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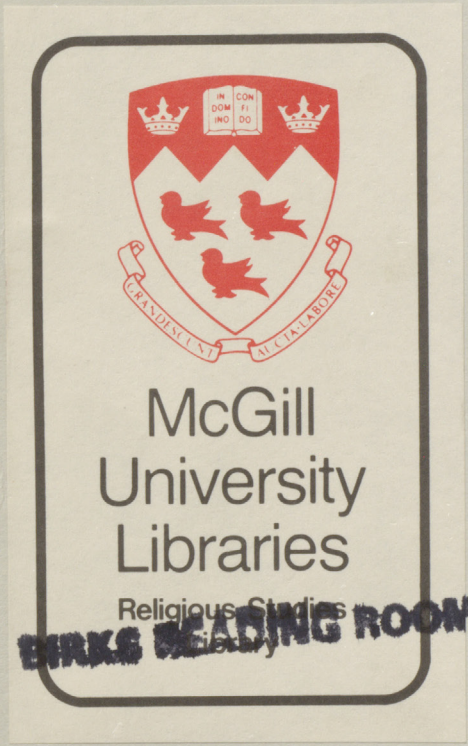
Papers from the 1990 Symposium on Truth & Tolerance

McGill University
E. J. Furcha
Editor



ARC SUPPLEMENTS

TRUTH and TOLERANCE

Papers from the

1989 International Symposium on Truth and Tolerance

McGill University

E.J. Furcha, editor

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FOREWORD

The Faculty of Religious Studies in conjunction with the Canadian Unitarian Council sponsored a significant scholarly symposium, September 27-29, 1989 on *Truth and Tolerance*. The event was generously supported by the McGill Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research and through a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Other contributors to the cost of the symposium were The First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto Foundation, The West Bequest Fund (Halifax), The Oshawa Unitarian Fellowship, Dr. James Mahood (Kingston) and several private donors.

It was the stated objective of the Planning Committee, chaired by the editor of this volume, to engage scholars from a variety of disciplines on the relationship of truth claims and tolerance in Western Christianity and within some of the dominant religious traditions. The event was arranged on the Tercentenary of the Toleration Act of 1689. While several papers approached the issue from a historical perspective some of the participating scholars considered contemporary problems within their respective disciplines and suggested emerging perspectives and world views which are brought about by the increasingly pluralistic context of modern living.

The Symposium was appropriately preceded by the Annual Birks Lectures which were given by John Hick, Danforth Professor and Chair of the Department of Religion, at the Claremont Graduate School. In three lectures on "Jesus Christ in a Religiously Plural World" Hick explored among other things the often absolutist claims of traditional Christian theology and the difficulties such claims present for mutual recognition and meaningful dialogue between representatives of living religions. He challenged Christians to re-examine their theological traditions, especially in regard to the divinity of Jesus and his sole mediatorship in the process of human salvation.

Well-attended sessions attested to the fact that the focus of the 1989 Symposium struck responsive chords and contributed significantly to clarifying truth claims made by believers and scholars alike. It became evident in the course of debate that exponents of religious and ideological tenets need to discover patterns of dialogue and interaction that arise from mutual respect of proponents of other religions or ideologies and from a willingness to accept limitations on one's knowledge of the truth.

The papers contained in this volume are an expression of the

high level of scholarship and of the heightened sensitivity to the issue under debate. Five scholars focus on historical developments within the Western Christian tradition in the sixteenth and seventeenth century respectively. Professors Klostermaier and Young explore truth and tolerance in Hinduism while Professor Sharma analyses the phenomenon by comparing Buddhist, Christian and Hindu perspectives. Professor Rumscheidt examines truth and tolerance in light of the conflict in Germany between *Kulturprotestantismus* and the Confessing Church. The volume is rounded out by two papers which explore the limits of toleration and the notion of religious freedom respectively.

A word of appreciation and gratitude is in order to the Faculty of Religious Studies and to Presbyterian College for housing and hosting the event.

The editor wishes to thank Ms. Veronica Dyck whose labours as Research Assistant went far beyond the call of duty and Ms. Samieun Khan for preparing the manuscripts for publication.

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SEBASTIAN FRANCK -- AN EXPONENT OF TRUTH

Edward J. Furcha
McGill University

Sebastian Franck of Donauwôrth has had admirers and critics. His circle of friends included the renowned humanist Jacob Wimpheling, the Nuremberg Patrician Pirckheimer, Agricola from whom he learned his Greek and Urbanus Rhegius who likely taught him poetry and rhetoric. Erasmus was less enamoured of Franck and main-line Reformers tended to dismiss or ignore him. In our own century, Peuckert and Teufel have made positive attempts to understand him.[1] Among recent scholars who have assessed Franck's thought, Christopher de Jung [Wahrheit und Häresie] figures prominently.[2]

In Ingolstadt Franck prepared for the priesthood under Dr. John Eck and Balthasar Hubmaier during the second decade of the sixteenth century. He likely studied at Heidelberg as well and was present during Luther's 1518 Disputation there. For years to come he would read Luther even when he no longer agreed with the Reformer. In 1526, about three years after his ordination to the priesthood, Franck turned up in Strasbourg. Here he came in contact with Buenderlin, Schwenckfeld, Servetus and other "radicals." We are not in a position to discuss at this point how they influenced one another during this time. It is of some interest, however, to note a communication from Franck to the radical Lutheran John Campanus, which suggests that they were soul mates of a sort.[3]

Franck's initial theological position after he had distanced himself from Rome seems to have been close to that of Luther. Somewhat later he showed some affinity with the thought of Hans Denck to whose way of thinking he was probably won over in the process of translating Althamer's *Diallage* (1528) a work which was intended to refute Denck. Franck met Denck in Nuremberg in the course of 1529.

After 1531, the year he published *Chronica*, Franck was not attached to any particular school or individual. His independent spirit elicited reactions severe enough for city councils to refuse him residence and employment. Hence he was to be a "wanderer along Danube, Rhine and Neckar" as E. Teufel described him in the subtitle to his book on Franck.

During some three years in the city of Ulm, Franck wrote his best works, among them *280 Paradoxa.* Unfortunately, opposition from the Lutheran clergyperson, Martin Frecht, caused him to be expelled from the city. In 1539 he settled in Basel with his first wife Ottilie Behaim and their children. After her premature death he married Barbara Beck, a daughter of his Strasbourg editor/publisher. Though their Basel stay seems to have been a relatively happy one, it proved to be shortlived for Franck. He is presumed to have died some time before Oct. 1542 (there is an inventory of his possessions from this date). It is noteworthy that for shorter or longer periods Franck resided in fourteen or fifteen different places, with Frankfurt being the northernmost and Basel the southernmost city. Despite his mobility he nonetheless published some thirty two tracts and books in his lifetime.

Franck's mature literary career was fully launched in 1531 with the publication of *Chronica, Zeitbuch und Geschichtsbibel.*[4] This attempt to advance a philosophy of history so stirred Bucer among others, that the book was confiscated in Strasbourg. The author's essential spiritualism is now clearly apparent; it is further reflected in the extant letter to Campanus, which was probably written in the same year.[5]

Franck was not above calling the "highly famous doctors whose works are still available" wolves. They had fallen upon the flock and were veritable antichrists. He firmly stated his conviction that the external church of Christ "went up into heaven and lies concealed in the Spirit and in truth" (Williams/Mergal, 149). Since the time of the apostles, Franck believed -- fourteen hundred years, to be exact -- Antichrist has laid waste outward church and all its gifts and sacraments, thus rendering them useless to true believers and redundant in the process of transmitting truth. He could claim with equal certainty, however, that nothing of the inner truth has been lost and is being imparted by the Holy Spirit to the faithful "in whatever land they be" (Ibid, 149).

How does Franck explain the continuing presence of external church and sacraments? These were, he assured Campanus, the signs given to the church in its infancy -- given like a doll to a child -- and, of course, expected to be given up when the child would reach maturity.

Most instructive is yet another claim he made in the Campanus letter and elsewhere as well, that all

> "Turks and heathen . . . who fear God and work righteousness, [who are] instructed by God and inwardly

drawn by him, are our brothers, even though they have never heard of baptism, indeed of Christ himself."

Franck here advanced a notion of the true church which is defined by its spiritual quality, its universal dimension and its total lack of visible form and structure. Though he takes a bold step in the direction of religious tolerance, he comes close to negating traditional Christian claims.[6]

Anyone who reads Franck in some detail soon discovers that he used the notion of paradox as a prominent hermeneutical principle.[7] He advocated it as a sure road to understanding, at the highest or deepest level of thought and action; it may well function as an important key to much of his own life and thought. This wondrous word or saying, as he called it, conceals truth from the uncouth, i.e. the unspiritual person, while at the same time revealing truth to the spiritual person. Finding the truth or being found to be in the truth was a fundamental concern in Franck's work.

Indeed, truth may be regarded Sebastian Franck's "ultimate concern" (to use a Tillichian term). He did not approach truth as an abstraction. Rather, it was of the essence of what he perceived to be the divine word to sixteenth century Christians -- the living reality which confronts persons: to come to terms, on the one hand, with principles of interpreting the faith and, on the other, to apply such principles (one might almost call them insights), to one's relationship with other individuals and groups.

In *280 Paradoxa*, Franck's mature philosophy of history, the term "truth" appears at least forty times. We cannot in this context undertake a detailed analysis of the way he used the term. However, I shall single out some of the most important definitions of truth which he gave.

His starting point is the assertion that "God has truth all to himself" [Furcha/Franck, 14]. This truth, like God, is without appearances; to enshrine it is to lose or distort it. Human wisdom cannot fathom its depth; in fact, more likely than not, 'human wisdom kills truth" [Furcha/Franck, 113]. It follows then that truth is found in paradoxes whose meaning is hidden. To know truth and live by its precepts requires divine help. Franck asserts frequently that God makes known his truth or that God desires us to call on him in truth or that Christ is our truth. At times it would seem as if truth for Franck is incarnational. He is cautious, of course, and will qualify any tendency by individuals or institutions to monopolize and control truth or to contain it in external manifestations of "law," "Moses" or "Christ,"

by reminding his readers that "truth is inward and spiritual" [Furcha/Franck 150, 155, et. al.].[8]

In light of such views on the nature of truth, one may wonder why Franck did not succumb to a profound pessimism which would have rendered him judgemental of other views.[9] That this did not happen was largely due, I suspect, to Franck's notion of paradox. By means of this hermeneutical principle he was led in true humanist fashion to go to the source for the fullest disclosure of that which is true. Until a seeker reaches that source, conflicting views and opinions would obscure the truth. Put differently, Franck discovered that all seekers after truth realize their goal when they come face to face with a divine disclosure of truth. To make premature truth claims would therefore be futile and self-defeating. In reality, then, one finds that during their search -- which spans the course of a lifetime -- all seekers after truth are on an equal footing of ignorance. The only sure way out of such darkness is to be impartial [unpartheyisch]. If pressed, Franck would probably say that at such point of impartiality human beings come close to their intended destiny which is to be like God whom Franck visualizes as impartial creator and sustainer of what he created.

In the "Preface and Introduction" to his *Chronica* [1531] Franck says that "one who is impartial and not enslaved is able to glean the truth, for God's sun shines on just and unjust alike." Thus, one person's truth [one should probably add "so-called"] is as good as another's, even when advocated by an heretic, for it participates in some measure in that which is of God. One always has the option therefore of asking God to forgive, cover over or unmask gross distortions of or deviations from the truth.

Because of the sharp distinction Franck made between inner and external, he was able, in the case of error being found in the lives and teachings of others to live harmoniously with them (provided his own faith was not put in question by them). For while he did not acknowledge truth claims to be valid that were based on external manifestations of truth alone, he was prepared to allow that an individual might nonetheless be "in the truth" which is "spirit and life" [Furcha/Franck, 99].

It can be argued that Franck internalized truth -- the truth of the inward being -- to the point of relativising it as a subjective experience of the spiritual person. For, as he says in Paradox 255, "carnal beings cannot understand or accept truth" [Furcha/Franck, 428]. This claim removed an individual's truth from the value judgement of others and made objective assessments of what is true difficult, if not

impossible. Nonetheless, Franck continued to maintain that the presence of truth in the inner being of an individual constituted true piety; he insisted, however, that discernment of truth belonged to God alone.

At the same time, such internalising enabled Franck to stay clear of the temptation of separating himself from others in righteous aloofness. He abhorred, as we have seen, all expressions of formalised religion and considered all religious groups -- including religious majorities -- sectarian. Nor was he prepared to establish his own sect or church.[10] Piety which always seeks company he perceived to be potentially harmful [*Chronica*, A iiii]. By declaring all groups to be sects, he removed a stigma from despised minorities and indirectly created a climate of tolerance which was remarkable for his time.

We are far from having exhausted Franck's notion of truth. Nonetheless, we are now in a position to look at the relation of truth and tolerance in his work. Meinulf Barbers in the 1964 publication *Toleranz bei Sebastian Franck* advances our discussion significantly at this point. The author first delineates spiritual influences that shaped Franck's thought. Early Christian gnosis, medieval mysticism, heretical trends, the peculiar trinitarian philosophy of history advanced by Joachim of Flores, Northern humanism and sixteenth century reform movements all played their part. Barbers then proceeds to present some fundamental tenets which Franck held regarding God, spirit, Scripture, the world and the church. This enables Barbers finally to show Franck's specific notion of tolerance and how it emerged in highly developed and carefully nuanced forms.

Five assertions, some of which we implied earlier, are noteworthy. I shall list them here for the sake of clarity.

(a) Franck's first claim is that God is impartial or non-partisan (Barbers, 113). (b) Secondly, he asserts that Christ is the redeemer of all of humankind (Ibid, 114). (c) Thirdly, he observes that the Holy Spirit teaches everyone without external means (Ibid, 116). (d) Most provocative for the sixteenth century is the fourth claim that even those may be members of the church who never heard of the church of Christ (Ibid, 118) -- though similar notions are found in slightly different form and expressed with less force by Denck, Schwenckfeld, Servetus and Castellio. (e) Franck's final claim is, that all human beings are kin to one another. Such divinely ordained relationship calls for liberty, equality and a sense of kinship (Ibid, 119).

Franck arrived at above assertions through his reading of the Scriptures. Especially in the New Testament he found evidence for them. Here, too, he discovered full support for a spirituality which transcended the boundaries set by external churches. Their insistence on externals, he opined, merely obstructed spirituality, thus preventing individuals from hearing and accepting the unalloyed teaching of Christ that could only come to fruition in human hearts when unaffected by externals.

Wackernagel has preserved a "Song of the four feuding churches" which may safely be ascribed to Franck (Wackernagel, 817). Somewhat crudely, but effectively, nonetheless, the song writer expresses his views on external church structures.

> Popish I do not want to be,
> Faith sure is weak in all the monks and priests.
> Despite all outward pomp and glory
> their hearts are never pure;
> they take us to be fools.
> Their belly's God, filled with the rot of
> rites and rules;
> I won't be fooled; I'll play it cool (1543; tune: Der Kônigin von Ungarn Lied).

Though the stanza sounds harsh, the main attack is aimed at the enslaving structure rather than at the individual Christian held in bondage by that structure. There may even be a touch of pity for the person caught in this particular way, since (as we have seen), Franck considered all external structure the most oppressive hindrance of the work of the spirit.

Existing Protestant systems fared no better. Both the Lutheran as well as the Zwinglian claims of having freedom and their respective call for "faith, faith" or their iconoclastic vigour, do not save them from the judgement that, "they too do err."

Not even the Anabaptists escaped censure, though Franck showed greater affinity to them because of their willing acceptance of suffering for their convictions. He found their sectarian insistence on water baptism too narrow to be useful. It tended to scare off others.

What options then does he proffer for finding the solid ground upon which to re-establish a *communio fidei*?

Admittedly, there are few, unless it were possible to return to the pristine essence of christendom and to the one, undivided *communio fidei*. Franck wrote to Campanus,

> "it is impossible that the one, undivided God be in so many different churches with Christ, grace and the sacraments. Therefore, when Luther baptizes, Zwingli with his church does not. And when the pope or the Baptist brethren baptize, no one else who is not of their ilk and their church, baptizes, but scatters instead, since he does not gather with them."[11]

There is little room for concession or compromise. Franck chose to believe that the church has not existed in a visible form since 131 C.E. and that all claims to be the church are therefore without authority from God. They are, as he would have it, "uncalled" and "unsent." Yet, he seemed willing enough to grant some usefulness to sects and found support in 1 Corinthians XI for his claim that true Christians may be driven to God by sects and party spirit in order to be established in God, the source of all truth, as the church of the spirit. The true church is found, according to him, in the hearts of all who are truly resigned and free from all external affiliation with visible structures.

Though Franck showed intolerance toward externals, he respected all evidence of inner spirituality. This proved to be a fundamental advance in two directions. On the one hand, he was disinclined to reject so-called heretics out of hand by acknowledging that everyone was a heretic and deserved the attention one heretic might owe another. On the other hand, his notion of the inner "hearing of and responding to God's word" allowed him to assume a stance toward non-Christian individuals which led to a high degree of symbolic and actual tolerance.

Three groups in particular received repeated attention throughout his writings, namely, Jews, Muslims and gentiles. Since Barbers has discussed Franck's treatment of each of these in some detail (Barbers, 145ff), I will limit myself to a few brief observations.

Franck described the significance of individual Jews - indeed, of the people of Israel as a preferred nation - in Paradox 82. He conceded that God had "elected" them out of love. Other nations were to experience this divine love toward them as well, as they observed how God loved Israel. Unfortunately, Israel's failure to understand such grace forced God to "place them in a corner behind the door" and

through Christ to choose gentiles in their place as the "new Israel" -- a truly spiritual people.

As elsewhere, Franck shows genuine concern for and understanding of the Jews in whom he recognizes the potential of being able to encounter God. He affirms without equivocation that the Christian and the Jewish God is by nature the One God (Franck, Kriegbùchlein, XXII).

With Muslims Franck had greater difficulty since he perceived followers of the Koran to be too closely linked to temporal powers (In his defence we should be reminded that he knew Muslims only from hearsay as the "Turks" who in 1529 had made their way to the gates of Vienna by force of arms). He was certainly in the minority when he suggested to his contemporaries that fighting the Turks with their own methods is not in the spirit of Christ. As spirit-filled individuals who have the potential of experiencing the living God, Muslims as well as Jews were in Franck's estimation welcome companions on the journey of life; but, as adherents of external structures who were caught up in meeting cultic obligations he could not accept them anymore than he would have accepted Christians who lived by the letter alone.

It should not surprise us by now to find a similar attitude of acceptance toward what Franck called the "gentiles." Through the inner word they, too, may be led to the salvation which God intends for all of humankind alike. Anyone who comes to God outside of laws and ordinances and cultic requirements is accepted as Franck's spiritual brother or sister; in this manner alone can one participate in the truth which is God and be tolerant of those who are destined by God to receive salvation. The only thing needed is to open oneself to the possibility of being claimed by the truth and of experiencing a spark of it in other spirit-filled people.

One of the fascinating discoveries one makes in reading Franck is his healthy agnosticism regarding the things an individual or group may claim to know. He held that no individual or institution could ever claim to have truth in its absolute form. Hence no one had truth exclusive of others. The wise person only, i.e. one who had inwardly been affected by truth and not one who had been schooled in a particular scholarly tradition, would, as a result, be tolerant of others. Such a person in Franck's view was a genuinely spiritual person, able to perceive and be in the truth. One of the qualities of this person would be *Gelassenheit* [a form of creative submission to the divine]. Being surrendered to God would, in turn, enable a person to be critically open to the partially perceived truths of others.

His own critical openness enabled Franck to be as tolerant as he was toward others and led him to demand of others tolerance of himself. Few of his contemporaries were willing or able to follow his example.

Franck, of course, saw himself as one who in his inner being responded to the prompting of the spirit of God. But he recognized the paradoxical nature of the human condition, when one knows oneself to be illuminated by God while at the same time bound by the external condition of one's humanity.

If we are to number Franck among reformers of christendom in the sixteenth century, we will have to attach limitations to his mission and his effectiveness. He was clearly unwilling to reform decadent structures. Instead, he sought to rediscover, as far as this seemed possible, the pristine state of being a new creation in the inner Christ.

In a sense, he might be called a "modern" thinker, for he was learned, yet not doctrinaire; God-intoxicated, yet not an enthusiast who would rather burn than bend. He was prepared to live with the ambiguity of being claimed by the truth, yet not willing to insist that his way was the only way. To put it differently, Franck was less preoccupied with the restitution of ecclesiastical and political structures than he was with discovering how the original and right relationship between God and humankind might be restored by disciplined, spiritual living.[12]

Surprisingly, his radicalism was rather moderate. for he was disinterested in establishing new socio/religious structures. Nor was he prepared to dismantle existing ones, lest they prove to have some value for those who out of ignorance or because of their own choice are outside the divine salvation plan.

Franck's conscious steps to be tolerant while adhering to clearly stated religious truth claims were among the first such efforts in the sixteenth century. He thus contributed in a small way to the relatively free market in opinion which later centuries have been privileged to trade in -- hopefully to become attuned to the truth that sets men and women free.

NOTES

1. See W. Peuckert, *Sebastian Franck*, Munich, 1943, and E. Teufel, "Landräumig", Neustadt, 1954.

2. Cf. Christopher DeJung, *Wahrheit und Häresie*, Zurich, Samisdat, 1980. A. Hegler, *Geist und Schrift bei Sebastian Franck*, Freiburg, 1892, is still a most useful guide to the life to Franck. The relative paucity of Franck studies in English is regrettable.

3. A letter by Franck to Campanus from the year 1531 is extant. For an English translation see G.H. Williams and A. Mergal, *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957.

4. Franck has 32 publications to his credit. Copies may be found in a number of European and North American libraries. E.J. Furcha, *Sebastian Franck. 280 Paradoxes or Wondrous Sayings*, Lewiston/Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986, is to my knowledge the only translation of any of Franck's works into English.

5. The original letter was in Latin. It has survived in a Dutch and German translation, extant in Zurich and Munich respectively. There is a discrepancy in dating with one showing the date February 4, 1541 and the other giving the date 1531. With the translator of the Campanus letter in Library of Christian Classics, vol. XXV I prefer 1531 as the likely date of the letter.

6. With the Silesian lay theologian Schwenckfeld he also seems to have shared the notion of the celestial flesh of Christ. Like him he advanced a pacifist approach to life as an acceptable expression of the spirit of Christ.

7. Cf. E.J. Furcha, "The Paradoxon as Hermeneutical Principle. The Case of Sebastian Franck, 1499-1542" in *Spirit within Structure. Essays in Honour of George Johnston*, Allison Park: Pickwick Publications, 1983.

8. Elsewhere in the *Paradoxa* Franck would state that "truth must bite the dust in this world," Furcha/Franck, 86.

9. In *Weltanschauung und Analyse*, I believe, E. Dilthey makes the point that Franck's position reflects a pessimistic view of the world. I find this claim difficult to sustain in light of my reading of Franck's writings.

10. In the "Preface" to *280 Paradoxa* Franck sets the boundaries within which he liked to be assessed by others. "Only a free, non-sectarian, partyless Christianity which ... stands freely on God's word in the Spirit, and which may be seen and comprehended by faith and not with human eyes, is of God", Furcha/Franck, 9. And a little later he continues, "In and with this [church] I am, I long for it in my spirit ... I am actually not able to point to it, but I am certain that I am in the church wherever I migh be."

11. The translation is mine. The rather difficult sentence is hard to understand. Williams/Mergal translate it slightly differently. See *LCC* vol. XXV.

12. On the other hand, Franck may well have anticipated our own age in his willingness to opt for fragmentary manifestations of truth in human beings and their socio-religious structures. For his approach lacks a clearly discernible core of accepted truths. Cf. Nathan Scott, *The Broken Center. Studies in the theological Horizon of Modern Literature*, New Haven: Yale U.P., 1966. See also, Nathan Scott, "The Broken Centre: A Definition of the Crisis of Values in Modern Literature," in Rollo May (ed.), *Symbolism in Religion and Literature*, N.Y., 1960, p. 180.

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TOLERATION, SKEPTICISM AND RIGHTS
JOHN LOCKE AND RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

James Tully
McGill University

It is a great honour for me to speak to this audience on the topic of toleration. Since it is the 300th anniversary of the Toleration Act of 1689, I would like to focus on John Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration*, which was published in the same year. It is of course one of the best known defences of religious toleration in early modern Europe. As a political philosopher I am concerned with bringing out the very close relation Locke saw between religious toleration and politics. To do this, I think it is necessary to discuss Locke's views on toleration in the context of the political and religious issues of Restoration England. I hope that this form of presentation will raise questions of both a historical and a more general kind in the question period that follows.

One of the major problems faced by Locke and his contemporaries was the nature of religion and the relation between religion and politics, ecclesiastical and political power, in post-Reformation Europe. The wars that swept Europe from 1530 to the 1690s were not simply struggles for power, they were also religious conflicts. Religion had become, Locke argued in 1660,[1]

> a perpetual foundation of war and contention[:] all those flames that have made such havoc and desolation in Europe, and have not been quenched but with the blood of so many millions, have been at first kindled with coals from the altar.

Twenty-five years later, still grappling with this problem, he said "I esteem it above all things necessary to distinguish exactly the Business of Civil Government from that of Religion, and to settle the just bounds that lie between the one and the other."[2] Without this there would be no end to the controversies. Locke's solution to this problem is presented in *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689).

A Letter Concerning Toleration has both an English and a European context. It was written in 1685 in support of the protestant Dissenters' struggle for religious and civil liberty in England, and translated and published by William Popple for that purpose in 1689. Locke wrote it while in exile in Holland to his friend Phillip von

Limborch with whom he discussed the whole Reformation experience. Also, it was written immediately after not only the failed Monmouth Rebellion for toleration in England, but also the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the persecution of Huguenots in France. Published at Gouda in Latin in 1689, it became a classic in the European struggle for toleration.

As early as the *Two Tracts on Government* of 1660-1661 Locke began to explore the religious causes of war. He argued that Christian leaders had inculcated two erroneous beliefs in both princes and the laity: that there is only one true way to heaven; and that it is a Christian duty to uphold and to spread the true way by force and compulsion and to suppress heresy. Both rulers and the people consequently believe themselves to have an overriding duty and an interest (fear of hell and hope of heaven) to use the force of arms to solve religious disputes. Given the multiplicity of Christian faiths, each of which considers itself orthodox and the other heterodox, this alignment of duty and motivation leads to persecution by government and religious revolts by the people.

The clergy of *all* sects, in turn, have propagated these two false beliefs in order to use either the rulers (prince or parliament) or the populace to gain access to political power, thus achieving what they want: power, dominion, property and the persecution of opponents. In using political power in this way religious elites thus provide those who serve their purposes by taking up arms with an additional and temporal interest in performing their (alleged) religious duty.[3]

Hence, civil wars are waged in the name of religious 'reform' and religion serves as a 'vizor' or ideology which masks the struggle of competing elites for access to, and use of political power.[4] By showing the relation of ideological legitimation between religion and political power struggles Locke brings his analysis of the religious problem in line with his claim in the *Two Treatises* that the central struggle in his day is over political power.[5]

The two true Christian beliefs are the antithesis of the widely propagated false beliefs; that God allows each man to worship him in the way he sincerely believes to be right (over and above a few plain and simple essentials: the existence of Christ, Heaven and Hell and the core Christian ethics) and that Christianity should be upheld and spread by love and persuasion only, not by force and compulsion.[6]

These two claims reflect Locke's acceptance of an argument put forward by Hugo Grotius in *On the Truth of the Christian Religion* in the

1620s.[7] Grotius argued that the major cause of the civil wars and rebellions that swept early modern Europe from the 1550s onward was the diversity of religious beliefs -- Catholic, Calvinist and Lutheran -- coupled with the belief that it is the duty of political authority to uphold the true religion. In the 1580s Michel de Montaigne initiated a skeptical attack on the claim of religious authorities to know which religion is the true one.[8] At the same time, Montaigne and Justus Lipsius advanced the argument that, to end the civil wars, it would be necessary to abandon the belief that it is the duty of the sovereign to uphold the true religion, and to adopt the *politique* view that the role of government is solely to ensure order and peace.[9] Therefore, political authority would regulate religious and political practice in accordance with the purely political standard of order and peace, not of religious truth. (This view was of course compatible with the imposition of religious uniformity, as in fact Montaigne, Lipsius and Thomas Hobbes all concluded.) Grotius accepted this line of argument and the view that there is a 'minimal core' of Christian beliefs on which all Europeans agree.[10]

Locke's justification of the belief that each person may worship God as he sincerely believes to be correct, is that nothing more than the essentials can be known with certainty; and his justification of the second belief is that the kind of conviction necessary for salvation cannot be compelled, but must be voluntary.[11]

On the basis of this analysis Locke advanced two radically different solutions. The first, in the *Two Tracts* in 1661, is a theory of absolutism and the imposition of religious uniformity. The second, in *A Letter Concerning Toleration* in 1689, is a theory of popular sovereignty and religious toleration. A brief account of the former and of its failure will show how he moved to the latter and provide a better understanding of its main features. Both solutions turn on removing the cause and justification of the wars of religion -- that it is the duty of the state to uphold the true religion -- and on replacing this with preservation, or the 'public good', as the duty of government.

The *Two Tracts* is Locke's proposal for the political and religious form of the Restoration settlement of 1660-62. He argues against a proposal for toleration based on individual conscience by Edward Bagshawe, that as long as the two false beliefs continue to be widely held, a policy of religious toleration would be used by religious groups to build up strength and, eventually, to precipitate another civil war in the attempt to gain political power.[12] The call for toleration thus masks the underlying will to power of a clerical elite bent on domination, as he repeats even in *A Letter Concerning Toleration.*[13] His

solution is for everyone to alienate irrevocably his natural power over indifferent things to an absolute monarch, Charles II. The monarch would then impose whatever forms of worship he judged necessary for peace, order and the public good, using solely customary and prudential considerations as his guide. The magistrate does not have the duty to impose the true religion, convert his subjects or suppress heresy. Religious activity is assessed and governed in accordance with the political criterion of the 'public good'.[14] Locke then suggests that if the Dissenters (Baptists, Presbyterians, Quakers and Independents) were peaceful, the monarch could permit toleration in the form of a Declaration of Indulgence (as Charles II in fact wished).[15] Dissenters could not be tolerated on the grounds of individual conscience, as Bagshawe proposed, because this would limit the monarch's sovereignty and reintroduce a religious criterion into politics.[16]

The greatest threat to peace according to Locke comes not from the Dissenters but from the Church of England. The monarch must be absolute in order to be free of the national church, which will otherwise use the state to impose religious uniformity and gain power: "[they] know not how to set bounds to their restless spirit if persecution not hang over their head."[17] Throughout his writings, Locke consistently attacks the Anglican church as the greatest threat to peace and calls for its disestablishment.[18]

Finally, he argues in this early work that, a subject is always obligated to obey any law and not to question it, even if it prescribes forms of worship the subject believes to be unacceptable to God. This will not compromise a person's faith because faith is a matter of inner belief -- judgement or conscience -- whereas obedience to the law need only be a matter of will or outer behaviour. With this crucial Protestant distinction Locke could argue, like all English uniformists, that conformity and obedience are compatible with liberty of conscience.[19]

This proposal failed because Charles II was not as absolute as Locke envisaged. He was dependent on Parliament which was dominated by an Anglican-gentry alliance whose aim was the imposition of religious uniformity, the removal of Dissent and the control of public life. Their justification for this policy was to identify religious Dissent with sedition and civil war, as Locke notes in the *Two Treaties* and *A Letter Concerning Toleration.* Even the moderate Anglicans or 'latitudinarians', with whom Locke is sometimes erroneously grouped, opposed toleration and worked for comprehension within the established church. Charles II fought for indulgence of Dissent and of English Catholics, but the Anglican-gentry alliance was powerful enough to enact the Clarendon Code, a set of repressive laws designed to stamp out Dissent.

The laws were enforced and augmented during the Restoration, sending thousands of Dissenters into poverty, death, jail or transportation.[20]

Rather than causing Dissenters to conform to Anglicanism, the Clarendon Code had the opposite effect. The Dissenters refused to comply, continued to practice their religion, disobeyed the law and suffered imprisonment and martyrdom throughout the 1660s and 1670s. The Code created a permanent underclass, who struggled for toleration until the Act of Toleration in 1689 oppressed and denied access to public life and to publication. This Act then was only a partial remedy for they were treated as second-class citizens until well into the nineteenth century. By that time the Anglican-Dissent division had become a major political cleavage in English society. From 1667 onward Locke wrote in support of this minority's struggle for toleration in the twofold sense of religious and civil liberty.[21]

Locke first changed his views and began to defend toleration in *An Essay Concerning Toleration.* 1667.[22] He prepared this manuscript for Anthony Ashley Cooper (soon to be the first Earl of Shaftesbury), the leader of the struggle for toleration and Locke's employer and closest friend until his death in 1683. This 1667 manuscript was used to persuade Charles II to support the concerted but unsuccessful effort of the dissenting congregations to gain an Indulgence by royal prerogative and to block new legislation to repress Dissent, especially the use of bounty-hunting informers and of transportation to the colonies in permanent servitude as punishment.

First, in this manuscript, Locke revised his views on belief and action in the light of the Dissenters' refusal to conform from 1662 to 1667. Now, he claimed, if a person sincerely believes that an article of faith is true and a form of worship is acceptable to God, and thus necessary to salvation, he evidentally will profess and act accordingly. Hence, the judgement and will are not separate. Rather, as he later put it in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, the "judgement determines the will," and so religious liberty must include liberty of practice as well as belief.[23]

Second, God judges people on the sincerity, not the truth of their beliefs, and thus if a person sincerely believes that something is necessary and not indifferent, it is necessary for salvation. This ushers in Locke's radically subjective definition of religion, which is fully articulated later in *A Letter Concerning Toleration*: religion is "that homage I pay to that God I adore in a way I judge acceptable to him." Consequently, to profess or act contrary to one's religious beliefs, even if the magistrate so orders, is now the paramount sin of hypocrisy and

it would lead to eternal damnation. This manuscript thus reverses the *Two Tracts*. Duty and interest (salvation) are now aligned with disobedience to the imposition of religious uniformity, thereby justifying the Dissenters' widespread resistance to conformity. It also expresses for the first time *the* key Lockean belief about the modern, post-Reformation individual: that the civil person is constituted by a moral sovereignty over one's core beliefs and practice that cannot be alienated.

