

HOPE

IN TIMES OF CRISIS



REPORT OF THE
STATE OF EUROPE
FORUM

ATHENS, MAY 8&9, 2014

SCHUMAN CENTRE
FOR
**EUROPEAN
STUDIES**



Video recordings
of the talks and panel discussions
of the 2014 forum,
as well as those of previous years,
can be viewed on
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THE STATE OF EUROPE FORUM

is held annually in the capital of the country
holding the presidency of the EU.

The 2014 forum included a public event in
THE OLD PARLIAMENT BUILDING and a full-day programme
at the ELECTRA PALACE HOTEL for registered participants.

May 8 & 9, 2014

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THEMES INCLUDED:

- *turning crisis into **opportunity***
- *from Athens to Brussels - how **democratic** is Europe?*
- *towards a just, sustainable and relational **economics***
 - ***migration** - whose responsibility?*
 - ***solidarity**, patriotism or nationalism?*

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The forum is initiated by
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HOPE in times of crisis

TURNING CRISES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

THE STATE OF EUROPE FORUM, MAY 8-9, HELD IN ATHENS during the Greek presidency of the EU, gathered Christian politicians, theologians, academics, church leaders, educationalists, economists and activists to reflect on the state of Europe today, in the light of Robert Schuman's vision for Europe as 'a community of peoples deeply rooted in Christian values'. In Dublin in 2013, five areas of crisis facing Europe today were identified in the *economic, political, social, environmental and religious* spheres of life.

The 2014 event sought to address issues related to these crises, particularly as experienced in southern Europe and specifically in Greece. Widespread distress has been resulting from individual and corporate national debt, youth unemployment and dwindling resources for health care and housing, which in turn threatens social and political stability. Other European nations have been facing parallel challenges. Lack of solidarity in the European Union has been undermining her capacity to respond adequately to the the worldwide crises.

What alternative perspectives could we, called to be People of Hope, offer in each of these areas? How could we contribute towards just and sustainable economies? How should we respond to current threats to democracy, and freedom of belief and conscience? How could we promote a commitment to the welfare of the whole, solidarity? What was our responsibility towards refugees and migrants flooding Europe's southern shores? What opportunities did these crises offer to promote '*shalom*', right-relatedness, in all spheres of life?

Today's pressing issues are summons to thoughtful, responsible and respectful responses based on the wisdom of the God proclaimed by Paul on Mars Hill in Athens 2000 years ago. For the gods of silver and gold have failed us yet again. And it is in the God who is still unknown to many Europeans today that 'we live and move and have our being'.

This report offers the reader the chance to reflect on the feast of insights shared in the space of one very full 24-hour period, and extends an invitation to all unable to attend to engage with the themes of the forum.

David Fieldsend, President, Christian Political Foundation for Europe
Jeff Fountain, Director, Schuman Centre for European Studies

THURSDAY, MAY 8, 19.30
OLD PARLIAMENT BUILDING

WELCOME:

Rev. Meletios B. Meletiadis

Pastor of the Greek Evangelical Church of Volos, Greece

Moderator of the General Synod of the Greek Evangelical Church

Your Eminence,

Monsignor Mazurkiewicz,

Your Reverences,

Honorable Mr. Neratzis,

Mr. Convener of the "*The State Of Europe Forum 2014*"

Dear Ladies and Gentleman,

ON BEHALF OF THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE of *The State of Europe Forum 2014* I would like to welcome all of you, hoping and praying for an inspiring, convicting and challenging meeting tonight and on the deliberations that are to follow tomorrow.

As a Greek, I would like to welcome you to what we Greeks believe to be one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful, country of the entire world. Its beauty is not limited to its natural richness and versatility, but most importantly, it extends to its rich and festive culture. Thus, on behalf of all Greeks, I welcome you to the land of Homer and Euripides, of Thales and Democritus, of Pericles and Alexander, of Sappho and Phidias, of Plato and Aristotle, as well as of Kavafis and Elitis, of Maria Kallas and Dimitris Mitropoulos, of Manos Hatzidakis and Mikis Theodorakis, just to mention a few.

On behalf of my people, I welcome you to the land blessed to be adorned by the Parthenon and the Temple of Poseidon in Sounio, by the Epidaurus and Herod of Atticus Theaters, by Delphi and Vergina, by Olympia and Dion, again mentioning just a small fraction of the richness of our heritage and culture.

I would like to welcome you to the birthplace of Europe, to the place that gave our continent its language, its philosophy, its architecture,

its epistemological categories, thus partly forming its identity. I welcome you, 'home'. *Καλωσήρθατε!* (Welcome)

As a Christian, now, I welcome you to the land of the Macedonian man who appeared to the Apostle Paul asking him to come over and help, to the first land in Europe to be evangelized by the Christian Gospel, to the land that gave its language for the Christian *Ευαγγέλιον*¹ to be written and its philosophical notions for the Christian theology to be formulated, to the land of the Church Fathers, the likes of John the Chrysostom, to the land of Christian missionaries the likes of Κύριλλος (Cyril) and Μεθόδιος (Methodius).

I welcome you to the land of the biblical Samothrace, Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessaloniki, Veroia, Athens, Corinth, Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Kos, Patmos, Rodhos, Gavdos Crete. To the land to which the Apostle Paul addressed five of his epistles. To the land where the last book of the Bible and of the written revelation was given by the resurrected Jesus and written by John the Evangelist. I welcome you to our common Christian heritage and again, I welcome you 'home'. '*Καλωσήρθατε!*'

We have come to Athens to celebrate Europe and be inspired again by Robert Schuman's vision for Europe as a '*community of peoples deeply rooted in Christian values*'.

We are gathering, however, as ominous and fear-provoking clouds of serious trouble for our beloved continent and its peoples are appearing on Europe's horizon. This time they are not the financial issues of Europe's south, but the sounds of war in the Ukraine and the rise of nationalism, anti-Semitism and Nazi ideologies, the very evils Schuman's vision sought to eradicate. Today, we are all concerned about the outcome of the upcoming elections for the European parliament.

One wonders if today's Europe was the one Schuman envisioned and along with his German colleague, Konrad Adenauer, proceeded

¹ Gospel

to establish. As we all know, in the years that followed and as the successors of the Founders of Europe took over, the basis of the vision shifted. Whereas for the Founders the basis was their deep Christian faith, for their successors the basis became more and more the economy and other related issues.

As Christians we might accuse the politicians for leading us to this pan-European crisis. We might blame them for not acknowledging Europe's Christian roots in the Preamble of the European Constitution, thus failing to mention its spiritual basis. However, before we point the finger at them, we need to do our own self evaluation and examination: *Where have we, the Christian Church, been all along?*

I cannot speak for the other Christian traditions, but I can speak for my own Protestant/Evangelical community. Early on we deserted the 'Vision' by either making the Church part of the state bureaucracy limiting itself to social matters and thus silencing its biblical prophetic voice, or we viewed Europe as the historical realization of Daniel's and Revelation's evil anti-Christian empire, leading part of the evangelical community to anti-European sentiment. We need to repent.

Schuman's vision for a Europe as '*a community of peoples*' cannot be realized apart from the Christian faith. Europe needs the Christian Church more than ever. That's why the Church must approach Europe lovingly, servingly and redemptively.

We cannot do it, however, as divided Christian Churches. The challenges are much greater and beyond us to tackle on our own. We need to leave our sectarianism and our self sufficiency and come together in those areas we agree upon, one being the Bible. Europe needs to be re-evangelized as a Continent and its citizens evangelized with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is her only hope. Europe needs the Church to be it's '*salt and light*'.

I hope this Athens gathering will initiate a common Christian move to redeem Europe in the Name of our Triune God and for the sake of the millions of its citizens.

Let us pray:

"⁹ Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come in Europe and Your will be done on our Continent, in its nations, institutions and peoples, as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give all those who live within its borders the daily bread, so that there will not be anyone who goes hungry.

¹² Forgive our Continent's multifaceted debts, as we forgive our financial, cultural, historical debtors and teach Europeans to learn and exercise forgiveness, with the Churches being the first to do so.

¹³ Do not lead our Continent into temptation, but deliver her from the evil one as it manifests itself in so many ways and sometimes even draped in angelic lightness.

Lastly, we pray that you will bless this convention and the deliberations to follow tomorrow with the inspiration of Your Spirit, so that this Athens gathering will be the beginning of a Christian revival in Europe and the redemption of its soul in the Name and for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

We pray these in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen!"



GREETINGS FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY ON ORTHODOXY

Mr. **Anastasios Nerantzis**, MP,
former Vice-President of the Hellenic Parliament.

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, it would be an injustice to Greece and to the previous speaker if I spoke only of the country. This city hosting this very special gathering was the birthplace of democracy. Right next to the beautiful buildings of the Acropolis, the Parthenon and the Erectium, there is the sacred place where the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul, addressed himself to the ancient Greeks and, as the theologians call it, gave the seed message. With this we unite the ancient Greek civilisation with the Christian civilisation which was coming.

I have two other reasons that I feel are of special honour for me being here tonight. I am the leader of the largest parliamentary organisation of Orthodox Christians, the Interparliamentary Council for Orthodoxy. In this organisation there are Orthodox parliamentarians from 25 parliaments from all over the world. You can understand why I am so very proud to be able to speak from this position since this organisation is constantly growing and spreading.

The subject of this convocation is hope in times of crisis. For quite some time the body and soul of humanity is being scourged by the merciless winds of a crisis: political, cultural, moral and financial. This crisis, if we were to take the definition of the economist Segal is like the leopard. All of us know the leopard but it is difficult to describe it.

It is not within the scope of this greeting I am bringing to find the reasons for the crisis we are in. I cannot help but stand especially in expressing the fear of mankind for the unavoidable terrible consequences of an expensive and very critical consumerism, secularisation, curse against God and mankind, and laws of normal functional living.

There's also the fear of people who are seeking rights without responsibilities, demands without any kind of giving and contribution. But between this fear and this hope that we've described is where man's life is being lived. Man is afraid of

everything: fire, hunger, earthquakes, ageing, sickness, poverty, medicine, persecution, captivity, jail...

But even in the last moment when he is facing these situations he hopes he will be able to avoid them. Fear is natural, it's inborn, it hits all living organisms. But at the same time it keeps them awake and gives them power to fight so they can escape and be saved. The person who has a mind that he uses to think is more influenced by fear than others. It seems that only ignorance gives security to a person. Knowledge brings insecurity. It breeds fear. Only immature people give themselves to extreme fearlessness. Those who have minds have grounded and reasonable hopes.

The Christian religion calls on the hope of salvation. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. This is what the apostle Paul says. This is a classical text which indicates there is a relationship between fear and faith. Since both of these very strong convictions co-exist within faith, so since fear has been overcome, there is hope.

Other than the fact that the financial situation is improving in many countries, including Greece, beyond the natural tendency to hope we have mentioned before, for all of this discomfort we are going through, the sense of working together has finally been awakened. Love, support and help for fellow man give essential content to the Christian message.

In closing, I must mention that Immanuel Kant describes and gives a recipe for dealing with these kinds of fears: hope, dreams and humour. Dreams however have gone out. Humour has evaporated. Hope is the only thing that remains standing and has not fallen.

It remains for us to maintain this hope alive and functioning. And with this to ignite and to bring a flame to all of the candles within society in our existence.

With these few thoughts allow me to greet this convocation and this initiative and to repeat that which I started with: *there is still hope, living hope.*



FIVE STEPS TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING THE STATE OF EUROPE

Jeff Fountain, Director of the Schuman Centre for European Studies

AS WE ATTEMPT TO SURVEY THE STATE OF EUROPE TODAY in the light of Robert Schuman's vision of Europe as a 'community of peoples deeply rooted in Christian values', let me try to describe it in terms of *one book, two splits, three images, four apps and five crises*.

ONE BOOK: The single greatest influence on the development of European culture and society has been *the Bible*. When Paul stepped ashore at Neapolis on the northern Greek coast and made his way to Philippi where he met with a group of women worshipping by a stream, he started a revolution that was to transform the peninsula we call Europe. Messengers bringing the story of this book about one God and his one Son Jesus Christ introduced a totally new worldview: of God and of man, of the spiritual realm and the physical realm, of the dignity and value of human life, of linear history and time as past, present and future. This understanding transformed the lifestyles of people groups from Armenia to Ireland, and from Cyprus to Iceland. Jesus became worshipped in many different languages by Greeks, Romans, Gauls, Celts, Scots, Angles, Saxons, Franks, Friesians, Allemanni, Suevi, Slavs, Rus, Balts and, eventually, Vikings.

This book shaped our art and music, agriculture and gardening, architecture and design, language and literature, law and justice, politics and democracy, healthcare and hospitality, education and training, ethics and morality, marriage and family, science and technology, business and economics far more than any other single influence.

We don't have to be believers to recognise this fact. Even a die-hard atheist like Richard Dawkins says you cannot understand European history without understanding Christianity and the Bible. Jürgen Habermas, secular German philosopher says that our western 'universal egalitarianism' from which democracy, human rights and rule of law derive, finds its roots in the Judaic ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love. We still draw our sustenance from these sources, he admits, and no alternative has ever been found. Anything else, he contends, is post-modern chatter!

In the light of the above, if the Bible is not given its due place in our European school curricula, that has to be the result of either ignorance or prejudice. It cannot be professionalism!

The paradox of Europe is that it is the 'continent' that has been most shaped by this book, and also by the rejection of this book! For, from the time of the Enlightenment onwards, various '-isms' have attempted to replace the Bible as a source of worldview: rationalism, humanism, socialism, communism, fascism and secularism, to name a few. And yet unconsciously they have assumed presuppositions drawn from biblical revelation, such as a linear view of time, the dignity of man, the purpose of life. Even in reacting to the Bible, these '-isms' still assume certain biblical insights.

TWO SPLITS:

Both in the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, major church splits occurred which even to this day continue to shape our headlines. Western Europeans are far more familiar with the latter split, better known as *the Reformation*. Or, should we say 'Reformations', as we need to recognise also the Catholic Reformation and the Radical Reformation, movements which also brought major upheavals in political, economic, social and spiritual areas of life across western Europe.

In 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation will be commemorated in many places and ways, hopefully not as a triumphalistic Protestant event but as a respectful occasion looking at the positive legacy of this period. We must emphasise that what we have in common is greater than what separates us, while recognising the pain and suffering caused by this split in the Body of Christ, resulting in decades of religious wars.

Much reconciliation has been effected in recent years, especially through the efforts of recent popes, and the signing of the Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) in 1999 between Catholic and Lutheran leaders, and the unprecedented declaration by Pope Benedict XVI in St Peter's Square that 'Luther was right' about justification by faith.

The earlier split of 1054, called *the Great Schism*, is less known in the west. The profound influence of this family feud within the Body of Christ, occasioned by an argument over the Trinity (whether the Spirit proceeded from the Father or from the Father and the Son), has created a deep spiritual faultline across Europe from the Baltics in

the north to the Balkans in the south, with profound social, economic and political consequences.

Vladimir Putin, for example, is deeply resentful of the role Pope John Paul II played in the demise of communism and thus the implosion of the Soviet Union. As we commemorate the centennial of the First World War, we recall how it was triggered right on this faultline in Sarajevo. The more recent Balkan wars of course were fought across this line. NATO, the UN, the EU are powerless to heal this spiritual rift; it is a matter for spiritual leaders.

The story of Europe cannot be understood without recognition of the deep impact of both of these ruptures in church history and their ongoing influence on politics, economics and society.

THREE IMAGES:

Fast forward to 2014 and we can describe Europe in terms of three images. The first is *a vase of wilting tulips*, ready to be thrown out. When placed in the vase they would have been truly beautiful, but from the moment they were cut off from their roots, they were doomed.

Roots nurture and stabilise. Yet European society cut off from its Judeo-Christian roots is a cut-flower civilisation. Hence, instead of drawing life, it draws from a culture of death. Europeans have decided to die out. Abortion, euthanasia, suicide, low birth-rates all contribute to a crisis of demography. No European country has the birth rate of 2.1 sufficient to sustain its own population. This fact carries serious consequences for Europe's future: economically, socially and politically. Yet a neo-liberal, secular pursuit of constant economic growth and ever expanding GDP without regard to relational implications tends to undermine sustainability.

A second image of Europe is that of *a field full of rocks, old tree stumps and junk*. No farmer would go out to sow seed in such a field without preparing the soil first by taking away the rocks, stumps and junk and ploughing the ground. Yet some efforts of evangelism attempt to do just this. Methods that are fruitful elsewhere in the world are sometimes attempted in Europe without recognising the different state of the soil.

Yet a third image is of *a squatted house*. Most Europeans today are like squatters living in a house without being prepared to pay the rent. They have no idea of the Judaic-Christian foundations of the European house, or try to live in denial of them.

FOUR APPS:

How do we then approach such a continent in need with eyes of faith, hope and vision? Let me suggest four 'apps' to download into our hearts and minds.

The first is the '*God's will*' app. Perhaps I'm being very simplistic, but it seems logical to me that it is always God's will for his will to be done. In other words, it is never God's will for his will not to be done. So why do so many Christians seem to believe that it is God's will for his will not to be done in Europe? That Europe is doomed to become 'the beast'? That things *have* to become worse and worse towards the end of times?

When Jesus taught us to pray the Lord's Prayer, was he really serious? Did he really want to see the Father's Kingdom come, the Father's will being done on earth, in Europe, as it is in heaven? Or was he just teasing us?

When we believe the future has been predetermined in this way, we find ourselves caught like rabbits in the headlights of a car, paralysed by fatalism and pessimism, believing we can do nothing to change the future. This can become a self-fulfilling prophecy in which things do get worse, not because God willed it but because we failed in our role as salt and light in the world.

The second app is that of '*the wheat and tares*'. Jesus told the parable of the man who sowed wheat in his field, but his enemy came at night and sowed weeds, or tares. The two grew up together and the man's servants asked if they should pull them out. No, the man said, wait until the harvest time.

Good and bad things are happening all around us. The media tends to emphasis the negative. The paradox of the wheat and tares is that both grow together.

Look at the twentieth century. It was surely the worst century ever, the century of Satan! Think of the two world wars, a devastating depression, a cold war, the holocaust, the invention of the atom bomb, and names like Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Mao Tset Tung and Pol Pot. More people were killed by their own governments in this century than in any other. What a terrible century!

Yet at the same time, it surely was the best century ever for the spread of God's Kingdom! It began with revivals: in Wales, Azusa Street in Los Angeles beginning the Pentecostal movement, in East

Africa, Indonesia, Argentina. It saw the world's largest churches emerging in countries like Korea where the gospel had only come a century ago; or in Nigeria, Brazil and other non-western nations. China surprised the world when it opened up to reveal a large, dynamic growing church. More people came into the Kingdom than in all the other centuries put together! Surely this was the century of the Spirit!

Wheat and tares, the good and the bad growing up together. We need to learn to discern what God is doing in our world. We hear how bad the situation is in Europe for the church: empty churches, churches closing or becoming mosques, widespread desertion of the faith in many countries as Europeans pursue materialistic and hedonistic lifestyles. But that is not the full story. God is also at work in new, unexpected ways: new spiritual hunger, new prayer movements, new expressions of church, new Europeans – migrants from Africa, Asia and Latin America – restoring lost gifts of bold proclamation, colourful worship and spiritual discernment; a new ecumenism of the heart and also a new realisation that the gospel is not simply about getting a ticket to heaven but about seeing heaven, God's kingdom, invading every sphere of human life.

A third app is the *'death and resurrection'* app. Christianity is all about death and resurrection, most centrally and supremely of course, that of Jesus. His resurrection is the starting point of God making all things new. It is the reason for our hope, as we look forward to the restoration of all things, when creation will be liberated from the bondage to decay.

Yet all through history, there has been a death and resurrection pattern, similar to the apostasy and renewal pattern of the book of Judges. God's people have experienced times of falling away and then renewal as the Spirit of God raised up new movements within and outside of established Christianity. He is committed to the fulfilment of his own purposes in history. He is working towards his goal of 'the knowledge of the glory of God covering the earth as the waters cover the sea' (Habakkuk 2:14).

Therefore, as people of hope, we can look beyond the negative circumstances of any given period in anticipation of what the Spirit will do next. We are expectant people, pregnant with the future, as we look forward in hope to God's ongoing work in human affairs. Our hope is not based on current headlines, trends or events. It is

based on God's character and purposes, the two 'unchangeable things' talked about in Hebrews chapter 6, verse 19.

Fourthly, there is the '*faithful minorities*' app. God has always chosen to work through obedient, available minorities. The Bible is full of stories about people and families, not economic and political theories. God's ways are relational and he works by starting with an Abraham, a Moses, a Daniel, an Esther, and so on. He uses the weak to confound the strong, the foolish to confound the wise.

I have learned to view history through the 'faithful minorities' lens, tracing the stories of those who were obedient to Jesus' teachings and example. Much of church history can be very discouraging. A lot of church history books should come with a government health warning on the cover: *Beware, this book could destroy your faith!* While studying history at university, I struggled with my faith while reading the terrible things done in the name of the church and of Christianity through the ages.

But when I began to focus on those movements and groups who chose to live in radical obedience to Jesus, I found myself being greatly encouraged and inspired to follow their example.

That's why my wife and I take people of tours each summer, through the British Isles and across part of the Continent, visiting places of people and movements who shaped Europe through their faith: Patrick, Willibrord, Boniface, Thomas à Kempis, Jan Hus, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Zinzendorf, Wesley... and many more.

Their stories encourage faith and vision of what God can do through us to help shape tomorrow's Europe.

FIVE CRISES:

At last year's State of Europe Forum in Dublin, Jim Memory of Redcliffe College presented a talk entitled: **Storm Warnings: Five crises that threaten Europe today**. We were sailing on uncharted waters, he said, and we needed help to orient ourselves. Sailors listen to the shipping forecast to find out what is ahead. To be a Christian engaged in life in Europe today, he said, we needed to understand what was happening in our societies, in the economy, in politics and in the environment.²

² See, www.schumancentre.eu/category/inspiring-talks/
- *Europe in crisis; threat or opportunity*

The Economic Storm: The consequences of the current economic crisis are evident. In Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Ireland there are paralyzing levels of debt. Measures have saved the banks but at the price of capital control. These nations have experienced all the pain but none of the gain of devaluation. Unemployment is at frightening levels. In Greece, six out of ten young people have no job prospects. Many house owners are unable to pay mortgages and face an uncertain future.

Four possible scenarios include: 1. *maintaining the status quo* – ten to twenty years of low or even negative economic growth. The current crisis will be the new normal; 2. *disorderly breakup of the Euro*, devastating countries such as the ‘club med’ grouping; 3. *structured break up*, in which certain countries would be ‘invited to leave’ and supported through the transition; 4. *full fiscal union*, unlikely to be acceptable to the whole EU.

