

PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED

1 CHURCH IN FINLAND

The History, Present State and Outlook for the Future
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. Helsinki 1989.

2 DIALOGUES with The Evangelical Free Church of Finland
and The Finnish Pentecostal Movement. Helsinki 1990.

CREATION

THE EIGHTH THEOLOGICAL
CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH OF FINLAND AND THE
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH.
PYHTITSA AND LENINGRAD,
JUNE 9TH-19TH 1989.

DISTRIBUTION:

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH OF FINLAND
ECCLESIASTICAL BOARD
P.O. BOX 185
SF-00161 HELSINKI

ISBN 951-9301-38-0
ISSN 0785-8558



DOCUMENTS OF
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OF FINLAND

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Helsinki 1991
Church Council for Foreign Affairs
Ecclesiastical Board

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ISBN 951-9301-38-0
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PREFACE

This book contains the material on the Eighth Theological Conversations between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church, held in Leningrad and Pyhtisa in the summer of 1989, hosted by the Russian Orthodox Church. These talks occur every three years and are held in Finnish and Russian.

In the mid-1980s Archbishop John Vikström and Metropolitan Anthony of Leningrad agreed that the material of future conversations would be published in their entirety in English. On the basis of this agreement the communiques and the theses of the meetings of 1970-86 were published as the book *Dialogue between Neighbours. The Theological Conversations between the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church 1970-86*. Ed. by Hannu T. Kampuri. Publications of the Lutheran-Agricola Society B17. Helsinki 1986 (bibliography included).

The discussions held in Mikkeli, Finland in 1986 were published as the book: *Mikkeli 1986. The Theological Conversations between the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church. Mikkeli, June 3rd-11th, 1986*. Ed. by Hannu Kampuri. Publications of the Lutheran-Agricola Society B 16: Helsinki 1986.

Through English language translations of the Finnish-Russian dialogue there is a desire to include these discussions among other Lutheran-Orthodox talks as well as to present these as material for other ecumenical projects.

This book contains the communiques and theses, in addition to papers, presented during the 1989 conversations. The Russian Orthodox Church has taken care of the translation of the Russian theologians, while the papers, communiques as well as theses presented by the Finnish theologians were translated in Finland. Therefore it ought to be kept in mind that this is a translation into a language not employed in the talks. The translations do not hold the same documentary value as do the Finnish and the Russian texts. The archives of the conversations are preserved in the Church Office for Foreign Affairs (Address: Saramakatu 11, PL 185, SF-00161 Helsinki, Finland).

Hannu T. Kampuri

PYHTISA 1989

Hannu T. Kampuri

The Theological Conversations held between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church go back twenty years. The very first talks were held in Turku, Finland, March 19 through 22 in 1970. During these twenty years, a relatively short time when seen from the perspective of church history, many changes have been seen in the lives of the two churches. Especially the Russian Orthodox Church has entered into a new phase in her life. During the regime of Mikhail Gorbachev church-state relations have put on a new basis.

In this new church-state situation the Russian Orthodox Church's functional possibilities have improved to a considerable extent. During the Millennial Jubilee Year of her history, 1988, the Russian Orthodox Church founded 1,244 new parishes, almost a 20 per cent increase. As this is being written, there is talk of up to 4,000 new parishes within a couple of years. In March of 1989, there were elected to the new Congress of Representatives, the organ representing the highest executive power in the Soviet Union, a few church leaders. Thinking in terms of the entire post-Revolutionary period, this election was quite unique. His Excellency Metropolitan Alexy of Leningrad and Novgorod, the host of the discussions, is among the new Congressional Representatives from the church. The first session of this Congress concluded the same day the Finnish delegation arrived in Leningrad. Naturally Metropolitan Alexy referred often to both the events surrounding the congressional session and the new political climate and changes. The Finnish-Russian Conversations of 1989, hosted by the Russian Orthodox Church, occurred in many ways at a turning point in history.

Over the years, the relationships of the churches participating in these negotiations have expanded and become more commonplace, everyday, in the positive sense of the word. The church representatives meet each other over various issues considerably more often than once every three years, the established rhythm for these doctrinal talks. Nowadays the churches send scholarship recipients to study in each other's schools for ministerial training. When one takes into account church tourism, the basic level in the churches' expanding search for deeper friendship, it must be admitted that the interaction between these churches is on a daily basis. The theolog-

cal discussions, however, continue to be the backbone for church relations.

During the period of perestroika and glasnost, the meeting of the church delegations during the theological discussions no longer has the same news value as it did twenty years ago when they were launched. Then the mere fact that Christians in Finland and the Soviet Union could meet and talk together broke the news barrier. Today, however, the true ecclesiastical significance of the discussions may be put forward more clearly in the public media.

Over the past twenty years, the two churches have raised a new generation of theologians, some of whom have been invited to participate in the discussions. In Pyhitys the two parties, nevertheless, brought along representatives present in all eight discussions. The delegations thus represented both continuity and renewal. This time the papers delivered by the Finnish delegation represented a younger generation of theologians, all with their Ph.D.s from the 80s, representing a broad spectrum of Finnish theology, i.e. parish work, university faculty, and the World Council of Churches. Out of the three papers read by the Russian delegation, two came from the older generation. Archbishop Mikhail is truly the senior laureate of the Finnish-Russian conversations as he has delivered papers at all eight meetings.

From the start it was clearly visible that this was a meeting of old friends. Personal relationships do not merely advance business negotiations; also in church related talks old friends get to the subject itself quicker. The Finnish delegation had undergone some changes, but all, with the exception of Wille Riekkinen, had some type of experience from the discussions of three years ago. The Russian delegation included three entirely new members: Archbishop Vladimir of Pskov and Porhov, Dean Vladimir Fyodorov, Asst. Prof. at the Leningrad Theological Academy, and Hieromonk Ioann (Ekonomov). Lecturer at the Leningrad Theological Academy. Archbishop Vladimir has a wealth of ecumenical experience, as he was in 1961 a Russian delegate to the New Delhi meeting of the World Council of Churches, where the Russian Orthodox Church joined the organization. He has also worked on the Geneva staff of the WCC for a number of years.

The discussions were held at the Convent of Pyhitys, located in the northeastern part of Soviet Estonia. The Convent is 100 years old, dedicated to the death sleep of the Mother of God, with a sisterhood of over 150 nuns. The average age of the conventuals is very young. According to Metropolitan Alexy only approximately one applicant out of ten can be taken as novices into the convent. The convent supports itself through agriculture and the sewing of paraments. Many of the speakers reminded us that the place was

ideally suited for these discussions in many ways. Firstly, the convent is an ideal environment for theological talks as they are spiritual in nature. Secondly, the convent is located in an area where Lutherans and Russian Orthodox people, Estonians and Russians, have met over the centuries. Thirdly, the meeting place in a sense reflected the themes chosen for the talks. The garden surroundings of the convent produced a paradise-like peace, reminding the delegates of the goodness of God's creative work, one of the doctrinal themes. On the other hand, not far from the convent is the city of Sillamäe, a military industrial complex, where according to the press hundreds of children suffer various symptoms such as balding, the reason being the radioactive and chemical pollution of the defense industry. The greatest polluters of Northwestern Estonia, however, seem to be the electric power plants using oil slate as fuel. The ash emissions from these power plants, carried by the winds all the way to Finland as well, contain radioactive particles and heavy metals. This background information about the state of the immediate surroundings did remind the delegates of the extreme seriousness of the socio-ethical theme, i.e. Our Responsibility for God's Creation.

The underlying thought in the choice of the doctrinal theme was the frequently made observation that there is a clear difference between the modes of thought employed by Lutheran and Orthodox theology. Lutheran theology is traditionally based on the pattern of thought taken from the viewpoint of salvation history, which is seen as representing the Semitic way of looking at the world through time and history. On the other hand, the cosmological mode of thought is more manifest in Orthodox theology than in Lutheran. The cosmological view of the world can be seen as representing the Greek world. In the cosmological world view the timeless hierarchical relations between the various levels of being are especially emphasized. The differences between modes of thought based on salvation history and cosmology were expected to be clearly demonstrated in the theology of creation in particular.

The treatment of the theme, however, did not go as was expected. The churches had a very far reaching agreement on the theme of creation. Prof. Fredric Cleve stated concerning the paper read by Archbishop Mikhail that he could not find a single point on which he could have disagreed with the Archbishop. The Russian delegates expressed similar comments on my own paper. A very important factor leading to agreement can be found in the way the subject was approached on the basis of the Nicene Creed shared by the two churches.

The specific difference between the Lutheran and the Orthodox mode of thought is seen in that in Lutheran theology the relation-

ship between God and the world has traditionally been explicated through the concept of Logos, whereas Orthodox theology employs the *energeia* conception. In the theses of the conversations it was however stated that "the intent of the two traditions is the same". Despite the definite differences seen between the *modes* of thought (resulting from the different *explanations* of the relationship of God and the world) the traditions see this relationship itself as being the same. The essence of God is transcendental to the creation, but God is however present amidst His creation. Thus we note that the Pyhitis conversations strove to clarify the common doctrinal basis underlying the theological modes of thought.

However, the discussions clearly brought out the problem of religious language, which always increases the difficulty of probing behind various modes of thought. Excited by the paper read by Wille Rieckman, Prof. Konstantin Scurat asked whether after all Lutherans ultimately respect the Bible as God's Word, even as they claim to do. Professor Scurat was given reassurances that Lutherans do respect the Bible even if they study it using modern exegetical methodology. Bishop Kalevi Toivainen emphasized that Lutherans continue to regard the Bible as God's Word. Nevertheless, the Bible is a collection of historical source material which can be studied using the same principles as are utilized in researching other historical collections of source materials. The Bible is God's speech in human language, thus sharing the same qualifications and premises as human language.

Doctrinal discussions between churches do not seek or expect theological monolithicity, as this is impossible even within any one church, as experience teaches. This issue was brought home in a very concrete manner when the Russians became enthused about discussing among themselves whether it is only the human soul that is the image of God or the whole man. The Rev. Nikolai Gindyayev represented the former opinion and Prof. Osipov the latter. The situation demonstrated the nature of Orthodox theology clearly. The basic dogma defined by the Ecumenical Synods binds all Orthodox theologians, yet on issues standing outside this dogma a wide spectrum of opinions often prevails. In Russian Orthodox theology a distinction is frequently made between dogma, *theologoumenon* and private theological opinions. Theologoumenon comes from the Early Church fathers and is generally accepted teaching that has not been confirmed by the Ecumenical Synod for one reason or another. Despite certain problems arising from the presentation of this tripartite division of theological validity by Prof. V. V. Bolotov around the turn of the century, it does provide a concrete ecumenical policy and method. According to it, disagreement over dogma is a serious problem between churches, but

when variance arises over theologoumenon or opinions the problem is not as great. Even within the church disagreement may prevail concerning the latter two.

Ecological issues were taken up in the discussions for the first time in Pyhitis. In the previous doctrinal discussions, within the socio-ethical framework there had always been a topic related to peace. The change of the theme may reflect the general global situation. Fortunately nuclear war is currently a fairly hypothetical threat to the world. Instead, the ecological crisis is a present reality. The change of the theme also included a certain interesting shift of viewpoint. Ecological issues do not contain restrictions created by national interests to the extent the theme of peace did. Pollutants do not respect boundaries between nations in the same way as peace time armies generally do.

The ecological theme was especially linked to the widespread, profound concern over the state of the world currently shared not only by the churches but also by other organizations. It was quite characteristic of the situation that the Russian delegates put a question to Metropolitan Alexy (as a Congressional Representative) on the relation between economic development and the continued growth of energy consumption. Can there be economic progress without an increase of energy consumption and, thus, pollution?

The discussion on the ecological theme showed that the churches have no particular wisdom concerning every single current practical issue. The churches can above all make their contribution by directing their members' attention to these issues. Many issues related to ecology can however be regarded from both a religious and an ethical viewpoint, as exemplified by the presentation of the simple life style as a Christian ideal in the theses of the socio-ethical group. In the discussions the theses in general remained associated with current concerns shared by other institutions as well. In this way the churches can draw their members' attention to global problems, but the theses do not carry any particular theological discussion on various concrete issues brought up by the ecological problem.

In the course of twenty years the Finnish-Russian Theological Conversations have attained their own stabilized channel. The discussion technology has developed immensely. For instance the Finnish party has created its own "training program", i.e. preparatory seminars by means of which the discussions do not remain the theological avocation of a narrow circle but are broadly linked to Finnish theological and ecclesiological discussions. An extensive group of theologians from every diocese and from each theological seminary participates in these preparatory seminars. In addition every effort is made to disseminate information on the discussions,

including the publication of the material of the discussions not only in Finnish but also in English.

In the future there should once again be cause to concentrate on the ecumenical methodology of the theological discussions. During the early years of the discussions the Finnish delegation in particular discussed methodological questions during its preparatory process. It was then stated that the lack of specific deadlines in the near future made for 'joyful ecumenia' in the Finnish-Russian discussions. The strict, practical goals of church politics have not prevented the pondering of complex theological questions. The discussions have often been portrayed as a process of convergence in which the churches gradually approach each other. Perhaps this process has advanced to that stage at which it is appropriate to specify intermediate, doctrinal objectives.

COMMUNIQUE

on the Eighth Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church

The Eighth Theological Conversations between the delegations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church, June 9th-19th 1989, were held both in the Orthodox Convent of Uspenski in Pyhtisa, Kuremaa, the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, and in the City of Leningrad.

The previous discussions are as follows: Sinappi, Turku, Finland, 1970; Zagorsk, USSR, 1971; Järvenpää, Finland, 1974; Kiev, USSR, 1977; Turku, Finland, 1980; Leningrad, USSR, 1983; Mikkel, Finland, 1986.

The delegation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland contained the following members: The Most Rev. John VIKSTROM, Archbishop of Turku and Finland, Hon. D.D. of the Leningrad Theological Academy (Chairman of the delegation); The Rt. Rev. Kalevi TOIVAINEN, Bishop of Mikkel; The Rt. Rev. Samuel LEHTONEN, Bishop of Helsinki; Prof. Fredric CLEVE, Vice Rector of Åbo Academy (university); Prof. Eino MURTO-RINNE, University of Helsinki; Dean Koski LAITINEN, District of Hamina; Asst. Prof. Eeva MARTIKAINEN, University of Helsinki; Asst. Prof. Wille RIEKKINEN, Secretary for Bible Work, World Council of Churches; Asst. Prof. Juha PIHKALA, Director of the Church Education Center; and the Rev. Hannu T. KAMPURI, Rector of the Parish of Olati.

The Russian Orthodox Church had as its representatives the following delegates: Metropolitan ALEXY of Leningrad and Novgorod, Diocesan of Tallinn (Chairman of the delegation); Archbishop VLADIMIR of Pskov and Porhov; Archbishop MIKHAIL of Vologda and Veliky Ustyug. Professor at the Leningrad Theological Academy, Hon. D.D. of Åbo Academy (university); Prof. Vladimir SOROKIN, Leningrad Theological Academy, Dean; Dean Bogdan SOIKO, Supervisor of the Congregations of the Moscow Patriarchate in Finland, Rector of St Nikolay Cathedral of Leningrad, Lecturer at the Leningrad Theological Academy; Archimandrite YANNUARY (Ivlev), Asst. Professor at the Leningrad Theological Academy; Dean Vladimir FEDOROV, Asst. Prof. at

the Leningrad Theological Academy; Hieromonk IOANN (Ekonomezv), Lecturer at the Leningrad Theological Academy; Prof. Alexy OSIPOV, Moscow Theological Academy; Prof. Konstantin SKURAT, Moscow Theological Academy.

The advisers of the delegation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland were the following: the Rev. Maunu Siimemski, Secretary General of the Church Office for Foreign Affairs of the Church of Finland; the Rev. Lorenz Gönvik, D. D., Director of the Theological Division of the Church Office for Foreign Affairs; and the Rev. Risto Cantell, Asst. Prof., Secretary to the Archbishop of Finland.

The advisers appointed by the Russian Orthodox Church to the discussions were the following: the Rev. Nikolai Gundayev, Rector of the Cathedral of the Holy Ascension of Leningrad, Dean, Prof. at the Leningrad Theological Academy; Hieromonk Vennyamin (Novik), Lecturer at the Leningrad Theological Academy; S. P. Rasskazovsky, B.D., Lecturer at the Leningrad Theological Academy; and Yuri Avvakumov, B.D., Lecturer at the Leningrad Theological Academy.

The information service of the Church of Finland was represented by Ms Auneli Janhonen, M. Th., Head of the Press Department of the Church Information Office.

The secretariat of the Church of Finland included the Rev. Martti Kotiranta and Ms Minna Väliaho, Secretary at the Church Office for Foreign Affairs.

The secretariat of the Russian Orthodox Church included Alexander Grigoriev, Secretary of the Orthodox Church's Foreign Department, Leningrad Branch; Ivan Sudosa, Presenting Officer of the Orthodox Church's Foreign Department, Leningrad Branch, Lecturer at the Leningrad Theological Academy; and Nikolai Derzhavin, Scholarship holder (in further training) at the Leningrad Theological Academy.

The interpreters for the discussions were the following: Ms Helena Pavinski, Office Secretary, the Rev. Jaakko Kuusela, and Ms Marina Latschhoff, M.Sc.

The Russian Orthodox Church invited the following to participate as observers: the Most Rev. Olof Sundby, Archbishop Emeritus of the Church of Sweden, Metropolitan Tikhon of Helsinki, representative of the Orthodox Church of Finland; the Rev. Titi Salumäe, Rector, representative of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church; and the Rev. Gunnis Kalne, Representative of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Throughout the talks the two delegations continued in prayer together. On Saturday, June 10th they attended the Orthodox Vigil officiated by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexy at St Nicholas Cathedral in Leningrad. The Lutheran Communion Service was celebrated in the Lutheran Church of Pushkin (Finnish language) on Sunday, June 11th. The Rev. Kosti Laitinen, Dean, officiated while Bishop Samuel Lehtonen and Archbishop Mikhail preached in this worship service.

On Wednesday, June 14th Bishop Kalevi Toivainen officiated the Lutheran Communion Service in St Sergei's Church in the Pyhtisa Convent. On Saturday, June 17th the delegations attended the Vigil held in the Trinity Cathedral of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra in Leningrad. On Sunday, June 18th the Pentecost Holy Liturgy and Holy Communion was officiated by Metropolitan Alexy, assisted by the members of the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church. The delegations were in attendance at this divine service.

During the talks daily Matins and Vespers were alternately held in the traditions of the Lutheran and the Orthodox Churches. In addition to these opportunities for worship the delegates could attend the regular prayers, the canonical hours of the breviary, held in the Convent.

Mr Jaakko Kaurinkoski, Consul General of Finland in Leningrad, and his wife arranged a reception in honor of the delegations at the General Consulate in Leningrad on Sunday, June 11th.

Archbishop Johan Vikström and Metropolitan Alexy visited Tallinn on Tuesday, June 13th where they met Ms Ain Soidla, First Vice-Chairperson of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian Socialist Republic, at that time Acting Prime Minister, due to the P.M. being abroad. The Council of Estonian Churches was in session at the Pyhtisa Convent on Wednesday, June 14th, its members having opportunity to meet the members of the delegations. A reception was held in honor of the heads of the delegations and the invited observers by A. Kiviorg, Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Council of the District Representatives of Kõhlaajärvi, and other local leadership in the city of Kõhlaajärvi on Wednesday June 14th.

Archbishop Johan Vikström and his associates visited Moscow on Friday, June 16th, where he met His Eminence Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk and Belo-Russia, Chairman of the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate. At the reception held there Metropolitan Philaret read and extended the

greetings of His Holiness Pimen, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, to Archbishop John Vikström.

Archimandrite Tikhon, Father Superior of St Daniel's Monastery, introduced his monastery, offering dinner in honor of Archbishop Vikström. Archbishop Vikström also visited the Council of Religion of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, where he met Mr Mikhail A. Ivolgin, First Vice-Chairman, at that time Acting Chairman.

Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk and Belo-Russia, Chairman of the Department of Foreign Affairs, served dinner in honor of Archbishop Vikström in his residence that same evening. Also Mr Pekka Oinonen, Ministerial Counsellor of Finland was present.

Rector Vladimir Sorokin, Prof. at the Leningrad Theological Academy, Dean, arranged a reception in honor of the delegations after the documents were signed there on Saturday, June 17th. On this festive occasion Metropolitan Alexy and Archbishop John Vikström each held speeches. On the same day the Academy hosted a press conference, where the Chairmen of the delegations related the results of the talks. Metropolitan Alexy arranged a farewell reception for the delegations in his Leningrad residence on Sunday, June 18th.

During the talks the delegations acquainted themselves with some of the reopened parishes and the churches to be repaired in Leningrad and Pushkin. Also, the delegates attended the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre in Leningrad on Friday, June 16th.

The Eighth Theological Discussions were officially opened at the Pyhittä Uspenski Convent on Monday, June 12th. After an ecumenical prayer His Eminence Metropolitan Alexy of Leningrad and Novgorod, Chairman of the Delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church opened the talks, giving a speech which included the following: "These are among the most fruitful bilateral theological talks that the Russian Orthodox Church is participating in. The theme selected for this round of talks is one which is a cause of great concern for everyone, both in our country, in Europe and the rest of the world." Metropolitan Alexy noted that our joint negotiations are an integral part of that agenda which was delineated by the European Ecumenical Assembly (organized by the Conference of European Churches and the Council of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe of the Roman Catholic Church) held in Basel recently. Metropolitan Alexy alluded to the fact that "these theological discussions between our churches are for the first time held in the area

of Estonia, which has accumulated a rich ecumenical experience". He stated that significant changes have occurred in the Soviet Union in the three years since the previous discussions: "The processes renewing and quickening our society have touched upon the life of our church in a fundamental way". In his reply to the opening the Most Rev. John Vikström, Archbishop of Turku and Finland, Head of the Delegation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, stated, among other things: "In opening the Eighth Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church here in the Pyhittä Uspenski Convent, we are fulfilling the call of the church of Jesus Christ to seek unity in truth and love. May our doctrinal discussions for their own part serve the endeavours moving towards the unification of the Church of Jesus Christ."

Metropolitan Alexy read out a letter of greeting from His Holiness Pimen, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. In his salutations Patriarch Pimen made reference to the fact that the discussions contribute considerably to the process of studying justice, peace and the integrity of nature. A telegram from Metropolitan Philaret, Director of the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, was also read to the participants.

The meeting sent greetings to the President of the Republic of Finland, Mauno Koivisto, the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev, the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, Arnold Rütel, and the Chairman of the Council of Religion of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Yuri Hristoradnov. Also, replies were sent to His Holiness Pimen, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and to His Eminence Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk and Belo-Russia.

The opening session was also attended by Mr Jaakko Kauvin, Consul General of Finland, Leningrad; Mr Igor Vishchepan, a Counsellor of the Greater Leningrad Area Department of the Council of Religion of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, representing the latter; Mr Rein Ristlaan, a Counsellor of the Council of Religion of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic; Ms. Ain Kiviorg, Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Council of the District Representatives of Kohla-järvi; and Mother Superior Varvara of the Pyhittä Uspenski Convent.