An Essay Concerning Toleration continues, the magistrate's role is to uphold the public good. However, the magistrate now does not have sovereignty over his subjects' indifferent beliefs as he did in the *Two Tracts*, and he knows that the imposition of uniformity will in fact be resisted. Thus, a policy of uniformity causes civil unrest -- it is not a response to unrest, as the Anglicans argued -- and toleration is the pragmatic means to civil peace. Given this analysis, Locke reiterates that *any* attempt to impose uniformity under the guise of unity or conversion is a stratagem to gain power and domination. Enforced uniformity, he argues, unites all the competing religious groups into one hostile opposition, whereas toleration would remove the cause of the hostility, create trust and tend to cause the proliferation of religious groups, thereby dividing and weakening further any potential threat to peace and security.

In 1672 Charles II introduced a Declaration of Indulgence which suspended the penal laws against Dissent. The Anglican-gentry alliance in Parliament attacked it on the grounds that it undermined the rule of law and the constitution. Shaftesbury defended it as a legitimate exercise of royal prerogative. This long struggle for toleration through absolutism, and against Parliament and its constitutionalist justification of opposition to Indulgence, is expressed in Locke's anti-constitutionalist treatment of prerogative in the *Two Treatises*. He says that the monarch may act in his discretion not only "beyond the law" but "against the law" if this is in accordance with the public good.[24]

When Charles II withdrew his Indulgence one year later, abandoned his alliance with the Dissenters, and began to go along with the uniformists in Parliament, the Anglican-gentry alliance entered government under Danby, and Shaftesbury and Locke turned against Charles II and absolutism. They began to build the 'radical' whig movement that would struggle for toleration first through Parliament (1675-81), then, when this did not work, through the failed revolt of 1681-83 and the unsuccessful Monmouth rebellion of 1685.

This transition to the combination of popular sovereignty and toleration as a right, which Locke presents in *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, is first sketched in *A Letter from a Person of Quality to his Friend in the Country* (1675). Locke states that what distinguishes limited from arbitrary monarchs is that they have "the fear of human resistance to restrain them."[25] Thus, a government has a sufficient motive to rule in accordance with the public good only if they fear armed revolt, and this is a credible threat only if there is no standing army. On the other hand, the people revolt only when the government genuinely abuses the public good because they fear that the revolt will be crushed unless they have the majority on their side. Locke concludes that when people are oppressed, as with the Dissenters, they will resist, not only passively (as in *An Essay Concerning Toleration*), but actively, by the force of arms, and they do so "justly and rightly."[26]

Understandably, Locke left for France when this pamphlet enunciated Shaftesbury's strategy: to work for toleration through parliament with the background of threat of revolt if this was blocked. It was only after Charles II dissolved three toleration parliaments and parliamentarians were 'trimmed' in 1681 that Shaftesbury and Locke turned to revolution and Locke wrote the *Two Treatises*. Accordingly, Locke moved from the 1675 thesis that a credible threat of revolt is sufficient to protect religious liberty to his mature thesis that, only the actual practice of revolution is sufficient to free a people from religious oppression.

The rebellions of 1683-85 failed and the repression was so vicious that Dissent did not resurface as a political force for almost a century, except for a tiny group around Locke in 1689 lobbying, again unsuccessfully, for the radical, religious and civil liberty in *A Letter Concerning Toleration.* Algernon Sidney and Lord Russell were executed after the Rye House Plot in 1683 and over one hundred Dissenters were hanged following the Monmouth Rebellion.[27]

Locke fled from England to the United Provinces in 1683 and did not return until the successful invasion of England by William in 1688. *A Letter Concerning Toleration* was written while he was living in political exile in Holland during the winter of 1685. The text opens with the claim that toleration is the fundamental Christian duty and goes on to describe it as a natural right. The pamphlet presents three reasons why the government is not concerned with the care of souls: individuals *cannot* alienate sovereignty over their speculative and practical religious beliefs necessary for salvation; outward force and political power, cannot induce the kind of sincere belief required for salvation, only persuasion can; and even if coercion could induce belief,

there is no epistemic certainty that the religion of any particular government is the true religion.[28] These arguments are used to justify toleration, the thesis that a church is a purely voluntary organization and the separation of church and state. That is, they free "men from all dominion over one another in matters of religion" by separating coercion and religious belief, introducing his two true beliefs, and thereby removing the cause of religious wars.[29]

Nonetheless, toleration is not an absolute right. Religious beliefs and practices must be assessed and governed in accordance with the overriding criterion of the 'public good' and those judged to be injurious to it proscribed.[30] Locke identifies four beliefs that are incompatible with the public good and hence should not be tolerated: atheism, religions which preach intolerance, the belief that religious leaders have power over a subject's political obligation, and a religion which involves political obligation to a foreign power.

What prevents a magistrate from arguing that a policy of outward religious uniformity is necessary, not to save souls or because it is true, but because the public good requires a shared public life; that the atomism of religious diversity is deeply divisive and "inclinable to Factions, Tumults, and Civil Wars?"[31] Locke had argued in this way in 1661 and many pragmatic defenders of uniformity or comprehension did the same.[32] Locke's first answer is to argue that, as a matter of fact, religious diversity does not cause political divisiveness nor civil unrest. Conventicles are not "nurseries of factions and seditions," as the opponents of Dissent claim, and therefore cannot be repressed on prudential grounds. European history shows that quite the opposite is true:[33]

> It is not the diversity of Opinions (which cannot be avoided) but the refusal of toleration to those that are of different Opinion, (which might have been granted) that has produced all the Bustles and Wars, that have been in the Christian World, upon account of Religion.

If we ask why the imposition of uniformity has continued in the face of its failure to bring peace, Locke gives the predictable answer that the alleged purpose, of stressing the public good, is entirely spurious. The real reason is the greed and desire for domination of the clergy and their ability to manipulate rulers and people.[34]

> The Heads and Leaders of the Church, moved by Avarice and insatiable desire of Dominion, making use of the immoderate Ambition of Magistrates, and the credulous Superstition of the giddy Multitude, has incensed and

animated them against those that dissent from themselves.

This analysis is repeated throughout *A Letter Concerning Toleration* and Locke's account of the abuse of political power in the *Two Treatises* traces it to the same religious roots.[35] The *Two Treatises* and *A Letter Concerning Toleration* are two complementary analyses of civil war, or, as Locke would have it, of religious domination of civil society through the state, whether Protestant or Catholic, and justified popular resistance to it.

Locke goes on to elucidate what specifically the clergy seek to gain by their 'Temporal Dominion'. He says that "they deprive them [Dissenters] of their estates, maim them with corporal Punishments, starve and torment them in noisome Prisons, and in the end even take away their lives."[36] Yet, on Locke's account, nothing should be transacted in religion, "relating to the possession of Civil and Worldly Goods," or civil rights.[37] Further, those who favour intolerance really mean that "they are ready upon any occasion to seize the government, and possess the Estates and Fortunes of their Fellow-Subjects."[38] Dissenters, by the imposition of uniformity, are "stript of the Goods, which they have got by their honest Industry."[39] The preservation of 'property', in the sense of lives, liberties and estates earned by industry is the reason why people enter civil government in both *A Letter Concerning Toleration* and the *Two Treatises*.[40] The violation of this trust is also the form of oppression Locke is specifically concerned to condemn. *A Letter Concerning Toleration* thereby illuminates the type of property that the *Two Treatises* is written to defend. It is the goods and legal and political rights of the Dissenters that were violated throughout the Restoration.

If the strategy of religious uniformity is as Locke suggests, then we should not expect religious elites to pay any heed to his arguments that it is the cause of civil unrest. Rather, we should expect them to defend their use of political power, the hinge on which their domination turns. This was indeed the response. Jonas Proast, a Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, defended the use of force to bring Dissenters to consider the true religion in his three assaults on *A Letter Concerning Toleration* and on Locke's two following letters.[41] In addition, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (used as a text in Dissenter academies), as well as *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, were seen, correctly, as threatening the established religious order, attacked by Anglicans, and defended by Dissenters.[42] The Toleration Act of 1689 shows how far outside reasonable opinion was Locke's call for toleration of anyone who believed in any God and for the end of coercion in religion. The Act

denied freedom of worship to unorthodox Dissenters (those who denied the Trinity) and Roman Catholics. It granted it, as a revocable exemption from earlier legislation, to Protestant Trinitarian Dissenters who took the oath of allegiance and obtained a licence to meet, but denied them access to public office.

Locke was well aware that just showing that the public good is disrupted by policies of uniformity and best served by toleration would have no positive effect on the ruling elite. As in the *Two Treatises* he repeats that the rulers will simply claim that those who protest and dissent from the policy will be said to be the cause of unrest, and their protestations used to justify further repression.[43] His practical solution to the problem is to argue in the same way as in the *Two Treatises* that individuals must exercise their popular sovereignty and judge for themselves whether any law concerning religious practice is in the public good. If the magistrate enjoins anything "that appears unlawful to the Conscience of the private individual" and it is also judged to be "directed to the public Good," then "a private person is to abstain from the Action that he judges unlawful [according to his conscience]; and he is to undergo the Punishment."[44] A person has the right to disobey a just law if it conflicts with his conscience, provided he recognizes his political obligation to the public good by suffering the punishment.

The case Locke is of course primarily concerned with is when the law appears not only unlawful to the conscience but also contrary to the public good.[45] What if the magistrate continues to believe it is for the public good and the subjects believe the contrary? Locke answers with the same revolutionary doctrine as in the *Two Treatises*: "Who shall be Judge between them? I answer, God alone. For there is no judge upon earth between the Supreme Magistrate and the People."[46] And he leaves no doubt as to what this means: "There are two sorts of Contests among men: the one managed by Law, the other by Force: and these are of that nature, that where the one ends, the other always begins." Therefore, as in the *Two Treatises*, people are justified in turning to revolution when they are stripped of their properties and their religion, and "to defend their natural Rights . . . with Arms as well as they can."[47] Civil wars will continue as long as the 'Principle of Persecution for Religion' continues to prevail. The attempt to impose uniformity by coercion is not only the justification of revolt but also its cause. The reason is that oppression naturally causes people to struggle to cast off this "Yoke that galls their Neck."[48]

Revolution is thus necessary to establish and protect toleration. Churches would then be required to preach toleration as the basis of their freedom, to teach that "Liberty of Conscience is every man's

natural right," and that nobody should be compelled by law or force in religion.[49] This would undermine the link between religious and political power that legitimates religious domination and, hence, "this one thing would take away all grounds of Complaints and Tumults upon account of Conscience." Unlike a National Church, which causes turmoil, a plurality of equally treated congregations would be, according to Locke, the best guard and support of public peace. Knowing they can do no better than mutual toleration, the churches "will watch one another, that nothing may be innovated or changed in the Form of the Government."[50] Again, his point seems to be that the only solid foundation for civil and religious liberties is the readiness to govern those who violate them by means of popular political rebellion. For Locke, popular religious sovereignty, in concert with popular political sovereignty, is the solution to the problem of oppression and war based on religion.

CONCLUSION

We can see therefore that the emergence of toleration in *A Letter Concerning Toleration* involved the following changes. First, it involved the transition from judging religious belief in the terms of its truth content (an epistemological criterion) to judging it in the terms of the sincerity with which it is held (a psychological criterion). This brought with it the transition from understanding Christianity as a living tradition embodied in the church and its members to the understanding of Christianity as a set of subjective beliefs of individual Christians rather contingently related to the church. Second, the key Reformation assumption that it is the duty of political authority to uphold the true religion was abandoned. The view that it is the role of political authority to judge the religious beliefs and activities of its subjects on purely political grounds - whether or not they contribute to the public good - was adopted in its place.

If we then ask what brought about these monumental changes in the way Locke and some Europeans understood religion and politics, there seem to be two major causes. The first is the experience of one hundred years of religious wars throughout post-Reformation Europe. The second is that this period of political crisis was accompanied by an equally widespread sceptical crisis: that is, a scepticism with respect to our cognitive abilities to know which set of religious beliefs is the true one and a consequent scepticism about the motivation of religious leaders.

It is these four features which explain the acceptance of religious pluralism and the elevation of toleration to the status of a fundamental right in Locke's *A Letter Concerning Toleration.* We should remember that although many Europeans came to share Locke's views in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they were highly unconventional when he wrote. Also, as Professor Bracken points out, Locke's toleration is limited by twentieth century standards and even by some more radical seventeenth century standards.[51]

We should also be aware of the ambiguity of this legacy. As we have seen, writers such as Montaigne, Lipsius, and Hobbes shared most of Locke's premises yet went on to conclude that the imposition of religious uniformity is pragmatically necessary to uphold the public good. The central claim here, put forward by Bishop Stillingfleet,[52] is that a society without a shared religious or moral life is atomistic, divisive and prone to sedition. Thus, these changes in the early modern period have laid the foundation for both the diverse struggles for religious pluralism and toleration and the equally diverse struggles for uniformity and latitude in the modern world.

NOTES

1. John Locke, *Two tracts on government*, ed. Philip Abrams, Cambridge University Press, 1969, 160-61.

2. John Locke, *A letter concerning toleration*, ed. James Tully, Indiana, Hackett Publishing Company, 1983, 26.

3. Locke, *Two tracts*, 160.

4. *Ibid.*, 169-70.

5. John Locke, *Two treatieses of government*, ed. Peter Laslett, Cambridge University Press, 1970, I. 106.

6. Locke, *Two Tracts*, 161.

7. Hugo Crotius, *De veritate religionis Christianae*, Leiden, 1627.

8. See Richard Popkin, *The rise of scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* Berkeley, University of California Press, 1979, 18-87.

9. See Richard Tuck, 'Scepticism and toleration in the seventeenth century', in Susan Mendus, ed., *Justifying toleration: conceptual and historical perspectives*, Cambridge University Press, 1988, 21-37.

10. See Richard Tuck, 'The modern theory of natural law' in Anthony Pagden, ed. *The languages of political theory in early modern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 1987, 99-122.

11. Locke, *Two tracts*, 161. See Carlo Augusto Viano, *John Locke, dal razionalismo all' Illuminismo*, Turin, Taylor, 1960.

12. Edward Bagshawe, *The great question concerning things indifferent*, London, 1660. See the discussion in Abrams's introduction to Locke's *Two tracts*.

13. Locke, *A letter*, 32-3, 43.

14. Locke, *Two tracts*, 119, 124-6, 143-50, 169-70, 229-32.

15. *Ibid*, 170.

16. *Ibid*, 121, 137, 154.

17. *Ibid*, 169.

18. See Mark Goldie, 'John Locke and Anglican royalism', *Political Studies*, 1983, 31, 61-85.

19. Locke, *Two tracts*, 220-40.

20. See Michael Watts, *The dissenters from the reformation to the French revolution*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1978, 221-263; and Robert L. Greaves, 'Conventicles, sedition, and the Toleration Act of 1689', in Robert C. Maccubbin and D.F. Morrill, eds., *English culture at the end of the seventeenth century*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988, 1-13.

21. See Richard Ashcroft, *Revolutionary politics and Locke's Two treatises of government*, Princeton University Press, 1986.

22. John Locke, *An essay concerning toleration*, in Carlo Viano, ed. *John Locke, Scritti editi e inediti sulla tolleranza*, Taylor, Turin, 1961.

23. John Locke, *An essay concerning human understanding*, ed. Peter Nidditch, Oxford University Press, 1976, 2.21.48.

24. Locke, *Two treatieses*, II. 14. 164. See Caroline Comstock Weston and J.R. Greenberg, *Subjects and sovereigns*, Cambridge University Press, 1981, 171-5.

25. John Locke, *A Letter from a person of quality to his friend in the country*, in *The works of John Locke*, 10 vols., London, 1823, vol. 10, 222. We do not know for certain that Locke is the author of this pamphlet.

26. *Ibid*, 222.

27. See Ashcroft, *Revolutionary politics*.

28. Locke, *A letter*, 26, 28.

29. *Ibid*, 38.

30. *Ibid*, 39, 42, 49-51.

31. *Ibid*, 54.

32. See for example Edward Stillingfleet, *The mischief of separation*, London, 1680.

33. Locke, *A letter*, 55.

34. *Ibid*, 55, cf: 24-5, 33, 35, 43, 50.

35. Locke, *Two treatises* II. 8. 112, II. 18. 209-10, II. 19. 239.

36. Locke, *A Letter*, 24.

37. *Ibid*, 30. cf: 31-33, 39, 43.

38. *Ibid*, 50.

39. *Ibid*, 55.

40. *Ibid*, 47-8. *Two treatises*, II.9.123.

41. Jonas Proast, *The argument of the letter concerning toleration briefly considered and answered*, London, 1690. His second and third replies followed in 1691 and 1703.

42. John Yolton, *John Locke and the way of ideas*, Oxford University Press, 1957, 26-72.

43. Locke, *Two treatises*, II.19.218. *A letter*, 52-5.

44. Locke, *A letter*, 48.

45. *Ibid*, 48.

46. *Ibid*, 49.

47. *Ibid*, 55.

48. *Ibid*, 52.

49. *Ibid*, 51.

50. *Ibid*, 53.

51. Harry Bracken, 'Toleration theories: Bayle, Jurieu, Locke', in *Mind and language*, Dordrecht, Foris publications, 1983, 83-96, and his article in this volume.

52. Shillingfleet, *The mischief of separation.*

PIERRE BAYLE AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH[1]

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In 1685 the limited toleration accorded Protestants under the Edict of Nantes was revoked. Some, like Pierre Bayle and Pierre Jurieu, were able to flee the savagery the French Catholic government inflicted on its Protestant minority. Others, like Bayle's older brother, died in prison. There is biographical evidence that Pierre Bayle was deeply hurt and religiously shaken by this event. His *Commentaire philosophique* ([2] II, 355-560) appears to be written as a response. Given the circumstances, it is a truly remarkable document. Published initially in 1686 and 1687, it is, in my judgment, as close to being a complete defense of religious toleration as appears in the 17th or any other century. I believe it also contains the first articulation of an 'absolutist' theory of freedom of speech, although limited forms of freedom of speech had been defended in Athens and Rome.

The short title of Bayle's work is: *Commentaire philosophique sur ces paroles de Jesus-Christ, contrain les d'entrer...* Bayle's goal is to show that Luke, ch. xiv, vers. 23, should not be taken as a Biblical justification for coercion in matters of religion. He examines the text and shows that Augustine, and other defenders of the persecution of heretics, are acting contrary to the clear sense of the Scripture and of universal God-given moral principles. The Cartesian language of clear and distinct ideas runs through Bayle's analysis of the words of Luke.

Bayle was well acquainted with Calvinist/Catholic debates over the interpretation of Biblical texts, in particular over the Eucharist, i.e. over the words *Hoc est corpus meum.* The Calvinists had already appealed to (philosophical) reasoning in order to circumvent a 'literal' reading of that text. But the Philosopher of Rotterdam goes further: philosophy is *not* the servant of theology. As the theologians tacitly recognize by their very arguments, philosophy stands above theology (cf. [2] II, 368a).

He seeks to establish in the opening portions of the *Commentaire*, as Walter Rex[2] puts it, "that the certitudes of natural light are a *criterium veritatis*" and that the literal interpretation of Luke xiv "is in direct contradiction with these certitudes and is, therefore, false" ([26] 163). Along the way, Bayle advances a range of what are often *ad hominem* arguments in order to strike down the pretentions of Catholic

and Protestant supporters of the "compel them to enter" doctrine. Bayle sets out this first set of arguments in terms of l certitudes revealed by the natural light -- in terms. that is, of Cartesian and Malebranchian principles.

The second theme in the *Commentaire* (Pt I, ch. i ff., but cf. [2] II, 533b) moves beyond the question of how to interpret the Biblical text. Bayle now emphasizes the special role of conscience. This time he argues that we must take seriously the claims of conscience, even of an erring conscience. Hence we are never entitled to persecute because to do so is to endanger the purity of conscience (e.g. [2] II, 395ab). The state has no right to interfere with beliefs. Bayle holds that conscience is the Voice of God and thus that no human authority can order us to go against our conscience. For Calvinists, conscience has a role connected with the 'Way of Examination.' One is obliged to examine a Biblical text with all due care and deliberation. The judgment then made is sacrosanct. Admittedly, Bayle includes remarks on 'obstinacy' and 'relativity,' but I think Rex is right in holding that Bayle is *not* arguing from sceptical relativity to toleration: Bayle is *not* saying that because we cannot really prove that one religion is any more true than another, we should therefore be tolerant. Instead, Bayle is grounding toleration on the privileged position conscience holds within Calvinism (and, to a much lesser extent and at certain times, within Catholicism).

Bayle fully appreciates that Calvinism has at its core a doctrine about conscience that makes it impossible to adopt the Catholic thesis about an *informed* conscience. The logic of the Calvinist position leaves no room for an appeal to any sort of ecclesiastical authority which could *inform* us without thereby abandoning the 'Way of Examination." Hence conscientiously held judgments must be respected. That is the second foundation for Bayle's toleration theory.

At the center of Bayle's theory of the erring conscience is Cartesian dualism. Bayle distinguishes the mental as inner from the body as outer (Pt I, chs. i, ii ff.). He discusses mind/body (non-) interaction. In fact, Bayle moves much beyond Descartes. After all, Descartes' domain of clear and distinct ideas purported to be objective. But the effect of according conscience such a pre-eminent role is that Bayle makes the mind totally private. He makes the basis for judgement rest on our innermost feelings (*sentiment intérieur* ([2] II, 439a)).[3] The thesis that truth is ultimately discerned in feeling, that it is in taste that our awareness of truth is revealed, is a doctrine also found in Jurieu. If it is true that the most basic difference between Catholicism and Calvinism is that Calvinism rejects the possibility of a natural theology, it becomes easy to see why that radically anti-

authoritarian notion should generate the doctrine of the erring conscience. However, as the execution of Servetus shows, theory does not always accord with practice.

For Bayle, minds are not physical and they cannot be probed by the physical. We can coerce the body but not the mind. Because the mind is seen as private and ontologically distinct, we can never tell from the actions of the body whether an expressed view is being conscientiously (i.e. in good faith) held. Since our conscientiously held religious views are about our relations to God, and because we have access only to our own conscience, it follows that we cannot be sure what anyone *really* thinks. So we should not try to coerce consciences. Christianity demands that we respect them. Furthermore, we have in principle no way to determine what effects our persecutions, our uses of torture, etc., have on the conscience itself.

The theory of the erring conscience is accepted by many of Bayle's contemporaries. But he carries it further and finds himself faced with a profound difficulty. What do we do with the murderer who makes an appeal of conscience? More embarrassing, how can one deal with the inquisitors, with persecutors, who justify their use of torture by appeals to conscientiously held beliefs ([2] II, 430a)?

The basis for his solution seems to be first, retention of the distinction between words as physical and their mental counterparts ('meanings') which he mentions at the outset ([2] II, 369ab, 371 ab); and second, acceptance of the Cartesian radical distinction between talk and action exactly parallel to that between mind and body. It is clear from his text that what Bayle wants is absolute toleration of religious *talk* -- not religious *action*. He handles the persecutors' appeals to conscience by granting them freedom of speech but not freedom of action. Because he explicitly rules out a right to public displays of religiosity ([2] II, 414a), I take him to be refusing to extend freedom of speech to freedom of expression taken more generally. Bayle wants us to be able to think and talk, to study, learn, and pray, without any intereference from the secular arm. He does not argue that freedom of thought or freedom of speech is a Good Thing to be justified on pragmatic or consequentialist grounds. The domain of the secular authority is simply action -- not our thoughts or their verbal expression.

In sum, it is out of materials derived from his Calvinist theory of conscience, his interpretation of the Bible in terms of clarity and distinctness, his Cartesian theory of mind/body dualism, and his theory of mental privacy, that Bayle constructs a philosophical framework within which absolute religious toleration and, I suggest, absolute

freedom of speech are direct consequences. There is thus a close relationship between his Cartesian-style theory of human nature and freedom of speech. Moreover, there are still echoes of his doctrine within modern absolutist views.

I have discussed some of these questions elsewhere. I have argued that while Cartesian rationalism and dualism are logically independent notions, they can function in combination to support a doctrine of human nature ([4] esp. ch. i). That is, *rationalism* helps make sense of human autonomy and freedom in that humans are not seen as blank tablets ready to be molded at someone's will. Dualism, on the other hand, helps provide a context in which mental privacy is sustained ontologically and our minds are secured from scrutiny. Finally, Descartes' doctrine of human nature includes a commitment to unrestricted freedom of will. This bears on the role of speech as not being a form of action. We are completely free to act (or not to act) on the basis of what we hear or read. Language does not, as it were, coerce us. If we are persuaded by what we hear, that is our own choice.

Bayle's *Commentaire philosophique* marks the high point in the development of religious toleration. Despite the suffering imposed on him by a Catholic state, he is recommending total and absolute toleration of Catholics, Socinians, etc. Bayle rejects the argument that one should extend toleration only to groups that advocate toleration themselves. Locke, who is generally seen as the patron saint of religious toleration in the English-speaking world, remains a fanatical anti-Catholic in his writings on toleration (see [4] ch. v). He does not accord primacy to conscience. In fact, Locke shifts to the state the resolution of religious disputes.

Although it is a commonplace to say that John Locke is the philosopher of the American Revolution, the freedom of speech principle incorporated into the US Constitution at the end of the 18th century is not Lockean. The first ten amendments to the US Constitution are known as the Bill of Rights. The relevant section of the First Amendment reads: "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech. . ." This is a totally unqualified assertion. It is a Baylean absolutist move. Yet I have found little said at the time either for or against freedom of speech, although the intentions of the American 'founding fathers' have long been explored, discussed, and debated by legislators, judges, scholars, presidential candidates, etc., as has been the question of the judicial significance of such intentions even in instances where they can be readily discerned. Both Jefferson and Madison were acquainted with Bayle's *Dictionnaire*. I cannot, however, present evidence that Madison got from Bayle that absolutist

idea of freedom of speech which he incorporated into the First Amendment. Nor have I yet discovered whether Madison could have had access to the *Commentaire philosophique*.[4] The 1708 English translation was in Jefferson's Library (which Madison used), but I have not discovered its accession date. The Bill of Rights (which, as noted, includes the First Amendment) is usually said to express the goals of the American Revolution and to have been inserted into the Constitution for that reason. At that moment, freedom of speech seems to have been accepted as a self-evident principle, perhaps rooted in a Bayle-type philosophical framework. The framework, however, soon became less acceptable and the principle certainly did not long remain self-evident.

By the middle of the 19th century, what had been more or less clear to a number of so-called Enlightenment figures was in need of a defense. Although Bayle is a major influence on Voltaire, Voltaire, like many other 18th century figures, is philosophically more under Locke's[5] influence than Descartes.' Bayle argues that freedom of speech and religious toleration follow naturally from philosophical positions. Subsequent debate challenges these Cartesian philosophical foundations and hence gradually creates the need to defend freedom of speech and religious toleration in themselves and on new grounds. One looks in vain in John Stuart Mill for the categorial dualisms of mind and body. and of talk and action, which appear in Bayle. Increasingly, speech is taken to be action -- and as action, it falls under the power of the state. Although we retain our concern with free speech as a democratic value, we now need to provide arguments for it and we find it easy to set limits upon it. One reason for this is that the philosophical framework has changed. I am not able to explain why it has changed. I want only to mention that the world-view which Bayle could assume, and that a number of his contemporaries accepted, is no longer in force. We seem more comfortable with the rejection of mind/body dualism, with the rejection of mental privacy, and -- at least in the English-speaking world -- with the acceptance of an empiricist-behaviorist doctrine of human nature.

In terms of the American experience, the history of the First Amendment is the history of attempts to withdraw what had been promised. Even before the end of the 18th century, Congress proscribed seditious speech. In general, those who have wanted to limit speech have viewed speech as action. Speech, it is believed, can damage reputations, undermine the state, challenge religious truths, demean the members of 'identifiable' groups, threaten commercial activity, incite trouble, promote immorality, etc. In the early 20th century, confronted with anti-subversive legislation, the US Supreme Court made clear that the First Amendment had no absolute force. It was but one of several

competing values. Speech was a form of action capable of generating criminal acts and while deserving (becuase of the First Amendment) of special consideration, not an absolute.[6]

The opinions of Hugo Black, a US Supreme Court Justice from 1937 to 1971, are an exception. He often advances an 'absolutist' position. He opposes tampering with what he believes are the clear words of the First Amendment. He believes that when the US Constitution says "no law" it means *no law*. Although he does not tell us much about the philosophical presuppositions of the text, he takes *speech* literally ([3] e.g. 478-9). He sharply distinguishes talk and advocacy from behavior and action. While accepting constraints of time and place, he opposes extending speech to cover various forms of behavior often described as 'symbolic speech' (which are then said to be entitled to First Amendment protection).

Reflecting on the political repression in the United States in the 1940s and '50s, Alexander Meiklejohn ([21]) seeks to show that the intent of the founding fathers was to make *political* speech free. That, he argues, is the point to the free speech guarantee. On a somewhat different tack, Thomas Emerson makes a powerful case for interpreting the First Amendment as providing protection for freedom of expression. The key to Emerson's analysis is the distinction between *expression* and *action*. Expression covers a wider range than speech, e.g., so-called symbolic speech, flag desecration, gestures, etc. Emerson does not give us a philosophical framework within which to base his distinction. Rather, he simply believes that the proper way to understand the First Amendment is in terms of this distinction. The Baylean distinction between *talk* and *action* only partially parallels the one Emerson draws between *expression* and *action*. Note that I am arguing that Bayle actually draws a category distinction between *talk* and *action*, one which he bases on ontological considerations. Neither Emerson nor Mill takes that step. These Cartesian ontological considerations only support a narrow reading of 'speech' and thus work against a more general 'expression' theory. Emerson, like most free speech theorists, also holds that if a society is to be democratic, if the members of the society are to participate in an informed way in the deliberations of that society, freedom of expression is a primary desideratum. Emerson clearly wants to distinguish sharply between "belief, opinion, and communication of ideas on the one hand, and different forms of conduct on the other" ([15] 8). But his expression/action distinction is not absolute. There are cases (as in Mill) where "speech is an integral feature of a course of action," ([15] 333) and hence may be suppressed to avoid the risk of violence.

I hope it is clear why I have touched on US Constitutional practice in connection with Bayle and why one is tempted to refer to that practice when talking about freedom of speech. By incorporating a free speech principle into their Constitution, Americans guaranteed that there would be a continuing discussion of the subject and a constant concern with drawing lines between what is and what is not constitutionally protected. In spite of this, the possibility of a debt to Bayle's way of thinking has not, I think, been noticed and the question of philosophical foundations has largely been ignored.

I wish now to turn to an example which illuminates how a different doctrine of human nature may bear on freedom of speech. In 1975, Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien, in the course of defending censorship in a debate in the Irish Senate, had this to say about the matter:

> Has the State the right to restrict freedom of expression? It is possible to hold that it is best not to do so at all: that the State should restrain, where necessary, overt and material actions, but should leave purely verbal utterances strictly alone... [However] words are in fact an integral part of many patterns of actions. If this is accepted that absolute distinction between words and actions is broken down, and words and actions together become part of a pattern of behavior which is and should be amenable to law.[7]

It is evident that O'Brien is *aware* of another tradition with respect to freedom of speech, that he proposes to *reject* that tradition, and that his rejection is established by advancing a different philosophical claim: that speech simply is behavioral action.

There are other domains in which we can observe the imposition of constraints on speech, e.g. libel, obscenity, pornography, conspiracy, etc. Understandably, hate literature statutes have appeared in various western countries since World War II. Thus article 20 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* reads: "1. Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law. 2. Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law."

International covenants may have few practical consequences, but sect. 177 of the Criminal Code of Canada reads:

> Everyone who wilfully publishes a statement, tale or news that he knows is false and that causes or is likely to

cause injury or mischief to a public interest is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for two years.

Ernst Zundel has been convicted under this statute for publishing so-called 'Holocaust revisionist' literature. His 15 month sentence was quashed by the Ontario Court of Appeal in January 1987 and a new trial ordered although sect. 177 was ruled constitutional. In the spring of 1988 he was found guilty in his new trial, and sentenced to nine months in prison. His case is now on appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.

The Canadian legal system does not include anything with the same legal priority as the US First Amendment. 'Freedom of Expression' appears as a principle in the recently enacted *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* but it is simply one among many. Thus hate-literature, group libel, anti-propaganda, and various types of anti-advocacy legislation can be drafted without the same sorts of difficulties American legislators encounter when they try to evade their free-speech principle. Similar laws have been employed in France against Robert Faurisson. In cases of this sort, the court must determine at least these three things: (1) that the accused is wrong about a set of historical facts. This makes the court the arbiter of history. (2) The court must determine that certain words can and do cause specific untoward consequences. (3) The court can discern whether a person is saying things which that person *knows* to be false. It is, I believe, hard to imagine a set of requirements more contrary to the spirit Pierre Bayle hoped the *Commentaire philosophique* would engender.

In reference to (1): On the question of fixing *any* historical fact, Bayle is extremely cautious (cf. [1] art. 'Zuerius'). In the 20th century countries both east and west have been prepared to let courts determine the truth about historical events. There is an obvious sense in which courts do settle matters of historical fact, as when they decide the facts of a given crime, say of a burglary. What is of interest in 'falsification of history' cases is, however, that the court first specifies the historical facts and then applies criminal sanctions against those who speak 'falsely' about those facts. That resembles the jurisprudence exhibited in the Stalin trials of the '30s rather than western criminal law practice.

