



Saint
Thomas's
Church

Spearhead

Published occasionally for the parishioners of St. Thomas's Church, Toronto

EASTER IV 1996

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"But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." (Luke 24:21)

A homily on the Resurrection by the Rev'd. Dr. Robert Crouse at St. Thomas' Church, Easter III, 1996

Unexpected, bewildering and dismaying

Each of the four Evangelists treats the events of the resurrection of Jesus somewhat differently, but they all give the impression that those events were unexpected, bewildering and even dismaying to his followers. Occupied with mourning, trying to assimilate what seemed to them a tragedy, trying to accept the bitter end of all their cherished hopes, they had no eyes to see his resurrection. At first, they couldn't even recognize him. Mary Magdalene, weeping at the sepulchre, mistook him for the gardener. The disciples in Jerusalem, huddled together in an upper room, "were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a ghost."

Most poignant of all those stories, I think, is the one we've just read as our Gospel lesson: the story of the two disciples walking on the road to Emmaus on Easter evening, sharing their sorrow with one another, and unable to recognize the stranger who joined them. That "stranger" was Jesus. "But their eyes were holden, that they should not know him."

Some of you will remember, I'm sure, J.S. Bach's profound interpretation of that Emmaus story, in his Cantata No. 6, for Easter Monday: "*Bleib bei uns*". The opening strains of the first chorus unmistakably recall the final chorus of the St. John Passion, and express an intensity of grief, weariness and resignation altogether beyond words. "But we trusted", say the disciples, "we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel". Rumours of an empty tomb and an angelic message brought no renewal of hope, but only bewilderment. Resurrection was simply not within the scope of their imagination or expectation. That Israel could be redeemed from worldly tyrannies was within the range of the possible; that Israel could be redeemed from sin and death was not. Only the light of Jesus' presence with them in Word and Sacrament, only as he opened to them the Scriptures, and was known to them in the breaking of bread; only then could they be



Caravaggio (1573-1610) "The Unbelieving Thomas"

carried beyond the settled and limited expectations of their own minds and hearts. "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." Ah yes, but the true redemption of Israel is in the dying and rising again of the Son of God; a redemption far beyond their boldest dreams.

There were many aspects of Christian preaching which found ready acceptance in the ancient world, among both Jews and Greeks. St. Paul, addressing the citizens of Athens, knew that he could call upon the testimony of the Greek poets: "In God we live and move and have our being", as certain of your own poets have said" (Acts 17:28). But the apostolic preaching of the bodily resurrection was disconcerting. It seemed absurd. The Hellenistic world cried out for a "spiritual" salvation, whereby immortal souls might escape from the prison of the body to a realm of pure spirit.

In the greatest literary work of Roman antiquity, the *Aeneid* of Virgil, there is a wonderful scene in which Aeneas, the hero, journeys through the

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- ★ Official Report
- ★★ Official Opinion
- ★★★ News item, profile, book review, etc.
- ★★★★ Personal opinion. Caution: may be controversial and upsetting to some.

Editorial matter may be left in the church office or sent directly to the editor:
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Events ★

Gifts of the Spirit

"Gifts of the Spirit" is a celebration of the various cultures that are part of the Anglican communion. You are invited to celebrate these gifts in a special Eucharist at St. James's Cathedral on the Day of Pentecost, May 26, 1996 at 4:30 pm.

Bishop Finlay will be presiding, the homilist is **Mrs. Prio Khan**, executive member of the Pakistani Christian Council and member of St. Luke's, Mississauga.

Enjoy music, voices and dances of **Africa, Canada, Europe, Latin America, The British Isles, and the Caribbean.**

This special event is sponsored by the Community Ministries Board's "No longer strangers" project.

Welcoming gays, lesbians and heterosexuals

Michael Ingham, Diocesan Bishop of New Westminster, British Columbia, has accepted the invitation of an Ad Hoc Group and Integrity, Toronto, to speak at a special event on September 27, 1996.

The bishop will speak on "For God so loved the world: welcoming gays, lesbians and heterosexuals into the Anglican Church of Canada." The meeting will be held at St. Leonard's Church, Toronto.

Further details will be forthcoming.

