From: *Theological Studies*, vol **37** Dec. 1976

TRINITARIAN LOVE AS GROUND OF THE CHURCH

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THE CONCEPT of "anonymous Christianity" and the possibility of grace outside the limits of the visible Church has forced Catholics to reappraise the question "Why the Church?" When we allow with Vatican II the movement of God's kingdom within the world as a whole, the focus of the theological understanding of history moves from the Church, the Mystical Body in the making, to the world, and the dictum "Outside the Church no salvation" simply appears anachronistic.[1] At the same time, our experience-centered age is listening to the humanists' question whether the Church is not removing its members from active involvement in the development of the world, and to the liberationists' query whether personal freedom is not oppressed by authoritarian structures. Church membership declines as many see the possibility of living Christian lives outside the Church or prescinding from its directives.

One response to the new question "Why the Church?" is to focus on a functional understanding of Church in terms of its mission to the world to be an explicit "sign" of God's love which in principle is operative in the world as a whole.[2] Such a position would not require a large church, for it would remain meaningful despite the phenomenon of decreasing Church membership in our modern secularized age. To be credible to the world, such a "sign" demands personal and communal conversion to a mission-oriented spirituality. The Church as institution is meaningful to the extent that it structures this service of love and thus continues Christ's mission of making God's love credible in the world.

As important as this focus on mission is, it raises a theological difficulty: Who is to judge whether or not God's love is really being revealed? To be a "sign," one must know what is to be signified. If one emphasizes credibility to the world as a principle for the Church's own self-understanding, this would seem to make the world—which is at least not explicitly aware of the Christian nature of this love—the judge of whether or not the Church is really living God's love. But God's love is not simply a response to human needs, though it is this at the deepest level of need for God. It is a call to faith in His kingdom, and as Paul remarks to the Corinthians, "no one knows what lies at the depths of God but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:11), and further, "the natural man

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[1] See Roger D. Haight, "Mission: The Symbol for Understanding the Church Today," pp. 620-649 in this issue.

[2] Ibid.

does not accept what is taught by the Spirit of God. For him, that is absurdity" (1 Cor 2:14). This absurdity culminated in Christ's cross, and a sign of God's love must also manifest that paradox. This is not to deny that the Church must listen to the signs of the times, such as the demand for experiential criteria of authenticity and for relevance for life in this world, but ultimately it must develop criteria from its own resources of faith for its mission.[3]

Thus, to take as criterion for the Church whether or not it is effectively manifesting God's love, far from simplifying the question "Why the Church?", actually confronts us with a further difficult question: What is the nature of God's love that the Church is to signify? The response of this article to that question makes the Church as worshiping community more central than an explanation which makes outward mission primary.[4]

Thus this article attempts to respond to the question of the Church by reflecting on its ground in Trinitarian love. Part 1 will consider the problem as it arises out of the ambiguity of love. That will move me in Part 2 to consider the cross of Christ as central to understanding God's love, and to develop principles from that center for interpreting God's love in social-religious development. In Part 3 I will apply those principles to an understanding of the Church today, and present some reflections on its call to transformation.

THE AMBIGUITIES OF LOVE

The usual argument for *the presence of grace outside the Church,* which seems to make the Church important mainly as an articulation of what is happening everywhere, is the presence in the world of unconditional self-sacrificing love. The ground of this possibility is the gift of Christ to the world as the "supernatural existential" of our present human situation. The basic presupposition of "anonymous Christianity" is that human spirit involves an "unlimited openness for the limitless being of God," and that *de facto* we live in a world called to God through the final gift of Christ to the world.[5] Thus Rahner can say: "If a man accepts the revelation, he posits by that fact the act of supernatural

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[3] 'Richard McBrien advocates this need for the Church to change out of its own self-understanding through "the way of self-determination"; see his *The Remaking of the Church: An Agenda for Reform* (New York, 1973), p. 80. His concern is more for structural reform, however, whereas my article questions the very ground of the Church, which ultimately must guide such restructuring.

[4] Haight's article presents the community aspect of the Church as "relative" to its primary function of mission. The position of my article will be that community is equally primary with mission, each presupposing the other.

[5] Karl Rahner, "Anonymous Christians," *Theological Investigations 6* (New York, 1974) 392.

faith. But he also already accepts this revelation whenever he really accepts *himself* completely, for it already speaks *in* him." [6] Not only is true self-acceptance within immediate transcendence of conscious knowing and doing thus seen as grounded in grace and an implicit act of supernatural faith, but also whenever an act of authentic love of neighbor is performed it must have as ground supernatural love of God, whether this is explicitly known or not. Rahner says in another place:

> Above all, most theologians today would still shrink from the proposition which gives our fundamental thesis its ultimate meaning, its real clarity and inescapable character, viz., that wherever a genuine love of man attains its proper nature and its moral absoluteness and depth, it is in addition always so underpinned and heightened by God's saving grace that it is also love of God, whether it be explicitly considered to be such a love by the subject or not.[7]

Since 1965, when Rahner wrote that article, it is no longer true that "most theologians today would still shrink" from such a proposition. Rather, it seems commonly presupposed. Thus, in his *Method in Theology* Lonergan speaks of religious conversion as a state of being in love unconditionally. Such a consciousness can dispense with positive theology, for its love is "oriented positively to what is transcendent in lovableness." He comments:

> It may be objected that *nihil amatum nisipraecognitum.* But while that is true of other human love, it need not be true of the love with which God floods our hearts through the Holy Spirit he has given us (Rom 5:5). That grace could be the finding that grounds our seeking God through natural reason and through positive religion. It could be the touchstone by which we judge whether it is really God that natural reason reaches or positive religion preaches. It could be the grace that God offers all men, that underpins what is good in the religions of mankind, that explains how those that never heard the gospel can be saved.[8]

Heribert Muhlen has argued to a similar position from the nature of a love that truly responds to another as other. If one is truly acting out of self-surrendering love in responding to another, that person must be grounded in the "unlimited Thou" of God, since one's own particularity cannot ground our surrender beyond ourselves nor can the particularity of the other. [9] Thus the affirmation of *Lumen gentium* that "everlasting salvation" can be attained by those who "do not know the gospel of Christ or his Church, yet sincerely seek God" (no. 16) is given content by

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[6] *Ibid.,* p. 394.

[7] Karl Rahner, "Reflections on the Unity of the Love of Neighbor and the Love of God," Theological Investigations 6 (New York, 1974) 237.

[8] Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., *Method in Theology* (London, 1972) p. 278.

[9] Heribert Muhlen, *Die abendlandische Seinsfrage als der Tod Gottes und der Aufgang einer neuen Gotteserfahrung* (Paderborn, 1968) pp. 55-56.

these theologians as referring to those who manifest in their lives "self-transcending" love of God and neighbor.[10]

These theological arguments seem solid and convincing for the possibility and actuality of self-transcending love outside the Church. They are less helpful, however, for specifying where in fact such love is actually present and what conditions are needed for its full working out. In the first place, with the exception of Muhlen, their principles are derived primarily from the self-transcending subject, with less attention to the interrelationship of such subjects, so that the social dimension does not come clearly into view. The Church, however, as a social institution, requires criteria derived from social development.[11] In the second place, their criteria are not clearly experiential or verifiable, because they do not focus sufficiently on committed love over a long period of time with its stages of development. Metaphysical principles are essential, but without the further experiential criteria there is little clarity for determining what ought to be done. Experience shows that the initial experience of love is no firm criterion; for the dark side very soon appears with its jealousies, angers, and destructive drives. As one Jungian analyst put it, "love is more complex than its emotions, just as God is mystery, not enthusiasms."[12] In the deeper regions of the human person, even our most "altruistic" intentions often prove to be efforts to see ourselves as valuable, and the fidelity of our commitment is shaken by lack of response in the other. A depth analyst such as Freud concluded toward the end of his life that some blocks to that freedom which is the basis of *any* true love are all but insurmountable, and that the drive to self-destruction is all but irresistible.[13] Experiential criteria for love thus have to take fidelity in time into consideration, a fidelity to the initial vision that may seem impossible in face of the "realism" of daily life.[14]

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[10] As is clear from their arguments, "self-transcending" has different meanings in the theologians cited according to their total theological viewpoint. They hold in common, however, that such "self-transcendence" indicates the action of God's grace.

[11] Lonergan's analysis of intersubjectivity (see *Method in Theology,* pp. 55 ff.) and of cognitive, constitutive, and effective meaning which constitutes the Church as society (pp. 362 f.) provides helpful principles for such a social-developmental analysis, but they are sketchy and need fleshing out. Paul Tillich, also, in Vol. 3 of his *Systematic Theology* analyzes Christian spiritual community in the context of world history (3 vols. in one; Chicago, 1967, esp. pp. 382-93). His treatments of historical "self-integration," "self-creativity," and "self-transcendence" have some similarity to the second, third, and fourthstages of my analysis (see below). They are not, however, interrelated by Tillich in a developmental way.

[12] See James Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion* (New York, 1967) p. 82.

[13] Sigmund Freud, "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," *Standard Edition,* ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth) 23 (1964) 252.