The Political Storm: A high pressure area hangs over the EU. The long period of political stability in Europe may be over. Popular levels of trust in the EU have reached record lows. There has been a rise in nationalist, populist and xenophobic movements. Extreme right wing politicians tap into rising unrest.

The Social Storm: Migration–experimentation with models of integration not greatly successful. Secular Europe simply does not know how to handle religions, which refuse to bow at its altar. There are 6.7% of migrants in the EU. *Demographic Change*–all EU states have a fertility rate below the replacement level of 2.1. By 2060, 33% of Germans will be over 65 and the average Italian will be over 50. This will have devastating impact on population figures and an aging population will add major strain to social welfare systems, etc.

The Environmental Storm: Because of the economic storm this is being ignored. Yet the summer ice in the Antarctic is melting. Sea levels have risen by 11mm. Extreme weather is becoming more common. In the UK, four of the five wettest years in history have happened in the last 12 years. The weather is getting more and more unpredictable.

The Religious Storm: Faith refuses to leave the stage despite predictions of its demise. Europe is becoming both more secular and more religious. Younger generations are more open to religious identification (although not in traditional forms).

We find so little practice of faith in Europe because people have put their faith elsewhere (e.g. 'prosperity'). The message is, 'If we can return to economic growth, we will return to security and prosperity.' Jim Memory says: '...I think not.'

He predicts: • *a long period of economic stagnation* • *a reduced Eurozone* • *the east and south to provide migrant workers for the prosperous north* • *EU expansion to continue but also to suffer some losses* • *the UK will either leave the EU or renegotiate its status* • *independence of new states will slow down EU decision-making* • *demographic changes will create inter-generational conflicts (younger generation railing against the old)* • *age-related migration* • *extreme weather will become the norm* • *higher CO₂ levels will boost food and forest growth in higher northern latitudes* • *a resurgence of religiosity.*

These crises must shape our mission in Europe today. Economic hardships are being felt by the most vulnerable in society. The church as one of the few intergenerational communities, and where rich and poor gather in one body, must rise to the challenge to offer hope in the midst of crisis. In a Europe where many services originally provided by the church have been taken over by the state, this is an hour where the church can step back into her former role.

Care for the elderly will be a vital part of Christian mission. Chronic unemployment means 'business as mission' can become a primary avenue for bringing Christian hope, stirring the voluntary sector and awakening gifts of entrepreneurship. New types of Christian community could emerge with communal living and new monastic orders. Social justice, simplicity and sustainability will become key issues. Environmental initiatives will move from the margin to the mainstream. Secularism, Islam and Christianity will compete in offering hope to a re-sacralised Europe.

It is against this background of the state of Europe that we meet here in Athens to address specifically issues concerning economics, solidarity, migration, democracy and religious liberty. May God give us understanding and wisdom for the task ahead. We need it!



TURNING CRISIS INTO OPPORTUNITY:

a panel including Dr. **Vasileios Meichanetsidis**, *Apostoli-Mission*, Pastor **Jimoh Adabayo** (*Nigeria*), **Katerina Kantartzis** *Thessaloniki*, **Gabriel Markus OM**, **Fotis Romeos AMG**.

Pastor Jimoh, Athens

As a migrant, you don't have anything - no home, no clothes. And in the midst of their struggle we want to help them to have the basic needs met, but most of all we want to focus attention of the immigrants onto God. Only God and God alone can see us through this crisis. Governments will come and go, crises will come and go, but God is the only one that cannot change. Most importantly we try to let them know that there is hope. That hope is in God, and God alone. No matter what situations we are going through, there is hope, and it can be found. I personally come from a Muslim background but it was in this country I found Jesus Christ. The state also needs to help by legalising those people without papers and legalising places of worship.

Dr. Vasileios Meichanetsidis, Apostoli-Mission, Athens

Apostoli is a major ministry of the Church of Greece providing charity for all without discriminations, whether it is immigrant, disciple, or a Greek that used to be well off but now is in a need of help, unemployed or otherwise needy people. €9 million has been provided since its start in 2010.

To be honest, the situation is worse than when we began. Despite more positive economic figures being announced on tv, we have more people asking for help.

Katerina Kantartzis, St. Lucas Hospital and reaching out to the Roma people, Thessaloniki

My husband is a doctor at the hospital and he and his colleagues help many in need at low cost or even none. Yes, some public health services have been degraded and the situation is still getting worse.

In both the Korean and Chinese languages they use the same ideogram for crisis and opportunity. We have begun to see how these two do match together.

The Roma or gypsy people in Thessaloniki are the ones that suffer the first, being one of the marginalized groups, first crisis victims. But together with a church started by a Korean couple, and with the Greek Church, and the the University of Thessaloniki, we are working together. There is a willingness to reach out their hand providing holistic help where they can, including bible studies, education, social services etc...

The extent of help is not only caring for the soul, but providing practical help that enables the people to have means in the future to build a life for themselves.

Gabby Marcus, Operation Mobilisation

We serve alongside the church as OM. We are providing food, opportunity to take a shower, clothing, tea and coffee, but most of all places to belong and be part of community in which they feel safe. One immigrant from Congo said: *"I feel safe when I walk into this centre."*

Fotis Romeos, AMG (*Advancing the Message of the Gospel*)

This is the success story of Greece, people from different tribes and from different colours, with different gender, and we all come here in time of crisis to reach out, to serve other fellow Greeks, and people around the world. We are providing love without borders. In the time of crisis it is amazing to see how people come together to serve other fellow Greeks. That is the greatest testimony and ray of hope for many. Among others they are distributing thousands of meals every day, People in need may receive their lunch from evangelical meeting, and their supper from Apostoli, from the Orthodox Church. Other days from Catholic church or from the municipality of Athens. Love without borders. We have rediscovered human values again.

As you say, the crisis now is hitting the grass roots of society. Numbers are going well at the European level but the man in the street is feeling it more.



SOLIDARITY, PATRIOTISM & NATIONALISM

Monsignor Piotr Mazurkiewicz, Warsaw, Poland, former General Secretary of COMECE, (Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community).

[Parts of this paper were shared on the opening session, while the remainder informed the working group discussion the next day.]

IN GDANSK, THE SITE OF THE INDEPENDENT SELF-GOVERNING TRADE UNION SOLIDARNOŚĆ, on June 12, 1987, Pope John Paul II recalled: "‘Bear ye one another's burdens’ – a concise sentence of the Apostle is the inspiration for interpersonal and social solidarity. Solidarity – that is, one and the other, and burdens are carried together in a community. So never: one against the other. Never: some people – against the others. And never the ‘burden’ carried by man alone, without help of others”.³

Solidarity is thus associated with the awareness of a burden which should be carried and that you cannot just throw off your shoulders and escape. The second element is a sense of community to which one belongs, and which ensures that in his misery he is not alone. Next to me walks another person who helps me carry my burden. You may ask: why? Why one unconstrained takes on his shoulders the yoke that is not his? He was allowed not to do this, look on the man and then, like the Levite and the priest in the parable on the Good Samaritan, ‘pass by on the other side’ (Lk 10:30-37). Today, under the influence of this parable, an obligation of aid to the victim of a road accident is written in the law, but at that time, no one would have the right to blame the Levite and the priest.

Why did this man stop?

Why did the Samaritan stop? The beaten man did not belong to his family, his nation or his religious community. In this respect, everything separated him from the half-dead man. What stopped him was human misery. There is no clear, rational explanation for his behaviour. He, a man from the outside, someone completely alien, feels compassion for the suffering of another human person. If you are searching in the text of the Gospel for the difference between the reaction of the Levite and the priest and the conduct of the ‘foreign’

³ John Paul II, Homily, Gdansk, June 12, 1987.

man, you will find it in very modest words added by St. Luke, so to speak, to describe the situation: "When he saw him, he had compassion on him" (Lk 10:33). That's what was absent in the reaction of the God's servants returning from the temple. This compassion in front of human misery spontaneously provokes solidarity.

Love and bureaucracy

The concept of solidarity starts with a Latin legal institution of *in solidum* (as a whole). Joint obligations resulted from a multiplicity of entities either on the side of the debtors (passive solidarity), or on the side of creditors (active solidarity), but the commitment was only one. Fulfilment of the provision by one of the debtors relieved the others from the debt, just as reception of performance by one of the creditors resulted in extinction of all the remaining claims. 'Solidarity' indicates here the legal capacity of each member of a group to accept all the benefits due to the group or to take responsibility for the whole debt. Solidarity in this sense usually arose as a result of liability of co-heirs in the case of indivisible benefits or of obligations resulting from a crime, if there were several perpetrators.⁴

Modern career of the word 'solidarity' begins during the Enlightenment. Pierre Leroux declares he is the first one to introduce the Roman legal concept of solidarity into social philosophy. He believed that the presence of the poor in France of his time was caused by the lack of appropriate institutions which would effectively solve the problem of poverty. He postulated that Christian charity, or *caritas*, referring to the commandment of the love of neighbour, should be replaced by human *solidarietas*, that is, a rationally organized system of state redistribution.⁵ Like everything

⁴ Cf. W. Wołodkiewicz (ed.) *Roman Law Dictionary*, Warszawa 1986, p. 142.

⁵ "En 1859, dans *La Grève de Samarez*, Leroux rappelle qu'il a "le premier, utilisé le terme de solidarité pour l'introduire dans la philosophie, c'est-à-dire [...] dans la religion de l'avenir" et il ajoute qu'il a ainsi "voulu remplacer la charité du christianisme par la solidarité humaine" (Leroux, *La Grève de Samarez*, Paris, Dentu 1859, p. 254). C'est effectivement dans un ouvrage de 1840, *De l'humanité*, qu'il propose cette substitution en la justifiant par le passage nécessaire du sens juridique à une signification politique et sociale, celle-là même que revendiqueront explicitement les révolutionnaires de 1848" (A. Policar, *Sociologie et morale: La philosophie de la solidarité de Célestin Bouglé*, http://classiques.uqac.ca/contemporains/policar_alain/socio_et_morale/socio_et_morale.pdf, p. 7).

in the Enlightenment, the problem of poverty and misery would also be solved in a rational way, with the exclusion of any subjective emotional elements. Love would be replaced in the society by cold calculation. Solidarity without love, "organized by an anonymous tax and the hands of anonymous civil servant striving to accomplish distribution stripped of irrationality and of the caprices of individual division. The citizen pays substantial social security and welfare taxes so that the state can take care of all the deprived. But the same citizen – Chantal Delsol writes – has less and less sympathy for his less fortunate neighbour because when he helps him directly, adding a kind look or a gesture, he feels like a fool who pays twice. This way (the state) eradicates, and deliberately, all the miasmas of compassion and mercy, individual preferences, obligations of gratitude, and the atmosphere of a debt that cannot be paid, in other words, all the attributes of the genuine human solidarity – all too human".⁶

St. John Paul II also pointed to the inadequacy of the bureaucratic structures: "In connection with the spread of individualism, we see an *increased weakening of interpersonal solidarity*: while charitable institutions continue to carry out praiseworthy work, one notes a decline in the sense of solidarity, with the result that many people, while not lacking material necessities, feel increasingly alone, left to themselves without structures of affection and support".⁷ John Paul II argues that solidarity "is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all".⁸ Move of the heart must be accompanied by concrete action. One should, if possible, bandage the wounds, set the beaten man on a donkey, bring him to an inn and pull out two silver coins from the pocket. However, the sense of solidarity cannot be reduced solely to provision of specific assistance in meeting the material needs of the

⁶ C. Millon-Delsol, *Solidarity and Barbarity*, http://www.tischner.org.pl/Content/Images/tischner_6_delsol.pdf, p. 79.

⁷ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, 8.

⁸ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 38.

poor. In this regard, 'cold' state institutions may be equally effective. They are at a disadvantage, however, as they are not able to be moved. Bureaucratic structures leave a man in need without spiritual and emotional support, along with his sense of loneliness and uselessness; they are not able to convince him that his existence is really important for someone.

Duties and responsibilities of the temple and of the heart

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). St. Augustine, commenting on this verse of St. Paul, recalls an observation made by Pliny the Elder of living deer: "Stags cross the sea in herds, swimming in a long line, the head of each resting on the haunches of the one that precedes it, each in its turn falling back to the rear. This has been particularly remarked when they pass over from Cilicia to the island of Cyprus".⁹ The reason for proceeding this way is the horns' weight, which makes them unable to keep their heads above the water for too long.

As social beings by nature, we discover fairly easily that our fates are intertwined. Our success depends on the success of others. Our fate is a part of the destiny of the whole group. But if our discoveries ended in that, what would be the difference between our behaviours and those of Pliny's deer? One can observe a sense of social ties also among those who are just dealing with common business. They decide to play in the same team, to start a business together, to invest their money together. They sail in the same boat and either they succeed together, or go down together. This type of loyalty is quite commonly observed among businessmen, in the army and even in the mafia. It does not exclude what is sometimes called 'solidarity in evil'. There is a kind of wicked unity in hypocrisy, in violence against the weak or in insensitivity to human misery.

It can be assumed that the other priests and Levites from the Jerusalem temple not only understood their colleagues, but would even justify them. They had, after all, the right to be afraid of ritual impurity or organized traps; it could also happen that this beaten man was a pagan or, God forbid, a Samaritan. And they come back from the temple to the house; garments smelling of incense, and

⁹ The Natural History of Pliny, VIII, 50 (32), <http://www.questia.com/read/99540464/natural-history-of-pliny>; Cf. St. Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, Kęty 2012, p. 242-244.

psalms still sounding in their ears. So why approach a man whom God has punished for his sins? They are responsible only for candles and incense, not for wounded people. Other services are paid for this kind of work. Mate justification could be even treated as a manifestation of professional solidarity.

Solidarity as a love of enemies

“What does it mean to be in solidarity?” asked Józef Tischner. “It means to carry another’s burden. No man is an island. We are united even when we do not know it. The landscape binds us, flesh and blood bind us, work and speech bind us. However, we are not always aware of these bonds. When solidarity is born, this awareness is awakened, then speech and word appear – and at that time what was hidden also comes out into the open. Our bounds become visible. Then man shoulders the burden of the other”.¹⁰ The most obvious elements come to mind at first: flesh and blood, work and speech. Family, nationality or class bounds appear. But if the Samaritan thought in these terms, he would pass by, and we would not know the answer to the question: “Who is our neighbour?”

At the time when the memory of the victims of martial law was still alive in Poland, John Paul II preached: “Solidarity – that is, one and the other, and burdens are carried together in community. So never: one against the other. Never: some people – against the others”. The essence of the ‘Solidarity’ revolution was a rejection of the Marxist theory of class struggle, and it was possible thanks to the religious inspiration of the movement. “Faith,” wrote Mirosław Dzielski, “determines the space in which political activity is permissible for us – the space between the rebellion against slavery and the duty to love our enemies”.¹¹ He then stated: “Christian revolution is not a revolution directed against people. What it fights for is more important to it than against whom it fights. (...) We must keep this constantly in mind. If it would appear one day that the reform of the system is only possible without removing our enemies from the

¹⁰ J. Tischner, *The Ethics of Solidarity*, http://www.tischner.org.pl/Content/Images/tischner_3_ethics.pdf, p. 37-38.

¹¹ M. Dzielski, *God, Freedom, Property*, Kraków 2001, p. 47.

political scene, we should accept such a solution. This solution is extremely Christian".¹²

Do our enemies have souls?

"Solidarity is undoubtedly a Christian virtue," writes John Paul II . "(...) In the light of faith, solidarity seeks to go beyond itself, to take on the specifically Christian dimension of total gratuity, forgiveness and reconciliation. One's neighbour is then not only a human being with his or her own rights and a fundamental equality with everyone else, but becomes the living image of God the Father, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the Holy Spirit. One's neighbour must therefore be loved, even if an enemy, with the same love with which the Lord loves him or her; and for that person's sake one must be ready for sacrifice, even the ultimate one: to lay down one's life for the brethren (cf. 1 Jn 3:16). At that point, awareness of the common fatherhood of God, of the brotherhood of all in Christ – 'children in the Son' – and of the presence and life-giving action of the Holy Spirit will bring to our vision of the world a new criterion for interpreting it. Beyond human and natural bonds, already so close and strong, there is discerned in the light of faith a new model of the unity of the human race, which must ultimately inspire our solidarity. This supreme model of unity, which is a reflection of the intimate life of God, one God in three Persons, is what we Christians mean by the word 'communion'." ¹³

Confronted by egoistic behaviours, determined by lust for profit, power or by an ideology of violence, solidarity refuses to fight. The logic of solidarity requires adopting an attitude diametrically opposite: instead of striving to use another human being we have a real commitment for his own good, instead of oppressing him for one's own benefit – a desire to serve him and willingness to sacrifice oneself rather than to recognize him as the enemy.¹⁴ Solidarity is not only opposed to thinking about the social, economic and political life in terms of a combat. Although it demands a sense of responsibility

¹² Ibidem, p. 53.

¹³ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 40.

¹⁴ Ibidem, 38.

for the 'other' and willingness to share with him one's resources,¹⁵ but above all demands concern for his humanity, his soul, even if he was previously called 'enemy'. Expansion of the group and admission of the ideological opponents as its members can be made, for example, by the discovery of an ethnic community. We must be aware, however, that if our community is too narrowly defined, if the criterion of belonging to it is badly chosen, we will always be doomed to struggle against the 'others'. It might be that our community in its dynamic will also absorb our staunchest enemies. But only because there are other strangers outside, considered dangerous. One community is opposed to the other one. Thus, the condition: "Never: one against the other. Never: some people – against the others", will never be satisfied. The only thing that opens up such a perspective is the discovery in the other being of a person – recognition that our opponent can have a soul, and then to help him to join our recognition.¹⁶ In *Centesimus annus*, published after the fall of communism, John Paul II describes the mechanism activating the 'work of conscience' on the side of the enemy:

"It seemed that the European order resulting from the Second World War and sanctioned by the *Yalta Agreements* could only be overturned by another war. Instead, it has been overcome by the non-violent commitment of people who, while always refusing to yield to the force of power, succeeded time after time in finding effective ways of bearing witness to the truth. This disarmed the adversary, since violence always needs to justify itself through deceit, and to appear, however falsely, to be defending a right or responding to a threat posed by others".¹⁷

Thus, the ultimate basis of solidarity can only be a discovery that we are children of one God and brothers in Christ. "For He Himself is

¹⁵ "Those who are more influential, because they have a greater share of goods and common services, should feel responsible for the weaker and be ready to share with them all they possess. Those who are weaker, for their part, in the same spirit of solidarity, should not adopt a purely passive attitude or one that is destructive of the social fabric, but, while claiming their legitimate rights, should do what they can for the good of all. The intermediate groups, in their turn, should not selfishly insist on their particular interests, but respect the interests of others" (John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 39).

¹⁶ Ibidem, 39.

¹⁷ John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, 23.

our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity" (Eph 2:14-16). Only in discovering this level of the community, we are able to honestly shed a tear over the fate of a 'foreigner', i.e. a man unknown until today, and care for the future of the people once recognized as enemies. Only then the danger of solidarity 'against' someone eventually disappears. Because we are all brothers, even though we are all also sinners. And nothing makes us so willing to carry on the burden of someone else – writes St. Augustine – as when we consider how much Christ endured for us.¹⁸

Intergenerational solidarity

Travestying a Winston Churchill's saying, Rémi Brague concludes that democracy is the best political system from the point of view of those who currently constitute the democratic community. If, however, it prevails in the long run, it will cause the extinction of humanity.¹⁹ Brague is referring to Alexis de Tocqueville, who pointed out that religion trains the practice of dealing with the general view of the distant future. "But in proportion as the light of faith grows dim, the range of man's sight is circumscribed, as if the end and aim of human actions appeared every day to be more within his reach. When men have once allowed themselves to think no more of what is to befall them after life, they readily lapse into that complete and brutal indifference to futurity which is but too conformable to some propensities of mankind. As soon as they have lost the habit of placing their chief hopes upon remote events, they naturally seek to gratify without delay their smallest desires; and no sooner do they despair of living forever, than they are disposed to act as if they were to exist but for a single day".²⁰ Myopia is written somehow in the nature of a democratic secular state. The community of currently

¹⁸ Cf. St. Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, Kęty 2012, p. 247.

¹⁹ R. Brague, *Modérément moderne*, Flammarion 2014, p. 304.

²⁰ A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, II, 17, http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/ch2_17.htm

living is not instinctively interested in providing rights to those who are not yet in the world. They forget easily that – as noted by Aristotle – “statesmanship does not create human beings but having received them from nature makes use of them (...)”.²¹ In other words, children are not born spontaneously. If you run out of conscious concern to bring the next generation to life, the children simply will not be born in sufficient number to prolong the very existence of a democratic community. Thus, the greatest threat to democracy of today does not seem to be an atomic bomb, but the pill.²² Meanwhile, instead of this concern we are rather witnessing the loss of a sense of intergenerational solidarity, and the growing popularity of different versions of new-Malthusianism is probably associated with the disregard of the debt to the past generations. “They are debtors because of those conditions that make human existence liveable, and because of the indivisible and indispensable legacy constituted by culture, scientific and technical knowledge, material and immaterial goods and by all that the human condition has produced. A similar debt must be recognized in the various forms of social interaction, so that humanity's journey will not be interrupted but remain open to present and future generations, all of them called together to share the same gift in solidarity”.²³

Solidarity in helplessness

Chantal Delsol objects to the idea of a ‘technical’, ‘barbaric’ solidarity, not only because it attempts to replace love by redistribution, but also because it seeks to make the human being self-sufficient. “Because distribution is perceived as an automatic reparation of an injustice of some sort, the individual believes he is self-sufficient and demands his share in social goods which will help him effectively achieve his so-called ontological self-sufficiency”.²⁴

To Saint Catherine of Siena, Jesus said: “I use the word temporal for

²¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1258a, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0058%3Abook%3D1%3Asection%3D1258a>

²² Por. R. Brague, *Modérément moderne*, p. 299.

²³ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 195, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html

²⁴ C. Millon-Delsol, *Solidarity and Barbarity*, p. 79.

the things necessary to the physical life of man; all these I have given indifferently, and I have not placed them all in one soul, in order that man should, perforce, have material for love of his fellow. I could easily have created men possessed of all that they should need both for body and soul, but I wish that one should have need of the other, and that they should be My ministers to administer the graces and the gifts that they have received from Me. Whether man will or not, he cannot help making an act of love".²⁵ God desired that people need each other. He created man as non-self-sufficient being so that people have the opportunity to show their love.