As for the second point, in legislation of this sort the causal effects of certain ideas appear not to stand in need of proof. In general, anti-advocacy legislation assumes without argument that words may cause actions. Hence advocating a crime becomes a crime. Within radical free-will systems such as Descartes' (and, I believe, Bayle's) each

person is responsible for his or her actions. We may listen to someone urging us to engage in a criminal act but if we in fact act, that is *our* decision, and only then should we be subject to criminal penalties. The thesis that speech does not of itself 'cause' action is thought to follow, or so I have been suggesting, from speech/action dualism, whereas proponents of anti-advocacy legislation seek to assimilate the category of talk to that of action. Pornography, obscenity, propaganda, hate-literature, incitement, etc., often constitute the context in which the causal efficacy of words upon actions is discussed. That the discussion has persisted inconclusively over the centuries shows that the issue is not straightforwardly empirical. That is why I propose that conflicting accounts of human nature may be at stake. Whatever reasons we may decide should apply, the fact is that our knowledge of the causation of human behavior remains extremely limited.[8]

The third legal point is one I have already discussed. It runs counter to the philosophical presuppositions in terms of which Bayle's doctrine of the erring conscience is cast and which I take to provide the foundation for his absolutist theory of freedom of speech. His thesis is, however, no longer taken to be intelligible. An appeal to a conscientiously held belief is not now easily sustained. As Bayle see the problem, only God can scrutinize our inner beliefs (cf. [2] II, 397a) and only God knows whether we mean what we say. The modern doctrine is very different. Although statutes may still require that the accused *know* that what they say is false, the knowledge requirement is easily eliminated. A 1936 British appeals court put the matter with elegant simplicity: "The best and often the only way of proving that a statement was known to be false by the person who made it is to prove that he had the means of such knowledge."[9] It is a short step to the traditional Catholic doctrine that 'error has no rights.'

Thus we have managed to turn the Enlightenment free speech doctrine on its head. It has even become difficult to maintain what for Bayle was a crucial but obvious distinction; namely, between the utterance of an (unpopular) opinion and the defense of the right to make such an utterance. To the extent that the collapsing of this distinction is successful, the right to freedom of speech becomes that much more difficult to state, explain, and defend.

For whatever reasons, societies are more and more willing to express their contempt for the capacity of individuals to form their own judgments. We feel entitled to incorporate into our legal systems agencies charged with deciding what is and what is not fitting for us to hear and read. In the age of Orwell, it becomes necessary to support censorship in order to preserve democracy. These restrictive moves

presuppose some doctrine of human nature; presumably, that the mind is a malleable substance which can be pressed into any desired shape by the appropriate application of verbal data. Without some such presupposition, Boards of Censors and the legislation authorizing them, make no sense. Thus to think that one can so protect a community is to think not only that one knows what is best for that community but also that one knows how humans are affected by words and ideas, as if human minds were blank tablets on which subversive, heretical, or other offensive ideas might be written.[10]

My concern in this paper is primarily to suggest not only how important Bayle's theory of conscience is to his views on religious toleration but also how important the dualisms of mind/body and talk/action together with the doctine of mental privacy are to both his toleration and his freedom of speech theories. I contend that Bayle's Cartesian dualist framework provides a categorial distinction between talk and action. That distinction, in turn, gives a plausible basis for freedom of speech. Bayle does not advance arguments for freedom of speech; rather he sees it as a natural consequence of that doctrine of human nature which he *does* argue for. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Cartesian philosophy came under sustained attack. As the dualist philosophical foundations for the talk/action distinction and hence for freedom of speech was undermined, direct defenses of freedom of speech had to be mounted.

Mill [22] gives a range of good reasons for supporting freedom of speech but primarily in terms of the advantages which should accrue to a society which thus encourages the quest for truth and the intellectual and moral growth of its individual members. Perhaps because Mill does not presuppose a category distinction between talking and doing, he is able to introduce a principle which has proven to have considerable restrictive power. Mill would restrain speech which might cause harmful consequences.[11] Quite apart from the difficulties of establishing the causal efficacy of words and of calculating consequences once psychological harm is included, one may discover that all speech offends someone. As US Supreme Court Justice Holmes remarked in *Gitlow v. New York*, 1925, "Every idea is an incitement," (cited in [15] 105). Some of other problems with group libel legislation are evident from recent Dutch experience. There have been successful prosecutions against the evangelists Goerees' advocacy of anti-semitism defended Biblically but not against the anti-homosexual and anti-feminist expressions of Cardinal Simonis.

The rejection of dualism provides a basis for rejecting the talk/action distinction. In the citation from Conor Cruise O'Brien we

see the distinction explicitly collapsed and censorship defended. Bayle's Cartesian dualism is replaced with a behaviorist account of human nature. I am not saying that only within Bayle's sort of framework can we express a robust doctrine of freedom of speech or that once we decide that speech is a form of action freedom of speech cannot be rigorously defended.[12] Nevertheless, historically that is what has happened.

I believe that the Philosopher of Rotterdam, like many Calvinists, finds in Cartesian philosophy a theory of human nature which helps to provide a conceptual bulwark against exterior control of the mind -- or at least against theories which are intended to make minds accessible to control.[13] This is of transcendent importance to Bayle because for him, the ultimate choice a human makes is between the *way of examination* and the *way of authority.* As societies we are faced with an ultimate choice of a similar sort: we are either for freedom of speech or for censorship. A society which seeks to be democratic has no such choice.

(Original submission to conference, 6 VII 88. This is a slightly emended version, Jan 90.)

NOTES

1. I have benefitted over the years from discussions on this topic with Noam Chomsky, Patrick Kelly, F.R.J. Knetsch, Elisabeth Labrouse, Thomas Lennon, and Richard Popkin. I am, however, particularly indebted to Elly van Gelderen and Arnie Herschorn. I wish also to thank Shirley Brice Heath, Joshua A. Fishman, and Jeroen van Rijen. Some of my research has been supported by a Leave Fellowship from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada and by a sabbatical leave from McGill University. A version of this paper was presented at a Conference, *Philosophy in the Netherlands in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam, 1988.

2. The definitive study of Bayle's life and work is [19]. See also [25]. As is obvious, I am very much indebted to the insightful work of Walter Rex [26]. I discuss Rex's study is [4].

3. See also [2] II, 397a, 407b and especially 441a. On the question of taste and feeling as articulated by Pierre Jurieu, see [4] ch. v.

The definitive study of Jurieu, the 'theologian of Rotterdam', is [18].

4. My thanks to J.C.A. Stagg, editor of the Madison papers, John Catanzariti, editor of the Jefferson papers, James N. Green of the Library Company of Philadelphia and James Gilreath of the Library of Congress, for help on this question.

5. See, e.g. [20]. Voltaire, however, follows Bayle and not Locke in taking freedom of conscience seriously in his discussions of toleration.

6. The 'clear and present danger' test is advanced by Supreme Court Justice Holmes in *Schenck v. US*, 1919, a unanimous decision supporting a conviction under the Espionage Act. The case of four-time Socialist Presidential candidate Eugene Victor Debs followed soon after. He too lost his appeal in a unanimous decision.

7. O'Brien was moving the second stage of the Broadcasting Authority bill (1975) before the Irish Senate, 12 March 1975 ([23] 9).

8. Chomsky has often raised this question, e.g. [5] ch. i.

9. A defamatory libel case, *Rex v. Wicks*, 25 Crim. App. R. 174. Also cited in *Rex v. Unwin*, 1938, Alberta Supreme Court, App. Div. 69 Cdn Crim. Cases, 202.

10. The rise of nationalism brought with it national language policies. The interesting question of whether Official Language Acts (e.g. in Canada) violate the principle of freedom of speech is beyond the scope of this paper. Presumably the recent California attempt to make English the official language of the state will be challenged in the US Supreme Court on First Amendment grounds. In this connection see the work of Shirley Brice Heath, esp. [16] and [17].

11. A sympathetic effort is made to clarify Mill in [27] and [28]. John Rawls [25] is a good example of how far one can get from a Baylean (absolutist) position and still mount a (very) modest defense of freedom of speech. Rawls appears to be in the Lockean tradition, i.e. ultimately yielding supremacy to the Magistrate.

12. I take 'speech act' theories to be the latest version of behaviorism. Cf. Chomsky ([5] ch, 1) and the Chomsky-Searle discussion in [8].

13. Freedom of speech is not incompatible with attempts at thought control through propaganda. On this matter (in the US) see [11]. The letters that follow in subsequent issues indicate that some people would like to censor discussion even in a journal dedicated to censorship. Chomsky's views on the media in this general context are discussed in, e.g., [6], [7], [10], [11], [13], [14]. On Faurisson, see [9]. The acceptance of propaganda as true, however, seems (from the standpoint of a Cartesian-type theory of human nature) to be an instance of Sartrean bad faith.

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TOLERATION AND THE FREE CHURCH TRADITION

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In speaking of a particular religious tradition I speak also as a representative of that tradition. Let me begin with a personal recollection of two of the occasions when I have found myself cast in that role.

Nearly two decades ago, my wife and I spent some time in Poland. We made a point of visiting the isolated settlement of Raków, founded in 1569 by the earliest Unitarian movement in Europe as its own Rome or Geneva, even, more ambitiously, its new Jerusalem. Today Raków is a little town of some two thousand inhabitants, all of them Catholic. We had been in correspondence with a local schoolteacher, and we stayed there as his guests, quite possible the first Unitarians to pass a night in Raków since our spiritual forbears were driven out in the seventeenth century by the counter-Reformation. News of our presence spread through the community, and we were given a welcome far beyond what might normally be expected for exotic visitors to a remote place. In fact, the historian Wacław Urban, who happened to be there at the same time, commented to us in a wry aside that we were being received like "angels from heaven." Discreet inquiries uncovered the reason. The processes that have opened up Polish life so dramatically in recent months had already begun to ferment at a semi-underground level. These unsophisticated peasants who knew next to nothing about ecclesiastical history did know one thing about the Unitarians who had founded their town, namely, that they had been doughty champions of tolerance. We, as in some sense their representatives, were to be shown how the present-day Racovians felt about that.

The second incident occurred not too long after the first. This was a period before public concern over the sexual abuse of children had reached anything approaching its present proportions. I was approached by a man who had been convicted of that offence and had recently completed a prison sentence. He saw himself as an intellectual (in fact, he habitually included his Ph.D. as part of his signature). He felt that he was a victim of persecution in the same way as so many figures in the past who had paid the penalty for being in advance of their times. Some of them had followed the same sexual practices as his, and this would be accepted and approved in years to come. What he wanted of me was that I should invite him to my pulpit one Sunday

so that he could expound these ideas to a wider public. When I refused to do so, he accused me of betraying the tradition of tolerance maintained down the centuries by Unitarians, and of allying myself instead with bigots and persecutors.

Whatever the limitations of the viewpoints I have just described, in both instances I was dealing with people who had hold of at least one truth that I would be bound to endorse. I do stand in a tradition for which tolerance and toleration have been a central focus to an extent which has few parallels. It is a tradition with fluid boundaries, leaving room for argument about the appropriateness or otherwise of labels, which is why I have chosen to call it the free church tradition. An example of the terminological problems is provided by the case of John Locke. Without a doubt he drew heavily from the thinking of the Racovians, whose literature occupied substantial space in his library, and he was a personal friend of the leading English Unitarians of his day. His influence in turn over the evolution of Unitarian thinking for a century and a half was profound. Yet he denied the charge that he was a Socinian, and he remained a nominal member of the established church. His views, his practice, his place in history, all place him within the free church tradition as I am using the term, beyond all controversy as to whether it would be appropriate to call him a Unitarian. Similar considerations apply to Castellio, Acontius, Milton and a number of others who occupy an honoured place in the struggle for toleration.

This may be the point for a further clarification of terminology. The English language has two nouns relating to the verb 'to tolerate' -- toleration and tolerance. I propose to use 'toleration' to speak of social and political policies and practices, almost invariably involving a disproportion of power. I shall use 'toleration' when speaking of the inward disposition underlying such policies, together with its expression in interpersonal relationships where such a disproportion of power may or may not exist. This usage corresponds, I think, to the distinction that Gustav Mensching, writing in German, drew between what his translator calls 'formal tolerance' and 'intrinsic tolerance'.[1] The latter involves more than a formal or legalistic relationship with the other party; rather, an attempt to enter sympathetically into that person's frame of reference and to understand it fully, without in any way compromising one's own convictions. The use of the same verb to describe both processes accounts for the resentment sometimes expressed by those who feel that in being tolerated they are being patronized.

A concern both for toleration and for tolerance has been central in the free church tradition. It was classically described by Earl Morse

Wilbur in the introductory chapter to his *History of Unitarianism*, which he said would portray not so much a sect or specific form of doctrine as "a movement fundamentally characterized instead by its steadfast and increasing devotion to these three leading *principles*: first, complete mental freedom in religion . . .; second, the unrestricted use of reason in religion . . .; third, generous tolerance of differing religious views and usages . . . . Freedom, reason and tolerance: it is these conditions above all others that this movement has from the beginning increasingly sought to promote . . . ."[2] At a later point he added: "the first and most essential of its three controlling principles named above is that of generous tolerance of differing views."[3]

Though Wilbur's interpretation of history as showing linear progress may be open to criticism, the same can hardly be said of his identification of the principle of tolerance as a dominant feature of the free church tradition, recognized alike by supporters, opponents and presumably dispassionate historians. In the seventeenth century Pierre Jurieu, the fiercely intolerant leader of the Huguenot exiles in Holland, referred to universal toleration as 'ce dogme socinien, le plus dangereux de tout ceux de la secte socinienne . . .'[4] An English Socinian wrote in his contribution to the *Brief History of the Unitarians*, a publication of the same period, that this practice of tolerance on the part of the movement he supported arose out of "a Principle common (I think) to them and the Remonstrants only, that Conscience ought to be free in matters of Faith; This is a Principle with the Socinians and the Remonstrants; other Families of Christians take it up as an expedient, when they have need of it."[5] Looking back in the perspective of more than two centuries, Lord Acton endorsed this judgment. "The true apostles of toleration," he wrote, "are not those who sought protection for their own beliefs, or who had none to protect; but men to whom, irrespective of their cause, it was a political, a moral, a theological dogma, a question of conscience involving both religion and policy. Such a man was Socinus . . ."[6]

There is no need to belabour the point. But an important question is raised by another historian who looks at the picture more quizzically, Herbert Butterfield: "The Socinians (i.e., the Unitarians) were willing to tolerate any differences of opinion, but their example could not bear fruit, especially as it was only the result -- and indeed it was merely the counterpart -- of their expressed indifference to matters of doctrine."[7]

If this is so, then there is little more to be said in defence of the tradition I am describing today, for indifference, as a cheap and easy caricature of tolerance, is indefensible. But although the point raised

by Butterfield is a serious, indeed a crucial one, I do not believe it to be well made. In the first place, it seems paradoxical to argue that the Socinian example did not bear fruit, when the work and ideas of this tiny minority were the focus of so much attention from all quarters throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and its influence upon all who worked for toleration during that period is not difficult to trace. Secondly, the Socinians did not express indifference to matters of doctrine. Indifference does not take people to prison or the stake. What the Socinians claimed was individual freedom in matters of doctrine -- it was not that these matters were unimportant, but that they were too important to be determined except on the basis of personal conviction. The revised Racovian catechism (1665) put it thus: "While we compose a Catechism, we prescribe nothing to anyone; while we express our own views, we oppress no one." The same document defended the concept of change and growth in doctrine in accordance with developing insights: "We do not think that we need blush if our Church advances in some things."[8] Serious reflection forging modifications is a far cry from indifference.

None the less, Butterfield's comments on the Socinians and the comments of others on their successors in the same tradition indicate a widespread suspicion that the vaunted tolerance of this tradition merely expresses a relativistic indifference with no commitments. Such an attitude was to be found, certainly, among the Italian humanists of the Renaissance era, but not among those of them who went into exile. They chose that lonely and often painful path precisely because they did take their religious convictions seriously and were not prepared to compromise when those convictions put them at risk. The same has been true of those who made personal sacrifices in the same cause during subsequent periods. It is a matter of record that right down to recent times, Unitarians and those who have shared their spirit have endured obloquy, ostracism and sometimes downright persecution.

At the same time, it has to be conceded that from time to time, individuals appear who, whether approvingly or disapprovingly, see the freedom of this tradition as meaning that they can believe whatever they like and do whatever they please. Tolerance is taken as a declaration that any belief is as good as any other, and, by direct implication, that truth is either completely unattainable or else doesn't matter. If there is tension between truth and toleration, then truth gives way, particularly because the road to it is notoriously difficult and the road to tolerance is assumed to be easy and undemanding.

This threat to the integrity of the free church tradition is always present. But individual licence and indifference to the hard requirements of a commitment to truth are not to be confused with a

genuine tolerance. I believe that Sir Richard Livingstone hit the nail on the head when he presented tolerance as an Aristotelian mean between two vicious extremes -- indifference on the one hand and fanatical intolerance on the other. "It is difficult to say," he added, "which of these extremes is the worse."[9]

There is a narrow ridge to be walked in the free church tradition, with forces continually in play pulling down toward one or other of the extremes. But the precarious balance maintained in walking this path is not unique. A similar balance has been characteristic of the scientific enterprise which, not coincidentally, took its rise during the same period of history and involved some of the same persons. The scientific theorist may be so completely committed to a particular understanding of the truth about the nature of things as to stake the work of a lifetime on its validity. Yet, at the same time, this commitment is combined with toleration for rival theories, for no one dare predict which interpretation will in fact stand the test of time and ongoing research. Scientists have also, to be sure, been known to display intolerance, though indifference may be less of a danger here because the criteria for verification are assumed to be accessible.

The spirit underlying both science and free religion was succinctly expressed in a phase coined, I believe, by the Unitarian scholar Raymond V. Holt half a century ago. In the modern era, he noted, masses of people abandoned religious dogmatism in favour of scepticism, and then, as this negative attitude proved sterile and unsatisfying, tended to swing back to dogmatism again. "If men and women have to choose between dogmatism and scepticism," he wrote, "between being certain of everything and being certain of nothing, in the long run [they] will always choose dogmatism. . . . But . . . there is a third way -- neither dogmatism nor scepticism but open-minded certainty -- the certainty of those who, while aware of all the problems and complexities in experience, face them boldly with open eyes, unafraid in the confidence given them by their deepest insight. . . . This way of approach may be called the scientific spirit in religion. . . the spirit of reverence for fact and open-minded passion for truth. . ."[10]

Open-minded certainty is a frame of mind that is far removed from indifference. It expresses itself in firm convictions but not in fixed convictions. But upon what are such convictions founded? The medieval source of authority was the church tradition, which included scripture. The Reformation claimed to shift the authority to scripture alone. An appeal to scripture was likewise characteristic of the earlier phases of the free church tradition; in fact, it has remained a part of that tradition, though radically changed in form. But from the outset it was well understood by adherents and opponents alike that the

distinguishing feature of the tradition was its appeal to reason. Application of reason to scripture as an interpretive tool notoriously led Socinians to unorthodox conclusions. The controversies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are peppered with scriptural texts, and in practice the Socinians, like the Anabaptists, took such New Testament precepts as love and non-resistance so seriously as to make a commitment to policies of toleration inescapable.

John Locke in the same way appealed to the New Testament on behalf of toleration, but by his day the autonomy of reason as an authority in its own right rather than as a tool for interpreting scripture was becoming more and more clearly established. Could there be a conflict between reason and scripture, and if so, which should prevail? There could be only one answer; from the period of the Enlightenment onward, appeals to scripture were always subordinated to appeals to reason. Tolerance was commended as a frame of mind that commended itself to reason, and toleration was defended as a rational policy, in the absence of any infallible criteria for determining truth and falsehood. It is better, as Milton so cogently put it in the *Areopagitica*, to let truth and falsehood grapple: "whoever knew truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?" Here is open-minded certainty -- a recognition of the possibility that one could be mistaken, combined with a confidence that free discussion will vindicate the views to which one is firmly committed.

Appeals to reason can be misinterpreted in the absence of an understanding that this term, though used in every period of the tradition, has not always carried the same meaning. When applied to scripture in the earliest period it usually meant rational analysis of the text and context rather than doctrinaire or allegorical interpretations. In the eighteenth century it came to be restricted to the intellectual processes exemplified in logic, mathematics and the physical sciences. But if one takes a broader view of what it has meant from ancient times onward, it appears as a way of describing intellectual activity as a whole, by no means restricted to logical analysis. Narrow interpretations of reason have been the source of the accusations that the free church tradition is 'cold.' Coleridge spoke of Socinianism as 'moonlight' -- illumination without warmth.

A more holistic view of reason invalidates this criticism. In its broader sense it is by no means confined to discursive ratiocination, which is seldom the best tool with which to approach religious matters. It embraces imagination, intuition, artistic appreciation and, as directly relevant to this context, an understanding of myth and metaphor.[11] It forms one complex human response integrating with the first-hand

experience that in religious contexts has been called mystical. A Unitarian historian summed it up thus: "There are two notes to be found undeniably, if unequally, characteristic of Unitarianism. It is both rationalistic and mystical. If the historian seems more attentive to the former than to the latter, this must not be taken as indicating their relative importance."[12]

The mystical aspect of the tradition expresses itself in a warmth of feeling. No less than the rational aspect, it emphasizes the rights of the individual and hence the need for tolerance and toleration. If individuals may be regarded as incarnating these two sides of the tradition, we may pick up from a comment by W.K. Jordan regarding the sixteenth-century figures Sebastian Castellio and Jacob Acontius. "Castellion," he wrote, "spoke from the heart, Acontius from the mind."[13] Over-simplified though this must necessarily be, it does dramatize the differences in approach. Acontius was by temperament and training an intellectual and a scientist, and made a shrewd analysis of the psychological motives of arrogance and hatred underlying the exclusive claims made by intolerant individuals. He argued for toleration on the grounds that free discussion would favour the emergence of truth, if it were carried on with an honest attempt to enter into and understand the opposing point of view. Castellio, on the other hand, was a sensitive spirit who wrote with a feeling of moral outrage when he saw the charity enjoined both by the Gospels and by his own spiritual experience violated so brutally by Calvin in having Servetus burned at the stake. None the less, as humanistic intellectuals, Acontius and Castellio had more in common than their shared abhorrence of intolerance.

The way in which a mystical or spiritual form of religion expresses itself in relation to tolerance is typically by invoking the rights of conscience. Each person should be permitted to develop his or her own faith in accordance with the dictates of a personal conscience -- which again is a broad term with meanings ranging from an application of reason to moral and practical concerns to an intuitive sense arising out of irreducible experience. A phrase which recurs repeatedly in the free church tradition of the sixteenth century asserts that "faith is the gift of God." This was the explicit basis for toleration in the declaration of the Transylvanian Diet of Torda under Prince John Sigismund in 1568, the first such official statement to come from those wielding power anywhere in Europe. The prince and most of the members of the Diet were at that point in process of becoming openly Unitarian.

The use of the word "faith" is significant. That word was of course highly important in the religious controversies of the Reforma-

tion era, and yet the prevailing intolerance implicitly presupposed that religious convictions are matters of knowledge rather than of faith. The mystical approach to religion maintained, on the other hand, not only that in the most fundamental areas of religious conviction we walk by faith and not by sight, but also that faith will express itself not so much by way of verbal propositions as in the whole of a way of life. The reluctance to spell everything out in words is based not upon scepticism but upon an awareness of the inadequacy of language to express what is strictly speaking ineffable. This constitutes a rejection of the dominant Western tradition which treats religion as primarily an intellectual exercise, so that the appropriate way of speaking of persons with a religious commitment is as *believers*, with such pejorative antonyms as unbeliever, infidel, miscreant or simply heretic.

What can in this way be said of faith in a tradition that takes first-hand religious experience seriously can in the same way be said of truth. In the verbal context of creeds, dogmas and confessions of faith, truth is understood to consist in the rational correctness of propositions purporting to convey an accurate picture of reality. But this is only one restricted -- and restrictive -- meaning of truth. Not only in the free church tradition but in religious traditions generally it has also carried the meaning well expressed in these words of John Hamilton Thom, a leading Unitarian preacher of the Victorian era:

> We have invested our faith . . . in the maxim that truth is mighty, and will prevail. Yes, but *what* truth? The truth that is adequately exhibited and applied. It is not the truth of theory, of agreement, of statement, that gains religious sway over men's souls: but truth of feeling and of action, which comes not in word but in power -- in living shapes of lvoe and self-denial, with the imperishable beauty of holiness upon it -- such truth as Christ had in mind when he said 'I am the Truth!'[14]

Here one is not arguing over the appropriateness or otherwise of verbal representations of reality. One is dealing directly with experienced reality and expressing it through all dimensions of living. One is not simply speaking the truth; one is doing the truth. As the Epistle to the Ephesians puts it: "You must be made new in mind and spirit and put on a new nature of God's creating, which shows itself in the just and devout life called for by the truth."[15]

Words are by no means essential for communicating the truth at these levels, but where words are used, they should be understood as the language of myth and poetry, directly expressing felt experience, rather

than the language of law and dogma, purporting to formulate a socially approved verbal interpretation of experience -- often a remote and distant experience into which one cannot enter at first hand. Gustav Mensching, who develops this theme with a wealth of illustration, argues that this understanding of the nature of truth is chronologically primary, and can be illustrated in early Christian history, where the secondary meaning of truth as correctness of teaching appears only at a relatively late stage. "Truth," he writes, "is first of all a divine reality which people have encountered in experience. Religious concepts of a mythical type attest to that reality and to that experience. Their 'truth' lies in the fact that they are expressive of a relationship with that reality, it does not lie in the rational accuracy of statements made about the numinous. . . ."[16]

The choice between these alternative views of truth has profound consequences for the life of the religiously committed person. If truth is seen as correctness of teaching, then it is something that can be possessed, and in practice the dogmatist claims not only to possess it but to be in some ways its anointed guardian and defender. If, on the other hand, truth is direct access to a reality that is overwhelmingly vast and awe-inspiring, then the appropriate response lies not in dogmatism or possessiveness, but in a humility that seeks to let it possess you and move through your life. It demands that your relationship with others be one of open dialogue, not as between lawyers trying to win a case, but as between artists comparing their expressions of an experience they suspect, though they do not know, to be one and the same. Here there is no room for intolerance, only for dialogue. As Karl Jaspers said, "Truth exists only in boundless communication."[17]

The growth in acceptance of this is one of the more hopeful features of the era in which we are living. "Dialogue" is a word that has come into its own, as intimately related both to truth and to tolerance. It requires of each partner a respect for the other, even though the other's presentation of religious commitments may be very different from one's own. It presupposes that each party is capable of learning from the other, and of incorporating that learning into their own living religion. One of the most richly suggestive ways of conveying this is that used by the Catholic theologian John S. Dunne when he speaks of 'passing over.' "Passing over" he says, "is a shifting of standpoint, a going over to the standpoint of another culture, another way of life, another religion. It is followed by an equal and opposite process we might call 'coming back,' coming back with new insight to one's own culture, one's own way of life, one's own religion. The holy man of our time, it seems, is not a figure like Gotama or Jesus or Mohammed, a man who could found a world religion, but a figure like Gandhi, a man who passes over by sympathetic understanding from his

own religion to other religions and comes back again with new insight to his own. Passing over and coming back, it seems, is the spiritual adventure of our time."[18]

References to Jaspers and Gandhi and Dunne are in no way intended as a claim that they are embraced within the free church tradition as here delineated. Rather,their religious stance illustrates how positions maintained over the years within that tradition, often in a far less open and sympathetic environment, are widely shared at the present time. Tolerance here moves to its positive limits, where it shades over into what may more properly be called mutual appreciation and understanding, which at its deeper levels enriches the lives of all participants.

But tolerance has its negative limits as well as its positive ones. Despite all the manifest evils of intolerance, there does come a point at which the tolerant person confronts the intolerable, and no discussion of this theme can realistically evade that fact. The free church tradition has at times been criticized for just such an evasion, though this ignores the long succession of stands taken within that tradition against all levels of oppression and injustice. Such stands presupposes the existence of standards, in the light of which toleration may reach its limits.

Confusion on this point is frequently a confusion of ends and means. Tolerance, after all, is never an end in itself. It is always a means to ends beyond itself, and if an alleged practice of tolerance ignores or subverts those ends, it cannot be justified. Earl Morse Wilbur, whose identification of freedom, reason and tolerance as the distinguishing characteristics of the free church tradition was widely acclaimed, became concerned lest he should be understood as urging that these principles provided all that would be needed for a full and satisfying religion. "It would be a grave mistake," he wrote, "to assume or to conclude that it is these that are the ultimate end toward which liberal religion strives, since they do no more than merely state the conditions under which it can best accomplish its work.... This is the challenge that faces all adherents of liberal religion: not to rest content and complacent with simply proclaiming its basic principles of freedom, reason and tolerance ... (for this would be to condemn it outright as sterile and fruitless), but under these conditions to go on to nourish the whole religious nature, ... to promote reverence of spirit toward the Highest, ... to promote ... deeper human sympathy ..., greater kindliness and more perfect justice.... Freedom, reason and tolerance ... have only cleared the way for doing more effectively what has always been and must continue to be our most important work: the

elevating of human character, and the uplifting of human civilization."[19]

The limits of toleration become very clear in the light of this distinction between ends and means. Tolerance serves ends beyond itself. With regard to ultimate ends, there is consensus between the free religious tradition and all religious traditions. Love is the ultimate end, love both at a human level and at levels that transcend the human, whether presented as love of God, love of creation, or, less theologically, as love of the whole nature of things in which our human lives are inextricably involved. An essential expression of this love is in the safeguarding and enhancing for each person of the possibilities of spiritual self-fulfilment, variously described as salvation or enlightenment or in some other terminology. Whenever these possibilities are inhibited or suppressed, wherever the freedom for human personalities to develop in this way is violated, there we are confronted with the intolerable. Theoretically at any rate, the limits to the exercise of tolerance now become very clear. Injustice, manipulation of persons, oppression, terrorism, violations of the physical or mental integrity of others, arbitrary discrimination against whole categories of people, the poisoning of the minds of the rising generation by vicious propaganda, destruction of the life-sustaining environment -- these are intolerable evils. To acquiesce in any one of them in the name of tolerance is to betray that one has not really understood what tolerance is for. The mistake made by most policy-makers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries -- and even by many in the persecuted minorities -- did not lie in thinking that there must be boundaries within which toleration must be exercised if it was to be a life-sustaining stream rather than a festering swamp. The mistake lay in putting those boundaries in the wrong place, so that they often served to inhibit rather than enhance people's spiritual self-fulfilment.

Unfortunately, these criteria are far easier to apply in theory than in practice. Sir Richard Livingstone described the situation admirably when he said of tolerance: "It has limits, but these cannot be defined; its kingdom has a disputed, changing frontier. We can be guided of course by some general principles. . . . But what Aristotle said of ethics is true of tolerance; there is no exact science of it; our conduct must depend on circumstances, and 'the decision is a matter of intuition.'"[20]

One comes back again, then, to the exercise of reason in the broadest sense, if one is to determine where the basic principle of love demands tolerance in a given situation. The fallibility of such an exercise can never be a warrant for inaction. Wherever faith and reason are exercised, no matter whether the context be labelled

religious, moral, political, economic, the same situation exists. In a secular age such as our own, the non-religious ways of interpreting a situation are generally regarded as more consequential than the religious way. In fact, they are often used to reinterpret the underlying significance of religious controversies of a bygone era. In the two incidents from my own experience with which I began, the primary interpretation given to the tolerance of the free religious tradition I was taken to represent was not religious: in the first case it was political, in the second, moral.

But despite the secularization of modern life, the issue of religious toleration in the narrower sense is still a live one. The ideas and practices of some religious groups can reasonably be declared intolerable. The words 'thug' and 'assassin' were originally the names of religious sects, and few would lament their suppression, though the spirit of the latter body still lives on in some religious circles to the present day, as we were so forcefully reminded in the Salman Rushdie affair. Fanatics have never constituted a sect of their own in this way, but the etymology of the word betrays its religious origin. It indicated the psychological condition in which one was expected to emerge from the temple, though nowadays the temple is more often a sports stadium and we indulgently shorten the word to 'fan.' The events at the international soccer match in Brussels indicate that this kind of fanaticism too is intolerable.

The Jonestown sect was tolerated for too long. The headline-grabbing cases of the televangelists show that there are limits to the tolerable even in this more disputable territory. Where does exploitation of people and inhibition of their spiritual growth reach such a point as to require a withdrawal of toleration from those responsible? Courts in several countries have had to rule in recent years in cases involving Scientology and the Unification Church, both of which have explicitly appealed to principles of religious toleration in their own defence. In this country there have been a number of cases in which leaders of extreme religious groups have been accused of physical and psychological assault on their adherents, in some cases children. Where are the limits? I can't improve upon what Sir Richard Livingstone said; I can only add that in the free church tradition the tendency has always been in the direction of giving groups and individuals the benefit of the doubt so long as reasonable grounds for doubt remain.

In summary, the free church tradition is one which has carried various names since it took organized form in the sixteenth century, including 'Socinian' and 'Unitarian.' It has made freedom, reason and tolerance its operating principles in the endeavour to find practical

ways of expressing the essential spirit of love and reverence. It does not flow from indifference, but from a religious commitment, including a commitment to truth and to the rights of an enlightened conscience. Its intellectual stance may be described as one of open-minded certainty. It summons its adherents to pass over in a spirit of empathy to understand and respect others' orientation to life without losing their hold upon their own. Given the complexities of life, it will not always be easy to determine precisely what action this calls for in specific situations, but this is a difficulty shared by all forms of religious commitment that are not arbitrarily doctrinaire. Its practice is an art, not an exact science.

The question of how much this tradition has contributed to the rise of toleration in the Western world must now be addressed. No doubt it is fair enough to say, as Herbert Butterfield does, that "in the post-Reformation period it would seem to have been chiefly the more Machiavellian statesmen who have found it easy to promote a policy of toleration. They would care little about the matters that were really at issue, and were ready to make religion serve their own political purposes."[21] It might be added that those who were motivated by religious principle often used pragmatic arguments to buttress their case. Furthermore, it is legitimate to ask whether the eloquent pleas for toleration from the Italian humanists who were chiefly responsible for the organized emergence of the free church tradition may not have been influenced by the fact that these persons were themselves refugees from religious intolerance.

None the less, to suggest that the whole case for toleration was built upon considerations of political, economic or personal expediency is to ignore the powerful spiritual motives that are apparent from a close study of leading figures of the day who influenced the development of the movement with which we are here concerned, whether or not they participated in its organized embodiments. One can go back at the outset to Erasmus, who according to Hugh Trevor-Roper can be seen as the true progenitor of the movements known to history as Arminianism and Socinianism. (He even goes so far as to call Erasmus 'the first Socinian.')[22] However, appropriate or otherwise this juggling of labels, the influence of Erasmus flows clearly enough not only through the early Socinians but also through leading figures of the day who, while in most cases remaining within the Catholic fold, expressed the same spirit and were in at least some cases known to be friends and allies of the pioneers of the free church tradition: persons such as Sir Thomas More, Michel de l'Hospital, Andrew Frycz Modrzewski, as well as heads of state such as Sigismund Augustus of Poland and John Sigismund of Transylvania, perhaps even Maximilian II of Austria and Philip of Hesse.