Aboriginal Justice

How a Successful Adult Criminal Diversion Program actually works

Wednesday, May 8, 7:30 p.m. at St. Peter's Anglican Church, 188 Carlton Street (one block east of Sherbourne, at Bleecker)

with: **Robin Besito**, recently featured on *Man Alive*, and **Jonathan Rudin**, major contributor to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report on Justice. Other resource people in Aboriginal alternative justice, healing and reconciliation work.

New alternative programs implemented by First Nations governments and Aboriginal agencies:

- help individual offenders turn their lives around:
- Reconcile offenders with victims and communities
- save tax payers millions of dollars

Are these achievements being threatened? Please join us!

Sponsored by **Magnificat**, an Anglican network for justice, peace and the integrity of creation with the cooperation of Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto, community council program

For more information contact: Dorothy Boddy at 504-4206

Next issue ★

The triptych

St. Thomas's Church is the beneficiary of a major gift of art in the form of a triptych in the Lady Altar. The next issue will feature the artist (Dr. Suan Seh Foo), the animator (Fr. Freeland), and others who were instrumental in its creation as well as reviews, expansions and pictures.

Your input

This is your newsletter! Its intent is to serve the community of St. Thomas's Church. The (obvious) bias of the editor is no reason why you should not champion ideas and causes that you treasure.

Please submit your views, news and other items which you think are of importance to the community.

RESURRECTION

(Continued from page 1)

underworld and meets the spirit of Anchises, his father, in the Fields of Elysium. His father shows him a host of souls, gathered on the bank of a river, waiting to return from Paradise to earth; and Aeneas cries out in protest:

*"But, O my father, is it thinkable
That souls could leave this blessedness, be willing
A second time to bear the sluggish body,
Trade paradise for earth?
Alas, poor wretches,
Why such mad desire for light?" (Aeneid, VI, 714)*

Anchises explains that only after drinking of the waters of the river Lethe, by which all memory is annulled, are the souls willing to enter bodily existence once again, the source of all the destructive passions of the soul; to enter once again into the conflict of body and soul, spirit and matter. Only in forgetfulness can it be borne.

The resurrection of Jesus was not a return to mortal body. It was not resuscitation, as with Lazarus, or the widow's son at Nain, or Jairus' daughter; but neither was it the escape of immortal soul. It was the transformation of body, the reconciliation of flesh and spirit. The Risen Lord was not a ghost: "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39). The disciples were incredulous. Clearly, in spite of all that Jesus had said, they expected no such thing. They had hoped to embalm his body and preserve it as a sacred relic. Their immediate reaction to his resurrec-

tion was fear and dismay. After all, they knew the limits of the possible. "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe", said Thomas (John 20:25). But they did see, and they did believe, and their lives became witnesses to the resurrection.

But what does that witness mean? I think that for many modern people, as for the ancients, the idea of resurrection seems

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disconcerting, not quite acceptable. We would accept more readily a more "spiritual" salvation. People die, but their ideals live on. The flesh decays, but the human spirit is unconquerable. We live on in our posterity, and so on. But those supposedly spiritual immortalities have a terrible emptiness about them. As St. Paul says to the Corinthians, "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (I Cor. 15:32). And I'm sure we all really know the

truth of those lines of Isaac Watts:

*Time like an ever-rolling stream
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten as a dream
Dies at the opening day.*

The doctrine of the resurrection testifies to the wholeness of our salvation in Christ, the true redemption of Israel, in which nothing can finally be lost: nothing except sin. Our longing, says St. Paul, is "not to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon" (II Cor. 5:4), to be re clothed, as Dante puts it in the *Paradiso*: "re clothed in the holy and glorious flesh". "If Christ be in you", says St. Paul, "the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by the spirit that dwelleth in you."

The manner of that quickening transformation is beyond all imagining. As St. John says, "we know not what we shall be, but we shall be like him" (I John 3:2). God has established resurrection in Christ, and what is Christ's belongs to those who are his. "For our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:20-21).



Dr. Robert Crouse is Professor of Classics at Dalhousie University, Halifax, and is one of this country's most respected theologians. Dubbed "the conscience of the Anglican Church" by Dr. Eugene Fairweather, Dr. Crouse is one of only two Anglicans to have taught at the Augustinianum in Rome, one of the Roman Catholic Church's most prestigious schools of theology. Dr. Crouse is also the Honorary President of the Prayer Book Society of Canada.