Solidarity is not about liberating man completely from the state of suffering, poverty and inequalities that are inherent in the human condition. Delsol writes: "It arises in the animal aware of its finitude, in a human being. It means that human beings are brothers involved in a tragedy. (...) It is the very wound, that can neither be negated nor healed, that reunites us".²⁶ However, living in a community it is possible to give the wound a meaning. "Solidarity means elevating love beyond suffering to show that the human wound is not entirely unarmed, without any recourse, or, in other words, that the wound is not the only human quality".²⁷ For this reason, there is also a deep sense in solidarity in helplessness; standing by the other man, even when we are not able to help him in any concrete way. You can only look at him in such a way that he knows he is very important in the world, irreplaceable. It is a joint effort of carrying the spiritual burden. You can easily find this type of solidarity in hospices, where someone, often a 'stranger', is sitting at the bedside of the sick, trying to move the suffering person out of the trap of loneliness.

National solidarity – patriotism as a moral category

Catechism of the Catholic Church in the comment to the fourth commandment of the Decalogue not only mentions the homeland, but also the duty to love the country: "The love and service of one's country follow from the duty of gratitude and belong to the order of

²⁵ St. Catherine of Siena, A Treatise of Divine Providence, VII, <http://www.catholictreasury.info/books/dialogue/diag10.php>

²⁶ C. Millon-Delsol, Solidarity and Barbarity, p. 82.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 82-83.

charity".²⁸ John Paul II, in his book "Memory and Identity", stresses that the word 'fatherland' (*patria*) is combined with the concept and the reality of the father (*pater*). Fatherland is somewhat the same as patrimony, that resource of wealth that we have received in inheritance from our fathers. It is meaningful that it is also said: 'motherland'. We know, from our own experience, the extent to which the transfer of the spiritual heritage is made through the mothers.²⁹

Internal link between the concepts of fatherland with fatherhood and motherhood explains the moral value of patriotism. "If we ask about the place of patriotism in the Decalogue, the apposition is clear: it falls within the scope of the fourth commandment which obliges us to honour our father and mother. This is the sort of behaviour that expresses the Latin term *pietas*, emphasizing the religious dimension of the respect and honour due to parents. We have to honour our parents because they represent to us God the Creator. Giving us life, they participate in the mystery of creation and therefore deserve honour similar to that which we give to God the Creator. Patriotism includes such an inner attitude with regard to the fatherland which is true mother for everyone. This spiritual heritage given to us by fatherland comes to us through our father and mother and builds in us the real base for this *pietas*".³⁰ Already

²⁸ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2239.

²⁹ Cf. John Paul II, *Memory and Identity*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson 2005, p. 67.

³⁰ Cf. John Paul II, *Memory and Identity*, p. 71; "The fourth commandment is addressed expressly to children in their relationship to their father and mother, because this relationship is the most universal. It likewise concerns the ties of kinship between members of the extended family. It requires honor, affection, and gratitude toward elders and ancestors. Finally, it extends to the duties of pupils to teachers, employees to employers, subordinates to leaders, citizens to their country, and to those who administer or govern it. This commandment includes and presupposes the duties of parents, instructors, teachers, leaders, magistrates, those who govern, all who exercise authority over others or over a community of persons" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2199); "The fourth commandment illuminates other relationships in society. In our brothers and sisters we see the children of our parents; in our cousins, the descendants of our ancestors; in our fellow citizens, the children of our country; in the baptized, the children of our mother the Church; in every human person, a son or daughter of the One who wants to be called "our Father." In this way our relationships with our neighbors are recognized as personal in character. The neighbor is not a "unit" in the human collective; he is "someone" who by his known origins deserves particular attention and respect (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2012).

St. Thomas Aquinas taught – after Cicero – that one and the same virtue of *pietas* organizes man's relationship towards both parents and the fatherland.³¹ In the order of love, according to St. Thomas, "In the second place, the principles of our being and government are our parents and our country, that have given us birth and nourishment. Consequently man is debtor chiefly to his parents and his country, after God. Wherefore just as it belongs to religion to give worship to God, so does it belong to piety, in the second place, to give worship to one's parents and one's country".³²

Recognition of patriotism in terms of a debt which man enlisted in the past (*maxime est homo debitor parentibus et patriae*), not making a free and informed decision in this case, implies a specific anthropology. For those who share the liberal vision of the origins of social life, according to which society arises from a voluntary agreement between adult, autonomous and rational beings, it is difficult to accept the perspective of being indebted against one's will. To take a loan, you have to go to the bank and sign an appropriate agreement. Without the prior informed consent, without a consciously made "signature", one cannot require us to repay the debt. The vision of human being as unsocial and self-sufficient causes the demand to repay debts not taken consciously to be regarded as unfair. Catholic social teaching is built on a completely different anthropology. Created in the image and likeness of God, man is by nature a social being. In other words, society is not a human product and social life is not something "artificial", later added to human existence. Each of us is born in a society as a non-self-sufficient being and becomes fully human only as a member of the society. This statement is true for the physical act of human existence (you cannot come into the world "out of nowhere", without any connection with other people), but also in relation to man as a spiritual being (you cannot become an adult, autonomous and rational being without deep relationships with other people). Before our identity is formed, we must learn to speak, think, love and

³¹ M. T. Cicero, *De officiis*, III, 90, <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/off3.shtml#23>

³² *Secundario vero nostri esse et gubernationis principium sunt parentes et patria, a quibus et in qua et nati et nutriti sumus. Et ideo post Deum, maxime est homo debitor parentibus et patriae* (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 2-2 q. 101 a. 1, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/aquinas/summa/sum357.htm>).

believe. What an adult considers a value cannot be expressed otherwise than in a language he received from the community. An individual learns the words, but their meaning is pre-determined by the community. What's more, his individual way of thinking is closely associated with the language he has learned from his own community. If, one day, man wants to adopt other values and explain what is currently important for him, he has to do so by reference to the meaning of words that have been established by the community. In this sense, everyone is a debtor. His life story is rooted in the history of the community, in which his identity has grown.³³

Everyone is a spiritual heir. That heritage can be rejected; one can contradict it, but there is no way to deny it. The relationship to the spiritual heritage is of moral character. One meets people who do not repay loans taken out, but this is a violation of the principle of justice. One must be very careful not to limit the understanding of the debt to the economic categories. It is about moral debt. Parents need to be loved. It is not enough to pay for their maintenance when they become shiftless. You just have to love the fatherland. It is about a deep emotional bond. You do not just leave the country having settled all the bills, for example, having paid a fee for the free tuition at state university. The virtue of justice, which morally requires a person to be a patriot, speaks about a spiritual debt to the created source of our existence. *Maxime est homo debitor parentibus et patriae*. As in relation to parents, being aware of how much one owes to them, not in the sense of the material costs they bore, associated with one's upbringing, but in connection with who one is as a person, leads to a spontaneous impulse in the human heart of gratitude; the same happens also in relation to fatherland. Gratitude is a noble man's reaction to the good experienced in the past. If, however, one were unable to be grateful in this natural way, St. Thomas recalls the obligation arising from justice, which everyone can understand with the force of natural reason.

In addition to the difficulty provoked by the liberal vision of the society, seen in the likeness of a company, also the current crisis of the family and the culture of suspicion in relation to parents probably influence the way in which contemporary people regard

³³ Cf. P. Burgoński, *Patriotism in the European Union*, Warszawa 2008, p. 98-99; John Paul II, *Laborem exercens*, 10.

the country and patriotism.³⁴ A man who has trouble loving his parents will also likely have more trouble loving the fatherland. *Pietas*, both in relation to parents and fatherland, demands absolute respect. You cannot get rid of this obligation by terminating the contract, if you consider it disadvantageous, or when in a particular situation it is difficult to find a good reason to be proud of belonging to a family or to a nation. The Bible says that you have to respect your father "even if his mind fails him" (Sirach/Ecclesiasticus 3:13). This commitment has never been understood as an invitation to a lack of criticism.

Responsibility for the material and spiritual heritage

What is fatherland? According to John Paul II, fatherland is "the heritage, and at the same time it is the property resulting from this heritage, including land, territory, but even more, the values and spiritual content that make up the culture of the nation".³⁵ "Patriotism means love of what is native: love of history, tradition, language or the native landscape. It is a love which also includes the works of one's countrymen and the fruits of their genius".³⁶ Jacek Salij explains this relationship as follows: "Fatherland is a country, which I feel to be a part of. I am a bit of this country in my spirit and my body, language and culture, memories and life environment, rootedness and ideals. It is a country with which I feel deeply connected – usually because I was born and I live here, and because here I feel most at home. The language of the country I've never really studied, because I suck it with my mother's milk. From its history and culture I draw most of my spiritual substance. The graves of my ancestors will usually be there, and I myself would like to contribute to the next generations being able to live here in peace and feel really at home here".³⁷

³⁴ Cf. J. Salij, *Patriotism Today*, Poznań 2005, p. 16.

³⁵ Cf. John Paul II, *Memory and Identity*, p. 66.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 71-72.

³⁷ Cf. J. Salij, *Patriotism Today*, p. 15-16.

Homeland therefore suggests a deep linkage between what is spiritual and what is material, between culture and the earth.³⁸ We visit the graves of our ancestors who ploughed this land, erected factories and churches on this piece of the land, who sang the praises of the beauty of these and not others 'forest hills and green meadows', and then quietly died in the country, in exile, on deportation, or fighting for freedom 'ours and yours'. Recognition of how much we owe the country, how close who am I is linked with the particular landscape, bears gratitude in the heart. 'Good for us to be here' – bursts the heart at the sight of the peaks of the Tatra Mountains, St. Mary's Church tower in Krakow or Suwalki lakes.

'Being at home' is a natural human desire. Nobody wants to be a stranger; nobody wants to be "a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth" (Genesis 4:12). In this context, it is worth looking at the problem of emigration as a moral issue. It is hard to blame the man for seeking better economic conditions or an environment more suitable for intellectual development (studies, work, science). But at his heart remains the question of responsibility for the relatives he leaves at home, as well as the responsibility for the community as a whole. The question concerning homeland cannot be simply reduced to the issue of moral responsibility. It is primarily a question of 'spiritual base'. John Ronald R. Tolkien, in "The Lord of the Rings", writes: "I should like to save the Shire, if I could – though there have been times when I thought the inhabitants too stupid and dull for words, and have felt that an earthquake or an invasion of dragons might be good for them. But I don't feel like that now. I feel that as long as the Shire lies behind, safe and comfortable, I shall find wandering more bearable: I shall know that somewhere there is a firm foothold, even if my feet cannot stand there again".³⁹ Somewhere, behind your back, there is a house to which you can still come back, and the land on which you put the first steps.

The risk of becoming 'a fugitive and a wanderer' is related not only to leaving the country. It may happen that someone staying physically in his or her home country becomes completely alien to its culture. John Paul II, addressing in 1990 intellectuals gathered in

³⁸ Cf. John Paul II, *Memory and Identity*, p. 67.

³⁹ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, I, 2.

Prague, said: "Notice how the beauty of this 'city of hundred spires' would be impoverished if it missed the silhouette of the cathedral and thousands of other gems of Christian culture. How much poorer the spiritual, moral and cultural life of the nation would be, had it been excluded from it or forgotten what was, is and will be inspired by the Christian faith! (...) If someone managed to make you deaf and blind to the values of Christ, of the Bible, of the Church, you would become foreigners in your own culture. You would lose the sensitivity and the key to understanding so many values of philosophy, literature, music, architecture, fine arts and all areas of your own spirit, of the national, but also the European tradition. Above all, however, you would lose an important source of inspiration and moral strength needed to solve many pressing problems of today and shape the future of civilization".⁴⁰

The risk of alienation applies not only to this or another nation in Europe, but also the entire continent. John Paul II, making an assessment of the European culture at the turn of the millennium, called Europe the 'continent of havoc'. He speaks of multitudes of Europeans who "give the impression of living without spiritual roots and somewhat like heirs who have squandered a patrimony entrusted to them by history".⁴¹ "European culture gives the impression of 'silent apostasy' on the part of people who have all that they need and who live as if God does not exist".⁴² Forgetfulness of God is – according to John Paul II – one of the reasons weakening hope in Europe, revealed by, among other things, the diminishing number of births, the grave phenomenon of family crises and the weakening of the very concept of the family or loss of a sense of solidarity.⁴³ I have to admit that these harsh words hit me with full force only when I read them in the context of reflection on man's responsibility for the culture contained in the book "Memory and Identity". By associating the words 'homeland' and 'heritage', the

⁴⁰ John Paul II, Meeting with representatives of the world of culture, Prague, 21 April 1990, 8.

⁴¹ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, 7.

⁴² Ibidem, 9.

⁴³ Ibidem, 8,9.

Pope recalls that people are responsible for one and the other, and that his compatriots once already failed to assume this responsibility and – as a consequence – they lost their independence. Europe is, in a sense, in a situation analogous to Poland in the eighteenth century. It is extremely important to remind the citizens of Europe the need to take into consideration also the fact that civilizations are mortal, which also applies to the European civilisation.

Patriotism and nationalism

Giovanni Reale, in comments on the writings of Karol Wojtyła, notes that patriotism and nationalism are often confused with each other. Sometimes it is done deliberately. Reale argues with the thesis that the difference between these two concepts is purely formal and rhetorical, not substantial. Patriotism – according to it – would be described by negating the least sympathetic and most shameful features of nationalism. Referring to the texts of John Paul II, Reale states that nationalism is a pathological overemphasis of the nation, and patriotism correctly understood is the antithesis of nationalism.⁴⁴ Characteristic of nationalism is the fact that it recognizes only the good of its own people and seeks only its own fulfilment, neglecting the rights of others. Patriotism, however, as love of one's own country, recognises the same rights of every nation, and is therefore a good tool to set social love in order.⁴⁵ It seems that the difference between patriotism and nationalism can be clarified by recalling the difference between self-love and selfishness. Vladimir Solovyov writes: "False and evil of selfishness do not consist in the fact that man values himself too highly, gives himself the absolute importance and infinite dignity: just in this he is right; every man has, in this respect, the absolute importance and dignity, cannot be substituted by anything and no one can value himself too highly (according to the Gospel: "What can man give for his soul?"). No recognition of the absolute importance of oneself would be tantamount to renunciation of human dignity. The main falsehood and evil of selfishness lies in the fact that in rightly recognising his own absolute importance, man wrongly denies the same significance; in recognizing himself as the centre of life, which he is, in fact, man sends the others to the

⁴⁴ Cf. G. Reale, Karol Wojtyła. The Pilgrim of Absolute, Warszawa 2008, p. 156-157.

⁴⁵ Cf. John Paul II, Memory and Identity, p. 73.

periphery of his existence, giving them only external and relative value".⁴⁶ Everyone has the absolute, and therefore, acts as the centre; is an end in himself and not merely an instrument to make others delighted. However, accent must be placed on the word 'everyone'. Same with patriotism. The error lies not in the fact that someone considers his own nation uniquely, but that he forgets that each nation is unique and each has the same rights. We speak here, however, only in analogy to self-love, because while the person is entitled to an absolute value, the nation has only a relative value.

Jacek Salij draws attention to another important difference. If patriotism would like to be a moral virtue, it cannot approve everything that is national, regardless of the ethical value of the proposed content. Just as the love of family requires concern about the moral state of the people you love, so love of the country requires a concern for its moral shape. "Love of the fatherland", writes Salij, "obliges us to care about our moral integrity. The answer above is based on a distinction between ethics and art. The point of ethics is that our actions are intrinsically good; in art the point is that the artefact is good. Hence, immoral man can create outstanding works of art, because here, talent and experience are the most important. Immoral man may even serve the country well, due to his economic, management or military skills. But patriotism in the strict sense is a virtue and therefore it must be founded on moral righteousness of a person, at least at the elementary level."⁴⁷

Personal moral righteousness makes also ethical evaluation of the content of national memory possible. John Paul II – in the context of the examination of conscience of the Church of the Jubilee Year – pointed out that not everything that happened in the past of the community is a source of pride and deserves to be continued. In this context, he pointed to the need for a 'purification of memory' which "calls everyone to make an act of courage and humility in recognizing the wrongs done by those who have borne or bear the name of Christian".⁴⁸ "Purifying the memory means eliminating from personal and collective conscience all forms of resentment or

⁴⁶ W. Sołowjow, *The meaning of Love*, Kęty 2002, p. 17.

⁴⁷ Cf. J. Salij, *Patriotism Today*, p.18.

⁴⁸ John Paul II, *Incarnationis misterium*, 11.

violence left by the inheritance of the past, on the basis of a new and rigorous historical-theological judgement, which becomes the foundation for a renewed moral way of acting".⁴⁹ The past is recognized in the opportunities that are opened to modify the present day. By giving the historic acts a new meaning in the life of communities, their new qualitative effect can be assumed on the present relations between the two communities. Rather than divide, they can connect communities due to the truth about the past and common ethical assessment. "The memory of division and opposition is purified and substituted by a reconciled memory".⁵⁰ Patriotism understood as a responsibility for the moral value of the community also demands vigilance on the community's memory and the quality of moral heritage that is being passed to the next generation.

Concern for the moral quality of the heritage that continues to form sometimes requires a willingness to oppose those legitimate authority initiatives that do not respect the fundamental principles of ethics. "Wherefore, to love both countries, that of earth below and that of heaven above", wrote Pope Leo XIII, "yet in such mode that the love of our heavenly surpasses the love of our earthly home, and that human laws be never set above the divine law, is the essential duty of Christians, and the fountainhead, so to say, from which all other duties spring".⁵¹ One also shouldn't forget that nations are only temporary. There is no national eschatology. "For the form of this world is passing away" (1 Cor 7:31).

The globalization of solidarity

John Paul II emphasizes the particular need for solidarity in the era of globalization. This process, seeming to be inevitable, causes violent opposition in many people due to fear. The growing awareness of the interdependence between peoples and nations that determines relationships in the modern world – economic, cultural, political, religious interdependence – often fosters the attitude of

⁴⁹ International Theological Commission, *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past*, 5.1, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000307_memory-reconciliation_en.html#Some%20Ethical%20Criteria

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ Leo XIII, *Sapientiae christianae*, 11.

aggression, even in its extreme form, i.e. the phenomenon of terrorism. This is largely because the very process of globalization, subject only to the logic of profit, becomes dangerous to humans. "Our world is entering the new millennium burdened by the contradictions of an economic, cultural and technological progress which offers immense possibilities to a fortunate few, while leaving millions of others not only on the margins of progress but in living conditions far below the minimum demanded by human dignity. How can it be, " asks John Paul II, "that even today there are still people dying of hunger? Condemned to illiteracy? Lacking the most basic medical care? Without a roof over their heads?"⁵²

How is this possible? The answer seems relatively simple: the growing interdependence between people and countries is not accompanied by a corresponding increase of the sense of solidarity. Current 'cooperation' often takes the form of a new imperialism, economic, military, political, or cultural. Even where we meet with some forms of assistance or support, often the underlying purpose is the desire to achieve secondary gains from offered resources. Hence, the call for a new culture of solidarity and for a new creativity in charity.⁵³

The economic and political globalization should be accompanied by the globalization of solidarity. Only an increase in the sense of mutual responsibility, particularly for weaker nations, can open the way to the world of peace. "*Opus solidaritatis pax*, peace is the fruit of solidarity" – reads the *Sollicitudo rei socialis*.⁵⁴



⁵² John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 50.

⁵³ Ibidem.

⁵⁴ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 39.

Gerard Kelly wrote the following poem to be read on location:

MARS HILL

A BLESSING FOR THE PEOPLES OF EUROPE

*May the God you have worshipped,
 Without knowing his name,
 Whisper a word
 For you to know him by.
 The concealed be revealed to you,
 The invisible unveiled,
 Untold stories
 Be unfolded before you.*

*May the statues you have sculpted,
 In your search for satisfaction,
 Be a springboard to new freedoms,
 Not a grave to guard your gods in.
 May the hunger that has haunted you,
 The thirst for joy that hunts you,
 Bring you at last to love's great banquet.*

*May the breath you were born with
 In the air that we share
 Lead your lungs
 To the sky-wide source of being.*

*And may God,
 Who sets the boundaries of kingdoms,
 And is active in the history of your tribe,
 Show you where his fingerprints
 Are scratched into your story,
 And where his footprints
 Show the pathways into life.*

*May the maker of meanings,
 The Father of all,
 Definer of nations,
 Designer of life,
 Turn his face toward you,
 Turn his favour upon you,
 Turn your sorrows to dancing:
 May he open your people
 To his peace.*

FRIDAY, MAY 9, 8.45

MARS HILL – ON LOCATION BIBLE STUDY ON ACTS 17

Dr George Adam, The Greek Evangelical Church, Athens

1. THE VIEW OF GOD

i. CREATOR (v. 24): Paul's first point is that God is the creator of all things: *The GOD who MADE THE WORLD AND ALL THINGS IN IT, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands (v.24).* The doctrine of creation, teaches (a) man's responsibility, (b) that God has not left himself without a witness and (c) that God is the Lord of everything. Everything belongs to Him! We are "stewards" of creation, stewards of the resources that have been given to us. We are not the owners.

ii. SUSTAINER (v. 25): The second point is that God is the sustainer of all things. This is what we read in the next verse *neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things (v.25).* God sustains all things. It's not that we provide for Him; He provides for us. If He did not do that, it would not be possible for humanity to survive. The same truth is taught in Colossians 1:17, *in him all things hold together.* And again in Hebrews 1:3, *he upholds the universe by the word of his power.* The very fact that we are here this morning, that we are alive, and are able to think about God, us, and the world, are all due to the sustaining activity of God.

iii. SOVEREIGN (v. 26): Third, we read that God not only created and sustains the universe, but also guides the affairs of men. Verse 26 says: *and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation.* Theologians sometimes refer to this as the "hidden counsels" of God. We do not know the future, we do not know what God has determined to do in national affairs, yet we know that He is in control of what happens. He has made plans and also determines whatever comes to pass. He's not a weak God.

2. OUR PROPER RESPONSE: SEEK & REPENT (vv. 27-30)

Now, if God has revealed Himself in creation and if He sustains creation (including ourselves) and If God has determined the bounds of our habitations and our destiny, it follows in verse 27,

that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring. This is the purpose of general revelation. God has revealed himself so that we might seek Him out. In our sin we are as blind. Nevertheless, because creation is still here we have an obligation to seek after God and find him, even though we cannot see him.

And that leads us to the conclusion in verses 29 and 30: *Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent.*

To 'repent' means to change my mind and my way of thinking. Christianity says, You have failed to seek after God. You have gone your own way. You are willfully ignorant. You have a wrong view of God. God is much-much greater than what you think. Therefore God commands that you repent of your ignorance. As we repent, God holds out the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ.

3. THE REASON: RESURRECTION & JUDGMENT (V. 31)

In verses 30 and 31 we read: *Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.*

There are three reasons given for why we should repent:

(a) God has been very patient and has overlooked ignorance for a time (v. 30). Our lands, our nations, our continent know much corruption even though we have known the gospel for hundreds of years. Having been personally involved for more than 10 years in ministries to women who are victims of trafficking, I can testify about "systemic evil" in this area. Yet, God is still calling us to Himself. Why? Because He is patient.

