardness of an unconverted heart. What if the unconverted spouse wants a divorce? The Christian is not supposed to divorce, so shouldn't he oppose the it with all he's got? But then wouldn't the increased strife compromise his Christian witness?

I'm afraid matters don't get any clearer by the end of the chapter. (Matt. 19:27-30) "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them,.... And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." There is a reward for forsaking all to follow Jesus, a reward of a full measure of fellowship (an hundredfold) in this life, and eternal life in the next. The forsaking all includes "or wife." Now, what can that mean, since Jesus is opposed to divorce (except for adultery)? Does this mean one should divorce his *unbelieving* spouse, applying the law of Moses? Jesus doesn't say, not in so many words.

In terms of forsaking, though, wouldn't that apply to forsaking an *intended* marriage, where perhaps the one intended is not a Christian convert? Say a man is studying to be a doctor. There are a hundred beautiful women he could pick a wife from. Doctors have status. Then he converts to Christianity. He intends to become a doctor ministering to the poor natives of Africa. His marriage prospects have suddenly vanished. He would certainly consider his decision a forsaking of a wife. He would surely find comfort in Jesus' promise. He might even find a wife afterall, the one homely sister who wants to be a

nurse and who would be just thrilled to go to Africa to minister to the needy. Here the first picks have become last, and the last first, although who knows what that means?

If we are not confused enough by this teaching, Jesus goes on to illustrate it with the parable of the laborers, (Matt. 20) "For the kingdom of heaven is like..." A householder hires laborers for a penny a day to bring in the crop. Later in the day, he hires more to get it in, and still more, later and later. End of the day, he starts with the last, paying each one a penny, and when the first get a penny they feel cheated for having put in a full day's labour to receive the same payment as those who worked only one hour. The householder is, of course, justified in paying them what they'd agreed to; he is free to spend his money as he pleases with the rest. And again we have the last being first, and vice versa, whatever that means.

Okay, we'll at least take the first step to figure this out. The payment, a penny a day. Since we have not left our brains at the door when we come to a study, we'll use some reference material here. Relax: you don't have to become a scholar; I'm going to quote from a historical novel, Ken Follett, *Pillars of the Earth*[189], which was a Literary Guild main selection, and was researched by an author passionate about the history.

They stayed at the village through the summer. Later, they came to regard this decision as a terrible mistake, but at the time it seemed sensible enough, for Tom and Agnes and Alfred could each earn a penny a day working in the fields during the harvest. When autumn came, and they had to move on, they had a heavy bag of silver pennies and a fat pig.

A silver penny was, during the Middle Ages, a proper payment for a day's labour. It seemed to be worth more than it is today, but the idea of a penny is one that isn't divided down. The reward for forsaking all was "an hundredfold" in fellowship and eternal life. One cannot divide down eternal life, and presumably the hundredfold of fellowship applies to various actual degrees of forsaking all depending on circumstance. Even the ones hired that last hour put their all into it. How that applies to forsaking wife, well, we are not told that here.

Okay, the synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke—haven't really enlightened us completely on the situation of marriage, just hints and questions. John writes from a different perspective, so let's see what he has to say. John 2 has the story of Jesus turning the water into

wine, ...at a wedding. Jesus here seems family friendly, he participated in the festivities to the extent of providing a miraculous beverage. And unlike the instance of healing Peter's wife's mother, we don't see the wedding party ministering to him and to his disciples. They do, the servants do, however, cooperate with Jesus in bringing the vessels filled with water. So Jesus will be involved in one's marriage if we'll let him, quite aside from us being missionaries in Africa or any other pronounced Christian ministry.

We note also the curious exchange between him and his mother, (vs. 4) "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee, mine hour is not yet come." We are reminded of Jesus as a child being about his Father's business in Jerusalem to the neglect of his earthly family. He hasn't changed much since he got older. Still operates by some set of priorities.

Okay, when we get into Acts and Romans, we encounter a married Gospel team Priscilla and Aquila. They help out Paul. They preach the gospel. They are just the type of marriage some of the churches I've been to exemplify and promote, like the end-all of Christian marriage is to be equally yoked in service to the Lord. I kind of expect Paul to get on the bandwagon here, and while he does commend their service, he leaves us hanging about their example of marriage.

Which brings us to I Corinthians. "Wait a minute!" you may ask, "Here we've gone through the whole New Testament up to First Corinthians when we could have taken Steve's shortcut in Second Corinthians to see how God felt about a Christian entering into a mixed marriage with an unbeliever. We've looked at all the passages on marriage so far, and frankly we're lost. We've got some ideas, but none of them are settled. Why waste time with one more book? Let's just skip to Second Corinthians and be done with it."

I sympathize with you, but reading the New Testament hasn't hurt you any. You are *supposed* to be reading it. Furthermore, I've got a trick up my sleeve. It's called I Corinthians 7. Here Paul gives some direct answers: "Now concerning the things whereof we wrote unto me..." (vs. 1). What are those things they wrote him? We don't know. There hasn't been a record preserved. So we have a bunch of questions with no answers, and a bunch of answers without the questions. How is that supposed to help us?

Well, remember back in Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are

the called according to his purpose." This is one of the cases where that happens, these answers matching up to those questions. Paul while extolling the life of a eunuch, doesn't impose it on one who can't handle it. Marriage is good too. Married Christians should be faithful and active with each other. If we are worried about marrying the unbeliever because of the state of the offspring of such a union, we need not be as the children of the mixed couple will be sanctified by the believer. We shouldn't ditch our unbelieving spouse, as we will sanctify such a one and perhaps convert him or her. And remember Jesus' coldness to Mary; here Paul says, (vs. 29) "the time is short, it remaineth that... they that have wives be as though they had none." We have to put marriage into the perspective of eternity as Jesus did ignoring his mother at times.

There is a caveat concerning a widow remarrying "only in the Lord" (vs. 39), but we probably have some idea what abiding in the Lord means even though this instance will not be elaborated until (I Tim. 5:11-12) "the younger widows,... when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, will marry; having... cast off their first faith." Marrying in the Lord is marrying not wantonly against Christ and not outside of faith. Everything should, in fact, be done in faith. And if II Corinthians 6 isn't addressing marriage *per se*, then it isn't addressing widows specifically either.

Here in the first part of I Corinthians, Paul has been chiding the Corinthians for their divisiveness. He tells us that the body of Christ is a unified whole but composed of many members. He gives a few examples of the members working together. Our callings with respect to marriage, on the other hand, are individual: (vs. 7) "For... every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that." The dynamics are different depending on one's gift. The eunuch avoids even touching a woman while the married man renders to his wife "due benevolence." While our unity in the body of Christ involves the dynamic of tending to each other in charity, our conformity to our individual callings involves following one's own dynamic. These dynamics can be different though we are all Christians.

I just use the same examples Paul does to demonstrate unity in the body, to demonstrate diversity in one's gift. (I Cor. 1:12) "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." The "Paul" camp would be the eunuchs, Apollos because of his association with Priscilla and Aquila would represent the married gospel team, Cephas (Peter) is the one whose

spouse helps minister to the Christian worker, Christ would be the throwback to Adam and Eve. These different callings have their own dynamics.

(I Cor. 3:21-22) "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's." "Paul" being ours is the calling as a eunuch for those who go that way. "Apollos" is the married gospel team for those who can swing it. "Cephas" is the one whose spouse supports his Christian ministry without having been called to it herself. "The world" is a mixed marriage to an unbeliever whether things present [an existing marriage to an unbeliever upon one's conversion], or things to come [a future marriage to an unbeliever after one's conversion]; all are your's." All these callings are acceptable.

And I am not getting too far afield in using these examples to relate to marriage, because Paul used the same ones, "the world" explicitly when he said a mixed marriage was sanctified, and here, (I Cor. 9:5) "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" "Cephas"—Peter—would be a marriage in which the wife ministers to the apostle's needs without herself being an apostle. "The brethren of the Lord" would be the Jesus-friendly marriage without a specific Christian ministry involved, and the "other apostles," by process of elimination, would be the gospel team like Priscilla and Aquila. Paul says he had the right to any of these kinds of marriage, so they would be, of course, sanctified, just as was the mixed marriage. (He couldn't use the mixed marriage example in a *rhetorical* question, because as he had to explain it to them, it wouldn't be *automatically* understood.)

Now we can understand the application to marriage of the parable of the laborers. The gospel team marriage, like Priscilla and Aquila, would be the full day laborers for the reward of a penny: an hundredfold of blessing and fellowship plus eternal life. The laborers from the third hour would be those marriages where one spouse has a specific ministry which the other spouse supports without being an actual part of it. The sixth and ninth hour start laborers would be those marriages that while not involved in a specific Christian ministry *per se* are nevertheless welcoming to Jesus' involvement in them. And the laborers from the eleventh hour, those would be where a Christian marries a non-Christian and is responsible for the labour of being with his life a Christian witness to his spouse and a strong Christian influence to his children.

Come payment and we see the mixed marriage being paid first in the Bible with Paul's explicit teaching of its sanctification. The married gospel team gets paid last, as it were, by process of elimination. The point of the parable, one of them, is that there is envy of that eleventh hour worker by the full day workers for their having "borne the heat of the day" (Matthew 20:12) but receiving no more reward than that mixed marriage Christian who merely had to be a witness to his spouse. The "heat of the day" would correspond to the "trouble in the flesh" (I Cor. 7:28) that Paul imputes to marriage, there being more friction for having to coordinate Christian ministry than there is just doing the worldly things. The married Gospel team would have more frictions also because their mates were chosen from the smaller pool of the "few who are chosen" than was the mate of the mixed marriage Christian who got his from the larger pool of the "many who are called," and thus was able to select a mate with better compatibility in the flesh; at least, that's how the full day laborers will perceive it whether it's true or not. God is fair in sanctifying all these marriages equally, and that's the way it is.

Now we have come to II Corinthians and we see Paul says he has (Ch. 3:12) "used great plainness of speech." Sure has been plain the way he explained marriage. Next we read he's (ch. 4:2b) "... not handling the word of God deceitfully." Okay, what does that mean? Well, we have been plodding along through Genesis, remember, and we've read (Gen. 34:13) "And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister," where they said they were allowed to intermarry when it turned out to be false. Paul has already told us it's okay for a Christian to marry a non-Christian; he's told us plainly. To handle the word of God deceitfully would be then to say it's not okay. So we don't expect him to be saying that. So it is not entirely true that Second Corinthians chapter six is not about marriage, because we can say it is in the negative sense that the command not to be unequally yoked with an unbeliever (vs. 14) *can not* be applied to marriage, not directly, especially not with the OT references supporting it.

CHALLENGES

This study will describe the challenges that dating partners face before marriage. Subsequent articles will feature information about interfaith couples at other junctures of the marital life cycle. The observations and descriptions that follow are representative of the observations and descriptions that emerged from the Interfaith Research

Project (IRP). This project included over 350 interfaith couples and spouses.

Meet Denise and Gus

Denise (24), whose religious and ethnic roots are Polish Catholic, and Gus (26), a Greek Orthodox Christian, have been married for 2 years. The couple live in the southwest where Denise works as a bank clerk and Gus is a sales representative. Both spouses describe their relationship as stable and happy, but also admit to having worked through a number of challenges over the past several years, "especially when we were dating."

Challenges during the Dating Process

When asked to describe the challenges related to their ethnic and religious differences when they were dating, Denise smiles, and then succinctly responds. "Sometimes it was like a bad dream that never seemed to want to end."

The couple laughs, and she continues. "From the beginning, our parents discouraged us from dating each other. Gus' parents wanted him to date more Greek girls, and my mother—my parents are divorced—wasn't too keen with the idea that I was dating someone from the Greek Orthodox Faith."

At this point Gus enters into the conversation, "More Greek girls—that's a hoot. My Church is small, and there were only a limited number of Greek girls that I could date. And yes, I attended some YAL conferences in hopes of connecting with someone, but I just never felt the same kind of chemistry between the girls I met at these conferences, and what existed between me and Denise."

Denise giggles at the last comment and then continues. "We met at Kansas State in my junior year, and his senior. At first we wanted to keep everything relaxed and casual. But soon we realised that this wasn't like any other relationship either of us had experienced."

Gus picks up the conversation and states, "I think we both pretty much knew after a few months that this was something special. By the end of our first year of dating, things had gotten pretty serious, and be began to discuss marriage."

"And just when everything was going so well, we decided to inform our parents of some of our feelings and intentions, and that's when things got interesting. At first, Gus' parents and my mother

were politely unresponsive to the news. But as we continued seeing each other, the disappointment and concerns from both sides started coming with regular frequency. There was this awful tension between my mother and Gus, and Gus' parents grew rather cold and aloof toward me."

"My parents kept on trying to dismiss my feelings for Denise, as if they were some fanciful whim. When this didn't work, they began to apply pressure on me to break things off," Gus stated while shaking his head…. "My parents also asked me not to bring Denise to the house, or to Church. And they kept suggesting Greek girls' names that I hadn't dated. It was really insane."

"Then there was the issue of the Church wedding," recalls Denise. "The Orthodox Church wouldn't recognize the Catholic Sacrament of Marriage. To accommodate this rule, we began talking about getting married in the Orthodox Church. I think this made it easier for Gus' parents, and broke some ice between us all, but at the same time irritated and hurt my Mom. She believed that the wedding should take place in the bride's church. To make things worse, Gus couldn't explain his Church's position. It was a real mess again, and people weren't talking to each other, and things didn't look good."

Gus continues, "I think one of the turning points was when we decided that if that's the way our parents were going to act, then we would simply get married by a Justice of the Peace. And we proceeded to respectfully inform them of this decision. I think that's when both sides began softening their position and accepted the marriage, but also subtly predicted its demise."

"I also think that our priest's advice really helped," states Denise. After asking us some rather pointed questions, both priests were super supportive, and guided us through these and other land mines, until things began to become tolerable."

"Things are better now," Gus adds with some relief in his voice. "My' folks really love Denise, and Denise's mother has warmed up to me. But for a while, things were really touch and go, and I wasn't certain how our desire to marry would effect our relationship with our parents."

Some Key Points That Emerge From This Conversation
- Most interfaith and intercultural couples can expect to encounter challenges from their family of origin during the dating process that are connected to their religious and cultural differences.

- While some tension can and often does develop during the dating process, it is important to note that much of this tension is healthy, because it compels couples to face some of the realities behind their decision to enter into an interfaith and intercultural marriage.

- Parents may politely tolerate their adult children's dating partners until the dating process moves from a casual to a more serious level. Parents may seek to undermine the dating process when couples become serious by revealing displeasure and withholding their blessings. In most instances, this occurs because parents care for their children and are concerned for their well-being.

- It is also important to mention that while some tension typically emerges between the dating couple, and their extended families, this tension generally does not result in cut-offs between adult children and parents. A reduction in intensity and regularity of this tension usually occurs over time as new and healthy boundaries develop that meet (a) individual dating partners' needs, (b) the couple's needs, (c) extended family needs, and (d) faith community needs and expectations.

- Conflicting faith community rules can also create some conflict, and dating partners may feel caught between a desire to have a church wedding, meet their individual and couple needs, please both sides of the family, and respect and obey their respective Church's rules.

- Given these and other challenges, information from the IRP suggests that the following coping strategies can be useful. Honest, respectful premarital discussions about their religious and cultural differences are vital. Continued communication of the type that serves to increase intimacy and understanding is also helpful. An acknowledgment by the couple that their relationship is a work in progress, and that all the answers will not be immediately apparent can also be of assistance. Couple's mutual love is also a chief factor in assisting couples to resolve their religious and cultural differences in a mutually satisfying manner. And finally, a healthy prayer life can serve to bridge the distance that they encounter.

INTERMARRIED COUPLE CHALLENGES AFTER MARRIAGE

During the first few years of marriage, couples are seeking to blend two separate lives into one life. Along with the typical challenges

that most single faith couples encounter, intermarried couples must negotiate a host of challenges related to their religious, cultural and racial differences. This article will portray some of those challenges.

Meet Tina and Harold

Tina (25) and Harold (25) have been married for almost two years. Tina is a second generation Greek-American Orthodox Christian. Harold was raised in the Methodist Church, and comes from a Scotch-Irish background. Both met at a small liberal arts college, dated for about one year, and were subsequently engaged and married in the Greek Orthodox Church.

When asked to describe some of their experiences since marriage, Harold began with the following observation. "It's been an interesting two years. For a while, I wondered what I had gotten myself into, because we were having lots of difficulty adjusting to each other's backgrounds. But I suppose our love for each other buffered us from any serious negative residual effects."

Nodding in agreement, Tina remarks, "It's been harder than I first supposed it might be for me also, but I think it was harder for Harold. He seems to be the one who had to make most of the adjustments."

Asked to elaborate further, Harold continues. "I wasn't exactly embraced with open arms, by Tina's family before the marriage. Tina's Mom even went so far as to tell me that it was difficult for her when she realised that Tina would be marrying a non-Greek. And to make things worse, for a long time after the wedding, most of her family seemed cold and distant toward me.

Tina interjects, "I don't think it was that long, Honey—maybe a few months. When they began realising that I was happy, and you weren't going away, they began to soften."

"I suppose," says Harold. "But to me, it seemed like a long time. And then when everyone began to warming up to me, this was also an awkward time. Members of my family tend to relate differently to one another. From what I've discovered, Greek families tend to be more involved and aware of each other's business. They also tend to be more emotionally expressive people. So when Tina's family started treating me like one of the family, it was rather difficult for me to handle because I didn't really know how to interpret all this new and unfamiliar behaviour. But don't misunderstand me. I like Tina's family, and have learned to adjust to their way of interacting with each other. It was just hard at first, that's all."

Harold pauses, then looks at Tina as if to ask if she has anything to add, and continues. "Then there were the differences in our religious traditions. I was raised in the Methodist Church and wasn't really going to church very much when I met Tina. But since she has such a strong faith in God, to please her, I began attending the Greek Orthodox Church with her after we got married. But it was really frustrating for me, because I couldn't understand the rituals, and a lot of the services were being conducted in Greek. And worse than this, whenever I asked Tina to explain something, she wasn't able to offer me a complete explanation."

"That's true," Tina states. "I love my church. It's the only church I've found that makes me feel comfortable. I went to Harold's church a few times, but things were too unfamiliar. Anyhow, as I was saying, when Harold started asking me questions about the Orthodox Church, I realised how much I didn't know. So we started picking up books, and even going to some of Fr. Peter's Wednesday night adult education classes, which this proved to be an enriching experience for us both."

Harold looks at Tina with a smile and declares, "I think that maybe it's been more of an enriching experience for you than for me. But I will say one thing, when Tina fasts, or displays icons in our home, or when I'm at my in-laws and they crack Easter eggs or cut the New Years bread—at least I'm not lost."

This part of our conversation appears to be coming to an end. Both are quiet, until Tina makes the following additional observation. "Even though we've spent most of our time describing the difficulties that Harold experienced trying to adjust to my background, I think that he would agree that we've worked hard at trying to combine the best of both of our backgrounds."

Nodding in agreement, Harold says, "I think that's a fair statement. I also think we're far more like other couples than we are different. And the few differences we've spoken about seem to have enriched our lives. I also think that our future children will benefit from our different backgrounds."

Challenges After Marriage

- Couples like Tina and Harold who participated in the Interfaith Research Project (IRP), said repeatedly that they were faced with challenges during the first few years of marriage. Results also suggest that couples who viewed their different religious and cultural backgrounds as enriching were less inclined to

experience long term negative residual effects. Conversely, couples who continued to experience difficulties related to their religious and cultural differences, tended to perceive them as drawbacks, and were more likely to experience lingering marital and family conflict.

- While both partners may experience some degree of culture shock in their efforts to adapt to their partner's religious and cultural background, results from the IRP suggest that the non-Orthodox partner may be apt to experience more discomfort when introduced to their partner's Greek Orthodox background. In most cases, the insecurity and unfamiliarity with their partner's cultural and religious idiosyncrasies tended to resolve with time.

- Spouses also described an awkward adjustment period that they experienced between themselves and their in-laws. In most instances this period did not last long. However, in some instances, their relationship with their in-laws remained distant and cold. The non-Greek Orthodox partners seemed more likely to experience more of these types of challenges than their Greek Orthodox partners.

- While it may not be apparent from this interview, results from the IRP indicate that it was important for newly married couples to draw healthy boundaries between themselves and their parents. Keeping out unwanted extended family intrusions was important to couples' efforts to mold and shape a life together.

- And finally, most of these couples indicated that their faith in God was indispensable in their efforts to strike a balance between personal, couple, and extended family needs. Given their religious differences, some couples were challenged to find ways to pray together. Couples who struggled to develop a prayer life together found that the stresses and strains of developing a life together were minimised.

INTERMARRIED COUPLES' PERCEPTION OF THEIR MARRIAGES

- Participants' remarks suggested that they loved one another. Their observations also repeatedly suggested that they worked hard toward ensuring that their marriages would not merely survive but also thrive.

- Despite the additional challenges they encountered as intermarried couples, the majority did not appear to have any serious problems with their decision to enter into and remain intermarried.

- Although most couples did not view their religious and cultural challenges in more problematic terms than other differences they faced, they were aware that their religious and cultural differences could potentially create marital conflict. Therefore, they worked hard at neutralising the toxic sources of strife that their religious and cultural differences could potentially generate.

- Their competency at finding ways of bridging their differences appeared to be immensely important to the well-being of these marriages. One participant whose spouse was not very religious lamented the fact that she attended church services alone, but almost in the same breath remarked that she saw this time as personal time which afforded her an opportunity "to be with God."

- Many of these couples—especially the Baby Boomers—had long ago addressed their religious and cultural differences and found ways of living with them or eliminating them. Even though they had managed to accept and learn to live with their differences, they still viewed these differences as potential sources of difficulty that needed periodic attention throughout the marital life cycle. Comments such as "this is a work in progress," and "there are plenty of ways to create problems in an interchurch, intercultural marriage" and, "you've got to make the best of things," served to reinforce the need for vigilance.

- These spouses repeatedly maintained that their religious and cultural diversity functioned to essentially enrich their lives as individuals and couples. Numerous participants observed that their partner's religious tradition provided them with another dimension of Christianity which served to broaden their own understanding of their faith tradition. Many also described how their partner's cultural/ethnic heritage added richness and variety to their lives. "…Two Easter baskets are better than one," and, "…The different foods, languages, traditions, religious perspectives are more enriching than belonging to one faith and one culture." were typical comments that were made.

- Their love for one another, their desire to see their marriages succeed, their interest in maintaining family stability, their respect for diversity, and their tolerant and patient attitudes for their respective religious and cultural differences appeared to be indispensable to their efforts to advance marital and family satisfaction and stability.

The Downside of Intermarriage

- Although most couples viewed their intermarriages in fundamentally positive terms, some respondents indicated that their religious and cultural differences tended to compromise intimacy. The fact that couples belonged to different faith traditions, churches and cultures, and were raised in different cultural and faith traditions, tended to create a low to moderate sense of distance between couples. Couples with equally strong commitment to their faith tradition were especially challenged by their religious differences. Many repeatedly maintained that these differences were detrimental to marital satisfaction. Moreover, this distance created a sense of separation between these couples that was sometimes perceived as unbridgeable.

- In addition, just as a couple's decision to remain inter—Christian appeared to inhibit their efforts to worship God as a couple, inter-Christian marriages may have the same effect on a nuclear family's religious life. According to these participants, when the family is unable to participate in the sacraments together, this inhibits a family's efforts to feel as if they are worshipping together.

Inter-Christian, but not Inter-Religious

- Inter-Christian marriages were generally accepted and viewed in a positive light. Conversely, inter-religious marriages involving non-Christians were generally viewed in a negative light. There appeared to be a general consensus among these respondents that they would not consider entering into a marriage with a non-Christian, since the religious and cultural differences in such relationships were greater than they could tolerate and have a greater potential to cause marital instability. They also reasoned that such a decision might disturb their parents, and negatively impact their children's perception of religion and culture.

- Participants also stated that they imagined that the level of commitment to one's faith tradition might influence the decision to intermarry across religious lines. They further stated that nominally committed Christians would be the most likely individuals to enter an inter-religious marriage.

- While more will be stated about how these couples make their marriage work, participants' repeatedly stated that they valued marital and family stability. With that in mind, when and if

their religious and cultural differences conflicted with marital and family needs, religious and cultural concerns generally took a back seat to protect marital and family well-being and stability.

PARENTING CHALLENGES INTERFAITH COUPLES FACE

Most couples decide to begin a family after a few years of marriage. Along with the typical challenges that intrafaith couples face, interfaith couples can expect to encounter additional challenges before or just after the first child arrives. In order to discuss these challenges, this subject will be presented in two parts.

Meet Joe and Elena

Joe (28), a civil engineer and Elena (29), an elementary school teacher have been married four years. Joe is a cradle Episcopalian, attends services sporadically, but continues to retain membership in the Episcopal Church. Elena considers herself a second generation Greek-American, and is an active member of her church. They have two children, Nicole (2) and Jason (3 months). They describe their marriage as being stable and happy, but state that they have faced numerous marital difficulties related to their religious and cultural differences over the past several years.

When asked to describe some of these challenges, Elena begins, "When I look back at the past four years of marriage, there are a number of really good memories, but there have also been a number of difficulties. But maybe one of the most upsetting things for me has been our inability to come to terms with our religious and cultural differences. We're both strong willed people, and I guess that hasn't helped."

Joseph agrees and elaborates. "I don't know, it didn't really concern me when Elena wanted to get married in the Greek Orthodox Church. I sort of understood that it was important to her and her family. But some of our major problems began developing when we started thinking about having children."

"That's probably true," remarks Maria. "Before the children, when we attended church, we kind of alternated and attended both churches. And while I'll admit that the services in the Joe's church didn't always do that much for me, I went because I knew it pleased Joe and my in-laws. But when we started thinking about having children that's when things began to get more complicated. After Nicole was born, I assumed

we were going to baptize her, and indeed, all our children in the Greek Church, and I guess that's when things got bad between us. It turns out that Joe needed to talk about this decision more, and I considered the decision made, and didn't want to talk about it. Looking back now, I think Joe thought I was being real stubborn, and this made him angrier. But I was really afraid that if we talked about this, he would talk me into baptizing our children in his church. And the thought of this possibility really upset me."

At this point, Joseph says, "Yeah, we really had some very heated arguments…. And it's not that I was necessarily against baptizing the kids in the Greek Orthodox Church, because I think our churches are very similar. But my main complaint is that she arrived at this decision with her folks and kept me out of the loop. I guess I always knew that our kids would attend the Greek Orthodox Church, because Elena's with the children more, and she's always taken the lead regarding religion. But when I found out that she and her folks had made the decision together—without including me—that really got to me, and I resisted the whole idea."

"It got so bad at one point," Elena continued, "that I left the house one night after a particularly heated argument and went to my parents' home. Thankfully, my father encouraged me to return home and work things out with Joe. So, I returned home with some reluctance, and that night we had our first serious discussion about this issue. We decided to baptize Nicole and our other future children in the Greek Orthodox Church."

"That was kind of hard for me, and it's still kind of hard on me," stated Joe. "As the children have grown, we've all but stopped attending the Episcopal Church, and almost exclusively attend the Greek Orthodox Church. We do this because we want what's best for their religious upbringing." Joe pauses for a moment and then continues. "It's also been kind of hard because I'm feeling more and more like the 'odd-man-out' when it comes to our family's religious life these days. The fact that I can't really participate in an active way at church with my family, and that I often feel more like 'the visitor' kind of hurts. While I have thought of converting, I'm just not ready to leave my religious tradition behind—who knows, maybe I'll never be ready."

Elena offers the last comment by stating, "Every time I think about this sacrifice that Joe made for me and the kids, I'm really grateful to him. I don't think I could have made the same sacrifice."

Viewpoint on this Subject

As this interview suggests, many interfaith couples who attend our churches have certain personal needs that are related to their religious and cultural backgrounds. One of these needs, is to share their religious and cultural heritage with their future children. Since both spouses come from different religious, and sometimes, cultural backgrounds, meeting this need can be difficult. Young couples' efforts to meet this need can also generate some personal distress and marital conflict.

Joe and Elena's experiences suggest that intergenerational coalitions can sometimes develop between couples and extended families. These can adversely effect a couple's marital satisfaction, and their relationship with extended families. Being aware of these types of possible trouble spots can certainly be advantageous.

Most marital difficulties and divorces occur during the first seven years of marriage. Understanding these and other potential pitfalls can assist interfaith couples during this most vulnerable period. A prayerful awareness and consideration of the challenges cited in this and the next article can help these couples find mutually satisfying resolutions to these and other challenges as they consider parenthood.

WHEN CHILDREN ARRIVE

There are many challenges that couples face just before and immediately after the children arrive. In addition to the challenges that single faith couples encounter, intermarried couples face a host of additional challenges related to their religious and cultural differences. Part One of this two-part article featured a couple discussing some of these challenges. Part Two will identify and discuss some of these challenges in more detail.

Some Typical Marital Challenges before Baptism

If intermarried couples failed to decide where their children will be baptized before marriage, and in which church they would be raised, some conversation regarding these questions will likely occur after marriage and around the time the children arrive. "I was surprised at how much conversation was required when we finally got around to discussing baptism," stated one participant from the Interfaith Research Project (IRP). "I really didn't think this issue was going to require so much energy. I guess that's why we didn't discuss it before marriage. But I was wrong."

The degree of attachment each spouse has to his or her religious tradition will affect these conversations. In cases where both spouses have equally strong attachments to their religious background, couples can expect to struggle more with this issue. However, such couples might also take comfort in knowing that results from the IRP suggest that their faith in God will generally assist them in reaching a mutually satisfying resolution. "We're both very committed to our religious backgrounds, so when we started talking about starting a family the topic of baptism came up. It was really an upsetting time for us both. Fortunately Father Nick and our faith in God helped us get beyond this issue."

Some couples will also struggle with the cultural tradition that necessitates Greek parents to name their first born son after the Greek Orthodox spouse's father. "I love my father-in-law. He's a precious and sweet man. But when John informed me that if our first born was a boy, he wanted to name him Panteleimon, well let's just say I wasn't very happy."

The Greek Orthodox partner may feel a deep need to honor his or her parents in this way, while the non-Orthodox partner frequently views this tradition as intrusive. "I had a real deep need to honor my Dad by naming our first son after him. He slaved to put me through school, and he didn't want anything in return. The least I could do is honor him in this way."

Finding ways of striking a balance between personal, couple, and extended family needs in this situation can generate marital, family and extended family tension. This challenge is not insurmountable. Time, prayer and a desire to make things work are imperative. "After considerable conversation, we resolved this issue peacefully, and with God's help. But making everyone happy was a real delicate balancing act."

Extended Family Challenges

Grandparents' yearnings to see their grandchildren baptized and raised in their faith community can also present some challenges to intermarried couples. Couples will be challenged to find respectful ways of (a) honoring their parents, and (b) drawing healthy boundaries between themselves and their extended families as they attempt to resolve this issue. "We've tried to respect our parents opinions and needs, but we've also made it clear to them that our decisions will be based on what's good for our family and the children."

If the couple elects to baptize their children in the Greek Orthodox Church, the non-Orthodox partner's extended family may feel somewhat short changed. This is often the case, because Orthodox pastoral guidelines prohibit non-Orthodox participation in the Sacraments. Additionally, the Orthodox partner may feel varying degrees of pressure and resentment from their non-Orthodox in-laws to explain the Orthodox Church's position with regards to non-Orthodox participation in the sacraments.

Finding ways of not personalising this resentment will be helpful to nuclear and extended family stability and well-being. "It was kind of hard putting up with some of my in-law's questions about my church's rules," stated one Greek Orthodox IRP participant. "Sometimes, I felt as if they were attacking me. So I had to keep reminding myself that they weren't really angry with me, but were disappointed that they couldn't be more a part of their grandson's baptism. I finally asked Father Lou to offer some clarification, and this really helped."

Challenges as Children Mature

As the children mature and grow, and in order to meet children's growing religious and spiritual needs, couples normally choose to attend the church where their children were baptized. When intermarried couples determine to baptize their children in the Greek Orthodox Church, and subsequently determine to attend the Orthodox Church, the non-Orthodox partner may struggle to avoid feeling like the odd-man-out when the family attends Divine Liturgy together. This sometimes happens because non-Orthodox cannot participate in the Sacramental life of the Orthodox Church. Being aware of this potential pitfall can help both partners work through negative feelings and thoughts that might undermine family members religious and spiritual development.

Challenges Related to Children's Cultural Development

Lingering hurt feelings related to children's cultural development can be unhealthy for a couple's marriage and their children's development. Finding ways of addressing hurt feelings can be challenging. Failure to assuage hurt feelings could be detrimental to marital and family religious well-being. The following remarks form one of the participants from the IRP reinforce these observations. "Steve comes from a mixed background. So he doesn't have any real attachment to his ethnic roots. I'm from Greece, and have a deep attachment to my background. It's also been important to me that our children identify

with their Greek heritage. Steve has never really prevented me from doing this, but he's also never really supported the idea. This issue has caused some tension and problems for us for time to time. I fear that these arguments have had an ill effect on our children's cultural development."

Couples who come from different religious and cultural backgrounds should expect to encounter some challenges and potential pitfalls when they begin thinking about starting a family. A familiarity with these challenges and potential pitfalls, together with a strong and abiding faith in God, can positively enhance marital and family well-being

WHEN CHILDREN REACH ADOLESCENCE

John, age 43, and Jessica, age 38, have been married for eighteen years. John is Greek Orthodox and a successful executive in a large company. Jessica is Southern Baptist and manages a local women's boutique. The couple has two teenagers, Maria (15) and John (13). Both children have been baptized in the Greek Orthodox Church. They reside in a mid-sized northwestern city and periodically attend a Greek Orthodox mission parish some fifty miles from their home.

They also admit to having had mixed experiences with the Greek Orthodox Church over the years. For the past several years, they have contemplated leaving the Greek Orthodox Church, but have yet to arrive at a decision to do so. Our conversation began from this point.

"I suppose I can't pin the fault entirely on the Greek Orthodox Church," stated John. "But I'm beginning to believe my long-time insistence that we attend the Greek Church has made it harder for my family to have much of a religious life. Don't get me wrong, I'm sure part of the problem rests in the fact that we've moved a great deal."

"Now that's not true," Jessica interjected. "I'll admit that moving has frequently made it difficult on the family, but our regular moves aren't really that much a part of the problem we're talking about. The real problem is that John has always wanted some connection with his Greek heritage, but wasn't really very religious until recently."

"There's some truth to what Jessica is saying," stated John. "Up until recently, I haven't been the most religious person, and what seemed important to me was having some contact with my Greek heritage. But today—for reasons I won't explain here—I feel different. I'm still very proud of my Hellenic background, but I'm equally interested these days in finding a church home that meets my family's needs."

John paused for a moment to determine if his wife had anything to add. Noting her silence, he continued, "These days I've been wondering how the Greek Orthodox Church fits into my family's religious needs, especially our kids needs. What I mean is that my wife is not Greek, and she and the children really don't identify with the ethnic side of the Greek Church. So lately, I've been wondering if we need to find another church home."

"I gave in to John when we got married, and agreed to attend the Greek Church, Jessica" remarked, breaking into the conversation abruptly. "John is a strong willed person—I suppose that's why he's so successful—and I didn't have the energy to challenge him regarding our family's religious needs. "But I guess I've never fully accepted our decision to worship in the Greek Orthodox Church."

At this juncture in our conversation, Jessica paused, and looked at her husband as if she was asking him to help her explain her next point. John accommodated her silent request by stating, "I suppose what my wife might want to say at this point is that she's never really felt accepted in the Greek Orthodox Church."

"That's part of it," Jessica stated, and then paused momentarily to collect herself. She appeared visibly upset. "Sometimes I've felt like a second class citizen because I'm not Greek Orthodox… but that's not my real struggle these days. I'm especially concerned with our children's spiritual welfare. Over the past few years, Maria, our oldest, says she hates going to church because she doesn't understand what's going on, and John doesn't have any interest for much the same reasons. I'd do almost anything to reverse this, maybe even become Greek Orthodox."

Appearing sorrowful, John stated, "Sometimes I feel like it's my fault. I'm certain that my attitude toward religion hasn't helped…. and at other times, I feel as if we both share some of the blame because maybe we haven't given the Greek Orthodox Church a fair shake. Whatever the reason, all I know is that, as a family, we're now at a point where I'm almost willing to do anything to correct this situation including finding a new church home. Incidentally, we just found out that we'll be moving again in a few months to a bigger city and I've made some preliminary inquiries about this area. I'm told that this city has several Greek Orthodox Churches. Rather than change religions at this point in our kid's lives, we've sort of decided to give it one more try. But if we can't find a Greek Orthodox Church that feels right this time, I'm sure we'll be making a change."

Some Observations

It is unclear how this couple and their children will fair. However, the change of heart that both partners have had regarding religion should prove helpful to them and their children's religious and spiritual development.

Additionally, this conversation illustrates how intermarried couples that are either conflicted or indifferent about religion can negatively effect their children's religious development. It also serves to remind such parents that when their children reach adolescence they will likely observe them rebelling against church attendance.

Results from the IRP also suggest that in later adolescence couples may watch helplessly as their children reject organised religion altogether. This does not imply that such reactions are permanent, since research indicates that many will end up revisiting this decision as adults and embracing organised religion. However, there is a high probability that these adults will select a faith tradition other than their parent's faith background.

As such, intermarried couples interested in avoiding this pattern must be especially vigilant regarding the messages they send their maturing children about religion. They must also make some definite decisions regarding their children's religious affiliation. While it is true that many adolescents will question the value of organised religion, if parents are able to provide them with consistent, meaningful answers and faithful examples, most will likely emerge from adolescence with a stronger commitment to their faith background.

Early family of origin experiences tend to play an important role in how an adolescent might view culture and religion. Prolonged parental indifference toward religion and culture in all probability will have a negative impact on children's perception of religion and culture. One focus group participant stated, "They say that hindsight is 20/20. I think this is correct regarding our topic tonight. My wife and I never put church attendance high on our list. Our busy schedules made it easy for us to ignore church attendance. So, now that our children are teenagers, they don't seem to have much interest in religion or their parent's ethnic backgrounds."

Similarly, if children are raised in an intercultural, interfaith family that is conflicted over culture and religion, and this conflict persists unchecked, then it is significantly more probable that they will reject the value of culture and religion altogether when they reach adolescence,

or be influenced by their peers'' perceptions of culture and religion. "There's no doubt in my mind, our constant bickering over our religious differences soured our teen's attitude toward religion," stated one respondent. Intermarried parents who have a sound understanding of each others religious tradition, and are generally in agreement about religious matters, are in a better position to address their adolescent's religious questions.

Parents

Parents who have been in agreement about their religious and cultural differences and have offered clear messages to their children regarding religion and culture, will likely encounter fewer and less intense challenges. "When we first got married, we both knew that neither of us could change. So, we talked about our religious and cultural differences very carefully to try and develop a good understanding before we had children. These conversations helped because we were able to make many decisions related to our future children's religious upbringing. We also resolved to help them develop a respect for both parents religious and cultural backgrounds."