These leaders were working for toleration in a period before its political and economic advantages can be said to have been clearly demonstrated, when, indeed, the lessons of the medieval period, still fresh in memory, seemed to point the opposite way. It was still plausible to think and act on the premise that the unity of Christendom, an ideal widely cherished, could be re-established and maintained by political and military coercion. In defiance of such traditional thinking, Sigismund Augustus publicly declared in 1569, the same year in which Rakow was founded, "I shall not place burdens on anyone's conscience; truly it is not my intention, for it is not my task to create religion."[23] The motives which here led to the establishment of toleration in Poland may be contrasted with those which produced toleration in sixteenth-century France after an exhausting conflict resulted in failure to achieve uniformity, and tolerance was formalized in the Edict of Nantes as an expression of calculated political expediency.

It was the humanists and irenicists of the free church tradition who demonstrated that the only form of unity possible either for a national church, or for Christendom as a whole, or, more ambitiously, for the world, would have to be based upon an inclusive diversity. The dream of uniting world religions on this basis was expressed in the sixteenth century by the early Unitarian Jacob Paleologus. The more manageable objective of an inclusive national church was for many decades a major goal for the emerging Unitarian movement in England, and as late as the mid-Victorian period it was being actively promoted by James Martineau and Goldwin Smith.

In more recent years the focus has shifted to efforts to bring into being a worldwide interfaith unity in diversity, based upon mutual acceptance of each other's integrity. Is it too much to claim that the pioneering work done here in the free church tradition, building upon the contributions of early members from Paleologus onward and taking a more organized and concerted form in the early decades of the nineteenth century, had a share in producing the ecumenical consciousness that has become so marked a feature of the past quarter of a century? The new openness is reflected in an official publication of the World Council of Churches which, after speaking of the deepened "awareness of the richness of the diversity of the community of humankind," goes on to regret what it calls

> the way in which diversity can be, and too often has been abused: the temptation to regard one's own community as the best; to attribute to one's own religious and cultural identity an absolute authority; the temptation to exclude from it, and to isolate it from

> others. In such temptations Christians recognize that they are liable to spurn and despoil the riches which God has, with such generosity, invested in his human creation.[24]

The viability of this approach, essentially that of the free church tradition, is still open to question in a world where powerful forces push the opposite way. Nearly half a century ago W.K. Jordan, at the outset of his monumental work on the rise of religious toleration in England, claimed that the attitude of mind we here described as one of open-minded certainty "can be attained only by an Olympian intelligence. History has adequately demonstrated," he continued, "that men who are warmly attached to religious beliefs almost invariably seek to impose them upon others by means which can only be described as one or another kind of pressure." He added that the attitude we have been commending, "when properly analysed, must be regarded as shading into the sceptical attitude of mind."[25]

Scepticism is a component, certainly. But is this the last word? The last word here must be that open-minded certainty is a viable alternative, that it has made a significant contribution in other areas of life, notably the scientific, that it has made a notable contribution to the development of religious toleration, and that it will continue to do so. The debate continues.

NOTES

1. Gustav Mensching, *Tolerance and Truth in Religion.* University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1971, pp. 11-12.

2. Earl Morse Wilbur, *History of Unitarianism*, Vol. I, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1946, p. 9.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

4. H.J. McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England*, London: Oxford University Press, 1951, p. 5.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 303.

6. John E.E.D. Acton, *Essays on Freedom and Power*, Cleveland: World Publishing, Meridian Books, 1955, p. 34

7. Herbert Butterfield, *The Historical Development of the Principle of Toleration in British Life*, Robert Waley Cohen Memorial Lecture, London: Council of Christians and Jews, 1956, p. 8.

8. Wilbur, *op. cit.*, p. 583.

9. Sir Richard Livingstone, *Tolerance in Theory and in Practice*, Robert Waley Cohen Memorial Lecture, London: Council of Christians and Jew, 1954, p. 16.

10. Raymond V. Holt, *Open-Minded Certainty*, (pamphlet) London: Lindsey Press, n.d., pp. 11-13.

11. These themes are fully developed in W.G. de Burgh, *The Life of Reason*, London: Macdonald and Evans, 1949.

12. W.G. Tarrant, *The Story and Significance of the Unitarian Movement*, London, Lindsey Press, 2nd ed., 1947, p. 67.

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20. Livingstone, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

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22. H.R. Trevor-Roper, *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change*, London, 1967, p. 220.

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THE TERCENTENARY OF THE TOLERATION ACT OF 1689: A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION? *

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The Toleration Act of 1689 has been seen as a crucial milestone in the history of religious dissent in England. It allowed Protestant dissenters freedom to worship provided their meeting places had been registered and their ministers had made certain declarations. The Act, by suspending the penal laws against those who refused to conform to the Church of England, is viewed as ending religious persecution. As a consequence of the Act congregations were at last able to establish themselves permanently, by appointing a minister, by acquiring a place to worship, and in time by building their own meeting houses and settling permanent endowments, some of which survive today. The Protestant Dissenting Deputies, the great eighteenth-century guardians of the dissenting interest, always read the Toleration Act at the conclusion of their meetings. Such action testifies to the importance with which they held the Act as the foundation of their liberties.[1] Modern audiences have also been inclined as a matter of principle to applaud the Act.

Yet the Act has always presented the twentieth-century audience with a problem, since Roman Catholics and those who denied the Trinity were specifically excluded from the relief offered by the Act. The traditional interpretation, moreover, does not stand up to close scrutiny. The Act was passed in a spirit very far removed from modern ideas of tolerance; was widely seen by many contemporaries as a disaster; and led to a generation and more of bitter religious strife. Modern historians are therefore inclined to dismiss the Act as merely granting the minimum concessions that the Anglicans could grudgingly be brought to yield. Indeed, Prof. Speck in a recent study has pointed out that the Toleration Act actually reduced the area of religious freedom which King James II had granted in the last years of his reign.[2]

It is clear that the Act granted dissenters only a strictly limited toleration to worship in their own meeting places. It therefore fell short of what a great many of their number had sought, for dissenters were still subject to major political disabilities, and indeed there were continuing restrictions on the practice of their religious faith in such matters as baptism, marriage, and the education of their children. Such disabilities were to remain until the nineteenth century, and were

therefore often the subject of intense political agitation by dissenters, as demonstrated by campaigns for political emancipation and demands for the registration of nonconformist marriages. Nonetheless, if there are serious reservations about the Act itself and its immediate benefits, the consequences (though entirely unintentional) proved to be of great significance for the subsequent development of religious freedom and civil liberty.

In many respects the greatest contribution made by the Act was the breach it recognised in the fundamental principle of an exclusive established church through the acceptance, albeit a reluctant one, that alternative forms of religious belief might be allowed by law. Once even a limited religious toleration was granted, and the principle that there could be alternative views accepted together with the freedom to express heterodox ideas, then political freedom could follow. If a general religious toleration was the unintended result of the 1689 Act, then political reform, upon which modern civil and religious freedom in Britain is based, was the result of a much more concerted effort by reformers in the late eighteenth century, much of whose leadership was provided by Rational Dissenters or Unitarians.[3]

Before the modern period a quite different meaning was placed on the concept of toleration. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries toleration was perceived not as a virtue, but as a dangerous and insidious threat to true religion. Nor could it be otherwise. The religious divisions of the sixteenth century, resulting from the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, polarised religious belief throughout Europe leading to an exclusive interpretation of religion and the rejection of any compromise over matters of faith and salvation. The word heresy is derived from the Greek word for choice. Any choice in religion was literally heresy, and if true religion was the gift of God then blasphemy, idolatry and heresy must be the work of the devil. Thus heresy and religious diversity were to be condemned, and the true way to salvation must at all costs be defended against the dangers of error and deception. To Catholics, Protestant heretics were perceived to pollute the body catholic and to imperil the very hope of salvation, while in turn Protestants saw popery as a perversion of true Christianity. Religious truth and falsehood were seen in absolute terms, of good and evil, right and wrong. In the words of some Lancashire puritans in the aftermath of the English Civil War, toleration was like[4]

> putting a cup of poison into the hand of a child, a letting loose of madmen with firebrands in their hands, an appointing a city of refuge in men's consciences for the devils to fly to; a proclaiming of liberty to the wolves to come into Christ's flock to prey upon His lambs.

Any concept of tolerating rival religions was therefore impossible, except under exceptional political circumstances. Thus the Edict of Torda issued by King Sigismund of Transylvania in 1568, which granted toleration to Catholics, Lutherans and Unitarians is in many respects unique for the sixteenth century. Nonetheless, if examined it is clear it was not an act of benevolence, but one of political expediency. With his country lying between the German Emperor and the Ottoman Empire, it was impolitic for Sigismund to declare for either Protestantism or Catholicism.

There is an additional point. A fundamental tenet of the Reformation was the supremacy of the civil magistrate in religion. It was therefore axiomatic that the Church and State were indivisible. It was believed that a man could not be a loyal citizen of the State unless he belonged to its Church. But the Reformation, by appealing to the Bible as the only authority and emphasising justification by faith alone, also opened the gates to an outpouring of Pauline and evangelical ideas which ultimately could not be contained within the bounds of an established church. If there was pressure in one direction towards conformity and uniformity, there was also a counter current of religious individualism working in the other direction. It is from this current of individualism that some of the earliest claims for religious toleration came.

Nonetheless, before the English Civil War in the mid-seventeenth century few doubted that the Church of England should embrace the whole community. Since there was almost universal acceptance that it should be inclusive, disagreement centred on what form the Church should take. Queen Elizabeth's Church, which had replaced the Catholic religious settlement of her sister Mary, was an Erastian establishment, comprehensive enough to embrace both conservatives and Protestants. But within the broad national Church which took shape under Elizabeth in the second half of the sixteenth century there was a growing division between a conservative majority, which the Oxford historian Christopher Haigh has recently suggested included many who were reluctant Protestants, and the highly influential but less numerous intensely committed Protestants (generally labelled Puritans), who sought to emphasise the Protestant character of the Church.[5] They hoped for a further reformation, considering the Elizabethan Church only partly reformed, particularly with respect to the survival of what they saw as popish superstition. Historians now recognise that an obsessive hatred of popery was part of the consciousness of most seventeenth-century Englishmen, but Puritans were far more uncomprising in their hatred of Catholics, and the more radical of them identified the pope with antichrist.[6] Although nonconformist in certain liturgical practices, particularly those considered to be superstitious or

Catholic, such as the wearing of the surplice, the hated popish rag, Puritans remained in principle committed to the concept of a national reformed church. A very small number of extreme Protestants, however, believed the Church of England was so corrupt that reform from within was hopeless, and they therefore broke away to form themselves into 'gathered churches' of like-minded believers. Although the subject of much historical study, separatists were very insignificant until the Civil War.

It has recently been argued that during the 1620s the Established Church tolerated a surprisingly wide range of voluntary religious activity outside the official framework of the parish. But the ascendancy of Archbishop Laud, with his rejection of Calvinist doctrine and his zeal for order and decency which led to his insistence upon a strict outward conformity to the liturgy and canons, destroyed the unity of the Church forcing many into outright separation who had previously been at least partially reconciled.[7] The attempts to suppress preaching and to outlaw Calvinist teaching seemed to many Protestants to attack the very roots of the Reformation. When Laudianism was combined with an unpopular ceremonialism and a doctrine widely considered to be popish it became linked in many minds with a general conspiracy to subvert the Church of England.

These innovations in religion occurred against a background of renewed European conflict between Catholics and Protestants, the Thirty Years War, when the very survival of Protestantism seemed under threat. In the context of these contemporary fears, Charles I's marriage to the Catholic Henrietta Maria, his choice of Catholics as friends and ministers, his arbitrary use of power during personal rule, and his apparent ambivalence towards Protestantism, were all calculated to incite fear and opposition. This obsessive hatred of catholicism, which is such a feature of British history from the middle of Elizabeth's reign until at least the nineteenth century, must be emphasised in all accounts of toleration in England. Catholics remained the bogeymen for all Protestants, the cause of massive national hysteria during every major political crisis from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Catholics were the victims during the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis of 1678-9, and the Gordon Riots of 1780. They were to suffer from Protestant hostility because of the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745, and as late as the 1820s the great constitutional issue was Catholic Emancipation.

The traumatic events of the English Civil War and Interregnum during the 1640s and '50s, with the breakdown of government in church and state, were of great importance for the emergence and development of the radical sects, and consequently for the development of religious

toleration. The rapid growth of Baptists and Quakers would hardly have been possible without the unprecedented freedom of the 1640s and '50s which followed the destruction of the Established Church and the collapse of authority. Separatists had previously been of little significance outside London, and before 1642 almost all Protestants belonged to the Established Church.

It is often argued that Cromwell supported toleration, but the arguments among Puritans were not about toleration, but liberty of conscience. It is clear that only the radical sects and other extreme groups advocated toleration, and they were a despised minority. Liberty of conscience was to be allowed, however, because in the journey towards salvation truth might temporarily be replaced by error. Blair Worden has shown that Cromwell's religious policy was not the toleration he is so often commended for, but a liberty of conscience which would allow the union of all godly people in one church, essential to the creation of the Commonwealth. Thus, for instance, Cromwell sought the admission of the Jews to England, not out of a willingness to tolerate their faith, but in order to convert them."[8] Others have shown that the common view that the Independents or the New Model Army sought to advance toleration is also wrong.[9]

In England by the 1650s many of the worst fears of the conservative majority were coming true. Ranters, Antinomians, Quakers and sectaries of all sorts seemed to be putting man in the room of God, and doing so by appealing to dreams, visions, voices, and personal revelations. The collapse of authority opened a Pandora's Box, allowing an extraordinary outburst of religious and other speculative ideas to occur. Such ideas were largely subversive, undermining authority and challenging conventional views on morality, property and order. In the heady excitement of the Interregnum years the more extreme groups appeared to reject all forms of restraint.[10] Although very small in number, their religious scepticism, wild, extravagant behaviour and general radicalism seemed to answer the worst fears of a conservative gentry and clergy. Existing views which equated toleration with heresy and subversion were therefore reinforced.

The Restoration of Charles II in 1660 is now viewed as having been the result of the internal collapse of the Protectorate and the realisation that the return of the King was the only hope of a lasting political settlement. But it has also been convincingly argued that the fear and outrage provoked by the radical sects, and in particular by the Quakers, caused a reaction from 1659 which ended in the Restoration.[11] Against this background any toleration which would include the radical sects was clearly impossible.

Attempts by Presbyterians to reach a settlement with Anglicans concerning the Established Church failed. Nonetheless, what orthodox Puritans sought was comprehension within a reformed Church of England, not toleration: a religious accommodation or settlement involving some reform of the prewar Church to enable most Puritans to remain within the Established Church without damage to their consciences, and not a freedom to all to preach their religion according to their conscience. They failed in their hopes of Comprehension because the royalist gentry were determined to ensure that the disasters of the previous tow decades were never repeated. Fundamental to that resolve was the insistence on an exclusive settlement. Religious conformity became the test of political loyalty, and so a strict Anglican settlement was a vital and integral part of the Restoration political settlement.[12] The basis of the church settlement was the 1662 Act of Uniformity. Nearly a thousand ministers (perhaps a sixth of the total) gave up their livings for reasons of conscience, and in all over two thousand clergymen and teachers were displaced or ejected between 1660 and 1662. It was said of Timothy Wood, for instance, that[13]

> He was one of three in these Parts, who could not imagine the Act of uniformity had been so high, but that it might have been Passable: But upon search, they found the Ford too deep, they could neither Wade it, nor Swim it.

The next ten years saw the enactment by the Cavalier Parliament of a series of penal laws, the so-called Clarendon Code, which were intended to destroy any opposition to religious conformity.[14] The Restoration religious settlement itself was clearly politically inspired. The 1662 Act of Uniformity uncompromisingly made religious conformity the test of political loyalty. And the main legislation directed against lay dissenters, the 1661 Corporation Act and the 1673 Test Act, introduced a religious test which required officeholders to have received the Anglican sacrament. They were designed to destroy the political power of dissenters, in particular the Presbyterians.

The consequences of the Act of Uniformity were to prove crucial for dissent. Had comprehension succeeded and religious dissent consisted only of the sects after 1660, it is unlikely they could have survived, except like the early separatists as a semi-underground movement. Instead the ejected ministers and their lay supporters formed the most important body of dissenters, joining the separatists already outside the Established Church, to create a force that because of their numbers and standing in society could not be ignored, and which even during the most intensive periods of persecution could only be suppressed, not eradicated. The issue at the Restoration had been

not toleration -- the political events of the previous twenty years had made that impossible -- but comprehension. Paradoxically, because of the interests of both Charles II and James II, it was their attempts at toleration, and in particular one open to Catholics, which in practical terms proved more successful.

If an account of the religious history of the country during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is essential in understanding why toleration in 1689 in England was so limited and ungenerous, of more immediate significance for the passing of the Act was the political crisis during the last four years of Charles II's reign and the events which occurred during that of his brother James II.

The years 1678 to 1686 saw the last period of severe religious persecution in England. It began with the Popish Plot, Titus Oates's fantasy of a monstrous plot to assassinate Charles II and place his Catholic brother on the throne, and ended when James II reversed the religious policy of his brother by suspended prosecutions against Protestant Dissenters. During the Popish Plot itself, the main victims were Catholics. Only 1588 (the year of the Spanish Armada) produced more Catholic martyrs than 1679. But since it had been the Whigs and their supporters amongst the Dissenters who had exploited the Plot to try and exclude the future King James II from the succession, Protestant Dissenters suffered severely from the Crown's revenge and the Tory reaction that followed the Exclusion Crisis. The Exclusion Crisis aroused fears of a return of the upheavals of the 1640s again, and the persecution which followed was prompted in its severity by the apparent threat of civil war.[15]

The crucial significance of political considerations in Anglican attitudes towards dissent is apparent from an examination of the pattern of prosecution. It is clear that the most intense periods of religious persecution occurred at times of political crisis. In the immediate Restoration period, when the survival of the new regime was far from clear to contemporaries, Quakers and Baptists suffered the severest persecution because of their former association with republicanism and their part in the disorders of the Interregnum. Although some of the more orthodox dissenters, the Presbyterians, were presented for nonconformity in the 1660s and 1670s, it is clear the main period during which they were persecuted was in the aftermath of the Exclusion Crisis, when there was a firm conviction that even moderate dissenters represented a serious threat to the political stability of the country. Certainly the radical sects, Quakers and Baptists, remained much more suspect than the Presbyterians in the immediate Restoration period, and as a result suffered the severest persecution. Thus, except at times of acute political tension, most Anglicans were prepared to

accept dissenters and even catholics as neighbours, and dissenters were normally left undisturbed in local communities, often being able to worship openly. It helps explain how dissent survived twenty-five years of official hostility.

The success of the Tory purge following the Exclusion Crisis, in removing the Whigs and their dissenting allies, is evident from the peaceful accession of James II. In view of the Exclusion Crisis James was no friend of Protestant dissenters and they continued to be persecuted vigorously. But James was without a Catholic heir, and he seems to have been determined to secure some statutory emancipation for his co-religionists before his death. In March 1686 a general pardon was granted to all who had been unable to take the Oath of Allegiance; which also included such non-Catholics as Quakers who on principle refused all oaths. A large batch of dispensations were issued on 23 November 1686, enabling Catholics to hold office without taking the necessary Anglican tests. Protections were sent to give Catholics immunity from the penal laws and to refund fines, but apart from the Quakers who also benefited from the return of fines there was as yet no question of relief for Protestant dissenters.[16] Then to the astonishment of his erstwhile Tory allies, there came a dramatic reversal of royal policy. James, concluding that he would not be able to persuade an Anglican parliament to agree to the repeal of the test and penal laws to benefit Catholics, turned to court the Dissenters. In April 1687 James issued his Declaration for the Liberty of Conscience granting a general religious toleration.

This represented a remarkable reversal of the previous policy of persecution. As late as July 1685, the celebrated nonconformist minister Philip Henry was a prisoner in Chester Castle following the Monmouth Rebellion, and in a letter to his wife he wrote, "Prepare for further sufferings, to which it may bee these are but the Preamble."[17] It is clear James II's Declaration was unexpected, both for the Dissenters and their persecutors. It was to undermine the alliance between the Anglican High Church and the Crown, that had existed since the Exclusion Crisis, and thus end the last great period of religious persecution. The transformation of the situation for Dissenters was dramatic. As the nonconformist minister Matthew Towgood wrote at the end of 1687[18]:

> A strange & astonishing providence . . . now the Broken, scattered Congregations were gathered again, & such who a while ago were constrained to sculk up & down in the solitary darksome night seasons in secret corners & caves of the earth to worship God, That did gather Bread for their souls with the peril of their lives because of the

> terrible persecution, could now go in flocks & droves & assemble by hundreds in the streets in open publik places, & in the view & sight of their enemies. . .

It was this indulgence, rather than the Toleration Act itself, which brought relief to Dissenters.

What was James's own attitude to toleration? Traditionally, he is seen as a Catholic bigot, one that threatened English liberties in his attempt to impose an arbitrary Catholic government, while others have argued that he was a sincere believer in religious toleration.[19] His two Declarations of Indulgence, the first of 1687, and the subsequent reissue in 1688, were certainly generous in terms of the almost universal liberty they offered.

However, James's motives are interpreted by historians, Protestants came increasingly to believe that their very religion was under threat. Although Dissenters took advantage of the liberty offered by James's Indulgences, they remained suspicious, both about the legality and the permanence of their new-found liberty. Their fear of arbitrary power and popery remained strong. The Leeds antiquarian Ralph Thoresby, a Dissenter, wrote that the Indulgence "gave us pease in this case, and though we dreaded a snake in the grass, we accepted it with due thankfulness."[20] No Catholic Prince since the Counter-Reformation had granted toleration to Protestant subjects for longer than was politically expedient or necessary, and to English Protestants the evidence of contemporary France was all too clear. The French Crown had guaranteed the rights of the Huguenots when they were a political force. After their political strength had been broken by Richelieu, their rights and privileges were steadily reduced, until finally, in 1685, the year James II became King of England, Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes which had given Huguenots in France their right to worship in public. All through James II's brief reign Huguenot refugees were pouring into Protestant Europe. With knowledge of the very real sufferings of their co-religionists in Catholic France, it was difficult for any Protestant to have confidence in James's promises of toleration.

The climax came in the summer of 1688. James's attempt to force the Anglican clergy to read his second Declaration of Indulgence led to a direct confrontation with the Church of England and the imprisonment of the seven bishops who led the resistance. Anglicans and Dissenters alike were persuaded by fear of the "common danger" that Protestant solidarity was the only safeguard against the popish designs of James II. And Anglicans were forced to acknowledge that any return to persecution would merely drive Dissenters into the arms

of James II. The Church's leaders therefore put in a counter-bid for the support of the Dissenters, by offering both comprehension and toleration.[21]

Prof. Speck has convincingly argued that religious toleration could only come about as a result of a change in political opinion. It was the threat of James's Catholic policies, and the fear that his blandishments might carry dissent to his side with disastrous results for the Church, which persuaded Anglicans to offer Dissenters comprehension and even a measure of toleration. After the Exclusion Crisis Anglicans had come to fear dissent more than they feared popery. It took the exceptional circumstances of the perceived threat to English liberties which a belief in James's absolutists ambitions created, to convince the majority of MPs and gentry to accept that even the sects had to be granted a measure of toleration. Thus the Church of England, which had been persecuting Dissenters since the Restoration of Charles II in the 1660s, had been forced by the Spring of 1688 to conclude that an accommodation with the Dissenters, offering some measure of liberty of worship in answer to James's Indulgence, was essential. Nonetheless, it was only a conversion born out of fear not conviction, and as the perceived threat of popery subsided following the Glorious Revolution, so did the Anglican enthusiasm for comprehension and toleration.[22]

Before a new understanding between church and dissent could be reached William of Orange landed. The invasion changed matters drastically. Most Churchmen faced a serious problem of conscience as a result of the Revolution. The events between 1687 and 1689 had reduced to tatters the whole Anglican view of the Church, Divine Right of Kings, Passive Obedience and Non-Resistance, and the religious settlement following the Glorious Revolution was therefore debated under very different circumstances from those when accommodation had first been proposed. It is evident that the earlier unanimity and friendliness between church and dissent in the face of the popish danger was dissolving. Nonetheless, in countering James's appeals to the Dissenters, the leading Churchmen had made offers from which they could not honourably escape. They were prepared, therefore, to modify the Church's liturgy and practice in order to comprehend moderate Dissenters within the Church, while allowing a carefully limited toleration for the relatively small number of radical Dissenters who wished to remain outside, and who could be guaranteed to reject any offer of accommodation.[23]

It is often overlooked that the Toleration Act was only one of two measures intended to establish the religious settlement of the Revolution, the other being concerned with comprehension. The

Comprehension Bill offering generous terms by which moderate Dissenters might be comprehended (or accommodated) within the Church of England was however lost, largely due to the growing hostility of many Churchmen towards the idea of concessions towards Dissenters. Only the Toleration Bill therefore became law. As a result, a great many ordinary and respectable citizens were forced to obtain their freedom to worship in public from an act intended only to offer a qualified toleration to a despised minority. It is this which in time was to prove highly significant. Had the Toleration Act applied only to a small and politically insignificant group it is difficult to conceive that religious toleration, on even such a limited basis, could have been achieved. Once the concept of the exclusiveness of religious truth was challenged by even a limited toleration, it became possible for the principle that there could be alternative views to gain acceptance.

All that survived, therefore, from the earlier Anglican alliance with dissent was the Toleration Act. It is clear that the Act was a modest document. The official title describes its purpose: 'An Act for Exempting their Majesties Protestant Subjects, Dissenting from the Church of England, from the Penalties of certain laws.'[24] It did not remove but merely suspended the earlier laws against religious nonconformity. Those who qualified themselves under the provisions of the Act were given liberty from the statutes which otherwise remained in force. Dissenters who took the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, and made the declaration against transubstantiation, were allowed to register their own meeting-places for public worship. Ministers, in addition, had to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, though they were excused those directly concerned with Anglican church-government. Baptists were exempt from that part of the 27th Article concerning infant baptism, and Quakers from taking the oaths and from certain other declarations over which they scrupled. Such scruples were of course fundamental to the beliefs of the two denominations, and the absolute minimum in terms of the concessions necessary to make the Act acceptable to either sect.

It is important to be clear about the extent of the toleration being offered. The Act was not based on the principle of a general toleration, but granted only a limited exemption from the statutory penalties under carefully defined conditions. In fact, the only freedom allowed was from the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England. Those who wished to benefit from the Act were still required to conform to the doctrines of the Established Church. The main group excluded were Catholics; Unitarian or Socinian ideas, though found from the Reformation and earlier, were still of only minor significance. The question of toleration for Unitarians became a live issue only in the second half of the eighteenth century when Unitarianism began to

take root amongst the Presbyterians, the wealthiest and most influential group of the Dissenters. Consequently, because most Dissenters enjoyed religious toleration, in reality if not in law, Rational Dissenters and Unitarians were to play a crucial role during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in obtaining a general religious toleration.[25]

Dr. Nuttall has drawn attention to the welcome given by non-conformist ministers to the passing of the Act, their relief at finally being granted a liberty to worship in public by law after more than twenty-five years of persecution.[26] It must however, be made clear that the response of Dissenters to the Act was far from unqualified. The Independents, Baptists, and Quakers had never hoped for more than the freedom to worship; Presbyterians on the other hand had had their hopes of comprehension dashed.[27] Presbyterian disappointment with the settlement is therefore not surprising in view of the loss of Comprehension, but it is clear that even those denominations who desired toleration had grave reservations about the terms on which it was being offered.

The operation of the Act fell into two parts: the registration of meeting-places by individual congregations, and the qualification under the Act required of ministers or preachers. It was the subscription demanded of ministers which caused the greatest difficulty. In July 1689, a group of Baptists in Buckinghamshire debated "whether wee shall Embrace the Termes offered us in order to [enjoy] our Christian Libertyes," and they came to the conclusion that we cannot "Approve of & subscribe to the Articles menconed in the said Act." The problem of subscription to the Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles was to provoke a considerable controversy amongst Baptists in the Country, which a public debate held by the local congregations was unable to resolve.[28] Some Baptists were not prepared to compromise in any respect, even if it meant they could not obtain any legal recognition of their liberty, while others felt the security offered by the Act overcame any scruples about acknowledging the authority of the Church of England that subscription to their articles implied. But for many Baptists subscription to the Church of England's Thirty-Nine Articles represented a fundamental breach of the principle of separation from a corrupt church upon which they justified their separation. This aspect of the Act, its acceptability to the Dissenters it was supposed to relieve, has been ignored by historians.

In contrast, Quakers suffered none of these difficulties over subscription since they did not have a formal ministry. The Act also paid sufficient regard to Quaker sensibilities over oaths and subscriptions. After some initial hesitation it is clear that they were the most enthusiastic amongst the denominations in taking advantage of the

Act to register their places of worship.[29] In part this was a reflection of their organisation. Once the Yearly Meeting had decided something should be done, the system of oversight generally ensured that it was. But it is also clear that Quakers welcomed the Act not least for the official recognition and acceptance it finally granted them in law.[30]

The surviving statistics for the registration of meeting houses help illustrate these points. Confirmation of the different attitudes towards registration by individual denominations is available from the study of individual counties. One of the most detailed studies of the pattern of registration at Quaker Sessions has been made for Warwickshire. In 1689 Quakers registered all but one of their fourteen meeting-houses. This compares with the reluctance of the Particular Baptists, who in 1686 only registered one of their five meetings.[31]

The large number of enrolments at quarter sessions in 1689 and 1690 for each county where the returns survive, is evidence of the willingness of many congregations to take advantage of the liberty granted by the Act, even if it is apparent from other sources that certain denominations were extremely reluctant to make the necessary declarations for doctrinal reasons (see Fig. 1-3). It is difficult to identify any significant differences between counties in the pattern of registration since much of the variation clearly relates to local factors. Nonetheless, the remarkably high level of registration for Somerset in 1689 can be explained as a reaction by Dissenters in the country to the severe persecution they suffered as a result of the Monmouth Rebellion (see Fig. 3). After the initial flood of registrations in 1689 and 1690, as Dissenters took steps to register their existing meeting-places or took advantage of the liberty offered by the Act to formally establish a congregation, the number of applications fell to more modest levels. Enrolments in subsequent years included a number made by new congregations registering a building for the first time, but also during the first few decades after toleration was granted, the registration of new meeting-houses as congregations acquired the resources and organisation to replace their earliest buildings and places of worship, as well as buildings for occasional services, such as a prayer meetings or funerals.

Within a couple of years of the Act being passed a surprising number of congregations had built their own meeting-houses. They were, however, mainly the wealthier meetings in the larger towns. In Nottingham the Congregationalists laid the foundations for a new meeting-house in the Castle Gate on 29 May, only five days after the Toleration Act became law, and indeed the land for the building had been acquired by a member of the congregation before the Act had even been finally passed. The deed of release was executed on 10 May,

though the trustees were not appointed until December. The Presbyterians at Nottingham were not as quick as the Congregationalists, but they also built a new meeting-house within the two years of toleration being granted. They purchased land on the High Pavement, one of the principal streets of the town, in 1691.[32]

Nonetheless, the apparent confidence in the future of toleration that evidence for the building of a new meeting-house suggests is misleading. Toleration after 1689 was not irreversible, and it is clear that until the Hanoverian succession in 1714 Dissenters had serious reservations about their continued liberty, particularly as a result of the growing political conflict during Queen Anne's reign. There is clear evidence of such concern from the locations chosen by Dissenters when they built new meeting-houses. Although the Presbyterians in Nottingham erected their meeting-house on the High Pavement, one of the principal streets in the town, it did not front the street but was concealed behind other buildings. Castle Gate Meeting was also concealed behind a row of buildings fronting the street. Early eighteenth-century maps show that Dissenters in other towns took similar precautions or built their meeting-houses in isolated locations. For example at Leicester in 1708 the Presbyterians purchased an orchard in an undeveloped part of the town near the Butt Close. Dissenters in Leeds, Northampton and other towns also located their meetings in outlying parts of the town.[33]

Some of the most interesting evidence comes from clauses inserted in the trust deeds of these new meeting-houses, particularly those built at the end of William's or in Queen Anne's reign. These clauses contain provisions that, in the event of the Toleration Act being withdrawn and nonconformist worship being proscribed, the buildings should be sold and the proceeds used for the benefit of the poor. Some deeds also provide more direct evidence of the hostility towards Dissenters. The trust deeds for the Presbyterian Meeting at Macclesfield referred to the damage to the chapel glass caused by the 'Rable.' It is also clear that even as late as 1695, the Presbyterians had not given up all hope of Comprehension. At Chesterfield, the trust deeds specified that if dissenting ministers were readmitted to the established church then the property was to revert to the original donor's family. A similar clause survives for both the Presbyterian and the Independent meetings in Hull.[34]

Further evidence of nonconformist unease comes from the surge in applications for the registration of meeting-houses in the last years of William's reign and the first years of Queen Anne's. Barton Park Meeting-House in Leicestershire, according to the eighteenth-century historian of the county, was built by the lord of the manor, John Hood,

in about 1694, though it was not registered at quarter sessions until the Epiphany Session in 1702. Delays in registration do not appear to have been uncommon; indeed, a number of congregations appear to have neglected to register their meeting places altogether. The decision to register the new meeting-house at this date, together with Hood's private house (almost certainly the original meeting place of the congregation), suggests concern over the growing political hostility towards Dissenters from Tories and High Churchmen which is evident from the end of William III's reign. It became increasingly prudent to seek the protection of the Toleration Act. The two years after the accession of Queen Anne saw a peak in the number of applications made to quarter sessions in Leicestershire and a number of other counties (see Fig. 4).[35] Registration under the Act was voluntary in the sense that there was no legal requirement to register. But failure to do so left preachers and congregations open to prosecution under the penal statutes, particularly the Conventicle Act against religious assembly outside the Church of England. Such penal laws were only suspended, not repealed, by the Toleration Act. The threat of prosecution is generally considered by historians to have been remote. This, however, is misleading. It is clear that the prosecution of Dissenters for holding meetings in unlicensed buildings was not unknown, particularly during the first few years after 1689, and again in Queen Anne's reign following the resurgence of the high church party.[36]

Nor were dissenting fears misplaced. A Tory mob celebrated the death of William III in 1702 by attacking the Dissenting meeting-house at Newcastle-under-Lyme. In 1709, the High Church incendiary, Henry Sacheverell preached his infamous sermon, *The Perils of False Brethren both in Church and State*, a furious rant against Dissenters and the supporters of toleration. Following Sacheverell's acquittal for sedition, mobs plundered and burnt meeting-houses in London, Bristol and the Midlands. Further riots against Dissenters followed the accession of George I. In 1715 Jacobite mobs celebrated the Pretender's birthday by wrecking some thirty nonconformist meeting-houses in the West Midlands and Lancashire.[37]

Even more serious was the attack upon the Dissenting interest in Parliament. The precarious nature of their existing liberties was emphasised immediately following the accession of Queen Anne in March 1702. The High Church clergy and their lay allies concentrated their efforts on attacking what they saw as two main abuses of the Toleration Act; the practice of occasional conformity (whereby Dissenters evaded the sacramental tests of the Corporation Act in order to hold political office), and the growth of nonconformist academies, which trained ministers and provided an education for the sons of

wealthy laymen. The choice lay between a strict insistence on the letter of the Toleration Act, and a charitable interpretation which allowed Dissenters to take part in many areas of public life. Grudging and partial though the provisions of the Toleration Act appeared when viewed by Dissenters, they were revolutionary in the eyes of High Churchmen. Some High Churchmen even argued that the Toleration Act was never intended to be permanent, and ought therefore to be withdrawn when the opportunity presented itself. With the Tories in power during the last four years of Queen Anne's reign, an Occasional Conformity Bill at last became law in 1711, and three years later, at the height of the High Church reaction, the Schism Act was passed to make the separate education of Dissenters illegal. Both Acts provide evidence of the fate of Dissenters at the hands of a zealous and unrestrained Tory party.[38]

Modern historians generally dismiss the Toleration Act as only offering minimum concessions to Protestant Dissenters. Although Dissenters at last received the liberty to worship in public, the only freedom in fact allowed was from the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England. Nonconformist ministers and preachers were still required to conform to the doctrines of the Church, and it is clear that the requirement to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles proved insurmountable to many convinced separatists, most notably Baptists. It is also clear that Dissenters continued to suffer serious discrimination on account of their religion. They were still subject to major political disabilities, and indeed continuing restrictions on the practice of their religion in many areas of everyday life. These grievances remained until the major reforms of the nineteenth century. There is even evidence that Quaker sufferings for their testimonies against tithes, oaths and war in fact increased following the Toleration Act.[39] Catholics, of course, remained outside the terms of the Act, and did not obtain the right to register their own buildings for worship until 1791. Unitarians had to wait until 1813 (for full legal toleration) before they obtained the right to worship in public. Catholics did not obtain full emancipation until 1829, the year after the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts.