[14] In his classic book on love, Vladimir Solovyev makes this very point. The keen emotion of love glimpses a transcendent reality, but it comes and passes away. What

Not only does experience show selfless love to be ambiguous and difficult in our individual lives; it is even more clearly challenged in our efforts to bring about just social structures. As John C. Bennett commented in a not outdated article,

> Enthusiasm for a cause is not enough. There is a phase in a particular struggle when the cause may simplify one's life, make decisions clear, enable one to know with whom to stand. But complexities finally overtake such simplifications. One discovers there are no total solutions, that even successes create new and unanticipated problems, that actual alternatives call for new and troublesome decisions. Those who have been most political and activistic often find the people with whom they have worked split away over strategies and develop a shocking hostility toward one another. ...[15]

A similar conclusion about the difficulty, if not impossibility, of establishing a socially-just world order was reached by Reinhold Niebuhr. After studying the historical evidence at length, he concluded that whereas individual selfless love is difficult enough, institutional selfless love is proven historically to be highly unlikely, if not impossible. "The selfishness of human communities must be regarded as an inevitability. Where it is inordinate it can be checked only by competing assertions of interest; and these can be effective only if coercive methods are added to moral and rational persuasion." [16] He concludes that the moral obtuseness and self-interest of human collectives make a morality of pure disinterestedness impossible, so that any overly optimistic expectation of it must come to terms with a history that evidences the contrary.

There are signs of a growing optimism that perhaps social change can be brought about if there is Christian community, but even those attempts point to the difficulty of following through with such communities. An editor of the Post *American,* a periodical published by a radical social-action group in Chicago, put it thus:

> The experience of our own small community in Chicago, however, is probably far too typical of what has happened with many. We watched helplessly with bewilderment and disillusionment as all our highest dreams and noblest efforts to build community crumbled around us. There were many reasons for this: our lack of wisdom in handling interpersonal friction, a fear of authority, a pride that often kept us from learning from others. As we look back, perhaps the biggest reason is that we simply did not understand the centrality of the Spirit to building community; now our greatest hopes in rebuilding stem from the beginnings of an "unclogging" of the Spirit among us.[17]

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remains is faith in love that stands firm to the end despite the cross. "In our materialistic society," he writes, "it is impossible to preserve genuine love, unless we understand and accept it as a moral achievement" *{The Meaning of Love* [New York, 1947] p. 67).

[15] John C. Bennett, "Two Christianities," *Worldview,* October 1973, p. 24.

[16] Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York, 1960 [first publ. 1932]) p. 272.

[17] Jim Wallis and Robert Sabath, "The Spirit in the Church," Post *American,* February 1975, pp. 4-5.

A similar conclusion was reached by Rev. Leo Mahon in his work in an experimental parish in San Miguelito, Panama. When he went there in 1963, he organized a group of 500 men, using methods learned under Saul Alinsky in Chicago. This group disintegrated almost immediately. He realized that what was needed was a "new man" and began to evangelize the people and to seek conversion of life.[18] He learned that what obstructs social change and community-building is deeper than mere good intentions can eradicate; in fact, what seemed needed was both personal and social conversion to Christ.

This imposing body of evidence cautions us against concluding too quickly from theological possibility to the actual working out of selfless love within or outside the Church. It also points to the necessity of developing theological criteria of its presence that include more explicitly the social dimension and the experiential dimension that includes fidelity in time. I turn now to this task.

TRINITARIAN LOVE AS REVEALED IN CHRIST'S CROSS

Since as Christians we hold the centrality of Christ for revealing God's love, I propose to examine how Scripture presents his life as foundation for our theological criteria. What has emerged from recent studies is the centrality of Christ's death/resurrection, not only for interpreting his own life and that of Christians, but also for interpreting the self-giving love of the Trinity. That Christ's death and resurrection was central to the Christian message has become clear from Scripture studies. The core of the early Church kerygma was "that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day . . . and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve" (1 Cor 15:3-5).[19] This was the key event in whose light all the other events of Christ's life were interpreted by the Evangelists.[20] Not only

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[18] See the unpublished dissertation by Robert J. Delaney, *Pastoral Renewal in a Local* Church: Investigation of the Pastoral Principles Involved in the Development of the Local Church in San Miguelito, Panama (Minister, 1973) esp. pp. 91-92.

[19] See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology," *Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968) pp. 812 f., for further development of the centrality of the cross in Paul's theology. Norman Perrin develops this point in Mark's Gospel, the earliest of the Synoptics, in his *The New Testament: An Introduction* (New York, 1974) p. 148.

[20] Hans Urs von Balthasar develops this point in his extended article on the paschal mystery, "Mysterium paschale," in *Mysterium salutis* 3/2 (Cologne, 1969) pp. 133 ff. Christian Schutz makes the same point in his interpretation of the Gospel miracles in the light of Christ's death/resurrection; see his "Die Mysterien des offentlichen Lebens und Wirkens Jesu," *ibid.,* esp. pp. 119-23.

Christ's life but Christian life was interpreted in the light of the paschal mystery. Thus, the description of the Christian life in all three Synoptics[21] is put after the prediction of the Passion, when Jesus turned specifically to teach his disciples. The call to become as little children, to forgive unconditionally, to exercise authority by serving, to remain faithful in marriage, etc., are all seen in the light of the coming Passion. John continues this view and calls the faithful to love one another as Jesus loved them (Jn 13:34), saying that the greatest love was "that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:12).

To see Christ's cross and resurrection as central for interpreting his life and the life of Christian discipleship is not novel. What is relatively recent is to see in it a revelation of Trinitarian love. A tradition of interpreting God's being as perfect act and absolutely immutable made it difficult to see Christ's suffering as revealing anything about the Father's self-sacrificing love, to say nothing of the Son's divine personhood.[22] Thus Hans Urs von Balthasar was developing unfamiliar ideas when he wrote in his recent major article on the paschal mystery:

> God's emptying (in the Incarnation) is ontically made possible by God's eternal emptying, His threefold personal self-gift. Consequently, even the created person is not primarily to be described as "standing in oneself," but more deeply (if the person is created in God's image and likeness) as "returning to oneself *(reflexio completa)* from being centered outside," and as "standing outside oneself as self-giving and responding interior."[23]

Balthasar thus interprets God's own Triune love from the self-emptying love of Christ revealed in his incarnation/death/resurrection.

Heribert Muhlen has taken up this theme in developing his interper-

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[21] Mk 10:32-45; Mt 17:22-18:35; Lk 9:51 ff. Paul J. Achtemeier develops this point at length in his recent commentary on Mark *(Mark,* ed. Gerhard Krodel [Philadelphia, 1975] pp. 96-100). William G. Thompson makes the point for Matthew's Gospel by pointing out the interspersing of the Passion predictions with advice to the community *(Matthew's Advice to a Divided Community: Mt 17,22—18, 35* [Rome, 1970] pp. 14 ff.). Luke places his advice in the context of the "journey to Jerusalem."

[22] Heribert Muhlen presents the patristic arguments against the Father suffering, arguments which in post-Chalcedonian theology also spoke against the divine Son suffering; see his *Die Veraenderlichkeit Gottes als Horizont einer zukuenftigen Christologie* (Munster, 1969) pp. 16-20. There have been sporadic affirmations since then of the Father's suffering (Luther's paradoxical theology was one such example), but they have not been widespread till recently. One recent study out of the Lutheran tradition is Kazoh Kitamori, *Theology of the Pain of God* (Richmond, 1965 [originally 1958]). Jiirgen Moltmann has also addressed this theme; see his *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (London, 1974).

[23] "Balthasar, "Mysterium paschale," pp. 147-48 (my translation).

sonal view of Trinitarian love.[24] He sees in the Son's giving Himself up (Eph 5:2.25; Gal 2:20) a revelation of the Father's own "not sparing His own son" (Rom 8:32) and handing Him over for us (Jn 3:16). The cross reveals the high point both of the Father's not sparing His own and the Son's not sparing Himself, and the moment of their unity in giving is the moment of the sending of the Spirit (Jn 19:30). Thus Muhlen sees the Spirit as the expression in person of the Father's and Son's joint self-giving love, who in turn effects self-giving community among those He is "sent" to. "The being *(einai)* of God," Muhlen writes, "the essence of His essence, is the giving away of His own."[25] Being the fulness of manifestation of God's Spirit, the cross is not seen as a single act but the culmination of a life of self-giving and the fruitfulness of this life in community formation.

This theological view of the paschal mystery as revealing God's own Trinitarian love places that event in the larger context of all God's loving action in salvation history as the culmination of His sovereignly-free absolute fidelity to His covenantal promise to Israel, a promise that not even Israel's infidelity could block. Muhlen expresses well this mysterious fidelity of God:

> In his convenantal conduct God is the absolutely unchangeable newness of His freedom, and this does not exclude the fact that He reacts sovereignly to what man does. . . . The death of the Son of God, who is the revelation of the

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[24] "Muhlen, "Veranderlichkeit Gottes," pp. 30-34. Methodologically, it is important to note the difference between von Balthasar and Muhlen and, say, Rahner. All three have constitutive Christologies (see Schineller, "Christ and the Church: A Spectrum of Understandings," earlier in this issue, for a description of this type), but von Balthasar and Muhlen have an interpersonal ontology behind their positions, as distinguished from what Muhlen would term a "transcendental subject" view that sees being as the horizon of one's personal "being-in-the-world" (as Rahner, similar to Heidegger). An interpersonal ontology focuses on interpersonal communication as primary revelation of being, so that one views being as a sort of union of opposites, and the Trinitarian perspective comes clearly into view. The cross is then interpreted as dying to autonomous personhood for the sake of emerging communal being, and emphasis moves from individual spiritual growth to community growth. It is clear how community and Church are more essential in this view than with a more subject-centered ontology. Such an interpersonal ontology is an underlying presupposition of my article.

[25] *Ibid.,* p. 31 (my translation). This is a further development of Muhlen's basic position that the best analogy for the Holy Spirit is "we" in person. The Father is initiating ground, analogous to "I" in interpersonal relationships. The Son is coequal respondent, analogous to "thou", joined in "mutual" love with the Father. And the Spirit springs from their "joint" love, the expression of their union in love while maintaining their otherness. (See his *Der Heilige Geist als Person* [Munster, 1963] pp. 100-169 for a full development of this position.) Thus the action of the Spirit in our hearts, in this view, is to bring about the same sort of joint self-giving while maintaining our differences. The Spirit is community-forming.

