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Contents

Richard Hooker and Righteous Rhetorical Display. Book 1 <i>Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie</i> RUDOLPH P. ALMASY	3
Sitting among Richard Hooker's Sermons. Notes on the Three Fragments JOHN K. STAFFORD	27
Proverbs 8:22-31 in the Christology of the Early Fathers MAURICE DOWLING	47
Thoughts about Eternity. A Review Article JAMES MCMAHON	67
Myth, Intermediacy, and Transcendence in Paul Ricoeur's Concept of Fallibility CORNELIU C. SIMUȚ	83
The Servant Leadership Concepts of Robert K. Greenleaf ADRIAN GIORGIOV	99
The Repressive Policy of the Communist Authorities in Bihor County against the Neo-Protestant Cults (1987) ANTONIO FAUR	115
About the Bioethics of Abortion at Request in Romania. A Case Presentation TIBERIU POP	125

Richard Hooker and Righteous Rhetorical Display. Book 1 *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie*

RUDOLPH P. ALMASY

West Virginia University

ABSTRACT. This essay, which focuses mainly on Book 1 of Richard Hooker's *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie*, traces how Hooker's preoccupation with the potential and the problems of persuasion influences his rhetorical performance. The argument examines how Hooker translates the Pauline sense of a renewed, spiritual mind (from Ephesians) into a rhetorical performance which emphasizes knowledge, understanding, logic, patience, and judgment through the art of the rhetor as well as in the mind of the reader. In contrast to this good persuasion is the sense that Hooker's opponents because of their hysterical rhetorical display not only are dangerous to church and state but also hard-hearted and without the virtue of regenerated spiritual minds. It is for this reason that the Presbyterian way of proceeding does not lead to peace and order. Hooker's display suggests that good persuasion, in the Reformation's broad culture of persuasion, comes from a divinely renovated mind and heart which contributes to building community and which leads to service to others.

KEY WORDS: Richard Hooker, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie*, rhetoric, reason, polemic

From the very beginning of the Reformation, persuasion was central to the efforts of theologians and polemicists as they bombarded citizens with various religious ideas and expected people to follow. And that effort continued throughout the century regardless of one's religious position or state politics. Indeed, Andrew Pettegree in his recent study sees 16th century

religious culture as fundamentally a “culture of persuasion.”¹ In such a highly rhetorical culture as the Renaissance, it is not difficult to imagine persuasion as vital and important, but there are warnings to be wary of its power to exploit and mislead. The dedicatory letter to John Dudley, Earl of Warwick in Thomas Wilson’s 1560 *The Art of Rhetoric* underscores the power of rhetoric to persuade for the good, for the best rhetoric employs “the gift of good reason” and leads to understanding.² But if rhetoric can persuade for the good, it can also persuade for the bad. And certainly Richard Hooker, as he began the massive effort to produce *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie*, understood completely the problem of persuasion.

Indeed, the very first sentence Hooker writes in the philosophical Book 1 of the *Lawes* has to do with persuasion: “He that goeth about to perswade a multitude, that they are not so well governed as they ought to be, shall never want attentive and favourable hearers; because they know the manifold defects whereunto every kind of regiment is subject, but the secret lets and difficulties, which in publike proceedings are innumerable and inevitable, they have not ordinarily the judgement to consider.”³ Hooker worries that this business of persuasion, this matter of allegiance to religious teaching, can be tricky and dangerous, dangerous because a multitude can easily be swayed by a skillful rhetor who can exploit (and in religious polemic often did) the intellectually and cognitively chal-

¹ Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

² Thomas Wilson, *The Art of Rhetoric*, ed. Peter E. Medine (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 36.

³ Richard Hooker, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie*, gen. ed. W. Speed Hill, *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, vols. I-V (Cambridge, MA: 1977-1990); vols. VI (2 parts) and VII (Binghamton, 1993-1998), I.56. All references to Hooker are to this edition with volume and page numbers given in the notes.

lenged.⁴ Persuasion then is not only directed to “hearers,” but it also reveals the ethos or display of the rhetor; we might say the performance of the rhetor. Hooker himself, of course, was not above persuasion as a goal and quite expertly exploited the dynamics of the disputational arena his work reflects.⁵ That disputational arena often revealed a manipulating rhetor exploiting the weaknesses of a multitude eager to hear the worst about the opponent, an opportunistic rhetor “openly reprov[ing] supposed disorders of state”⁶ and church. Hooker implies that his opponents, the presbyterian persuaders, verge on being rascals, and that persuasion can be problematic because of the “heavie prejudices deeply rooted in the hearts of men.”⁷

From these very first sentences, Hooker reveals a preoccupation which stretches throughout the *Lawes*—a great fear of people being “stirred up.” We can note the language in the concluding chapter of Book 1. In terms of persuasion, there are two ways of proceeding which need to be clearly understood, so says Hooker, if his rhetorical enterprise—his attempt at persuasion—is to succeed: either the wicked rhetor stirs up “the passions of men ... one way or other” until knowledge and understanding are impossible or the rhetor leads men “unto the tryall of that whe-reof there is doubt made” in order to teach men, that is inform minds, so that truth can be “better discerned” in the public are-

⁴ See Brian Vickers for a discussion of Hooker’s worries about persuasion and the arousal of emotions. “Public and Private Rhetoric in Hooker’s *Lawes*”, in *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community*, ed. Arthur Stephen McGrade (Tempe, AZ: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1997), 95-145.

⁵ A. D. Cousins has also noted the words Hooker begins Book 1 with and observes that although Hooker seems to pursue a rational explanation for how things are in the social order and good, he was just as skillful in utilizing what Cousins calls “unreason,” emotive rather than rational, to sway his readers. A. D. Cousins, “Playing with Reason. Aspects of Hooker’s Rhetoric in *Lawes* I-V,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 97.1 (1998): 177-189.

⁶ Hooker, I.56.

⁷ Hooker, I.56.

na.⁸ In response to Pettegree's question of whether choice in religious belief "involved any real degree of understanding of the core doctrine,"⁹ Hooker would have insisted that in his enterprise, or propaganda as Pettegree would label it, understanding would have been central, and possible. But such a "tryall" is not easy for the "hearers," not only because of those "heavie prejudices" and the vulnerability of the emotions but because of the sheer labor that has to be expended to gain understanding. For intellectual labor—the possibility of being persuaded of the truth—is plain difficult. Most people, Hooker admits, are too lazy to do the work.¹⁰ If not lazy, then ignorant, for "they have not ordinarily the judgment to consider" the "difficulties" within church and state and what is required for good order and obedience.¹¹ Hooker then must proceed rhetorically toward judgment and understanding, alert to both the problems and the potential of persuasion. In this essay, I am interested in tracing how Hooker's preoccupation with persuasion leads him a certain way rhetorically to construct himself as a mind (and heart) renewed to write as he does and to make understanding possible.

To see Hooker as a mind renewed, we need to follow the implications of Hooker's first scriptural citation in chapter 7 of Book 1. After acknowledging the power of reason, the chapter asks how do human beings attain "unto the knowledge of such things unsensible as are to be knowne that they may be done,"¹² this one of the task of the *Lawes*. Part of the answer lies in the

⁸ Hooker, I.135. For one description of how Hooker proceeds with "public rhetoric", see Vickers, "Public and Private Rhetoric in Hooker's *Lawes*" cited above.

⁹ Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*, 7.

¹⁰ For a discussion of how Hooker categorizes the intellectual abilities of his various readers, especially in Book 1, see Rudolph Almas, "Language and Exclusion in the First Book of Hooker's *Politie*", in *Richard Hooker and the English Reformation*, ed. W. J. Torrance Kirby (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), 227-242.

¹¹ Hooker, I.56.

¹² Hooker, I.77.

desire for what is good, and that desire unleashes or inspires the “divine power of the soule, that Spirite of our mind as the Apostle termeth it.”¹³ The citation (and I shall use the Geneva Bible for scriptural passages) is to the fourth chapter of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians where Paul contrasts the old man with the new, linking “the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness” with the renewing in the spirit of one’s mind. The renewed is therefore something of a spiritual creature, faith-driven, led by the Holy Spirit, and as John Calvin would have it implicitly obeying the call of the Spirit of God.¹⁴ What is important to note for our purposes is the further linking in verse 25 of the mind renewed, which is how Hooker constructs himself, to the act of speaking or communicating: “Wherefore cast of lying, and speake everie man trueth unto his neighbour: for we are members one of another.” In other words, the rhetor Hooker worries about at the beginning of Book 1, and we can identify that manipulating rhetor with Hooker’s opponents, is the one who persuades through lies. Hooker, on the other hand, renewed in the mind, a creature of righteousness, edified, with an inward understanding, speaks a persuasive truth to his neighbors which brings peace and order and community. He has taken Paul’s exhortation in the same chapter seriously: “Let no corrupt communication proceede out of your mouths: but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that ye may minister grace unto the hearers.” Apparently, writing could minister such grace as Paul speaks of.

¹³ Hooker, I.77.

¹⁴ For a helpful discussion of these notions, see Corneliu C. Simuț, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the Sermons of Richard Hooker* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), especially chapter 4 on “The Epistemology of Faith.” Also helpful is Robert Hoopes, *Right Reason in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962). For John Calvin, see the opening paragraphs of Book III, chapter vii, “A Summary of the Christian Life”. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, tr. Henry Beveridge, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953).

As with any Reformation polemicist, Hooker rhetorically establishes two relationships: first, in opposition to his disputational opponents—the lying Presbyterians—and secondly in edifying friendship with the neighbors who read the text. To emphasize this latter relationship, the opening chapter of Book 1 quite strikingly moves from the warning about prejudices and persuasion to the voice of an “I”—to a focus on a certain type of “I” which Hooker adopts as he closes out chapter one. Since Hooker seldom uses the pronoun “I” in the *Lawes*, we need to consider what might be going on with this “I”? How is it that Hooker is able to exert the scholarly and intellectual labor, demonstrate understanding, and invite others to join with him in the truth that leads not to being stirred up but to peace and community? Indeed, leads to a certain edification or inward understanding. How does Hooker play the role of one renewed in the spirit of the mind? And does he seek the same renewal in the neighbor?

In a Pauline sense, to be renewed is to be called and privileged to lead through a newness of life—lead in a certain way as a certain type of modern-day apostle. As Hooker begins Book 1 with the problem of persuasion, he ends the book continuing to worry about the “passions of men” “stirred one way or other.”¹⁵ Of course, Hooker’s leading is meant “to enforme” the mind, not to stir the passions. Unlike the manipulating presbyterian rhetor who will tell the multitude anything they want to hear, Hooker’s focus is on a regenerated self with, as Egil Grislis would say, a redeemed reason,¹⁶ able to examine the issues, research the materials of the controversy, organize ideas, create the text of judgment. For this reason, the “I” sounds so often less as a disputant and more as a judge, or perhaps a school

¹⁵ Hooker, I.135.

¹⁶ Egil Grislis, “The Hermeneutical Problem in Richard Hooker”, in *Studies in Richard Hooker*, ed. W. Speed Hill (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1972), 178.

master, a master who also expects his pupils to exhibit a renewing of the spirit of the mind.

But there is more to the “I” than this, for Hooker’s “I” is part of that which is established as church and state, and I would say also that this “I” is absorbed into that which is established. Can one really separate Richard Hooker and the way he proceeds from the social and ecclesiastical community of order he envisions? The rhetor at the beginning of chapter 1 who “goeth about to persuade a multitude” is not part of that which is “well governed.” Those who “openly reprove supposed disorders of state” are not part of that state because the disorders are not real, only “supposed.” Much like the fallen angels, they are not part of the ordered and peaceful community. As we know, Hooker is the guide for those who have wit and patience and understanding, and in this teaching or guiding he rehearses the very work of the renewed church, for it is the church “whereby for so many ages together we have beene guided in the exercise of Christian religion, and the service of the true God.”¹⁷ The key words are “together” and “we,” which are words of community.

If, as chapter four of the Preface indicates that even the “learneder sort” can be deceived, how can the community be held together and by what type of rhetor and rhetorical performance? Although the soul “preferreth rest in ignorance before wearisome labour to knowe,”¹⁸ “education and instruction” might still make the “naturall faculty of reason, both the better and the sooner able to judge rightly betweene truth and error, good and evill.”¹⁹ The key, as so many have noted, is the gift of reason for the rhetor and the hearer.²⁰ Although Hooker may

¹⁷ Hooker, I.57. Emphasis mine.

¹⁸ Hooker I.81.

¹⁹ Hooker, I.76.

²⁰ Two recent studies are Nigel Atkinson, *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason. Reformed Theologian of the Church of England?* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997) and Nigel Voak, *Richard Hooker and Re-*

say that only children, innocents, and mad men are without reason, and “in the rest there is that light of reason, whereby good may be knowne from evil,”²¹ he acts as the tutor for everyone, the tutor who seeks “their good.” What is obvious from the way Hooker designs his discourse is the assumption that the learner is positively affected by what is delivered orderly. Weary flesh is exhorted by the apostle (Paul in Ephesians as well as Richard Hooker in the *Lawes*): “Awake thou that sleepest, Cast off all which presseth downe, Watch, Labour, strive to go forward and to grow in *knowledge*.”²² Just as Paul did, Hooker speaks this as much to the community as to the individual reader. And he speaks it in a certain way, this call for knowledge, this hope that the soul of man can rise “unto perfection of knowledge.”²³

A word about Hooker’s understanding of right reason. Although many passages could be cited, the sentences near the end of Hooker’s *Answer to the Supplication that Master Travers made to the Counsell* are particularly powerful in sensing what Hooker might have meant in celebrating the mind renewed.²⁴ In answer to Travers’ slander that Hooker in his Temple sermons merely used his “owne reason” in preaching doctrine, Hooker responded emphatically that the gift which was being used was “true sounde divyne reason, reson whereby those

formed Theology. A Study of Reason, Will, and Grace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

²¹ Hooker, I.79.

²² Hooker, I.81. Emphasis mine. The citation is to Ephesians 5:14; note Hooker’s change from the Geneva Bible: “Awake thou that sleepest and stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”

²³ Hooker, I.74.

²⁴ The *Answer* as well as Travers’ *Supplication* are printed in volume V of *The Folger Library Edition*. A thorough commentary on the controversy which happened in the mid-80s before Hooker embarked on writing the *Lawes* is provided by William P. Haugaard in the same volume. One also can find a useful discussion of the necessity and power of reason in Hooker’s Book III, chapter 8.

conclusions mighte be out of Ste Paule demonstrated and not probably discoursed of onely, reson proper to that science whereby the thinges of god are knowne, theologicall reason which out of princyples in scripture that are playne soundly deduceth more doubtfull inferences, in suche sorte that being herd they neither can be denied nor any thing repugnaunte unto them receyved, but whatsoever was before otherwise by miscollecting gathered out of darker places is therby forced to yeld itself and the true consonaunte meaning of sentences not understood is broughte to lighte.”²⁵ I would argue that this is the reason, this the procedure, which the good rhetor uses for righteous persuasion. Indeed, Hooker writes a bit later in the same paragraph in the *Answer* that this procedure is “the moste sure and sauff waie whereby to resolve thinges doubted of in matters apperteyninge to faith and christian religion.” Corneliu Simuț discusses right reason in terms of Hooker’s adroit combination of “the certainty of evidence” and the “certainty of adherence.”²⁶ This combination of the natural and the spiritual, reason and revelation, nature and grace enables the mind renewed to explore the spiritual world through faith and trust, for as “the chieftest doe commaunde and direct the rest ... the spirite of our mindes [conducts] the soul.”²⁷ One might think of this as part of the process of sanctification as William Harrison understands this in the *Lawes*.²⁸ The rhetorical performance of the mind renewed in a work like the *Lawes* is precisely directed to resolve things pertaining “to faith and christian religion” and so nur-

²⁵ Hooker, V.255.

²⁶ Simuț, 136.

²⁷ Hooker, I.87.

²⁸ See William Harrison, “Powers of Nature and Influences of Grace in Hooker’s *Lawes*, in *Richard Hooker and the English Reformation*, 15-24. As Harrison writes, Hooker in Book V, Hooker may be speaking of “the process of sanctification by the infusion of the Holy Spirit. This he seems to understand in a rather Thomistic fashion. The emphasis is upon the co-operation of nature and grace, where the Holy Spirit takes the natural powers which are still present in fallen humanity and transforms them”. See page 18.

ture faith as “not only the intellectual assent of spiritual things but also the heartfelt trust in spiritual things.”²⁹ As Simuț concludes, “man should be certain of the truth of spiritual things and reason plays an important role within Christian epistemology.”³⁰

Humans can thus grow in knowledge—and in knowledge to understanding and in understanding to judgment and in judgment (and this is significant) to obedience within church and state. This despite being plagued by the feebleness of humanity and the fragileness of society. Much we cannot discern about God, Hooker admits: “That little thereof which we darkly apprehend, we admire, the rest with religious ignorance we humbly and meekly adore”³¹—with Hooker’s help. But this is not only a complicated world which ought to elicit humility; it is a fragile world. The intellectual world, the world of disputation, is a potentially chaotic world. When Hooker worries, in the well-known passage in chapter 3 of Book 1, that things rightly ordered in the natural world could intermit, loosen, dissolve, forget, wander, he is talking as much about text and disputation as potentially chaotic. In considering the problem of persuasion, this wonderful passage on order and degree, on the necessary manner of keeping law—even the law of the text—is a warning on how precariously things are held together, especially as readers are repeatedly reminded in the *Lawes* of human intellectual limitation and the potential confusion brought on by the affections. And both of these—intellect and affections—manifest themselves in the disputational arena.

In reading the *Lawes* and recalling Hooker’s confrontations at the Temple in the 1580s with presbyterian sympathizers led by Walter Travers, and later in the 90s the state’s crackdown on

²⁹ Simuț, 137. I would suggest that on some rhetorical level or experience the *Lawes*, as good persuasion, leads hearers or readers to such assent and trust.

³⁰ Simuț, 147.

³¹ Hooker, I.62.

nonconformists, recusant and puritan alike, Hooker's text can give the impression that ecclesiastical and political and social structures are about to explode. Martin Marprelate's disrespect of bishops and episcopacy had been set loose only recently. The *Lawes* might be more of a cultural text than we usually think, reflecting the anxieties of Elizabeth's final decade. In chapter 8, which continues the discussion of reason guiding the will so that the human mind and everything else won't "loosen and dissolve," Hooker uses the story of Joseph as the example of how dangerous and fragile the human situation is. And the scriptural scene can be read as an intertext on the dangers of rhetoric and persuasion. Joseph the hearer stands before, is almost manipulated by, the seducing rhetor, Potiphar's wife. When a lesser good—we could say Potiphar's wife—is wilfully embraced, "divine order" totters on "utter disturbance."³² Indeed, as the concluding chapter of Book I remarks, social life is impossible unless private desire (represented in this case by Potiphar's wife) gives way to public obedience (the example of Joseph's self-control).

Hooker's rhetorical procedure and self display as teacher and judge are his response to how fragile life can be when challenged by the likes of the presbyterians. There are two issues the rhetor needs to worry about: judgment and affection. Hooker summarizes these in a fragment that came to be titled "The Causes of the continuance of these Contentions concerning Church-government."³³ As Hooker writes emphatically: "Contentions ariseth, eyther through error in mens judgements or else disorder in their affections."³⁴ Error in judgment can be

³² Hooker, I.80.

³³ The fragment is printed in volume III of the *Folger Library Edition* of Hooker's works. To understand this fragment as a possible conclusion to the *Lawes*, see my essay "They Are and Are Not Elymas. The 1641 'Causes' Notes as Postscript to Richard Hooker's *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie*, in *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community*, 183-201.

³⁴ Hooker, III. 455.

corrected by instruction. And I think we see Hooker's language throughout Book 1 addressing this hope. The proper education leads to the use of one's public reason, as opposed to "the law of private reason."³⁵ To do otherwise, that is to follow "the law of private reason, where the law of publique should take place," will breed "disturbance." Public reason which reflects the corporate wisdom of generations of regenerated minds produces understanding (we need also to add humility), and this leads to community. Community is not possible through the arrogance of "private reason." Such arrogance is the subject of Hooker's *A Learned Sermon of the Nature of Pride* which very much reveals Hooker's interest in the workings of the "mindes of men" and how spiritual life proceeds as "god hath geven unto his that spirit which teaching their harts to acknowledg and tungues to confesse Christ the sonne of the living god."³⁶ But apparently God does not give the Holy Spirit to those who "walk in the blinde vanitie of their own mindes."³⁷ As minds darkened, they are susceptible to unrighteous persuasion. Indeed, they do not have Christ within them. We return to the notion of "the new man," of the renewing in the spirit of one's mind which is a characteristic of the righteous life in God: "Which life is nothing els but a spirituall and divine kind of being which men by regeneration attain unto, Christ and his spirit dwelling in them."³⁸ In contrasting private reason and public reason in the last few pages of Book 1, Hooker seeks a better "inuring" of

³⁵ In concluding Book 1 still worried about persuasion and the public good, Hooker writes: "Of all these thinges they judge by that rule which they frame to themselves with some show of probabilitie, and what seemeth in that sort convenient, the same they thinke themselves bound to practise; the same by all meanes they labour mightily to uphold, whatsoever any law of man to the contrary hath determined they weight it not. Thus by following the law of private reason, where the law of publique should take place, they breede disturbance" (I.140).

³⁶ Hooker, V.327.

³⁷ Hooker, V.327.

³⁸ Hooker, V.328.

men's minds.³⁹ And the meaning of "inuring" is worth checking in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: to bring a person by use, habit, or continued exercise to a certain condition or state of mind. The goal of righteous persuasion is therefore not a momentary rhetorical display to stir up emotions or affections to exploit the crooked mind, as Hooker terms it in *Pride*, but rather, in cooperation with the spirit, an enduring change in one's orientation. Righteous persuasion reflects or mimics living the life of God, for the potential is there that "dispellesh the cloudes of darknes, easeth the hart of grieffe, abateth hatred, composeth strife, appeaseth anger, ordereth our affections, ruleth our thoughtes, guideth our lives and conversations."⁴⁰

For the better inuring, Hooker plays a role that dominates how he sees himself and how we see him. He's charitable, he's authoritarian, he's paternal. I think of him so often as the wise, charitable schoolmaster before eager but weak-minded students. Hooker's hope, conveyed in biblical language of love, reconciliation, and peace, is that the conscience can be resolved, the heart led, and the "clowd of prejudice, or mist of passionate affection" blown away.⁴¹ In the concluding chapter 9 of the Preface, Hooker, as schoolmaster, urges his "students" to examine themselves to determine "whether it be force of reason, or vehemencie of affection" which has formed their opinions.⁴² If they have minds renewed, if they are able to sift the arguments presented by the upright rhetor, Hooker also promises community in an exhortation not unlike that which Paul gave to the Ephesians: let us "labour under the same yoke, as men that looke for the same eternall reward of their labours, to be joyned with you in bands of indissoluble love and amitie, to live as if our persons being manie our soules were but one."⁴³ After all,

³⁹ Hooker, I.140.

⁴⁰ Hooker, V.329.

⁴¹ Hooker, I.34.

⁴² Hooker, I.51.

⁴³ Hooker, I.52.

God and the righteous rhetor are not authors “of confusion but of peace.”⁴⁴ Indeed, corporate and ecclesiastical fellowship is characterized by peace and contentment. His opponents do not produce fellowship—remember that rhetor at the very beginning of Book 1 who worries Hooker so? Nevertheless, peace and quietness are possible, for “God being author of peace and not of confusion in the Church, must needs be author of those mens peaceable resolutions.”⁴⁵ And God as such an author leads one into contentment, not toward disruption: “so that although we be men, yet by being unto God united we live as it were the life of God.”⁴⁶ And that is a powerful statement. Divine activity leads to “mens peaceful resolutions”—rhetorically and otherwise. Surely such divine activity can and does influence the power and faculties of the mind. As David Neelands argues, the soul of man is capable of a more divine perfection precisely because of “intellectual capacity.” Through knowledge, human nature “may grow to glory (with the help of grace).” Neelands continues: “both reason and revelation have a single divine source, as two ways the ‘spirit leadeth men unto all truth.’”⁴⁷

Might it not be the case that God works through the righteous rhetor so that orderly texts help to produce peace within the believer? For such rhetoric performance encourages the believer to do God’s will, not one’s own, to be humble not arrogant, to be thrown toward, absorbed by and into, God the creator and his orderly creation, rather than thrown back upon

⁴⁴ Hooker, I.31.

⁴⁵ Hooker, I.34.

⁴⁶ Hooker, I.112.

⁴⁷ W. David Neelands, “Hooker on Scripture, Reason, and ‘Tradition’”, in *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community*, 79. As Hooker writes, “For whatsoever we have hitherto taught, or shall hereafter, concerning the force of mans naturall understanding, this we always desire withall to be understood, that there is no kind of faculty or power in man or any other creature, which can rightly performe the functions allotted to it, without perpetuall aid and concurrence of that supreme cause of all things” (I. 92).

one's self and one's complaints about life's "manifold defects." Could it be that being absorbed into the divine project characterizes in some way Hooker's new creature? That is to say, God's restoring the fallen mind to unity with him influences the attitude, skill, and work of the righteous rhetor. Although of "perfection capable we are not in this life,"⁴⁸ the power and faculty of one's mind can be renewed so as to affect understanding and will. When all things are orderly and done in an orderly fashion, "the soule then ought to conduct the bodie, and the spirite of our mindes the soul"⁴⁹ and so contributes to one's righteousness.