Prolonged parental indifference or lingering conflict

Adolescence is a time when everything is questioned, including culture and religion. As such, intermarried parents should expect their teenagers to scrutinize and question their 'parent's cultural and religious values and beliefs. Parents who lack knowledge about their respective religious traditions, or are conflicted have mixed conflicted feelings over their religious and cultural differences, will likely fail miserably at addressing their adolescent's religious questions and needs. "I don't really know my religion – not to mention my husband's religious background," stated a frustrated mother. "And I know that this has had a bad effect on our kids religious education because I never really have known how to answer their questions."

Parents must remember that actions speak louder than words. If teenagers discern that their parents are saying one thing to them regarding the value of religion and culture, and demonstrating another, their teenager's efforts to develop a strong religious and cultural identity will be negatively impacted. When parents fail to celebrate their cultural differences or live out their religious beliefs, their children's religious and cultural development will generally be negatively impacted. "When we were young, we went to church because our parent's made us go. We didn't ask all these questions that kids ask today. So, I didn't

learn much about my religious background. Today it's different. Kids question everything, including the value of religion, and if you don't have good answers, they may take the answers they get from their friends or the TV."

Permitting adolescents, the latitude to question religious beliefs can prove to be a necessary part of their efforts to personalize their religious beliefs. Inter-Christian parents should welcome questions from their adolescents, and view their questions as opportunities for all members of the family to develop a deeper cultural and religious identity. "Before having children, I think I can safely say that I didn't know my Orthodox faith," stated one mother. "When we were blessed with our first child, I decided to educate myself, and now I feel comfortable when I talk to my teenagers about religion. There are really great resources available today to help parents. No Greek Orthodox parent has to be in the dark any longer about the faith. Yes, it takes some effort, but it can make all the difference in the world to a family's religious and spiritual participation."

Intermarried parents with adolescents generally try to help them develop a respect for other faith groups, while also helping them grow into a personal faith commitment in the church where they were baptized. When parents remind adolescents that they are part of a rich religious tradition that can facilitate a meaningful relationship with God, this positive emphasis assists them in discerning the value and worth of being religious. If parents spend most of their time disparaging other religions and cultural groups, such activity may simply serve to reduce adolescents' respect for their religious and cultural heritage. Parents' knowledge, respect and example will have a positive impact on their teenager's religious and cultural development.

Research also suggests that if only one parent has a strong cultural and/or religious identity, then it is probable that adolescents will embrace the dominant parent's cultural and religious preferences. Adolescents who tend to identify with only one parent's cultural background may at a later stage in life discover and search out information about the other parent's cultural and religious background.

Finally, when parents are in agreement, are knowledgeable and respectful of each other's religious tradition, information from the IRP suggests that such an approach will have a positive impact on children's religious and cultural development. This approach will also positively influence their children when they reach adolescence.

WHEN CHILDREN BEGIN MATURING

As children mature, the pace of life dramatically increases. During this stage in the family life cycle, parents typically struggle to meet their children's growing needs, couple's needs, family's needs, extended family's needs and increased work related responsibilities. However, many important needs and concerns are thus inadvertently neglected, sometimes for years. Some of these lingering needs and concerns are often related to children's religious development. This is especially true of intermarried couples and families.

As we will see in the interview that follows, along with the usual family life cycle changes and challenges that single faith couples and families face when children begin maturing, intermarried couples who participated in the Interfaith Research Project (IRP) described a host of other challenges related to their religious and cultural differences. Moreover, in many instances these challenges frequently were ignored, and in consequence negatively impacted family well-being, along with their children's religious development.

Meet Costa and Teresa

Costa (35) and Teresa (34) have been married for ten years. Costa is a third generation Greek Orthodox Christian and Teresa comes from an Italian Roman Catholic background. They are both professionals and admit to certain "lingering marital and family disagreements" associated with their different religious backgrounds. They have three children, John (8), Sophia (6), and Thomas (4).

Teresa began. "When it comes to our children's religious training, I don't know, it's been kind of frustrating for me over the years." She pauses for a moment, visibly upset, then continues. "To please Costa and his parents, I relented to baptizing the children in the Greek Church. But I'm often very sorry that I gave in and agreed to this."

Costa interrupts his wife. "That's not entirely true, Honey. It had very little to do with me. Well, what I mean, is that I didn't care nearly as much as my parents about where the kids would be baptized. They're the ones that applied the pressure. So to keep the peace in the family, I remember asking you if you wouldn't mind if we baptized them in the Greek Church."

"Well that's not exactly how I remember things. But anyway, be that as it may, I agreed, and we decided to baptize them Greek Orthodox." She paused again to collect herself, and then proceeded.

"And maybe I wouldn't feel so upset and resentful if Costa took an interest in their religious training, but he hasn't. Don't get me wrong, he's a good man and a great father, but he's not really a very religious person. He doesn't really know his religion, and he hardly ever goes to church. So the responsibility to bring them up in the Greek Church has fallen on my shoulders. But I don't know the Greek Church like I know my church, so the end result is that they have grown up without much religious training."

"I know that Teresa is right," Costa stated with some regret. "But I've got work commitments that keep me busy all week, and when Sundays roll around, I need to unwind. To be honest, church has never done much for me. I simply don't understand it. I respect it and value religion, but I don't get anything out of it. So, I guess I've chosen other ways of using my time to unwind on Sundays."

"We've had this conversation over and over again," Teresa stated with some frustration and then addressed Costa. "The remedy might have been for us to have chosen to attend the Catholic Church. But I rather doubt that also, because I think our kids' religious training requires the involvement of both parents…." Teresa paused for a moment, then continued in a slightly different direction. "I'm not Greek Orthodox, so I don't really know the services, and can't participate in communion. It was okay when the children were younger, but now that they're growing older, they ask me questions that I don't know how to answer. So because Costa isn't interested in going to church, we don't go very often—maybe we might go on Christmas and Easter." Costa remained quiet, so Teresa continued, "And do you know what really hurts these days? As the kids matured, I would have liked them to experience their first communion and confirmation in the Catholic Church as I did. Those were really special times for me, and I regret the fact that they will not have these experiences."

At this juncture, Costa appeared very serious and genuinely moved by what his wife stated, then offered the following comments. "I didn't know you felt this strongly about this. I guess it's because religion has been such an insignificant factor in our lives. Maybe we need to discuss this more when we get home. Maybe it's time for me to make some changes? Maybe I've been really selfish?"

"Yes, maybe you have Costa. Maybe we both have. I hope we can resolve this before they get much older, and it's too late. I hope it's not too late now…. I guess I'm really glad we had this conversation."

A Few Concluding Observations

A central finding to emerge from the IRP is that many couples like Costa and Teresa enter marriage assuming that their religious and cultural differences will not offer them many serious challenges. However, as children arrive and begin maturing, participants reported encountering a higher number of challenges than they first anticipated—many of which had the potential to generate high levels of marital and family conflict.

Participants also indicated that the fast pace which typically characterises this stage in the family life cycle made it more difficult for them to address and negotiate these challenges. Rather than seek closure and resolution, many opted to simply ignore them. Moreover, as results from the IRP suggest, the unfortunate effect is that their children's religious development suffered. I will provide more information regarding the challenges that intermarried couples face as their children mature. I will also seek to offer some suggestions to assist parents in their efforts to facilitate marital and family religious well-being.

Regular Attendance

As children mature, a couple's focus will shift from a preoccupation with their own relationship to a greater focus on their children's needs. Many couples who have previously been nominally interested in religion show an increased interest in religious matters. These couples generally report being interested in their children's religious well-being. The following comments serve to reinforce these observations. "Before the kids, we bounced around from my church to his church, and sometimes even visited other churches. We even omitted church attendance altogether for long periods of time. The rules changed when our children arrived and began to mature. About a year after our first child was born we realised that if we wanted our children to have a religious background we had to start attending regularly. That's when we started going to liturgy on a weekly basis. Since then, you might say we've been regulars."

One Church, Consistently

Many couples who were part of the IRP indicated that the transition from sporadic to regular attendance is not always quite that smooth. They repeatedly stated that their religious differences had a potentially detrimental effect on their children's efforts to develop a religious identity. In their eagerness to be respectful to both partners' religious

backgrounds, many observed that they had not understood that children need time to bond to a specific faith group in order to develop a religious identity.

Participants stated that when parents fail to provide their children with a consistent faith experience in one church, this could prevent them from developing a strong religious identity. Striking a balance between their mutual desire to help their children develop a keen respect for both parents' religious traditions, while also helping them bond to one faith tradition, can be a tricky proposition.

"If I could offer newlyweds one piece of advice," one participant stated, "I'd tell them that their children need to attend one church consistently. The simple truth is that parents want it all. They want to raise their children to have respect for both parents' religious backgrounds, and they also want them to become religious. As far as I can see, one parent has to make some concessions and realize that the children need to go to the same church consistently. If they don't, they will run the risk of making the same mistake we did. Our children never ended up bonding with a church because we never brought them to one church consistently."

Children's Questions

As children mature, they ask questions in an effort to piece their world together. As they observe their parent's different religious habits, they will naturally ask questions. Sometimes these questions can present real challenges to the parents. Typical questions may be: "Why doesn't Mom receive communion with us?" or, "Why does Dad go to a different church and doesn't come to church with us?" or "Why does Dad do his cross differently?"

When parents are presented with these questions, they may not be familiar enough with their own faith tradition or their partner's faith tradition to offer an adequate answer. In these instances, the answer is not to ignore their questions. Results from the IRP clearly indicate that parents must prayerfully seek age appropriate answers.

Feelings of Regret, Loss and Guilt

The parent who has agreed to baptize his or her children in their partner's faith tradition can end up feeling some distance between himself/herself and the children in this area of their developing lives. This is especially the case when the parent has a moderate to strong religious attachment.

This parent might also feel some degree of loss as a result of their decision to baptize the children in his or her partner's church. "I sometimes lament the fact that I can't receive communion with my son. It makes me feel like there is some separation between us," stated one father with some sadness. "But I guess that's what we signed up for when we chose to get intermarried. Anyway, it's the best that we can do right now."

Spouses who have had their children baptized in their church can end up feeling some guilt when they become aware of their partner's feelings. In these instances, ongoing discussion is necessary to ensure that these negative feelings do not impact couple and family religious and spiritual well-being.

"I know that Jill still has some regrets related to our decision to baptize the children in the Greek Church. We talk about this from time to time, and remind ourselves that because of extenuating family circumstances this is the best we can do. This seems to help for a while, but the misgivings reoccur."

Extended Family

Extended family pressures are of minimal concern at this point in the family life cycle. Most couples have generally managed to develop healthy boundaries between themselves and their respective families. Nevertheless, some couples might experience some lingering extended family challenges related to their decisions to baptize and, or raise their children in the Greek Orthodox Church.

In these cases it is important to identify the source of the problem and seek to remedy it without placing blame. Sometimes clear boundaries have not been drawn and a couple must seek to establish them. At other times the boundaries must be respectfully redrawn.

Couples should be aware that some extended family members might attempt to challenge existing boundaries. They should remember that even though grandparents may be well-meaning, they need to stand together at these times, and respectfully remind extended family that they, as parents, will make decisions about their children's religious development and well-being.

Couples should remember that when intermarried families experience these challenges, most report working through them and emerging unscathed. Results from the IRP clearly indicate that prayer, pastoral guidance from clergy and Christian understanding go a long

way toward helping couples reach a healthy resolution to these and other challenges.

WHEN INTERFAITH SPOUSES ARE HIGHLY RELIGIOUS

In this study you will meet two interfaith spouses who have strong attachments to their religious backgrounds, and consider these attachments of paramount importance to their individual, couple, and family well-being. Moreover, while this couple is fictitious, rest assured that these types of interfaith couples do fill our pews on Sunday mornings, and the comments and information that follow are typical of highly religious interfaith couples' perceptions and lived experiences.

Meet Joe and Ellen

Joe (46) and Ellen (45) have been married for 19 years. Joe is Catholic, and identifies himself as a "third generation Italian-American." Ellen self identifies herself as a "second generation Greek-American who was raised in a Greek-American Orthodox home." In addition, Joe is a successful small business owner, and Ellen is an elementary school teacher. Both describe their marriage is positive terms, and boast about their three children during our conversation.

When asked how they met, Joe states that, "we were introduced through some mutual friends at a small Christian liberal arts college." Ellen agrees, and continues the conversation by offering the following observation. "What attracted me to Joe was his strong faith in God: a quality that I had difficulty finding in the Greeks and non-Greeks that I dated before Joe."

Joe continues this line of thought and also states, "if either of us were marginal believers, I don't think we would have considered marriage. We fell in love with each other because of our mutual Christian faith. And it's our faith in Christ that continues to play a central role in our happiness as a couple and family."

When this couple is asked if they attend one church or two, Ellen states, "we try and respect both of our religious traditions, because we believe that, that is what God wants. But we probably attend the Greek Orthodox Church more frequently because we have chosen to baptize our children in the Orthodox Church. So I guess what you might say about us is that we're a Christian family who work at being Christians through two closely related Christian traditions."

"Absolutely," Joe emphatically adds. "We believe that we are both Christians who are part of Christ's Church, but we also respect our

individual religious preferences. The truth is, Ellen feels more comfortable in the Greek Orthodox Church, and I feel more comfortable in the Catholic Church. We respect and honor this very private and important part of our spiritual walks, and also celebrate our common Christian Faith."

"It's also a lot of work," Ellen adds. "We have spent considerable time becoming very familiar with each religious tradition. And I might also add here that Joe, bless his heart, has sometimes struggled with all the Greek in the services, but he is doing better then he was when we first got married."

After making this latter point, Joe nods in agreement, but chooses to change the subject and talk about their struggles as parents. "And we've also labored long and hard to help our three children gain a respect for our Lord, as well as both parents' religious traditions."

"That's right," Ellen states. "That's always been very important to us." By now both spouses are talking very freely about their marriage and family, and Ellen, with a twinkle in her eye continues, "And maybe people might think that our focus on being a two-church family may create confusion, but nothing could be further from the truth. The real truth is that our efforts to honor and respect both religious traditions have been a real plus for our family, and if (for some reason) we hadn't proceeded in this way, I believe that this might have been very harmful to our marriage and family."

Ellen looks at Joe for confirmation, and Joe continues our conversation. "It's like Ellen said. We're pretty happy with where we find ourselves at this time in our life, because we believe it's where God wants us to be…. Sure, we'd like things to be different between our two churches, and we pray that things may be different one day in the future, but we understand that won't happen anytime soon. So, we love and respect both traditions, and try and help our children to do the same."

Some Observations About this Short Interview

1. Inter-Christian couples like Joe and Ellen, not only have strong attachments to their religious traditions, but also believe that they are a single faith family who worship God through two closely related Christian faith traditions.

2. These types of couples do not generally consider conversion a viable alternative for reasons like the following few.

- They strongly believe God has not called them to become a single religion couple and family.
- They believe that God desires that they continue to respect each partner's faith tradition.
- They respect each other's religious needs and preferences, and maintain that conversion could function to disturb their partner's personal relationship with God.
- They believe that conversion might function to negatively impact couple and family well-being, rather then having a positive affect on their marriage and family.

3. These types of couples also tend to espouse an ecumenical vision of the church, and conceptualize themselves as Christians who were born into one Church that has many religious/cultural traditions.

4. As parents these types of couples will likely baptize their children in one church, and raise their children in one church. Nonetheless, because of their ecumenical perception of the church, these types of couples will also seek to enhance their children's developing religious identity by exposing them to each parent's religious traditions.

Serving these Types of Couples

While the recommendations that follow may be far from comprehensive, they are representative of some of the suggestions that highly religious interfaith couples have given during their participation in the Interfaith Research Project.

These types of couples desire that both our clergy and lay people to avoid making any disrespectful inferences or judgments regarding their decision to remain in an interfaith marriage. In this later case, they suggest that clergy and other members of the congregation might remember that their present choice has prayerfully emerged, and it is not the result of laziness or certain philosophical secular influences.

These types of couples also suggest that they are more likely to remain engaged and supportive of their local Greek Orthodox Church if their church refrains from (a) being overly ethnocentric, (b) overly critical of other Christian faith traditions, (c) extends a welcoming hand to everyone who wishes to pray in our Churches, (d) cultivates a Christian environment, (e) provides a Christ-centered youth programme, and (f) utilises enough English in an out of the services to assist them in their religious and spiritual development.

Results from the Interfaith Research Project (IRP) have clearly indicated that interfaith couples are at once similar and dissimilar. One chief reason why this is the case is because interfaith spouses'/couples' religious and/or ethnic connections vary from one spouse to the next and from one couple to the next.

In this article you will briefly meet a couple who have nominal religious connections to their faith traditions. It should also be emphasised that while this couple is a fictional couple, the observations and descriptions that follow are typical of interfaith couples like this one. While reading the contexts that follow, please keep in mind that they are offered as a way to help us become more sensitive to the complex nature of the interfaith marriage challenge, and assist us in our efforts to reach out more effectively to these types of couples and families.

Meet Gus and Susan

Gus (41) and Susan (38) have been married for 15 years and are the parents of two preteens. Gus is a successful attorney, and Susan is a stay-at-home mom who has a small but growing home-based business. They live in an upper-middle class bedroom community outside of a large Southern City. Gus was born and raised in this city, while Susan is originally from another past of the country.

When asked to describe their religious and ethnic background, Gus states that he is "a Greek-Orthodox American," while Susan states that she is "Roman Catholic" from a decidedly "Americanized" family.

Both state that they attend St John the Baptist Greek-Orthodox Church about once or twice a month. When Susan's parents are in town, however, she indicates that "my parents, the children, and I will attend Sacred Heart Catholic Church." Asked if Gus attends, both smile at one another and Susan politely states, "he just stay home, or works."

When the couple is prompted to explain why they decided to attend the Greek Orthodox Church, Gus offers the following information. "I'm not what you might consider very religious. I attend because it's my family's church, and I like the people." Elsewhere during this discussion Gus will also infer that he attends St. John's because, "I am proud of being Greek American, and want my children to be exposed to the good things that Greek culture has contributed to my development."

Susan also adds the following: "I knew that attending the Greek Church was important to Gus. And since my family lives in another part of the country and we were going to live near Gus' family, attending the Greek Church seemed like the logical choice." She then also adds, "but I never really thought about converting."

When Susan is asked to elaborate upon her last statement, she states, "religion has never been really priority number one to us, if you follow what I'm saying. Going through the effort of converting never seemed very cost effective to me."

When the couple is asked if they have encountered any challenges related to their religious and ethnic differences, Gus begins. "Things have been fairly easy for us, but I don't believe things would have been quite so smooth if Susan was insistent on being an active Roman Catholic."

Susan agrees with this last statement, and adds, "the fact that Gus' family is in town and they know almost half of the community has made things pretty easy for me…. After we got married everyone came up to me and made me feel at home." She then pauses and remarks, "I like the cultural side, but I still don't feel very close to the religion. The liturgy just doesn't speak to me. And since Gus is usually unable or unwilling to answer my questions, I haven't grown very close to the religion…. But I do worry about the kids religious needs, because I don't know if they have much of a Christian foundation, and I want them to be Christian."

"That's true," Gus says while shaking his head in agreement. "You know, as I get older, time has a way of making us rethink what's really important. When I was younger, religion didn't seem very important, but as my kids have grown, and we age, I'm starting to wonder if I haven't missed the boat on this issue."

"Really," states Susan with some surprise. "I didn't know that." Then she adds, "but he never talks about things like that…. I don't know, maybe it's because were too busy, or because Gus thinks that religion is a private matter, or maybe it's because of some other reason…. I don't know." Then she turns to Gus and follows up on her initial remark. "I didn't know you've been having these thoughts honey."

Some Observations from This Brief Exchange

While there is a great deal that could be stated in response to the contents of this brief interview, because of space limitations, let us consider the following few points.

1. According to Diocesan statistics (where they are available), in some regions of our country there are more Greek Orthodox/Roman Catholic marriages being conducted in our churches vis-à-vis single faith Greek Orthodox marriages. This means that Greek Orthodox/Catholic marriages are more the norm and less the exception in many parts of our country.

2. Like some single faith Orthodox couples that attend our churches, some interfaith couples attend our churches for reasons that may be unrelated to their religious and spiritual needs. For example, some of the primary reasons that compelled Gus and Susan to attend were because, (a) Gus had strong ethnic connections, (b) Gus' family lived nearby, (c) Gus wanted his children to be enriched by the same Greek-American culture that positively impacted his development, and (d) neither spouse had a particularly strong religious identity.

3. Couples like Gus and Susan often have little incentive to become a single faith couple because religion is of marginal concern to them. As such, Susan is content to simply come to liturgy, but is not convinced that the time she must expend to convert will be "cost effective" to either her, her marriage, or family. This indifference toward religion and/or conversion may not, however, be permanent. Life cycle changes may prompt these types of spouses/couples to reevaluate the role that religion and spirituality should play in their lives.

4. When and if these types of spouses/couples have a change of heart regarding religion, this can potentially create some marital and family instability. This may especially be the case if only one of the two spouses determines that religion must play a more prominent role in his/her life. It is thus important that the Church be there to assist these spouses/couples in their efforts to meet their individual, couple, and family religious needs and challenges. Furthermore, if the Church is not responsive, then some of these spouses, couples, and families may look elsewhere to fulfill these needs and remedy this new challenge in their lives.

WHEN ONE SPOUSE IS A CONVERT, AND THE OTHER IS NON-ORTHODOX

Some of the diversity that exists in our Greek Orthodox congregations is due to the numbers of converts that have begun to embrace the Greek Orthodox Faith. Many, either have converted to Greek Orthodoxy as a single person, or have married a Greek Orthodox Christian and converted after marriage.

This article will focus on those marriages where one non-Greek spouse converted to Greek Orthodoxy, and the other has remained non-Orthodox. The numbers of these marriages comprise only a small segment of the interfaith marriages populating our churches. All interfaith marriages, that is, an Orthodox married to a non-Orthodox, have ongoing challenges. However, the couples who are the topic of this particular article have their own unique challenges and deserve our attention.

Meet Katherine and Edward

Katherine (30) and Edward (29), have been happily married for three years. Katherine is a psychotherapist, with Protestant roots, who entered the Greek Orthodox Church about five years ago. Edward owns his own bicycle shop. He refers to himself as a "non-practicing Roman Catholic." He attends Katherine's church periodically. They have no children.

When asked to describe some of their interfaith challenges, Katherine began to offer some background information. "I first heard about Orthodoxy while attending a workshop on spirituality. Even though the workshop leader was not Orthodox, he spoke with admiration about Orthodoxy, and his remarks piqued my curiosity." She pauses, overcome by some emotion, then continues. "I tried many types of faith experiences that didn't seem like a good fit. But with Orthodoxy, it was different. Almost from the beginning, the information that I read about the Orthodox Church made me feel like I had finally found a home."

Listening attentively, Edward responds. "That's true. My wife loves her Faith, and I respect that about her. But, I'm different. I feel more comfortable with God on a mountain trail, or when I'm fly fishing one of the local trout streams. I'm not very religious. I go to church occasionally with Katherine because I know she appreciates it."

"That's also true," Katherine remarks. "And at first, that was so hard for me. We almost didn't get married because my faith meant so much to me. And Ed's faith was so, well-nominal. Only after a great deal of personal struggle, and some guidance from my pastor, did I finally consent to accept his proposal. And I'm glad I did, because I feel as though that's what God wanted.

After another pause, Katherine continues. "And it's not been easy for many reasons. But one of the hardest things was finding a place for myself in the Orthodox Church, then getting married, and trying

to cultivate my own religious development while also helping my husband to adjust. He was really put off by all the emphasis on culture, and the unfamiliar rituals. For a long time, he questioned me about it. But over time, we kind of got over this, and we're now attending together on a more regular basis."

Another pause, then Katherine again continues. "I guess the liberal amounts of English that are used in our church, along with the genuinely warm and welcoming atmosphere towards newcomers, helped us find a home here, and have kept us both coming back. I know this is a Greek Orthodox Church, but I don't come to church because I'm interested in becoming Greek. Not that there is anything wrong with that. I come because I love Orthodoxy. I would come even if a good part of the liturgy were done in Greek. But, I know that it would be really hard for Ed, so I'm glad there is a lot of English used here."

"Ed nods in agreement, and adds, "I probably wouldn't be here talking with you if Katherine's Church didn't use as much English. As silly as it sounds, this made a big difference for us. English makes me feel more comfortable. It also helped me crack what I call the cultural barrier, so I could begin meeting some of the many wonderful people who come here. And even though I'm definitely not ready today. Who knows, when the kids arrive, I might even consider becoming Orthodox. But that's still a good distance away."

Our interview continues, but for our purpose here, it is not relevant. The question arises—what can we learn from this conversation between Katherine and Ed?

As we stated above, interfaith couples face challenges in their marriages. They are addressing their own religious needs as an individual, and as a couple. Couples, such as Katherine and Ed, face similar, yet different challenges. This brief interview reveals three challenges.

1. Because these couples do not have extended families attending the Greek Orthodox Church, they have no social support system that families offer in a new social setting. Trying to find "a place" in the Greek Orthodox Church without extended family, can be difficult.

2. Since religion, and not ethnicity, is the primary reason that attracts and holds many converts, they are challenged to find unique ways of respecting that congregation's emphasis on ethnicity, while practicing their Orthodox faith.

3. The Orthodox partner, will also be challenged to find ways of helping the non-Orthodox spouse, gain a respect for Orthodox forms and rituals, as well as the congregation's emphasis on ethnicity.

How can the Church help?

It is difficult to determine just how many couples like Katherine and Ed actually fill our pews on Sunday. Yet, it would not be a stretch of your imagination to suggest that in most of our churches today, this type of couple, is rare. However, with the increasing media emphasis on religion, including Orthodoxy, these couples may not be atypical in the near future. Thus, considering the needs of these couples could make good sense, in our efforts to minister to them and retain them within our Churches. Finding ways of assisting both the Orthodox and non-Orthodox partners, will ensure their continued involvement. I would like to offer the following observations:

The Orthodox partner's love for Orthodoxy generally keeps him or her engaged in one of our Churches. Remember, this is a good first step in understanding why they come to our church. Using English, in and out of our services, will facilitate their continued involvement in our churches.

WHEN GREEK ORTHODOX SPOUSES ARE NOT RELIGIOUS

Results from the Interfaith Research Project (IRP) suggest that most Greek Orthodox young people of dating age will eventually spend some time considering their dating partner's religious background. Moreover, if there are too many differences between their own Greek Orthodox religious background, and their dating partner's religious background, information from the IRP suggests that these types of relationships will generally fail to evolve into something serious.

This was not, however, the case in all instances. Some Greek Orthodox participants involved in the IRP stated that they had not spent any time considering their perspective mate's religious background because they did not consider themselves religious. In these cases, many of these types of participants had either drifted away or remained nominally connected to their Greek Orthodox background.

The remainder of this article will briefly introduce the reader to just such a person who will be identified as John. It should also be noted that the descriptions and observations that follow have not come from one particular individual named John, but are the result of

several individuals who participated in the IRP. Furthermore, while it is difficult to determine just how many of these types of lapsed intermarried Greek Orthodox exist, there is no doubt that they do exist and most everyone of us is acquainted with someone like John.

Meet John

John (37) is a successful small businessman who has been, in his own words, "happily married for 12 years." When asked to describe his religious affiliations, he states that "I come from a Greek Orthodox background, but I don't really consider myself a very religious person."

When John is asked to amplify upon this last statement, he offers the following additional information. "Well, I can't remember the last time I was in church. My wife goes sometimes with the kids, but they go to the Catholic Church. If I go at all, it's because someone died. But don't misunderstand, I still consider myself a Greek-American, but I don't go to church, that's all."

John is then asked to describe some of his religious experiences while growing up. With a half smile on his face almost resembling a smirk, he proceeds to answer with the following disjointed remarks. "My parents would bring us to church, but to this day I don't know why. When I would ask them why I had to go, they would yell and say something lame like, 'you just have to go that's all.' But none of their answers ever made much sense to me."

At this point in the conversation, John is asked if this discussion is making him feel uncomfortable, and he emphatically states, "no, not really, actually I'm finding it rather refreshing." He then proceeds to offer further information. "Don't misunderstand me, I loved my parents. They were good people. They worked hard to ensure that my sibs and I obtained a good education and would have a happy, comfortable life. But I don't think either of them really knew much about Greek Orthodoxy. So we went fairly regularly to church, but that was as far as religion went around our house…. I don't know, maybe they went because their conscience bothered them, or that's what people did back then, but I quickly decided that I wasn't going as soon as I could make my own mind up." John pauses for a few moments as if to collect his thoughts, and then shares the following additional observations about his father. "But my dad was kind of proud of his ethnic background. He sometimes talked about being Greek, but even when he talked about being Greek, he had as many bad things to say about the Greeks as he did good things."

John is then asked to describe more of his childhood church experiences. John smirks again, and sarcastically repeats part of the question. "My church experiences…. Do you really want this information? Well, okay, here goes. I remember going to church and being bored, I mean, really bored. I couldn't understand anything. Besides the fact that the services were in Greek, and people looked at you sternly if you fidgeted too often, I have very few other memories."

After more of the same information is shared for several more minutes, and our conversation begins to come to a conclusion, John is asked if the Orthodox Church could do anything for him and his family now. John shrugs his shoulders and states, "I doubt it, but it did feel good talking to someone about this…. Sometimes I feel like it might help my kids and family, but I just don't know…. Maybe a few more discussions like this might help some people like me."

Some Observations about this Interview

What can be stated in succinct terms about this short interview? First, the compelling reason(s) why intermarried Greek Orthodox Christians like John have stopped coming to church has little or nothing to do with being intermarried. Many of these types of lapsed Greek Orthodox appear to have severed their relationship with religion before getting married.

Second, other factors such as (a) their parents' lack of understanding of Orthodoxy, (b) their parents' nominal faith in God, and (c) the Church's inability to effectively reach out to John in a meaningful, personal way appear to have infected his thinking about religion and/or the Church.

Third, if intermarried parents expect their children to develop a bond with Greek Orthodoxy, they must be prepared to put in the necessary time to learn the faith and mirror it by example to their children.

Suggestions for Reaching John

While many lapsed Greek Orthodox like John may never come back to the Church, information from the IRP suggests that nominal believers like John may respond if the Church finds ways of identifying them, connecting with them in a non-judgmental manner, and allowing them some latitude for ventilation.

In short, many of these types of individuals' stories infer that they have never found a meaningful reason to renew their religious ties.

When these types of people get married and have families, however, marriage and family needs may compel them to rethink the value of religion if the Church can respectfully show them how it can have a positive impact on individual, marital, and family well-being.

WHEN CHILDREN REACH YOUNG ADULTHOOD

Separating from the Family

Children in our culture who reach young adulthood are typically busy separating themselves from their parents in an effort to form their own opinions about the world around them.themselves Parents are also generally assisting and supporting them in this effort.

When young adults begin separating themselves from their childhood homes, they not only separate from their family of origin, but must also separate from the cultural, religious, and community structures of their youth. However, this does not imply that young adults thoroughly discard their cultural and religious roots since in most cases this does not happen. Young adults are simply creating enough space between themselves and their parents to afford themselves ample room to make independent choices and decisions about important matters such as culture and religion. Moreover, if parents are too intrusive and seek to impose their values on their young adult children, they may create tension or worse, a family cut-off.

One focus group participant expressed the separation process in this way: "I went into the military at 19. A year later when I returned on leave, my parents began asking me all kinds of questions and treating me like a kid. Some of their questions had to do with religion like, 'Have you been going to church?' Well, I didn't say much, and there was a lot of tension in the house between us. I felt as if I was old enough to make my own decisions about a lot of things, and it wasn't their business anymore. Take religion for example, I felt like I needed to explore the idea of religion by myself."

Four Possible Pathways

Unlike adolescents who busy themselves experimenting and testing out new ideas, most young adults are beginning to form the basis of a solid and stable life structure and cultural identity which will ultimately assist them in their efforts to make crucial decisions about such things like their career and future mate. Some of these decisions will be related to religion and culture. For example, Dr. Joel Crown, in his book, *Mixed Matches*, describes four possible pathways that young

adults' might take when decisions about culture and religion are being considered.

1. Some young adults will essentially identify themselves with "the parent who is from the dominant culture, and they will essentially adopt this parent's cultural and religious values. These young adults may or may not identify with the other parent who is from a minority culture.

2. Some young adults will identify themselves "with the minority ethnic, racial, or religious background of one of their parents. In these instances, the young adult may or may not acknowledge the other parent's background.

3. Some young adults will tend to create their own values, rituals and identity—irrespective of both parent's cultural and religious backgrounds. These young adults may refuse to accept any labels or create a distinct label that differentiates them from any childhood cultural and religious labels.

4. Other young adults may strive to bring together and integrate both their parents' cultural and religious backgrounds. These adults will generally acknowledge that both their parents have influenced their perceptions of culture and religion.

What is important to note here is that young adults may make some initial decisions regarding religion and culture at this stage in the life cycle, but these decisions may be reconfigured several times as they mature. The following remarks are typical, "When I left home for college, I all but rejected my Greek Orthodox faith. But as time passed and I had a family, I found myself slowly gravitating back to my Greek Orthodox background. I guess when it came down to it, of all the places I would like to be on Sunday morning, I decided St. George Greek Orthodox Church was probably the best place for me."

Marital and Family Challenges

As young adult children make decisions about religion and culture, it can be a particularly unsettling time for all members of their family. If parents have not come to terms with their religious differences, old wounds will generally surface and irritate their marriage — especially if their adult children make decisions about religion that appear to be related to parents' unresolved religious differences. In this case, spouses might be prone to assign blame and reopen old arguments. The following short exchange between a husband and wife from one of the focus groups illustrates this point.

George: "From day one, our religious differences—and to a lesser degree – our cultural differences have been sore spot in our marriage."

Linda: "I wouldn't argue about that. We've had a hard time agreeing about where to go to church, where the children would be baptized and which church activities they should attend."

George: "I always wanted them to attend the Greek Church and she wanted them to be raised Catholic."

Linda: "For years we had some real heated arguments – sometimes in front of the children."

George: "Then somewhere around the time when they were teens, to keep the peace we just stopped going to church."

Linda: "Yeah, and now that they're on their own, one of them won't have anything to do with organised religion, and the other two are attending non-denominational churches. (Thoughtfully) These days George blames me, and I blame him."

Family Tension and Cut-Offs

Parents with strong opinions about religion can also potentially drive a wedge between themselves and their children. Young adult children might pretend to espouse certain religious affiliations to please their parents. They might also resent covert and overt intrusions into this part of their lives that could negatively color their relationship. In some instances, cut-offs might take place when irreconcilable differences over religion and culture exist between a parent(s) and a young adult child.

One participant who had little to do with her parents stated, "I came to this country as an exchange student and later became an American citizen. During the time when I was studying, I met my husband. We started dating, and we fell deeply in love. When I told my parents, I knew they wouldn't be pleased, but I didn't expect them to react so negatively. They tried everything to break us up. But nothing worked because we loved each other.We eventually set a date to get married in the Greek Orthodox Church, but they refused to attend the wedding. This hurt terribly, but I decided to go ahead with the wedding. We've been happily married for ten years now. They still refuse to meet my husband, and I have slowly begun accepting the fact they may never be a big part of our lives."

Some Concluding Thoughts

Results from the Interfaith Research Project clearly suggest that most intermarried couples and families live a very stable and happy

existences. However, together with the challenges that single faith marriages and families face when children reach adulthood, results also indicate that intermarried couples and families confront some unique challenges related to their religious and cultural differences. This article has described some of these challenges. Intermarried couples who are aware of these challenges will be in a better position to cultivate marital satisfaction and family stability.

SOME OF THE CHANGES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE CHURCH

When social scientists compare contemporary young adult dating and mating patterns with previous generations, they discover that contemporary young adults are mixing more and intermarrying more. Moreover, this finding clearly applies to Greek Orthodox young adults, since statistics indicate that 60-80% of our young adults choose to intermarry annually.

But how is one to interpret these statistical trends? And how will these trends effect the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese's future? Should we expect to face new challenges in our local churches, and at the Diocesan and Archdiocesan levels as a result of these trends? Are there adjustments that must be made? And what are these adjustments?

Obviously a short article like this one cannot possibly address all these complex questions. Nevertheless, articles like this one can begin facilitating and encouraging prayerful discussion of the type that can guide us to some answers. It is both hoped and anticipated that what follows will make a small contribution in this direction: to God's glory and our salvation.

Meet Sara and Danny

In the brief conversation that follows, you will be introduced to a fictional couple whom I shall call Sara and Danny. And even though this couple is fictional, I assure you that the remarks offered below are typical of numerous interfaith couples who attend our churches, since the contents of this short exchange will be based on the observations and descriptions of numerous couples who have participated in the Interfaith Research Project (IRP).

Sara (27) and Danny (26) have been married for several years. Sara is a third generation Greek Orthodox Christian, while Danny was raised Catholic, comes from a mixed Irish, Scottish, and Italian ethnic background, and does not know how to determine which

generation he might be. Both would like children in the future, are well educated, and will in all probability live a middle to upper-middle class existence.

When asked what compelled them to marry, both indicate that the primary factor was their mutual love for one another. Sara is also quick to offer the following observation: "It certainly wasn't like that for my parents. I think there was more pressure on them to marry a Greek. My mom's dad (my papou) was very insistent that she date and marry a Greek."

Danny is familiar with this story and offers the following observation without any objection from Sara. "Yeah, but that wasn't necessarily true of your parents. I mean, they didn't really care that much."

Sara agrees, and adds, "That's true, but I think way down deep somewhere in their hearts they might have preferred that I marry a Greek. But we never really discussed it, and I think my mom was determined not to impose the same types of dating restrictions on me that were imposed on her. Besides I think we both knew that pressure wouldn't have worked."

Danny interrupts and states, "Yeah, these are different times."

When the couple is asked which church they attend, and why, Sara offers the following remarks. "When we go to church, which is about once a month, we generally go to my church. And the reason why is connected to Danny's indifference to his religious background and my desire to attend my family's church."

As this conversation continues, Sara also observes that she probably attends the Greek Orthodox Church for slightly different reasons then her parents. She states that "I think my parents came because their parents pressured them to come, and they kind of felt that that's where Greek-Americans should worship. But I come because the liturgy makes worshipping God easier. And even though I really don't understand it very much, I like the incense, the familiar hymns, and icons, because they make me feel close to God."

At this juncture Danny is asked if he would like to add anything, and he says, "Well, not really. I think what Sara has said pretty much answered your questions."

Two Brief Observations From this Conversation

First, social science informs us that connections to the old country thin out and weaken from one generation to the next. Moreover, a

careful examination of what was stated above appears to confirm this latter point. While Sara has some connects to her ethnic background, her remarks suggest that they are thinner and weaker than her grandparents and parents ethnic connects. Moreover, while Danny ethnic connections remain in the backdrop of this conversation, one infers from his few comments that this is the case because they are so thin and weak as to be indiscernible to him.

Second, social scientists also suggest that as people's ethnic connects thin out and weaken, the dominate American culture plays a greater role in influencing who they are and how they see the world. While there are no direct references that would serve to reinforce this latter point, there are plenty of indirect references. For example, this couple's decision to intermarry is perhaps the strongest evidence that their behaviour and decisions are influenced more by the dominant American culture then either of their ethnic backgrounds.