> omnipotence of God in the impotence of the cross, is the completely unexpected expression of the free fidelity of God to His promises, which is incapable of being grasped by any sort of a priori schema.[26]

It is this larger salvation-historical context that enables us to derive from Christ's cross/resurrection both transcendental qualities of God's Trinitarian love and experiential historical stages of religious social development. The next three sections unfold these implications.

Qualities of Trinitarian Love Revealed in Cross/Resurrection

If we view the cross/resurrection event as revealing God's Trinitarian love, four qualities of that love appear: His sovereign freedom, His fidelity to His promises and the continuity of His call, the universality of His love, and its community-forming power. His freedom is revealed because the cross shows that no other power, whether human evil or demonic, can stand against God's free self-gift. His fidelity appears in the cross as God's standing by His covenant despite Israel's rejection of it. His universal love is revealed because through the cross God's love breaks through narrow national boundaries and extends salvation to all, Jew and Gentile alike. Finally, through Christ's dying and rising God frees the world from its alienation in order to produce a new people through the sending of the Spirit. I will consider each of these in turn.

First, God's sovereign freedom is revealed in His determination to give Himself despite the rejection of His people. The cross shows God's love as not conditioned on whether or not it is reciprocated, but as itself the ground of our ability to reciprocate. It is the sort of love to which Matthew calls Jesus' disciples: "If you love those who love you, what reward have you?" (Mt 5:46).[27] It is this love's sovereign freedom from outside influence that grounds Paul's conviction that since God did not spare His own Son but gave Him up on our behalf (Rom 8:32), then no power, neither life nor death, neither angel nor principality, can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:38-39). The ground of this "freedom from" is God's total self-possession and sovereign power to commit Himself/or some end. His absolute initiative is the source of the unconditional covenant promised to David[28] and realized in the "yes" of Christ to God's promises (2 Cor 1:20). Thus God's sovereign freedom from inner-world dependency is not mere arbitrariness, as seems implied in nominalism, but is precisely the ground of His absolute covenant fidelity.

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[26] *Ibid.,* pp. 29-30 (my translation).

[27] Matthew says this in the context of calling the disciples to love their enemies (Mt 5:44) and ultimately to "be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (5:48).

[28] See Delbert R. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore, 1969) pp.98-119.

Secondly, implied in God's sovereign freedom, therefore, is His fidelity and the continuity of His self-gift to humanity. The cross is the paradoxical revelation that God's fidelity is able to accept the freedom of His people even to reject Him and His Son and still not take back His unconditional offer of love. Israel had the background for understanding this in its theology of covenant. The Sinai covenant was conditioned on their fidelity to the divine commandments, and since Israel proved unfaithful, the later prophets pronounced that covenant broken [29] and interpreted her national trials (destruction of Jerusalem, exile, dispersion) as the consequences of this breach of covenant. [30] Despite all this, God's plan of the covenant remained unchanged. God would renew the covenant of Sinai (Ez 16:60) and that of David (Ez 34:23 f), and would change their hearts by the gift of the divine Spirit (Ez 36:26 ff.), so that they would again be His people. This unconditional fidelity of God, which regathers Israel despite her dispersion through infidelity, is thus brought to surprising revelation in the cross/resurrection event, where Christ's words of forgiveness as seen by Luke (23:34) reveal the ultimate in God's willingness to forgive and reunite despite all.[31]

Thirdly, the cross thus reveals God's love as universally open. It is Christ's death for our sin that Paul sees as God's offer of reconciliation to the whole world (2 Cor 5:18) through repentance and forgiveness of sin. Christ healed the division between Jew and Gentile in his own flesh, according to the author of Ephesians (2:14-15), and prepares in himself the ground of reunification. In principle no one, including enemies, is excluded from the call to "be reconciled to God," though the call may in fact be refused, at least in Matthew's view, and the judgment will consist in whether or not one has opened in hospitality to "his least disciples" (Mt 25:31-46). It is important not to separate the universality of God's offer of love from its realization on the cross. In Matthew the cross is the bridge to universalism; in Luke, though universalism is present in intent from the beginning, it is realized only through the cross/resurrection and sending of the Spirit. [32] Thus the particularism of Jesus' mission during his life is finally broken through only after his death/resurrection. That

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[29] "See Jer 22:9; 31:32; Hos 2:4; Ez 16:15-43, etc.

[30] "See "Covenant" in *Dictionary of Biblical Theology,* rev. ed. by Xavier Leon-Dufour (New York, 1973) p. 96.

[31] "It is such trust in God's faithful love that grounds Paul's mission to preach the kerygma of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:20-21) and is behind Matthew's instructions to forgive unconditionally (Mt 18:21-22) even when someone else has the grievance (Mt 5:23-24). According to John, Jesus' postresurrection gift to the disciples was the Spirit that empowered them to forgive (Jn 20:23).

[32] See Eugene A. LaVerdiere and William G. Thompson, "New Testament Communities in Transition: A Study of Matthew and Luke," earlier in this issue.

breakthrough was precisely the extension of the call to become God's people in Christ beyond the limitations of Judaism.

Thus, finally, the cross/resurrection event reveals God's love as community-forming through the "sending" of His Spirit. It grounds what Paul calls a "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17), or a "new covenant" in the Spirit (2 Cor 3:6-13), which is celebrated in the Eucharist as the covenant ratified in the blood of Christ and recalling his death until he comes (1 Cor 11:25 f.). Luke portrays the very event of Pentecost as a new Sinai epiphany, the Spirit covenant fulfilling the covenant of the law. [33] Not only were the disciples empowered by the Spirit to witness, but believers were brought together in common worship and shared all things in common (Acts 2:44).[34] John's view is similar, though the Spirit is not as clearly linked to the community formation. He clearly links the sending of the Spirit to Jesus' death/resurrection (Jn 7:39; 16:7; 19:3®), and he also sees Jesus' death as a sort of seed giving rise to a new community (Jn 12:24). When the Spirit is given He is a power for reconciliation (Jn 20:23), so that the disciples might lead the lost back to unity. Thus the very witness of the disciples is to be their communion and love for one another (Jn 13:35), and their unity is to reveal God's own unity (Jn 17:20-21). In some mysterious way, therefore, Christ's dying in submission to the Father's will is seen in these accounts as an event through which God builds a new covenant community through the sending of the Spirit. His action throughout history of calling a people to Himself is brought to fulfilment (in principle, if not in time) through establishing a new people by His Spirit.[35]

These four qualities of God's Trinitarian love—its grounding in God's sovereign freedom and fidelity, its universal intent and community-forming power—are manifested historically most fully in the cross/resurrection event, but they are transcendent and present analogously in every stage of salvation history. The Church, as we shall see, embodies not simply the final and fullest stage of divine action, but includes the forms characteristic of preceding stages as well. Thus experiential criteria to identify the prevailing stage of religious development must

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[33] See Thierry Maertens, O.S.A., A *Feast in Honor of Yahweh* (Notre Dame, 1965) pp. 148-51.

[34] See LaVerdiere and Thompson, *art. cit.*

[35] Throughout Israel's history the Spirit of Yahweh serves His covenant people. It inspires leaders at critical moments (Gideon, Jg 6:34; Samson, Jg 13:25; Saul, 1 S 10:6, etc.) all "in service of the establishment of the Kingdom of God in Israel" (Walter Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* 2, 51). Later the Spirit is manifested more personally through anointing prophets with Yahweh's "Word" to call Israel back to the covenant, and still later as the inner power that will establish Yahweh's law in their hearts (Ez 36:26 ff.); ibid., pp. 57-65. Thus the Pentecost experience is situated in a history of progressive personalizing and interiorizing of Yahweh's Spirit in service of His covenant people.

also be developed in order to guide the Church to fuller growth. Hence I turn now to the question of social-religious development.

Notion of Historical Development as Help to Understanding Church

Wherever it is manifest, God's love will show the qualities both of sovereign freedom and of fidelity in forming community of an ever more universal character. These qualities, however, will show up differently in the Noah covenant than in that of Moses or the New Promise. Because of God's fidelity, each of these covenant promises will be included in the succeeding ones, but each succeeding covenant will also reveal an element of newness that comes from the sovereign freedom of God's love.[36] This paradox of God's freedom and fidelity, of prophetic challenge and continuity of commitment, confronts us inevitably with the question whether or not there are stages of historical development that enter into succeeding stages as necessary presuppositions for their emergence. In other words, is there a law of historical development that will help us to interpret the role of the Church today?

A springboard into this difficult question is given by Muhlen in his treatment of a theology of politics in *Entsakralisierung* .[37] He observes that a certain view of updating as simply a matter of ridding the Church of Old Testament forms and introducing "religionless religion" is overly simplistic. The Old Testament is not some fixed quantity that lies behind us so that we are in an entirely new order. It is an eternal, enduring covenant that must be realized in history ever again. This means that the Old Testament can never be a reality of the past that we have outgrown. "It belongs, therefore, to the 'essence' of the New Covenant that the Old as having been still is present, for the newness of the New Covenant even today can only come into appearance in the tension of the Old Covenant promise."[38] On this basis the Spirit of the New Covenant does not simply replace the law of the Old, but in some sense contains it while surpassing it. Behind such a view is a notion of development that needs closer examination.

This notion of development appears most clearly in human development but is verified in every new stage of evolution. Thus, as Teilhard de Chardin has shown, each successive stage of evolution includes yet transcends the previous stage, molecules being contained in living cells, cells included in sensate life, sense included in human life, and so on.

