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THE FINNISH LUTHERAN - ORTHODOX DIALOGUE

CONVERSATIONS IN 1991 AND 1993



DOCUMENTS
OF THE EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF FINLAND

7

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DOCUMENTS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
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PREFACE

Voitto Huotari

Bilateral theological discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Orthodox church were officially begun in 1989. However, the ties between these two churches extend back for centuries.

A thousand years ago Christianity spread to the Nordic countries, both from the East and from the West and since then the Eastern and western traditions have confronted each other in Finland. From the Middle Ages the majority of its population has belonged to the Western Church, Lutheran since the Reformation. Throughout the centuries, however, there has been an Orthodox minority in the country, culturally and linguistically Finnish. At present, 86 % of the Finnish population belong to the Lutheran and 1 % to the Orthodox Church.

The Orthodox and the Lutheran Finns meet in mixed marriages, the most common marriage type for the Orthodox today. Parishes are also in contact with each other. Ecumenical relations have seen continuous improvement especially since the Second World War and have been exceptionally close for the last two decades, reflected and expressed in the theological discussions between the Churches. Their purpose is to support and deepen the relationship between the Lutheran and Orthodox national churches. They are thus a part of the ecumenical process in Finland. Since the dialogue takes place between two Churches which already have numerous contacts with each other, the discussions have benefited from a positive and constructive atmosphere which recognizes differences in thinking, doctrine and church life and, at the same time, a genuine need and desire to improve ecumenical ties. Since the members of the churches are from the same national, linguistic and cultural background and both Churches function in the same societal context, there exists both an opportunity and a responsibility to seek a closer ecumenical relationship.

The Finnish Lutheran and Orthodox Churches participate in international cooperation both among their own church families and on a wider basis. This has in many ways enriched our local life and cooperation between our Churches. Although this experience is reflected in theological discussions, the fact remains that the dialogues concern the meeting of two local churches.

The topic in the first two theological discussions was the significance of the ecumenical councils of the old church to the two Churches. The aim was to

relationship between church and the people in different traditions. In addition, mixed marriages between Orthodox and Lutherans were discussed as a theological challenge arising from daily Christian life.

The third and fourth dialogues, which this publication concerns, approached theological problems in terms of divine service and liturgy. As is well known, this approach is very central in Orthodox theology. For the Lutheran Church it has been significant because, for example of the ongoing changes in the divine service. The Churches have also discussed matters which arise from the fact that they confess faith, both together and separately, in a shared societal context. This has been one reason for the discussions on the Lutheran and Orthodox conception of man and, as a part of it, man's relationship with life and nature, for instance. In the fourth dialogue, the Churches' views on freedom of religion were also discussed. Both Churches consider it essential to human rights and emphasize its positive interpretation, stressing above all else the creation of an opportunity to practice religion freely.

By providing information on the local discussions and their results, the Churches have sought to witness their faith together in Finnish society. At the same time, we hope the dialogue between the Finnish Lutheran and Orthodox Churches and its results will also be beneficial in a wider ecumenical context.

THE THIRD THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF FINLAND AND THE FINNISH ORTHODOX CHURCH

COMMUNIQUE

The third theological discussions between delegations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Orthodox Church were held at the Church Training Centre at Järvenpää on October 7th-9th, 1991. The conference was hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the chairman of its delegation, Kalevi Toivainen, Bishop of Mikkeli.

The other members of the delegation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland were Rev. Dr. Lorentz Grönvik, Rev. Dr. Voitto Huotari, Rev. Dr. Hannu T. Kämpuri and Acting Professor Eeva Martikainen.

The chairman of the delegation of the Finnish Orthodox Church was John, Archbishop of Karelia and all Finland. The other members of the delegation were Chief Assistant Jarmo Hakkarainen, Father Heikki Huttunen and Father Olavi Miettinen. Ambrosius, Bishop of Joensuu, a member of the delegation, was prevented by illness from participating in the discussions.

The secretaries to the conference were the Archbishop's secretary Makarios Lehtimäki and Ms. Minna Väistö.

Father Jan Aarts, D.D. of the Roman Catholic Church in Finland was an observer at the conference.

At the opening ceremony the delegations held a moment of silent prayer in memory of His Holiness Demetrios, the late Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.

The speakers at the opening ceremony were Bishop Kalevi Toivainen and Archbishop John. Bishop Toivainen examined different ecumenical concepts. He mentioned that in worship-centred ecumenism the activity of the Triune God in the Word and the sacraments has received emphasis. Service-centred ecumenism, on the other hand, regards the united action of the churches as a channel of unity. In his speech Bishop Toivainen pointed out that at the present day ethical questions have become especially relevant. While in human life the limits of what is possible are constantly expanding, at the same time the question of what, for instance, is permitted from the standpoint of human dignity, becomes an acute one.

In his opening words Archbishop John emphasized that the themes of the discussions are both interesting theologically and significant in practice. He also

stated that decisive steps in rapprochement between the Evangelical Lutheran and Orthodox Churches are, however, possible only on a wider inter-church level. In this light there is perhaps cause for considering the character of the Finnish dialogue and any new forms it might take.

During the discussions the delegations attended an Orthodox evening service in Jämsenpää Orthodox Church. On Tuesday 8th October in Jämsenpää Orthodox Church Archbishop Johannes, together with Canon Olavi Merras, led a memorial service in remembrance of His Holiness Patriarch Demetrios. In the Agricola Chapel of the Church Training Centre morning and evening prayers were held in accordance with the Lutheran tradition and morning prayer in accordance with the Orthodox tradition.

At the conference two subjects were under discussion. The first was "The Church as a Worshipping Community": papers on this subject were delivered by Olavi Merras and Lorenz Grönvik. The second theme was "Our Churches' View of Man and the Present Day". On this subject were heard papers by Bishop Ambrosius and Eeva Marikainen.

In considering the first theme the parties agreed that the Church is above all a praying community that serves God. The Triune God is really present in the church service in the Word and holy sacraments (mysteries). In them the saving acts of God are made present. In the church service the Church is the Church at its most genuine, where God meets men and women, and men and women appropriate the salvation he offers. God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - is present in the church service and engenders loving service to one's neighbour. The church service gives the gift of the Kingdom of God in the present age and expresses the content of Christian faith.

On the second theme the parties agreed that man and woman are created for communion with God and his love (the image and likeness of God). In interpreting the Christian view of man there is discernible, however, a certain difference between the Lutheran and Orthodox traditions. This became apparent in the discussions in the use of the concepts "image and likeness" and "law and gospel". It was stated that the difference in the theological terms used by the churches makes the analysis of problematic points somewhat more difficult.

With the Christian view of man as the point of departure the churches can meet people who are seeking God and themselves in the so-called new religious movements. However, the essence of the Church involves the kind of community and individuality that some people seek in the new religions. Therefore the churches are paying more attention to the clarity of their teaching and the pastoral care of their members.

The Christian view of the creation and of man offers a theological basis for the churches' teaching on relations with the environment. Man's responsibility for the creation as its ruler, cultivator, preserver and protector provides a starting-point for participation by Christians in the contemporary discussion of environmental issues.

The discussions were held in an open and loving spirit. It was agreed that the fact that the delegates know each other well on a personal level helped in deepening understanding between the churches. It was decided that the discussions should be continued.

Jämsenpää, 9th October, 1991

OPENING SPEECH

Archbishop John of Karelia and all Finland

Opening speech by His Eminence Archbishop John at the Orthodox-Lutheran dialogue at Jarvenpää in 1991

My dear Bishop of Mikkeli. Dear friends in Christ.

We are gathering a third time for the Finnish Orthodox-Lutheran dialogue. At our two previous meetings we were able to discuss in a constructive way central themes from the point of view of the closer relations between our Churches. Due in part to the common tradition of our Churches and in part to the choice of themes we have in many respects been able, in spite of our differences, to rejoice in mutual understanding. On the other hand, we are well aware that decisive steps in the relations between our Churches are possible only with wider contacts than we have within our domestic circles. In this light someone might think it necessary to reconsider the character and purpose of our meetings. We might possibly consider new forms of promoting fellowship.

Our themes this time are, as far as I can see, of such a kind that studying them is of both practical significance and theological interest, irrespective of any other goals our Churches may have. I consider the choice of them to be positive and good one.

Honoured Bishop, dear friends in Christ,

I bring the greetings of the Finnish Orthodox Church to our dialogue and I wish blessing and success upon our work.

OPENING SPEECH

Kalevi Toivainen

Your Holiness Archbishop John,
Most blessed Bishop Ambrosius,
honoured Orthodox Fathers,
dearly beloved in Christ Father Jan Aarts, an observer from the Roman Catholic Church,
honoured members of the delegation of the Lutheran Church,
dear Sisters, Fathers and Brothers.

On behalf of the delegation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, I welcome you to the third round of negotiations between our churches, which on this occasion are being held in the Church Training Centre.

I wish particularly to express my joy that we are able to meet again and that God has permitted our discussions to proceed in such a way that we await each new stage with enthusiasm. Praying and discussing together increases our mutual knowledge and trust.

It is generally known that in ecumenical efforts, as well as in the churches responsible for them, one can distinguish different emphases in the definition of goals. There is first of all the 'church service-centred' interpretation of fellowship (*κοινωνία, communio*). Its principal emphasis is on the Triune God giving himself in the Word and sacraments. As regards faith, it is a question of receiving this gift; as regards ecumenism, it is a question of a common aspiration and the communion that springs from it.

Since the 1960s this church service-centred ecumenism has had to make way for another stance, which one might call 'service-centred'. In some sense it is a return to the so-called social gospel of the beginning of the century, although there are important differences between them. Then it was not considered essential for the churches to act together, while nowadays it is regarded as a centre and channel of unity.

It is further known that united action is not a characteristic of the Christian community alone and cannot as such be the primary source of this communion. Christians should first of all be Christians on the basis of grace and of the faith that receives it before they can act together as Christians. Therefore the order of the Church, its notion of the factors leading to communion, has its own significance. For the Orthodox, communion is primarily the communion of

those who pray together and while remembering their common pastors enjoy prayerful fellowship. In the Roman Catholic Church communion is communion with the Pope and the Church he leads. Without reflecting on these matters more deeply I wish to state, however, that the administration of the Church is clearly one of the elements of communion and as such forms its own ecumenical programme. Its goal is organic communion.

In this context I notice that our themes for discussion on this occasion are connected with the first and second ecumenical conceptions. One may not, of course, make the simple deduction that our discussion involves taking a stand on them.

One of the characteristics of our time is that ethical questions have become more important than perhaps ever before. There are several reasons for this. The whole of humankind is being faced by such threats as cast doubt on our chances of survival. I am here thinking of such difficult problems as the depleting and pollution of the environment and the use of nuclear weapons. Secondly, a new sensitivity is noticeable when it is a question of mistreatment of the individual or of a people and of crimes committed against them. The modern media are of great significance in sensitising the conscience in this context. For example, when the events of January around the television tower in Vilnius were brought into people's living-rooms, both in Finland and elsewhere, the media not only showed something that is brutal and shocking but also awakened a feeling that oppression and malpractice make victims of real people. Thus they affect us too as human beings.

Thirdly, we are concerned by the question of what is permitted. New considerations are opening up. In many respects humankind is meeting limits which demand re-orientation. For example, our young people in Finland are in danger of losing their sense of direction when it is a question of what is right and of what at a casual glance appears expedient. When, for example, medicine and biological methods constantly expand the boundaries of what is possible, the question of what is permitted becomes critical, because of human dignity or from some other human point of view.

Here are a few reasons why the churches' ethical responsibility is the subject of interest, expectation and discussion. There is a demand for the churches' contribution, conduct and practice.

When we now discuss the churches' view of man, we could hardly have chosen another subject for discussion which would be more relevant and central from the viewpoint of what constitutes the churches' responsibility. The fact that we work among and serve the same people makes this discussion of particular importance for us.

We know that it is only if there is reception of ecumenical meetings and discussion on the part of the Church that the discussions gain their full and real authority. For us this may mean that in our churches we wish to promote factual knowledge of and respect for our partners in discussion, and we are

working for the adoption and implementation of any results we may achieve. But irrespective of all this we can surely agree that after the churches have begun to discuss with each other, the atmosphere between them will undoubtedly change.

of his creation. Recognizing this act of the love of God opens up for a person the possibility of experiencing His love and glory. The Divine service is possible only because of God's historical revelation and from the viewpoint of the sacramental history of salvation. This sacred history is made up of remembering the saving events of the Old and New Testaments, for the prophets and the Gospels belong inseparably together as promise and fulfillment. In the historical dimension of the Church are found the roots of Christian faith and hope.

Salvation history

The historical nature of the Divine service appears clearly in the structure of the liturgical year. Early on the Lord's day became a weekly remembrance of both the cross and the Resurrection related to it. And gradually every day of the year gained its own historical content. Thus the Christian calendar has become a living theological monument. Day by day the Church looks back into its past. The daily services following the calendar tell of the sanctification of time in the course of the life of the Church. Temporally the Church lives in the dimension of the saints and of saving memories, at the same time, however, looking intensively towards the future.

The events of salvation history are repeated in Divine services. And what is remembered is also actually present and shall be present 'from everlasting to everlasting', until He returns. And before His return He is already present in His Church. His enduring presence makes the Church what it is - the Body of Christ. The mysterious presence of Christ in the Church and in the world has begun a new age in history as a manifestation of the activity of God. The Christian remembrance of the past and present reaches its climax in the eucharistic *anamnesis*.

Eucharist

The Eucharist is the centre of the Divine service, although it is not intended for the sanctification of time. The Eucharist is not an individual service but a divine mystery, a sacrament. According to the teaching of John Chrysostom, every celebration of the Eucharist is in reality the Last Supper itself in all its fullness without reducing it in any way. *"This table is the same as that and has nothing less... The offering is the same, whatever it be offered by some ordinary man, or by Paul or Peter. That which Christ gave to His disciples, and that which the priests minister now is the same. This is in no wise inferior to that, because it is not men that sanctify even this, but the Same who sanctified the one sanctifies the other also."* (Hom. 82 on Matthew's Gospel; Hom. 2 on 2 Tim.)

Fixed forms of service, prayer-books and service books have sometimes been condemned by some masters and authorities of the spiritual life. In their opinion they best suit beginners. This may be partly true. But because the prayer-book is also a service book, the prayer of the individual church member is also a service of the Church. For this purpose prayer has its own rules. Thus he or she never prays alone, but with millions of others using the same thoughts and the same words. Therefore it is spiritually dangerous to reject service books, because by using them we do not only follow ecclesiastical order and discipline. Readings lead the praying person to meditate and help him or her to bear in mind the great saving acts of God. In the Divine service the whole essence of the Church surrounds the praying person in word and melody, and also the congregation gathered to pray with him or her.

Every liturgy and every Divine service is celebrated together with the whole Church. Both the visible and the invisible are present, the temporal Church and the Church triumphant. In the Divine service one remembers the living and departed members of the Church, not as a demonstration of sympathy but as a demonstration of the fact that all believers, both living and dead, belong together in Jesus Christ, the risen Lord of everybody. The Eucharist is not only an expression of the fellowship between us or of our human brotherhood but also an expression and image of the divine mystery of our salvation. We pray in the name of all humankind, of all those who are called and have responded to the call. We pray as the Church. And the whole Church prays with us, prays in us and through us. The past and the future are united in the eschatological expectation of the Church: the Kingdom of God will come. This fulfilment the Church has prayed for since the early years of its existence: *"As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, but was brought together and became one, so let your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your Kingdom."* (Didache 9:4)

The Church and the liturgy

In recent years there has been much discussion on the essence of the Church. In ecclesiology, authorities have unanimously emphasized eucharistic ecclesiology and the view that the Church is a eucharistic community. Outside the Orthodox Church this view has been parodied, pointing out that the Orthodox are always at the meal table while others are engaged in action. It is a question, however, of a one-sided and false picture of eucharistic ecclesiology, for the Eucharist is an expression of faith and a visible reality built upon a genuine, sacrificial and endeavouring Christian life. Because the Eucharist and the community belong inseparably together there may be reason to examine the basic elements of that community in connection with the Divine service.

In his catechism Bishop Feofan defines the Church as follows: the Church is the community of those believers who are united by the true faith (the Holy Tradition of the Church and dogma), the law of God (the Bible), ecclesiastical government (the ordained ministry of the Church) and the sacraments (holy mysteries). Although the definition comes from the last century, it clearly tells which elements the Church is built upon.

In the Orthodox Church there are in fact rather few exact doctrinal definitions. And many undefined dogmas occur only in the inner intuition of the Church and in church life, while they are, however, as obligatory as exact definitions. Basil the Great declares: "We have many things in written teaching, others we have received from the preserved apostolic tradition as a mystery; these things also have the same power of piety". For us the inner tradition preserved as a mystery is to be found above all in the Divine service. The law of prayer is also the law of faith (*Lex orandi lex credendi est*): people's shared faith appears in their prayers. The readings in the Divine service also tell of how to keep faith and of what is common to all. It is a common saying that by praying the Church teaches, and by teaching the Church prays.

The liturgy and the Bible

The position and significance of the Bible is brought into prominence by the bound copy of the four gospels in the middle of the altar: the gospel book. The Gospels tell of Christ, who is the centre of the whole Bible, both Old and New Testaments. Reading the Bible is part of almost every Divine service. And the Church exhorts its members to read it every day. Most emphasis is placed on the Gospels, the letters of the apostles and the psalms, which are part of every Divine service as prayer and meditation. Reading the Bible is thus part of the Church's teaching and public prayer.

How the Orthodox Church relates to biblical criticism is always a topical question, because our thinking brains are a gift of God and the thinking process is comparable to constant breathing. Describing thoughts and images is a natural part of the achievements of human life. Thus research into the origin of the Bible is clearly justified. From the Church's liturgical viewpoint, the Orthodox cannot, however, fully accept the results of biblical criticism, because the liturgical texts and prayers and the Bible readings must be consistent, just as icons must correspond to the content of the Bible and the liturgical texts. Reaching conclusions concerning the Church's doctrine on the basis of exegetical research is problematic, since first there was the Church and then came the Bible.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the Bible is not merely a collection of historical documents but the Church's book which contains the Word of God. A member of the Church does not read the Bible as an isolated individual nor interpret it only in the light of his or her private understanding, nor from the

viewpoint of modern source criticism, form criticism or redaction criticism. He or she reads it as a member of the Church in fellowship with all its other members in all the ages. The final criterion of Orthodox Christians' biblical interpretation is the mind of the Church, the thinking of the Church. This means that as members of the Church we constantly bear in mind how the Bible is expounded and used in holy tradition, in other words, how the Church Fathers and saints understood the Bible and how it is used in the Divine service.

The Orthodox are not normally given any detailed methods or rules on how to read Bible attentively and systematically. The Orthodox spiritual tradition does not make special use of systems of meditation progressing in a logical order. The reason why there has not been the need for this is that public Divine services attended by the Orthodox - particularly at great feasts and during Lent - are very long. They contain much repetition of key Bible passages and stories related to the Divine service. All this is sufficient to nourish the spirit of the praying person so that he or she does not need in addition to meditate and work out the message of the Divine service for himself or herself with the aid of a daily time of systematic meditation.

The liturgy and the church's ministry

In recent discussion on the eucharistic view of the Church many essential points of the Church's ministry have received less attention. Concentration has been directed on how the bishop or priest as representatives of Christ and with Him celebrate the holy sacrifice of thanksgiving, the Eucharist. The conclusion has been reached that the essence of the Church is in the community that celebrates the Eucharist, which by the power of the Holy Spirit institutes the celebrant of the sacrifice with the congregation. Many Orthodox theologians, such as John D. Zizoulas, Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Glasgow, and Paul N. Tazari, Professor of Biblical Exegesis at St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in New York, have reminded us that the Church is founded on the episcopate and the bishop's teaching ministry, which idea is much older than the later eucharistic concept of the Church. The episcopate is seen as a sacramental ministry. The functions of this ministry, such as pastoral care and teaching, are based on the idea of the high priestly functions in the local community.