Some Responses

Results from the IRP suggest that past generations of Greek Orthodox Christians attended services because the church met their ethnoreligious needs. Present third, fourth, and fifth generations are less likely to be connected to their Greek ethnic roots, and by extension, may be less likely to attend as a result of their ethnic connections.

Results also suggest that one of the factors, among others, that appears to motivate third, fourth, and fifth generation Greek-American church attendance is a need to meet certain religious and spiritual needs. Furthermore, many of these types of faithful may be lacking in knowledge of their Greek Orthodox faith tradition, but come because it feels the most familiar and most comfortable way to worship.

And finally, as a researcher who has tried to assume a "not knowing" attitude of curiosity so as to avoid allowing my own biases to contaminate the results that have been emerging from the IRP, I have asked myself the following questions, and I conclude this short article with these questions as a way to stimulate further conversation about interfaith issues across our Archdiocese.

1. If it is true that ties to the old country thin out and weaken from one generation to the next, what factors will keep our intermarried young adults connected to our churches?

2. If our intermarried young adults are coming to our churches because they feel the most comfortable with Greek Orthodoxy, but also lack knowledge of their faith, how will this effect their

children and their children's children commitment to Greek Orthodoxy?

3. If interfaith marriages are more than a passing trend, then what adjustments should the Church be considering in its efforts minister to a population of faithful whose ethnic ties are weaker than previous generations?

GREEK ORTHODOX PARTICIPANTS' VIEW OF THEIR FAITH TRADITION

1. Childhood Impressions

- Greek Orthodox participants born in this country suggested their childhood impressions of the religious dimension of Greek Orthodox Church were moderately to highly negative in character. They typically described memories of "long boring" services that were celebrated "in Greek rather than their own English language." They also stated that while many of their parents extolled the virtues of being Greek Orthodox, they failed to explain the faith in understandable terms. Their parents' efforts to force and manipulate them into attending were also mentioned. Since many stopped attending church when they reached adolescence or went to college, many pointed out that their parents' strategies were generally ineffective. Practicing their faith meant very little to them because they lacked a rudimentary understanding of their Orthodox faith background.

- Many recalled how Sunday School lacked any depth and failed to be of much assistance in helping them understand Orthodoxy. Some stated that they obtained an understanding of Christianity when they attended non-Orthodox Bible studies and youth group activities later in life.

- In several cases, the religious dimension of their faith community continued to mean very little to them as adults because they lacked a fundamental understanding of Orthodoxy. These participants continued to belong to their churches because of family and ethnic ties, and not because of religious connections.

- Many Greek Orthodox participants' impressions of the social, ethnic, and family dimensions of Greek Orthodoxy were viewed in highly positive terms. They stated that their Sunday experiences allowed them to form many treasured memories with family and friends that served to make a positive impact on their sense of self and the world around them. They further stated that

being part of a community of people who were at once socially and ethnically interconnected appeared to impact them in positive terms.

2. Adult Impressions and Experiences

- While some participants stated they had engaged in some religious experimentation either as single young adults or newlyweds, they also stated this "was simply a phase that didn't last long." Most participants' observations indicated that the Orthodoxy was their preferred form of worship. Many also stated that they could not imagine worshiping in any other church because of their moderate to high attachment to the religious forms and rituals and their Hellenic background.

- While many described a high attachment to their faith communities, they also perceived themselves as possessing a low to moderate understanding of their faith tradition. As a result, many participants stated that their lack of knowledge about their faith often made it difficult for them to explain many of the theological and liturgical subtleties of their faith to their spouses and children. This deficiency deeply frustrated and troubled them, and they often stated that they "wanted to address and correct this weakness." Because of their busy schedules, many were never able to correct this deficiency. In a few instances, participants described a process whereby they became committed to developing a deeper understanding of their faith. They indicated that it was "hard work" and " a real sacrifice." They further suggested the motivating factor that compelled them to learn more about their faith was their concern for their children's religious and spiritual development and their spouse's continued participation at liturgy.

- Despite the fact that many Greek Orthodox participants lacked knowledge of their faith, most clearly indicated that the Greek Orthodox experience was important to their sense of identity. Their observations also pointed to the positive impact religion and culture had on their psychological and spiritual well-being.

- Others pointed to the social benefits they derived from Greek Orthodoxy. They stated that Greek Orthodoxy facilitated and maintained a connection with their familial ancestors, extended family and others with whom they shared a common religious and cultural experience. When compared to other religious communities, Orthodox participants were also attracted to Greek

Orthodoxy because their faith background placed an equal value on individuality and autonomy, as well as the group experience. In several instances, Greek Orthodox participants stated that when they visited other churches, they felt as if an inordinate amount of emphasis was placed on the individual, and social connections did not seem important.

- Most Greek Orthodox participants believed that the Orthodox Church is an important part of the Christian Church. However, they did not espouse the view that the Orthodox Church is the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church of Christ. Respondents' remarks suggested that this perspective was "a sensible, fair and Christian way to view Greek Orthodoxy." Participants also stated that a respect for other Christian traditions served to reduce conflict between Christians, and by extension, conflict within their inter-Christian households.

- A few participants tended to view their Church as "the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church." They stated that they believed the Orthodox Church "has safeguarded Christ's full message." Most participants espousing this view avoided making this an issue with their non-Orthodox spouse. They appeared to hold to this belief privately. They also appeared to reason that arguments around theological differences were counterproductive that could create marital conflict and family instability. They maintained that arguments caused by their theological differences were "against God's will." Marital rapport was clearly more important to them than theological agreement.

- Many Greek Orthodox spouses felt that their non-Orthodox spouse was not receiving very much from his or her participation in the Divine Liturgy. Some observed that this might be the case because of their spouse's religious background. Greek Orthodox participants married to Protestant Christians were most likely to make this observation.

- When comparing their Church with other faith communities, participants generally felt that their Greek Orthodox faith was too rigid on many subjects. Several comments indicated that their Church's inflexibility made Greek Orthodox participants feel as if they were caught between (a) their church's teachings, (b) their spouse's feelings and needs, and (c) their non-Orthodox partner's extended family's feelings and needs. Their Church's rigid rules regarding participation in the sacraments compelled

participants to infer that their Church may appear less welcoming to difference and diversity when compared to other churches. Numerous participants stated that their attendance and support of the Greek Orthodox Church depended on their non-Orthodox spouse's perceptions of the Orthodox Church they attended. When the non-Orthodox partner felt welcomed in the Church, this increased Greek Orthodox participants' attendance and support of their Church.

3. Orthodoxy's Ethno Religious Character

- Respondents repeatedly conceptualised Greek Orthodoxy in ethno-religious terms, *i.e.*, an experience that weaves ethnicity and religion into one.

- This experience was generally characterised as "Greek-American" and "American-Orthodox" in nature, and depended on whether participants were immigrants or American born. Greek immigrants' comments attested to the "American" character of the church in this country, while Greek-American's described the distinct "Greek-American" character of the Church.

- Many participants placed an equal value on ethnicity and religion, and asserted that ethnicity and religion were interconnected and interdependent spheres of experience. In other instances, religion or ethnicity was given more value. In these instances, comments inferred that they did not view religion and ethnicity as interdependent and interconnected spheres of experience, and either religion or culture was perceived to be of singular importance. The value of both spheres of experience varied from one respondent to the next depending on the level of each individual's ethnic and religious attachments.

- Many Greek Orthodox participants spoke in ambivalent terms about the ethnic side of their Churches. Participants stated that the inordinate emphasis on ethnicity in many of our Churches "tended to make their spouses, children, and in-laws feel like outsiders." All Greek Orthodox respondents in this study stated that it was very important to them that their non-Orthodox spouses feel accepted in their churches. They encouraged the Church to make some modifications and adjustments so that it could meet the needs of their spouses, children, and in-laws more effectively. Some participants who came from large urban areas observed that inner city churches tended to be especially ethnocentric.

- When asked what adjustments the local Greek Orthodox Church could make to reach out more effectively to intermarried couples, all participants felt that local churches needed to find ways of becoming "more inclusive" and "more accepting of non-Orthodox." They further stated that churches must strive to become more tolerant of the cultural and religious diversity in their congregations. Derogatory references to non-Orthodox religious groups, as well as disparaging stereotypical comments about other ethnic and racial groups were unacceptable and inappropriate. In short, increased respect for the cultural, religious, and racial diversity in our congregations should be aggressively promoted.

- Numerous comments indicated that the church must find ways to (a) provide more opportunities for direct involvement to non-Orthodox, (b) use more English, (c) make non-Orthodox family members feel more welcome, (d) encourage more tolerance and respect for diversity, and (e) avoid making intermarried couples feel guilty about their decision to remain intermarried.

- Some Greek Orthodox participants also suggested that an overemphasis on ethnicity had driven them from their childhood Churches and compelled them to look for a Greek Orthodox Church where their spouses could feel at home. Some of these participants also mused that if an "Americanized Greek Orthodox Church was not available, they do not know what they might have done."

4. Impressions of the Priest and Congregation

- Participants observed that the priest's attitude towards them either encouraged or discouraged their participation. When the priest was perceived as assuming a dogmatic, rigid approach toward intermarried couples, and either overtly or covertly communicated disrespect for a couple's decision to remain intermarried, this pastoral approach tended to push couples away. Similarly, if a priest used derogatory, demeaning remarks to characterize non-Orthodox faith traditions, this behaviour unsettled and offended Greek Orthodox participants.

In addition, when a congregation was perceived as overly ethnocentric, this tended to push intermarried couples away. Congregations who were also perceived as nationalistic made intermarried couples feel like outsiders.

STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT DIVORCE

We live in a Divorce Culture

Do these messages sound familiar? I'm not surprised if they do. After all, we live in a culture that considers divorce a legitimate option when spouses are unhappy with their marriage. However, what we don't hear as often is some of the information that's now emerging from respected researchers who've been studying divorce in our country. Here's a sampling of I mean.

- Researchers suggest that two thirds of the divorces that take place are between spouses who are only moderately conflicted. They also suggest that many of these marriages could likely have been saved.

- Research also indicates that 80% of moderately conflicted couples who choose to remain together report higher levels of martial satisfaction within five years.

- Research also suggests that many people who choose divorce, are likely to experience ambivalent feelings about their decision years later. That's because many discover that divorce is not the panacea it's made out to be. In fact, in most instances, divorce creates more problems than it resolves.

Help From the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese (GOA)

Because of the pervasiveness of divorce, the GOA has started several initiatives. These include a Website that answers questions for individuals, two books—one for couples and one for priests and lay leaders—which deal with marital problems. They also include articles such as this one in the, as well as the development of a Department of Marriage and Family ministries.

Don't Give Up

As a result of the negative, long lasting effects on both divorcing spouses and their children, many researchers, psychotherapists and government officials are beginning to rethink the merits of divorce – especially in the case of moderately conflicted couples who report low levels of marital satisfaction. So long as there isn't any emotional or physical abuse occurring, many experts are now beginning to argue that a substantial number of moderately conflicted marriages can be saved.

The fact is, many couples who determine to find ways of reclaiming the happiness that they have lost, successfully do so. That's because,

researchers now know what factors promote healthy marriage, and this information has been translated into programmes that help two committed people reclaim their marriages.

If you're currently caught in an unhappy relationship, for many of the reasons I've indicated above, and for many that I couldn't include in this short article, let me encourage you not to give up. If you're interested in reclaiming the love, intimacy and happiness that you've lost, please know that it's possible. With an unswerving commitment and some prayer and the help of some marriage building strategies and techniques, you can turn an unhappy marriage around. I'm not saying it will be easy. But it is possible, if you're committed enough. I know, because I've seen it happen numerous times.

If You're Divorced and Experiencing Mixed Feelings

Conversely, if you related to the respondent's remarks at the beginning of this article, here are a few suggestions. It may be that enough time has not passed. Many of us know that we can obtain a civil divorce in about a year, but we're rarely informed that it takes people about five years to reach emotional closure. If you're still struggling to find some closure, you might consider the following suggestions:

1. If you haven't already done so, consider obtaining a Church Divorce. This process will assist you in finding some spiritual closure. That's because this process can prayerfully repair the separation that has occurred between you and your faith background. For example, you may have never processed through the circumstances surrounding your divorce with God. One individual comes to mind whom I once assisted. In paraphrased form she stated, "It took mine five years to ask for God's forgiveness, and to experience His comforting tender mercy. Getting a Church Divorce lifted some lingering regrets and burdens off my shoulders." Whatever the special, unique circumstances, a Church Divorce can facilitate spiritual closure and this process can have a positive impact on your efforts to find some emotional closure.

2. If you've obtained a church divorce without experiencing the spiritual closure I've described above, then you might consider confession. Confession can help you some spiritual and emotional closure.

3. You might also consider obtaining some counsel – either from your priest and or a professional counselor. In either case, speaking to a caring individual who has good listening skills can help you process through some of the lingering regrets and doubts.

Trust in God

Whether you are currently in a conflicted marriage or have exited a conflicted marriage, please know that God can help you. If you are in a loveless relationship, God can help you reclaim the love and intimacy that compelled you to marry. If you've divorced and have lingering regrets, God can help you find some emotional and spiritual closure. In either instance, remember what the author of proverbs states. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths".

DEVELOPING A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF INTERFAITH MARRIAGES AND THEIR CHALLENGES

Over the next several months a series of articles will begin appearing in the Observer with the intended purpose of sharing some of the results that are emerging from the ongoing research that is occurring on interfaith marriages across our Archdiocese. If you would like your voice heard and included in this ongoing research process, and you are an interfaith spouse/couple, clergyman, lay leader, parent, social scientist, or other interested person, you are encouraged to visit the interfaith marriage website on the Archdiocesan home page. Interfaith spouse/couple feedback forms are available for interfaith spouses and couples who visit this site, as well as stakeholder feedback forms for clergy, lay leaders, parents, social scientists, and other interested persons.

An Orthodox, Ecological, Developmental perspective of Interfaith Marriages

Because of the diversity that exists among interfaith marriages across our Archdiocese, developing a basic conceptual understanding of the challenges that face interfaith spouses/couples who attend our churches is no easy task. To be more specific, some of these marriages include two spouses who have equally strong religious and ethnic connections. In other instances, some of these marriages include two spouses who have equally strong religious commitments, but dissimilar ethnic ties. And in yet other instances, some of these marriages may

include spouses with similar ethnic attachments but dissimilar religious connections. Furthermore, some of these couples may consist of a Greek Orthodox spouse and an Irish Catholic spouse or an Asian, or Chicano… Catholic spouse, while others may be Greek Orthodox and some variation from the white Anglo Saxon Protestant tradition. In short, the number of combinations are numerous and varied when religious, ethnic, and dominate cultural variables are considered.

As a result of the inherent complexity in this population of faithful, one of the first tasks that has been deemed necessary is to develop ways of managing the many seemingly desperate pieces of information that exist in an examination of interfaith couples across our Archdiocese. As the research process has unfolded, therefore, a theory has begun to emerge that (a) will help us conceptualize the many differences and challenges interfaith couples face, and (b) is at once grounded on Orthodox theology, human science, and interfaith spouses' lived experiences.

To be more specific, over the past few months an Orthodox, ecological, developmental, grounded theory has begun to emerge. And while it is far beyond the scope of this short article to offer a detailed explanation of this developing theory, an introduction to some of the salient components of this theory is not too ambitious a task. The following are some of the important points to emerge after 13 focus groups have been conducted, in six dioceses.

- By virtue of interfaith spouses'/couples' religious and ethnic differences, these types of spouses/couples struggle with numerous unique challenges throughout the life cycle.

- These unique challenges are not simply the result of interfaith spouses' and couples' challenges, but are the result of the social environment (social ecology) in which they are embedded.

- Among the many components of interfaith spouses' and couples' social ecology, (a) the individual spousal subsystem, (b) couple subsystem, (c) family subsystem, (d) extended family subsystem, (e) faith community subsystem, and (f) our dominate American culture appear to be of salient importance and should be given the most attention in our efforts to understand this population's unique challenges.

- In addition, each of these various subsystems have certain inherent needs, priorities, and expectations. Moreover, these various subsystem needs, priorities, and expectations do not always fit

perfectly together. For example, individual spousal needs, priorities and expectations can conflict with couple needs, priorities, and expectations; couple needs, priorities and expectations can conflict with extended family needs, priorities and expectations; extended family needs, priorities, and expectations can conflict with faith community needs, priorities, and expectations etc.

- Interfaith spouses and couples are constantly seeking to strike a balance between all these disparate subsystem needs, priorities, and expectations. If they are successful in striking a reasonable balance between these numerous subsystem needs, priorities, and expectations, then their efforts will serve to positively impact individual, couple, and family well-being. To the extent that they are unsuccessful, then individual, couple, and family well-being (and by extension, religious well-being) will be negatively impacted.

- Anyone wishing to minister to this population of people will benefit from discerning how interfaith couple's religious and cultural differences interface with their social environment to create unique challenges (over the life cycle) for this population of faithful.

A Brief Illustration from the First Stage in the Marital Life Cycle

If you are confused by these theoretical assumptions, then perhaps the following brief illustration might serve to help you begin better understanding what has been posited above.

Couples involved in the interfaith research project have reported that when they initially began casually dating circumstances between them were reasonably simple and innocent. But this quickly changed once they began becoming more serious about one another, and individual spousal needs, priorities, and expectations surfaced. For example, some respondents stated that they became increasingly more concerned about their religious and cultural differences and, they wondered how these differences might impact their marriage. Many of these same respondents also stated that they questioned how they could meet their own religious and cultural needs while also respecting their partner's religious and cultural needs, priorities and expectations.

Numerous respondents also reported that when the issue of marriage began to be broached, they felt pressure from their parents as a result of certain extended family needs, priorities and expectations. In the

words of one respondent, "I wanted to please them (my parents), and meet my needs, and my spouses needs,… but they kept making me feel guilty because I was marrying a non-Greek."

They also stated that they were challenged by the conflicting rules that existed between their respective faith communities as they sought to determine where they would marry. For instance, numerous Greek Orthodox, Catholic combinations ruminated over the trails and tribulations they encountered when they tired to reconcile conflicting church rules with regards to their children's religious development.

And to complicate matters further, while discussing the dating process several participants also stated that certain dominate American culture norms such as tolerance, acceptance, and respect for difference also served to further confuse them. One Greek Orthodox respondent's observations were typical of what many respondents stated about how church rules and our American culture sometimes conflict: "We live in a society that is tolerant of difference, but sometimes I feel caught between what my church says, and what society is saying…. Society preaches tolerance, acceptance… while my church seems to often be intolerant of outsiders."

Some Resolutions and Solutions

In the face of all these and numerous other conflicting subsystem needs, priorities, and expectations that surfaced during the dating process, participants reported making an effort to strike a balance that would meet personal, couple, extended family and faith community needs, priorities, and expectations. Moreover, to the extent that they were successful in negotiating these conflicting needs, and striking a balance between them, the events leading up to their marriage, and the day they were married, was a pleasant, memorable, blessed event. And to the extent that they were unsuccessful, the time before marriage, as well as the day they were married, was riddled with a degree of disappointment and controversy. Furthermore, if these conflicting subsystem needs, priorities, and expectations lingered, then they continued to be irritants that seemed to negatively impact individual, couple, and family religious well-being for years to come.

A Life-long Endeavour

The unique challenges enumerated above succinctly considered what many interfaith couples encounter during the initial phase of the first stage in the marital life cycle, *i.e.*, the dating stage. The challenges do not, however, end when these couples are finally married, but

merely change over time as individuals, couples, and families pass through the individual, marital, and family life cycle. Furthermore, the success that interfaith spouses and couples have at striking a balance between the many subsystem needs during early stages in their relationship will either negatively or positively impact future marital and family well-being, and by extension, religious well-being.

Two Concluding Observations

Because this theory and ongoing research will be grounded on (a) Orthodox theology, and (b) interfaith spouses' and couples' lived experiences, the following results are anticipated:

1. The church will be provided with a means to better understand the unique challenges facing interfaith couples' and families' across our Archdiocese.

2. It is also anticipated that this work will give the church another effectual way to begin strengthening its ties with this growing group of faithful to God's glory.

INTERFAITH MARRIAGE AIMS

Because of my expertise in the areas of marriage and family, I have been examining inter-Christian and intercultural marriages across the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. A few of the reasons this work was initiated are as follows:

- Nearly 2/3 of marriages (65%) conducted in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese (GOA) are inter-Christian and intercultural in composition. Some are also interracial.

- Families are of central importance to Greek Orthodox Americans' individual and collective psychological, physical, religious and spiritual well-being.

- Healthy marriages have a positive impact on individual and family well-being, while unhealthy marriages have a reverse effect.

- Professionals from a variety of philosophical perspectives are writing about marriages and families. Our Orthodox voice should also be heard.

- Reports given by the Interchurch and Interfaith Committee at the 1996, 1998, 2000 and 2002 Clergy-Laity Congresses asserted that a failure to reach out to interfaith couples and their families could be detrimental to the future well-being and viability of many of the churches in the GOA.

As a result, the GOA commissioned me to develop and initiate the Interfaith Research Project (IRP). This research was funded by Leadership 100. The following points describe the primary objectives of this work:

- To acquire a more thorough understanding of what special challenges and obstacles intermarried couples and their families face.

- To document the lived experiences, observations, and interpretations of a select group of "stakeholders" who might either be personally interested in this topic or have special insight to contribute to this project. (Examples of stakeholders might be intermarried couples, clergy, social scientists, individuals from failed intermarriages, theologians, and lay leaders).

- To generate resources that will assist our seminarians, clergy, lay workers and lay leaders in their efforts to minister to intermarried spouses, their marriages and their families.

- To generate resources for intermarried spouses, couples and their families who attend one of the churches in the GOA.

- To develop seminars and presentations for (a) future seminarians, (b) clergy, (c) intermarried couples, and (c) our laity. These seminars would seek to help participants acquire a deeper understanding and sensitivity for the special needs and challenges that intermarried spouses, couples and families encounter.

- To begin developing user-friendly, effectual methods, approaches, and programmes that can assist clergy and lay leaders in their efforts to minister to interfaith marriages and families.

- To develop a Department of Interfaith Marriages, together with an infrastructure that would seek to facilitate this work at all levels of the GOA.

REASONS WHY INTERMARRIED COUPLES BECOME SINGLE CHURCH COUPLE

Although most participants involved in the IRP appeared to be very comfortable with their decision to intermarry, there were a small number (11%) who were considering conversion. These individuals were considering this option for one or more of the following reasons.

Conversion Eliminates Possible Sources of Contention

Results from the IRP suggest that a small but sizable number of intermarried spouses believe that conversion can positively impact their marriage. These participants stated that conversion would likely

strengthen their marriage by removing possible sources of contention that could compromise spousal and extended family stability.

Time, Tolerance, and Education

Time, tolerance, additional information, and education classes appeared to help intermarried couples decide if they should become single-church couples. "What I needed was some space to make the decision," stated one respondent who was embracing Orthodoxy in the near future. "In my heart of hearts, I always knew that I would convert, but if someone had pressured me, that wouldn't have been good."

Respectfully Sharing Greek Orthodoxy

Results also indicate that if a non-Orthodox spouse is approached respectfully and sincerely with the idea of conversion, such an approach can facilitate conversion. For example, one participant stated, "I never forced him. It was his decision. I respected him and knew if I had tried to push, that would have been harmful to our marriage. It was his decision, not mine. He was the one that had to feel like that's what God wanted for our family."

Weak Religious and Ethnic Connections

A weak connection to one's religious tradition, together with a renewed sense of the importance of religion, made it easier for some participants to consider conversion. "I wasn't very religious when we first got married. As you get older, and your priorities change, religion seemed to take on more importance for me. Since my wife and kids are Greek Orthodox, it seemed like a natural thing for me to consider the Orthodox Church more seriously. Today, I am in the process of going through the Inquirer's Class to enter the Orthodox Church."

Similarly, a weak connection to one's religious tradition, along with the perception that conversion might strengthen one's marriage and enhance one's relationship with one's in-laws also offered some participants incentive to consider conversion. One respondent said, "The main reason why we got married in the Orthodox Church is because this decision was going to help our family. His parents didn't accept me easily because I was previously married, and so I said to myself, this is going to be my mother-in-law, and I want to make this work. So we got married Orthodox, and now I'm considering conversion for some of the same reasons. Besides that, I really didn't have any strong connections to my religion."

The Arrival of Children

When intermarried couples decide to have children, or when their children begin to mature and are able to ask questions about religion, some couples reconsider their decision to remain intermarried. One father said, "I think that it's very important that the kids see both parents go to church…. When I would sit at home on Sundays, as the kids grew I began to hear the kids saying, 'why do I have to go, Dad isn't going.' So then, I began to rethink what I was doing, and started going to church regularly. And after a while, I also began thinking about maybe even converting."

A Love of Orthodoxy

Conversion that was coerced or entered into to simply satisfy church rules, the extended family, and, or one's spouse was repeatedly described in pejorative terms. As such, remarks like the following one were made repeatedly. "I feel very strongly about this. If you don't feel that you should convert—you shouldn't. And if you feel like you're being pressured, and you convert, what good is that? It might just lead to trouble in the future. What I mean is, that the person who converts may end up being resentful." Conversely, having a sincere, heartfelt commitment to the Orthodox faith was perceived as a legitimate, justifiable, and healthy reason to convert

EXTENDED FAMILY

This study concern itself with participants' observations regarding their extended families. While these observations may not apply to every intermarried couple, couples who have some association with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America should find this information useful. In general, participants' indicated that they encountered most extended family challenges during the dating process, engagement process and after marriage, up through the time when the first child arrived.

During the dating and engagement periods, individual preferences regarding a choice of mate sometimes triggered family conflict. Many parents wanted their adult child to marry someone of the same faith and ethnic background. Parents' needs tended to create a number of individual and family challenges. After marriage, questions regarding baptism and the couple's church home surfaced. Intermarried parents often made decisions regarding their children's baptism and the church they would attend that ultimately conflicted with the wishes of one or

both sets of grandparents. Intermarried couples were often challenged to find ways of addressing their nuclear family needs while being respectful to their parents' needs. In some instances this was not always possible, and conflict resulted.

Results also indicate that if couples were able to strike a balance early on between nuclear family needs, and extended family needs, future extended family challenges were less frequent and serious. If couples were unable to strike a balance between nuclear family needs, and extended family needs, lingering extended family tension and conflict related to their religious and cultural differences negatively impacted intermarried couples throughout the marital and family life cycle. Moreover, this conflict could undermine marital and family well-being.

Participants' age and Extended Family Challenges

- The age of participants generally determined the quality and amount of the conversation that took place within each focus group regarding extended family challenges. Generation "X"ers (ages 21-34) spent more time discussing extended family issues. This presumably was the case because "X"ers were trying to work through extended family challenges related to their religious and cultural differences. In contrast, Baby Boomers' (ages 35-52) comments generally suggested they had negotiated and formed boundaries between themselves and their extended families.

Gender Specific Challenges

- When non-Orthodox male participants described their initial experiences during the dating process, they often observed that dating guidelines were generally more conservative than the dominant culture's standards. This did not hold true when non-Orthodox female participants described the dating process. This suggests that gender can play a role in the type of challenges that dating couples face.

Dating

- Many participants inferred that their parents' approval and happiness with their choice of dating partners was important to them, and they tried to date individuals who would please their parents. However, this was not always possible. In some instances, participants described experiencing some initial displeasure from

their parents regarding their choice of partner. A few participants also indicated that ill feelings regarding their choice of partner lingered into the first few years of marriage. This was especially true of many Greek Orthodox participants' experiences. In these cases, participants described being caught between their desire to please their parents, and their growing love and affection for their mate. Some reported that cutoffs occurred after they disclosed their decision to intermarry. Cutoffs were rare, and often did not last.

- Extended families' association to the old country, their level of ethnicity, and their level of religiosity, were all factors that were related to the challenges couples experienced during the dating process, engagement period and the period shortly after marriage.

- During the dating process, couples observed that the degree of attachment their parents (and extended families) had to the old country, was related to the difficulties many had in obtaining their parents' blessings to move the relationship to the engagement stage. Immigrant and first generation extended families were likely to offer more resistance to couples as they became serious with one another. Conversely, families who had been in this country for a longer period of time were generally less resistant to their children dating outside of their culture and faith group. Having a more "Americanized" perspective influenced parents' expectations regarding their adult children's choice of partner during the dating process and beyond. As such, results suggest that (1) the extended family's level of ethnicity, and (2) the length of time each spouse's family of origin had been in this country, were factors that were associated with the amount of extended family resistance a couple encounter.

- Greek Orthodox parents who exerted pressure on their adult child to cool their involvement with their non-Orthodox dating partner, tended to confuse and insult some non-Orthodox. These respondents often felt that their partner's parents were intolerant toward other cultures and faith backgrounds. If the relationship survived, and the non-Greek Orthodox partner was eventually accepted into their partner's family, these negative perceptions changed.

Engagement

- When compared to non-Orthodox extended families, Greek Orthodox extended families generally offered more resistance

to engaged couples who planned to intermarry. Many Greek Orthodox parents were described as valuing and encouraging single-church and single-cultural marriage, while most non-Orthodox parents accepted inter-Christian and intercultural marriage. One possible exception were non-Orthodox extended families who belonged to faith groups with a fundamentalist, exclusive view of religion. In these instances, inter-Christian dating and engaged couples received inordinate amounts of pressure from one or both parents.

- Pressure from Greek Orthodox grandparents was also mentioned repeatedly. In the words of one respond, "sure, it's true that my parents gave me some grief over dating a non-Greek, but don't forget about yiayia pressure, this kind of pressure can be even more pronounced than parental pressure."

- When extended families viewed inter-Christian marriage from a positive perspective, this approach tended to have a positive effect on the dating process, engagement, and first stage in the marital life cycle. Positive extended family support seemed to have a positive impact on a couple's relationship with both sets of parents and on family togetherness and vice versa.

- Once it seemed apparent that a couple was going to wed, almost all extended families appeared to soften, and were considerably more supportive. This does not suggest that extended family challenges ended at this point, because many extended families took more time to warm up to someone from another religious and cultural background.

After the Honeymoon and Greek Orthodox Families

- While Greek Orthodox parents may experience some initial disappointment when their son or daughter informs them that they intend to intermarry, in most cases this disappointment slowly fades. Here are some reasons why.

  1. Parents want their adult child to be happy. When parents discern that their child has found happiness with their non-Greek Orthodox mate, they tend to accept the marriage.

  2. Should the couple choose to worship in the Greek Orthodox Church, this will facilitate their parents' acceptance of intermarriage.

  3. Parents may also be fearful that their continued disapproval could alienate the couple, and even result in a cutoff.

4. Another factor that changed Greek Orthodox parents' attitudes was their child's efforts to follow some of the Greek traditions, and the non-Orthodox mate's willingness to respect and learn about Greek Orthodoxy.

5. Finally, the arrival of grandchildren also minimised the amount of disapproval some intermarried couples experienced from extended family members. Over time, grandchildren decreased extended family disapproval and enhanced intimacy between (a) the non-Greek Orthodox partner and extended families, and (b) between the nuclear family and extended family.

After the Honeymoon and the Non-Orthodox Partner

- Participants' comments indicated that after the wedding some extended families try to make couples feel guilty over their decision to remain intermarried. In time, this behaviour disappears —especially if parents discern that the marriage is healthy and their adult child is happy. When compared to non-Orthodox extended families, Greek Orthodox extended families tended to apply more pressure on intermarried couples to attend the Orthodox Church. They were also generally described as being more distressed than their non-Orthodox counterparts if a couple chose to worship outside of the Orthodox Church.

Non-Orthodox Extended Family Reactions to Greek Orthodoxy

- If a couple chose to attend the Greek Orthodox Church on a regular basis, numerous participants observed that our churches' religious and ethnic exclusivity frequently served to create tension between them and the non-Orthodox partner's extended family. Several participants described negative reactions from non-Orthodox extended family members when they were informed they could not function as a sponsor during the wedding or baptism. These negative reactions appeared to potentially threaten marital satisfaction and family stability.

The Importance of Drawing Clear Boundaries

- When spouses are torn between (a) participating in their family's religious and cultural background, and (b) their spouse's religious preferences and needs, this inhibited their efforts to make decisions about religious and cultural matters, and created distance in the marriage. This seemed to be especially true during the first few years of marriage.

Some participants stated that their extended families covertly competed with each other to convince them to attend and baptize their children in their church. In these cases, intermarried couples were forced to initially accommodate both extended families needs by marrying in both churches. These couples experienced more challenges in their efforts to decide where to baptize their children. As a result, participants stated that intermarried couples must quickly learn how to draw clear boundaries between their nuclear family and their extended families with regards to religion and culture. They also observed that couples must learn to resolve their religious differences apart from their extended families. Otherwise, extended family biases can end up contaminating their decisions and undermining marital satisfaction and family stability

A DIVERSITY OF DIFFERENCES AND CHALLENGES

Religious Differences

Not all intermarried couples and spouses have the same level of connection to their religious backgrounds. Some may have a low connection, while others will have a moderate or high connection. If partners have a low connection to their religious background, I've discovered that their religious differences will likely not create big challenges.

While talking about the role that religion played in their lives, one couple offered the following observations: "We believe in God, but we're not very religious. Sometimes we go to church, but it doesn't really matter where…. I guess religion isn't a big part of our life." Since religion has such a peripheral place in this couple's life, it's likely they will not experience many serious challenges unless one or both partner's attitude toward religion changes.

Conversely, if spouses have a moderate to high connection to their religious backgrounds, they will likely encounter some challenges – especially those with a high connection. Your own e-mail reinforces this point. Among other challenges, partners in these marriages may struggle to reconcile their need to participate in their faith background with their need to pray together. This is not generally an easy task, but most—with God's help—seem to find a mutually satisfying resolution.

Ethnic and Cultural Differences

Beyond religion, my research has taught me that many intermarried spouses and couples who attend the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of

America have some level of connection to their ethnic background. This connection can be thought of on a continuum from low to high.

If couples have a low connection to their ethnic roots, then it is likely that they will not experience many challenges related to their different ethnic backgrounds. Take Cathy and Joe for an example. Together with a mixture of other ethnic backgrounds, Cathy's background is half Greek. By his own admission, Joe is "a mutt" who has "a little bit of almost everything in me." When asked how their ethnic backgrounds challenge their lives, Joe speaks for the couple and observes, "I don't think this is an issue in our marriage."

Conversely, Athena and Hector both have very high connections to their ethnic backgrounds. When asked how this impacts their lives after a few months of being married, Hector states, "…profoundly. We want a home that respects my own Espanic background and my wife's Greek background. Sometimes this creates problems, but nothing we haven't been able to handle so far." Unlike Joe and Cathy, this couple will have to remain vigilant across the marital and family life cycle regarding this difference. They will also likely experience some challenges in their efforts to respect both partner's ethnic backgrounds.

The Church Seeks to Help

As you imagine, there are numerous potential interesting combinations that emerge when we begin considering all the various shades of differences that exist between couples with regard to religion, ethnicity and race. Moreover, these differences will create challenges that vary slightly from one couple to the next. Add to this complexity— personal needs, preferences and expectations, personality differences, nuclear and extended family needs and others. All of a sudden, things get really complicated.

That's why the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese has developed a special ministry to intermarried couples. It's aware of how religious, ethnic, cultural differences can impact religious and spiritual development. It is also aware of how these differences can potentially have an adverse affect on children's religious and cultural development. It is also attentive to how these differences, can create challenges that can fester into unresolved problems and issues that can have a negative impact on individual, marital and family well-being.

Some Suggestions

If you're currently intermarried, and would like more information about this subject I'd like to recommend the following two resources. They've been developed specifically for intermarried couples like you.

- A book I've written entitled, *When You Intermarry* (2002), should prove informative and helpful. It can be ordered at a nominal cost by either calling Holy Cross Bookstore at, 800-245-0599, or through www.amazon.com.

- Another great resource is the Interfaith Marriage Website. This site's address is www.interfaith.goarch.org. It has a great deal of information on this subject.

- For problems of a more personal nature, you can e-mail me at joanidesch@aol.com.

Research indicates that recent newcomers to this country will encounter many of the challenges that Toula and Ian encountered in the movie, My Big Fat Greek Wedding—no matter whether they are or are not associated with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. In my opinion, that's one primary reason why this movie was able to enjoy such a universal appeal. We are essentially a country of immigrants with similar challenges, and the movie's producers unknowingly hit on this universal phenomenon.

With that stated, as this article has suggested, when couples choose to mix ethnic, cultural, religious and, in some cases, racial backgrounds, they will experience a host of new challenges related to these differences. Moreover, these challenges will vary slightly from one couple to the next.

However, my work has shown that as long as a couple is able to respectfully discuss these challenges, and both partners are generally comfortable with what emerges from these conversations, these challenges can enrich their lives, and if God blesses them with children, their future children's lives.

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WORLD RELIGIONS AND SECULARISM: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

THE RELIGIONS AND THE SECULAR

It has been argued that the division of life into a sacred (for us the sacred is contained within what we describe as the area of autonomy) and a secular sphere is a western conception which is not to be found in Hinduism, Islam etc. It is also contended that any line of demarcation must inevitably be arbitrary. It is these two contentions that I propose to examine in the present chapter. In short, is the division of life into an autonomous sphere, which includes religion, and a secular sphere a purely western conception? The contention that the division of life into a sacred and a secular sphere has its roots in Christian society is well founded. Prof. Wilfred Cantwell Smith in his excellent book. *The Meaning and End of Religion* shows that the society in which the Christian church developed had to contend with two important forces. These were 'the philosophic tradition of the Greeks and the state organisation of the Romans the upshot at best has been a bipartite or plural society, with what it now calls religion as one element and alongside of it elements from these other sources. Western civilisation accordingly has been composed of two traditions, one from Greece and Rome, one from Palestine. These have developed together sometimes at peace, sometimes in conflict, often interpenetrating. But they have never fused. A consequence of this lack of fusion of the Graeco-Roman and Palestinian traditions is that in the West it has been taken for granted that the secular and religious spheres are different.

However, there are more fundamental aspects of Wilfred Smith's analysis which are of immense significance from our point of view. His basic contention is that the concept of 'religion' and of 'religions',

in the plural, to designate a system of beliefs, is of recent growth, at any rate subsequent to the 18th century. These concepts are imprecise and confused, and further, which is the most important point, they miss the core of what it is to be religious, which is to have a personal faith, a relationship with the transcendent. Wilfred Smith, therefore, suggests that the terms 'religion' and 'religious' should be substituted by two others which he designates respectively as 'cumulative tradition' and 'faith'. We shall devote our attention to these concepts later. Meanwhile, the substance of his argument needs to be filled in.

To start with, his contention is that with the possible exceptions of Mohammed and Mani (AD 216-277), founder of the Manichean religion, none of the great religious leaders set out to found a 'religion'. Whoever was responsible for the lore contained in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, did not set out to proclaim the 'religion' which is designated today as Hinduism and of which the most distinguished scholars have written that they do not know if 'Hinduism' can be described as a 'religion'. Wilfred Smith contends that this is equally true of the Buddha, of Jesus and of Guru Nanak. These great men reacted to a situation in which they found themselves and their message is concerning God and the relationship of each of them with Him. The description of their messages as 'religion' or as the Buddhist, the Sikh or Hindu religion, as the case may be, is the work of outside observers. On the surface Islam appears to be an exception. It is the only religion which has given itself a name, to be found in the Qur'an. But Wilfred Smith points out that the term Islam is much less used than are other related but much more dynamic and personal terms; and that secondly, when it is used, it can be, and on many grounds almost must be, not as the name of a religious system but as the designation of a decisive personal act'. While the word *Islam*, he continues, occurs in the Qur'an only eight times, the word *iman* (faith) is used fortyfive times; and in other formulations, such as verbal nouns, far more frequently. Wilfred Smith's intention in drawing attention to these facts obviously is to show that although the Prophet is naming a new religion, Islam, what is far more important is that he is delineating, in various manifestations, faith in God.