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[36] This would imply both continuity and divine intervention, using the categories of J. Patout Burns, "The Economy of Salvation in Patristic Theology," earlier in this issue. I shall develop this more at length later.

[37] Heribert Muhlen, *Entsakralisierung: Ein epochales Schlagwort in seiner Bedeutung fur die Zukunft der christlichen Kirchen* (Paderbom, 1971) pp. 177-85.

[38] *Ibid.,* p. 178 (my translation).

What appears in evolution as a whole, Erik Erikson has shown in human development through the various crises of trust/mistrust, initiative/guilt, identity/diffusion, etc.[39] Each stage enters into the successful working out of the succeeding stage or else introduces a deviation that prevents a full working out of the process. Lonergan articulates this notion of development in connection with the three types of conversion (intellectual, moral, and religious) he sees in self-transcending consciousness.

> Because intellectual, moral, and religious conversions all have to do with self-transcendence, it is possible, when all three occur within a single consciousness, to conceive their relations in terms of sublation. I would use this notion in Karl Banner's sense rather than Hegel's to mean that what sublates goes beyond what is sublated, introduces something new and distinct, puts everything on a new basis, yet so far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it, on the contrary needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context.[40]

The key point in this view is that previous stages are not destroyed but even raised to higher realization in their own right, while being integrated in the richer context. Thus, sensation in humans is richer than in animals, and cells in animals are more complex than those in plant life, etc. Lonergan finds this phenomenon in the stages of conversions: the intellectual conversion from conceptualism to judgments of reality is contained in the moral conversion to value choices on the basis of the objective good, and both are contained in the religious conversion to the principle of unlimited love. If this is true of individual consciousness, which analysis can show presupposes an interpersonal context in order to develop,[41] it seems reasonable to expect that it is also true analogously of social-religious consciousness, such that stages of development could be seen as preparatory for the Church of Christ springing from the cross/resurrection event.

To discover such stages in Scripture, however, presents a difficult methodological question. There are multiple theologies in both Old and New Testaments[42] and it is impossible simply to take one of these as speaking for the whole of Scripture. On the other hand, the systematic theologian does not merely take over scriptural theologies; he develops

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[39] Erik H. Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis* (New York, 1968) chap. 3, "The Life Cycle: Epigenesis of Identity," pp. 91-141.

[40] Lonergan, *Method in Theology,* p. 241.

[41] Erikson's stages, e.g., are all socially conditioned. One cannot grow in trust without a trustworthy environment, etc. Language itself, the product of social culture, conditions personal growth, and love is the necessary environment for growth. Thus person is essentially interpersonal, and one could expect that the individual person's stages of growth imply social stages. Analysis will have to show whether this is true.

[42] See LaVerdiere and Thompson, *art. cit.,* as but one example.

categories suitable for modern problems and attempts to correlate these with the data of Scripture. Since the Church is a historical reality, it does demand historical analysis (the problem cannot simply be bypassed); and if this analysis is to produce more than historical relativity, some foundation in laws of development seems called for. Since, further, the Church is not merely a sociological reality but a mystery of God's grace and hence a spiritual-social reality, we will look to spiritual psychology to work out a paradigm of the stages of spiritual development (presupposing these reveal stages of social development as well) and then correlate this paradigm with Scripture to show how it corresponds to major stages in Judeo-Christian history.[43]

The first stage of spiritual growth is to lay the foundation of an integrated personality through relationships with parents, peers, and members of the other sex, as well as the discipline of rules, in order to consolidate one's self-possession and personal freedom sufficiently to sustain constructively the break-through of spiritual experience. At this level one interiorizes collective norms of one's parents or one's environment—what Freud would call the "superego"—in order to bring one's self-centered desires into integration with social expectations and the rights of others. The personality is fed and strengthened through these close relationships and rules and opened to a broader social participation. I will call this the "familial" stage. It is characterized by close (even blood) relationships to members of one's religious group and by emphasis on obedience to law. God is known more externally, as an authority figure and lawgiver, and one identifies oneself primarily in terms of social expectations. It is an essential stage of self-integration; otherwise spiritual experience can break the tenuous integration or be distorted because of the one-sidedness of personal development.[44]

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[43] Paradigm" is used here in basically the same sense as in LaVerdiere and Thompson, art. cit., to mean what "in-forms and in-fluences the life of the community and its members." There, however, Scripture is the source of the paradigm, and the present day makes it its own. Here the paradigm is worked out from present-day developments in spiritual psychology with an eye to its correlation with Scripture. Here, also, its implications are worked out systematically as an aid to interpreting scriptural data developmentally. It may well be that further study would show that this is what exegetes also do (judging from cultural trends in exegesis), without fully articulating the present-day thought-frame being used. This could be a question for further investigation.

[44] It is difficult to give in detail all the sources of evidence for these stages. My own dissertation has provided much data by examining Freud, Jung, and Moreno in the light of Muhen's theology of the Holy Spirit; see *Spirit: Divine and Human. The Theology of the Holy Spirit of Heribert Muhlen and Its Relevance for Evaluating the Data of Psychotherapy* (unpublished, Fordham University, 1974) pp. 378-477. Further evidence has come from a social interpretation of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius: human freedom is needed even to begin the *Exercises,* a spiritual break-through initiates the the Second Week, it is integrated in one's life in the Election and Third Week, and moves to a missionary thrust in the Fourth Week and *Contemplatio.* What I have found

Secondly, conscious integration of oneself in society necessarily involves a one-sidedness that leaves other aspects of one's individual uniqueness undeveloped and suppressed. At some time or other there is a break-through of "spiritual experience" springing from one's spiritual center—what has been called the "superconscious." [45] This center is beyond rationality, much as the subconscious is prerational. It is the dimension of the personality whence come intuitions, artistic inspiration, love, and personal experience of God. [46] Its emergence frees aspects of one's wholeness that have been denied consciousness by the effort at social integration—the "dark side" of one's personality, guilt, shame, mystery. Thus the transition to this dimension is disorienting to one's "normal" view of life. There is demanded a sort of "dying" of the conscious self in opening to this new transcendence, whether it is experienced in a "great love" or in more direct experience of God.[47] One's personal self is now not so much agent as respondent, and has to learn a new way of co-operating with the power and influence of this new dimension. The new centering experience frees one from collective relationships to the beginning of individuation, which at the same time opens one to the universality of the spirit. However, this is only the vision

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most helpful to describe the stages is the work of C. G. Jung (quite widely available) and his follower Roberto Assagioli. Thus, Jung found the distinction between personal self ("personal unconscious")and spiritual self ("collective unconscious") to be verified the world over and in every age. These are not separate; the personal self (or ego) is a particular reflection of one's total spiritual self that is developed as the ego stabilizes itself in the world. Jung saw this social stabilization of the ego as the work of the first half of life, till about age 35 to 40 (see "The Stages of Life," in *The Portable Jung,* ed. Joseph Campbell [New York, 1975] pp. 3-22). Spiritual experience could occur before this, but it could not develop fully unless the ego was thus strengthened. Erikson's stages in the life cycle would basically correspond to the work of this stage. Conflicts in this stage, according to Assagioli, "occur between the 'normal' drives, between these drives and the conscious ego, or between the ego and the outer world (particularly human beings closely related, such as parents, mate or children)" *{Psychosynthesis* [New York, 1971] p. 43).

[45] Assagioli gives a fine description of the indications preceding and accompanying this "spiritual awakening." The "ordinary man" may begin to experience a vague and elusive "lack," which may lead to intensified activity to escape the sense of meaninglessness. This might increase even to the extent of despairing of life itself. The break-through itself of the spiritual dimension opens one to an ecstatic experience of love and truth and a whole new generosity toward life *{Psychosynthesis,* pp. 40-46).

[46] A helpful article describing the spiritual dimension in a systematic way is Benedict M. Ashley, O.P., "A Psychological Model with a Spiritual Dimension," Pastoral *Psychology,* May 1972, pp. 31-40.

[47] Assagioli's description focuses more on the mystical aspects of this break-through, whereas "ecstatic love" itself shows many of the same qualities as the break-through of the self. It decenters the person and places one in a new interpersonal context that reveals itsgrounding in a transcendent Other. See Solovyev, *The Meaning of Love,* pp. 58 ff.

of universality, not yet its realization. In time, because one's relationships and ways of acting are still patterned on the old model, the experience ebbs, love cools, or one loses the vision of the spiritual and is left with a conscience sensitized by the experience but with the same old narrow self and guilt. In fear of this state, one may intensify efforts at purification, but this only deepens one in the previous self-structure and increases alienation.[48] Learning submission to transcendence is a long and difficult process.

Thus, thirdly, there is what might be called an "incarnational" stage of transforming one's relationships in line with one's experience of God and the new break-through of spiritual love. This stage is essentially communitarian, since one's relationships cannot be transformed apart from a community undergoing a similar transformation. This presupposes the freedom gained in the second stage, for only if one is centered and whole can relationships be true. Thus one continues to submit to the transcendent dimension in a growing and mutual submission to and unification with others. But also this stage presupposes and transforms the first stage by a growing decentering from oneself for the sake of the other through a sort of "ecstatic love" which does not annihilate one's self but brings increased self-understanding and self-gift in the new love.[49] The process involves a purification of one's previous self-centered feelings, understandings, and choices—a sort of "dark night" of the senses and spirit—which emerges into a deeper unification and indwelling in the other. St. John of the Cross expresses well the ecstatic nature of this love: "Wherefore the soul may know well if it loves God or no; for if it loves Him, it will have no heart for itself, but only for God."[50] Not only is this increasing other-centeredness true of relationship to God, but increasingly of all one's relationships in God.