Humans can discover—or at least discuss—"by what steppes and degrees [the soul of man] ryseth unto perfection of knowledge,"⁵⁰ ryseth unto righteousness. "The soule of man ... [is] capable of a more divine perfection" because it can reach "higher then unto sensible things."⁵¹ Natural reason combines with "true art and learning" to produce "maturitie of judgement."⁵² No wonder Hooker deliberately plays the role of school master: "Education and instruction are the meanes, the one by use, the other by precept to make our naturall faculty of reason, both the better and the sooner able to judge rightly betweene truth and error, good and evil."⁵³ Immediately in the next chapter Hooker raises the notion of "that divine power of the soule" which Paul links to the renewing of one's mind, "that Spirite of our mind as the Apostle termeth it," this the citation from Ephesians 4 which I find so important in understanding how Hooker constructs himself as he sees reason, that highest power of the mind, renewed through natural and supernatural means. And this chapter, chapter 7, centers on the

⁴⁸ Hooker, I.112.

⁴⁹ Hooker, I.87.

⁵⁰ Hooker, I.74.

⁵¹ Hooker, I.75.

⁵² Hooker, I.76.

⁵³ Hooker, I.76.

will, the need for the tutor, the fragileness of choice, the link among will, reason, understanding, and desire in a conjunction of the natural and the supernatural: "For the lawes of well doing are the dictates of right reason."⁵⁴ As Peter Lake concludes in *Anglican and Puritans?*, the work of reason reveals the work of the spirit.⁵⁵ And the work of reason, along with the work of the spirit, produces righteous persuasion.

I want to suggest that those who are truly awake, who labor in knowledge, who combine reason and faith, are the righteous, are those whom Paul exhorts in the fourth chapter of Ephesians which Hooker uses in chapter 7: "If so be ye have heard him [that is, Jesus the Christ], and have bene taught by him ... that ye cast of, concerning the conversation in time past, the olde man, which is corrupt through the deceiveable lustes, and be renewed in the spirit of your minde, And put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holines."⁵⁶ While William Tyndale says in his prologue to the Romans that faith "killeth the old Adam, and maketh us altogether new in

⁵⁴ Hooker, I.79.

⁵⁵ Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterian and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 79.

⁵⁶ John Calvin and Hooker understand this Pauline passage in much the same way although Calvin, who cites Ephesians 4:23 three times in *Institutes*, uses it "negatively" to stress the debilitating results of original sin not merely to the sensual but to the intellectual. Calvin's interest, of course, is on divine renovation or regeneration of both the heart and the mind: "For the Spirit, which is contrasted with the old man, and the flesh, denotes not only the grace by which the sensual or inferior part of the soul is corrected, but includes a complete reformation of all its parts (Ephesians 4:23). And, accordingly, Paul enjoins not only that gross appetites be suppressed, but that we be renewed in the spirit of our mind (Ephesians 4:23), as he elsewhere tells us to be transformed by the renewing of our mind (Romans 12:2). Hence it follows, that that part in which the dignity and excellence of the soul are most conspicuous, has not only been wounded, but so corrupted, that mere cure is not sufficient. There must be a new nature." See pages 218-219.

the hart [and] mind,"⁵⁷ Hooker might want to say that we are made altogether new in the mind—or in the rational soul, to paraphrase Torrence Kirby, where the operation of the will can be transformed through grace.⁵⁸

The rhetorical implication of this scheme leads one to conclude that the presbyterians are not "new in the hart [and] mind," for the characteristics of the "old man" are linked to the behavior of the presbyterians, especially their polemical ways. Their will is not inclined to accept that which is rightly discerned—this the work of Hooker's *Lawes*. They have not been diligent in the search for the good. As Hooker's answer to *A Christian Letter*⁵⁹ emphasizes, their minds are weak, and they are not patient and humble as Hooker so earnestly prefers. Finally, theirs is the "hart obdurate."⁶⁰ But despite "originall weaknes in the instruments" one can pursue that "naturall thirst after knowledge ingrafted in us"⁶¹ and act out the role of one whose spirit of the mind has been renewed: Hooker is awake, he has cast off all which presses down, he has labored to grow in knowledge, and these are characteristics of the righteousness rhetor recounted as chapter 7 concludes. Hooker cites the Wisdom of Solomon

⁵⁷ Tyndale's prologue is a translation of Luther's: "But right faith is a thing wrought by the holy ghost in us, which changeth us, turneth us into a new nature and begetteth us anew in God, and maketh us the sons of God, as thou readest in the first of John, and killeth the old Adam, and maketh us altogether new in the heart, mind, will, lust and in all our affections and powers of the soul, and bringeth the holy ghost with her." "A prologue to the epistle of Paul to the Romans", in *Tyndale's New Testament*, ed. David Daniell (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 212-213.

⁵⁸ See W. J. Torrence Kirby, *Richard Hooker, Reformer and Platonist* (Burlington: Aldershot, 2005), especially chapter 3 "Grace and Hierarchy: Hooker's Two Christian Platonisms."

⁵⁹ *A Christian Letter*, published in 1599, was the earliest response to and attack on Hooker's *Lawes*. It is printed, along with Hooker's marginal notes, in volume IV of the *Folger Library Edition*.

⁶⁰ Hooker, I.81.

⁶¹ Hooker, I.81.

(9:15) near the end of the chapter: “hardly can we discern the things that are uppon earth, and with great laboure find we out the things which are before us. Who can then seeke out the things that are in heaven?” Who indeed, I ask. The biblical chapter continues: “Who can know thy counsel, except thou give him wisdom, and send thine holy Spirit from above? For so the waies of them which are upon earth, are reformed, and men are taught the things that are pleasant unto thee, and are preserved thorow wisdom.”

And all of this describes Richard Hooker—the new creature, as he displays, nay constructs himself, as he proceeds rhetorically, as he persuades for the good. His is the mind renewed; it is to him that the Holy Spirit has given wisdom; from him comes the true explanation of reformation of state and church which Hooker’s wisdom helps preserve. If God, then, is the final author of peace, God has renovated the charitable schoolmaster and the righteous rhetor. And Hooker wants his readers to feel this in order to have confidence in his efforts to persuade. How else could he have explained darkly apprehended theological knowledge? And what can be said of the disordered presbyterians? From *Causes*: “how sober and how sound soever our proceedings be in these causes; all is in vaine ... except their unrulie affections be bridled. Self-love, vaine glorie, impatience, pride, pertinacie, these are the bane of our peace. And these are not conquered or cast out, but by prayer.”⁶²

There is no peace when the rhetor stirs up the crowd. Peace proceeds, in Hooker’s vision, through peace makers who appear to be proceeding rhetorically with attention to logos and logically with attention to intellect. And I would suggest that such intellectual proceeding is essential to the creation of fellowship. With an impulse toward fellowship yet because of potentially obstinate hearts, humans create and follow law, as a reflection of divine law, which holds everything together. Note

⁶² Hooker, III. 459.

the positive language in chapter 10 of Book 1: the possibility of a community “civillie united” and “spiritually joined,”⁶³ a “league of amitie,”⁶⁴ “mutual communion.”⁶⁵ The impulse to communion is a divine impulse, based on the “principle of cosmic mediation of the divine power and governance,” as Professor Kirby illustrates.⁶⁶ It is within community that “errors in mens judgements” can be corrected. As grace perfects nature, as the mind is illuminated by the Holy Spirit,⁶⁷ reason’s ability within the new creature leads to peace and order which in turn creates community. “The spirite of our mindes [conducting] the soul,” as chapter 8 makes plain, is associated with knowledge, order, obedience, communion, fellowship, and hierarchy. As man observes the law of his nature, righteousness is realized.

And what destroys community? The illustration in chapter 10 of Book 1 is the story of Cain and Abel—malice taking “deepe root,” when “instruction humane or divine” could not prevent “envy, strife, contention and violence.”⁶⁸ “Errors in mens judgements” might be remedied, despite both “lewde and wicked custome” and “senseless stupiditie.”⁶⁹ But the real problem is the “hardnes” of heart which Paul speaks of, again in Ephesians which Hooker records in chapter 8: men walk “in the vanitie of their minde, having their cogitations darkned, and being strangers from the life of God through the ignorance

⁶³ Hooker, I.106.

⁶⁴ Hooker, I.107.

⁶⁵ Hooker, I.109.

⁶⁶ W. J. Torrance Kirby, “Grace and Hierarchy. Richard Hooker’s Two Platonism”, in *Richard Hooker and the English Reformation*, 27.

⁶⁷ See Neelands, “Hooker on Scripture, Reason, and ‘Tradition’” as well as Simut’s chapter 4 on “The Epistemology of Faith.” Also of value is Ranall Ingalls, “Sin and Grace”, in *A Companion to Richard Hooker*, ed. Torrance Kirby (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 151-183. Grace impacts and strengthens human reason which in turn strengthens human understanding which, I would argue, affects Hooker’s way of seeing himself as a rhetor.

⁶⁸ Hooker, I.98.

⁶⁹ Hooker, I.91, 92.

which is in them, because of the hardnes of their harts."⁷⁰ As the Geneva Bible glosses, echoing Calvin: "Man not regenerat hathe his minde, understanding, and heart corrupt ... for the hardnes of hearts is the fountaine of ignorance." "All knowledge and understanding is taken from" the unrighteous, says Hooker, "for God hath shut their eyes that they cannot see."⁷¹ And this, to return to the *Causes* statement, is "not conquered or cast out, but by prayer." What kind of persuasion is produced by the unrighteous?

What I want to suggest is that Hooker, through his orderly rhetoric, through his voice and positionality within the disputational arena, displays himself as the charitable school master, as a mind, understanding, will and heart regenerated, as the righteous rhetor. And he does this according to his assumptions about how the regenerated should displayed themselves in texts meant to build community. Perhaps this is the double process of engagement, as Pettegree outlines, which is directed toward the individual Christian and toward a collective religious consciousness.⁷² Note how John Spenser describe his friend in a preface written to introduce the 1604 edition of the *Lawes*: "What admirable height of learning, and depth of judgement dwelled within the lowly minde of this true humble man, great in all wise mens eyes, except his owne; with what gravitie and majestie of speach his tongue and pen uttered heavenly mysteries ... how all things that proceeded from him were breathed as from the spirit of love, as if he like the bird of the holy Ghost ... the Dove, had wanted gall; let them that knew him not in his person, judge by these living Images of his soule, his writings."⁷³ The writings, according to Spenser, reveal a Hooker without hardness of heart, renewed in the spirit of his

⁷⁰ Hooker, I.92-93.

⁷¹ Hooker, I.93.

⁷² Pettegree, 8.

⁷³ Spenser's preface is printed in volume I of the *Folger Library Edition*, 346-348.

mind and so able to write a disputation that educates not alarms, a disputation rhetorically patient. After all, only those with patience, so Hooker argues, can “tread so long and intricate mazes for knowledge sake.”⁷⁴ In terms of the performative, rhetorical behavior such as that exhibited by Richard Hooker is a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Not so the opponents. In response to *A Christian Letter*, Hooker writes: “You rage yell and bellow as one that were carried besides him self. A great deale of passionate Rhetorique bestowed to little purpose.”⁷⁵

According to Ephesians 4, the new creature, renewed in the spirit of the mind, always stands in relationship to others as tender-hearted and forgiving, “for we are members one of another.” “Old” men reveal their unrighteousness precisely, as chapter 4 indicates, because they direct their spirit not to others but to themselves. They are much like the fallen angels who sin “by reflex of their understanding upon themselves.”⁷⁶ They are especially “prone to fawn” upon the self.”⁷⁷ Hooker laments that the present age is “full of tongue and weake of brain,”⁷⁸ surely a reference to his Temple opponent Walter Travers, to the wicked writer of the Martin Marprelate tracts, as well as to the biblical epistle which is James’. And the themes of James’ epistle reflect Hooker’s rhetorical and biblical behavior: be patient, be meek, refrain the tongue, ask for wisdom, be “swifte to hear and slow to speake,” and above all do not throw yourself back upon yourself but stretch outwardly to community. As the first chapter of James has it, “For if anie heare the worde, and do it not, he is like unto a man, that beholdeth his natural face in a glass.” I cite James’ epistle here because the last chapter of Book 1 ref-

⁷⁴ Hooker, I.83.

⁷⁵ Hooker, IV.63.

⁷⁶ Hooker, I.72.

⁷⁷ Hooker, I.121. Such fawning on self is precisely why Hooker’s call in the preface for his opponents to reexamine “whether it be force of reason, or vehemencie of affection” that rules their thinking will go unheeded.

⁷⁸ Hooker, I.83.

erences this first chapter of James which Hooker is able to link to his rhetorical enterprise⁷⁹ and which celebrates the “father of lightes” who gives wisdom from above. James continues in chapter 3: “first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easie to be entreated, full of mercie and good frutes ... and the frutes of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace.” Righteousness is no result of private reason, private fancies, private discretion, for the private inevitably fawns upon self.⁸⁰ The renewing of the mind leads inevitably away from self toward others, from the private to the community with its public dynamic, and this is what I mean by Hooker’s attempt to create a rhetorical text that absorbs him and his readers through righteous persuasion. The public required a voice of acceptance and toleration, of order and peace, in the face of hysterical and divisive voices, such as Marprelate’s, that threatened stability. To “inure” men’s minds with the notion of law—the mother of peace and joy, as Hooker says—invites the individual to join with the community and to be incorporated, through the efforts of the righteous rhetor, into the larger entity which is the state and the church-incorporated even into *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie*.

⁷⁹ In this the concluding chapter of Book 1, Hooker explains what he is doing in his discourse with reference to James’ epistle: “Least ... any man should mervayle whereunto all these thinges tend, the drift and purpose of all is this, even to show in what maner as every good and perfect gift, so this very gift of good and perfect lawes is derived from the father of lightes; to teach men a reason why just and reasonable lawes are of so great force, of so great use in the world; and to enforme their mindes with some methode of reducing the lawes wherof there is present controversie unto their first originall causes, that so it may be in every particular ordinance thereby the better discerned, whether the same be reasonable just and righteous or no” (I.135).

⁸⁰ This is one of Hooker’s consistent complaints about Walter Travers at the Temple who in controversy with his master Hooker, so Hooker argues, used the light of his own understanding and the force of his own private judgment in attacking Hooker’s thought and the ecclesiastical arrangements at the Temple.

How apt for Hooker to end the Preface with a reference to Joseph—that same Joseph Hooker cites in chapter 8 of Book 1 who demonstrated a mind renewed in not being stirred up by Potiphar's wife. By means of his discourse, Hooker can envision perfect fellowship: "former enmitie being allaied" "we shal with ten times redoubled tokens of our unfainedlie reconciled love, shewe ourselves each towards other the same which Joseph and the brethren of Joseph were at the time of their enter-view in Aegypt."⁸¹ But who is responsible for this reconciliation of brothers? God, yes. But surely too Joseph, who, as the biblical story in Genesis 45 indicates, manipulated his brothers (as a good rhetor could do) exactly where he wanted them in order to illustrate that he was God's instrument: "God sent me before you to preserve your posteritie in this land, and to save you alive by a great deliverance." And what of deliverance? Is that not Hooker's righteous work in the *Lawes*?

⁸¹ Hooker, I.53.

Sitting among Richard Hooker's Sermons. Notes on the Three Fragments

JOHN K. STAFFORD

University of Manitoba

ABSTRACT. This paper revisits the extant sermon fragments of Richard Hooker (1554-1600). The sermons exhibit Hooker's characteristic rhetorical and homiletical style. Each sermon is notable for its extensive range of Scripture quotations and allusions which assumes congregations able to interact with their themes. The tight reasoning employed by Hooker is typical of his hermeneutic and homiletical method. Hooker held that pastoral and practical problems of Christian experience were primarily the result of error in reasoning or theology. The remedy for this situation was correct thinking such that right reason will place pastoral problems in correct relation to each other. As in *Remedie* and *Pride*, the *Fragments* consistently exhibit this method. Similarly, Hooker always has Puritan theological sensibilities in view. The *Fragments* reveal Hooker's response to the key Puritan themes of election, grace, assurance, and divine forbearance.

KEY WORDS: Richard Hooker, 16th century, sermons, hermeneutic, Early Modern period

Introduction

The sermons of Richard Hooker continue to attract attention because they offer a dynamic and immediate context for his thought. They also offer a check between polity and praxis—what emerges in defence and polemic is not always what appears on the public stage or in the pulpit. So the sermons can give some insight into Hooker's application of his own thought and method.

The three fragments discussed in this paper, found in the Folger Edition,¹ are pieces from sermons on Matthew 27:46, Hebrews 2:14-15, and Proverbs 3. The sermon on Hebrews 2 is the longest and most developed, and may be very close to complete.² To that extent, it is not really a “fragment” but is conveniently recognised as such. The sermon on Matthew 7:7 was not published until 1678 and is included in Folger as a separate sermon and again, appears virtually complete.³ It is not considered here. The purpose of this paper is to uncover some of the classic themes found in the three fragments and evaluate the particular treatment he gives them.

Fragment 1: Matthew 27:46

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

The words of dereliction so familiar from Holy Week liturgies point most obviously to this context although the occasion of a funeral cannot be conclusively ruled out. However the first day of Lent is possible and also Easter evening on the Saturday. The substance of the fragment as we have it is the nature of dereliction which Hooker clarifies as his first priority. This is completely typical of his sermonic approach—if words and terms are not well understood then all other conclusions built on them are weak. It also enabled him to set the agenda for the

¹ Richard Hooker, “Three Sermon Fragments,” in *Tractates and Sermons*, vol. 5 of *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, ed. Egil Grislis and Laetitia Yeandle, gen. ed. W. Speed Hill (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990), 399-417.

² Hooker lays out six topics for consideration at the start of the sermon and the Folger text reproduces all six. It may be that a further conclusion has dropped out but as it stands, the sermon does not end especially abruptly. Rather it concludes on a note of pastoral hope and confidence, something most preachers prefer.

³ Hooker’s authorship is disputed. Cf. Richard Hooker, “Tractates and Sermons,” in *Tractates and Sermons*, vol. 5 of *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, ed. Egil Grislis and Laetitia Yeandle, gen. ed. W. Speed Hill (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990), 380.

sermon by setting up the boundary conditions well ahead of clinching arguments. From this Hooker, in short compass, manages to traverse some key questions of Christology, a basic Christian anthropology, the mystery of suffering, and hints of other favourite topics, fear of death and the loss of assurance though the fragment breaks off before these are developed.

These homiletical moves are like scenes in a play—the transitions are not arbitrary but woven together through Hooker's particular use of Scripture. In his hands Scripture, is not heaped up through tenuous idea associations but remains congruent in his exposition and application of the presenting text. In other words, he is always looking for significance. Good preachers do this—they know the difference between the lecture room and the pulpit—even if Hooker sometimes forgets. Hooker always attempts a coherent theological narrative because coherence speaks to the divine origin of the textual revelation itself—truths which could not be achieved by the unaided mind—the mystery of the Gospel. It is the preacher's task to open up the theological landscape already revealed in the Scriptures but obscured through human "imbecility." Indeed, that is what he considers to be the purpose of Scripture.⁴

The discussion of dereliction and its causes in this fragment is no mere exercise in theological subtlety. We know from the *Remedie*⁵ as well as the *Lawes* more generally, that a serious part of Puritan debate was the question of certainty and assurance of salvation in the life of the believer—that fear was construed to be a symptom of weak faith and therefore called into question

⁴ Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity. Preface, Books I to IV*, vol. 1 of *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, ed. Georges Edehlen, gen. ed. W. Speed Hill (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977), III.8.14: 1.229.33-230.1.

⁵ Richard Hooker, "A Remedie Against Sorrow and Feare, delivered in a funerall Sermon John 14:27," in *Tractates and Sermons*, vol. 5 of *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, ed. Egil Grislis and Laetitia Yeandle, gen. ed. W. Speed Hill (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990), 363-77.

the reality of one's election. To be uncertain about the calling and choosing of God's elect was a matter about which each person had to be clear. In the *Remedie*, Hooker goes to great lengths to establish theological criteria by which to bring pastoral comfort in the contemplation of death or suffering—fear, he concludes, is both natural and necessary for it saves us from grave error and catastrophe and is not the sign that our faith is null or inferior. Naturally, the clinching argument is Jesus' own cries of dereliction.

In the first instance however, Hooker discusses the word "dereliction" itself. The experience of it can have a number of causes. First, when a person has been disobedient and rebellious before God. We reap what we sow in other words. Hooker's construal of such "reprobation" is however, extreme. It is not merely universal human waywardness but "utter refusal" reaching into "the everlasting condition" by which all divine appeal to repentance is cast aside. This situation, such as would satisfy a strict Calvinist outlook, involves God's denial of "the grace of his saving mercy, and that forever ..." ⁶ With the ominous, "... and that forever," Hooker understands this to mean people who "... have made themselves vessels incapable of his goodness in that kind." ⁷ But he never specifies the identity of such people. In the *Lawes*, in *Pride*, and in the *Sermons on Jude*, "they" can be anyone including, pointedly, Puritans. While his early rhetoric echoes the Calvinistic emphasis on election and the perpetuity of the damned for whom repentance is not possible, Hooker's extreme tone serves as a foil (as usual) because Hooker is not preaching to condemn anyone—his interest is to help his hearers understand that the dereliction of Jesus is the dereliction of all who must, and will, suffer. Thus, the second form of dereliction is that which is found in the trials that beset life in the body. In this, by contrast, "... they which are born of

⁶ Hooker, "Fragments," 399:7ff.

⁷ Hooker, "Fragments," 399:8f.

him, he doth not in that sense foresake."⁸ And of course, it is too obvious to say that Jesus did not experience dereliction of the first kind! Hooker upholds the sovereignty of divine election and now strives to show that it is by no means compromised because of the sensible experience of fear. He does this by examining the sufferings of Christ through the lens of the Scriptures satisfyingly stitched together to form an unassailable picture of God's absolute forbearance and covenant love.

In either case, Hooker makes a distinction between the manifestations of dereliction—"corporall dereliction"⁹ and that which is located in "th'inferiour part of the Soul, ..." ¹⁰ In the first case Hooker has in mind the physical "dilaniation and torture"¹¹ of the body which is the most clear and immediate aspect of suffering associated in Hooker's mind with human nature. In the second, "th'inferiour part of the Soul" is where Hooker considers "fancy and affection dwell."¹² And since Jesus was tormented beyond the sufferings of Job, Hooker is most reticent to speculate upon that part of Jesus' anguish because "between the passionate powers of his soule and whatsoever might refresh them a courtain [is] drawn."¹³ This second order suffering is the most extreme in Hooker's mind because of its ontic situation. So to those suffering, insofar as words can have any effect, the empathy of the preacher is directed:

... doth not this thy mournfull complaint of dereliction cause even almost to feel that thy soul was become now as a scorched heath, wherein no one drop of the moisture of sensible joy was left? But I do foolishly to labour in explicating that which is not explicable; that whereof our fittest esteeme is our very astonished silence.¹⁴

⁸ Hooker, "Fragments," 399:10.

⁹ Hooker, "Fragments," 400:24.

¹⁰ Hooker, "Fragments," 400:29.

¹¹ Hooker, "Fragments," 400:22.

¹² Hooker, "Fragments," 400:29f.

¹³ Hooker, "Fragments," 401:12.

¹⁴ Hooker, "Fragments," 401:13-18.

Hooker's startling capacity to depict the sufferings of Christ at the hands of "the impes of Satan"¹⁵ has, overall, the stamp of one who has some experience in the realm of suffering, at least by observation if not by actual experience. He piles up the language of hopelessness and at the end, observes that "neither God nor Angel nor Man, to ease his [Christ's] heaviness with the comfort of their presence at this howre; ..." ¹⁶ was given to Christ. Given the two forms of dereliction identified by Hooker, could his own frustration with his Puritan critics be even faintly related to the "impes of Satan"? Is Hooker dealing with his own soulful anxieties? Since he himself had affirmed that it was impossible to judge the heart of another, his own readiness to draw a veil over the mystery of suffering does bring this fragment to an abrupt but not unsatisfying conclusion in its own right. He really does believe that a rational theological investigation into the sufferings of Jesus will be sufficient grace needed by the believer in such times, and yet he does so without trivialising in any way, the human experience of its effects. Still, one could wish for more at this point. Could Catholics, for example, "not denying the foundations," truly be said to be reprobate? And the political cartoon of public suffering for truth?—does the question of proportional retribution not arise? On this, Hooker is silent yet his silence is telling, and a presumed Puritan readership is not excluded.

Fragment 2: Hebrews 2:14-15

That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, ...

This is the longest of the fragments and appears to be complete.¹⁷ The theme of death and fear is again explored in this

¹⁵ Hooker, "Fragments," 400:17.

¹⁶ Hooker, "Fragments," 400:10f.