What Wilfred Smith means by 'cumulative tradition' is not difficult to understand. For illustration let us take the case of the Prophet Mohammed. During his time the conception of justice was essentially revenge. In the tribal warfare which prevailed among the Arab tribes, the principle of a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye was accepted as fair. It is in this content that the Prophet says:

And we prescribed for them therein: The life for the life, and the eye for the eye, and the nose for the nose and the ear for the ear and the tooth for the tooth, and for the wounds retaliation. But who so forgoeth it (in the way of charity) it shall be expiation for him.

SV 45

The injunctions against female infanticide, on the limitation on the number of wives, on the treatment of women, must be looked at against the practices which were current among the Arab tribes during the Prophet's time.

Again, if we turn to Sikhism, we find several verses in the *Adi Granth* which are against the evils of caste. Nanak, we read, is to be found in the company of the lowliest. Guru Gobind Singh lays emphasis on high and low all sitting to eat together. Shortly after he initiated the baptismal ceremony he appealed to the hill chiefs to join the Sikh fold and to present a united opposition to Aurangzeb. He said that it was the caste divisions of Hindu society which had brought about their downfall. He also attacked female infanticide and enjoined Sikhs not to have social relations with those indulging in such practices.

In the *Dhammapada* the Buddha, bearing the widespread practice of sacrifice in mind, devotes much space to showing its futility. He says, 'If a man, month after month for a hundred years, should sacrifice with a thousand (sacrifices); and if he but one moment pay homage to a man whose self is grounded in knowledge, better is that, homage than what is sacrificed for a hundred years.' (Chapter VI, 7).

The cumulative tradition includes the forms of prayer, the rituals, social and ethical codes enjoined by religion. It encompasses the ecclesiastical organisation, the monasteries, educational and other institutions, properties and their management.

Thus, one aspect of what is generally included in the imprecise concept of religion is, as Wilfred Smith has explained, what could more accurately be called 'cumulative tradition'. Prophets and great religious leaders, being creative and possessing insight, add to the tradition which they receive and change it. Equally important are the millions of followers, those brought up in a tradition, who function as preservers of the tradition. 'Cumulative tradition' is, however, an historical living phenomenon and it is subject to change. Wilfred Smith is keen to emphasise this point. He writes, 'The 'cumulative tradition' as a concept, therefore, is not inflexible or final, either in content or in form. It is not *given by the world, but is a human construct offered to order what is given.'* (emphasis added). In short, religious tradition or

cumulative tradition is a human construct, which like other human traditions has been changed in the course of history and can be changed in future. It is not sacrosanct.

Let us turn then to the other term, 'faith', which Wilfred Smith substitutes for the second aspect of 'religion'. What then is faith? The short answer, according to him, is history and God—though perhaps not in that order. The historical aspect we have already dealt with; it is what the outsider observes. The outsider tends to dismiss the other aspect, which is the core and gives the religious life its special quality. This sustaining quality of the religious life is faith. In faith we are approaching the mystical and traditionally the mystic state has been held to be ineffable. Nonetheless some pointers to it are available. For example, knowledge in the sense of acquaintance or direct awareness implies the distinction between the knower and the known, the subject and the object. On the other hand, mystical knowledge comes through the merging of the self in the cosmic reality. In this experience the categories of rational thought such as time and place, cause and effect do not apply. It is an experience of eternity and is overspread with the glow of bliss. In trying to describe the mystic state, religious men, philosophers and poets have likened it to aesthetic experience in which the object is perceived intuitively as a whole and its significance and meaning are grasped without resorting to the categories of discursive thought.

While I have been relating faith to mystical experience, the two are distinct, though they have some characteristics in common. For example, Wilfred Smith, in speaking about faith, stresses that it is personal and in this respect is similar to mystical experience. He writes, 'Theology is a part of the traditions, is part of this world. Faith lies beyond theology, in the hearts of men. Truth lies beyond faith, in the heart of God. And again, he says, 'I have argued throughout that men's faith is their own, and is in principle beyond external domination. Yet, like other men's personal involvements in art, love, ambition, joy and sorrow, though it cannot be comprehended, it can be apprehended. Though as a privilege and never as a right, men can know in part what other men know at heart. However, faith is the wider of the two terms. The mystic's faith concerns the reality of merging one's being in the infinite. On the other hand, for the orthodox Muslim or Christian, faith concerns direct awareness of or communion with God.

At this point, it is necessary to clarify the different senses of the word 'transcendent', a word which, as we shall find, is frequently

used in religious and philosophical discourse. As used by Plotinus, 'transcendent' means simply 'beyond'. More specifically, however, 'transcendent' is used in contrast to 'immanent'. Both concepts relate to the nature of God or the ultimate reality. When philosophers and theologians speak of God as transcendent, they imply that God is apart from the universe. He is the creator, the first cause. As in Christianity and Islam, it is He who will judge on the day of the resurrection. In contrast, in the Vedantic view of God or Brahman, He is all-pervasive; everything is in God and God is in everything. This is the God of the mystics. So we can speak of God being ontologically transcendent or immanent.

However, God is also spoken of as transcendent in another sense, that is, he is above all predicates and cannot be described in terms of normal human categories. Thus, in this sense, to assert that God is transcendent means that he cannot be described as good or wise or existing for a long or short duration and so on. And it follows that God cannot be known through these categories. In this usage we can speak of God being epistemologically transcendent. It will then be clear that Brahman is ontologically immanent, but epistemologically transcendent, for the Brahman of the Vedanta is the *nirgun* Brahman.

On the whole, we will find that the word 'transcendent' is rather loosely used and is applied to anything that is 'beyond' man (whatever 'beyond' may mean)! So the world is transcendent if reality is not confined to me and my ideas; mathematical ideas are transcendent for Plato and the earlier Russell and values are also transcendent for those philosophers and all those who believe in their objectivity.

After this digression let us return to the two issues raised in this chapter and see what light we are now able to throw on them. The first issue is the contention that the division between he sacred (for us the autonomous) and secular spheres is a western concept and does not apply to Indian religions. We accept Wilfred Smith's contention that Western society has been constituted by two traditions, Greek philosophy and Roman law on the one hand and Christianity on the other. These two realms, one representing the secular sphere and the other he sacred, have never fused. But within Christianity itself, as also in Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism, there is a dichotomy between what, following Wilfred Smith we call the cumulative tradition and faith. The first represents the observable historical facts about religion, its mundane aspects. The second constitutes the inner core that is the essence of the spiritual life. This division provides the

rough line of demarcation between the secular and the sacred (for us the autonomous) realms.

In short the critics are wrong when they contend that the division between the secular and sacred realms is a purely western concept. They are wrong because within Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Islam, no less than in Christianity, there is a division between the historical or mundane aspects of religion, more accurately to be described as the cumulative tradition and the specifically spiritual aspect which is faith. Further, and here I am concerned with the contention that any line of demarcation must be arbitrary, the evidence produced by Wilfred Smith shows that the line of demarcation is discernible within the religions themselves and has been uniformly propounded and accepted by all the great religious innovators. In short, the line of demarcation is a fact of history which has been recognised by the foremost religious personalities. It is grounded in Christian history. It is equally not arbitrary in the case of the other religions, since here also it is grounded in history. Incidentally, it would be relevant at this point to enquire as to what could be meant by saying that any *line* of demarcation between the sacred and the secular or any two spheres is arbitrary. For example, when Karl Popper attempts to demarcate the sphere of science from non-science and provides a criterion for making the distinction, is he being arbitrary? It will be recalled, as Popper explains in his paper "Science, Conjectures and Refutations', that he was puzzled by the fact that Marx's theory of Historical Materialism, Freud's Psycho-analysis and Adler's Individual Psychology, like Einsstein's Theory of Relativity, all claimed to be based on experience.

Each claimed to be scientific, to be able to predict and to seek verification in the facts of experience. Yet there was something about relativity which distinguished it from the other three. If science was described as knowledge based on induction which sought verification in experience, then there could be no difference between relativity and the other three theories. In short, what was needed to explain the difference was some other definition of science and this definition Popper found in his theory that scientific hypotheses can be falsified by facts. He thus claimed to find a defining characteristic of science and to distinguish science from non-science. The point we are concerned with here is whether the line of demarcation could be described as arbitrary in the ordinary sense of the word.

What Popper is concerned with might be described, as the operations of division and classification as known to the classical logicians. Thus,

falsification becomes the fundamental division as between knowledge as science and non-science. A division may be said to be invalid if it leads to an overlapping among the classes alleged to have been separated. The sub-classes into which a genus is divided are required to be mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive.

Let us, however, come back to the question whether Popper's procedure is arbitrary. We could accuse Popper of being arbitrary if he provided no criterion for the line of demarcation and categorised some branches of knowledge as science and others as non-science purely on the basis of whim. We could also accuse him of being arbitrary if the criterion provided by him ruled out from the domain of science well-established sciences such as botany and zoology, or grouped together such diverse disciplines as physics and transcendental meditation. On the other hand, in justification of Popper's procedure we might say that it helps us to group together and order branches of knowledge in a useful way. It clarifies our minds on methods and procedures which we should apply to each of the separate branches of knowledge, on the nature of evidence relevant for their consolidation and the degree of reliance we can place on them, and so on. If these requirements are satisfied we would be inclined to accept it as reasonable. Mind you, the division might give rise to some concern; it might force us to change some habits of thought. For example, we may have been brought up to think of psychoanalysis as a science, and we would be forced to abandon this idea. Let us take another example—crime. One form of division is between criminal offences and civil offences. The former are considered crimes against the state while the latter are offences against other members of society. Is this division, the line of demarcation between criminal and civil offences, arbitrary? The point is whether, if a division between two sets of cases helps you to understand their nature and thereby to codify procedure to deal with them effectively, such a division is arbitrary. Of course you could, for another purpose, divide crimes on a different basis—say crimes against men and crimes against women. This may be required if you were engaged on a thesis on the position of women in a society. If for such a thesis the researchers were to enquire into crimes against men of all economic groups from wealthy to poor but to confine himself to women belonging to the wealthy classes, we could consider his procedure arbitrary. We could say that the researcher was not applying the same principle for drawing the sample of men and women and restricting the women's sample to a single economic class was arbitrary.

It is clear of course that when we divide phenomena in real life, or classify or group facts, theories or ideologies, the division may not be neat and clear-cut. Facts and theories may resist being pigeonholed. Thus, for example, critics of Popper have argued that scientific hypotheses have been abandoned even if they were not falsified by facts. They are abandoned because some other hypothesis can explain the facts with fewer assumptions or has greater explanatory power.

We have so far given reasons to show why certain procedures can be called arbitrary, viz., if they do not follow a basis which is rational considering the purpose in mind.

The word 'arbitrary' is also sometimes used in relation to rules. Max Black has distinguished four senses of the word rule:

1. In certain contexts a rule is an instruction. It lays down a procedure to solve quadratic equations, how to grow tomatoes and so on. Rules in the instructional sense can be effective or ineffective, useless, helpful.

2. Rules may assert an actual or alleged uniformity, such as that bodies expand when heated, like poles repel, and so on. Black refers to rules of this kind as rules in the sense of principles.

3. There is what he calls the regulation sense of rule, where rule is a synonym for regulation. Examples are provided by traffic rules, for deciding the winner of the first four sets at Wimbledon, rules for voting and so on, A regulation has to be announced, put into effect and enforced. Regulations have to be promulgated and the area of their operation has to be defined. Rules which are regulations can be described as arbitrary, as we shall consider shortly.

4. Rules sometimes take the form of precepts. Thus, one could say 'make it a rule to repay your debts promptly' and 'love thy neighbour as thyself.' Such rules may be prudential in the sense that they may be helpful in getting on in life. They may also be moral, as exemplified in the second of the maxims cited.

Max Black is concerned to establish that precept rules, which include prudential and moral rules, are distinct from regulatory rules. He points out that it is irrelevant to ask of precept rules who promulgated them, who enforces them etc., though such questions are pertinent in the case of regulatory rules. It seems to me, however, that regulatory rules and precept rules overlap. Let us take the case of laws—say the law declaring murder to be a criminal offence. According to the criteria

laid down by Black, this law is a regulatory rule. It is laid down in the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure; it was promulgated by a competent authority and so on. At the same time surely it is also a moral rule, unlike traffic rules. So it is clear that in this and like cases precept rules, those which are specifically moral rules, overlap with regulatory rules.

Max Black makes a number of interesting comparisons between prudential and moral rules but I shall ignore them as they are not relevant to the problem before us.

It is evident that it is only in regard to rules in the regulatory sense that one can speak of a rule as arbitrary. What makes a regulatory rule arbitrary? It is argued that a regulatory rule prescribes a mode of conduct for a class of persons. For example, 'All persons having an income above fifteen thousand rupees per annum shall be subject to income tax.' If an exception is sought to be made for a particular individual within the framework of the law itself, then the law becomes arbitrary. If, on the other hand, exceptions to the law are to be made, they must be based on some principle, and the principle must be considered reasonable and fair. However, a law itself may be held to be arbitrary if it offends against the principle of fairness. During the Emergency an attempt was made to enact legislation putting the Prime Minister above the law, a measure which would run counter to the Constitution which affirms equality before the law. Such a law would have been arbitrary.

An analysis of judicial discretion might further help to throw light, on what it is to be arbitrary. Prof. Ronald Dworkin examines this issue in his book *Taking Rights Seriously.* Dworkin considers what are basically two examples of discretion. In one example an officer orders his sergeant to select five experienced and well-tried soldiers on a recce. The sergeant has discretion, but this discretion is limited in two ways. Firstly, the officer's order restricts his choice to some extent; the sergeant has to choose soldiers who have experience and are well-tried; he, however, has discretion as to what constitutes experience and being well-tried although he cannot choose raw recruits. Secondly, the sergeant is answerable. The officer may criticise his choice of men and the sergeant will have to justify his selection. He calls this the weak sense of discretion. Secondly, there is a strong sense of discretion. Dworkin says, 'We use authority sometimes, not merely to say that an official must use judgement in applying the standards set him by authority or that no one will review that exercise of judgement, but to

say that on this issue he is simply not bound by standards set by the authority in question.' But Dworkin goes on to point out that discretion in the strong sense does not mean licence and in this context it is clear that 'licence' is a synonym for 'arbitrary'. In this example the official must take recourse to standards of rationality, fairness and effectiveness.

It may be concluded that a line of demarcation (as attempted between the secular and the autonomous) is not arbitrary if it is based on a rational principle and if it is effective. And *pari passu* regulatory and precept rules, which include legal and moral rules, are not arbitrary if they are based on principles of rationality and fairness.

However, first we will define more clearly the line of demarcation, and in order to do so we must examine more closely which aspects of religion fall within the area of autonomy.

It has been argued that religion has the following aspects:

1. Every religion involves faith, and, as some persons such as Wilfred Smith contend, faith is the core of that blanket term, 'religion'.

2. Every religion lays down certain dogmas. Dogmas have been defined as metaphysical propositions which the followers of religion accept. Thus, in Islam and Christianity there is the belief in the existence of God; Vedantic Hinduism asserts the all-pervasive existence of Brahman of which the Atman is an integral part that appears as individual reality because of *maya.* Sikhism also subscribes to these, dogmas of Hinduism. For the Buddhist, there is the dogma of *karma* which he shares with Hinduism and Sikhism. I mention these merely as some metaphysical beliefs of the religions we are concerned with. I use the word 'dogma' without any pejorative associations, which it has come to acquire in common parlance.

3. Every religion prescribes some rituals.

4. Every religion prescribes a code of ethics or a scale of values. The highest value is placed on *nirvana* or *moksha* in Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism and on surrender to the will of God in Islam and Christianity.

Let us see how the distinction between the two realms, the autonomous and the secular, can be defined in relation to these aspects. It appears to me that the two aspects of faith and belief in dogma have to be considered together. Why this is so will become evident as we proceed.

Wilfred Smith 'seems to indicate the following important characteristics of faith:

   (a) Faith is ineffable;

   (b) Faith is personal;

   (c) Faith is an awareness of, a relationship with, the transcendent.

The first two characteristics, namely the ineffability and the personal character of faith, seem to be inter-connected. By faith being personal is meant not only that when we talk about faith we are talking about the faith which some person or other has. It is persons who have faith. But, over and above that, when religious persons speak of faith as personal, they mean that the faith of each individual is unique. This uniqueness is what makes for ineffability. For what is conveyed through words and sentences is always general, and faith is unique and individual.

While we admit that it may not be possible to describe faith completely, it appears to me that the opposite contention that we cannot describe it at all, that it is entirely ineffable, cannot hold water. For if that were so, it seems doubtful that we could even point to particular cases and say of any one that 'this is one-instance of faith', 'that is another instance of faith' and so on. True we may not be able to give a complete description of a particular person's faith, but we can certainly observe the 'family resemblance' which various examples of faith exhibit. And here we are concerned with that sub-group of the family, commonly described as religious faith.

In normal usage 'faith' and 'belief' are closely related. For example, one can say, 'I have faith in so and so' and equally one could express the same thought in the word 'I believe in X'. So there is the usage where we could substitute 'having faith in' by the form 'believing in'. But we also say, 'I believe that so and so is the case'. To this would correspond the sentence 'It is my faith that there is one God' or whatever it is. In short, there appear to be at least two usages "having faith in' or 'believing in' and 'having faith that' or 'believing that'.

When we use the phrase 'believing that', what follows is a proposition. We believe that 'the Buddha lived between the years 559 and 477 BC'; we believe that 'the earth is round' and so on.

In contrast is the usage 'believing in' or 'having faith in'. For example, I 'believe in' or 'have faith in' a person and by this I mean that he has certain moral and intellectual qualities which he would

uphold in practice. So if allegations of corruption are made against him, I might reply that I have faith in his integrity and I will not easily believe such allegations. Or if he has made a promise, my having faith in him means that I have confidence that he will fulfil his obligation. Or yet again, when a person is nominated to undertake a difficult assignment by a government, those in authority have faith in him, in his ability to surmount the problems he will encounter. In this usage 'believing in' or 'having faith in' connotes esteem, loyalty and trust. This is the usage which comes nearest to religious faith, with which we shall be chiefly concerned.

Perhaps parenthetically it might be useful to point out that 'believing in' is not confined to cases in which what is believed in is a. person. For example, I can say I believe in certain engines and when I see the monogram RR on the body of the engine of an aeroplane in which I am going to travel, it gives me a feeling of confidence. And I could also say, for example, that I believe in the method of conceptual analysis in philosophy. However, these and other usages of 'believing in' are not germane to my present enquiry.

Some philosophers have contended that all cases of 'believing in' can be reduced to 'believing that'. Following the line of argument pursued by the late Professor H.H. Price in his book *Belief* take the view that 'believing in' cannot be reduced to 'believing that'. The elements of esteem, loyalty and trust which characterise 'believing in' are peculiar to this usage and are not to be found in examples of usages of 'believing that.'

So faith in the context of religion means 'believing in', having an attitude of esteem, loyalty, trust, and there are no doubt other features which characterise the 'faith' of the believer. But, in addition to 'believing in', the religious person also 'believes that there are several propositions which constitute his religious belief, some of which, according to our classification, may be described as dogmas or metaphysical propositions. The scriptures are replete with examples of dogmas. While these are a few examples of metaphysical propositions, the question arises as to whether so-called metaphysical propositions are propositions at all. Since the 1920s the Vienna school, and their counterparts, the Logical Positivists in England and America, have contended that so-called metaphysical propositions are not statements but are in fact nonsense. Their argument hinges on the assertion that words are of two kinds, syntactical devices, such as the word 'and', which is a conjunctive, and other words. Words of the latter kind can have meaning only if

they refer to some object in the empirical world. Thus, so-called propositions, or pseudo-propositions which include words which have no empirical reference, are nonsense. This is the well-known verification theory of meaning summed up in Wittgenstein's statement in the *Tractates Logico Philosophicus* in these words: 'The right method of philosophy would be this: To say nothing but what can be said, *i.e.* the propositions of natural science, *i.e.* something which has nothing to do with philosophy; and there always when someone else wished to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had given no meaning to certain signs in his propositions. This method would be unsatisfying to the other—he would not have the felling that we were teaching him philosophy—but it would be the only strictly correct method.'

The verification theory of meaning has largely been abandoned by its most distinguished proponents such as Prof. A.J. Ayer and I doubt if any positivist would care to defend it in the form in which it was originally propounded. The verification; principle itself obviously is meaningless on the very criterion of meaning it presents. On the other hand, if it is merely a verbal definition, a statement of how certain persons intend to use the word meaning, the objection is that this usage is arbitrary and too narrow.

However, this issue has been thrashed out threadbare in recent philosophical controversy and in any case it is not necessary to go into it here. Suffice it to say that metaphysical statements have meaning and are believed by religious persons not only to be meaningful but also true. Again, it is not the purpose of this study to enquire as to which of the metaphysical statements believed by religious persons are true and which are otherwise. For us it is something given, a fact, that religious persons believe that certain metaphysical propositions are true.

A distinction is sometimes made between knowledge and belief. Knowledge implies certainty and, where it is a case of knowing a proposition, then the proposition is true. Thus, it would be absurd to say 'I knew that he was dead but actually he was alive'. Belief on the other hand involves some degree of doubt. So it would not be at all foolish to say 'I believed he was dead, but actually he was alive'. Religious persons might find some inaccuracy if one were to speak of their belief that 'Jesus is the Son of God' (for Christians) or 'Mohammed is the last of the Prophets' (for Muslims) and so on. They might contend that for them these and other metaphysical propositions which constitute

their creed are matters beyond doubt. They know these things for certain. On the other hand, the creed says 'I believe in God the father etc.'

However, this is not of much importance and we need not pursue it further. When I refer to a religious person as believing certain metaphysical propositions such as the proposition that God exists, it is not my intention to cast any doubt on the firmness of his conviction. In such contexts, I will not be making a distinction between knowing and believing.

Metaphysics has been defined traditionally as a study of the ultimate nature of reality as a whole. The operative words in this definition are the 'ultimate nature of reality' and 'reality as a whole'. Thus, while science is concerned with phenomena as they appear, metaphysics is concerned with what lies behind the appearance. Again, while the sciences concern themselves with separate branches of reality, the function of metaphysics is to co-ordinate their findings in a total view of the universe. It is argued that metaphysical theories cannot be finally refuted. This is not to say that they cannot be critically examined. We can enquire (a) whether the metaphysical statement in question solves the problem to which it was an answer; (b) does it provide a more coherent answer to the problem than other available theories? (c) is it coherent with other theories which answer other problems? (d) is it fruitful?— and so on. These considerations may incline a person to prefer one theory to another; they would not provide a conclusive refutation of a metaphysical theory. This would apply to the metaphysical or, to be more precise, the ontological doctrines of religion such as the existence of God or Allah, the Absolute or Brahman, the existence and nature of the individual soul and its relationship with the divine, immortality, the doctrine *of karma*, freedom and determinism and so on. These constitute some of the essential dogmas or metaphysical doctrines of religion.

Religious scriptures, however, propound doctrines which would not now be described as metaphysical statements. Examples of such statements are the story of the creation in *Genesis*, the doctrine of the universe being supported on an elephant in the *Upanishads* and so on.

The earliest theories about the origin and nature of the universe put forward in India and pre-Socratic Greece were philosophic speculations. These areas of knowledge have since become part of the science of cosmology. The stories of creation found in the scriptures have been refuted by empirical evidence and are no longer regarded

as explanations which claim to be true. They are looked upon as myths and the function which they perform in primitive societies has been explained by social anthropologists.

However, the major point we wish to make so far is that within the sphere of autonomy fall two aspects of religion. These are (a) the belief in metaphysical dogmas and (b) what religious persons call faith, a psychological 'tone' or 'colour' which gives the relationship each individual has with the transcendent its special quality. It is faith which Wilfred Smith has argued is the core of religion.

It is my contention that faith in its psychological aspects which make for a certain quality of life, and faith as it refers to and includes metaphysical statements, lie in the area of individual autonomy and total freedom from state control. In placing these matters within the sphere of individual autonomy, I maintain that I am meeting what religious persons themselves claim to be the essence of religion, which Wilfred Smith sums up in the word 'faith' and which we have further distinguished as faith and belief in dogma.

Within the sphere of autonomy I would also include all aspects of man's search for knowledge, in the mathematical, physical and social sciences and in the speculative realms of philosophy. In these areas the search for knowledge goes on; knowledge is progressive. Whether it is science, speculative philosophy or humanistic studies, a spirit of enquiry, a readiness to discuss and analyse, a healthy scepticism which will attempt to understand and will tolerate contrary opinions, are essential. This attitude rests on the premise that metaphysical statements which assert existence, such as God exists or that Mohammed was the last of God's Prophets, cannot be logically refuted, though some of these statements must be false. For example, it cannot both be true, as the Christians believe, that God is a trinity and also, as the Muslims contend, that Allah is one. One or other of these views is false but which one is false cannot be finally shown—nor whether He is of the nature of Brahman, or whether there is a God at all. Thus, the progressive nature of empirical knowledge and the irrefutability of metaphysical statements provides the basis for autonomy and toleration which must be one of the basic premises of the secular state.

Let us then turn to rituals which we have listed as the third important element in religion. Rituals fall into the following categories:

Firstly, there are rituals connected with important events in the lifecycle of an individual. This class includes rituals prescribed for

birth, initiation into the religious brotherhood such as baptism, marriage and death. Manu refers, for example, to the five daily sacrifices required of a householder. These are *ahuta,* the recitation of vedic texts; *huta,* the burnt oblation offered to the gods; *prahuta,* scattering of oblations on the ground known as *bali* offerings to *bhutas; brahmya-huta,* offering of food to Brahmins and guests; and *prasita,* the daily offerings to the *manes.* In addition, there are rituals connected with marriage, pregnancy, child-birth, the initiation or *upanayana* ceremony for the twice-born castes, death ceremonies etc. *(Manu* III 73 *et seq.* and Chapter II).

Secondly, there are rituals for purification considered necessary because a person has transgressed a taboo, has committed a sin or because he or she is considered unclean for some reason or other. Frequently, purification is required immediately after important events in the lifecycle.

Thirdly, there are rituals to commemorate important events in the history of a religion such as the martyrdom of Hassan and Hussain for the Shias, Id-ul-Fitr and Bakr-Id, Ram Navami and Janmashtami, Buddha Jayanti, Christmas and Easter and the birth anniversaries of the Sikh Gurus. Into this group fall cultural-cum-religious festivals such as the Kumbh Mela, the Amarnath Yatra, Holi etc.

Fourthly, there are rituals intended to propitiate the gods such as *yagnas* intended to bring rain, ward off an epidemic or to avert cosmic catastrophe.

From the point of view of secularism, we should distinguish between rituals which are private from rituals which are performed publicly. If a ritual is carried out in a home, a temple or a mosque, it remains a private affair, provided it does not infringe on the fundamental rights of others. For example, the *devadasi* system involved the gifting of girls and young women to Hindu temples. In theory they were supposed to be the brides of the gods and were required to dance as part of ritualistic practices. In point of fact they were no better than the slaves of the priests. It amounted to trafficking in human beings which is contrary to Article 23 of the Constitution and contrary to morality. According to the Report on the *Status of Women in India* published by the Government of India in 1974, this was so widespread at the time of Independence that the Madras government felt impelled to curb it by means of the Devadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act 1947. Similar legislation has been enacted in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and other states. Nevertheless, the Report says that it continues today

in parts; of Tamil Nadu, Mysore, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa and is practised particularly among the lower castes. In recent years it has been alleged that Roman Catholic priests, particularly in Kerala, were recruiting women as nuns who were then sent off to countries in Europe to perform menial functions.

Complications, however, arise in the case of religious rituals of a public nature. Foremost among these concern the *tazia* processions which are taken out on the occasion of Moharram and processions taken out on some Hindu religious festivals. Finally, there is Holi. The general principle on which the secular state should deal with such processions and festivities is clear; they are permissible provided they do not interfere with the rights of other members of the public. Mr. Balraj Madhok says of Holi that 'it is a festival of gaiety and abandon in which all social barriers are broken. As such it is a festival of social cohesion as well. It is particularly the festival of the common people, symbolised by the Kisan, the sturdy peasant of India. Ironically enough, Holi, far from becoming an occasion for social cohesion, has become a major cause of conflict and terrorism for most people. The "abandon" and 'breaking of barriers' takes the form of molesting innocent members of the public and the government has simply washed its hands of maintaining law and order. Women students and even boys are unable to attend college two or three days before Holi for fear of being maltreated, pawed and douched in coloured water. On the day itself public transport is off the roads, shops are closed, and if you happen to be travelling by train you have to keep the shutters of your carriage closed lest 'the sturdy Kisan', justifiably full of envy and hatred against those who can afford the luxury of travel, lets off his pent-up frustration by throwing-stones, cowdung and muck at the passing trains. Such behaviour must be severely dealt with by the law in the same way as the public nuisance caused by drunken rowdies celebrating New Year's Eve.

When we come to public religious festivals, the situation is delicate. For Muslims there are three such occasions, Id-ul-Fitr which marks the end of Ramzan, the month of fasting, Bakr-Id to commemorate Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son, and Moharram to commemorate the tragedy of Karbala. The first two involve mass prayers at mosques; no processions are taken out. Nevertheless there could be apprehension of disorder if there is ill-feeling between Muslims and other communities in a particular area and a petty incident such as pigs being driven towards the mosque may set off communal rioting. This is what is alleged to have occurred in Moradabad in 1982.

Moharram processions have not infrequently been the cause of rioting involving Shia and Sunni Muslims on the one hand and between Muslims and Hindus on the other. A background of tension is the basic cause and in such a situation any flint can ignite communal flames.

In Hinduism, processions have traditionally been taken out in connection with the Jagannath car festival in Puri, which has its reflections in other places in the country, the Durga Puja in Bengal when images of the Goddess Durga are taken for immersion in rivers and Dussehra when the processions culminate in the burning of effigies of Ravana.

In principle, there cannot be any objection to the holding of such processions, as long as their organisers are guided by the principle of working in such a manner as to cause the least possible inconvenience to others and of course avoiding downright offence. Insisting on taking a particular route, playing music or shouting slogans which may not be conducive to good neighbourliness exhibit a want of 'due consideration for others' which, according to Mill, is the essence of toleration. What has been happening in recent years is that politico-religious bodies have been using religious occasions to organise processions as a show of strength to cow down members of the minority communities. Thus, a reporter of *India Today* (January 15, 1983), who investigated the Baroda Riots which raged for a whole year, comments that in December 1982 a procession of Lord Vishnu attracted a record strength of 60,000 participants. Normally on this occasion the crowd had been around 7,000. The entire city was lavishly decorated and illuminated. *The Statesman*, New Delhi, of April 22, 1983, reports that Ram Navami was celebrated on the previous day in a manner never before witnessed in Delhi. The objective of this 'religious' gathering was to demonstrate Hindu solidarity against the government's deletion of Ram Navami from the annual list of compulsory holidays!

As against the Founding Fathers of the Constitution repeatedly emphasising the need to provide freedom for the exercise of 'true religion', by which they clearly meant faith, in the last thirty years we have witnessed the growth of its ritualistic and superstitious aspects. What is needed is education and persuasion and only if they fail and there is a threat to the rights of others will force become necessary.

SECULARISM: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Having attempted to demarcate the areas of individual autonomy and secular control and having defined and defended the chief secular

values which we must affirm if Indians are to live together as a single community, we are in a position to consider the prospects for the establishment of a secular society. It is against the criteria of secular values laid out in this study that losses and gains have to be measured.

SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

One of the basic values of a secular society is its attitude to knowledge and the belief that through knowledge the way to a better life can be opened up. Enough has been said in the preceding pages on the contrast between the religious and secular attitudes to knowledge. Article 51A of the Constitution, defining the fundamental duties of citizens, asserts that one of them is (h) to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of enquiry and reform. The Science Policy Resolution adopted by Parliament in 1958, in which the moving spirit was Jawaharlal Nehru, aimed at making science an important part of Indian life. Parliament affirmed its belief that 'it is only through the scientific approach and method and the use of scientific knowledge that reasonable material and cultural amenities and services can be provided for every member of the community'. Hence the priority given to fundamental and applied research through the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the National Laboratories and the prestige which Indian scientists enjoy today. Scientists are almost the only professionals who have managed to attain and retain top jobs in the bureaucracy which the Indian Administrative Service considers their monopoly. Educationists and technocrats who had enjoyed a temporary lease of power have been successfully edged out! However that may be, the Science Policy Resolution went on to affirm the importance, in the daily lives of the people, of the spirit of enquiry and the scientific approach to problems which it characterised as the scientific temper.

What has happened to the cultivation of a scientific temper in the country in the quarter of a century since the Science Policy Resolution was adopted? An answer is to be found in a statement issued by the Nehru Centre, in Bombay, on the 19th of July, 1981. Mr. P.N. Haksar, formerly Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, as Chairman of the Nehru Centre headed the list of signatories which comprised top Indian scientists such as Raja Ramanna (Director, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre), M.G.K. Menon (Member, Planning Commission and formerly Secretary to Government in the Department of Atomic Energy), Satish Dhawan and a handful of historians and economists. The statement says: 'No systematic and determined effort was made to

work out specifically and concretely what was needed to be done to build a society which is animated by a spirit of enquiry rather than passivity and acceptance.... There was failure to give mass dimensions to scientific temper and specifically to incorporate it in the educational system.... In education acceptance of authority has come to take the place of enquiry, questioning and thought.' The result of all this has been a 'cancerous growth of superstition at all levels. Rituals of the most bizarre kind are frequently performed often with official patronage. Obscurantist social customs are followed even by those whose profession is the pursuit of scientific inquiry.'

The statement goes on: 'Scientific temper involves the acceptance, amongst others, of the following premises:—

(a) that the method of science provides a viable method of acquiring knowledge;

(b) that human problems can be understood and solved in terms of knowledge gained through the application of the method of science;

(c) that the fullest use of the method of science in everyday life and in every aspect of human endeavour from ethics to politics and economics is essential for ensuring human survival and progress; and

(d) that one should accept knowledge gained through the application of the method of science as the closest approximation to truth at that time, and question what is incompatible with such knowledge; and that one should from time to time re-examine the basic foundations of contemporary knowledge.

The trouble about the statement is that it makes impossibly tall claims for science and this in turn may be due to the fact that scientific method is nowhere defined. What the authors seem to have in mind are the physical sciences where the steps for gaining knowledge, reduced to its barest bones, would be somewhat as follows. Defining a problem which results from an existing hypothesis and remains unsolved; framing a new hypothesis to solve the problem; making predictions on the basis of the hypothesis and observing whether or not the predictions are verified by facts. Usually there is verification but what is more important is falsification or partial falsification, which gives rise to new problems. This model applies to the physical sciences. But does it apply to all knowledge? Take pure mathematics, for example. Empirical

verification is not in the picture; it is just irrelevant. Clearly this model does not apply to philosophy. But, I doubt that anyone would deny that mathematics and philosophy do constitute knowledge.

However, let us come to the social sciences, for the statement is concerned with using social science and physical science in the form of technology for the improvement of society. Can social science give us grounds for prediction? It has been contended that there are laws of historical development, where successive stages follow inevitably from those that preceded, and according to Hegel and Marx the later stages are improvements on the earlier which will culminate in an ideal society. History cannot be diverted from its course, but one can be on the winning side. Thus, Marx says: 'When a society has discovered the natural law that determines its own movement, even then it can neither overleap the natural phases of its evolution nor shuffle them out of the world by a stroke of the pen. But this much it can do; it can shorten and lessen the birth pangs.' Opposed to this view which Popper designates as the 'prophecy' form of social science, there is what he calls 'piecemeal technical engineering'. What this means is that while it is impossible to change the nature of society as a whole, it is possible, on the basis of generalisation of observed facts, to predict that if such and such a policy is pursued some desired results will be obtained, in the short run. This form of prediction has its limitations.

Firstly, analysis of facts reveals trends, not fixed laws.

Secondly, prediction in social matters can be affected by the influence it has on human beings who may react to it in *a pro* or *con* manner.

Thus, a prediction of a shortage of sugar is likely to lead to hoarding by wholesalers with the object of pushing up prices and consumers might also follow suit, thereby bringing on a shortage, although in fact there may be no shortfall in the actual production. This has been described as a self-validating prediction. There are also self-defeating predictions. For example, it has been argued that the belief that socialism was inevitable, on the Marxist thesis, made the social democrats in Germany in the thirties lethargic in working for a socialist revolution. The Nazis organised themselves militarily to ensure that it would not come about. So the inevitability of socialism proved to be a self-defeating prediction.

However, the point we are trying to make is that piecemeal technical engineering for the improvement of society is a practical possibility and policies can be formulated by following scientific method.

Objection could be taken to the assertion at para (d) that, at a given time, the accepted scientific doctrine should be accepted as the closest approximation to truth, and we should *'question what is incompatible with such knowledge'*. And further that 'one should from time to time re-examine the basic foundations of contemporary knowledge'. It could be objected that it is the awkward fact which is not compatible with accepted theories which presents problems, problems which in their turn generate new theories, new solutions. While it is certainly right to *question*, it is not right to sweep such facts under the carpet. However, what the statement, in all probability, has in mind is not awkward *facts* but superstitious *claims* that something is a fact. Godmen, who have been proliferating like mushrooms in India, make all kinds of fantastic claims, that ash will start oozing from a painting, that watches were found in safes in Tokyo after a godman told a Japanese businessman to look for them, although no watch had been deposited in the safe, and so on.

The late Professor Kovoor investigated the claims of godmen and found that they were not substantiated. The late Professor C.D. Broad, President of the Society for Psychical Research in Britain, who was sceptical in the best sense of the word, after going into the question of life after death summed up the position in these words: 'In the known relevant normal and abnormal facts, there is nothing to suggest, and much to counter suggest, the possibility of any kind of persistence of the psychical aspect of a human being after the death of his body. On the other hand, there are many quite well attested *paranormal* phenomena which strongly suggest such persistence, and a few strongly suggest the full-blown survival of a human personality. Most people manage to turn a blind eye to one or other of these two relevant sets of data, but it is the business of the professional philosopher to try and envisage steadily both of them together.'