Fourthly, as the person (and community) grows in "ecstatic self-gift" through a deepening dying to self-centeredness into greater unification in community through the transcendent love, one experiences a desire to communicate the joy one has found with others beyond the limits of the believing community. Thus St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross were led by their mystical purification to become active reformers. Perfect love, as

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[48] See Assagioli, *Psychosynthesis,* pp. 46-49.

[49] John Cowbum develops the notion of "ecstatic love" in his *Love and the Person: APhilosophical Theory and a Theological Essay* (London, 1967). As he notes, Christian mysticism is distinct from Eastern mysticism on this point, in that Eastern mysticism brings a greater union with one's own greater self and ultimate annihilation of one's self in the One, whereas Christian mysticism preserves the otherness of God in the process of ecstatic unification (pp. 347-55). Thus our third stage diverges from Eastern mysticism, and the divergence continues in the fourth stage.

[50] St. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle,* ed. E. Allison Peers (New York, 1961) exposition of stanza 9, n. 4, p. 83. This passage is quoted in Cowburn, *op. cit*., p. 345.

Richard of St. Victor noted, wants to share its beloved with others.[51] There is a "release of power," in the words of Rosemary Haughton, that springs from conversion to Christ in a loving community. [52] This fourth-stage person, grounded in the love of community and of Christ, desires to bring this communal love to those who still have not experienced it, and to do so freely, because one's need for love is fulfilled through the community. The creativity of the transcendent ground of God's communitarian love is thus freed to go out.[53]

These are four stages of spiritual growth into transformation by Trinitarian love. They are not independent of one another, but related in a logic of development. Familial relationships and rules bring developing integration and liberation of one's individual freedom. Grace touches that center of freedom and opens the self ecstatically to God and spiritual love.[54] As one integrates this spiritual dimension in free and freeing relationships to God and others, the liberation of self in this communal sharing breaks out in a transcendent desire to give freely the love one has experienced. Not only are the stages interdependent; successive stages preserve and develop more richly what was begun in previous stages. Individuation permits greater unification and deeper relations with others; ecstatic communal love effects deeper self-possession; finally, the stage of outgoing love increases one's delight in communal sharing, for that sharing is then not self-enclosed but creative of expanding love.[55] As with other developmental processes, break-throughs can take place in later stages before the previous ones are well developed, but they cannot normally continue in a solid way unless the presupposed stages are healed. Thus these stages form a sort of social-religious law of development akin to the other examples of development I have presented. It remains to see whether these stages cast light on and are correlated to the biblical data.

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[51] *De trin. 3,* 11. Critical text and notes by Jean Ribaillier (Paris, 1958) p. 146. Ewert Cousins analyzes Richard's argument in "A Theology of Interpersonal Relations," *Thought* 45 (1970) 56-82.

[52]Rosemary Haughton, The Transformation of Man: A Study of Conversion and Community (New York, 1967) pp. 116-50.

[53] This correlates well with Muhlen's view of the Holy Spirit as breathed forth from the joint ecstatic love of Father and Christ at the moment of Christ's death. Gratuitous self-giving, in this view, springs from the joy of shared love. See n. 25 above.

[54] This is a moment of divine intervention that is not simply a further development of its preconditioning stage. See J. Patout Burns, *art. cit.,* for the distinction between a developmental and a condition-intervention schema of Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine respectively.

[55] The effect of succeeding stages on the preceding seems more an aspect of development, since it presupposes that each stage builds on the preceding and helps it unfold; see Burns, art. cit.

Correlation of Stages of Development with Biblical Data

The difficulty of such a correlation was mentioned before. An exegete could ground such stages variously: according to the various covenants, or particular persons such as Abraham and Moses, or various authors and traditions such as the Yahwist or Priestly account. I have chosen not simply to work from those positions but to sketch out a paradigm of spiritual development and to correlate it with what Scripture presents as major stages of Israel's development, both to elaborate our paradigm and to give further understanding to the biblical data. The stages were chosen with an eye to that correlation, so it should not be surprising to find how well they do fit.[56]

Thus, in the first place, we have a religious community of Israel, formed on the basis of the call and promise to Abraham, and the covenant and law given to Moses. The people were to be Abraham's offspring, so that membership depended for the most part (with the exception of converts) on blood relationship. These prepersonal bonds affected even the conferral of guilt and blessing—to the fourth or thousandth generation respectively (Dt 5:9 f.). The norm of conduct was provided by the Mosaic law, and this covenant presupposed and was conditioned by the people's observance of the law. Yahweh is seen as "Israel's God," not yet clearly as the "only God." He is transcendent in holiness, so that even Moses, the chosen one, could only look on the back of Yahweh lest he die (Ex 33:18-23). To represent Yahweh's "otherness," the priests wore special dress, and the Temple—a place "cut out" for Yahweh's worship—was His special place of presence. This corresponds almost exactly with the familial stage of religious development with its collective aspects of law and biological bonds of membership, and the transcendent otherness of Yahweh's Lordship. However, reflection will show that we each recapitulate that history in our own religious growth. If absolutized, this stage narrows in on itself in differentiating itself from others. It becomes judgmental and moralistic, and because outsiders are excluded it falls prey to one-sidedness. Although it is a necessary stage of growth, it must give way—through a sort of dying and rising—to a more personal and universal stage if it is not to harden in exclusiveness.

The second stage seems to have occurred with the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion. Secure symbols of identification such as the Temple and Jerusalem were destroyed and intense disorientation and despair resulted. A broader, more universal view of Yahweh's power and action emerged from the dispersed situation, so that this seems a decisive new stage in Israel's development. Fundamental to this stage were the prophecies that the old conditional covenant was abrogated

[56] See n. 43 above, for the meaning here of paradigm.

because of Israel's infidelity (Jer 31:21 etc.) and that Yahweh Himself would intervene and put His own Spirit in their hearts and make them keep the law and be His people (Ez 36:27). This break-through of Yahweh's transcendent unconditional love seems to have broadened their vision of Him from "Israel's God" to universal creator and "only God." Pagan gods are seen as nothing at all, and the Priestly creation account sees Yahweh as universal creator and Lord. Further, there is a move from collective guilt to individual responsibility, as seen in Ezechiel's admonitions to each Israelite (Ez 18). Correspondingly, there is a wider vision from narrow nationalism to seeing Jerusalem as eschatological center of world peace (Is 60:1-7).

This clearly corresponds to the stage of spiritual break-through with its polarity of individual responsibility and ecstatic universal visions. However, it is only the initial break-through, which sensitizes consciences, enlightens the intellect, and motivates to renewed activity; it is not the full transformation. The promises of inner transformation are all put in the future, and even though there is a growing closeness of relationship to Yahweh (seen especially in later wisdom literature), there is not yet the step to incarnating this spiritual dimension in human relationships that we find in the New Testament. In fact, in the ebbing of the Spirit, Israel increased its personal efforts toward purification and increased its laws and legalism.[57] A process of incarnating surrender to the spiritual dimension must take place if the people are not to stagnate between the spiritual break-through and their own efforts at self-salvation.

This third stage was inaugurated by Christ and brought to completed beginning in his death/resurrection. According to the Synoptics, Jesus not only experienced the personal break-through of relationship to the Father—as at his baptism—but also lived out in all life the implications of a Spirit-guided and empowered activity. This portrait corresponds well to what I have named the "incarnational" stage.[58] It involves a purification of one's own strategies and moral efforts for bringing about the good one envisions—such as we find in Christ's temptations—in

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[57] Paul Ricoeur beautifully analyzes this process of increasing guilt with increasing attempts at self-purification; see *The Symbolism of Evil* (Boston, 1967) esp. pp. 126-47. The "Pharisee" is the "separated" man, alienated in his own efforts at purity (p. 137).

[58] Muhlen describes the change of spiritual experience from Old Testament to New at some length; see *Entsakralisierung,* pp. 264-320. He argues to a move from a transcendent, fearful experience of the sacred in the OT to an experience personalized and mediated by Christ and fellow Christians in the NT. See "Sacredness and Priesthood in a New Age," *Theology Digest* 21 (1973) 106-11, for a condensation of his position. My treatment relies heavily on his. My argument does not necessarily presuppose the historicity of the Scripture accounts. The writers' own attitudes toward Jesus reveal their spiritual experience.

order to submit one's powers freely to the Father's initiative. This purification of Jesus is linked to a deepened unification with the Father and an incipient spiritualization of social relationships. Thus Jesus is portrayed as using the intimate term "Abba" to express his relationship to the Father, a new sacred term reserved for the Father alone (Mt 23:9). And the Father is seen so close to him in John's Gospel that Jesus applies the Temple symbol to his own body (Jn 2:19-22) and exclaims to Philip that he who sees him sees the Father (Jn 14:9 ff.). Thus the fear of death that surrounded the epiphanies of Yahweh in our first stage is now transformed into an intimacy that involved Jesus' dying to himself in surrender to the Father's will. This decentering and unification increased till its culmination in the cross/resurrection event that John sees as the moment of "handing over" his Spirit (Jn 19:30), the break-through into incarnate spiritual relationships in the Church.