¹⁷ Hooker says he intends to expand six points and by the end of the fragment, that is what he has done.

fragment and although an exposition of Hebrews 2 the starting point is Leviticus 25 and a discussion of the concept of Jubilee. His sermonic strategy initially suggests an oblique argument because the initial move to Leviticus 25 is quite unexpected unless the emphasis on Israelite religious tradition in Hebrews has simply opened up such an array of themes that the preacher could have selected a large number that spoke to the idea of servitude. Hence the connection of "bondage" in Hebrews 2 with Old Testament precepts concerning temporal bondage and servitude. Even if this stretches the exegesis, Hooker applies such a wide range of texts overall, if one fails to convince, others might. And further, in a congregation with Puritan sympathies he would surely not be outdone in his facility with the biblical texts. The Elizabethan lectionary does not suggest a liturgical link. Hooker's sermonic strategy now becomes clear. "... they were all in the yeare of Jubilye restored unto that state of perfect liberty; so that no man might chalenge or charge them for anything past. Which Jubilyes were types and figures of a Jubily that was to come."¹⁸ This establishes the hermeneutical framework—typology—what was historically the case really amounted to the long end of a telescope. But then Hooker moves immediately to Daniel 9 and the edict of Cyrus which supplies a basis for this reasoning, that is, Daniel uses the idea of Jubilee to describe the redemption and restoration of Israel.¹⁹ Daniel 9 itself is initially taken up with an extensive act of confession through a re-presentation of Israel's history.

Following this excursus into Daniel 9, Hooker quickly leads the reader/listener into Isaiah 53, Revelation 5, Luke 4 and John 8. His point is to establish that human need presupposes confession of actual guilt for which there is a remedy. In Hooker's view, wilful failure to acknowledge this condition is a form of bondage and being universal, hard for many to recognise. So

¹⁸ Hooker, "Fragments," 402:16ff.

¹⁹ Hooker does this by a process of numerology to achieve 10 Jubilees between the edict and the time of Christ—70 weeks of years.

now the problem has been identified—"Pride," as we might expect: "Behold a servitude, from which none but the sonne can deliver you. He it is that must *make you free*. Joh. 8."²⁰ It is, in fact, an extended commentary on the Hebrews 2 text which speaks to the human fear of death and its universality—our total bondage and servitude. In very short compass, Hooker has moved from problem, its description, to its solution. Scripture interpreting Scripture in the best reformed tradition.

Having established the problem, Hooker now begins to "crumble" the texts through the six points as follows:

1. how Christ defeated Satan.
2. the benefits of our deliverance.
3. the extent of our deliverance.
4. the nature and extent of our bondage ("thralldome").
5. our fear of death.
6. the continuance of fear, and its complete extent throughout our lives.

We can see immediately how comprehensive Hooker intends to be in this sermon. At the outset, this sermon is remarkable for its human sympathies and emphasis on *Christus Victor*. It is a theological sermon like all Hooker's sermons. Rich in rhetorical texture and intertextuality; filled with memorable and powerful images crafted with rhetorical design. Yet what is striking, more subjectively, is the absence of patronising tone—Hooker never talks down to his listeners while constantly keeping the heart of the human problem in sight, always seeking a theological and kerygmatic response. In other words, the Gospel is life and so, as he expands his first point, Hooker begins where he must: "The very centre of Christian beliefe, the life and soul of the Gospell of Christ doth rest in this, that by ignominye, honour and glory is obtained; power vanquished by imbecillity;

²⁰ Hooker, "Fragments," 403:27.

and by death salvation purchased."²¹ The mystery of death in God's wisdom, is made apparent by his use of R. Moses and a discussion of Jewish messianic ideals. The problem is this: within the scope of such ideals why was Jesus' death a necessity? Could salvation not be equally obtained without it through the exercise of God's "bare authority"?²² How does Hooker answer is own question?

He does so indirectly, by setting up an equation. To ask about the necessity of a cause, is also to ask about the nature of its effect. Now the effect is much easier to grasp than the cause, so this becomes Hooker's new starting point. We, the guilty, are delivered from death perfectly by the intercessions of Christ. *Our* condition is defined by divine wrath; *Christ's* condition is defined by the highest honour and integrity of divine promise. Christ's honour was combined with our humiliation—this sounds very similar to Hooker's notion in *Pride* where he considers God's actions in terms of a physician—the more difficult the disease, the more radical the surgery required.²³ And so in the central mystery of Christian worship, the Eucharist, "... the face of death might most lively appear in it."²⁴ What argues for the efficacy of Christ's death is morally located in his infinite love, goodness, grace and mercy, and rationally perfected in relation to the depth of the human situation.²⁵ The Cross is therefore everything and also the most mysterious in the claims made for it.

As for the extent of Christ's deliverance, Hooker reserves some of strongest pastoral language. It is the outlook of the BCP

²¹ Hooker, "Fragments," 404:12ff.

²² Hooker, "Fragments," 405:21.

²³ Richard Hooker, "A Learned Sermon of the Nature of Pride Abac. 2.4," in *Tractates and Sermons*, vol. 5 of *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, ed. Egil Grislis and Laetitia Yeandle, gen. ed. W. Speed Hill (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990), 320:30.

²⁴ Hooker, "Fragments," 406:22.

²⁵ Hooker, "Fragments," 406:12-20.

Exhortations pressed even more strongly. The discussion of point three is the extent of the effects of the Cross and the Eucharistic feast “which the God of our salvation *hath not prepared for a few*.”²⁶ [emphasis mine]. This is telling. It is clearly an attenuation of Calvinist scruples concerning the visibility of the elect. What Hooker has done is replace the certainty of assurance by which the elect can adjudicate authenticity of their own election (which s pastorally suspect), with the offer of salvation made utterly liberal and generous to the extent that “If any be thereof deprived, the falt is their own.”²⁷ That is, determined not by a double predestination but by human rejection of grace—again, an attenuation of the view that grace is irresistible. But this is not a theological possibility upon which Hooker wishes to dwell because it is inconceivable to him that needy persons in whatever condition would spurn the gift of grace. Hooker’s extensive meditation on the *extent* of salvation is positively Wesleyan in scope and embodies some of his strongest language. Consider the following:

Let men not dig ... the cloudes to find out secret impediments; let them not ... stormingly impute their wretched estate unto destinie. Let no such cogitation take place in the hart of any man; abandon it with all execration and hatred: it were even impious and diabolically. ... *That from deliverance through the death of Jesus Christ there ever was child of perdition excluded by maine strengthe, or that any hath bene ever withhelde otherwise then by the malice of an indisposed will,* ... Wherefore upon this as a sure foundation let us build. Christ hath died to *deliver all*. Let not the subtiltye of Satan beguile you with fraudulent exceptions, and drive you into such laberinths or mazes as the wit of man cannot enter into but with danger to lose it self. ... Christ by death hath defeated Satan, to the end that he might *deliver all* whosever were detained in bondage. Urge this.²⁸

²⁶ Hooker, “Fragments,” 406:29.

²⁷ Hooker, “Fragments,” 406:30.

²⁸ Hooker the surrogate Apostle who “urges” compliance with inherent authority. Cf. 1 Corinthians 4:16, 16:16; 2 Corinthians 9:5; 1 Timothy 2:1, 6:2; Titus 2:6; Hebrews 13:19.

God cannot denye himselfe.²⁹ And himself doth preach deliverance by death unto all. If any therfore be not delivered, it is because they have sayd in their harts *Nolumus hunc*: our present pleasure shall still be our god, for such favour we care not, we will not him to be our deliverer.³⁰

Again, Hooker piles up short emphatic sentences building on the Cross as the central instrument of grace, and with the frequently repeated note that Christ died for *all*. This must reflect Hooker's point of departure from a rigid puritanism that made election and predestination the centrepiece of God's saving activity. It is still important to observe that in saying this, Hooker rejected neither election nor predestination but he never considered these the touchstone of faith because they served not to initiate faith but rather sustain it.³¹ They are intended for those who, on other more immediate and vital grounds (the Cross), seek to marvel at the wisdom and mercy of God. Election resides in the counsels of God and for Hooker, while grace can be resisted, the evangelical proclamation is that God wills all to be delivered from the bondage of sin. In this, Hooker is emphatic.

Hooker has not, however, explained why divine deliverance could possibly be resisted, given the alternative. Why is the corruption of the will so tenacious that one might prefer death to the promise of life? The answer is further developed in point four with rare psychological insight. Part of our deliverance is our actual desire to be delivered.³² To fail to grasp our situation is the key attribute of "ghostly servitude." Our natural master puts us to "vile labour"³³ and because we live comfortably with

²⁹ Echoing 2 Timothy 2:13.

³⁰ Hooker, "Fragments," 406:31-407:25.

³¹ "Predestination bringeth not to life, without the grace of externall vocation, ..." Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Book V, vol. 2 of *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, ed. W. Speed Hill, gen. ed. W. Speed Hill (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977), V.60.3: 2.256.18.

³² Hooker, "Fragments," 409:10.

³³ Hooker, "Fragments," 408:19.

it, to a sufficient degree, we do not see the problem, and our spiritual oppression keeps us blind to our plight. Hooker puts it this way:

... they which live in this kind of ghostly servitude, ... are in this unlike unto servants: they doe not feel the misery they are in, but their servitude is sweet unto them, because they see it not to be servitude. It is the care of all tyrants to provide as much as they can, that such as are most oppressed by them may not seem to be oppressed. In kingdomes tyrannized therefore we see, that the doors of mens lips yea their very lookes are with jealousy observed and watched: least men by powring forth their mutuall complaints should prove to be touched somewhat deeply each with the sense of others misery, and in the end studye how to shake the yoke that lyeth heavy upon them.³⁴

Now Hooker contrasts the old servitude with the new servitude. The new servitude is Christian freedom and the fear of death as a “*miserie escaped* is not misery.”³⁵ The fear of which Hebrews 2 speaks is also found in its more extensive treatment in the *Remedie*.³⁶ It is a consistent theme. Hooker never loses an opportunity to moderate the Puritan anxiety occasioned by a contemplation of assurance. Fear is natural and therefore not to be reprovéd—it all depends on the cause of the fear. Some fear needs better counsel. And it is true that since “death hath as yet the upper hand ... conflict with death naturally is feared.”³⁷ There can be no simplistic handling of human emotions around this topic. Hooker knows very well that the experience of fear, even when rationally defensible, is variable and fickle. St. Paul said as much. There is much to live for and many desires which any person would wish to see fulfilled—death however, as Tols-

³⁴ Hooker, “Fragments,” 408:26-409:6.

³⁵ Hooker, “Fragments,” 410:9.

³⁶ Hooker, “Remedie,” 368:5ff. There is also considerable verbal similarity on the theme of the fear of death between the Hebrews 2 fragment and the *Remedie*.

³⁷ Hooker, “Fragments,” 411:21.

toy's Ivan Illych declared, was the great spoiler of dreams. But the attendant problem is also our tendency to believe that the "covenant with all things dreadfull" ³⁸ is stronger than the covenant of mercy. We may justly fear death because we not only perceive its existential reality, but mainly because we understand its theological construal. Death is not a neutral thing that is merely "part of life." It is only neutral in who it takes. Hooker, like the Scriptures, wants to know *why* it is part of life, and he is not satisfied with scientific or rational descriptions of its processes alone. One may be entirely fearful *for* someone in danger while not participating in the danger itself. So Hooker is only distancing himself from Puritan piety as a matter of degree and emphasis, not as to the statement of the problem.

At the conclusion of the sermon, Hooker engages in a remarkable discussion of those things that "abate the fear of death"³⁹ Our relationship with death is nonetheless complex. The fear of death can be abated in many ways that include our participation in the ways of nature, which is a kind of resignation and which, Hooker thinks, is the limit of heathen resolution in face of the inevitable. He is not content with Aristotle on this question, and writes, "And such as that of Aristotle [who said]. As birth, so death is beneficial unto the state of the whole world. Birth doth stop death, and death doth ease birth. No reason therefore but that we should be contented to give place unto others by death, as by birth we have succeeded others dead."⁴⁰ Yet Hooker is not content with Aristotle's analysis of the "violent smotherings of fear."⁴¹ These can only "rightly be conquered but by strength of infallible reason."⁴² And by this, Hooker means reason shaped and conformed to the Gospel which, as in the *Remedie*, is the product of rational belief in Christ since fear is the principle result of error. And reason can only

³⁸ Hooker, "Fragments," 410:24.

³⁹ Hooker, "Fragments," 412:5.

⁴⁰ Hooker, "Fragments," 412:18-23.

⁴¹ Hooker, "Fragments," 412:9.

⁴² Hooker, "Fragments," 412:11.

be “infallible” if it is thoroughly consonant with the truth of Scripture.⁴³ So the conclusion of the sermon is quite consistent with the *Remedie*—perspective is everything, and anxieties and setbacks are temporary phenomena, and to be viewed as such. The believer does not need to depend exclusively on internal psychological conviction because such convictions are variable—the truth is objectively in the midst of the immediacy of fear and such truth is not contingent on our experience. Yet fear is not condemned, it is real and does not attract condemnation from Hooker except insofar as it is rooted in error. Neither is it the touchstone of one’s deliverance. Fear is neither good nor bad—the absence of fear can be as threatening as an overburden of fear—it may actually be a greater danger because it can proceed from denial of the true human situation within which God holds us accountable. In this respect, Hooker has provided a kind of deliverance from the anxious piety of Puritan insistence on assurance on the one hand, and a trivialising of human circumstances on the other where even suffering is of no account. To be sensible of fear can save a person from those actions which can push them towards divine judgment.

At its conclusion, Hooker rapidly brings the sermon to a close with a memorable line: “They who lived as sonnes, being dead are as heyers blessed. The labours which heer they did suffer are ceased, the evill they did is buried and their works of righteousness follow them ...”⁴⁴ as one might say, works whose significance only becomes evident at the parousia.

Fragment 3: Proverbs 3:9-10

Honour the Lord with thy substance ...

One of the features of Richard Hooker’s writing is the manner in which he is often on the alert for internal paradox in a text or topic that presents itself. A typical preacher! Things are never

⁴³ “Infallibility” here in its Tudor sense means strong confidence in the Gospel not an absolute inability to err.

⁴⁴ Hooker, “Fragments,” 413:4-7.

what they appear—there is always an unexplored dimension that can shed light, be it linguistic, historical, cultural or theological. But in looking for paradox, Hooker always tries to establish coherence because while paradox hides truth behind incongruity, coherence is its unmasking and allows the paradox to be more fully enjoyed. This being so, its truth is more readily grasped and internalised. We have seen this in Hooker's discussion of fear and death, and the present fragment from the book of Proverbs also does something of this. The Proverbs fragment is obviously incomplete—Hooker introduces five points he wishes to elaborate but the fragment ends some way into the second.

Here are the five points:

1. the relationship between divine promise and our duty.
That is, the obligation to honour God materially *so that* the worshipper will prosper—a very modern question!
2. does this promise apply to the individual?
3. what sort of prosperity is in view?
4. how prosperity is in view?
5. how can the benefits of divine obligation be demonstrated?

Hooker's main question is one of causality. In keeping with the outlook of Proverbs as a whole, the underlying assumptions are driven by Deuteronomic theology as suggested by Deuteronomy 28:1ff and similar. There, the causal relations of covenant obedience and reward are spelled out in detail, and also the consequences of disobedience—such relations declare that right actions produce right results, and *vice versa*. Very straightforward and generally true.⁴⁵ But first, Hooker identifies an apparent paradox. To honour God with the motive that we shall be

⁴⁵ The wisdom tradition of Israel includes, of course, Ecclesiastes and Job, where this reasoning comes in for very serious challenge. But here, we are working within the thought world of Proverbs.

materially satisfied seems base. Such a motive appears unworthy because it is driven by self-interest rather than love. Such an elementary paradox is immediately negated by Hooker. In fact, says Hooker, it is neither a paradox nor a principled way of withholding the honour due to God, but rather our necessary cares in the world which achieve this unaided. Our self-interest is rational, not reprehensible. So these words of assurance are made to imprint the idea "that we shall better this way supply our wants then any: that God will not suffer his to be the worse provided for, because they bestowe themselves in his service."⁴⁶ Once again anticipating the argument, Hooker notes the objection: what benefit is it if a person gives to God only to find it harder to meet their own wants and necessities? But yet again, the purposes of God are inherently good and however our service takes place, God intends "not to impoverish but to enrich thereby his servants. ... That God ... doth thus reward his servants, ... comes not by the worthiness of their service but from his goodness whom they serve."⁴⁷ Hooker is therefore careful not to place any hope in the question of merit. Rational self-interest does not force us to choose between the service of God and a desire to live with sufficiency.

That paradoxical questions of this sort actually exist is located in the paradoxical nature of human existence itself. The ones who bear the image of God, made little lower than the angels, are also the objects of divine wrath and mercy. Given the conditions of man's rebellion, new forces that bring coherence to our lives are now in play—indeed, they must be in play if we are to live at all. All questions of our relationship with God now must consider the force of heavenly wisdom upon the dark corners of human life. Therefore, we will always be conscious of paradox and contributes to our sense of dislocation in the world. Hooker puts it this way:

⁴⁶ Hooker, "Fragments," 414:22f.

⁴⁷ Hooker, "Fragments," 414:29-416:11.

So that we may set down as a grounded axiom that man degenerating and transgressing the duty which his nature standeth bound unto, he loseth the benefit which things in the world working according to their natures might otherwise have yeilded unto him, and now do not; God restrayning their force in such sort, that either they doe not at all or doe not so easilye answear his desires and supply the wants of his nature. That God doth ... enlarge or restraints the forces and powers of things naturall, needeth rather meditation then proof.⁴⁸

Ideally, man lives in a fashion consistent with his nature as does the entire created order. Yet that order is corrupt and this is the source of the paradox. The further tension that Hooker wants to avoid is the notion that such a paradox excludes God from the bounds of his own creation and that nature stands outside either the care or hand of God. The fragment ends with the question of particularity. That is, the fate of the individual is often contrasted with the fate of the community in Scripture. Hooker sees the problem immediately—if the general provisions of the Torah or any other precept are sufficient for the community but collapse under any given particular circumstance, “this would be but a poore comfort, a slender encouragement, and God should less respect his family which is the world then the children of men do theirs, whose care extendeth even in particular unto the meanest creatures estate that doth them service.”⁴⁹

Hooker's reply? “For this cause the spirit doth single every man out by himself, for this cause we are as it were spoken to one by one, that no man might doubt to reap the fruite of his righteous service even with his very own hands.”⁵⁰ And the obverse is also true, by which the reader is left to conclude that a different fruit is reaped from *un*righteous service.

⁴⁸ Hooker, “Fragments,” 416:19-28.

⁴⁹ Hooker, “Fragments,” 417:13-17.

⁵⁰ Hooker, “Fragments,” 417:19-22.

Conclusions

The *Fragments* disclose the same carefully constructed reasoning that we find in the *Lawes*. The sermons on Hebrews and Matthew appear to be complete by virtue of their closure and the completeness of their sermonic trajectory. Each sermon is notable, as in all Hooker's sermons, for its extensive range of Scripture quotations and allusions, presupposing congregations familiar with them and able to consider their applicability. Further, the discipline of the sermons marks them as expository and intertextual in nature because Hooker, although always ready to expand his given text into other texts, does so on the basis of *scriptura scripturam interpretatur* or *sacra scriptura sui interpretres*. If Hooker departs from his main text he still remains firmly connected, overall, to his main idea and the issues it raises for him.

With respect to those issues, the Puritan debate is always in sight, and Hooker never loses an opportunity to contrast his own understanding of a text's implications with those an imagined Puritan reading might produce. It is a common strategy for Hooker and in this respect, the *Fragments* do not disappoint. Notwithstanding, it is important to acknowledge in Hooker the trademark signs of genuine pastoral care and insight which stands as a modest corrective to the idea that Hooker is primarily a rationalist theologian. What he *does* do however, is argue that many pastoral issues originate in distorted thinking (the superior part of the soul for Hooker), that error in one's reasoning will eventually distort even good and sincere intentions—this is theology as the rational pursuit of a Christian mind, *not* devoid of the Holy Spirit but always crucially dependent on the Spirit. The Bible for Hooker, teaches theology. It enables us to distinguish good theology from bad theology, establish the language of theological discourse and, if such discourse is worthy, supplies the necessary conceptual framework by which pastoral care is lifted from much of the therapeutic subjectivism so common in modern *pastoralia*. Yet here again, to distance oneself from pastoral subjectivism does not mean a

loss of empathy or sympathy—quite the reverse, because the pastor, of all people, must see a situation in its spiritual dimensions as well its presenting pathology. Therein lie the resources of divine counsel and we the beneficiaries of Hooker's spiritual and theological gifts.

To sit among the sermons is a little like sitting in our grandparents' attic going through an old trunk and marvelling at lives and conversations opened up through letters, cards, and diaries. Viewing life through the eyes of another, seeing what was important to them and, without judgment, realising that the themes of their lives were much like our own, sifting through their joys and skirmishes, anxieties, hopes, and failures. If the sheer humanity and commonality of our lives is sometimes obscured by Hooker's rigorous reasoning in the *Lawes*, his sermons make clear that questions about living faithfully within life's contingencies were the same as ours, that pastoral wisdom is not a de-intellectualised version of theology, that the best spiritual formation begins with freedom from gross error which, it may be said, is the essence of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, "to lead us into all truth."⁵¹

⁵¹ This paper was first presented at the Richard Hooker Society conference at Trinity College, Toronto in October 2009.

Proverbs 8:22-31 in the Christology of the Early Fathers

MAURICE DOWLING

Irish Baptist College, Belfast

ABSTRACT. The relationship between Word and Wisdom, and the relationship of both to Christ is an important aspect of New Testament studies. This article looks at how Patristic Christology makes use of the personification of Wisdom found particularly in Proverbs 8, with some discussion of the background to this theme in Judaism as well as the New Testament. The focus is on how Proverbs 8, notably verse 22, figured in the Arian controversy of the fourth century, and especially in the extant fragments of the works of Marcellus of Ancyra, a fierce opponent of Arius, but one who was widely rejected himself because of his alleged Sabellianism. The Proverbs passage was divorced from the context of a meditation on the nature of Wisdom and was given almost exclusively a Christological significance. It became a text which different sides of the fourth-century debates tried to capture in order to strengthen their own position.

KEY WORDS: Word, Wisdom, Patristic Christology, Proverbs, Arianism

The Ante-Nicene Fathers

In Patristic Christology the concept of Wisdom became very prominent, and the portrayal of Wisdom in Proverbs 8, especially verses 22-31, was one of the most popular Old Testament passages applied to Christ. Even though some early writers occasionally identify Wisdom and the Holy Spirit¹, this is not typ-

¹ E.g. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 4.20.3, A. Roberts & J. Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, 488. Theophilus in *Ad Autol.* 2.15 appears to think of the Spirit as Wisdom when he describes the divine *trias* as "God, his Word, and his Wis-

ical of the Fathers in general. Most Fathers assume without question that the Old Testament Wisdom passages speak of the Son (or Word) of God.²

Justin Martyr quotes Proverbs 8:22ff as part of his argument that the Word (who is divine Wisdom) is distinct yet also inseparable from God:

God begat before all creatures a Beginning, [who was] a certain rational power [proceeding] from Himself, who is called by the Holy Spirit, now the Glory of the Lord, now the Son, again Wisdom, again an Angel, then God, and then Lord and Logos...

He was begotten of the Father by an act of will; just as we see happening among ourselves: for when we give out some word we beget the word; yet not by abscission, so as to lessen the word [which remains] in us, when we give it out: and just as we see also happening in the case of a fire, which is not lessened when it has kindled [another], but remains the same; and that which has been kindled by it likewise appears to exist by itself, not diminishing that from which it was kindled. The Word of Wisdom, who is Himself this God begotten of the Father of all things, and Word, and Wisdom, and Power, and the glory of the begetter, will bear evidence to me, when he speaks by Solomon the following: "If I shall declare to you what happens daily, I shall call to mind events from everlasting, and review them. The Lord made me the beginning of His ways for His works ..." [quoting in full Proverbs 8:21-36; verse 21 in the LXX is very different from the MT].³

Athenagoras and Tertullian use the Proverbs passage in the context of their "two-stage" history of the Word: there is the Word immanent in the mind of God from all eternity, and there is the Word expressed or sent forth for the purposes of creation. Athenagoras and Tertullian make Proverbs 8:22ff refer to the

dom," Ibid., vol. 2, 101, but in 2.10 he applies Proverbs 8:22ff to the Son or Logos, Ibid., 98.

² Some non-canonical Wisdom passages also find their way into the Patristic repertoire, e.g., Baruch 3:29-37 and Wisdom 7:22ff.

³ Justin, *Dial.* 61, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, 227f.

latter “stage,” namely, the extrapolation of the Word for the purpose of creating the world⁴. Athenagoras says:

That we are not atheists, therefore, seeing that we acknowledge one God, uncreated eternal, invisible, impassible, incomprehensible, illimitable, who is apprehended by the understanding only and the reason, who is encompassed by light, and beauty, and spirit, and power ineffable, by whom the universe has been created through His Logos, and set in order, and kept in being—I have sufficiently demonstrated. [I say “His Logos”], for we acknowledge also a Son of God. Nor let anyone think it ridiculous that God should have a Son. For though the poets, in their fictions, represent the gods as no better than men, our mode of thinking is not the same as theirs, concerning either God the Father or the Son. But the Son of God is the Logos of the Father, in idea and in operation; for after the pattern of Him and by Him were all things made, the Father and the Son being one. And, the Son being in the Father and the Father in the Son, in oneness and power of spirit, the understanding and reason [*nous kai logos*] of the Father is the Son of God. But if, in your surpassing intelligence, it occurs to you to enquire what is meant by the Son, I will state briefly that He is the first product of the Father, not as having been brought into existence (for from the beginning, God, who is the eternal mind [*nous*], had the Logos in Himself, being from eternity instinct with Logos [*logikos*]); but inasmuch as he came forth to be the idea and energizing power of all material things, which lay like a nature without attributes, and an inactive earth, the grosser particles being mixed up with the lighter. The prophetic Spirit also agrees with our statements. “The Lord”, it says, “made me, the beginning of His ways to His works.”⁵

The identification of Wisdom and Logos is even clearer in Tertullian:

⁴ The two stages correspond to the distinction between *logos endiathetos* and *logos prophorikos*, in Theophilus, *Ad Autol.* 2.22.