(b) Repentance is commanded. And if the creator and sustainer, if the owner of the universe tells us to do something, we had better do it. We read in Romans 2:4, that *we should not despise the riches of his*

kindness and forbearance and patience, because God's kindness is meant to lead us to repentance.

- (c) God has appointed a final day of reckoning when Jesus shall be the final judge. Jesus is alive!! He promised that He's coming back to save and to judge. One day we shall all meet Him. To Him we are accountable. God has assured us about this, through the resurrection, which we celebrated very recently.

4. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO TODAY'S SOCIAL PRESSURES

This sermon produced three kinds of responses: *Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, "We shall hear you again concerning this." So Paul went out of their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.* Some mocked, others postponed, yet some joined him and believed. We should not be surprised, when the very same thing happens even today. God continues to use the "folly of preaching" (1 Cor. 1:21) to save those who believe. People today continue to seek wisdom or signs, *but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God* (1 Cor. 1:23-24). Why? Because even today in Greece and in Europe: *the foolishness of God is (still) wiser than men, and the weakness of God is (even today) stronger than men* (1 Cor. 1:25).

This message lays, indeed, a foundation for many of the themes we will be addressing today. The right view of who God is should shape differently our response to the issues we face:

From verse 26, *And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place*, we are taught that God is the Maker of ethnic groups. *"God made from one every nation."* Ethnic groups do not just come about by random genetic change. They come about by God's design and purpose. The text says plainly, *"God made every ethnos."* Paul chooses to confront ethnic pride head on. God made all the ethnic groups—Athenians and Barbarians—and he made them out of one common stock. So "you Athenians are cut from the same cloth as those despised

Barbarians and Scythians". Of course this attitude begins within the Church communities: All believers in Jesus Christ, of every ethnic group, are united to each other not only in a common humanity in the image of God, but even more, as brothers and sisters in Christ and members of the same body. Without a good example, our efforts to influence are meaningless and in vain.

Therefore, against the rising spirit of indifference, alienation, and hostility in our land, we will embrace the supremacy of God's love to take new steps personally and corporately toward racial reconciliation, expressed visibly in our community and in our church.

Since we should not think that *God is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man* (v. 29) that should lead us to think that the false gods of greed and injustice, the love of money, the gods of gold and silver are not enough and should not guide our principles and policies.

Our response should be one of repentance. Because we believe in the Risen Lord, because we know that He is the Judge of all, because we are accountable to Him, we need to repent and call others to repent of our injustices, of our greediness, of our short-sighted view of solving our problems. Christians are tuned to the reality of the resurrection and the second coming of our Lord! The hope of the resurrection means that a new world has been opened to our eyes. Because we are new creatures, we need to proclaim that He (Christ) leads us to a new creation!! We may enjoy from now the first fruits of the eschatological reality that He promised.

5. PAUL'S STANCE AND ATTITUDE (VV. 16-17)

Please, bear with me, because I would like to end with a word of how Christians, how the Church should go about doing that. I will read only two verses, just before Paul's sermon.

Paul could have spent his days as a tourist! His thoughts could have been absorbed by the majesty of the Parthenon and the Acropolis. We read that *Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens... he was beholding the city full of idols* (v. 16a). Paul was able to see "behind" or better, "beyond" the external beauty. He was pondering what the idols represented. He was looking at the world in darkness, away from God, in desperate need of a Savior. The way in which one

“sees” determines their reaction and response. We are fallen human beings. We are capable of admiring the glory and overlooking what is shameful. We may recognize the successes of human technology and not even think about the idolatry behind it. When the Church begins to “see” beyond the physical realities, then – and only then – the Church is on the right path to fulfill the Great Commission.

The second has to do with Paul’s reaction. We read that, *his spirit was being provoked within him as he was beholding the city full of idols...* (v. 16b). The word ‘provoked’ is not accidental. When someone is ‘provoked’ it means that he experiences—a violent emotional reaction, even anger, for something that he or she believes it’s wrong. He is upset. This same word ‘provoke’ describes God’s emotions towards sin. In Isaiah we read: *I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in the way which is not good, following their own thoughts, A people who continually provoke Me to My face, Offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on bricks;* (Isaiah 65:2-3).

So, what did Paul do? *So he was reasoning in the synagogue ... and in the market place...* Paul went out to find people. He did not stay passive. He used his time wisely for the Lord.

6. TODAY’S CHRISTIAN STANCE AND ATTITUDE

This means that he talked to people. He had a conversation with them. Sometimes we tend to minimize this option. People around us have questions. We may still “proclaim” and “preach” the truth through our discussion with them. Of course this needs love, patience and persistence. But don’t minimize the importance of “reasoning”.

The second thought here is “where” he had his discussions. He went to the synagogue with the Jews and also in the market place. Now, when we read the “market place” it does not mean “the Mall”, the shopping places. The “market” was the place where ideas were exchanged, the place where the philosophers the Epicureans, the Stoics were. It was the center of life of the city. Christianity is not afraid to answer the challenges of each particular age. Christianity has a Christian response to violence, to domestic abuse, to the financial crisis, to atheism, to materialism. Christianity must be proclaimed publicly, must pose challenges and must offer answers.

In order to influence today, we also must

- 1. “See beyond” the physical realities to the spiritual realities.**
- 2. “Feel” what God feels for all the evil and sinfulness around us.**
- 3. Move not only “in the synagogue”, (we need to move out of our comfort zone) but go “also in the market place”.**

Questions for understanding and reflection:

- What do we learn about God from Acts 17:22-30?
- If God has revealed Himself as creator, sustainer and sovereign over the affairs of men, what should our response be? (vv. 30)
- Why should humanity repent? (vv. 30-31)
- What are the implications of Paul’s view of God for a Christian response to the themes of human equality and dignity?
- How does the previous answer affect the Christian understanding of solidarity, migration, economics, freedom and democracy?
- In what ways does the hope of resurrection and of the new creation affect the Christian presence and witness today?
- What do we learn from Paul’s attitude and stance while he waited in Athens, for our own attitude and stance as Christians, today? (vv. 16-17)



FRIDAY, MAY 9, 10.30

ELECTRA PALACE HOTEL

FIRST PLENARY SESSION: ***SETTING THE CONTEXT***

OPENING PRAYER

Rev George Kaloterakis

President, Greek Evangelical Alliance

Dear Lord,

We stand humbly before Thee, Your sons and daughters, brothers and sisters from all over Europe. We stand after all these centuries at the very place where Your faithful servant, Paul, preached to the great city of Athens the Gospel of Salvation through Jesus Christ, Your Son. We stand where he preached of Jesus and His glorious Resurrection, of Jesus as the Lord of the Judgement Day. It is by faith to this same Gospel, that we were healed from our wounds and saved from our sins, that we were given the right to call Thee 'Our Father in heaven'.

We come humbly to Thee asking Your guidance in these difficult days this country and the whole of Europe is facing. We come humbly to Thee asking to reveal us Your perspective, as we are going to discuss our problems. We know, that these are problems and ordeals created by our fallen nature, brought about by human greed and injustice, by the sinful desire of fallen men to exploit and oppress one another, by our failure to see our fellow human beings as You see them, made in Your Image, object of Your Love.

Please, show us the path of your Righteousness, make us able to see and follow Your Footprints, fill us with Thy Light and make us into lights in the darkness of an unjust and cruel world. Grant to us the Grace to see our world, to see Europe in all its complexity and diversity as You see it, waiting to heal, bind, restore.

Teach us Your Will, dear Father, and make our lives reflect the Love and the Character of Jesus.

Bless us everyone, as you see us gathered here in Your Name, seeking Your Face and waiting to hear Your Voice.

Amen.

THE SOUL AND SPIRIT OF EUROPE

Jeff Fountain

Director, Schuman Centre for European Studies

WE ARE A FORGETFUL GENERATION. As short memories breed short-sightedness, we are therefore also a generation without vision. Winston Churchill said that a people who forget their past have no future.

Today is Europe Day, and we have gathered here in Athens to reflect on our roots, our past, our foundations—for the sake of our future.

This forum is held each year on and around May 9, the anniversary of the Schuman Declaration which led directly to the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community, and eventually to the European Union as we know it today.

We have come to consider the state of Europe today in the light of Schuman's vision for Europe as a 'community of peoples deeply rooted in the basic Christian values of freedom, equality, solidarity and peace'.

It is rare occasion when Christians convene from a wide spectrum of traditions spanning Orthodoxy to Pentecostalism, from the breadth of the continent from Greece to Ireland, from a diversity of professions including politics, theology, education and economics, and ranging from young to old. In short, we aim in this forum to be pan-European, trans-denominational, multi-professional and inter-generational.

We recognise that we need each other's help to see the big picture. That doesn't come naturally to my evangelical constituency, or even to Protestant Europe. Catholics see woods; Protestants see trees; Evangelicals see branches. While I have met many Germans, many Dutch, many British, many French, and so on, I have met few 'Europeans'—people who see the big picture. We need each other's help at this forum to broaden our horizons.

We are also mindful that we gather as the European financial crisis creeps into its seventh year. We heard the impact of that crisis on the Greek people from the panel last night. One of the working groups this afternoon will be focusing specifically on the relational and spiritual roots of this crisis.

We are also conscious that we meet as a new-old world order is

emerging. How much has changed since the Sochi Winter Olympics! The recent events in the Crimea and the Ukraine have made us painfully aware of the deep rift between east and west, a schism with spiritual roots, as I mentioned last night.

When we first began planning for this event, long before the Crimea developments, we first considered the need for a call for solidarity to come from the churches to the peoples of Europe. However, we quickly realised that our failure to model solidarity as different churches thorough the centuries has disqualified us to issue such a call. We first need to address the question ourselves, and be instructed on biblical foundations of unity with diversity. This is a subject I personally have learnt much on from Catholic social doctrine, and we are most grateful for the contribution from Monsignor Mazurkiewicz on this subject.

The Ukraine crisis has also reminded us that peace cannot be taken for granted in Europe. The sixty-nine years of peace we have enjoyed since the war are a complete abnormality in European history. In the seventeenth century, for example, there were only four years in which war was not being waged in Europe.

Everyone knows, of course, who won the Second World War. But who won the peace? We tend to forget that the immediate post-war years were anything but peaceful. Life did not simply return to normalcy after the liberating soldiers had given out chocolates, kissed the girls and gone home. Europe was experiencing a major case of post-trauma stress disorder. These were years of much social disruption and strikes, uncertainties and tension, anxiety and fear.

The defining moment, in my view, came on May 9, 1950, when Robert Schuman, the French Foreign Minister, tabled a plan which, from that moment on, gave vision and direction towards 'an ever increasing union' of European peoples. In just three minutes, less than it takes to boil an egg, Schuman laid the foundations for the European house in which today over 500 million Europeans from 28 nations live together in peace.

Schuman, the first French MP to be imprisoned by the occupying Nazi forces in France, had managed to escape and go underground in the 'free zone' of southern France for the last two years of occupation. There he had spent his time planning for when the war would end, and Europe would need to be rebuilt. But what sort of Europe? And on what foundations?

These are questions we are asking ourselves today at this forum. The Schuman story offers insight on these questions from a politician who was a devout believer, a man of faith and prayer.

The Schuman Declaration, described in the media at the time as the Schuman 'bomb', surprised everybody with its daring proposal to treat the defeated Germans as equals to the French and other 'victor' nations. It proposed putting the coal and steel industries under a supranational authority, thus rendering war in Europe 'unthinkable'.

In many aspects, the EU has followed the methods and purposes proposed by Schuman in his declaration. In other aspects, the course followed by the EU leaders has strayed significantly from Schuman's vision, chiefly his warnings about the perils of neglecting the spiritual dimension of Europe's fundamental identity.

Jacques Delors' warnings of 1992, now more than a decade past their deadline, echoed Schuman's cautionary exhortations of Europe's essential need for a soul:

*'Europe' cannot and must not remain an economic and technical enterprise: it needs a soul.*⁵⁵

So it is instructive for us to revisit Schuman's writings and speeches to remind ourselves of the vision that motivated the French foreign minister to propose such a radically alternative solution to the post-war problem of Germany—one based on Jesus' command to love God and neighbour; a solution based on forgiveness, reconciliation and brotherly love, so opposite in spirit to the Treaty of Versailles.

Here was a vision of Europe as a community of peoples sharing a common spiritual and cultural heritage, deeply rooted in the Christian values:

We are called to bethink ourselves of the Christian basics of Europe by forming a democratic model of governance which through reconciliation develops into a 'community of peoples' in freedom, equality, solidarity and peace and which is deeply rooted in Christian basic values.

Schuman spoke of both the **soul** and the **spirit** of Europe, giving the two words different but complimentary meanings.

⁵⁵ Robert Schuman, *For Europe*, p58

SOUL

For him, the **soul** of Europe was that which had animated the spiritual and cultural community of those peoples populating the western peninsular of the Eurasian landmass, strangely called a continent, or even The Continent!

The story of Jesus, and the book telling that story, had been the greatest influencing factors shaping Europe's identity and values. Our understanding of time—as past, present and future—came from the Bible. It is not as self-evident as we may think. Our understanding of human beings as being created equally is also not self-evident, as the American founding fathers claimed, who had grown up in a society influenced for centuries by the Bible. Just go to India where no-one believes that that is self-evident.

Schuman's strong conviction was that Europe's only future lay in rebuilding Europe on such Christian foundations.

*The merging identity of a new Europe 'cannot and must not remain an economic and technical enterprise; it needs a soul: the conscience of its historical affinities and of its responsibilities, in the present and in the future, and a political will at the service of the same human ideal.'*⁵⁶

Jacques Maritain and Christopher Dawson were two contemporary intellectual leaders who helped shape Schuman's thinking. Dawson, in his book *Understanding Europe* wrote:

*Europe owes its unique character to the fact that it is and has always been a society of nations, each intensely conscious of its own social personality and its own political institutions and laws, but all united by a common spiritual tradition, a common intellectual culture and common moral values. It is only by the recovery of these common traditions and values and in the strengthening of them that Europe can be saved.*⁵⁷

This was also the view of others such as Adenauer and de Gaspari. After the signing of the ECSC treaty in Paris in April 1951 Adenauer wrote to Schuman:

⁵⁶ Schuman, p58

⁵⁷ Christopher Dawson, *Understanding Europe*, (Sheed & Ward, 1953) p223.

'I regard it as a particularly favourable and even providential sign that all the weight of the tasks to be undertaken rests on the shoulders of men who, like you, our mutual friend President De Gasperi and myself, are filled with the desire to build the new edifice of Europe on Christian foundations. I believe that few occasions in the history of Europe have offered better opportunities for achieving such a goal.'

En route to the signing of this treaty, these three men had joined in a prayer retreat at the historic Maria Laach monastery near Koblenz, a place of personal spiritual and intellectual refreshment for both Adenauer and Schuman, and even refuge for Adenauer, when Hitler's men had sought to kill the former mayor of Koln.

For in Schuman's understanding, the roots of true democracy—the principle of equality, the practice of brotherly love, individual freedom, respect for the rights of the individual—all came from Christ's teachings. Democracy owed its existence to Christianity, he argued. Practical application of those teachings had transformed Europe through the centuries, resulting in liberal democracy.

Christian principles had become the features of our civilisation, he wrote in For Europe, to which the seventeenth century rationalists owed their human and citizens' rights, which are essentially Christian'.⁵⁸

'Loving your neighbour as yourself' was a democratic principle which, applied to nations, meant being prepared to serve and love neighbouring peoples.

Let's just pause here. These are very familiar words. If this is the command of Jesus to love our neighbour as ourselves, we must ask to what level are we prepared to obey? Who are our neighbours? Usually those we tell ethnic jokes about.

As we think about migration and solidarity today, let us remember how radical these commands of Jesus are. How can Europe fulfil this command to love our neighbours who are knocking at our doors?

Schuman shocked his fellow countrymen during the war when he was underground, by telling them they would have to learn to forgive and love the Germans, something few could accept, least of all Charles de Gaulle!

⁵⁸ Schuman, p45

Democracy, he believed, was 'essentially Evangelical', since love was its mainspring. *'Democracy will either be Christian or it will not be. An anti-Christian democracy will be a parody which will sink into tyranny or into anarchy.'*⁵⁹

Early democracy of the Hellenistic age based only on majority voting would end in a 'tyranny of the majority'. True democracy required servanthood: serving the people and acting in agreement with the people. The goals had to start with peace and the means had to be works of peace.

For Schuman, a future, united Europe naturally had to be both Christian and democratic. The European story was deeply rooted in the Christian story. Cut off from those roots, Europe would lose the foundations for equality, human dignity, tolerance and compassion.

*The democrat's position can be defined as follows: he will not accept that the State systematically ignores religion or that it opposes it with hostility or contempt... the State cannot ignore the extraordinary effectiveness of religious inspiration in the practice of civic duty and in protecting people against forces of social disintegration which are at work everywhere.*⁶⁰

Schuman's vision for Europe was not limited to Europe itself, but embraced a sense of deep responsibility to the rest of the world, and extension of the command to love one's neighbour.

SPIRIT

If the **soul** of Europe was the historical reality that had shaped Europe's fundamental identity as a spiritual and cultural community of peoples, what then was the **spirit** of Europe?

Schuman used this word 'spirit' to refer to the recognition of this basic historic reality, and the corresponding attitude, perspective or outlook that Europeans ought to have towards Europe as a whole and towards the nations as parts of that whole:

The European spirit signifies being conscious of belonging to a cultural family and to have a willingness to serve that community in the spirit of total mutuality, without any hidden motives of hegemony for the selfish exploitation of others... Such a spirit is

⁵⁹ Schuman, p51

⁶⁰ Schuman, p52

*needed, which means that we need to be aware of our specifically European common patrimony and we need to have the will to safeguard and develop it.*⁶¹

Today such talk of Christian roots sounds anachronistic/politically incorrect/intolerant/arrogant and even dangerous; it signifies a head-in-the-sand denial that time has marched on, history has moved on to a new era; and there is no going back to tired-old Christendom.

In a relativistic, post-modern age, it is politically incorrect to claim priority for any one worldview over another. All are equally valid, we are often told. Nothing is absolutely true. No belief can claim it is true. Yet that statement is logically absurd. Most beliefs hold that they are uniquely true. Islam, Christianity, and the belief of those who hold absolutely that no belief is true.

The claim that Europe's roots are primarily Christian is ignored today in the light of the presence of many later competitors. Hence the rejection of the mention of God and the Judeo-Christian tradition in the proposed European Constitution. Yet, what was the real source of Europe's basic values? Is that a matter of conjecture? or of historical fact?

Pope John Paul II, on the other hand, was prepared to admit freely that Europe had multiple cultural roots:

*'If a new European order is to be adequate for the promotion of the authentic common good, it must recognise and safeguard the values that constitute the most precious heritage of European humanism. Multiple are the cultural roots that have contributed to reinforce these values: from the spirit of Greece to that of Roman law and virtue, from the contributions of the Latin, Celtic, Germanic, Slav and Finno-Ugric peoples, to those of the Jewish culture and the Islamic world. These different factors found in the Judeo-Christian tradition the power that harmonised, consolidated and promoted them.'*⁶²

The pope stressed that the diversity of cultures making up Europe's heritage found their unity in the biblical tradition. Of course, we expect a pope to say such things. Yet even arch-atheist Richard

⁶¹ Schuman's speech in at the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 16 May 1949

⁶² John Paul II,

Dawkins candidly admits we cannot understand European history without understanding Christianity and the Bible.

Yet roots are not something we invent or choose. We discover roots.

Jürgen Habermas, one of the world's most influential secular philosophers, concedes that there is no alternative to Judeo-Christian ethics for grounding freedom, solidarity, emancipation, morality, human rights and democracy:

*'Universal egalitarianism, from which sprang the ideals of freedom and a collective life in solidarity, the autonomous conduct of life and emancipation, the individual morality of conscience, human rights and democracy, is the direct legacy of the Judeo ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love. This legacy, substantially unchanged, has been the object of a continual critical reappropriation and reinterpretation. Up to this very day there is no alternative to it. And in light of the current challenges of a post-national constellation, we must draw sustenance now, as in the past, from this substance. Everything else is idle postmodern chatter.'*⁶³

There's a story of a drunk man on his hands and knees looking for his keys under the lamp-post at night. When asked where he lost them, he says: "over there in the dark; but there's more light here." Many Europeans refuse to look for the lost keys to Europe's future anywhere but within the orb of Enlightenment thought.

The question remains: *which world and life view can give us answers for the pressing questions of our day?*

Are the multiple crises facing us in Europe today—economic, political, social, religious and environmental—the result of ignoring Schuman's warnings that: *'The European Movement would only be successful if future generations managed to tear themselves away from the temptation of materialism which corrupted society by cutting it off from its spiritual roots.'*⁶⁴

May our deliberations today, in some small but significant way, help us understand what it will mean to recover both the soul and spirit of Europe.



⁶³ J. Habermas, 'Conversation about God and the world', *Time of transitions*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2006, p150-1

⁶⁴ Schuman, speech to the General Assembly of the International Catholic Organisations, 1956.

SPIRITUALITY AND POLITICS:

THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION IN THE RE-INTEGRATION OF EUROPE

Dr. Petros Vassiliadis,

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FIRST OF ALL I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY SINCERE GRATITUDE to the organizers of this year's conference of the State of Europe Forum with the very optimistic general title, *HOPE IN TIMES OF CRISIS*. I was a little hesitant at the beginning with such an optimistic title in a very pessimistic period of crisis. What an ordinary academic, and especially a theologian, can tell to such a distinguished and audience beyond the usual, banal and trivial recommendations of a kerygmatic character? Especially when he is asked to speak about spirituality and politics? After all there is a very rich tradition in the State of Europe Forum, with extremely insightful recommendations: "The game is not over...yet!" it was suggested two years ago in Copenhagen, Denmark (May 9, 2012), underlining the fact that, "if Europe wants to have a future, it needs a soul". Or its Congress on Values Economy, one month later in Brussels, Belgium, insisting that "Europe's economy needs a new paradigm" (June 7, 2012), and its Seminar few weeks later that examined Europe's values in a 'Post-Secular Europe' (June 27-29, 2012). The common denominator of all these events is undoubtedly last year's conference in Dublin, Ireland: "Europe in Crisis: What can we do?" (May 9-10, 2013).