THE HEART OF IT ALL

★★★

In the last issue of Spearhead I tried to describe something of the "feel" of Jerusalem, which was the centre of my last summer's mini-sabbatical. Here I want to tell you about Christianity's central shrine the church of the Holy Sepulchre: the heart of it all. For this is what Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem, over many centuries, have come to see. by **Roy Hault**

"Evangelicals, may be looking for something as splendidly simple as the Gospel story they know by heart. Others, a lovely cathedral. In fact, the church is an unattractive, dark, and very complicated building; hemmed in on all sides by the crowded Arab-market-like streets and buildings."

owadays I think almost all of them must be disappointed. Some, especially North American evangelicals, may be looking for something as splendidly simple as the Gospel story they know by heart. Others, a lovely cathedral. In fact, the church is an unattractive, dark, and very complicated building, hemmed in on all sides by the crowded Arab-market-like streets and buildings. Moreover, if one comes looking for peace, there is no peace. On the first day I visited it, the place is so crowded I was almost smothered. And then there is the fact that it is officially occupied by six jealously possessive Christian traditions. The Eastern Orthodox (the Greek Orthodox are the main men(!) having inherited it from the time of Byzantium), the Latin (Roman) Catholics (represented by the Franciscans), Armenians, Syrians, Copts, and Ethiopians. Every stone has been battled over, every part of it claimed, and is now constantly watched over for any infringement of rights. In fact, a terrific shouting match broke out between Armenians and Greeks right before our eyes. I thought they would come to blows. It seemed to be about who brushed which part of the floor!

But is this disappointing and rather terrifying



place really the place where Jesus the Christ died and was buried? Is it genuine? Can it be that this chaotic church enshrines the place of Calvary and the Empty Tomb? Modern scholarship thinks that it probably is. At the beginning of the first century the site was a disused quarry "outside the city walls". Tombs similar to those found elsewhere and dated the same period had been cut into the vertical

west wall left by the quarrymen. And then there is the evidence of the Jerusalem Christian community, which worshipped at the site until the year 66. Even as the city expanded and the site came within the walls, it was not built over. The memory of the site remained and was probably reinforced by extreme bitterness when Hadrian (of Hadrian's Wall fame) in 135 filled in the quarry to provide a level base for

his Capitoline temple, which was flanked by a shrine honouring Aphrodite. Why this deliberate desecration of the site if not to try and completely wipe out the memory? The value of the Jerusalem tradition must have been scrutinized very carefully when in the early fourth century the emperor Constantine decided

where Mr. Zelatimo's sweet shop now stands! Constantine's great church: He wrote "I have no greater care than splendidly to adorn this holy place, that not only the church may be more beautiful than all the others but that even its details may excel those of any other city of the empire." It was dedicated

in 335 and just less than 300 years later, in 614, the invading Persians set it on fire, and just 300 years after that, in 1009, the lunatic caliph Hakim of Egypt systematically destroyed the building. The repaired church was perhaps less than half the length of the original; only the rotunda around the tomb and the open space before it remained, and this was the church to which the Crusaders came with tears

of joy to sing their Te Deum after capturing the city on July 15, 1099. It was then that the Romanesque building which we see today was erected; not that it has escaped desecration and destruction since. A fire in 1808 and an earthquake in 1927 did extensive damage. The British authorities who then ruled in Palestine offered to restore it, but the warring factions who claim the church as their own couldn't agree even on preliminary committees. It took until 1959 for the three major communities (the Greeks, the Armenians, and the

Roman Catholics) to agree on a major repair programme. Even now, the dome over the tomb is hidden in scaffolding and the tomb itself braced with the steel girders put there by the British Royal Engineers.

The weaker traditions who lay claim to the building have suffered most, as you might expect. In Turkish times the Ethiopians were banished to the roof over the east end crypt chapel of Saint Helena, where they live in tiny cells. These white washed habitations have become a little village of monks and nuns. The Copts sometimes hurl stones at them from their rooftop monastery nearby.

One day, when we completed the Way of the Cross there, one of our instructors told us of the Easter Eve ceremonies which continue to this day (The Eastern Easter, of course). From early in the morning people crowd into the church and press close to the tomb. The Greek Patriarch and an Armenian priest enter the tomb, which is closed after them. The crowd is huge—in 1834 more than a hundred people were trampled to death during the ceremony! Crammed together the faithful wait for the lamps within to be lit by "miracle", and know that this has happened when the Patriarch and the priest thrust out the flame through a hole in the Tomb's wall. Then the cry goes up: "Christ has risen!" And an overwhelming joyous celebration begins? for us more recipient of a great sports event than of what we are accustomed to in church.