With the sending of the Spirit, believers are empowered to have the same intimate relationship with the Father as Jesus. They now cry out "Abba" (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15) and they also embody the presence of God for one another as "temples" of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19). Relationships among believers are so transformed that believers are seen actually to embody Christ (Mt 25:31-46; Acts 9:4-5) and to mediate the love of the Father which is alive in us through the Spirit (1 Jn 4:13-16; Rom 5:5). Nowhere in the OT is it ever said that one's brethren mediate the presence of God. Love of fellow Israelites was commanded by Yahweh, but it is never said that this love *was* loving Yahweh.[59] Now love of the brethren is better than cultic sacrifices (Mk 12:33), and reconciliation must precede any temple worship (Mt 5:23-24). By the one Spirit they are baptized into the one body (1 Cor 12:13), so that they become not just a community of believers in Christ but are actually seen as a new communal reality, the "Body of Christ," in which Christ himself grows to his fulness (Eph 4:13).[60]

This description of early Christian experience correlates very closely with our third, "incarnational" stage. It presupposes a centering in transcendent love (Christ is the center of their community, and disciples

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[59] Muhlen develops this point in *Entsakralisierung,* pp. 299-310.

[60] Hans Kung treats this image as the third of his group of three: people of God, creation of the Spirit, Body of Christ; see *The Church* (New York, 1967) pp. 107-260. The three images correspond to the three stages of development I have outlined, but whereas I have suggested the Body of Christ image as the more developed and inclusive, Kung opts for the centrality of the People of God image. It may well be that our age requires such an emphasis—to return to our beginnings; for, as we shall see, any stage is incomplete if separated from its roots. However, I see the Body of Christ image, according to our analysis, as evolutionarily a more inclusive and developed stage of Church understanding. It presupposes the other stages, however, and without them can only appear as monolithic.

are seen in Christ[61]) and also a purification of self-centered attitudes to enter more fully into a reconciled community.[62] The heart of the process is a dying to oneself for the other and an entering more deeply into commitment to Christ and the community that embodies him.[63]

This stage itself, however, is not enough. Just as Christ's death was not just for his disciples but for the whole world, so the disciples are empowered by the same Spirit and thus called to witness God's love to the world. The communal "incarnational" stage, therefore, must break out into what might be called a fourth, "eschatological" stage. Luke brings both aspects together.[64] For example, his description of Pentecost shows not only the forming of a sharing community but also the "release of power" of the Spirit for the apostles to preach boldly the good news of Christ. Community and mission reinforce each other, the one providing the worshiping base that calls down the power of the Spirit in the apostles, and the mission motivating a deepening Christian community (see Acts 4:23-31). John's view seems very much like Luke's; the very message is their love for one another (Jn 13:35). In principle, this mission will end only when the full number of believers is brought into oneness with Christ: "that all may be one" (Jn 17:20 f.).[65] Thus, as in the fourth stage of our schema, communal love in the Spirit gives rise to outgoing love, which in turn intensifies the communal love in an ever-expanding rhythm.

These, in broad outline, are biblical stages of spiritual growth that correspond to my developmental schema. The move from one stage to another was hardly ever smooth. Sin, understood as refusal of God's call to ongoing development, resisted the dying to self necessary to advance to the following stages.[66] Israel was moved from the clan stage only by the destruction of its center of institutional identity—Jerusalem and the Temple. And Judaism itself balked at going beyond its national limits to its universal mission in Christ. At each stage a dying was required: to corporate identity, then to spiritual individualism, then from communal worship to immersion in the world. Yet there was also fidelity to the past.

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[61] See LaVerdiere and Thompson, art. *cit.* Luke especially focuses on Christ's presence among the disciples.

[62] *Ibid.* Matthew's rules for community emphasize this.

[63] As noted before (n. 21 above), the advice to the community is put in the context of the predictions of the Passion. Thus the whole of Christian life is seen as involving a dying to self.

[64] See LaVerdiere and Thompson, *art. cit.*

[65] See 1 Cor 15:24 for an even more universal expression of the mission of the Church, to bring all of creation into submission to Christ, and his final submission to the Father.

[66] Sin is here understood in relation to grace, and not simply as a moral fault. Hence, in a developmental view of the call of grace, sin will involve idolizing some present stage of development and refusing to open further to the transcendent call of grace.

Community was present in the end as in the beginning, and even more intensely, so that Christians could call themselves the "new Israel." [67] There is law in the end as in the beginning, but a "new covenant" law in the Spirit.[68] And there is a promise as in the beginning, but now one that even death cannot overcome, of an eschatological, transcendent kingdom. My notion of development seems confirmed: succeeding stages include the previous and even bring them "to a fuller realization within a richer context."[69]

Finally, the constant dynamism behind each new stage is God's love, sovereignly free, faithful, universal, and formative of community, but this love is ever more fully realized in each succeeding stage. Thus, God's freeing freedom called Abraham *from a* nontranscendent culture to obey Him personally, and the law called for free obedience. The spiritual break-through freed further from collectivism to individual responsibility and universal vision. Christ moved this freedom into real relationships by his willingness to face dying to himself for others, and the gift of the Spirit frees believers to love unconditionally in the world as grounded in God's transcendent freedom. God's fidelity also moves from a conditioned fidelity, to an unconditional promise, to an incarnate fidelity in relationships, and finally to eschatological fulfilment in Christ. His universal love moves from a particular promise to Abraham that all nations would be blessed in Him, to a universal vision of His Lordship, to incarnation of this universality in Christ's cross/resurrection and the "new creation," and finally to world transformation. Lastly, the community itself is gathered, interiorized, embodied, and sent forth to bring all into the one fold.

To conclude this section, these stages have been developed from spiritual psychology, and their biblical confirmation shows that they are appropriate to reveal God's action in our spiritual growth. They are not just past history but an ever-recurrent developmental pattern. If the view presented is correct, we would have to conclude even now that succeeding stages cannot be fully developed without the preparation of preceding stages. A later stage may emerge early—as with a spiritual break-through in a disintegrated personality—but one would have to take care that the preparatory stages are repaired if the succeeding ones are to yield their full fruit. Service to the world would then be seen as impotent or only feebly possible without a powerful spiritual community. Community would be impotent without reliance on the break-through of

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[67] See Kung, *The Church,* pp. 68-69.

[68] I have already adverted to Luke's presentation of Pentecost as a new Sinai experience. Matthew makes a similar point by his interiorization of the law in his Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7).

[69] See Lonergan, *Method in Theology,* p. 241.

the Spirit and the freedom of individual commitment, and that break-through itself as disintegrating unless grounded in basic human communities. The constant dynamism behind every stage of development would be God's love, and the gift of community-forming Spirit.

WHY, THEN, THE CHURCH?

I began with the question, in a world where anonymous Christianity is a real possibility, "Why the Church?" I insisted that the usual norm for discovering the working of the Spirit and hence salvation is selfless love. Admitting that selfless love is a sign of God's love, since it is only possible on the basis of a transcendent ground, the question still addressed us:
What then is God's love, when is love really selfless? My argument has been that fully selfless love is only manifested in the cross/resurrection of Jesus, that this event is normative for selfless love wherever it occurs. Further, I argued that the cross reveals four qualities of such divine love: freedom, fidelity, universality, and community-forming. Not only that, but since the cross/resurrection is no isolated event but the culmination of a people's divine formation and preparation, it can only be interpreted historically as culminating stages of historical development: of community, reliance on divine power, and the unification of these in the spiritual community that was the early Church. And even this Church is not in itself sufficient to manifest God's love unless it is moved out by the very divine power within it to manifest God's universal community-forming love and co-operate with the movements of the Spirit in the world. What would such a position say to the question "Why the Church?"

In the first place, it would have to criticize a one-sided view of the Church as primarily a servant of the world; for the mission aspect of the Church in the above view is to manifest God's love as revealed in the cross/resurrection event, much as is presented in Matthew's Gospel, and that event does not stand alone but is the culmination of a whole history of community formation which enters into the content of the mission. The spiritual community of the Church is itself the message—the effective revelation of God's love in the world as a possibility of human development. [70] Only if the Church converts to becoming a living manifestation of God's love will it be a real embodiment of the message of the kingdom. This seems to me the theological reason why efforts at social transformation have proved unavailing: the lack of spiritual community supporting them; for it is not just individual acts of selfless

[70] This view does not take away from the need for mission, and for adapting to the needs of the people one serves and their stage of development (as Haight argues, *art. cit.).* But if this service is to go beyond helping people be healed for the first of our stages, it will involve further conversion and development of community in the Church. One cannot give what one does not have.

love that it is the mission of the Church to communicate, but community-forming, committed love, and this can be communicated only if it is really being lived.

Secondly, it would also be insufficient to the question "Why the Church?" to say simply that it was to form a community of faith in Jesus Christ; for this would make the community center solely on its relation to Jesus and to one another, and would not go beyond itself, as Jesus himself did, to reveal the universality of his Father's love. This would be equivalent to an exclusivist ecclesiology and would not be taking seriously the reality of God's grace outside the boundaries of the believing community.[71]

Thirdly, however, could we not simply hold a representational ecclesiology, accepting the reality of grace outside the boundaries of the Church and affirming that the Church was there to show what was basically possible independent of its witness? It is difficult to exclude this possibility in theory, given the possibility of grace outside the Church, but it does seem highly unlikely, given some reflection on our experience. One likely candidate as revelation of God's grace, for example, would be the high points of Eastern spirituality. There certainly we have the recognition of oneness, of the need to die to egoism, and of compassionate concern for suffering humanity. However, if our analysis of Trinitarian love is taken as norm, that love would fall short precisely through its absence of community-forming thrust. The Eastern view of God is monistic, so that community could not be considered as a transcendent goal—perhaps as a means, but not as itself a glimmering of the divine community that is our future. Hence that revelation would be more in line with the second stage of my historical analysis—from collectivism to spiritual universal individualism—and not a manifestation of the fulness of Trinitarian love.