While accepting the limitations in the scope of the Act itself, an assessment which only concentrates on the practical limitations of the Act ignores its real significance. The right to a distinct legal existence for rival religious groups had at last been acknowledged by Parliament. Moreover, the statutory freedom to worship in public offered by the Act gave a very real and practical relief. The objections expressed by the Baptists concerned the terms on which the liberty was granted, not a dispute over the value of the relief being offered. Though Dissenters continued to experience discrimination because of their religion, the

last period of large-scale religious persecution had ended in 1687 following James II's Indulgence. The religious future of dissent was at last legally secured. From their previous, often shadowy, existence nonconformist congregations had become a permanent feature of the religious life of England.

But it is the unintended consequences of the Act which proved to be the most significant. Firstly, religious ideas which had previously been suppressed could now be discussed in public by Dissenters, and inevitably the area of religious debate widened. This led to a far wider license than had been even remotely intended. If the Toleration Act led to a fundamental breach in the orthodox monopoly concerning the expression of religious ideas, then the political changes put in train by the Revolution, actively encouraged a widespread and lively popular debate in public matters. As a result of the flood of publications which followed it became impossible to reimpose an effective press censorship. Though a Blasphemy Act, intended to prevent the spread of heretical and blasphemous ideas, was passed in 1698, it remained ineffective. Secondly, the breach in the legal requirement to attend church was to have fundamental consequences. When the principle of religious uniformity and attendance at parish church was abandoned, it also became impossible, despite the requirement laid down in the Toleration Act, to compel everyone to attend even *a* place of worship. Thirdly, the use of the Act to obtain relief by all Dissenters, including those it was never intended to cover, inevitably led to a wider interpretation of the liberty it allowed. It had not been the intention of the Church to offer a general toleration, but the loss of the comprehension bill made that inevitable. There is a serious case for arguing, therefore, that the significant event of the 1689 religious settlement was the failure of the comprehension bill, rather than the passing of the Toleration Act. The Toleration Act was intended to offer a carefully limited indulgence to a relatively small number of radical Dissenters. But the inclusion of an additional two hundred thousand sober and respectable Dissenters altered the whole character of dissent after 1689. If comprehension had been successful, then a majority of Dissenters, including the most wealthy and prominent representatives, would have conformed. As members of the Church of England their political and religious aspirations would have been answered. Instead, they were forced to seek their right to worship and their political privileges under the terms of the Toleration Act. Any attempt to extend their involvement in public life had to be done within the context of the Act, and inevitably it altered how toleration was viewed. Finally, it is clear the Act was passed in a spirit very far removed from modern ideas of toleration. After a Civil War, the chaos of the Interregnum the renewed religious and political conflict over the Exclusion Crisis, and most importantly,

the fundamental change in the Anglican situation after 1688, it was impossible for toleration in 1689 to be anything other than an act of political expediency.

Is the tercentenary of the Toleration Act a cause for celebration? Historians and modern audiences are entitled to have serious reservations about the Act itself, the intentions of the legislators and its limited immediate benefits. Nonetheless, the consequences, which proved to be so significant for the subsequent development of religious freedom and civil liberty in England, can and should be celebrated.

NOTES

* I wish to thank my colleague Professor A.N. Newman for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

1. B. Manning, *The Protestant Dissenting Deputies*, Cambridge, 1952, p. 10.

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3. G.M. Ditchfield, 'The Parliamentary Struggle over the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, 1787-1790', *English Historical Review*, 1974, LXXXIX, pp. 487-90; M. Fitzpatrick, 'Toleration and Truth,' *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 1982, I, pp. 3-31; M. Philp, 'Rational Religion and Political Radicalism in the 1790s,' *Ibid.*, 1985, IV, pp. 35-46.

4. *The Harmonious consent of the ministers of . . . Lancaster*, 1648.

5. C. Haigh, 'The Church of England, the Catholics and the People' in *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, ed. C. Haigh, Basingstoke & London, 1984, pp. 201ff.

6. C.Z. Weiner, 'The Beleagured Isle,' *Past and Present*, LI, 1971, pp. 27-62; R. Clifton, 'Fear of Popery' in *The Origins of the English Civil War*, ed. C. Russell, London & Basingstoke, 1973, pp. 144-67; C. Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot*, Chapel Hill, 1983.

7. P. Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English* Society, 1559-1625, Oxford, 1982, Ch. 6; N. Tyacke, 'Puritanism, Arminianism and Counter-Revolution' in *Origins of the Eng*lish Civil War, ed. Russell, pp. 119-43; *idem, Anti-Calvinists: The Rise*

of English Arminianism, c. 1590-1640, Oxford, 1987; J.S. McGee, 'William Laud and the Outward Face of Religion' in *Leaders of the Reformation*, ed. R.L. DeMolen, London & Toronto, 1984, pp. 318-44.

8. B. Worden, 'Toleration and the Cromwellian Protectorate,' *Studies in Church History: XXI Persecution and T*oleration, ed. W. Sheils, 1984, pp. 208, 210; D.S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of Jews to England, 1603-1655*, Oxford, 1982, p. 224 esp.

9. A. Zakai, 'Religious Toleration and its Enemies: The Independent Divines and the Issue of Toleration during the English Civil War,' *Albion*, 1989, XXI, pp. 1-33; M.A. Kishlansky, *The Rise of the New Model Army*, London, 1979, p. 290.

10. C. Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, London, 1972; *Radical Religion in the English Revolution*, eds. J.F. McGregor & B. Reay, Oxford, 1984.

11. R. Hutton, *The Restoration: A Political and Religious History of England and Wales, 1658-1667*, Oxford, 1985, Part II; B. Reay, 'The Quakers, 1659, and the Restoration of the Monarchy,' *History*, 1978, LXIII, pp. 193-213.

12. Hutton, *Restoration*, pp. 132-42, 162-4, 169, 181-3; R.A. Beddard, 'The Restoration Church' in *The Restored Monarchy, 1660-1688*, ed. J.R. Jones, London & Basingstoke, 1973, p. 157.

13. Edmund Calamy, *An Account of the Ministers, Lecturers, Masters, and Fellows of Colleges and Schoolmasters, who were Ejected or Silenced after the Restoration in 1660. By, or before, the Act of Uniformity*, London, 1713, II, p. 792.

14. The following legislation was passed by the Cavalier Parliament against religious dissent: the Corporation Act, 1661, which was designed to break the political power of the Puritans in local government; the Conventicle Act, 1664, which prohibited five or more people from meeting together for nonconformist worship; the penalties were increased substantially in the Second Conventicle Act, 1670; the Five Mile Act, 1665, which was intended to prevent nonconformist ministers from ministering to their former flocks, or from gathering new congregations in towns; the Test Act, 1673, which, although intended to prevent

Catholics from holding office in government or the armed forces, also hurt dissenters.

15. J. Miller, *Popery and Politics in England, 1660-1688*, Cambridge, 1973.

16. M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters: From* the Reformation to the French Revolution, Oxford, 1978, pp. 257-9.

17. Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Eng. lette. e.29, Papers of the Henry family of Broad Oak, Cheshire, fo.13^{r}, Letter of Philip Henry to his wife, 8 July 1685; *Diaries and Letters of Philip Henry*, ed. M.H. Lee, London, 1882, p. 325.

18. [Matthew Towgood], *Ecclesiastica, or A Book of Remembrance Wherein the Rise, Constitution, Rule, Order . . .*, Exeter 1874, pp. 104-5.

19. The best recent reassessment of James is J. Miller, *James II: A study in Kingship*, 1978.

20. *Diary of Ralph Thoresby, F.R.S. Author of the* Topography of Leeds (1677-1724), ed. J. Hunter, London, 1830, I, p. 186.

21. R. Thomas, 'Comprehension and Indulgence' in *From Uniformity to Unity, 1662-1962*, eds. G.F. Nuttall & O. Chadwick, London, 1962, pp. 238-42; *idem*, 'The Seven Bishops and their Petition, 18 May 1688,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, XII, 1961, pp. 56-70; G.V. Bennett, 'The Seven Bishops: A Reconsideration' in *Studies in Church History: XV Religious Motivation*, ed. D. Baker, Oxford, 1978, pp. 267-87.

22. Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries*, pp. 167-8, 170-74, 184-5.

23. G.V. Bennett, 'Conflict in the Church' in *Britain after the Glorious Revolution, 1689-1714*, ed. G. Holmes, London, 1969, pp. 161-2.

24. 1 Wm and Mary c18, *The Statutes of the Realm*, London, 1819, VI, pp. 74-6.

25. Fitzpatrick, 'Toleration and Truth,' pp. 30-1.

26. G.F. Nuttall, '"The Sun-Shine of Liberty": The Toleration Act and the Ministry,' *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, IV, 1989, pp. 239-55.

27. See for example, Edmund Calamy, *An Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's History of His Life and Times*, London, 1702, p. 653; Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Eng. lett, e.29, Henry Papers, fo.89^{r}, Letter of Phillip Henry, Broad Oak, to his son, Matthew Henry, Chester, 1 June 1689; 'Miscellanea: III A Brief Memoir of Mr Justice Rokeby,' ed. J. Raine, *Publications of the Surtees Society*, 1860, XXXVII, p. 38.

28. 'The Church Books of Ford or Cuddington and Amersham in the County of Bucks,' ed. W.T. Whitley, *Baptist Historical Society Publications*, 1912, IV, pp. 4, 7-8.

29. See the evidence for Lancashire in Fig. 1.

30. R. Clark, '"the Gangreen of Quakerism": An Anti-Quaker Anglican Offensive in England after the Glorious Revolution,' *Journal of Religious History*, 1981, XI, p. 405; W.C. Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, Cambridge, 1961, pp. 154-60. I owe the comment concerning the importance of Quaker organisation to Edward Milligan of the Friends Historical Society.

31. *Warwick County Records: VIII, Quarter Sessions Records Trinity, 1682, to Epiphany, 1690*, ed. H.C. Johnson, with a supplement to the Introduction, 'Warwickshire Nonconformist and Quaker Meetings and Meeting Houses, 1660-1750' by J.H. Hodson, Warwick, 1953, pp. cxxi, cxxii-cxxix.

32. Nottingham University Library, Manuscripts Department, 'Records of Castle Gate Congregational Church, Nottingham' CU/D2/6-8, D3/1-3 Property and Trust Deeds, CU/S/1 'Scrap Book' includes accounts for the building of the first meeting-house in 1689; 'Records of High Pavement Unitarian Chapel, Nottingham' Hi 2 D/1/4-5 Trust Deeds.

33. 'Large Plan of the Town of Nottingham' in C. Derring, *Nottinghamia Vetus et Nova; or an Historical Account of the Ancient and Present State of the Town of Nottingham*, Nottingham, 1751; Thomas Roberts, 'A True Plan or Ground-Plot of the Antient Corporation of Leicester with the Adjacent Parts,' [surveyed 1711-12; published 1741]; John Cossins, 'A New & Exact Plan of

the Town of Leedes', 1725' 'A Plan of Northampton, surveyed by Noble and Butlin, 1746, engraved by Thomas Jeffreys, 1747.'

34. Nottingham University Library, Manuscripts Department, Hi 2 D/1/4-5 High Pavement Chapel, Nottingham, Trust Deeds; Chester Record Office, 'Records of King Edward Street Chapel, macclesfield' EUC 3/19/1-3 Chapel Trust Deeds; Chesterfield' ELD 7-9 Trust Deeds; W. Whitaker, *One Line of the Puritan Tradition in Hull*, London, 1910, pp. 74, 77-8; R.S. Robson, 'Pre-Ejection Foundations: II - Dagger Lane, Hull," *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England*, 1917, I, pp. 125-6. This section is based on a larger survey of surviving trust deeds for the period between 1689 and 1720.

35. Leicestershire Record Office, 'Leicestershire Quarter Sessions' QS5/1/1 Court Munute Book, Epiphany 1696 - Translation 1726, fo.24v; J. Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of Leicestershire*, London, 1811, IV ii, p. 804. See D.L. Wykes, 'Bardon Park Meeting House: The Registration of Nonconformist Places of Worship under the Act of Toleration, 1689,' *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* [forthcoming].

36. 'Calender of the Sessions Books, 1689 to 1709,' ed. W.J. Hardy, *Middlesex County Records*, 1905, p. 100; *County of Buckingham: Calender to the Sessions Records. I, 1678-1694*, ed. W. Le Hardy, Aylesbury, 1933, p. 389; W. Urwick, *Nonconformity in . . . the County of Hertford*, London, 1884, p. 642; Oxfordshire County Record Office, 'Oxfordshire Quarter Session Records' QSR/Michelmas 1708 and Epiphany 1709, *sv.* Jeremiah Lepper jun. of Bicester and William Giles of Winslow, Buckinghamshire; R. Owen, 'Some Details about the Independents in Caernarvonshire,' *Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society*, 1945, VI, p. 44.

37. G. Holmes, 'The Sacheverell Riots: The Crowd and the Church in Early Eighteenth-Century London,' *Past and Present*, 1976, LII, pp. 55, 59, 61-4; *idem, The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell*, London, 1973, A.P.F. Sell, 'The Walsall Riots, The Rooker Family, and Eighteenth-Century Dissent,' *Transactions of the South Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 1983-4, XXV, pp. 50-3; J.H.Y. Briggs, 'The Burning of the Meeting House, July 1715; Dissent and Faction in Lake Stuart Newcastle,' *North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies*, 1974, XIV, pp. 70-1.

38. G. Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, London, 1967; G.V. Bennett, *The Tory Crisis in Church and State, 1688-1730*, Oxford, 1975.

39. E.J. Evans, '"Our Faithful Testimony": The Society of Friends and Tithe Payments, 1690-1730,' *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, 1969, LII, pp. 114-5; A.B. Anderson, 'A Study in the Sociology of Religious Persecution: The First Quakers,' *Journal of Religious History*, 1976-7, IX, pp. 251, 260-1.

Registration of Nonconformist and Quaker Meeting-places
Lancashire, 1689-1720

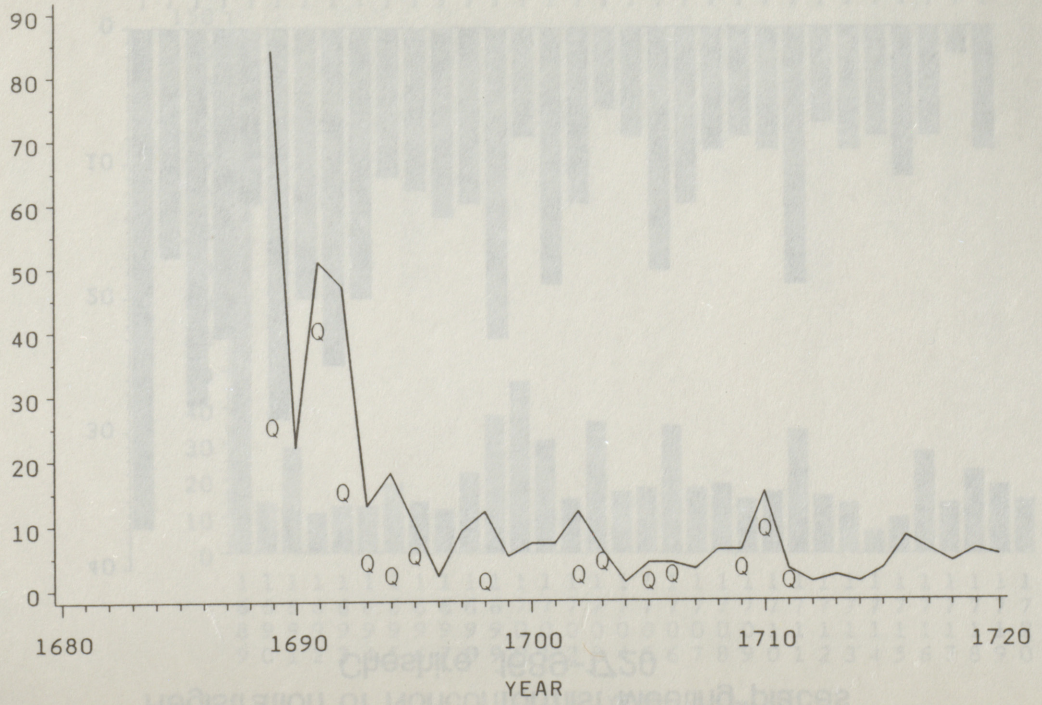

Fig. 1
82a

Registration of Nonconformist Meeting-places
Cheshire, 1689-1720

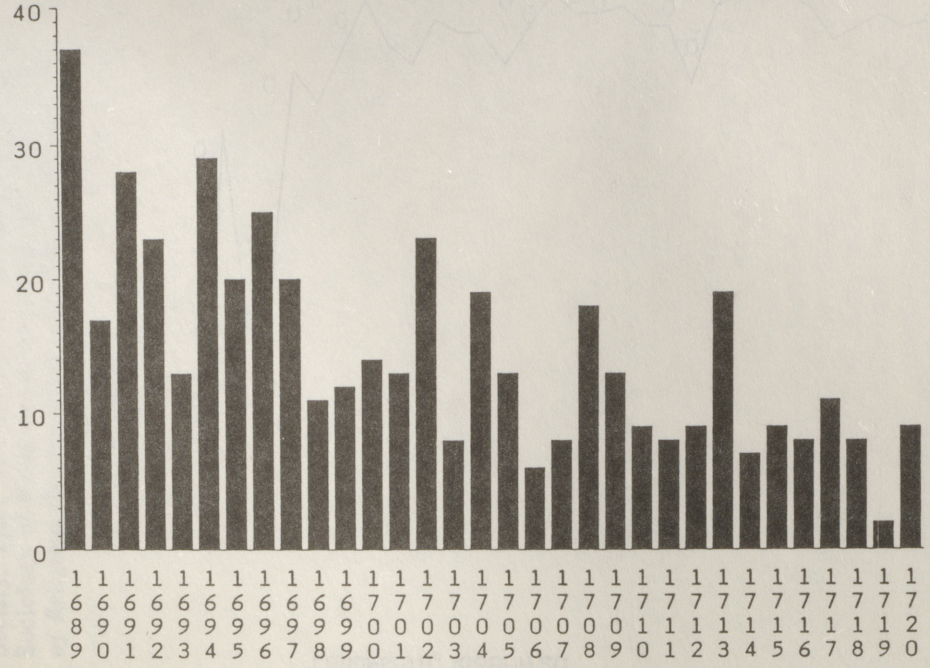

Fig. 2

82b

Registration of Nonconformist Meeting-places
Somerset, 1689-1720

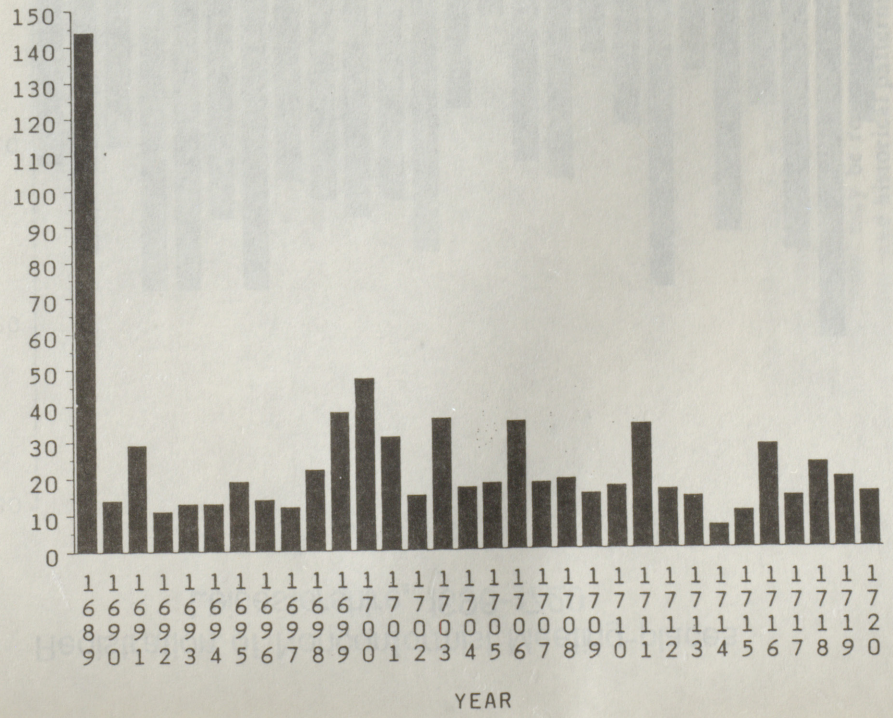

Fig. 3

82c

Registration of Nonconformist Meeting-places
Leicestershire, 1696-1720

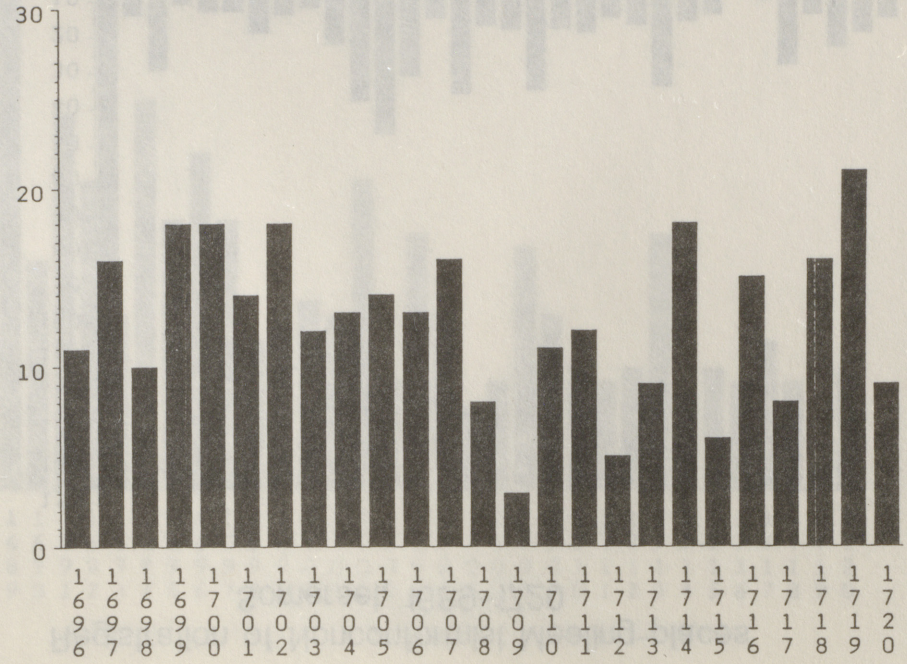

Fig. 4
82d

THE CLASSICAL INDIAN VIEW OF TOLERANCE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE TAMIL EPIC CILAPPATIKĀRAM

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1. Tolerance: a word study

> Tolerance: 1. The capacity for or practice of allowing or respecting the nature, beliefs, or behavior of others; 2. A leeway for variation from a standard, the permissible deviation from a specified value of a structural dimension; 3. the capacity to endure; especially the ability to endure hardship or pain (*American Heritage Dictionary* 1351)

The Indo-European etymon of tolerance is *tel* which means to lift, support, weigh. The word is related to Germanic *thulen* and Old English *tholian* to suffer or endure (*American Heritage Dictionary* 1545). A connection may be found in the idea that one who lifts too much or for too long must endure or suffer. The Sanskrit verb *tul*, also of Indo-European origin, means to weigh, compare by weighing and examining . . . to make equal in weight; the noun *tula* means to be in balance, be equal with and the abstract noun *tulyatva* means equality (Monier-Williams, 451). Thus the Sanskrit nouns emphasize the idea of balance, harmony and equality and therefore have a more positive connotation than their Western counterparts which denote not only balance but also endurance or suffering.

2. The classical Indian model: a reconstruction

The political realm

It may be argued that there is a classical Indian model of tolerance which is derived from this idea of balance and equality though it has no formal name and there is no theoretical discussion in the texts. Nevertheless, the model may be reconstructed from various values, philosophical statements, and historical patterns. The time span under consideration is roughly 4th century B.C.E. -- 8th century C.E.

This view of tolerance is a subtle construct which provides ways of realistically mediating various tensions: (1) among those with

political power (2) among religions; and (3) in the interface of politics, religion, ethnicity, and linguistic diversity. Appreciating this mediating model provides the key to understanding the ethos of tolerance so important for the consolidation of kingdoms and the integration of aryan and non-aryan populations. These are important items in the agenda of spreading the civilization throughout the subcontinent.

Kingdom formation is a continuous process from about the 8th century B.C.E. beginning in northern India (Aryavarta).[1] Although we cannot go into the details here, the rise of kingdoms creates dramatic oppositions between violence and nonviolence, plurality and unity, group solidarity and individualism, hierarchy and equality. In Aryavarta, the rise of kingdoms is accompanied by religious developments to escape or to mediate the various oppositions of the day and to create order and harmony.[2]

Such developments, however, introduce a new set of oppositions. Accordingly, one may speak of Brahmanism's sacramentalization of violence (witness rituals such as the horse sacrifice or *aśvamedha*, and the battle itself as a *yajña*) yet its acceptance of the concept of nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*).[3] Jainism, by contrast, initially postulates absolute nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*) but in later times has to make concessions to the political realm and power based on military might.

The emergent classical model of tolerance is indebted to the concept of a 'middle way,' especially as extended to more general societal concerns.[4] The middle way establishes nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*), harmony, and social justice within the kingdom but allows the king to exercise violence outside the realm in his role as a "world" conqueror (*cakravartin*). While Aśoka supposedly gives up his aggression,[5] later kings make a distinction between aggression to expand the kingdom but pacification to consolidate it.[6] Thus, the separation of spheres -- *outside* and *inside* the kingdom -- is a way to deal with the paradox of violence and nonviolence as well as aggression and tolerance on which the very notion of kingdom is predicated.

But even the king's violence to conquer territory and to fulfill his agenda of being a *cakravartin* has critical limits. According to Kautilya's concept of *dharmavijaya* in the *Arthaśāstra*, a king, when he defeats another, does not kill him. The new relation is based on a hierarchy determined by power but cemented, so to speak, by peaceful and diplomatic relations (Dikshitar 1987, 81). With this relation defined, the sovereign king recognizes the right of a new constituency to exist and maintain a large measure of independence.[7] In short, the model of tolerance is extended to the new territory. The new group, in turn, gives

its loyalty to the sovereign, who has shown generosity to its defeated king.

This position is preeminently pragmatic. It recognizes that being a king or emperor is based on desire for power and expansion. At the same time a successful king has to make sure that the various groups within his realm are loyal and cooperative. The best way to ensure that the ruler is respected is for the ruler to respect the former ruler and various groups within his realm and to give them a sense of identity with the larger political realm. They, in turn, will respect the ruler. Such reciprocal respect makes social harmony possible.[8] While the king must occasionally wield his stick (*daṇḍa*) to ensure justice,[9] his task is much easier with loyalty and cooperation. The king's support of various collectivities, however, has its limits; it is never to be at the expense of the stability of the realm. But the king's exercise of power within his realm also has its critical limits. A tyrannical king can be deposed by the people.[10] Then, too, the king must not show extreme favouritism much less extreme punishment to any one group; this would engender a sense of relative deprivation or the perception of being an injured party.[11] If the model of tolerance in classical India is not obvious and must be extracted and tentatively reconstructed, it is because it has become embedded in the culture itself and seems completely natural. It has become part of an ethos. When such an ethos exists, of course, it becomes difficult to resolve serious conflicts should they arise, even though courts of justice not to mention the king exist to resolve disputes.[12] Conflicts seem to rupture existence itself.

The religious realm

If the dialectic of violence and nonviolence is reconciled by the ideal of the *cakravartin* and so contributes to the model of tolerance, the dialectic posed by truth and tolerance, too, has its classical resolution which contributes to the model.[13]

From about the eighth century B.C.E., there develops an implicit correlation among (1) the idea of omnipotent kings, (2) supreme gods or radical transcendence, and (3) religions advocating ultimate truth. It is not coincidental, I think, that political and religious ferment in north India from this time is related to such concepts (e.g. Viśvakarman, Prājapati and Brahmā as supreme gods; *nibbāna*, *mokṣa*, and *kaivalya* as radical transcendence of the human condition, and *sacca/satya* as ultimate truth in the various scriptures.

Because each religious movement has its own view of ultimate truth, it is eager to share this view with others. Polemics and proselytism are hallmarks, for example, of early Buddhist texts such as *Ambhaṭṭa Sutta*, *Sutta Nipāta*, and *Brahmajāla Sutta* of the Pāli Canon. The former castigates the Brahmans as arrogant, concerned with racial purity, and immoral because they perform animal sacrifices. The next gives a satirical description of the Brahmans as materialistic. And the latter purports to describe all the religious and philosophical theories of the day. It then goes on to describe them as a net or trap which can be circumvented only by the Buddha's *dhamma* or teaching which is the guide to truth and the experience of liberation. From the time of the Buddha himself, these teachings are propagated by monks and nuns. A strident tone, if not a missionary stance, occasionally occurs.[14]

Castigation of the Brahmans can also be detected in early Jaina texts (Jha, 20). And Jaina monks and nuns preach and try to convert others to their perspective. Even the Brahmans promote their promoted their view of truth. According to an observation reputed to be that of a Brahman: "Brahmins come to the absolute conclusion: 'This alone is Truth, and everything else is false'" (Rahula, 10). While the Upaniṣads and later Hindu smrti texts are remarkably free of direct attacks on Buddhists and Jainas (though the *Kauṣītaki* Upanisad does hint at animosity), we must surmise that successive reorientations of Brahmanical tradition are a response to the ongoing and not always friendly dialectic with the heterodox religions. Sanskrit plays occasionally say, for example, that if one departs from the house and sees a Buddhist, it is bad luck. This idea also appears in expiatory rules, developed by the Pūrva-Mīmāmsakas who were often anti-Buddhist: a Brahman touched by a Buddhist must be purified by a holy bath (Krishnan, 175 fn. 39).

Now, once again, kingdom formation creates a dilemma. Put simply, it creates conditions of plurality and homogeneity or equality and supremacy which lead, in turn, to the conflict of respect and conversion. Put differently, if these religious communities are to propagate their view of truth and promote certain paths to salvation, does this not deny the basic integrity or worth of other groups and challenge the concept of tolerance as respect? Already by the time of the great Buddhist ruler Aśoka in the 3rd century B.C.E. we discover some attempt to reconcile the Brahmans. Aśoka, for instance, reverses the usual order of the terms *śramana* and *brāhmaṇa* to *brāhmaṇa* and *śramana*.[15] This may be a way of giving respect to Brahmans by mentioning them first and thereby gaining their lóyalty as he tries to consolidate his empire. He does, however, use his royal power and resources for proselytism (through his edicts) and for sending

missionaries out to new lands making Buddhism virtually a state religion by the end of his rule.