The task of the Church is to proclaim. Thus the *kerygma*, true teaching, is the basis upon which the Church is built. And that teaching must be correct. Without it there is no Eucharist. The Eucharist and teaching are closely interrelated, for ordination in the different orders of priesthood takes place during the Eucharist. Ordination is not a ceremony separate from the Church community because the congregation gives authorization for the ministry when the bishops or bishop request it from the people. The congregation with the

ordinating bishops prays for the grace of the Holy Spirit to descend upon the ordinand.

The sacramental mysteries of the Church cannot be separated from their connection with the Eucharist. According to Nikolaos Kabasilas, the Eucharist is the only one of the mysteries to give fullness to the other sacraments. Unfortunately, the present-day practice in the Orthodox Church of administering the sacraments separated from their eucharistic context does not fulfil our view of the Church or the Eucharist. The unsuccessful practice of "administering private sacraments" is a liturgical error, which does not even correspond to the Western practice of the private mass, because it has its own theological rationale. Although every sacrament has its own personal character and external expression, nevertheless in the Orthodox Church there is nothing that happens privately. Every ceremony of the Church is the action of the whole Church. Therefore the Church has not defined the number of the sacraments or what is a sacrament, because the whole world is God's sacrament. The Lord Himself has given to His Church the mission of returning the entire creation to fellowship with God.

In the teaching of the Church the holy Eucharist is always the original mystery of the Resurrection, in which our fallen humanity changes into the humanity of the new Adam glorified by Christ. This glorified humanity becomes possible and is realized in membership of the Church body. As fellowship and co-operation between God and man, the holy Eucharist is a prayer which in Christ is addressed to the Father and which is fulfilled by the descent of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the *epiklesis* is a fulfilment of the celebration of the Eucharist, just as Pentecost is a fulfilment of the saving plan of God, for salvation is always brought about by the Holy Trinity. Also the whole concept of *synergia*, co-operation between God and man, is based on the pneumatological dimension of the Eucharist. The Holy Spirit makes Christ present between his first and second advents. God offers man the opportunity to work with God and accept His actions.

Local church and the liturgy

Every local church in which the divine liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated also has the hallmarks of the true Church of God: one, holy, catholic and apostolic. No other human gathering or meeting has or can have these hallmarks, because they are eschatological signs which the Spirit of God gives to the community. As an eucharistic community the local church is not only part of the universal people of God, the *laos*, but it is an expression of the existence of the whole people of God. Thus every liturgy predicts the eschatological fulfilment, the realization of hope placed in God.

Liturgical order and the canon law of the Church aim to protect the unifying and catholic nature of the Eucharist. They prescribe that on no altar

may more than one Holy Eucharist be celebrated on the same day. Similarly, a priest or bishop may not celebrate the Eucharist twice on the same day. However great the practical difficulties may be, by these rules one aims to preserve the Eucharist at least nominally as a meeting such as that mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles 2:1 - to be gathered together. All should be together at the same time around the same altar, around the same bishop, because there is only one Christ, one Church and one Holy Eucharist. Throughout history the idea that the Eucharist is a sacrament which unites the whole Church has been strongly maintained in the Eastern Church, and it has prevented the growth of various kinds of masses serving specific needs and of 'stripped' masses celebrated without singing and incense. In the Orthodox Church the Eucharist has been preserved at all times as a festival event, a feast among secular festivals, in which in principle the whole Church takes part.

Community

Different definitions of the Church can be given from different viewpoints, all of which can be regarded as justified, but they always remain inadequate. The Church is the criterion of truth. Therefore Orthodox thought reminds us that the Church and its essence are fundamentally a mystery, a divine mystery. It is part of the saving plan of God. The Church is a manifestation of Christ and the Holy Spirit, who work to fulfil the holy will of the Father. In the life of the Church the Holy Spirit unites members of the Church to Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord, who in turn leads them to the Father. Because the Church has both a divine and human side one can say of the Church that it is a divine-human reality (*θεϊνo-ἀνo-πo-ς, theanthropic, Theandric*), which can never be fully expressed in human terms. The Church is in this sense the mystery of humanity in association with divinity, which appears in history and will one day go beyond time and space. In the activity of the Triune God the Church has its beginning and end.

Because the Church cannot be fully defined, it must be described as a human community in fellowship with the tripersonal God. The Church is an expression of the horizontal and vertical relations of the love of God, which are not bound to time or place. When meeting for a service the congregation does not gather because of doctrine, teaching, rituals or for any social reason (e.g. 'It is nice to come and meet friends'). Gathering cannot be viewed merely as a sociological phenomenon. If this happens, the Church has lost its character as an object of faith and a mediator of God's grace and love. Such an event is a challenge to the Church to find out what is the function of the community gathered to serve God in the house of the Lord.

Feeling of brotherhood

When the Orthodox Church speaks of the Church as a human community, community appears as a feeling of brotherhood which is not limited to fellow-believers or Orthodox neighbours but radiates to all people. This is based on the fact that all people are created in the image of God and that redemption is achieved for all people. Christ died for all. Therefore all are called through the Resurrection to new life. The congregation knows that it is in fellowship with the Lord present in the Eucharist and with the angels accompanying Him and with the heavenly Church of the saints. In uniting with the Risen One members of the congregation also unite among themselves. Brotherly love is brought to mind by the words of the Lord: "So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift" (Mt. 5:23-4). The practice of the early Church in this matter is described by the Didache as follows: "When you have come together on the Lord's Day, break bread and give thanks, after you have first confessed your sins that your offering may be pure; but let none who has a quarrel with his fellow join in your meeting until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice be not defiled" (Did. 14:1-2). Therefore in the Eucharist before communion one asks for mutual forgiveness for all sins, in word and deed, conscious and unconscious, day and night, in understanding and in thought.

Orthodox missiology is also based on these ideas. The missionary vision of the Church is to bring the Kingdom of God into the whole world in the form of the Eucharist. All people and peoples are invited into eucharistic fellowship. This fellowship is not merely celebrating the liturgy, "being at the meal table", but responsibility for other people to improve their social conditions. They must also understand what the Church teaches, so that they can with all their heart and full understanding participate in the Eucharist. One has no right with a good conscience to participate in the Eucharist, if one sees one's neighbour suffering or being without the chance to participate in the Eucharist.

Brotherly fellowship

The presence of Christ in the Eucharist in the sense of including one another in fellowship with us is strongly emphasized in the greeting "Christ is among us." In present-day practice this greeting has been confined to the clergy, as perhaps a slightly ceremonial event. In the early centuries of the Church Christians gathered in the Temple, where the men kissed each other and the women kissed each other, greeting one other with the above words. Therefore everyone present in church now remembers all Christians in his or her prayers, not only those in the Temple or those close to his or her heart. He or she remembers the

alienated and hastens to be reconciled with all those towards whom he or she has felt bitterness, anger or dissatisfaction. He or she gives to all a kiss saying, "Christ is among us" and replying, "He is and will be." Without such thoughts he or she cannot participate in the celebration of communion in the service.

The Easter night service expresses this idea of brotherly fellowship most powerfully. In it is preserved the kiss of peace from the early Church for the forgiveness of sins and renewal and liberation from guilt and revenge. When singing the Easter sticheras the clergy and people greet each other with a kiss on the cheek and the words "Christ is risen from the dead." The response is "He is truly risen." During the greetings the choir sings, "The day of Resurrection! Let us celebrate a glorious feast of joy and embrace one another! Brethren, let us say to our enemies: Let us forgive everyone for the sake of the Resurrection, and thus let us cry: Christ is risen from the dead, by dying he conquered death and gave life to those in the tombs." This awareness that all the redeemed are in mystical union with the Risen Lord is the very heart of the Orthodox view of community and worship and it always receives new vitality from the mystery of the Eucharist.

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THE CHURCH AS A WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY

Lorenz Grönvik

Introduction

The above subject can be approached from many perspectives: theologically, sociologically, from the perspective of the experience of the individual member of the congregation, from the perspective of the activities of the Church or thinking of the missionary perspective and the perspective of bearing witness.

The aforementioned aspects are all connected in different ways with the essence, task and life of the Church. In dealing with the subject in inter-church discussions the most important, however, may be what makes worship worship and what this means for the identity of the Church and our faith.

Participation in the holy mysteries and the communion of the saints

According to the Apostles' Creed, the Church is *koïnonia ton hagion*. In the interpretation of the Eastern Church this has meant communion, that is, participation in holy things (*τα ἁγία*), that is, participation in mysteries in which God is present. In the Western tradition the said clause is usually interpreted and translated as communion of saints (*communio sanctorum*). Linguistically both interpretations of *koïnonia ton hagion* are possible. Probably and evidently, however, the Eastern interpretation is original and a convincing translation and interpretation of the Greek phrase.

It is another matter that both interpretations (*τα ἁγία* and *communio sanctorum*) are not mutually exclusive in their theology but on the contrary are linked and even presuppose one another. The presence of the Triune God and his gift of salvation in the Word and the sacraments/mysteries creates the Church, gathers it and engenders faith and new life. Only for this reason can the Church be a worshipping community and also a *communio sanctorum*.

Although the original interpretation of the concept *koïnonia ton hagion* is, on the one hand, participation in the holy mysteries (*τα ἁγία*), one must in a sense implicitly include the dimension of the idea of *communio sanctorum* and the related concept of the Church. This is not without significance from the viewpoint of the affinity of the ecclesiastical and theological tradition of East and West.

The Church as a worshipping community is defined decisively by the above points: on the one hand, the Church is *ta hagia* and the real presence of God according to his promise, which as such is more than one feature of the concept of the Church, and on the other hand, the Church is a communion of saints created and maintained by the presence and gift of God.

The Lutheran View of the Church according to the Augsburg Confession

In the section of the Augsburg Confession on the Church is visible the same parallel emphasis on the two aspects and their interrelating as has been described in connection with the Apostles' Creed.

In the seventh article of the Augsburg Confession we read: "Our churches also teach that one holy church is to continue forever. The church is the assembly of saints in which the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly. For the true unity of the church it is enough to agree concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments."

In the above passage appears clearly the double-threaded Lutheran view of the Church: the view of the Church is like an ellipse with two foci: the Church as a Church of the Word and sacraments and the Church as a community of saints. This duality in the view of the Church is not a mistake nor absent-mindedness but is entirely intended. Both foci of the ellipse are in internal relation to each other from the standpoint of divine salvation history. In fact both aspects of the concept of the Church are united in the church service, where first of all there is the Word and sacraments, in which God and what he gives is present and secondly the holy congregation of believers, which God himself creates, engenders and maintains.

We cannot indeed see into other people's hearts, nor always into our own, nor do we know where the boundary of the congregation of saints runs. The eighth article of the Augsburg Confession says: "Properly speaking, the church is the assembly of saints and true believers. However, since in this life many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled with believers, it is allowable to use the sacraments even when they are administered by evil men..."

The Church as a worshipping community is especially emphasized in the double-threaded view of the Church in the Augsburg Confession, which is also based and argued from the perspective of salvation history. The third article of the Augsburg Confession deals with the Son of God, the fourth with justification and faith and the fifth with the ordained ministry of the Church, the Word and sacraments and the Holy Spirit. In the fifth article we read: "In order that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and the sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given, and the Holy Spirit produces faith, where and when it pleases God, in those who hear the

Gospel. That is to say, it is not on account of our own merits but on account of Christ that God justifies those who believe that they are received into favor for Christ's sake. Gal 3:14, "That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Through the Word and sacraments the Holy Spirit of God creates faith, union with Christ and new life and thus creates the congregation of saints. Thus the fifth article is the background to the seventh article: both feet of the ellipse belong together when the Holy Spirit of God creates the Church. And it is this which in a primary way is the essence of the Church as a worshipping community.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the Word and sacraments is thus primary with regard to faith, justification and new life. The first words of the fifth article "That we should receive this faith..." refers back to the fourth article on justification. Thus, according to this reference, the fifth article is logically primary with regard to the fourth article.

The Church as a worshipping community is a quantity of salvation history. By his life, death and resurrection Christ has purchased atonement. (Article 3 of the Augsburg Confession). He is our righteousness. And this gift of atonement and salvation which Christ has purchased is distributed by the Holy Spirit through the Word and sacraments. Through them the Holy Spirit engenders faith, which receives the gift of God and which is fellowship with the living Lord. Thus the Spirit of God engenders faith, hope and love and new life. This work of the Holy Spirit, in which biblical salvation history continues in the above sense, is the heart of the matter in speaking of the Church as a worshipping community.

From all this is apparent the perspective in terms of which, according to the seventh article of the Augsburg Confession, the Church is a community of saints in which the gospel is preached purely and the sacraments are rightly administered. This perspective of the presence of God also appears in the ninth article of the Augsburg Confession on baptism: "The grace of God is offered through baptism." It appears also in the tenth article on the Lord's Supper, where it is said: "Our churches teach that the body and blood of Christ are truly present and are distributed to those who eat in the Supper of the Lord."

- The viewpoint is thus the presence of God and his gift of salvation and new life with all its aspects.

Thus the Word and sacraments are not "forms of action" or "working projects" among other types of activity, let alone a feather in the hat. Instead it is a question of quite another dimension when speaking of the Church as a worshipping community. The statement of the seventh article of the Augsburg Confession "The Church is a assembly of saints in which the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly" does not - as has been seen above - attempt to say everything which can be said about the Church. It is

rather a question of the points of origin and of what makes the Church the Church.

In Lutheranism there has been discussion about the hallmarks of the Church (*notae ecclesiae*), of which there are several besides the Word and sacraments, such as the ordained ministry, the cross, suffering and love. These are hallmarks which belong to the Church and from which one can deduce where the Church is. The seventh article of the Augsburg Confession, however, especially mentions the Word and sacraments because they are constitutive signs in a special way and in a sense of salvation history: through them the Holy Spirit engenders faith and distributes the gift won by Christ. This is constitutive, that is, primary and fundamental. What is consecutive, what comes as a consequence of the Word and the sacraments (such as, for example, love and works of love or diakonia), is not at all less important. According to the Bible, love is the greatest of all. But it is important in its own place and in its own order and it is consecutive.

That the means of grace constitute the Church is a result of the fact that the Triune God is present in them and creates faith and new life. From this the Church too lives as a horizontal quantity, and the members of the Church are thus joined together.

Above in all its brevity is outlined a description of worship in the perspective of biblical salvation history. The Church and the church service are not only linked to this perspective or bear witness to it but they are part of the salvation history of the Triune God.

This perspective sheds light on the position and significance of the ordained ministry. On the basis of the fifth article of the Augsburg Confession we can state:

1. The ordained ministry is divinely instituted and not a human arrangement.
2. The position and role of the ordained ministry in salvation history is linked with the Word and sacraments as forms of the presence of God, which the ordained ministry serves.
3. Thus the ordained ministry was instituted "ut hanc fidem habemus", "so that we should have this faith".

The ordained ministry thus serves the Word and sacraments as forms of the presence of God and also from the standpoint of receiving faith and of life from faith. The ordained ministry is thus linked to the Church as a worshipping community. This is important both for the theology of the ordained ministry and for the identity of the priest.

The Church of the Word

One might naturally ask how justified is the above picture of the Lutheran Church as a worshipping community and to what extent the features described

are a living fact and utilised talents in our Lutheran Church. The above picture is compiled from certain sections of the Augsburg Confession which have been analysed and from which conclusions have been drawn. In this respect, in my opinion, our Church still has much to learn in practice, as we also have much to learn from other churches. One might also ask whether the Orthodox Church is in some respects more evangelical and more Lutheran than our Church. As for the theme "the Church as a worshipping community", we are aware that we have much to learn from the Orthodox Church and that this is of ecumenical importance. We also have important and fruitful points of contact with this theme in our own confessional tradition.

It is, for instance, a question of what is the meaning of the Lutheran view that the Church is a Church of the Word. What is the significance of the Word for the Church as a worshipping community? Is there here concealed the intellectualisation of the Church and the church service in modern Protestantism? And what does the word "Word" mean?

Firstly, one must point to the fact that, according to the Augsburg Confession, the Church is rather to be called a Church of the Word and sacraments than a Church of the Word. Secondly, it is a question of the Word with a capital not a small w. It is not thus a question of words or abundance of words in general. This means that Christ Himself is the incarnate Word of God, who is present in the Word of the Gospel and in the sacraments through the Holy Spirit. The concepts Word and Church of the Word do not therefore refer to an informative word telling of an absent God, but they mean that God Himself is present in His Word according to His promise. The heart of the matter in this respect is thus not that words are important, nor even that the sermon is important, but the way and the depth in which they are important.

The Word has several dimensions. The Word of God has a mental and acoustic dimension because God works in this way too, for we humans can be addressed mentally and acoustically. This is important in our relationship with God and our neighbours.

The Word of God is thus addressed to our reality, but this acoustic and mental dimension is not, however, the sole or the most profound or essential in one's relationship with God and the Word of God.

For although a person's mental and acoustic faculties decline, due, for instance, to handicap or age, God is still God and the Word of God is still the Word of God in which He Himself is present with His gifts and blessings. It is thus important that the depth of the Word is always included when the Church as a Church of the Word celebrates a service. Thus in the Church of the Word both the acoustic level and the vertical perspective, that is, the level of the presence of God, are important.

The Word of God is brought to people in man's world first of all as addressing him or her, obliging him or her to life and the command of love, and thus also as an accusing reality (that is, to use Lutheran terminology, the

Word as law). In the church service God addresses people, who receive what He says. Secondly, the Word of God comes as the revelation of a great surprise. God and the love, grace and forgiveness of God are present for us, hidden where we cannot see Him with our eyes (the Word of the Gospel). The task of preaching is to tell of this mystery as joyful news, to declare it and in a sense "disclose" this secret. In spite of the fact that God and His grace revealed and "disclosed" remain a hidden reality.

In the Church of the Word is thus realized in man through the Word of God the battle between the rule of God and the kingdom of evil.

Gift and sacrifice - sacramentum and sacrificium

The nature of the church service as a gift, that is, its sacramental nature, has been described above from many points of view. This is also what the Church as a worshipping community lives from and what the individual Christian lives from, if he does live. It is a question of what is God's way to man: the Incarnation of God in Christ, the life, death and resurrection of Christ and the presence and gift of the Holy Spirit in the Word and the sacraments, and the gift of new life and fellowship with God.

This means also that the sacrifice of Christ for the world and for the sinner is present in the church service and is the foundation and basis of the worshipping community. The sacrifice of Calvary is present in the blessed bread and wine and it is from this that the Church lives.

This means also that the forgiveness of sins is important and central in the church service and in the worshipping community, both in an exclusive and inclusive sense. Exclusively it means that only the forgiveness of sins is the way to fellowship with God, and the forgiveness of sins is the forgiveness of God, which cannot be demythologised. And in the inclusive sense the forgiveness of sins also is part of the whole fellowship with God and new life which is linked with this and which God also gives. In the church service both these senses appear and both also determine the Church as a worshipping community. The Church lives and the Christian lives by the gracious forgiveness of God and also by the fact that God is present and creates faith, hope and love.

Above we have emphasized the sacramental nature of the church service and the worshipping community, that is, its character as a gift of God. This is the same as the sacrifice of the love of God for us and given to us. When we now move on to describe this sacrificial nature of the church service we must remember that this other aspect is possible only from the first. In other words, only the gift of God to us and the fact that the church service is God's way to us, makes possible our sacrifice, efforts and Christian lives. The church service includes and is associated with a sacrificial character. We are responsible for

what God has given and for what we may receive in the church service. Following on this gift and on the basis of it we are called to our own sacrifice.

What is the Christians' sacrifice in the worshipping community? We read about it at the beginning of Romans chapter 12: "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Rom. 12:1-2)

This Christians' holy and living sacrifice and this spiritual worship, as it is called in some Bible translations, is in fact the universal and common priesthood of Christians.