On my last Sunday

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to build a church commemorating the Resurrection. And as the eyewitness Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, tells it: "As layer after layer of the subsoil came into view, the venerable and most holy memorial of the Saviour's resurrection, beyond all our hopes, came into view."

Constantine separated Calvary and the sepulchre from the rock around them, created a rotunda around the tomb (much as it is today), created an open space between this and his basilica, which led by an atrium to the main street. Actually, the main door would have been

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THE HEART OF IT ALL
(Continued from page 5)

morning in Jerusalem, I got up very early, sneaked out of residence and walked through the old walled city, along the deserted Via Dolorosa and found myself in an almost deserted church of the Holy Sepulchre. To my amazement the organ was playing a magnificent improvisation which marvellously enlivened that ancient space (I didn't realize there was an organ. But there is: it's in the transept occupied by the Latin Rite (the Roman Catholics). Franciscan monks were shifting benches away from before the entrance to the tomb. Apparently, they had just finished celebrating mass there. They were being very carefully watched by a Greek Orthodox monk! After a few moments I was able to enter the tomb; to step into the heart of it all, not surrounded by hundreds of noisy pilgrims and tourists, but alone except for a heavily veiled Palestinian woman (who probably wouldn't have been able to go there this Easter) and kneel at the tomb of Christ. For me, there was something very special about that moment which I will never forget. After a short visit to the Armenian Cathedral Church of Saint James, where morning prayer was being sung to its haunting chant, I came out into the hustle and bustle of the main road outside the Jaffa Gate into the business traffic that is their "Monday Morning" (not Sunday, the Sabbath being over) kind of rush hour, and began to look for MacDonalds! I felt as though I had suddenly, by passing through a wall, time travelled a millenia—or even two!

COMING THIS AUTUMN

The first three books in the St. Thomas Poetry Series ★★

The St. Thomas Poetry Series has its origin in the poetry readings held annually since 1988 at St. Thomas's Church on Huron Street in Toronto. Most of the poets in this series have participated in those readings, and all share a perspective on human experience that emphasizes its metaphysical and philosophical dimensions. Their poems witness to the religious meaning of experience.

1. George Johnston
What is to Come: Selected and New Poems
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2. Margo Swiss
Crossword: A Woman's Narrative
ISBN 0-9697802-3-0

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ISBN 0-9697802-2-2

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER:

Order before September 1, 1996, and each volume will be \$7.50, or all three for \$22.50, a total saving of \$6 (publication price: \$9.50 per volume). If you require postage and handling, please add \$2.00. Make cheques payable to "St. Thomas Poetry Series." (Note: Your cancelled cheque is the acknowledgement of your order.)

Produced by Coach House Press. Design consultant: Nancy Ruth Jackson. For information write to: St. Thomas Poetry Series
383 Huron Street
Toronto, ON M5S 2G5

SUMMER VOCATION PROGRAM ★

Sisterhood of St. John the Divine Toronto, Ontario July 15-August 11, 1996

As Christian women, we are called to live out our baptismal vows according to the gifts and guidance which God gives us, and in response to God's personal call to each of us. Some are called to lay careers in the church, some to business, some to homemaking, some to the ordained ministry, and some to life in a religious community.

Preference will be given to those who can participate for at least two

weeks. A maximum of eight women will be accepted at any one time. This program assists women to discern where God may be calling them, through:

- sharing the life of a group of women committed to prayer and service in a Christian community;
- living a balanced life of prayer, study, work, and play;
- engaging in classes and discussions about Christian life and vocation;
- receiving personal guidance in deepening

Letters ★★★★★

Way back in 1990 I read an article in the business section of the *Globe and Mail* about Alex Christ, the president of MacKenzie Financial Corporation. This elusive, private man who seldom talks to the press had been a guest speaker at the King-Bay Chaplaincy. In the lengthy article which was about his company and his philosophy of life, his advice to "give away at least 10% of your income" jumped out at me. I had heard that Alex Christ was a Christian so I knew he was talking about 'tithing.'

The phrase made me feel uneasy. I gave only a fraction of my net income to church and charity and even that was done with difficulty. I had too many commitments to materialism. I told myself that I was already over-tithing by four times to Revenue

your prayer life.