Trying to answer this very honest question I decided to embellish the title I was given with my understanding of the role of religion within a gloomy situation of a foreseeable disintegrated Europe. I will invite you, however, to notice that I speak of a re-integration rather than the future of an already united Europe. And furthermore I concentrate on the importance of *religion*, rather than of Christianity, despite my conviction that the founding fathers' vision of Europe was that of "a community of peoples deeply rooted in Christian values". Almost 10 years ago the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, speaking on a similar topic ("The Role of Religion in a Changing Europe"), remarked that "it is surely disquieting that, in the proposed Constitutional Treaty, despite protest from many religious leaders,

there is no explicit reference to the contribution made by Christianity to the formation of the European heritage.”⁶⁵

As for myself, I propose to take it as settled issue, and for granted, that multiculturalism, and especially secularism, has won the battle - hopefully not the war - to leave behind the stubborn resistance of the secularists not to include in the preamble to the new Europe’ Constitution Treaty any reference of Christianity in the overall shaping the European culture. And I say this with confidence, because “religion is far too important for human existence to be excluded from politics,”⁶⁶ especially in our dis-integrated and without a “soul” Europe. I propose to show how such a development, namely a reconciliation between religion and modernity, can be a real hope for Europe, provided of course that religion will be able to “exercise its tremendous potential and power to bring back moral values, to recreate and originate new images of what it means to be human in a just, peaceful and sustainable universe”.⁶⁷

But before doing this, it is important to specify the ambivalent relation between religion and politics. Politics is the theory of an ongoing exercise of power, of coercion that includes legitimized violence. Politics also addresses religious issues and makes a religious statement. But on the other hand, religions very often take up political stance and engage in political action. After all, most religions - and Christianity in particular - integrates the private and the public.⁶⁸ But although some people expect from religions - and from Christianity in particular - not only private views, but also final solutions to shared problems and anticipate from the Church not only affirmations of conscience but also some sort of acts of power,

⁶⁵ Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, *In the World, Yet not of the World* (ed. by J. Chrysavgis, with a Foreword by Jose Manuel Barroso), Fordham University Press, New York 2010, 109-120, pp. 111f.

⁶⁶ See my “Orthodox Christianity”, in J. Neusner (ed.), *God's Rule. The Politics of World Religions*, Georgetown University Press, Washington DC 2003, 86-105, p. 104.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ J. Neusner, “Retrospective on Religion and Politics,” in J. Neusner (ed.), *God's Rule*, pp. 257-260.

the Church's role – and by extension of any authentic religious body – is of another dimension, the real nature of which I will attempt to describe later. This is why spirituality, rather than religion, was chosen in the title to interact with politics.

Europe in our days - more than any other continent on our little planet, I would add – is shaped by multiculturalism, by an obvious lack of a guiding spirit, and by pluralism. Pluralism, however, and especially religious pluralism, i.e. the acceptance of all religious paths as equally valid and able all to promote coexistence, is definitely related to, and for most scholars is the result of, “modernity”, the most tangible outcome of the Enlightenment that prevailed in Europe and dominated in all aspects of public life of our after the disastrous religious wars in the 17th century, that ended with the famous peace of Westphalia in 1648 c.e. One specific aspect of modernity, and an equally important outcome of the Enlightenment, was the development of the democratic values and institutions in dealing with social life, the most prominent of which was tolerance, and Parliamentary Democracy; which little by little replaced a governance of the society vindicated in the name of God (cf. e.g. the ‘*eleo theou*’ monarchy), by dealing with public affairs legitimated by, and exercised in the name of, the people. In other words Parliamentary Democracy and religion were by definition somewhat a contradiction in terms. Even the so-called “Return of God” in the last decades of the previous century was either deplored or even demonized, being considered as a threat that would question or even overthrow the “secular condition”!

In order, however, to properly understand this phenomenon, namely the importance of religion in a modern society, and its return in the public domain, despite the opposite starting points and the different agendas between religious and secular institutions, it is necessary to briefly refer to the contrast and the successive stages of pre-modernity, modernity and post-modernity.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ From Nancey Murphy's three-fold approach to the subject (philosophy of language, epistemology, philosophy of science) I will concentrate only on the last one (*Anglo-American Postmodernity: Philosophical Perspectives on Science, Religion and Ethics*, Boulder: Colorado 1997). Cf. also Rodney L. Petersen (ed.), *Christianity and Civil Society*, BTI: Boston 1995; and Jacob Neusner (ed.), *Religion and the Political Order*, Scholars Press: Atlanta 1996.

In the *pre-modern* world, the sacred cosmic stories of all religions provided, each for its own culture, the most certain public knowledge human beings believed they had about reality. After the Enlightenment, i.e. in *modernity*, the secular science replaced religion as the most public and certain knowledge that human beings believed they had of their world, whereas the religious stories were reduced to matters of personal belief and opinion. The ideal stance of modernity with regard to religion was, and in some cases still is, the separation of the religion (in Europe Christian institutions) from the state, and if possible its marginalization in the society at large, its relegation to the private or personal realm, and the declaration of the public realm as *secular*, in other words free from any religious influence. That is why all religions (Christianity included) were always reserved, if not hostile, to both pluralism and the principles and values of modernity, at least in the early stages.

Post-modernity is an ambiguous term used to denote first of all a time of transition in history. It is important to underline that post-modernity had its beginnings in the emergence of the social sciences, namely the science that at its earlier stages undermined the authority of religion and their public presence, and contributed to the secularization of society. When, however, the same methodological principles of sociological and historical criticism were finally applied to science itself, including the social sciences, it was discovered that there was no scientific knowledge without a possible alternative or counter knowledge, and in some cases some previously considered uncontested conclusions were to a certain extent also imaginative interpretations of the world. For some, this affirmation was as shocking as the discovery that the earth was not the centre of the universe.⁷⁰ Suddenly, all our worldviews, including the so-called scientific ones, were relativized. This made people aware that their respective (modern) views of the world could not automatically be

⁷⁰ Darrell Fasching, "Judaism, Christianity, Islam: Religion, Ethics, and Politics in the (Post)modern World," Jacob Neusner (ed.), *Religion and the Political Order*, Scholars Press: Atlanta 1996, pp. 291-299. Also idem., *The Ethical Challenge of Auschwitz and Hiroshima: Apocalypse or Utopia?* Albany 1993.

assumed to be objective descriptions.⁷¹ All these, together with other developments brought again religion back into the public domain.

Having said all these, it is important to reaffirm what sociologists of knowledge very often point out, i.e. that modernity, counter (alternative) modernity, post-modernity, and even de-modernity, are always simultaneous processes.⁷² Otherwise, post-modernity as a worldview can easily end up and evaporate to a neo-traditionalism, and at the end neglect or even negate all the great achievements of the Enlightenment and the ensuing democratic institutions. The rationalistic sterility of modern life, has turned to the quest for something new, something radical, which nevertheless is not always new, but very often old recycled: neo-romanticism, neo-mysticism, naturalism, etc.⁷³ There, in my personal view, can one find the roots of the rising euro-scepticism, some violent intolerance, even nostalgic or militant to nazi behaviour. At the same time, I firmly believe that no religion can meaningfully and effectively exercise its mission in today's pluralistic world without a reassessment of the present context, in other words without a certain encounter with

⁷¹ According to Stanley Grenz (*A Primer on Postmodernism*, Grand Rapids 1996, esp. pp. 161-174) the hallmark of postmodernity is "centerless pluralism".

⁷² Jürgen Habermas, "Die Moderne-Ein unvollendetes Projekt," W.Welsch (ed.), *Wege aus der Moderne. Schlüsseltexte der Postmoderne Diskussion*, Weinheim 1988, pp. 177-192; Jean-François Lyotard, "An Interview" *Theory, Culture and Society* 5 (1989), pp. 277-309, esp. p. 277; idem, *The Postmodern Condition* Minnesota UP, Minneapolis 1984; Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in 19th c. Europe*, J.Hopkins U.P.: Baltimore 1973; I. Petrou, "Tradition and Cultural Adaptation in Post-modernity," *Synaxis* 75 (2000), pp. 25-35 (in Greek). W. Welsch, *Unsere postmoderne Moderne*, VCH Acta humaniora: Weinheim 1988, σελ. 7

⁷³ Postmodernity's responses and reactions to the modern project of the Enlightenment to ground knowledge or "reason" as a timeless, universal construct, immune from the corrosive forces of history, has very seldom gone to the extreme. The enduring dream of modernity should not be minimized or dismissed out of hand, and the many achievements it has realized, such as a concern for universal human rights, a concern for justice and equality, all deserve commendation and praise from religions.

modernity.⁷⁴ If today this encounter is possible, and even desirable – despite the tragic events of Sept 11 – this is because of the undisputed transition of our culture to a new era, the *post-modern* era that brought with it the resurgence of religion; and this is undoubtedly both a threat and a hope. It is a threat if the fundamentalists assume uncontrolled power. However, it is a hope if religion is willing, or allowed, to exercise its tremendous potential and power to bring back moral values, and if recreate, and originate new images of what it means to be human in a just, peaceful and sustainable universe. Europe must embrace religious values, instead of being hostile or even indifferent to them. The alternative would certainly be a far-right-wing fanaticism.

It was for this reason that my Orthodox Church unanimously endorsed this encounter. In a recent statement in 2008 it is mentioned that “Efforts to distance religion from societal life constitute the common tendency of many modern states. The principle of a secular state can be preserved; however, it is unacceptable to interpret this principle as a radical marginalization of religion from all spheres of public life.”⁷⁵

All these affirmations were on the ecumenical agenda of Christianity, even of the world Christian mission, the turning point of which was the 1963 World Mission Conference in Mexico. It was there that ecumenical Christianity replaced the negative assessment to modernity by a more positive one. Since then most of the earlier models of evangelization of the whole world, with so many negative

⁷⁴ Cf. my recent book *Unity and Witness: A Handbook on Inter-Faith Dialogue*, Epikentro Publishing: Thessaloniki 2007; and its predecessor *Postmodernity and the Church. The Challenge of Orthodoxy*, Akritas: Athens 2002. By and large, there still exist a aloofness between religion and modernity, which is caused not only by the former’ rejection of the latter, and the negative attitude toward the whole range of the achievements of the Enlightenment; but also by the obstinate persistence of the adherents of modernism – and of course the democratic institutions that come out of it – to allow historic and diachronic institutions, like religion, to play a significant role in the public life, without being either absorbed or alienated by it, with the simple argument that derive their origin in the pre-modern era.

⁷⁵ § 7 of the *Message of the Primates of the Orthodox Churches*, disseminated *urbi et orbe* by the ultimate authority of the Orthodox Church, namely the Synod of the Primates of the independent (Autocephalous) Orthodox Churches, issued on 12-12-2008).

effects in history, most notably in the tragic events of the Crusades,⁷⁶ were completely abandoned.⁷⁷ The new understanding of Christian mission is not any more limited to such terms as *Christianization*, *verbal proclamation*, *evangelization*, *conversion* etc. in their literal and exclusive sense; they were replaced by a variety of much more inclusive terms, like *witness* or *martyria*, *public presence*, *inter-faith dialogue*, *liberation*, etc.⁷⁸

And what I consider as the most optimistic development in religious history, the Church – in collaboration with other religions – began to address the human sin in the structural complexities of our world, and started ministering the socially poor and marginalized of our societies in their contexts, what we describe as the “global South.” Above all religion, especially Christianity, entered into a constructive dialogue with pluralism and at the end of the road with modernity and/or post-modernity, thus making her presence visible in the society.

⁷⁶ If one surveys the diverse religio-cultural contexts of various Orthodox Churches, one can observe that there is a long history of peaceful co-existence between Orthodox and people of other religions. When the Crusaders in the middle ages launched that dreadful campaign to liberate the Holy Land, while passing from Constantinople and its surroundings they accused the Orthodox of “being too tolerant toward the Muslims” (!)

⁷⁷ This is not to say that Christian churches no longer organize evangelical campaigns or revival meetings; in fact, many Christians are still asked to take up conversion as their top priority mission. We must confess, however, that the traditional terminology (*mission*, *conversion*, *evangelism* or *evangelization*, *christianization*) still have an imperative validity and are retained as the *sine qua non* of the Christian identity of those Christian communities which belong to the “evangelical” stream of the Christian faith. What I mean is that all churches on the institutional level are coping in one way or the other with the questions of many contexts, many religions, many cultures and systems of values – what we call *pluralism* or the effects of *globalization*. Rather than proclamation alone, the Christian churches are now exploring in their own ways a different understanding of “Christian witness”.

⁷⁸ Cf. Common Witness. A Joint Document of the Working Group of the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC, WCC Mission Series, Geneva 1982; the document Common Witness and Proselytism; also I.Bria (ed.), *Martyria-Mission*, WCC Geneva, 1980. Even the *Mission and Evangelism-An Ecumenical Affirmation*, WCC Mission Series: Geneva 1982, 21985, is an attempt to correctly interpret the classical missionary terminology. For a comprehensive presentation of the present state of the debate see J.Matthey, “Milestones in Ecumenical Missionary Thinking from the 1970s to the 1990s,” *IRM* 88 (1999), pp. 291-304. The New Mission Statement recently (2012) endorsed by the Central Committee of WCC, was discussed in the last WCC General Assembly in Busan, Korea, together with the “Call for Action 2012”.

Speaking again for my own religion, on the basis of “the economy of the Holy Spirit” we believe that God uses not only the Church, but many other powers of the world for God’s mission (*mission dei*) for the salvation of humankind and the entire creation. After all, God’s Spirit, the “Holy Spirit”, who is the “Spirit of Truth,” “blows wherever He/She wills” (Jn 3:8, leading us to the “whole truth” Jn 16:13), thus embracing the whole of cosmos. According to the Biblical *magna carta* (Mt 25), God judges humanity with criteria other than the conventional religious ones. With the “Economy of the Spirit” the narrow limits of all world religions, or in the case of Christianity, the canonical boundaries of the Church, are widened, and all cultural (and religious) superiority syndromes and arrogant missionary behaviour give their place to a “common witness” and a humble “inter-faith dialogue”.

In the recent New Mission Statement, entitled *Together towards life: mission and evangelism in changing landscapes*, it is clearly stated: “The church lives in multi-religious and multi-cultural contexts and new communication technology is also bringing the people of the world into a greater awareness of one another’s identities and pursuits. Locally and globally Christians are engaged with people of other religions and cultures in building societies of love, peace and justice. Plurality is a challenge to the churches and serious commitment to inter-faith dialogue and cross-cultural communication is therefore indispensable.”⁷⁹

God in God’s own self is a life of communion and God’s involvement in history (and consequently our religious responsibility) aims at drawing humanity and creation in general into this communion with God’s very life. This ultimate expression of *koinonia* (communion) and love through this kind of “inter-faith” encounter is transferred to the whole world not as doctrinal statements (dogmas) or ethical commands, but as a communion of love. This openness toward the faithful of other religions, or the “other” in general, any “other”, including the most militant atheist, is also reinforced by the unique Orthodox anthropology, expressed in such terms as *theosis* or deification. The human nature is not a closed,

⁷⁹ § 9 of the document with the above title of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), fully endorsed in September 2012 by the Central Committee of WCC.

autonomous entity, but a dynamic reality, determined in its very existence by its relationship to God. Determined by a vision of how to “know” God, to “participate” in His life, and of course to be “saved” neither by an extrinsic action of God nor through the rational cognition of propositional truths, but by “becoming God”, this anthropological notion, developed in our religious tradition, is much more inclusive to “others”, to non-Christians, even to non-believers, and much more relevant to the social, economic and environmental issues, than the old conventional missionary attitude.

To sum up: The inter-faith-dialogue, and the dialogue with modernity, from a Christian point of view does not simply aim at decreasing the enmity and the hostilities between people of different religions - this is what the secular powers in the world are interested in, but just for the stability of the present world order and *status quo*; nor even make the “other” a real partner in, and not just an “object” of, mission - this is a purely inner theological development.⁸⁰ The inter-faith-dialogue, and the dialogue with modernity, is currently being promoted and with full determination pursued, at least from the ecumenical perspective of my faith, in order to build upon what is left unfinished in modernity by the so-called “secular condition”. And the area where the “modern paradigm” failed to succeed was “spirituality”, in a sense that includes both the spiritual and the material welfare of the people; in other words the last fortress of humanity against degradation in social and moral values. And here I am referring to modernity’s inability to enforce a lasting just peace on earth, its unwillingness to preserve the natural environment, and its surrender to the rules of the dominant world economic system, which - allow me to remind you - has caused enormous pain to my country.

To these aspects I will limit myself in the remaining time, making use of the most recent collective statements, which in one way or another I was personally involved in: one was issued by my Orthodox

⁸⁰ Viewing the faithful of other religions as co-workers in God’s mission, the Christian synergetically assists in the realization of the work of the Holy Spirit for a new world reality, a global communion of love, which transcends his/her personal as well as cultural and ethnic ego.

Church,⁸¹ two by the wider Christian ecumenical community,⁸² and the last one by an inter-faith initiative.⁸³

This failure or shortcomings of modernity in justice, peace, the integrity of creation, i.e. the environment, and the world economy, is to a certain extent the result of *individualism*, one of the pillars of modernity, and the ensuing absolute, unconditioned, uncontrolled freedom of the individual in all aspects of life (sexual freedom, legally protected freedom in accumulating wealth etc.), heralded as the new faith after the Enlightenment. Looking at the ambivalence of modernity many Christian theologians and activists (and many Muslims or faithful from other religions, I suppose) insist that there must be a criterion to judge what should be saved from the values and achievements of modernity and what should be overcome. For with the free-market economy, especially in its latest neo-liberal form, the argument goes on, the power balance changed and modernity from a midwife of human rights became their murderer. On the basis of the old principles of modernity, the present world economic system is increasingly falling back into totalitarian trends. Only if the world listen again carefully and gleans from the shared wisdom of religions and other ages-old ethical traditions, can the positive values of the “modern paradigm” be renewed and revitalized, and thus be accepted by the faithful. This, and only this, can save Europe from its dis-integration, or even worst, from the avalanche of fascist behaviours and the nightmare of Nazism. It is for this reason that from all religious quarters we speak of *liberation of modernity*.

The most tangible aspect of this liberation has to do with the most revered in the West document of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. In view of the last breakdown of the International Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen few years ago, it became

⁸¹ See above n. 11.

⁸² The first one is the new mission statement produced by CWME and recently adopted by the C.C. of WCC with the title: *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*; and the second a Call for Action, prepared by the committee “Poverty-Wealth-Ecology” of the AGAPE process focusing on eradicating poverty and entitled: *Economy of Life, Justice, and Peace for All: A Call for Action*.

⁸³ *Faith Shared Wisdom and International Law*.

clear – at least in religious circles – that human rights are awfully ineffective, if they are not accompanied by “human responsibilities”. The people of faith nowadays believe that the values and principles that form part of a common world ethic need not only be publicly declared, they also require an international legal endorsement; they should be more effectively integrated into the work of the UN system and major international legal institutions, even if integrating such values and principles requires significant reforms to leading organs and agencies of the UN. And this battle must certainly start in Europe.

The inter-faith document, *Faith, Shared Wisdom, and International Law*, produced by the most serious global movement initiated in Asia, with strong Muslim participation, called: *Initiative on Shared Wisdom (ISW)–Thought and Action for a Sustainable Future*, insists that “a Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities that would stand beside the Universal Declaration of Human Rights” is a *sine-qua-non* for a just, peaceful and sustainable universe. Action has already been taken that the Secretary General of UN “acts to advance acceptance of a statement of shared ethical values and that the document be introduced into the General Assembly for debate and adoption”. And the document goes on: “To this end religious and other ethically based institutions should work with legal and political authorities (and I cannot see another place in the world than this can start except in Europe)...in order to develop a higher level of public understanding and awareness of commonalities in values between the major religious and ethical traditions, while fully respecting religious, ethnic and cultural diversity”.

The struggle, however, of Christians and faithful of other religions to promote a Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities is not just a diplomatic initiative aiming at introducing in the world agenda moral values at the expense of the values of modernity and the democratic achievements of the Enlightenment. It came out of pressure by prophetic and charismatic figures and theological movements for social and ecological justice from a faith perspective. “Economic justice” is a concept developed by the churches and the ecumenical movement towards achievement of global justice through advocating for equitable sharing of resources and power as essential prerequisites for human development and ecological sustainability. Long before a universal concern (political, scientific

etc.) and advocacy for the dangerous effects of the climate change was developed, theologians from all religious quarters put a critical question to their own religious institutions: "Will the churches have the courage to engage with the 'values' of a profit oriented way of life as a matter of faith, or will they withdraw into the 'private' sphere? This is the question our churches must answer or lose their very soul," declared a WCC consultation of Eastern and Central European Churches on the problem of economic globalization at the dawn of the 3rd millennium.⁸⁴ And if the Churches, especially the European Churches, lose their "soul", no "soul" whatsoever will remain for Europe!

Therefore, the Christian Churches slowly, but steadily, started being concerned about two interrelated aspects of globalization: ecology and economy, both stemming from the Greek word *oikos* (household), and both carrying inherently the notion of communion (*koinonia*), so dear and revered in all Christianity, but definitely rooted stronger in my Orthodox tradition. Therefore, it did not come as a surprise the immediate response by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and Patriarch Bartholomew in particular, who has become known all over the world for his sensitivity for the environment, God's creation, and the universally appreciated activities, like the series of the international ecological conferences, for which he was given the nickname the "Green Patriarch."

On a theoretical level, however, the most significant and crucial decision, shared now by all religions, was the conviction that from a faith perspective economy and ecology cannot be dealt with in isolation from each other. This interrelatedness is in line with a similar conviction in the ecumenical movement, which for almost half a century had been examining justice and peace as inseparable

⁸⁴ Rogate Mshane, *Globalization. WCC-JPC*, presented in the Harare WCC Assembly. *The Responsibility of World Religions for Ecology, the World Economic System, and the International Law*

entities, even at a time when the superpowers during the cold war stubbornly were prioritizing them in differing and opposite ways.⁸⁵

In the wider ecumenical movement Christians came to the conclusion that “various aspects of climate, ecological, financial, and debt crises are mutually dependent and reinforce each other. They cannot be treated separately anymore.”⁸⁶ The people of faith “discern the fatal intertwining of the global financial, socio-economic, climate, and ecological crises accompanied in many places of the world by the suffering of people and their struggle for life. Far-reaching market liberalization, deregulation, and unrestrained privatisation of goods and services are exploiting the whole creation and dismantling social programs and services and opening up economies across borders to seemingly limitless growth of production.”⁸⁷

For two decades now the wider ecumenical movement, in cooperation with their partners in the inter-faith dialogue, developed a lasting process, bearing the acronymic Greek name AGAPE (= *Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth*), the latest stage of which was a program focusing on the ethical imperative of the eradication of poverty. This program critically challenges the well established in society tradition of wealth accumulation as an evil, being the offspring of the deadly sin of greed, placing at the same time first in its agenda the safeguarding of the ecological integrity. Basic principle in the program is the understanding that Poverty, Wealth, and Ecology (PWE as the program is called) are integrally related. The PWE program engaged in on-going dialogue between religious, economic, and political actors. Participants included ecumenical leaders, representatives and leaders of churches from all

⁸⁵ Only last year, during the 22nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva, a symposium was organized by the WCC in collaboration with other Christian organizations, interfaith networks and civil society groups. It was moderated by Dr Guillermo Kerber, WCC program executive on Care for Creation and Climate Justice, who in his concluding remarks called action for climate justice an “ethical and spiritual imperative”. From this perspective, he said, the WCC, other faith-based organizations and a broad coalition of non-governmental organizations are calling on the HRC to establish a Special Rapporteur on human rights and climate change.