⁵ Athenagoras, *Leg.* 10, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, 133.

Now, as soon as it pleased God to put forth into their respective substances and forms the things which He had planned and ordered within Himself, in conjunction with His Wisdom's Reason and Word, He first put forth the Word Himself, having within Him His own inseparable Reason and Wisdom, in order that all things might be made through Him through whom they had been planned and disposed, yea, and already made, so far forth as [they were] in the mind of God. This, however, was still wanting to them, that they should also be properly known, and kept permanently in their proper forms and substances.

Then, therefore, does the Word also Himself assume His own form and glorious garb, His own sound and vocal utterance, when God says, "Let there be light." This is the perfect nativity of the Word, when he proceeds forth from God—formed by Him first to devise and think out all things under the name of Wisdom—"The Lord created, or formed, me as the beginning of His ways" ... The Son likewise acknowledges the Father, speaking in His own person under the name of Wisdom: "The Lord formed me as the beginning of His ways, with a view to His own works; before all the hills did He beget me." For if indeed Wisdom in this passage seems to say that she was created by the Lord with a view to His works, and to accomplish His ways, yet proof is given in another Scripture that "all things were made by the Word, and without Him was there nothing made."⁶

In Justin the Proverbs passage is used to demonstrate the distinction between the Logos and the Father, and the priority of the Logos over creation; in Athenagoras and Tertullian it is used to present a picture of the Logos passing from an "immanent" to an "expressed" state. The passage is also of some importance for Origen. In his commentary on John 1 Origen expounds his concept of the *epinoiai* or different aspects of the person and work of Christ. Among the various *epinoiai* Wisdom occupies a special place, and Origen makes a connection between the words of Proverbs 8:22 in the LXX—*kurios ektisen me archēn hodōn autou eis erga autou, pro tou aiōnos ethemeliōsen me en*

⁶ Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.* 6-7, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3, 9.601f.

archē—and those of John 1:1, *en archē ēn ho logos*. In Origen's understanding Wisdom is the beginning of all the ways of God "inasmuch as she contained within herself either the beginnings or forms or species of all creation"⁷. This Wisdom, Origen emphasizes, is not an impersonal attribute of God but is in fact the first-born Son of God.⁸ Origen makes use of two meanings of *arche*: the idea of an actual "beginning" in the chronological sense; and the idea of a "principle" according to which the world was made.

Wherefore we have always held that God is the Father of his only-begotten Son, who was born indeed of him, and derives from him what he is, but without any beginning, not only such as may be measured by any divisions of time, but even that which the mind alone can contemplate within itself, or behold, so to speak, with the naked powers of the understanding. And therefore we must believe that Wisdom was generated before any beginning that can either be comprehended or expressed. And since all the creative power of the coming creation was included in this very existence of Wisdom (whether of those things which have an original or of those which have a derived existence), having been performed beforehand and arranged by the power of foreknowledge; on account of these very creatures which had been described, as it were, and prefigured in Wisdom herself, does Wisdom say, in the words of Solomon, that she was created at the beginning of the ways of God, inasmuch as she contained within herself either the beginnings, or forms or species of all creation.⁹

For Christ is, in a manner, the demiurge, to whom the Father says, "Let there be light," and, "Let there be a firmament." But Christ is demiurge as a beginning [*archē*], inasmuch as he is Wisdom. It is in virtue of his being Wisdom that he is called *archē*. For Wisdom says in Solomon: "God created me, the be-

⁷ *De Princ.* I:2:2, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, 246.

⁸ *Ibid.*, I:2:1.

⁹ *Ibid.*, I:2:2.

ginning of his ways, for his works" ... Consider, however, if we are at liberty to take this meaning of *archē* for our text, "In the beginning was the Word", so as to obtain the meaning that all things came into being according to Wisdom and according to the models of the system which are present in his thoughts. For I consider that as a house or a ship is built and fashioned in accordance with the sketches of the builder or designer, the house or the ship having their beginning [*archē*] in the sketches and reckonings in his mind, so all things came into in accordance with the designs of what was to be, clearly laid down by God in Wisdom.¹⁰

The first hint that Proverbs 8:22ff might be the occasion of controversy comes with "the affair of the two Dionysii" in the third century, an affair which may be said to have anticipated the Arian controversy of the fourth. In the fragments which remain from Dionysius of Alexandria there is no direct allusion to Proverbs 8, but from the letter of Dionysius of Rome to his Alexandrian namesake it would appear that the latter had used Proverbs 8 as part of his argument against the Sabellians.¹¹ Dionysius of Alexandria apparently interpreted the word *ektisen* of Proverbs 8:22 too literally for the liking of the Roman bishop. In his zeal to refute the Sabellians the Alexandrian Dionysius so stressed the distinction between the Father and the Son, with the help of Proverbs 8 and other texts, that he gave the impression that they belonged to distinct orders of being—the Father being the Creator and the Son being created—and he used two illustrations which seemed to confirm this impression: the relationship between the farmer and the vine and that between the ship and the shipbuilder. Athanasius in *De sententia Dionysii* works hard to present Dionysius of Alexandria in the best poss-

¹⁰ *Comm. in Ioh. I:22, Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 10, 307f.

¹¹ The Roman Dionysius' letter is preserved in Athanasius, *De Decretis* 26, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Second Series* (P. Schaff & H. Wace), vol. 4, 167f.

ible light, arguing that the Arians have no right to claim him as their “partisan”¹², whereas Basil of Caesarea felt that Dionysius had fallen into “the opposite error” to Sabellius¹³. Whatever may have been the precise beliefs of Dionysius of Alexandria, that particular “affair” ended peaceably. The same cannot be said of the Arian controversy.

The Fourth Century

Arius and his kin appealed to a number of Biblical texts in order to support their subordinationist Christology. They made use of any passage which described the Father as the one and true God, or which represented the Son as in any way inferior to or subordinate to the Father, or which portrayed Christ as being subject to limitations and emotions incompatible with being divine, or which suggested that the Son did in fact have a beginning. Inevitably, Proverbs 8:22ff proved to be an important weapon in the Arian arsenal. The three main verbs of verse 22-25 were treated as synonyms:

The Lord created (*ektisen*) me ... established (*ethemeliōsen*) me ... begets (*genna*) me¹⁴

As far as the Arians were concerned, the meaning of this passage was clear. The Son (e.g., the Word or Wisdom of God) was a creature. The key verbs of Proverbs 8:22ff occur in Arius’ letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia, where he writes of the Son:

Before he was begotten or created or ordained or established he was not, for he was not unbegotten.¹⁵

¹² *De sent. Dion.* 19, *Ibid.*, 183.

¹³ Basil, *Ep.* 9, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Second Series*, vol. 8, 123.

¹⁴ A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta*, vol. II, 196.

¹⁵ H. - G. Opitz, *Urkunden zur Geschichte des Arianischen Streites, 318-328, Athanasius Werke III:1* (Leipzig, 1934), 3.

There is also a clear echo of the Proverbs passage in Arius' letter to Alexander:

God, being the cause of all things, is unbegun and altogether unique, but the Son, being begotten apart from time by the Father, and being created and established before ages, was not before being begotten.¹⁶

Similarly, Eusebius of Nicomedia wrote to Paulinus of Tyre in the following terms:

We have learned that [the Son] was created and established and begotten in substance and in an unchangeable and inexpressible nature and in likeness to him who made him, as the Lord himself says: "God created me the beginning of his ways, and he established me before time began; he begets me before all the hills."¹⁷

Proverbs 8:22ff was a passage which, in the opinion of the Arians, spoke plainly of the creaturely nature of the Son and his inferiority to the Father. In their eyes the text obviously referred to the pre-incarnate Son; it could not be made to refer to the humanity of Christ. The Arians found a powerful weapon in Proverbs 8. They were following the standard line of interpretation in applying these verses to the pre-incarnate Son, and Marcellus of Ancyra's attempt to counter the Arians by applying the passage to the Incarnation suffered from all the disadvantages of apparent novelty. Marcellus' interpretation could be regarded as not only novel but also forced. Certain other "subordinationist" texts, particularly those referring to the person of Jesus Christ (e.g., "The Father is greater than I"), could with some justification be interpreted as references to the *oikonomia*

¹⁶ Ibid., 13.

¹⁷ Ibid., 16.

kata sarka rather than to the being of the Son himself. This device was not so convincing when applied to Proverbs 8.

We shall consider in more detail Marcellus' interpretation of the Proverbs passage, because he was one of the principal opponents of Arianism in the period 320-345, although he is much less well known than Athanasius¹⁸. Before doing so, we should note that, with the exception of unnamed people mentioned by Gregory of Nazianzus¹⁹, the Arians' opponents did not attempt to outflank them on the interpretation of Proverbs 8 by the strategy of arguing that this passage speaks figuratively and poetically of a divine attribute, rather than concretely of a divine person. Fourth century readers generally accepted without question that the personal language of the Proverbs passage indicated a divine person, and that, since Christ was the Wisdom of God (as explicitly stated in 1 Corinthians 1:24), it was obviously Christ that the passage was describing. One way of countering the Arian interpretation was foreshadowed by Origen, whose Christology makes important use of the concepts of "generation" and "eternal generation." Origen saw the phrase "begets me" of Proverbs 8:25 as the key to the whole passage. It is clear from several parts of Origen's work that for him the relationship between the Father and the Son was most fitly described using the verb *gennaō*, rather than *ktidzō* or *themelioō*. Origen points out that Proverbs 8:25 makes a significant use of the present tense, "begets", indicating a continual generation.²⁰ There is a hint of a similar approach to Proverbs 8 in a letter of

¹⁸ References will be made to the fragments of Marcellus preserved by Eusebius of Caesarea and found in ed. E. Klostermann, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte. Eusebius Werke IV* (Leipzig, 1906).

¹⁹ *Catachetical Orations* 4:2.

²⁰ *Hom. in Ierem* 9:4, GCS Origen 3, 70. In contrast to his use of *gennaō*, Origen betrays a certain diffidence about using *ktidzō* when speaking of the Son: "God having created the Son, as it were ..." *Comm. in Ioh.* 1:19; GCS Origen 4, 24.

Dionysius of Rome which Athanasius has preserved. Referring to Proverbs 8:22 the Roman bishop insists that the verb “to create” may have different meanings and that in this passage it cannot possibly mean “to make” in the sense of “to bring into being”. In support of his argument Dionysius cites Psalms 110 (LXX Psalms 109):3, Proverbs 8:25, and Colossians 1:15. He comments:

In many passages of the divine oracles the Son is said to have been begotten (*gegennesthai*) but nowhere to have come into being (*gegonenai*).²¹

During the course of the Arian controversy a number of writers had occasion to comment on Proverbs 8:22ff, and some followed a line similar to what we find in Origen and Dionysius. Eusebius of Caesarea in effect argued that the verb “created” of verse 22 did not mean what the Arians claimed. The context of Eusebius’ principal discussion of the Proverbs passage is his polemic against Marcellus in *De Ecclesiastica Theologia* 3. Although he does not mention Arius by name here, Eusebius is clearly arguing that the Church is not faced with a stark choice between Marcellus’ exegesis (e.g., applying Proverbs 8 to the Incarnation) and that of the Arians. In fact, some time before the controversy over Marcellus’ views, and possibly before Arius had become notorious, Eusebius had had occasion to comment on Proverbs 8:22 in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*. Here he comments that, although verse 22 indicates that Wisdom is a *geneton*, this term is to be understood in a qualified sense, making it closer in meaning to *gennēma*.²² When dealing with the proverbs passage in more detail in *De Ecclesiastica Theologia* 3:2, Eusebius argues that the passage proves that God and the Wisdom which figures in Proverbs 8 are not one and the same: the Wisdom of

²¹ Dionysius is quoted in Athanasius, *De Decretis*, Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 25, 464D-465A.

²² *Dem.ev.* 5:1, GCS Eusebius 6, 210ff.

this text is not merely an accident or a predicate (a *symbama*—a word rarely found in early Christian writers)²³. This Wisdom is in fact the Word or Son of God, of whom Paul said "... Christ, the power of God and the Wisdom of God"²⁴. Eusebius has no doubt that the words of Proverbs 8:22ff are spoken by the Son, and he argues:

Even if he says that he was created, he does not mean this in the sense of passing from non-existence into existence, not that he too, like all the other creatures, was made out of nothing, as some have supposed in error; but rather that he subsists and lives, being before and existing before the creation of the whole world, having been ordained to rule over all things by the Lord, his Father, and the passage says "created" rather than "ordained" or "appointed".²⁵

Eusebius cites other passages from Scripture to show that "to create" is not always used in the absolute sense of "to bring into being out of nothing"; it is sometimes used *metaphorikos*.²⁶ However, Eusebius main point of originality lies not so much in these arguments as in his appeal to the Hebrew text, no doubt through the medium of Origen's *Hexapla*. Eusebius points out that in the Greek versions produced by Aquila, Theodotion and Symmachus we find that Proverbs 8:22 reads *ektēsato*—"possessed" or "acquired"—rather than the *ektisen* of the LXX. Eusebius agrees that *ektēsato* (from *ктаομαι*) is a more accurate rendering of the original Hebrew (e.g., the verb *qanah*, which Eusebius does not mention as such), and he argues that, whereas *ktisis* is popularly understood as implying the transition

²³ GCS Eusebius 4, 139.

²⁴ 1 Corinthians 1:24.

²⁵ GCS Eusebius 4, 140. In answer to these comments the Arians might well have asked why, if the Son was in fact "ordained" to rule over all things, the text in question does not actually say "ordained" but rather "created"!

²⁶ GCS Eusebius 4, 141. Eusebius quotes Amos 4:13, Psalms 51:10, Ephesians 2:15; 4:24, 2 Corinthians 5:17.

from non-existence to existence, *ktesis* on the other hand indicates a relationship between that which is already in existence and the one who does the “possessing”:

Therefore, when the Son of God says: “The Lord possessed (*ektēsato*) me as the beginning of his ways for his works”, he was declaring both his pre-existence and his unique relationship to the Father, and at the same time the value and necessity of his own personal care and control of his Father’s works.²⁷

Eusebius points out at some length Marcellus’ insistence that the whole passage refers to the flesh which the Saviour assumed.²⁸ The amount of space which Eusebius devotes to Marcellus’ interpretation is an indication of the strong feelings which he held on the matter. What annoyed Eusebius was not that Marcellus took issue with the Arians over Proverbs 8 but rather the way in which he did so.

The factor which shaped Marcellus’ interpretation of Proverbs 8:22-31 is the conviction that the passage refers to the Incarnation of the Word. He appears to accept without question the reading *ektisen me* of verse 22, but he insists that this refers to the *deutera oikonomia*. When we refer to the origin of Christ’s humanity “it is fitting to speak of ‘creation’”²⁹. The Lord created the Saviour through the Virgin Mary³⁰, and in this connection

²⁷ GCS Eusebius 4, 143. Gregory of Nyssa, writing against the latter-day Arian Eunomius, also draws attention to the original Hebrew behind Proverbs 8:22. However, Gregory is prepared to accept the rendering which Eunomius is using and his main thrust is that the verse does in fact refer to the Incarnation: “He was created when he became man”; “The words ‘created me’ do not proceed from the divine and immortal nature but from that which was commingled with it in the Incarnation from our created nature ... The sense of ‘created me’ has reference to the humanity”. *Cont. Eunom.* 2:10; 3:2.

²⁸ GCS Eusebius 4, 144.

²⁹ Marcellus, fragment 9, Klostermann, 187.

³⁰ Marcellus, fragment 10, Klostermann, 187.

Marcellus has no difficulty accepting that the *ektisen* of Proverbs 8:22 means “brought into existence”:

God our master, when he made what had not existed, truly created. For what “he created as the beginning of his ways” was not flesh which already existed and which the Word then assumed, but rather that which did not exist.³¹

According to Marcellus, when Scripture speaks of Christ prophetically in the words, “The Lord created me the beginning of his ways”, we are to see this as relating to the “ways” established by the incarnate Lord:

It was therefore right, since old things had passed away and all things were about to become new through the new life of our Saviour; that our master Christ should declare through the prophet, “The Lord created me the beginning of his ways”.³²

For to us who intend to live righteously he is the way to the fear of God, the beginning of all ways that lead from here.³³

He rightly calls our master and Saviour “the beginning of ways”, because he is the beginning also of all the other ways that we have had that come after the first way. This signifies the traditions of the holy apostles who have, in accordance with the prophecy, proclaimed to us this new mystery “in the most exalted of proclamations”.³⁴

Similarly, when Proverbs 8:22 says, “The Lord created me the beginning of his ways *for his works*”, we are to understand these “works” as meaning those of the incarnate Word, the works to which Christ referred when he said, “My Father works until now, and so do I”, and, “I have completed the work which you gave me”.³⁵

³¹ Marcellus, fragment 11, Klostermann, 187.

³² Marcellus, fragment 12, Klostermann, 187.

³³ Marcellus, fragment 13, Klostermann, 187.

³⁴ Marcellus, fragment 14, Klostermann, 187.

³⁵ Marcellus, fragment 15, Klostermann, 187.

Moving on to Proverbs 8:23—*pro tou aiōnos ethemeliōsen me en archē*—Marcellus says that the use of the singular *aionos* is significant. In his opinion, it refers to the “age” which follows the ministry of the incarnate Word. The text does not say *pro ton aiōnon* (plural) and so Proverbs 8 cannot be referring to the foundation of the Son “before the ages”³⁶. Asterius, the “Arian” against whom Marcellus was writing, had obviously interpreted the verbs “created”, “established” and “begets” in terms of the creation of the Son “before the ages”, just as Arius himself had said of the Son, “Begotten outside time by the Father, created and established before the ages, before being begotten he was not”³⁷. As well as insisting that there is a fundamental difference between “age” and “ages”, Marcellus argues that the verb “established”, like “created”, refers to the incarnation, the *kata sarka oikonomia*. The Apostle Paul had said, “No man can lay any other foundation than the one laid, which is Christ Jesus”, and so it is obvious that Proverbs 8:23 speaks of the laying of a “foundation” in Christ.³⁸ Marcellus anticipates his opponents’ argument that the phrase “before the age” (*pro tou aiōnos*) implies a divine activity at some time before the incarnation; in other words they would interpret the text as meaning, “Before the age [of the incarnation] he established me.” Marcellus responds by saying that, because both the purpose of God and also the prophesying of the new dispensation existed *before* the age of the incarnation, the phrase “before the age” is quite appropriate.

Just as the Almighty God long ago foreordained the Church, so in his thought he first laid the foundations of the dispensation of Christ in the flesh, through whom he purposed to call the race of godly men “unto adoption”.³⁹

³⁶ Marcellus, fragment 17, Klostermann, 187f.

³⁷ Arius to Alexander, Opitz, *Urkunde* 6, 13.

³⁸ Marcellus, fragments 17-18, Klostermann, 187f.

³⁹ Marcellus, fragment 19, Klostermann, 188.

Though this new mystery has been revealed in what are indeed the last times, yet because this was foreordained before this age it was appropriate that the prophecy should say, "Before this age he laid my foundations".⁴⁰

Eusebius preserves for us Marcellus' allegorical interpretations of the various phrases used in Proverbs 8:24-25. According to Marcellus, "before the earth was made" refers to human flesh, which Scripture describes as "earth" ("dust")⁴¹. Marcellus rather tortuously applies this phrase to the healing of human nature through the work of Christ, rather than simply to the flesh which Christ assumed⁴². "Before the oceans were made" (verse 24) refers to "the hearts of the saints, which in their depths have the gift of the Spirit"⁴³.

As for what is said next—"Before the springs of water came forth"—Marcellus takes this as a reference to the Apostles. Why he should do so is not immediately obvious, but it becomes clearer when we bear in mind a traditional interpretation of the twelve springs of Elim mentioned in Exodus 15:27. Tertullian⁴⁴ and Origen⁴⁵ saw the twelve springs as a type of the Apostles, who were commissioned to evangelize and to baptize all nations, and, going a step further than them, Marcellus links together Exodus 15:27, Matthew 28:19 and Proverbs 8:24b:

And so the Saviour said to the holy springs, "Go and make disciples of all nations".⁴⁶

The next verse, 25, is also interpreted as referring to the Apostles:

⁴⁰ Marcellus, fragment 20, Klostermann, 188.

⁴¹ An allusion to Genesis 2:7 and 3:19.

⁴² Marcellus, fragment 21, Klostermann, 188.

⁴³ Marcellus, fragment 22, Klostermann, 188.

⁴⁴ *Adv. Marcionem* IV:13:4, *Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina*, Tertullian vol. 1, 572f.

⁴⁵ *Hom in Ex.* 7:3, GCS Origen, vol. 6, 207f.

⁴⁶ Marcellus, fragment 25, Klostermann, 189.

He says, "Before the mountains were set in place, and before all the hills, he begets me". By "mountains" and "hills" he means the Apostles and the Apostles' successors, indicating by a figure of speech how righteously they lived compared with other men.⁴⁷

Again, Marcellus was following a line of interpretation which was not altogether novel. In Hippolytus⁴⁸ and in Origen⁴⁹ we find examples where the mountains and hills mentioned in the Old Testament are seen as prophetic references to the Apostles.

As for the latter part of Proverbs 8:22-31, Marcellus has to make a rigid division between verses 22-25 and the rest of the passage. Verses 22-25 are made to refer to the Incarnation, with the help of a good deal of typological exegesis. However, Marcellus would have found himself in real difficulties if he had tried to force this line of interpretation consistently in the following six verses. He is content, it seems, to accept that verse 26-31 refer to the creation of the world through the Word:

Since it was not possible that God should consider the creation of the heavens apart from his Word and the wisdom the belongs to the Word, Scripture has rightly said, "When he set out the heavens I was with him".⁵⁰

For before the world existed the Word was in the Father. When Almighty God decided to make all things in heaven and on earth, the origin of the universe required an active, efficient force. For this reason, since there was no one apart from God (for, as everyone agrees, all things were made by him), the Word came forth and became the maker of the universe, he who first of all prepared it in thought within his own being, as Solomon the prophet teaches us when he says ... [Proverbs 8:27-30].⁵¹

⁴⁷ Marcellus, fragment 27, Klostermann, 189.

⁴⁸ *De Benedic. Jacobi* 27, C. Diobouniotis & N. Beis ed., 12.

⁴⁹ *Comm. in Cant.* 3, GCS Origen, vol. 8, 201, 205.

⁵⁰ Marcellus, fragment 59, Klostermann, 195.

⁵¹ Marcellus, fragment 60, Klostermann, 196.

Eusebius of Caesarea points out the obvious fact that:

He who said, "When he set out the heavens I was with him", was the same as he that said, "The Lord created me the beginning of his ways for his works".⁵²

He points out the basic weakness in Marcellus' interpretation:

If it was the flesh which said, "Before the oceans were made, before the springs of water ...", it follows that, "When he set out the heavens I was with him", must also be said on behalf of the flesh!⁵³

How Marcellus would have replied to this charge of inconsistency we can only guess.

Marcellus' interpretation of Proverbs 8 is an excellent example of his opposition to Arianism and of his desire to maintain the unity of the Godhead at all costs. However, he is rather vague as to who exactly is speaking in this passage. If the Word is the subject of the whole passage then he appears to speak as someone who has a distinct existence—something which does not fit easily into Marcellus' theology. If the incarnate Word (i.e. in Marcellus, the Son) is the subject then verse 27ff would mean that the *incarnate* Word, and not simply *the Word*, co-operated with the Father in the work of creation. If the whole of the passage is essentially poetic language, where divine wisdom is personalized and the role of divine wisdom in creation and providence is dramatized, then many of the problems created by the Arian interpretation are solved. Marcellus tackles the passage with the assumption that it speaks specifically of the divine Word (as distinct from the Father) rather than of wisdom as a divine attribute. Consequently he rather ties himself in knots by arguing that verses 22-25 speak of the incarnate Word,

⁵² *De Eccles. Theol.* 3:3, GCS Eusebius, vol. 4, 153.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 154.

whereas verses 26-30 speak of the Word or Wisdom through which the world was made.

Athanasius attempted a similar line of interpretation of Proverbs 8, although he made a strict distinction between *ektisen* (verse 22) and *genna* (verse 25). Anxious to counter the Arian argument that, according to verse 22, the Son is a creature, Athanasius claimed that *ektisen me* referred to the humanity of Christ.⁵⁴ Similarly, the clause *pro tou aiōnos ethemeliōsen me* referred, Athanasius says, to the purpose which God had of building his church upon Christ;⁵⁵ *genna me*, on the other hand, refers to the unique relationship between the Father and the Son, a relationship which distinguishes the Son altogether from the category of created beings⁵⁶. Athanasius' interpretation of these verses is in some ways more satisfying because it avoids the strained exegesis which we find in Marcellus, but Athanasius too is open to the charge of inconsistency in his handling of Proverbs 8:22-31.