There is no charge for room and board, but you will contribute to the life of the Community by sharing in the Sisters' work. A monetary contribution (tax deductible) may also be made to the Sisterhood, but this is not required.

For further information write: Sr. Constance Joanna, SSJD
St. John's Convent
1 Botham Road
North York, Ont. M2N 2J5
Phone: 416-226-2201
Fax: 416-222-4442

Canada. However I was moved to cut out the article, yellow-highlight the four sentences about 'tithing' and put it into a desk drawer. Occasionally I would re-read the article and I would think about it. I thought about it a lot. I finally decided that in gratitude for all the wonderful things in my life I would give back to God. So I made a commitment to cream off 10% from my net income and give to church and church related charities. I have continued to do so to this day.

Now let me assure you that the hand of God did not grace me with a "Bless you my child" gesture. And I did not feel self-satisfied and holy. Sometimes giving this money is very hard to do and there is a struggle involved. But the big surprise is that I have rarely missed the material items I have had to give up. My life has changed. I feel a deeper level of joy and gratitude to God. Areas of my life which were problematic have cleared away—sometimes in the most unexpected ways. A few times during a financial "drought," money which I didn't know or had forgotten about, just appeared.

Recently I wrote to Alex Christ thanking him for having influenced me so profoundly. His response was deeply moving and one which I will cherish forever.

It truly is a blessing to give. It enriches you in ways you cannot begin to imagine.

Name withheld by request

The health of any parish may often be determined from a critical review of its life in addition to and, outside of, its liturgical worship. In the case of St. Thomas's, the latter, one might safely claim, is in a fine state of health. In this day of shrinking church attendance, we can gratefully recognize that we *do* have an active, participating, worshipping congregation. Let's appreciate that this is due to a good deal of attention and energy that is focused on our liturgy and the high quality of preaching given at St. Thomas by our Rector and his assistant priests. And I think it is these two obvious strengths of St. Thomas's that has allowed us to maintain a relatively strong level of church attendance in comparison to many of our sister parishes. But, perhaps the same cannot be said about our parish life—or should I say our extra-liturgical activities.

I say "perhaps" because frankly it is rather difficult to know just what goes on in the parish throughout the year. Little in the way of news, reports or even gossip comes to us about our activities. As a case in point I must refer to the discussions and tenor of our recent Vestry Meeting. At this important "Annual Meeting" in which we ought to be given a report on the year past, little if anything was said or reported on about the life of the parish (extra-liturgical). We spent nearly an hour

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"Let's appreciate... our liturgy and the high quality of preaching given at St. Thomas by our Rector and his assistant priests. And I think it is these two obvious strengths of St. Thomas's that has allowed us to maintain a relatively strong level of church attendance in comparison to many of our sister parishes."

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LETTERS
(Continued)

going through the financial statements and budgets out of a two hour meeting. The balance of the time was spent on electing or appointing people to various committees (the purpose of which are unfamiliar to many new-comers at the church), and some fifteen minutes or so on an important nevertheless contentious motion. Any reference to the Year's activities of the new "Parish Life Committee," INTCH, Outreach, the Boy

Scouts, the Play School, the Deanery, or any other "hidden" group activity was given but brief passing reference. One would think that we don't take these activities too seriously.

Surely after all these years we can safely recognize that our finances are in good hands under Elaine Bell's very competent guidance and the Wardens' close watch. They are doing an excellent job of a very difficult responsibility. We have full disclosure before us—why belabour the point and close question the

amount of hydro we use or the contribution to the diocese? Surely our other activities should get at least equal time! Can we not have a full report on just what we have accomplished in our parish activities over the past year and what plans we have for the future? Aren't these activities also part of our Christian mission?

I do feel that the work of the Church is more than just keeping our finances on track—important as this may be. Or have I missed the point of the "Annual Meeting"?

Gene Stewart

Lenten Studies

★★★

During the five Sundays in Lent, two groups met for study and reflection.

One group, meeting between morning worships, studied the Lenten lectionary using the "African method," in order to discover the connections between worship, work, faith, and our daily lives. The sessions used Bible reading and personal experience as a lens through which to discover some of the rich layers of meaning in scripture.

The sessions included several readings of the Gospel followed by reflection. Each member of the group took a minute to identify the word or phrase that caught his/her attention, and then shared that phrase with all others without explanation or expansion.