With the development of the classical model of tolerance come more strategies to mediate the opposition between respect and conversion. One technique is to remain silent regarding other religions. A second is to state philosophically or mythically what may be offensive to other religions. An argument based on logic, for instance, creates distance from the immediate context: through logic something can be said to be true yet not be interpreted personally. Similarly, stories of the gods and demons can allude to truth and illusion without directly incriminating particular religious groups. Thus, silence, logic, and mythos are distancing mechanisms that operate as a form of etiquette to avoid overt clashes. Unlike etiquette, though, there is an attempt to redirect the orientation of one of the participants, albeit as graciously as possible. Then, too, the clarity of logic or the opaqueness of myth or even the wall of silence can still be interpreted by a religious group as strategy, aggression or proselytism itself.[16]

There are, in fact, two official arenas that allow for overt interfaith competition in classical India: the philosophical debate and the religious poetry contest. Each have their decorum, their umpire (*mādhyastha*) -- literally one who stands in the middle and is indifferent -- and their judge. Such court or public competitions operate much like the duel in other societies. Potential conflict is siphoned out of society by a prearranged battle of wits fought according to formal procedure; by extension this becomes a struggle for ascendency between two contending persons, groups, or ideas. It is noteworthy, however, that the Indian "duel" is intellectual and nonviolent. We are told, for instance, by Bāna in his *Harṣacarita* how Buddhists, Brahmans, and advocates of other views at the hermitage of Divākaramitra debate their respective positions in amicable but vigilant fashion.

Tolerance is also enhanced by skillful ways to relate conceptually the one and the many. The Hinduism of the classical period, for example, values both plurality (through the Vedic texts which acknowledge many deities) and oneness or supremacy (through the monistic and theistic Upaniṣads). This creates an agenda to reconcile them. One strategy, borrowing from what has been termed henotheism by Max Müller, is to admit and even enjoy plurality but prefer one thing. Closely related is the concept of *iṣṭadevatā*, that is, having a chosen or personally favoured deity but at the same time acknowledging the deities worshipped by the family or even the entire pantheon. In general this strategy is an example of *prādhānyavyapadeśa*

(pointing out what is chief, more important or essential). This cultural logic is also extended to the various philosophical systems and sects:

> There are many religions -- that of the Vedas, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Pāśupatas, Vaisnavas -- and one person chooses this path, another person another path; because of the variety of preferences, favouring a straight path or a widening, *you* are the goal for men, as the ocean is the goal for all rivers (O'Flaherty, 378; emphasis added).

An elaboration of the idea of inclusion is to view the supreme deity or Brahman as the totality of all names, epithets, embodiments, and paths.[17] A Buddhist version of this technique is found in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika* where Avalokiteśvara preaches the Dhamma (according to the needs of each) in various forms such as Brahmā, Indra, Īśvara and Maheśvara (i.e., Hindu deities, though there is overlap with the names of Buddhist figures). Yet another technique common to Buddhism and Hinduism is to see truth on two levels: multiplicity constitutes the lower level, oneness or emptiness the higher. And despite the tension between the orthodox and heterodox religions, we find that some leading Mahāyāna teachers at the Buddhist universities are Brahmans (Chattopadhyaya, 325-329) and that a number of famous Buddhist teachers are born as Brahmans (for instance, Nāgārjuna, Aśvaghosa, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Buddhaghosa, Dignāga, and possibly Gaudapāda).[18] Then, too, Brahmans are said to have built the first monastery at Nālandā and, according to Hiuen Tsang, to have helped in the reconstruction of the Vihāra at Buddha Gayā (Krishnan, 173).

> The Chinese travellers make no mention whatsoever of antagonism between the Brāhmins and the Buddhists... According to Fa Hien, Brāhmins gave gifts to Buddhist monks. According to Sung Yung, the people of Gandhāra belonged entirely to the Brāhmin caste who had a great respect for the law of Buddha and loved to read the sacred books. According to the Chinese traveller, Śilāditya (Śri Harsa), the Buddhist King, convened a general council of Śramanas and Brāhmins. He also mentions that the Buddhist monks at Nālandā studied even ordinary works as the Vedas... (Krishnan, 170-171).

We also know that Brahman *paṇḍitas* are in the teams of Buddhist scholars that go to Tibet to translate Sanskrit texts (Roerich 1949[19]). Finally, Śantaraksita (8th century C.E.), in an expansive spirit, declares that the only difference between the Buddhists and the Advaitins is

momentariness and continuous consciousness. He adds that this is but a minor defect.[20]

One of the results of this respect is that no other religious group is viewed as categorically evil. On the contrary, the distinction is between good and best, between penultimate and ultimate, between acceptance and preference or, more radically, as "one among equals." Arvind Sharma summarizes the Hindu view of tolerance as follows:

> That Hinduism, however, notwithstanding the dogmatic strand, is tolerant is a statement which has been documented so often it need not detain us. There is also not much to say on its being ultra tolerant, except to point out that one strand within Hinduism regards it as identical with its own negation. Thus it may be said that a Hindu is most a Hindu when least a Hindu: when a Hindu openly embraces the religiosity of all the religions instead of confining it to his own.
>
> However, 'the usual pattern in Hindu thought is to acknowledge parallelism rather than identity' among religions. In other words we are led back to the middle position between dogmatism on the one hand and ultra-tolerance on the other... Hinduism tends to be tolerant of doctrines and practises within it. Let this be called internal tolerance. Hinduism tends to extrapolate this internal tolerance when it comes in contact with other religions with varying degrees of success.
>
> Thus its external tolerance i.e. tolerance of other religions, mirrors its internal tolerance... the intolerable and the intolerant can only be tolerated to the point where they do not endanger the existence of the very system which ensures tolerance. In the case of Hinduism, then, while great latitude in the diversity of religious beliefs and practices may be allowed such customs as clearly offend human sensitivity must be curbed...
>
> Herein lies the dilemma not merely of Hindu tolerance but of all tolerance. The two horns of the dilemma may now be identified. On the one hand, if a religion or a political system only tolerates conformism, then what does its tolerance consist of? It is hardly a virtue to tolerate the pleasant or the acceptable. It is precisely by tolerating what would normally not be tolerated that tolerance becomes a virtue. Yet, on the other hand, if this

> tolerance of deviance from the norm itself leads to the destruction of the very system which renders such tolerance possible, then obviously such self-destructive tolerance will be self-defeating. This dilemma can only be resolved by setting the limits of tolerance at that point beyond which tolerance would subvert the very system which makes it possible (Sharma 1987, 29-32).

A yogic dimension of Hinduism and especially Buddhism is indifference (*upekṣa*) or equinimity. There are also values such as friendship (*maitrī*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) which give more positive content to tolerance as long as the state is not threatened.

The interface of the political and religious realms

The next issue is to understand how the concept of tolerance mediates political and religious arenas. Obviously, if there is an alignment of political power and a particular religion, it is possible that a state religion may be created. A state with a state religion may refuse to allow other religions to exist. It may also persecute them or, at the very least, may refuse to give them royal gifts and patronage when this has been the custom. The Mauryan Empire under the Buddhist king, Aśoka, is a case in point; it was noted earlier that Aśoka came very close to declaring Buddhism a state religion. It is striking that Puśyamitra Śuṅga of the first century B.C.E., who wrested power away from the Mauryans and revived Brahmanism, is one of the few rulers charged with persecuting Buddhism.

In general, however, it is tacitly understood that the king is to ensure harmony within the kingdom by recognizing and positively supporting and protecting the various religious groups. Such official sanction and patronage are not only a pragmatic tactic to prevent strife among the religions but also a way to maintain the continuous presence of the various religions. The latter is important, for it is thought that religious figures have a magical power which contributes to the welfare of the land from the fertility of fields to the invincibility of armies.[21] Such protection of religious groups is also important in symbolic terms, for it presents the protection of diversity itself be it also ethnicity or linguistic identity.

Thus it is recognized that the king has a basic freedom to pursue his own religious proclivities and to reward the religion of his choice as long as he maintains the royal gifts to other religious establishments according to custom. This also gives the religions some scope for

proselytism, for there is always the challenge of attracting the king and members of the royal court to their cause. Once again, however, we see that tolerance has its limits. If the king withdraws his protection or patronage, he is perceived as unjust. An unjust king does not deserve support. This point is illustrated by the story of Mālinī in the Buddhist text *Mahāvastu*. King Krki had patronized twenty thousand Brahmans by feeding them daily. Mālinī, however, had brought Buddhist monks into the court and provided them with food instead. As a result the Brahmans plotted to put Mālinī to death.

Accordingly, if the religions are free to proselytize, they must recognize the freedom of the king to listen and to be convinced of a particular view of truth. Such is the critical leeway in the model of tolerance. Often, however, kings avoid such dilemmas by giving equal treatment to all religions.[22] And sometimes the fact that different members of the royal family follow different religions or sects creates an image of royal impartiality.[23]

This general discussion may be concluded with three points. First, the classical view of tolerance is not a simple moral premise, an "ought," but a dynamic, mediating model that recognizes and tries to deal with deep tensions in order to develop a stable society. At the same time it accommodates certain inherent tendencies to aggression that lead to serious conflicts if left unacknowledged or unmediated.

Second, because most groups appreciate the value of this model and because it becomes deeply rooted in the culture's values (not to mention those of individual religions), tolerance becomes more than a model. It becomes an ethos and a feature of the civilization itself despite the rise and collapse of particular kingdoms or changes in their boundaries. The fact that there is, of course, always room to migrate outward from Aryavarta during the classical age also prevents serious conflict.[24] From this observation one surmises that when there is no more territory for religious expansion, there is the "pressure-cooker effect," that is, interreligious conflict may grow and create pressure in the society despite the fact that some steam is released by proselytism, public debate, and so forth. The ethos of tolerance -- which in the best of times is a fragile thing -- may disappear or at least change from being based on a concept of harmony to one of endurance.

Finally, it may be possible to correlate different modalities of tolerance with different historical epochs. When there is the tremendous optimism of kingdom stabilization, tolerance will be promoted as an enjoyment of variety to enlist loyalty and create balance and harmony (hence the term *tulyatva*). But if there are hard times in the kingdom or

if one group is unduely powerless and frustrated or if there are foreign invasions, then the identity of other groups may be perceived more negatively. Their existence must be tolerated in the sense of *sahana śakti*, which means bearing with fortitude or *sahana śīlatā*, the characteristic of endurance.[25]

3. The Tamil Epic *Cilappatikāram* as an Example of the Indic Model of Tolerance

In the early stage of kingdom formation in Tamil Nadu (which can be detected in the poetry of the Caṅkam Period about 3rd century B.C.E. to 3rd C.E.), the court poets (*pulavar*) and itinerant bards (*pāṇar*) celebrate the greatness of the king by singing of the wonderful variety of his kingdom. The genre of *aṟṟupaṭai* -- wherein one bard describes to another the route to a king (or chief) who will appreciate his eulogy and reward him handsomely -- occasions the graphic portrayal of the kingdom. More specifically, it describes the kingdom with reference to five *tiṇai*, that is, characteristic landscapes -- the mountains, pasture lands, seashore, agricultural plains and badlands -- and their typical human settlements, flora, fauna, and so forth.

It is my suspicion that such appreciation of variety is preeminently related to the political agenda of kingdom stabilization as promoted in the courts, perhaps with Aryan input. Kingdom stabilization is a phenomenon that is "a continuing one throughout the centuries with new areas being brought into state systems . . . a pattern which . . . [is] either repeated or modified or reorganized in later periods, but of which the constituents . . . remain substantially the same" (Thapar, 19). The purpose is to help the king consolidate his realm and therefore his power by concretely acknowledging and appreciating the various kinds of community. Because some of the poets are itinerant (the *pāṇar*), they also spread this genre of poetry throughout the land and enable various groups to recognize themselves as part of a larger realm. Then, too, such Tamil poetry popularizing the idea of unity-in-diversity no doubt is also a way to prevent racial tensions in the urban areas and rich agricultural lands, which may be occasioned by the increasing migration of Aryans to the Dravidian south.

The Tamil epic *Cilappatikāram (the Lay of the Anklet)*, of later date (sometime between the 5th and 12th centuries; in my analysis about the 9th), extends the idea of *aṟṟupaṭai* or journey to include all of Tamilnadu.[26] Kamil Zvelebil has characterized this work as "the first literary expression and the first ripe fruit of the Aryan-Dravidian synthesis in Tamilnad. . . [and] the first consciously national work of

Tamil literature, the literary evidence of the fact that the Tamils had by that time attained nationhood" (1973, 172). If we think of nationhood as a common Tamil identity that embraces an ethnic plurality rather than a political unit per se, then Zvelebil is right. It is a national epic: a piece of historical fiction situated in the Caṅkam age (although inadvertently reflecting the culture of a later age). Divided into three books representing the first three great kingdoms of Tamil Nadu (that is, the Cōḷa, the Pantiya and the Cēra), it tells a simple tale. The marriage of Kōvalan and Kannaki is disrupted because of Kōvalan's liaison with the charming courtesan Mātavi. After reconciliation, the young couple Kōvalan and Kannaki leave their native Pukār to travel to Madurai to start a new life only to face Kōvalan's unjust execution there at the hands of the king. Kannaki, who insists on retribution, and thereby protects justice, is deified in Vañci.

The epic describes a journey across the peninsula from east to west and eulogizes the ethnic, cultural, and religious mosaic: Brahmans in their fire-halls, cultivators in their villages along the great Kāveri river, Jaina ascetics in Araṅkam, and the Eiynar of the Maravar tribe in the forests. All is upbeat and positive. Even the portrayal of the Eiynars, infamous as mauraders and thieves who prey on the agriculturual settlements in prime land, are gently teased that they are becoming too civilized (they were also known to offer their own heads in sacrifice):

> The cattle-herds of the towns of your enemies are flourishing: the common places (*maṉṟam*) of the strong-bowed Eiynars are lying empty: the Eiynars of the Maravar tribe have become meek like persons observing *dharma*, and no more rob the wealth of passers-by (Dikshitar 1978, 204).

If enculturation to more humane and nonviolent values is the subtext of this epic, it is to proceed through appreciation of distinct identities. Such is the good world of Tamil Nadu.

Tamil identity reflected in the *Cilappatikāram* can be characterized as multicultural; even the Greeks are mentioned (Dikshitar 120, 376). It can also be characterized as religiously pluralistic.[27] Iḷaṅkō-atikal, the reputed author, loses no opportunity to mention the deities worshipped by the various groups or their religious customs and beliefs. The archaic Tamil god Murukaṉ is often praised but so are northern figures such as Intira (Indra), Kāma, Civaṉ (Śiva), and Māyōṉ (Krsna). Types of worship are portrayed -- the *maṟava*, for

instance, offer grain, sesame seed balls, meat and rice, flowers, incense and toddy; the shepherds give flowers, incense, sandal-paste and garlands; and the Brahmans perform their Vedic rituals. Then, too, various types of holy places are described: the "space with the tall shining stone" is a reference to an archaic megalith; the *pāvaimaṉṟam* involves an image (perhaps of Laksmī) in an open square; the *kōṭṭam* are shrines to various gods such as Civan and Māyōṉ; and holy trees are associated with Intira (Indra) and Aṟivan respectively. There are various types of religious specialists -- the Tamil *vēlaṉ* who sings of Murukaṉ, and the Jaina nun Kavunti who preaches, Brahmans who chant the Vedas, and Brahmans (probably Vaisnava or Śaiva sectarians) who dance. There are astrologers and expert sculptors in the capital of Vañci, and there are drummers who fill the air with tumultuous sounds in the war ritual.

So inclusive is the imagery in this epic, especially the religious imagery, that even modern scholars have been confused over the author's own persuasions. Dikshitar, who translated the epic into English, is convinced, for example, that the author is a Brahman (Dikshitar 1978, 76-78). The Singalese scholar Obeyesekere (1984) has argued recently for the epic's connection with the heterodox milieu through the Goddess Pattiṉi, known to the Buddhist epic *Maṇimēkalai* and well-known even today in Buddhist circles in Sri Lanka.

A close examination of the epic, however, reveals a subtle preoccupation with Jainism. The author describes himself as a prince-ascetic (*iḷaṅkō-aṭikaḷ*) at Kunavāyirkōttam, a Jaina establishment on the outskirts of Vañci. This may be a clue to his Jaina identity despite the fact that he has situated his authorship in his historical fiction by describing himself in the prelude as the younger brother of the ancient Cēra king Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ.

If this be true, the Jaina author exercises remarkable restraint. His hero and heroine, Kōvalaṉ and Kannaki, are Jainas but on their journey they demonstrate their cosmopolitan interests and their respect to people of other religions such as the Brahman pilgrim on his way to Vēṅkatam or the shepherd women dancing to Māyōṉ (Lord Krsna). The author even has such figures speak of their religion with lively conviction, which is almost a form of proselytism. Only the Jaina nun Kavunti and the Jaina figure of the Cāraṇar, however, are allowed by our author to preach in some detail about religious doctrine. The final speech can also be recognized as Jaina with its admonishments to rise above pleasure and pain, to refrain from eating meat, and not to injure any living thing. Nevertheless, the ethical precepts are stated so generally that they would be acceptable to anyone influenced directly

or indirectly by the Indic religions of Jainism, Buddhism, and Brahmanism-Hinduism. There is even an example of interfaith etiquette. The cowherdess Matari (with whom Kannaki stays briefly while Kōvalan goes to Maturai) -- knowing the Jaina dietary laws -- brings unused cooking-vessels, jack-fruits "that never flower, white-striped cucumbers, green pomegranates, mangoes, sweet plantains, rice of the first quality, and milk" (Dikshitar 1978, 253) so that Kannaki can observe the vows of the Jaina householders by preparing her main meal during the day.

Our author, the "crown-prince" (Ilaṅkō-atikal) is certainly concerned to provide every possible example of the rich diversity that makes up Tamil Nadu. In fact, it is likely that Jainism, given its long history in Tamil Nadu, may have worked hard over a number of centuries, to produce the kind of society reflected in the *Cilappatikāram*. Of course, our author can also draw on a form of Jainism developing outside of Tamil Nadu which is becoming much more inclusive from about the 5th century C.E. This is reflected in the development of the Jaina Purānas (e.g. the *Paumacariya* of Vimalasūri, c. 400 C.E., the *Padmacarita* by Ravisena, c. 678 C.E.; and the *Harivaṁśapurāṇa* and *Ādipurāṇa* by Jinasena c. 783 C.E.). In such texts, there is an increasing willingness to "arrest the anti-Brahmanical feelings as reflected in early Jaina literature" (Jha 20). In the *Paumacariya*, for example, the first Jina, is identified with the Hindu triad of Brahmā, Visnu and Śiva.(21). And Hindu names and epithets for Jina are increasingly common. In the *Paumacariya* of Svayambhū (c. 700-900), a Jaina version of the life of the Hindu god Rāma, all the popular names and epithets of the deities of different faiths and sects such as Nārāyana, Brahmā, Hari, Buddha, and so forth are used for the Jinas. Given such integration of the Indian religions, it does not suprise us to find a description of the Supreme in *Cilappatikāram* as follows:

> The All-Knowing, the incarnation of *dharma*, he who has transcended all limits of understanding, the great Friend, the great Victor (Jinendra), the Accomplisher, the Great Person (*Bhagavan*), the foundation of all *dharma*, the Lord, the All-Righteous, the Inner Essence (of the Āgama), the Pure, the Ancient-One, the All-Wise, the Vanquisher of Wrath, the Deva, the Blissful Lord, the Supreme Being, the Possessor of all virtues, the Light that illumines the world above, the great Truth, the All-Humble, the great Cāraṇa, the Root Cause of all, the *yogin*, the great One, the great Illumination, the Dweller in everything, the great Guru, the Embodiment of nature, Our great God, the One of undiminishing fame, the great King of virtues, the All-Prosperous, the great

> God, the Self-born, the *four-faced*, the Bestower of the *angas*, the *Arhat*, the peace-bestowing Saint, the One God, the Possessor of eight qualities, the indivisible old Substance, the Dweller in the Heaven, the foremeost of the Vedas, and the shining Light that dispels ignorance. None can escape the prison of this body unless he obtains the illumination of the revealed Veda proclaimed by Him who has the various (above-mentioned) names (Dikshitar 1978, 185-186).

Many of these epithet-names are very general and are used for Hindu deities as well (e.g. the four-faced one is a common epithet of Brahmā and Bhagavān is the appelation of Visnu-Krsna). That the Jaina scriptures are referred to as Veda and Āgama (both terms of Hindu scriptures) also makes the boundaries of Jainism more permeable. Thus, what starts out as a northern religion antithetical to Brahmanism and with an often harsh form of proselytism (despite its emphasis on *ahiṃsā*) has become gentle, so to speak, and a promoter of a tolerant ethos which is reflected in its expansive categories.

The portrayal of the three great Tamil kings in this epic is very much on the model of the *cakravartin*, though images of the ancient Tamil warrior-hero are incorporated and sometimes dominate the text to ensure that Tamil archaic identity is appreciated as a major contributor to the civilization.[28] The valour and fame of the three kings is eulogized to no end. And in the last book, the idea of being world-conquering is given mythic projection as the three Tamil kings victoriously battle the Aryan kings and reach the northern Himālayas.[29] That the king is also to ensure social justice and harmony within his realm is the very denouement of the epic itself, for the Pantiya king falsely accuses Kōvalan of stealing the Queen's golden anklet and puts him to death.[30] Kannaki, who first dreams about this terrible event, cries out repeatedly "See this injustice." The residents of Madurai, the capital, say that the unbending and righteous sceptre of the king has been bent by this irremediable harm; the fame of the king is lost, his moonlike umbrella, symbol of royalty, now generates heat and the sun itself withdraws. Kannaki calls on the women of the city to ensure that their power generated by being chaste wives will preserve justice. She calls on the good people who nurture and fend for children born of them to ensure justice. She cries "Is there a god? Is there a god?" The queen, too, dreams of these events.

Finally, when Kannaki goes to the palace and confronts the king, he realizes his terrible mistake. Because he failed to protect someone in the southern kingdom for the first time, he dies

instantaneously. Kannaki, then calls on the men and women of Madurai, the deities in the heavens and the holy people on earth to witness her curse on the city. Twisting off her left breast with her hand, she circumambulates the city thrice, throws her breast in the street, whence the god of fire appears saying that it was foreordained that the city would be burnt at this moment. Kannaki then orders: "Spare Brahmans, the righteous, cows, chaste women, the aged and children, but go towards unrighteous people" (Diksitar 1978, 296). After fourteen days, the king of gods comes, showers unfading flowers upon her, and reveres her. Kōvalan then arrives in a divine chariot, Kannaki joins him and together they ascend to heaven.

4. Conclusion

This discussion shows, I think, that a multicultural and multifaith orientation can form a people's identity, that it can be an official policy and a very effective one, too. Diversity can be positively appreciated. This can add to the self-esteem of different groups, allow for a sharing of resources and expertise, and promote a sense of well-being and identification with "a good land," to borrow a phrase from the *Cilappatikāram*. This analysis of the classical Indian model, especially as revealed in the *Cilappatikāram*, shows that it is quite different from the concept of the naked public square, a place that is empty of any reference to religion or religions or of any specific identity, for that matter (Neuhaus 1984). On the contrary, the square is full. It has concrete communities. It tells of people's stories. It lets us see their religions and worldviews and does not hide what is most important behind a veil of privacy. There is a limit, however, to such diversity: all must be loyal to the land and maintain the polity. Just as protection of diversity is a cultural agenda, so there must be an enormous cultural attempt to foster unity. It cannot be assumed or left to the vagaries of history.

It is recognized, moreover, that language is central to a nation's identity. Pure Tamil language is eulogized in the Caṅkam literature and epics such as *Cilappatikāram*; an effort is made to prevent the language from becoming polyglot with immigration. Immigrants to Tamil Nadu, and there are many in the classical period, willingly integrate into the Tamil milieu; they, too, become poets and literary figures in their adopted language thereby contributing to national integration. They continually voice their pride in Tamil. This plays no small part in the receptivity of the proud Tamils to large scale immigration. This does not mean, however, that the northern immigrants always give up their languages. The Jainas and Buddhists

in Tamil Nadu maintain their Sanskrit and Prakrit, the lingua francas of the Indian subcontinent and the intellectual world; some continue to write philosophy in these languages but not at the expense of Tamil (which is now recognized as one of the great classical languages of the world). Then, too, immigrants to Tamil Nadu quickly learn what is important to Tamil identity. Even when they do not agree with the customs they find (some, we recall are quite horrific such as the head sacrifices of the Eiynar), they gain the confidence of the people through a stance of initial respect and quietly work toward transformation, thereby contributing to the development of the civilization. Tolerance is fostered through knowledge and dialogue. We are reminded here of *Cilappatikāram's* example of the shepherd woman, probably illiterate, who still knows enough about the religious customs of others that she can take the initiative and provide the right utensils and food at the right time for her Jaina guest. Tolerance is also fostered through justice. As in the Sanskrit term *tulyatva*, harmony must be intimately related to equality and social and economic justice. Just as Kannaki galvanizes the people of Madurai against injustice, so everyone must join forces against injustice.

If in the early history of a reform religion -- especially in its formative period -- other religious groups are criticized, then the development of a model, etiquette and ethos of tolerance will be much more difficult. Still, this discussion indicates that it can be done. Buddhism seems to have been less critical in the classical period, though such tolerance later disappears when there are other social pressures. Jainism, at least as reflected in the *Cilappatikāram*, which may be a reflection, in turn, of a particular Tamil ethos, is a good example of how a reform religion can improve its relationships and positively champion tolerance. While it seems that this *esprit* does not last into the mediaeval or *bhakti* period, it may well be that there is a different group of Jainas of a more proselytizing character that have come to the south. Then, too, there is the pressure-cooker problem. One of the major problems with the classical Indian model of tolerance is that there are few mechanisms for conflict resolution. After tensions mount with the pressure cooker effect and the advent of Islam, there are few ways to solve problems. This has given rise to modern problems of communalism and violence.

Some of these remarks may seem commonplace. I think, however, that the classical Indic model of a multicultural and multifaith society is not commonplace and deserves our attention as do any other models of tolerance in the past or present that help us chart the future for today's pluralistic societies.

NOTES

1. For discussion of various theories regarding early state formation in India see Romila Thapar's *From Lineage to State: Social Formations in the Mid-First Millennium B.C. in the Ganga Valley* (1984). Thapar examines four different contexts: "the Rg Vedic and Later Vedic societies of the Indo-Gangetic watershed and the western Ganga valley as well as the *gaṇa-saṅgha* system and the emergence of monarchies in the middle Ganga valley" (14). She sees these as the prelude to the emergence of the complex state systems of the Nandas and Mauryas.

2. The mid-first millennium B.C.E. witnessed the development of the speculative Upaniṣads and the advent of Buddhism and Jainism which introduced criticisms of existing Brahmanical society and religion and proposed reforms and solutions.

3. J.C. Heesterman explores the conflicting norms of sacrificial violence and *ahiṃsā* (which he sees as a common Indian movement shared by Brahmanism, Buddhism and Jainism). He argues that the archaic Indo-European traditions of (1) warriors raiding for pastures and cattle in one part of the year when they must refrain from meat consumption and (2) the end of the raiding period which is celebrated with sacrifice, the advent of the peaceful agricultural season, and the eating of meat are an ancient alternation. Remnants of this are found in Vedic rituals with their patterns of alternating phases of vegetarianism during preparation or *dīkṣā* (which may last up to one year) and meat-eating after the sacrifice. The ritual replacement of the archaic raids meant that Vedic rituals were "divorced from society and set apart in a transcendent world of their own" 126. While there were efforts to reduce the violence of the killing, it remained a killing. The unresolved tension, argues Heesterman,

> . . . led to an irreversible bifurcation that pitted the world renouncer against the worldly householder and sacrificer. . . . The clear-cut and absolute opposition between the worldly and the sannyasic modes of life created, however, its own irresolvable problem. As against this absolute break the Veda and its ritual maintained the unresolved tension of the paradox. Perhaps it is precisely in this unresolved paradox that the pivotal and

enduring importance of the Veda and its ritual are situated. The point is that Vedic ritual, though desocialized and set apart in its own transcendent sphere, still recognizes and assigns a place, albeit a reduced and strictly controlled one, to mundane interest, conflict and violence. This paradoxial double orientation may well be decisive. Even if not practised, the Veda is there, in its full scriptural authority, to hold out to man the promise of access to transcendence without demanding him to break away from his own world. In this way we can perhaps understand that the Veda is central to the dharma, but equally that it is there as a sign of contradiction. At the heart of the dharma that propounds *ahiṃsā* the Veda holds on to sacrifice. It would be unsatisfactory to view this as a meaningless survival. Invested with the transcendent authority of the vedic injunction sacrifice defies human order and logic. The transcendent contradicts and breaks open all order. For the same reason the ideal and universal order of dharma must acknowledge and admit to its centre its own contradiction, 1984, 126-127.

4. At the time of the Buddha there are clan oligarchies such as the Vajjis and the Mallas and monarchies such as Magadha and Kósala. The *Dīgha Nikāya* of the Pāli canon describes how the Maha Sammata was chosen by the whole people to censure and punish wrong doers but also to charm others by *dharma*. In the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (2.141) Buddha says that his body is to be treated like that of a supreme emperor. The *Maitrī Upaniṣad* (1.4) uses the term *cakravartin* to refer to several kings who became ascetics. Kautilya uses the term in his *Arthaśāstra* (c. 300 B.C.E.) to refer to the king's power from the Himālaya mountains to the sea. This may be a reference to Candragupta, the first Mauryan king.

The last Mauryan king Aśoka also of the third century is described as a *cakravartin*. Legend has it that he converted to Buddhism after a particularly bloody campaign in Kaliṅga. In any case, the inscriptions on the rock edicts reveal that he had

"an intense feeling of responsibility for the welfare of his subjects, and indeed for the welfare of all humanity; and a very strong moral purpose. . . . His constant propaganda must have done much to promote the principles of nonviolence (*ahimsā*) and vegetarianism. . . . The legal system was made more just and less oppressive. . . ." (Basham 469). Nevertheless, there is a clear hint of the iron fist in the velvet glove: "'The Beloved of the Gods' [Devānampiya, a Mauryan royal title] will forgive as far as he can, and he conciliates the forest tribes of his dominions; but he warns them that there is power even in the remorse of the Beloved of the Gods, and he tells them to reform, lest they be killed" (Basham 467-468).

"In the *Mahāvagga* . . . Buddha says 'I am a king, an incomparable, religious king (dharmarāja); with justice (dhammena) I turn the wheel, a wheel that is irresistible.' Here the idea of the secular cakravartin is carried into the moral and spiritual sphere" (Kane 3:66). Later Buddha is imaged as a king. There are Buddhist myths of the ruler as a pacifying leader whose power is embodied in his unifying skills: the universal monarch turns the wheel of righteousness throughout the whole world. In sum the ideal of the *cakravartin* seems to embrace both the imperial ideal of empire and the ideal of righteous rule. It becomes common to all views of Indian polity and inspires rulers throughout the subcontinent in later ages. For one Brahmanical view of kingship see *Mahābhārata* Śāntiparvan 59 which describes the degeneration of *dharma*, how the *rsis* come to instruct a man in *dharma* and *dandaniti*, and how the people are so pleased by him and his protection, that he is called *rājan* and henceforth has dominion over others (rather than just being a "chief among equals" as in the earlier tribal society). (Śāntiparvan 67, by contrast, is more like a contract or bribe to entice someone to become ruler and prevent the anarchy that occurs when big fish eat little fish.")

5. Aśoka argued (after his conversion) that the duty of the king was not to expand territory per se but to raise the ethical level (by promoting Buddhism) and to rule by moral power rather than coercion.

6. Sometimes, however, the Smṛtis discourage outright conquest.

7. The king is also to tolerate various customs. According to the *Mahābhārata* (Śāntiparvan 261.17) *na hi sarvahitah kaścidacarah sampravartate* (there is no practice that is done which is beneficial to everyone). "Bṛhaspati advises the king to keep

intact the customs of countries, castes and families that have been long in vogue in them and states that otherwise the subjects become irritated and disaffected and there is loss of wealth and army" (Kane 3:861). Manu says "(A king) who knows the sacred law, must inquire into the laws of castes (jāti), of districts, of guilds, and of families, and (thus) settle the peculiar law of each" (Bühler 260). Yajñavalkya "laid down that when an Indian king reduced a kingdom to subjection, it was the conqueror's duty to honour the usages, the transactions and family traditions of the conquered country and to protect them" (Kane vol. 5 pt. 2, 1011).

8. According to some texts the king is described as the servant of the people. He is to protect and please his subjects (*Arthaśāsatra* I.19) and be like a father to them.

9. The power of punishment is necessary to prevent the strong from abusing the weak: it should be appropriate to the fault committed (Manu 7:16-22). Manu (8:128) also says "A king who punishes those who do not deserve it, and punishes not those who deserve it, brings great infamy on himself and (after death) sinks into hell" (Bühler 276).

10. Kane (3:96-97) notes various kinds of checks and balances. There are exhortations that the king not give way to wrath and that he respect and uphold *dharma* or righteousness. It was said that *danda* or punishment personified as a Deity may strike down a bad king (Manu 7: 19, 27-30). Then, too, the office of king is to be regarded as a sacred trust; the king is bound to honour the *śāstras* as sacred texts and to accept the advice of learned Brahmans and the judges and the *sabhyas*. A king who did illegal acts and wrongful punishments has to pay a heavy fine (Manu 9:243-244). And finally, according to Manu 7:27-28 and Arthaśāstra 1:4, subjects can "abandon a worthless king or even . . . kill a misguided one or tyrant" (Kane 3:97).

11. Aśoka's " . . . banning of animal sacrifice in Pātaliputra and his disparagement of useless ceremonies and rituals in the Ninth Rock Edict may have given the Brahmans cause for annoyance. As did most later Indian kings, [he] gave qualified support to all the religious groups in his kingdom, and he even donated artificial caves in the Barabar Hills, near modern Gaya, to the Ājīvikas, opponents of the Buddhists" (Basham 468). Still, Buddhism became virtually a state religion in Aśoka's later years. This may have contributed to a feeling of relative

deprivation and a revival of orthodox Brahmanism under the Śuṅgas some fifty years later.

12. There were courts of justice to settle disputes. "The chief judge declares (the law), the king awards punishment, the sabhyas examine the dispute, smrti (dharmaśāstra) lays down the rule of decision, the success (of one party or the other) and the punishment; . . ." (Kane 3:278). There were also tribunals and village councils, corporatons, and assemblies which had various powers to arbitrate.