Another interpretation—also involving a sharp distinction between *ektisen* and *genna*—is that of Gregory of Nazianzus. In the *Fourth Theological Oration* he argues that in studying what Scripture says about the Son we should adopt the principle of attributing to the deity the higher and diviner expressions, and the lower and more human to him who for us men was the Second Adam.⁵⁷

Gregory is prepared to accept the view of “the sacrilegious robbers of the Bible and the thieves of the sense of its contents’ that Proverbs 8:22 refers to ‘our Saviour himself, the true Wisdom’.⁵⁸ But whereas ‘created me’ refers to the humanity of Christ”—because “created” implies a cause and therefore cannot refer to his deity—the phrase “begets me” (verse 25) does not admit the idea of a cause. Therefore,

⁵⁴ *Contra Ar.* 2:46, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Second Series*, vol. 4, 373.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:73-77, 388ff.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:57-61, 379ff.

⁵⁷ *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Second Series*, vol. 7, 309.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 309f.

Wisdom is called a creature in connection with the lower generation, but begotten in respect of the first and more incomprehensible.⁵⁹

Gregory is aware of people who interpret the words of Proverbs 8 “as those of Wisdom herself ... For Scripture personifies many even lifeless objects”⁶⁰. But he does not specify which writers he has in mind and he makes it clear that he does not agree with them.

Conclusion

A major feature of the controversies of the fourth century was the tendency to make certain passages of Scripture into battlefields, or strategic points which must be captured if the campaign as a whole is to be successful. Certainly, the exegesis of Scripture is not a task which Christian theology can afford to neglect. If Scripture means anything at all then it is worth taking the trouble to find out what that meaning is. However, it has perhaps been overlooked that what is important is the totality of the Biblical witness. In doctrinal controversies there is always the danger that certain passages become isolated as all-important, while the rest of Scripture is treated as almost superfluous. The exegesis of Scripture obviously entails the exegesis of specific passages and indeed individual words, but too often this exercise can become a scouring of Scripture for proof-texts to be used in defence of established positions. This article has concentrated on one passage which was used as a weapon by different sides during the Arian controversy. One wonders if the energy expended in pressing such a text into service really contributed to a better understanding of the passage in its Biblical context.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 309.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 309.

Thoughts about Eternity. A Review Article

JAMES MCMAHON

Albert Ellis Institute

ABSTRACT. This article is based upon a recent book written by retired Episcopal Bishop, John Shelby Spong, *Eternal Life. A New Vision*, published by Harper Collins, New York, 2009. The present writer summarized some of Spong's background presented in the text and from limited sources outside the text. The presentation thereafter looked at Spong's major premises of how he undertoods anthropology, human consciousness, the role of religion, and declarative statements about the former which served as leap-off points for Spong, and an examination of his conclusions. All the while, Spong reminded his readers that his purpose was to deal with matters concerning death, heaven, hell, and eternity. Agree with his conclusions or not, Spong achieved his goals based upon the way he cast his arguments.

KEY WORDS: fundamentalism, anthropology, consciousness, self consciousness, Christianity

Some Salient Issues in the Personal and Public Life of John Shelby Spong

In the preface to this 227 page effort followed by chapter notes, bibliography, and index, the former Episcopal Bishop (Anglican Communion) of Newark, John Spong opined that it would probably be his last book. He was born in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1930, so sometime in 2010 he will reach his eightieth birthday.

In the first several chapters and then in a chapter toward the end of the text, Bushop Spong outlined his various childhood encounters with the deaths of family and friends, his upbringing in a local Presbyterian church, and his education in local public schools in Charlotte. Poignantly, Spong wrote about his father's death followed by the relocation of his family to a less spacious house more distant from the City due to family fiscal realities. He also wrote about having met an aunt who was visiting from Pennsylvania and who took him for the first time to an Episcopal church. He was "hooked" quickly into the pomp, circumstances, liturgy, Bible study, choir, and Book of Common Prayer.

Concerning a young man who had returned from the Second World War, young Spong recounted how that War veteran was one who appealed as model to him because theretofore Spong—as boy had conceptualized the ministry to be comprised of older men only. From independent and text sources known to this reviewer, Spong attended the University of North Carolina from which he was graduated Phi Beta Kappa in just three years, following which he completed the Virginia Episcopal Seminary¹. Thereafter, Spong was ordained a priest and stationed in a Durham, NC parish by the time he was 24 (and he was married and had fathered his three daughters by the time he was 28). Spong was elected a Bishop in his early Forties and installed in Newark. He championed the poor, the downtrodden, the gay, women, and other groups that he judged to have been treated unfairly by the institutional church. He also established an annual lecture series in Newark that featured internationally known theologians, philosophers, and literary critics. (A person who had read Spong's 2000 autobiography, *Here I Stand*, could reasonably conclude that the lectures reflected broadly Spong's own interest and sense of phronesis.)

¹ J. S. Spong, *Here I Stand. My Struggle for a Christianity of Integrity, Love and Equality* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001).

Several of Bishop Spong's books were published while he served actively in the Newark Diocese, just across from New York². As a sometimes reader of philosophical and theological literature as well as the popular press, this writer recalls the celebrity and probable maverick status that followed the Bishop. Yet, Spong was a churchman when it came to Episcopal institutional polity. For example, one parish in Jersey City decided it would withdraw from the Diocese because of disagreements with Spong and that the congregation would lay claim to the property. The property—after an attempt at civil law suit by the trustees of the parish—reverted back to the Diocese. Spong's attorneys successfully had the civil action removed to ecclesiastical procedures with the upshot being that the congregation was free to leave if it wished while the property belonged to the Diocese.

When new churches were planted, and with the assistance of retired Iowa Episcopal Bishop, Walter Wrighter, Bishop Spong encouraged each vestry, the lay group elected by parish colleagues, to conduct local church business and to select lead and assisting clergy. Some clergy led in ways that could be considered Anglo-Catholic, while others were clearly Evangelical. A few were very "liberal" in that they used the Book of Common Prayer in constructive ways. Most reflected the "bridge church" philosophy wherein both Catholics and Protestants generally felt at home.

As part of the Anglican Communion, the Episcopal Church in the United States argued for apostolic succession, so Holy Orders were conceptualized within that context. There was a communion rail open to any Baptized Christian with Anglican-Episcopal theologians arguing that the bread and wine were more than memorials yet were not the same as some specifics

² See: Spong, *Born of a Woman* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992) and *Why Christianity Must Change or Die* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998).

promulgated as Council of Trent definitions.³ There was music that some Catholics and most Protestants would recognize, yet with some pomp that most Catholics would recognize and that many Protestants might think to be too Catholic. In the current text that serves as basis for this review article, Spong seemed to enjoy writing that eight of his assistants in the Newark Diocese have now been installed (elected and then religiously confirmed) as Bishops in the Episcopal Church of the United States of America (ECUSA).

Whatever press celebrity the Bishop had was earned by him either through probable combinations of sensationalism (writing style often) and/or scholarship. This writer has heard the Bishop referred to as a “liberal”, as a “theological lightweight”, and as an “innovator” and “brilliant 21st century leader and savior of Christianity” whose arguments set a tone to force even stolid and entrenched believers who think to consider other possibilities other than what they have learned. One anecdote which this writer was able to verify circumstantially took place when an older woman slapped the Bishop’s face when he was visiting and attending church outside of his Diocese because she judged that he was involved with other women while his first wife was alive. In fact, Joan L. K. Spong (1929-1988) was being cared for due to terminal dementia in that location. The women with the Bishop were his daughters. John Spong was loyal to his wife and family, to the Diocese that elected him, and to the very nature of the Episcopal communion. The reader can judge in the comments below (or by reading the text him or herself) whether the Bishop has now gone too far—beyond his complaints about fundamentalists, about his interpretation of Christian doctrines, and about church polity—since his retirement as Bishop of Newark in the year 2000.

Since his retirement as presiding Bishop, Spong’s texts have come frequently and they apparently have sold well. He has lectured at Harvard, Drew, and in the United Kingdom, and the

³ E. Pagels, *Beyond Belief* (New York: Random House, 2004).

retired Bishop maintains a webpage from which a subscriber can read weekly messages. Spong's editor for the text under review urged that he write about death from a personal perspective.

Fundamentalism and Anthropology

Spong had a habit throughout the book of making a declarative statement and then assuming that it represented an "insight" for the reader. He did not write that exactly, but the assumption seemed implicit because the Bishop was sharing his own so called insight with the hope, goal, or intention that the reader would experience it too. There was no evidence of mere solipsism by the Bishop since his breadth of knowledge ranged from history, scripture, church polity, physics, anthropology, psychology, and other domains.

Despite this phronesis, however, this writer concluded that Spong's writing in this text took some leaps in logic—perhaps because space was limited to a "what length of book will sell" condition imposed by his publisher. More often than *insight*, however, especially when Spong lambasted fundamentalists (again) and with his take on anthropology, this writer concluded that the Bishop was explaining and defining concepts in one place in his text that differed from his definitions and explanations elsewhere. Either the differences could be a tribute to Spong's diversity, or there was some incoherence.

For example, the term religion (which implied organized religion, and especially organized Christian denominations) was used in at least five different ways in this text. No matter which use, however, Bishop Spong wrote as both self-exploration and expostulation. He recounted, for example, how unfolding scientific and Enlightenment evidence as paradigm shift placed pressure on Christianity to examine itself. At Princeton Theological Seminary at the beginning of the 20th century, money was sought to launch amongst the ministry a strong presentation of apologetics, or *ad fontes*—clear and precise statements of funda-

mentals of Christianity. From that movement, the term “fundamentalist” became popular—a term that is now a-historical and can be used in pejorative sense with the intent of denigration.

Bishop Spong recounted an anthropology that is well known and repetitive; namely, that many beliefs about a virgin birth, crucifixion, risen savior, and atonement were imported into Christianity by writers who summarized and embellished oral tradition well after the death of Jesus. Yet, he had no trouble accepting many statements from John’s Gospel, so that some arguments seemed to violate the logical fallacy of *a tu quoque*. For examples, the founders of anthropology in England, Taylor at Oxford and Frazer at Liverpool, offered explanations about the origins of religion.⁴ Yet, Bishop Spong seems not to have been aware of the earlier work of Robert Marett who argued not for explanation of religion but descriptions pieced together to show that its origins were not for security (as Spong argued) since families, groups, and political organization accomplished that goal. Instead, Marett argued that religion first represented a sense of awe, wonder, and respect—that its origins were far more emotional than intellectual.⁵ Further, Spong took a side-long glance at Carl Jung’s archetypes which really represented an attempt to show that human beings thought-felt within parameters. Rare individuals, it seemed, could think outside of the box, to use a current term, but they were rare (and their thinking-feeling usually represented some combination of known archetypes). Spong also seemed not to have been familiar with arguments for an unfolding Christianity (from little acorns, mighty oaks grow, e.g.) especially written about by John Henry Cardinal Newman.⁶

⁴ J. McMahon, *Happiness as a Goal of Pastoral Counseling. A Context for Theology* (Cluj: Babeş -Bolyai University Press, 2010).

⁵ Robert Marret, *Psychology and Folklore* (New York: Kessinger Publishing, 2010).

⁶ J. MacQuarrie, *Twentieth Century Religious Thought* (London: SCM Publishers, 1963).

Consciousness and Self-Consciousness

Throughout the text, the term *consciousness* was used without precise definition. Without naming him, Spong did allude to some of Daniel Dennett's work which argued that consciousness as awareness to stimuli (especially light) extending far down into the mammalian chain—perhaps even to amphioxus (lancelet or cephalochordata)—the first animal with and without a backbone-spinal chord.⁷ It was left to the reader to try to discern what to make of the term itself in the human condition, although Spong did argue that self-consciousness was a condition that distinguished human beings from other mammals while conferring upon them the personal pronoun, "I" (i.e. humans differed in kind not just in type from other animals—and especially in how they dealt with idea of past-present-future). There was no empirically derived definition other than the declarative statement that human beings were self-conscious with some examples of how they were self-conscious. Further, his argument was brain based: no brain, no self-consciousness. While this argument can itself posit the brain as a *necessary* condition of self-consciousness, there was no evidence from the good Bishop regarding why or how it was *sufficient* as an explanation. If Spong's attempt with this kernel was to make it *res ipsa loquitur*, it seemed weak to this writer.

Mortimer Adler⁸ argued as had Aquinas and Aristotle before him that a human being was a rational animal. While any argument that ontogeny recapitulated phylogeny would not be exactly correct, in the broad sense human beings have passed through single cell, vegetative, amphibian, and animal stages of development. The single cell example is conspicuous (sperm meets egg to form a zygote in human beings). Being vegetative—sometimes a put down term used by teachers to describe students who underachieve—is a condition that persists: when we eat an apple or tomato, sooner or later part of it will become

⁷ D. Dennet, *Consciousness Explained* (New York: Back Bay Books, 1992).

⁸ M. Adler, *How to Think About God* (New York: Bantam Books, 1980).

human; or, light has an effect upon brain tissue that is post-retina, and disruption can lead to problems such as seasonal adjustment disorder. Our likenesses to the amphibians with respiration, the gill slits extant in the neck of each human, and the amount of water (possibly 90%) that makes up each human body would point to this developmental stage. Human beings possess many similar functions as do other animals including respiration, circulation, reproduction, and digestion, *inter alia*.

When it came to consciousness and self-consciousness, however, Spong's argument emphasized hardware rather than software as partner or single explanation. For example, John Searle has argued persuasively against artificial intelligence (AI) without the presence of software. In similar manner, Robert Sharpe has argued for the human mind being explained by language, language about language, and reflective and sophisticated language about language to account for abstraction. Martin Luther argued against universals in favor of local languages or nominalism; however, he also argued against generalizations within language groups—perhaps because he detested them. Today, categories and generalizations as classes seem to represent good language construction and probable reality. Back to Sharpe: he did not make the mistake of the logical empiricists, linguistic analysts, or logical positivists. Each of them called for use of the verification principle, and none was able to subject itself to that principle. Positivism, then, is muddled and incoherent because it is trapped in the contradiction that it inherently affirms what it explicitly denies. That same criticism would extend to analytic theology as well: like Descartes who argued for a body and mind that could not meet (and so he put humanity on the road to skepticism), theological analytic language seems all about God without making the connection.

Shaking the Foundations of Christianity

Bishop Spong argued that three large paradigm shifts have helped to undermine the authority of the Christian religion.

First, he argued that the Enlightenment ushered in anti-authoritarianism. He concluded that religion depended upon some transcendent God who was “out there”, as well as a God who doled out rewards and punishments. Another challenge was to the concept of the “one true church” claimed by various religious denominations. Spong lumped the Protestant Reformation into this category since much of the emphasis was not only against central authority, but in favor of an individual person’s relationship to God. He mentioned the stand of Luther, the individualism of Kierkegaard, and rise of democratic states with liberal parties that threw off religions that clung to conservative values. He did not mention that it could be argued *a fortiori* that Aquinas could be considered the father of existentialism well before Kierkegaard, and that that two-thirds of Europe remained under the then religious authority (and that many amongst the Reformers formed denominations or they functioned well under State control as in England). In order to attack religion, of course, there was the conundrum that the texts vouchsafing the history of civilization at the time were in large measure kept and made available by those very same religions. On his deathbed, the forceful voice of Marie Arouet yielded his rails against church and organized religion as he called for his local priest to give him the sacrament of the living (extreme unction): he was better known as the Voice of the Enlightenment, Voltaire.

A second movement to shake the foundations of religion came with Darwin and his theory of evolution. With that theory and its evidence for uncaused and/or unguided development, Spong wrote that any argument for or need of a God who caused the process was irrational. He made no distinction between Darwin’s work and theory which would be based upon radiations leading to survival of the fittest, Gould’s argument for chance selection from amongst competitors (as in Spong’s argument that no human being was unique and that each and all were the result of just one from hundreds of millions of sperm meeting one ovum—although the Bishop forgot to take

into account that two ova were probably available for fertilization at any given time, as in twins who were dizygotic), or a hybrid theory combining Lamark-Darwin-Gould. Lamark's theory, so favored by Marx-Engles, argued for survival from function, and that theory languished except in the halls of Moscow State University and in the minds of dominance dreamers such as Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Hitler, and bin Laden. So far as is known, each human being has a distinct fingerprint, and each has a unique combination of stories (narratives) that make him or her. While the DNA of each human is largely the same, testing using DNA alleles has more than anything shown that one person differs from another up to odds greater than 100 trillion to 1. Since there are about 6 billion people on our planet, uniqueness would seem to support arguments that join yet oppose those from the Bishop.

The last paradigm concerned Newton and his work which overturned the globe theory of life in here and God out there. Of course, Newton continued to believe in a God of the universe during and after his discoveries about how it was organized and how it stayed in existence (gravity). Yet, Einstein posited that gravity could not account for change that approached the speed of light and so he argued for relativity. In fact, while Nietzsche claimed to have destroyed metaphysics or the house in which God lived, Einstein seems to have restored it. Since $E=mc^2$, the fourth dimension will have obtained. Thus, when space and time meet, there is no change: Christians describe that phenomenon as eternity. Further, consider the following from Spong:

From all we know about the physical universe itself—and that knowledge is both massive and extensive—there is no hint anywhere that anything in the universe shares in eternity. Even the universe itself had a beginning, which means that the universe itself is finite. We can today speculate in very intelligent ways about how the universe will end and even project an approximate date on which that ending will occur. Things that have a beginning al-

ways have endings, no matter how much time expires between the two events. This means that everything is mortal and, therefore, that nothing is eternal.⁹

When the foregoing statement is unpacked, it would seem reasonable to argue that no one thing shares in eternity. However, when one argues from Einstein's point of view, any one thing when moved fast enough equates to energy so that time (change) ceases to exist as the dimensions of space are eliminated. Eternity is distinguished from infinity in that the former means without change, whereas the latter can imply not only limitlessness but also a series without end as in numbers (or as chemists would argue, in matter which can neither be created nor destroyed). Now, if the universe had a beginning, there is a God: from nothing, nothing comes. This argument from Mortimer Adler, the New York Jew who converted to Christianity on his deathbed, and William Lane Craig, the Evangelical philosopher trained at Louvain who is now at Biola University is self-evident and represents logic *a tu quoque* contra Spong. In science, however, a cause is not merely a force outside that results in the effect of movement, as in the fall of a line of dominos once one is pushed. In science, a cause in part—as in our parents—resides in the effect. God, then, by analogy resides within creation in ways not directly commented about in this review article, but which could offer a ground for immanence.

Upon examination it would seem that the three great shifts posited by Spong have resulted in as much support for the God of religion as Spong marshaled to try to make his case. Leaving aside some of what he considered to be psychoanalytic arguments ultimately traceable to Freud that religion treats adults as children searching for a father substitute whom they have invented and called God, others have argued the converse. Alfred Adler, like Vaihinger before him, argued for teleology or goals/reasons for human behavior. Carl Jung anticipated later

⁹ Spong, *Born of a Woman* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 180.

work such as that of Mario Beauregard of Montreal whose neurophysiological arguments for a human animating force (soul) and destiny (God) are current and exquisite. Further, centers at Columbia University and Arizona State University are exploring neurotheology, or the argument based on brain science that human beings are built to believe in God.

The Crucible and Conclusions

However, Spong turned to the crucible of his argument against eternity as a place where humans go in favor of mystical arguments that the divine resides within each of us now. This process in the history of religion and the early history of Christianity is called immanence. The Bishop drew many of his arguments from his own journey while he seemed well aware of others who came before him such as Meister Eckhard. He leaned on some of the work of Paul Tillich especially, that philosopher of theology whose arguments were for God as the ground of all being. He did not explore immanence that was so important to Aquinas, as it was to the Desert Fathers, to Dennis the Aeropagite, and to a cohort of similar believers. The Bishop said flatly that he did believe in eternity as transcendent transformation that escaped the bounds of religious belief—that is, moved beyond them. He argued from John's Gospel using statements and limited contexts to support his conclusions that we humans were not animals who from time to time participated in a spiritual life, but instead that we were spiritual beings who shared the DNA of all beings in the universe—humans for whom God was closer to each of us than we were to ourselves.

Throughout the text which resulted in two very well written chapters that argued for the crucible mentioned and how we were each God-centered beings for the whole of our existence, Bishop Spong's arguments seemed to be of the either—or variety (*pace* to Kierkegaard): either the reader would accept the feeble, childlike myths of organized Christian denomination, or they would adopt his point of view. An alternate way of argu-

ment would be the and-and variety: that one could argue for a spiritual life similar to that concluded by Spong and for a God of the universe who acts to sustain it¹⁰ and whose immanence pervades it, especially in human beings because they are unique and are taught to see themselves created in God's image and likeness (i.e. that they are part of what Heidegger called being—there, although Heidegger's work was not discussed).

Any argument resting on the crucible argued for by Spong, or for that matter any existentialism including that of Aquinas, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Marcel, Buber, or Levinas owes its moorings to Plato. It will be recalled that Whitehead opined in what is now a well-known aphorism that all philosophy in Europe including that from the 20th century was but a footnote to Plato. In that sense, Bishop Spong's crucible seemed to be a throwback to Plato coupled with enormous modern erudition (his own which this writer has referred to as phronesis). Mortimer Adler's argument for a true cosmology seems to have escaped or was judged not to be important by the Bishop. In his 1980 book, *How to Think about God*, Adler argued for a being whose existence could be demonstrated from the weight of empirical evidence other than as argued for by Aristotle and Aquinas plus a few Neo-Scholastics including William Lane Craig. In contrast, Platonists and Neo-Platonists such as Bishop Spong used empiricism as parallel support for being *qua* being. Simply stated, Spong's crucible rests upon and within Platonism, whereas Platonism rests upon empiricism as was demonstrated in the criticism of Anselm by Gaunilo the Monk, Aquinas, and Kant. Perhaps either the Bishop or those who have read him carefully will explore and write about this integration in future texts and in these supposed postmodern times.

A last point concerning postmodernism: this writer has argued elsewhere that modernism is hardly dead. The march of science, of the internet, of international banking, of travel, and of shared cultures all instantiate modernism. Postmodernism in

¹⁰ Adler, *How to Think about God* (New York: Bantam Books, 1980).

the persons of Foucault, Derrida, and Beaudrillard as examples does not dominate the work of Kandel, Gates, Buffet, and the Rolling Stones. Postmodernism has contributed by trying to call attention to grand schemes that are totalitarian and freedom thwarting, but it has hardly resulted in a displacement of modernism. Christianity, further, has not only survived modernism, but it also has survived early threats against it such as various gnosticisms, Marcion, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, various totalitarianisms, deconstructionists, logical analysts, and post-liberals. Bishop Spong has emphasized one important way of functioning within and without organized religion (read that as both the invisible and visible church) among the several available to the human family—and he has emphasized it in cogent, often terse, yet lucid style in the text used as the basis of this article. As a result, it seemed to this writer that Bishop Spong achieved his goal of personalizing and popularizing eternity within a new vision. That vision includes seeing eternity as a state of being rather than as a place, and that it exists *now* for Christians and kindred spirits who can see and think about life and death from Bishop Spong's perspective. That could prove quite difficult for Evangelicals, Catholics, and many Orthodox Christians who could respect the Bishop for his efforts and his constructions but who might opt for an either/or stance akin to that of John Spong but within a wholly different context.

Various reports about the late Pope John Paul II indicated that, when asked about it shortly before his death, Wojtyła concluded that heaven or eternal beatitude was more a state of being than a place. He saw no inconsistency in his private opinion with that taught within his own religious denomination. Had he, the writer was reminded of the following: "... there stands one's own conscience which must be obeyed before all else, even if necessary against the requirements of ecclesiastical authority. The emphasis on the individual, whose conscience confronts him with a supreme and ultimate tribunal, and one

which in the last resort is beyond the claim of external social groups, even the official Church, also establishes a principle in opposition to increasing totalitarianism.”¹¹

¹¹ Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, *Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 5 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 134.

Myth, Intermediacy, and Transcendence in Paul Ricoeur's Concept of Fallibility

CORNELIU C. SIMUȚ

Emanuel University

ABSTRACT. This article presents Ricoeur's attempt to pass from a theoretical understanding of human fallibility to a more pragmatic approach which is supposed to explain the reality of man's capacity to choose evil. Man is fallible because he lives as a finite being in contrast with the infinitude of God. As God's infinitude and ontology cannot be grasped by man, it seems more logical to discuss the existence of man's fallibility as intermediacy between various levels of human finitude rather than making reference to God's infinitude. Thus, the infinitude of god should actually be conceived in terms of man's finitude, which also leads to the dramatic redefinition of the idea of transcendence. Ricoeur can work with the concept of transcendence for as long as transcendence points to human realities, which can be properly assessed and comprehended only by philosophy. Religion and theology cannot explain man's reality as a fallible being in a global way; this is why, resorting to philosophy should fix this problem because, in Ricoeur, it is only philosophy which can understand the complexity of the human being in its swinging between finitude and infinitude.