In the final meeting in the Pyhittä Convent on Thursday, June 15th, both Metropolitan Alexy and Archbishop John Vikström spoke. In joint prayer the two delegations gave praise to Almighty God for His presence and blessing during the talks.

The agenda of the discussions included two themes:

1. Creation Work (The First Article of Faith)
2. Man's Responsibility for God's Creation

The First Article of Faith was discussed by Hannu T. Kampuri, D.D., under the title of "The Creation Work of the Holy Triune God" and Asst. Prof. Wille Riekkinen on the subject of "Exegetical Perspectives on the Theology of Creation", both from the delegation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. The delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church presented Professor Alexei Osipov and his lecture "Creation. The First Clause of the Creed" and Archbishop Mikhail under the title of "The Bible and the Nicene Creed of God's Creative Activity". Comments were given by Professor Konstantin Skurat and Archimandrite Yannuary (Ivliev) as well as Professor Eino Muortomäe and Professor Fredric Cleve.

On the theme "Man's Responsibility for God's Creation" Asst. Prof. Eeva Martikainen of the delegation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland read the paper "Our Responsibility for God's Creation". Asst. Prof. Vladimir Fedorov delivered a paper entitled "Our Responsibility for the Integrity of Creation". Comments on these papers were offered by Hieromonk Ioann (Ekonozhev) and Asst. Prof. Juha Pitkälä.

These lectures gave rise to active discussion both in the plenary meetings and in the working groups.

The results of the negotiations are appended to this communiqué; each theme being covered in a summary.

The two parties stated with satisfaction that the Eighth Theological Discussions held between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church in Pyhätisa Uspenski Convent were carried out at a time when the Soviet Union is undergoing significant positive societal renewal.

By the mercy of God, as a celebration of all Christendom, the year 1988 witnessed the millennial celebration of the first holy baptism of the Russian people. In the Soviet Union this occasion had the effect of renewing societal attitudes towards the church and Christianity. The two delegations were grateful in noting that the desire expressed in the Mikkehi Communiqué of three years ago had been materialized, namely that "through this forthcoming celebra-

tion the rich spiritual treasures of the Russian church should become better known throughout Christendom".

The two delegations expressed their joy over the positive attention and graciousness which the authorities of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic as well as of the District of Kholmjari now exhibited toward the theological discussions and the participants.

Both delegations were unanimous in their statement that the location of the talks in Pyhätisa Uspenski Convent, where prayer and work are in harmonious unison, had contributed to a deeper pondering of the topics, man's fellowship with God and relationship to his environment.

The negotiators noted that the talks were essentially based on the foundation created by the previous meetings. The talks in Pyhätisa Uspenski Convent were carried out in the spirit of mutual respect, love and trust. True to the spiritual heritage of each church, the delegations together were able to find a growing accord, and an ever-deepening understanding of our common Christian faith.

The delegations were unanimously agreed that the theological discussions should be continued.

The delegations of the Pyhätisa Discussions completed their work full of thankfulness to Almighty God, jointly expressing their hope that the Holy Spirit would lead the disciples of Christ into a more profound knowledge of His mercy and into mutual love.

Leningrad, June 17th, 1989

John Wikström

Archbishop of Turku
and Finland

Alexy

Metropolitan of
Leningrad and Novgorod

SUMMARY ON THE THEME OF THE CREATIVE WORK OF GOD

I

The final communiques of the previous discussions refer to the creative work of God in a multiplicity of connections. God's creative work has offered a central theological starting point for discussions on the foundation and praxis of the work for peace carried out by the churches. Reference has been made to creation when speaking about the Christian concept of man (anthropology), the ultimate reality of the world (cosmology), the doctrine of salvation (soteriology) as well as the view of the future opening up through faith (eschatology).

Thus the creative work of God discloses an important holistic aspect of Christian faith and life. One of the most significant issues is how the relationship of God to the world is understood, as it has great importance to the faith and action of the church and the individual Christian. Therefore the question about creative work and the creation was brought to the forefront in these talks.

While the theme provides a natural continuation of the previous talks, it has exceptional current interest attached to it. In a significant way the Christian faith interprets the present ecological crisis of the world; Christian love leads people to struggle to overcome this crisis; and Christian hope provides the courage necessary for such efforts.

II

1. The Christian Church praises God, whose hidden and unknown essence (*ousia*) is one and undivided, yet three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The doctrine of the Triune God is not only an expression of the internal life of the Godhead but also of His relationship with the world.

2. The created world is the act of the united, undivided Triune God. "God the Father creates everything through the Word in His

Spirit." (St Athanasius of Alexandria, *cf.* Ps. 33: 6, Is. 40: 25-26, Neh. 9: 6).

The entire creative work is a manifestation of God's infinite love and goodness (Psalm 8; Psalm 19; Psalm 74: 12-17; Psalm 104).

The New Testament Scriptures lay special emphasis to the share of the Son in the creative work (1 Cor. 8: 6 and Col. 1: 15-19). Also the Holy Spirit sustains the life of the creation (Ps. 104: 24-30, *cf.* Job 33: 4).

3. The Bible uses words such as *bara* and *kidas*, NT, to describe the creative work of God. These words are not employed in the meaning of creative human activity. What man creates comes from the existing world, following its general laws. God, on the other hand, has through the exercise of the free choice of His own will and by His almighty creative Word brought "non-existence to existence" (2 Macc. 7: 28; Rom. 4: 17, Heb. 11: 3; *cf.* Gen. 1: 3, 6, 9, etc.). The Apostolic Fathers teach that this is to be taken literally and that for this faith is necessary, as it is extremely difficult to explain how *ex nihilo* creation can take place.

4. God created the world out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). The entire visible and invisible world is the creation of God. God's being is absolutely transcendent to the created world. God is different in being from the world, dissimilar, not interused, as is accepted in the Pantheistic view of the world. And yet God is in the midst of His creation, loving it.

According to Pantheism the world has been formed as an action arising out of the internal compulsion of God. This concept is linked to the denial of a personal God. In equating God with the world Pantheism excludes either the reality of the world or God. When the concept of a personal God vanishes, we are led into the cult of man, a religion in which man is worshipped, with multiple catastrophic consequences.

By equating God with the world and by deriving everything as coming from the same source Pantheism completely destroys the distinctions between truth and error, good and evil, beauty and ugliness.

In Orthodox theology the presence of God is expressed by saying that God is present and has influence in the creation through His

energies (St Maximus the Confessor and St Gregory Palamas). Lutheran theology uses the expression that God has influence in the world through His Word. Both traditions share the same intention.

5. Even after its creation the world is at every hour and in every place totally dependent on God. The world cannot remain even for a moment, without God's continuous sustaining power. The world is neither autonomous, nor is it neutral territory in regard to its Creator.

6. God has created the entire visible and invisible world as good. As God's creation the world is one. There is nothing in it which would be alien to God. The Christian belief in creation does not correspond to the dualistic concepts of the world, because these are in conflict with the Biblical truth that God is one, undivided, the ultimate beginning and the source of all being.

7. The Biblical creation accounts show man's place in the world. According to them, man is at once part of the creation and at once in a special position as the image of God, which position raises him above the rest of the creation (Gen. 1: 25-28; Ps. 8: 6-9). His acts do not only affect humanity, but all of the creation.

8. Created as the image of God man was, as a child of God, admonished to cultivate and protect the land (Gen. 1: 28-29; 2: 15-25). He is to confess the Creator of the cosmos as his own God and so behave in his actions that the condition of the creation would be in accordance with God's will (cf. Ez. 36: 26-38). As the image of God he is responsible to God in all his actions for his entire existence (1 Cor. 6: 19-20).

9. God being one, the world, too, is one and indivisible. As the handiwork of the Divine Creator, a respectful approach is especially demanded towards the earth, the habitat of man, the crown of the creation. This is the reason the ecological problem is not primarily a physio-material problem but a spiritual and esthetic one. Man is the most crucial factor in the ecological dilemma.

10. Even the Biblical account of the Garden of Eden in Gen. 3: 1-24 reminds man that sin has distorted God's image in him. By putting himself in God's place he has renounced the companionship between men and begun to misuse nature. The creation suffers because of man's selfishness. Man who is dependent on this suffering creation has driven himself to the brink of destruction.

11. God's intention for man in the creative work is only carried out insofar as he becomes a partaker in Christ, the image of "the invisible God" (Col. 1: 15; Rom. 8: 29; 2 Cor. 3: 18; 2 Cor. 5: 17). Through Christ man already participates in this new life promised by God (2 Cor. 5: 17; Phil. 2: 5-11; Heb. 1: 2-10), which is manifested as faith, hope and love in the world (1 Cor. 13).

12. Since the Christian in himself has side by side both the new creation and the old nature distorted by the Fall, his battle against selfishness and against the misuse of the creation remain incomplete in time (Rom. 7: 14-25). Thus he is dependent on God's mercy in all things. He is not only prompted onwards merely by anticipation of concrete results but ultimately by eschatological hope based on God's promises (Rom. 8: 18-25; Rev. 21 and 22).

13. Even if God's kingdom is not manifest throughout the creation in a visible manner, it is present in an invisible and inward way (Lk. 17: 21). It is there where Christ calls people to God through the agency of the Holy Spirit: to believe, to love and to do good works (Matt. 25: 34-40).

III

The purpose of the Biblical account of the creation is not to provide a naturalistic, scientific explanation of events but to offer of the existing world a holistic interpretation opening up through faith. The creation accounts contain truths central to faith with a profound significance for the world whose laws, and their regularity, are studied by the natural sciences. This is a challenge to the Christian Church. A proper response to this challenge can be made only by taking both Christian theology and modern scientific knowledge seriously. As such science does not threaten the belief in creation, or the belief in creation science. Between the two there is to be a fruitful interaction, a situation both possible and necessary in the current situation of the world.

SUMMARY ON THE THEME OF MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOD'S CREATION

1. Humanity is in the situation where man through his culture and activity has conquered for the first time in history the entire world and the biosphere, so indispensable to life. Yet humanity has driven itself to the brink of the abyss. As the result of significant scientific-technological achievements man has acquired unprecedented strength and power over nature. At present, however, man senses his lack of strength more strongly than he has previously. The progress gained in the sciences and in technology is incapable of guaranteeing his security or welfare. Mankind is threatened by disaster because he lacks control over this situation. Disaster is also a possibility, total disaster in the shape of nuclear war or partial as an ecological catastrophe.
2. As a result of human activity the ecological balance has been shaken, with the soil depleted and waterways and the atmosphere polluted. The consequences of all this on our flora and fauna are known to all. Natural resources are shamelessly robbed beyond nature's own capacity for renewal, even though these resources are requisites for future generations. The situation is rapidly worsening due to the population explosion.
3. We Christians are convinced that the profoundest cause of this unhappy situation is found in the alienation of man from God, in the prostitution of his relationship to God's creation, in the loss of spiritual values and in the uncontrolled quest for the material things in life. This has been further advanced by the worship of science, to many people a religion without God. Science has been harnessed to serve man's selfish desires, to exploit the creation infinitely and violently.
4. As Christians we share the responsibility for man's selfish approach to nature, which is one of the causes of the crisis. At the same time we are convinced that the Christian faith educates man to have a caring approach to nature. Also, the Christian faith increases our hopes concerning the preservation of the creation's integrity, in addition to demonstrating a realistic way out of this dilemma.
5. God created man in His image and likeness. Yet the Bible does say that man was depraved in the Fall (Gen. 3). At the same time sin distorts man's relationship to God and his fellow man, it also makes of him an exploiter of nature. This is the religious and moral point of departure for the ecological crisis. The breach of relational faith leads to a lack of, and a prostitution of, love.
6. Christ is the second Adam and the beginning of the new creation; in the words of St Paul, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation..." (2 Cor. 5: 17). Partaking of Christ lays the basis for the Christian's responsibility for the creation. Faith in Christ also means that his relationship to nature is renewed. This healing process will be completed when "the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom. 8: 21).
7. The integrity of the creation cannot be achieved without the discovery of a new way of life. This includes a responsibility for the cultivation and care of nature, to take place in accordance with God's will (Gen. 2: 15). Thus the responsibility that both the individual Christian and the church hold for the integrity of the creation means, in practical terms, the battle against man's sin, selfishness and greed, all of which are responsible for pushing the creation to the brink of destruction. The church works for the preservation of nature by proclaiming the law of God and the gospel of Christ.
8. From its very beginning and throughout its history, the Christian faith has emphasized the simple life style in contrast to the affluent consumption of goods and the exploitation of natural resources. This corresponds to the principle of ethical self-discipline, which godly Christians both in the East and in the West have honored as their guide-line, and which ought to be every Christian's basic policy. St Paul states: "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want" (Phil. 4: 12). It should be noted that this feature has been an essential part of everyday piety among both the Finnish and the Russian peoples.
9. Sinfulness is manifest in those acts of each individual which cause damage to his environment. In the entire society sinfulness is also disclosed by such activities, ideological systems and power structures whose effect on the destruction of nature is far greater

than that of individuals. The arms race exhausts natural resources, weakening man's possibilities for survival as well as creating the threat of war. The interests of industry and business are often in conflict with the conservation of nature. All humanity needs energy, but the use of its various forms threatens the balance of nature, each in its own way. As Christians we regard the demands for continued economic growth as a serious threat to the future of the earth and of life, in addition to nuclear war. Also science and its applications must take into consideration the ecological tolerance of the globe, as science cannot stand independently of its ethical value bases.

10. There is a great need for urgent, cooperative efforts by all mankind to ensure the integrity of the creation. Time is running short. Legislation is needed both on the part of the individual sovereign states and between various countries. The international, so-called Brundtland Committee has drafted an outline for international legislation on the environment. We support the policy that the international community sign agreements calling for the cessation of the pollution of nature throughout the entire world. Such agreements are to be expedited quickly. Individuals, the economic infrastructure and society must be prepared to pay the expenses incurred by the conservation of the environment.

11. We call upon the governments of all nations to support the ongoing disarmament process, to cease experimentation with all weapons of mass destruction, and to channel the funds thus released into the creation of the prerequisites necessary for the protection of life and the preservation of the environment.

12. While convening as delegates of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church within the territory of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Estonia we have concluded that many environmental problems touch upon us closely as neighbouring countries. The treatment of these problems calls for legislative action from our states, in addition to international cooperation.

13. The assimilation of a new ecological mode of thought and the awakening to a holistic concept of ethical responsibility in regard to nature are necessities. The people of God must learn to bear their share of the responsibility for future generations. We appeal to all Christians to unite forces for the preservation of life on the earth. Each and every member of the church is called to advance the common good both in his own personal life and in

society, in accordance with his capabilities. We find it of great importance that education directed at the preservation of life and the environment be carried out in the whole of society. We urge all churches and Christians to unite their strength for the achievement of these objectives.

THE CREATIVE WORK OF THE HOLY TRINE GOD

Hanna T. Kampouri

Introduction

Faith in God's creative work is not a side plot of the Christian Faith, limited to the clarification of the genesis of the world and of man. Neither is it a sideline in the sense that the doctrine concerning it would be insignificant in terms of the Doctrines of God, Man and Salvation. This faith in creation opens up an entity that delineates the relationship between God and the world, not merely in terms of cosmology but also for soteriology and eschatology.

In the previous discussions held between the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church belief in creation was brought forward as a central theological justification of all work for the promotion of peace. It has often been stated in these discussions that due to the unity of creation all striving for peace is not only the obligation of the churches and their members, but also a mission uniting all humankind. God is the Father, Creator, and Sustainer of all people and all creation.¹

¹ This has been brought forth in the following connections:

"Mankind forms a whole. God created life good and complete, but because of Adam's fall, it has been shattered." *Turku 1970, Summary of the discussions dealing with peace 7.*

"As children of one Heavenly Father, their Creator and Shepherd, all men are under the protection of His universal law." *Kosva 1977, Salvation and the Kingdom of peace, 2.*

"God created everything to be good, but because of the fall of man the whole creation groans in the bondage of corruption (Rom. 8: 20-22). Its recovery to health presupposes that God's original intentions for the creation are allowed to become realized."

God's activity in restoring health does not concern individuals alone, but embraces the whole of mankind. As God's intentions are realized, the world achieves its ultimate fulfillment.

War has been one of the worst and most dangerous consequences of sin throughout the history of mankind. Therefore it is of prime importance to uproot this evil from the life of the human community. Since our world is God's creation, work for peace does not concern only Christians, but all people. Its means and realization are matters for human reason, for reason, too, is a gift bestowed on man by God. The Christian concepts of creation and of man thus unfold the possibility for all human beings to work together for peace.

God's presence in this world, His Kingdom and grace are joyful realities. The Kingdom of God will appear in glory, but even so, it is already present here and

In the above-mentioned negotiations the use of the belief in creation as a theological argument has not been limited to socio-ethical issues. In the communiques issued by the previous negotiations God's creative work is referred to in connection with theological anthropology, cosmology, soteriology as well as eschatology.¹ The thematic study of the theology of creation is therefore a natural and essential part of the process in which the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church approach one another in the understanding and expression of faith shared by the two bodies.

now. We participate in this Kingdom through God's Word and Sacraments." *Turku 1980, The Theological Foundation of the Churches' Work for Peace, 1-4.*

"God's creative work in the world is a basis for the unity of mankind, and for brotherhood among men. Because of her catholicity, the Church is called upon to the sign of the unity of mankind. Therefore, because of the good intention inherent in God's creative will and due to her very essence, the Church has been summoned to build unity among nations." *Turku 1980, The Theological Foundation of the Churches' Work for Peace, 6.*

"The work for the promoting of peace originates in the Holy Bible. God created the world, which was meant to be one and in which people were meant to be brothers and sisters." *Leningrad 1983, The Work of the Churches for the Promoting of Peace in the Modern World, 11.*

See: Dialogue Between Neighbours. The Theological Conversations between the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church 1970-1986. Communiqués and Theses. Edited by Hanna T. Kampouri. Publications of Luther-Agricola Society B 17. Helsinki 1986.

¹ "God has created mankind to be one, and has redeemed it through his son, Jesus Christ." *Zagorsk 1971, On Justice and Violence, 1.*

"Almighty God, who is One in His substance and Trine in the persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, has created the visible and the invisible world." *Järvenpää 1974, The Christian Doctrine of Salvation, 1-2.*

"The relationship of man to his environment, to nature, which God set him to nurture, gains new meaning from Christian hope. Man's selfishness has impoverished and spoiled God's creation and its life. Man is to blame for the fact that the whole created universe groans" (Rom. 8: 22). It lives, however, 'in hope' (Rom. 8: 20) that it will be 'freed from the shackles of mortality and enter into the liberty and splendour of the children of God' (Rom. 8: 21)." *Järvenpää 1974, The Christian Doctrine of Salvation, IV, 10.*

"We accept the view expressed by the conference that God as Creator and Saviour gives man full dignity, a right to many-sided development and to a life befitting human beings." *Järvenpää 1974, The Bangkok conference 1973, 13.*

"Holiness in its absolute fullness is characteristic of God and only of Him. Any holiness in His creatures is relative and limited. Although it cannot be compared to the holiness of God, it has its origin in Him." *Mikkeli 1986, Holiness, Sanctification and the Saints, 3.*

"God created man holy, when He created him in His own image. This image was corrupted by the Fall, whereby man lost his holiness. The Fall of man is reflected in the whole cosmos (Rom. 8: 20-22). In Christ, the New Adam, the Christian becomes a new creation (2 Cor. 5: 17). This foreshadows the renewal of the whole creation."

Everything that God has created belongs to Him." *Mikkeli 1986, Holiness, Sanctification and the Saints, 6-7.*

The study of belief in creation is not significant only from the viewpoint of inter-church theological dialogues, but its public manifestation is a necessity in the present world as the churches jointly testify to their faith in God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is of great importance for the churches to tell modern man that the world is neither an autonomous nor a neutral reality in regard to God. At the same time the churches themselves ought to remember that the alienation of God and the world is not a feature characteristic only of the current worldview. For instance, Luther found it necessary to comment on the relation of his contemporaries to the first article of the Creed as follows: "We all pass it by lightly. We do hear it and recite it out loud, but we do not comprehend or ponder upon the content of the words. If we did believe it in our hearts, we would also act upon it accordingly. Then we would not proudly brag or defiantly boast as if we had created our lives, riches, power and glory by ourselves... It is God who creates and provides it all so that we might thereby notice and understand his father's heart and abundant love toward us."¹

Especially the post-Enlightenment era has sought to isolate God and the world from one another. In theology too there is a polarization to be discerned, one party of which is theological fundamentalism, the other party being theological modernism. The basic dilemma of the two trends has been their striving to adapt the creation accounts of the Bible directly to the issues raised by Enlightenment philosophy, whereby either the belief in creation or the questions of modern science have been repudiated. And yet the juxtaposition of the creation account and the issues raised by the philosophy of the Enlightenment is an anachronism. This is why fundamentalism has been incapable of adequately interpreting the gospel: it has simply rejected all the modern questions of the natural sciences, historical research as well as theological exegesis. Similarly, modernism has failed in its identification with the intellectual heritage of the Enlightenment and its ideological premises without due criticism: in taking the theological heritage of the Early Church less seriously. Modernism has alienated itself and to a certain extent dissociated itself from the legacy of the faith of the Church. Due to the overwhelming supremacy of the natural sciences and technology, the overcoming of the polarization of theological fundamentalism and modernism is a challenge to be shared by all churches. This can be realized by, on the one hand, taking both conservative theology and modern science seriously and, on the other hand, by placing them in their due positions. As science, the natural sciences do not present any threat to the belief in creation. Nor does the belief in creation, as a belief, threaten modern science. Science is not a

worldview, nor is faith a science. Making this distinction does not entail a separation between natural science and the belief in creation. On the contrary, this distinction renders possible a meaningful dialogue between the two. This dialogue is both a possibility and a necessity in the present worldwide ideological and social situation.

We believe in One God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of All That is, Seen and Unseen

In the creed we publically confess our faith in "God the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and all that is, seen and unseen." This definition reflects the thought carried in the first verse of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The belief in creation indicates that everything existing is created by God.¹ The world has no eternal or autonomous "nature" independent of God, but it is His creation, which is why all creation, not only man, is in relationship to God and is thus to be understood from the viewpoint of this relatedness. As God's creative work all the cosmos is His good work, not an evil world strange in His eyes. "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." (Gen. 1:31).