The universal priesthood does not really nor primarily mean emphasizing the work, activities and authority of laypeople in the Church, although it is naturally connected with it, but it really means the sacrificial priesthood (*hiericus sacerdos*). The Old Testament priests were sacrificing priests in the Jerusalem Temple, Christ as the high priest was a sacrificing priest, from whose sacrifices the Church as a worshipping community still lives. And the universal priesthood of Christians is a sacrificial priesthood, the content of which sacrifice is, in the words of Paul: your whole lives as a holy and living sacrifice, acceptable to God. This offering of the whole life is an offering to God and at the same time, to a certain extent, also directed to one's neighbour serving God in that neighbour. The offering carried through by the universal priesthood of the Christians is dealing with and concerned with the life outside but at the same time it is dealing with and arises out of the worship and the church as a worshipping community.

I shall now briefly deal with certain aspects of the church service and worshipping community which comprise the sacrifice of the universal priesthood of Christians.

The Church of praise and of the offering of thanksgiving

The offering of thanksgiving is an offering and a sacrifice.

The Church can be a Church of praise and thanksgiving before God only on the basis of the content of the sacramental-nature of the church service: God's way to people, God's presence and grace. It is from this that also the sacrificial nature of the church service lives, when the Church is called to take part in thanksgiving: to praise, give thanks, confess, sing hymns. An expression of this are the different parts of the church service, readings, prayers, hymns, and in many ways service music too.

It is important that there are external forms in the church service, with which the congregation is involved in this thanksgiving in a visible and tangible way, and there have recently been attempts in our Church to develop this. But still more important is that this does not affect only certain external expressions

but one of the dimensions of the entire church service: the thanksgiving of the congregation before God and his sacrifice.

The offering of thanksgiving involves, as the new Finnish Bible translation says, the whole of life, that is, both the service in church and everyday life in God's world, from which one comes to the church service, and which it includes within its orbit with its blessings. The life of the Church and the Christian's life in the Church as confession and service form this offering of thanksgiving.

The Church of prayer

Prayer is turning to God, calling upon him for help, trusting in him and committing oneself to him. It is calling upon him for help on one's own behalf and on behalf of others.

The Lutheran Church has emphasized the sacramental nature of the communion as an act of God, as the nearness of God and as a gift of God. What is not for this reason said of the communion can instead with good reason be said of prayer: it is and it must be our life, efforts and work before God.

At the same time it is, however, important to emphasize that prayer lives in interaction with what God gives in the church service, in the life of the Church and in the life of the Christian. Without this one cannot pray, but people become frustrated with their own efforts.

It is important that Jesus taught his disciples to pray. This is also the Church's task as a worshipping community. A person can join in the prayer of the Church and through it also learn to pray himself when alone. But as concerns the sacrifice of prayer, we have not been left alone as autonomous individual Christians but we have been called into the Church of Christ as a worshipping community, where the Lord of the Church is the sustaining power.

The Church of service and of the sacrifice of the whole of one's life

The sacrifice of praise, prayer and service is interconnected from the viewpoint of the universal priesthood of Christians, at the same time, however, representing different dimensions. The sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving is closely connected with faith as thanks for what is of a sacramental nature in the Church and the Christian life: the presence and gift of God and being in the hand of God. The sacrifice of prayer is effort and commitment to God and calling to him for help on one's own behalf and on behalf of others. The sacrifice of service is shown to one's neighbour, whom God has placed beside one, serving God too by serving one's neighbour and loving God by loving one's neighbour.

The commandment of love is a double commandment with both dimensions. New life consists of two dimensions: faith and love. Thus in the

Church as a worshipping community there is at the same time both imperative and indicative. There is the commandment of God, taking on a task, being sent out and receiving exhortation, and also the fruit of the Spirit and faith, which grows where Christ is present and where the Spirit works. Both are connected essentially with the worshipping community and its essence. The sacrifice of service concerns everyday and life in the world, but in the same decisive way it also concerns the church service and the worshipping community. In fact, the sacrifice of service forms a kind of bridge between the church service and everyday life. Therefore the sacrifice of service in everyday life is called the liturgy after the liturgy.

One comes to the church service from everyday life and at the beginning there is confession of sin and above all absolution. In other ways and later on too the church service shows how constantly one lives in reliance upon the gracious mercy of God. A Lutheran may be allowed in this context to refer to the Orthodox service: Kyrie eleison is one of the basic tones of the church service and one of life's basic tones. The church service also ends with being sent out into the everyday, when it ends with God's blessing. In blessing God sends people out into the everyday, to the tasks of the week, among people and everywhere where one is needed. God sends from the liturgy to the liturgy after the liturgy.

On the other hand, the blessing can have this sense of sending out only for the reason that it is God's blessing and that this dimension of the church service is the basis of life. Sacrificium is possible only on the basis of sacramentum.

The hymns of our Church express a great deal about the worshipping community. In many hymns in our new hymnbook the worshipping community is depicted as a praising and serving congregation. The starting-point of this sacrifice of thanksgiving and service is the nature of the worshipping community, that is, the presence of God, the total gift of salvation and grace.

As an example let me mention here a communion hymn by Grundtvig from our Danish sister church. It is used as a translation in our church's hymn-book. Here it is in its present Danish version.

Vor Herres Jesu mindetest
den højtid er, som glæder bedst;
thi hvor han kommes ret i hu,
lystevende han er endnu.

Vær, Jesus, da mit liv, min lyst,
den skjulte perle i mit bryst!
vær du min trøst, vær du min fred,
vær du mit lys, min salighed!

Et lys, som aldrig bliver slukt,
en blomst, som altid sætter frugt,
en videnskab, som Guds kun ved,
er livet i din kærlighed.

Den hilser mildt som morgensol,
den brænder klart som solens glød,
den døber stuv med glædens døb,
den føder herlighedens håb.

Den føder hjertens-kærlighed
til dig, som for os døden fød;
den føder kundskab evig sand
om livets lys og livets land.

Kun hvo som elsker, kender Gud
og dig, hans hjertes sendebud,
hans Ord, hans billede og hans Søn,
hans jævnlige i lys og løn.

Som Faderen, så ærer dig
hvert englekor i Himmerig;
og som du elskes her på jord,
af støv opelskes englekor.

Så bryd da ud i fyreråd,
du gamle tro, du unge håb!
og du, som ej af alder ved,
du eviglade kærlighed!

I Jesu navn syng Jesu pris
i ørken og i Paradis,
alt, hvad som tunge har og røst,
alt, hvad som hjerte har i bryst!

Halleluja for Herrens bord,
i Himlen hist, og her på jord!
Halleluja, stig op, stig ned
for Jesus, i al evighed!

Our Churches' View of Man and Contemporary Challenges

The Vocation of Humankind

The Orthodox theology concerning the concept of humankind is based on the view that humankind was created in the image of God. His vocation is to live in fellowship, in *koinonia*, with God and grow ever deeper into the divine life, into the likeness of God. God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness" (Gen. 1:26) and placed him to live in paradise.

Humankind did not become perfect through creation in an actual but in a potential sense. According to St. Maximus the Confessor (d. 662 A.D.), in creating humankind God gave him four traits of Himself. Being and eternity are part of his essential being, while goodness and wisdom are offered to humankind for use.

The Triune God created humankind in His own image and likeness and placed him to live in Paradise. John of Damascus explains this as follows: "The expression in His image refers to rationality and freedom, while the expression in His likeness shows assimilation with God through virtue."

Free will, the Fall, synergy

The fact that humankind was created in the image of God is a gift and a task to humankind. Humankind has been given free will, reason, a sense of moral responsibility. This is what makes man really human and raises him above the world of animals.

The likeness of God is an aim to us. It is a goal to which we are gradually called to proceed in co-operation with the help of the grace and power of God and through our own efforts. In this spiritual development humankind has been granted free will. God created us as children for Himself, not as slaves. We need God's help to reach harmonious fellowship with Him, but we also have to do our own part. "I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I shall come in to him and we shall eat together, I and he." (Rev. 3:20). God knocks at the door, but He wants humankind to open that door. He does not break in violently. Thus God calls to fellowship with Himself in love, but He does not force anyone.

The teachers of the Orthodox Church have always emphasized that freedom of humankind is a crucial part of being human. It is much more than moral freedom. According to Metropolitan John of Pergamon, the freedom offered to humankind in Christ is the eschatological "bliss" of the "children of God". Eucharistic communion makes real just such a state of being, which indicates freedom even from the wrong kind of individualism and death. (Zizoulas, pp. 121-2)

God gave Adam free will, the power to choose between good and evil. The fall of Adam was his disobedience to the will of God. By his decision he separated himself from God. The consequence is sickness and death. Ancient Orthodox teachers have perpetually stressed the fact that we have inherited mortality from Adam but not his guilt. There is solidarity in death between Adam and humankind, while between the risen Christ and the baptized person there is solidarity in new life.

After Adam every person is born into a world where sin is present everywhere. For this reason it is easy to do evil and difficult to do good. We inherit Adam's corruption and mortality but not his guilt. Humankind is guilty only to the extent that, relying on his own free will, he follows Adam's way. Kallistos Ware emphasizes that the Eastern Church has a lower view of humankind before the fall but also a less severe view of the consequences of the fall than in the Western Church. This is because Adam fell from a state of undeveloped simplicity. He did not, as Augustine taught, possess all possible wisdom and perfection in Paradise. (Ware, p. 228)

The Fall led humankind away from personal and loving interaction, from communion with God. The consequence was corruption of autonomous and mortal humankind. When humankind voluntarily breaks himself free from communion with the Triune God, he is inevitably doomed. Thus sin means much more than an individual infringement of a certain moral code and psychological guilt.

According to patristic teaching, only a free and individual human being can commit sin and experience guilt. After the Fall, humankind has still preserved free will, although in a limited sense. Due to Adam's sin humankind has therewith operated within a limited freedom.

Although the Fall did not cause universal guilt, it meant, however, a basic change in the relationship between humankind and God. From that time onwards there will be a wall which humankind cannot knock down by his own efforts. Christ came to knock it to the ground. The spiritual development of humankind can be effected only in synergy, in fellowship between humankind and the Triune God. This growth in a deep sense deals with humankind, the human person as a physical, mental and spiritual being. The holy teachers of the Church emphasize that one cannot come to know God solely through an intellectual process but in communion, with Him. This is connected with the whole Christian life, asceticism. Gregory Palamas says: "It is impossible for

humankind to have God inside himself ... unless man is purified through virtue." (See Meyendorff, p. 140)

Not the soul alone, nor the body alone is what is called humankind, but both fully integrated. Together they form the image of God in humankind. The image of God in a human person means rationality, free will and responsibility for oneself. It is exactly these characteristics that point to the way in which humankind as a person is distinguished from nature and is not bound by the so-called laws of nature.

The task of humankind to become whole and mature

In a highly unanimous way the Christian tradition emphasizes the view that humankind is a whole, a unity of soul and body. Patristic tradition strived for a Christian synthesis between the Jewish and Hellenistic spiritual legacies. The Jewish tradition stressed the unity of the material and immaterial aspects in humankind and the heart as the centre of the spiritual understanding of humankind. The Hellenistic legacy, especially in Platonism and Neo-Platonism, sometimes reflected a dualism between matter and spirit, mortality and immortality, in the writings of the early patristic teachers, of whom I.S. Romanides mentions St. Augustine, St. Gregory of Nyssa and Origen as examples. (Gour 1/54, p. 64)

In deep sense this view of the material and immaterial consistency of humankind then proved to be much more an opportunity than a problem. Humankind was understood as a microcosm because he was created in the image of God. At the same time he is a mediator with essential likeness, affinity with God. "We are also His children" (Acts 17:28). (Thunberg, pp. 296-7)

Maximus the Confessor represents a clear synthesis of this pattern of thought. In his opinion humankind is a unity of soul and body. His body is glorified as the same time as his soul. The perfect deification of the body happens, however, only at the end of time. For instance, in iconography we anticipate this reality. Instead of realistic and photographic portraits, the saints in icons have been depicted as having a glorified "resurrection body". They are portrayed in a "new" light and from a "new" perspective, which will become full reality at the end of the time. The saints, however, already in this life often experience the first fruits of that visible and corporal glorification, although the glorification of saints in temporal life is normally inward, the glory and radiation of the soul. Because the body and soul are sanctified and glorified together, the Church venerates the relics of the saints. Once the grace of God has been present in the bodies of the saints during their human lives upon the earth, it may be so after their death. It is our common experience in the Orthodox Church that relics are instruments of God's power and often serve as an aid in the spiritual growth and healing process of humankind. For this reason

relics and miracle-working icons serve us as reminders of the coming redemption, which affects everything that exists, equally both physical and immaterial reality.

This metamorphosis is anticipated in fellowship between God and humankind already now. The entire patristic and Byzantine tradition understood that the knowledge of God means participation in the life of God. Maximus the Confessor writes: "When God created human nature, He did not make the senses susceptible either to pleasure or to pain; instead He implanted in it a certain noetic capacity, through which humankind could enjoy Him in an inexpressible way." It means the direct experiential, intuitive longing of a human being for God. (Philokalia II, p. 243)

Nevertheless, we do not have a share in the substance of the Triune God. We will only participate in divine energies, through which God does his work in the world. Humankind preserves his full personal identity, however closely he is linked to God. The goal of human life is theosis, growth ever nearer to God and ever more perfect participation in His energies. St. Gregory of Nyssa emphasizes that deification will never reach a static state, but the Christian's "via mystica" never ends. (Ferguson, pp. 66-68)

When the Orthodox Church speaks of theosis, it relies on the teaching of the Apostle Paul and the Gospel of St. John. St. Paul spoke frequently that Christian life is above all life in Christ. This life also includes the physical being of humankind, which is created as a "temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:19). We should present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1). Similarly, the Gospel of St. John emphasizes the fact that the goal of our life is unity, which means that God lives in us and we in God. Jesus' high priestly prayer expresses this unity: "I pray that they all should be one, as You, Father, are in me and I in You." (Jn. 17:21).

The Holy Trinity offers us in the Church a model for living in full fellowship with God, similarly also with other people in interaction and in love. Whilst living this corporate life humankind encounters in his own social, political and cultural milieu different challenges and problems, to which he should respond in the context of the tradition and experience of the Church.

The fundamental challenges of humankind have not in profound sense changed over the generations, although for instance the environment in which we today live is quite different from that of the patristic age. We shall now examine three polarities as examples of the many challenges to the contemporary Christian anthropology:

- 1) humankind and creation
- 2) the fall of humankind and his development
- 3) the call to social action and the call to spiritual life/holiness

Humankind and creation

In contemporary ecological discussion man's traditional lordship of humanity has been strongly criticized - and rightly so. This concerns particularly the abuse of nature and its destructive consequences for the creation. Criticism has been particularly pertinent when it has pointed out how the creation has become an object of the exploitation, greed and domination of humankind.

What in the patristic period was called a microcosm is in no way in conflict with modern discussion of the task of humankind. St. Gregory of Nazianzus in the latter half of the fourth century refers to his task as an intermediary in the following way: humankind is "king of all upon earth, but a subject of heaven; earthly and heavenly; transient yet immortal; belonging both to the visible and to the intelligible order; midway between greatness and lowliness; combining in the same being spirit and flesh; spirit because of God's grace; flesh because raised up from the dust." (Harakas, pp. 71-72)

Professor Jürgen Moltmann and Metropolitan Paulos Gregorios have analyzed western problems concerning the creation along similar lines. Moltmann typologizes human relationships with nature with the terms "kennen (to know)" and "können (to be able)". Paulos Gregorios with the terms "mastery" and "mystery". The technological mastery and exploitation of physical reality when taken to extremes have become antitheses to human ability, opportunity, calling to act as a mediator and as a microcosm, as a builder of communion between God and the rest of creation. Paulos Gregorios writes: "We need to balance these masteries with an awareness and participation in the underlying mystery of God and His universe, and the related mystery of Christ in us, the hope of glory." (See George, p. 52)

Although in today's world we have enormous ecological problems, we should not strip humankind of his 'kingly' and 'priestly' responsibility. Rather on the contrary, humankind, who has brought the creation into this state, should now take conscious responsibility for its future. For humankind is a "frontier being", a mediator between God and nature. The whole of creation suffers from the fall of humankind. Its restoration and renewal will begin whenever humankind finds his true participation in divine life, and at the same time a respectful attitude and cooperation with nature.

In this context, the Orthodox have, on the basis of patristic tradition, outlined a holistic perspective of the relationship between humankind and creation and in particular of the task of humankind as a microcosm and mediator. Because Christ became humankind, our goal will no longer be the sanctification and transfiguration of humankind only, but that of the whole material world. The whole of creation "sighs in birthpains"; it too needs the gift of salvation, because it is a participant in the fall of humankind. Its wholeness is realized only "in communion with the sanctifying presence and energies of God" (Harakas, p. 73).

Because the creation does not have in itself sufficient awareness or sufficient freedom to reach it, we have been called "to give to physical objects a voice which in themselves they lack" (K. Ware, see Harakas, p. 75). In particular, this priestly function of humans is realized in the sacramental life of the Church. In the Eucharist we carry bread and wine, which depict and represent the whole of creation, back to God. "Your own of Your own we offer to You, in all and for all", we say when we elevate the eucharistic gifts in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. Through the blessing and sanctification of the bread and wine, as in other holy services, material reality becomes a bearer of the saving and sanctifying work of the Triune God. At the same time it is a foretaste of the wholeness of creation.

This sacramental view of nature places a high and demanding task before Christians. Today's ecological discussion shows that, unfortunately, there has often been a long delay between what the Church teaches and brings present in sacramental life and how as Christians we have realized our task in the concrete world. The JPIC process within the ecumenical movement challenges us to seek our responsibility and relevant ways of action more seriously in the future in order to solve current problems concerning peace, justice and the integrity of creation. This should be done in faithfulness to the values and principles of our own spiritual tradition.

In today's discussion on environmental issues Orthodox theologians (e.g. Harakas, Yannaras) point out how people in western culture have drawn a strict borderline between human beings and the rest of creation. Here modern science and western Christianity have walked hand in hand. When theology has spiritualized salvation, nature has become a mere object which humankind in the natural sciences, in industrial development and in economic life has then exploited without limits.

In my opinion the members of the Eastern churches have similarly taken part in this instrumentalization of nature and bear the same responsibility. Therefore we should together seek future balance between the preservation and utilization of the creation.

On the other hand, some ecological groups today praise nature in romantic terms. At the same time they heavily analyze and judge contemporary scientific-technological culture and its achievements. We as Christians should critically evaluate this.

In the light of the Christian anthropology we similarly need a critical analysis of present-day pantheistic movements, which in their mystical search tend to equate God with nature or divinity with humanity.

The Fall and development of humankind

The question concerning the mental and spiritual development of humanity is substantially related to the view of humankind. At least in our Finnish pietistic

culture we have so powerfully kept preaching about the Fall, helplessness and powerlessness of humankind that we have faced the danger of forgetting that the process of growth and transfiguration is a crucial part of being human person. Perhaps for this reason many young people have gone off to seek food and models for spiritual growth amidst the high religions of Asia, in new religious movements etc.

The Christian view of sanctification, transfiguration and deification and similarly guidance on that road could offer a firm Christian alternative to those who seek the future of humanity in illumination and/or reincarnation. For this reason we as church people should make active efforts to reveal our precious perspectives on humankind, its calling and future. We should also emphasize the fact that we have been given human freedom, the uniqueness of life, responsibility for this "one life", which continues and is transfigured in Christ, even beyond the borders of this time.

This optimistic vision is shadowed by awareness of human fall and mortality, which are, however, being understood much more profoundly by Christian faith, than, for instance, by many new religious movements. Whilst united with Christ and living inside His body the Church, we have got the way forward. Every Christian who sincerely makes efforts to love God, however weak they may be, is already to some extent a participant in the glory of Christ. Although the image of God in us is corrupted, it has never completely disappeared. Therefore in the Orthodox funeral - which in itself is, in my opinion, an excellent "textbook" of Christian anthropology - we sing:

I am an image of your inexpressible glory, even though I bear the wounds of my sins.

O Lord, be merciful to your creature and cleanse me by your grace. Give me the home-country of my heart's desire and make me again a citizen of Paradise.

On the one hand, human evolution and self-analysis/knowledge go hand in hand along the road of mental and spiritual growth. The aspect of repentance is similarly part of the deification process. In the course of history many holy fathers and mothers have had the same experience that the nearer they get to God, the greater sinners they feel themselves to be.