⁸⁶ § 10 of the Economy of Life, Justice, and Peace for All: A Call for Action.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

over the world, interfaith partners, leaders of government, and social service organizations, and represented a rich variety of the world's regions and nations. Regional studies and consultations took place all over the world, with a Global Forum and AGAPE celebration in Bogor, Indonesia in 2012, issuing a "Call for Action".

This call for "Action" is addressed not only to the member-churches of WCC, to Christian religion worldwide, and to the people of faith in general; it is also a "call" to all partners from the secular establishment (political, social etc.) who share the common ethical values. Needless to say that faithful from all religions must join forces to this end, and not fight one another. Hostility between them is a betrayal of religion. And the battle for achieving a legally established Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities cannot be won unless it is fought by a united front of people of faith and good will. If all religious leaders take actions similar to the ecological initiatives of Patriarch Bartholomew, a new and better world will certainly rise. A new Europe can appear again as a moral player in world affairs, a united and re-integrated Europe, worthy of its great legacy.



WORKING SESSION I: *Framing the Responses*

1. **TOWARDS JUST, SUSTAINABLE AND RELATIONAL ECONOMICS**

Dr Michael Schluter and Bruno Roche, scheduled to co-lead this session, were both hindered from attending the forum by health and family matters just days before the event. Jonathan Tame of the Jubilee Centre led the discussion, and introduced the following paper prepared especially for the forum by Dr Schluter.

The people of Greece and other European nations are suffering from an economic crisis with spiritual and relational roots. Steps need to be taken to rebuild and restore relationships on a basis of integrity and transparency, and to develop a strategy for a relational economy based on the principles of **'No reward without responsibility, no investment without involvement, no profit without participation'**.

THE GREEK ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND RELATIONAL CRISIS: SYMPTOMS, CAUSES AND WAYS FORWARD

by Dr Michael Schluter⁸⁸

Summary

There is great social and economic distress in Greece, leading to political unrest. This is caused by a combination of debt, unemployment, poverty and lack of healthcare. The current crisis has

⁸⁸ This memo is written by a friend of Greece in a spirit of humility, recognising the deep flaws in inter-personal and inter-group relationships which exist in all societies and especially his own. This memo uses data from the most recent IMF financial programme review in July 2013 and information from the European Commission's Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece, as well as personal observations and comments from colleagues. It may well contain errors and omissions for which the author is responsible and for which he apologises to any individual or group which has been misrepresented.

resulted from globalisation of trade and the immediate problem of an overvalued exchange rate (the Euro). Historical reasons for the crisis stretch back to the Ottoman Empire and the Second World War; lack of social harmony makes it hard to establish fair procedures in civil service appointments, use of government funds and local government. To move towards a resolution of these challenges requires fresh social and relational initiatives, which might include a Trust and Reconciliation Commission and an annual Day of Forgiveness. As debt is relationally toxic in most cases, fresh economic policies are needed to lower levels of household indebtedness. These might include negotiation for a write-off of national debt, and a shift from debt to equity in business and housing finance. The paper concludes with four questions for discussion.

Introduction

This short paper has been prepared as a contribution to the State of Europe Forum, and is a Christian response to the far-reaching and deep distress of the Greek people in their current financial crisis. The Christian starting point is always 'relational' in the sense of recognising that behind economic realities and political tensions lie relationship problems, both local and international. It is these relational issues which are often, if not always, the key to resolving the political and economic challenges a country faces. Thus, the paper will explore ways forward which address in different ways the relationship problems which are perceived to lie at the root of the social and economic hardships faced by the Greek people.

1. The people of Greece are in deep distress. Some symptoms of this moment, when they cry out to God, Europe and the world, are as follows:

- a. **The unemployment rate** in Greece is around 27 per cent (Figure 1). Youth unemployment (under 25) is around 60 per cent and most have little or no prospects of jobs in the foreseeable future. The youth and adult suicide rates have risen sharply in recent years.
- b. **Growth of poverty:** especially in the last few years there has been huge growth in levels of poverty (Figure 2) as GDP has fallen sharply (Figure 3). Savings rates are low so most

household are vulnerable to income shocks (Figure 4). In many cases people don't have enough to eat, and there is widespread malnutrition.

- c. **Healthcare** – public health spending dropped 25 per cent 2009-2012. Some hospitals are being reclassified as 'healthcare centres' to reduce government spending. Unemployment has lowered levels of monthly insurance contributions available to fund health services. Stocks of prescription drugs are critically low because many pharmaceutical companies have not been paid. So there is limited capacity to treat adults or children, and often the public lack access or funds to obtain drugs and care.
- d. **Massive debt** – household and national debt are rising fast. National debt is now 180 percent of GDP, a level which realistically can never be repaid, and household liabilities are close to 75 percent of GDP (Figure 6). Non-performing loans are close to 30 percent of all loans and rising fast (Figure 5).
- e. **Housing** – house prices have fallen over 30 per cent since 2009 (Figure 7). At least 25 per cent of mortgages are delinquent. Many have their homes under threat of repossession by the banks so live with insecurity. There has been a moratorium for foreclosures for those unable to pay their mortgage for 4 years. The EU and IMF are insisting that the moratorium ends now.
- f. **University education** has been disrupted by strikes of administrators making it difficult for many young people to get qualifications.
- g. **Emigration of professionals** continues to weaken the availability of core competencies in the economy and in society.

2. Economic and political reasons for this distress:

- a. Globalisation of information and trade, and the euro, have made it more difficult for countries like Greece to hide inefficiencies behind walls of protection and declining exchange rates.
- b. Government (sovereign) debt is so great now (nearly twice GDP) that the creditor countries/EU institutions are imposing severe measures to put things in order. While these measures may lead to greater efficiency in the medium term (5-10 years) there are such high short-term costs and consequent political instability that a positive outcome is uncertain.

- c. GDP has been declining by 3 per cent a year. In addition, instead of inflation or a steady price level, prices are falling at 3 per cent a year. So, nominal GDP has been declining currently at 6 per cent a year. This means that the debt burden in real terms is rising, and it is difficult for financial institutions to pay a positive interest rate to incentivise savings and reward investors. In such a context, many businesses find it impossible to make a profit.
- d. There is lack of administrative capacity in government departments to implement policies to achieve economic recovery and growth, e.g. to collect outstanding tax liabilities from the public, to collect outstanding social security contributions and to implement a new and simplified property tax.
- e. These economic and political difficulties have led to lack of confidence, lack of hope and political instability which further discourages investment and growth.

3. Spiritual and relational roots of Greece's national crisis

- a. The Orthodox Church in Greece has had a difficult history, most notably under the Ottoman Empire whose rule over Greece only came to an end in during the course of the War of Greek Independence (1821-32). However, the Orthodox Church has not fostered strong relationships with other churches across Europe, resisting their efforts to do evangelism and plant churches in Greece, perhaps on occasion putting nationalist considerations ahead of the proclamation of the global gospel.
- b. However, the Orthodox Church has a remarkable record of seeking to help vulnerable members of society. For example it distributes 270,000 meals each day throughout Greece for the homeless, migrant and poor. It also tries to fill some of the gaps in the rather torn safety net of the Greek national health service e.g. it provides care residencies for special needs such as Down Syndrome, senior citizen homes, dementia centres, orphanages, and kindergartens for impoverished communities. The Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Evangelical Church also have welfare organisations.
- c. There are long-term roots to the deep social distrust across Greek society. These go back to mutual suspicion arising from first Ottoman occupation in the 19th Century, and more recently to

Nazi occupation in the Second World War. More recently, sharp political divides have strained trust between the Left and the Right. These sources of distrust, and sometimes even hatred, exist between extended families and individuals.

- d. Having pointed to strains in relationships between families and communities, it is also important to recognise the strength of many extended and nuclear family relationships in Greece relative to those in much of the EU area.
- e. The decision by Greece to apply to join the Euro, and the EU's acceptance of its application, was characterised by lack of transparency on both sides. The result has been an escalating level of Greek national indebtedness and no formal mechanism by which Greece can escape the currency straitjacket, even if it wishes to.
- f. Tax evasion is practised widely in the population, but especially by the wealthy, so that the needs of the vulnerable in society cannot be met by the government, and the wealthy can in some cases be rightly accused of ignoring the needs of the poor.
- g. There is said to be widespread corruption in political parties, the civil service, the healthcare system, the judiciary, the police, and even the church, leading to a lack of public trust in key public institutions and perhaps accounting for public reluctance to pay taxes.
- h. There is a political culture which allows civil service appointments and allocation of government funds to be based more on nepotism and personal connections than on rational, unbiased processes of decision-making.
- i. Too often EU countries have turned a deaf ear and a blind eye, both in the churches and in wider society, to the distress and suffering of the Greek people in terms of direct support to agencies seeking to alleviate the worst of the suffering. Many churches across Europe have failed to pray for a resolution to the Greek crisis and reach out to their brothers and sisters in need.

4. Restoring Relationships with EU countries and institutions

- a. The present continuing crisis should not be underestimated. Current news of a government surplus in its fiscal budget is said to be misleading as it fails to take into account deficits in local

authorities' and in the state pension fund. Also, the balance sheets of the banks fail to report the fact that arrears in servicing mortgages now affect between one third and one half of the housing stock. It is not clear what the value of this housing is in the current economic context.

- b. A strong case can be made for Greece, perhaps with other Southern European countries like Spain and Portugal, to leave the euro altogether, if there is to be healing of relationships with other EU countries and institutions. This is because as long as northern Europe and southern Europe have differing rates of growth of productivity, without being able to correct these by exchange rate adjustments, there will continue to need to be falls in real wages and prices if Greece and other Southern European countries are to increase levels of employment. In practice, such changes in wages and prices are extraordinarily difficult to achieve in a democratic political context, especially where countries like Greece and Spain are heavily in debt so that deflation increases the real costs of debt repayment.
- c. The first step towards negotiation of an exit from the euro, or towards a new 'Southern Europe euro', would be for Greek and other Southern European governments to apply capital controls with immediate effect to allow a period to negotiate publicly with their Northern European neighbours. The negotiation might well take 12 months, and would perhaps require Greece and other Southern European countries to help their EU partners recognise that failure to exit in a given timescale might lead to even more radical and negative outcomes.
- d. Understandably, both the EU and many in Greece wish to stay within the Euro as Greece both historically and today plays an important part in European thought and culture. The tension is between recognition of the roots of much European thought in Greece and the current financial costs of keeping Greece within the Euro.
- e. It is the author's view that if Greece is to stay in the euro, and once again attract investment, 80 per cent of Greek debt needs to be written off – so national debt is reduced from 180 per cent of GDP to 25 per cent of GDP. One reason that this is difficult to achieve is because Germany in its constitution is probably unable to lend again to a country once debts have been written

off in this way; however the write-off is essential if Greece is to be able to attract foreign direct investment. Few investors will put their capital at risk as long as such a huge debt overhang continues to create uncertainty over any long-term growth strategy and taxation policy, and the possibility of a rise in interest rates on the debt threatens even the present government's small fiscal 'surplus'. The losses to Greece's creditors could be mitigated by:

- Some debt for equity swap (i.e. some debt is exchanged for a share in the ownership of Greek property, infrastructure, energy reserves ...)
 - Some warrants, options or securities on Greek bonds linked to GDP growth so if the economy picks up some additional payments are made to owners of these bonds (recognising that governments often manipulate GDP statistics).
- f. From a Northern Europe perspective, the present 'compromise' may seem to be fair to both Northern and Southern Europe. Cheap loans are provided by the North on a 'never-never' repayment basis to compensate for the fact that Greece suffers from low levels of investment and employment due to the inappropriately strong Euro as their currency. However, this does not resolve the problem of Greece's need for foreign investment to help generate new jobs, the unhealthy dependency in Greece's relationship with its Northern neighbours, and is creating, rightly or wrongly, a legacy of resentment.

5. Possible Church initiatives to help Greece move towards a more Relational society

- a. Recognising that cultural transformation is essential if Greece is to re-establish itself, a first step might be for the Orthodox Church to set aside past misgivings and welcome all churches based on established Christian tradition, i.e. based on the Bible and the ancient creeds, to come and both preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and establish local churches in Greece. The influence of Christian teaching and ethics is vital to the long-term transformation of the Greek economy, as well as society more widely.

- b. Many people have failed to pay taxes, some over a long period. The government has limited capacity to pursue unpaid tax obligations so that much will never be recovered. Thus the Church might propose to the government a Truth and Reconciliation Commission not dissimilar to what happened in South Africa. This would mean that where individuals or groups are prepared to acknowledge unpaid tax obligations, whether these are income tax debts, social security debts or perhaps even mortgage debts, and are willing to pay half of that unpaid debt, the rest of the debt would be forgiven provided they also keep to a commitment to pay taxes going forward. This would save, perhaps, the immense costs and ill feeling of other debt collection measures and processes.
- c. The churches in Greece could also establish an annual Day of Forgiveness, appealing to all Greeks to forgive one another past wrongs, to re-establish contact with those they have avoided, and rebuild friendships. Without forgiveness and the willingness to move on from the past, relationships in the community will continue to be characterised by suspicion and bitterness. The key to such relationship restoration often will lie in previously-hostile families sharing a meal together; this might be particularly promoted and encouraged through the annual 'Day of Forgiveness'.
- d. The churches could seek to encourage schools to become 'relational schools', so that right and healthy relationships are actively promoted within schools, between parents and teachers, and between pupils. This could contribute to building a culture of 'other-person-centredness', forgiveness and reconciliation in the years ahead.⁸⁹

6. Possible steps towards a more Relational and debt-free economy

- a. Begin to encourage the principle: 'No reward without responsibility, no investment without involvement, no profit without participation'. This would have many implications for the way Greek families and individuals relate to one another

⁸⁹ See www.relationalschools.org

because shared financial interests help to develop inter-personal and inter-group relationships. The implications include:

- Higher taxation of interest-based transactions and financial instruments relative to equity because fixed returns (interest) reduce the incentive for savers/investors to be engaged with where and how their funds are used. Companies should be discouraged from using debt finance (bonds and bank loans), and encouraged to use more equity finance, through the tax system.
 - Incentives for shareholders to engage actively with companies where their funds are invested, as the responsibility principle should require investors to accept some degree of responsibility to contribute towards payment of debts if the company incurs losses (i.e. some limitation on 'limited liability'). This would give more transparent legitimacy for returns on investment, whether in agriculture or industry, because no-one could accuse investors of being 'absentee landlords'.
- b. Lower mortgage debt by restructuring housing finance. Many households in Greece cannot pay their mortgages and will not be able to service such a high level of debt in the foreseeable future. One way forward would be to convert a significant proportion of mortgage debt to a shared equity ownership structure so that families own part of their property and rent the remaining part from the financial institution which owns the rest of the property. This would have the following advantages:
- It avoids the possibility of negative equity;
 - It provides greater flexibility for households to increase or decrease the size of the share of the property that they own depending on their economic circumstances. [In order to maintain the relationship between the lender and borrower, it is essential that the lender is not permitted to sell on their share of equity in a property to a third party who has no knowledge of the original borrower.]
 - From the bank's perspective, it would in many cases save them from needing to repossess homes, and prevent a further decline in house prices.
 - It would help potentially to recapitalise banks' balance sheets.

- c. A 'Relational Ratings Agency' could be established to measure the quality of stakeholder relationships among stakeholders, both between and within companies and parastatals, as proposed by the paper 'Transforming Capitalism from Within'⁹⁰. This also is consistent with recommendations of the International Integrated Reporting Council.
- d. Debt counselling services are an important way to reduce stress in households (and companies). The church in Greece could request the EU to fund such a service using church-related debt-counselling services, training Greek speakers to deliver such counselling from UK, Cyprus etc, in addition to what would be available from Greece itself. Government could provide practical advice and help for all families to renegotiate their personal debts with government utilities and financial institutions so as to help households to escape from the slavery of personal and household debt.

7. Questions for discussion

- a. What are the positive opportunities, from a long-term point of view, arising from the current economic crisis in terms of the renewal of Greek society?
- b. What is the potential for a Truth and Reconciliation commission in regard to unpaid tax obligations in Greece? What obstacles would need to be overcome? Who could initiate such a process?
- c. Is the idea of an annual 'Day of Forgiveness' a realistic proposal for Greece? Who should promote this idea? What issues from the past should be its main focus?
- d. How can the international Christian community help to resolve both the immediate financial crisis and the longer-term underlying economic problems in Greece? How can the international community help to empower Greek civil society to address the current extensive social needs? ❖

Cambridge, UK, 7th May 2014

⁹⁰ *Transforming Capitalism from Within, a Relational Approach to the Purpose, Performance and Assessment of Companies*, by Jonathan Rushworth and Michael Schluter. Downloadable from the Relational Research website: www.relationalresearch.org

RESPONSE FROM DR GEORGE KALOTERAKIS,

PRESIDENT, GREEK EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE:

Concerning Dr Michael Schluter's memo, I have to say that it is a quite balanced and thorough assessment of the current economic situation in Greece and the reason that led to it. My personal opinion is that the emerging picture is more pessimistic than the actual situation and of course the economic data used, are rather outdated.

For example: in paragraph 4b regarding the exit from the euro. Today, there are fewer voices calling for an Grexit as the recovery of the economy becomes obvious and is acknowledged even by former skeptics.

Greece's remarkable adjustment in the last two years has taken a new dimension in 2013 and in the first months of 2014.

I refer to some key drivers:

Greece's comparative advantages in tourism (including its position as a place of permanent retirement residence for old people) as well as in industry (including energy and construction). Greece, according to official data, has in the first months of 2014 recorded far greater growth rates in foreign tourism arrivals and in travel revenues than its direct competitors in the region. Civil Aviation Authority figures suggest an 11.8 percent yearly rise in air arrivals from abroad in the first quarter of the year, while even domestic arrivals have grown by 1.7 percent. Travel revenues in January-February 2014 grew at 17.3 percent year-on-year to 294.1 million Euros according to the Bank of Greece data. Tourism growth and improved confidence in Greece have helped the country's economy put the worst behind it. There are new investments in tourism industry in Halkidiki (Northern Greece) and in the islands. For example: the latest report by GBR Consulting on Greek tourism and hotels, reveals that two major global players in the hotel industry, Banyan Tree and Fairmont, are getting ready to enter the Corfu market.

The labor market has started to stabilize, although the unemployment rate remains at a particularly high level: By the end of 2014 it is expected to reach a 27.1 percent against 27.3 percent at end-2013, according to the OECD forecasts. In 2015 it should drop to 26.7 percent. Salaries and prices in certain goods and services will continue to decline albeit at a slower rate than previously.

There is a revival of investment in infrastructure and other state controlled investment. More specifically, the Greek government has secured the agreement of the EU authorities to redirect structural funds financing the restart of works on the country's four (4) main highways, where construction work had stopped for almost three years. The final approval of this new allocation of funds and of the new high way projects by the relevant EU bureaucracy was given at the end of 2013. The Greek government and the re-established contractors in each of the four projects have now to coordinate their efforts so as to complete the projects by the end of 2015. The restarting in these projects will imply the recovery of production and of investment activity in the construction sector and various other sectors of the Greek economy and it will give a substantial boost to total fixed investment and employment.

In 2013, a significant improvement in the general government (GG) primary balance was recorded, with a surplus of 0.4% of GDP, compared with a planned zero balance, from -1% of GDP primary deficit in 2012. For 2014, the GG primary surplus target has been set at 1.6% of GDP. In fact, the successful fiscal consolidation process is grounded on legislation adopted in November 2012, with spending cuts and revenue-increasing measures exceeding €15bn securing the implementation of the 2013-2014 budgets.

Greece and the Commission believe there will be marginal growth from this year. The European Commission, in a forecast published last Monday, also offered encouraging signs, predicting Greece returning to growth sooner than anticipated, with a projected growth rate of 0.6 percent this year and 2.9 percent in 2015.

Unlike the Greek government and the European Commission, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) does not expect Greece's economy to grow this year. In its bi-annual Economic Outlook the OECD foresees the Greek economy shrinking by another 0.3 percent of GDP this year. It expects there to be growth of 1.9 percent of GDP next year.

About the public debt.

The OECD says that significant economic growth rates and an additional fiscal adjustment are required for the public debt to become sustainable. Structural reforms are needed to strengthen the Greek economy's competitiveness, along with improved liquidity. It

adds that cash flow may improve more than expected thanks to the outcome of the recapitalization of the systemic banks and the return of investor confidence following the country's return to the markets.

Having achieved a primary surplus of 1.5 billion Euros in 2013, Greece will demand that the Eurogroup lives up to its November 2012 commitment to examine other ways of reducing the country's giant debt burden of roughly 175 percent of gross domestic product.

There is some reluctance within the Eurozone to make any firm commitments now because of the proximity to the European Parliament elections on May 25. Eurogroup sees debt relief talks in fall.

The first part of the Greek proposal regarding debt relief consists of stretching the maturity of 192.8 billion euros in loans the country has received from the Eurozone to 50 years. The Greek Loan Facility (GLF) loans amount to 52.9 billion Euros and have an average maturity of 17 years. The 139.9 billion Euros Greece has received from the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) have an average maturity of 30 years. An extension could reduce Greece's debt repayments over the next couple of decades by about 6 billion Euros a year.

The second part of the proposal consists of switching to a fixed interest rate on the GLF loans. Currently, Greece is paying a rate of 0.83 percent (Euribor plus 0.50) but as the Euribor rate is expected to rise over the next few years, Athens wants to ensure lower repayments by fixing it at a low rate.

Now some comments on the remarks regarding Greek Universities. Yes, there *have* been strikes in the winter semester among the administration personnel in most Greek Universities. Because of the enforced austerity measures a great number of the administration staff have been out of the work. The needs of the departments were not taken seriously into account, so many sectors have been left with no personnel at all.

But....the picture of the strike-effects given in the paper is oversimplistic and not absolutely accurate. The strike affected mainly certain departments of the Athens University only. The academic program at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (the largest in Greece) ran according to schedule with many individuals from the

administration personnel working extra hours to meet the extra needs.

I think, though, that the most important aspect regarding Greek University education in the years of economic crisis is the following one:

The evaluation of the various University Departments that has been taking place in the previous months has led to very good results in the great majority of the Greek Universities (Athens, Thessaloniki, Crete, Ioannina). The **external judges** acknowledged the quality of the graduate and postgraduate programs as well as the quality of the research activity of the academic staff **despite the obvious and great problems due to the ongoing economic crisis**: dramatic decrease of the state funds leading to inadequate infrastructure, understaffed departments (because due to the austerity measures retiring academics are not immediately replaced), dramatic decrease of the salaries of the academic personnel (you would be shocked if you heard some numbers and compared them to the European standards).