Luther emphasized that difference which is between God and man in relation to the created. Something that seems bad to man can be good in God's eyes. "If you wish to comprehend God's deeds as meaning those after the Fall that they were very good, you will notice that this is not said of us but of God. One does not say: 'and man saw what God had done and it was very good.' There is a great deal of what God looks at, deeming it very good, that we see as the worst of all, which it is... What is better than Christ and the gospel and yet: what is more cursed in the eyes of the world? How then can something that is bad in our eyes seem good to God? That is known by God alone, as well as by those who see it with God's eyes, that is those who have the Spirit."²

On the basis of the belief in creation Lutheran theology has stressed that God's influence is not confined only to the inner lives of believers but embraces everything created. According to Luther, in considering child rearing, love toward one's wife and respect for the authorities as acts of the flesh, the members of the

¹ "The very simple meaning of what Moses says, therefore, is this: Everything that is, was created by God." *Luther, Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5, 7.*

² *The Bondage of the Will.*
Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan, Saint Louis 1958. WA 42, 6.

papal church fail to understand that all creation is God's.¹ God being Creator. His creative work affects everything in everything, not solely in the lives of Christians: "... a person who is outside God's grace still remains under the general omnipotence of God, who moves and influences everything; God, who starts all and carries all on an absolute and unfailing course..."²

Therefore God's work in the world is not only confined to miracles. The entire creative act, *creatio ex nihilo*, is the wondrous work of God, incomprehensible to reason. Even our very existence, continuous and daily, is God's wonderful gift and handwork. So God's work of creation is not only confined to one act at the beginning of the world but continues as the moment by moment sustenance of the Creation. God has not gone off and left his creation. "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered."³

Faith in God's continued work in his Creation comes out in a beautiful way in the explication of the first Article of Faith in the Small Catechism: "I believe that God has created me and all creation, given me a body and a soul, my eyes, ears, all the members of my body, my reason and all my senses; as well as sustains them at all times."⁴ Without God's sustenance and providence the created world would return to non-existence, from where it was called forth in creation.

The central concept in the belief in creation is creation out of nothing. It was by means of this very idea, *ex nihilo*, that early Christian theology clarified Biblical faith in creation in its relation to the remainder of the models explaining the origin of the world. The *ex nihilo* thought comes out in St. Thomas' thought, in the second century.⁵ Later on in patristic theology, the polemics directed toward, for example, neo-Platonism, Stoicism and Gnosticism (which polemics were necessary for the clarification of the uniqueness of the Christian belief in creation) brought in cosmology and protology as the central themes of the theology of creation. This is

why the salvation history theology of creation, as represented by St. Irenaeus among others, gained relatively little attention.

By means of the *ex nihilo* thought patristic theology particularly wants to give emphasis to the fact that God and the world are not consubstantial, i.e. of one and the same essence. The world does not emanate from God, but is created. The essence and being of God cannot be compared to that of the created. There is no beginning or end in God's being, nor is God confined to time and place. In this respect the essence of the created is quite the opposite: it has a beginning and an end, and is also confined to time and place.

According to the Biblical account of creation the creation of the world is the beginning of time. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen. 1:1). "The beginning" is the genesis of time.¹ Without the world there is no time, no change, no end. Time started once, and it will also end once. Everything created is tied to time and time is bound to the creation. There will come a 'time' when created time will no longer exist. "Then the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven. And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be no time longer."² (Rev. 10: 5-6).

St. John of Damascus comments on the end of created time: "For after the Resurrection time will not be counted by days and nights. Rather, there will be one day without evening when the sun of righteousness will shine brightly on the just, but there will be a deep endless night for the sinners."³ Even if created time ends, it does not mean the cessation of the Creation. At the end of time will occur the new creation, through which the Creation can partake of God's eternity.

Traditionally Lutheran theology has emphasized the concrete time-bound nature of creation. Creation is history and vice versa: history is creation.⁴ Nature and history, time, these cannot be separated.

¹ So, then, I have the conviction that Moses wanted to indicate the beginning of time. Thus in the beginning has the same meaning as if he said: 'At that time, when there was no time, or when the world began, it began in this wise, that heaven and earth were first created by God out of nothing in an unformed condition, not beautified as they now are. However, heaven and earth did not lie unimproved this way for a long time, but immediately on the first day the beginning was made to adorn them with light.' Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, Chapters 1-5, 10. WA 42, 9.

² St. John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa* II, 9.
³ "Schöpfung hat Luther als Geschichte und Geschichte als Schöpfung verstanden." O. Bayer *Zugesagte Welt in der Versenkung der Zeiten*. *Luthers Verständnis der Schöpfung*, 9. Herrenalber Texte 49, 1983.

¹ WA 40, I, 348.
² *The Bondage of the Will*.
³ Mt. 10: 29-30.
⁴ Similarly in the *Confessio Augustana* "God... Creator and Sustainer of all that is, seen and unseen," *Confessio Augustana* I.
⁵ "God, who dwells in heaven and has created all that is from nothing and has proceeded all that is..." *Mend.*, 1, 1.
"Above all the belief that God is God alone. He who has created everything and prepared and made from nothing all that now is. He who encompasses all but cannot Himself be encompassed by anything." *Vie.*, 1, 6.

rated from each other. The Christian faith does not view nature and history merely as empirically provable and as processes based on causality, but also from the salvation historic, transcendental viewpoint, from the viewpoint of faith. "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible" (Heb. 11:3). Salvation history is not a parallel to the general history of the creation. As salvation history, God's deeds are the history of all Creation and of mankind. Understanding the relation between God's good, creative act and the fallen world has frequently been difficult. For example, in the early history of the Church the Christian belief in creation was threatened by concepts, fostered by, among others, Gnostic trends, where creation and redemption were so radically separated from one another that creation was understood as the work of a god other than the one who provides salvation. In these heresies the created world was considered an area strange to God, or even a divine error. In these doctrines salvation meant the liberation of man's soul from the bondage of created matter.

In the Christian faith both man and nature are God's handiwork, both of them part of the same creation. As the image of God, man, however, has a special position in all creation (Gen. 1:26-28). This is why the Fall affects all creation. Due to the Fall all creation is part of God's judgment: "To Adam he said, 'Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' 'Cursed is the ground because of you; ...' (Gen. 3:17).

On the one hand all creation is the area in which God functions and on the other hand it is in its entirety the object of God's saving work. Thus creation is a partaker in salvation history in two ways, which viewpoint opens up the true significance of creation. "The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." (Rom. 8:19-23).

Patristic theology uses the terms *diastema* (*διάστημα*) and *diastasis* (*διάστασις*) in discussing the differences between the Creator and the create.¹ As the Creed puts it, all creation, all that is, is

made, created. Thus, the Creator and the created are not commensurate or comparable.² This distinction or distance is, however, unilateral in that it by no means limits the Creator. The Creator is in *diastasis* in his relation to the created, contrary to the relation of the persons of the Holy Trinity with no separation in essence, while the created is always directly present to the Creator Himself.³ The separation of substance serves as a chasm only from the creation to the Creator, but not inversely. The creation is not alien to the Creator, but "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." (Gen. 1: 31).

Many of the difficulties prevailing in the clarification of the relation between God and the world have been a consequence of conceiving this relation between God and the creation to be symmetric. This is why the fact that God is unknown is understood as being perfect transcendence, i.e. that God would not be realistically present in His creation. Yet *diastasis* is asymmetrical, unilateral. God is transcendent over the world, whereas the world is ever-present and transparent to God. Only the Creator Himself is capable of transcending the gulf between the Creator and the creation.

Thus the Christian belief in creation includes a conceptual tension of a sort which has caused problems for theologians and thinkers throughout the course of time. The belief in creation simultaneously teaches the closeness and/or distance of God and creation. On the relation of God to the creation the Apostle Paul states: "For from him and through him and to him are all things" (Rom. 11: 36); and with regard to the Son and creation: "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him" (Col. 1: 16). The Christian belief in creation does not, however, result in pantheism, since an infinite *diastasis* prevails between the Creator and the creation.

Despite the *diastema* existing between the Creator and the creation, Christianity cannot speak about the desecularization or secularization of nature, as do certain modern theologians, because each

¹ *und die Philosophie*, 243-259. Hrsg. Heinrich Dohle, Margarete Altenburger, Uta Schramm, Leiden 1966.

² "Huge and infinite is the middle-wall which fortifies the Uncreated Being vis-à-vis the created existence. The latter is bounded, the former has no boundary.... In the latter, i.e. in this life, the beginning and end of existence can be understood, but the former, the blessedness that is above creation, neither beginning nor end exists." Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunom.* lib. II, § 69.

³ "The whole created order cannot, thus by its comprehending vision get out of itself, but remains enclosed within itself, and whatever it beholds, it sees itself. And even if it somehow seems to see something beyond itself, that which it sees outside itself has no being." Gregory of Nyssa, *In Ecclesiasten*, or. 7.

¹ See, e.g. T. Paul Verbeke, *ΔΙΑΣΤΗΜΑ and ΔΙΑΣΤΑΣΙΣ in Gregory of Nyssa. Introduction to a concept and the posing of a problem*, Gregor von Nyssa

and every moment nature is dependent on the Creator. There does not exist nature that is in regard to its maker either neutral, autonomous or indifferent. Therefore, God's invitation to His fellowship is nothing extraordinary, disrupting the independent substance of nature. Creation is genuinely itself only in communion with its God.

Thus there is simultaneously a very basic difference, i.e. the not created/not made vs. the created/made and a communion, i.e. the Creator and his creation.

We believe in One Lord, Jesus Christ... eternally begotten of the Father... through Him all things were made

The creation is not only the act of God the Father, but a Trinitarian accomplishment. The Apostle Paul expresses the relation between the three persons of the Holy Trinity in their creative work by stating that creation takes place through the Son: "yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live." (1 Cor. 8: 6). He further writes: "For by him all things were created... and in him all things hold together... he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him..." (Col. 1:16-19). On the basis of Pauline theology St Athanasius defined the creative work in trinitarian terms: "The Father creates everything through the Word in the Spirit."¹ The Father carries out His creative act through the Logos, but the Logos is not merely a passive instrument in this, nor is he the Creator's assistant, but the Creator. The creative work is the common and indivisible work of the Holy Trinity. In his Commentary on Genesis, Luther emphasizes this trinitarian nature of the creative work by continually returning to the fundamental issues of the doctrine of the trinity.

In their creative work, the persons of the Holy Trinity have their own specialized tasks, which reflect the trinity of God. Luther describes the relation between the Father and the Son in creation by stating that the Father created by speaking and that the Son is God's Word, through whom everything was made.² According to Luther,

¹ Athanasius, *Ad Serap.* Ep. III, n. 5, PG XXVI.

² "...in the unity of the Godhead there is a certain plurality of Persons, because one Person is that of the speaker, and another is the Word, or the λόγος. ... But for us it is a great comfort to know that ever since the beginning of the world there have been such indications that in the Divine Being there is a plurality of Persons

God's work does not threaten the unity of the three persons, as these persons act together: "... in one divine essence there are three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Not even so far as their activity is concerned, therefore, is God separated, because all three Persons here co-operate and say: 'Let us make.' The Father does not make one man and the Son another, nor the Son one man and the Holy Spirit another; but the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one and the same God, is the Author and Creator of the same work."¹

The theology of creation also serves as background to the study of the persons of the Trinity. The Father has not created the Son or the Holy Spirit, but the second and the third person in the Godhead are of the same essence with the Father. Therefore the Creed says concerning the origin of the Son, "begotten not made". In christological dogma a distinction is made between the birth of the Son and the creation of the world. It is the theology of creation that provides the background against which the christological dogma of Chalcedon is to be understood. In His divine hypostasis, Christ unites the two natures, in the words of the Chalcedonian Definition: "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, the distinction of the natures being in no way abolished because of the union, but rather the characteristic property of each one being preserved, and concurring into one person and one being (hypostasis)."

Against this background, the teaching of the Early Church unites the creative and redemptive work without ever blending them, however. Redemption does not exclude, cancel or alter the creative work, but includes it in itself. Each of these, i.e. creative and redemptive work, is the work of the one and the same God. Hence Lutheran theology has created an important conceptual distinction between the earthly realm, i.e. *regnum civile*, and the kingdom of Christ, i.e. *regnum Christi*, while at the same time emphasizing that this distinction is not a separation: "...a social order bound by laws is God's good creation and his order, which a Christian can without reservation make use of. This entire Article of Faith concerning the distinction between the realm of Christ and the earthly one has been profitably explained in our books."²

and nevertheless a unity of the divine nature and essence. ... one Person is the Person of the speaking God and that another - not in nature but in Person - is the Word, through whom all things were created and are preserved up to the present day, as the author of the letter to the Hebrews says (1:3): 'Upholding all things by the Word of His power.' Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, Chapters 1-5, 20-21, WA 42, 16-17.

¹ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, Chapters 1-5, 58, WA 42, 44.

² *Apologia Confessionis Augustanae* 17, 1-2.

So the goodness and grace of the Creator are neither to be confused nor separated in such a manner that only redemptive work would be considered the proper work of God. Creation is not as if it were a neutral background for God's specific work of salvation, but creation is in and of itself the work of the Triune God, the Creator, the Redeemer and the Sanctifier. St John of Damascus states: "...out of nothingness He brought forth being and created everything, the invisible as well as the visible, also man consisting of both that which is seen and unseen. He created by His thoughts; the thought became an act completed by the Word and realized by the Spirit."¹

The work of creation takes place through the Son, the Word. Luther links this dogma of the Early Church to Genesis and the creation account in the Gospel according to St John when he states, "What is this Word, or what did He do? Listen to Moses. The light, he says, was not yet in existence; but out of this state of being nothing the darkness was turned into the most outstanding creature, light. Through what? Through Word. Therefore in the beginning and before every creature there is the Word, and it is such a powerful Word that it makes all things out of nothing. From this follows without possibility of contradiction what John expressly adds, 'This Word is God and yet is a Person distinct from God the Father, just as a word and he who utters a word are separate entities.' Yet this distinction is such that, to use the expression, a most single singleness of essence remains."²

The Word understood christologically has always had an especially important position in Lutheran theology, since it does not solely refer to the trinitarian nature of the creative work but also functions as a more general model of explanation of the relationship between the Creator and the created.

God is known through His acts and through the Word.³ These two are not separate from one another but "God has created everything by speaking, and everything is made through the Word; and all His works are just as His words, created by the non-created Word."⁴ To clarify the union between the non-created Word and

the created reality Luther states that God said inwardly "Let there be light" and "light came outwardly."¹

God's speech and his Word are thus not linguistic symbols only referring to something real, as does the human word. God's Word is in itself reality, which is why the creation comes forth from nothing when God speaks through His Word.² The relationship between the created word, the creation and the non-created Word is analogous to the christological dogma which states that the various natures are neither to be confused nor separated. Also, the relationship of God's Word to the Creator is analogous to the trinitarian dogma stating that the trinitarian persons are one God, yet perceivable from one another in their very personal essences.³

As for Orthodox and Lutheran theologies, a far-reaching similarity is to be found in the understanding of the relationship between God and creation. Firstly, this parallelism is manifest in that in accordance with the two traditions the essence of God, *ousia*, is unknown. In the words of Luther, that which belongs to divinity 'outside' creation, is unknown to man. "It is folly to argue much

1 "This Word is God; it is the omnipotent Word, entered in the divine essence. No one heard it spoken except God Himself, that is, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And when it was spoken, light was brought into existence, not out of the matter of the Word or from the nature of Him who spoke but out of the darkness itself. Thus the Father spoke inwardly, and outwardly light was made and came into existence immediately. In this manner other creatures, too, were made later." *Luther, Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5, 19, WA 42, 15.*

2 "Here attention must also be called to this, that the words 'Let there be light' are the words of God, not of Moses; this means that they are realities. For God calls into existence the things which do not exist (Rom. 4:17). He does not speak grammatical words. He speaks true and existent realities. Accordingly, that which among us has the sound of the word is a reality with God. Thus sun, moon, heaven, earth, Peter, Paul, I, you, etc. - we are all words of God, in fact only one single syllable or letter by comparison with entire creation. We, too, speak, but only according to the rules of language; that is, we assign names to objects which have already been created. But the divine rule of language is different, namely: when He says: 'Sun, shine,' the sun is there at once and shines. Thus the words of God are realities, not bare words." *Luther, Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5, 21-22, WA 42, 17.*

3 "Here men have differentiated between the uncreated Word and the created word. The created word is brought into being by the uncreated Word. What else is the entire creation than the Word of God uttered by God, or extended to the outside? But the uncreated Word is the divine thought, an inner command which abides in God, the same as God and yet a distinct Person. Thus God reveals Himself to us as the Speaker who has with Him the uncreated Word, through whom He created the world and all things with the greatest ease, namely, by speaking. Accordingly, there is no more effort for God in His creation than there is for us in the mention of it. With thoughts of this kind the good fathers Augustine and Hilary also delighted themselves." *Luther, Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5, 22, WA 42, 10.*

1 *St. John of Damascus, De fide orthodoxa, XVII.*

2 *Luther, Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5, 17, WA 42, 13.*

3 "God also does not manifest Himself except through His works and the Word, because the meaning of these is understood in some measure. Whatever else belongs essentially to the Divinity cannot be grasped and understood, such as being outside time, before the world, etc." *Luther, Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5, 11, WA 42, 9.*

4 *WA 42, 35, 38-41.*

about God outside and before time, because this is an effort to understand the Godhead without a covering, or the uncovered divine essence. Because this is impossible, God envelops Himself in His works in certain forms, as today He wraps Himself up in Baptism, in absolution, etc. If you should depart from these, you will get into an area where there is no measure, no space, no time, and into the merest nothing, concerning which, according to the philosopher, there can be no knowledge.¹ Similarly, Orthodox theology traditionally teaches that God's essence is unknown to creation.

The fact that the divine essence, *ousia*, cannot be known does not, however, mean that God is totally unknown to man and that the ontological gulf between the non-created God and the created is unbridgeable. As stated above, Lutheran theology teaches that the incarnated Word bridges the gap between the Creator and the created. Orthodox theology teaches that God works in His creation through divine power (*energeia*). Especially St Gregory Palamas developed this doctrine on *energeia*. According to him, the divine power, i.e. *energeia*, is not created grace or an intermediary reality between the Creator and the creation but God Himself. The origin of the divine power and the Word is the essence of God.² In this respect the Lutheran concept of the Word and the Palamistic concept of *energeia* are closely related. The two traditions emphasize that no intermediary reality exists between God and His creation but that God Himself bridges the chasm, thus coming into the midst of His creation.

Even if the Palamistic concept of *energeia* and the Lutheran concept of the Word cannot be treated as identical, it is, however, evident that the intent of the solution for the relationship between the Creator and His creation is the same. The communion between the divine power and the Word is manifest in the first chapter of the Letter to the Hebrews (1-3): "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."

As stated above, Lutheran theology emphasizes that God's Word is not merely a sign to describe reality but a Word working out reality or rather reality itself. "God has created everything by

speaking, and everything is made through the Word; and all His works are just as His words, created by the non-created Word."¹

At its meeting in 1985, the International Lutheran-Orthodox Commission therefore juxtaposed the Lutheran concept of the Word and the palamistic concept of *energeia*. "God, whom no one has ever seen (John 1:18), reveals Himself in history to people through His word and power, i.e. *energeia*. This divine revelation, which begins in the creation of the world (Acts 14:15-17), has its fulfillment in His saving work (*oikonomia*) in Christ, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and in the promise of the New Creation."²

Thus the concepts of *energeia* and the Word cannot be kept as entities separate from the personal God, but the triune God works through *energeia* and the Word and is present in His creation. The non-created Word and *energeia* bestow existence on created reality.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life

In the Third Article of Faith we express our faith in the Lord and Giver of Life. The Holy Spirit sustains creation, so without the Holy Spirit nothing would live. Concerning the text for the Creed that the Spirit of God mentioned in Genesis 1:2 ("...and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters") is the life-giving Holy Spirit, Luther states: "As a hen broods her eggs, keeping them warm in order to hatch her chicks, and, as it were, to bring them to life through her, so Scripture says that the Holy Spirit brooded, as it were, on the waters to bring to life those substances which were to be quickened and adorned. For it is the office of the Holy Spirit to make alive."³

The Church Fathers interpreted the Old Testament texts in the way that the Spirit of God is given not only to man,⁴ but also to all created living things.⁵ For example the words in Psalm 33: 6, i.e. "by the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth", are understood to refer to the Holy Spirit. According to St Irenaeus the heavenly Spirit has been sent into all the world, not to the church alone.⁶

According to St Basil the Great, the Holy Spirit is the perfecter of creation. He however reminded us that this did not mean that the

¹ WA 42, 35, 38-41.

² The International Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue, 1985, Conference Documents.

³ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5*, 9, WA 42, 8.

⁴ Gn 2: 7; 6: 3; Jb 21: 3; 33: 4; Hs 37; Sr 12: 7.

⁵ Ps 104: 28-30; Jb 34: 14-15.

⁶ Adv. haer. III, 11, 8.

¹ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5*, 11, WA 42, 15.

² "This Word is God; it is the omnipotent Word, uttered in the divine essence," Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, 19, WA 42, 15.

Father could not have created without the Holy Spirit. The co-creation of the Persons of the Trinity in creation is based on the free choice of the Persons.¹

St Irenaeus compared the work of the Holy Spirit in creation and in salvation history to the work of a dramatist who directs the drama of salvation on the stage of history.²

On the basis of the Early Church tradition, Luther taught that the Holy Spirit sustains the creative work by continually giving creation existence.³ This work of the Holy Spirit, based on creation, as giver of life and as sustainer is different from the work where He frees Christians from the elements of the fallen world, giving a new life in Christ: "So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world... Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba', Father." (Gal. 4: 4, 6). In faith, the Holy Spirit works out a new life and the fruits of this new life. The fruits of this new life (love toward God and our fellow man) are a consequence of and a witness to the presence of the Holy Spirit. "We believe, teach and also confess that works do not sustain faith and salvation in us but that these are solely the act of the Spirit of God, through faith; the Spirit of God, of whose presence and indwelling good works bear witness."⁴

These two activities of the Holy Spirit, i.e. as Creator and Sanctifier, are neither to be confused nor separated from one another. The new life in Christ is the beginning of the new creation, the new heaven and new earth (see Rom. 8:11; 2 Cor. 5:17).

¹ "When you consider creation I advise you to first think of Him who is the first cause of everything that exists: namely, the father, and then of the Son, who is the creator, and the Holy Spirit, the perfecter... The Originator of all things is One: He creates through the Son and perfects through the Spirit. The Father's work is in no way imperfect, since He accomplishes all in all, nor is the Son's work deficient if it is not completed by the Spirit. The Father creates through His will alone and does not need the Son, yet chooses to work through the Son. Likewise the Son works as the Father's likeness, and needs no other co-operation, but He chooses to have His work completed through the Spirit." *St. Basil the Great, On the Holy Spirit*, 62. New York 1980. (De Spiritu Sancto 38)

² Adv. Haer., III, 33, 7.

³ "Therefore when the text says: 'And God saw that it was very good,' it refers to the preservation itself, because the creature could not continue in existence unless the Holy Spirit delighted in it and preserved the work through this delight of God in His work. God did not create things with the idea of abandoning them after they had been created, but He loves them and expresses His approval of them. Therefore He is together with them. He sets in motion, He moves, and He preserves each according to its own manner." *Luther, Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5*, 50-51. WA 42, 38.

⁴ Epitome 4, 15.

The activity of the Holy Spirit can be described with the christological term *Kenosis*, since the Holy Spirit acts without revealing Himself other than in actions and deeds secretly influenced by Him. The new creation influenced by the Holy Spirit is not present in creation in a visible way. It is in the midst of creation in an indescribable, inward way (Luke 17: 21), it is wherever God is believed in and loved, wherever good deeds are done as gifts of the Holy Spirit (Mat. 25: 34-40).