About 15 people attended each session and agreed that a repeat of the "African method" would be beneficial in the future.

Willem

The newly formed **Fellowship of St. Benedict** hosted a

Lenten discussion series following the 11:00 Solemn Eucharist. Parishioners who stayed to participate in this series were treated to soup and sandwiches, provided by three members of the Fellowship (John Alldredge, Catherine Spence and Diana Versegghy). Each session featured a different keynote speaker (a member of the parish) who gave a short talk based on his or her spiritual journey and what the faith means to him or her. This was followed by an informal, half-hour discussion period. The roster of speakers included Walter Hardacre; Earl Barnsley; Elizabeth Lemberger; Andrea Budgey; and John Alldredge.

All of those who participated found the talks and discussion highly stimulating and inspiring. The speakers had come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including Anglican, United, Roman

Catholic and Jewish. Several had had recognizable religious or conversion experiences. Some had been brought to this parish by other people; others had simply wandered in by chance. Each speaker had interesting things to say about the experiences that had contributed to forming his or her faith, the individual people who had shaped and influenced it, and the way in which that faith found its expression in their lives. The free-flowing discussion that followed helped to draw us all into an examination of our own faith and Christian witness. Participants came away from each session conscious of a deeper rapport with each other and with the parish as a whole. By popular demand, a similar series will be organized next year!

Diana Versegghy

The Fellowship of St. Benedict is a group of St. Thomas' parishioners who gather informally in the parish hall each week after the 11:00 A.M. Sunday worship, to discuss the lectionary of the past week.

JESUS CHRIST THE MORNING STAR:

Light of the world ★★★★★

As Christians we say that Jesus Christ is our light. Is this light compatible with the lights of others (Buddha, Muhammad?) Yes, says Hans Küng, because this compatibility corresponds to Christ's spirit. World religions seek world peace, and this search must be based on a partnership that is general but not abstract, critical and still a bearer of hope.

by **Hans Küng**

In today's confused world Christians find spiritual support in Jesus, "the light [that] shines in the darkness" (Jn 1:5). I must confess that throughout my life as a theologian I would not have been able to endure against the darkness of this world without that light which, in my fragile human condition, has always been for me the way, the truth and the life. Many others will say the same.

The essence of Christianity is not something abstract, but is a person, a concrete historical figure, Jesus Christ. He has been a light and has given hope to innumerable people whose names do not appear in any church history, but who through the centuries have taken him as their example. From him they have learned that those are blessed who are poor, who do not use violence, who hunger and thirst for justice, who are merciful, who are peacemakers, who are persecuted for justice's sake; they have learned to respect others and to share with them; and they have received strength for forgiveness, repentance, self-renunciation and helping others.

In daily life Christians constantly show it is possible to live high ideals, that in the depths of faith in Christ, suffering and guilt, despair and fear can be overcome. This faith in Christ, light from light, is not simply the consolation of a hereafter, but the basis that makes protest and resistance to injustice possible here and now.

Many will say if Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life," what more do we need? K. Barth, for example, said that Christ is such a light that he could have no other light (Church Dogmatics). But Barth had to recognize that this exclusiveness does not fit with God's plan for humanity. Christian exclusiveness leads to intolerance, which is not Christian because it contradicts the spirit of Jesus. So even Barth had to accept that there are other lights, other words alongside this Word of God, other truths alongside this truth of God. Jesus Christ is not confined to the pages of the bible or the walls of the church, because God as the God of all human beings also acts outside the church. In fact both the OT and NT show that



"Ascension"
Rembrandt (1606-1669)

non-Jews and non-Christians can recognize the true God and that God is with them.

Even if Jesus the light is the decisive criterion of all discourse on God for Christians, we cannot disregard the fact that for millions—in the past and in the present—Gautama is the "Buddha," the "Enlightened One," and therefore their great "light." And for millions of Muslims—in the past and in the present—the Koran is the light which lights their path, and it is Muhammad who personally focuses this message. Similar things could be said for all great religions. Is Jesus Christ our light compat-

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LIGHT OF THE WORLD
(Continued from page 9)

ible with the lights recognized by others? Yes, because this compatibility corresponds to the spirit of Christ. By concrete example he showed how to be- have with those of other beliefs. He recognized their dignity and treated them with respect. Born of a Hebrew mother, he delighted in the faith of a Syro- Phoenician woman and of a Roman officer. He welcomed Greeks and used a Samaritan heretic as an example of love of neighbor.