Some objection could also be taken to the idea that 'from time to time the basic foundations of contemporary knowledge should be re-examined'. There is the well-known distinction between normal science and revolutionary science, made by T.S. Kuhn, in his *Structure of Scientific Revolution.* At a certain period, a paradigm for scientific investigation is accepted and normal science consists in working within this framework, applying the principles to new areas, building up a considerable body of knowledge. Basically normal science is puzzle-solving. Questions which do not fit into the paradigm are dismissed or ruled out. Revolutionary science is the throwing overboard of one

paradigm and substituting it by another. But, as against Popper, who contends that a paradigm is rejected because of empirical falsification, Kuhn makes several points in his paper *Logic of Discovery or Psychology of Research* from which I pick out just one which is relevant for our present purpose. He points out that revolutions in science, where a whole paradigm is rejected, on what the statement calls 'basic foundations of contemporary knowledge', are rare. Referring to some of Popper's pet examples such as 'Lavoisier's experiments on calcination, the eclipse expedition in 1919, and the recent experiments on parity conservation', he says: 'Episodes like these are very rare in the development of science.... When they occur they are generally called forth either by a prior crisis in the relevant field... or by the existence of a theory which competes with the existing canons of research (Einstein's general relativity).' So these 'periodic reviews' cannot be at any fixed intervals, nor are they undertaken by outsiders: they come from within because scientists themselves find that problems cannot be solved within the existing theoretical framework.

The reference to the relationship of science to value is too cryptic to yield any clear idea of what the statement intends. The popular Anglo-American view some decades ago was that science is value-neutral. Scientists, as scientists, have no views on value; it is politicians, science administrators and others who use the discoveries of science for good or evil ends. Another view is that science itself implies certain values and in their absence it cannot exist. For instance, it implies that a high value be placed on free enquiry; humility in the face of criticism and before facts; an aesthetic sense, for, in deciding between alternative hypotheses, the criterion of simplicity, which is an aesthetic requirement, also applies. But does *science* or *scientific method* go further in probing such problems as what is value, what things are valuable and the end means relationship? These are philosophical questions, not problems for science. Science has been pursued in egalitarian societies — and also in spite of inequality and restrictions on enquiry.

The statement on scientific temper, then, goes too far if it claims that all problems can be solved by using scientific method or, alternatively, it uses the words science and scientific so loosely that they have no specific meaning. It would be nearer the mark to say that what we need to cultivate is the spirit of rational enquiry. And rational enquiry will devise methods appropriate to the subjectmatter of enquiry. It was rational enquiry that Russell had in mind when he spoke of making philosophy scientific, as he does in his lecture on

Scientific Method in Philosophy. (I note that Russell also uses the word scientific.) He reduced this neatly to three points. Firstly, problems piecemeal—analyse the large or complex problem into its component parts and deal with each separately. Secondly, cultivate a spirit of humility before facts; the aparently insignificant fact that does not suit your theory must not be brushed aside. Thirdly, remember that conclusions are tentattve not final. Had the framers of the statement on scientific temper borne these points in mind, it might have gained more acceptance than it has. Needless to say, I am in general agreement with the spirit of the statement, particularly in its application to the system of education.

It needs to be stated that the spirit of rational enquiry is not against all aspects of religion. Science makes metaphysical presuppositions which science itself does not examine. For example, science assumes that the universe exhibits order, that the order is atomic so that the universe is capable of being analysed into its constituent parts without distortion and that the combinations of atoms do not occur in unlimited ways. Keynes had summed up these presuppositions in his principles of the uniformity of nature and universal causation, of atomic uniformity and limited, independent variety. Something on these lines constitute the minimum assumptions for science. Over and above these, scientists, metaphysicians and religious persons have speculated about the ultimate nature of reality. Distinguished scientists like Newton, Eddington and James Jeans were believers in God.

GROWTH OF RITUALISM AND OBSCURANTIST PRACTICES

However, science and religion are opposed to each other, as we have seen, in their attitude to enquiry and discovery which science and rationalism consider essential for knowledge. Science and rationalism are also opposed to rituals and obscurantist practices which claim to bring about miraculous changes in the course of nature and demean human beings for the satisfaction of the gods. As it happens, it is this aspect of religion, obscurantist ritualism, which has developed since Independence. Innumerable godmen have sprung up and the more successful of them are making millions out of the credulity and mental sickness of sizable sections of the public. One former scientific advisor to the Government of India and one well-known Vice-Chancellor of an important University are among the devotees of a Baba who has a large *asram* and vast assets. Their example is followed by lesser luminaries in the scientific and intellectual spheres. Patronage by important persons, including ministers and officials, is at least one of

the reasons for what is admitted to be, though statistical data are not available, an enormous growth of obscurantist ritualism. It all started with President Rajendra Prasad's insistence on visiting the first Kumbh Mela after Independence, which is believed to have attracted no less than five million pilgrims. Subsequently he presided over the ceremony on the completion of the renovation of the Somnath Temple. Both these actions were taken against Nehru's advice. Since then the number of persons visiting shrines, bathing in holy waters during eclipses, participating in *yagnas, kathas* and *kirtans* has gone up several hundredfold.

Every now and then one comes across examples of ritualism which are grotesque. In October 1982 the Tamil Nadu Government found it necessary to impose a ban on *yagnas* at which snakes were being used. It took action under the law to protect wildlife! Evidently, the malpractice had reached considerable proportions, judging from the severity of the punishment which could be meted out against offenders. It could amount to two years' imprisonment, or a fine of two thousand rupees, or both. *(The Statesman,* October 23, 1982).

In Kerala there are some temples where the *Thookam* ceremony is still practised. According to tradition, one man was sacrificed every year. He was hung on iron hooks which were stuck into his back and suspended from a wooden structure in the temple and after that the temple was closed for fortyone days. The hooked individual, of course, never came out alive. *Thookam* evidently is still performed but the ceremony is over in approximately half an hour. Five men presented themselves for *Thookam* in April 1983 at the Elavoor Puthenkavu Bhagawathy Temple in Kerala, near Angamali. (*Indian Express,* April 26, 1983).

In November 1982, a case came up before a division bench of the Supreme Court in which the owner of a cinema house was alleged to have been implicated in a Harijan boy being sacrificed so that the gods would make his venture in running the cinema a success. The Supreme Court issued a notice to the State of Andhra Pradesh and others directing that a speedy investigation should be carried out. The petition, which had been moved by the Organisation for People's Rights, wanted that action be taken against a minister of the State Government who was allegedly involved in impeding investigation. The allegation was that a fourteen-year-old boy, Bola Siva Reddy, a labourer in a rice mill near Tenali, was beheaded at dawn on, November 14, 1981. (*The Statesman,* November 9, 1982).

A devotee of Saint Basaweswara was reported in *The Statesman* of September 8, 1983, to have offered a pair of slippers made out of his skin to the saint's temple in Basavana Bhagawadi in Bijapur district in Karnataka. The devotee, a Basappa Sangappa Masdbinal (35) is said to have had a dream in which the saint had desired this gift. Skin for the slippers was peeled off his thighs. (*The Statesman,* quoting UNI on September 8, 1983). Evidently the priest accepted the gift and no Shankaracharya nor even the Virat Hindu Sammelan has protested that this is a distortion of Hinduism.

In the year 1983, newspapers reported three attempts at *sati,* two of which were successful. The successful attempts were reported in *The Statesman* of April 11 and September 22, 1983, quoting UNI. In the first, Jam Bai, a 45-year-old Harijan woman, jumped on to her husband's funeral pyre on the 9th of April, at Deep village, 65 km from Bilaspur in Himachal Pradesh. According to the statement of her son, Ram Narayan (21), his father had been suffering from the threat of cancer for six months, to which he eventually succumbed. Jam Bai insisted on going to the cremation and while performing *arti* requested the persons present to turn their backs to the pyre and when they did so she jumped on to the flames and was consumed by them. It is clear that the crowd acquiesced in the commission of *sati,* if they did not actually support it.

In the second case, which occurred at Karhi village near the Block Headquarters at Jaijaipur, Gyanvati Sabu (70) jumped on her husband's pyre. No one stopped her or attempted to rescue her. The police are believed to have arrested twentyeight persons.

In the unsuccessful attempt, Midi Bai, a middle-aged woman, declared her intention of committing *sati* in a village in Panna district of Madhya Pradesh, on Wednesday, the 17th of August, 1983. According to a PTI report, a large crowd had collected to witness the *sati.* Police spread word that she had postponed the act and, when the crowd had dispersed, persuaded Midi Bai to change her mind. The important point is that the village people approved of the idea of *sati* and would have made it difficult for the police to stop Midi Bai from carrying out her intention.

The reaction to *sati* well illustrates the contrast in attitudes which prevailed about a hundred and fifty years ago, when *sati* was abolished (in 1829), and those which are gaining strength today. Rammohun Roy and others built up a strong feeling against *sati* and, once the British overcame their initial hesitation to interfere in 'religious' matters,

they acted promptly and with severity. The result was that *sati* was virtually stamped out. But today *sati* cases are on the increase and *sati* is being propagated as a' 'heroic and martial sacrifice' sanctioned by history: it is held up 'as the highest ideal of female spirituality and renunciation' and is glorified 'as a supreme instance of Hindu religion'.

These quotations are taken from the report of an investigation into a case of *sati* which occurred in the village of Jhadli, 70 km from Jaipur, in 1980. The investigation was undertaken by Ms. K. Sangari and S. Vaid, who were accompanied by Prof. Anand Chakravarty of Delhi University. Jhadli lies in the Sikar district and, in the seven years ended 1980, no less than 7 cases of *sati* had been reported. In Jhadli itself, the previous case had occurred two hundred years earlier.

The person who committed *sati* was Om Kanwar, an adolescent of sixteen, who was married a short while earlier to Ram Singh (22), a truck driver in Bombay who died in hospital in Jaipur. There are several points of interest in the report.

Om Kanwar was a psychological case. She had suffered hysterical fits ten days before her decision to commit *sati*, and was said to be in a 'trance-like state'. Her relatives thought at that time that she was in a pathological state and needed medical treatment. Subsequent to her decision, she was again in a 'trance-like state' but now she was said to be possessed, in direct communication with God and indifferent to a mundane life. *Sati,* it is contended, is to be committed by a woman possessed by *sat*; a woman so possessed is believed to have special powers to bless or curse and so people are afraid to bring her curses on their heads by opposing her. She is also believed to be immune to fire, so she does not suffer pain as a result of self-immolation.

Apart from the psychological aspect of Om Kanwar's act, there are significant social aspects. (1) The report states that the whole village participated in building the pyre and two lakh persons witnessed it. (2) The family *purahit,* one Jamnalal Shastri, appears to have been the evil genius of the case and to have encouraged Om Kanwar and others to believe that she was possessed by *sati.* Subsequently, he wrote a book to commemorate the event, which was published by a committee of 32 members to propagate and glorify the ideal of *sati.* (3) A Sati Temple Trust was set up to build a temple at Hathideh, 3 miles from Jhadli, which has become a place of pilgrimage. This Trust, like the other temple trusts, is exempted from tax. (4) Four members of the family who carried the corpse were charged under the Cr. P.C. for abetment to suicide, not under the Sati Abolition Act. It was generally

believed that the case against them would not be pursued. In short, as the report concludes, Legal inaction gives... silent sanction to *sati*. So does tax exemption.

The greatest sufferers of obscurantist thinking are undoubtedly women. According to figures given in the Lok Sabha on March 3, 1983, 260 were burnt to death in Delhi in the calendar year 1982—'dowry deaths' as they are referred to. This was 59 more than in the previous year. 292 Scheduled Caste women were raped by the upper castes in 1975 and the figure has been going up steadily since. In 1982 the figure was 635.

THE PROBLEM OF BACKWARD CLASSES

The problem posed by the Scheduled Tribes is different in important respects from those of the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes. The Scheduled Tribes are at a different level of development and culture from the more 'advanced' segments in the rest of the country. They do not have written languages of their own and have adopted the Roman script; their agriculture has been based on shifting cultivation and in terms of modern education and technology they can be described as backward. However, the tribal people do not suffer from a sense of social inferiority. There is among them a high degree of social equality and noone suffers from a feeling that he or she is 'higher' or 'lower' than anyone else. Women also are not discriminated against in relation to men. So the problem is to give them a chance to catch up with the forward elements and to assist them to identify themselves as one of the many streams that constitute Indian society.

For the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Communities there is the stigma of low social status and with it go the nasty occupations of scavenging, flaying, etc., poverty, discrimination in living conditions and other manifestations of caste. While constitutional provisions make the uplift of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes the responsibility of the Centre, it is left to the States to take steps to alleviate the condition of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

The Second Backward Classes Commission's report, which was submitted to Government on the last day of 1980, estimates that approximately 52 per cent of the population consists of Other Backward Classes. SC/ST constitute approximately 18 per cent. In short some 70 per cent of the Indian population are deprived classes.

The following conclusions emerge from the Commission's study of backwardness and poverty:

1. Caste is a relevant fact in determining backwardness but it is not the sole factor: caste status is not altered by conversion.

2. Social backwardness in the ultimate analysis is the result of poverty. Caste and poverty aggravate each other.

3. For the purpose of reservation, backwardness must be both social and educational.

4. A backward class cannot be considered to be backward for all time to come; this would show that reservation serves no purpose.

The problems of the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes fall into two broad categories. Firstly, there are the problems of the vast majority of the deprived classes living in the rural areas. Secondly, there are the problems of the relatively advanced members of the community who are receiving higher education and are attempting to improve their status though the avenues provided by the Government's policy of reservation. Let us deal with them in turn. The vast majority of the Scheduled Castes live in the rural areas. According to the 1961 Census, and this is the last census provides rural data, 72 per cent of the Scheduled Castes were living in the rural areas. Of this total, 48 per cent were labourers and 52 per cent were cultivators. So far as the upper castes in the rural areas are concerned, 81 per cent were landholding agriculturists and only 19 per cent were landless labourers. While there may have been a slight shift in the balance between rural and urban and between landholders and labourers in the two groups during the past two decades, the basic pattern is unlikely to have altered appreciably. What is the social condition of the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes in the rural areas? Crimes against Scheduled Castes given in reply to Parliament Questions present the following picture:

1974—8860	1977—10879	1980—13866
1975—7781	1978—15059	1981—14308
1976—5963	1979—13975	1982—15050

The crimes are those which are registered under the IPC and include such offences as arson, murder, rape and grievous injury. Seventy per cent of the crimes took place in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. Some commentators believed that the phenomenal rise in crimes against the Scheduled Castes between 1977 and 1979 showed the upper caste bias of the Janata government. But it is clear

that Mrs. Gandhi has not been able to stem the tide. The non-left parties are tarred with the same brush.

Reports which appear from time to time in the newspapers read something like this. Harijans living in fifty blocks had to flee their homes to save themselves from murdering landlords. The landlords forcibly harvested the standing crops and took possession of them. This was followed by the ransacking of their houses by muscle-men hired by the landlords who beat up the men and assaulted all those who attempted resistance. (See *Indian Express,* January 16, 1983). The devastation caused by the landlords in the village of Belchi in Patna District on the 29th of May, 1977, has come down as an example of the brutality which is being perpetrated on the Scheduled Castes in the rural areas.

The fact is that in small towns and villages caste is the most important single factor regulating economic and social relationships. Caste rivalries exist between the upper castes and lower castes and also between rising peasant castes (who have gained wealth and acquired positions of power in alignment with the upper castes) and scheduled castes. The Belchi disaster in which one Harijan was shot dead and 13 others were tied up and burnt alive was an example of feuding between the Kumris, a rising peasant caste, and Harijans. In all such conflicts it is the lowest caste, the Harijans, who come off worst. It is for this reason that the upper caste poor, whose number is rising due to the consolidation of landholdings, are unable to make common cause with the Scheduled Castes. The village situation is well brought out in the case of Meenakshipuram in Tirunelveli district almost on the borders of Kerala, which has become famous as the scene of mass conversion to Islam in February, 1981. The village consists of approximately 1300 inhabitants, some 1250 of whom were Harijans. The fifty upper caste inhabitants of the village are Thevars and there are four temples in the village. There were at the time of the conversion forty *pucca* houses with electricity and four of these were occupied by Harijans. Of the six wells, only one could be used by the Harijans. There were three tea stalls, one of which was run by a Muslim and it was only at the Muslim stall that Harijans were served.

More than forty per cent of the Harijans were educated. Among them were two doctors with MBBS degrees, one agricultural scientist and five graduates. A number of Harijans were well placed in Government service and the community provided two of the four teachers in the local primary school.

Yet, despite their overwhelming majority and educational advancement, they were subject to acute social discrimination. They lived in a separate part of the village. When entering the upper caste area, the Harijans had to take off their *chappals.* When speaking to a Thevar, the Harijan had to bow his head, fold his hands and hold a leaf in front of his mouth, lest some of his saliva fell on the upper caste person! If carrying a towel or a shawl he had to hold it below the elbow. If a Harijan had the temerity to wear a clean shirt and trousers, *chappals* and a wrist watch, he could be beaten up for trying to look like an upper caste gentleman. One is reminded of the *Fatwa-i Alamgiri* compiled in Aurangzeb's time which gave religious and legal sanction to the medieval practice which forbade Hindus from looking like their Muslim rulers.

The point which the Meenakshipuram conversions bring out is that it is the educated and relatively well-to-do Harijans who are rebelling against the discrimination and insults to which they are subjected by upper caste Hindus. He discounted the allegations that money had played a role in the conversions. An important element in the story is the part played by the police and Government agencies who seem always on the alert to find some pretext for maltreating Harijans. Feuding in the village started when a Harijan boy was beaten up for wearing smart clothes and a wrist watch. The offended boy went to the police who refused to register the case. The boy then appealed to the courts. The case was dismissed. Enough had been done to invite the wrath of the police.

Shortly thereafter, a Harijan boy eloped with a Thevar girl and this provided the excuse for the police to start harassing the boy's family and the community. The young couple embraced Islam and this frustrated the police for the time being. Shortly after, a trumped-up charge was brought against the offending young man, leading to a further round of beating up of the Harijans. Commenting on this aspect of the situation and its adverse effect on the Meenakshipuram Harijans, the Regional Director in his report says, 'The harassment meted out to Harijans by the Inspector of Police in the course of investigation/interrogation in the double murder case has also caused a feeling of frustration in the minds of Harijans. It was a genuine feeling that they had to face this treatment mainly because they belonged to pattan caste.' An article on the conversions in the weekly *Sunday* of June 7, 1981, suggests that if the Harijans of Meenakshipuram could have fought the tyranny of the caste Hindus by any means other than

the changing of their faith, they would have preferred that. Their conversion was like a drowning man catching (sic) a straw —any straw. And the Harijans were drowning.' (p. 43). Instead of turning to Islam, had the Harijans opted for confrontation, they might have faced a massacre at the hands of the upper castes, their muscle-men and the police.

The disabilities from which Scheduled Castes suffer are fairly general. A recent study of 29 villages in Gujarat has shown that in 90 per cent of them Scheduled Castes cannot enter temples, shops and houses of persons belonging to the upper castes. In 64 per cent of the villages the Scheduled Castes are confined to separate sources of water. In 47 per cent of the cases untouchability prevails at Panchayat meetings.

It has also been observed that riots have occurred and killings of Harijans have been greater in areas where the Scheduled Castes are more advanced. These were recorded in Ahmedabad, Mahsana, Kaira and Baroda. The riots in Gujarat lasted for 30 days in 1983 and took a toll of 18 killed and 29 injured. There were similar findings in Maharashtra. Three districts which were worst affected by caste riots were Nanded, Parbhani and Aurangabad. It is in these districts that there is the highest enrolment of Scheduled Castes in schools and colleges and also the highest rural-to-urban migration of educated Scheduled Caste youth in search of employment and finally these districts have recorded the most rapid economic development.

Let us turn then to the second aspect of the problem presented by the weaker sections, namely the problem of reservation in government employment and in technical educational institutions under government control.

It has rightly been pointed out by some commentators that the policy of reservation for SC/ST OBCs in government and in medical and engineering colleges is a non-issue. There are in all 2 million employees in the central and state governments. Reservation in Medical and Engineering colleges would concern a few thousand persons. An infinitesimal fringe of the Indian population is affected by this policy. Nevertheless the policy has become the cause of protests and riots in many parts of the country. In Bihar, disturbances broke out in March 1978 when the government, which was already reserving 24% vacancies for SC/ST, decided to increase this quota by 2% for OBCs. Patna University had to be closed and in the rioting 14 persons were injured and 300 arrested. 80 Janata party legislators threatened to resign if the government did not withdraw its orders.

A.R. Kamath in a study of 'Education and Social Change Amongst Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes' (EPW Vol. XVI No. 31, 1981) contends that the impact of the policy of reservation gave the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes 'for the first time an opportunity for significant social advance'. As a result of the officially approved policy of protective discrimination, the SC/ST were able to improve their social and economic position, mainly at the lowest rung of the ladder in government. In the private sector they gained no entry. Anti-reservation riots broke out in Ahmedabad on the 31st of December 1980 and continued till the 13th of April 1981, that is for 104 days. In 1974 the Union Health Ministry had suggested reservation of vacancies at the post-graduate level in medical colleges. In that year the Gujarat Government reserved 7% of vacancies for Scheduled Castes, 13% for Scheduled Tribes and in July 1980 a further 5% for the socially and educationally backward castes (SEBC), making a total of 25% of reserved vacancies. It is pointed out that these reserved groups constitute 60% of the population of Gujarat. Thus, 75% of the vacancies are open, by competitive examination, to 40% of the population and SC/ST/SEBC candidates cannot compete for these vacancies. It is also the case that within this class of 75% vacancies some are reserved for donors, that is persons who can provide money as gifts to the medical college and no protest is made by upper class candidates against such reservation where merit does not figure. An examination of the representation of SC/ST on the staff of 5 medical colleges in the state showed they held slightly over 3% of the posts. Thus, out of 737 posts, SC/ST account for 24, and 17 of these were at the lowest rung of the ladder, that is tutors.

However, the Government decision of 1980 led to riots which were triggered off by students of B.S. Medical College and then spread to the others. The students' demands escalated from abolition of the roster and the carry forward system to the total scrapping of reservation at all stages of education.

One of the notable facts about the riots was that professional people such as lawyers, teachers, doctors and businessmen were involved in street fighting. Landlords, especially in Ahmedabad, Mahsana and Kheda, were aggressive and cruel in their attacks on the Scheduled Castes. The Scheduled Caste representatives, with a touch of humour, contended that they were being opposed by the six 'Ps', that is, the police, the press, the Patels (landlords), the pocket (money), political parties and Probodh Raval (Home Minister in the State Government)!

It is significant that only the CPI (M), the CPI and the Communist League condemned the agitation.

Mr. I.P. Desai, who made a searching enquiry into the caste riots in Gujarat, said that 'while the policy of reservation in medical institutions and in the services has made an insignificant dent into the power and economic hold of the upper castes, yet it is found to be intolerable'. He sums up by saying, 'Although merit appears to be a progressive slogan, it is in fact a slogan for defending the moribund Hindu hierarchy and maintaining the social and economic *status quo*. There is little mobility in economic, educational and occupational spheres. Unless the stagnation is broken and the door to further mobility is opened, the conflict will go on.'

Nonetheless, the existence of conflict is a hopeful sign. It shows that the 'weaker' sections are awakening and are no longer prepared to submit passively to assault and indignity. The secular state owes them assistance and protection.

HERESY HUNTING AMONG THE BOHRAS

If individuals have the right to opt out of groups, it would equally seem to follow that a group has the right to maintain its integrity and discipline and, if members do not fall into line, the group has the right as an extreme threat to expel them. Clubs expel members and so do political parties. On this analogy, why should religious groups not excommunicate those who are guilty of apostasy or wrong? This matter is well brought out by the example of the Daudi Bohras, a minuscule Muslim community which comprises just around five lakh members. In 1949 the state government passed the Bombay Prevention of Excommunication Act. The state Government took the stand that "the rights and privileges of the Dai (the religious head of the Bohra community) to regulate the exercise of religious rights do not include the right to excommunicate any person so as to deprive him of his *civil rights and privileges.* It also denied that the right to excommunicate is a religious practice." The Act was challenged by the Dai-ul-Mutlaq, the head of the Bohra community, Saifuddin Sahib, who contended that it interfered with his religious duties guaranteed under Article 26 of the Constitution. Saifuddin Sahib lost the case in the Bombay High Court but the Supreme Court struck down the Act as void by a majority judgement. The plaintiff's plea was that the head of the community was entitled to 'secure continued acceptance of certain tenets, doctrines and practices' and further held that 'the Dai had the customary right to excommunicate for dereliction of particular rules of behaviour.'

At that time the Supreme Court had accepted the theory that religion includes not only belief but also essential religious practices. As to what constitutes an essential religious practice, it was contended that it is what the community believes is an essential practice. The majority judgement delivered by Justice Dasgupta held that 'where an excommunication is itself based on religious grounds, such as lapse from the orthodox religious creed or doctrine (similar to what is considered heresy, apostasy or schism under Canon Law) or *breach of some practice considered as an essential part of religion by the Dawoodi Bohra community in general*, excommunication cannot be held to be but for the purpose of maintaining the strength of the religion. It necessarily follows that the exercise of the power of excommunication on religious grounds forms part of the management of the community, through the religious head.' (emphasis added).

Before we comment on this we must notice another part of the judgement, where Justice Dasgupta seems to be aware that excommunication might violate civil rights. He says, 'it might be thought undesirable that the head of a religious community would have the power to take away in this manner the civil rights of any person. The right given under Article 26 (b) has not, however, been made subject to the preservation of civil rights. The express limitation in Article 26 itself is that this right under several clauses of the Article will exist subject to public order, health and morality.' The majority judgement raises several questions. For example, is the excommunication based on religious grounds or is it based on secular practices? And again, what are the so-called civil rights which are not protected under the Constitution? Are the Fundamental Rights of freedom of thought and expression and of association rights which can be suppressed by a religious head? Fortunately, Justice B.P. Sinha, then the Chief Justice, gave a dissenting judgement. He pointed out that the way in which excommunication was being practised was not a purely religious matter. In effect the excommunicated person becomes an untouchable in his community and, if that is so, the Bombay Prevention of Excommuni-cation Act, in declaring such practices to be void, has only carried out the injunctions of Article 17 which abolishes untouchability. Justice Sinha observed that "it (*i.e.* the Prevention of Excommunication Act) is aimed at ensuring human dignity and removing all those restrictions which prevent a person from living his own life so long as he did not interfere with similar rights of others.'

The fact seems to be that excommunication has been resorted to for actions which are not part of religion. Mr. Asgfaar Ali Engineer in

his book *The Bohras* gives numerous terrible examples. For instance, members of the Bohra community may not stand for election in Municipal and Assembly elections without the permission of the Dai. They may not form associations for social welfare work. The reading of national newspapers which the Dai disapproves of is taken as an offence. For all such cases the Dai can and has resorted to excommunication, but what does excommunication involve? Is it only denial of religious privileges? Is it only that an excommunicated person is forbidden to enter a Bohra mosque or to be buried in a Bohra graveyard? Such action by a religious organisation would be understandable. But the plight of those who are excommunicated is much worse than that of untouchables. An excommunicated person is debarred from maintaining social relations with his family. The family is threatened with excommunication if they have anything *whatever* to do with an excommunicated person. A son may not see his dying mother since she will be denied burial not only in a Bohra graveyard but in any Muslim graveyard. Engineer mentions a case in which the dead body of a person was dug out of a non-Bohra graveyard and thrown out on the street because the dead person was related to a person urging reform in the Bohra community. If a woman is excommunicated, her husband is forced to divorce her. There have been murderous assaults on those urging reform (including assaults on Asghar Ali Engineer), acid-throwing and what not else. An unofficial Committee was set up in 1977 by the Citizens for Democracy in Bombay under the Chairmanship of Mr. N. Nathwani, an ex-judge and then M. P, with the blessings of Mr. Morarji Desai, the Prime Minister, and J.P. Narayan. It included two Muslims, Mr. Alam Khundmiri of Osmania University and Dr. Moin Shakir of Marathwada University. Mrs. Aloo Dastur of Bombay University, Mr. V.M. Tarkunde and Chandra Kant Barua of Ahmedabad were also members. The Dai and the Bohra establishment made many efforts to frustrate the working of the Commission.

The Nathwani Commission's report, which is practically unknown to the general public, accepted the plea that those who failed to obey the Dai in purely secular matters were being subjected to 'complete social boycott, mental torture and frequent physical assault. The Misaq (the oath of unquestioning obedience to the Head Priest) which every Bohra is required to give before he or she attains maturity is used to prevent... Bohras from reading periodicals such as the *Bombay Samachar* and *Blitz,* contesting elections to municipal and legislative bodies without permission' and so on. Above all, continues the report, 'Bohras are

prevented from having any social contact with a person subjected to Barat (excommunication), even if the person is a husband, wife, brother, sister, father or son.

It is significant that the Dai, who is effectively denying to his followers fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution, has the support of the state and its highest dignitaries. President Zail Singh attended a reception in his honour given by the Dai in Bombay on the 29th of September 1983 and in praising the Bohra establishment referred to religion as 'a path to peace and happiness'!

AKALI PERSECUTION OF NIRANKARIS

If the Bohra problem has found little space in the Indian press because they are a minute community and the Reformists have not been able to muster political support, this does not apply to the Sant Nirankaris. The Sant Nirankari-Akali feud was brought to a dramatic climax on the 24th of April, 1980 when the then Sant Nirankari Guru, Baba Gurbachan Singh, was shot dead while alighting from his car to enter the Sant Nirankari Bhavan in New Delhi. The assassins allegedly sought refuge in the Golden Temple in Amritsar and three years after the event they are still at large. The Delhi Administration has asked the Punjab government to apprehend the culprits and the Punjab government has not taken action on the plea that entering the Temple precincts will lead to bloodshed. They have suggested that the CRPF be asked to take this step. This game of passing the buck has continued.

What, however, is the genesis of the problem? For this we have to answer the question: Who are the Nirankaris? The puzzle is to distinguish between two groups, both of which go by the name Nirankari, while the Indian newspapers use the one name. There is an older group, the Nirankari Sikhs, whose origin goes back a hundred and fifty years, and a post-partition group, the Sant Nirankaris. The Sikh Nirankari movement was started by Baba Dayal who was born in Peshawar in 1783 and passed away in 1855. He was a contemporary of Ranjit Singh. The early history of the movement is shrouded in obscurity but John Webster in his *The Nirankari Sikhs*, weighing the different sources, concludes that it took shape between 1843 and 1845. The purpose of the Nirankari movement was to effect reform in Sikhism and primarily to rid it of idolatrous elements which had crept into Sikh practices. There is no special initiation ceremony for becoming a Nirankari. The baptismal ceremony of Guru Gobind Singh is acceptable but not necessary, since *sahajdhar* is and *kesadharis* can be members.

This is one of the important points on which the Nirankaris differ from the orthodox Sikhs. The differences between the Nirankari Sikhs and the orthodox Sikhs are principally as follows: The Nirankaris believe in the *dihadhari* principle, that is, that there is an embodied or living Guru, though for the orthodox the *Adi Granth* and the Khalsa, that is the Sikh body politic, constitute the Guru.

According to the Nirankari *Hukumnama* issued in 1886 AD in the name of Satguru Dayal, it is stated that once Satguru Dayal visited the abode of the Formless One. A divan (congregation) was in progress. All the ten gurus from Guru Nanakji onwards were present there. The whole assembly stood up. Then it was ordered thus: 'O men of the Formless One, go hence and instruct all the Sikhs in (true) conduct. All Sikhs who have been up to the time of the ten gurus are entrusted to you.' Satguru Dayal then asked, 'What authority have I (to discharge this commission)?' At which it was decreed: 'O man, whosoever obeys you shall obtain liberation and shall have his abode in the region of truth. You go and instruct them in the way of the Name.' It is clear that the Nirankari Guru is viewed as a successor in the line of the ten Gurus. On all points the *Hukumnama* quotes verses from the *Adi Granth* and draws conclusions from them. This would indicate that the Guru is conceived of as subordinate to the Holy Book and his role is that of an interpreter of its message.

The *Hukumnama* urges Sikhs to praise the Formless One. 'Attend the sangat in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib and wash the feet of those who are present. Already by the grace of the Formless One we clean the shoes of the congregation in the presence of the Granth Sahib because Guru Nanakji has told us to do so.' The Nirankaris believe in daily morning and evening worship. Their gurdwaras have only one side open and there are several copies of the *Adi Granth* placed on wooden stalls. There are slight innovations in ceremonies when a child is born. Women are not to be treated as unclean at childbirth. Death is an occasion for rejoicing not of mourning and the dead are to be disposed of through cremation or throwing the dead bodies into rivers.

Although the *Hukumnama* declares that rites and rituals are all false, Webster states that according to the 1891 Census Report some slippers of Baba Dayal were kept as relics and that Nirankaris 'prostrated themselves on their foreheads before them.'

Baba Dayal was followed by his eldest son Baba Darbara Singh and then in 1876 by his third son Rattan Chand, known as Sahib

Rattaji. Sahib Rattaji was succeeded by his son Baba Gurdit Singh, who was on the *gaddi* for thirtyeight years from 1909 to the 16th of April 1947, barely four months before partition, it is Baba Gurdit Singh who consolidated the position of the Nirankaris and established their headquarters at Rawalpindi and Dayalsar, the place where Baba Dayal was cremated. They had sixty sub-centres *(burhis)* which they had to abandon at partition. It was the fifth Nirankari Baba, Hara Singh, who had to deal with the crisis of partition, to gather together 'his scattered flock' and to 'establish new central shrines'. (Webster, page 39). Several annual functions were held in Delhi and various other places till the Nirankari *durbar* was established in Chandigarh in 1958. Baba Hara Singh died in 1971 and was succeeded by his son Baba Gurbaksh Singh.

One of the chief claims made by the Nirankari Sikhs is that it was their second Guru, Darbara Singh, who initiated the movement which culminated in the Anand Marriage Act of 1909. At any rate, during the reign of Ranjit Singh, Sikh marriages were solemnised in accordance with the Hindu *sastras.* Baba Darbara Singh is said to have dispensed with Brahmins and to have solemnised marriages in which the bride and bridegroom circumbulated the *Adi Granth* (instead of fire) four times. Prayers were offered and hymns were sung. It appears from the 1891 Census Report that in 1857 other Sikh groups were also performing marriages in a similar manner. Thus, Baba Darbara Singh could have been the first to initiate this form of marriage.

Webster in his study of the Nirankari Sikhs raises the question whether there is any reason for this cult to exist today? Religious and social reform could make for the existence of a movement but according to Webster the Nirankaris have not pursued this in a sufficiently assertive manner. After the days of Baba Dayal and Darbara Singh 'they have been peaceful, quiet, and non-influential.

Sometimes writers have viewed the Sant Nirankari cult as an offshoot of the Sikh Nirankari movement of Baba Dayal. Baba Avtar Singh, who is said to be the founder of the cult and whose book *Avtar Bani* is referred to as their scripture, states in the preface that lie was inspired by Baba Boota Singh. Balwant Gargi in his book *Nirankari Baba* states that Boota Singh (1873-1943) was a tattoo master. He used to tattoo British Tommies in the then North-Western Frontier Province, and was a fine *kirtan* singer. He lived in Rawalpindi and one of his most devoted disciples was Avtar Singh. A small band would meet every morning. Baba Boota Singh would sing verses from the *Gurbani* and

comment. When Baba Boota Singh passed away he nominated Avtar Singh as his successor. In Balwant Gargi's book there is only one reference to the Sikh Nirankaris and that is on page 57, where he says: 'In 1929, he was proclaimed the new Nirankari Guru by Kazan Singh, who carried him on his shoulders through the streets of Rawalpindi shouting his discovery. Thus, Boota Singh became the founder of the Sant Nirankaris who embrace all faiths (in opposition to the traditional Sikh Nirankaris who claim to be the purist Sikhs).'

Baba Avtar Singh (1899-1969), Gargi tells us, had earlier been a staunch Akali Sikh, who had served three years in a British jail as a freedom fighter. (p. 67).

On the other hand, Webster argues that there is no evidence to show that Boota Singh, a well-known *kirtan* singer and a Nirankari Sikh, was a rebel. He was admonished for drunkenness but not excommunicated. He continued to attend the annual functions of the Nirankari Sikhs, though he took a less active part, till his death. Webster concludes that it would therefore be more correct to consider Baba Avtar Singh rather than Baba Boota Singh as the founder of the sect. It would also not be correct to consider the Sant Nirankaris as an offshoot of the Sikh Nirankaris. The fact is that the Sant Nirankari Mandal was registered in Delhi in 1948. We have also to consider the fact that the Sikh Nirankaris repudiate any connection with the newly formed Sant Nirankari Mandal. Thus, Baba Gurbaksh Singh, the Sikh Nirankari Baba, told a press conference on the 29th of April, 1978, that the Sant Nirankari Mandal was misusing the name Nirankari of the original organisation and that it "Should stop using the name. He supported the idea that the Sant Nirankari Mandal should be banned.

The basic point to note is that the Sant Nirankaris do not now consider themselves to be Sikhs. This is stated explicitly in a paper issued by the Sant Nirankari Mandal, New Delhi, in which they state that the Sant Nirankaris are not 'a particular sect of the Sikh religion but a 'universal brotherhood society'. It is evidently the case that, with the passage of time and particularly since the 1970s, the Sant Nirankaris have drifted away from the Sikh fold and have come to define their position as a group entirely independent of Sikhism. The Sant Nirankaris consider their Baba as a *Satguru*, a 'spiritual guide', a 'holy man'. He is not held to be a divine incarnation nor even a prophet. Sant Nirankaris are not puritanical in their ethics. All kinds of food (and drink) are permitted whereas the Nirankari Sikhs are forbidden to eat meat and to take intoxicants. At each Sant Nirankari

sangat the feet of the Guru are washed and the water is considered to have miraculous powers of healing. It is drunk by the congregation and is kept in storage to be taken at *sangats* where the Guru is not present. This is a practice which was also observed by the Sikh Nirankaris though it is not in vogue at present. Each devotee is given a *gian*, a piece of secret wisdom, which is appropriate for his personal problem. There is great emphasis on equality, helping other members and on social service. By and large the Sant Nirankaris can be likened to the many cults of godmen who flourish in India today.

However, we are concerned with the Sant Nirankaris insofar as they have been subject to religious persecution by the Akalis and for whom the secular authorities of the Indian state have failed to provide any semblance of protection. In 1951 a major clash occurred in Amritsar when Baba Avtar Singh and 200 of his followers were holding a *satsang.* A number of persons were injured. Following this incident, the Sant Nirankaris have discontinued the practice of keeping the *Adi Granth* at their congregational meetings. The Akalis had objected that it was sacrilegious for the Sant Nirankaris, Baba Avtar Singh to proclaim himself a Guru in the presence of the *Guru Granth Sahib.* ('Who are the Nirankaris?' by Sukhdev Singh, *Tribune,* April 15, 1978). In the same article, Sukhdev Singh mentions other incidents, at Mehta Chowk, Amritsar, on the 15th of September, 1973, and at Ludhiana on the 23rd of September, 1973, when some eightyfive persons were injured. Another major clash took place on the 17th of September, 1977, when a Sant Nirankari congregation was in session at Pathankot. There was stoning and vehicles belonging to the mission were damaged.