KEY WORDS: myth, disproportion, intermediacy, fallibility, transcendence

From Myth to Non-Coincidence and Disproportion

Ricoeur is utterly concerned to show that fallibility can be discussed primarily as a concept.¹ The best possibility he finds for this task is the appeal to pure reflection, which he defines as a "way of understanding and being understood" which is not attainable by means of "image, symbol or myth". This approach

¹ Henry Isaac Venema, *Identifying Selfhood*, 54.

is crucial for Ricoeur because without the mediation of imagery, symbolism and mythology, pure reflection discloses a reality which belongs to the essential constitution of the human being. In this sense, fallibility is not a mere concept but also a reality which presents the fragility of the human being as well as its characteristic of being subject to commit erroneous actions in all respects. In attaching fallibility as a concept to the possibility of pure reflection, Ricoeur wants to make sure that the sum of the human being's most fundamental features includes fallibility as one of man's essential characteristics. This is Ricoeur's explanation of fallibility as a concept:

In maintaining that fallibility is a concept, I am presupposing at the outset that pure reflection—that is, a way of understanding and being understood that does not come through image, symbol, or myth—can reach a certain threshold of intelligibility where the possibility of evil appears inscribed in the innermost structure of human reality. The idea that man is by nature fragile and liable to err is [...] an idea wholly accessible to pure reflection; it designates a characteristic of man's being.²

This particular way of approaching fallibility as a prominent part of man's structure, Ricoeur comes closer to traditional Christianity which presents man's fallibility—concretized by means of the idea of sin—as an innate distinctiveness of human nature. Man is born fallible and will definitely stay fallible for the rest of his life. There is no doubt that in this very specific sense Ricoeur's philosophy could agree with traditional Christian theology. There is, however, a fundamental difference between traditional Christianity and Ricoeur's apprehension of fallibility which is given by the particular perspective on fallibility adopted by traditional Christianity on the one hand, and Ricoeur on the other. While Ricoeur sees fallibility as an essential characteristic of man's human being in its natural state, tra-

² Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, xlx.

ditional Christian theology approaches fallibility as inner to man's inner constitution after the event of Adam's fall. When it comes to approaching the fall, Ricoeur parts ways with traditional Christianity for which the fall was an actual and historical event. This means that man's natural constitution had certain characteristics prior to the fall and other characteristics after the fall. So the fall functions as a rupture in man's natural constitution, which is totally changed after the even of the fall. It is quite evident that Ricoeur cannot accept such a breach in man's natural structure and his conviction is informed by his perception of the fall as a non-event. If the fall is a non-event, it transcends the biological level of man's existence in the sense that it does not disrupt man's life within history as some sort of cataclysmic interruption of his natural state. There is no point in history when man was different from what he is in the present, so whatever fall describes is categorically not a historical fact but something which goes beyond this particular level of man's life. Therefore, it is logical to presume that the fall should be approached in a totally different way which is congruous with Ricoeur's conviction that man's nature has been constantly the same throughout history. This is why Ricoeur sees the fall as a myth and the myth is structurally a non-event. The myth may present a certain event followed by subsequent events which appear to be historical but they are essentially non-historical, so they cannot be conceived as having been part of the actual development of history as an intricate web of events. Myth is part of history insofar as man, which conceives it, is part of history but it also transcends history because its core structure is separated from the reality and possibility of historical events. So in Ricoeur the fall presents us the reality of fallibility as a non-event but rather as a concept which is available to pure reflection.

To be sure, fallibility is an ontological feature of humanity so humanity cannot be conceived without the possibility as well as

the reality of fallibility.³ Likewise, fallibility cannot escape any discourse about humanity because it is contained by the reality of man's natural constitution. Fallibility, however, cannot be clearly presented unless it proves empirically that something is wrong with the human being. How can we know that something is wrong with the human being if the human being is characterized by fallibility as structurally imbedded within itself? We know that something is wrong and fallibility can be seen as an innate possibility of man's natural constitution if man is seen to exist in some sort of a "non-coincidence" with himself.⁴ For Ricoeur, this non-coincidence of man with himself appears as a certain disproportion which is the very reason or cause of fallibility.⁵ Thus, fallibility shows that man's existence is characterized by disproportion or non-coincidence which is at the end of the day an ontological constituent of man's natural state.⁶ It follows that it is most natural for man to be fallible or characterized by fallibility which presents man as a complex being;⁷ a being which exists in such a way that he appears at the same time in a position of showing utter greatness but also fundamental nothingness.

But how can this idea of man's fallibility be made clear? We shall have to be prepared to formulate a series of approaches that, although partial, will in each case grasp a global disposition of human reality (or the condition) in which this ontological characteristic is inscribed. [...] this global disposition consists in a certain non-coincidence of man with himself: this "disproportion" of self to self would be the *ratio* of fallibility. "I should not be surprised" if evil has entered the world with

³ Henry Isaac Venema, *Identifying Selfhood*, 41.

⁴ See David M. Rasmussen, *Symbol and Interpretation*, 43.

⁵ Andrew Cutrofello, *Continental Philosophy*, 255.

⁶ See also John Wall, *Moral Creativity*, 29.

⁷ For details about man's complexity and how it should be approached as far as Ricoeur is concerned, see Theodoor Marius van Leeuwen, *The Surplus of Meaning*, 38.

man, for he is the only reality that presents this unstable ontological constitution of being greater and lesser than himself.⁸

In order to make a clear case in favor of fallibility, Ricoeur is eager to explain what he means by disproportion.⁹ It is important not to forget that disproportion proves fallibility so fallibility is seen in disproportion.¹⁰ When applied to human reality, it is crucial to know where disproportion can be sought and how it can be identified. Disproportion can be investigated by means of the Cartesian paradox of finite-infinite but Ricoeur is not very happy with this approach to fallibility. The reason for his discontent is the fact that the paradox of finite-infinite can present fallibility as an ontological characteristic of man which is based on the concept of intermediacy.¹¹ If the disproportion of fallibility is assessed from the perspective of the intermediacy between finitude and infinitude,¹² then we need a reference point which is totally transcendent to humanity and even to its realm of existence. It is quite natural to understand the human being as characterized by finitude in the sense that it is finite and limited with respect to its own existence; the problem though appears when we have to define human finitude by comparison to infinitude. If finitude is utterly human as man's core structural essence, the infinitude is the opposite reality which describes man in opposition to what he is in his natural state. Therefore, man should be seen as finite in opposition to a reality which exists beyond his finite realm of existence. In other words, human finitude should be described in opposition to a non-human reality which cannot be other than the reality of God—understood as utterly transcendent to man and his existential as well as historical reality. If disproportion is understood by means of the intermediacy between man's finitude and

⁸ Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, 1.

⁹ See also Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, 21.

¹⁰ Karl Simms, *Paul Ricoeur*, 16.

¹¹ Also check Paul Varo Martinson, *A Theology of World Religions*, 107.

¹² Dan R. Stiver, *Theology after Ricoeur*, 26.

God's infinitude, then—Ricoeur believes—we find ourselves in a totally misleading position.

Fallibility as Intermediacy

Why is it misleading to judge fallibility by means of the disproportion between finitude and infinitude? Primarily because the dialectics between finitude and infinitude presuppose the idea of intermediacy between finitude and infinitude as well as the idea of finitude as totally opposed to infinitude. If man is finite, then his inner constitution and being is characterized by finitude; to be sure, man is finitude when it comes to define his natural state. By opposition, the idea of infinitude presupposes the reverse of finitude and, as finitude is represented by means of the being of man, then it follows that infinitude is also represented by means of the idea of being. This being though is not finite but infinite, so this is the classic argument for the existence of God. So we have the finitude of man and the infinitude of God in a relationship of disproportion because man is finite not only in relationship to God but also in relationship to his realm of existence as created by God. Ricoeur is very uncomfortable with this approach because it introduces the idea of "ontological locality"¹³ which places man within a reality that is characterized by the concept of "between". Man is fallible because he can be understood based on the disproportion between his own finitude and God's infinitude:

We are certainly not in a position to deal directly with this ontological characteristic of man, for the idea of *intermediacy* that is implied in the idea of disproportion is also very misleading. For to say that man is situated *between* being and nothingness is already to treat human reality as a region, an ontological locality, or a place lodged *between* other places. Now, this schema of intercalation is extremely deceptive: it tempts us to treat man as an object whose place is fixed by its relation to other realities that are more

¹³ See also Stephen David Ross, *Inexhaustibility and Human Being. An Essay on Locality*, 137.

or less complex, intelligent, and independent than man. Man is not intermediate because he is between angel and animal; he is intermediate within himself, within his selves. He is intermediate because he is a mixture, and a mixture because he brings about mediations. His ontological characteristic of being-intermediate consists precisely in that his act of existing is the very act of bringing about mediations between all the modalities and all the levels of reality within him and outside him.¹⁴

It seems that Ricoeur dismisses this perspective because the idea of “between” as applied to man’s finitude in opposition to God’s finitude confers an ontological status not only to the reality of man¹⁵—which is rather obvious—but also to the reality of God.¹⁶ Therefore, Ricoeur appears to experience a certain feeling of unease because of the possibility of seeing God in ontological terms which pushes man to a definition in opposition to an ontology of total transcendence. Ricoeur is not willing to define man as well as man’s fallibility—and finitude—by means of its opposition to the total transcendence of God’s infinitude.

Such an enterprise would cause his exegetical hermeneutics of the myth—of the fall—and the resulting symbolism of evil to break down completely because myth is the very element which disrupts the intermediacy between the finite ontology of humanity and the infinite, total and absolute ontology of God.¹⁷ Myth actually disannuls the total transcendence of God and restricts the idea of transcendence to the finite reality of man. Ricoeur seeks to retain the idea of intermediacy as well as the accompanying concept of disproportion but not as applied to the opposition between man’s finite reality and the ontology of

¹⁴ Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, 2.

¹⁵ For details about human reality in Ricoeur, see David Wood, *On Paul Ricoeur*, 48-50.

¹⁶ See Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, 211.

¹⁷ Check also Paul Gifford, *Love, Desire and Transcendence in French Literature*, 45-48.

God's total transcendence but between realities which belong to man's immanent reality both internal and external. Therefore, man does not mediate between levels of reality which can exclude his own reality; he mediates between levels of reality which not only include his own reality but also define his own reality. To put it in plain words, man mediates between himself and other people but also between himself and his own self.

There seems to be another reason why Ricoeur resents the idea of intermediacy if applied to man's finite reality—which defines his fallibility—in opposition to the ontology of God's total transcendence and infinitude. If God is ontologically real, it means that man must be defined in opposition to God. Whatever God is, man is not or whatever God is in his infinitude man is in his finitude, which automatically presuppose a reversed definition. For instance, if God is immortal in his infinitude, man is immortal in his finitude which automatically means that his immortality should be defined in terms of finitude; at the end of the day, man's immortality is nothing by mortality defined from the perspective of God's immortality. Likewise, if God is infallible in his infinitude, man is infallible in his finitude which actually means that he is fallible as opposed to God's totally transcendent infallibility. The idea of disproportion between the ontology of man and the ontology of God is rather evident but what seems to concern Ricoeur is not as much the idea of disproportion but rather the concept of intermediacy. If God is totally transcendent, then it follows that his ontology is utterly opposed to man's ontology. Thus, if the idea of intermediacy is applied to the opposing realities of God and man, man is totally incapable to function as intermediary between himself and God. The intermediacy is not between man and God because man cannot apply this intermediacy by himself because of his finitude which cannot find access to God's infinitude; the intermediacy is rather between God and man, so it is God who applies the intermediacy between himself and man because his infinitude can always find access to man's finitude. In the best of cases, the idea of intermediacy as applied

to man can only be passive because the active side of it belongs to God. Man's intermediacy is passive because he cannot have access to God's infinite ontology; only God can have access to man's finite ontology so, in the end, intermediacy is more an action of God rather than a state which defines man.

Ricoeur simply cannot accept such a conclusion, so his idea of intermediacy focuses exclusively on man's ontology as defined by means of translating myths into symbols which can develop different meanings in order to find relevant ways to explain humanity.¹⁸ This way, he cancels the ontology of God and promotes the ontology of man, so the intermediacy—and the accompanying idea of disproportion—should be tackled exclusively from the perspective of man with view to realities which not only encompass man's own reality but also exist within man's own reality. Therefore, the idea of intermediacy can achieve the full measure of man's active involvement;¹⁹ man in himself is the state of intermediacy between all levels of human existence—internal and external—so it is no longer God who actively mediates his relationship to man but it is man who mediates his existence within the finitude of his immanent ontology.²⁰ In other words, Ricoeur admits the existence of various levels of reality within man and outside man but all these levels of reality are mediated by man.²¹ To be sure, the possibility of fallibility as defined by disproportion—and intermediacy—has nothing to do with the idea of God's ontology of total transcendence but only with man's finitude as given by his multifaceted historical existence and experience.²²

¹⁸ Jeffrey W. Robbins, *Between Faith and Thought*, 104

¹⁹ See Charles A. Kelbley, "Introduction", Paul Ricoeur, *History and Truth*, xix.

²⁰ For further insights into Ricoeur's idea of mediation, see David Wood, *On Paul Ricoeur*, 26-27.

²¹ For details, see Domenico Jervolino, "Paul Ricoeur and Hermeneutic Phenomenology", in Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.), *Phenomenology World-Wide*, 394.

²² John Wall, *Moral Creativity*, 29.

Redefining Transcendence

The notion of transcendence is crucial for Ricoeur when it comes to define the intermediacy of man from the perspective of the disproportion between the finite and the infinite.²³ Finitude and infinitude should be linked to transcendence but we must be very careful when we identify what we mean by transcendence.²⁴ As shown before, Ricoeur is more than willing to work with the idea of transcendence as long as transcendence has nothing to do with God's ontology. If we accept that God is ontologically real, so he has an existence of his own which is active beyond the realm of man's existence, then the idea of transcendence tends to define God rather than man. This is an equation which cannot be accepted as far as Ricoeur is concerned, so he carefully redefines the idea of transcendence by means of the refinement of mythology through symbolism. Therefore, if the idea of God is encapsulated within mythology, then the reality of God's ontology fades away in favor of man's ontology.²⁵ The idea of transcendence can still be retained but it no longer underlines the infinitude of God's ontology; it only highlights the reality of man's ontology. So, it is no longer God who is transcendent but man.²⁶ In other words, we should not conceive transcendence with reference to God who exists beyond the finitude of man but rather with reference to man who transcends his own finitude. This is clearly a point of contrast between Ricoeur and traditional Christianity because the total transcendence of God's ontology is the stronghold of traditional Christian theology. Thus, God is transcendent, infinite and infallible and it is this particular definition of God that subsequently informs the image of man. Whatever man is in his historical reality should be defined in accordance with God's

²³ For details about transcendence and immanence in Ricoeur, see Richard L. Lanigan, *Speaking and Semiology*, 93.

²⁴ Scott Lash, *Another Modernity, a Different Rationality*, 158.

²⁵ See also Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, 132.

²⁶ Cf. Richard Freadman, *Threads of Life*, 318.

absolute transcendence. This results into some sort of a reverse definition of man which while retaining the characteristics of God's absolute transcendence—infinity for instance—it still posits them by contrast with God, so we can speak of man as being infinite but only in terms of his finite existence. In other words, man's transcendence—as presented by Ricoeur—is limited because man's nature is essentially finite. Here is what Ricoeur has to say about the way we should understand the idea of transcendence with reference to man:

The question is whether man's transcendence is merely transcendence of finitude or whether the converse is not something of equal importance: as will be seen, man appears to be no less discourse than perspective, no less a demand for totality than a limited nature, no less love than desire. The interpretation of the paradox beginning with finitude does not seem to us to have any privilege over the opposed interpretation. According to the latter, man is infinity, and finitude is a sign that points to the *restricted* nature of this infinity; conversely, infinity is a sign of the *transcending* of finitude. Man is no less destined to unlimited rationality, to totality, and beatitude than he is limited to a perspective, consigned to death, and riveted by desire. Our working hypothesis concerning the paradox of the finite-infinite implies that we must speak of infinity as much as of human finitude. The full recognition of this polarity is essential to the elaboration of the concepts of intermediacy, disproportion, and fallibility, the interconnections of which we have indicated in moving from the last to the first of these concepts.²⁷

So unlike in traditional Christianity, Ricoeur attributes the idea of transcendence exclusively to the human being. Man is transcendent despite his finitude but also because his finitude. This means that man is capable of nurturing feelings which seem to contradict his limited natural constitution while at the same time he displays these feelings as a result of his awareness

²⁷ Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, 3-4.

about his limitations. For instance, as a limited being, man should be controlled by desires—which are not commendable by definition—but despite his finitude, man is still capable of exhibiting feelings of deep love. Man's love, as opposite to desire, is a proof of his transcendence because love rises above his instinctual cravings.²⁸ The human being manifests love in spite of what he is by nature but also because he is fully aware of his finitude. This is why man purposefully shows love as an attempt to go beyond the limits of his own end in death.²⁹ It is very possible that—according to Ricoeur's understanding of human transcendence—man should perceive love as a means to continue his influence beyond the limits of his actual existence or maybe he just enjoys the experience of transcending his own natural instincts during the actual span of his life; whatever the explanation, Ricoeur is convinced that transcendence is an inner quality of the human being which—despite its restricted nature because of man's finitude—offers a positive definition of fallibility.³⁰

It becomes evident therefore that fallibility must be discussed—according to Ricoeur—from the perspective of the human being alone. Fallibility may be a concept which presents a human reality but we cannot investigate the reality of human fallibility by remaining stuck to its conceptual framework. Ricoeur's methodology of investigating fallibility is to acknowledge the concept but proceed from the reality of the human being and especially from its polarity between finitude and infinitude. Man is being of utmost complexity and his complexity cannot be properly assessed unless the totality of his humanity is both acknowledged and accepted. In order to understand human fallibility, Ricoeur suggests that we should promote a wholistic view of man, a perspective which integrates the entire complexity of humanity in general as well as of the human be-

²⁸ Karl Simms, *Paul Ricoeur*, 19.

²⁹ Theodoor Marius van Leeuwen, *The Surplus of Meaning*, 188.

³⁰ Cf. David M. Rasmussen, *Symbol and Interpretation*, 43.

ing in particular. Thus, it is not sufficient to research the concept of fallibility as the possibility of evil seen as deeply imbedded in our human nature;³¹ what we should do is investigate man in his entirety, complexity and existence with particular attention to the intermediacy between his finitude and infinitude. So it is the totality of humanity, which includes man's finitude and infinitude in relationship to himself and other humans that should offer a comprehensive assessment of man's fallibility. Here is what Ricoeur has to say about fallibility as produced by the global view of humanity:

The question is how to begin. How can we determine the point of departure in a philosophical anthropology placed under the guiding idea of fallibility? We know only that we cannot start from a simple term, but must rather start from the composite itself, from the finite-infinite relation. Thus it is necessary to start from the whole of man, by which I mean from the global view of his non-coincidence with himself, his disproportion, and the mediation he brings about in existing. But is it not likely that this global view would exclude all progression and logical sequence? There remains the possibility that progress and order might develop in the course of a series of viewpoints or approaches that would in each case be a viewpoint on and approach to the totality.³²

It is important to realize that, for Ricoeur, this global perspective on the totality of humanity with view to a definition of fallibility can be achieved only by philosophy. The philosophical comprehension of fallibility however cannot be produced exclusively based on philosophical sources. Actually, Ricoeur admits that philosophy is, in a way, the second—though fundamental—step to be taken in order to define fallibility. The first step in assessing fallibility is not taken by philosophy but by non-philosophy, which can be theology and/or religion in general. With respect to fallibility, philosophy must offer compre-

³¹ Charles E. Reagan, *Paul Ricoeur*, 23.

³² Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, 4.

hension but this philosophical comprehension is based on a non-philosophical—namely theological and/or religious—precomprehension.³³ Philosophy is reflection, non-philosophy is an enterprise which precedes reflection.³⁴ So, in order to understand fallibility, we must seek the non-philosophical precomprehension of humanity—given by theology and religion—and then, by means of reflection, achieve the philosophical comprehension which eventually illuminates man's reality as fallible being. At this point, the fundamental question is where can the non-philosophical precomprehension be actually found? As far as Ricoeur is concerned, the non-philosophical precomprehension of man's fallibility can and should be found in what he calls the pathologicalness of misery (*pathétique de la misère*).³⁵ Ricoeur explains that this pathologicalness is actually a precomprehension in itself because it makes man understanding himself as miserable. In other words, the non-philosophical precomprehension of fallibility is based on man's realization that his existence is characterized by misery.³⁶

Now, if the development of thought in a philosophical anthropology never consists in going from the simple to the complex, but always moves within the totality itself, this can only be a development in the philosophical elucidation of the global view. This totality, therefore, must first be given in some way prior to philosophy, in a precomprehension that lends itself to reflection. Consequently, philosophy has to proceed as a second-order elucidation of a nebula of meaning that at first has a prephilosophical character. This means that we must completely dissociate the idea of method in philosophy from the idea of a starting point. Philosophy does not start anything independently: supported by the non-philosophical, it derives its existence from the substance of what has already been understood prior to reflection. However, if philosophy is not a radical beginning with regard to its sources, it

³³ Don Ihde, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology*, 87.

³⁴ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Biblical Narratives in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, 58.

³⁵ Theodoor Marius van Leeuwen, *The Surplus of Meaning*, 39.

³⁶ See also Henry Isaac Venema, *Identifying Selfhood*, 57.

may be one with regard to its method. Thus, through this idea of a difference of potential between the non-philosophical precomprehension and the methodical beginning of elucidation, we are brought closer to a well-defined working hypothesis. But where should we look for the precomprehension of fallible man? In the *pathétique* of "misery". This pathos is, as it were, the matrix of any philosophy that makes disproportion and intermediacy the ontic characteristic of man. Yet it is necessary to take this pathos at its highest point of perfection. Even though it is prephilosophical, this *pathétique* is precomprehension, and it is that insofar as it is perfect speech, perfect in its order and on its level. Accordingly, we shall look for some of those excellent expressions which tell of man's precomprehension of himself as "miserable".³⁷

The bottom line for Ricoeur in assessing fallibility is the recognition of man's ontological characteristics based on the non-philosophical precomprehension of fallibility which presents man as a being that acknowledges its own misery. Although Ricoeur does not elaborate on this particular aspect, it should be stressed that the non-philosophical precomprehension of fallibility can be given my theological and religious mythology. In other words, theology and religion produce myths which picture man as a being of utmost misery. From this point onwards, theology and religion cease to explain human fallibility in a global way, so we need to resort to philosophical discourse in order to obtain a philosophical comprehension of human fallibility. So it is not philosophy which begins the task to unveil the depths of man's fallibility; this resides in the pre-philosophical endeavors of theology and religion. What philosophy does is not to begin but rather to begin again the assessment of human fallibility from the pre-philosophical foundation offered by theology and religion. In other words, we need to pursue a genuinely philosophical anthropology, which globally takes into account man's complex disproportion and non-coincidence

³⁷ Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, 4.

with himself due to the polarity of finitude and infinitude.³⁸ To conclude, the methodology to be followed with view to defining human fallibility includes pre-philosophical and philosophical approaches to man's misery in order to portray a global perspective on his existence which swings between finitude and infinitude, a perspective that necessarily goes all the way from pure reflection to total comprehension.

³⁸ Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, 5-6.

The Servant-Leadership Concepts of Robert K. Greenleaf

ADRIAN GIORGIOV

Emanuel University

ABSTRACT. Robert K. Greenleaf (1904-1990) stands out as the person who introduced the term “servant leadership” to modern times, and has captured the imagination of hundreds of thousands of readers worldwide in the realm of education, business, and church life. The central meaning of his theory is that the great leader is first seen as a servant to others, and this simple fact is a key to his or her greatness. Greenleaf contends that it is possible to fuse the role of servant and leader. This fusion was perfectly achieved in Jesus Christ, whose service during his earthly ministry reflected a true servant leader. The paper presents the characteristics of a servant leader and of a servant institution; it then discusses the concepts of servant leadership in churches. It concludes with an evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of the concepts, followed by theological perspectives on the issues.

KEY WORDS: servant leadership, trustees, servant institution, core values, society

Introduction

Among the prominent personalities who spent a considerable amount of energy and dedication to effective leadership is Robert K. Greenleaf. He was concerned about the effectiveness of both individual leaders and institutions. He wants to help those leaders who have tried to live in the confusion and ambiguity of their work by themselves.

Greenleaf is convinced that the truly energetic organizations are not places to which people escape; they demand time, involvement, participation from the people. He expresses his be-

lief in the necessity of using operating as well as conceptual talents in revolutionizing our society. The operating talent carries the institution toward its objectives. Conceptual talent sees the whole in perspective. Institutions need an optimal balance between the two types of leadership. This paper will give an overview of the basic leadership concepts of Greenleaf, evaluate his strengths and weaknesses and, finally, view these concepts from theological perspectives.

Summary of Basic Leadership/Management Concepts

Biographical Information

Robert Kiefner Greenleaf was born on July 14, 1904, in Terre Haute, Indiana. Upon his graduation from Carleton College (1926), he went to work for AT&T and spent his first career of 38 years working with them, retiring in 1964 as vice-president for Management Research. Just before his retirement, he held a joint appointment as visiting lecturer at Sloan School of Management of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M. I. T.) and at the Harvard Business School. In addition, he has held teaching positions at both Dartmouth College and the University of Virginia.

His consultancies include Ohio University, M. I. T., Ford Foundation, R. K. Mellon Foundation, Lilly Endowment and the American Foundation for Management Research.