The external judges gave credit to the Greek academic staff who continue to strive for excellence in teaching and research in an absolutely hostile economic context. The proof of my comments lies in the very good, many times excellent performance of Greek students doing postgraduate studies abroad. It is a credit to their graduate studies at home.



2. *MIGRATION – WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?*

Kari Tassia, Refugee Highway Partnership

Migration has been part of the human story from the beginning, as Paul stated in his Mars Hill address. Yet in today's globalized world new challenges have arisen for Europe which seems a paradise and a haven for the 'have-nots' and the persecuted from Africa and the Middle East particularly. This is a task too important to leave to politicians. Biblical injunctions concerning sojourners make this a responsibility for the Body of Christ and society in general. What role can Christians play practically both in offering shelter, clothing, food and drink to migrants, as well as urging those who have to share with those who don't, including the southern border nations who carry the brunt of the problem?

BACKGROUND TO A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR FAITH LEADERS

In December 2012, UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres organized a Dialogue with faith leaders, faith-based humanitarian organizations, academics and government representatives from countries around the world on the theme of "Faith and Protection."

As the High Commissioner noted in his opening remarks, "...all major religious value systems embrace humanity, caring and respect, and the tradition of granting protection to those in danger. The principles of modern refugee law have their oldest roots in these ancient texts and traditions."

At the conclusion of this landmark event, the High Commissioner embraced a recommendation for the development of a Code of Conduct for faith leaders to welcome migrants, refugees and other forcibly displaced people, and stand together against xenophobia.

In response to this call, from February through April 2013, a coalition of leading faith-based humanitarian organizations and academic institutions (including HIAS, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Jesuit Refugee Service, Lutheran World Federation, Oxford Centre for

Hindu Studies, Religions for Peace, University of Vienna Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology, World Council of Churches, World Evangelical Alliance and World Vision International) drafted **"Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders."** The Affirmations, which have been translated into Arabic, Chinese, French, Hebrew, Russian and Spanish, inspire leaders of all faiths to "welcome the stranger" with dignity, respect and loving support. Faith groups around the world will use the Affirmations and supporting resources as practical tools to foster support for refugees and other displaced people in their communities.

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WELCOMING THE STRANGER: AFFIRMATIONS FOR FAITH LEADERS

A core value of my faith is to welcome the stranger, the refugee, the internally displaced, the other. I shall treat him or her as I would like to be treated. I will challenge others, even leaders in my faith community, to do the same.

Together with faith leaders, faith-based organizations and communities of conscience around the world, I affirm:

I will welcome the stranger.

My faith teaches that compassion, mercy, love and hospitality are for everyone: the native born and the foreign born, the member of my community and the newcomer.

I will remember and remind members of my community that we are all considered 'strangers' somewhere, that we should treat the stranger to our community as we would like to be treated, and challenge intolerance.

I will remember and remind others in my community that no one leaves his or her home land without a reason: some flee because of persecution, violence or exploitation; others due to natural disaster; yet others out of love to provide better lives for their families.

I recognize that all persons are entitled to dignity and respect as human beings. All those in my country, including the stranger, are subject to its laws, and none should be subject to hostility or discrimination.

I acknowledge that welcoming the stranger sometimes takes courage, but the joys and the hopes of doing so outweigh the risks and the challenges. I will support others who exercise courage in welcoming the stranger.

I will offer the stranger hospitality, for this brings blessings upon the community, upon my family, upon the stranger and upon me.

I will respect and honor the reality that the stranger may be of a different faith or hold beliefs different from mine or other members of my community.

I will respect the right of the stranger to practice his or her own faith freely.

I will seek to create space where he or she can freely worship.

I will speak of my own faith without demeaning or ridiculing the faith of others.

I will build bridges between the stranger and myself. Through my example, I will encourage others to do the same.

I will make an effort not only to welcome the stranger, but also to listen to him or her deeply, and to promote understanding and welcome in my community.

I will speak out for social justice for the stranger, just as I do for other members of my community.

Where I see hostility towards the stranger in my community, whether through words or deeds, I will not ignore it, but will instead endeavor to establish a dialogue and facilitate peace.

I will not keep silent when I see others, even leaders in my faith community, speaking ill of strangers, judging them without coming to know them, or when I see them being excluded, wronged or oppressed.

I will encourage my faith community to work with other faith communities and faith-based organizations to find better ways to assist the stranger.

I will welcome the stranger.

[Available online at www.unhcr.org/51b6de419.html].



FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

The call to “welcome the stranger,” through protection and hospitality, and to honor the stranger or those of other faiths with respect and equality, is deeply rooted in all major religions.

In the **Upanishads**, the mantra *atithi devo bhava* or “the guest is as God” expresses the fundamental importance of hospitality in Hindu culture. Central to the Hindu *Dharma*, or Law, are the values of *karuna* or compassion, *ahimsa* or non-violence towards all, and *seva* or the willingness to serve the stranger and the unknown guest. Providing food and shelter to a needy stranger was a traditional duty of the householder and is practiced by many still. More broadly, the concept of *Dharma* embodies the task to do one’s duty, including an obligation to the community, which should be carried out respecting values such as non-violence and selfless service for the greater good.

The **Tripitaka** highlights the importance of cultivating four states of mind: *metta* (loving kindness), *muditha* (sympathetic joy), *upekkha* (equanimity), and *karuna* (compassion). There are many different traditions of Buddhism, but the concept of *karuna* is a fundamental tenet in all of them. It embodies the qualities of tolerance, non-discrimination, inclusion and empathy for the suffering of others, mirroring the central role which compassion plays in other religions.

The **Torah** makes thirty-six references to honoring the ‘stranger’. The book of **Leviticus** contains one of the most prominent tenets of the Jewish faith: “The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Leviticus 19:33-34). Further, the Torah provides that “You shall not oppress the stranger, for you know the soul of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 23:1)

In **Matthew’s Gospel** (26:12) we hear the call: “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me...” And in the Letter to the **Hebrews** (13:1-3) we read, “Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

When the Prophet Muhammad fled persecution in Mecca, he sought refuge in Medina, where he was hospitably welcomed. The Prophet’s *hijrah*, or migration, symbolizes the movement from lands of oppression, and his hospitable treatment embodies the Islamic model of refugee protection. The **Holy Qur’an** calls for the protection of the asylum seeker, or *al-mustamin*, whether Muslim or non-

Muslim, whose safety is irrevocably guaranteed under the institution of *Aman* (the provision of security and protection). As noted in the **Surat Al-Anfal**: “Those who give asylum and aid are in very truth the believers: for them is the forgiveness of sins and a provision most generous.” (8:43)

There are tens of millions of refugees and internally displaced people in the world.

Our faiths demand that we remember we are all migrants on this earth, journeying together in hope.

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World Refugee Sunday, 15 or 22 June 2014

<http://www.refugeehighway.net/events/world-refugee-sunday>

World Refugee Sunday (WRS) will be observed on June 16 and June 23, 2013, whichever Sunday works best for each location. WRS is an opportunity to join other churches around the world in praying for refugees and internally displaced people.

The mission of the **Refugee Highway Partnership** (RHP) is to use collaborative strategies to mobilize the worldwide church to bring the hope of Christ and provide refuge for the nearly 50 refugees and forcibly displaced people around the world. For more information about the RHP visit: www.refugeehighway.net

A collaboration of refugee organizations from around the world, the Refugee Highway Partnership was launched at an historic 2001 Refugee Consultation in Izmir, Turkey, sponsored by World Evangelical Alliance. Nearly 200 global leaders gathered to build connections and develop collaborative strategies to respond to the incredible need of refugees in our world. Since then annual leadership meetings and strategy roundtables have been held to build and grow this partnering effort globally and regionally.

The number of refugees with little hope of a durable solution is growing. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that there are more than 5.5 million refugees under its mandate in what it classifies as “protracted refugee situations”.

THE DUBLIN III REGULATION ENTERS INTO FORCE - *evaluation from the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)*

Brussels, 19 July 2013 Today, the Dublin III Regulation enters into force.⁹¹ For the European Union and its member states, this is a pivotal moment because it heralds the arrival of what they consider to be the Common European Asylum System.⁹² It is also a pivotal moment for asylum seekers: the way in which EU member states implement Dublin III will undoubtedly impact their ability to seek protection in Europe.

This year, both the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) published in-depth research studies revealing how the Dublin II Regulation impedes asylum seekers' access to protection in Europe. Though both were produced separately, the findings of the studies are strikingly similar.⁹³

We found vast differences in the way member states apply the Dublin Regulation. There are no common standards of information provision and reception conditions, and no common ways to assess people's vulnerabilities and special needs. In some countries, people are told about a Dublin transfer just before it actually happens, leaving no time to appeal it before a court and access their right to an effective remedy. Member states implement the humanitarian and

⁹¹ See Art.49 Regulation (EU) No. 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the European Council of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person (recast) OJ 29.6.2013. The Regulation shall apply to applications for international protection lodged as from the first day of the sixth month following its entry into force and, from that date, it will apply to any request to take charge of or take back applicants, irrespective of the date on which the application was made.

⁹² See The Stockholm Programme – an open and secure Europe serving and protecting citizens (2010/C 115/01)

⁹³ ECRE is co-author with Forum Refugees-Cosi and the Hungarian Helsinki Committee of the Dublin Transnational Network publication (2013) *Lives on Hold: The Dublin II Regulation*, available at www.ecre.org and www.dublin-project.eu; JRS Europe (2013). *Protection Interrupted: The Dublin Regulation's Impact on Asylum Seekers' Protection*, available at www.jrseurope.org.

sovereignty clauses in a restrictive way with the result that some governments never apply these provisions for the benefit of the asylum seekers concerned.

The consequences of these divergent practices have been enormously detrimental to asylum seekers. Many people seeking asylum are transferred from one country to the next without ever having the chance to have their asylum application fully examined. Families are torn apart by the Dublin transfer process because governments are too focused on removing asylum seekers to the EU country that they first entered, rather than working to keep families together. Asylum seekers spend months in detention centres, and even when they are not detained there is no guarantee that they can have access to decent housing and welfare support.

We acknowledge that the newly adopted Dublin III Regulation has the potential to remedy some of the serious gaps in protection identified by both of our research studies. The new right to information, a personal interview and the European Commission's obligation to produce a common information leaflet may leave asylum seekers better informed of what is happening to them. The new provision on judicial remedies may better enable asylum seekers to challenge Dublin decisions where transfers would not be in compliance with their fundamental rights.

But all of this depends on how the Dublin III Regulation is applied at a national level. If Europe is to have a common asylum system that is truly based on common standards with a high level of protection, dignity and human rights, then governments will need to interpret and apply the Dublin III Regulation correctly. Improvements on paper will not lead to improvements in practice as long as there is not a level playing field. Asylum seekers must have access to fair asylum procedures and decent reception conditions wherever they are in Europe.

Above all, our research studies show that if the Common European Asylum System as a whole is to be sustainable, then it must seriously consider and address any protection gaps that may undermine the right to asylum. Asylum seekers do not always choose to be in a particular country, but only in a place that offers them protection. In the end, the Dublin III Regulation's success or failure will be based on how well governments adhere to this standard. ❖

3. SOLIDARITY, PATRIOTISM AND NATIONALISM – WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE?

Msgr Piotr Mazurkiewicz & Rev Dimitrios Boukis, *Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE)*

With the European Parliament elections looming, many populist voices are clamouring for Europeans to look after their own interests under the banner of 'patriotism'. Need patriotism and solidarity be mutually exclusive? Is there a biblical balance between commitment to one's own nation, patriotism, and the commitment to the welfare of all the European nations, solidarity? What are the biblical roots of solidarity, and of patriotism? To what degree has nationalism been a threat to Europe's welfare historically? And today? How can we promote biblical perspectives on both as we approach the elections? On what did Robert Schuman base his understanding of solidarity, the 'spirit of Europe'?

See the paper introduced by Msgr Piotr Mazurkiewicz on the opening session, p. 21.



4. FROM ATHENS TO BRUSSELS – WILL DEMOCRACY SURVIVE?

Philip Powell, Jubilee Centre; Antonie Fountain

Democracy, everybody knows, was birthed in Athens. But was there a direct line from Athens to Brussels and our modern democracy? What role did biblical insights play in nurturing democracy into its modern forms? Is democracy more biblical than theocracy? How democratic is the EU today, where talk is often heard of a 'democratic deficit'? What is necessary for democracy to be sustainable? What prevents democracy from becoming the tyranny of the majority? What are the current threats to democracy in Europe today?

Framework for discussion: by Philip Powell

Content:

1. Introduction

In the city of Athens it is impossible to talk about democracy without a feeling that the ghosts of Plato and Aristotle are still haunting us.

Like Democratia, an Athenian minor deity: 'She is everybody's mistress and yet somehow retains her magic even when a lover sees that her favours are being in his light, illicitly shared by many others.'

Should Christians have anything to do with such a promiscuous concept?

Democracy is an overused word that makes defining almost impossible. There are too many meanings attached to it and it is 'essentially a contested concept'.

"Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time." - Sir Winston Churchill, from a House of Commons speech on Nov. 11, 1947

Democracy is the "government of the people, by the people, for the people." – Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address, 1863

The word democracy comes from two words, *demos* "people" and *kratos* "power": "the people hold power."

2. A framework for thinking about democracy

- a. Democracy's past – Athens or Bethlehem?
- b. Theories of democracy (formal, top-down)
- c. Democracy from below (people power)
- d. Democracy's future

3. Christian critique and affirmation of democracy

- a. Democracy as vision
- b. Democracy as system

As Christians we can broadly support the vision of society that guarantees the rights of citizens, equality before the law and limited government. But democracy can become an ideology leading to the tyranny of the majority.

Democracy as vision must be realized through institutional arrangements, and here is where the challenge lies. One size or model of democracy does not apply to all context and countries.

4. The ecology of democracy

- a. Democratic constitution
- b. Democratic government
- c. Democratic society
- d. Democratic spirit

The constitution (highest law of the land) of a country must have a democratic trajectory. But that is not sufficient. The functioning of government also has to be democratic. The government must be accountable and responsive to the citizens. But beyond the formal aspects of democracy, there is a need to build 'middle institutions' in society that can operate independent of the government intrusion. A society is democratic when the press/media is not being controlled by the government. Finally, the population must have a 'democratic spirit', and it is here the church after the Reformation played a key

role in educating and empowering people to stand-up to the tyrannical power of illegitimate authority. What is needed is more active citizenship, or what Rowan Williams called 'argumentative democracy'.

5. Ten features of democracy

- i. Rule of law
- ii. Free, fair and frequent elections
- iii. Elected representatives with term-limits
- iv. Independent judiciary
- v. Military is limited and circumscribed
- vi. Freedom of conscience and expression
- vii. Inclusive citizenship
- viii. Educated and empowered middle-class
- ix. Right to information (news is free from state power)
- x. Social Middle institutions (church, clubs, organisations, etc.)

6. Threats to democracy

- a. Big government
- b. Corporate lobbyists
- c. A shrinking middle-class
- d. Social inequality
- e. Consumerism
- f. Debt

7. A way forward for Europe...

The following paper was presented for discussion:

Christian Justifications for Democracy, Jonathan Chaplin

*From Ethics in Brief, Autumn 2006 (Vol.11 No.3) formerly The Whitefield Briefings
used with permission*

Introduction

Two factors are generating particular ferment in contemporary global politics today: the continuing struggles of movements for 'democratisation' in states which are emerging fitfully from autocratic or totalitarian rule; and the striking and unsettling resurgence in both democratic and undemocratic states of new forms of 'public religion' – some wholesome, some deadly. British citizens need no reminder of the second factor, and it is not surprising that many of them are having a hard time comprehending how public religions other than a Christianity familiar to them – or public religion at all – might make any constructive contribution to political life in this country. There is evidently a pressing need for imaginative and critical reflection on the relationship between religion and public life in Britain, and good work on this theme is certainly coming on stream from a variety of sources.

It is important, however, to pause for a while and pose a prior question, one to which most people, including most Christians, think they have a straightforward answer: why should we favour democracy in the first place? There are all sorts of valid pragmatic responses to this question, notably Winston Churchill's celebrated quip that democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others that have ever been tried. But given the ferment just described, as well as the ever-deepening cynicism about the operation of democracy in societies like ours, it is more than ever important to be able to identify principled answers to this question. As Christians reflect on their political responsibilities today, they need to make clear – in the first instance to themselves – why democracy is important and what conception of democracy should guide their political engagements.

In this article I present a broad overview of key strands in the tradition of Christian political thought which can equip us in this task.

The meaning and value of 'democracy'

In many discussions of democracy, the term is used quite loosely to mean anything from a society that values freedom, tolerance or human rights, to a constitutional state governed by the rule of law, to an egalitarian society which has cast off medieval hierarchy, or even simply to a 'modern' society. In this article, I shall use the term 'democracy' quite specifically to mean the principle of the popular election of political rulers (without implying that this is the only legitimate usage). This principle is actually one specific implication of a wider democratic principle, that of the accountability of government to the people (which itself needs balancing with several other political principles). This wider principle mandates much more than just popular elections, but here I will focus on the narrower implication of popular election.

It is true that democratic elections have, in the modern world, tended to go hand in hand with, and are generally supportive of, those other good things just mentioned: freedom, tolerance, the rule of law, equality, human rights, and more. But democracy does not itself guarantee them; indeed it can undermine them: elected majority governments can ride roughshod over the freedom and human rights of minorities.

Consider the historic plight of Irish people in Britain, of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, or of Black people in the USA, to name just a few glaring examples from our own so-called 'civilised' liberal democracies. But nor is democracy always necessary to realise those other principles; unelected governments can sometimes respect the rule of law, secure civil freedoms, and pursue a measure of justice. Indeed non-democratic governments have not infrequently proven able to establish significant degrees of social provision and secure a measure of social order, without which public injustice would have been much greater. Democracy is not the highest or deepest political principle, nor the most comprehensive. It is rather one of a number of vital institutional components of a balanced constitutional framework, all of which need to play their distinctive roles in securing the larger goal of just governance. And the justification and content of democracy are derived from more fundamental political principles.

Having entered those qualifications, I now want to explain why democracy is, nevertheless, a profoundly important principle, one

which Christians should enthusiastically, if critically, support where it exists, improve and reform where it is flawed, and argue and mobilise for it where it does not exist and where political opportunities allow - and in a manner and at a pace that such circumstances render prudent. It is possible to distinguish three broad theories of democracy that have crystallised out of many centuries of Christian political reflection and experience. Each implies a specific kind of justification for the principle of popular election. I call them consent, defensive, and participatory theories. They do not imply, jointly or severally, that democracy is the only legitimate form of government, but they do suggest powerful Christian motivations for supporting and engaging with democracy today.

Consent theories

Christian consent theories propose a distinctive reason why the citizenry, or at least their representatives, must participate in the process by which political authority is legitimised. Consent theories were not invented by the social contract thinkers of the seventeenth century, only radicalised by them in an individualistic and eventually secularizing direction. Their origins go back to at least the twelfth century, and they were transformed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, first by Reformation political thinkers into full-fledged covenantal models, and later by Catholic philosophers into sophisticated natural law theories.

Christian consent theories hold that both divine and human appointment are required for the establishment of legitimate political authority. Political authority as such is seen as originating in God, operating either through creation or providence, rather than in autonomous popular will. But consent theorists argue that there is a necessary role for popular participation, expressed in various ways, in the public legitimising of those who exercise the divinely authorised office of government. The idea was developed in different directions. In a more conservative version, often termed the 'designation' theory, popular consent supplies only a recognition of the providential appointment of rulers.

Through consent, however it may be expressed, the citizenry confirm, rather than confer, the authority of those in office. Designation theorists often drew upon Old Testament accounts of

the divine appointment of kings by specific divine intervention, perhaps by the word of a prophet.

A more radical 'transmission' version of consent theory held that God has transmitted the inherent right of self-government to the people, not through direct intervention but through the medium of created human nature. God has planted in human social nature a natural capacity and inclination towards political community, so that when humans discern the need to establish a political authority at a particular point in history they are acting in conformity with their created nature and so with divine order. One of the more radical sixteenth-century Calvinist documents put it like this: 'it is the people that establishes kings, gives them kingdoms, and approves their selection by its vote. For God willed that every bit of authority held by kings should come from the people, after Him....'

It is vital to recognise that on the consent theory, in either version, the right to establish a government is not seen as the right to create just any sort of political regime at all, nor as a mandate for rulers or citizens to pursue just any political goals they autonomously choose. The consent theory makes sense as a Christian theory only if we see political authority as having a divinely established normative purpose which is not itself created by an act of human consent but stands above the wills of both ruler and people. Consent is seen as being given by the people to those who will fulfill that normative purpose, and in exercising consent the people are in effect undertaking before God both to obey their rulers but also to hold them accountable for violations of that purpose. That normative purpose was described in various ways in medieval and early modern political thought: the securing of peace and justice; the establishment of public righteousness; the protection of the welfare of the realm. But the most comprehensive description came to be the pursuit of 'the common good'. And the common good was understood, not, as in much modern liberalism, as a mere aggregate of individual interests or an outcome of collective will, but rather as the assemblage of public conditions that protect and make flourish the normative structures of society created by God, broken by sin, but open to the operation of redemptive grace. It was seen as an integrated and substantive conception, a 'thick' vision of normative social order, with the act of political consent understood as pursuant to its realisation.

Participatory theories

The second and third kinds of justification for democracy are neatly summed up in the two parts of Reinhold Niebuhr's celebrated maxim: 'man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.'

The first part of this maxim expresses the thrust of the participatory theory. This theory endorses the principle of popular election as an expression of the human capacity to assume responsibility for the doing of justice. The opportunity for democratic political participation provides a channel for the fulfilment of our created impulse to actively and responsibly promote justice (or advance the common good). Once again the justification of popular participation derives from the normative purpose of government. Participation is not justified as subjective expressiveness but as fittedness for the pursuit of justice in solidarity with our fellow citizens. Historically, Christian consent theory was compatible with very different conceptions of the method by which popular consent is to be expressed, including different conceptions of the extent of the electorate, or even with popularly-acclaimed monarchy. The participatory theory reaches a more far-reaching conclusion by explicitly affirming the equal possession of a capacity for pursuing justice by all human beings. It drives the logic of popular consent forward in the direction of an ever-widening franchise, and indeed beyond mere voting towards the expansion of other opportunities for political influence.

Advocates of this view often cite the model of the church as a spiritual community of equals as a generative source of participatory ideas. What eventually emerged around the seventeenth century was a conviction that each person stands equally responsible before God for the proper discernment of justice and the common good, and so equally capable of participating, in some manner, in public affairs. The Reformation had played a vital role in gradually infusing European society with ideas such as the equality of callings ('the priesthood of all believers'), individual freedom of conscience, and the right to share in communal self-governance. The Puritan movement was perhaps the clearest embodiment of these converging ideas. As Graham Maddox puts it: 'In the Puritan congregation each person was worthy of full participation in discussion not merely out of respect for her or his worth before God, but also because each person

in a gathering in Christ's name could be a vessel for the outpouring of the Spirit - each could be moved by God to add something genuinely revealing, or revealed, to the collective understanding....'