Yet God has also revealed himself. He is present among His people in His Word and in the Sacraments. "It is through these, i.e. through the Word and the Sacraments, that the Holy Spirit does His work."¹

Summary

In the theology of creation, the focus has often been shifted from trinitarian salvation historic thought, i.e. the study of the works of the true God, to a type of cosmological thinking where a model of the creation, static in the relationship between God and the cosmos, is striven for. To a certain extent this happened as far back as the Patristic era when opposition to both Gnostic dualism and the eternal conception of matter of Greek philosophy brought cosmology and protology forward as the predominant issues of the theology of creation. For instance the theology of creation of St Irenaeus, with its central viewpoint in salvation history, failed to achieve a very significant position later. In Scholastic Theology the salvation historic viewpoint of creation remained in the background, which is why the theology of creation has often been utilized as an explanation of hierarchies of existence and natural causality as well as a protological study, instead of understanding the theology of creation as the study of God's works in the history of salvation—not only in retrospect but also from the perspectives of the present and of eschatology.

An impending need, arising from the present age, to understand the relationship between the creation and man in its original manner cannot be a mere 'return to nature', since the Christian faith also presupposes God's central position in the inter-relationship of man and nature, which relationship cannot be separated from the relationship of the whole of creation to the Creator.

Forgetting the belief in creation may result in the kind of interpretation of the Christian faith where Christ is merely an existential Saviour who liberates man from the worldly or societal bonds he is in. Christ is not only a saviour for some. He is the Pantokrator,

¹ *Apologia Confessionis Augustanae* 24, 70.

through whom everything was created and under whom everything is subjected.

The Bible and the theological heritage of the Early Church can open up a rich theology of creation which can teach us to see ourselves, our own era and the entire cosmos, not as autonomous entities, but as the fallen creation of God; in which God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is continually present, sustaining and calling all creation into His fellowship.

CREATION THE FIRST CLAUSE OF THE CREED

A.I. Osipov

One of the interconfessional dogmas of Christianity is the teaching on creation of the world by God as it is clearly written down in the Bible. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the Earth ... and God said, Let there be ... And there was ... and the evening ... and the morning were the first day ... the second day ... the third day ... the fourth day ... the fifth day ... the sixth day ... Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." (Gen. 1-2,1; also 2 Maccab. 7, 28; Is. 45, 18; Jer. 10, 12; Ps. 145, 6; Jo. 1, 3; Rom. 4, 17; Col. 1: 16, 17; Heb. 11, 3; et al). And the generally accepted Christian creed has in its very first clause the truth of creation: "I believe in One God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and Earth, of all things visible and invisible".

What is the meaning of this truth for the modern Christian mind? The reaching of revelation may be summed up briefly as the following concepts:

(1) The world did not appear by itself but is a result of God's creative activity.

(2) The world was not transformed by God from some everlasting matter but was created by Him, i.e. the matter and the world as a whole (cosmos) were brought to life from non-existence (ex nihilo) through His omnipotent creative Word only.

(3) The creation of the world as a whole was not instantaneous but took six days.

(4) Alongside with a visible world - a world that can be perceived by man - another world was created, a world invisible and imperceptible.

It is obvious that each of the four statements involves a complex of theogico-philosophical problems needing a special examination. We shall limit the examination by one question. What is the nature, or the essence of the created world?

There are three major views of religious philosophy upon this problem, dualistic, pantheistic, monistic.

The simplest of them is the dualistic view, according to which the matter is an eternal substance existing of its own and serving the original material from which God creates the world like an architect or a builder. From this point of view the matter and the world

are substances of their own, and in this sense are essentially independent of God. Even if the world were to be destroyed, the basis-matter - is indestructible.

Christian theology cannot accept this notion. First, it has no reference in the Bible. Second, it discredits the idea of God as the one supreme beginning and source of being, for it is generally connected with ideas of metaphysical and ethical dualism, which eventually places it outside the Revelation.

From the pantheistic point of view (existing in many variants which are all reduced to one idea), the world is the self-revelation of the Deity. According to this concept, both the matter and the world are either of the same substance as the Deity (i.e. their essence is the same and equal to that of God) or non-existent. It is of interest to note that some Russian philosophers (E.G.V.S. Soloviev and S.L. Frank) also wrote of one substance for the world and for God.

Still, the pantheistic point of view - in terms of the world - its origin and its essence - is incompatible with Christianity.

Pantheism deprives the notion of God of the supreme positive predicate which man's conscience can attribute to God - His Personality; moreover, it considers the origin of the world as an action of necessity in God, as one conditioned rigidly by the ontological properties of His nature. Pantheists try to avoid the very notion of "creation", since creation involves the existence of unconditional freedom in God. Father Pavel Florensky is right in saying, "Despite Spinoza's acosmism and most philosophers' pantheism, nothing can be concluded from the nature of God on the existence of the world; the act of world creation - whether we take it to be instantaneous and historically attainable, or gradual and spread over the entire historical period, or revealed in an infinite time process, or even pre-eternal - this act must be conceived, with all variety of possible concepts, to be free, i.e. originating from God without a necessity".¹ This is a sufficiently clear formulation of a fundamental concept of Christian faith, which distinguishes Christianity from Pantheism; an absolute spiritual freedom of God as a being both Personal and Perfect.

Pantheistic cosmogony is opposed to Christianity in other important aspect as well. By identifying the essence of God with the essence of the world, pantheism guarantees the annihilation - in man's conscience - of either one or the other.

The annihilation of the former generally occurs in Europe, resulting in a cult of Man, a "religion of Man-God", and consequent leads to an incredible increase of pride, which in turn leads to alienation, egoism, hatred, dictatorial mental and moral behaviour,

etc. The development of this negative phenomena is eventually crowned by their admission - as a minimum they are allowed to exist, which is especially evident in such fields as music, literature, art, philosophy; the principle "all is permissible" substitutes arrogantly the principle of freedom; thus a society passes a death sentence on itself. It should not be supposed that this refers to the non-religious, non-Christian part of society only. Unfortunately, the principles of Pantheism exert a great influence on philosophical and theological thought thus shattering the Church from within and misleading the Christians - taking them away from the correct understanding of God and of man's attitude towards Him.

The Pantheistic doctrine influences the solution of most important problems by limiting them logically. Pantheism offers a quite original solution of such problems as truth and fallacy, good and evil, freedom and dictatorship, beauty and ugliness, suffering and welfare, etc. Since these opposite categories evolve necessarily from one source - "God-World" - then there is no essential difference between them, nor any antagonism. The religious and anthropological consequences are obvious: the firm principles and goals give way to utilitarian and pragmatic aims or to abstract ideals as best.

Christianity rejects the concepts of dualism and pantheism, and affirms the idea of creation ex nihilo, from non-existence (2 Mac. 7, 28), from the invisible (πρὸ τοῦ φαινομένου Heb. 11, 3), through the Word of God (λόγος θεοῦ Heb. 11, 3), Logos, the self-revealing thought and will of God, is set forth in the Gospel of St John: All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made" (Jn. 1: 3). "This and other texts of the Scriptures, as well as the context on the whole, unambiguously understood by the fathers of the Church,¹ speak of Creation as an act in which the Triune God gave existence to the very matter and the world from "non-existence", "ex nihilo", from nothing. The concept of "nothing" is the most difficult problem in the theological attitude towards the mystery of creation. The reason for it being so difficult is not even so-called common sense saying that nothing can evolve from nothing; the reason is in the understanding of the nature of the world, which - in terms of the biblical context of Creation - appears to be void of ephemeral, having no existence, no being. It is this conclusion that Christianity has always opposed by the dogma of Incarnation and teaching on Resurrection. The antinomy is obvious, and a certain theological analysis is needed to comprehend the contradiction.

¹ P. Florensky, *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, Moscow 1914, 144.

¹ Cf. ideas from old fathers and teachers of the Church, collected by Archbishop Filaret of Chernigov, *Dogmatic Orthodox Theology*, St. Petersburg 1982, 125-128; Archimandrite Sylvester, *On Dogmatic Orthodox Theology*, Kiev 1885, vol. 3, 17-44.

The theological interpretation of the world creation is based on the well-known Church teaching, which was elaborated by St Gregory Palamas in the 14th century, on the necessity of distinguishing - in God - between His essence or nature, which is absolutely transcendental for the created world, and His energies or actions, which are perceptible for the human mind. The main idea of this theological model can be seen from these words by St Gregory Palamas, "God is and called the nature of all being, because everything belongs to Him and exists due to this belonging; but belongs not to His nature, but to His energies". (The Russian translation is to be found in "Everlasting light" by S. Bulgakov, 1917, p.125).

Archpriest. Prof. V. Zenkovsky can be said to comment upon these words when he writes, "The Divine energies penetrate the world; it is through these energies that the world is supported by God and governed by Him. This is the teaching of St Gregory Palamas, defending the apophatic aspect in the notion of Deity and at the same time clarifying the "omnipresence" of God in the world in the shape of Divine energies, which is important both for theology - for the purity of teaching on God - and for the metaphysics, for an understanding of the world. The world has not only a surface ("an envelope"), which is measurable and perceptible, but also the rays of Divine energies, which penetrate everything in the world in order to revive it and transform it". "All tissues of the world are pierced by the rays of Divine energies; since the radiation is not of the created being, perceptible for us; without admitting this distinction between the "essence" in God and His Divine energies we cannot comprehend the world as living whole, nor can we comprehend God without falling in to a sheer transcendentalism".¹

An essentially the same idea was given a different verbal formulation by a prominent Russian theologian and philosopher, Evgeniy Trubetskoy. Trubetskoy is of the opinion that "the pre-eternal wisdom - Sophia² contains the eternal ideas which are prototypes of all things created, of all the world evolving in time. Hence, in the pre-eternal act of creation, God sees - before the beginning of time - the non-existence filled with the boundless variety of positive opportunities. In Him the irrelevant non-existence is transformed into relative non-existence, i.e. into a potentiality or a possibility of a certain existence ... and it is that which evolves in time".³

St Maxim the Confessor wrote about it in a more certain way, "Knowledge of things always existed in the Creator, Who, when He wanted gave essence (οὐσία) to it and brought it into light (φωτίζειτο)".¹

The above quotations contain essentially the same idea: the Divine energies (ideas of eternal Sophia, "Knowledge of things", Divine Word) have brought into existence the matter and then cosmos in all its variety and greatness, including man who became the crown of creation. Which means that the things created were given existence or essence by the energies which were the basis, the origin, the "nature" of all "things", their substance. Consequently, the world is realized in matter, i.e. it is in fact the Divine energies animated or the Divine ideas brought about due their being of God's energies - although they are not of God's nature. Hence, cosmos without the Divine energy realizing it as a substance is nothing, non-existence, as inconceivable artifact. The world is kept by the power and the energy of the Divine Word, "And God said let there be ... And there was". "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts. 17: 28). This means that the world is not based on a material substance; the basis of the world is the immaterial, spiritual Divine idea of the world in this sense "God is and called the nature of all being".

St Cyril of Alexandria taught that the Creation of the world is not the birth of the nature of God, as pantheists had suggested; it was an act performed by His energies. "Activity creates, but nature gives birth. Nature and activity are not the same, therefore to create is not to give birth".²

If translated into the terminology of St Gregory Palamas, these words of St Cyril would be as follows: "The ability to create belongs to energy. The ability to give birth belongs to nature. Nature (essence) is not the same as energy; consequently, creation is different from birth".

Therefore, in the frame work of the present theological interpretation the world is not something which is absolutely external or alien to God Who has created it; it is not a thing separate from Him or out of contact with Him (cf. the teaching of Philo Judaeus), which is suggested by dualism; nor is the world an emanation or an outcome of an some impersonal divine nature (essence) which practically has no place for God or for the world as authentic realities - as is suggested by pantheism. The Christian faith teaches that the world is inseparable and indivisible from its Creator, since it is a realization of His eternal non-created energies; on the other hand,

¹ V. V. Zenkovsky, *Principles of Christian Philosophy*, vol. 2, Paris 1964, 51, 53.

² According to Trubetskoy, Sophia is "a divine wisdom and power which is inseparable from Christ". E. Trubetskoy, *The Sense of Life*, Moscow 1918, 104.

³ E. Trubetskoy, *Ibid.*, 105.

¹ Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 90, 1048, quoted from Archimandrite Sylvester, *On Dogmatic Orthodox Theology*, Kiev 1885, vol. 3, 40.

² Archimandrite Sylvester, *Ibid.*, 42, note 4.

the world is not of the nature of God; therefore, the world does not merge with Him, but keep its own reality, its "personality", its immutability.

Thus "Chalcedonic" of God being inseparably, indivisibly, immutably, eternally united with the world is valid for the entire history of the world and manifests itself in three different forms. The first form is the creation of the world; according to the "Chalcedonic" principle, the union of the world and God is on the level of energy: the world is related to God's energy but not to His essence. The second form is the Incarnation; according to the same principle, the Divine nature and human nature are united in Jesus Christ. The third form is the general resurrection, a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21: 1); a reconstruction of everything, when God is all in all (*πάντα ἐν πάντιν*) (1 Cor. 15: 28); a union of God with all mankind and all creation which will reach an utmost degree without merging or dissolving i.e. in accordance with the same "Chalcedonic" principle. In this case God's Creation becomes fully of God and godliness. It is hardly possible to say anything more concrete on deification, for there are no direct indications in the Revelation of the Subject.

Some consequences should be pointed out, resulting from the above concept of world creation.

First, we should speak of deification of Creation as of an opportunity, and a process, to come more of God both for man as a personality and for the matter itself: the human body, the lower beings, the natural forces, artefacts, etc.

Second, we should speak of comprehending the godliness of man. Since man was given essence by the creator, not only the human soul but the human body as well are the image of the Creator. Hence, the act of general resurrection is regular and necessary, since it was implied in the very act of Creation as a manifestation of God's immutable energy in relation to man and all creation.

Third, we should speak of comprehending the world in terms which are quite different from the mechanistic theory claiming that all changes in the Universe and all living creatures are caused by physical and chemical forces only. The Christian view is different: the world is pierced with the divine energies - therefore it is a well-arranged beautiful whole, which requires a rational and reverent attitude on the part of man.

This last aspect is becoming of particular importance, for we are facing a great danger: man's activity may result in the destruction of environment. We all know about the concrete problems caused by the ecological situation in the world and the certain regions of the world, as well as about scientific and technological measures which are offered and carried out in order to solve those problems.

In this the Church has her own field of activity - Her field is morality.

The World Council of Churches has put forward a theme for our joint examination and research, "Justice, Peace, and the integrity of Creation", considering it a most vital current issue. It is growing more and more evident, however, that mankind - even with peace an justice attained - may perish, if the integrity of nature is not kept, or, to be more exact, if man does not do his best to restore the integrity. Equally evident is the fact that it is the moral standard of mankind which both causes the destruction of environment and is able to bring about a resurrection of environment. The ecological problem, therefore, is a moral problem rather than a material one, with the nucleus of the problem being man rather than his environment.

What is the most important thing in man? It is his purpose in life, guiding him and directing all his activity. This purpose was revealed to man by Jesus Christ - it is the attainment nurturing and the manifestation of love which both satisfies man's soul and his ideal of life and is a safe criterion for estimating man's activity in the world. There are no doubt that nature is mainly destroyed by man's egocentrism and selfishness, by his pragmatic and material interest prevailing over the spiritual values (pity and charity, beauty and reason, impartiality and moderation, love for all things created); not are there any doubts that the integrity of creation can only be restored when the spiritual integrity of man has been restored. "Wisdom would not enter into evil soul and would not dwell in a body which is enslaved to sin" (Wisdom of Solomon, 1: 4).

How can this restoration of man be attained? We find the answer in the Holy Scriptures - "The time is to come that judgement (*ὁ κρίσις*) must begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. 4: 17). It is in the Church that the revival of man must begin. The Church has a knowledge of man, which is so needed by the world - it is a teaching of righteous life, which is called asceticism. This doctrine contains objective laws and practical means supported by a vast Christian experience; it indicates the true path and teaches to avoid possible errors. This theory is applicable to all stations and conditions, which - in their turn - determine the degree of success (perfection) in ascetic practice. It is certain to lead the man to his goal in life - to "the bond of perfectness" (Col. 3: 14), i.e. to love. Unfortunately, modern Christianity knows little of this theory which was called "the science of all sciences" by the Fathers of the Church who considered it to be of utmost importance. This is another reason why it should be learnt by all Christians in order to form a basis for the actual process of reviving the life in the church

and, consequently, in the world (Mt. 5: 13) and of the world (Rom. 8: 19-22).

The above are some of the conclusions resulting from a theological view of cosmogony in the Bible and from its fundamental thesis that God created the world "ex nihilo".

Of certain interest are some of the contemporary scientific theories on the material nonentity of the material world, e.g. the theory of anti-world or "Symmetrical Universe" by G. Naan, Academician of the Estonian Academy of Sciences.

The development of physical science resulted in discovering the antiparticles for all subatomic particles except the photon and the neutral meson (one theory suggests that the mesons are the forces holding together the nucleus of the atom while the photons are regarded as the quantum of electromagnetic energy of discrete particles having zero mass, no electric charge, and an indefinitely long lifetime). The particles and the antiparticles are sort of twins having the opposite signs of electric charges. But whereas the particles are the "bricks" of which our Universe is built, the antiparticles are but "visions" appearing in the world for infinitesimal moments of time. When the two collide, an explosion occurs resulting in their mutual restriction and great amount of energy is emitted. A long study of antiparticles and their behaviour led some scientists to the idea of anti-Universe, which is an exact image of our Universe, co-exists with it, differing from it by the opposite sign.

The main thesis of prof. Naan's theory is that the two halves of the Universe - the World and the Anti-World - arise from an absolute vacuum.

The statement of a possibility to arise from nothing (void, vacuum) must seem utterly paradoxical if the laws of conservation are to be strictly observed. The meaning of the laws is that nothing may arise from nothing, nothing can give birth to anything at all. The present hypothesis does not contradict this statement. A nothing is actually not able to give birth to something (one something), but it gives birth to a greater thing - a something and an anti-something, simultaneously. The present hypothesis is ultimately based upon an elementary fact, i.e. that Equation $(-1) + (+1) = 0$ may very well be written as $0 = (+1) + (1)$, the latter expressing not only cosmology, but cosmogony as well. The initial building material for the Universe is a void, a vacuum. On an average, the summarily symmetrical Universe is a space empty of matter. Consequently, it can arise from an emptiness, with all laws of conservation strictly observed. All time and space intervals and coordinates (axes) are

identically equal to zero. On an average, the symmetrical Universe contains nothing, not an even space and time".¹

The above theory is particularly unusual by its idea of physical vacuum, of a nothing as the original "material" for the Universe. On the one hand, this idea is in harmony with that in the Bible - on the material world being meonic by itself; on the other hand, it puts forward a philosophical problem - what is the driving force which preserves the very unstable existence of cosmos by "splitting" an ideal vacuum and creating a wonderful structure and life.

In the framework of this theory, no material force as the driving force is implied. When non-matter is admitted to be the source and origin of all things existing, we return to the fundamental principles of theism in the Bible - "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth".

¹ G. E. Naan, *Symmetrical Universe* (A report presented to the Astronomical Council of the USSR Academy of Sciences), Cf. *Proceedings of the Tartu Astronomical Observatory*, vol. 34, Tartu 1964, 431-433.

EXEGETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE THEOLOGY OF CREATION

Wille Riekkinen

The Challenge of Belief in Creation

The Bible has much to say about "the praiseworthy acts of God", for instance the creation of the world and humankind. In antiquity this provided a sufficient explanation of the origin of the world. However, creation was not the starting point of Old Testament revelation history; rather it is the historical interaction of God with the patriarchs. In the accounts of creation this history of revelation was extended to touch upon the origin of all things. The God Yahweh, who became known in history, in particular in the liberation of Israel from Egypt and the "covenant assembly" on Sinai, was demonstrated to be the Creator of the entire universe.

The Old Testament accounts of creation are clearly linked with the creation stories of Israel's neighbours; these stories are considerably older than the biblical texts. The Mesopotamian story "The Mother goddess creates man" tells how a god urges that man should be formed from clay and made alive with blood. The still better known creation epic "Enuma elis" depicts the primeval struggle between Marduk and Tiamat, the victory of Marduk and the creation of humankind from the blood of Kingu, Tiamat's military commander. In Egyptian theology the best-known creation stories come from the areas of Heliopolis, Memphis and Aswan. The characteristics of these creation beliefs vary greatly; for example, Ptah creates "with the thoughts of his heart" and "with the commands of his tongue" (his word); Khnum, on the other hand, creates by moulding clay on a potter's wheel. This means that as far as their themes are concerned the biblical creation stories are nothing new in antiquity. What is new and significant, however, is the way in which familiar material is used in appropriating creation material for one's own religion. There was a desire to use the creation stories to proclaim that Yahweh, the God of the fathers, reigns as Creator and Saviour in history.

The Creation Narratives in the Bible

God's work of creation is viewed in the Old Testament from a variety of different perspectives. This is demonstrated by the very first pages of the Bible. Here are found the two best-known accounts of creation. At the beginning of Genesis (1: 1-2:4a) there is the later of the two accounts, i.e. the so-called Priestly account (P; from ca. 500-400 B.C.), and immediately following it the older so-called Yahwist account (J; Gen. 2: 4b-25; ca. 900-700 B.C.). The recognition of this stratification reminds us that in ancient Israel creation was spoken of with varying emphases. There was not a single "canonical" doctrine of creation which was merely repeated, but the same story could be told from different points of view.

The most noteworthy difference between these accounts is that the older one (J) depicts the manner of creation as a concrete act: man is formed from clay and woman from the man's rib; in the later account (P) God creates by his word: God spoke ... and it came to pass. Behind both of these accounts lies a long oral tradition and theological elaboration. This reflection and processing with regard to creation is attested in the Old Testament not only by the aforementioned passages but also by numerous other references, to creation at the beginning of time, the triumph over chaos and primeval monsters, on the one hand, and to God's continuing work of creation and sustenance, on the other hand, particularly in the Psalms, Deutero-Isaiah, Job and the Book of Wisdom.

In the New Testament, too, creation is spoken of in many contexts, using a variety of literary expressions. The New Testament does not merely continue the Old Testament theme of God (or Spirit) as the Creator who rules the world, but points to the central role of Jesus Christ in God's work of creation.

A good example is provided by the "creation account" in John's Gospel (Jn 1: 1-18). While emphasizing the unity of Christ with creation the writer gives a mythical explanation of the pre-existence of Christ. He does this by using the concept of the logos as a key term. In both Jewish and Greek worlds this term was understood very widely. It was a matter of "word", "wisdom", "cause", "reason", "force uniting and sustaining the world", "quest for harmony", "architectonic order of things", "power opposing chaos and expressing and implementing God's (just) will". By this God created the world and sustains it. This Logos was now, according to John, incarnate in Jesus Christ.

The Message of the Accounts of Creation

The biblical accounts of creation are not timeless scientific explanations of the origin of the universe, but mythological accounts of God's work of creation and sustenance. With their aid the "primeval events", temporarily at least beyond the reach of science, can be brought into the present in such a way that the hearer comes to face the reality of creation. Then he realizes that he is being addressed by the same reality, the *prima causa*, the Creator, as those who first used these accounts in this sense. This quest for the *prima causa* is a universal human characteristic. It is part of being human and of the ultimate question in proclaiming creation.