On the other hand, Christian churches in Europe are still often prisoners of their own history and geography. Large and scattered congregations have not always managed to offer sufficient community support, *koinonia*, nor personal spiritual guidance to their members. For this reason we should seriously seek models for that kind of congregation structure which could more holistically express the love between the persons of the Holy Trinity among the parishioners both in their spiritual and material relationship. Whilst seeking

holiness people also need, concrete spiritual guidance in addition to the examples and support of the saints.

Social activities and holiness

Being a person means that we are "living theology". We find God by looking inside ourselves, into our hearts. In the words of Jesus: the Kingdom of God is within you (Lk. 17:21). St. Isaac the Syrian (d. c. 700 A.D.) adds: "Enter eagerly into the treasure-house that lies within you, and so you will see the treasure-house of heaven, for they are the same... The ladder leading to the Kingdom of heaven are hidden within you, and is found in your own soul. Dive into yourself and in your soul you will discover the rungs by which to ascend." (The Art of Prayer p. 164)

Being a human being and fulfilling one's task in life belong together. I can find my neighbour once my inner life has been put into order. St. Seraphim of Sarov has said: "Save yourself, then thousands around you will be saved." Also Jesus' parable of the last judgment tells us how Christ will meet us in the person of a neighbouring human being, particularly in the person of a suffering, hungry, imprisoned humankind. St. Clement of Alexandria (d. 215 A.D.) adds: "When you see your brother, you see God." (See Ware, p. 226)

For this reason, the calling of humankind to holiness and carrying out God's will in society will always have the same starting-point and the same goal. The Orthodox, e.g. in the ecumenical movement have in recent decades often been critical of the WCC's one-sided tendency towards "horizontalism" concerning political and social issues. In doing this they have attempted to protect the basic spiritual task of the Church. The Church, nevertheless, will constantly have to struggle with the tension what it means to be "in the world but not of the world". Because the Church has been called to be yeast in the dough, in the midst of the universe, it does the work of Christ through its members for the benefit of human race and the whole of creation.

In this context the questions concerning life-style substantially affect the Christian view of humanity today. Meditation, contemplation, asceticism, fasting and a simple life-style are spreading among us in Finland. To a certain degree this takes place as a challenge from the non-Christian religions and cultures of the East. For this reason, and even more seriously under the obligation of our own rich spiritual heritage, we as members of different churches should together seek models for a contemporary Christian life-style. This too is part of the dialogue between our national churches.

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Man and the Present Day The View of our Church

Eeva Martikainen

Introduction

The title of this paper brings the churches' teaching about man in contact with the challenges of the modern day. In this paper we shall examine, on the one hand, the churches' own view of man and, on the other hand, the views which we encounter in modern science and in different ideological and religious movements. Since it is a question of such a broad task, clarification of the method is in order. We have a choice between two possible approaches. First of all, one can begin to outline the problem generally from the standpoint of anthropology. In this case, however, the question of so-called meta-anthropology, in other words, ideological points relating to anthropology, remain to one side. Anthropology "in itself" is obviously difficult to create. Another possibility of approaching the theme is to begin from the framework of Christianity and the various denominations. The approach is then a theological one, and then points of contact with different views of man arise from a theological foundation.

Since it is a question of inter-church doctrinal discussions, the theological approach is a natural option. It does not, however, exclude the possibility that discussion could be engaged in relation to other views of man. The churches teach and speak of man from the standpoint of their own doctrine and theology, but this view has to be related to views arising from man's reason and experience. The Church's teaching about man need not be in antithesis to the results which science has obtained about man. Christianity is not one ideology among many, nor is it a science among other sciences relating to man, rather it relates the scientific and ideological views of man and at the same time relativizes them. This idea - non-negotiable for Christianity - contains at the same time the possibility of fruitful interaction with other views of man. At the same time Christianity always forms a corrective to the views of science and ideologies. A particular difficulty of principle is encountered by Christianity in attempting to respond to the challenges posed by other religions and new religions typical of today. It is easier to answer challenges posed by different sciences, because they usually represent strictly limited expertise. In religious

views of man one has to do with holistic views, which often demand of their supporters absolute religious commitment and which have not explicitated the question of the validity of the area of religion in relation to human knowledge and science in general. Forming an opinion about the new religions is made difficult by the fact that they unite different ideological elements containing (pseudo-)scientific and partially syncretistic views, contrary is the case when discussing scientific views, encountering the new religions requires the limits of the field of discussion to be drawn afresh.

¹ Law as a link between the Church's and other views of man

content of the Church and Gospel, but at the same time it offers room for other views. In its view that law as natural law is common to all men, it forms a point of contact with the scientific view of man, both the social and psychological view of man. The Church has the opportunity of discussing these scientific results concerning man, with which one comes into contact in the sphere of natural law, in other words reason and experience. A particularly important distinction is in defining the Church's view of man in relation to the so-called new religions. In these the borders of faith and reason are typically confused, worldly and divine, law and Gospel, and healthy and sick. Distinguishing law and Gospel is, in the Lutheran view, also "good medicine" against unhealthy religiosity. In the new religions they want to supplant the healthy and natural in man, both his psychic and physical make-up and also man's natural social structure. The idea that natural law is part of the Church's doctrine makes it possible to take into account theologically the knowledge that is offered about man's natural physical, psychic and social make-up.

knowledge" taught by the new religions by teaching that man as created by God is a real, physical-psychical being. The unity of content of law and Gospel is also opened up by the Church's preaching of the Gospel and the significance of

the sacraments. The Church's teaching about man contains both profound knowledge of the natural make-up of man, and the communicating of unconditional love is still a relevant basis in encountering the growing popularity of the new religions and delimiting their ideas.

In the Lutheran view, so-called natural law (*lex naturalis*) forms a general point of contact between the Church's teaching and other views of man. The Lutheran Church begins from the idea that all people know the law of God by nature. "The letters of the law" are written in everyone's heart, and one's conscience accuses one of breaking the law. Every person is "under God's left hand", even if he does not acknowledge God. The view that law can be naturally known is also the basis for confidence in man's possibility of creating a just society. In order to be a just society it does not need to be "Christian" in the sense that the areas in which Church and society function should be confused and that the Gospel should be the "supreme law" of society. The Lutheran Church recognizes a relatively just society on the basis of natural law and at the same time that Christians working in official positions in society "serve God in their everyday life". "Law as law", in other words, as an expression of social justice (*ius civitis*) is thus a non-negotiable part of the Lutheran view of law. In the social sense, law is good because it sets limits to the selfishness of man and at the same time attempts to protect the weaker members of society from exploitation by the stronger. Although the social use of the law is a negative use of law from the viewpoint of the Gospel, it is necessary just as it is.

The negative use of the law is also the proper spiritual use of the law (*usus spiritualis, usus theologicus*). Law in the spiritual sense reveals the true state of man. Natural law already includes the accusing function of the law, but law in the spiritual use reveals man's guilt before God. The Lutheran Church reminds one that men live by nature "under the law", in other words, under the accusation and judgment of the law. The task of preaching the law is not to make man feel guilty, which he already is by nature. Guilt is often a person's closest companion, and in remaining under guilt a person is destroyed. The negative use of the law - even though in a limited sense it is good and necessary - in the absolute sense leads a person to destruction. The law is not, in other words, a power "in itself". This means that man cannot fulfil the demands of the law, but the law always shows a person's limitations and at the same time one's own impossibility. The law is conceived theologically, if it is understood as transcending itself, in other words, as showing its own impossibility. This appears when one examines the content of the law in a theological, positive sense.

2. The (positive) content of the law

In the Lutheran and early Church view, the law always demands at bottom faith and love; faith in God and love for one's neighbour. In Lutheranism it has been the custom to express this also in terms of the law not ultimately demanding deeds but a doer, in other words, a good person. A good person is not born by order nor by doing deeds but by faith and trust in God.

When the law is studied from the standpoint of its content, the common area between the Church's view of man and the "social view of man" expands. The law demands at bottom faith in God and love for one's neighbour and care for nature, although the "material" limits of the social use of the law rise only to the area of neighbourly relations and nature conservation. Although the authority of the law in the secular area of life only rises to the area of human relations and the environment, this does not mean that the "entire content" of the law does not have meaning for the social use of the law. If the law is understood as being in the service of love, then the law is not an end in itself, justice expands to apply to all men and not just a legal measure of a crime revealed by the law. People's communal life and every individual person's life can then be understood as promoting justice: every person is in his own sphere of life responsible for a just life and he can promote it with his own life. In the modern social view of man, the significance of inter-personal dialogue is well understood. When Luther and the church fathers before him taught that the commandments do not demand only that one refrain from doing certain deeds which harm one's neighbour but protect and in every way promote the good of one's neighbour: nowadays one well understands this profound meaning of the commandments. In everyday inter-personal relations, taking account of another person is important for one's own welfare. Whoever tramples on another person knows that very soon he will get into the same situation. The selfish person, who only seeks his own interest, is unconsciously in need of the law of love.

3. The transcendent significance of the law

When the law is understood as at bottom demanding love, the significance of the law which transcends people is expressed at the same time. In demanding love the law points outside itself. Love is not fulfilled by compulsion but it presupposes a gift, the gift of love. In demanding love the law thus points implicitly to faith and God. Since the law cannot be exhausted as the demands of the law nor as the fulfilling of the law but ultimately as love, the foundation of all life, the theological interpretation of the law already contains the Christian view of man. The roots of love contained in justice and human intercourse are deeper than just in inter-personal relations: man was created and placed in higher and deeper love: in divine, eternal love. On the basis of creation a person carries within himself the image and likeness of God. His

being is not thus to be returned only to the secular and thus only to the psychological or sociological level, but it must also be examined theologically. From the standpoint of the content of the law there also opens up a point of contact for inter-church discussion about man as the image and likeness of God.

II The positive content of the law as a link between the churches: the law ultimately demands a person who is the image of God and in his likeness

1. The difference between law and Gospel

If the theological concept of law forms a positive point of contact with other views of man in society, its direct point of contact for inter-church theological discussions is not as direct. It is well known that the Lutheran Church has held fast to the distinction between law and Gospel and emphasized very strongly the meaning of the social use of the law (*ius civilis*) as a point of contact between the Church and social functions. In preaching the law and Gospel the Church does not speak to an empty heart, although it cannot observe it. The formal distinction of law and Gospel and the classification of the uses of the law have not been typical hallmarks of Orthodox theology. The significance of law as a bridge between the churches is, however, understood in a new way when one examines what law in fact contains.

The law demands at bottom faith and love, in other words a good person, which theologically is understood as being fulfilled in a person's being the image and likeness of God, such as God originally created him. The idea that man is the image and likeness of God is common to both churches, although there are differences of nuance. In speaking of man as the image and likeness of God we are speaking of man in the sphere of the Gospel. Man cannot by his deeds or by his own choice create himself or become the image and likeness of God. He himself is created by God and has received himself as a gift. The expression "the image and likeness of God" is already Gospel language, which the Church actually speaks to people. The Church's view of man, which is expressed briefly by saying that man was created in the image and likeness of God, contains the profound message and meaning of the Gospel. The Church cannot therefore give up this view of man, and the churches are united in the common teaching of the Gospel about man. The Lutheran formal distinction of law and Gospel is a guarantee and reminder of how deeply the Gospel is hidden in the Church's teaching about man. Similarly, the ontological view of man, which is expressed by saying that man is the image and likeness of God, gives substantial content to the Gospel. For inter-church theological discussions it is important to see what connection there is between the distinction of law and Gospel and the ontological view of man. In the Lutheran view, the distinction

of law and Gospel "protects" the substance of the Gospel, which is hidden in the view of man as the image and likeness of God.

2. Man as the image and likeness of God - the connection between creation and the doctrine of justification

In the Lutheran view, theological anthropology and the doctrine of justification are closely linked. When man was created in the image and likeness of God, he was created at the same time for the love of God and as an object of the love of God. The doctrine of justification is thus the organically linked foundation of the theology of creation. In this the churches are largely in agreement. Creation means, in the Lutheran view, the original wholeness of man, which has its foundation in the love of God. This wholeness is visible in inter-personal relations and in a harmonious relation to nature. The redeeming work of Christ and the justification of man through the Word and sacraments is the restoration of this original wholeness.

In order to emphasize the foundation in the theology of creation of the doctrine of justification the Lutheran Church and theology has not distinguished between the expressions 'the image of God' and 'the likeness of God', but they have been seen in firm relation to each other. So Luther, the Lutheran confessions and Lutheran orthodoxy speak synonymously of man as the image and likeness of God. Then man as the image of God does not mean merely a formal structure (soul, body, memory), which was preserved unharmed after the Fall, but the expression 'the image of God' already contains living unity and fellowship with God. 'The likeness of God' (in other words, participation in the qualities of God: 'love, eternity, grace, peace, joy, truth') is not separate from being the image of God. Being the image of God means personal unity and fellowship with God and at the same time this fellowship includes participation in the divine Virtues. With the fact that Lutheran theology has not made a distinction between the image and the likeness is linked an important emphasis from the point of view of the doctrine of justification: grace and sanctification, faith and love, are not independent or subsequent states of man but different sides of the same "matter": justification is sanctification, because it is participation in the love and goodness of God. The way to the deification of man thus leads only through justification. Progress is always a return to the beginning, that is, the grace of baptism. In God's gift is everything, even though from man's perspective the beginning and end look different.

In the Lutheran doctrine of justification - in understanding "image" and "likeness" as synonyms - it is emphasized that man is incapable in his own strength and with his own faculties of approaching God and of reconciling himself with God. Also in the life of the believer this model continues: justification is not a beginning, a "springboard", after which he himself is able to work to achieve improvement or wholeness. When speaking of man as the

image and likeness of God on the basis of creation, however, substantial agreement between the churches is found.

In the Lutheran view, man was created in the image and likeness of God, to live by faith and trust in fellowship with God and sharing in his good things; life, love and eternity. Here, too, Lutheranism emphasizes the unity of the image and likeness of God: man as created by God really shared in divine gifts and good things, in other words, in divine life. The likeness of God did not mean, according to Luther, "supernatural" grace above man's natural make-up but a share in God's life and goodness received as a gift and as part of humanity. Likeness was thus part of man's being created. This meant that when man lived in a relationship of faith and trust with God he also lived in a relationship of love and care with his neighbour and in harmonious fellowship with other creatures. Man was created by God, a creature among creatures and thus sharing in physical reality, but at the same time in a special way also sharing in spiritual reality, in God as the foundation of all being.

3. Man as the image of God: man's relationship to nature, his neighbour and God

From the perspective of theological anthropology one can positively approach the disciplines which study man's relation to nature (ecology, environmental research) and inter-personal relationships (psychology), to mention but a few examples. Theological anthropology emphasizes, however - seeing man's foundational relation to God - that man in relation to nature and his fellow-men already exceeds these relationships in his consciousness. Man is not only a part of nature nor are his mental contacts limited only to other people. Man's being of nature includes a foundational relationship with God, in which man can transcend himself, conscious of himself as a mental and spiritual being. At the same time the relationship to nature and one's neighbour finds new dimensions of significance.

The view of man as the image of God thus places man in three kinds of relationships which are not independent, but of different degrees. As a physical being man is on the same foundation with the rest of creation, animals and plants. He shares in being common to all men, which ultimately is based on the being of God himself. Man can thus be examined as a physio-biological being, and the knowledge relating to man and nature gleaned by the biological sciences cannot be alien to the churches. In his ability to transcend himself man is also conscious of his relationship to nature. He is part of it, but he is also aware of it. Modern ecology poses an enormous challenge to the churches. If the churches emphasize man as a being created by God and as part of creation, this challenge cannot be left unaccepted. The churches' concept of man also brings a significant contribution to modern ecological efforts. Man is not bound blindly to fight for his living space as one species of animal - as the biological

view of man presupposes - but man can transcend himself in relation to nature. He is part of nature by his physical being: he needs sun, earth, water, food, living space, but he can get this without destroying the living space of other creatures. Man himself is deeply dependent upon nature, so that the exploitation and destruction of nature turns out to be man's own doom, as modern ecological consciousness clearly states. The ecocatastrophe, the upsetting of the balance of nature tells at the same time of man's own sickness, the upsetting of his original relation to nature. At the same time it tells, however, also of the shaking of man's relation to his neighbour, his lack of love.

Man's being the image of God also includes his relationships with other people. A relationship with another person which is both physical and thus biological and the basis of which can also be seen as biological and not merely psychological, is essential in man's being man. His development to be in relationship with another person, which is the biological-psychological foundation of his life, is formed in the primary relationship with his parents. When the churches speak of love for one's neighbour, and when modern psycho-analysis speaks of so-called object relations, a basis for fruitful discussion is already provided. It is important for the Church to know man's make-up, such as presented by modern psycho-analysis. It shows how in a basic way his ability to transcend himself lives in relationship with "another" and how in this relationship with "another" he "finds himself"; builds up his ego. In particular, most recent psycho-analysis has emphasized that a person's ego (*Ich*) and his self-consciousness (*Selbst*), the ability to transcend oneself, is based on the safe mother symbiosis. A child's trust in "another", which is the condition of his being and life, develops concretely in a loving parent responding genuinely to the needs and distress of the child. Trust, which is the psychological foundation of life and the essential condition of all mental development, is born out of the sufficient reception and adequate response of the loving "other". While early psycho-analysis (Freud) regarded man's destructive aggression as inborn and a second instinct (the death instinct) in addition to libido (the love instinct), later psycho-analysis has emphasized aggression as a product of frustration; man's destructive behaviour is not part of man's being but it is a response to the primary object which has produced frustration. Psycho-analytical knowledge helps one to know man's deep emotional make-up, the knowledge of which is also important for the Church.

Many therapists speak of a point of contact between modern human science and faith in their emphasis that in the primary object relation, man "experiences" on a psychological level what "divine love" could be. When psycho-analysis speaks of love surpassing all human love, as "divine love", they speak of how in a deep human relationship, and in particular in the relationship where his being in relation to another develops in a psychological sense, man already transcends psychological experience. This ability of man to transcend himself points to man's final object. The Other who is behind every other and

the source of every other, God. Therapists have also observed that man can have an ideal of unconditional love, even if he has not been able to experience it sufficiently in his primary relationship and even if he has not been able to internalise it and thus live and function according to this image of love.

When, with the help of modern psychology, people understand man's concrete make-up "to find himself in another" and the distortion of that make-up, illness, they at the same time "exceed" that knowledge. Man's final foundation is not in his natural object relationship, his relationships with his neighbours nor is failure in these his eternal ruin. The relationship with another person is also subject to distortion caused by sin; parents also bear and transmit original sin. Modern psychology well understands on a concrete level what the Bible statement "I will avenge the evil deeds of the fathers to the third and fourth generation" means. The human other, even though already pointing to God's love in human love and communicating it in the world, is limited and deficient. Also in these structures the churches see a distortion caused by sin. Man as the image of God is as a physical and psychic being in relationship with another, by surrendering to whom he gains himself, transcends himself and aims towards the Final Other, the Foundation of Life, which carries him with the help of a natural other, but also in these distortions, in sin and above all beyond death.

The churches' view of man as the image of God thus has a profound ontological foundation. Without this classical view of creation, in which God is not separated from the creatures, only the initiator of creation, but himself present in the foundation of all life, fruitful discussion and interaction with the modern scientific view of man is not possible. If the tenet of creation is set aside and man is spoken of only from the standpoint of christology - as in modern theology and also in the ecumenical movement has been the custom - the churches' learning about real people will remain slight and the Church's preaching of the law will be an incomprehensible moral demand.