In 1978, there was a series of clashes. The first one occurred on the 13th of April, Baisakhi Day. The Sant Nirankaris had taken a procession through the city of Amritsar in which a lakh of people participated. However, the procession passed off peacefully and terminated at the Railway Stadium, where they were holding a Manas Ekta Sammelan. Meanwhile, the occasion was also being celebrated by the orthodox Sikhs in the Golden Temple. At this meeting Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale proposed that the Sant Nirankari Sammelan be stopped because it was against the tenets of Sikhism. At about 1 p.m., lorry loads of approximately two hundred armed Nihangs and Akalis attempted to force their way into the Sant Nirankari meeting. The police tried to keep the two groups apart but there were clashes. In the event, some sixteen persons died that day and two others succumbed to their wounds within the next two days. Thirteen of the sixteen

killed on the first day were Akalis and Nihangs. The Sant Nirankari meeting continued for nearly three hours after the clash and was terminated on the advice of senior police officials. It is clear to common sense that the Sant Nirankari procession and Sammelan did not interfere with the meeting organised by the Akalis. The decision of the Akalis to interfere with the Sammelan would obviously show that it was they who were the aggressors. It is part of my thesis that governments (all governments almost invariably) side with the orthodox religious establishment and predictably, therefore, it was the Sant Nirankaris who were held to be the guilty party.

Baba Gurbachan Singh and 60 Nirankaris were accused by the Government of conspiracy to murder. The fact that a few Sant Nirankaris sitting in the reception centre were armed and that the majority of those killed were Nihangs and Akalis became the excuse for turning the tables against the Sant Nirankaris, though Baba Gurbachan Singh had stated that the Akali-Nihang deaths were probably due to police bullets. The Sessions Judge, rejecting the prosecution case, described it 'as a frame-up and after-thought which entirely changed the genesis and sub-stratum of the matter'. (Para 171 p. 281). Several paragraphs of the judgement refer to fabrication of registers and 'manipulation of police diaries'. (Para 121). The Sessions Judge observes:

"It seems to me that in the given circumstances the arrests of the Nirankaris were made afterward at the behest of and to the wire-pulling from the religious/political overlords of the Akali Dal party who held the reins of and dominated the Punjab Government. It seems to me that it was under pressure from them that the police officers afterwards made deliberations, conjured and trumped up this wrongful version branding the Nirankaris aggressors." (Para 126 (g) p. 221).

The Judge goes on to opine:

'For the reasons recorded above I agree with the defence that after pushing back whatever scanty police force was there the Jatha of Singhs went berserk and rushed to the main gate of the pandal and then opened their virulent attack on the Nirankaris with deadly weapons which they were carrying. It seems to me that their differences with the Nirankaris in the matter of religion had the better of them, that they threw all discretion to the winds and that they in flagrant subversion of law and order went to the Nirankaris' pandal determined to uproot their Samagam and to punish them. They thereby caused fatal injuries to some and other types of injuries to many others. I am of the view that all these police officers and for that matter the Executive Magistrate, surrendered

their conscience to the pulls and pressures from those who could make or mar their career. Perhaps, they found themselves helpless.' (Para 129 p. 227).

The Baisakhi Day incident was followed by militant action against the Sant Nirankaris in the Punjab. On the 10th of June, 1978, the Akal Takht issued a *Hukumnama* calling upon Sikhs not to have further social contact with the Sant Nirankaris and not to let the sect prosper or propagate. It accused the Sant Nirankaris of being interested only in physical pleasure and said their preachings amounted to a 'lethal attack on the world's religions. Sikhs cannot help defying this challenge.' The *Hukumnama* said the sect was harmful to humanity and the biggest enemy of the Sikhs. (*Sunday Standard*, New Delhi, June 4, 1978).

Voices were raised demanding a probe into top government officials who were said to be helping Sant Nirankaris in getting jobs. (*Tribune*, April 20, 1978). Meanwhile, Sant Bhindranwale was busy ensuring that the Sant Nirankaris should not be allowed to hold *satsangs* in the Punjab. (*Tribune*, August 17, 1978). In the event, the Sant Nirankaris decided on the 20th of August not to hold *satsangs* in Amritsar district. (*Tribune*, August 21, 1978). Propaganda was mounted to prevent Baba Gurbachan Singh from entering Chandigarh and to ban two Sant Nirankari books, *Avtar Bani* and *Purush,* However, these efforts did not succeed because Mr. Morarji Desai, the Prime Minister, impressed upon the Chief Minister, Mr. Prakash Singh Badal, that he must ensure the freedom of worship guaranteed under the Constitution and the heritage of religious tolerance. (*Hindustan Times*, September 30, 1978).

Meanwhile, on the 26th of September, a murderous attack took place in Kanpur when Akalis and Nihangs swooped down upon Sant Nirankaris who were holding a prayer meeting in the Nirankari Bhavan. *The Statesman* of September 27 reported that a mob of Akalis attacked the Nirankaris with swords and spears at the Nirankari Bhavan. The police had to fire twentyfive rounds to disperse the crowd. The toll was thirteen killed and fiftysix injured. As had happened after the Amritsar incident, the Akalis *made* out that they were the injured party. They took out a funeral procession of the seven Akalis killed and put pressure on the Central government to ban Baba Gurbachan Singh's entry into Chandigarh. The Sant Nirankaris demanded a judicial enquiry but this was not accepted. Five and a half years after the event (March 1984) the case against those accused of rioting and murder was still pending and the alleged culprits were out on bail.

Attacks on the Sant Nirankaris have continued. According to Sant Nirankari official estimates, forty of their followers, including important office-bearers, have been done to death between 13.4.78 and 31.3 84. As in the case of the Bohras, the secular government (that of the Janata Party and the Congress-I after 1980) have failed to protect a dissident group from the fanaticism of a religious establishment.

HINDU-MUSLIM COMMUNALISM

I shall be concerned with the problem of Hindu-Muslim communalism expressing itself in riots since the formation of the secular state in India in 1950. More precisely I consider the decades from 1960. There were few communal incidents in the 1950s but since 1960 the situation has taken a turn for the worse.

The Hindustan Times correspondent writing in the issue dated March 27, 1968 about communal incidents says that 'it is a matter of concern that as many persons were killed in 1967 as in the 9 years from 1954 to 1962'. A study of the Home Ministry Reports placed before Parliament from 1950 to 1959 shows that communal incidents were not separately listed during this period nor were the number of casualties given. However, in the text of the Reports communal clashes are referred to and they show that such incidents were rare.

If one studies the books on communalism published since Independence one sees that they are devoted to tracing the origin and development of communal politics from 1857 onwards, particularly during the 1920s and 1930s, culminating in the propagation of the two-nation theory and the partition. So, it is argued, at least by implication, that present day communalism, like everything else, has its roots in history and it would therefore be irrational, if not arbitrary, on my part to ignore the period prior to 1960. However, my reasons for doing so are clear-cut. If one has to reduce one's material to manageable proportions, some demarcation of the area of concern becomes inevitable although one recognises that historical processes do not lend themselves to being put into water-tight compartments. Moreover, I am concerned with communalism in the Indian secular state. Muslim communalism prior to 1947 was geared to the creation of Pakistan. The setting up of a secular state in India produced a new situation and we are concerned to see in what ways the old communal rivalries changed or what new conflicts have arisen in secular India.

In what follows I propose to examine some of the major riots of the decades after 1960 and shall attempt to trace the family resemblances

(and the differences) which they exhibit. I shall argue that the factors which constitute the family resemblances are:

(a) Ideology—Communal ideology both Hindu and Muslim. This factor, operating at the national and local levels, was the prime factor in the 1960s.

(b) Economic rivalry—Since 1971 what has been emerging as an increasingly important factor is the economic rivalry between Muslim craftsmen, cultivators and others and Hindu competitors often of the lower castes.

(c) There has been a loss of confidence in the administration and the police, which has been politicised since 1967 when the Congress party ceased to be a monolith holding uncontested power at the centre and in the states.

(d) As a corollary to the third, and due to factors such as economic rivalry and the growth of black money, the underworld, the world of hired *goondas*, has come to play a bigger role in communal conflicts.

While all these factors have been in operation throughout this period, the latter three have come more into prominence in the period after 1971. An important reason for this is that, after the creation of Bangladesh, Pakistan has ceased to be a serious threat to India as it was in the decade prior to that. No doubt it has been Mrs. Gandhi's habit to harp on the 'foreign threat' and the danger created by the supply of sophisticated arms to Pakistan by the United States. But it has cut little ice with Hindu communal parties. The slogan that every Muslim is anti-national and a Pakistani agent has lost its edge. It is the opposition parties such as the BJP, Lok Dal, the CPI etc. which have criticised her for building up the Pakistan bogey and have advocated more friendly relations with Pakistan.

Let us, however, first look at the facts. I give some details as revealed in Reports of the Home Ministry presented to Parliament.

When a communal riot occurs, three sets of preceding factors have to be taken into account. Firstly, there is the factor of ideology in general involving Hindu and Muslim political parties at the all-India level. Secondly, there is ideology mixed with local party politics over particular issues such as control over the municipality. This involves, among other things, building up the strength of the rival parties, organising, meetings and processions and the mounting of a hate campaign against the opposing group. Finally, a trigger has to be

pulled and for this any incident, however insignificant, and more often than not the circulation of a rumour (that a woman has been raped or a cow has been slaughtered) is enough to lead to a holocaust. It is this which provides the combustible material which bursts into frames. In its absence, nothing happens, innumerable provocations not withstanding. The truth of this is evident from the fact that the daily newspaper reports of rape and of dowry deaths produce no religious or righteous anger among the Sankaracharyas, the leaders of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and their social and political cohorts.

Let us turn first to the issue of ideology at the general level. Although the Muslim League is accused of having popularised, if it did not invent the two-nation theory, the fact is that this theory was, and unfortunately is still, held by Hindu and Muslim communalists alike. The constitution of the Hindu Mahasabha declares its aims to be to achieve a Hindu Rashtra, a Hindu culture and a Hindu polity by constitutional means. It defines a Hindu as a person who regards Bharatvarsh as his fatherland and professes any religion of Bharatiya origin, including Vaidikism, Sanatanism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, the Arya Samaj, the Brahma Samaj etc. The 48th session of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, held in Sholapur in May 1944, among other things demanded that 'for permanently solving the communal problem and for breaking the vicious circle of communal riots both in India and Pakistan, exchange of Hindu population from Pakistan with the Muslim population of India should be brought about on government level in a peaceful manner.' Later, the Election Manifesto of the Hindu Mahasabha issued in 1966 declared, 'Hindustan is the land of the Hindus from time immemorial. The Hindu Mahasabha believes that Hindus have a right to live in peace as Hindus, to legislate, to rule, to govern themselves in accordance with Hindu genius and ideals and to establish by all lawful and legal means a Hindu State based on Hindu culture and traditions so that Hindu ideology and way of life should have a Homeland of its own.' In this Manifesto the Mahasabha reiterated what it described as Savarkar's clarion call, given in 1939: 'Hinduise Politics and Militarise Hindudom.'

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh, formed in Delhi in 1951, while asserting in its constitution that the idea of a theocratic state is foreign to Bharatiya culture, states that secularism is a means of appeasing the Muslims. It declared its objective to be 'the revival of Bharatiya culture and the revitalisation of true Bharatiya nationalism'.

For the Hindu Mahasabha and the Jana Sangh, which shared this basic ideology, the Muslims, Christians and Parsis are foreigners and have to be Indianised, which in effect means Hinduised. In extreme utterances Muslims are referred to as 'guests' and the implication is that 'guests' have to accept the way of life of the host people and are under obligation to them for their hospitality. Further, a corollary which gives a sharper edge to this thesis, used in mounting campaigns of communal frenzy, is that a guest can be accommodated for short periods only, that the time to push these 'guests' out, that is into their own homeland, Pakistan, is overdue. The illogicality of this theory is of course self-evident. If the vast majority of Muslims are converts from Hinduism, as the Hindu communalists are themselves keen to emphasise, then obviously they never were 'foreigners' in this country and the propaganda to Indianise them can only mean Hinduising them. For the respect in which they differ from Hindu Indians is that they are Muslims. Balraj Madhok, writing with an air of innocence which belies the part played by him in fomenting the Ahmedabad riots, seeks to give his concept of Indianisation respectability by quoting from Nehru's *Discovery of India.* Referring to Arab, Turkish and Mughal invaders, Nehru says that, while their conflict with the indigenous people went on, 'the other process of absorption and *Indianisation* was also at work ending in the invaders becoming as much Indian as anyone else'. Akbar became the great representative of the old Indian ideal of synthesis of differing elements and their fusion into a common nationality. But the essential element of Nehru's concept of Indianisation is ignored by Madhok, which is that *'of synthesis of differing elements and their fusion into a common nationality'*, (emphasis mine). For Madhok Indianisation is a one-way process from Islam to Hinduism, there is no 'synthesis' of differing elements, no fusion or creation of a new common nationality which is the essence of the whole thing.

Muslim communalism has on the whole been defensive. The All-India Muslim League, which had continued after 1947 only in the South, opened up branches in some northern states in the year 1959. In August 1964 the All-India Majlis-e-Mushavarat was formed at a convention of Muslim parties held in Lucknow. The principal aims of the Mushavarat were to make efforts (i) to unite the Muslims into a *Millat* (Community) so that they may live their lives in accordance with the ideals of Islam and take part in the problems of the country and the community in such a way as might justify their being called the chosen people; (ii) to bring together all Muslim organisations which

are working for the country and the *Millat;* (iii) to adopt effective measures to remove communal and sectarian prejudices and tensions; and (iv) to create a better atmosphere of unity and harmony among different communities and groups living in India. The Mushavarat actually approved a resolution proposed by the Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Hind for the calling of a convention of representatives of minority communities and sympathetic members of the majority to end the communal canker in India's body politic. But the Jamat-e-Islami stood in the way of calling such a convention and the Mushavarat became, as the President of the Rajasthan Unit of the Mushavarat, Mirza Rafiullah Beg, stated in his letter of resignation, 'the political front of the Jamat-e-lslami, just as the Bharatiya Jana Sangh is doing the work of the RSS'. Reference should also be made here to the Majlis-e-Tamir-e-Millat formed in Hyderabad in 1954 (in fact an existing organisation was re-named). This organisation was one of the two which fathered the Mushavarat and together with the Mushavarat played an important role in the happenings in Bhiwandi. These organisations have taken the line that Islam, including Muslim personal law and Muslim institutions, should be treated as sacrosanct. They have made demands for proportionate representation in the services.

Occasionally the argument has been put forward that the Muslim minority can be safe only if two lakh Harijans are converted to Islam within the next decade. This plan was first discussed in Bangalore at an educational conference organised by the Jamat-e-Islami on the 8th of June, 1980, which was attended, among others, by the Director of the Islamic Educational Centre, London, Mr. Mohd. Abdul Kheir Badawi. Badawi, in his report to Muslim nations, stated that the time was ripe for converting poor Harijans to Islam. It has been argued that the mass conversion of Harijans to Islam at Meenakshipuram in 1981, and at other places in south India, was the result of this Bangalore meeting. The campaign for Harijan conversions was also further discussed at the four-yearly meeting of the Jamat-e-Islami in Hyderabad in February 1981 where representatives of the Islamic World Assembly also were present. *(Times of India,* March 21, 1981. See also Kuldip Nayar: 'Between the Lines,' *Tribune,* Chandigarh, February 11, 1982 and *Statesman,* November 16, 1982).

Apart from this, expressions of solidarity with pan-Islamic issues in West Asia and agitations to ensure that the government of India will take a pro-Arab stand on every issue are all that seems to concern Muslim political parties in India. And the desire to ensure Mulla backing

has been so obsessive with successive governments of India that even the Janata government did not take a single step towards establishing diplomatic relations with Israel—though several of the Arab states themselves maintain such relations.

On the other hand, if one looks out for Muslim participation and support for democratic and progressive movements such as safeguarding civil liberties, improvement in the position of women, tightening of the rape law, we find that they have received negligible response from Muslim political and social welfare organisations. However, we shall have more to say on this subject when we come to discuss the issue of national integration and the so-called concept of the mainstream.

Our contention is that, apart from ideological differences at a national level, for a communal riot to take place a hate campaign has to be built up round local issues and finally any trivial incident is enough to ignite the situation. An exception to this rule seems to be provided by the riots which took place in 1964, which with its ghastly record of 1170 communal incidents has been, till 1981, the worst year for such happenings. (The Home Ministry's tally for the year 1982 is 309 incidents but this obviously does not include the incidents with their enormous toll of death, injury and destruction which took place in Assam during the course of the financial year 1982-1983. Detailed studies have not yet been made nor, significantly enough, has the government of India ordered a judicial enquiry into the events which preceded and followed the so-called elections to the Assam Legislative Assembly. I have therefore not attempted to deal with them.)

Unfortunately, detailed studies of the incidents of the year 1964 are not available and we have to fall back on the *Report of the Indian Commission of Jurists.*

The Report faithfully reproduces the sequence of events. On December the 27th, 1963, from the Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar, which houses the holy relic, the hair of the Prophet was stolen. The relic was placed inside a silver casket and this was kept in an inner room behind a glass door in the shrine. It was found that the glass door had been broken and the casket and the holy relic within it removed. There were large-scale protest meetings in Srinagar, in which all communities participated, directed chiefly against the former Chief Minister, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, who was believed to be involved in the affair. The holy relic was mysteriously replaced on the 4th of January, 1964, but the damage had been done.

On the 6th of January, 1964, rioting took place in Srinagar, but it was not communal. Fifteen persons were killed and 200 injured in police firing.

Pakistan radio and the press took up the incidents and gave them their own twist. The following day the Pakistan Home and Kashmir Affairs Minister made a statement alleging that the theft was a sequence in the drama of hatred and violence let loose against the Muslims of India. A number of similar statements were made with reports of massacres of demonstrating Muslims in Srinagar. Protest meetings and Black Days started being organised from the 31st of December in West and then in East Pakistan. A Black Day was observed in Khulna in East Pakistan and on that very day attacks on Hindus in Khulna started and spread to Daulatpur and the Khalishpur industrial zone and thereafter to other areas.

According to the Jurists' Report an influx of several thousand refugees into West Bengal commenced on January the 5th. 'The harrowing tales told by the migrants infuriated a certain section of the people in West Bengal and the goondas and hooligans seized upon this for indulging in what came to be known as communal incidents in Calcutta city and in the suburbs.' (p. 284). Three incidents of assault, arson and loot occurred on Friday the 10th of January, 1964, and the police opened fire five times. The military was called in to aid the civil authorities on January the 11th but before that the police again had to open fire nine times. The army remained in position till the 18th of January and 10,000 evacuees returned to their homes by the end of this day. On the 21st of January the Chief Minister stated that the situation had returned completely to normal. There was a recrudescence of communal trouble a day prior to the calling of a *hartal* in Calcutta on the 17th of March by an organisation which styled itself the 'Save Pakistan Minorities Committee', to protest against the alleged 'callous and indifferent attitude of the Government of India and of the West Bengal Government regarding the safety and security of the minorities in Pakistan'. A day prior to the *hartal*, that is on the 16th of March, a group of 100 Muslim textile workers was attacked. Thirteen persons were killed on the spot and seven others died later in hospital. The injuries to the victims disclosed that sharp, cutting weapons such as knives, daggers and swords had been used. Forty persons were injured in this incident. The total casualty figures do not appear to have been made available. The Jurists' Report (p. 291) giving the figures up to the midnight of the 14th of January puts the number killed at 168-86 Muslims, 49 Hindus and 33 unknown.

The total number of dead in Calcutta was 83, of whom 56 were victims of police action. On page 295 we are told that, up to the 19th of January, the number of those who lost their lives in Calcutta was 104, of whom 39 did so as the result of police firings. In short, 21 persons had lost their lives in five days since the 14th, 16 in communal clashes. The number of those injured in Calcutta had gone up during these five days from 478 to 562. The number of dead and injured in the districts was officially released on the 14th of January. The official release on the 19th or any later date does not give casualty figures for the districts. The number killed up to the 14th was 52 in Calcutta and 70 in the districts. The jurists' silence on those killed and injured in the districts after the 14th of January is, therefore, unfortunate and perhaps ominous in view of the charge that the Report is a cover-up for the Congress governments at the Centre and in West Bengal.

East Pakistan refugees, after being conveyed to Sealdah station in Calcutta, were taken in trains for rehabilitation in Madhya Pradesh, the Dandakaranya in Orissa and in Bihar. Various organisations took food for the refugees to the trains whenever they stopped at stations *en route* to their destinations. At these halts the refugees related harrowing tales of their maltreatment, which is alleged to have led to tension and communal rioting. Thus, rioting broke out for one day in Raigarh (MP) on the 19th of January, in which 9 persons lost their lives.

The situation was more serious in Rourkela, where rioting started on the 16th of March and the situation was not brought under control till the 23rd of March. The frenzy was at its worst on the 21st, when the military had to be called in to aid the civil authorities. The casualty figures officially given were 70 dead and 113 injured.

In Jamshedpur, rioting broke out on the 19th of March and the army had to be called out on the 21st/22nd. Muslims numbering between thirty and thirtysix thousand had to be evacuated and kept in refugee camps. It was not till the 19th of April that most of them were able to return to their homes and it was on the 27th of April that refugee camps were officially closed. Mr. G.L. Nanda, the Home Minister, paid a visit to Jamshedpur on the 25th of March and stayed on for two days. Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan also visited Jamshedpur and addressed six public meetings in an effort to bring back samity.

A Citizens Peace Committee had been formed on the 27th of March, 1964, and Mr. J.R.D. Tata, addressing it on the 8th of April, said,

'There have been hundreds of people who have lost their lives and thousands who have suffered catastrophic suffering and I think an enquiry is something that should take place and I hope it will. I hope it will result in the apprehension of at least some culprits and the punishment of those for their acts of crimes.' Mr. Tata expressed the view that the sort of explosion of violence, fanaticism and hooliganism that Jamshedpur had witnessed could not have flared up spontaneously out of sympathy for the refugees who had passed through Jamshedpur in trains. He said, 'I think there is enough evidence by the very fact that these events flared up suddenly, almost suddenly at the same hour, on the same day in various areas of Jamshedpur, and even outside Jamshedpur in places like Rourkela and others... to show it was... an organised plot of loot, arson and murder.' That is why he called for an independent enquiry which would uncover the facts— believing that Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan had voiced a similar demand. (Report, P. 305). It is indeed regrettable that the Government of India did not hold an enquiry into the widespread and serious communal troubles which rocked the country in 1964. And now we shall never know what were the forces behind them. The general communal atmosphere till then had not been bad. There had been 26, 92, 60 and 61 communal incidents in the years 1960 to 1963, respectively. So, apart from the tirades against India let loose by Radio Pakistan, which may command some listening, especially among Muslims in times of trouble, within India; and by the Pakistan press, little of which is picked up for redistribution by the Indian papers, there was not much scope for building up a hate campaign even at the national level. Why, then, did trouble erupt at Jamshedpur and Rourkela, even though we might accept more easily at face value the jurists' explanation for the trouble in Calcutta? For, at any rate, the refugees were in Calcutta for considerable periods and some at least would have had relatives in West Bengal, if not in Calcutta.

Let us turn next to the factor which I have described as the building up of a hate campaign which seems to us to be present whenever a communal riot flares up. Why is it that on certain occasions a petty quarrel or an act, which would normally just find its way into the list of criminal offences to be treated like others under the law, leads to a communal riot? When a team of journalists or sociologists sets out to make an enquiry into the causes of a communal riot or when a state or the Central government appoints a commission to hold such an investigation, what they are asked to concern themselves with are 'the efforts made to fire communal passions and build up communal

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tension... in the area(s) concerned within a reasonable period preceding these disturbances'. Let us look at a few riots to examine the mounting of a local hate campaign. Such campaigns, as we have pointed out, are built around local issues.

RANCHI (AUGUST 1967)

According to the 1961 Census the total population of Ranchi city was 1,40,249. The city consists of two parts, Ranchi proper and Doranda. The population of the former was 1,22,416 and of the latter 17,833. Of the total population, Muslims accounted for approximately 20 per cent.

The Raghubar Dayal Commission gives us an account of how communal tension had been mounting in Ranchi town and in the district since 1964, the year of communal trouble in East Pakistan and the horror tales brought in by Hindu refugees from that country. The Report tells us that in April, 1964, serious tension developed at Ranchi on the eve of the Ram Navami festival when "extremist sections refused to abide by the demands of saner sections regarding control of Mahavira Jhanda processions. Coming nearer the Ranchi riot itself (22nd-29th of August 1967) we are informed that between the 1st of October, 1966, and the 1st of March, 1967—a period of 6 months—there were no less than five incidents. Most of these involved students, the majority of whom were Hindus, and taxi drivers, who were mainly Muslims. Between the 1st and 29th of March, when the Lok Sabha election campaign was on, there were eight incidents. In July, 1967, there were two incidents and yet again on the 9th of August, 1967, there was another incident. Despite the growing tension evident in the frequency of communal incidents and warnings from responsible quarters, a procession of schoolboys (mostly under 15 years of age) was permitted. It was the taking out of this anti-Urdu procession and its stoning by Muslims which ignited the communal flare-up.

The Dayal Commission refers to the building up of the communal hate campaign over the issue of making Urdu the second language of the state. The Jana Sangh party, which was a member of the newly elected United Front government, had dissociated itself from this particular move to which the other parties were committed.

On the 14th of July, a non-official bill was moved in the Bihar Legislative Assembly by a Congress member for making Urdu the second official language of the state. This led to protests by the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, the Jana Sangh and certain Congress members

and a procession organised by them entered the premises of the Legislative Assembly and shouted anti-Urdu and abusive slogans against Mr. Karpoori Thakur, the Chief Minister. The Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, the Jana Sangh and the RSS decided to organise a fortnight of protests from the 12th to the 26th of August, 1967. A meeting and a procession were organised in Ranchi and a handbill was circulated which said that the Urdu language issue was anti-national and would lead to another division of the country; it was Pakistani-inspired. The procession and meeting passed off peacefully but there were more demonstrations and counter-demonstrations on the 16th. On the 17th of August, another pamphlet was issued by the leader of the anti-Urdu campaign, which in the words of the Dayal Commission 'used, to say the least, strong language against the supporters of Urdu'. (P. 11). Apart from repeating the accusations of the handbill, the pamphlet ended by asking rhetorically whether such venomous serpents (the supporters of Urdu) should be allowed to live again. The pamphlet was entitled 'Challenge to the Manhood of the New Generation.' But, comparatively speaking, the hate campaign was short-lived. It started barely a week before the riots erupted.

THE MEERUT RIOTS (JANUARY 1968)

Meerut lies some forty miles east of Delhi in the state of Uttar Pradesh. At the time when the riots broke out, the population was approximately 4 lakh (4,00,000) and the breakup communitywise was given in the 1951 Census as Hindus 64.17%, Muslims 30.11%, and others 5.72%. In Meerut district refugees from Punjab constituted 3.99% of the population and nearly 85% of them lived in the city.

Riots broke out on the 28th of January, 1968, and were brought under control after three days, though communal incidents occurred sporadically for sometime thereafter. A case study of the Meerut riots was made by two journalists, Ashwin Kumar Roy and Subhas Chakravarty, published in four instalments in the *Patriot* on the 22nd, 23rd, 24th and 27th of February, 1968. The authors point out that trouble arose over the decision of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Hind to invite Sheikh Abdullah to address a meeting scheduled for the 28th of January, 1968. This decision was basically unprincipled since the Jamiat had all along opposed the stand taken by Sheikh Abdullah but it wanted to score off the recently formed Majlis-e-Mushavarat which had been gaining ground in Meerut. The local Jana Sangh and RSS leaders, however, made it clear that they would not allow Sheikh Abdullah to address a meeting in Meerut and set up an organisation styled the

Kashmir Bachao Morcha (Save Kashmir Movement). Meetings and processions were organised and propaganda was let loose to the effect that the Sheikh was anti-national and pro-Pakistan, as were those who had issued him the invitation. Jeeps fitted with loudspeakers were used in the city to spread this message. A sizeable proportion of the Hindu population of Meerut city consisted of refugees from the Punjab and they fell an easy prey to such propaganda. Thus, on the appointed day, some two hours before Sheikh Abdullah was due to address the Jamiat conference at Faiz-e-Azam college, the Morcha organised a counter-meeting at a place very close to the college (and they were permitted to do so!). The Morcha meeting at its conclusion formed itself into a procession and went to the Faiz-e-Azam College. When they reached its gates the inevitable happened—brickbatting, followed by arson, loot and murder. In the last instalment of their case study, Ray and Chakravarty say, 'We have no hesitation in putting the blame squarely on the local leaders of the majority communal forces for the riots. The entire episode bore the stamp of organisation and advance planning executed with ruthless disregard for human lives.'

AHMEDABAD RIOTS (SEPTEMBER 1969)

According to the 1961 Census the total population of Ahmedabad was 11½ lakh (11,50,000). Professor B.K. Roy Burman cites an estimate of the Town Planning Organisation to the effect that when the riots occurred it was in the neighbourhood of 15 lakh (15,00,000). The 1961 Census put the strength of the Muslims at 15.51 per cent of the total.

In the Lok Sabha elections of 1967 the Jana Sangh had failed to make much impact in Gujarat. Their only stronghold was Rajkot and they, therefore, started to build up their strength in different districts of the state by appointing wholetime leaders. Municipal Elections were to be held in Ahmedabad in April 1969 and their campaign was centred round this local event.

A booklet entitled *Ahmedabad Riots X-Rayed* written under the pseudonym of Research Worker, with a preface by Subhadra Joshi, describes the series of events through which the hate campaign developed, culminating in the outbreak of violence which erupted on the 18th of September and was not brought under control till the 25th of September. The most important of these events can be listed as follows: (1) The RSS organised a four-day camp in Ahmedabad in January 1969 in which 1,800 volunteers were given theoretical and

practical paramilitary training. The proceedings were secret. Golwalkar attended the camp and is believed to have addressed the volunteers, allegedly describing the Muslims as 'our guests in India'. (2) Anti-Muslim propaganda was stepped up on various occasions between January and the outbreak of the riots on September the 18th. This propaganda reached its peak in the Modak lecture delivered by Mr. Balraj Madhok on the 14th of September, where he argued among other things that (a) what needed to be 'nationalised' were not the banks but the Muslims of India; (b) Muslims could not be relied upon; (c) a Pakistan attack on the Rajasthan border was imminent and that Muslims should be sent to Pakistan, this was overdue. (3) The Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti took out a 'victory procession' on the 14th when the Gujarat government issued orders suspending a Muslim Sub-Inspector of Police and ordered an enquiry into an incident in which the officer had insisted that the Jagannath Temple authorities should stop using loudspeakers, in accordance with the law, on the midnight of the 4th of September. (The Samiti/JS/RSS had been demanding this action. It was alleged that, in the scuffle that followed the SI's attempt to enforce the order, a copy of the Ramayana was knocked down and kicked by the SI. This came to be known as the Ramayana incident.) 'The slogan that roared through the procession' (according to Researcher) was *'Gaddar har Musalman, bhagao usko Pakistan'* ('Every Muslim is a traitor, drive him off to Pakistan.') (Page 9). The victory procession was in effect the throwing down of the gauntlet.

THE BHIWANDI RIOTS (MAY 1970)

Bhiwandi is the *taluka* headquarters of Thana district and is located 53 km from Bombay on the Bombay-Agra National Highway. The importance of the town stems from the fact that it is a centre of the powerloom industry. The industry has been expanding rapidly and so has the population. In 1961 there were 26,000 powerlooms and by 1970 the number had shot up to 40,000. The population had risen from 47,630 to 1,15,000 during the same period. There was a high percentage of immigrant labour from UP, Madhya Pradesh and Malabar. Muslims constituted approximately 65 per cent of the population, the balance being Hindus.

While Muslims formed a majority in Bhiwandi town, the position was reversed in the surrounding villages.

We are fortunate to have the *Report of the Inquiry Commission into the Riots in Bhiwandi, Jalgaon and Malad.* This one-man enquiry conducted

by Justice D.P. Madon, then of the Bombay High Court, is a remarkable analysis of a communal riot.

The Bhiwandi riots provide an interesting example of the building up of a hate campaign. Till 1964 Bhiwandi town and district had been singularly free from communal disturbances. It was in that year that certain Hindu groups decided to observe Shiv Jayanti by taking out a procession.

Differences arose over these issues: Firstly, the route of the procession, the Muslims objecting to its passing in front of important mosques, particularly the Jumma Masjid. (It seems that Bhiwandi is littered with mosques and no route could be found which would altogether avoid mosques!) A compromise was arrived at by which the procession would pass along one side of the Jumma Masjid and would avoid the front. Secondly, the throwing of *gulal.* It was argued that while no objection would be raised over the throwing of *gulal,* precautions should be observed to see that it did not fall inside the mosques. Thirdly, only approved slogans should be used. With breaches here and there a shaky truce was maintained between the communities. But, with the coming of the 1967 Lok Sabha and state elections, branches of several communal organisations were set up in Bhiwandi such as the Majlis-e-Mushavarat (1966) and the Majlis-e-Tamir-e-Millat (November 1968), the Jana Sangh (1964), the Shiv Sena (1966) and the Rashtriya Utsav Mandal (1969). The Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS had been in existence for several years. The Muslim and Hindu organisations co-operated among themselves to build up a hate campaign, particularly after the Ahmedabad riots. A feature of the hate campaign was the publication in newspapers, and publicity given at public meetings, to anonymous letters received by Hindu leaders to the effect that the Muslims were planning to avenge the atrocities on Muslims in Ahmedabad. These letters (whatever the authorship) 'gave an opportunity to the local Hindu leaders and a section of the Press to create an impression that Muslims were conspiring to burn and loot their properties and to warn the Hindus to be ready to meet this contingency on the ground that the Government and the Police were not likely to protect them'.

Portions of the corners of the walls of a building facing the Vegetable Market, which would be seen by villagers and others when they went to the market, were painted black and used as a blackboard on which the Rashtriya Utsav Samiti wrote out extracts from newspaper editorials or other matter intended to inflame Hindu communal feelings. The

Muslims also used a board on some occasions near the wall of a mosque for a similar purpose.

Most of the building up of the campaign on both sides was through provocative speeches. Some of the major themes are indicated below:

On the Hindu side: 'Ninety-nine per cent of riots have been started by Muslims... though we call them riots between Hindus and Muslims or a communal riot, it is a riot of the Muslims, riot started by Muslims...' (V.R. Patil, Vice-President, Hindu Mahasabha, in a speech at Padgha on 23.1.1970. Madon Report P. 288).

'There are many Masjids in Bhiwandi and we are to stop playing music.... At Bhiwandi they asked us not to throw gulal. But out of love we throw colours and spread gulal to express joy and celebrate religious and national occasions.' (V.R. Patil at Bhiwandi on 23.1.1970. Ibid. P. 291).

'I don't hate Muslims but it is the duty of Hindus to make bandobast of such persons as are born in India, brought up on the produce of India, and nonetheless sympathise with Pakistan!'

'I don't want to shed the blood of Muslims, but I wish you to give up some wrong notions. We are not to be afraid of Muslims.' (Ibid. P. 291).

'Muslims should be sent to Pakistan or should get themselves converted and become Hindus. They (Muslims) should not be given any responsible posts (in India). Instead of expressing resentment over the fire set to the Alaka mosque in Jerusalem, it was the foremost duty of Muslims to restore mosques (which were originally mandirs) to the Hindus for converting them into mandirs.' (Ibid. P. 295).

These were the common themes of speeches made by Pandit Brij Narain Brajesh, President of the Hindu Mahasabha at Ambivale, Kalyan, Ulhasnagar, Bhiwandi and Thana from the 7th to the 11th of March, 1970, respectively. At the speech in Bhiwandi on the 9th of March, portions of which are reproduced verbatim in the Report, Pt. Brij Narain made insulting remarks about the Islamic conception of the deity and the Prophet. He ended this portion of his speech by asking, 'Would such a religion be called at all a religion?' (Ibid. P. 295).

On the Muslim side: The Maharashtra Branch of the Majlis-e-Tamir-e-Millat adopted a number of resolutions at conferences in 1968 which set the tone for the Muslim reaction to the rising tide of communalism. While referring to aggressive communal forces which had manifested

themselves in various parts of the country and the failure of governments to provide for their protection, the Central Committee of the Millat held a meeting on the 11th and the 12th of May, 1968, at which a booklet was circulated which stated that 'by the Grace of God the Muslims had now become conscious of self-defence, that the time had come to give it a practical shape, and that no member of the Tamir-e-Millat would sleep or get sound sleep till the Muslims would become 'Mujahideen' (crusaders) on the principles of self-defence'. The meeting further advised the Muslims to 'listen to the call given by the All India Majlis-e-Tamir-e-Millat and organise themselves in each locality on the principle of self-defence'. The Millat, however, also advised that they should 'improve their contact with peace loving citizens, scheduled castes and other minorities and should not forget that their efforts were not against the Hindu community but were against those anti-social elements who were the real enemy of mankind and were contemplating to throw the country to the stage of anarchy'. (Ibid., pp. 330-331).

Between November 1968 and November 1969 some fourteen public speeches were made by members of the Majlis-e-Tamir-e-Millat in Bhiwandi, which the Commission held to be communal speeches. The main themes of these speeches were (1) dangers faced by Islam and the Muslim community in India; (2) exhortation to Muslims to unite to meet the challenge of Hindu communal forces; (3) bias of the administration against the Muslim community which meant that they could not look to government for protection and must therefore stand on their own or perish. By constantly harping on these issues, Muslim communal organisations must, according to the Commission, share responsibility for building up tension in Bhiwandi. However, the Inquiry Commission found that between December 1969 and May 1970, when the riots broke out, the Majlis-e-Tamir-e-Millat and the Mushavarat did not hold meetings at which communal speeches were made. (Ibid. pp. 350-360 and 367).

Apart from the public speeches, the Commission also held that propaganda on these themes was carried out by the Millat at private meetings and in mosques though the extent of such propaganda was 'considerably exaggerated... and was magnified by rumours spread deliberately or otherwise'. (p. 352).

There are thus three different views of the genesis of communal riots. The first is exemplified by the dots of 1964 where the Indian Commission of Jurists contended that the riots occurred *spontaneously*

when people heard the harrowing tales of Hindu refugees from Pakistan. There was no building up of a hate campaign in Calcutta, Rourkela and Jamshedpur. Secondly there is the view that, apart from communal ideologies at the national level, riots occurred in Ranchi, Meerut, Ahmedabad, Bhiwandi because a hate campaign centering on a local issue was built up and it got sparked off by some petty incident. Thirdly, there is the view that communal riots are planned. J.R.D. Tata expressed this about the 1964 riots in Jamshedpur; the report of the two journalists concerning Meerut came to the same conclusion. 'Researcher' was strongly of this view about Ahmedabad.

'Research Worker', in the booklet already referred to, expresses himself with great force and concludes that the 'Ahmedabad and Gujarat riots (18th to 25th of September, 1969) were pre-planned and executed with unprecedented, ruthless efficiency; Jana Sangh, RSS, Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti appear to be the forces behind this carnage and blood-bath'. (Page 44). 'Research Worker' has listed no less than twentyfour reasons which led him to the conclusion that the riots were pre-planned. It is clear from a number of reasons cited that he does not distinguish between building up a hate campaign and pre-planning of a riot—the hate campaign is part of the plan. However, if we distinguish between these two, then, more specifically, the reasons which 'Research Worker' cites in favour of his conclusion are the following:

(i) After the Jagannath Temple incident when the glass panes of a case housing some idols were broken in stone-throwing and a Muslim delegation had gone to the temple to offer an apology, on the 17th of September, 1969, Hindu children were taken home from school by RSS/JS workers.