13. One of the three greatest qualities of a king is truth. The king ideally is to be a royal sage (*rajarsi*), for *dharma* is none other than truth.

14. While there is no explicit idea of conversion, there is the concept of following the teachings of the guide; taking the triple refuge of the Buddha (i.e. refuge in the Buddha, the *dhamma* or teaching, and the *sangha* or monastery) is a case in point. Even though the terms Bauddha, Jaina, and Hindu are late, the idea of different views (*darśanas*) and the distinction of orthodox (*āstika*) and heterodox (*nāstika*) is relatively early. Pānini (ca. 4th century B.C.E.) refers to the *āstika* (as the theists) and the *nāstika* as the Natthikaditthi; By the time of Manu, *āstika* has come to mean those who accept the authority of the Veda and *nāstika* those who reject it (Sharma; forthcoming). Then, too, Buddhists and Jaina monks and nuns preach. Aśoka sends Buddhists to the hinterlands to spread his views. This means that proselytism is central to these religions. Consequently, they may be termed missionary religions. Gradually Brahmanism adapts to this proselytising trend with the development of the sects Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism which after the first century C.E. gradually spread throughout the subcontinent as a way to promote 'Hinduism.'

This competitive dimension is often ignored in scholarship. Y. Krishan, for instance, in an article called "Was there any conflict between the Brahmins and the Buddhists?" states

> At the outset, it may be pointed out that evidence of Buddhist-Brahminical conflict is extremely tenuous in Sanskrit literature. In such a vast literature extending over 1500 years, only a few such references can be traced. On the contrary, absence of any

particularly anti-Buddhist or anti-Brahminical feeling in the literature is significant" (167).

Krishnan goes on to provide examples of how the Brahmans in the Nikāyas are considered superior to ordinary men, how they are referred to respectfully, how the Buddha himself was said to have been a Brahman in a previous birth, and how the Brahmans present the Buddhist monks with garments, medicines and utensils. Some of this, however, can be attributed to Buddhist polemics. The Brahmans had very high status in the society. The Buddha (or the authors of the Nikāyas) may well have wanted to increase his (their) prestige by describing how the Brahmans were attracted to the Buddha and his teaching.

15. This was brought to my attention by Arvind Sharma. Moreover, Aśoka in his 12th Rock Edict also says "Neither praising one's own sect nor blaming other sects should take place;" that "other sects ought to be duly honoured in every case;" that "concord (samavāya) alone is meritorious, that is they should both hear and honour each other's Dhamma. In the 7th Pillar Edict. . . Aśoka proclaims that he appointed officers called Mahāmātras to look after the Saṅgha (the community or body of preaching Buddhist mendicants), brāhmanas, Ājīvikas, Nigganthas and all other *pāsaṇḍas* (sects)" (Kane vol. 5 pt. 2, 1012). Kane goes on to cite examples from inscriptons from the 2nd century C.E. that attest to this tolerant attitude on the part of Buddhists, Jainas, and those sympathetic to Brahmans (1012-1014).

16. O'Flaherty in *The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology* cites many examples of militant Hindu myths in the Purānas which reflect the fear of foreign invasions, heretical sects such as Buddhism and Jainism, and loss of Brahmanical power. All this finds symbolic form in the concept of the Kali Yuga, a period of decline of *dharma*. "From the standpoint of pure common sense, the myths involving actual heresies of Buddhism and Jainism must originally have been composed with human beings in mind . . . thus a myth about mortals is framed in the pattern of a myth about demons. . . The Buddha avatar may represent an attempt by orthodox Brahminism to slander the Buddhists by identifying them with the demons: 'We may have in this conflict of the orthodox divinities and heretical Daityas some covert allusion to political troubles, growing out of religious difference, and the final predominance of Brahmanism.' This suggestion is supported by the fact that the Buddha incarnation, accomplishing the delusion of the demons, is said in many texts

to be followed by the avatar of Kalkin, exterminating the heretics and barbarians of the Kali Age; these myths presuppose a political situation in the pre-Gupta period (precisely when the myth of the Buddha avatar first appears), when orthodox Brahmins were fighting a desperate battle on two fronts, against foreign invaders and a thriving Buddhist community at home (200).

In contrast to O'Flaherty who thinks that "the Buddha avatar may represent an attempt by orthodox Brahminism to slander the Buddhists by identifying them with the demons," it may be argued, as above, that mythos is used to allude to the problem posed by the heretical religions without destroying the ethos of tolerance. After all, if the Brahmans had wanted to slander the Buddhists, they certainly could have done so directly.

17. Hence "Knowers of the truth call that--the truth which consists of non-dual knowledge as Brahman, Parabrāman, and Bhgavān" (vadanti tad tattvavido tattvaṃ yaj jñānam advayaṃ brahmeti paramātmeti bhagavāniti śabdyate). And "those whom the worshippers of Śiva worship as Śiva and the Vedāntins as Brahman" (yam śaiva samupassate śivayati brahmeti vedāntinaḥ).

18. I wish to thank my colleague Dr. Richard Hayes for calling my attention to the account of the succession of teachers at Vikramaśīla, a Buddhist university. The account contains the names of Brahmans, for example, the "*brāhmaṇa ācārya* Śrīdhara."

19. See the list of personal names in Sanskrit: some belong to Brahmans.

20. Dr. Arvind Sharma has provided this information which is found in an article called "Śāntiraksita" on Differences Between Buddhism and Advaita as Minor in the Hindi book *Saṁskṛti Ke Cāra Adhyāya* (Patna: Udayācala, 1977, 266) by Rāmadhārī Siṅgha Diṅkara. This spirit of rapprochement did not, however, extend to everyone. Kumārila Bhatta, a convert from Buddhism to Hinduism, led a spirited intellectual attack against Buddhism in his promotion of Mīmāmsā, which upheld the authority of the Vedas. And Śaṅkara rebutted Buddhism in no uncertain terms in his philosophy of Advaita.

21. "Whatever meritorious acts (such a Brāhmana) performs under the full protection of the king, thereby the king's length of life, wealth, and kingdom increase" (Bühler 237). Also see Manu 8.305 "Whatever (merit a man gains by) reading the Veda, by sacrificing, by charitable gifts, (or by) worshipping (Gurus and gods), the king obtains a sixth part of that in consequence of his duly protecting (his kingdom)" (Bühler 307).

22. The iconography of the *trimūrti* (Brahmā, Visnu, and Śiva) or *harihāra* (Visnu and Śiva) may reflect a royal move to view various deities as one and to avoid sectarian conflict by worshipping them together. Also the Kattuceruvu copper plate inscription (*Copper Plate Inscriptions of Andhrapradesh Government Museum*: see Rao 1973, 63-65)) records that Harivarma, the son of Pṛthvimūla, the king of Kaliṅga, made a gift of a village to a Buddhist vihāra, but also refers to the king as a champion of Vedic *Dharma*. I wish to thank my colleague Leslie Orr for drawing my attention to this inscription.

23. According to Rao (1973, 63-65) there is considerable evidence to support the fact that different members of the royal family have different preferences. In Kashmir, Meghavāhana's queens built *vihāras* and *stūpas*. Kings of this line were mostly worshippers of Śiva and supporters of Brahmanism, but Pravarasena II's maternal uncle built Jayendravihāra (N. Dutt's 56-57). Many Śātavāhana and Ikṣvāku queens patronized Buddhist institutions, although their kings were adherents of Brahmanism (EI 8 pp. 60-65; EI 8 p.71 (Nāsik inscription); EI 8 p. 71 (Karle inscription); Ikṣvāku queens and princesses (EI 20, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa inscriptions No. 85, 86, F). Viṣnukuṇḍin kings seem to have been Śaivites, but Parama Mahādevi, the queen of Govindavarma, made gifts to a Buddhist *vihāra*. In one of these inscriptions, the king is also said to be learned in Buddhist *dharma* and a patron of Buddhist institutions) (see Rao 63-65). In Bengal, Chitramātṛkadevi, the chief queen of the Buddhist king Mādanapāla, requested her husband to make a gift of land as *daksina* for the recitation and exposition of the *Mahābhārata* (Manahali copperplate: in Tapo Nath Chakrabarty "Women in the Early Inscriptions of Bengal" (*B.C. Law Volume* Pt. II edited by D.R. Bhandarkar et. al., Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute 1946, 353-254). I thank my colleague Leslie Orr for providing this inscriptional evidence.

24. Fission was common from the early period of state formation. It may have accounted for migration into the middle Ganga Valley. Buddhist sources frequently speak of fission among the

kṣatriya clans; some such as the Śākyas, the Koliyas and the Licchavis established new *janapadas*. When disagreements arose among the monks, the dissenters were allowed, under certain conditions, to move to a new territory. "Segmenting off provides the possibility of repeating the pattern elsewhere and thus relieving the pressure on the original group.... The frequency of groups branching off meant a continually expanding frontier and encroachments into forests and waste land. This in one sense stabilized the political situation and at the same time eased the tension arising from demographic and other pressures, but did not encourage major internal changes in the original *janapada*" (Thapar 82-83).

25. Thus, after the advent of Islam in India (and later the Western colonial powers) tolerance in the Indian sense of harmony gives way to the idea of endurance. This necessitates a different terminology (unlike the English word tolerance which has these two meanings). One wonders whether Hinduism's replacement of the view that "all religions are one" (sarva-dharma-eka-bhāva) with the view today that "all religions are equal" (sarva-dharma-sama-bhāva) is not a reflection of the real polarization that developed out of the confrontation with Islam and Christianity and their claims to supremacy and exclusivism.

26. ". . . the epic narrative is structured according to the five *akattiṇai*: the book of Pukār deals with Kaṇṇaki's agony caused by Kōvalaṉ's affair with Mātavi (the typical *marutam* theme), and the latter's love-making on the sea-shore (the *neytal* region); 'Maturai' sees Kōvalaṉ and Kannaki 'eloping' (from their ruin in Pukār) and travelling through wild country (the typical *pālai* themes), and then Kaṇṇaki waiting among cowherdesses for the return of Kōvalaṉ from the town Maturai (the classical *mullai* situation); in 'Vañci' the major events take place on the hills (the region of *kuriñci*) where Kaṇṇaki is reunited with Kōvalaṉ who takes her into heaven. These features suffice to show the amount of 'academic' structuring that has been imposed on the epic. Moreover, in a number of places the epic narrative is interrupted by purely lyrical cantos which dwell on the classical *akam* themes: *marutam* and *neytal* in canto 7, *pālai* in 12 (the *Vēṭṭuvavari* 'Songs of the Hunters'), *mullai* in 17 (the *Āycciyarkuravai* 'Dance of the Cowherdesses'... and *kuṟiñci* in 24" (Hardy 171-172).

27. Tamil folk religion, Jainism, Buddhism, Ājīvika tradition, Brahmanical religion, and Hindu sects such as Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism are all acknowledged.

28. "The valiant warriors residing in the suburbs (*maruvārppākkam*) and the leaders of the army quartered in the city (*paṭṭinappākkam*), vied with one another in going first to the great altar to make the asseveration 'May all evil to our mighty king be warded off, and may you (the Butam) stand firm on the side of those who propitiate you with offerings!' Stone-slingers, and different classes of soldiers who held shields stained with blood and human flesh, as well as lances, patted themselves on their shoulders, shouting exultingly, and cut off their dark-haired heads containing such fierce red eyes as seemed to burn those upon whom they looked, and willingly offered them upon the sacrificial altar (of the guardian deity) with the prayer that the conquering king might be ever victorious, when those headless trunks seemed to speak through the drums of untanned leather these words of thunder: 'We have given you our lives as a sacrifice: Accept them" (Dikshitar 1978, 124).

29. See Dikshitar 1978:329, 330, 339, 355-356, 364-365.

30. See Dikshitar 1978, 46, for a discussion of justice as reflected in the epic. The are Brahmans, for example, in the halls of justice (*aṟakkalam*) (Canto xxv, II. 183-94) and there are jails (Canto xxiii,1.103). The king "of righteous sceptre and a triumphant sword" is said to have "weighed his flesh to save a dove" and to have given justice to a cow. Moreover, "'If rains fail, great havoc is caused (to the country). If living beings suffer unrighteousness, widespread fear is caused. Paying due regard to the welfare of his subjects, and wary of tyrannical rule, a protecting king born of a noble line occupies a positon which is but suffering and is not to be sought after'" Dikshitar 1978, 334.

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TRUTH AND TOLERANCE: CHRISTIAN, BUDDHIST AND HINDU PERSPECTIVES

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I

In this paper I would like to examine the following issue: when a religious tradition experiences tension between truth and toleration, how does this tension affect its conceptualization of truth in terms of logic. I shall confine my examination in this paper to the cases of Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism. I would also like to define the key terms *truth* and *tolerance* for the purposes of this paper. I shall use the term truth to mean a statement about reality while admitting that the two terms might be used interchangeably and I shall use the term tolerance to mean making allowance for different or conflicting views in matters of religion without prohibition or molestation, but also without necessarily implying approval or absence of criticism.

II

The most striking fact about the three religions covered in this paper is that all of them explicitly subscribe to the unitary nature of truth and explicitly state that truth is one. The prooftexts are as follows:

Christianity -- Mark 12: 28-29:

> 28. And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him. Which is the first commandment of all?
>
> 29. And Jesus answered him. The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:[1]

Buddhism -- Sutta Nipāta: 883:

> Truth is one without a second
> (*ekam hi saccam na dutiyam atthi*)[2]

Hinduism -- RgVeda I. 164. 46:
Truth is one
(*ekam sat*)[3]

In the case of Christianity, it is true that it is God and not truth which is declared to be one but in the context of Christianity this would amount to a quibble, especially in the light of Deut. 6:4-5; 32:4 and James 2:19 etc.

III

I, therefore, now pose the problem as follows. When confronted with religious differences, how have these traditions handled them in the light of the claim that there is only one truth?

Christianity

The relevant material from Christianity on this point can be historically organized, depending on whether it belongs to the period prior to the establishment of Christianity as a state religion; during the period of its dominance as a state religion or to a period following it, namely, the modern period.

Prior to its establishment as the state religion there are identifiable elements within Christianity disposed to tolerance, notably in Alexandrian Christianity as represented by Clement and Origen. Clement accepted the position that "Plato and his followers were able to attain to the knowledge of God as Father but not of Son or Spirit,"[4] while Origen declared (*Contra Celsum IV* 16): "There exist diverse forms of the Word under which It reveals itself to Its disciples, conforming Itself to the degree of light of each one, according to the degree of their progress in saintliness."[5] Justin Martyr (2nd century) speaks in the same vein when he says: "Christ is the reason of whom every race of men partakes: and those who live according to reason are really Christians, even though they may be called atheists. Such were Socrates and Heraclitus among the Greeks and others like them; and among the barbarians [i.e., non-Greeks] Abraham, Elijah. . . etc." Again: "Stoics, poets, prose-writers, each spoke well through his share in a little seed of the Divine Reason. So, whatever has been spoken well by any men, really belongs to us Christians."[6] Similarly St. Ambrose (4th century) commented on I Corinthians 12:3 as follows: "All that is true, by whomsoever it has been said, is from the Holy Ghost", a view endorsed by Thomas Aquinas.[7]

This willingness, however, to accept ostensible non-Christians as Christians fades and then disappears when Christianity becomes the official religion of the Roman Empire. During this period truth is upheld at the *cost* of tolerance.

The situation changes in three ways with the dawn of the modern age. Firstly, there is the rise of secularism which leads to an attenuation or a dilution of commitment to creedal Christianity as truth, thereby promoting tolerance. Secondly, a greater emphasis on the ethical dimension of religion, many aspects of which are shared in common by other religions, push the truth issue somewhat into the background. But most significantly, there is also a change of outlook within Christianity itself. Professor Baum, in a personal conversation, identified three models now in use in Christian circles which are designed to accommodate non-Christians; or in other words, reconcile truth and tolerance. The first of these may be called the *inclusivist* model. According to this model non-Christians are accepted as de facto Christians either through the recognition of the universal operation of God's grace, or through the concept of a cosmic Christ or through a universalization of the activity of the Holy Spirit. Thus each member of the Trinity can be used as a mode of inclusion. The second model may be called *eschatological* in the sense that the world will be perfected with the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth through the Second Coming. In the interim we live in an imperfect world in which other paths to God may also continue to exist. The third model is the *kenotic* model. It builds on the idea of kenosis or the self-emptying of God to become human. In the context of the Christian Church this could be understood of the Church emptying itself of the drive to convert. Self-emptying would then translate into self-restraint in the matter of missionizing.

The above survey reveals the striking fact that all attempts at tolerance in Christianity preserve the uniqueness of Christianity. The basic logical divide is between truth and falsehood. Tolerance is exhibited in allowing more people to be moved on the side of truth, sometimes even without their knowing it, as in the case of the anonymous Christians.

Buddhism

When one surveys the relevant material from Buddhism one is struck by the following facts:

1. Buddha does not admit the Hindu position that there are many paths leading to the same goal. "In the *Tevijja Sutta*, the brahmins claim to have a diversity of paths for attaining fellowship with Brahmā or God. The Buddha criticises these claims on the ground that not one of them has 'seen Brahma face to face' (Brahmā sakkhidiṭṭho, D.I. 238) . . . . The Buddha, who has held this office in the past and has verified in the light of his extra-sensory powers of perception the conditions required for attaining fellowship with God or Brahmā, could state that there are not a diversity of paths all leading to such a state but the one and only path consisting in acquiring purity of mind, cultivating compassion and being selfless or without possessions."[8]

2. Buddha recognizes that some religions may be unsatisfactory rather than false. "Elsewhere, in the *Sandaka Sutta* there is a clear-cut answer to this question. There Ānanda says that in the opinion of the Buddha there are four false religions in the world and four religions which are unsatisfactory though not necessarily totally false, while Buddhism is distinguished from all of them. The word for religion here is used in a wide sense as in modern usage to denote theistic and non-theistic religions as well as pseudo-religions or religion-surrogates, i.e. substitutes for religions such as, say, Marxism, Existentialism, Humanism, etc. The four false religions or philosophies inculcating a way of life are: first, Materialism which denies survival, second, Amoralism which denies good and evil, third, any religion which asserts that man is miraculously saved or doomed and last, theistic evolutionism which holds that everything is preordained and everyone is destined to attain eventual salvation. The four unsatisfactory religions in some sense uphold survival, moral values, moral recompense as well as a relative freedom of the will. They are, first, any religion that claims that its teacher was omniscient all the time and knows that entirety of the future as well; second, any religion based on revelation, since revelations contradicted each other and were unreliable; third, any religion based on mere reasoning and speculation, since the reasoning may be unsound and the conclusions false; and fourth a pragmatic religion based on purely sceptical foundations which is, therefore, uncertain. On the other hand, Buddhism is to be distinguished from all of them by virtue of the fact that it is realistic and verifiable. Its truths have been verified by the Buddha, and his disciples and are open to verification (ehipassika) by anyone who wishes to do so."[9]

3. Buddha, in keeping with the above, accepts the concept of *partial* truth. "We can consider statements which strictly correspond with fact (as those of the Dhamma are claimed to do) as absolutely true, while those which do not all correspond with fact would be absolutely

false. In that case, those which correspond to some extent with facts would be 'partially true' (or partially false). According to this convention, all statements will be either true, false or partially true. Modern logicians have shown that a system of logic could be constructed on the basis of this fundamental assumption as well -- namely that every statement is either true, false or partially true.

It is on the basis of this convention that the Buddha characterised certain theories held by individuals, religious teachers and philsophers as being '*partial truths*' (pacceka sacca). It is in this connection that we have the parable of the blind men and the elephant (Ud. 68). The men who are born blind touch various parts of the elephant such as the tusks, ears, forehead, etc. and each reports, mistaking the part for the whole, that the elephant was like that part which was felt by him. In the same way, the various religious and philosophical theories contain aspects of truth and are based on the mis-described experiences of the individuals who propounded them, while the Buddha was able to understand how these theories arose as well as their limitations, since he had a total vision of reality with an unconditioned mind."[10]

4. Buddha does concede that things which are not true could be useful. This leads one to ask: "What does Buddhism have to say about Pragmatism? Does it uphold a pragmatic theory of truth? Evidently, it does not, since it does not maintain that all true statements are useful or that all useful statements are true. As we have seen above, there are useless truths and useful falsehoods according to Buddhism. The pragmatic theory of truth was put forward to accommodate theistic beliefs, but Buddhism does not hold that a theory is true because people like to believe it and it is, therefore, of some use to them."[11]

5. Buddha did discover a unique truth,[12] but it need not all be disclosed at once but only as much of it as the recipient can absorb. This attitude is associated with the Buddhist doctrine of *upaya-kausalya* or "skill in means" and promotes tolerance by allowing for differences in spiritual calibre among people. There are specific instances when the Buddha who denied the existence of a soul does *not* deny it in the course of a discussion with a monk, and subsequently explains why he chose not to.[13]

These points indicate that although both Buddhism and Christianity believe truth to be 'one,' this belief has been combined with a greater measure of tolerance in Buddhism than in Christianity.

Hinduism

Hinduism shares many of the attitudes identified during our survey of Buddhism. It accepts, like Buddhism, the idea of partial truth. In fact it contains *six* orthodox systems of philosophy. T.M.P. Mahadevan remarks: "Systems of philosophy arise when the doctrines relating to fundamental questions are sought to be formulated. As the inquiring minds differ in their ability to understand, so the philosophies vary. But in spite of the variations, there is an underlying identity also. In fact, the philosophical systems are like drawings in perspective of the same object. Their common object is Truth. Each of them attempts to give us a vision of Truth."[14] Hinduism also accepts the idea of partial disclosure of truth in keeping with the spiritual and moral capacity of the seeker. This idea is known as the doctrine of *adhikara-bheda*[15] and virtually constitutes the Hindu counterpart to the Buddhist doctrine of *upāya-kauśalya* or 'skill in means.'[16] But in some ways Hinduism seems to allow even more latitude than Buddhism. It accepts that truth is one but admits of immense if not infinite variety in its description.[17] It accepts one truth but again much greater freedom in the choice of paths to attain it -- including the Buddhist as one of them.[18] Moreover, field reports from India further attest to the highly tolerant ethos of Hinduism.

> Husband and wife may worship different gods, visit different temples, and identify themselves with different sects and gurus. In a large home one room may be set aside for a member of the household who has selected a special god for worship. Friendly banter between husband and wife about their different forms of worship is a frequent form of household amusement. It is not unusual for a member of the Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj, or some other innovativeanch of Hinduism to marry a more traditional Hindu. Half-serious and half-humorous conversations about "true Hinduism may be heard in Hindu households, especially at those times of the year when one member of the household is engaged in activities appropriate to a cult.[19]

IV

Now that the relevant material from Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism has been surveyed, one may seek answers to two questions on the basis of this material: (1) Does the claim to one truth by itself involve intolerance? (2) Does the claim that the access to that one truth

is only possible through the mediation of that tradition involve intolerance?

The answer to the first question is clear. The claim to one truth *of necessity* does not involve intolerance. This is clearly established by the causes of not only Buddhism and Hinduism but Christianity as well.

The answer to the second question is more complex. The greater the tradition's insistence on the sole and rigid mediation to that one truth, the greater the probability of intolerance. Nevertheless, the nature of this one truth proclaimed by the tradition can alter the situation rather drastically. In this respect, Christianity represents the hard line. Not only does John 14:6 proclaim Jesus as saying: "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me," 1 Timothy 2:5 declares: "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ." Thus there are two *ones* and the second *one* is restrictive in the context of the relationship between truth and tolerance.

Buddhism, on the other hand, seems to stop just short of such an extreme position. From the context of the last initiation -- that of Subhadda -- performed by the Buddha just prior to his passing away, the following conclusion may be drawn:

> In whatever religion the noble eightfold path is not found, in that religion one would not get the first, second, third or fourth stages of sainthood and in whatever religion the noble eightfold path is found, in that religion one would get the first, second, third and fourth stages.[20]

Thus the "Buddhist view is that any religion is true only to the extent that it contains aspects of the noble eightfold path."[21]

Thus while there is an insistence on the superiority of Buddhism, there is room left for negotiation with other traditions on the basis of its normative stance which is not tied to a person. This is confirmed by two other considerations. One of them is the implication in one sermon of the Buddha that the acceptance of the Buddhist doctrines by the Buddhists is meant to be pragmatic rather than dogmatic[22] and the other is his general counsel that the wise man does not make exclusive claims.

> The Buddha gave advice of extreme importance to the group of Brahmins: 'It is not proper for a wise man who

maintains (lit. protects) truth to come to the conclusion: "This alone is Truth, and everything else is false".'

Asked by the young Brahmin to explain the idea of maintaining or protecting truth, the Buddha said: 'A man has a faith. If he says "This is my faith," so far he maintains truth. But by that he cannot proceed to the absolute conclusion: "This alone is Truth, and everything else is false".' In other words, a man may believe what he likes, and he may say 'I believe this.' So far he respects truth. But because of his belief or faith, he should not say that what he believes is alone the Truth, and everything else is false.

The Buddha says: 'To be attached to one thing (to a certain view) and to look down upon other things (views) as inferior -- this the wise men call a fetter.[23]

Hinduism, like Buddhism and Christianity, represents a tradition with many strands. In the case of Buddhism we basically used Theravada Buddhism to illustrate our points. Here, in the case of Hinduism, I would like to use the example of Advaita Vedanta to illustrate my point that the nature of the *one truth* upheld in the system can have startling implications in the context of truth and tolerance. Advaita Vedānta, for instance, claims that "It does not reject any view of Reality; it only seeks to transcend all views, since these are by their very nature restricted, limited, and circumscribed. The pluralisms, theistic or otherwise, imagine that they are opposed to Advaita. But Advaita is not opposed to any of the partial views of Reality. An illustrious predecessor of Śaṅkara, Gaudapada, makes this clear when he says:

"The dualists (i.e. pluralists) are conclusively firm in regard to the status of their respective opinions. They are in conflict with one another. But, Advaita is in no conflict with them."[24]

Śaṅkara concludes his commentary on this and the succeeding verse with the following remark:

As one who is mounted on a spirited elephant does not drive it against a lunatic who stands on the ground and shouts, 'Drive your elephant against me who also am seated on an elephant,' because he (the former) has no notion of opposition, even so (is the case with the non-dualist). Thus, in truth, the knower of Brahman is the

very self of the dualist. For this reason, our view is not in conflict with theirs.[25]

In other words, as Advaita upholds the doctrine of a sole spiritual reality there is no other to contend with or tolerate!

V

Some conclusions may now be drawn on the basis of the foregoing analysis. These may be framed in the form of questions and answers. This technique was used earlier and may now be extended.

1. Is there in the knowledge of one truth *of necessity* greater intolerance?

No.

2. Is there in the claim to the sole access to that one truth *of necessity* great intolerance?

No.

3. Is the nature of logic associated with truth of significance in relation to tolerance?

The answer here would seem to be in the affirmative. In Christianity, there is clear dichotomy between truth and falsehood. It uses the mode of logic known as exclusive disjunction characterised by the excluded middle. So either you are a Christian or not a Christian and accordingly saved or condemned. Tolerance is displayed in reinterpreting the category of the Christian.

In both Buddhism and Hinduism, however, one can have the intermediate category of partial truth. If one distinguishes here sharply between a *mediating category* (such as Jesus) and an *intermediate category* (such as partial truth) the point can be seen in sharp relief. Now we are in a position to explain why Buddhism and Buddhism vis-à-vis Christianity are more tolerant.

Scholars of both Buddhism and Hinduism have emphasized the need to switch to an inclusive disjunctive logical mode if these religions are to be understood. K.N. Jayatilleke remarks:

> As a result of the Correspondence theory, statements which strictly correspond with fact are considered to be 'true' and those which do not are considered to be 'false.' All statements would thus be true or false. Aristotelian logic is based on this assumption alone but modern logicians as well as ancient Indian thinkers have discovered that, without prejudice to our definition of truth, we can adopt other conventions.[26]

He makes these remarks in a Buddhist context. Troy Wilson Organ writes in a Hindu context: "No one can understand Hinduism until he has entertained the possibility of styles of thinking strikingly different from the exclusively two-valued logic which we Westerners sometimes parochially regard as the thinking of all rational beings."[27]

One more question remains to be asked and answered: If it be fair to assert that Hinduism is *more* tolerant than Buddhism, how would this be explained? It seems that at least two points can be made here, the second being the one concerned with logical categories. But first the first. Hinduism allows for a multiple soteriology to a far greater extent than Buddhism, with both absolutism and theism well-represented within it. This is also true of Buddhism but to a lesser extent. The logical point is the more interesting. In Hinduism, in a sense, there is no utter falsehood. The dichotomy between truth and falsehood does not hold the way it does in Christianity and Buddhism. For instance, Advaita Vedanta distinguishes between *absolute truth* and *absolute falsehood* but it also claims that the absolutely false is incapable of manifestation or appearance, like a barren woman's son. It is only a verbal category. The world of appearance, which we may regard as 'false' in relation to truth, is grounded in reality just as the illusory snake has the rope as its substratum. In these terms absolute falsehood is not possible and even error has an element of truth in it. This seems to provide the metaphysical basis for the widespread tolerance of Hinduism.

NOTES

1. Also see John Hick, *Philosophy of Religion* (third edition) (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1983) p. 6.

2. Also see K.N. Jayatilleke, *The Message of the Buddha* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975) p. 44.

3. Also see T.M.P. Mahadevan, *Outlines of Hinduism* (Bombay: Chetana, 1971) p. 10

4. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Recovery of Faith* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955) p. 191.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

8. K.N. Jayatilleke, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 28-29.

10. K.N. Jayatilleke, *op. cit.*, p. 48, emphasis added.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 45-46.

12. Walpola Sri Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (New York: Grove Press, 1974) p. 51; Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* (translated by Willard R. Trask) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970) p. 173-174.

13. Walpola Sri Rahula, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

14. T.M.P. Mahadevan, *op. cit.*, p. 98-99.

15. N.K. Devaraja, *Hinduism and Christianity* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1969) p. 26, 119.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 26

17. S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959) p. 229.

18. P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśastra* (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1959) p. 229.

19. Troy Wilson Organ, *Hinduism: Its Historical Development* (Woodbury, New York: Barron's Educational Series Inc., 1974) p. 35.

20. K.N. Jayatilleke, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

21. *Ibid.*

22. A.L. Basham, "Theravāda Buddhism" in Wm. Theodore de Bary et al., *Sources of Indian Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958) p. 104.

23. Walpole Sri Rahula, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

24. T.M.P. Mahadevan, *The Insights of Advaita* (University of Mysore, 1970) p. 3.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

26. K.N. Jayatilleke, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

27. Troy Wilson Organ, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

TRUTH AND TOLERATION IN CONTEMPORARY HINDUISM

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One of the more frightening facts of life in contemporary India is the fairly frequent and widespread outbreak of communal violence: groups of people engage in attacks upon each other, murdering, maiming and marauding in the name of their religion. Hundreds of thousands lost their lives, and millions more lost their possessions, in the communal rioting that accompanied the partition of India in 1947. Hundreds of such communal riots have been reported every year since. Communal riots are, of course, the manifestation of the very opposite of tolerance. The inflammatory speeches preceding and the partisan reports following these events in the communal press are, again, the very contrary of truth.[1]

By introducing a presentation on "Truth and Tolerance in Contemporary Hinduism" with references to obvious instances of intolerance and untruth I do not intend to suggest the absence of truth and tolerance in present-day India but I wish to underscore the great practical importance of truth and tolerance in that large part of the world and I wish to hint at the specific forms in which truth and tolerance have to appear there to be meaningful.

In addition, I am trying to follow a time-honoured Indian methodology in pursuit of such a difficult and elusive, if important and profound topic. Thus Madhusudhana Saraswati, the celebrated 14th century author of the *Advaitasiddhi*, a work devoted to the establishment of Truth/Reality, opens his treatise with a longish dissertation on untruth/unreality. Only if untruth/unreality has been recognized as such, can Truth/Reality shine forth.

I. The Intolerance of contemporary Hinduism and the tolerance of Secularism

1. Indian society, as is well known, consisted throughout its long history of a large number of smaller, fairly closed, societies, which lived side by side, following their own specified ways of life, with limited, and precisely regulated, interaction and communication. The ancient and sacred institution of caste made sure that everybody had a place in society with well known rights and duties, thus ensuring

social stability and a measure of economic security. Although caste as an institution is specifically Hindu, other societies in India patterned themselves on this model too. Not only did Hindus treat the Buddhist, Jain, Jewish, Christian, Parsi and Muslim communities as if these were separate castes, even these otherwise egalitarian religions either preserved the caste-structure or developed similar divisions of their own.[2]

The idea of community as quasi-independent closed society has also shaped the Hindu idea of religion. Hinduism never existed as one but was always divided up into a number of parallel family traditions (*sakhas*) and orders (*sampradayas*) with their quite specific and fairly exclusive bodies of teachings and practices. Religion was always understood as a way of life. Besides ritual-mythical and doctrinal elements it comprised socio-economic and legal-political realities. Consequently, religion-based communities were at one and the same time also socio-economic units with their own legal systems and often their own political interests. *Communities* in the sense described, have existed in India from times immemorial and for most of the time they lived peacefully and productively side by side. *Communalism*, however, is, by common consent, a modern phenomenon. It brought conflict and strife into Indian society and has proved to be a major disruptive factor.[3] Wilfred Cantwell Smith has aptly defined communalism as "that ideology which emphasizes as the social, political and economic unit the group of adherents of each religion, and emphasizes the distinction, even the antagonism, between such groups."[4]

Bipan Chandra, whose *Communalism in Modern India* (1984) is often referred to as a standard work on the subject, gives a precise date to the beginning of communalism. The date is 1875, the year of the foundation of the Arya Samaj. Swami Dayananda Saraswati defined, perhaps for the first time in Indian history, Hinduism in a narrow denominational sense, setting down a precise canon of scripture, a set of exclusive rules and precepts, and rejecting on such grounds Christianity and Islam as false religions with an un-Indian ethos. Bipan Chandra puts the major blame for the rise of Hindu communalism (which gave rise to Muslim communalism) on the British *raj*. According to the time-honoured Imperialist maxime *divide et impera* the British administration of the time, fearing Indian nationalism, encouraged the growth and development of factions based on the one thing upon which Indians would not be able to agree: religion.