Greenleaf's religious background (Quaker) is reflected in the principles and illustrations used in most of his writings. He died on September 29, 1990 at the age of 86, after suffering a series of strokes.¹

Servant Leadership

The idea of servant leadership was crystallized as Greenleaf read Herman Hesse's short novel, *Journey to the East*. Greenleaf came to the understanding that the central meaning of the nov-

¹ Alfonso A. Narvaez, "Robert K. Greenleaf, 86, Pioneer of Humanist Business Philosophy," *New York Times*, 2 October 1990.

el was that the great leader is first seen as a servant to others, and that this simple fact is a key to his or her greatness.

In 1970, at the age of 66, Greenleaf wrote a small essay called *The Servant as Leader*, which introduced the term “servant leadership”. Since that time, this modest, 32-page essay has captured the imagination of hundreds of thousands of readers worldwide. In it, Greenleaf described some of the characteristics and activities of servant leaders, providing examples which show that individual efforts, inspired by vision and a servant ethic, can make a substantial difference in the quality of society.

Definition of Servant Leadership

The central definition of servant leadership, as stated by Greenleaf is, as follows:

It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant—first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served.

The best test, and difficult to administer, is: do those served grow as persons; do they while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or at least, not be further deprived?²

Being servant first means that “leadership was bestowed upon a man who was by nature a servant. It was something given, or assumed, that could be taken away. His servant nature was the real man, not bestowed, not assumed, and not to be taken away.”³ “The leader—first and the servant—first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that

² Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership. A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 13.

³ *Ibid.*, 8.

are part of the infinite variety of human nature."⁴ Servant leaders are not merely servants of what is, but shapers of what might be.

"The followers will freely respond only to individuals who are chosen as leaders because they are proven and trusted as servants."⁵ The followers accept the leadership because the other sees more clearly where it is best to go.

Characteristics of the Servant Leader

According to Larry Spears, the executive director of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, there are ten key elements of servant leadership described by Greenleaf.⁶ The first one is listening receptively to what others have to say. In the Situational Leadership model the leader needs to know the followers' level of readiness. Receptive listening is one of the essential ways of acquiring the necessary information and determine the readiness level.

Second, the servant leader accepts others and has empathy for them. The servant never rejects but always accepts the person. "Sometimes he refuses to accept some of the person's effort or performance as good enough."⁷

Third, the servant leader has foresight and intuition. The leader needs a sense for the unknowable and to foresee the unforeseeable. These are usually not formally assessed in an academic way.⁸ Foresight is the "lead" that the leader has. The loss of leadership is often due to the failure "to foresee what reasonably could have been foreseen, and from failure to act on that knowledge while the leader had freedom to act."⁹ Through in-

⁴ Ibid., 13.

⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁶ Larry C. Spears, "Servant Leadership. Quest for Caring Leadership," *Inner Quest* 2 (1994): 2.

⁷ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 20.

⁸ Ibid., 21-2.

⁹ Ibid., 26.

tuition, the leader bridges the gap between the available solid information and what is needed.¹⁰

Fourth, the servant leader has awareness and perception. These allow the leader to discern between the urgent and the important.

Fifth, the servant leader has highly developed powers of persuasion. The leader initiates, provides the ideas and the structure, and takes the risk of failure along with the chance of success.¹¹

Sixth, the servant leader is able to conceptualize and to communicate concepts. He or she always sees the goal and can articulate it for any who are unsure. Greenleaf uses the term goal in the special sense of overarching purpose, big dream, visionary concept.

Seventh, the servant leader recognizes that servant leadership begins with the desire to change oneself. "If a flaw in the world is to be remedied, to the servant the process of change starts *in here*, in the servant, not *out there*."¹² The last three characteristics are the ability to exert a healing influence upon individuals and institutions, building community in the workplace, and practicing the art of contemplation.

Spirit

Greenleaf is an advocate of the restoration of a word fallen into disuse. "That word is *entheos*, from the same roots as enthusiasm, which means *possessed of the spirit*."¹³

There are eight indicators of the existence of *entheos*. First, the existence of two paradoxes, a concurrent satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the status quo. Second, a concurrent feeling of broadening responsibilities and centering down. Third, a growing sense of purpose in whatever one does. Forth, there are

¹⁰ Ibid., 23.

¹¹ Ibid., 15.

¹² Ibid., 44.

¹³ Robert K. Greenleaf, *Teacher As Servant. A Parable* (Newton Centre, MA: Robert K. Greenleaf Center, 1979), 60.

changing patterns and depths of one's interests. Fifth, as *entheos* becomes a more constant companion, one moves toward the minimum of difference between the outside and inside images of the self; "one becomes more willing to be seen as one is."¹⁴ Sixth, one becomes conscious of the good use of time and uncomfortable with the waste of time. Seventh, a growing sense of achieving one's basic personal goals through one's work is achieved. Finally, there is a developing view of people. "All people are seen as being to be trusted, believed in, and loved; and not as objects to be used, competed with, or judged."¹⁵ The ultimate test of *entheos* is an intuitive feeling of oneness, of wholeness, of rightness.¹⁶

The Servant Institution

In 1972, Greenleaf published a second essay, *The Institution As Servant*, which was based on the idea that institutions could also be servants. Greenleaf said that much of the caring for persons in today's society is mediated by large, complex institutions. He challenges conventional wisdom about hierarchical organization and the use of power in major institutions.¹⁷

"If a better society is to be built ... then the most open course is to raise both the capacity to serve and the very performance as servant of existing major institutions by new regenerative forces operating within them."¹⁸

Greenleaf defines institution as "a gathering of persons who have accepted a common purpose, and a common discipline to guide the pursuit of that purpose, to the end that each involved person reaches higher fulfillment as a person, through serving

¹⁴ Ibid., 62.

¹⁵ Ibid., 63.

¹⁶ Ibid., 64.

¹⁷ "Who was Robert K. Greenleaf?" Available from www.greenleaf.org/rkgbio.html. Accessed 10 October 1997. Internet.

¹⁸ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 49.

and being served by the common venture, than would be achieved alone or in a less committed relationship.”¹⁹

The attitude of the institution toward work is that “work exists as much for the enrichment of the life of the person who does it as for the service of the person who receives the benefit of it or the reward to the investor who put up the money to do it.”²⁰

Core Values

In a servant institution, there are some basic principles about purpose and structure that make it different. These are the core values of that institution. Commitment and evaluation are important values. For instance, Greenleaf gives the example of a church where each member reviews his commitment to the church each year and discusses it with others.²¹

Questioning relates not only to the act of listening but it is “one of the most effective means by which the servant is able to relate to the consciousness and conscience of others.”²² Students need to learn that it is a high form of art to ask the right questions.²³

Organization Traditions

There are two organization traditions that have strongly influenced the way people lead. The *hierarchical tradition* comes down from Moses. This principle places one person in charge as the lone chief atop a pyramidal structure. This tradition holds that one person responsible. At the same time, “the natural reaction to a call for stronger leadership is to try to strengthen the control of the one person at the top.”²⁴ This system, as Greenleaf observes, is abnormal and corrupting. The pyramidal

¹⁹ Ibid., 237.

²⁰ Greenleaf, *Teacher As Servant*, 124.

²¹ Ibid., 146.

²² Ibid., 120.

²³ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 188.

²⁴ Ibid., 61.

structure weakens informal links and “dries up channels of honest reaction and feedback.”²⁵ A self-protective image of omniscience often evolves from the filtered communications, and the person atop the pyramid experiences real loneliness.

The second tradition comes down from Roman times. It is the form where the principal leader is *primus inter pares*—first among equals. The leadership abilities of that person are constantly tested among a group of able peers.²⁶

The *primus inter pares* is responsible that each of the people will make their optimal contribution to the whole with their talents. An advantage of this system is that collegiality favors the growth of the individuals in the group as persons, as people whose full human potential is worked toward. “People are not used up by the struggle; they do not ‘burn out’ after a few years.”²⁷

Formal and Informal Structure

An institution has two types of organizational structure: formal and informal. The formal structure consists of the more or less definite arrangements and ways of working, which are delineated in various documents. The informal structure responds more to leadership and it involves building purpose and challenging with opportunity, judicious use of incentives, astute ordering of priorities, and allocating resources where they count the most. “The result is team effort and a network of constructive interpersonal relationships that support the total effort ... These informal initiatives are the ‘glue’ that holds the formal structure together and makes it function well.”²⁸

²⁵ Ibid., 63.

²⁶ Ibid., 61.

²⁷ Greenleaf, *Teacher As Servant*, 123.

²⁸ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 60.

Power and Servanthood

The powerful can best serve as they use their power to make serving institutions of those they influence or control. ... *Servanthood is ultimately tested wherever one is with one's power! ... The primary moral test is what one does with one's power—in those places where one's power is greatest.*²⁹

Humbly receiving is, according to Greenleaf, the best protection against the arrogance of power.³⁰ Coercive power is sometimes overt and brutal, other times it is covert and subtly manipulative. The trouble with coercive power is that it only strengthens resistance. If it is successful, its controlling effect lasts only as long as the force is strong. Trustees hold ultimate power but they do not use it operationally. Yet they are responsible for its use.

Trustees

As he continued to reflect on the way organizations operate, Greenleaf realized that institutions were controlled by trustees. This reflection prompted a third essay in 1974, *Trustees As Servants*, in which he seeks to address the needs of senior executives for sustained, caring (but demanding) assistance from able trustees.³¹

Two Teams

An effective institution is led by two strong teams: the trustees and the leadership. "Trustees supply the standard of quality and determination so that the institution could be exceptional."³² They are the pacesetters. Trustees care for all of the people the institution touches.³³

²⁹ Greenleaf, *Teacher As Servant*, 68.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 196.

³¹ "Who was Robert K. Greenleaf?" Available from www.greenleaf.org/rkgbio.html. Accessed 10 October 1997. Internet.

³² Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 51.

³³ *Ibid.*, 55.

The institution where there is a low level participation of board members and a single chief executive is a clear design for mediocrity.³⁴ There is a difference between the active administrators and the trustees. The administrators are too involved to have objective judgment about top level organization. "That is why trustees with their relative detachment from administration are so important."³⁵

Greenleaf goes back to the story of Moses, as his father-in-law, Jethro, advises him to delegate the work. "In the end the Lord sacked Moses. Why? Because in that dramatic incident of drawing water from the rock he acted as if he were God. This confirms the fatal flaw in Jethro's advice."³⁶ The delegation of work was important; however, according to Greenleaf, missing was the necessary guardianship of strong trustees.³⁷ The abuse of power is curbed if the holder of power is surrounded by equals who are strong. Greenleaf insists that no one is to be entrusted with the operational use of power without the close oversight of fully functioning trustees.³⁸

Tasks of Trustees

"Defining the institution and stating its goals and purposes is probably the most critical task that confronts trustees. Everything else that trustees do rests on this one basic decision."³⁹

Trustees are important because the leadership of an institution needs them, if the leaders want to remain effective. "Few of us, regardless of how able, have the ability to perform consistently at a high level of excellence, to set the goals for our own performance, and to judge our own performance objectively."⁴⁰

³⁴ Ibid., 83.

³⁵ Ibid., 57.

³⁶ Ibid., 84.

³⁷ Ibid., 84.

³⁸ Ibid., 117.

³⁹ Ibid., 87.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 99.

Servant Leadership in Churches

Greenleaf does not confine his views to the church or educational institutions. However, the servant leader style is most fitting in the church. He speaks of a “growing edge” church that would live up to its opportunities in our world.

Greenleaf brings up a theory of prophecy which holds that prophetic voices are speaking cogently all of the time. The variable that marks some periods as barren and some as rich is in the level of seeking of the hearers. It is seekers who make the prophets.⁴¹ Greenleaf himself is a seeker. He embodies what he claims seekers need to be doing. “By their intense and sustained listening they will make the new prophet who will help them find that wholeness that is only achieved by serving.”⁴²

Society is in great need of ethical leaders “to go out ahead to show the way so that the moral standards and the perceptions of the many will be raised, and so that they will serve better with what they have and what they know.”⁴³

Religious leadership is needed to respond to widespread alienation in all sectors of society as well as to many institutions’ inability or unwillingness to serve society. The primary mission of the seminary should be leading and supporting churches as influential institutions.

Evaluation of Strengths and Weaknesses

The concepts of leadership espoused by Greenleaf come largely out of his own experience and from watching and talking to able practitioners.⁴⁴ Servant leadership is a practical philosophy which supports people who choose to serve first, and then lead as a way of expanding service to individuals and institutions. Servant leadership encourages collaboration, trust, foresight, listening, and the ethical use of power and empowerment.

⁴¹ Ibid., 219.

⁴² Ibid., 222.

⁴³ Ibid., 228.

⁴⁴ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 3.

Greenleaf rightly points out that competition is a powerful motivating force, but it is a low-grade and debasing motivation.

Greenleaf is an advocate of persuasive power. He rejects coercive power, although it may have a certain role according to the situational leadership model, especially in the case of the lowest readiness level.⁴⁵

Greenleaf is a strong supporter of large organizations. He contends that small organizations cannot make a big difference in shaping society. However, the history of many organizations proves that a small beginning does not necessarily mean remaining small and having no influence on society. The church and Christianity itself was a small beginning and has been a powerful change agent in many societies for the last two millennia. At the same time, large organizations may actually hinder the implementation of changes. In many cases even large churches can become irrelevant, mediocre, and obstruct transformation in the lives of individuals in particular and society in general.

Theological Perspectives

Greenleaf expresses his belief that the only way to change society is to produce enough people who will change it. The doctrine of redemption claims the same belief. It is possible to change the society if there are enough people who are changed; and the ultimate transformation is clearly expressed by the doctrine of Eschatology, which reminds us that a perfect “society” will become reality in the new world.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, those who are already citizens of that still invisible world can make a difference in this present world, being the salt and light of it.⁴⁷

Most institutions have too few leaders because they are structured so that only one at the time can emerge. “When there is but a single chief, there is a major interruption when that per-

⁴⁵ Hersey and Blanchard, 236.

⁴⁶ Revelations 21:1-5.

⁴⁷ Matthew 5:13-16.

son leaves.”⁴⁸ The Bible gives such examples, and an even worse situation occurs when the leader does not train other potential leaders in order to avoid such major interruptions. The example of the period of judges is classical. After Joshua was entrusted by Moses with the leadership of Israel, he failed to train other potential leaders and the result was that the subsequent period is described in the Book of Judges as every man doing what was right in his own eyes.⁴⁹

One of Greenleaf’s examples of awareness and perception is the story of Jesus when confronted with the woman taken in adultery. When Jesus silently writes in the sand, he actually withdraws for a short time to cut the stress and open his awareness to creative insight.

Greenleaf’s philosophy of leadership is value-driven, supporting people who wish to serve first, and then lead as a way of expanding service to their families, friends, teams, institutions, and communities.

According to the biblical account in the book of Genesis, work was given to man before the Fall. Work was intended to be a blessing, not a curse. The Fall had consequences on every aspect of human life, including work. The principles of servant leadership can change the way people approach work and empower them, leading to the liberation of the human spirit.

The team-oriented approach to leadership is not new. The New Testament considers the church a living body, an organism in which all the parts are essential, and each of the parts has a well-defined role. The ministry of the church was intended to be performed by the whole body, and those who lead the church are, as Greenleaf leads us to see, *primus inter pares*.

Servant leadership reminds those who are in leadership positions that their primary responsibility is in serving others. Jesus Christ had the same attitude when he said that “whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever

⁴⁸ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 64.

⁴⁹ Judges 21:25.

would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”⁵⁰

Greenleaf contends that it is possible to fuse the role of servant and leader. This fusion was perfectly achieved in Jesus Christ, whose incarnation and service during his earthly ministry reflected a true servant leader. “To become a servant leader, therefore, requires the desire to reflect through our leadership that which we see in God,”⁵¹ his incarnation and servant attitude displayed in the life of Jesus Christ.

Human nature, with all of its imperfections, is still able to learn how to live better by serving. The ability to serve and to lead at the same time, despite of our imperfections, is in a sense a reminder of the fact that humans are still the bearers of God’s image, even though that image was distorted by sin.

Acceptance of persons requires a tolerance of imperfection. “Anybody could lead perfect people—if there were any.”⁵² It is part of the enigma of human nature that the imperfect, immature person is capable of great dedication if wisely led. The servant leader can lead an immature follower along Argyris’s Immature-Mature Continuum in a wise way.⁵³ Ken Blanchard’s one minute reprimand is in consonance with Greenleaf’s statement that “people grow taller when those who lead them empathize and when they are accepted for what they are, even though their performance may be judged critically.”⁵⁴

Power is benign when, in the course of using it, both the user and the subject grow as persons, when they become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants.⁵⁵ “Power is malignant force when people are

⁵⁰ Matthew 20:26-28.

⁵¹ Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser, *Leading the Congregation. Caring for Yourself While Serving the People* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993), 35.

⁵² Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 21.

⁵³ Hersey and Blanchard, 73-75.

⁵⁴ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 21.

⁵⁵ Greenleaf, *Teacher As Servant*, 77-8.

coerced by it. No one grows when coerced. The best that can be hoped for is that they will conform—not a very happy state.”⁵⁶ Compared this with the Situational Leadership Model it seems that it does not agree that for the lowest readiness level coercive power may be used. Also, theologically this statement can pose some problems. The Bible abounds with cases when God had to utilize coercive power.

Greenleaf contends that “the enemy is strong natural servants who have the potential to lead but do not lead, or who choose to follow a non-servant.”⁵⁷ This is a realistic observation in light of the servant leadership model; however, he does not go into details concerning the motives and reasons that are behind such actions. In light of the biblical revelation, the situation described by him is the result of a fallen world, and the image of the enemy is a complex one.

Conclusion

Greenleaf is concerned about the leaders, but his frame of reference seems to be broader. He proposes that his servant-leadership model could bring change not only to leadership-effectiveness, but also revolutionize institutions and, in the long run, change the society.

“Reducing mediocrity in positions of influence ... is a manageable task with our available resources ... it will be done on a substantial scale when the people ... concentrate on the one thing that will turn us about the quickest: excellence in place of mediocrity.”⁵⁸

Appendix

What Does the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership Do?

Originally founded in 1964 as the Center for Applied Ethics, Inc., the Center was renamed the Robert K. Greenleaf Center in

⁵⁶ Ibid., 210.

⁵⁷ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 45.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 149.

1985. The Center is an international, not-for-profit institution headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The Greenleaf Center's goals are:

- To help deepen an understanding of the original ideas of Robert K. Greenleaf and the principles of servant-leadership, via the preservation and promotion of his writings.
- To nurture colleagues and institutions by providing a focal point, and opportunities to share thoughts and ideas on servant-leadership.
- To produce and publish new resources by others on servant-leadership.
- To connect servant-leaders in a network of learning.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Excerpt from "What Does the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership Do?" Available from <http://www.greenleaf.org/goals.html>. Accessed 10 October 1997. Internet.

The Repressive Policy of the Communist Authorities in Bihor County against the Neo-Protestant Cults (1987)

ANTONIO FAUR

University of Oradea

ABSTRACT. Concerned about the reduction, almost to extinction, of the activity of some neo-Protestant cults, the communist regime in Romania had exercised its control over them through the available administrative means, even in their final years of existence. Therefore, in Bihor County, the Department of Cults (through the means of the Territorial Inspector of Bihor and Sălaj Counties), compiled a table of the places in Bihor County where “the neo-Protestant Christians gather without an approved cult unit”, which included 41 localities. An inspection—in the period between March 17th and April 1th, 1987—was conducted by the specialized inspectors from the county government, with “regard to the work of some religious sects” (i.e. by the Pentecostals and Baptists), who “meet in unknown places.” The results of this monitoring are contained in a document from which the author was advised to present data obtained by those mentioned. It is noted that the authorities performed a permanent “supervision” of these cults, then they took coercive measures (especially against those Protestants who have provided the cults their own buildings, more or less conducive to their work), and the application fines, closing down the “unauthorized” religious sites, and even prosecution before the law. Methods were used throughout the 45 years of Romania’s deviation from its normal free development during the concert of the other European states. The experiences lived by the neo-Protestant believers, of harsh confrontation with the atheist state and ideology, are part of their history, and, as such, deserve to be known by the contemporaries.

KEY WORDS: Neo-Protestant, cults, believers, communist authorities, Bihor

The communist regime in Romania practiced an obstructionist policy towards the Church, in which it saw a competitor and also a formidable opponent. The communist ideologists were aware of the power of faith; they could not destroy it, in spite of the use of all means they had, and which they used abundantly. They tried to diminish its influence by laws and measures of repression, which concerned both the greater potential confessions (Orthodox, Roman-Catholic, Reformed) and the neo-Protestant cults, which had a smaller number of believers, but they were fervent and able to withstand the permanent attacks on their standing.

It is known that at the early Stalinist period, the Greek-Catholic faith was broken, arbitrarily, and its servants (from the bishop to the priests in parishes) became victims, especially those who were not accepted under any report, to leave their faith. Some of them filled the communist prisons in Romania, by hundreds of thousands of people (some great personalities of our political, cultural and military life) who had opposed the process of the Sovietization of Romania, contributing to the well-known anticommunist resistance movement.

Over the years, with the interested support of Moscow, the Romanian democratic-popular state—and, later, the socialist one—organized a permanent control over the cults in Romania, proving by all it did, that it was an atheist state. However, in the Constitution there were stated express assignments, in a formal manner (but not really), that would have provided the free expression of conscience, including the cultivation of any religious beliefs. It was rather a stratagem of the communist authorities in Romania, because, in reality, they had not ceased to follow-through their institutions of coercion (security, police and prosecutors) the many parishioners who showed contempt to the official ideology and believed, with great sincerity, in God and the Bible.

Towards the end of the so-called socialist era, the communist leaders from Bucharest (and all over the country), internationally isolated and criticized by the press and radio stations in Eu-

rope and America for the “treatment” that they have applied to the religious cults, found that their efforts, aimed to affect the believers’ condition, had become useless. In despair, they enhanced the fight against the role that the faith and its followers had in the Romanian society. First, they resorted to a forced ideological indoctrination of the young people in schools, who were reared in the spirit of scientific atheism.

However, the local government institutions exerted pressure and threats on some religious cults, some of them (such as Baptists) received support from abroad. To reason these claims, an unedited “document”¹ will be used, which contains important information about the neo-Protestant cults’ situation in Bihor County.

Following a provision given by the secretary of the Bihor County People Council, several inspectors from the Department of State Local Administration (control and secretariat) performed between March 17th-April 1st 1987, a “control” that had as objective “the activity carried out by some religious sects, which met in unauthorized places”.

The findings reached by those involved in this action are contained in *Sinteza concluziilor desprinse în urma controlului efectuat privind întrunirea unor grupuri de credincioși din cultele neo-protestante*. (The summary of the conclusions drawn from the review carried out on the meeting of some groups of the neo-Protestant cults.)

The entire Bihor County was divided into ten areas (Aștileu, Cefa, Ceica, Finiș, Sălard, Balc, Tileagd, Săcuieni, Sudrigiu and Tinca). The Protestant cults were inspected in 29 villages and three towns (Beiuș, Aleșd, and Dr. Petru Groza) and mentioned the Baptist and Pentecostal believers of them.

The village Bălnaca (at no. 37/A), the Pentecostal cult “gathered” (i.e. it was active), having a “room endowed with the necessary means for the ritual”. It was held in Maria Popa’s

¹ It came into our possession after the events of 1989. A copy of the document to which we refer has been given to the Emanuel University Library in Oradea, to be consulted by those interested in such problems.

home, the local authorities warning her not to “recognize” the pursuit of such “meetings” on her property.

In the village of Butan (at no. 36) they organized—at Ioan Popa’s place—“unauthorized meetings” of the Pentecostals, proceeding, in this case, with the threatening of the owner.

About the Pentecostal believers of the Tinăud locality it was known only that they “meet regularly”. Instead, the believers from the town of Aleșd (Bucegi Street, no. 54) and those of Munteni (Bulz village) gave way to the interdictions, “not meeting any more”.

The 16 members of Pentecostal cult, who were gathering in the village Apateu (at no. 54), at Florian Moș’s home, were advised to “go to the Chișirid” locality where they were distributed”.

Situations, considered to be illegal, have been identified in other localities, too. For example, in the Corbești (Ceica village), the citizen Petru Trim built a house in 1980 for his son and used this opportunity to arrange a “room” in which to take place “meetings” of the Pentecostals from the settlement without having the required authorization. It was ordered the “cessation” of these meetings, however, the believers continued to gather in the same place.

In their turn, the members of Pentecostal inhabitants group in the village Bucium were “meeting” in a house (from no. 9), which was “outside” the perimeter of the settlement, its demolition planned for the future.

In accordance with Decree number 153/1970, the Pentecostal inhabitants of the village Dusești, who gathered regularly in a building at no. 15, were told that if they persevere, they will impose a contravening fine.

There have been cases when this process was exercised promptly by the authorities. Thus, the Pentecostal inhabitants of the village Dobrești, who carried on their “meetings” in a room of the house of Sav Coita were surprised by the “local organ” (being the Communist organization before 1989) that has

“sanctioned by contravention” all those present, including the building owner.

Another group of Pentecostals “gathered” in winter, at Dumitru Lunca’s place in the village Răcaș (no. 25), and during summer “they met at the authorized gathering” in the village of Hidișelul de Dobrești. The members of this cult, residing in the Gruilung, no. 36 (the village Lăzăreni), gathered in a house outside the settlement, so that it was doomed for “its demolition”, as in other similar cases.