Even if man's natural transcending in his relations with nature and his neighbour do not lead directly as a positive continuation to a relationship with God, they remind man of his life transcending Other. The Church's teaching about man will be deficient and will not provide a corrective to the modern view of man if it only confirms what man already knows deep down: teaching the law, which is constantly revealing faults in man's being man. The Church always teaches ultimately what man is in relation to the Transcendent Other: to God, who in his love has drawn close to man and his creation in Christ, and draws near in the Church, in its means of grace and in the Word. This is teaching of unconditional love, of the Other, by surrendering to whom man gains his life not only in the worldly and natural sense - but also in the eternal sense, in fellowship with Christ communicated by the Church, by being in the Other, man gains himself in the spiritual and eternal sense. The likeness of God, in which man was, in the Lutheran view, a participant in the original

creation, is based on being in another. In participation on which the resulting trust man can also internalise divine qualities, love, wisdom, eternity, mercy, peace, etc., but at the same time he also transcends himself as a being sharing in eternity. The Church's real teaching can be summarized in man's relationship with God, man's relationship with the eternal Other; a relationship of trust holding up all of life. The relationship with God can also be presented as a relationship with another, in which participation is of the essence, in which man really gains himself and has the opportunity to grow. Participation and individualization, beginning and development are not independent of one another but they are united by a bridge of trust, an internalised relationship with God. Without unconditional (divine) love the construction of such a bridge is not possible.

III Man's religious need and the new religions

Man's religious need, which is in the make-up of man, in his ability to transcend himself, surfaces particularly in crises of great ideologies, at times of uncertainty and restlessness, although it may seek new channels of realization. Such are the new religious movements and their growing popularity (New Age).

Without going into an actual analysis of the New Age, the uniform character of which could be the subject of discussion, we shall outline only very general features of the New Age view of man in relation to the churches' view of man. One characteristic feature of the New Age is so-called esotericism. This emphasizes the natural "godliness" of man, the divinity living in man's soul and through this special knowledge of higher reality. Esotericism appears structurally in secret societies, in which only a certain group of similarly thinking people with similar interests receive special divine knowledge. Linked with the emphasis on secret knowledge is also contempt for knowledge based on human reason (science). So different alternative movements (special health knowledge and related programmes, etc.) are hallmarks of the New Age.

New Age reminds the churches of man's profound need for mysticism and innerness and individuality. The Church, for which external power and uniformity are sufficient, as well as the Church whose teaching has moralised, easily feeds movements where man finds some correspondence to his inner life. New Age reminds the Lutheran Church in particular of its lack of mysticism. The Lutheran Church with its heaven of Protestantism has understood religiosity as a very narrow area affecting man. It has preached either an abstract gospel (Barthianism) or God's (moral) law, the target of which has been an autonomous person, who fulfils the moral commandments depending upon his will. Opposite the preaching of the Protestant gospel is not a person resting on an ontological-mystical foundation, but someone who acts, whose being

human depends upon will and action. By contrast, the Lutheran Church offers a corrective to the New Age emphasis on secret knowledge in teaching that man as created by God is a real physical-psychical being. Creation in the image and likeness of God does not mean the creation of a bodiless and timeless person but a person who lives among both nature and his neighbours, sharing deeply with them. When Lutheranism relates positively to scientific knowledge and the use of social law, it emphasizes the significance of common knowledge and responsibility for everyone. Christianity does not give new knowledge of the structure of the world nor of the natural make-up of man; it is not a science of the world for only a few initiates. Instead, it teaches love, which is a prerequisite of all persons, their knowledge, responsibility and deeds. In the Church are created, in the image and likeness of God, people built up by love and grace, who in their own places communicate this and act responsibly in the world. The Lutheran view of the distinction of law and Gospel, which formally limits the ontological view of the image and likeness of God, is thus a remedy for the religiosity of the "secret knowledge" of the New Age. Here the fruitful tension between divine and human, Gospel and law, Church and society has disappeared.

The popularity of the New Age tells at the same time of man's distress, where autonomous man, relying merely on science and morality, and thinking he can build his life himself, has ended up. Different quests are an effort to find original trust, which is born of participation in genuine love. If this search by man is answered by the emphases of the Church's hierarchy, by ecclesiastical counter-ideology or morality or mere scientific knowledge, the problem is not solved. The Church, which is universal by nature, because God is the creator of all men and because the world is his world, cannot exclude new religious movements as opposed to it, but it must be seen as the target of the quest of the people involved, even if, from the Church's perspective, it is distorted and even if religious views of man are from the Church's standpoint more difficult to encounter than non-religious views of man.

The teaching of the churches, in which are united profound knowledge of man's make-up and communication of unconditional love in forgiveness and participation in realities which support Church life, in the sacraments and spiritual life, is non-negotiable in encountering different new religions and ideologies.

THE FOURTH THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF FINLAND AND THE FINNISH ORTHODOX CHURCH 1993

Communiqué

The fourth theological discussions between delegations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Orthodox Church were held at the Orthodox Centre at Iisalmi on September 20th-21st, 1993. The conference was hosted by the Finnish Orthodox Church.

The chairman of the delegation of the Finnish Orthodox Church was Ambrosius, Bishop of Joensuu. The other members of the delegation were Chief Assistant Jarmo Hakkarainen, Father Antti Larikka (vicar), Father Olavi Merras (vicar) and Juhani Räsänen (parish reader).

The leader of the delegation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland was the Bishop of Mikkeli, Voitto Huotari. The other members of the delegation were Rev. Dr. Lorenz Grönvik, Dean Matti Järveläinen, Rev. Dr. Hannu T. Kämpuri and Docent Eeva Martikainen.

The secretaries to the conference were Rev. Dr. Lorenz Grönvik and the Archbishop's secretary Deacon Kimmo Kallinen.

Observers at the conference were Father Martti Voutilainen of the Roman Catholic Church in Finland and Jan Edström (Swedish Baptist Mission of Finland), General Secretary of the Finnish Ecumenical Council.

At the opening ceremony the speakers were Bishop Ambrosius and Bishop Voitto Huotari. In his speech Bishop Ambrosius emphasized that the present theological dialogue moves on especially favourable ground. In Finland the churches have long lived alongside one another in the same country and they have a common language and cultural environment, although their doctrinal and liturgical traditions are very different. Bishop Ambrosius also briefly outlined the international doctrinal discussions in which the Orthodox Church has engaged. The goal of all the churches should be to repair the divisions impairing the unity of the Christian Church. Bishop Ambrosius hoped that this dialogue could be called a "dialogue of love and truth".

In his opening remarks Bishop Voitto Huotari emphasized that the Orthodox and Lutheran churches are both part of their own international family of churches. In Finland the churches wish to make their contribution to

promoting ecumenism. They have shown each other a considerable degree of positive appreciation, which speaks of a serious attitude towards ecumenism and of a desire for progress to be made. In the dialogue the churches once again have an opportunity to become acquainted with and learn to understand each other's worship. A point of common interest is also the scope for church life created by Finnish society. Therefore consideration of reforms in legislation concerning freedom of religion is especially important in this context.

During the discussions the delegations attended vespers in Iisalmi Lutheran Church and an Orthodox morning service in Iisalmi Orthodox Church. During the conference Father Olavi Merras told of the work of the international Lutheran-Orthodox dialogue and the present state of the discussions.

At the conference two subjects were under discussion. The first was "Freedom of Religion as a Basic Right in Finland"; papers on this subject were delivered by parish reader Juhani Räsänen and Bishop Voitto Huotari. The second theme was "The Incarnation in the Liturgical Tradition of our Churches". On this subject we heard papers by Chief Assistant Jarmo Hakkarainen and Rev. Dr. Hannu T. Kämpuri.

Freedom of Religion as a Basic Right in Finland

In dealing with the first theme it was stated that the question of freedom of religion and human rights is essentially linked with one's concept of man. The conference hoped for discussion of the concept of man and basic values in connection with the reform of basic rights.

The definition of freedom of religion and conviction given by the basic rights committee was dealt with in depth. It was agreed that the report of the basic rights committee places too great emphasis on negative freedom of religion, freedom from religion. The main emphasis should be the right to practise religion, that is, positive freedom of religion. The European agreement on human rights ratified by Finland in 1990 emphasizes the right to practise religion:

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes the right to change religion and the freedom to profess one's religion or faith, either alone or together with others, publicly or privately, in worship, by teaching, in devotions or in religious ceremonies.
2. Personal freedom to profess one's religion or faith can only be restricted as laid down by law and as essential in a democratic society for public security, in order to preserve public order, health or morals, or in order to ensure the rights and freedoms of other individuals. (9th article)

In line with this agreement, the conference emphasized that freedom of religion not only applies to people as individuals but also to churches and

other religious groups as communities. This point should also be manifest in Finnish legislation on basic rights.

The conference viewed favourably the suggestion that the right to religious teaching, or teaching in accordance with one's conviction, should be ensured in the constitution. The positive rights of children and their parents to religion will thus gain a clear and prominent position.

In the reform of criminal law, the ordinances concerning religious peace should be supplemented so that the definition of the violating of sacred values should be based on what the religious community itself regards as sacred. It cannot proceed exclusively on the basis of protecting the religious feelings of the individual.

The Incarnation in the Liturgical Tradition of our Churches

In dealing with the second theme it was stated that the Incarnation of Christ opens an entirely new perspective on reality, comprising the whole of creation, as expressed by the liturgy. Both the liturgical chants and readings (in particular those that relate to the Nativity) of the Orthodox Church and the Advent and Christmas hymns and readings of the Lutheran Church express the significance of the Incarnation in the entire history of salvation.

The starting-point of the Incarnation is philanthropy, God's love for man. In their understanding of the feast of the Nativity both churches stress the Incarnation. In both churches the feast of the Nativity is preceded by a time of preparation (Advent/fast). It also includes an eschatological emphasis on the second coming of Christ. Thus the message of Christmas and the Incarnation are inseparably linked to the overall message of salvation history.

In the teaching of both churches a central place is occupied by the true divinity and true humanity of the person of Christ. In the Incarnation the value of the whole of creation is also visible. This has consequences for the socio-ethical thinking and activities of the churches with regard to contemporary ecological, economic and social issues.

It was tentatively decided that the discussions should be continued on 18th-19th September, 1995, hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. The themes were agreed as "Work, Unemployment and Human Dignity" and "The Universal Priesthood".

Helsinki, 21st September, 1993

OPENING SPEECH 20th September, 1993

Voitto Huotari

On behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and its delegation I thank the Finnish Orthodox Church for inviting us to the Helsinki Orthodox Centre for our inter-church dialogue. This centre reminds us of the great restructuring of the society which brought members of our national churches into contact in a new way fifty years ago. It was a confusing period in relations between our churches. Members of our churches met each other, as can be deduced from mixed marriages, for example.

Over the decades ecumenical relations between our churches have, however, substantially improved. One sign of this is the present doctrinal dialogue, which has taken place three times previously in an open, constructive and friendly spirit. We wish to take part in these discussions and make progress in them so that members of our churches in our country should be better able to express their common faith, rejoice in it together and go forward in united witness.

Both the Orthodox and Lutheran Churches in Finland are part of their own church families. We wish to engage in discussion with the awareness of being members of them, knowing the related responsibilities and opportunities we have been given, and playing our part in furthering relations between them. Recently efforts to make progress in ecumenical relations have in general been slow in achieving unanimity on the level of theological concepts and doctrinal definitions. Instead the churches have given positive signs of mutual appreciation, which tells of a stable attitude towards ecumenism and a desire for progress. We hope that these discussions will be a significant message to one another, to members of our churches, to those engaged in ecumenical work elsewhere and to our society.

Worship is the heart of spiritual life. In worship each church expresses in its own way the central truths of our common faith. Therefore it is essential to be acquainted with and understand each other's worship on the road towards ecumenical fellowship.

We are also united by interest in the kind of position and scope created for the churches in Finnish society. We regard as important the opportunity provided by these discussions to go together into the details of contemporary legislative reforms concerning freedom of religion. Although freedom of

religion is a universally recognized basic right, in the legislative reform under way in our country it is defined negatively, as freedom from religion. In international declarations of human rights there is, however, a positive side, the freedom to practise religion. In Finnish legislative reform, too, the right kind of encouragement should be given to practise religion and to bring up children and young people accordingly. It is also beneficial for the healthy development of society.

I hope that the work now commencing will bring us and our churches still closer to one another "so that the world might believe" (Jn. 17:21).

OPENING SPEECH

20th September 1993

Bishop Ambrosius

The Dialogue of Love and Truth at Istanbul

In the name of the Finnish Orthodox Church - and with the blessing of Archbishop John of Karelia and all Finland - I cordially welcome the delegations of both churches to this fourth session theological dialogue between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Orthodox Church. We especially rejoice that in this dialogue the Bishop Voitto Huotari of Mikkelä continues the esteemed ecumenical work of his predecessor in this dialogue.

Late last night I returned to Finland from Istanbul. For this reason I have the opportunity of conveying the heartfelt greetings of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and his wishes for God's abundant blessing upon this dialogue and upon the joint efforts towards unity to which these doctrinal discussions bear witness. As a great friend of Finland, he looks for the increase of convergence and of a genuine ecumenical dialogue between our churches.

Those of us who have participated in international theological dialogues between different Churches know from experience how in this Finnish dialogue we are moving on an especially fertile ground. The first stage of the dialogue at Mikkelä in 1989 proved that almost a millennium of coexistence in the same country, and a common language and cultural environment, offer a unique basis for our work together. As representatives of Eastern and Western doctrinal and liturgical traditions we both rely on the common faith and spiritual experience of the undivided Church. Finland still serves as a meeting place for these two Churches and cultural traditions, and - by purifying our memories - we are now called to face our past and equally our common future in a creative and constitutive way.

This dialogue is not merely our privilege; it is also a sacred duty. The centuries' long brokenness of the unity between the Churches has been a painful wound in Christendom. We Orthodox and Lutherans, and equally Roman Catholics and Free Church Christians who serve as observers in our meeting,

each cherish a number of different stereotypes our own uniqueness and exclusive truth as part of our historical heritage.

In this kind of a theological dialogue we stand before the face of holy God. This context is like a mirror, in which we should look at ourselves with open and critical eyes but at the same time be guided by the Spirit. We are called to be open to the future, without, however, sacrificing the truth transmitted to us by the holy Church in living tradition and in living tradition without compromises. Christ himself prays in his high-priestly prayer for his flock, for fellowship and unity between his disciples and followers. With this vision and goal before our eyes we must learn to distinguish between what is non-negotiable in substance of the faith of the undivided Church and where we must appreciate each other's different ways of expressing it in common worship and witness.

This Finnish dialogue was preceded for decades by international doctrinal discussions between our respective Churches. Even longer our Orthodox Church has engaged in the dialogue with the Old Catholics and also with the Anglican Churches.

The Old Catholic dialogue reached a number of important doctrinal agreements by the beginning of the 1980s. Nevertheless, until now no practical conclusions have been drawn from the unanimously approved documents concerning the various aspects of Christian faith, witness and service.

The discussions with the Anglicans have dealt extensively with the Church's doctrine and spirituality of the Church. The result is two *Agreed Statements* (Moscow 1976, Dublin 1984). In spite of many good pursuits little progress has been done, especially, since many Anglican national and regional churches decided to ordain women to priesthood. On the other hand, the great theological diversity between high-church Anglicans and evangelicals is experienced as a great problem in the dialogue by the Orthodox. After the Dublin conference only two sessions have been held, one at New Valamo in 1989 and the other in Toronto in 1990.

The break of unity between our Byzantine Orthodox Church and the so-called Oriental Orthodox Churches has affected us most painfully since the Council of Chalcedon in 451. As far as this dialogue is concerned it is extremely significant for us that in the 1980s an agreement was reached on the person of Christ in dialogue between the Eastern Orthodox and the Monophysite and Nestorian church families. Even in a wider perspective the results of this dialogue are signs of the hope: theological dialogues are not futile efforts but rather an organic part of the life of the Church.

From our perspective in Finland the world-wide doctrinal discussions with the Roman Catholic Church on the one hand, and with the Lutheran churches on the other hand seem most important for the Orthodox. Both began at the turn of the 1980s. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland hosted the first meeting of the international Lutheran-Orthodox commission in Espoo in 1980,

while our church hosted the Roman Catholic-Orthodox commission at New Valamo in 1988.

On the Orthodox side, great hopes were vested in the international dialogue between the Orthodox and the Lutherans. The Orthodox theologians know that the Lutheran Church has got a firm common doctrinal basis ever since the Reformation, even though this may not be the case with the Anglicans. It was a good starting-point, but the dialogue has unfortunately not progressed as expected. In addition to ecclesiastical problems the work of the commission has suffered from a lack of clear methodology and leadership.

The same cannot be said of the work of the Roman Catholic-Orthodox international commission. A turning-point in relations between our churches took place a generation ago when as a result of the meeting between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras the anathemas of 1054 were revoked in 1965. Although the work in the commission has proved difficult due to various painful historical experiences and prejudices, and particularly due to the problems relating to Uniatism, its results speak for themselves. In ten years the commission has achieved significant unanimously approved theological documents on the sacraments of the Church, including documents on eucharistic doctrine and the ordained ministry. We face the doctrine of Papacy and the primacy of the Bishop of Rome as the crucial questions for the rapprochement of our Churches. It promises good for the future that there is readiness on the part of the representatives of both Churches within the commission to deal this difficult issue. Many Orthodox and Catholics rejoice at the unanimity reached on the Uniate issue by this commission in Balamand, Lebanon, in 1993. This centuries old sore wound between our Churches has finally reached a healing process, and the commission has also adopted a number of proposals for concrete action. It remains to be seen what consequences it will have for the dialogue between local Churches particularly in the Middle East, the Balkans, the Ukraine and Slovakia.

In this opening speech of our dialogue it has been my desire to report briefly about the international doctrinal discussions of the Orthodox Church in order to enable us to put our Finnish dialogue into a wider context. The international experience shows that we may look for progress on our road towards unity, and that difficulties will overcome.

Last winter the previous Lutheran chairman of this dialogue, Bishop Kalevi Toivainen, stated in his farewell interview in the newspaper "Kotima" that Finland is a developing country as regards ecumenism. In a nutshell he thus pointed out the conflict between the vision and the present day state of ecumenism, which also in our country includes growing dissatisfaction over the slow tempo of the ecumenical movement.

There is no "short cut to happiness" in our efforts towards unity. We must be committed to working for the unity of the Church of Christ on a number of various ways. Disruptions caused by centuries old heresies, prejudices and

diverse cultural conditions cannot be ecumenical field, if we think of the ample opportunities that has been offered to us by our own intellectual and spiritual climate. Globally, however, we are in the front line. There are no everyday conflicts between the Churches and practical cooperation increases on various levels of the life of the our Churches. This is also true about relations our Churches with society and culture at large.

Finally, when the Roman Catholic-Orthodox international dialogue began in 1979 it was called a "dialogue of love and truth". Our domestic Finnish dialogue involves nothing less than the same profundity and seriousness.

May God, who is good and loves humankind, grant that these doctrinal discussions here in the Orthodox Centre at Iisalmi will serve in truth and love the deepest purposes of the Church for His glory and the benefit of all people.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION AS A BASIC RIGHT IN FINLAND

Voitto Huotari

INTRODUCTION

Freedom of religion is a universally recognized basic right. It is one of the internationally accepted human rights. In Finland it is safeguarded by constitutional regulations.

In our country reform of basic rights regulations is under way - and is now reaching its conclusion. The ground work was done by the basic rights committee. On the basis of this and of pronouncements made the basic rights working group set up by the Ministry of Justice has drawn up a revised proposal for basic rights legislation. Churches and religious communities operating in our country are naturally interested in how freedom of religion is defined in the constitution.

I shall now briefly examine basic rights reform and how the Lutheran Church sees its task as a defender of human rights. Then I shall expound the kind of content given to freedom of religion in the proposed constitution and the kind of changes to the proposal suggested by the Lutheran Church. In addition, I shall examine the definition of religious peace associated with this subject, likewise in the pending reform of criminal law.

BASIC RIGHTS

In Finland basic rights usually means the rights of the individual as laid down in the constitution. The constitution safeguards basic rights for Finnish citizens. The concept of human rights refers to rights mentioned in international agreements on human rights. Human rights are not bound to citizenship of a particular country but belong to everyone. Internationally, freedom of religion is evidently the oldest fundamental right, which logically belongs within the scope of protection afforded by agreements on human rights. Traditionally the constitutions of different European countries have followed the line of the French Revolution in guaranteeing religious liberty.