This basic question is followed by many others on another level, namely those relating to faith and understanding. They are included in the human questions and answers concerning the beginning and end of all things, the origin and destruction of the world, the "big bang" and the final catastrophe. In whatever way these questions are asked and whatever kind of (scientific) answers they each provide, they are to be seen as questions and answers on a secondary level. Before them we meet the primary proclamatory narrative level, through which we are brought into contact with the author and pre-server of all things. All the creation accounts of the Bible aim at this encounter and its realization in our own historical situation.

The Terminology of Creation

The Priestly account describes creation by means of the word. It is the Creator's command, by which the non-existent (*h*) *h*va are called existent (*h*va). (In the intertestamental period and in the New Testament this is linked to the ideas of creation from nothing, *ex nihilo* = *h* *h*va *h*va, see 2 Macc. 7: 28, without using e.g. pre-existent material). In addition, the account reminds us that the whole created world has a purpose (*causa finalis*) and a starting point (*prima causa*); creation did not create itself. Only God can undertake that, therefore in the Old Testament the verb "to create" is used only for God's creating activity.

During the intertestamental period and in particular in the process of the hellenization of Judaism the theology of creation was enriched in many ways, although it continued to be based on Old Testament material. With respect to the terminology, the work of creation was described using verbs denoting ordinary doing, moulding or founding. The key theological concept in the Greek texts, however, was provided by the word family *κτίω*, not the technical term *δημιουργεῖν* found in Hellenistic accounts of creation. The

latter directs one's thoughts to handicraft and suchlike "creation", the former rather to a ruler whose will, decision and command to an oasis in the desert suddenly lead to the appearance of a skilfully built city for certain utilitarian purposes. *δημιουργεῖν* is a term built up for certain utilitarian purposes. *κτίω* is a verb denoting volitional, con-related to handicraft, while *κτίω* is a verb denoting volitional, conscious and influential intellectual potential. It is hardly a coincidence that in the New Testament the verb *κτίω* and its derivatives became a technical term: it is solely used for God's work of creation.

... the Creator of all things visible and invisible ...

The biblical expressions describing the Creator's activity are information technology of their time. The message is, however, clear: God is something far greater than the human being. The Creator of heaven and earth is not a giant being but something quite different. He is the God, the first and the last, who remains when heaven and earth, "the work of his hands" (Ps. 102: 26) disappear. Remembering this the expression "creating by the word" can be regarded as an accurate theological term for God's activity. It emphasizes the person of the Creator, for creating by the word tells of a conscious will and objective. God does what pleases him (Ps. 115: 3; 135: 6). On the other hand, creating by the word emphasizes the spiritual dimension of creation as well as the superiority of the Creator with regard to creature (Is. 41: 4; 48: 13; Amos 9: 6; Ps. 33: 6: "By his word the Lord has created the heavens, by the breath of his mouth the host of the stars").

The references to creation glorify God, who demonstrates his supremacy over the direction of history. His omniscience is praised, as well as his wisdom and omnipotence (Jer. 10: 12; Ps. 104: 24; Job 28: 24-26; Prov. 3: 19, 18: 27. He has authority over creation, which should show reverence to him (Jer. 17: 7; 22: 11; 40: 26ff; 43: 1; 44: 2; Hos. 8: 14; Ps. 103: 22; 119: 73). The act of creation distinguishes Yahweh from the false gods (Jer. 10: 12-16; 51: 15-19; Ps. 96: 5; 115: 3f; Jon. 1: 9). Although the Priestly account tells that God rested on the seventh day (Gen. 2: 2f), the Bible assumes that God continually creates new things and rules the world by his ordinances (Jer. 1: 5; Ps. 104: 27f; Neh. 9: 6; Is. 40: 26).

For the Old Testament writers it was an axiom that the creation had "fallen", the Yahwist account of paradise concludes with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden. The Priestly account of the flood with its causes and consequences also makes this clear. But fallen humankind still possesses the blessing of Gen. 1: 28, which is renewed after the flood (Gen. 9: 1-17). The blessing also includes a

commission, but the very first pages of the Bible do not give a definite reference to the final goal of history. We discern it, however, already in the promise given to Abram that "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12: 3). Later this theology of creation, sustenance and renewal increases in emphasis (e.g., Is. 65), coming to a climax in the visions of a new heaven and a new earth in the apocalyptic literature (Rev. 21).

The Early Christian Theology of Creation

The theology of creation became a self-evident part of early Christian thought. Missionary sermons based on the Old Testament proclaimed one God who created the world in which human beings live, and whom even the Gentiles appear to seek and worship without being aware of it (cf. Acts 17: 22-31; 14: 15-17). A good example of creation theology as the material of a missionary sermon is to be found in 1 Cor. 8: 6: we have "however, only one God, the Father, from whom everything is and for whom we are created, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom everything is, so also we through him". A freer translation would be:

We have only one God, the Father.
Everything comes from him.
And to him we are journeying.

We have only one Lord, Jesus Christ.
He took part in the creation of everything,
he created us also.

The verses begin with the Jewish creed (Shema, Dt. 6: 4), to which is added the assertion that God is the Creator and ultimate destiny. Alongside this is placed the Christian confession that Jesus is Lord, which includes the statement that Christ participated in the creation of everything. The skilfully constructed verse assigns Christ a place and task in the creation event. God is the source and objective of existence; Jesus Christ is the one through whom we receive life.

Paul used this confession in a situation where the problem was the consumption of meat used in pagan sacrifices. According to the apostle Christians are free to eat all kinds of meat (8: 8), because the whole world is the Lord's (10: 25-26). Admittedly, he makes concession to those with a weak conscience.

An even clearer example of Christ's role in the creation of the universe is to be found in Colossians in the hymn of Christ (Col. 1: 15-20), where creation and redemption are closely linked, as in the Old Testament.

Creation: "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities - all things were created through him and for him... He is the head of the body, the church."

Redemption: "He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (RSV).

This song of praise, which originated in a Hellenistic environment, originally concluded with the words "he is the head of the body", in other words, "the world". The hymn may have originated among the enthusiastic Christians who, captivated by the lordship of Jesus Christ, extended his praise to the highest heaven and the beginning of time. Contemporary support might be found in the Greek view of the world as the body of Zeus and the way of equating creation and the presumed creator. This idea was applied to Christ in order to maintain distance, the hymn had, however, to be accented in the Pauline manner. To the apostle the body of Christ was the believing church, not the world (1 Cor. 12: 3-27). So here too it was necessary to refer to the church in order to prevent misunderstandings. The addition to the text spoiled the metrical structure of the early Christian hymn, but corrected its theology. Also the reference to "the blood of his cross" in the latter half of the hymn is probably a conscious emphasis, with the aim of specifying that the work of creation was carried out by none other than Jesus Christ.

The way of speaking in the Epistle to the Colossians of the lordship of Christ emphasizes the life in Christ, in which we may partake (2: 9-10). The atonement earned by Christ is understood cosmically. The pre-existent Christ is also the ruler of the world, the sustainer of all things (omniterens), that is, the executor of continuous creation.

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new Creation

The Old Testament tells of God as Creator, his care and direction of the course of history. In the New Testament it is emphasized that everything is created in Christ (1 Cor. 8: 6; Col. 1: 16; Eph. 1: 4; Jn 1: 1-18, etc.). Therefore it is not surprising that Jesus Christ is seen in the early Christian period as the author of continuous creation (Hebr. 1: 2-10; cf. Phil. 2: 5-11). In christological language his

mission includes the sustaining of the world. Faith sees him as the cosmic Christ and the Wisdom of God, who is praised in hymns and in the creeds.

Overemphasis on the creative and sustaining work of God (Christ) may lead to a wrong kind of "holy carelessness", to immobility and conforming to the world. In order to avoid this the Church must refer to the objective of creation, to the authority of God, also in the future, and to commission to humankind to cultivate and preserve the earth without ceasing. Even "cursed" (Gen. 3: 17) God's work of creation is "very good" (cf. Gen. 1), the well-used and cultivated earth provides all creatures with constant sustenance. The apocalyptic tradition of the day of the Lord teaches that a healthy caution should be exercised in relation to all this world and its exploitation; at least Christians should not reach out according to its standards (Rom. 12: 1-2). Another danger is to deny the realities of the times and to turn human thoughts to the hopes for future with a one-sided enthusiasm. In anticipation of both these dangers the New Testament speaks of creation and participation in it in a positive way, emphasizing Christ's redemptive work. At the same time a clear line is drawn between the Creator and the creation.

The self-awareness of God's people includes the conviction that they are to be in the world but not of it (1 Jn 4: 6, 17). God himself has created his people with the world, just as he created the world. But since it is a question of this sin-filled world, the Church is not to conform to it. This also applies to the temptation of misusing the material resources of creation. The command given to the people in Gen. 1: 28 to "subdue" and "have dominion" over all creatures is easily misinterpreted: as permission to ravage and waste natural resources. According to the Book of Wisdom sinners who persecute the righteous use to say: "Come, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that exist, and make use of the creation to the full as in youth" and "let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they wither" (2: 6-8). This passage makes it clear that such an attitude of ruthless exploitation of natural resources is to neglect the responsibility given to humankind to take care of creation.

The life-principle of creation and of this world is $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$, while God's life-principle is $\piνε\upsilon\mu\alpha$. The antithesis to the "natural person" is the "spiritual", whom Paul defines in 2 Cor. 5: 17 with the words: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation". Thus the life-principle of the new creation is the Spirit. The new existence is characterized by a new relationship with God, which conditions the human relationship with his neighbour and the rest of creation.

The Role of Humans

Human beings have a special position in the biblical accounts of creation. The work of creation is portrayed as reaching a climax in the creation of man and woman, the companions of God. They confront creation as a revelation and task of God. From the very beginning they have desired, however, to penetrate into the mysteries behind God's revelation. This curiosity and the capacity to have a relationship with the Creator and to engage in the dialogue initiated by God, are characteristics of human beings.

It is curiosity which involves the quest for the *causa prima* and *causa finalis* of creation. The Christian's curiosity could be satisfied with the answers given by the Word of God, with simple faith. Faith does not, however, exclude scientific and intellectual search for an explanation of the origin of creation and the world. It would be a mistake to disregard scientific investigation. One must bear in mind, however, that one-sided answers from a scientific standpoint - without the perspective of faith often appear to lead to pessimism or agnosticism as to the future of creation.

Faith means seeing creation and one's own existence as a miracle, as an obligation of communication and as a task for the present and the future. The future includes the hope of eternal life, the ultimate goal of creation. With respect to this hope and the realities of creation, creation is dependent upon its Creator.

Paul's confession that everything is from God and in relation to him ("For from him and through him and to him are all things", Rom. 11: 36) clarifies the difference between the Creator and creation. Creation is God's achievement and is in no way to be equated with him. As Creator God is Lord over the creation. He has authority to return the creation to a state of non-existence (Ps. 102: 26-28; 104: 29; Ec. 32: 39). The role of human beings before this hidden and marvellous God of creation is to praise and wonder (Ps. 8) what kind of manifestations divine wisdom, reason and energy (Logos) display each time (not to be understood emanatively or pantheistically).

Man and Woman as the Image of God

The human being is a microcosmos with a special position in the whole of creation (Ps. 8: 6-9). This is also emphasized by the mention of the creation of humankind in the image and likeness of God (P source, Gen. 1: 26).

At least from the time of the Arian controversy it has been emphasized that in fact only the Logos of God, Jesus Christ, is the only

true image of God, for he is of the same substance as the Father. Thus the natural human being could not be called the image of God in the same sense, but only "made according to the image" (*κατ' εἰκονα*, LXX). We only became the image of God when we partook in the true and natural image of God, the *Logos*, Christ.

The question of the human being created in the image of God is complicated. In theological discourse resort has been taken to the distinction image/similitudo. Some explain that the human being is endowed with an image that cannot be lost; similitudo, on the other hand, was lost at the Fall. Others equate these terms and assert that humankind, the *massa demana*, has already lost everything. There has even been debates on the two kinds of gifts of creation. One part was already given by God (the creation of human beings according to the image of God, noetic and ethical powers, authority and ability to make use of nature, the pursuit of harmony with God, the environment and one's own life), and part was on the level of promise and hope (immortality, righteousness, fellowship with God). The Fall interrupted "development", completely eliminated the latter gifts of creation and partly even the former.

From the exegetical point of view it is noteworthy that in the P source the conformity to the image of God is not corrupted, nor does it disappear (the account of the Fall is from the J source). When it is said of Adam: "He became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image" (Gen. 5: 3), this description of the image of the image of God in the P source does not mean the weakening or gradual fading of the image of God in human beings. The P accounts emphasize that the plants bring forth seed according to their kind, and this fertility blessed by God extends to the animals and to people. Gen. 9: 6 (P source) describes each person as the image of God. This is due to the desire to emphasize the special position of human beings in creation. They are in a position of dependence upon the Creator and in a position of authority over the rest of creation, of equal status with the neighbour.

In the P source the estimate of the created world, in Genesis 1, is a surprisingly positive one. The thoughts of the human heart are not described as evil from his youth on, as in the case of the Yahwist (Gen. 6: 5). Nevertheless, also the P source knows of the factuality of sin, which led to the flood. When these sources (J + P) were combined they lost part of their significance. But the purpose of human beings created in the image of God were not lost. They are the same as formulated by the prophet Ezekiel as follows: God will be their God - and the state of the world (creation) will be according to the will of God (Ezek. 36: 26-38).

The Hope of Creation

Reference to the glory of creation is based upon its starting point (*prima causa*) and its final purpose (*causa finalis*). The starting point is the morning of creation and the purpose includes keeping company with God. In between is situated the present time, which appears to be characterized on the one hand by the constant impoverishment of creation and, on the other hand, by the partaking of the children of God in the future glory by faith, whatever the external circumstances may be.

In the Bible God's work of creation is presented as good news (P). The Creator God is good and the end result is good (Gen. 1: 4, 8, 10, 12, 21, 25 and 31). After the Priestly account the Yahwist, however, has had news to tell: there is inexplicable evil in the world - even in Paradise alienation from God, an evil which has to be faced (Gen. 3). The mythical account of the Fall contained in the Bible does not explain the origin of evil (the serpent, too, was created by God, Gen. 3:1), but merely asserts its factuality and consequences. In the tension between the will of God and the curiosity of human beings, people are addressed by God, oppressed by sin and accompanied by the groans of creation (Rom. 8: 18-27).

The entire creation awaits liberation and rest. It obtains this when it partakes in the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8: 21). This eschatological glory appears in glimpses as in a mirror. It is to be grasped where people, through the witness of the Spirit, become heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. After his new creation they suffer together with him in order to be glorified with him (Rom. 8: 17).

The sufferings of Christ are based on divine love for humankind. For this reason one of the persons of the Trinity, the *Logos* of God, became flesh. The consequence was the birth of a new Adam, through whom the original glory of the entire creation was manifested. The hope of creation is based upon the incarnation of the *Logos* (word, wisdom, reason) of God.

In the person and work of Christ *πνεῦμα* came into the world and initiated the dawning of a new era (Mt. 12: 28). Where the activity of God in restoring and healing humans is realized, God "creates". The collective restoration and unification of humankind as a "new people" (Eph. 2: 15) is also the work of creation. The goal is a new creation. This is only possible in a visible and final way with the appearing of Christ (Col. 3: 4), when this heaven and this earth disappear and a new heaven and a new earth are created, when death and transiency pass away. Then Christ will appear as the vivifying Spirit (*πνεῦμα ζωοποιόν*) and will show what the

glorious liberty of the children of God means factually to the whole creation (Rom. 8: 21).

Belief in Creation - a Call to be a Co-worker with God

Life in the hope of salvation is still deficient, although it means partaking by faith of eschatological glory already now. This privilege does not justify a fatalistic attitude in social and ecological issues. It gives us the right and duty to demonstrate love and respect. Together with faith and hope, participatory love is a characteristic of Christian life. It even precedes faith and hope in Paul's scale of values (1 Cor. 13: 13). Faith and hope are sometimes an *alibi* for the lack of love and care and for deficient cultivation and protection of creation. But love is the touchstone of true faith and life-giving hope. It is a call and challenge to Christians to come to grips in love with the global problems of our time. Activities will then not be based upon human activeness, upon concern for one's own existence or the furthering of one's own interests, but will have a goal indicated by faith and hope. Demonstrated love aims at the renewal of creation and humans and at the promotion of promised glory as God's ambassadors and co-workers.

THE BIBLE AND THE NICENE CREED OF GOD'S CREATIVE ACTIVITY (CREATION AND MAKING)

Archbishop Mikhail (Mudugun)

The word "creation" (*Schöpfung*) has a double meaning both in Russian and in German: it may be understood as the definition of an action described by the verb "to create" with the meaning synonymous to a more concrete noun "creation", or as the definition of the result of that action, which in Slavonic has one meaning only, "creature".¹ The notions of "creature" and "creation", as well as the verb "to create" from which the nouns are derived, imply - i.e. include into mental process - the notion of subject (doer, maker, creator) responsible for the act of creation (in Present, Past or Future), and the notion of object to be created ("creature").

In colloquial Russian, the verb "to construct" is used alongside with the verb "to create". The Russian verb has the root relating it to "structure", which make the meaning close to "building", "construction". These notions are so similar in Russian that may be called close synonyms. They all define the result of activity - of man's usual work² - the process leading to this result includes some substances called materials, to which man's intellectual or bodily energy is applied to result in a new artefact; the action is described by such verbs as create, construct, build, make, produce, and the result may be a house, an instrument, a means of transport, a utensil. The process is called "production" from "produce", in which the meaning of the verb implies that the artefact proceeds from something, so that in the end some product is produced.

The words thus reflect the common or conventional idea that for creating, constructing, producing, making a thing in this material world we have to have some initial materials to proceed from, and the process of creation or production is understood as a labour process consisting of several stages: the material is selected, processed, trimmed, assembled with the final stage being the test of the new artefact and its implementation.

¹ In the discussion below, "creation" shall mean the action (*das Schaffen, creatio*) and "creature" shall mean the result (*die geschaffene Welt, mundus creatus*).

² Also, of animals (the beaver, birds, etc.).

If the idea of this necessity is accepted as an axiomatic presumption of any human activity, then its authenticity may be best described by the ancient phrase, "ex nihilo fit nihil".

If the existence of initial materials - whether natural resources or prefabricated materials (i.e. the same natural resources which for some reason have not yet been made ready to use) - is considered an essential element for any process resulting in new artefacts to be used in this or that manner, then an equality essential and necessary element of any production process - in particular, of creation - is the person involved in the process; in political economy the person is termed "the working hands", but we shall term him "producer" of this or that artefact. The latter term seems preferable, for it is close to the above-mentioned definition of man's or person's activity, which has been described as construction, production, or - more frequently - as creation.

What is the difference between the artefact or structure and the material used to have them made? As a rule, in terms of money the artefact costs more than the basic material used for the production, so that the cost of the material is only a part of the total cost. However, in terms of quantity (e.g. weight) the artefact does not exceed the volume of the material utilized; on the contrary, the production nearly always entails some "waste matter" which often weighs more than the resulting artefact.

The main difference between the artefact (structure) and the material used for production purposes is the degree of usefulness, i.e. the pre-set requirements must be fulfilled. This degree is the direct result of labour - bodily or/and mental work, i.e. spiritual work. The physical work involving the energy expenditure can be estimated in units of energy; the spiritual energy is hard to estimate - experience shows that it has not been possible to evaluate, or define, the expenditure in terms of scientific approach.

It may be suggested however that the spiritual or psychic energy consumed by production or construction can be said to contain following items:

- (1) realisation of need for the artefact;
- (2) estimation of the effect resulting from implementation of the need;
- (3) modelling the product (construction) - a graph, a scheme, a description, a model;
- (4) selection of means and techniques, i.e. the working out of the technological process;
- (5) estimation and selection of materials required for production, including the qualitative and quantitative characteristics (specifications);
- (6) selection and preparation of tools required for work;

(7) the actual process of making the artefact (product, construction).

It is obvious that all operations, except the final one, require little physical effort (not much energy is spent on drawing a graph or writing a text); the main component is the spiritual energy, viz. the mental activity of an essential creative character. Although the creative process is but an element of creation, by its quality it differs greatly from all other elements - from the bodily work required to carry out the creative design, and - of course - from the material used for the purpose.

The above consideration implied the design and the implementation of a technical object such as structure or a mechanism; it would have been identical if some creative process had been implied such as writing a literary work (on technology, sociology, fiction) or composing a piece of music, or painting a picture, or manufacturing a utensil, or any other artefact to be used in everyday life, industry, science, liturgical worship.

In many domains the creative element is prevalent, and such activity is called "creative activity" or simply "creation" - and with a very good reason, too; here we can see an entirely new phenomenon come into existence - a work of literature, a piece of music, a painting, a utensil. The value of each of them is not determined by the material (the price of a canvas for the artist to paint on, or a paper for a composer to write his music on), nor is it determined by the physical effort required (e.g. the energy spent on moving the hand of artist, writer, composer, pianist), it is determined by the novelty of the phenomenon arising from non-existence, which bears no resemblance whether to the material or the bodily work. This making of an essentially new product which has non-existent prior to the act (or process, to be more exact) of production is called creation, which is the subject of the present discussion and the title of this paper.

It follows therefore that with respect to creative act, or creation, the "ex nihilo fit nihil" presumption is not valid. Creation is an act resulting in the rise, or appearance, or beginning of existence of something new, essentially novel, which was non-existent. Thus, the "Jupiter" symphony by Mozart would not have come into existence if it had not arisen in the great composer's mind; the characters of Othello or Lady Macbeth did not exist until they were created by Shakespeare.¹ Any creation is essentially a miracle beyond the power of natural laws governing the material world.

¹ There used to live people as jealous as Othello or as ambitious as Lady Macbeth, but it was the great bard who created them as concrete individuals, recognizable personalities; the characters were creations rather than mere replicas of reality.

In the Bible we find a magnificent epic describing the creation of the material world with the creation of man as its highest point - the climax completing the act (man is a creature of both material and spiritual character) man is in the material world and is related to the material world by the nature of his flesh, but man stands above the material world due to his spiritual nature.¹

Without dwelling on the particulars of the first two chapters in the Genesis, we have been considering the main point of the Bible description of creation, included by the Nicene fathers, at the Council of Nicea in 325, into their *oros* as the first clause which was used in 381 for the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible".²

By the beginning of the 4th century - prior to the Council of Nicea, in the years when the numerous future signatories of the Council must have thought of necessity to re-write the main credal formulae - there had existed, and been widely used from the middle of the 2nd century, the so called Apostles' Creed (Apostolicum) which is still used at the worship in the West. It is certain that the Nicene fathers were well aware of the Apostolicum and used it as a starting point, or a basis, for a meaning and the text of the Nicene Creed.

There may be controversy as to who had written the Apostles' Creed - all twelve disciples of Jesus Christ or some of them - but there are no grounds to doubt that it was written about the 1st century, i.e. in the Apostles' time; also obvious is the Symbol's close relationship to the credal formulae dating back to an even earlier time. Hence we are justifying in regarding the Apostles' credal formula as the major intermediary stage in the textual development of the Christian Creed - from the Commandment in the Gospel, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 28:19), towards the baptismal formulae, and the Apostolicum, then towards the Nicene Creed, and eventually towards the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 A.D. whose formulae are now established in all Christian world.