Oliver O'Donovan captures the original biblical thrust of this view evocatively as 'pentecostal republicanism.' It is easy to see how, when applied to politics, these practices advanced democratising trends. Robert Dahl sums up the emergent Christian view thus: 'all men were equal not only in the eyes of God but equally qualified to understand the word of God, to participate in church government, and by extension to govern the commonwealth.'

The early twentieth-century Catholic movement known as 'personalism,' which was influential on subsequent papal social thought, contributed in a distinctive way to the participatory theory through its affirmation of equal human dignity and the human rights flowing from that dignity, and of the humanizing potential of widespread popular political participation.

Defensive theories

The third variety of justifications for democracy, defensive theories, is captured in the second part of Niebuhr's maxim which I quoted earlier. Whereas the participatory theory appeals to the enduring goodness in human nature - 'man's capacity for justice' as Niebuhr puts it - the defensive theory places the emphasis on human fallenness and corruptibility - 'man's inclination to injustice.' In this theory democracy is justified as a necessary check on the inescapable tendency of fallible office-holders to abuse their power: democratic election is one vital constitutional restraint on the corruption of power. Churchill might be counted as an honorary adherent to this view, but Niebuhr is the clearest modern exponent. One of Niebuhr's characteristic claims was that human collectivities, especially larger bodies in possession of significant social power, substantially magnify the tendency and capacity of individual humans to exploit each other. Government, holding the greatest concentration of power, must therefore be brought under the restraint of the disciplines of democracy.

Advocates of the defensive theory will typically argue in favour of a wide range of constitutional disciplines; as in the first two theories, an argument for popular election yet again serves as but one element of a larger account of a just state. The point is stressed that to establish democratic elections alone, without further constitutional

checks, carries its own dangers, since the people are, as much as their rulers, subject to corruption. This is why most Christian political theories have insisted on a point of enormous importance, namely that the expression of the popular will, valid though its role may be, must nevertheless be subjected to higher, justice-embodiment principles, formalised in a set of constitutional brakes on the assertion of bare democratic will.

Toward a robust Christian account of democracy

There is, then, a 'cloud of witnesses' in the Christian tradition, the cumulative impact of which is to counsel an embrace of the principle of popular election by Christians today. Indeed I suggest that we need to honour the insights of all three theories and integrate them in a robust Christian account of constitutional democracy. The consent theory generates an account of the role of popular will in the legitimising of authorised rulers; the participatory theory supplies an egalitarian extension of that role; and the defensive theory offers a significant supplementary reason for establishing democratic interpretation of the first two. These amount to strong and authentically Christian reasons why we should favour not just the principle of popular election of rulers alone, but a participatory, representative constitutional democracy in which popular consent is seen as an essential ingredient, but in which both government and people are held accountable to transcendent norms of justice and the common good. Just governance cannot be left only to governments.

Rather we should assert the principle of the co-responsibility of citizens and government in the discernment and pursuit of justice and the common good.

As a member of the political community each citizen shares in the duty to contribute to the divinely-ordained purpose of that community. I suggest that, from a Christian point of view, it is this basic obligation, and not some supposed prior individual right to autonomy, which should be seen as grounding our constitutional rights to participate in the choice of our leaders and in the continuing shaping of government policy. That is only the first step in developing a rounded account of authentically Christian democratic engagement today, but it is an indispensable one.



5. SAFEGUARDING FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND CONSCIENCE

Christel Ngnambi & Julia Doxat-Purser, EEA

Diversity is here to stay in Europe. What does this mean for Christians who have sometimes enjoyed a dominant and privileged position? The fundamental freedom of religion and conscience, the basis of all other freedoms, is being undermined at national and European levels in courts of justice primarily through secular interpretations. Many misunderstandings are common among Christians, however, who often demand this freedom for Christianity without seeing the implications for other faiths also. What do the international laws and conventions actually say? How can we learn to live with diversity, encourage respect among neighbours, and build bridges with others working for social cohesion? How can we defend FORB (freedom of religious belief) in Europe and around the world?

EEA's Biblical Guidelines on Civil Public Square Thinking: A Summary.

EEA encourages all Christians to work for and in a civil public square with freedom, space for the Gospel to thrive, respectful co-existence of different kinds of people & peaceful resolution of conflicts. We believe this is a thoroughly biblical duty for the following reasons.

I. THE FOUNDATION: God's blessings to his people have always been for the wider good,

1. God's own character. His goodness and mercy are great and for all. (Psalms 145: 9, 15-16, Psalm 103: 8, 11). He created heaven and earth for all, He rules and cares for all and calls us to bless all. He said all nations would be blessed through Abraham's descendants. Joseph and Daniel are just two examples of obedient believers serving with integrity in the public squares of pagan lands.

2. Jesus Christ: the visible image of God's mercy for all (John 1: 9). Jesus' teaching, life and death became the most extraordinary incarnated evidence of God's mercy and goodness for all. He taught us to love our enemies and to work for freedom for those on the edge of society. Of course, Jesus' behaviour and motivations within the public square were totally radical but He was there. He was the suffering servant, welcoming all, dying for all.

3. The Early Church and the apostolic teaching: example and evidences in everyday life (Romans 12: 18). The Holy Spirit inspired the Early Church to reach out. Paul's preaching was relational, he built bridges with his audience. His epistles urge people to love and do good to all, including in civil life. We are called to shine like stars among a crooked generation (Phil 2: 14-15). We demonstrate the Kingdom as a foretaste of what is to come.

II. THE IMPLEMENTATION: God's will in relating to mankind is to promote respect for difference, to respect freedom & demand responsibility.

1. Promoting a genuine respect for difference (Romans 15: 7). The Trinitarian God created diversity in all of creation. The Church is described as a body, i.e. diverse. Unity is good, uniformity is not. There is dignity in difference, stemming from uniqueness. Difference is an opportunity. But, of course, the fall means that difference brings danger. We need to know when we must stand firm (E.g. Daniel 3 and 6). We seek common ground and yet always obey Christ. With open minds and hearts, we accept one another as they are. We seek to be peacemakers.

2. Respecting freedom and demanding responsibility (1 Samuel 8: 19-22). The advocacy of freedom for all cannot be separated from the notions of God's justice and human responsibility. We don't only advocate for freedom, but also for truth. There is no coercion but persuasion and an invitation to relationship. We are called to respect freedom and expect responsibility. In a civil public square, we can propose, proclaim, be an example and eventually confront our neighbours. Nevertheless our presence at the civil public square and our defence of it cannot be a substitute for our responsibility to be heralds of God's message.

III. A CHALLENGE: SOME PITFALLS TO AVOID

A narrow horizon: lack of a “wider embrace”. God’s people have and being only concerned for their own welfare.

The hidden lamp: lack of visibility. We cannot hide from our social public responsibilities because our call is not to hide in a safe shelter just yearning for “Jerusalem”, but to thrive in “Babylon”.

The temptation to try to make people be like us: lack of love and grace. Christ's command is to 'love your neighbour as yourself', not make your neighbour like yourself.

Imposing versus proposing: lack of respect for difference. Persuasion has its own limits, but it is God’s method to relate to us. Imposing Christianity and its values by means of force or by decrees usually brings forth rejection, nominalism and legalism, exactly the opposite of Christ’s true freedom.

CONCLUSION

To have a prophetic impact, we must follow the example of the Servant of the Lord, who was a blessing for all (Isaiah 49: 6). This great challenge implies example, proclamation, invitation, defence and confrontation in the civil public square. Such a great task is impossible to accomplish with human resources. The freedom revolution that Jesus ushered in is so radical that, without a moral steer from the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures and much prayer, it literally cannot be handled. We pray earnestly for the Lord’s help.



A RELATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE UKRAINE CRISIS

The plenary discussion was facilitated by Jonathan Tame, of the Jubilee Centre, using the following discussion paper prepared by Philip Powell and Dr Michael Schluter. The discussion can be followed on video on www.stateofeuropeforum.eu.

1. Introduction

- a. The information war and media perceptions (bias)

2. Overview of the political context

- a. Historic background to Ukraine
 - The present area of Ukraine was home to the powerful state of Kievan Rus' culture
 - The 'soul of Russia' is in Kiev
 - Crimea is viewed as the cradle of the Russian Christianity
- b. The Crimean War (1853–1856)
 - 400,000 dead
 - European powers against Russia
- c. Ukraine-Soviet Union relations (1922–1991)
 - Crimea gifted to Ukraine by Nikita Khrushchev
- d. Post-Cold war Ukraine
 - Lack of real democracy
 - 2004 Orange Revolution
 - The seesaw between support for Russia on the East and the EU on the West

3. Underlying economic issues

- a. Corruption in Ukraine
 - Ukraine was ranked 144th out of the 176 countries in Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index
 - Politicians are trying to sell-off Ukraine to the highest bidder (EU, US or Russia) for private gain
- b. Oil and gas industry
 - Russia has invested heavily into this sector
 - Germany depends on Russian oil and gas
 - ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell, Repsol and even Petrochina
- c. Failing coal industry
 - EU money cannot sustain this dying sector of the economy
- d. Missile/arms factory in East Ukraine

- Dnipropetrovsk, a key manufacturing centre for Russian nuclear, arms, and space industries
- e. Agricultural sector
 - The best soil for agriculture is in West Ukraine
 - Big Western agribusinesses can exploit this situation

4. The Putin question

- a. KGB background
 - Sees enemies everywhere
 - Views the West and America in a certain light
 - b. Strongman image
 - He will not roll-over and simply accept what the West says and does
 - Russia needs a strong leader who can hold together the different forces and groups in Russian society
 - c. Authoritarian despot
 - Holding onto power and needs some circus (conflict) going to secure his own leadership position
 - Sees himself not simply as the head of state of Russia but the leader of the Russian people everywhere
- Moral Leader
- Looks up to Catherine the Great (1729-96), a conservative Christian crusader
 - Wants to restore national pride

5. The US/NATO points of view

- a. Post-Cold War International Order
 - A unipolar world
 - The USA had the advantage and Russia was weak
- b. NATO expansion
 - Poland, Romania
 - Ukraine joining NATO a threat to Russia
- c. Neo-liberals in the Obama administration
 - Promote democracy and a liberal cultural agenda

6. The tri-polar relational nature of the crisis

- a. Ukraine's internal divide between Ukrainians and Russians
 - The ethnic divide
 - Geographical divide
- b. Ukraine-Russia relations

- Ukraine lies within the sphere of Russian influence
- A functioning democracy on Russia's border is a threat to Moscow

c. Ukraine-EU relations

- Germany is the biggest loser in this crisis because of its dependence on Russian energy

d. The example of the UK – Northern Ireland – Republic of Ireland peace process

7. Non-relational responses to the crisis

a. 'I and mine first' approach

- International relations is a zero-sum game which the West must win

b. Military tension and build up

- NATO military exercises in Eastern Europe
- Arms race

c. Sanctions and more sanctions

- Whole sectors of the economy face punitive sanctions

d. Bully Russia into compliance

e. Break-up of Ukraine

8. A Relational response to the crisis

a. The need for dialogue/conversation

b. Track-II diplomacy

c. Good research; engaging the facts accurately is essential

d. Seek to find common ground and build consensus from bottom-up

e. Trust has to be built over a period of time

f. Keep the process away from the press as far as possible

g. Include religious actors (Christian and Jewish)

h. Long term constitutional settlement, with one option being a federal state.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- *What part could churches and individual Christians play in responding to this unfolding situation?*
- *In what ways are you connected relationally with this crisis, and how might the various outcomes affect you? ❖*

CHRISTIANITY AND EUROPE

Closing message delivered by **His Eminence Ignatios**,
Metropolitan of Dimitriados and Almirou

JUST A FEW YEARS AGO, DISCUSSION OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY was at the centre of public attention. Many opinions were expressed concerning the advice and place of Christianity in the formation of modern European culture. According to some, Christian churches contributed decisively to the foundation of the European system of ideals and peaceful coexistence and the prosperity of different peoples. There were many, however, who desired and continue to wish to exclude Christianity from Europe's ideological framework, leaping – often under the influence of the Enlightenment and the Renaissance – directly to her ancient Greek roots. The whole debate remains essentially unresolved and continues to be ever timely, refusing to yield a final solution.

Europe today finds herself yet again at a critical crossroad in her contemporary history. This time, the centre of attention is not so much the search for the spiritual roots of a united Europe – though at bottom discussion of this issue must be presupposed – as the ways and means by which this union might be strengthened and rendered viable, and on the way that the peoples of Europe might overcome the problems they face so as to face the future with greater optimism. The problems that are now coming to the surface are neither unknown nor novel. In her long history, the European continent has faced with varying degrees of success the challenges of the times, sometimes yearning for the support and strength offered by Christianity and at other times renouncing her Christian identity in order to adopt often self-destructive tendencies – let us remember her religious wars and the World Wars – which tendencies inhibited her spiritual and sociological cohesion. Today this unity and cohesion are again in danger. The reasons are many. On the one hand, the demands of radical economic neo-liberalism shake many local communities to the foundations, driving to the margins large proportions of populations, while simultaneously it appears that political expedience leads to neglect of the true needs of human souls.

On the other hand, phenomena of extreme xenophobia across the European continent are reappearing, building yet again high walls of bigotry in the face of every form of difference. We are of the opinion that if these constitute the critical problems and dilemmas that Europe is called to face today, then Christianity's contribution to their resolution is not simply important but imperative, since only the truth of the Gospel, correctly conceived, has the capacity to place the human being once again at the centre of politics, of economics – in a word, at the centre of life itself. So, what can Christianity offer to Europe, as the latter struggles to emerge from the impasse in which she finds herself, (which she can do only by) rediscovering the Christian values on which she was built, even if in the name of so-called progress she denies them?

The imminent economic crisis, as well as the ever-increasing xenophobic phenomena (beginning with Greece but also occurring nearly throughout the European continent, often even in the most prosperous and influential European countries), present problems that, to a greater or lesser degree, lead to the dehumanization of the human being, underestimate his value and importance, destroy his dignity to the degree of throwing into doubt his own identity and security and restricting the mere possibility of peaceful, calm social coexistence. In this framework, the human being is brought face to face with the problem of his own survival, with a deep existential crisis, as he is often deprived, without himself wanting it or being responsible for it, of basic rights (to work, to medical care and legal assistance, to education, equality, self-determination and so on) which would provide him with the means and the conditions for a dignified, human life. Yet again, riches, money, social goods, gender, religion, difference, social position and ancestry, instead of constituting the opportunities for people to come together and live with the common goal of building a bright future, continue to be the cause of division, dissension, social injustice and grim exploitation.

Christianity (and especially our Orthodoxy) offers a very simple alternative in the face of this situation: the polity of the person (πρόσωπον). Here the person we are discussing is not the individualistic Ego which plots to attain sovereignty over everyone else, but an identity which “springs forth from a relationship”, an identity which cannot exist except in continual and deep relationship with everyone else.

The human being as a person is not distinguished based on his racial or social origin or on his religion, but based only on the fact that he is a person who, created as an icon of God, exercises freedom and love as constitutive components of his existence. The human being of Christianity (and of Orthodoxy), following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, is not built on any divisive or exclusive values, but in every way is founded on the unconditional and unbounded love for and solidarity with all people, towards every other human being. In the Christian perspective of Europe, respect for the dignity of the human being and for fundamental human rights can never, in any situation, be set aside for the sake of any political or ideological expedience. It is obvious that the anthropological model of Christianity is to a large degree diametrically opposed to the current anthropological model, which is determined above all by the market's economic indicators or is marked by differences in origin and religion.

The person of Christianity, the anthropological presupposition of which undoubtedly stands behind Europe's numberless calls for human rights, freedom and equality between peoples, must now be situated once again in the foreground of public discourse, in an era when human dignity is being swept into the gutter. God – the Word of God – became flesh, suffered and was resurrected in order that the human being might overcome, once and for all, all negative limitations that disintegrate his being and do violence to his human dignity. The Cross and the Resurrection present exactly the framework within which the human person is built up in the context of the Christian faith. The Crucifixion of the old, egocentric, dominating human being, makes way for the Resurrection of the loving, supporting, open and collective way of being the new person in Christ. This is the anthropological model that the Christian faith presents and which could constitute the solution to existential impasse of European culture. Consequently, it is time for Christian churches (beginning with the Orthodox Church in the case of Greece) to emerge once again at the foreground in order to give appropriate answers to the challenges of the times and to the problems, which Europe faces in our days, before it becomes too late to preserve the unity of the European people.



THE ATHENS AFFIRMATION

compiled from the various working groups consensus statements
offering guidelines for action following the forum.

We, a group of Christian believers from various nations, traditions, organisations and churches in Europe, participating in the State of Europe Forum in Athens, on Europe Day, May 9, 2014,

- **Affirming** that the message of hope proclaimed by Paul on Mars Hill two thousand years ago, of the God in whom 'we live and move and have our being' and of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, continues to offer hope for Europeans everywhere today, hope for every sphere of life affected by sin, including politics, economics and society, and hope for a sustainable future of freedom, solidarity, equality and peace;
 - **Acknowledging** that Robert Schuman's vision for a 'community of peoples deeply rooted in basic Christian values' and the founding father's conviction that Europe could not remain merely 'an economic and technical enterprise' but needed a soul, remain guiding perspectives which we neglect to our peril, as evidenced in the current economic, political, social, religious and environmental crises; perspectives that lay behind the Schuman Declaration made this day sixty-four years ago giving birth to what is now the European Union;
 - **Reminding** ourselves of our responsibility to help shape the spiritual character and values of Europe, aware that 'issues challenging European union and true community today, such as racism, nationalism, the rise of Islam, the influx of refugees, and the environment, can only be sufficiently responded to from a biblical perspective, which transcends race, nation and culture, offers a secure hope allowing for tolerance to rival worldviews, calls God's people to hospitality and compassion, and requires wise stewardship of earth's resources', as expressed in the Brussels Affirmation of 1992⁹⁴;
 - **Empathising** with the peoples of Greece and elsewhere in southern Europe suffering hardships daily due to an economic crisis with spiritual and relational roots, where job prospects for youth are bleak and families, businesses and institutions struggle increasingly to meet financial obligations, and who carry the brunt of increasing numbers of migrants and refugees, the 'have-nots' and the persecuted from Africa and the Middle East particularly, seeking a better life in Europe;
- I. **Call** for a unity of heart essential for the church to exercise moral authority to promote solidarity and community among the peoples and nations of Europe, what Schuman called the 'spirit of Europe'; for continued

⁹⁴ <http://www.stateofeuropeforum.eu/the-1992-brussels-affirmation/>

repentance and forgiveness among Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant leaders, recognizing that: historical ecclesiastical schisms continue to feed social, political and economic tensions, including the present Ukrainian crisis; that biblical solidarity goes beyond healthy patriotic caring for our own communities of family and fatherland to include the other, as the Good Samaritan parable reminds us; that nationalism is a pathological overemphasis of the nation, the antithesis of true patriotism; that economic and political globalization demands the globalization of solidarity, a sense of mutual responsibility, particularly for weaker nations; and propose that churches promote reconciliation at personal and local levels, in societies characterised by suspicion and bitterness, by for example holding an annual Day of Forgiveness, appealing to all to forgive one another's past wrongs;

2. **Urge** entrepreneurs, financiers, politicians and policy makers to recognize the opportunity crisis brings to reshape priorities, and to promote an economy based on the relational principles of '*No reward without responsibility, no investment without involvement, no profit without participation*'; to encourage a macro-economic shift towards a debt free economy; to help families suffering under the financial crisis to escape from personal and household debt by offering practical guidance and to renegotiate personal debts; to promote concrete steps such as converting mortgage debt to shared equity ownership structures; to discourage companies through the tax system from using debt finance (bonds and bank loans), and to use more equity finance; and for church leaders to address issues of corruption and tax avoidance by promoting Christian teaching of ethics and proposing such initiatives as a Day of Debt-Forgiveness (i.e. where unpaid tax obligations be partially forgiven given a commitment to pay taxes going forward); and to help ignite the Greek virtue of *filotimo* to bring hope to the wider society.
3. **Appeal** to church and government leaders to work hand-in-hand towards more liveable environments in the home countries of migrants and refugees while also ensuring that the Dublin III Regulation is interpreted and applied to protect the dignity and human rights of refugees, with fair asylum procedures and decent reception conditions; while committing ourselves to welcome strangers, refugees and the internally displaced, treating them as we would like to be treated, and to challenge others to do the same;
4. **Seek** to strengthen democracy locally, nationally and Europe-wide, recognising our duty to contribute to the divinely-ordained purpose of the community, the call for incessant prayer for our leaders, as well as the threats to democracy of special interest lobby groups (corporate and civil), a shrinking middle-class, far-right populism, inequality and political corruption; by stepping out of our comfort zones to lead by example,

seeking out respectful dialogue with those of different persuasions; engaging debate based on content and reason, avoiding emotion and polarization; working together with all relevant actors; by stimulating citizen's initiatives and empowering political engagement at all levels, especially for young people, and by prioritizing our activities strategically for maximum 'salt and light' influence; encouraging open and transparent government, and thus fostering faith in democratic systems;

5. **Entreat** believers of all backgrounds actively to support and implement Article 9 of the European Convention of Human Rights, which affirms that all human beings rightfully have full freedom of conscience within limits necessary for a democratic society and the well being of others; to defend the rights of others to freedoms we desire for ourselves, to pray for authorities, the well-being of our diverse societies and wise and just use of the law, while understanding that loyalty to God is higher than loyalty to any man-made authority; by courageously advocating and protesting our beliefs to people in power; and by participating in a day of fasting and prayer for freedom of conscience for all; also to remind governments of their accountability, and not operate beyond the limits of their sphere, by interfering in theological matters; to accept the God-given right for every human being to freedom of religion and belief; to treat all people with justice, equality and truth regardless of faith, including in our criticism or disagreement with the faiths themselves, to engage in constructive dialogue with them, and to implement a day of freedom of conscience with associated awareness-raising packs for schools;
6. **Resolve** to respond to the Ukraine crisis by recognising that non-relational approaches tend towards power confrontations and escalation, economically, politically and militarily; but that a relational response would seek dialogue and conversation, promote diplomacy, research for facts, search for common ground and a bottom-up consensus, avoid media interference, aim to rebuild trust over time, include appropriate religious actors and seek a long term constitutional settlement, considering the possible option of a federal state;
7. **Commit** to live our lives, arrange our priorities and distribute our resources according to these affirmations, and to challenge others, including leaders of our faith, political and social communities, to do the same, by God's grace.