How would Christ behave in today's world? What inspiration would he give? I am convinced he would tell us to go to other believers so that in encounter with them we would discover our Christian responsibility to the world.

Today we find ourselves facing new challenges to take decisive steps in inter-Christian ecumenism. (May we hope sharing the eucharist will become possible under another pontificate?) We must also face the challenges of inter-religious ecumenism. In this international society Christians are called to assume responsibility, in collaboration with those of another belief, for peace, justice, and the integrity of the creation. The destiny of the earth concerns all, whatever their religion or ideology. In this context we note three great objectives: world peace, world religion, and world ethos.

World peace
U.N. officials estimate

that if Africa were ever divided according to ethnic borders, there could be 450 sovereign states. But if ethnic or religious units of smaller and smaller groups seek to be "sovereign states," not only Africa, but all Europe will splinter off and founder in the chaos. The smaller units become, the narrower becomes the perspective, and the more fanatic is the tendency for dividing lines. Yugoslavia should be a warning to us to change our way of thinking and to find better rules of coexistence in this world and in this humanity. But how?

It may seem rash to speak of world peace, world religions, and world ethos when there are about 30 armed conflicts in the world today. But if not now, when are we to speak this way? The demand by world religions for world peace is not idle talk, but comes from bitter experience in which religions have often played (and still play) a disastrous role. The aim is not one single religion nor a union among Christian churches alone, but for a peace among all religions.

What a blessing it would be if leaders of the great religions were to speak and act for peace among the confessions, religions, and nations. What a blessing it would have been for the former Yugoslavia if the years since World War II had been used—especially by the Catholic Croat and Serbian Orthodox bishops—to take stock of the offenses and crimes

committed by both sides—by Croats in World War II as well as by Serbs today. What a blessing if, after the work of mourning and clarifying guilt, they had asked each other's pardon and celebrated the reconciliation as was done between France and Germany. We could say the same of all places of conflict. We all have to change our way of thinking. We need not only a new policy and a new diplomacy, but a conversion of hearts, a true acceptance of each other, a new ethos.

What would Jesus himself ask of Christians if he were to come back? I think he would require from us a humanity in solidarity

—which would renounce not only religious wars and the inquisition, but would practice tolerance and, in its relations with other religions, would replace collective egoism with a solidarity born of love;

—which, then, instead of listing transgressions committed by other religions, would forgive and would venture a new beginning.

World religions

For years religious differences, prejudices, and mistrust were too great for a new dialogue among religions. Religions lived in deliberate isolation. But the global situation has changed decisively. Even Switzerland is gradually realizing there are no national or regional islands of stability. And despite the exposition of national or regional interests, political, economic, and financial interdependence are so great

that economists speak of a world society and sociologists speak of a world civilization (in the technical, economic, social sense). All of us, directly or indirectly, are involved in this system of interaction.

But this dawning world society and the technological world civilization—and this is important to me—in no way mean a single world culture in the spiritual-artistic-creative sense, or even one world religion. To the contrary, world society and a world civilization include a multiplicity of cultures and religions. Sometimes with stress on their particularity. To hope for a single world religion is an illusion, and to fear it is nonsense. The multiplicity of religions, denominations, sects, groups, and religious movements neither can nor should be reduced to a common denominator.

Different as they are, all religions are messages of salvation answering basic human questions about love and suffering, guilt and repentance, life and death. Where does the world come from? Why are we born and why must we die? What determines the destiny of the individual and of humanity? What is the basis of moral consciousness and ethical norms? Besides offering an interpretation of the world, all religions offer ways to live and act here below for a permanent, eternal salvation—in short, deliverance from suffering, guilt, and death.

And as a human phenomenon, each

religion can be misused. From a sociological point of view, they are systems of power that tend to stabilize and broaden their power. They have potential for struggle, but also for peace. Religion can motivate, support, and prolong war, but can also avoid or shorten it. With all the strategic, economic and political aspects of world political crises, we must not lose sight of their social, moral, and religious aspects.