It is customary to divide basic rights into three groups:

1. Rights to freedom, that is, civil and political rights. Freedom of religion is one of these, as is, for instance, the right to life and personal immunity, freedom of speech, assembly and association, freedom of movement, the right to protection of one's private life and freedom of economic activity. These so-called classic rights have traditionally been regarded as individualistic. They have been seen primarily as safeguarding the individual's range of freedom from interference by the authorities.

2. Economic, social and educational rights. These are, for example, the right to work, the right to accommodation, the right to social and health services, and the right to education. These rights presuppose more frequently than is the case with the former group active measures on the part of the authorities for their implementation.

3. Communal or collective rights. Their subject is a community such as the people or a minority group. Communal rights are, for example, the right of peoples to self-determination, the right to peace, the right to development and the rights of minorities.

The registering and enacting of basic rights is a question of drawing up a catalogue of the basic values of society. The basic rights committee wishes to safeguard classic rights in a contemporary way and to safeguard and extend legislative protection of economic, social and educational rights. Altogether new rights to be defined in the constitution would include social security, the right to social and health services and the right to the environment.

Basic rights do not interest the Lutheran Church only from the viewpoint of freedom of religion but in general from the viewpoint of safeguarding civil and human rights. According to the doctrine of the two kingdoms, the acts of God are manifested not only in the spiritual realm but also in the secular realm. The ascendancy of love, truth and justice in them is the fulfilling of God's will. In a corrupt world the Church is a community of new life. Its task is to remind the world, in which rights are trampled underfoot and people are oppressed, of the demands of the righteousness of God. Therefore the Church should show interest in how basic values in society are defined and how they are implemented, and in every way take part in putting into effect basic Christian values.

The entire basic rights reform in hand thus deserves active support from the Church. Its basic aims are in harmony with the aims of Christian righteousness and love for one's neighbour. As far as details are concerned, the substance of basic rights and the way they are implemented are within the scope of human discretion guided by love. Although as a church we take part in defining them, from the standpoint of our faith we have nothing special to give as regards to content. This is to be developed by the use of common sense and

discretion guided by love. They are thus, in the Lutheran view, theologically legitimate principles within the area of secular authority.

THE NEW FORM OF THE FREEDOM OF RELIGION CLAUSE

The basic rights committee makes the following proposal for clause of the constitution on freedom of religion:

Everyone has freedom of religion and other conviction. This includes the right to practise religion and express one's convictions, and the right to belong to or not to belong to a religious community.

No one is obliged to take part in the practice of religion contrary to his or her convictions nor to support a religious community of which he or she is not a member. In teaching and education, respect must be shown for the convictions of the individual, the rights of the child and the right of the guardian to be responsible for the child's development.

In discussion among Lutherans, and in a statement issued by the ecclesiastical board and the general synod with respect to the proposal, attention has been paid to the following points:

Freedom of religion and conviction

The committee has fully equated freedom of religion and other conviction. Religion is, however, usually a communal matter in quite a different way than is the case with any conviction whatever. This is quite apparent in legislation, for we have a law of freedom of religion, but not a law of freedom of conviction or world-view. The proposal is based on the old-fashioned liberal view of freedom of religion as being purely the right of the individual. By contrast, the Church supposes that the State will actively guarantee to all churches and religious communities unhindered freedom for the practice of religion.

Although the practice of religion as the right of the individual and especially of the community forms its own category, the individual's freedom of conscience also demands protection by the constitution. This applies to convictions to be equated with religion or philosophy of life.

From a negative to a positive definition of freedom of religion

In international agreements freedom of religion is understood primarily as the positive right to profess or practise religion. The basic rights committee interprets it, however, in a one-sided negative way, as freedom from religion.

Thus the positive side of freedom of religion, the right to practise religion, is not taken sufficiently into account.

The background is once more a liberal way of thinking, nowadays regarded as obsolete, where freedom of religion, like other rights to freedom, demand from other parties only the negative obligation not to interfere with people's rights. A more modern view is that other people and society also have the obligation actively to promote people's welfare and liberties.

Negative wording of freedom of religion also has practical effects. The most serious is that it may clearly hamper and even endanger other people's positive freedom of religion. The committee has proceeded from the supposition that the area in which the regulation it to be applied includes schools, social and public health service institutions and the armed forces. One is fully justified in asking why, for instance, in these institutions only negative freedom of religion should be safeguarded by the constitution. How is it more important than the right of those who belong to religious groups to practice their religion in the said institutions?

Due to these considerations the Lutheran general synod proposes that this clause of the constitution be written on the basis of the principle of positive freedom of religion as follows:

Everyone has freedom of religion and freedom of philosophy of life. They include the right to profess and practise religion and to express one's philosophy of life and the right to belong or not to belong to a religious community. Freedom of religion is laid down by law.

Freedom of religion and religious education

One positive point is that the committee's proposal has brought the right to receive teaching of one's religion or conviction within the scope of constitutional protection. This idea was included in the proposal by the parliamentary Church and State committee that the institution of basic rights should clearly safeguard the right of parents to obtain for their children teaching in accordance with their religion.

The regulation on religious education should, according to the Lutheran general synod, be written in such a form that the positive rights to religion of both children and parents have a clear and emphasized position. Attention should be paid to the common interests of parents and children in obtaining religious education and not unnecessarily place the implementation of the child's rights in tension with the corresponding rights of parents/guardians. The definitions of agreements on human rights emphasize that the interests of the child and the parents/guardians are as a rule parallel and that the rights of both parties can and should be safeguarded by mutual agreement.

The Lutheran general synod has proposed that the second paragraph of the clause on freedom of religion be written in the following form:

In teaching and education the right of a child and his or her guardian to religious education or to the teaching of a corresponding philosophy of life is to be respected according to the principle of freedom of religion.

RELIGIOUS PEACE IN CRIMINAL LAW

Another aspect of freedom of religion which occurs in legislation is the view taken of its infringement. The reform of criminal law currently in progress also contains a proposal concerning religious peace. According to the proposed bill, this paragraph of the criminal law should read as follows:

Whoever

- 1) publicly, with intent to insult, abuses or profanes what a religious community registered in Finland regards as sacred or
 - 2) by making a noise, by threatening behaviour or otherwise disturbs public worship, church ceremonies, other such practice of religion or prayer meetings,
- shall be convicted and fined for breaking religious peace or sentenced to a maximum of three months' imprisonment.

This clause is proposed to replace the present clause of the criminal law which speaks of blasphemy. For over two decades this clause has been a subject of public discussion.

Lutherans emphasize that the Church's view of blasphemy is unambiguous. From the point of view of the faith of the Church, the omnipotence, majesty and holiness of God are inviolate. God is above all mockery so that mockery cannot harm Him. Blaspheming God is, however, injurious to the blasphemer himself, because it affects the person's very being. It is thus not a question only of respecting and protecting certain convictions but of the fundamental principles of being human and at the same time the fundamental principles of life and morals of the nation. We understand that when there is freedom of religion all legislation affecting citizens cannot include elements of a particular religious conviction without causing problems. According to the majority of delegates to the Lutheran general synod, direct mention of blasphemy or the name of God could be removed from criminal law.¹

In the reform of criminal law the aim is not to protect God but rather to protect religious feelings. This is in itself right and justified. It is not, however, a question only of protecting feelings but of respect for the object of people's

¹ In Finnish the word *jumalainpilkka* ('blasphemy') is literally 'mockery of God'.

feelings. Thus, for instance, in Norway and Germany it is a punishable offence to insult the creed of a religious community, Christian or other religious doctrine and public worship, thus an insult to particular objective things. Therefore Lutherans propose that something to be protected in Finland would be "religion as such", that is, particular objective things, not just feelings about religion. Objective things are also better assessable than subjective feelings, if this clause of the criminal law has to be applied. When therefore one attempts to define when sacred values have been insulted, the starting-point should be what the religious community itself regards as sacred according to its confession.

The Lutheran general synod proposes the following new wording of the clause of the criminal law concerning religious peace:

Whoever

- 1) publicly, with intent to insult, abuses or profanes what the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the Finnish Orthodox Church, a religious community registered in Finland or a comparable registered association regards as sacred according to its creed
- is to be convicted and fined for breaking the religious peace or sentenced to a maximum of six months' imprisonment.

The current reform of legislation in Finland is thus at present re-wording several central passages on religion. Our Church expects that in the final decisions clearer expression than was the case in the proposals will be given to the significance of religion as a positive thing in society and conditions for practising it will be safeguarded. In our view, this corresponds to the way of thinking of the vast majority of Finns. It means ridding the legislation of Marxist and liberalist elements with regard to religion. It is also in accordance with international agreements on human rights.

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FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND THE FINNISH ORTHODOX CHURCH

Lutherans and Orthodox in Finland

Juhani Räsänen

Historically freedom of religion was for long an unknown concept. The principle *cuius regio, eius religio* has operated for a considerably longer time. This also applies to the early history of Finland. The areas within the sphere of influence of Russia embraced the Orthodox faith, and the areas within the sphere of influence of Sweden embraced Roman Catholicism and later Lutheranism. In particular, at the end of the 16th century and the 17th century there were also religious wars involving the demarcation of boundaries. In these wars doctrine diverging from the religion of the majority or of the ruling power was seen as a clear threat to one's administration and thus the main objective became to unite the population on a large scale under one government and one religion.

For this reason it is of even greater significance to examine in particular the events of the 19th century, which laid the foundation for contemporary relations between the Orthodox Church and the Finnish State.

The foundation of freedom of religion with respect to Finland was first recorded when Finland was part of the kingdom of Sweden. In 1779 a decision of the Swedish Diet and the subsequent royal declaration in 1781 were statutes of tolerance ensuring religious peace, but freedom of religion was not, however, granted to the realm. These regulations remained in force during the period of the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland and with them, for example, state posts were closed to those of other faiths, educational establishments were forbidden, missionary work could not be undertaken within the realm, monasteries could not be founded, monastic orders did not have the right to operate nor were public religious processions or ceremonies allowed.

When Finland gained autonomous status in association with Russia, the constitution inherited from the period of Swedish rule was guaranteed to Finland, and the monarchs declared that they would keep them unaltered. In this situation the Lutheran Church was the State Church and the Orthodox Church had a position as a minority denomination in accordance with the decision of the Swedish Diet. This situation gradually became problematic

because Russia wanted to support the position of the Orthodox population, but at the same time the Finnish authorities held on to the principle of national unity. In addition, problems arose over the rights of Lutheran and Orthodox clergy and the right of Lutheran chapters to interfere in the life of Orthodox congregations. Thus the situation was not rectified by amending the constitution but by enacting new statutes rectifying and adjusting the position of the Orthodox in the Grand Duchy (e.g. the statute of 1827 concerning the right of Orthodox to act as civil servants in Finland). In this confused situation with different statutes and ordinances the Orthodox of Finland were directly subject to the Finnish Senate in secular matters, and in spiritual matters they were subject to Russian bodies, the spiritual government of Vyborg, the diocese of St. Petersburg, and ultimately to the Holy Synod.

In 1869 there was enacted a new ecclesiastical law which changed the status of the Lutheran Church so that, for instance, leaving the church and joining another Christian community was made possible. However, there remained in force a statute which forbade a member of the Orthodox Church from leaving his congregation. It is, however, noteworthy that one could not leave the Lutheran Church and join a non-Christian community or not belong to the Church. At the same time, in 1869, many statutes and special regulations were given verbal confirmation, but the status of the Orthodox Church compared with other minority churches improved.

The Dissenters' Act

At the beginning of the 1870s there began discussion of the so-called dissenters' law, which in 1871 led to a petition by the clergy for the urgent enactment of a dissenters' law at the Diet. There were no signs of urgency but in 1874 the Senate set up a committee to draw up a dissenters' law. The work of the committee was not simple, because the Czar had decided that the new law should not alter the present or future position of the Orthodox Church in the Grand Duchy of Finland. Thus, for instance, leaving the Church would still be impossible. In 1876 the general synod of the Lutheran Church proposed that the Orthodox be guaranteed unlimited freedom of religion, the right to leave the Church, but the activities of monasteries and missionary work within the realm would be forbidden. In 1877, however, the estates at the Diet rejected the bills and thus the framing of the law of freedom of religion came to nothing. In party-political terms the 1860s and 1870s were, with the re-activation of the Diet, rather stormy, and the issue of freedom of religion was tied to the points of view of the parties with regard to Russia.

In 1882 the Diet reconsidered the dissenters' law, but with unfortunate results. Because the Czar stood on the opinion that the position of the Orthodox in Finland should not be altered, the legal commission of the Diet rejected the drafting of the bill. In this connection one might mention that J. W. Runberg,

a delegate to the parliament, proposed drawing up a separate Protestant dissenters' law. The law would then have applied, for instance, to the Baptist Association of Finland. However, this bill was not accepted, because the estates did not reach unanimity on the content of the law.

The foundations of legislation in the 1880s

In March 1883 there were issued two statutes which applied to the Orthodox congregations in Finland. In the first statute a framework was laid down for local church organization, and the second statute concerned the organization of children's education. The statutes were, however, rather general and it was still unclear whether Orthodox congregations should observe the same legislation in their administration as the Lutheran parishes. That is why the drafting of a new law was begun in 1885.

The law-drafting commission based its work on the Lutheran ecclesiastical law, and an Orthodox expert was invited to be a member of this commission. Because the task of the commission was primarily to prepare statutes applying to conditions in Finland concerning order in Orthodox congregations, we shall not here deal with the content of the statutes. The work of law-drafting, however, raised once again the question of a dissenters' law in Finland, and in particular the position of Orthodox congregations in Finland. Now the main problem was the right of congregations to buy land other than for the needs of churches or cemeteries. According to the legislation of the time, only the Lutheran Church was allowed to own other real estate than that needed for parish institutions. Another great problem was the language question. Most of the Orthodox population in Finland were Finnish-speaking, but most of the clergy were Russian-speaking and, for instance, administrative certificates and official letters were in Russian.

While the drawing up of statutes was still incomplete, chauvinistic opinions began to arise, both in Finland and in Russia. In Russia there were louder demands for closer annexation of Finland to Russia, and at the same time Finns began to demand more energetic work for the independence of Finland. The preparatory work was, however, continued and finally, after numerous changes, the bill was presented to the Finnish Senate in spring 1892 and obtained the Czar's approval in December 1892.

The dissenters' law drawn up at the same time set out in new directions. In 1886 the general synod in Turku dealt with the dissenters' law and it was hoped that it would include the Orthodox in Finland. The commission which had drawn up the dissenters' law considered it especially important that the new law should continue to forbid monasteries and monastic and nuns' orders. The reason for this was "the fear of Catholicism among the people". The preparatory commission drew up three separate proposals:

1. A proposal for a statute concerning other Protestants than those professing Evangelical Lutheran doctrine.
2. A proposal concerning the right of a Finnish citizen who professes different Christian doctrine to function as a civil servant in this country.
3. A proposal for a statute concerning liability for a person who illegally influences someone else to transfer from one confession to another.

The process of preparation of the dissenters' law reached a conclusion in 1889, when the bill for the first and second ordinances was confirmed and the third transferred to criminal law. The laws did not apply to the Orthodox population of Finland but regulations formed from different statutes still applied to them. This situation can be seen as laying a basis for the ordinances and the position of the Finnish Orthodox Church in modern-day Finland. Similarly, the dissenters' law that was drawn up then can be seen as laying a basis for the regulations on freedom of religion in the Finnish constitution, which are presently being redrafted.

PRESENT-DAY BASIC RIGHTS AND THEIR REFORM

In 1989 the Council of State set up a committee to draw up a bill for a new section on basic rights in the Finnish constitution. A thorough definition of basic rights was previously given in 1919, when widespread attempts to modernize the Finnish constitution were made on the basis of laws and ordinances concerning tolerance deriving from the period of Swedish rule. The committee was known by the name of its chairman, K.J. Lång, and its work was completed after extra time in January 1992. Because the results of the work of the committee were, however, considered partly impracticable, the Council of State set up a new working group under Pekka Halberg, a member of the Supreme Administrative Court, to consider the real feasibility of the proposals of the basic rights committee, and the basic rights working group completed its work in February this year. The working group has throughout been observed by a parliamentary follow-up group including representatives of all parliamentary groups.

The premises of basic rights work

The premises of the work of the basic rights committee were defined as follows:

1. Basic rights should as a rule apply to all persons within the jurisdiction of the Finnish State and they should be as widely applicable as possible, also in exceptional circumstances.

2. Rights of freedom safeguarded in the constitution should be made more precise and extended in accordance with international agreements on human rights.
3. The committee should draw up a proposal on economic, social and educational rights (TSS rights).
4. The committee should have as its aim that other than programmed basic rights should be law immediately applicable as widely as possible by courts and other authorities.
5. The committee should consider arrangements as to how the position of agreements on human rights binding Finland could be strengthened in the Finnish legal system.

The common goal of changes was to extend basic rights written into the constitution so as to ensure basic rights more widely to all those within the sphere of jurisdiction of Finland - not only to Finland citizens. On the other hand, great weight is placed on international agreements on human rights which Finland has accepted and ratified.

The report of the basic rights committee and freedom of religion

When the basic rights committee concluded their report, they decided to propose making the so-called rights to freedom more exact, so that the 11th paragraph of the new constitution would safeguard freedom of religion and conviction (11) and add a supplementary passage on freedom of other than religious conviction (11).

When drawing up their report, the basic rights committee decided on the following proposal (11 of the report of the committee, p. 284):

"Everyone has freedom of religion and other conviction. This includes the right to practise religion and express one's conviction and the right to belong or not to belong to a religious community.

No one is obliged to participate in the practice of religion contrary to his or her conviction nor to support a religious association of which he or she is not a member. In teaching and education respect is to be shown for the convictions of the individual, the rights of children and the right of the guardian to be responsible for the child's development. The right to refuse on grounds of one's convictions to participate in military defence of one's country is laid down by law."

The committee gave the following reasons for its proposal:

1. The proposal safeguards freedom of other than religious convictions. By conviction is meant a religious or other world-view.
2. In the name of freedom of religion one may not, however, practise actions that infringe the basic rights protection of individuals (e.g. human sacrifice or mutilation).
3. The proposed regulation defines more precisely the dimensions of negative freedom of religion. No one can be obliged to participate in a meeting contrary to his or her convictions, in a church service or a religious meeting. This regulation would extend, for example, to the activities of schools, social and public health service institutions and the defence forces.

By way of comparison, the ninth article of the European agreement on human rights defines freedom of thought, conscience and religion as follows:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society..."

Paragraph 8 of the present constitution of Finland reads as follows:

"Finnish citizens have the right publicly and privately to practise religion provided the law and good manners are not infringed, also as it is separately laid down, the freedom to leave the religious community to which he or she belongs and the freedom to join another religious community."

The proposal of the basic rights working group on the basis of the committee report

The basic rights working group decided on the basis of the committee report to propose the following form of paragraph 9 of the new constitution:

"Everyone has freedom of religion and conviction. This includes the right to practise religion and express one's convictions and the right to belong or not to belong to a religious community. No one is obliged to take part in the practice of religion contrary to his or her convictions nor to support a religious community of which he or she is not a member.

The right on the basis of one's convictions to receive exemption from participating in military defence of one's country is laid down by law."

The basic rights working group gave the following reasons for their proposal:

1. Other than religious convictions would receive protection in the constitution. At the same time the constitution would include a reference regulation on the right to exemption on the basis of one's convictions from taking part in military defence of one's country.
2. A so-called discrimination clause would be placed in accordance with the new proposal in paragraph 5.2 of the constitution forbidding all discrimination on the basis of religion or convictions.
3. The proposed regulation on freedom of religion does not mean a change in Church-State relations.

The necessity of basic rights reform

Both the clarification of Finnish judiciary and the better observance of human rights norms formed by international agreements on human rights are already sufficient reasons for the reform of the present-day Finnish basic rights system.

The content of the proposals concerning freedom of religion in the proposal of the working group can be considered successful, but they mainly emphasize negative freedom of religion. Nor does the bill guarantee directly the right not to belong to an ideological community and association, nor the freedom not to belong to an ideological community and association, nor the freedom not to support such activities. Such a consideration was appended, for instance, to the basic rights of former National Socialist states.