The clause in the Apostles' Creed, corresponding to the first clause in the Nicene Creed, says: "I believe in one God the Father Almighty, the Maker of Heaven and earth". We shall consider be-

low the new interpretation in the first clause of the Nicene text, but first it should be noted that both first clauses are nearly identical.

In both Creeds, God is called the Father and the Maker. The former may be regarded and interpreted in two senses: as the proper name of the first Person of the Holy Trinity, and as the manifestation of God's affectionate and fatherly attitude towards His creation. Although the second meaning is natural for Christians as they know the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5: 3-12, 6: cf. Jn. 1: 12), it was hardly implied by the Nicene fathers who - in composing the text of the Creed - must have been guided by the necessity to teach, through the text, the name of the persons of God, who is one in the Trinity; hence the name "Father" is here first and foremost the manifestation of hypostatical relation of the eternal first person to the co-eternal Him - the Son begotten of the Father, the second person of the Trinity. Another reason for this ontological meaning of the name "Father" may have been found by the Nicene fathers in the illogical first mention of God's fatherly attitude to His creation prior to the mention of God as the Creator, i.e. before He is called the Maker. The fatherhood of God follows from the act of Creation (Is. 14, 8; Mal. 2: 10); with respect to man, it is manifested in adopting men as His sons through Christ, and is therefore functional, whereas the relation of God the Father to the Only-Begotten Son is ontological and does not depend upon the existence of the world created by Him in time and space, i.e. there is no dependence upon any phenomena related to the world only (Is. XVII, 5, 24; Lk. X, 18; Jn. VIII, 58; II Pet. III, 8; Ps. I, 39, 5; Mt. 24, 35; Rev. 10, 6).

Moreover, we are justified in saying together with Paul the Apostle that it is of the hypostatical fatherhood in the Trinity that "the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3: 14-15).

The name of maker is of extreme capacity including the entirety of God's relation towards everything which is not God; from this name it follows that "all" originated as God's creation, that the beginning of the creation was *ex nihilo* (2 Mac. VII, 28) rather than from something that was extant prior to the creation (see above); it follows that God has provided for the world He created, and the very existence of the world in time is made possible because God willed it both to be created and continue existing in time and space, which is proved by the words of Peter the Apostle who says, "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store" (II Pet. 3: 7).²

¹ Likewise, a Christian is in the world, but not of the world (Jn. 17: 14-16). Our Lord Jesus Christ was (Mt. 28: 20) and is in the world as God-man, but by his divine nature He is always with His Father and the Holy Spirit.

² The Russian text is nearly verbatim translation from the Church Slavonic text.

¹ See in Thanksgiving Service for New Year: "Times and years You put in Your power".

² See in the Order of Great Blessing of Waters: "You are keeping the Creation".

The same idea had been aptly expressed by V.N. Lossky who writes, "The secure and the permanent for the creature is in its relation to God; in relation to itself it is reduced to nihil".¹

It is appropriate to quote from Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdov) of Moscow, whose phrase is filled with spiritual poetry, "The creatures are placed on God's creative word as on a bridge of diamonds beneath the abyss of divine infinity, above the abyss of their own non-existence".²

In both Creeds, the artefact of creation is defined as "heaven and earth". The borrowing of this formula from the opening verse in the Bible (Gen. 1, 1) is obvious; the meaning of it is far from being simple; the various interpretations by fathers of the Church and modern scholars remain a vital issue.

As it is known, St John Chrysostom and other "Antiochians" regarded the words "heaven and earth" as close to tautology intensifying the expressiveness and attaching a boundless totality to phrase. Indeed, this phrase is often used in the Bible with the meaning of space, universe, world (Gen. 2, 1; Chron. 29, 11; Ps. 113, 24; Hag. 2, 21; Mt. 5, 34; Mt. 11, 25; Mt. 28, 18; Heb. 1, 10). Other authors, e.g. Origen, St Basil the Great, St John of Damascus, et al., saw in it a differentiation between the visible world and the invisible world; this opinion was so widely spread that the Nicene fathers deemed it necessary to include it into the text of the Creed. Their main concern, however, must have been to emphasize the entirety of creation, with no exceptions whatsoever: all which is not God is of God's creation. This main idea of creationism - which is basic for all religions, and above all for the monotheistic doctrines - was the reason for another definition in the Creed, which is both an explanation of the words describing the creation of the world and the logical conclusion from the fact of creation.

In the Latin text, God is called "omnipotens", the Omnipotent, while in the Greek text another name is used, "Pantokrator", the Pantocrator, i.e. the All-Holder. Although the terms are very close to one another, they are not identical: "omnipotence", infinite power, is expressed by an adjective, whereas the noun "pantokrator" conveys a meaning inherent in God's name existentially. The "omnipotent" is referable since it could be said of God prior to the act of creation, for omnipotence is potential attribute, whereas the "all-keeper" conveys the idea that the world has been created and now God keeps it, holds it, or is part of it.

The most essential textual difference between the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' text, in terms of the first clause, seems to be the

1 V. Lossky, "The Dogmatic Theology" (in Russian), Bogoslovskiy Trudy (Theological Works), No. 3, p. 146.

2 Quoted from Ibid.

introduction by the Nicene fathers of the word "one" ("We believe in one God") which is not contained in Apostolicum. This confirmation of the monotheistic principle seems to have been necessary for attaining a balance with succeeding clauses dealing with the Word and the Holy Spirit. The exposition of the hypostatical properties of the Word, which is more revealing in the Nicene Creed than in the Apostolicum, might cause (and did cause) a temptation to see in the Trinity of God a certain pantheon, which violated the theological dogma of undividedness and consubstantiality. To exclude this temptation, the statement is firm: God is one. The briefest credal formula contains two basic truths: first, the unity of the persons in the Holy Trinity does not spoil the hypostases of each person - on the contrary, it affirms each person, as well as the hypostatical relations among them. The second truth in the statement is the oneness of God - the truth proclaimed from Mount Sinai where Moses received the law from God (Ex. 19), which accompanied the history of Israeli people, constituting their ideal, protecting the chosen people from drowning in an ocean of heathendom, thus preparing and maintaining the condition for the coming of Messiah - the Saviour who was expected by the Jews to come and set them free, the Providence having chosen the Hebrew nation. "The Lord He is God; there is none else beside Him" (Dt. 4: 35) - in this categorical form, this revealed statement about the oneness of God has been repeatedly accepted by the Israeli people; the Nicene fathers could not help obeying the absolute authority of the statement, nor could they disregard its extreme importance.

The teaching about God the Maker and the Father is not confined to the first clause of the Creed; although the succeeding clauses deal mainly with the Second and the Third Persons of the Holy Trinity, the name of God the Father is mentioned many a time: it is by Father that the Second Person, the Son of God, is begotten, and it is from Father that the Third person proceeds, the Holy Spirit. This unity of the three Divine Hypostases urges one to think the act of creation as of an action in which all three persons participated; however, it is directly spoken of the Second Person - "The Word of the Father", as He was frequently called by the early fathers of the Church - that all things were made through Him, i.e. all things came into being through Him. "By Whom all things were made", it must have been due to Divine Providence that the participation of the Word in the creative activity was perceived by the Psalmist who wrote, "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Ps. 33, 6). These words convey the idea of the Father creating all through his Word only, which is supported by the opening lines of the Gospel according to St John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was

with God and the Word was God". This truth is so important for St John that it is repeated in verse 10: "He was in the world and the world was made by Him". The mention of the Holy Spirit (Ps. 33) participating in the act of creation is supported by the direct indication in the First Book of Moses, "And the Spirit of God moved (merhafeet) upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1: 2).

We have discussed the essential difference between creating and producing - by God and man, respectively. In the Book of Genesis, the act of creation is mentioned three times: first, in Gen. 1: 1, the verb "bara", "to create", describes the creation of the material world to be established and arranged (it should be noted that many interpreters do not consider it to be material); then the first leaving creatures are created (Gen. 1: 21), and eventually the same term introduces the creation of man (Gen. 1: 26, 27).

This intermediate stages of development of the material world are written down with the verbs "to make" or "to bring forth". The latter indicates that reference is made not only to the formation, construction, production from some matter that has been already created, but it also implies that the matter is endowed with certain abilities and properties allowing it to make some autonomous part in its own development. This co-participation does not exclude or replace the Divine initiative; on the contrary, it confirms and elevates our impression and understanding of the supreme omnipotence and greatness of that initiative.

An analogy is relevant here with contemporary phenomena of the technological advance. Indeed, however perfect the computers and robots are, however dazzling the advance of cybernetics and related branches of science and technology is, it is man who creates all modern devices and it is man whose power it is to control and maintain all man-made machinery.

The same is true about the evolution of the created nature, in particular about the "production" of new, more complicated forms of life (Gen. 1: 20-25) originating due to God's will, which is creating, directing, regulating, preserving. Although St Paul's words, "in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17: 28) were spoken in the name of all mankind, as it were, this phrase of total character may very well referred to the entire created world. A psalm is relevant here, "Thou takest away their breath, they die... Thou sendest forth Thy spirit, they are created: and Thou renewest the face of the earth" (Ps. 104: 29-30).

From the Bible we see that the creation of man was the climax of the act of creating the world.

From this we obtain another convincing evidence of all three Persons of the Holy Trinity participating in the act of creation. Indeed, prior to the description of creating man, the text contained the names of the artefacts to be brought forth and created, whereas the creation of man is preceded by "the Council of the Holy Trinity" (in terms of Orthodox theology): "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1: 26). Which emphasizes the particular - one may say, cosmic - importance of creation of man, and the phrase sounds solemn.

The use of the plural, "Let us", as well as the plural form for God's name, "Elohim", are treated by Orthodox theologians as a God-inspired evidence of Trinity of God.

The creation of man, as well as the creation of matter (i.e. inanimate nature) and of life (the simplest forms followed by new living creatures) brought into existence the things and beings which had not existed, nor had any prototypes; hence, the word "bara" is used again to denote the creation ex nihilo, without using any initial material whatsoever.

It is axiomatic that the problem of ruling over nature involves the existence of nature; moreover, it implies an evolution, witnessing the presence of intellect in man who rules over it. Vice versa, the degradation of nature, which decline and impoverishment despite the presence of man dominating over it, is a sure sign that man is not fulfilling his assignment.

Further on, the Bible indicates the principle and the bound for man to exploit nature. The exploitation of nature is allowed within the bounds of necessity for maintaining man's existence. Moreover, a universal law is suggested for the utilization of some forms of living nature by other forms: "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat" (Gen. 1: 29-30). Later, man was allowed to use more things as his food-stuff: "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb Have I given you all things" (Gen. 9: 13). At the same time, God willed a limit in the exploitation of the natural resources - viz. blood, an agent determining the life in man and animal: "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require" (Gen. 9: 4-5).

It is therefore forbidden to exploit the natural resources beyond the limits of necessity, and the bounds may not be transgressed.

Hence it is sinful to abuse nature unreasonably, i.e. insanely, e.g. to destroy the woods, to poison the soil with chemical compounds, which leads to poisoning the natural water resources, to destroy animals by poaching and hunting, to pollute the air and the water by the waste matter of industry and means of transport. It is a well-known fact that the technological advance entails an increase in the industrial waste matter (smoke and exhaust gases, above all); the increase is a geometrical progression, so that in this second half of the 20th century it results in a catastrophic pollution of the environment, in particular of air and water.

The latter is accompanied by a barbaric destruction of the woods supplying the air with oxygen; the oxygen is not only spent for man and animal to breathe - it is wasted on burning the fuel in the furnaces and the gas in the motors.

The time is near when man will have to face the problem of "the hot-house effect". The deficit in the heat balance, caused by the air pollution, will entail an overheating of the earth surface air layer, which will result in climatic changes, with the Arctic ice fields melting to raise the sea level, to reduce large areas of good land to bog, and so forth.

Another danger has been recently exposed: the chemical compounds keep affecting the layer of ozone protecting our planet.

Nuclear tests are causing long-term changes for the worse, telling on the seismic situation and the state of the atmosphere, which will eventually affect all nature and mankind.

From this abuse, it is man who suffers most. The ecological effects of man's activity, including the climatic and seismic changes, are harmful for man's life and health and to his psychic condition; the direct and potential damages manifest themselves in the lack of confidence, anxiety, concern for the safety of the present and future generations.

Bearing in mind all these threats to man's environment - and consequently to man's existence - we have to admit that it is unreasonable and dangerous to waste the material and spiritual resources on the armaments and space exploration of the SDI type.

The appeals to cut down the arms race and slow down the technological development so as to try and avoid the imminent catastrophe often meet with unreasonable responses reminding us of Louis XV with his phrase, "Après nous le déluge"; some people argue, "Shall we go back to the caves, eat raw meat, and settle conflicts fighting with the fists?"

There is no need to dwell in the caves - as yet; but there is an urgent need to cut down the production and use of cars, to replace

them by electric transport, to impose laws demanding responsibility for all instances of air pollution, poaching, violating of ecological balance (e.g. the notorious projects to turn a flow of rivers in Siberia, or to build a dam in Leningrad).

First and foremost, the woods must be protected in order to save the atmosphere.

As we see, men on the earth are at present in a situation similar to that described in the Bible (Mt. 21: 33-41): the modern husbands are in great danger, for "the Lord... will miserably destroy those wicked men".

Likewise, if we think of the punishment for the servant who did not gain profit from the talent he was given by his lord (Mt. 25: 14-30), what shall be the sentence of the court for the modern man who abuses his opportunities or wastes them unreasonably or viciously.

Must he not realise his sorry state due to wasting "his substance with riotous living", cease thinking of filling "his belly with the husks that the swine did eat", go to his father and admit his sin, and be His heir, and cooperate with Him in the reasonable management of His property? (Luke 15: 11-24).

OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOD'S CREATION

Erva Martikainen

Introduction

The theme presents us with two tasks. In order to acquire a correct image of the contents of our responsibility, we should first study the current state of the creation from a historical perspective. Secondly, the theme includes the challenge of conveying how the Lutheran church perceives her responsibility for the creation in a theological light. Thus the theme requires on the one hand a chronological discussion and on the other a theological treatment.

I The Creation in Crisis

We cannot escape the fact that mankind lives amidst an unprecedented crisis, threatened by total holocaust both in the form of nuclear war and in the slow, insidious collapse of nature through ecological catastrophe. It is difficult to say which is to be the final cause of death for mankind, but destruction is imminent and inevitable unless a decisive turn for the better occurs.

The dangers of nuclear war were recognized as early as forty years ago; the ecological crisis has been discussed for the past twenty years. Nonetheless, the scope of this presentation is limited to the ecological crisis, although it is clearly recognized that the threat of nuclear war cannot be totally separated from this question.

1. The Ecological Crisis

'Ecology' means an ecosystem, i.e. the science studying the relationships of organisms and their total environment. Further, 'ecological crisis' signifies the vast and devastating breach of the interactions prevalent in the ecosystem, as well as the severe disruption of nature's economy. First the ecological crisis emerges in local phenomena, such as in the death of the fish in a certain lake as a result of acid rain. In actuality this crisis does entail a much wider, global threat, in which all organisms as well as the whole of mankind are at risk. There exists the very real fear that this crisis

might lead to an ecocatastrophe, which at its worst would mean the cessation of all human life and, possibly, the destruction of all living organisms.

Ecologists have realized that the entire ecosystem staggers from the effects of arable land vanishing as a result of erosion, rain forests being destroyed, river deltas and shallows polluted, the atmosphere damaged and its ozone content decreasing, and the mean global temperature rising (i.e. the so-called greenhouse phenomenon). Innumerable plant and animal species will become extinct. The resulting imbalance of the ecosystem is not an integral phase in its development but the direct consequence of human intervention. On the one hand man 1) uses an ever-increasing amount of the earth's non-renewable resources and 2) uses more of nature's renewable resources than their normal annual production would warrant, and on the other hand by the technological systems he has created man places into imbalance nature's own ecosystems.

It must be admitted that both the rich industrialized nations and the poor developing countries disturb the balance of nature. Technological exploitation by the industrialized nations especially pollutes forests, waterways and atmosphere, whereas the usage of resources by the developing countries destroys rain forests and arable land. While the former use up natural resources for the maintenance of high standards of living, the latter utilize them in order to acquire the mere necessities of nutrition.

The underlying problem is that man has been able to raise the ecology of his own population in the ecosystem both in quantity and quality through technological and medical progress. The population explosion, mostly taking place in the Third World, with a commensurate rise in the standard of living, has exploited nature to its extreme limits. These limits have been exceeded in many respects: advance is no longer possible without the existence of the globe being threatened. With the entire earth at stake, the problem will be whether and how such a crisis can be/is to be controlled.

2. Potentials for the Control of the Ecological Crisis

In addition to the study of ecology, measures (which, may I add, must be international) aimed at crisis control have to include cultural, societal, economic and political factors. The ecological crisis, where the issue lies in universally shared resources, also constitutes a threat to international security. This crisis not only touches upon man's relationship to nature (the question of the environment) but also interhuman relations, security (the threat of nuclear war), justice and equity (the conflict existing between the industrialized and the developing nations).

Many research studies emphasize that the economic and technological resources, or at least facilities for such, needed for the control of the ecological crisis do exist if directed properly towards their goals. The economic resources suffice if the current arms race could be given up. So by means of the sum of money used for only a few weeks' armament the following could be accomplished: the funding of birth control in the developing nations to a decisive extent, which would be an integral part of crisis control; the prevention of the deforestation of rain forests; and the improvement of the condition of forests in the industrialized nations of Europe.

Also scientific and technological facilities for the control of the ecological crisis exist if political good will and desire for international cooperation could be found. The greatest obstacle to crisis control must be considered the reluctance to work for the common good of mankind and for the preservation of nature. Primarily, the problem boils down to cultural factors, of which religion is one of the integral aspects.

As our starting point, the share and significance of culture in the ecological crisis can be viewed by making a survey of the cultural factors which preceded the scientific-technological developments contributing to the ecological crisis, concurrently assuming that certain cultural, i.e. philosophical and religious, concepts also affect the control of the ecological crisis in a positive manner.

3. Cultural Factors Contributing to the Development of Modern Science and Technology

In Antiquity, science and technology, based on the philosophical-religious conception of the unity of reality, were in accord with nature. An essential change from the concept of science based on this oneness of reality to the current atomistic concept of reality occurred as early as the Middle Ages (Knuutila, *Ajatus [Thought]* 41; 1984).

According to the concept of science in Antiquity, the structure of reality as the goal of science is unchangeable, knowledge actually focusing on this unchangeable structure, whereas in accordance with its modern concept, science is a continuous activity concerned with new knowledge and its development. In the principle of the unity of reality, man was naturally understood to have a certain position in the chain of being/the ontological structure. His special talents were not thought to give him any right to rise above other creatures. The function of knowledge was only to perfect the human ability to reason so that he might understand his place within the entity of reality. In contrast to modern conception, for Plato and Aristotle science was not research activity seeking new knowl-

edge but rather the presentation of the organized image of reality, which was thus understood to be undivided and rational.

In the concept of science of Antiquity, theory and practice were closely intertwined. While people in concrete situations were to make moral and political resolutions using their own judgement, the goals, the pursuit of which formed the basis for decision, were given as part of the order of being/ontology. Also, man himself as one alongside other species belongs to this order of things. His basic aim is not to rise above nature. Thus in the philosophy of Antiquity, human existence was not seen as a pioneering aspiration in quest and discovery of the new, but as a growing into the given, good model of life.

In addition, the view that Antiquity held of technology and its usage rises directly from its concept of reality. So with Plato, the basic artifacts of man are the imitations of ideas born out of the human thought process, very few in number in fact. The invention and manufacture of unnecessary artifacts means the production of "waste matter" outside of the order of things. Aristotle was even more ascetic in his approach to technology. The cultural philosophy formulated by Plato and Aristotle does not contain the possibility for on-going technological development.

The concept characteristic of Aristotelian philosophy that science was to strive to present the structure of reality systematically, started to crumble in the critical philosophy of the late Middle Ages. The world ceased to be a well-known and familiar cosmos, whose universal principles could be extracted from contemporary science. To an increasing degree it became an unknown entity, whose intellectual mastery seemed to require lengthy and elaborate research. This was the genesis of the framework of the new concept of science, where the scholar became a researcher pursuing new knowledge. The new research-oriented mode of thought already surfaced in the early 1300s in the form of the search for various theoretical models of thought for the natural sciences.

When science was thus considered a quest for the truth rather than its description, the concept of science began expanding until it included practical technological development and experimental activity by alchemists occurring outside the universities. In the 15th century, Nicholas of Cusa outlined his theory of culture, presenting the principal features of the philosophy forming the background for what was already a expansive empirical natural science. According to Nicholas of Cusa, the ability to continue to advance both in knowledge and in skill can be considered a special human characteristic. With the materialization of this potential the human race can ever rise to new levels of materno-spiritual culture (Knuutila, 1984).

The new concept of science has been seen to include religious elements as well. In the Middle Ages an eschatological concept became more common, in which history was understood as development toward the latter-day Kingdom of God. Especially in Franciscan theology this was interpreted as the step-by-step development of mankind toward a state of perfection transcending historical reality. Also the Paracelsian theoretical-pragmatic plan of growth through knowledge aiming at the control of nature had its religious justification. In Paracelsus' thinking, the researcher's immediate spiritual contact with the Divine Alchemist would guide him to discover tests which would increase correct knowledge. Prof. Knuutila, however, points out that in the development of the rational methodology of science in the 1600s, the religious element was omitted even while still used as a motivating factor. He concludes that the original religio-ethical mode of justification of modern-day science has left its indelible mark on the concept of self in the scientific-technological progressive movement, which understanding of self has, at least, been characterized by an uncritical faith in the rightness of cause when producing ever-new devices for the control and manipulation of nature.

In the discussion of the ecological crisis, the contribution of religion is occasionally considered decisive as a cultural factor advancing the genesis of the ecological crisis. Its crucial role in the endeavor to overcome the crisis is however also emphasized. In his article which has aroused such great interest, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis" (*Science*, 1967, 120:3-1207), Lynn White, Jr., an American scholar of medieval history, ascribes to religion a decisive position both as a factor contributing to the birth of the ecological crisis and as its solution. According to White, man's relationship to nature is decisively dependent on his concept of religion. Further, throughout history Christianity has had a significant impact on the formation of man's concept of nature.

The dependence of the concept of nature on religion continues in the life of the secularized person as well. White feels that the spiritual basis of the technologically oriented industrialized nations has been affected by and continues to be affected by the following "Christian" notions: 1) the concept of continuous development with its roots in Judeo-Christian teleology, 2) the linear concept of time, including the idea of an absolute beginning and end, inherited by Christianity from Judaism (Greek philosophy, especially Aristotelian, refuting the theory of the birth of the world, as it had a cyclic concept of time), 3) the Creation account, where man was placed highest in creation and where everything else is subjected to him, Christianity thus being the most anthropocentric of the world religions, 4) the abolition of animism, which in Christianity meant

the breakdown of the concept of nature adhered to in Antiquity. In Christianity man received the sole right to the possession of a spirit, whereas in Antiquity nature also possessed such a right. According to White, man was herein afforded the right to exploit nature.