It is true that in the religions of the world there are systems of thought and belief that are ultimately incompatible. But are world religions necessarily in opposition? Peace is most often a part of their program. Their primary task today should consist in being peacemakers with each other by using all means available, especially in the media. They could clear up misunderstandings, resolve traumatic memories, dispel stereotyped images of the enemy, negotiate conflicts of guilt, diminish hate and destruction, and stress what we have in common.

But the members of different religions do not know what they have in common, especially in their ethics. Hence the urgency of a new ethos.

The need for a world ethos

An entente among religions does not mean a coalition of believers against unbelievers. The movement to re-Catholicize, especially in Eastern Europe (euphemistically called re-evangelization), will only lead to a reestablishing of former trench warfare. We do not need a division of social and political parties into clerical and anti-clerical factions (as in Poland). A world ethos seeks an

alliance of believers and unbelievers for a new ethos with a common foundation.

What unites all the great religions should be the object of detailed analysis. This task which has already begun has already stirred much interest. But I would like to pose a more fundamental question. Despite their differing dogmatic and symbolic systems, what specifically can religions contribute to promoting an ethos which distinguishes them from philosophy, pragmatic politics, and philanthropic groups?

In the past religions have always considered their traditions as absolute. They have firmly set dogmas and rituals and have isolated themselves from each other. But when they wish they can command respect for the basic maxims of an elementary humanity with an authority and conviction not available to politicians, jurists, or philosophers.

Clearly, all the great religions demand certain non-negotiable standards, basic ethical norms and maxims that guide action. These are based on an unconditional, an absolute—valid, then, for hundreds of millions of people—even if these are not strictly followed in practice. (People do in fact often act contrary to ethics. But something can be valid in principle though no longer respected in practice.)

Five great commandments valid in all great religions of the world can also be applied to economics, politics, and society: 1) Do not kill (cause harm to another); 2) Do not lie (deceive, break agreements); 3) Do not steal (violate another's rights); 4)

Do not lust (commit adultery); 5) Respect parents (help the needy and the weak).

Are these too general? The Declaration for a World Ethos voted on by the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago (1993) an unparalleled event in the history of religions—gave some specifics. This assembly of believers from all the world religions succeeded in producing a basic text formulating common ethical principles and definite recommendations, all of which directly concern the conciliar movement of Christianity and our responsibilities for justice, peace, and the integrity of God's creation. All religions can and must be actively committed to: 1) tolerance and a life in the truth (do not lie), 2) nonviolence and respect for life and nature (do not kill), 3) solidarity and a just economic order (do not steal), and 4) equality of rights and partnership between man and woman (do not lust).

This declaration of the Parliament of World Religions is a sign of hope for a future in which religions of the world could collaborate for a common ethos of humanity. The declaration should be studied and discussed in all our groups and parishes, in religion and ethics courses. It is formulated in the language of our day. It is general but not abstract, concrete but not mired in casuistry, critical and still a bearer of hope.

At the same time we Christians should reflect on what constitutes our specific ethos: Jesus Christ our light. For us this will mean a particular deepening, a putting into practice, a radicalization of the

"What would Jesus himself ask of Christians if he were to come back? I think he would require from us a humanity in solidarity which would renounce religious wars and would replace collective egoism with a solidarity born of love; which, then, would forgive and would venture a new beginning."



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LIGHT OF THE WORLD
(Continued from page 11)

world ethos. We ought to reflect on what we, illuminated by Jesus Christ our light, have to say, for example, on the meaning of life and death, on suffering and forgiveness, on the unconditional gift of self and the necessity of renunciation and on joy. Such a Christian ethos will not only be compatible with a world ethos; it will be able to deepen, to specify and to concretize the world ethos for Christians.

**Change
of consciousness**

History has shown that change on our earth requires a change of consciousness and a conversion in thought and action, both in the individual and in Society. We have seen this in regard to views on war and peace, the economy and ecology, man and woman. The churches bear special responsibility for such change in interior dispositions, in mentality, in hearts. It will be difficult to find universal consensus for many questions (bioethics, sexual ethics,

an ethic of the economy or state, or an ethic of the media or of science). But in the spirit of the principles we have just enunciated, we should be able to find differentiated solutions for many disputed questions.

I am convinced that the new world order will be better only if the world becomes a social and plural world; only if it is based on partnership and working for peace; only if it becomes an ecological and ecumenical world. That is why many, driven by human or religious convictions, are already involved in working for a common world ethos and are calling for all those of good will to work for a change of consciousness in regard to ethics.

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