Thanks to the measures “taken by the local organ” (again the Communist organization of that area), the Pentecostals in Vărășeni (Răbăgani village) no longer met after 1983, with all kinds of constraints placed upon them as a result of the communist authorities.

In the Beiuș town, the inhabitant Miron Petruș arranged a “household annex” attached to his house (in the Plopilor Street, no. 11), which he has “endowed necessary for carrying out the Pentecostal cult”. The local Communist authorities intervened in their characteristic manner, which sealed the fate of the respective annex.

The same mode of action took place in the case of Terente Bogdan, inhabitant of the Șuncuiuș vill (Finiș village), whose annex, he had “arranged” for the Pentecostal cult. Their end was sealed with the lack of “legal authorization”. Also other places of “meetings” of the Pentecostal cult were identified in Forău (in Vasile Caciul’s house, no. 160), Goila (village of Căbești) and Lazuri (village of Roșia).

The Pentecostal cult members did not “gather” for years in the no. 56 property of the village Ciuhoi. However, about 16 believers attended occasional “meetings” in the house of Iosif Török (no. 39), since they did not have a “special arranged room”.

Furthermore, we present in a condensed form, other findings of the “inspectors of control”:

- In Borumlaca (village Suplac) they had no place, in a recent period, with meetings of the Pentecostals;
- In Chijic they “no longer hold meetings of religious nature with the unauthorized cults”;
- The inhabitant Petru Lazar, of Sărand locality, “promised that in the future” he would not hold meetings;
- In Bucuroaia village, where at house number 8 they arranged a place for meetings, upon closer investigation they adopted the “required measures”;
- To Alparea, at the place of Gomboș (at no. 251) the members of the Pentecostal cult met, although the local Communist authorities “forbade them”;
- In the Vârciorog village in Vasile Costea’s housing (from no. 208), “a room is arranged for carrying out the ritual” of the Pentecostal cult, then ordered for the prohibition of such meetings in the future;
- They have “prohibited the meetings of the Pentecostals in the village Săcuieni, in the house on Mihai Eminescu Street;
- In Țigănești (the village Drăgănești) a group of 40 Pentecostals met in the house of Sofia Făt (no. 45), putting them into account to meet “in the area where they are distributed”;
- In Lazuri de Beiuș (the village Hinchiriș), in the house of the inhabitant Crăciun Fofiu, (at no. 4), met 12 Pentecostal believers; who had arranged a house for the cult activity; the meetings were “stopped” by the local authorities;
- In the town of Dr. Petru Groza (currently Ștei), Republic Street (no. 9), is “meeting”—at the Miron Buglea’s place—50 Pentecostal “believers”. Initially, there was even a higher number (110) that “gathered” in a house on the same street at no. 111. They had no authorization for any

of those two places. Meanwhile, “disagreements within the group intervened”, and, therefore, 50 believers decided to stay together, already operating in a “shed” belonging to Miron Buglea, where they made “changes”, which resulted in the building of a house.

The local authorities, after an already well-known practice, applied more fines, sued them (requiring the demolition of the building, which had been obtained by a judicial way) and “challenged” them not to “meet” any longer. As such, they made new steps to obtain “administrative authorization”. Their case was significant for both the persistence with which the communist authorities tried to annihilate them and, in counterpoint, through their ability to resist any repressive actions, retaining their faith, which regenerated after 1989.

- In the settlement Fânațe (at no. 120) there were 101 Pentecostals, who “meet” in the house of Ioan Gabor, for which he was applied “sanctions”, as he respected not “the regime of buildings”;
- In Ferice, 39 “believers” “meet” in a “special house”, namely at no. 128 (owned by Miron Bonchiș); they were notified to cease these meetings;
- In Săud (a near locality) there are only 6 believers meeting “occasionally” in the house of Elisabeta Costa, “specially adapted” for cult;
- In the village Pietroasa, at Miron Banciu’s place (no. 11) it was “particularly arranged” a room needed to conduct the religious ritual, although the 20 “believers” were not “allowed to get together”;
- In the village Burda (at no. 39) “20 Pentecostal believers meet” in the home of Ilie Matiu, although they were “put to” refrain from such activities;
- In Seghiște met (in 1986) “10 Pentecostal believers” in the house of Victoria Petriș (at no. 8);

- In Izbuc (at no. 54), “meet” 30 Pentecostals, who have been “punished because of breaking the law” and were “warned” not to relapse.

The inhabitants of the Baptist confession with the information in the document brief, referred only to two places². It is about the six “Baptist believers” in the village Săud, who met in the house of Alexander Farc, having no home “specially adapted”. So far, not “any sanctions” were applied “by the local organ” (organ is also known as the Communist authorities).

The situation in the village Tinca was more complicated because the Baptists of this settlement were “approved to meet” in a house on Crișani Street. Because of some “misunderstandings on a dogmatic line”, twenty Baptist believers were separated from a larger group and “meet” in a house on the Mihai Viteazul Street (no. 10). Although in 1986 they took measures to discontinue the activity of this group, however, it was found—by the “police organs (authorities)”, which made a “continuous surveillance”—that the pastor of Tulca, as an authorized person, went “regularly” to Tinca and “organized the service of cult” for the twenty Baptists. He even managed to celebrate and perform “one baptism”, which took part in a large audience.

The results of the inspections carried out, from March 17th to April 1st, 1987, by the inspectors from the Department of State Local Administration, Control and Secretariat, in the whole district of Bihor were therefore recorded in the so-called “Sinteză” (Summary) of the “meeting of some groups of believers of the neo-Protestant cults” (Pentecostals and Baptists), employing the cult activities “in *unauthorized* places” (my italics). Their identification of the “unauthorized” locations’ owners was the only

² For example, in a table-row with the places in Bihor county in which the inhabitants of neo-Protestant confession gather, although there is no unity of cult authorised (made by the same Department of Cults, established in Oradea), included the following information about Baptists in Chijic, Meziad, Săud, Totoreni and Tinca. (A copy of this document is in possession of the author.)

time in the state action for the persecution and minimization of the number of believers belonging to these cults who assumed all the risks (from the administrative fines, to the destruction of the cult buildings or threats to change their religious purpose or imprisonment). It was undoubtedly a period of resistance in the existence of these cults.

About the Bioethics of Abortion at Request in Romania. A Case Presentation

TIBERIU POP

University of Oradea

DIANA MOCUȚA, SZIDONIA LACZIKO, FLORIN SZASZ

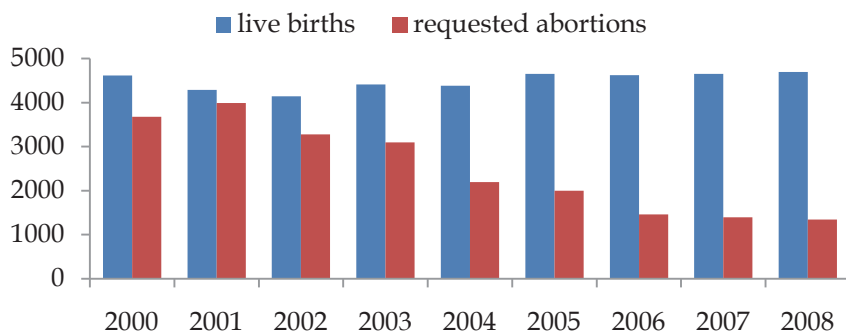
ABSTRACT. Nowadays, being in the post-modernist time when the scientific prophecies elaborated, launched and guaranteed at the beginning of the past century, ensuring the world that until the end of the twentieth century the science will definitively solve the most severe problems of humanity (illnesses, procreation, old age, and death) did not find resolution, even more, they are persistent and aggravated, endangering the demographic future of mankind. From these issues, we can mention the problems generated by an unseen sexual immorality and promiscuity or the too easy acceptance of interrupting the natural evolution of a pregnancy [at ob-gyn's advice or (especially) at the woman's direct request]. All these socio-moral and medical situations, which can have a catastrophic impact on the healthy demographic future of humanity, are due to the replacement of Christ-centered philosophy with the anthropocentric one, placing the man in the center of beliefs, with the direct or indirect perversion of sexuality and human reproduction, and also, most important, the perversion of the main reason of sexual partnership, the procreation. We consider that, regarding demographics, the liberalization of abortions at request in the last 20 years represented a wrong political and socio-medical decision. This led to the fact that millions and millions of live creatures were not brought into life, Romania getting the disgraceful first place in the European Community regarding the number of abortions, a direct result of the contradictions between the pro-life and pro-abortion groups. We can notice that in our country, the pro-abortion groups can very easily input their arguments, which gives more courage to the women on their choice of interrupting a pregnancy as a method of contra-

ception, when abortion should definitively be the last solution when all the other contraception methods had failed. From a bioethical point of view, we found useful to debate some negative examples, as the next cases we present, in order to attention the fellow gynecologists upon the non-ethical consequences of abortion.

KEY WORDS: bioethics, gynecologist, abortion at request, pro-life, pro-abortion, tiny man

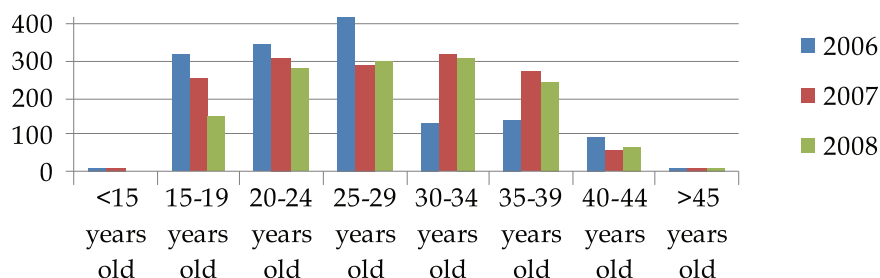
The number of requested abortions in Clinical Hospital of Obstetrics and Gynecology in Oradea from the last decade, by paradox, shows a decreasing trend, in 2008 getting to almost 1/3 from the number of abortions performed in 2000, meanwhile the number of births is approximately constant, with slight variations. In 2000 the number of live births was 4614, in 2001, 4286 and in 2002 showed a mild decrease to 4142; in 2003 started to run high again, getting to 4410, then 4379 live births in 2004, exceeding the level of 4500 in all following years: 4650 in 2005, 4620 in 2007 and the highest number of 4695 in 2008.

Speaking about willed abortion, in 2000 its number was 3677, rising to 3993 in 2001, after which every year we could notice a decrease, getting to 3275 in 2002, 3096 in 2003, 2195 cases, running low with almost 1000 in 2004, 2001 in 2005, 1464 in 2006, 1398 in 2007 and almost 1/3 of the initial values, 1346 abortions in 2008.



Graphic 1.

An interesting aspect of the abortion's problematic is the age of the patients when they choose the end of their pregnancy. From the data we were able to conclude clearly that during the last years, the age of the women asking for interruption is rising. In 2006, the repartition in age groups was the following: <15 years old: 14 cases, 15-19 years: 314 cases, 20-24 years: 344 cases, 25-29 years: 420 cases, 30-34 years: 130 cases, 35-39 years: 139 cases, 40-44 years: 93 cases and >45 years: 10 cases. In 2007, significant differences were noted at 30-34 years and 35-39 years groups, where the number of requests had doubled, getting shorter in all the other groups, the model being the same in 2008, too, where the most significant decrease is in the group of women under 20 years of age.



Graphic 2.

For sampling the bioethical deficiency of the medical act and the women's rights given by law, and in order to discuss and conclude some pertinent finding, we are going to present two relevant cases validating our concerns regarding the requested abortions, met in the Obstetrical department of CHOG from Oradea in the year 2009.

The First Case

The pregnant H. L., 32 years old, from urban environment, shows up at the admittance department with the symptoms of a

respiratory infection and mild hypogastric pain, over a pregnancy which was not followed until present.

From the family history there was no relevant issue, but speaking about life conditions and behavior, we can note that she is coming from an unfavorable, unorganized background, unmarried or with no stabile relation at that moment or at any point in her life, with no help from her family, no job, very low life conditions, below average, no studies, not even elementary school. Instead, she had been a heavy smoker for about 20 years, probably alcohol consumer, as well.

Besides the related sociologic aspects, it is worth to mention her pathological, especially obstetrical past. From anamnesis we found out an impressive number of 20 abortions on demand, first being performed at 16 years of age. At the age of 21, she takes a pregnancy to term, giving birth to a healthy, male gender, 3200 grams baby. In 2003 she underwent a surgical intervention of left salpingectomy due to a ruptured tubal pregnancy. Even after this event, the patient was not conscious enough to use a contraceptive method; she kept on referring to abortions on demand. The ongoing pregnancy has not been observed by any doctor until this admission, date of last menstruation is not known but estimated, but it is necessary to mention that the pregnant did not intend to keep this pregnancy either, however possible intervention of abortion on demand was outdated by the time of patient's presentation to hospital, pregnancy being 14 weeks in evolution.

From past medical history, we keep in mind the latent form of pulmonary tuberculosis, treated for the first time about 5 years ago. The acute respiratory infection began about 2 weeks ago, with cough, rhinorrhea, asthenia and no applied treatment.

General physical examination reveals an overall ill being, suffering eyes, pallor, dry skin, weakly presented subcutaneous tissue, muscular hipotony and little distended abdomen due to pregnancy.

Gynecological examination reveals a discreetly distended uterus, with fundal height at the mid pubo-umbilical point,

with low consistency on palpation, soft and elastic vaginal wall, cervix positioned at the direction of vagina, with the external orifice permeable to the tip of a finger, bad smelling abundant leucorrhea, without hemorrhage.

Echography reveals the presence of an ongoing pregnancy corresponding 15 gestational weeks, with BPD=2,81 cm, FL=1,2 cm, active fetal movements and rhythmic fetal cardiac movements.

Laboratory analysis proves a moderate leucocytosis of 12.500/ml and an anemia with Hb=10,2 g/dl and Htc=33%. Vaginal secretion shows the presence of *E. coli*, sensitive to majority of antibiotics, as well as *Candida albicans*. Antibiotic treatment with Ampicillin 500 mgx4/day is initiated right away, together with pregnancy protective treatment with Duphaston and Indomethacin suppository.

Following the treatment the respiratory and abdominal symptoms ameliorated, the pregnant woman was released with strict recommendations concerning personal and pregnancy related hygiene, together with pregnancy protective treatment.

The Second Case

O. E., age 39, from a rural area, presents with painful uterine contractions, and a clinically term pregnancy. Family history and past medical history do not reveal anything clinically significant.

Relative living conditions were more favorable compared to other patient. The pregnant woman came from a stable family environment, married, primary education level, but unemployed.

Obstetrical history is somewhat more impressive. At the time of admission the patient was toward the end of her 10th pregnancy, having 9 children already, whose data of chronologies, ages, weights, or birth pathologies could not be precisely obtained from the pregnant woman but vaguely. The actual pregnancy was not attended by any means, not even by the family doctor, the doctor's visit during 9 month period occurred only

once. Abortion history of the patient is relevant to mention, declared by her that she has been through 17 abortions on demand, few of them being before the first pregnancy she carried to term, the rest were in between the births she gave, the last one was done right before the actual pregnancy. The pregnant woman declared with no regrets that the actual pregnancy was not wanted either, however the legal demanding period for abortion was outdated by the time of presentation.

Pregnancy anamnesis followed a physiologic course, with no problem, but at the time of admission she presented painful uterine contractions for approximately 5-6 hours, without the possibility of determining the systematization.

General physical examination does not remark anything unusual, gynecological examination reveals a lax abdominal wall, uterine dimensions corresponding to a term pregnancy, uterine height at 2 finger distance sub-xiphoid, normal uterine tonus, painful uterine contractions every 2-3 minutes with the duration of 30 seconds, complete cervical effacement, almost complete dilatation, intact membrane, blood stained and increased leucoreic vaginal discharge.

Spontaneous vertex delivery started its course about 15 minutes after admission, resulted in a live birth, male gender, 3000 gr., Apgar score 9/10, clinically healthy baby. Immediate puerperal evolution was favorable, sero-sanguine lochia, contracted uterus, lactation present. Second postpartum day she left the hospital by her choice, against medical advice, leaving the newborn in our hospital.

Discussions

From the beginning it must be noted that the discussions should remind that, on one hand, relevant statistical data published in specialty literature remarks the fact that, at the end of last century and the beginning of the third millennium approximately 30% of all pregnancies occurred at married women [from developed countries (by choice from USA)] were unwanted [unfortunately at present in Romania this percentage

was and is much higher (horrifically higher)], in time the rest 70% of pregnancies were wanted, however not at the time of discovering the pregnancies, but at another time, in other words those pregnancies were unexpected or unplanned. On the other hand, these statistical data which refer to married as well as unmarried women, shows that, one in two obtained pregnancies is considered void, and among those void pregnancies one in two is interrupted on demand, which means one in every four pregnancies is finalized with abortion on demand.

We consider that at present, in the civilized world, with high probability, the abortion on demand has become the most delicate socio-ethical and political problem, noticing countless debates and confrontations pro and anti-abortions on demand, many times this rhetoric deploys too much of noise and aggression [not only in words, but sometimes also with a series of crimes (bomb blasts in front of clinics where abortions on demand are performed, criminal executions of some gynecologists)] or on the contrary, bringing some embarrassingly weak proofs or reasons within some sterile discussions, lacking a logical conclusion, useless and discordant with the unborn children's rights. Without a discussion, both sides involved in this rhetoric consider and affirm that the other part is mistaken.

The context in which we recall is that, on one hand in taking decisions pro-life activists do not understand why promoters of abortion on demand are that fractious about the unborn children's right to live (intrauterine and extrauterine). Practically the embryo/fetus is a miniature living person, who lives only a limited and temporary period (40 weeks) intrauterine and as this universally recognized right, sometimes unfortunately unwanted, to be born into this world after the act of labor, and whereas nobody has the right to kill a newborn at or after delivery, therefore nobody should have the right to kill an unborn child.

On the other hand, promoters of abortion on demand do not understand why the pro-life activists want to consider the right of the pregnant to benefit from the freedom to choose and exer-

cise a total control over own body per se, those prompters remind the pro-life supporters that they are not completely pro-abortion either, decreeing that their persistence can be considered pro-life, for they do not deny the rights and needs of the embryo/fetus evolving in womb either, but only consider that taking decisions to interrupt the normal course of a pregnancy (by abortion on demand) must be first the woman's decision regarding what happens to her body, as she is the sole beneficiary of her own body.

Nowadays these two concepts/motivations of pro-life and pro-abortion continue to contradict, both based on a series of universally recognized rights, some based on the right of the unborn children to live, while opponents are based on the right of the women to decide what to do with their own bodies.

We point out that from the obstetrical point of view, induced abortion (on demand) can be of three types: therapeutic abortion, eugenic abortion, and elective abortion.

Practically, in the majority of cases, therapeutic abortion is indicated and performed in maternal scope (of saving the life of the woman) and that the grace of spectacular medical development is more and more rarely indicated/recommended [in severe cardiopathy, cervical and uterine cancer (in which chemotherapy as well as radiotherapy anyway interrupts the life of the child)].

Usually, eugenic abortion is performed on parents' wishes and requests in cases of suspicions and/or paraclinical confirmations (by ultrasound, amniocentesis, and triple test) of some physical malformations and psychological disabilities or handicaps [trisomy 21 (Down syndrome)] or some hereditary conditions (Sickle cell anemia).

In elective abortion, motivation for executing induced abortion is the comfort of the parents, stability of the number of descendants, physical and psychological type/style, financial difficulties, finalizing the studies etc., or the wish for choosing the sex of the baby and the elimination/deliberate dismissing of the child presenting unwanted gender.

At present, multiple models exist in executing the normal course of pregnancy in medical arsenal according to gestational age, among which first of all we must mention the curettage of uterine cavity performed after the dilatation of the cervical canal with the help of metallic dilators, aspiration after dilatation of cervical canal, transabdominal injection of a chemical solution (concentrated saline), hysterotomy or systemic (in IV perfusion) or local use of prostaglandins (in form of tablets or vaginal gels).

We consider that, in the much more complex contemporary human society, series of more delicate particular situations or cases may appear, related to induced abortion problem, which generates a series of medico-moral uncertainties and which needs additional explanations from biblical and/or philosophical motivations and on the basis of which the existence of some medical cases/situations must be accepted or rejected where therapeutic abortion can be taken into consideration and be indicated, and among those we mention the lifesaving purpose (of the mother), serious cases of malformation/handicap, rape or incest for which induced abortion can be admitted.

Attempting to rationally and objectively analyze the executed abortion to save the life of women is found in imminent danger of life, must be initiated from a Romano-catholic moral principle, which affirms that deliberately taking someone's life can never be never justified, while to bioethically validate this principle for the argument to be applicable/viable, existence of some radical differentiation must be demonstrated between the deliberate act of taking someone's life and the act of leaving someone to die. Likewise, when the first act is always considered to be criminal, immoral, non-ethical, or unacceptable, in some exceptional/rare cases the second act can be taken into consideration and be accepted as a last medical solution, to save one life in order not to lose both lives.

Surely, accepting the decision to save the life of pregnant can be validated as following the medical concept which affirms the

fact that, instead of leaving two beings in evident and imminent danger, it is much better to save the life of one.

However, this acceptance must be conditioned *sine qua non* by the seriousness of medical condition, distinctly rare in which the pregnancy really aggravates the illness, possibly may reach pre-terminal situations and this decision is indicated only and only after exhausting all actual medical/therapeutical resources for no-abortion and saving both lives.

We remind the fact that the latest (Hi-Tech) medical technology highly reduced the number of therapeutic abortions properly and which is not motivated bioethically except in distinctly severe cases of real and imminent life danger and/or of fetal malformations incompatible to extrauterine life and which does not include the depression cases of women (in which the unwanted child is not included in socio-economical-professional plans) and right after therapeutic abortion can be considered only in case of endangering the mother's life in which case it becomes impossible (from a medical point of view) to save both lives.

By another side, we underline the fact that, handicaps represent a very wide range of gravity (minor, moderate or severe, physical or psychological), and the decision to abort all regardless of this scale of gravities requires to be unusually cruel, especially if we take into consideration the fact that mostly children born with no handicap can become handicapped during their lives (following an illness, accident). Thereby, as people who become handicapped postpartum are not killed, neither should the fetuses presenting a certain handicap diagnosed intrauterine be killed.

Evidently from the tanatogenic point of view, some embryo-fetal abnormalities are in their total incompatibility to life, as the example of anencephaly; medically interrupting such pregnancy is a recommendable medical measure, in that such newborn does not survive outside the uterine cavity. Decision to have or not to have a medical abortion in these situations at limit is a strictly personal one (theoretically un-directable).

Couples that decide to abort such malformed fetus can be understood in taking these decisions, as after expulsion (even at term) these fetuses would die in a few minutes, with no exception (100%). Likewise the attitude can also be understood of the couples who choose to continue the pregnancies even in these conditions (with no hope of the newborn to survive postnatal), preferring to wait for the natural expulsion holding on to their child until the moment of death. Couples should not be considered guilty, no matter what decision they take.

Other reasons (motives) are not absolute indications for therapeutic abortion, though many doctors and/or many others (non-specialist) recommend therapeutic abortions in these cases too. But deciding to have a therapeutic abortion in such circumstances depends only on every couple's personal moral regarding the therapeutic abortion issue.

Finally, we can combat the decision to abort the fetuses presenting abnormalities affirming the fact that, extraordinary perfection of paraclinical methods for tracing intrauterine fetal abnormalities did not lead to disappearance of aberrant decision subjectivity due to the existence of multiple false positive or false negative results, sometimes due to medical mistakes, or due to excessive pressure of some parents (we do not have to forget the high opportunities given to patients by the malpraxis liberal law).

Conclusions

Although apparently, the number of demanded abortions is decreasing in our area in the last decade, we have to underline that this statistical data was obtained only from the declared abortions performed in the hospital, therefore represents only the tip of a huge iceberg, most of the requested abortion are nowadays performed in private offices, which are not counted or centralized anywhere. So truly we have to assist to a highly increasing number of this procedure, especially at young girls.

The presented clinical cases demonstrated that this kind of women do not understand or accept that life begins right after

fertilization, not after the delivery of the child, and the request of an abortion is practically killing a life.

As we can see from the discussed cases, the social and familial background, educational, economic, moral or religious issues have great importance in taking a decision over an abortion.

In both presented cases, the fertility of our patients remained good, getting to have an enormous number of pregnancies (over 20), and abortion was the only contraceptive method used by them, in spite of so many performing possibilities, from which is impossible not to find something to fit.

In both cases the psychological counseling before abortion or after that was not done, although it is compulsory by law.

None of the women had any emotional distress regarding the very high number of requested abortions they had. In their opinion, the pregnancies they choose to abort were just unhappy mistakes, accidents, and not a blessing, so it was very easy to get rid of them, meanwhile other families do not mind to invest hope, money, effort or pain in order to be able to have a child, and even so, many times they remain without children.

The good news is that day by day, more and more gynecologists realize and admit that performing an abortion on demand is a legal, but profoundly non-ethical deed, with which they end a life, and as a result many of them gave up executing abortions.

Summarizing, we consider that with no doubt, the number of request abortions should be diminished by any means. In order to do that, the formative and educational role of the family and society has to get back to its lost importance. School, state, medical system, church, all have to validate with maximum efficiency their efforts in preventing unwanted pregnancies and family planning, and the civic responsibility of couples has to be real all along having sexual relations.

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