Could we not point to a political movement such as Marxism, therefore, as an example of selfless commitment to a just society where each is respected for what he/she can give and helped for what he/she needs? This does exemplify the community aspect of God's love, but falls short of the norm of the cross/resurrection by its limiting its vision to this world. God's Triune love is indeed a power for healing and love in this world, as we have seen in my third stage, but its motivating power and final vision is not this world but an opening to the transcendent power of God's Spirit.

Perhaps, then, one could point to the good people one meets in

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[71] See P. J. Schineller, "Christ and the Church: A Spectrum of Understandings," earlier in this issue, for a description of this position. Matthew could hold this in an age when the "world" was seen as much smaller; see LaVerdiere and Thompson, *art. cit.*

everyday life, people whose selfless love seems far superior to one's own, and who seem far better carriers of divine life than oneself. Apart from my early critique of such manifestations of selfless love (which may or may not be borne out in the long run), such individual acts may qualify an individual for divine life, but one could hardly say they manifested the quality of universality and community-forming that are needed to embody the fulness of God's love. If one is simply looking to individual salvation, then the question of the Church would seem not to arise at all. But if the Church is God's instrument to effectively manifest His own love in the world, then it needs a community base that lives from His Triune love.

Why, then, the Church? The answer the above position points to is that the Church is the normative and constitutive[72] embodiment of the fulness of Trinitarian love in the world, called to realize this love in itself and to co-operate with the movements of grace in the world according to its own experienced knowledge of the community components that enter into that love. It presupposes that Christ's death/resurrection established in the world a new possibility of spiritual community through the sending of the Spirit, and that this Trinitarian love is fully revealed only through such a community and the mission that springs from it. This would be predominantly a developmental schema, with a strong condition-intervention component, especially at the points of transition between stages.[73] It adds to Gregory of Nyssa's view, however, the communitarian focus of Augustine's pneumatology; for in my view the Church is not just a pedagogue of individuals in their process of purification (as necessary as this is) but precisely the locus of God's community-forming Spirit in whose power each member is opened to communal freedom, universality, and self-giving. One is educated precisely by being ever more deeply incorporated into the Body of Christ, and it would be this inspiriting that empowers the Church's action in the world. Because of the equal emphasis of community and mission in this view, it is more akin to the Lukan than the Matthean model. Both Christian community and mission are viewed as equally primary; for the mission is for the sake of expanding community, and the community for the sake of expanding mission.

Thus the Church would have a twofold task: to purify itself to become an embodiment of God's living Spirit, and to witness this love in the world and call the world's own manifestations of the Spirit to the fulness of Christian communal love. This is well expressed by Rosemary

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[72] Schineller, *art. cit.,* for a description of this type of ecclesiology. The difference between this ecclesiology and that of Karl Rahner lies not in the type but in the interpersonal ontology that underlies it; see n. 24 above.

[73] See Burns, *art. cit.,* for a development of the implications of these two options.

Haughton in a recent book:

> The Christian community has two tasks, which are not separable but are distinct. . . . The community has to organize itself, and organize with others, in order to bring to bear on its own worldly situation the understanding it gains in its calling. This is its task of religion-making. But in order to do this truly, and make a religion which can worship God and not idols, it must also come into being as a community made not by hands, but by the act of God. This act is an act of judgement, and it is by undergoing this judgement that the community exists as spiritual. By this also it is enabled both to *be* and to *utter* God's judgement on the world, which includes its own worldly building. . . . *Only* the Spirit can do this, when he acts in people and sets them free to love each other.[74]

Thus the Church has itself to hear the call of divine love to conversion and spiritual community, and from this basis of experience to witness to God's call to the world. It may well be that the Church is predominantly in the first stage of institutionalism and needs first to hear the prophetic call to convert and trust in God's transcendent love before it can gain the strength it needs to be sent out in joy. It need not postpone mission till this is done, since the stages mutually help one another, such that mission can be a strong motivation to become formed in spiritual community, as it was for the Post *American* community.[75] It would only mean that if the mission is truly to bring God's love, it must have as ground a living experience of that love in community. That experience, in the view here presented, involves the four stages of development, each of which needs renewal if the Church's witness is to be solid. Thus we are led to the following suggestions for renewal.

First, there needs to be renewed, or even formed, the familial basis, which heals emotional relationships and schools freedom to break loose from the collectivities of our world to find one's true self. Without that base the anxiety to secure one's place in our threatened world will prevent our hearing God's new call to grow. Israel had this component in her family feasts and community synagogues. Temple celebrations presupposed that familial base. This base is increasingly lost in our day when families are more and more uprooted in our "future shock" economy, and collectivism and individualism pervade our disintegrated neighborhoods and commercialized entertainment. If God is to build community on a natural base, we need to develop communities that neither our culture nor our Church as institution at present builds.[76]

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[74] Rosemary Haughton, *The Theology of Experience* (New York, 1972) p. 58.

[75] See n. 17 above and the corresponding text.

[76] The strategy of developing "basic communities" in South America, and the trend to forming "covenant communities" in the charismatic renewal, both seem to be responding to this felt need.

Secondly, today, when we recognize better our human inadequacy, there needs to be renewed conviction that not Church structures, however necessary they be, nor merely human efforts, which also are needed, but God's community-forming love assures the Church's unity, existence, and growth. Israel's own institutions were razed in order for her to open to Yahweh's power for new creation. The remedy today, I hope, will not be as drastic, but it remains true that the Church today as before requires the same transcendent help for every aspect of renewal, from updating of liturgy to reinterpreting ministries. The charismatic renewal is only one instance of such a spiritual awakening in the Church,[77] but the trend must reach to seminaries and parishes if we are to move beyond a merely institutional communitarian life.

Thirdly, the Church needs the foundation of a strong spiritual community to empower mission. In the early Church Christ's cross/resurrection was the model for such healing and the unconditional forgiveness it implied. At Pentecost dispersed Jews were regathered by the Spirit, and the disciples were sent out with that message of reconciliation. The same is true today. The Church needs to heal divisions within our own communities and between Christian churches. There is but one Spirit, so our divisions must be seen as sinful (regardless of who was or is at fault). The cross/resurrection teaches that healing comes not from our own unaided efforts but from openness to God's reconciling love, which involves dying to our own (or the Church's) narrow self-justification or even self-condemnation, and opening to the unity God is effecting. If we open to Christ in our community (as was Luke's vision), we can emerge from our narrowness into the new unity to which we are called in the one Spirit.[78]

Fourthly, God's love in Jesus' cross was not just for the renewal of Israel: it is a universal call to repentance for the whole world. There is only one goal for the world. God's Triune love, and grace is everywhere at work. Hence the Church must bring its knowledge of spiritual community into ongoing dialogue with the world. It is not a one-way dialogue but a willingness to learn (as is clear from Roger Haight's

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[77] Other examples are the renewal of Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises,* new methods of communal discernment, and the Cursillo movement, among others. The contagion of such movements as that of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon (See *Time,* June 14, 1976, pp. 48-50) and transcendental meditation shows the hunger of our age for transcendent experience. The Church is particularly called to embody a healthy openness to this dimension, which will help free people to creative community rather than enslave them.

[78] Heribert Muhlen has recently argued for a universal ecumenical council of all Christian churches, on the grounds that there is only one Spirit we all share by baptism, and we need to presuppose this unity in our efforts to embody it; see "Steps toward a Universal Council of Christians," *Theology Digest* 21 (1973) 196-201. The argument of this article would support his conclusion, provided, of course, we have broken through to the transcendent ground that we have seen is implied in such a reconciliation.

article) as well as critique. Thus it can learn from the Marxist concern for justice and the oppressed to recall its own early community experience.[79] Or it can learn from the Freudian expose of our unconscious sinfulness to take seriously the prophetic challenge of Christ himself. On the other hand, it will judge the world's narrow nationalism (or its own narrow institutionalism) or the economic world's psychological manipulation (as well as its own administrative manipulation) that reveals an absolutizing of world structures and a closedness to God's transcendence. In constant openness to such learning and critique, the Church will transform itself and witness to the world according to God's love that it lives from.

CONCLUSION

I began with the question that anonymous Christianity presents to the Church. From the view here presented, God's love forms an enduring and committed community in the Spirit; it is not just the ground of individual acts of selfless love. It has been argued that committed community is essential if social structures, and not just individuals, are to be transformed by God's love. Such transformation is no mere structural change—which could be accomplished by separate acts of love—but a move to "new being," a committed, Spirit-empowered community of love. Anonymous Christianity cannot mean a negation of the necessity of such a spiritual community if it is not to divest the Church of its power so to transform structures. This article does not deny the possibility of such spiritual communities elsewhere in the world (though experience does not show this as likely), but only cautions that such a committed love, even beyond death, is no mere instance of selfless love but a life devoted to a transcendent love even at the cost of one's life.

"Why the Church?" Our response is: to become a living witness to this Trinitarian love. It is a vision that involves an ongoing conversion toward the freedom, fidelity, universality, and spiritual community that are revealed and effected by Christ's cross. The cross itself is the final manifestation of the inadequacy of any finite representation of this divine love, so that only by an ongoing dying to its finite values, immobile self-justification, and limited love will the Church, by extrapolation, reveal its source of life within, yet beyond, itself, the call of Trinitarian love which is the final goal of all the world. The Church must be a place where such a call to conversion is ever heard as both a judgment and a gift to itself and the world.

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[79] Because of grace in the world, the world can and should be a call to the Church to recognize values it has neglected. However, if the Church is to grow in self-determination, it will look for the roots of these values in its own faith. We need, in the words of Archbishop Helder Camara of Brazil, a new Thomas Aquinas, who will do for Marxism what Thomas himself did for Aristotelianism (talk given at the University of Chicago at the celebration of our medieval heritage, November 1974).