White emphasizes that religion is particularly necessary in overcoming the ecological crisis: additional science or technology will not alone suffice. Thus White demands that Christianity must take responsibility for the ecological crisis, which, above all, means the adoption of an altogether new mode of thought in Christianity itself.

As a case in point, White takes Francis of Assisi's concept of a type of spirituality which would include a democracy between all that is created. White White views Christianity as one doctrinal system without differentiating between philosophies, historical and theological concepts included in it, many theologians lay emphasis on the fact that philosophy itself has greatly molded Christianity during its history.

James Spiceland for one states that the earliest Christians lived and thought in a world ruled by Greek concepts. Also medieval theology applied Platonic philosophy to its theology in the thought that it is only the human soul that is in the image of God. The body belongs to the natural world which works against the soul to detach it from its most essential task. Man's interest in nature is nothing but the intention to change and organize it. The need to mold nature under man's control has subsequently been an integral part of how the industrialized nations regard nature.

Ole Jensen stresses the impact of Kant and of neo-Kantian philosophy on the approach of modern Protestant theology, in particular as to the development of modern science and technology. Jensen believes that the theologians influenced by Kant and neo-Kantian philosophy such as W. Herrman and R. Bultmann advanced the concept of nature propounded by Descartes and Hobbes, i.e. that nature, and thus the human body, is a machine meant to be utilized by the human mind and soul. Kant's division of reason into the theoretical and practical has upset the thinking appreciative of nature. According to practical reasoning, science never reaches the truth or its point of contact with reality. Science uses discursive thinking, which proceeds in an unending series without reaching fixed results. These conclusions could be used to make ethically justifiable inferences for the utilization of scientific results. Scientific assessments of fact and ethical value judgments employed in practical realizations are based on different objects of reason. While science rests on how the facts lie, ethics and religion are built on the notion of how they ought to be, which, in turn, can by no means be derived from the concept of good or happiness. According to

Jensen the fact that the practical-philosophical mode of thought was adopted by theology isolated ethics and theology from science into their own separate realm. At the same time this adoption contributed to the dissociation of theology from responsibility in the spheres of science and technology, further entrenching it in the struggle against the ever-strengthening coalition formed by these two.

The above survey shows that ever since Kant's philosophy no unified concept of reality or mode of thought has existed, either in philosophy or in the philosophy of religion, on which a cultural vision striving for the control of the ecological crisis could have been structured. Nor is there any return to the theoretical monolithic culture preceding scientific-technological development. Instead, a suggestion has been put forward that overcoming the ecological crisis will require a type of holistic mode of thought as the basis for culture, to take the place of the current atomistic or meristic modes so widely prevalent even in scientific circles (G.H. von Wright, Henryk Skolimowski). We should also study the possibilities of the ecology and of the churches to contribute to the creation of such a mode of thought. If correctly understood, the church, even incorporated in its own doctrine, has a holistic, i.e. theological, mode of thought, which already has significance for the church, at least, in her endeavours to have influence on the control of the ecological crisis, provided, however, that the positive potentials involved in such thought are recognized. The contribution of Christianity in surmounting the ecological crisis may well be most decisive if the responsibility for the creation included in Christian doctrine is correctly understood and implemented.

II The Church and Christianity as Cultural Factors in the Control of the Ecological Crisis

The church's responsibility over the creation is based on the love demonstrated by God in creation, redemption and sanctification. Understanding this responsibility over the creation from the concept of divine love as belonging to the church creates a new opportunity for the faith and life of the church to be aligned in a positive perspective toward the moral, judicial and rational endeavours of society to control the ecological crisis. In love the goal, the aspiration and the motivation are united in a way which does not nullify the gospel and the faith so essential to the church and which also gives scope to man's natural reason and activity. The concept of love helps our understanding of how, from the viewpoint of her

doctrine and faith, the church can cooperate with all people in efforts to control the ecological crisis.

5. God as the Source of Love in Creation, Redemption and Sanctification

5.1. The Creation as the Handiwork of the Entire Trinity

In order to understand how the idea of divine love unites the doctrine and the ethics of the church we have to examine how it is that God is in relation to Himself and His Creation in creation, redemption and sanctification. It is interesting that both Martin Luther and the Lutheran *Symbols* assign creation to the whole of the Trinity. The triune God is the Lord and Sustainer of all that is, both visible and invisible. Luther says the following: "God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, three separate persons yet of one and only one divine substance and nature, are the one true God, who created heaven and the earth." (*Large Catechism*). The *Augsburg Confession*, which appeals to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, expresses the same notion as follows: "... (there) exists only one divine being who is called God and who is indeed God. In this one divine being there are however three persons who are equally powerful and eternal: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, all three of whom are one divine being, eternal, indivisible, without end, immeasurable in power, wisdom and goodness, the Creator and Sustainer of all that is, visible and invisible." (CA I).

Luther expounds the share of the Trinity in creation in the following manner. God creates everything by His Word, Himself in the second person. This means that everything created is a partaker in God's Word, the continuous sustainer of all as well. If God took away His Word, all of creation would also cease to exist. All creatures in the creation, even plants and animals, are therefore participants in the divine through God's Word, the necessary condition of life for them as well. All of creation exists and lives solely through the power of God's Word, i.e. the power of God Himself who lives and has His influence in them. Also the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, participates in the creative act, according to Luther's biblical exposition. In Luther's opinion this comes out in God's statement that everything He created was good. Neither is matter, as opposed to spirit, outside of what is good. Even fallen and depraved creation is not totally outside of God's goodness, but it exists by God's Word and through the power of His Word.

Thus God is, in accord with both the Lutheran and the patristic concepts, in a deeper communion with His creation than merely as

its external originator. In his theology Luther radically broke down the concepts of everyday thought and of scholastic philosophy, according to which all creatures and all objects could only be considered within the categories of time and space (Metzke 1961). God, who is the Creator of all that is, both of time and of space, is not confined to these categories Himself. God is present in all His creation without becoming a part of it. God fills the heavens and the earth, yet nothing can define His limits. God's being is His divine being, which goes beyond human understanding, yet it is a real being. In his doctrine of ubiquity Luther brought out this mode of divine being and its significance to other doctrines (Grönvik, 1968). So Christ's presence in incarnation, baptism, communion and faith is precisely that divine "being". Luther considers this idea of divine reality as an essential criterion of doctrine. In all points of doctrine must refer to God, who is present and loving, who is espoused by faith unto itself and found by love as a fountain of continuous good (Martikainen, E., 1987).

According to the interpretation of doctrine offered by Luther, in creation man already became a partaker of the divine reality and love in a special way. All the Trinity was present in creating him and molding him in the image of the Trinity, the Godhead (*imago Dei*). Nevertheless, participation in God was not restricted to simply the reception of a static image. Even more was involved in it, namely that man was created in the image of God (*imago*) and in His likeness (*similitudo*). In faith man participated in God's essence and His characteristics; he was like God in wisdom, goodness, grace, love, strength, immortality, etc. (Mannermaa, 1979). This divine life in faith was prevented neither by the body nor sensory reality. While paradise was not yet heaven, there man had immortal life (Huovinen, 1981).

Communion with God also had significant consequences for man's relation to his fellow man and to nature. As the image of God, made in His likeness, man was responsible for the creation. So the special position given to man in the creation did not mean that man could set himself above nature. Quite the contrary, he loved it and was responsible for it. In faith man had a generous supply of all goodness, knowledge, love, etc., which also enabled genuine rejoicing over God's creation and its goodness.

The Fall destroyed the harmony of the original state. Man lost the likeness of God; his immortality, i.e. his share in the divine life. This loss of real participation in God also shattered his other relationships: his relationship to himself, his love for his fellow man and his harmonic balance with nature. The human ability to love and care for his fellow human being and for nature is depraved due to his own lack of love for God. In the Fall he lost the likeness of

God as well as his ability to have genuine communion with nature. Thus being without his inner vivacity, riches and creativity, man attempts to achieve wholeness by attaching himself to the creation and its good gifts. Man, without his inner animation, continues to seek surrogates which are nevertheless incapable of mending and healing him. Thus he becomes inwardly dependent on nature and his fellow man to the extent that he cannot freely love and advance their well-being without actually exploiting them while seeking the love so essential to his own internal existence, seeking love from a source which cannot give it. The consideration of nature and one's fellow man presupposes a good personality which is only generated from the reception of love. This need to receive love basic to man cannot be replaced by anything else. It must be noted in particular that sin, i.e. the absence of divine love, not only affects man as personal evil but as the depravation of nature as well.

Yet God has not abandoned His creation. Faithfulness is a divine characteristic, without which God would cease to be God. This faithfulness is not only manifested by His personal coming in Christ and the Holy Spirit but by His works amidst His creation. God channels His care in the world through both individuals and offices seeking to share the gifts bestowed in God's creation with equity to all. Also social justice, whenever it strives to realize equitable justice can, when seen from the viewpoint of Christian doctrine, be seen to be based on divine love, albeit more in the form of setting limits to evil than distributive of positive good. During crises, and in the face of the ecological crisis looming over the creation in particular, concepts of justice prevailing in societies are to be reviewed. Also universal cooperation for the common good must be stressed. The dramatic disruption of the ecosystem sets a new challenge before all peoples and nations: a readiness to relinquish benefits and the standard of living already realized, as well as to share the wealth of the creation in a way which spares nature as much as possible. The church has a significant task to remind people of nature as a gift of God to be shared with one's fellow man and, if need be, returned to God.

Without love individuals do not volunteer to act for the common good and for that of others, which good seems to be far removed from their own interests. Political and societal activities aimed at the common good do not receive support if all citizens do not make a personal contribution to their inception. Thus it is crucial to see loving, caring people born and raised in the church. The Christian doctrine of the atonement is not counter to this love. Rather, in redemption God Himself approaches His entire creation with a special kind of love.

5.2. God's Love for the Creation in Atonement

When we talk about redemption we also need to observe how God loves and how He loves His entire creation in particular. The very Word of God, through which the whole creation was brought forth, becomes flesh. The incarnation is not something strange to the divine personality. He is already present in His entire creation although not approachable in His salvatory functions throughout the whole creation. In his doctrine of the atonement Luther also gives emphasis to the significance of God's real presence, even though he separates the divine presence in the creation and the salvatory presence of Christ in the incarnation. The question, however, touches upon the being and presence of the same God. God does not become man from another physically separate reality, but He is in the heart and womb of Mary before Christ's incarnation. God's incarnation means His becoming concrete, one, an approachable being, and not at all God's coming into the world from some other reality.

It is to God's own, i.e. to those created by God that Christ comes. Everything was created by the Word: nature and humanity, the created, are partakers of His divinity, even if the goodness of the created is depraved, both in regard to man and nature. God has not abandoned His creation because of depravity, but He himself draws nigh. In coming so close He gives even more than He did in the creation where He bestowed the heavens and the earth and everything in them. In redemption He does not limit His gifts to simply the renewal of all this vast realm. Rather, God gives Himself.

So evil and sin do not prevent God from approaching man. Luther frequently stresses how the overcoming of sin is possible only in the presence of the divine person and power. Christ does not take upon Himself only a neutral, purified or imaginary humanity but a real, sinful humanity (Mannema, 1979). Overcoming sin is the very work of God. In the person of Christ sin is overcome while man is rejoined as a partaker of the divine nature.

On the basis of the doctrine of creation it is possible to extend Christ's redemptive work even further. It can be claimed that Christ not only redeems individuals or the souls of men but also His body, which is an integral part of nature, and ultimately the entire creation (Rom. 8:18-23). In Christ's atonement the battle against evil and depravity has not been carried to its final end yet. Depravity continues in the entire creation, where sin and evil are a reality. Ultimate freedom from depravity is attained in the fulfilment, where evil is condemned and removed. The atonement of Christ is dispensed through the means of grace in the church. It is received as righteousness in faith and love. This already entails a

battle against depravity. In a world where nature is in a state of emergency due to human selfishness, Christian love spells unselfishness, the readiness to part with one's own good and to advance that of others. The way of divine love is also the way of the cross.

5.3. God's Love and the Creation in Sanctification (the Church)

While Christ has redeemed in Himself the entire creation, redemption does not mean the justification of all yet, i.e. partaking in faith of the restored communion with God prepared by Christ. Justification takes place in the church through the work of the Holy Spirit.

The appreciation of the created continues to be recognized in the Lutheran doctrines of the church and of justification. Justification takes place through the material elements. The proclamation of grace is oral proclamation; Christ Himself is present in the bread and wine of the Sacrament as He is in the baptismal water. Sanctification is none other than bringing people to Christ in order that they may receive all His gifts. These gifts also include receiving the gifts of the creation anew. In the eyes of faith the entire creation appears in its original form, yet renewed. Sanctification thus unites the believer with the gifts afforded by God in the creation as well as with that special gift offered in redemption, i.e. God Himself. Sanctification is nothing other than continued believing in God and participation in Him and all His gifts through faith.

Luther frequently compares faith to the righteousness of the original state, even though faith reaches towards that perfect righteousness and love which is to come. Salvation and sanctification do not only mean the human soul's turning away from the world but at the same time the total renewal and renewed relationship of man to his fellow man and nature. Salvation means the returning of the original harmony of faith and love while growing into eternal life, perfect immortality, i.e. participation in God.

6. Conclusions on Our Responsibility for the Creation

In the above we have emphasized that in its teaching the church should find it important to understand that the entire creation is the gift of God given in love. The original communion of the creation with God was established in the creation. Man partakes of God in a special way as His image and His likeness. God's special care for His creation does not thus begin only in the atonement or even in justification and sanctification, where man's distorted relationship is indeed repaired and renewed. The atonement does not mean the

creation of an entirely new person but simply the redemption of man created by God. The very same person whom God has created is redeemed in Christ.

The concept of man as part of God's creation, the recipient of the gift of his own life, creates the basis for the concept of man redeemed and sanctified. Man is always the creation of God even when his cognitive awareness of his relationship to God in faith has been broken. In Christ this communion is restored on a new and even more profound level than previously. An emphasis placed on the image of God of the original creation creates the possibility in the church for a holistic mode of thought, in which faith in God is not divorced from the other aspects of human life, although faith in its specific meaning would only mean justification by faith.

Consequently, the comprehension of man as part of God's creation, both as the image of God and in His likeness, does not mean human passivity in relation to himself and the rest of the creation. It does not exclude man's responsibility for the remainder of the creation but rather implies precisely this responsibility. This is already included in the concept of man as the image and likeness of God, as a physio-spiritual being molded by divine love, who has the possibilities of taking responsibility for himself, for his fellowman as well as for nature, who through his powers of reason has capabilities necessary to the discovery of the requisite channels for the advancement of the common good of the creation. To be truly responsible is impossible without participation in a self-supportive, deeper and vaster reality; that love which signifies partaking of God. The best example of the character of this responsibility is presented by God Himself in committing Himself to His entire creation in love. This commitment, beginning with the creation, cannot be severed by sin and evil as God Himself has made an even more profound commitment in the atonement and in sanctification. He takes upon Himself the real nature of suffering and alienated man, bearing these in Himself even unto death and victory. Evil and suffering are overcome in God's own person as He Himself gives an example of how responsibility belongs to the stronger party even when it requires a profound identification with the life of the weaker party in all its real aspects. As a man, as a figure of suffering, Christ conveys a very illustrative, humane image of this responsibility.

In diverse ways man himself participates in and is dependent on the remainder of the creation. He breathes its air; he receives the light and heat he needs from the sun; he receives sustaining nourishment from the earth, etc. None of these are his own accomplishments but gifts bestowed upon him.

True responsibility, not directed simply towards accountability for temporal well-being, is thus only possible when we are con-

scious of this given structure of love already included in the creation. In order to take on responsibility for the entire creation we cannot be content with only knowledge and action but deep-seated participation and identification with its life. Without these given, i. e. spontaneous, life potentials responsibility for human life or the creation could not be carried out. This responsibility can never be a harmonious whole unless it on the one hand rises out of a profound participation in God's love supportive of the entire creation and on the other hand brings forth a recognition of this love in life's multiplicity of spontaneous possibilities.

According to this presentation, the church's responsibility in the ecological crisis rises out of its own doctrine, the various aspects of which much be recognized and presented. This doctrine contains in itself a mode of thought appreciative of nature, even though this has for one reason or another been by-passed in church history. Man, created by God, bearing His image, has a special position in the creation so that his integrity is connected with the welfare of the rest of the creation.

The general discussion on the ecological crisis emphasizes universal democratic participation for the advancement of the common good at a global level. Without the participation of every single human being, there can be no achievements in the areas of international cooperation and legislation aiming at the preservation of nature and the continued existence of humanity. So each church member and every citizen should be motivated to participate in his own place in life and through his own contribution for the advancement of the common good both in his personal life and through democratic political involvement. The church has a significant responsibility in teaching its members and all people to love, which opens up a cooperation not simply restricted to communion among Christians but including sharing with everyone. In all activities, the church and its members especially stress unselfish love, which places ahead of our personal interests both nature and the commonly shared life of humanity. Even if the overcoming of the ecological crisis calls for vast and multi-dimensional political, societal (legislative), economic and technological solutions, all to be based on the information obtained from ecology and the environmental sciences, education and measures directed at the underlying problem of the ecological crisis, man and his selfishness, are, however, of decisive significance. The churches and their members have a singular contribution to offer in providing instruction as well as an example of the Christian concept of man. In continually offering spiritual good the churches are also a reminder of the fact that the good life of man is not based on (economic and material) competi-

tion or external prosperity but rather on that inner wealth abundant enough to share.

The churches also support all efforts that advance international security (disarmament, weapons reduction), equity (especially focusing attention on the economic development of the impoverished developing nations), the economical use of natural resources (the energy consumption of the wealthy industrialized nations should be controlled through legislation and by means of appropriate technological development), the prevention of environmental pollution as well as the rectification of prior damage everywhere by all possible means, population control (especially in the developing nations), universal equality. Above all the churches insist that nature's intrinsic systems be taken into consideration when plans are made for economic and technological development in a new direction in which the previous destruction of the ecosystem could be repaired and forthcoming problems prevented. The churches stress that these measures have an especially high order of priority. Also universal education and instruction aimed at the consideration of the global good is to be carried out at all possible levels. Within their own framework the churches have a role to carry out in this universal instruction and communication of information.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Vladimir Fedorov

The dictionary defines the word "responsibility" as "an obligation, either imposed upon someone or adopted by someone, to be accountable or answerable for some actions and their possible consequences".¹ It is meant here that obligations in the form of "promise or agreement" demanding from the person who promises or agrees an unconditional fulfillment of the promise or agreement.

"Responsibility" is also an ethical accountability; we can speak of the feeling of responsibility, of developing this quality as an moral feature of human character.

In the ethics and law, responsibility is treated as a category reflecting a specific social and ethico-legal attitude of a person to the society (to mankind as a whole).

The philosophers introduced this term into their writings in the second half of the 19th century. As it is stated by R. McKeon,² the term "responsibility" was first used by A. Bain in his book "The Emotions and the Will"³ published in 1859, who treated responsibility as "punishability", since any problem involved in this term is a problem of "accusation, examination, and punishment".

The trends in the evolution of the notion of responsibility may be represented as several vectors; one of the vectors is the historical evolution from a collective responsibility to a personal responsibility, another is the evolution from an outward responsibility to an inward responsibility, which is a conscious personal responsibility. In the opinion of J. Piaget, the former vector may be called the vector of the individualization of responsibility, and the latter the vector of spiritualization of responsibility.⁴ A third vector evolves from the one of spiritualization, viz. a responsibility for the future, rather for the past only.

In this transfer from the retrospective to the prospective, the progressive tendency of evolution manifests itself. The transfer also implies an ability of man both to foresee the consequences of his

¹ The Dictionary of the Modern Literary Russian, Moscow, 1959, vol. 8, 1840.

² R. McKeon, "The Development and the Significance of the Concept of Responsibility," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, Bruxelles, 1957, No. 39.

³ A. Bain, *The Emotions and the Will*, London, 1865, p. 616.

⁴ J. Piaget, *The Moral Judgement of the Child*, London, 1977, p. 399.

future actions and to try and take an active part in the transformation of the surrounding world.

A prerequisite of the responsibility is an opportunity to make a careful choice, i.e. to consider a preferable alternate behaviour. The choice also implies many possibilities at least one alternative should be available. Most frequently, the choice does not mean having a preference for some one alternative, but it means a suppression or rejection of some other alternative, which promotes the first one. In other words, the person is responsible both for the trend he has selected and for the one he has rejected.

The person, or the subject, of responsibility may be one man (an individual) or a group of people (a society) or even all mankind. Apart from the subject of relations, there must exist another subject to which the former subject is answerable. In psychology the latter subject is termed "the instance".¹ The instance assesses the activity of the subject and imposes sanctions a reward or a punishment according to the degree of merit or error.

In our case, the instance of responsibility is God. It is God who pronounces His creating word, "Let us make man", and it is His order for the man to "be" that man must obey, displaying the divine intention and realizing the pre-eternal idea. Man must respond to the creating word. God expects man to respond in a human manner. Man is responsible because with his abilities of thinking and speaking he is answerable to God by his very being and the plenitude of his humanity.

A different instance of responsibility was indicated by Academician V. Goldansky when he discussed the real menace of self-destructing of mankind: "We are responsible not only to ourselves but to the Universe if only because of the unique character of the Earth civilization".²

Causes for Concern

Today many people have realized that the very existence of mankind depends on the measures taken to preserve our natural environment. Academician Vernadsky wrote: "We are living at a turning point in man's history, in an essentially remarkable epoch of man's life on our planet. For the first time, man has embraced

by his life and his culture the entire upper envelope of the planet: the total biosphere, the entire part of the planet involved in life".¹

An intense sometimes critically intense ecological situation in the second half of this century is but a warning that a new historical stage has been reached in the relations between the human society and the natural environment. The range and the scale of man's influence on nature have grown enormously, with qualitatively new shapes and forms of that influence, with man's activity spreading over the media of nature which have hitherto been unattainable for him.

The problem of "Man and Nature" has acquired an altogether new dimension, a different socio-economic and politico-international status.

Let us outline the main global problems. During the last few decades, the lithosphere the Earth's crust, especially its upper layer had been subjected by man to considerable anthropogenic overloads. Man has invaded the Earth's resources, is changing land receives and the natural landscapes, and building large scale engineering constructions; man made reduction of cultivated lands was in some cases quite unnecessary; harmful processes are going on: the soil gets destroyed or polluted, fertile soil is reduced to wasteland or marshes or to salty land, etc. Every ten years, 7% of upper stratum of soil in the world is lost.²

Owing to bad management, the area of wasteland increases in one hundred countries of the world. If the present rate of deterioration is not slowed down, the world is in for 26 bln dollars worth losses of food products within the next thirty years.³

If we take into account that the population of the world may double within the next fifty years, the problem of food for mankind becomes menacing with the amount of cultivated lands always decreasing.

Relatively recent phenomena include the world-wide processes of pollution (in particular, of soil and of the underground water) and of an intense utilization of the lower layers of ground (for burying the dangerous waste products, for storing oil and gas, for nuclear tests, for various underground constructions, etc.), which cause many negative consequences.