The view of the basic rights working group provides guarantees for the practice of religion and the activities of religious associations, even in exceptional circumstances, for according to the proposal the obligation of the public authorities is to guarantee the implementation of basic rights and human rights even in exceptional circumstances.

From the point of view of the Orthodox Church of Finland, altering the regulations on freedom of religion does not affect the activities of the Church. Changes guarantee in particular the rights of foreign immigrants and refugees to practise their own religion without obtaining Finnish citizenship.

From the point of view of the Orthodox Church, social rights are rights guaranteed by the State to its population, in accordance with which the Church operates. In spite of the circumstances, the primary task of the Church is the spiritual guidance of its members and a life in accordance with the teaching of the Gospel. However, if life in this country is not in accordance with the life of the Church, the Church should make known its own view, so that injustices can be corrected. The activities of the Church are based on communality and therefore the activities and life of the Church also affect the surrounding society. Doing good and avoiding evil are the main tasks of Christian salvation.

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INCARNATION IN THE LITURGICAL TRADITION OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

Father Jarmo Hakkarainen

"God is the Lord and he appeared to us. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD" (Ps. 118:26).

This proclamation full of Christian joy is sung every morning in the morning service of the Orthodox Church. It proclaims that our Christian faith, our hope, our love and our prayers have their foundation in the reality of God's appearing. The way in which God approaches us and the way in which we approach the living God is not dependent merely on human abilities and aspirations. God is not a supreme authority or power that we approach with our reason. Rather, He is God, who reveals Himself to us and for us. As God approaches us we come to know God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Therefore, in the Orthodox tradition and theology the Holy Trinity is the unshakable foundation of all religious thinking, spiritual life and the experience of the Church.¹

Christological dogma is the basic pillar of Orthodox faith, worship and devotional life. It is the foundation of all Orthodox truth. The Incarnation of the Son of God, Christ, is the central event of God's appearing to humankind. It is the fulfilment of the law and prophets of ancient Israel. Christ came into the world to open to men and women the opportunity of entering the Kingdom of God. The Incarnation of Christ created a new relationship between God and human beings. Christ showed in his own person what God is really like. The christological dogma of the Orthodox Church was given infallible dogmatic definition in particular at the four ecumenical councils (Ephesus 431, Chalcedon 451 and Constantinople 553 and 680-681 A.D.).²

New life in Christ

The Church's official and authoritative christological teaching was confirmed at these councils. The cosmic dimension of the Incarnation was referred to in the definition drawn up at the Council of Chalcedon in 451: Christ is "of one substance with us as touching the manhood, like us in all things apart from sin."³

¹ V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, London 1957, p. 158.

² See further J. Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions*, New York 1989, pp. 167-178; 235-245 and 369-373.

³ Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

He is both God and man, for "the distinction of natures is in no way abolished because of the union; rather, the characteristic properties of each nature are preserved."⁵ The last phrase of the definition covers in a clear way the activity of man as a creative, inventive and directive being in the cosmos.

The christological doctrine defined by the Church was communicated to the Orthodox service by the holy hymnographers. Byzantine church poetry was elevated, pure and separate from worldliness. All the hymns were based on the theology of the Church. The basic theme of the hymnographers was the incarnation of Christ, a mystery on which the entire Christian faith is based.⁶ The great wintertime feasts of the Orthodox Church, the Nativity of Christ and the baptism of the Lord, that is, Theophania (6th January) are preceded by two Sundays of preparation. The penultimate Sunday before the celebration of the birth of Christ is called the Sunday of the holy forefathers. The Bible readings⁷ for that Sunday stress passing from the old Law to the new order, from the life of the "old man" to new life in Christ. The gospel in the liturgy (Lk. 14:16-24) is the parable of the great feast. The teaching of the gospel rejects the privilege of the Jews as an ethnic group and opens to all people the Gospel of the New Covenant.

Bethlehem has opened to Eden

The last Sunday before the celebration of the birth of Christ is the Sunday of the holy fathers. The gospel reading for this Sunday is from the first chapter of Matthew and it begins with the words: "The genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David and the son of Abraham..." (Matt. 1:1-25). Christ is the eternal Son of God, but the feast we celebrate praises His birth as man.

"On this day the Virgin gives birth to a supernatural being, and the earth offers a cave to the unapproachable..." With these words begins the famous nativity kontakion of St. Romanos the Melodos (died 555 A.D.).⁸ At the beginning of his poem Romanos paints a poetic icon of the Nativity. The leading characters are Christ, the mother of God and the wise men. During the kontakion is repeated twenty-four times the central message: God is born as a baby. God's sacred history is a great drama. God works in history, but quite especially in the person of Christ to save men and women. "The angels with the

shepherds sing praise. The wise men travel with the star... Bethlehem has opened to Eden: come and let us see!"⁹

Heaven and earth sing together, the past and present merge. Eden and Bethlehem become one. The whole universe is created anew. Therefore both in heaven and on earth there is rejoicing over the glory of the Incarnation of Christ. The Incarnation of Christ means eternal and dynamic communion between God and man. The poet calls Christ the "gift of gifts". God became man for the sake of man.

In the second canon of the Nativity we hear the words:

"You the Most high came to men of your own free will as an equal, when You were born as man of a pure Virgin, for You desired to wash away the poison of the deceitful serpent and as God lead everyone from the gates of darkness to the radiant brightness of life."¹⁰

The extract from the hymn shows, with numerous other similar passages, that Mary cannot be separated from the person and work of her Son. The Virgin Mary is not the mother of something, but she is truly the mother of the incarnate Logos, the Mother of God. Thus numerous pious and devotional expressions addressed to the Virgin Mary in the Byzantine liturgical tradition are nothing other than a description of the hypostatic union between the divinity and humanity in Christ. In the tradition of the Eastern Church the baptism of our Lord in the River Jordan is remembered as Theophany. In old Orthodox countries the feast is also called the feast of lights (*εορτή των φώτων*).

The Orthodox Church celebrates as a theophany the transfiguration of the world in Christ. In the teaching of our Church the Incarnation of Christ becomes a visible historical truth in the baptism of Christ. In the morning service of the feast we sing: "O Christ, our God, You sanctified the waters of the Jordan and crushed the power of sin. You came to be baptized by the predecessor and so you saved humankind from delusion..."¹¹

Baptism is literally a person's new birth in Christ and thus in a certain sense man is created anew. But separated from Christ a human being on the biological level does not have the form of Christ but is formless matter. In holy baptism the believer is united with the functions of the body of Christ and with new spiritual senses.¹²

⁵ Ibid., p. 153.

⁶ E. C. Topping, *Byzantine Hymnography*. Three Byzantine poets. Brookline 1979, pp. 9-10.

⁷ On the Bible readings of the feast, see G. Barrois, *Scripture Readings in Orthodox Worship*, New York 1977, pp. 147-153.

⁸ E. C. Topping, *St. Romanos the Melodos and His First Nativity Kontakion*, *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 21:3/76, pp. 231-250.

⁹ The kontakion of the feast of the birth of Christ appeared in Finnish for the first time in 1981 in Father Johannes Sepälä's translation (*Aamun Koito no.* 25-26/1981, pp. 480-482).

¹⁰ *Jubilantia*, Pieksämäki 1987, p. 53.

¹¹ *Katiskaatopari*, 4th time, *Jubilantia*, Joutseno 1987, p. 62.

¹² P. Nellas, *Deification in Christ. The Nature of the Human Person*. New York 1987, p. 122.

The old natural order remains behind and we pass over to a new order. On the eve of the feast the Old Testament readings in the so-called 'royal hours' and in the great post-eucharistic service function as a prophetic introduction to the New Testament revelation. In the liturgy of St. Basil (on the eve of the feast) the gospel reading (Lk. 3:1-18) quotes the prophecy of Isaiah: "A voice cries in the wilderness..." The writer exhorts sinners to conversion and proclaims the Messiah, who baptizes people with the Holy Spirit and fire (Lk. 3:16).

Christ's saving and victorious sacrifice showed to man the likeness of God, which through that sacrifice was again available to men and women. Christ, the second Adam, came into the world and he removed the effects of the disobedience of the first Adam. The Incarnation of Christ meant the destruction of the power of death and satan and the possibility of the gift of new life to those living in the world. However, in the Incarnation of Christ both the Father, who sent the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who acts in all the deeds of the Saviour, appeared to the world.

Made Man for our salvation

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (died 202 A.D.) teaches: "The name of Christ contains the anointer, the anointed and the anointing. The Father is the anointer, the Son is the anointed and the Holy Spirit is the anointing oil."¹³ The appearing of the Father and the Holy Spirit in the baptism of Christ and in His transfiguration on Mt. Tabor emphasizes and confirms this truth. The divine economy, the goal of which is the salvation of humankind and the world, hides within itself each person of the Holy Trinity. The Son of God became man for our salvation. St. Gregory Palamas (died 1359) says:

"The Saviour, who is uncreated in his deity, became man for our sake. He lived for our sake and thus he showed us the way back to real life. All that he suffered in his flesh, he suffered for our sake in order to heal our sinful desires. For our sins he had to die and rise again from the dead and ascend into heaven. And he offers us the resurrection and eternal life."¹⁴

God's activity for the world becomes real and continues in the divine liturgy. Therefore the Orthodox liturgy for the world is of prime importance. The central reality of the divine liturgy is the holy eucharist. The Holy Eucharist is God's supreme manifestation in Christ. Saint Nicholas Cabasilas (died 1387) writes:

"The eucharist is the only one of the sacred mysteries which makes the other mysteries perfect."¹⁵ Unfortunately the present-day practice of the

Orthodox Church of performing the sacramental mysteries separately from the eucharist does not rightly serve our view of the Church or the Eucharist. In the Orthodox Church there are no private ceremonies or sacraments.

Father Alexander Schmemmann writes:

"Under the influence of scholasticism, for example, a distinction has arisen in the minds of believers between 'corporate' worship and 'private' worship designed to meet some need. The Sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation, Marriage, not to speak of requiems, funeral services, etc., have fallen into the category of requested ceremonies or 'private' offices. Under the same scholastic influence liturgies began to regard the Eucharist as just one among a number of offices or sacraments of the Church, in this way distorting the whole perspective of the liturgical tradition, which has always regarded the Eucharist as the centre and source of the whole life of the Church."¹⁶

Every mystery of the Church is the activity of the whole Church. The nature, structure and content of Christian worship manifest and realize the true essence of the Church. And this essence is new life in Christ - a covenant with God and the Holy Spirit in Christ, knowing the truth, fellowship, love, grace, peace and salvation.

People like to explain the divine liturgy as a depiction of the life of Christ. But who explains it as a manifestation of the life of the Church, a ceremony in which the Church is eternally realized? Who sees that in this ceremony the Church expresses, creates and realizes itself as the Body of Christ? Divine worship is no longer seen as bread-raising heaven, as the love of God for the world, as a testimony to the Kingdom of God, as the good message of salvation, as new life. On the contrary, the service is seen as a momentary separation from the world or as an escape from worldly circumstances, the door of grace.

When we study the prayers and ceremonies of the Orthodox liturgy we perceive clearly the close relation between the Eucharist and the Holy Trinity. The Eucharist offers us the opportunity of experiencing each person of the Holy Trinity. The Eucharist is a gathering where in prayer believers meet the persons of the Holy Trinity. The Eucharist is a mystical meal and a liturgical gathering (synaxis) where human persons unite in faith, hope and love with the persons of the Triune God.¹⁷

The holiness of the Holy Trinity comes within reach of people in the life of the Church. The mission of the Church is to reject all attempts to reduce the divine dimension of the Church or its human fullness. Father Georges Florovski

¹³ Against Heresies 5.36.2.

¹⁴ Hom. 21, PG 151:277AB.

¹⁵ Nicholas Cabasilas, *The Life in Christ* 4.3.

¹⁶ Introduction to Liturgical Theology, New York 1975, p. 19.

¹⁷ J. D. Zizoulas, "The Eucharistic Community and the Catholicity of the Church," *One in Christ* 6 (1970), pp. 314-337.

stressed clearly how heretical views opposed to the authentic christological teaching of the Church can easily gain a foothold in ecclesiology.¹⁸

In our day there is the danger of reducing the reality of the Church to a community formed around doctrine, ritual and an ethical system. Thus sociologically the Church becomes a paternal, political or ethnic community which aims to avoid the reality of the beyond. Thus the Church is no longer the object of faith. The eucharistic prayers show us that our God is not impersonal. By our prayers we approach each person of the Holy Trinity. Most prayers are addressed to God as Father. However, most of these prayers contain a doxology to each of the persons of the Holy Trinity.

The liturgical practice of the Orthodox Church of praying to each person of the Holy Trinity emphasizes and clarifies to us the significance of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as one true and living God. On the other hand, the eucharist is a commemoration (anamnesis) of the great saving works of the Triune God.

Although the Western man knows practically nothing of Byzantium, he has at least heard of the rich symbolism of the Byzantine church service. The terms 'symbol' and 'symbolism' have become almost synonyms for the Byzantine liturgy. Byzantine symbolism is often perceived as a hackneyed phrase which does not need a more precise explanation.

Symbolism of Christ

Symbolism is common to all services that are in accordance with the Byzantine liturgical tradition, but it is emphasized in particular in the holy Eucharist. In the Eucharist is portrayed the life and ministry of Christ from his birth to the ascension. The ritual preparation of the eucharistic gifts depicts the birth of Christ and the 'little entrance' tells of His public ministry, above all as a teacher.

In the first and second centuries the Christian liturgy was necessarily simple and lacking in external ceremony. By contrast, since the time of Constantine (the beginning of the 4th century) solemnity has been an essential and inevitable characteristic of Christian worship. The feast of the nativity and baptism of Christ developed in centuries full of theological and christological controversies.

The purpose of creating the feasts was not polemic, but they still promoted the equalizing of the dogmas of the Orthodox faith - of the dogmas of Nicea, Ephesus and Chalcedon.¹⁹ But commemoration was not concentrated on details

but on the whole saving work of Christ. Therefore we do not gather for the eucharist solely to remember Christ. In the liturgy we bring to the fore God's saving acts from the creation of man to the second coming of Christ. Father Georges Florovski says:

"The Christian remembrance is much more than just a memory or reminiscence. Indeed, Christians are bound to look back to the mighty events which are the foundation of their faith and hope: Incarnation, Cross and Resurrection, Pentecost."²⁰ In remembering the events of Christ's life on earth our temporal communion is closer with the Holy Trinity. The Byzantine church service must always remain historical in the sense that the events remembered are historical and real. But historically has, however, with time gained mystic garb.²¹ A clearer example of the influence of the new mystical devotion is the multi-stage development of the Nativity period and of its liturgical structure. When dogmatic influences were applied to worship, the church service became a means of proclaiming and manifesting the new position of the Church in the world, its new tasks and new relation to the world.

According to the holy Apostle Paul, the primary and supreme mystery of our faith is the incarnate Christ (1 Tim. 3:16). According to Saint Nicholas Cabasilas, Christ is a mystery, which becomes concrete and effective in the holy mysteries of the Church. He stresses that there is an inner relationship between the historical body of Christ and the Church, just as there is between the energies of his body and the holy mysteries. The holy ceremonies of the Church are linked with the Incarnation of our Lord Christ. On the foundation of the Incarnation of Christ has been created and organized the Church, which lives in holy mysteries. Cabasilas constructs his entire ecclesiology on the holy mysteries. His teaching can be called a christocentric cosmology. The covenant between God and man in Christ is, according to the fathers, a great and hidden mystery.

The real significance and final purpose of man has been revealed, and it is realized in the Incarnation of Christ. He came from heaven to save the world and to unite man eternally with God. The entire christological dogma of the Church is based on the Incarnation of the Word, that is, Christ. God always works in his Word and in the Holy Spirit. God became man as the Word in his own person of the holy Virgin Mary. In the Orthodox order of baptism the officiating priest reads aloud the following prayer for consecrating the water: "For You, O God, who are unportrayable, without beginning and inexpressible in words, came upon earth, taking the form of a slave, and became like men. For You, O Lord, for the sake of the compassion of your grace did not suffer to see humankind subject to the tyranny of the tempter, but you came and saved us...you freed our families and by your birth sanctified the maternity of the

¹⁸ Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View, Belmont 1972, pp. 37-72.

¹⁹ A. Schmemmann, Liturgy and Tradition, New York 1990, pp. 115-128.

²⁰ A. Schmemmann, Introduction, op. cit., p. 95.

²¹ "The Worshipping Church", The Festal Menaion, London 1969, p. 28.

²² Schmemmann, Introduction, p. 97.

Virgin, and the entire creation sang to you because of your appearing."²³ This prayer reveals the real essence of the entire Christian faith: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14).

The Orthodox Church does not proclaim this central truth merely in the first great prayer of holy baptism; it is prominent in the eucharistic thanksgiving of the divine liturgy of St. Basil the Great:

"You, O Good One, did not finally turn away from your creatures which you had created, nor did you forget the works of your hands... you have spoken to us through the mouths of Your servants the prophets, revealing to us beforehand the coming salvation... but when the time was fulfilled, You spoke to us in your very Son, through whom you also created the world... being himself eternal God, he appeared on earth and lived among men; who having become incarnate of the holy Virgin emptied himself and took the form of a slave, becoming like the bodies of our degradation in order to make us like the image of his glory."²⁴

The Church prays what the Bible teaches. Jesus Christ, the incarnate Logos, came into the world to liberate people from demonic delusion, darkness and the slavery of sin. Christ was born as man to lead people to the wisdom and light of God. The holy apostles John and Paul often repeat this truth. Paul writes about the mystery of God in Christ, "in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden" (Col. 2:3).

Anthropological and cosmological communion with God

The great penitential canon of St. Andrew of Crete (died c. 740 A.D.) shows the anthropological and cosmological communion of penitence. The whole human personality is called to penitence. The great penitential canon is not a believer's monologue but a dialogue in which man plumbs the mystical depths of his existence. The incarnate Logos, our Saviour Christ, is powerfully present, as a loving redeemer, as a crucified bridegroom, who touches the hearts of believers with his love and calls them to mystical communion. In the same way the Mother of God is to the fore in the penitential canon. Her own body is the body of the God-man, that is, of the Church. The Mother of God is the stairway which unites earth and heaven:

"We sing to You, we praise You, Mother of God, for you have borne the only begotten Son and God from the indivisible Trinity and thus opened to us beforehand the heavenly kingdom on earth."²⁵

The Mother of God is the comforter of believers in the battle of fasting and prayer. She leads us to Christ. She is present at the beginning and end of service. In the great penitential canon is also present St. Mary of Egypt (6th century), a great teacher of Orthodox asceticism and reform of life. The purpose of reading her biography is not merely to make the minds of believers more sensitive. In the Orthodox tradition cherishing the memory of a saint is not of didactic significance. Rather it is our participation in the life of the saint, in his struggle, victory and glorification. Reading the lives of the saints is a liturgical act. Thus, for example, holy Mary is present with believers in the penitential canon. She struggles with them in penitence and prayer. Therefore we hear in the penitential canon the words: "Sanctifier mother, pray now for your servants to Christ, whom you have loved, whom you have yearned for, and for whose sake you have striven, that having mercy upon us He would grant his peace to those who honour Him."²⁶

The penitential canon of St. Andrew is in its entirety a theological study. It depicts the reality of the liturgical activities of the Church, that is, prayer and penitence. The penitential canon depicts the reality of God, who changes people and the whole world and saves them.

"Christ became man, calling thieves and those living in sin to repentance. The soul does penance, the gateway is already opened to the kingdom, which is entered first by penitent Pharisees, publicans and adulterers."

Penitence leads people to new humanity in Christ. The reality of this new humanity is realized particularly in the eucharist, where the creature lives in real communion with his uncreated Creator.

The Byzantine church building - a proclamation of the Incarnation of Christ

Today it is difficult for us to understand fully the nature of the ecclesiastical ceremonies and practices of our Church - mysteries, services, festival periods, prayers, asceticism or penitence. This is largely due to the fact that we have a one-sided and banal view of time and place. In Byzantine architecture, iconography and hymnography too there is a completely different approach to time and place.²⁷ The Byzantine church service is art and church art is worship. Art is not only for decoration but it proclaims the external and internal harmony of the world. Byzantine architecture teaches us the truth of the

²³ Euhologion. Pyhien toiminnus käsikirja. Piekstämäki 1974, pp. 27-28.