(ii) The initial attack on Muslims took place on the 19th of September, within minutes of the temple incident, in distant areas whereas disturbances did not occur in the immediate vicinity. The argument is that the JS and the RSS were waiting for a signal to go into operation and the refusal of one articulate *sadhu* to accept the apology given by the Muslim delegation provided the signal,

(iii) After the rioting broke out and despite the curfew (which was not enforced till the Army took charge on the 25th of September) cars were shuttling up and down the streets ferrying rioters and tins of petrol used to set fire to Muslim property. The contention is that the deployment of cars and the containers for petrol must have required prior planning and organisation and

could not have been arranged at the last minute by infuriated mobs,

(iv) 'Researcher' alleges that the rioters were armed with voters' lists and it was on this basis that persons with Muslim names were attacked and property owned by Muslims was singled out for destruction.

Fortunately, two judicial commissions have gone into this question of alleged pre-planning or conspiracy to create a communal riot. While the Dayal Commission has dealt with the matter in a summary fashion, Mr. Justice Madon has gone into the subject with characteristic thoroughness in his *Bhiwandi Inquiry Report* Vol. III Part III Chapter 50.

The Special Investigation Squad set up by government to investigate communal offences, and some Hindu parties, alleged that there was a criminal conspiracy entered into by certain local Muslims of Bhiwandi between 11 April and 7 May 1970 to attack the Shiv Jayanti procession on a pre-arranged signal to bring about communal riots simultaneously all over Bhiwandi town, to cause total destruction of the Hindu community and their property. (pp. 127 and 130). In support of the conspiracy it was alleged that:

(a) A large number of Muslim families left Bhiwandi prior to the 7th of May. The Commission found that the 'Maharashtra Relief Committee' had been set up at Madangura on the 10th of May. No shelter had been given to anyone prior to 9 p.m. on the 9th of May, though the prosecution had contended that Muslims had sought shelter prior to the start of the disturbances on the 7th of May. (Pages 215-216).

(b) In anticipation of the disturbances, Muslims had insured their residential premises, factories, and other properties. The Commission found that it is the general practice to insure property against riot and strike risks and new policies were taken out by both Muslims and Hindus. The Special Investigation Squad, while enquiring into the policies taken out by Muslims, had made no similar enquiries about members of the Hindu community. (Page 224).

(c) Because the Muslims knew that disturbances would start on the 7th of May they drew their rations on the 6th. The Commission found that rations were usually drawn on the 8th of the month or later since salaries to handloom workers

are paid on the 7th. But on this occasion a higher number of rationcardholders of *both* communities drew rations on the 6th, the reason being that the 7th was a holiday. (Pages 226-227).

(d) It was alleged that the Muslims had been arming themselves considerably in advance, that swords and knives were sold at a *dargah* on the occasion of an *urs,* that such weapons were distributed from a particular house and that the Muslims had armed themselves with bombs and missiles such as acid bulbs, Molotov cocktails and the like. These charges were examined in detail and shown to be baseless. The judge found the counter-charge of an arms build-up by Hindus to be equally baseless. The Report comes to the conclusion that the 'allegation that in preparation for a communal riot there is a buildup of sophisticated weapons is exaggerated to the point of caricature. Every loud noise was attributed to the explosion of a bomb burst by a Muslim. Many who talked glibly about bombs, including a senior police Deputy SP, had not seen a crude bomb or a country bomb in their lives!' (P. 275). The Commission found that the weapons mostly used were stones, *lathis* and knives though, on some occasions, spears and firearms also were employed. The commonest missiles for arson were cloth rags soaked in kerosene, lighted torches and fireballs though occasionally Molotov cocktails were used. The violence showed that there were no particular weapons which were the monopoly of rioters of one community. 'Thus, rioters of both communities have perpetrated dastardly atrocities, each of them was equally a criminal and none of them deserve any sympathy.' (Page 259).

(e) The alleged simultaneity of the incidents: We have seen that all those who contend that communal riots are pre-planned lay great store on the contention that incidents occur on the same day and the same time in widely dispersed localities. On this the Dayal Commission had commented that, supposing it were granted that the attacks took place simultaneously, it would not show that they were pre-planned. (Part II Chapter I Page 65 para 1.12). The Bhiwandi Inquiry has revealed that in fact the incidents were not simultaneous. The Report says that it would not matter very much whether the rioting began at 5.30 or 6 p.m. but, because the charge of conspiracy laid so much emphasis on it, it became necessary to enquire minutely

into the alleged simultaneity of the incidents. The time of the incidents is an after-thought, which Justice Madon found, in the cross examination of witness after witness, was planted in their affidavits. Many of them admitted that they did not have wrist watches! It is surprising, he remarks with a touch of humour, that when stones were being pelted or persons were under attack and they would be running for their lives, they thought of checking on the time! (Para 40 Page 268 Vol II Part III).

We would like to urge that the concept of *planning* does not apply to the case of riots. In its ordinary sense, as we have seen elsewhere, planning implies the conscious articulation of objectives, and thereafter the formulation of strategies to achieve them in specified time-spans, the larger objectives themselves being broken down into more immediate objectives which are to be realised progressively. If there is any of this in the so-called 'planning' of a communal riot, it is too vague and confused to qualify as planning and crumbles under the careful analysis to which it was subjected in the Bhiwandi Inquiry. What happens is the building up of a hate campaign and mass hysteria. There is the background of retaliatory self-defence— each community advising its people to give up cowardice and to organise themselves for self-defence, with the corollary that sometimes attack is the best form of defence. A real or concocted incident lights the spark, the underworld takes over, government fumbles and 'mere anarchy is loosed upon the world'.

One other point deserves attention, particularly with reference to the sort of allegation made by 'Research Worker' that rioters in Ahmedabad went about with workers' lists and picked out from them the names of Muslims and their properties; the persons were murdered and their properties destroyed. Both Justice Dayal and Justice Madon have repeatedly commented on the unreliability of the witnesses. The affidavits filed by them crumbled when they appeared in the witness box under path to speak the truth and nothing but the truth and were subjected to cross examination.

COMMUNALISM SINCE 1971

When we come to the 1970s the political climate is vastly different in regard to the issue of secularism. It will be recalled that in the Lok Sabha Elections in 1971 there was what was known as the Grand Alliance with the Organisation Congress (Congress-O), the Swatantra Party, the Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP) and the Jana Sangh on one

side opposing Mrs. Gandhi and her Congress Party styled as Congress-R. The Hindu Mahasabha was no longer recognised as an all-India party. The two Congress parties continued to stand by their commitment to secularism. The Congress-R led by Mr. Jagjivan Ram, in para 54 of its Manifesto, referring to secularism as 'one of the basic tenets of our Constitution', says 'it will strive to ensure that all minorities have full freedom to establish, manage and run educational and other institutions. The Congress-O) in para 36 of its Manifesto asserted that there shall be no discrimination against the minorities in the various services and stressed the need for Urdu to be given its rightful place among the fourteen languages of India and encouraged to grow according to its genius. The Swatantra followed suit. The SSP held that Hindu-Muslim riots were one of the most serious dangers facing the country. It said that, in any coalition government it partnered, it would take upon itself the task of promoting communal harmony, preventing communal riots and punishing the guilty. The CPI said that Right reactionary forces such as the Jana Sangh and the RSS, by raising slogans of Indianisation of Muslims and other minorities, were striking at the very foundations of secularism and national unity.

All this is what one might expect. The real change is in the attitude of the Jana Sangh party. In its Manifesto it charged the ruling Congress with communalism in entering into an alliance with the Muslim League in Kerala. It went on to say, 'Jana Sangh regards India as one nation and all Indians as one people. The diversity of castes, creeds, languages and provinces only lend beauty and splendour to this unity of *our national life which is an assimilation that even those who came as invaders were absorbed in it and became identified with it.*' (emphasis mine). It goes on to state that the Jana Sangh is resolved to carry forward the secular tradition of ancient India. 'The State has always regarded that all faiths are entitled to equal freedom and protection.' The Jana Sangh, however, rejected 'the pseudo-secularism that combines religion with appeasement'. It advocated 'the Indian ideal of *sarva dharma samabhava'* which observes 'not merely tolerance but also equal respect for other faiths'. This philosophy is a very far cry indeed from that which prevailed in the sixties, particularly in the last few years of the decade. It is interesting to observe that according to its Manifesto the Akali Dal 'stands for secularism and for the protection of the interests of minorities'. The Akali Dal would fight in the Lok Sabha for 'the protection of the rights of all the religious minorities in the country—the Muslims, the Sikhs and the Christians'. In this section of its Manifesto, concerning minorities and secularism, we also find (ironically in the light of

subsequent history) the following sentence: 'It (the Akali Dal) *is concerned about the activities of certain paramilitary organisations and would, therefore, press upon the new Central Government to curb the activities of such organisations.'*

It is, however, plausible to argue that a new cycle of communal fever has started since the Meenakshipuram conversions in 1981. The Virat Hindu Samaj, of which Dr. Karan Singh is President, held its first *sammelan* in Delhi on the 18th of October of that year and has organised several since. Dr. Karan Singh has stated that the Samaj is a federating unit for different Hindu organisations and its purpose is to bring various factions of the Hindu community together irrespective of class and caste and effect reform in Hinduism. The Samaj, according to him, is not against other religions. On the subject of conversion he said that the Samaj was not directly concerned with it but equally it is not against it: a number of other organisations (presumbly he meant organisations affiliated to the Samaj) are involved in conversion.

We do not see why so much should be made out of conversion to Hinduism as an indication of revivalism or communalism. If conversion to Islam, Christianity, Buddhism or Sikhism is legitimate, it is not evident why conversion to Hinduism should be frowned upon. The only point of relevance is that conversion should not be the result of fraud. As to inducements, they are varied. Some promise you justice in the next life, that is in heaven; some promise release from the painful cycle of birth and death; and some, greater social euqality in this life. Surely, it is every one's right to choose the induce ments which appeal to him.

After 1971, the number of communal incidents came down and in the years 1975, 1976 and 1977 were lower than the number recorded in any year after 1966, when only 133 incidents took place. But we have to remember that two of these were wholly years of the Emergency and one cannot rely to the usual extent on official statistics provided during that period. After that a new trend of rising communal incidents and crimes against the Harijans becomes evident. These two tendencies should not be considered in isolation. We found that, as the Harijans started improving their status and making claims to a few privileges to which they were entitled, vested interests came down upon them.

What has been happening to the Muslims is somewhat on similar lines. Data collected from various sources show that the Muslim population of India is mainly in the urban areas. Whereas Muslims total a little over 11% of the Indian population, in the urban areas

their proportion is as high as 29%. Barely 1% of Muslims in the urban areas would qualify to come within the upper strata, while some 5% would fall with in the middle income group comprising small businessmen, petty shopkeepers and the educated employed. The rest, that is some 94% of Muslims in the urban areas, are semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Coming from the poorest sections of society and weighed-down by the traditional conception of education, the Muslim boy goes to the *maktab* for a couple of years and that is the end of his education. The drop-out rate for Muslims up to class VI is 70% and barely 20% of the rest will make it to the Higher Secondary level. With all these odds against him and religious prejudice to boot, whereelse is he to turn for a living but to some form of self-employment. He learns a trade or a craft, practised by his forefathers, mostly in the smaller cities. Thus, Muslims constituted most of the locksmiths in Aligarh, woodworkers in Saharanpur, silk and carpet weavers in Varanasi and Mirzapur and brassware workers in Moradabad. A particular stronghold of theirs has been the handloom sector in Ahmedabad, in Bhiwandi and in Azamgarh, and Ghazipur in UP. The tanning industry is in Muslim hands throughout India. It is mostly in the smaller cities that communal riots have taken place. It is also the case, which we will bring out when we examine particular instances of communal rioting, that there has been growing tension between the Muslims and Hindus coming from some of the lower castes. The probability is that persons from these castes are competing with Muslim craftsmen and semi-skilled workers and breaking their monopoly in these professions. The reverse process of Muslims entering into occupations previously held by Hindus is also taking place to a limited extent.

Muslim craftsmen cling to an outmoded technology and little or nothing has been done by Wakf Boards, and even in an institution such as the Aligarh Muslim University, to cater to actual needs. A survey in three parts in the *Indian Express* (17th to 19th of October, 1983) on Muslim education mentions that there are fifty thousand persons employed in the lock industry in Aligarh and the Lock Manufacturers' Association there persuaded the university to start a six months' certificate course in its polytechnic on lock manufacture. Though costly machinery was bought, the course never got going. No wonder that Muslim locksmiths are losing out to competitors.

In this context let us look at the Moradabad riots which started on the 13th of August, 1980, which was the day on which Id-ul-Fitr was

being celebrated, and in nearly a fortnight resulted in the estimated loss of between two hundred and fifty and three hundred lives. Krishna Gandhi, who analysed the factors in October, in an article entitled 'Anatomy Of the Moradabad Riots' draws attention to the fact that Muslims constitute 55% of the population of the town which was estimated at three lakhs. Brassware is the main industry, where the bulk of the artisans and workers are Muslims. Much of the goods produced is exported to West Asia. The sequence of events is somewhat as follows. There was a very large gathering at the Idgah at 9 a.m. and the devotees had spilled over onto the street. The *namaz* was completed and the *khutba* (sermon) was being delivered when a pig strolled towards the people who were listening to the sermon on the street. Some of them asked the police to drive it away, but the police refused. People thought that the police were responsible for driving the pig towards the *namazis.* The crowd began pelting stones at the police. The Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) was hit by a stone and fainted; the Additional District Magistrate (ADM) was dragged out of a stall and later found to have been beaten to death. The mob also attacked a police post *(chowki),* looted arms and one policeman is reported to have been burnt alive. Thereafter the police and criminal elements had a field day.

Various explanations have been offered for the Moradabad riots. It is argued firstly that it was basically a confrontation between the police and the Muslim community. One Javed, a criminal and a *protege* of the President of the local Muslim League, had been killed in an encounter with the police and this created bad blood between at least a section of the Muslims and the police. It has been contended that at least for one day the Hindus were not involved and it was only after this period that Hindu *goondas,* encouraged by the police, joined the fray. But the question is who runs the underworld of *goondas*? It is only too well-known that they are the hirelings of business tycoons, just as the tycoons need politicians to safeguard their interests on another front and to give them respectability. So why, if the Hindu community was not involved, if there had been communal harmony in Moradabad for nine years, did the Hindu *goondas* come in, and at whose bidding?

Secondly, there is the well-known and handy theory that the Moradabad riots were instigated by Pakistan and Arab money was flowing in—with the insinuation that the Muslims were using it to arm themselves (shades of Bhiwandi!). In reply, the Muslims have

argued that, had they anticipated trouble, they would not have taken their children with them to the Idgah. The charge of Arab money is important but has to be looked at in the proper way. So, if we are dissatisfied with the surface explanation, where should we look? R. P. Mullick, writing in the same issue of *EPW* as Krishna Gandhi, in article 'Not a Communal Riot' the argues that the underlying causes of the trouble in Moradabad were economic. A Brassware Corporation had been set up in Moradabad in 1974 through the efforts of Mr H.N. Bahuguna, who was Chief Minister of UP at that time. The Corporation was itself arranging for the export of goods to West Asia and the workers were getting a fair return for their supplies. This had hit the middlemen, and profiteers in the brassware business who were mostly Hindu. So Arab money means that money was coming in from West Asia in return for goods and, as a result, things were looking up for a few Muslims. They were investing in real estate and spending more on religious occasions. Imtiaz Ahmed of Jawaharlal Nehru University, writing in *The Times of India* in an article entitled 'Communal Riots in India: Part of General Social Strife' (1.12.81) has some pertinent comments to make. He says, 'The export opportunities created by the sudden prosperity of oil-exporting countries has been a boon for these Muslim entrepreneurs.' This new-found prosperity has had various effects— outflow of Muslims to newer and less congested areas, purchase of real estate by Muslims in better areas. He points out that, around Moradabad, a large number of townships has grown up such as Wajidnagar, Mehbeobnagar, Mustafabad and Islamnagar, With growing prosperity, Muslims have become more assertive.

Riots in Bihar Sharif, a small town 50 miles from Patna, located on the highway to Ranchi, broke out on the 30th of April 1981 and continued for a week. In Bihar Sharif town itself the official casualties were given out as 47 dead and 68 injured but unofficial estimates cited by Mr. Asghar Ali Engineer, who visited the town nearly a fortnight after the riots, said the number was more like 150 killed. In the villages the casualties were far greater.

Bihar Sharif had an estimated population of 1.30 lakh, of which some 48% were Muslims. It is an important centre for the *bidi* industry, in which 15,000 persons, mostly Muslims and Hindus from the lower castes, are employed. It is also an important centre for the weaving industry. Muslim landed gentry are few in number; most of the Muslims have small holdings and many are landless labourers. The most important crops are potatoes and a number of cold storage units have been coming up for the storage of potatoes.

Engineer reports that there is great pressure on land and tension had been building up between the Yadavs, a rising Hindu caste, and Muslims over Muslim graveyards. It was over one such case that trouble started. The Yadavs are alleged to have built a temple overnight in a graveyard and to have covered it with cowdung. The Muslim contention was that this was part of a plot to 'discover' the temple later and on this basis to claim the land. A date had been fixed by the District Magistrate to discuss the matter with leaders of the two communities but a drunken brawl sparked off the riots before the meeting could be held.

Certain features of the Bihar Sharif riots deserve attention. It has been pointed out that no one was killed as a result of police firing but in skirmishes between Hindus and Muslims, of the 50 dead (official figure) only one was a non-Muslim and this appears to have been the result of mistaken identity, for the person sported a beard and was therefore taken to be a Muslim.

While the riots broke out on the 30th of April, no serious action to enforce order was taken till the 5th of May when the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Central Reserve Police (CRP) arrived on the scene. This obviously resulted from Mrs. Gandhi's sudden dash to Bihar Sharif on the 4th of May. She was to visit Kuwait and could not but be concerned about public reaction in the Islamic world! The Chief Minister, who had stood by watching, sprang into action; two district magistrates were arrested and six were suspended on *prima facie* evidence of the common charge of acute anti-Muslim bias.

Baroda was without dispute the most communally disturbed city in 1982. There were no less than nineteen communal incidents in Baroda. The last lot of trouble started off in the concluding fortnight of 1982 and extended into the first few days of 1983. In this round the police opened fire sixtyfive times and the casualties amounted to 12 dead and 70 injured.

The troubles in Baroda have centred round the illicit liquor trade which was largely in the hands of the Muslims, who constitute some 12% of the population. The Kahars, a Scheduled Caste community, have appeared as rivals in this field and the riots have been manoeuvred by the activities of hoodlums hired by the competing factions. The daily sale of illicit liquor has been estimated at around a lakh of rupees and *hafta*, the police cut, is said to be about 60 lakh rupees per annum. A fact-finding committee set up in 1981 by the President of the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee (I) found that 'infighting

(within the Congress) and the patronage of police factions were major causes of communal trouble in Baroda'.

In the instances cited above, I have been trying to illustrate three points. Firstly, that in communal riots since 1971, a factor of growing importance is the economic rivalry between Muslims and Hindus, particularly of the lower castes who were competing with each other and posing threats in particular fields. In Moradabad it was the Hindu middlemen who were hit by the setting up of the Brassware Corporation. In Bihar Sharif it was pressure on land which motivated the rising Yadav farmers to make inroads into the Muslim Wakf land. In Baroda it has been the Kahars who have been threatening Muslim monopoly in the illicit liquor trade.

It is significant that the intertwining of Hindu and Muslim commercial interests can help to maintain communal concord. Thus, for example, in 1970 there were forty thousand powerlooms in Bhiwandi, twenty thousand of which were owned by Muslims and fourteen thousand by Hindus. The majority of master weavers were Hindus while workers were drawn from both communities. Raw materials such as yarn and beams were mostly supplied by members of the Hindu community and the finished products were also marketed by them. The Muslims also, to a considerable extent, depended on Hindu finance. The economic and commercial interdependence was a factor making for communal peace. While Muslims were a majority in Bhiwandi town, there was a convention whereby Hindus and Muslims shared posts in the Municipal Council. Thus, if the President was a Muslim, the Vice-President was a Hindu.

On the other hand, in a highly thought-provoking paper entitled 'Social Profile of Ahmedabad and the Communal Disturbances', Prof. B.K. Roy Burman has pointed out that, in the textile industry in Ahmedabad which plays a 'crucial role in the economic and employment structure of the city', certain features have developed which could give rise to caste and communal tensions. In the past certain sections or dpartments in the mills were manned wholly by workers belonging to a particular caste or community. There was a historical background to this. When the industry started it was natural to recruit for particular jobs persons from groups which had performed them traditionally. Thus, the spinners were recruited from Harijan inhabitants of north Gujarat, who were hereditary handloom weavers, while the winders and weavers were mostly drawn from the local Muslims. From this policy a rigid monopoly developed and, though new recruitment

procedures do not debar a person from any community being employed in any department, the tendency to maintain the monopolies has continued. According to Mr. Roy Burman, this has been a cause of tension.

He mentions two other causes of tension. Persons employed in different departments are paid according to different scales. These differences evidently are not based on rational principles and their continuance could well give rise to tension. This area requires investigation.

Further, it appears that the owners of small-scale industries had refused to re-employ the Muslim workers who were ousted from their positions after the riots.

Prof. Roy Burman has rightly pointed out that the factors mentioned by him, of which I have picked out only a few, are only indicators of the possible causes of communal tensions. What we need are detailed studies, for example, of how the percentage of Muslim and non-Muslim employees has changed in different departments over the years. Whether, and if so to what extent, employment of Muslims has been adversely affected; where they have turned for alternative employment and the overall effect on different segments of the community. And so with other areas of tension. Prof. Roy Burman goes on to state that not only do we need such detailed studies of one city, Ahmedabad for instance, but we need studies of other cities affected by communal riots. Thus, in the case of Moradabad we should know how many of the brassware workers were brought into the ambit of the Brassware Corporation. We should know the extent to which the Corporation had been expanding its business; how much of the export business had been taken over by it and the extent to which it had adversely affected private exporters. Only on the basis of extensive, detailed and comparative data would it be possible to arrive at definite conclusions on the extent to which economic rivalry between the two communities has led to communal riots. In the absence of such data, theories on the subject must be considered speculative, as pointers to the directions in which we must look if we wish to understand precisely and concretely the phenomenon of communal conflict. We turn next to the underworld which seems to be playing an increasing role in communal outbreaks.

The Dayal Commission in their inquiry into the Ranchi-Hatia riots had noted that there was an exceptionally large number of registered *goondas* in Ranchi. 'Goondas,' it said, 'are encouraged by cinema owners,

liquor shops, bus owners and big businessmen. Whenever trouble starts in Ranchi the *goondas* start it and take charge of it.' (Part III Chapter III—the Underworld 2.41). The Report notes that there were Hindu and Muslim *goondas* and there was some sort of tacit understanding between them of their respective areas of operation. The lists of *goondas* available with the authorities when the riots broke out in 1967 were out of date and prompt steps were not taken to apprehend the *goondas.* They obviously played a big role in Ahmedabad in 1969. In Baroda in 1982 it is the underworld operating in the illicit liquor trade which is admitted to be a major factor. And since the underworld has its protectors in places of power in the political arena and cannot be touched, it has led to the progressive demoralisation and politicisation of the police force.

Here we come to the third factor which is playing a greater and greater role in communal riots, and that is the administration in general and the police in particular. The tendency to let things drift, if not a definite and growing anti-Muslim bias, at least consciously not to give them protection has been noticed time and again in judicial enquiries. Thus, the Dayal Commission noted in respect of the Ranchi-Hatia riots, 'There is surprisingly a very good consensus of views about the fact that great demoralisation had set in in the police force and to some extent in the magistracy as well.' Tracing the genesis of this demoralisation they point out that the United Front (UF) government took over on the 5th of March, 1967, and within eight hours decided to hold a judicial enquiry into the student-police clash at Ranchi on the 3rd of January and the police firings in Patna on the 5th of January of that year. Political persons and students arrested in the previous year were ordered to be released immediately. On the 9th of March the *Indian Nation* reported the Chief Minister as saying, 'No police firing on people now.'

In these circumstances, it was not surprising that the District Magistrate and the police were hesitant to take action against the students and others. The Reddy Commission which went into the riots in Ahmedabad and other places in Gujarat after September 18th, 1969 noted 'complacency' on the part of the District Administration and the police 'for permitting processions to be taken out at a number of places when they should have known that tension existed'.

Justice D.P. Madon has perhaps been the most explicit in accusing the administration and police of grave communalism in their handling of the situation in Bhiwandi. He points out that a Special Investigation

Squad had been set up in Bhiwandi under a recommendation of the National Integration Council at its meetings in June 1968. The object was that trained officers from outside the affected area should investigate riot cases as they would be able to do so impartially, unaffected by local politics. It was under the aegis of this Squad that the Bhiwandi Conspiracy Case, accusing some Muslim organisations of planning and provoking the riots, had been prepared. The actual working of the Squad, Justice Madon says, would have deeply dismayed the Integration Council. He describes it as 'a study in communal discrimination'. 'The officers of the Squad systematically set about implicating as many Muslims and exculpating as many Hindus as possible, irrespective of whether they were innocent or guilty.'

Within a few hearings of the conspiracy case by the Inquiry Commission, it became evident that the case was a frame-up and could not stand scrutiny. Government sought permission to withdraw the case but Judge Madon continued with his hearings and mercilessly exposed the false evidence and the concocted affidavits which had been filed by various persons in support of the case. The Dayal Commission had recommended that if criminal charges were levelled against persons for allegedly creating ill-will and hatred between communities, once initiated in the courts they should not be withdrawn. And prosecution should be launched, under the law, against those responsible for bringing false charges against innocent persons. Despite the Dayal Commission's recommendation. Justice Madon regretted that the Maharashtra Government withdrew the conspiracy case and the officers and others responsible for concocting it did not have to answer for their guilt in knowingly and falsely accusing innocent persons. All this can only lead to a further deterioration in the morale of capable and honest officers and men in the administration and police.

THE RISE OF SIKH COMMUNALISM

Sikh communalism differs from Hindu and Muslim communalism in certain basic respects. It is confined to one compact area in India, namely the Punjab and adjacent regions in neighbouring states. It is not connected with economic deprivation, for Punjab is one of the richest states in the country with a per capita income of Rs. 1,482 (at 1974-75 prices) against the national average of Rs. 850. With less than 2% of the population, Sikh representation in the services far exceeds this proportion although they are making demands for more. Sikh communalism is basically a question of identity.

The problem of Sikh identity has existed at least since the British took over the Punjab in 1846. There were two aspects to the problem. Firstly, there had been, even in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time, considerable deviation from the Sikh code of ethics. As Khushwant Singh graphically puts it, 'Sikhs of lower caste continued to be discriminated against.... Brahmanical Hinduism, with its pantheon of gods and goddesses, mumbling of Sanskrit mantras, beliefs in soothsayers, astrologers and casters of horoscopes continued as before.' Thus one part of Sikh identity has been concerned with keeping Sikh religious doctrine and practice separate and distinct from Hinduism. The second aspect of the problem has, to quote Khushwant Singh again, been concerned with dwindling numbers. 'When the Khalsa was in the ascendant, large numbers of Hindus had begun to grow their hair and beards and pay lip service to the Sikh gurus. After annexation these time-servers returned to the Hindu fold.' And many of the genuine Sikhs who had family ties with them followed suit. Thus, arose the fear that soon the Sikh community would be swallowed up by Hinduism and Sikhism would suffer the same fate as Buddhism.

Reverting to this theme in the Post-Script of the abovementioned work, Khushwant Singh argues that the only chance the Sikhs have of survival as a community distinct from the Hindus is 'to create a state in which they form a compact group, where the teaching of Gurmukhi and the Sikh religion is compulsory and where there is an atmosphere of respect for the traditions of their Khalsa forefathers'. This conclusion cuts at the root of the conception of a secular state and in my view is without warrant. In over three decades of Indian secularism the Jains have not been swallowed up by Hinduism and the minuscule Parsi community survives though dispersed throughout India without even a municipality under their control. Be that as it may, the point is that Khushwant Singh here is voicing, with characteristic clarity, the orthodox views of the Akali Dal. A strange role indeed for him!

The mixing of religion with politics can be traced back to the Sikh Sabha movement after World War I for the control and purification of the gurdwaras which were under the control of *mahants.* When the courts failed to give the Sikh Sabhas control of gurdwaras, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandhak Committee (SGPC) was formed on the 15th of November, 1920, to wrest them by force. The Shiromani Akali Dal came into existence on the 20th of December of the same year as the fighting arm of the SGPC. Faction-ridden since its inception, the Akali Dal (there were no less than 4 different groups of the Dal in 1980) has dominated the SGPC.

There are two other factors of key importance in the mixing of Sikh religion with politics in the recent history of the Punjab. The Congress Party supported the Sikh demand for control of the gurdwaras as part of the common battle against the British, and in return the Sikhs and the Akali Dal joined the non-cooperation movement. To cement this collaboration Baba Kharak Singh, President of the SGPC, was made President of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee. Thus, were the SGPC and the Akali Dal initiated into political activity. Interestingly enough Gandhiji, in a letter to the SGPC Secretary dated the 20th of April 1924, desired that the Akali leaders should declare that (a) the SGPC is a purely religious body with no secular objectives: it has no desire to establish Sikh raj and (b) the SGPC is not against Hinduism or any race or creed.

As a result of the Sikh Sabha movement the British Government yielded to their demands and the Sikh Gurdwara Act of 1925 came into the statue books. The Act provides for a corporate body consisting of 160 members, 140 of whom are elected once every five years, and the remaining are nominated by various Sikh interests. There are only two women. The last election took place in 1979. Only a Sikh over 25 years of age can be a member of the corporate body and a Sikh is defined as 'one who believed in the ten Gurus and the Granth Sahib and was not a Patit (apostate)'. The Executive Committee of the SGPC consists of fifteen persons elected by the corporate body. The SGPC also has a judicial wing of three retired judges who are appointed by the Government from a panel prepared by the Executive Committee.

The Sikh Gurudwara Act of 1925 has been amended some thirty times but its basic structure remains the same. The SGPC controls 700 gurdwaras and shrines, educational and medical institutions. To adminster its budget of 6 crore (sixty million) rupees, it has its own bureaucracy of *granthis*, musicians, teachers, professors, medical men and managers. The religious gatherings at gurdwaras and fairs give the SGPC unique opportunities a communicate with the influence the Sikh masses. Any loosening of the bonds of religious orthodoxy means reduction in the size of this otherwise captive audience. No wonder that the Akali Dal, who have dominated the SGPC since its inception, have rigorously propagated religious orhtodoxy and persecuted those like the Sant Nirankaris who, because of their heterdox beliefs or other practices, tend to blur the distinction between Sikh and Hindu. The Sikh Gurudwara Act has created a state within the state. Hence, the demand of the Akalis for the Act to be extended to cover gurdwaras

and Sikh shrines throughout India. The Akali Dal derives its political authority from the SGPC and its political policies are in turn designed to increase the authority and prestige of the SGPC. It is notable that several imporant decisions on political affairs since Independence have been taken by the Akal Takht, for example the Punjabi Suba slogan in 1955, the Punjabi Suba agitation in 1960-61 and the agitation against the Emergency in 1975-76.

It is argued that the functioning of the SGPC and the Akali Dal as religio-political organisations is part of Sikh religious tradition and these organisations are carrying on in the line which they inherited from the sixth Guru Hargobind when he donned two swords representing both spiritual and temporal authority. But this does not answer the question whether, if Dar-ul-Islam or Hindu Rashtra are not justifiable, we can justify a Sikh theocracy. If Hindu and Islamic procedures for running politics and institutions are to be repudiated (procedures sanctified, if you like, by hundreds of years of tradition), why then should the Sikhs also not be asked to repudiate some of theirs?

The first question, of course, is one of fact. Are the SGPC and the Akali Dal asking for a theocratic type of state? The much-talked of Anandpur Sahib Resolution, unanimously adopted by the Working Committee of the Akali Dal on the 17th of October, 1973, subsequently endorsed by the general body of the Dal at Amritsar at the 18th Session of the All India Akali Conference in Ludhiana in August 1977 and October 1973 respectively, throws some light on the subject. The resolution is divided into four parts—postulates, general aims, religious objectives and political objectives. The foremost of the general aims of the Akali Dal is stated to be 'propagation of the Sikh way of life and removal of atheism and un-Sikh thinking'. The second objective is 'maintaining the feeling of a separate independent entity of the Sikh Panth and creation of an environment in which the 'National Expression' of the Sikhs can be full and satisfactory'.

These objectives must also be considered along with the very definite political objectives of the Panth. We are told that 'the political aims of the Panth are definitely ingrained in the orders of the 10th Guru in the pages of Sikh history'and in the perspective of the Khalsa Panth, the purpose of which is the pre-eminence of the Khasla. To give this 'birthright of the Khalsa a practical shape...' certain steps are necessary from which I pick out a few of relevance to the issue of secular values.

The present state of Punjab and other Punjabi-speaking and Sikh areas, according to the resolution, shall be made into a single administrative unit w*herein Sikhism and the interest of the Sikhs can be specially protected'*.

In the new Punjab, the authority of the centre should be confined to defence, foreign relations, communications, railways and currency. 'All the residuary subjects (departments) should be under the jurisdiction of Punjab which should have the right to frame its own constitution for these subjects.'

If the projected Punjab is to be sovereign in all subjects other than defence, foreign relations, currency, communications and railways and is to frame its own constitution, it is evident that the area of fundamental rights and in fact the whole paraphernalia of democracy will be open for the new state to decide. In this context references to the general aims such as 'propagating the Sikh way of life' and getting rid of 'un-Sikh thinking' and of atheism assume importance. These objectives are in conflict with what is understood as freedom of conscience, freedoms guaranteed under Articles 15, 19 and 25 of the Indian Constitution. No less important are the references to the birthright of the Khalsa and its pre-eminence. What else could it signify but the slogan *'Raj karega Khalsa'* (the Khalsa shall rule)? The Constitution as it stands today, and even the proposals now being mooted to make it 'truly' federal, do not and presumably cannot abrogate fundamental rights and the basic character of the Indian Union as a democracy. Incidentally, in demanding a separate constitution for Punjab and in suggesting that the Indian Constitution should be amended to make it genuinely federal, the resolution does not assert, even as a corollary, that other federating units should each have the right to frame their own constitution. Though the resolution does not explicitly refer to an independent Sikh state, Khalistan, one has only to scratch the surface to see that this is the reality behind the facade. Subsequently, the SPGC has been more forthright. At its meeting on the 29th of March, 1981, it unanimously adopted a resolution moved by its President, Sardar H.S. Longowal, declaring that the fact that the Sikhs constituted a separate nation 'was evident from their religious, political and cultural past'. The Talwandi group of the Akali Dal boycotted this meeting but they had already declared themselves in favour of this position.

Given the Sikh tradition it is not inevitable that Akali Dal politics should have taken this turn nor is it necessary that they will pursue it to its logical conclusion. When there is a spirit of compromise the

Akali Dal has been prepared to moderate its stand. For instance, after the States Reorganisation Commission rejected the case for a Punjabi Suba, Master Tara Singh accepted in 1956 what came to be known as the Regional Formula negotiated with Nehru. Under this arrangement, (a) PEPSU would be merged with Punjab but Himachal would remain separate. (The merger of PEPSU in Punjab increased the percentage of Hindus in the state.) (b) The new Punjab had Punjabi- and Hindi-speaking areas and both Hindi and Punjabi were accepted as the official languages, (c) Two Regional Committees of MLAs and Ministers of the regions were formed to advise on the development of the two regions, the decision of course resting with the Cabinet.

The Regional Formula resulted in the merger of the Akali Dal in the Congress. The Working Committee of the Akali Dal at its meeting on the 30th of September, 1956, declared that 'the Dal would concentrate on the protection and promotion of religious, educational, cultural, social and economic interests of the Panth'. But the pact with the Congress was repudiated in 1957 over the failure to agree on the distribution of seats in the Assembly elections and the Dal was on the warpath again, culminating in the Punjabi Suba agitation and its eventual success in 1966. What had been lost over a decade and a half was the goodwill of the Sikh community and the faith that their identity would be preserved.

A crucial issue, which has turned the Sikhs to search for their identity on the basis of religion rather than on other criteria, has been that of language. In pre-partition days, the vernacular was Punjabi and the commonly accepted script for secular purposes for Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs was the Persian or Urdu script. It can safely be said that most Punjabi Hindu males were familiar with the Urdu script and their competence in Hindi and the Devanagari script was rudimentary at best. It was Hindu women who knew Hindi and the Devanagari script. With the Muslims practically ousted from Punjab and with Hindi in the Devanagari script as the national language, the Urdu script could, with some show of reason, be counted out. But it is nevertheless extraordinary and perhaps unique that Punjabi Hindus, as a result of tutoring by the Arya Samaj and the Jana Sangh, repudiated Punjabi as their mother tongue and opted for Hindi. From the 1951 Census onwards the Arya Samaj advised Punjabi Hindus to declare Hindi, not Punjabi, as their mother tongue. As a result of this vigorous, if not virulent propaganda, the percentage of Punjabi-speaking people fell from 60 per cent to 41 per cent between 1951 and 1961. The impact of this on the Sikhs is graphically brought out in the following:

'He (Hindu) overnight fell in love with Hindi in Devanagari script—of which he was as ignorant as of Gurmukhi—and just to oppose the Sikh he began to clamour for Hindi to be made the only court language in East Punjab. The money-minded Hindu, the secularist Hindu, the Muslimised Hindu, who never seriously revolted against Urdu and Persian in the Punjab, who has not even now learnt one word of his classic language, Sanskrit, and pronounces Hindi in the Arabic accent, has pitted his full force against his own mother tongue Punjabi. The Hindu discovered all the beauties of Devanagari, and his love for it returned to him on the day when it become the official script by an Act of Parliament,... If that position of vantage had been given to Chinese or even Arabic, the Hindu would not have minded much.'

The Punjabi Suba agitation launched with the authority of the Akal Takht was a natural result of this situation ending in the achievement of the Punjabi Suba. The language controversy has nevertheless been kept alive by the Arya Samajists and the Jana Sangh. In 1969 the Guru Nanak Deo University was set up in Amritsar and colleges of four neighbouring districts were affiliated to it. The Arya Samajists launched an agitation demanding the creation of a Dayanand University in Jalandhar. However, the Bharatiya Janata Party has disengaged itself from this position and in the 1981 Census advised Hindus to record Punjabi as their mother tongue though the Arya Samaj has continued to pursue its narrow sectarian line.

Harish K. Puri makes an important point when he remarks that the creation of the Punjabi Suba marks a watershed in Akali politics. A 62% Sikh majority in the newly formed state opened up an opportunity for the Akali Dal to capture power in the 'secular political system of the state'. The background necessary to understand this statement is the theory put forward by Paul Wallace that 'two political systems have developed in the Punjab based respectively on ethnic-religious criteria and territorial criteria; a Sikh religious political system and one for Punjab as a whole'. He further holds that these two political systems are not dichotomous and they can support each ether. In any case, clear-cut dichotomies do not apply in real life. Parties are not wholly sectarian and religious on the one hand or wholly secular on the other. They occupy positions on a graduated scale represented by the extreme poles of the religious and the secular.