The problem of fresh water in the world can be solved by using one of the most precious natural resources in the lithosphere the

1 K. Muzdybayer, *Psychology of Responsibility* (in Russian), Leningrad, 1984, p.10.

2 V. Goldansky, *Logic of Reason instead of Logic of Egoism* (in Russian), "Izvestia", 1989, No.42, p.5.

1 V.I. Vernadsky, *Reflections of a Naturalist* (in Russian), Book 2, Moscow, 1977, p.22.

2 See Cf. *State of the World, 1986. A World watch Institute Report on Progress toward a Sustainable Society*, New York London, 1986, p.10.

3 Our Common Future, *The World Commission on Environment and Development*, Oxford, N.Y., 1987, p.2.

underground water. They are also the cheapest water reservoirs, and they are in imminent danger of being exhausted in terms of quality due to the increasing practise of burying the polluting waste products including toxic and radioactive ones.

Radical anthropogenic changes take place in the earth's atmosphere: the atmospheric properties and the gas composition are changing; there is a danger of destroying ionosphere and the stratospheric ozone layer; the proportion of dust increases steadily; the lower layers get impregnated with gases and solid particles of industrial origin, which are dangerous for the living organisms; the "greenhouse effect" is developing.

There is a general opinion that the increasing quantity of dioxide carbon, which is responsible for approximately one half of the greenhouse effect, results from burning the mineral fuels. However, some recent calculations made by Dr. G. Zavarzin, Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, and Prof. W. Clarke (USA) indicate that the main source for the "greenhouse" gases is the anthropogenic disturbance in the life of the microbe communities in the soils of Siberia and of some North American areas.¹ What ever the cause, the results is this: every ten years the mean global temperature will keep increasing by five degrees if the rate of anthropogenic loads is kept stable. In consideration the rise may seem, the resulting rate of desert expansion (which at present amounts to 6 mln ha per year) will rise both in Africa and in Asia.

We are bound to face considerable changes of climate in the northern parts of North America, Siberia and Scandinavia. Another global result will be a further acceleration of the sea level rise. The surface level of the world ocean is believed to have risen by ten to twelve centimetres within this century; nowadays the rate of the process is ten times greater.

The change in global climate also include an increase in the intensity of solar ultraviolet radiation reaching the Earth's surface. This results from a decrease in the ozone layer. During the last sixteen years, the average decrease of ozone in North America and Europe amounted to 3%, which led to a 57% increase in the skin-cancer cases.²

Acid precipitation is another global problem: the acid rains, snowfalls, mists are due to the great amounts of discarded by-product of fuel expenditure sulphuric acid and nitrates. Acid precipitation affects the food production by killing the plants and fresh water life and destroys the houses.

1 A. Yablokov, Shall we be able to protect our environment? (in Russian),

"Pravda", 1989, No. 13, p.6.

2 Ibid.

The biosphere, which supports the self sustaining and the self regulating plant and animal systems, is suffering from negative ecological consequences: the biochemical cycles are distorted; as well as the energy and thermodynamic processes in the biosphere. Moreover, some specific stresses are taken place a number which are of global character, e.g. the number of species is reducing in the plant and animal life, and the woods are disappearing faster than ever before.

Man's ecological illiteracy and carelessness result in cases of barbarism towards nature leading to the extinction of some species of wild animals at an unprecedented rate of one species a year.

More and more alarming grows the state of vegetation on our planet. According to some estimates, in the mid 70s the rate of plant extinction was one species or subspecies per day; the rate is to rise to one species to hour by the end of the 80s.¹

Similar deterioration is going on in the cultivated plants and animals, impoverishing the genetic potential of the Earth's biosphere. In the latter case, the reduction of the variety of biological species a direct result of man's conscious activity.

A special problem is the cutting down of tropical forests (up to 11 mln ha annually). At this rate, it will take only 85 years to strip the tropics bare of all trees. The ecological and socio-economical consequences of the process are numerous: the great losses of moisture a deterioration of soil reducing it to waste land, changes in the local climate, the dramatic destruction of the natural resources, etc. In terms of global ecological changes, the resulting transformation of the Earth's surface is bound to tell on its reflection properties. The latter together with changes in the global balances of gas, water and energy may destabilize the Earth's climate.

The hydrosphere the water in the rivers, lakes and oceans is also under a stress because of the industrial waste products polluting the environment of the biota in this part of the Earth. The qualitative changes in the hydrosphere (the chemical composition and the water properties) turn into a quantitative factor: the fresh water resources and the fresh water life are being exhausted.

The ever increasing man made pollution of the water reservoirs is not fatal as yet, but it needs a revision of concepts for utilizing the fresh water resources in economics, a new strategy for using them, and radical changes in the technological, management and the economics principles of the water consumption.²

1 E. Eckholm, Conservation for Survival, UN Development Forum, Geneva, 1978, p.3.

2 M.I. Lvovich, (1) Preservation of water resources in the future (in Russian), Izvestia AN SSSR, seriya geograficheskaya, 1982, No.1, pp.384-3; (2) Water and Life (in Russian), Moscow, 1986, pp.224, 227.

The world ocean presents another vital issue: man's activity brought about pollution in such a degree that a biological efficiency showed a decrease by 20% and the fishing losses amounted to 1520 mln tons in the early 80s.¹

The UN statistics show that each year the world ocean is polluted with pesticides (50,000 tons), mercury (5,000 tons), oil (10 mln tons) and by other waste. This is much more than the amount of natural elements received by the water due to geological processes (this refers to iron, manganese, copper, zinc, lead, tin arsenic pentoxide, oil, etc.).²

The bottom of the world ocean, including the deepest hollows, is widely used for burying there the more poisonous substances (including the "morally outdated" military toxins) and the radioactive waste. There is evidence that in some cases the containers broke open to cause a particularly dangerous poisoning of the water area.

There are many examples proving the situation to be critical. E.g. a sudden outbreak of the brown algae propagation in the North Sea in 1988, which may have been due to some mutations caused by toxic chemicals unloaded into the ocean, although another reason is equally probable the influence of substances washed out from soil. Another example of an ecological catastrophe is man's plundering the sea of fish. E.g. in the 60s criminally great amount of codfish was trawled from the Barents sea; then the fishing industries of Norway and the USSR became most active in trawling two other species which are essential for the ecology of the Barents sea since they are the main food for the cod and the herring, for the water fowl and the seal. This vandalism caused starvation for the sea-birds and the extinction of the seal in the area.

During the last thirty years another problem arose how to preserve the integrity of the Earth's outer envelope, the cosmospere (the space around the Earth)? Space exploration is a purposeful long-term policy of conquering new surroundings and natural resources.

The outer envelope of the Earth is responsible for a number of vital functions, e.g. the balance of heat and radiation and certain geophysical processes. As man penetrates into space, a major global task is to keep the natural equilibrium and the original properties of the cosmospere. It is now obvious that certain activities involved in space exploration must be properly regulated in order to exclude all forms of pollution and other disturbance of natural balance in space and on heavenly bodies. Discussions are held on a world scale of prohibitive measures and such aspects of regulation as the non-mil-

itarization of space, protection of cosmos from man, a reduction of space waste (the discarded satellites continuing to orbit the Earth), the dumping into space of the "earthly" waste matter, the launching of larger rockets using the solid fuels.

Among the ruinous factors of man's influence upon nature, the first and the most destructive is the military activity in all its forms both in a period of peace and at a time of hostilities with the "conventional" weapons used.

The arms race is deadly dangerous for many reasons: the natural resources consumption is not productive and leads to shortages, the environment gets polluted in various ways, enormous is the waste of military production stored or buried in the earth. The severest wounds on the earth may be inflicted by the use of nuclear weapons; nuclear tests are carried on for over forty years, injuring the life on the planet.

The ecological aspect of a possible global nuclear war exposes the suicidal policy of man leading to a thermo-nuclear conflict which is bound to destroy the food and water basis as well as damage all geophysical, chemical, thermodynamic and other properties of all envelopes of the earth, distorting the interactions. In particular, the global climate is faced with imminent anomalies: first, a great rise of temperature; then a great cooling (on the level of Arctic temperatures), i.e. "the nuclear winter".

The by-effects of a nuclear war, with injuries to nature due to radioactivity, will cause long-term disturbances in the biota by breaking all chains in the feeding systems; all species of the plant and animal life are going to be distorted, the total mass of living organisms will be reduced drastically, etc. The radioactive pollution of the atmosphere and the water will be responsible for turning our planet inhabitable for a long period of time (50 to 100 years as minimum) both for man and for all higher forms of life.

On the whole, the situation will be rendered irreversible (at least within the lifetime of one generation): a number of fundamental natural processes will be damaged, which determine the very existence of man and, consequently, the survival of those who may, for some reasons, be spared the immediate death during the hostilities. The means of mass destruction destroy not only life, not only social organism and surrounding media: they destroy the mechanisms securing their possible revival, i.e. regeneration of their necessary quantity and needed quality within the thinkable limits.¹

The huge power of the mass destruction weapons stored in the world renders our planet too fragile: the use of the weapons will destroy both man and his environment. Apart from direct ecologi-

¹ State of the World, 1986, p.9, 10.

² The State of the Environment, 1985, p.7475.

¹ Cf. N. Semenov, "Disturbing the Peace" (in Russian), "Znanie-Sila", 1989, No.2, p.76.

cal damage, the arms race imposes upon mankind the great weight of economic losses, the international political climate is poisoned; a great damage is being caused to nature and nature preservation. It should be admitted that the arms race entails not only the risk of a nuclear conflict but also an aggravation of the ecological conflict, undermining the hope to overcome the vital ecological contradictions the Earth today.

In order to overcome the present crisis, man needs a new way of thinking ecological thinking, global thinking. For Christians, the foundation of this new thinking is the Christian theology particularly, the Christian viewpoint on the relationships of Man and Nature.

The Christian View on Relations between Man and Nature

The need to teach and propagate the Christian attitude to nature is caused both by the purpose of promoting the efforts of Christians aimed at the elimination of the present ecological crisis, i.e. by a practical purpose, and by the problem of morality, i.e. by a Christian duty to struggle with sin viz. a sinful attitude towards God's creation.

It is clear that the present alarming state of our environment has been brought about, first and foremost, by the activity of economically developed countries in which the Christian culture is predominant. The present situation can be explained by the fact that, as regards nature, the progress of civilisation was contradicting the Christian teaching and was, and still often is, a sinful process contradicting God's will and commandments.

It is therefore essential to explain and propagate the teaching of Christian Churches on Creation, the Christian view on relations between Man and Nature.

It appears all the more essential when one is faced with the fact that some ecologists tend to explain the utilitarian approach on the part of some of their colleagues by their Christian outlook. For instance, a famous American expert on ecology, Prof. Daniel Simberloff (Florida University), criticises his American colleagues for their utilitarian approach centring on the protection of those plants and animal species which are useful for man. He says that he detects the influence of the Christian teaching imbued by several generations of Americans in the USA; if God created man as a crown of Creation, to rule over all other creations on earth, then it is logical

that life should be preserved for those species which are useful for man, eliminating all those which seem to be harmful.¹

Another American scientist, Dr. L. White, writes in his article examining the historical roots of our ecological crisis that the cause of the situation when the traditional European world outlook is losing its humane character based upon the Christian criteria in morals and religion. He writes, "Christianity ... not only approved dualism of man and nature but also declared that it's by God's will that man exploits nature in his own interests".²

In one way or another, many western scientists support this thesis stating that the Christian outlook focused on man at the cost of nature an anthropocentric outlook regarding man as the central fact or final aim of the universe is responsible for the present calamitous condition of Nature since it places human values above all other values.³

This interpretation of the Christian world outlook should be undoubtedly rejected. The opposite is true: a sinful, non-Christian attitude of Christians towards nature has brought about the crisis.

The Christian outlook and man's attitude to Nature are based on the Holy Scriptures. The first biblical narrative of Creation (Gen. 1: 1-13) unites, in one common blessing, man and all other living creatures, thus emphasizing the anthropocosmic union on the plane of nature.

The second narrative (Gen. 2: 4 - 25) is more certain in defining man's place in Creation. Man is shown not only as the crown of Creation but as its principle; the plants had not been made for "there was not a man to till the ground" (2: 5). Then follows a detailed description of man being created, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (2: 7). In this narrative, man is the hypostasis the essence of principle of the universe as a harmonious whole, while all nature on Earth is but a bodily sequence of man, man's peripheral body.

Father Sergiy Bulgakov wrote, "Man is the completeness and culmination of the world, man is the Logos of the Universe. In principle, there is not a single thing in the world, which could not be called human man is able to embrace every thing by his percep-

1 Cf. N. Semenova, "Disturbing the Peace" (in Russian), "Znamie-Sila", 1989, No. 2, p. 76.

2 L. White, Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis, "Nature", 1967, vol. 155, pp. 120307.

3 In this connection, N.B. Ignatovskaya cites A. Toynebe, G. Cox, R. Dis, O. Leopold et al. in her article "Attitude to Animals as a Problem of Morality" (in Russian), col. "Ethic Thought", Moscow, 1988, p. 224.

tion, his emotions, and his will... The universe is a potential and peripheral body for man."¹

An outstanding Russian theologian Father Pavel Florensky was very expressive when discussing the ideal relations between man and the universe. He indicated several aspects in the interdependence of man and the universe: gnoceological, biological, economic, psychological, metaphysical, and religious. "From the gnoceological point of view, it is through our knowledge that we master everything by assimilating it into ourselves (all is 'I' as J.G. Fichte meant it. All becomes assimilated to man through knowledge). From the biological point of view, everything that surrounds man is man's body, a sequence of man's body, an aggregation of man's additional organs. From the economic point of view, everything that we cultivate, produce, and consume is our economy. From the psychological point of view, everything that we perceive is the symbolic embodiment of our inner lives, a mirror reflecting the spirit. From the metaphysical point of view, all is actually the same as man, for if it had been different from man it could not have been assimilated with man. From the religious point of view, the Universe the image of Sophia is the Mother, the Bride, and the Wife of man who is the image of Christ; she is assimilated to Man and expects Man to take care of Her, to give Her caress, and to fertilise Her with the spirit".²

The six days in the book of Genesis convey the general idea that all creatures, in their infinite variety, from the hierarchy which is held together in reciprocal relationship and is focused in man. The six days is the narrative about the World being Man, about the creating the world for man, for the purpose of man, with a view of man. For instance, the animal kingdom appears after man and in relation to man as "an help meet for him" (2: 18). It was Adam who gave names to all animals that God brought to him because the Lord God had formed the entire world for man to improve it. And man perceives the living creatures, penetrating into their secrets to rule over the host of them. The fact of man giving names to all animals acquires a mystical meaning since a name is not a meaningless sound but an outer envelope for the sense. Man is allowed by God to give names to all living souls because man knows the words expressing the divine meaning for each living creature. Man gives names to creatures and rules over them as a person embracing his conscience the idea of life.

The act of giving names is the expression of authority over the living creatures. Man is allowed to be the centre of all Creation on earth, to govern and rule, here man is the king of nature, the master of all things natural who gives a "name" to everything; which proves that everything obeys man.

It is extremely important to comprehend the true meaning of the notions "to govern" and "to own". These notions are best illustrated by the image suggested by Father Pavel Florensky, the image of "Wife". "Man the husband is supposed to love the world the wife and be united with Her, to take care of her, to guide her towards the light and spirituality, directing her elemental forces and chaotic impulses towards creativity, so as to reveal her original cosmos". And then, "Man is the king of all beings a king but not a cruel or unjust ruler obtaining complete power by force, nor an usurper who takes the power wrongfully; it is to God the Maker that Man is accountable for the Universe which is entrusted to him".¹

The words above are quoted from a lecture delivered by Father Pavel Florensky, Professor at Moscow Theological Academy, seventy years ago. When reminding his students of Christ's commandment, "and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16: 15), Father Pavel Florensky put this question, "Is the Western civilization preaching to every creature? Is it announcing the Resurrection and the Transfiguration? Is it a word of a new earth and a new heaven? Thence criminal is the plundering civilization without mercy or love for the creatures which only wants profit from each creature, which has no wish to help nature to reveal the latent culture forcing instead both the outward forms and the outward goals. Through the crust of civilization, however, nature can be seen; it is evident that nature is not an indifferent medium for the despotic power of technology although for the time being nature has to tolerate this power no, nature is a living image of man".²

Today there are even more grounds repeating these words with one correction, viz. now the words "Western civilization" refer to us as well as to other countries in Europe and America. Today we do not have to prove that "from whatever side we approach the problem of relations between man and his environment, we can always see that by violating the Environment, Man violates himself, by giving up nature as sacrifice for the sake of a profit, man sacrifices himself to the elements governed by his passions".³

The Bible narrative about giving names to all creatures may be interpreted that an indication that in Heaven the language covered the very essence of things, which is now lost. This language is at-

¹ Fr. Serpily Bulgakov, "The Lamb of God", On God & Manhood, Paris, 1933, p. 138. (in Russian).

² Fr. Pavel Florensky, "Macrocosm and Microcosm" (in Russian), Theological Proceedings Published by the Moscow Patriarchate, 1983, No. 24, p. 233.

¹ Ibid.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid.

tainable for only "the merciful hearts", which were described by St. Isaac the Syrian in these words, "A merciful heart is a heart moved by the care of all Creation of men, and fowl, and beasts, and demons, and all creatures..."¹

We can see a true understanding of the cosmic meaning of the creatures in the numerous stories about Christian zealots who used to pray for all living creatures and by whose side the beasts were living as peacefully as at the time when Adam gave the names. If this world-wide common meaning exists, then the world must unite in one Church of God, and all creatures must assemble around man as the announcer of this meaning.

The idea of the former heavenly relationship between man and other creatures, which is partially re-established in the lives of saints and ought to be fully restored in coming new Earth, this idea is vividly illustrated by the Russian icon paintings. In the icon "In Three Rejoice, O Full of Grace, All Creation: the Angelic Hosts and the Race of Men", the paradisiac plants, beasts and the fowl, i.e. all creatures surrounding the Mother of God as the Loving Heart of the Universe. In the icon "Let Everything that Hath Breath Praise the Lord", the universe is shown with people, angels, beasts and birds, plants and planets, surrounding Jesus Christ in a circle of heavenly spheres. It is the cosmos of the future, the world accumulated in Jesus Christ, which is inspired by the love of the Mother of God and resurrected in God who in the Christian faith opposes the chaos reigning supreme on the earth of today.

Man is inseparable from all other creatures. By his origin, he is related to the universe, and Paul the Apostle witnesses that, "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8: 19). The feeling of cosmos is inherent in the theological teaching of the Church. "On his path towards a union with God, man does not push aside any creatures in his love he accumulates all cosmos which has been split by sin so that eventually it should be transformed by the Grace of God"².

The above examination is but a brief outline of one aspect in the Orthodox teaching on Creation on the interdependent relationship between man and the universe, man and nature. The basic principles of theology declaring the necessity to preserve the integrity of Creation imply many other aspects as well; many doctrines of the Orthodox theology have not been mentioned here, e.g. the teaching

of Image and the Likeness, of the Sophia, the Wisdom of God, of deification of man and all creatures, etc. The current urgent issues demand that we should study and systematize those theological doctrines which can help us form a new ecological thinking.¹

For many years the ecological theme has been studied by Christian theologians discussing it at various ecumenical conferences, but systematic studies are still to be carried on. The Russian Orthodox theology produced many works on the subject; of the more important writings we should single out "The Christian View on the Ecological Problem" by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexy of Leningrad and Novgorod and a paper by M.S. Ivanov, "Christian attitude to Nature"³, detailed and fundamental is the paper by Yu. P. Avvakumov, "God the Creator and Creation by man"⁴. Still, a further research is really imperative: a Christian sermon on ecology is to be addressed to believers and non-believers alike. Unfortunately, the Soviet scientists even experts on ecology are little acquainted with the Orthodox view on the subject, or with the common Christian approach. A recent proof is the article by Yu. V. Krianev, "Ecumenical Concepts in Ecology", in which we read, "Theological presentation of ecological problems is mystical and absolute; it is a mixture of different subjects economic, ideological, cultural shading the true cause of the ecological crisis, i.e. the private property in a bourgeois society"⁵.

In conclusion, I should like to give three instances of the truly Christian attitude to nature, which prove that the Christian outlook is not guilty of any exploitation of nature.

In 1912, Father Sergiy Bulgakov wrote a preface to his "Philosophy of Economy"; explaining the purpose of his book, he quoted from F.M. Dostoyevsky, "Love all God's Creation the whole of it and each grain of sand in it. Love each leaf and each ray created by God. Love the plants, and the animals, and every single thing. If you love everything, you will know the Divine idea of all things" ("Brothers Karamazov", a sermon spoken by Zosima the elder).⁶ The words belong to the zealot in the novel, but they are identical with the words spoken by the saints of this century, Father Siluan of

¹ St. Isaac the Syrian, Works, 3rd ed., Sergyev Posad, 1911, p.205. Migne PG. 186, col.411.

² V.N. Lossky, The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, Theological Studies, No.8, Moscow, Moscow Patriarchate publication, 1972, p.60; Essai sur la Théologie Mystique de l'Eglise de l'Orient par V. Lossky, Aubier, 1944, p. 106.

¹ "... we understand our spiritual peculiarity in the terms of sophiology as well as in absence of sophial perception of the world in the West we feel ourselves far from both acosmism and naturalism", Cf. V. Zenkovsky, "Overcoming Platonism and the Problem of Sophianity of Creation", Par. 1930, No.24, p.6.

² At the time of writing, His Eminence ALEXY was Metropolitan of Tallinn and all Estonia. His paper was published in the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate, 1974, No.34.

³ Ibid, 1976, No.2.

⁴ Ibid, 1989, No.2.

⁵ In the book, "Horizons of Ecological knowledge", Moscow, 1986, p.111.

⁶ Fr. Sergiy Bulgakov, Philosophy of Economy, Moscow, 1912, p.IV.

St Athos, "The spirit of God teaches the soul to love all things living so that not a single green leaf on a tree should be hurt, or a flower in a field trampled down. Thus the spirit of God teaches love and sympathy for every creature, and the soul learns to be merciful and compassionate for every creature even for enemies and demons, because they are lost and have no goodness".¹

It is not surprising that the Orthodox teaching should be close to the idea spoken by a distinguished Protestant zealot Dr. Albert Schweitzer, "Today it does not seem quite normal to accept a prerequisite of reasonable ethics a careful attitude to all things living, including the lowest forms of life. But the time will come when it will seem surprising that people should take so long to learn that meaningless injuries to anything living is incompatible with ethics. Ethics is an infinite responsibility for everything which lives".²

What actions shall be expected of mankind now that the responsibility has been assumed? First, new generations must be brought up in the awareness that a non-ecological behaviour is immoral. In terms of concrete actions, an independent international committee of experts on ecology ought to be set up to supervise over man's economic policy. Complete information should be available. A World Ecological Service ought to be established, with an international centre of research and coordination.

Nowadays, the solution of ecological problems has become a major criterion of humanism in society, of progress in science and technology, of the responsibility in the authorities taking political and economical decisions.

¹ Hieromonk Sophrony, "Father Silvan", Paris, 1952, p.192.

² A. Schweitzer, *Culture and Ethics*, (tr. into Russian), Moscow, 1973, p.308. A. Schweitzer, *Kultur und Ethik*, München, 1960.