COMMENTS ON ROBERT T. SEARS'S ARTICLE

After rereading Robert Sears's "Trinitarian Love as the Ground of the Church " I wished it had preceded my own instead of following it, since its position makes it appear as a retort or an alternative view. But this would obscure the fact that we share many common concerns and that I feel myself in agreement with most of his assertions, if not with his method. For example, he raises the question of the *kind* of love that is salvific and responds to it in clear and distinctly Christian terms. Thus I believe that our views could be taken as being complementary on a certain level, even while on another they are fundamentally different. I shall, therefore, briefly outline my position in his terms to show where we might agree and then try to pinpoint where we differ.

The point at issue lies in whether the *raison d'etre of* the Church consists in its being a Christian community which also has a mission, or its being a Christian community-primarily-in-service-to-the-world. [80] Were I to adopt Sears's developmental point of view, I would insist more consistently than he does that, in Lonergan's words quoted by him, the final stage of religious development to which the Church is called is indeed a higher stage which "introduces something new and distinct, puts everything on a new basis, yet so far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it, on the contrary needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context." Thus, to view the Church simply as a community of love and reconciliation (the third level) "is not enough"; this must be transcended m such a way that "communal love in the Spirit gives rise to outgoing love, a transition that requires a quantum jump (a "dying") "from communal worship to immersion in the world." Thus the Church, which is a spiritual community, is "raised to a higher realization" in a mission Church. The idea and the actual status of the Church as mission "develop more richly what was begun in previous stages." This new and richer context of existing and understanding includes the former stages, cannot exist authentically without them, and is nourished by them.[81] And yet this is a different and higher level of existing to which the Church is called negatively because falling back to a prior stage or idolizing it "and refusing 'to open further to the transcendent call of grace" may involve sin, positively because in a Church whose mission is turned outward to the world God's "love is ... more fully realized." In all this we agree.

The position of Sears, however, is quite different from this, because in reality, I believe, he is operating within the context of three stages of development and not four having collapsed the third and fourth stages into a single one. Or else the goals, finalities, or intelligibilities of each of the higher stages are not distinguished in importance or are equally primary. Thus, he states that "both Christian community and mission are viewed as equally primary, for the mission is for the sake of expanding community, and the community for the sake of expanding mission." The strictly reciprocal or mutual interdependency between community (third stage) and outward-turned mission (fourth stage) on a *de facto* psychological and everyday level (which I accept) is raised by Sears to the level of understanding the very purpose or ultimate finality of the Church. It is here that we differ.

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[80] For my part, I hesitate to use Sears's phrase "servant of the world" because of its over-close association with that particular movement called "secular theology.

[81] 1 therefore agree with Sears that "service to the world would then be seen as impotent or only feebly possible without a spiritual community."

The reasons for this difference are multiple, but two stand out. The first, which is more fundamental and complicated and therefore cannot be dealt with adequately here, has to do with method. Sears, who begins his argument from above, from Scripture as an external and objective authority and from a dogmatic theological understanding of divine Trinitarian love, sees things from a different perspective than myself, since I assume a concrete, historical, and existential point of view and seek to correlate Christian symbols with a critical appreciation of the present situation both inside and outside the Church. Secondly, this difference in method, it seems, is implicit in a different understanding of the very word "Church." In Sears the term "Church" is eschatological, in the sense that it applies equally to the empirical Church and the final spiritual community. For this reason "the spiritual community of the Church is itself the message" of the Church, community tends to become an end in itself, and the goal of the Church of this world is the same Church in the end time. For my part, I prefer to limit the term "Church" to the community we see in this world and apply the symbol "kingdom of God" to the eschatological community.[82]

In sum, then, although I agree that the Church *is* a spiritual community, and although Sears too asserts that this community has an exigency for mission to the world, I cannot affirm that these are equally the finalities of the Church we know today. It appears to me impossible at this moment in time to assert that the goal of the Church is to draw all men and women into itself.[83] This would constitute the ultimate theological justification for triumphalism. And such an understanding would never allow any given church to sacrifice or even to risk its empirical existence as church (community) to its mission (or to the *missio Dei)* as sign for other people and of self-sacrificing love after Christ. Unless the Church passes to

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[82] There are grounds in the New Testament for an eschatological understanding of the term "Church" (See Dulles' *Models of the Church),* but this usage can lead to an idealized language about the Church that is uncritical and unbelievable, as well as to a confusion about what exactly is being referred to by the word "Church." I find this ambiguity in Sears's article. For example, he writes that "the Church is the normative and constitutive embodiment of the fulness of Trinitarian love in the world." But since in his view there is salvation outside the visible Church, and other authentic spiritual communities may exist, relative to salvation the Church is *not* constitutive but normative and representational. Or, since the Church is also the final community sharing Trinitarian love, in which the Church community in this world already shares proleptically and consciously, then the Church in this world is constitutive of salvation by participation. Or, since the Church in this world is constitutive of salvation, and since there is salvation and may be authentic spiritual community outside this Church, where these latter occur, there too is the Church. Or, finally, all of these positions might be affirmed at once. These ambiguities could be easily cleared up by restricting the word "Church" to the visible Christian communities we see.

[83] Lack of space prevents development of the positive theological justification for this position, which has been worked out in mission theology.

Sears's fourth stage, where the spiritual community is precisely not primarily in service of itself, the Church will not be a credible witness to the divine love manifested in the cross of Jesus.

ROGER D. HAIGHT, SJ

COMMENTS ON ROGER D. HAIGHT'S ARTICLE

In a joint issue on Church a question will inevitably emerge: How would the two systematic positions on "Why the Church?" respond to each other? This comment attempts an answer to the legitimate request, and thus presupposes some acquaintance with my article "Trinitarian Love as Ground of the Church."

Haight's choice of "mission" as symbol for understanding the Church not only responds to an empirical tendency of our day to "Show me," but also calls the Church to a much-needed conversion from complacency and institutional in-turning to examine itself for signs of real self-transcendence in the form of service to the world. He takes the world seriously, both as a place where God's grace acts and as being in need of the Church's service of love. On all of these points there is basic agreement between us.

The difference between our two positions appears both in our points of departure and in our underlying philosophies. Haight begins with the problematic the modern world gives us—pragmatic, empirical, aware of historical relativity. Scripture is appealed to as responding to that problematic. In my view, our present culture not only provides new possibilities of understanding Scripture; it is also called into question by Scripture. In some ways we always fall short of God's revelation in Christ, and we have to look to that source to judge even our own time. As I see it, present-day inadequacy is manifested in our very tendency to think only functionally and empirically, with the result that permanent commitments—whether in marriage or the churches—are being progressively undermined because of our inability to face the inevitable dark and unrewarding times such commitments entail. If Christ has won a final victory, the Church's participation in that victory must somehow be valid for all time. How it will be lived out in any age certainly changes, but the basic structure of committed communal love remains constant. In my view, the most pressing need of the Church today is to rediscover that spiritual groundwork as the basis for any solid missionary work.

As for our philosophies, Haight appeals to empiricism and functionalism as most suitable for today's mentality. My position looks to empirical data, especially that of depth psychology, but is unabashedly ontological—and, indeed, with an interpersonal ontology. Empiricism thinks from the outside in, looks for marks of credibility and functional effect. An interpersonal ontology thinks from the inside out, to discover the energy sources from which the outer effect will be lasting and fruitful. Both are needed. Without looking to outward effect, inner dynamics will stagnate in mere process; but unless the interpersonal dynamic is attended to, our social action will collapse through lack of staying power. Contrary to Haight, my view of our present problem is that inner dynamics are most neglected, and that unless we rediscover spiritual growth and community, a mission-oriented approach is in danger of perpetuating our present alienation from self-understanding, much as the Protestant churches are discovering the inadequacy of a merely social gospel in our day.

It is the difference in philosophies that determines our different views of finality in the Church. Haight sees one overarching finality, that of mission. I have affirmed a double finality, like that of marriage. As conjugal love and procreation of children are both seen as ends of marriage, so I see Christian community and mission as double ends of the Church. Haight's view corresponds

to a functional philosophy; it has the efficiency of one goal that can clearly direct decisions. My view follows from an interpersonal ontology in which persons are never means to an end. Since our union with Christ and community is already an end—much like the love of spouses—it cannot be subordinated to mission, even though its authenticity is revealed in the desire to communicate this love to others. A Trinitarian view is at home with such a complex finality, since it reflects the different processions in the Trinity. These different positions are not without implications for decisions. For me, the Church does have a mission to itself, its own conversion and growth. Hence a spirituality serving deeper relation to God—even monastic spirituality—may ever be needed to empower the other finality of mission. Further, a double finality is not solely focused on the transcendent kingdom; it celebrates the present kingdom, and out of this celebration is motivated to give with joy what it has found. This view sees in the community a love that "never ends," so that all attention is not simply focused on the "not yet" of mission.

Thus I see "mission" as but one aspect of the complex goal of the Church. If the total goal is not kept in mind, it seems to me we will be consigned to a recurrent dialectic from one neglected aspect to another, without being rooted in an adequate overview. "Mission" itself will differ according to particular needs. The present need is most likely what Haight sees—to extend the service of God's love to the oppressed and neglected. But liberation itself is only a beginning. One needs to build committed community and to transform the world in final submission to God. The world may reject this, since a God-centered, communal view demands the cross, but the Church cannot tailor its call to what the world is ready to accept. The Church's call may be as mysterious as that of a Mother Teresa of Calcutta, which calls the world out of its own self-centered ends to a recognition that beyond all, and relativizing all, is the eternal community with God and fellow believers that all our hopes are grounded in and foreshadow.

ROBERT T. SEARS, SJ