²⁴ Jumalallinen liturgia (Divine Liturgy). Third edition. Piekstämäki 1988, pp. 87-88.

²⁵ Suuri katumuskanooni (The Great Penitential Canon). Pyhä ja Suuri Paasto III. Kuopio 1976, p. 139.

²⁶ Suuri katumuskanooni, pp. 150-151.

²⁷ C. Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*. New York 1984, pp. 244-252.

incarnate Christ, the condescension of God and the possibility of the deification of created people.

The ancient Greek temple expresses a view of the world as harmony and order. The Byzantine church expresses the Church's view of the world, that is, the participation of the world in the life of the Kingdom of God. In the church building material creation finds form; it takes the form of the incarnate Word of God. The Byzantine church building is the body of the incarnate Word, which perceives the Incarnation in the shape of the cross.²⁸

The community of believers enters the church building in order to be the Church. Therefore the church building is not merely an architectural plan, but in its form is united life and its course. In the Incarnation of Christ the entire material creation is elevated to the throne of God. Therefore the Church is not a monolithic organization which uses its authority to give orders to separate individuals. The Church is an organic unity of persons, the task of which is to strengthen community life.²⁹

This living fellowship between created man and uncreated God is the foundation and goal of the entire sacramental life and asceticism of the Church. In the Orthodox apostolic and patristic tradition there is profound awareness of the psychosomatic make-up of man and of man's relation to the world. On this cosmological and anthropological fellowship is built the life of the Church. And this fellowship presupposes all the liturgical practices of the Church, also the Great penitential canon.

The Apostles and the Church fathers did not understand Christian faith as a simplified rationalism. Faith was understood as truth, life and wisdom, based on a living relationship with a free person as ordained by God. Only in this dynamic fellowship is the truth of faith refined into the truth of life.

The Incarnation of Christ - a cosmic event

Christ is the supreme revelation of God in the world because He is the Incarnation of God as the supreme fellowship of love and life. Christ reveals the living God as the eternal fellowship, the Holy Trinity, and he reveals that man was created for free intercourse with God in this fellowship of life and love. Orthodox worship in its entirety, with its prayers, songs, icons and all its rites, from gathering together to leaving the church is the Church's view of the world. It is a view of the world as the reality of the presence of God.

In the eucharistic liturgy the Church shows that it has the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). When the Church together administers the eucharist, it does not do so only in remembrance of Christ but also in remembrance of humanity united in Him. Therefore in the *proskomidia*, that is, the section of the

preparation of the eucharistic gifts, our Lord is honoured, but also the Mother of God, the prophet and forerunner John and all the prophets, apostles, chief pastors, holy martyrs, God-bearing Fathers, the holy wonder-workers and all the saints. Then God is asked to remember the clergy and churchmembers, living and dead.

The invariable fellowship between man and God founded by Christ is the heart of the doxological theology of the Orthodox liturgy. Eucharistic fellowship is intended for the dynamic sanctification, that is, deification of man. Nowadays Orthodox theological education should emphasize this teaching as well as the significance of the liturgy. The dogmas of the Incarnation, resurrection and deification are of great help in man's aspiration to glorification.³⁰ The hypostatic union of the two natures of Christ is an eternal confirmation which the absolute gives to the relative, the Creator to the creature. On the other hand, it is important today to emphasize in theological teaching and in the churches the unity of liturgical life and daily life. Only if the liturgy is understood and experienced as the depth and wealth of the Incarnation of Christ can there develop a more powerful bond with theological knowledge, awakening theological thinking on the different levels of church life.

The multi-stage history of the Orthodox Church shows clearly that social awareness expresses love between God and men and women. God's being born as man and participating in all the positive characteristics of human nature is a cosmic event. God and man are one in Christ. Christ is the pattern for the Church's social responsibility. This sense of responsibility lives in the prayer of the early Church:

"We pray You, O Lord, our helper and protector, hasten to the aid of the suffering, have compassion on the lowly, lift up the fallen, help those in want, heal the sick, feed the hungry, free the prisoners, support the weak and faint-hearted. Let all peoples understand that You are the only God and that Jesus Christ is Your Son. Let us understand that we are your people and the sheep of your pasture."³¹

²⁸ See further D. Staniloae, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik II*, Zurich 1990, pp. 99-101.

²⁹ The prayer of Clement of Rome (died c. 96 A.D.) for the sick 59.4; P. Phan, *Social Thought. Message of the Fathers of the Church 20*, Wilmington 1984, p. 47.

³⁰ Yannaras, p. 247.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 215-216.

INCARNATION IN THE LITURGICAL TRADITION OF THE CHURCHES

IS THE LUTHERAN CHURCH ONLY A CHRISTMAS CHURCH?

Hanna T. Kaupuri

It is considered characteristic of the Lutheran Church that Christmas is the greatest festival of its church year. Correspondingly, the celebration of Easter is regarded as typical of the Orthodox Church. This 'division of labour' is nowadays considered so fixed in Finland that the Church 2000 working group of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has paid attention to reviving the celebration of Easter in the parish life of the Lutheran Church. Is it really that the Eastern tradition of Christendom regards the miracle of the Resurrection, and the Lutheran tradition the Incarnation, as central in the work of Christ? Emphasizing the celebration of Christmas is often seen as narrowing the Christian message.

From a sociological point of view, is the realistic perception of the relation of Lutheranism to Christmas a consequence of the Lutheran Church's own teaching? Is the Lutheran Church only a church of Christmas and the Christ-child? I shall attempt to clarify this problem by studying the significance of the Incarnation in the liturgical tradition of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. In this study I have used different parts of the church service book. With respect to the lectionary I have used both approved sections and material under preparation by the service book committee but not yet approved by the synod. I shall not here attempt to investigate the appearance of the theme of Incarnation in different periods of the Lutheran tradition and in different countries, but I shall concentrate on studying the theme primarily on the basis of the material in use in Finland.²²

The first Sunday in advent

In the Lutheran tradition Advent is a time of preparation before Christmas, associated with Christmas in the same way as Lent is associated with Easter. In salvation history the birth of Christ was preceded by a long period of waiting, when the Old Testament prophets foretold the birth of the Saviour. In the liturgical tradition the New and Old Testaments are organically linked. The Old Testament tells of the promises of God and the New Testament of the fulfilment of the promises. This principle is observed in Advent. The name Advent points to the idea of Incarnation. Advent comes from the Latin term *adventus Domini*, which means 'the coming of the Lord'. For this reason the Advent liturgical texts, prayers and hymns point to Christmas. Advent anticipates Christmas and prepares the congregation to celebrate Christmas.

As regards our basic problem - whether the Lutheran Church is a church of Christmas and the Incarnation - one may note that the basic passages for the first Sunday in Advent are Matt. 21:1-9, the story of Christ riding into Jerusalem, and some Old Testament texts. These passages connect Advent, perhaps surprisingly, with Lent, Palm Sunday and the Easter events. Advent reveals the theological reality that Christmas only has significance in relation to the Passion, death and resurrection of Christ. Christmas is not a detached event in the totality of salvation history.

Matthew's story is linked to the prophecy of Zechariah concerning the coming of the King. With this is also connected the name of the First Sunday in Advent, the Advent of humiliation (*adventus humilitatis*). As Christ humbly rode into Jerusalem as the King of peace, the Son of God draws near to the creation as the child in the manger. The Advent exhortation to confess one's sins also tells that the message of Advent was once fulfilled between the Incarnation and the foretold *parousia*: "Dear Christians, the Lord says to his Church: 'Lo, I am coming soon.' In order for us to receive the King of glory, our Saviour, let us confess our sins to God and pray for forgiveness." The Advent Sunday readings are from Zechariah and other Old Testament passages, which are interpreted from the point of view of the already realized Incarnation.²³

In the prayer for the First Sunday in Advent we thank the Father that He gave his Son to liberate men and women from the power of sin and death. This prayer aptly demonstrates that the claim that Lutheranism concentrates on the problem of sin and Orthodoxy on the problem of death is not well grounded. In

²² The synod is at present revising the service book in line with the new Bible translation of 1992.

²³ The Old Testament reading for the first Sunday in Lent is Isa. 12:1-6 "Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the LORD GOD is my strength and my hymn of praise; he has become my salvation." Ps. 24:7-10; Isa. 62:10-22 etc.

the prayer we ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that the congregation would trust in Christ alone. Similarly, the prayer refers to the idea of *kenosis*: "Help us not to be like the world and be offended by his lowly form nor despise his word, but that in firm trust in him we should receive eternal salvation."

The gradual hymn for Advent Sunday (1) is connected directly with the gospel passage: "Hosanna the Son of David, praise be to him." In other ways too Advent hymns repeat the themes of Old Testament prophecies and of Christ's riding into Jerusalem.

The second Sunday in advent

The theme of the second Sunday in Advent is the *parousia*, the coming of Christ in glory at the end of time. This is also expressed by the designation *Adventus glorificationis*, which Eerik Sorola translated into Finnish, in his book of homilies of 1621, as "*Christusen kannistusta tulemistä*" ("On the glorious coming of Christ"). The Church should patiently wait for the coming of Christ and the salvation promised to us.

The theme of the Sunday appears beautifully in the gospel passage. In the Gospel Christ says: "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Lk. 21:25-33).

The same is said in the Gospel in the second year of the lectionary: "For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day." (Lk. 17:20-24).

The epistle for the Sunday in the second year of the lectionary tells of the Church awaiting the *parousia*: "For yet in a very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay; but my righteous one will live by faith. My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back. But we are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and so are saved." (Heb. 10:35-39).

The epistle in the third year of the lectionary is an exhortation to wait patiently: "Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near." (Jas. 5:7-10).

Hymn 11 is particularly related to the themes of the second Sunday in Advent. It describes how the Church awaits the *parousia*: "You, O Christ, your Church awaits on the way of the cross. The earth is full of distress, but you still delay, O Lord."

The third Sunday in advent

The central biblical character of the day is John the Baptist, whose sermon of repentance and whose exhortations to fix one's eyes upon Jesus remind us of what is most important in preparing for Christmas. John the Baptist was a sign that the Saviour was soon to come. On the third Sunday in Advent the congregation is reminded that as in the work of Christ the signs of the time of salvation were fulfilled, so he comes again in the midst of the congregation in the Word and sacraments. This "spiritual coming" of Christ is referred to in the Latin name for the Sunday, *Adventus spiritualis*.

The introductory words for the Sunday are: "A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD.'" (Isa. 40).

In the gospel for the third Sunday in Advent Christ tells John's disciples that he is the One who is expected (Mat. 11:2-10). The Old Testament readings for the Sunday, in connection with the general theme of Advent, foretell the coming of the Messiah (Isa. 51: 3-5; 45:2-7). Isaiah's prophecy foretells the activities of John the Baptist.

Of Advent hymns Hymn 12 is exceptionally devoted to describing and remembering the activities of John the Baptist. In other Advent hymns the main theme is awaiting the coming of Christ.

The fourth Sunday in advent

The final phase of preparation for Christmas begins. A person's inner state of mind should be ready to receive the great message. Therefore the day is called the Advent of sanctification (*adventus sanctificationis*). In the present lectionary the gospel passage of the day is Jn. 1:19-30, which contains the words of John: "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know."

In the gospel for the fourth Sunday in Advent John tells the priests and Levites that he is the voice crying in the wilderness, who precedes Christ as Isaiah foretold. In the Sunday epistle one is assured that Christ is the word of life who has appeared and whom the followers of Christ have seen with their own eyes and heard with their own ears (1 John 1:1-4). In the gospel for the Sunday in the third year of the lectionary Jesus says that he was sent by the Father. (Jn. 5:31-39)

One is reminded of the second coming of Christ by the epistle in the third year of the lectionary: "Set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed." (1Pet. 1:13)

In the new lectionaries of most churches this Sunday is dedicated to Mary, the mother of the Lord. The service book committee may recommend that the passage for the fourth Sunday in Advent be the Magnificat (Lk. 1:46-55), which in the daily offices is the vespers song of thanksgiving, the *canticum*.

The new principal passage recommended for the Sunday links the hopes of the Saviour's mother to the expectation of the Lord's people. The whole Church joins in Mary's expectation and joy.

Christmas

The main message of Christmas is naturally the birth of Christ. Until the calendar reform of 1772 there were four feastsdays at Christmas. Since then two have been removed. In the service book reform of 1968 a footnote was added to the lectionary containing the epistle and gospel readings for use on the third and fourth days of Christmas where these days are still celebrated.

On Christmas Eve we stand at the door of the promises of the prophets. In the lectionary there are only Old Testament readings for Christmas Eve. The Christmas Eve passages are prophecies which are interpreted as predictions of the coming of the Messiah. Isa. 11:1-5: "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might... He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth." The second passage is Micah 5:1-3: "But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel." The third prophecy is Jeremiah 23:5, 6: "The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch."

Christmas day

In the Western branch of Christendom Christmas midnight mass is the main event of the Christmas celebration. In Finland Christmas midnight mass has traditionally been replaced by a Christmas morning service, evidently primarily for practical reasons. In recent years the opposite trend has been noticeable, in particular in urban parishes. Christmas midnight mass is returning to the place of the principal church service, if we compare its popularity with the morning service. On Christmas night the promise of the prophet is realized concretely and dramatically: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Isa. 9:1).

The celebration of the feast of the Nativity of Christ on 25th December is based on the order of Pope Liberius in 354 A. D. Previously the birth of Jesus was commemorated at the feast of Epiphany on January 6th. At Epiphany the Lutheran Church, according to the Western tradition, remembers the visit of the Magi to worship the Christ-child, which of course links Epiphany and Christmas: the child in the manger is the Messiah foretold by the prophets. The

original theme of Epiphany, the feast of the baptism of Christ, is remembered by the Lutheran Church on the first Sunday after Epiphany.

In the Christmas morning prayer reference is made to the purpose of the Incarnation: "We thank you and praise you that for our salvation and blessedness you gave your Son, Jesus Christ, to be born as our Saviour." In the same prayer are present *kenosis* and *communicatio idiomatum*: "Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to you eternally, that you, who were rich, became poor, that we should become rich by your poverty. You, who are Lord of all lords, have become our brother, that we should become children of God. Be born now in our hearts. Give us a true child's mind."

The idea of *kenosis* is typical of the theology of the Apostle Paul. Although the Apostle Paul's "Christmas gospel" (2 Cor. 8:9) is less colourful than the Gospel descriptions of the birth of Christ, it contains in a nutshell the entire message of Christmas. In many prayers in the service book reference is made to the thoughts expressed by the holy Apostle.

In the collect for Christmas Day reference is made to the Incarnation as a historical event: "Lord God, who on holy night let your true light dawn." The Advent time of waiting is fulfilled. The Christmas eucharistic prayer declares: "You gave your only Son to become man, so that we should become your children and pass from darkness into your marvellous light." In the Christmas exhortation to confess one's sins the message of Christmas is expressed in the words: "Unto us is born a Saviour, who is Christ, the Lord. Let us come before him with thankful hearts and let us pray for forgiveness."

The meaning of Christmas is returned to in the prayer read at every eucharist: "For this inexpressible gift, with the heavenly host and all the saints, we thank and praise your holy name."

EXCURSUS: CHRISTMAS HYMNS

Hymns are part of the tradition typical of the Lutheran Church. Typical of the Lutheran service is not only the Word but also participation in the service by the congregation in the form of hymnsinging. Hymns are sung prayer, praise and confession, which have nurtured Finnish churchgoers and the national religious consciousness for centuries. My basic thesis (that in the Lutheran Church Christmas is not just a detached feast of the Incarnation) is diversely apparent in Christmas hymns. Christmas hymns contain an interpretation of the Incarnation spanning the whole of salvation history. This is shown by the fact

that the hymns contain at least the following theological themes, which I shall list cursorily:

- The Word became flesh, a human child³⁴
- The virgin birth³⁵
- Mary as the mother of God³⁶
- God became man³⁷
- Jesus is the Son of God³⁸
- The doctrine of the dual nature of Christ³⁹
- Communicatio idiomatum*⁴⁰
- Incarnation as Christ dwelling in the heart⁴¹
- Kenosis* (Jesus became poor, a slave, humbled himself, condescended to be our brother)⁴²
- Jesus left the glory of heaven⁴³
- Jesus is the equal of the Father⁴⁴
- Christ is sinless⁴⁵
- The Incarnation is connected with the act of salvation, the totality of salvation history⁴⁶
- The Incarnation was foretold⁴⁷
- The Incarnation is a cosmic event⁴⁸
- The Incarnation is victory over death⁴⁹
- The Incarnation is trinitarian⁵⁰

- ³⁴ 16:2; 17:2; 17:3; 19:2; 19:4; 27:4.
- ³⁵ 17:1; 17:3; 23:2.
- ³⁶ 28:2, 6.
- ³⁷ 16:1; 19:1.
- ³⁸ 22:1; 22:5.
- ³⁹ 16:4; 23:3; 29:1.
- ⁴⁰ 19:4.
- ⁴¹ 21:8; 25:6.
- ⁴² 17:2; 21:3; 21:4; 21:5-7; 22:3; 22:6.
- ⁴³ 16:5; 17:1.
- ⁴⁴ 16:6.
- ⁴⁵ 16:3.
- ⁴⁶ 16:5; 17:3; 18:3; 20; 22:5; 29:3.
- ⁴⁷ 20; 23:1; 23:2; 24:2; 26:4; 27:1; 33:3-4 (Isa. 9:1-6).
- ⁴⁸ 21:1; 28:1.
- ⁴⁹ 24:6-7; 35:2.
- ⁵⁰ 24:6-7.

St. Stephen's day

The second day of Christmas, the commemorative feast of the first Christian martyr, Stephen, and of all martyrs, forms a sharp contrast to Christmas Day. The Christmas message of salvation, the Word becoming flesh, divides people into recipients and rejecters of the Word, followers of Christ and his persecutors. Sentimentality over the Christmas idyll (or what nowadays seems to us to be the Christmas Gospel) does not last long.

The third day of Christmas

The 27th of December is dedicated to the Apostle John, who is traditionally identified with the author of the fourth Gospel. St. John's Day may be placed among the days of Christmas because John's Gospel begins with the proclamation of the Word become flesh.

The fourth day of Christmas

On 28th December are commemorated the victims of Herod's infanticide and the flight of Mary, Joseph and the child Jesus to Egypt. The feast reminds us of the kind of world we live in: the world really needs the Saviour.

Finally

In this brief and in part haphazard study I have attempted to present liturgical material of the Lutheran church associated with the idea of Incarnation. I have concentrated on the material which occurs in Advent and at Christmas-tide.

The theme of Incarnation will certainly be returned to in other contexts throughout the church year. I have attempted to show that in the Lutheran liturgical tradition the idea of Incarnation is not a disconnected theological theme. The material gone through has, as I see it, shown this attempt to be well grounded. After making such a thematic study, the wealth of liturgical material in use in the Lutheran Church was a surprise to me too, although for more than twenty years I have conducted services in accordance with my own tradition.

Neither can the frequently alleged commercialism and superficiality of Christmas be considered the product of the liturgical material of the Lutheran Church. The material in the service book has been used to guide our people for centuries into the wealth of God's salvation history. The commercialism and essence of Christmas are perhaps not mutually exclusive. There may be Finns for whom Christmas means nothing more than the annual peak of consumption, but I would dare to assert that for the majority of our people Christmas is still primarily a church festival. Commercial Christmas is only the wrapping paper of the real gift of Christmas.

As I see it, my brief study shows that the assertion that the Lutheran Church concentrates only on Christmas and the Orthodox Church on Easter proves to be untenable, at least in the light of the material of the Lutheran Church. Christmas and Easter are not an ecumenical front line between churches. Both great festivals of the ecclesiastical year are the festivals of both churches. Both holy days are part of one and the same salvation history of God, of its commemoration and of living by it.

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