So, the argument runs, having achieved one major objective, viz., the Punjabi Suba, the Akali Dal's new ambition was to gain power in the secular system, that is, in the State Legislative Assembly. This objective would involve soft-pedalling its sectarian and religious stance.

Thus, it is pointed out that since 1967 the Akali Dal has put itself forward as a political party wedded to secular ends. In 1969, in the mid-term Assembly Election, it gained an absolute majority but formed a coalition govement with the Jana Sangh (short-lived though it was). Viewed from the religious angle the Jana Sangh were their natural enemies. Again, in 1977, despite a majority (the Akali Dal won 58 out of 117 seats, the Janata Party got 25, the CPM 7, Congress 17, CPI 8 and Independents 2), it formed a coalition government with the Janata Party. In its Election Manifesto, as already pointed out, secular issues were raised and the only reference to religion pertained to the extension of the Sikh Gurdwara Act to the whole of India.

A significant fact is that the Anandpur Sahib Resolution which we have quoted in part, though adopted by the Working Committee of the Akali Dal in October 1973, actually burst upon the public in 1980-81. Several newspapers published for the first time what purported to be the full text of the resolution or large sections of it. This lack of publicity for nearly eight years needs explanation. The fact seems to be that during these years the Akali Dal was concerned with secular issues which were afflicting the country as a whole. Thus, when Jayaprakash Narayan visited Ludhiana in October 1974, the Dal was one of the main organisers of a vast meeting and they also participated in the protest meeting against the Congress in Delhi in June 1975, a few days prior to the declaration of Emergency. Then followed the Akali Morcha against the Emergency, during which a large number of Akalis, MLAs and some former Ministers were in detention. Aligning itself with the Janata in 1977, the Akali Dal and even the SGPC were concerned to march in step with other progressive parties. It was when the Janata Government failed the Badal government collapsed and the Indian Congress came back to power that the Akali Dal fell back on old slogans of religion and separation.

The desire to gain success in the secular political system did for a while compel the Akali Dal to widen its mass base. Traditionally the Akalis have drawn their support from the Jat Sikhs who are at the top of the Sikh caste hierarchy and are comparatively better off than the masses. This class has been chafing under land ceiling and the other socialistic policies of the Congress and have, therefore, supported the Akali Dal. The Green Revolution and large-scale capital investment in the Punjab has widened the gap between the rich and poor and added considerably to the number of landless labourers who are mostly Harijans. Only four Sikh castes are classified as Scheduled Castes so

that benefits, including reservation in services etc., are not available to the landless, lower caste Sikhs. The sub-castes excluded from the schedule have been abandoning Sikhism and reverting to their old religion to gain these benefits. As Khushwant Singh remarks, 'has it proved more than ever that religious sentiment is a poor argument against economic benefit.' However, the point is that the Harijans constitute 24.7% of the population of the Punjab and no party can afford to neglect this important segment. In a socio-psychological approach to the Akali Dal's performance in elections from 1967 onwards, Dr. Surjit Singh Narang comments that till 1972 the Akali Dal could not win over the Harijans, mostly landless labourers, 'due to the fact that the Harijans view the Akali Dal as dominated by the landowning Jat castes'. Opposition by the Hindus, he goes on, 'was due to. the exclusive character of Akali politics. Subsequently, in 1977 the election issues cut across state and communal lines and its alliance with the Janata brought in rich dividends. But, even in the short period which intervened between the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls, it lost ground particularly with the Harijans who 'became disillusioned because of the fact that Jagjivan Ram was not elevated to the Prime Ministership.

The question is, what sort of strategy will the Dal employ to win over Harijan votes? Will it try to find a solution on religious and communal lines or will it go for a radical economic policy of organising farm labourers to get better wages, set up co-operative farning ventures and the like. The indications at the moment of writing are that the Akali Dal is not able to throw off its religious and sectarian approach. The latest demand of the Dal is that the benefits of the Harijans should be extended to Scheduled Caste Sikhs. In other words, the landless poor should also be communally split into Scheduled Caste Sikhs and Harijans and the implication is that Scheduled Caste Sikhs should get the benefits granted under the Constitution. In this way, the Akali Dat will have done its bit for the Scheduled Caste, landless Sikhs and will thereby have ensured their support at least for the time being. That this solution will satisfy orthodox Sikhs is doubtful, for it repudiates a most important principle taught by the Gurus, namely their refusal to recognise caste barriers. The secular solution is to do away with poverty which is the real cause of the social and educational backwardness of the labouring classes.

If the Akali Dal is to play a major role in the 'secular sphere' of Punjab politics, it must widen its horizons to work for the welfare of the non-Sikh minorities. So far there have only been temporary and

faint glimmers of hope and more recently it has been submerged in an orgy of fanaticism and terrorism.

PROCESSIONS

Processions have been a frequent irritant embittering communal relations and have on some occasions sparked off communal riots. The law relating to processions as enforced by pronouncements of the Privy Council, the Bombay High Court and the Supreme Court is excellently summarised on page 154 of Part VII of the Bhiwandi Inquiry Report as follows: (1) The right to go on a procession stands on the same footing as the right which the general public has of passing and re-passing a highway. (2) No religious community has the right to insist that the procession of another community should not go by its place of worship. (3) The right to take out processions extends to both religious and non-religious organisations and includes the right to take out such processions with the accompaniment of music. (4) This right, however, is not an unfettered or unrestricted right, for it is subject to;

(a) the rights of other users of the highway,

(b) the orders of the local authorities regulating the traffic and

(c) the directions of a Magistrate under any law of the time being in force for the prevention of a breach of the peace.

It has rightly been pointed out that, whereas communal and religious organisations have publicised the second and third aspects of these judicial rulings, they have ignored the first and fourth. The fact seems to be that the ordinary individual's right of free passage on a highway has been thrown overboard. Not only religious processions but equally political processions are organised as a show of strength and their success is counted and publicised by the press, in terms of the number of highways blocked and the length of time for which they were not open to the ordinary public. The Akali programmes of *rasta roko* (block the roads) are merely an explicit avowal of what religious and political bodies have been working towards in the last two decades. It is also worth pointing out that religious processions such as the Muharram processions of the Shias and the processions taken out on numerous Hindu festivals such as the Ganapati and Durga *Pujas* are nowhere prescribed by scripture. They have grown up through tradition, and equally they can be modified by good sense and a proper consideration for others which, Mill reminded us, is the essence of democracy. Today we seem to have reached the saturation point in processions which

can serve but a ritualistic purpose at their least harmful and, in many cases, result in disruption and the loss of numerous lives.

RUMOURS

One of the facts which has been repeatedly noticed by Commissions of Inquiry and other investigators is the part played by rumours in touching off and in spreading communal riots. Highly exaggerated and totally false stories are spread—the raping of Hindu women, slaughter of a cow and the desecration of a place of worship. During the Ahmedabad riots a rumour was spread and even broadcast by All India Radio that the municipal milk supply had been poisoned. A favourite theme for rumours relates to so-called religious processions, that a procession deviated from its scheduled route to disturb prayers at a mosque by playing music, that a procession was obstructed by bursting crackers, stone-throwing or at any rate abusive slogans. Government policy is to give as little news as possible about such incidents on the theory that news of incidents in one area is likely to trigger off incidents in others. If a large number of Hindus have been slaughtered in one area there will be reprisals in others where they have the upper hand. And on the same presumption official releases do not disclose the community to which the dead or injured belong. The Dayal Commission examined governmental policy on this subject in some depth and suggested reconsideration. The mere report of a clash between 'two groups', which is how such clashes are reported, immediately leads people to presume that it is a communal clash, even though it may not be so. Also the failure to name the communities of the dead or injured persons leads to speculation and rumour-mongering.

However, despite the lapse of a decade and a half since the publication of this recommendation, the policy of the Government remains unchanged.

The reason for this is that, although the Government of India has a Principal Information Officer of the rank of an Additional Secretary, and a few other officers of equivalent rank such as the Directors General of All India Radio and Doordarshan (TV), policy on what information is to be given out, especially in times of crisis, is determined by the Ministry concerned. So, in wartime, it is the Defence Ministry and during communal riots it is the Ministry of Home Affairs. The attitude of officers of these Ministries is pusillanimous, to say the least. They believe that the less said the better. If you give figures of casualties

naming the communities, it will lead to reprisals. If you contradict rumours you only succeed in giving them publicity. And nothing, it seems, can dissuade them from continuing to hold these views. In the early 1970's there were a number of meetings both at the Centre and in the states where officials responsible for law and order, the Information and Broaucasting Ministry and representatives of the Press were present to discuss the subject. Most of the media persons pointed out that, while naming communities and giving community-wise figures of casualties could lead to reprisals, on the other hand it could have a stabilising effect. Also, if persons knew precisely which were the trouble spots, they would avoid them. Many persons got involved in *melees* through ignorance and lack of information. Moreover, full information and contradiction of rumours would give radio and TV credibility. In the absence of authentic knowledge of facts, rumours flourished. Unfortunately, nothing came of these discussions and the record of the Janata Government in disclosing crimes against the Scheduled Castes and reporting communal riots has been no better than that of the Congress.

IS THERE A PROCEDURE FOR RELIGIOUS REFORM?

One of the counts on which Donald Smith has criticised the secular policy of India is the procedure whereby the Government is committed to aid religious institutions such as temples, *mathas, wakfs,* schools, libraries and so forth. This, the Government contends, stems from its theory of secularism which is not one of divorcing itself from religion but of assisting religions equally. Smith makes two points. Firstly, that the State is intentionally or unintentionally giving support to Hinduism, which is liable to develop into a state religion. Secondly, that the state's policy of equal support for all religions is leading inevitably to politics being enmeshed in religion. Each of these is detrimental to the cause of secularism. Let us deal with them in turn.

Smith contends that state interference in the religious affairs of Hinduism, the majority religion, is making Hinduism respectable and thereby helping to propagate it. Through legislative action reforms are being carried out, such as the abolition of the *devadasi* system, prohibition of animal sacrifices etc. Also, government has acquired the right to appoint administrators on religious trusts, which (as in the case of the Tirupathi Temple Trust) not only control the funds and ensure financial rectitude but also plan how temple funds should be invested in such secular activities as University and school education and so forth. 'The powers of State control over these institutions are

enormous, but in the hands of sincere and devout Hindu administrators, have been used to enhance the prestige of Hindu religion.' In short, an ecclesiastical department has evolved for the advancement of a State religion. Again, the implication is that government and politics in general will get embroiled in religion and this will not further the objective of establishing a secular State and a secular society. On the other hand, various commentators, Dr. Luthera and William H. Newell for example, hold that the State must intervene in the religious affairs of Hinduism because there is no other authority which can bring about religious and social reforms. This is one reason why Dr. Luthera is opposed to the idea of a secular state in India, a state which would keep itself wholly aloof from religion. He writes that a secular state 'implies that religious bodies must have a mechanism of their own which will enable them to manage their affairs properly.... It presupposes a religion which has its own laws, its own courts to interpret these laws and to settle disputes, its own discipline and its own hierarchy of officials to administer its affairs and to effect religious reforms if needed.' And Dr. Newell echoes these ideas almost in the same words. '... In the absence of any national church with its own administrative structure... the state cannot remain neutral in disputes between religious groups when there is no more powerful religious authority which can take responsibility for putting its house in order.'

Luthera and Newell are mistaken on a point of fact. I will endeavour to show that not only has there been an ancient tradition of autonomous self-governing institutions in Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism, but mechanisms also exist in each of them to deal with religious reform.

Let us take the case of Hinduism first. Trusts to manage temples, *mathas* and shrines was a concept taken over from the organisation of the Buddhist Samgha. While the chief function of the temple was prayer, that of the *matha* was education, religious and secular. In many cases temples were affiliated to *mathas* and important *mathas* had numerous subordinate *mathas* which functioned under their aegis. The celebrated philosopher Sankaracharya is reputed to have established four paramount *mathas at* Puri, Dwaraka, Badri and Sringeri, which exist today.

Mathas and temples acquired considerable property, in land, jewellery and money, which were gifted by wealthy devotees. Commenting on the property of the *mathas*, Kane says, 'it is in a certain sense trust property; it is devoted to the maintenance of the establishment and is not accountable for its management nor for the

expenditure of the income provided (the trustee) does not apply it to any purpose other than what may fairly be regarded as in furtherance of the object of the institution'. It would appear from this that the autonomy of these institutions was almost absolute. Kane cites the authority of Sir T. Strang for the view that 'the Hindu law strictly so called, is meagre in its provisions relating to religious endowments' and he explains this by the high reputation for purity and piety enjoyed by the priestly classes in ancient India which was 'deemed a sufficient safeguard against breach of duty, so as to render detailed rules of law to regulate their conduct unnecessary,'

Three methods were recognised for the appointment of the head of a *matha.* These were (1) the head of a *matha* selected a successor from among his disciples; (2) election of a member of the *matha* by his colleagues and (3) the original founder or his descendants retained the power to appoint successive heads of the *matha* in question.

The Hindu *sastras* prescribed a procedure for settling matters of dispute concerning *dharma.* Kane quotes Brahaspati for the prescription 'that doubts about dharma should not be settled by blindly following the letter of the sastras but that logic and reasoning should be employed'. A *parishad* of at least ten Brahmins of high learning and lofty character was to decide such matters. Kane remarks that *parishads* had been performing this function for centuries before Sankaracharya came on the scene and since British times this function had been taken over by the Sankaracharyas of the four *mathas.*

Recent studies of south Indian temples and *mathas* show a continuous tradition of autonomous management of temples and *mathas.* For a brief period, between 1817 AD and 1863, the British Government of Madras took over the management of all temples and charitable endowments, but after that they were handed back to those persons and groups who sometimes could put forward only 'the slimmest historical claim'. Thus, for example, Christopher Baker in his study *Temples and Political Development* tells us that by the early years of the twentieth century the Tirupathi Temple (Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh) had acquired three complete *talukas* and was one of the largest landowners in south India. Many of the large temples built shops and markets, organised annual cattle fairs and acted as moneylenders. They 'exercised considerable control over the commercial life of the locality' and enhanced their wealth and economic influence. In addition to the temples, there were also the *mathas* which 'often administered subordinate *mathas,* temples and charitable institutions

as well'. Baker mentions a *matha*, Tiruvadathurai, which controlled 130 subordinate *mathas*. Apart from the original founders and their successors the *mathas* were controlled by 'managers, trustees and committees chosen from the local community'. The method of selection of the head of a *matha* seems to have been in conformity with the ancient procedure mentioned earlier.

One of the differences between earlier and recent times in the management of *mathas* is in respect of the probity of the trustees. Baker cites numerous examples of graft and embezzlement of funds by management committees. But he says, 'It was the attraction of power, not plunder, that motivated most men in their struggles for control over temples.'

An important point is the composition of the managing committees of temples and presumably also *mathas*. Persons on the committees were worldly men of affairs. They might be political figures, members of the state legislature, lawyers, educational managers and so on. Nor were these persons necessarily Hindus. Baker mentions a Christian, two Muslims and an atheist! Numerous *mathas* were controlled by non-Brahmins as Burton Stein has shown.

In Islam the concept of *wakf*, according to Fyzee, is 'the most important branch of Mohammedan law for it is interwoven with the entire religious life and social economy of Muslims'. A *wakf* is a property which is donated to God Almighty for a charitable purpose. It means 'tying up'of the substance of the profits for some charitable purpose. While there were some differences of opinion between Abu-Hanifa and two of his disciples, Fyzee tells us that the definition given by the disciples was substantially accepted by later Hanafi jurists. According to him three points in this definition are important: (i) the ownership of God, whence perpetuity and irrevocability; (ii) the extinction of the founders' right; (iii) the benefit to mankind.

When making a *wakf*, the founder *(wakif)* has to appoint a *muttawali* or manager and, in the absence of such an appointment, the *wakf* is considered void. The *muttawali* is not the owner of the property and again, according to Fyzee, 'his rights and duties are analogous to those of a trustee, but there are important differences'. He has to administer property, and for this purpose he can employ agents and servants to aid him in discharging his obligations. He does not have the right to sell, mortgage or lease the property, but if he considers it necessary or desirable in the interests of the objectives of the *wakf*, he is required under Muslim law to take the permission of the Kazi.

The founder of the *wakf or* his executors generally nominated the successors of the *muttawali.* But, if this was not done, the right of appointment lay with the Kazi whose discretionary powers were considerable. The office of *muttawali* was not hereditary though it was a common practice to choose a successor from the *muttawali's* family. An interesting point is that a *muttawali* could not be removed from office by the *wakif* or founder. If the *muttawali* was found guilty of misconduct, he could be removed, but only by the Kazi.

Our interest in *wakfs* is to show that they are examples of self-governing institutions. Recent history tends to show that *wakfs* have not been efficiently managed. There have been 'instances of mismanagement', of the worthlessness of *muttawalis'* and the squandering of *wakf* property in 'vexatious and frivolous litigation'. *Wakfs,* Fyzee opines, are not an undisguised blessing and, in countries like Turkey and Egypt, were found to be 'a handicap to the natural growth and development of a healthy national economy'. In several Muslim countries *wakfs* were abolished and their lands and properties were taken over by the state.

Wakfs, however, are not concerned with religious reform. For this, we have to turn to the mechanism of *ijtihad.* The concept *of ijtihad* is derived from the Qur'anic verse which says, 'Those who exert themselves in our path we shall surely guide,' and Fyzee explains that this exertion is 'exercised to form an opinion in a case as to a rule of law'. More often, reference is made to a tradition when Ma'ad was appointed ruler of Yemen. The Prophet asked him how he would decide matters. He replied, 'I will judge matters according to the Book of God.' 'But if the Book of God contains nothing to guide you?' 'Then I will act on the precedents of the Prophet of God.' 'But if the precedents fail?' 'Then I will exert to form my own judgement.' The procedure of *ijtihad* was closed in 1258 AD, described as the Closure of the Gate of Interpretation, and has remained inoperative since then. But in the past two hundred years or so the need to revive *ijtihad* has been voiced by the *wahabis,* by Shah Walli Ullah, Sir Sayyid Ahmad and in considerable detail by Dr. Moharamad Iqbal. In accordance with tradition, *ijtihad* requires a *mujtahid.* an individual who is to re-interpret the Qur'an. Sir Sayyid and Iqbal were, however, in favour of a body of scholars and learned persons to perform this function. In his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought In Islam,* Iqbal argues that for political reasons the Omayyad and Abbasid Caliphs favoured individual m*ujtahids.* An assembly to function as an *ijtihad* might have become

too powerful for their liking. But the institution of learned opinion to arrive at a consensus, known as *ijma,* is very much there in the Islamic tradition as an important source of law. Iqbal says: 'The transfer of the power of *ijtihad* from individual representatives of schools to a Muslim legislative assembly which, in view of the growth of opposing sects, is the only possible form *ijma* can take in modern times, will secure contributions to legal discussion from laymen who happen to possess a keen insight into affairs.' In this way Iqbal thought the legal system of Islam could maintain an evolutionary spirit. Something on the pattern of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee could be thought of for the functioning of *ijtihad.*

It appears that steps are afoot to lift the ban on *ijtihad* (Sir Sayyid had ridiculed the idea of the ban). King Fahad of Saudi Arabia has put forward the idea of convening an Islamic Synod for this purpose and to revamp Muslim law. The synod is expected to include scientists, economists and experts from all branches of learning, apart from theologians. Indian Muslims could well profit from this move.

It is not necessary to say much in regard to Sikhism since the Panth is the living Guru and cannot only interpret doctrine as a measure of reform, but can also create new religious law. The drawing up of the *Rahit Maryada* (the Sikh Code of Living) is a recent example of its capacity to discharge this function.

I conclude that it has been amply shown in the foregoing pages that procedures exist in the traditions of all the four religions of our study of self-governing, trust-like institutions which can bring about religious reform in their respective religions. Whether the 'trusts' have functioned efficiently is open to question. Certainly there is scope for government control over secular activities such as registration of endowments, sanction of alienation, proper budgetary and financial procedure. But it appears that the Supreme Court has restrained state governments from having any say in religious affairs. The state commissioner for religious endowments (there are different designations for this functionary in the states) cannot in normal circumstances appoint a *shebait* of a temple nor can a *mahant* be appointed or removed by him. 'Action which reduces the dignity or tends to treat him merely as a servant of a stats department has been held to be improper interference in religious affairs.' It is the managing committees, functioning as trustees, that wield power. The Secretary of the Committee, who is appointed by the State Government, functions as the Executive Officer. While the Executive Officer has wide powers

on paper, 'his authority is curtailed by the trustee who, in fact, runs the temple'. The Executive Officer is left to do the job of handling the finances of the temple. 'All other matters regarding the running of the temple are decided by the trustee...' Executive Officers who fall out with the trustee are transferred. Smith's fear of governments running temples, *mathas* and *wakfs* as a vast ecclesiastical department have not come true.

However, two points remain, (i) There are charges of corruption and misuse of public funds in religious institutions. It is argued that, unless there is some governmental supervision and control, things would get much worse. In reply, however, it could be said that public effort to put an end to corruption will only be generated if leaders of public opinion and people generally are roused to take an interest in their own religious affairs and to put their house in order. This is the normal democratic procedure. If the priestly classes and trustees of religious bodies do not respond to public pressure the devotees will lose confidence in them, cease to subscribe in material and spiritual terms, leading to the decline of religious institutions. So, if the 'spiritual' leaders are to maintain their power, they will have, in their own interests, to work for reform and clean management. The present policy renders government liable to charges of interference in religious affairs and provides a handle to interested parties to whip up religious fury on real or imaginary issues. Moreover, government is not capable of doing anything effective, because it is too sensitive to criticism of the kind just mentioned.

(ii) If government keeps itself away from all religious institutions, there would be an end to the pampering which has led to vast accumulations of wealth, power and influence in the political and social spheres. In short, my prescription is that religious institutions should be cut to size and discouraged from indulging in activities which are outside their province in a secular state.

There is little doubt that government involvement in religious affairs has several unfortunate political repercussions. Religion gets a handle to intrude into politics and religious institutions and organisations start playing at politics and do not attend to their proper function, namely the 'spiritual welfare' of their devotees. A part of the first tendency is the alignment of political parties with conservative elements in religion. Political parties, with the exception of the Marxists, have strengthened the conservative religious establishments and have expected in return support in their electioneering campaigns. Mrs.

Gandhi has made it a practice to visit temples as part of her electioneering campaigns and to get the 'blessings' of the chief priest for her endeavours. A report in the Bombay weekly *The Sunday Observer*, September 10-12, 1983, stated that Mrs. Gandhi, assiduously cultivating prominent Hindu religious leaders, had suffered a setback because the *shebaits* and the managing committee of the Jagannath Temple at Puri had refused her entry into the temple on the ground that, having married a Parsi, she was not a Hindu. By her visit she was obviously concerned to get the support of the prestigious Sankaracharya of Puri. Her inability to get entry into the temple is recognised as a *political* reversal for her and for those of her partymen who were responsible for negotiations with the temple authorities. No doubt the temple authorities and their political associates will use this as a lever to obtain concessions for Hindu ideology before they find scriptural arguments to open their doors to her.

Apart from encouraging communal politics, the practice of VIPs visiting temples and mosques is leading to the denigration of the concept of secularism to which the government is committed—on paper. The public see their behaviour as hypocrisy and for a lot of people secularism has become synonymous with hypocrisy.

The following case illustrates this dangerous drift to hypocrisy in Indian secularism. The public learnt *(Indian Express*, September 10, 1982) that the President was proposing to visit the Gunrvayur Sree Krishna temple in Kerala and this had given rise to a problem. According to the practice obtaining at the temple, a man may not enter the temple wearing a shirt or western dress and he is required to keep his head uncovered. On the other hand, a Sikh is required by his religion not to take off his turban in public. So the question arose as to whether the temple authorities would make an exception for the President. If not, would the President offer his prayers outside the temple as Press reports said he would or decide to cancel the visit? In the event, the President cancelled his visit. It seems, however, that the authorities of the Kanyakumari temple were more flexible and the President was able to offer his prayers there, with some minor adjustment of his normal attire.

We are concerned here with the moral implications of possible courses of action for any government official, such,. for example, as a Deputy Commissioner, who might face a like problem. This quite unnecessary problem arises from the faulty nation that secularism means that the state and its officials should maintain an equivalent

distance from all religions. However, this could be interpreted both as keeping a considerable distance from religions and as getting close to them. What political parties, other than leftist parties, are opting for is the latter.

First of all there is the question why any state dignitary should, in his official capacity, feel obliged to enter a place of religious worship. The primary purpose of such places is obviously that one goes there to pray. Apart from this prime purpose, which will apply to believers of a particular faith, persons may visit such a place for a variety of reasons. One may be interested in the architecture, the murals and paintings, the religious music, or one may visit it merely for the purpose of observation. And this observation may not be mere curiosity. One could have a deep respect for the congregation, for the prayers or the ritual observed, though one may not subscribe to it. Both the primary and secondary grounds for visiting a place of worship are subject to the proviso that non-believers are welcome to the sacred precincts. Thus, anyone, except apostates, may enter a gurdwara, provided he keeps his head covered and does not carry forbidden articles such as tobacco. In the case of Hindu temples, this is not always the case. There is frequently a signboard outside which says explicitly, 'Non-Hindus Not Admitted'. Here the position is perfectly clear. The temple is for worship according to certain beliefs and ritual practices and for no other purpose. Although this procedure is adopted in certain temples, for instance at the Jagannath temple at Puri, my suspicion is that it applies to Hindu temples generally. Theoretically, a temple would be defiled by a person who is ritually impure and a non-Hindu would almost by definition be such a person. Be that as it may, the point is that, if non-believers are not welcome, it would be very wrong for such persons to intrude.

Now, let us look at the problem from the other side, that of the individual. The person may belong to a religion which may consider it wrong to enter a place of worship of another religion for purposes of prayer. A Sikh, for example, would, according to his religion, be debarred from entering a Hindu temple for purposes of *prayer.*. The Sikh religion forbids idolatry in any form. A Sikh is not to bow his head except before the *Grantli Sahib*. And although folding one's hands in prayer, inside a temple or just outside it, may not literally mean bowing one's head, in effect it amounts to the same thing. It means obeisance before a god or gods other than the Almighty who is present in the Holy Book.

The same thing would apply to a Muslim or a Christian or a Buddhist, and for the same reason, namely their rejection of idolatry.

Suppose, for instance, however, that the Sree Krishna temple authorities had waived the objection for a person of very great importance to enter the temple with his head covered or wearing what is described as western dress. Should a person belonging to another religious persuasion whose religion rejects some of the religious symbols of the temple enter it? I have explained the basic reason why he should not. However, in the case of a Sikh there is a further compelling reason. According to the *Rahit Maryada* (The Sikh Code of Living), there is insistence in the Sikh religion on treating everyone who enters a gurdwara as of equal importance. No distinction is made between one person and another on grounds of social status, caste or religious belief. A non-Sikh is accorded the same treatment as a Sikh and sits along with him. This is one of the very admirable characteristics of the Sikh religion. This being so, could any devout believer in the Sikh Code accept favoured treatment in a religious house, based on social or official status? Consistency would require that, since a person would be debarred from granting favours of this kind, he should equally refuse to accept them. And, in fact, leaving Sikhism aside, would it not be in keeping with religious teaching generally that distinctions in terms of social status should be shunned since all human beings are equal in the sight of God?

There is a possible advantage which could accrue from temple authorities making an exception to their normal procedure by allowing a VIP admittance on terms prescribed by his own religion as a form of showing respect. Having taken a favourable decision in one case, they might consider that to make an exception is discriminatory and they might decide to extend the rule to all similar cases. Such a decision would be welcome and make for the furtherance of a healthy spirit of toleration. But there is little evidence to support such a hope.

What happens when a state dignitary goes to a place of worship other than the religion to which he subscribes? Can such state ceremonial prayers have any real sense of devotion? Will not such gestures make only for hypocrisy and lead people to equate secularism with hypocrisy, which is what is happening on a large scale today? Will not such behaviour, in the long run, lead to an erosion of toleration, the recognition and respect for differences of opinion which is its essence? Secularism does not mean that I have to pretend to share another

man's faith; I have to stand by my own, if I have one, and respect others for theirs.

What then should be the attitude which the state should adopt towards religion in secular India? On the basis of this analysis we would draw the conclusion that the state should not support religion by giving financial assistance or pamper religious institutions with special privileges such as exemption from income-tax. Religious institutions are very wealthy. The state should only interfere in religious institutions if they transgress fundamental rights. Abolition of the *devadasi* system is justified on this ground since it offends against Article 23 which forbids traffic in human beings and forced labour. The Madras Abolition of Animal Sacrifice Act of 1950 stands on a different footing. Animal sacrifices in temples and some associated practices were declared by Hindu legislators, during the discussion of the Bill in the state assembly, to be against morality, which brought Hinduism into disrepute in the outside world. This matter could well have been left to temple authorities to decide. Animal sacrifice on occasions such as Id-ul-Zuha must involve much needless slaughter under unhygienic and cruel conditions. The case of *Thookam* mentioned earlier in these pages appears to be more difficult. The practice of hook-swinging as a form of self-torture sanctioned by religion, which was performed publicly as late as the nineteenth century, was stopped by the British Government in 1865. If it is a crime outside, it remains a crime if performed inside a temple, and that in essence is what *Thookam* appears to be.

If religious leaders were to spend less time and energy in playing politics, they would be able to devote their attention to religious and social reform. An enlightened and powerful Hindu, Dr. Karan Singh, President of the Virat Hindu Samaj, occasionally mentions in his speeches the need for Hinduism to rid itself of untouchability. Few Hindu leaders go even so far. Dr. Karan Singh, who can gather together the four Sankaracharyas and other important Hindu religious leaders whenever he chooses, could get practical steps taken to end untouchability, not on the statute books but in the minds of Hindus. Take the growing problem of dowry murders. Dowry may be customary, but it is against Vedantic Hinduism. Why not urge a return to the practice *of sulka* which has behind it she authority of Manu? The Sikh *Rahit Maryada* expressly debars a Sikh from either offering or receiving money for the marriage of sons and daughters; and dowry is flatly contrary to Islam. But neither the Virat Hindu Samaj, the Sankaracharyas,

the SGPC nor the Mushavarat-e-Islam have made statements attacking this evil, leave alone mounting campaigns actively to stop it. If Hindu priests were forbidden to solemnize marriages where dowry is involved, and if the Akal Takht were to issue a *Hukamnama* to Sikh gurdwaras on these lines, something might be accomplished. But no, not a word of protest escapes their lips on the issue of *sati,* on human sacrifice or any other like issue. The Muslims follow suit. Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan, Iqbal, Maulana Azad are names to play with but their rationalistic approach to religion and social problems is carefully kept out of sight. What Muslim leaders are anxious about is to defend religious privilege.

THE POSSIBILITY OF AN INDIAN MAINSTREAM

Many in India have viewed the rapid growth of fissiparous tendencies with grave concern. The National Integration Council was set up after the Chinese conflict and has met at intervals after one crisis or another. There has been considerable talk about national integration and of getting the minorities, and especially the Muslims and tribal groups, to join what is called 'the mainstream'. Neither the National Integration Council nor any of the top leaders in the Congress. I have tried to define what constitutes the mainstream.

When definitions of the mainstream have been put forward, it has been by Hindu political groups. Thus, the Jana Sangh, an important political party, passed a resolution on Indianisation at its Plenary session held at Kanpur in 1952, which said that the idea of the whole of India as one nation with one culture should be stressed and propagated. This could be achieved in several ways. For example, 'Education should be based on national culture and tradition. Knowledge about the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana, Mahabharata and the literature and literary figures of the modern Indian languages who have contributed *towards revival and preservation of Indian cultural traditions* be disseminated (emphasis added). The major festivals of the country like Holi, Diwali, Raksha Bandhan and Vijaya Dashami be treated as national festivals and celebrated as such.

'Sanskrit language should be revived and its knowledge be made compulsory for all votaries of higher learning.

'Indian history should be re-written that it may become the record of the Indian people and not merely of foreign invaders and conquerors...'

'...it is the duty of the Hindu society to make concerted efforts to Indianize those sections of the Indian society which have been cut off

from the national mainstream because of the influence of foreign invaders and foreign missionaries or have remained cut off from it for other reasons.'

A subsequent resolution on the same subject in 1969 draws attention to various factors which are disrupting Indian unity but leaves the main thesis of the earlier resolution intact.

The Muslim reaction to this description of the mainstream and of Indianisation has been to assert that it is no more and no less than a cover for Hinduisation. In the Jana Sangh resolution, all references to Indian people, their tradition and culture, are clearly all Hindu. Everything else is foreign. After 1300 years, the Muslims are foreigners and no contribution of theirs is recognised as an ingredient in the composite culture of this country. Not a word is said about Bhakti and the mingling of Hindu and Islamic ideas of devotion and mysticism and there is no reference to great Indian saints and seers such as Kabir and Nanak, and a host, of others, revered by Hindus and Muslims alike.

But what of the Muslims? What has been their thinking about the secular mainstream in independent India? Wilfred Smith in the chapter on 'India: Islamic Involvement' in his book *Islam in Modern History* says that Islam faces a momentous challenge in modern India. In the past Muslims have either governed or have suffered political subjection. In subjection they have tried to convert their position into that of rulers. In India this is an unreal dream. So what is it that Indian Muslims have to explore for themselves? Muslims have to learn to be involved in governance and to share power with others. Wilfred Smith writes, 'The fundamental fallacy of Muslims has been to interpret Islam as a closed system. And that system has been closed not only from outside truth but also from outside people. The fundamental hopefulness about Indian Muslims and, therefore, Indian Islam, is that the community may break through this. It may be forced to have the courage and humility to seek new insights. It may find the humanity to strive for brotherhood with those of other forms of faith.'

Thirty-six years after independence, one seeks in vain for any signs of that courage and humility to break through the closed system of interpreting Islam. The diehards still talk foolishly of striving to attain a majority. Hence the avoidance of birth control—the Muslim population has increased at the rate of 30.85 per cent as against 23.69 per cent for Hindus in the decade 1961-1971. Hence also the movement

for conversion. Small wonder that Hindu communalists make capital out of it.

The moderates of Islam also want to continue as a separate group which is left to itself without interference. This afterall is traditional way of looking at things. Hence the propaganda a for the sanctity of Muslim personal law and the appeal to the secular state to safeguard the community during riots. Communities and individuals must be provided with security—that is an elementary duty of the state. The Muslim attitude to secularism is purely negative, summed 'up in one word, 'non-interference'. On this basis the demand for improving the lot of the Muslim community (I am fully in favour of it) is contradictory. Secularism implies positive values and it is to these that all communities must contribute.

The average intelligent Indian committed to the ideals of secularism has in all probability hoped for the loosening, if not the total disappearance, of group or ethnic identities. Ethnic groups, it was thought, would be replaced by groups having economic, professional and other commonalities. Since such groups would cut across religious, linguistic and geographical boundaries, they would not pose a threat to national identity. But this has not come about. This may be accounted for on the theory held by some sociologists that ethnic identities are primordial, they are what an individual is born into, hence the tenacity of their hold. Be that as it may, the fact is that ethnic identities change.

There is a process of assimilation in which a group may incorporate itself in another group, or two or more groups may amalgamate to form a single larger group. Equally, there is a process of differentiation in which sub-groups, which had previously been identified as a single group, assert their separate identities. The most notable example of the former process is the identification of Muslims as a single group which led to the separation between India and Pakistan. The latter process is illustrated in the differentiation between the two wings of Pakistan, ending in the setting up of Bangladesh as a nation state.

It is clear that the Jana Sangh favours the amalgamation model in which minorities would merge their separate identities in the larger Hindu group. When the Congress speaks of national integration,.they have a vague idea of a synthetic Indian culture coming into existence. This latter model would involve loosening of existing linguistic and cultural bonds and the simultaneous strengthening of other bonds which would form the basis of the new identity. The brown sahibs of

the British raj provide an example of a group identity of the latter kind. The official policies pursued by government after Independence, such as the organisation of states on a linguistic basis, the absence of common curriculae in education and the resulting obstacles to mobility for students and academic personnel, have been hindrances to the synthetic culture of India as opposed to a Tamil or Bengali culture. If there are positive signs of the growth of an Indian culture, they are to be found in the defence and all-India services and in elitist educational institutions such as the public schools. At a different level, a common Indian culture is being forged through industrial establishments, trade and commerce, which cannot afford to be parochial at the cost of financial interest. The Hindi film also is playing its part, as a result of which certain personality types, are being emulated, irrespective of an individual's state or linguistic background. Thus, there are factors working for the growth of a synthetic Indian culture in which the elements of tradition and modernity play their part. So far of course only a minute fringe of the population is exhibiting signs of this synthetic culture.

However, if we conceive of the mainstream as a synthetic culture, need this result in a neutral type of uniformity basically western and urban? Leaders of thought have been laying emphasis on the variety of cultures and traditions found in this country and have urged the importance of maintaining this rich and many coloured variety. If the political structure is seen as truly federal rather than unitary, which is the predominant trend today, then the Jana Sangh model will have to be abandoned, for it implies the submerging of cultural identities in a Hindu identity.

A synthetic culture will take time to develop. There are hopeful signs on the horizon. People in all parts of the country are developing a taste for each other's food. *Idli* and *dosa* are available in most corners of the country. The *kurta* and some variety of the *churidar-pajama* are found convenient for students and working women and are being adopted in all parts. At a different level, light classical and classical music in their Hindustani and Carnatic forms are gaining votaries. Many of the better-known *ghazal* singers of today are persons whose mother tongue is not Urdu. They do not know the Urdu script and read their *ghazals* in Devanagari. Thousands, hardly able to understand Urdu, attend *ghazal and qawwali* concerts and enjoy them. Hindustani classical music commands vast audiences in the south. Unhappily, there is not quite the same interest in Carnatic music in the north. On

the other hand, there is a great interest in the north in Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathakali, Odissi and in other dance forms. Many of the promising young Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi dancers come from the north. Theatre is certainly exhibiting an *Indian* character today. The works of leading playwrights in Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Kannada and Tamil are being translated and put on the boards in all parts of the country. Techniques are borrowed from the classical Sanskrit theatre, from folk forms as also from the Japanese Noh and the west. Painting too exhibits a new Indian culture, much influenced by western concepts but firmly synthetic rooted in several native traditions.

Meanwhile, we can conceive of the mainstream in political, economic and social terms with adherence to the secular values we have attempted to outline and defend in this study. We are *Indians* insofar as we subscribe to democratic ideals, insofar as we uphold social and economic equality, bound by a common legal system, imbued with a spirit of toleration, of healthy respect for, and a desire to understand and appreciate, the good things which are to be found in traditions other than our own.

In the ultimata analysis, the future of secularism in India will depend upon the majority community, the Hindus, who constitute eighty per cent of the population. We have had frequent occasion to criticise obscurantist and communal trends in the community. But it is good to remember that it is the only community which has accepted far-reaching changes in its personal law since Independence, which even the generally progressive communities such as the Christians and Parsis have not. Moreover, it is the Hindu community which has provided leadership in progressive and leftist movements in India. It is on this group of 'Hindus' and forward-looking representatives of other communities that the hope for a secular society rests.

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