There may be some truth in this allegation. It will be for historians to examine this thesis and corroborate or disprove it. The leaders of the Arya Samaj, however, were very explicit about another

factor that led to the foundation of the "Ayran Society": Christian Missions in India. The Arya Samaj understood from the very beginning its task as counter-mission: not only to stem the tide of Christian missionary activity in India, but actively to missionize on behalf of the new reformed Hinduism, even to carry it abroad into the countries from where the Christian missionaries had come. The organisational structure of the Arya Samaj, its reliance on the authority of a canonical scripture, its rigid definition of membership, its proselytising drive (*śuddhi*), its regular (Sunday!) performance of group-worship, its practice of preaching and it hostility towards other religions (including its enmity towards other and older expressions of Hinduism, which it considered "degraded" and "impure") makes it a mirror image of 19th century missionary Christianity.

Hindu leaders, both of traditional *sampradāyas* and of new movements, rightly or wrongly feared that the Hindu way of life was in danger of being eliminated by an increasingly aggressive Christian missionary activity. Reading the Christian literature of the time gives one the impression that, if India was not close to becoming a Christian country, at least Hinduism was moribund and bound to disappear before long.[5]

Bipan Chandra, with most Marxist thinkers, holds that communalism has nothing to do with religion and everything with class-interests, which are wrongly or misleadingly given a religious label, referring to the well-known agnosticism of such communal leaders as Vir Savarkar and Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

I hold that to be a simplification of communalism and a misreading of the facts and of the words of the "communal" leaders. It may well be that the founders and leaders of communal Hindu organisations often were not pious and religious people in the traditional sense. People who are unacquainted with the working of organised religions, often entertain rather romantic and old fashioned ideas about what a religious leader is or ought to be. Militancy and strong engagement on behalf of a religious organisation can very well go together with a lack of personal religiosity and an absence of theological interest.

Communal Hinduism is militant, intolerant, and it is alive. Not all Hindus belong to communal organisations; in fact, these comprise only a small minority.[6] But it is a minority that is vocal and that is growing and its views and actions appear to be looked upon with sympathy by a majority. Neo-Hinduism gave Hindus the assurance of not only being equal, but superior, to other religions and races.

The *Ārya Samāj* with its interpretations of the *sanātana dharma*, the eternal truth which was entrusted to the Hindus to preserve and spread, its sense of mission and its aggressive approach to the re-conversion of Indian Muslims and Christians was the parent organisation for the *Hindu Mahasabha*, a political party, the *Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh*, a militant "cultural" association, from which again originated a host of other communal front organisations like the *Visva Hindu Parisad* and the *Virat Hindu Sammelan*. Organisationally Neo-Hinduism may have become by now as diversified and difficult to describe as traditional sectarian Hinduism. But it is united in its endeavour to win back political power for Hinduism and to not only give to Hindus a sense of identity but also one of pride and self-consciousness. It accepts as Hindus not only those who conform to the traditional criteria of sectarian religiosity, those who regularly do their *pūjās*, visit temples, go on pilgrimages, put on *tilakas* and belong to a guru's circle, but also those who -- like Vir Savarkar himself -- distance themselves from the Hindu *sampradāyas* and identify with a vague notion of *Hindutva*, Hindudom, with clearly political ambitions and socio-cultural implications.

Communal Hinduism is not apologetic about its political right-wing orientation: that, precisely, is its *raison d'etre*. It is not tolerant either. Self-assertion, standing up for the rights of Hindus, defending the Hindu *dharma*, are its essential features. The absoluteness of truth which classical Hinduism claimed to possess at the level of *brahmavidyā* is now translated into an absoluteness of truth on the level of political ideology. "Communalism" always presupposes a plurality of groups operating under such parallel ideologies and there would not be a "Hindu communalism" without Muslim and Sikh communalism. In present day India, with its overwhelming Hindu majority (over 80% of the population are Hindu), Hindu communalism is the most conspicuous. Within it the RSS with its over thirty-three front-organisations seems to really represent "political Hinduism" and to hold the reigns of organised Hinduism today. Almost everything will depend on its attitude towards India's religious and socio-economic minorities. The prospects for tolerance are not too good. The momentum created so far, the sense of power, and the persuasion, that Hindus have to organise under the political banner of the RSS in order to represent their legitimate interests over against Muslims and Christians as well as the "secularist" Government, makes RSS rhetoric and practice anything but "tolerant." Their decidedly anti-Gandhian stance absolves them from the need to argue against the reasons for tolerance which Gandhi had brought into the Indian scene more than half a century ago. The total incomprehension of the legitimate case which Hindus have in a country which was Hindu for over two thousand years and where Hindus hold

a majority, as shown by the left-wing and liberal press, does not make the prospect any better. The RSS is far too strong today to be harmed either by liberal ridicule or left-wing antipathy. From the perspective of 1989 it looks, as if the Neo-Hindu revival initiated by Dayananda Saraswati, (to a lesser degree by Ram Mohan Roy and the Brahmo Samaj), Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghose and, to an extent, Rabrindranath Tagore and other less well known late 19th century and early 20th century promoters of the "Hindu Renaissance" were just the overture for the "real thing," the RSS which is well organised, ably led, articulate and politically shrewd as well as determined. To regain the Visvanath Temple grounds, the Rama and Krsna Janmabhumi, may mean nothing to the secularized Indian, it means a great deal to the great majority -- including the Muslims![7]

2. Ten years after the foundation of the Arya Samaj, in 1885, the Indian National Congress was founded. It was a gathering of representatives of the Indian people, regardless of religious affiliation, working together towards peacefully taking over, one day, the administration of India from the hands of the British. Soon, of course, communal differences were also voiced within the Congress, one of the major complaints coming from the Muslims, about the Congress being dominated by Hindus and geared towards establishing Hindi-rule over India. These communal differences became a serious issue and the Muslim League, composed largely of (former) members of the Congress, campaigned for, and eventually succeeded in, the establishment of a separate homeland for the Muslims, Pakistan. Many of the leading early members of Congress, above all Motilal Nehru and his son Jawaharlal, were modern, western oriented politicians, who wanted to keep religion out of the play. Not only were they "secular" themselves, they saw in "secularism" the only means to hold the country together and to lead it on the path of modernisation. In his autobiography (first published in 1936) Nehru bitterly complains about "communalism rampant," quoting examples of communal rioting in Allahabad, his hometown, and what effect it had on the lives of ordinary people. He castigates politicians, who in the twenties and thirties indulged in communal politics. Nehru then held the opinion that a) communalism had nothing to do with religion properly speaking and that b) it would cease to be a factor in Indian politics if and when people's interest were directed towards economic goals and material achievements.[8]

Nehru realized that the word "secularism" had, in its Hindi translation, a foreign ring and an association of hostility towards religion.[9] The words for tolerance too, in Hindi, sound slightly inauthentic and have connotations of physical endurance and self-mortification rather than of acceptance of other creeds and forms of worship.[10] That may have to do with the fact, that pluralism was, on

the one hand, a matter of course for Indians as far as beliefs and the choice of *iṣṭadevatā* were concerned and that on the other hand, the *svadharma* concept was so ingrained in people that they would not see any need for western style tolerance. Differences on many levels -- be it socio-economical, religio-ritual, philosophical-theological or linguistic-tribal were accepted almost without question and so was the hierarchical pattern within which everything was ordered. Muslim rule upset that order in some parts of the country; the egalitarianism of Islam attracted many outcastes and low-castes. Legislation which appeared to disadvantage Hindus and to favour Muslims, did much to create a siege mentality among the Hindus.[11] British rule, with its principle of non-interference in religious matters and its impartial justice-system first gave new hope to Hindus. The imagined or real preference of the British for government employees with a Muslim background again created a feeling among the Hindus that they were shut out and not given due recognition. Congress leadership, aware of the multiple fissions which divided Indians from each other on religious, linguistic, caste, tribal, economic and other lines was convinced of the need to create first of all a feeling of Indianness, of belonging together. Linguistic divisions were taken care of by creating states according to major language boundaries. Recognizing the great importance which religion played in the life of the Indian masses and aware of the potential which religious loyalties had, to disrupt the social fabric and to impede the process of modernisation, Congress opted for secularism. The Indian flag shows the symbols of the majority religions of India: the saffron of Hinduism, the green of Oslan, the *dharmacakra* of Buddhism. Like V.K. Sinha, many were -- and are -- convinced that "secularisation of society is a necessary precondition of any modernizing state. All historical religions have some features which inhibit modernization, and if allowed to persist, can keep a nation in a state of perpetual backwardness." Secularisation, he says, means "the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols."[12] Secularism, due to its disinterest in religion and its focusing upon this-worldly issues (economics, formal education, material progress, social harmony) encourages "tolerance" in religious matters.

India, with its history of religious communal conflict, certainly needed tolerance in order to hold together as a nation. The major organised religions neither taught nor practiced it.[13] So it had to be the secular state which provided both the theory and the practice of tolerance. Nehru, the most ardent proponent of secularism in India, who had set such large hopes in its virtues, later had to realize that modernisation and economic development did little to reduce communal tension. And yet, tolerance was of utmost importance for the very

survival of the Indian union. Since governmental efforts to promote tolerance have obviously failed -- the major political parties themselves becoming hotbeds of communal rivalry and the election process turning into an opportunity to exploit the ubiquitous communal feelings -- it is now suggested that "the major responsibility of accelerating the secularization of Indian society will rest on non-governmental associations and groups. It is the press, the universities, the intellectuals and the artists who will have to take the initiative in promoting secularism in India."[14]

II. The truth of contemporary Hinduism and the untruth of Secularism

1. *Satya*, Truth/Reality, was considered the highest value of traditional Indian society. Truth-seeking was the noblest profession of men and women, and truth-finding was equated with reaching freedom and salvation in an ultimate sense. All the theories of Indian philosophy, and all the practices of Indian religion were expressions of truth-seeking and methods of truth-finding. For the sake of truth all other values had to be sacrificed. If tolerance implies, as it obviously does in the minds of many people, a compromise with truth, it cannot be reconciled with the traditional Hindu ideal which is still alive among the best representatives of contemporary Hinduism. "Truth" in the Hindu context is not an abstract concept or a formalism but a reality and an ideal to be lived. The way of life, as prescribed by Hindu tradition, is the "true way" (*sadācāra*) and practices opposed to it are "untruth" (*mithyā*). Thus for Hindus the (Christian and Islamic) practice of killing and eating cattle is not only disgusting and offensive, it is "untruth." For Mahatma Gandhi the rule of the British in India was not only a violation of a nation's right to self-determination, it was against the principle of *satya*. Truth cannot tolerate untruth without giving itself up and thus mocking the very purpose of existence. Swami Dayananda called his *opus magnum*, the *summa* of the Arya Samaj, the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, the "Light of Truth." A truth which is real demands expression in the life of a people too: its personal *mores* as well as its public institutions must be shaped in the light of this truth and must reflect it.

Whether one likes it or not, there is not doubt that much of Indian culture is Hindu culture and that Indian languages, literatures, art, music, statecraft, scholarship and especially religion are Hindu inspired.[15] Without understanding Hinduism one would not understand much of India's past and present. The truth of Indian philosophy and art is largely a Hindu truth and one cannot avoid a "Hindu tinge," if

one identifies with the cultural heritage of India.[16] True, there are elements of civilization and culture which were brought to India by Jews, Christians and Muslims, by secular Europeans and by secularized Indians. However, as has been noticed many times before, Hindu-India possesses an uncanny power to absorb and assimilate much of what comes to India, so that also Indian Islam and Indian Christianity have a "Hindu tinge" and even the modern emancipated secular Indian who does not care much for religious affiliation betrays -- to the outsider at least -- features which reveal a Hindu past.[17]

A community has a right to defend its culture, especially if it perceives its central values to be threatened.[18] Gandhi, a most tolerant man and a deeply religious person who was able to appreciate genuinely religions and cultures other than his own, nevertheless remained a convinced Hindu and a staunch defender of Hinduism and spiritual world view.

A religion loses its very essence, its heart, if it abandons its truth-claim. It cannot, however, maintain its truth-claim, if it does not inculcate a discipline leading to truth.[19]

Contemporary Hinduism can rightly claim to be the heir of a great Truth which it is called upon to preserve and defend. This Truth, however, is not identical a with a single book, a particular way of life, one kind of institution. It was the greatness of the Hindu tradition that it recognized different expressions of truth, that it appreciated and tolerated also what it considered to be imperfect expressions of truth and that it advised people to seek and find their own truth rather than to either take truth over from someone else or impose it upon others. The "denominalisation" and "Churchification" of Hinduism is, so it seems to me, a betrayal of the true genius of Hindu tradition.

2. Universities and intellectuals were, we remember, called upon to promote secularism now after the governmental agencies have not only proven their inability but also their unwillingness to do so. Critical intellectuals, however, such as T.N. Madan (Director of the Institute of Economic Growth at the University of Delhi), a world renowned social scientist, expose the untruth of secularism.[20]

"Secularism," Madan declares, "is the dream of a minority, which wants to shape the majority in its own image, which wants to impose its will upon history but lacks the power to do so under a democratically organised polity." The minority, whose dream secularism is, are those Indians, mostly of the upper middle class, who have become westernized, uprooted and whose interests are largely, if not exclusively, economical. The great majority of Indians, Madan holds, are still

guided by their religious traditions and do not show any sign of abandoning these. the majority religions of India, Hinduism, and Islam are "totalizing," i.e. they encompass the whole of life and do not permit the distinction between a "secular state" and a "private religion" which is typical for Western countries. Madan categorically states: "There are no fundamentalists or revivalists in traditional society."[21] He accuses secularism of being the cause of, not the cure for, communalism, because it brings about "the marginalisation of religious faith . . . that permits the perversion of religion." Intolerance, Madan insists, is *not* a religious problem: even those religions, like Christianity and Islam, which took a quite uncomprising stance vis-a-vis "unbelievers," "speak with multiple tongues and pregnant ambiguities." "Tolerance," Madan claims, "is a value enshrined in all the great religions of mankind," and "both tolerance and intolerance are expressions of exclusivisms." Madan takes care to draw his examples from various major traditions of India, but the clearest expression of what he considers the truth of the matter he finds in Mahatma Gandhi's life and work: "For Gandhi religion was the source of absolute value and hence constitutive of social life; politics were the arena of public interest; without the former, the latter would become debased. While it was the obligation of the state to ensure that every religion was free to develop according to its own genius, no religion which depended upon state support deserved to survive." Madan sums up his argument by saying that "secularism as an ideology has emerged from the dialectic of modern science and Protestantism, not from a simple repudiation of religion and the rise of rationalism." He cautions that a mere transfer of secularism from the modern European to the present (traditional) Indian milieu would not work; he pleads for a "translation."

Madan makes it clear that he does not want to see a Hindu state (re-)established in India -- but he also rules out secularism as autonomous ideology. "Secularised man can confront fundamentalism and revivalism no more than he may empathize with religion." In conclusion he invites to a reconsideration: "Maybe religion is not as fake as Marx asserted; maybe there is something eternal about it, as Durkheim maintained. Perhaps men of religion such as Mahatma Gandhi would be our best teachers on the proper relation between religion and politics -- values and interests -- underlining not only the possibilities of interreligious understanding, which is not the same as an emaciated notion of mutual tolerance or respect, but also opening out avenues of a spiritually justified limitation of the role of religious institutions and symbols in certain areas of contemporary life. The creeping process of secularization, however, slowly erodes the ground on which such men might stand."

The argument that secularism is the cause for communalism and fundamentalism seems also borne out by the general observation that if religion is denied the possibility of shaping private and public life and, in return, is exposed to public scrutiny and rational critique, it either degenerates into hocus-pocus, sectarian faddishness or silliness, or it breaks out into fanaticism and communal intolerance.

III. The Gandhian Way to Truth and Tolerance in the Contemporary Indian Situation

1. Since Hindus, with 80% of the population, form an absolute religious majority in the country, much will depend on them whether tolerance can work or not. Many Hindus are not willing to subscribe to the idea of a secular state and thus will not accept secularism as the basis for tolerance. They must be given a religious meaning, a Hindu foundation for tolerance, such as Mahatma Gandhi attempted it. When communal violence had created havoc, and when Muslims and Hindus expressed their mutual contempt and hatred in rioting, Gandhi did not admonish them to practice tolerance as one of the principles of a secular state, but he began a fast, held prayer meetings, met with the people and spoke about *ahiṁsā*. "Tolerance," he said, "may imply a gratuitous assumption of the inferiority of other faiths to one's own, whereas *ahiṁsā* teaches us to entertain the same respect for the religious faiths of others as we accord to our own... And if we are imperfect, our religion as conceived by us must also be imperfect . . . hence it is always subject to a process of evolution and re-interpretation. And if all faiths outlined by men are imperfect, the question of comparative merit does not arise."[22]

The "tolerance" proclaimed in the Europe of 1689 was a political compromise necessitated by the self-destructive tendencies manifest in the politicised Christianity of the time. It was a diluted form of Christian charity, extended to those living in error -- a Christian error. For the Europeans of the 17th century "truth" was still largely identical with Church-dogma although a new form of truth, "scientific truth" began to make its appearance. The secularisation which accompanied European-Christian "tolerance" appealed to rationality and to scientific thinking. It was able to dispell much religion-based emotion and animosity and succeeded in persuading people belonging to different denominations to cooperate economically and sometimes also politically. But it had and has its limits. Fundamentalist and revivalist groups appear also in the contemporary West, and highly emotional issues keep disrupting the smooth working of the economico-political process. Suffice it to point to Fascism, Nazism and Communism in our century,

all of whom relied on "science" and all of whom won their victories by heating up emotions, highly intolerant totalitarian systems, sometimes called quasi-religions.

It took centuries after the signing of the Act of Toleration before Ecumenism, a more open and cooperative attitude between Christian denominations could take root. The Christian Ecumenical Movement has not yet reached agreement on the wider ecumenism of religions, the acceptance of other religions as equal -- if not in the cultural -- historical sense, where inequality is evident, but in the philosophico-theological sense, where all claim to strive for nothing but Truth.

The re-emergence of Fundamentalism in the Christian West and of Communalism, which in many ways resembles Fundamentalism, in the East has many reasons and one should not trivialize the phenomenon by reducing it to a "nothing but" . . .[23]

One of the noticeable facts, however, is that in the organised religions of today the profoundly religious thought of their great thinkers hardly finds mention or expression -- that is true of the leaders as well as of followers. Pragmatic thinking and speaking determines their actions, a desire to be "popular" with the masses and to gain political influence. Instead of a continuation of the great schools of thought we see the emergence of small-scale movements and sectarian propaganda -- the ideal climate for Revivalism, Fundamentalism and Communalism with all its intolerance. It does not help much to point out that Fundamentalism and Communalism constitute a misuse of religion for secular purposes -- where today can we find the "true" religion which could give guidance in our lives in a genuinely universally religious fashion?

2. Religions are not tolerant *per se*. Historically, different religions have established conflicting and exclusive truth-claims.[24] Religions have to learn to be tolerant, like every ordinary person. It is more difficult for religions, because they have to learn tolerance without giving up truth. Genuine pluralism must not destroy the specific values of particular religions but must preserve them and make them available to all who care. In all instances religions have to widen and deepen their notion of truth and reality, they must enlarge their capacity to understand.

For Gandhi the practice of *ahiṁsā* was the only way to truth. As he said: "It is not given to man to know the whole Truth. His duty lies

in living up to the truth as he sees it, and in doing so to resort to the purest means, i.e. *ahiṁsā*.

God alone knows absolute truth. Therefore, I have often said, Truth is God. It follows that man, a finite being, cannot know absolute truth. Nobody in this world possesses absolute truth. This is God's attribute alone. Relative truth is all we know. Therefore we can only follow the truth as we see it. Such pursuit of truth cannot lead anyone astray.[25]

There are private as well as public aspects of tolerance. On the personal level tolerance is the manifestation of largemindedness, of the ability to live and let live, accepting people as they are. On the public level it entails the ability to maintain one's own corporate identity while also respecting the corporate identity of another tradition. This is not always easy and real tension and real disagreement do occur even while being "tolerant." Growing up is painful and also the growth of understanding and of tolerance is accompanied by pain.

Truth and tolerance are historical and specific. They also imply an accommodation of all involved, not a unilateral cessation of claims. There are, in present-day India, some issues, where the latitude of the tolerance of Hindus (and not only of those who belong to communal organisations) is being tested and challenged.

a. Cow-protection: The India-wide banning of cow-slaughter has become a major Hindu concern. It is in effect in several Indian states and there is agitation to extend it. According to traditional Hindu teaching the killing of all higher animals for the sake of consumption is sinful; but the killing of the cow and its offspring is considered an especially heinous crime and the eating of beef is tantamount to betraying one's religion. Anti-cow slaughter campaigns were mounted in the late 19th century as part of the anti-British agitation; the British were denounced as beef-eaters. The cow-protection agitation also had some anti-Muslim overtones. Many a communal riot has been set off by someone mischievously or accidentally dropping a cattle-head in front of a Hindu temple.

   Can Hindus compromise on this issue and tolerate cow-slaughter? Or should Muslims and Christians, in the name of their own religion (avoid giving offence) and in the name of tolerance be persuaded to give up beef-eating?[26]

b. Of somewhat related nature is the issue of alcohol-consumption. Not only Hindus, but also Muslims and Sikhs are forbidden by their religion to consume alcoholic beverages. Under Morarji Desai, the Union Government legislated partial prohibition and several state governments had fairly strict prohibition laws of their own. (Not too long ago a Hindu, who wanted to buy a bottle of liquor had to get a doctor's certificate attesting to the patient's incurable alcoholism. . .) Low castes and tribals had always consumed their home-made spirits and there was (and is) a large and thriving illicit spirit related industry. Most states have repealed their prohibition laws and it is not unusual today to see members of all communities having their beers and whiskies without religious qualms. Agitation for prohibition exists but has not much hope of succeeding, in spite of the quite strict code maintained by the Hindu revivalist organizations.

c. Conversions: Hindu agitation against conversion to Christianity and Islam has been an issue of long standing. The 19th century "communal" Neo-Hindu movements were motivated mainly by a desire to stop conversions. Since Independence there had been periodically demands by Hindu members of parliament to ban conversions all together. Several states have passed stringent anti-conversion laws, providing punishment to both convert and converter. Agitation against conversion has many causes. One is the plain fear (irrational, considering the numbers, but real nevertheless) that Hinduism might disappear. Strident anti-conversion rhetoric was certainly once justified in the face of aggressive and offensive Christian missionary anti-Hindu propaganda. It is hardly justified now. The Indian constitution explicitly allows not only the practice of different religions but also their preservation and propagation. Could HIndus be tolerant in those matters? Considering the close identification of the social and religious dimensions, one understands the apprehensiveness also of Hindus, who are not "communal" and otherwise quite tolerant towards other faiths. Can Christianity and Islam be expected to accomodate the wishes of the Hindu majority? Could the development of a wholly indigenous Christianity, even a "Hindu-Christianity" be a way out of this dilemma?

M. Gandhi does not offer much advice on this thorny issue either. While appreciative of the good in all religions, he considered it unnecessary for a Hindu to convert to another religion and he became downright angry with Dr. Ambedkar, who, together with a large number of his Mahar followers, had renounced Hinduism and publicly embraced Buddhism.[27]

d. Harijans: One of the major liabilities which the Indian Republic took over from its Hindu past was the large number of people (about one fifth of the entire population!) whom caste-Hinduism had rejected as ritually unclean and socially unacceptable. The abolition of untouchability was one of the major issues in Gandhi's independence movement. In order to give the *asprha*, the "untouchables," some sense of self-respect he used the term "Hari-Jan," Children of God, as collective name. Gandhi himself believed in caste and its important spiritual and social function. He did not work for the abolition of caste, but he wished the former "untouchables" to be incorporated into the lower ranks of the Hindu caste system. The Indian constitution abolished the notion of untouchability and made it a punishable offence to disadvantage anyone on account of it. It tried to make amends for past injustice by reserving a certain percentage of places in schools and positions in government service for the members of the former scheduled castes and tribes. This provoked a backlash from the side of certain caste Hindus who resented, what they called, the "pampering" of the Harijans. Hindu prejudice against the former untouchables still shows in many ways in today's India. They still live largely outside the villages, are often not allowed to use the village well and other village facilities. Occasionally Hindu intolerance results in atrocities against Harijans: for alleged minor offences they are often cruelly punished and even murdered.[28]

Gandhi had much to say on this issue: an entire journal *Harijan* was devoted to their cause and their concerns. Here certainly is a point where caste-Hindus must learn to be tolerant. The fact that Hindu tradition allowed the inhuman treatment of out-castes is no justification of it. As usual, the resentment is strong on both sides and a long process of reconciliation and mutual acceptance will be necessary before Gandhi's idea of *ahimsa* can become norm.[29] However, already in Gandhi's lifetime the "untouchables" resented Gandhi's Hindu patronising. Dr. Ambedkar, himself a Mahar, accused Gandhi of being an enemy of the outcastes (*What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Outcastes*) and, with several million fellow-mahars, he openly renounced Hinduism and embraced Buddhism. More recently several quite radical Dalit ("oppressed") movements have formed which cut across the religious and political spectrum of India.[30]

e. Possession of specific holy places, such as the Rama and Krsnajanmabhumis (in Ayodhya and Mathura, respectively) and the Visvanath temple in Benares, are a major issue for Hindu

agitation at present too. All these places, which had been amongst the holiest and most frequented for Hindus for many centuries, were transformed by the Muslim conquerors in the Middle ages into mosques, the existing temples having been raced. The RSS, in conjunction with the Hindu Visva Parisad and other organisations, has been mobilizing hundreds of thousands of Hindus in a *yātrā* through India in order to pressure the government to restore these places to Hindus. Having been for centuries now sacred places for Muslims too, it will not be easy to determine who really rightfully possesses them and to come to a "tolerant" understanding may require a great deal of bargaining and presuppose an even greater deal of good-will on both sides.

Similar issues, on a more local scale, are to be found in many places in India. Indians have long memories and the destruction of Hindu temples centuries ago by invading *mlechhas* has neither been forgotten nor forgiven. The strengthening not only of Hindu-self-consciousness but also of Hindu officialism allows those issues, for the first time in centuries, to be opened up again.[31]

3. Considering the social ills and the many forms of injustice which religions have tolerated over the ages or even supported with their own peculiar arguments -- slavery, war, inhuman treatment of lower classes and of minorities, luxury and waste of the ruling class -- one is inclined to call for rather more intolerance than more tolerance. The need to reform the Church and to make this reform an ongoing concern has been clear (at least theoretically) to Christians for several centuries. Hinduism too had and has its reforms and its reformers. They were decried as enemies of their religion by the defenders of the status quo, as apostates and as traitors. In the context of our present theme and the demand for more tolerance as well as a deeper truth from the side of contemporary Hinduism we state not only that religions do in fact change, but claim that they must change in order to remain true to their original inspiration. Not all of these changes will necessarily go in the direction of secularisation and liberalisation. Religions cannot abdicate their interest in the life of individuals and communities, they cannot be kept out from the marketplace, where not only economic decisions are made but where also policies affecting the conscience are debated and shaped.

An increasing engagement of religions in politics and a growing interest of religious leaders in socio-economic questions is very noticeable today. Some of the statements coming from religious people

may reveal naiveté and insufficient expert knowledge of the "secular" areas, but they are expressions of a legitimate moral and religious concern. Hindus and Hinduism cannot be kept out from the major decisions affecting the culture and society of contemporary India. It would be unrealistic to expect the members of the majority religion not to express themselves on matters which they consider of vital interest.

There are, undoubtedly, massive economic interests and class-interests connected with today's "communalism." But to explain it as being *only* that, as the Marxists do, is not enough. Why is it that people with supposedly identical interest, belonging to the same (economic) class, are confronting each other in Hindu, Muslim and Sikh organisations? Politics, economics, class and religion may never have been clearly demarcated, but in order to do something about the problem of communalism and its potential for destruction and chaos, one has to pay attention to all of these elements and must not believe that by addressing the economic problem, the rest will follow (as Nehru had believed). Many a (nondescript) Hindu may have joined a Hindu communal outfit out of purely material interests -- better job-opportunities, connections with influential people -- but by participating in the activities of the group, and listening to the speeches of its leaders he may have gained a greater awareness of his Hinduism and may have become in the process even a more religious person.

To the extent to which a large group of people with a common cause and purpose -- be it religious or other -- wields a certain amount of political and economical power, "communalism" cannot be eradicated and there is no reason why it should be. Similarly religious revival -- in our case *Hindu jāgaraṇ* -- is, in and by itself, something positive. It becomes a threat to society only if it uses its power to suppress others, if it becomes totalitarian and antagonistic to other groups with a different orientation and purpose. Religion has its place in the life of individuals and societies, and a plurality of religions can well go together with social harmony and economic cooperation. Hinduism has gone through major changes in its long history from Vedic ritualism through Vedantic mysticism and Bhakti devotionalism. It is undergoing major changes in our time too, one of the most important ones being its attempt to articulate (for the first time in its history) positions common to all Hindus and thus begins to speak with one firm voice.

Living religions, we must remember, are not only what some enlightened mystics and religiously sensitive philosophers think about God. They are also the response of ordinary people to transcendent inklings, a socially shared attitude concerning values, a rallying around symbols and myths which have the power to motivate large numbers.

Comfortable as it would be for governments as well as for religious bureaucrats, religion -- neither in general nor in particular -- cannot be satisfactorily defined rationally or fully dealt with administratively. Religion will remain, to a large extent, unpredictable, whether we like it or not. Nobody could foresee the emergence of a Buddha within the Hindu fold and the tremendous transforming power of the Buddhism of the centuries to come. Similarly, the rise of Christianity was unforeseeable two thousand years ago. Religious responses to new developments can hardly be anticipated and the emergence of new religions is not something which belongs only to the remote past. The "old" religion will always consider the "new" illegitimate and the new will call the old "false." There is no instance of a smooth transition and a friendly side-by-side. It happens today and will happen again in the future. Hinduism, in spite of its strong tradition, has constantly brought forth new movements.

In a genuinely pluralistic situation like the Indian one *samanvaya*, harmonisation, as conceived by kaka Kalelkar is a better and more creative response than mere tolerance.[32] *Samanvaya* implies fruitful interaction, mutual give and take, development of a higher kind of consciousness as a result of learning from each other and harmonising one's ideas and ideals. To create harmony all have to contribute actively, and all have to give up, what might disturb it.

This seems to have been well understood by the current Vice-President of India, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, who in a recent lead-article in *India Perspectives*[33] on "Secularism in the Indian Ethos" quotes profusely from the Vedas and the Upanisads, the Avesta and the Koran, the Edicts of Asoka and the New Testament, to demonstrate that what modern India advocates as "secularism" is what these religious scriptures had held throughout history. Referring to Gandhi's synthesis of religion and politics based on morality and ethics as understood by all the major religions he castigates communalism as "an outlook in which the morals and ethics of religion are absent" and makes it clear that Indian Secularism is not against religion but the harmonious working together of all religions for the common good.

CONCLUSION

There are students of religion who believe that they owe it to the academic method to remain mute and lame observers of the religious scene, recording what they see, generalising the observations, refraining from all personal judgement and opinion, refusing to get involved.

They study religion as geologists would study a rock or as antiquarians would study a document of a bygone age.

If one considers historic religions to be the creations of human minds, vital to the mental and spiritual well-being of humanity, alive and ever changing, constantly facing challenges, searching out its own essence, questioning its own part findings, looking for an expression of its meaning not only in words but in actions and in life as a whole, one cannot study it and remain a silent bystander. Too much is at stake. If one judges expressions of religious intolerance to be wrong, one must suggest ways of becoming tolerant. Education has always been considered complementary to study and thus the student of religion must also strive to become an educator in what he believes to be expressions of genuine religion. Education for tolerance must go hand in hand with the search for truth, so central to religion. The seeming "tolerance" of those who do not care about religious issues ("you may believe whatever you want") is the very opposite of genuine religious tolerance. It is also the opposite of truth: we may not believe whatever we want, without doing harm to ourselves and our fellowmen. As students and teachers of religion we are under mutual obligation to actively contribute our own share to the development of religion in our age, to enhance the truth and the tolerance of religions, to study, to teach and to practice *satya* and *ahiṁsā*.

Tolerance obviously has its price (it demands from all self-restraint and a reduction of universal claims), but compared to the price of intolerance (the wholesale destruction wrought by interreligious warfare not only in today's India, but worldwide throughout human history), its price seems fair.

NOTES

1. One of the most written about post-Independence communal riots took place in May 1970 in Bhiwandi, a town with roughly equal Hindu and Muslim populations, about 50 km east of Bombay. The *Organiser*, a RSS weekly, reported on it on the front page of its May 16, 1970 edition under the headline: "Muslim Blitz of Bhiwandi". P.C. Chatterji, in his *Secular Values for Secular India*, (pp. 272-280) gives an incisive analysis of the event, its antecedents and its aftermath, summarising also the findings of the commission appointed to investigate the riot. I lived in Bombay at the time and had occasion to witness the engagement of several members of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, under the leadership of Kaka Kalelkar who, risking their lives,

went to Bhiwandi attempting to calm down the rioters. They had horrible stories to tell.

2. Cf. N. Katz and E.S. Goldberg, "Asceticism and Caste in the Passover Observances of Cochin Jews" in *JAAR* LVII/1 (1989) pp. 53-82.

3. Bipan Chandra defines communalism as "the belief that because a group of people follow a particular religion they have, as a result, common social, political and economic interests." This definition will need a qualification. There is also a "religious interest", a desire to defend what one believes to be threatened traditions and values.

4. W.C. Smith, *Islam in* Modern India, Lahore 1943, p. 185.

5. Typical for this is a CLS publication *India Hindu and India Christian* which appeared in 1900 in Madras in its 2nd edition.

6. It is difficult to give reliable statistics on these communal organisations. The Arya Samaj may have some two million members; the R.S.S. claimed years ago a membership of five million, so did the Visva Hindu Parisad. There is a great deal of overlap and, probably a great deal of fluctuation. At certain occasions, like famous *melas* or rallies, the militant Hindu organisations do muster impressive numbers. See: *India Today*, June 30, 1989.

7. Bipan Chandra, *Communalism*, p. 318 f: "While before 1947 the main damage to national unity was done by Muslim communalism, since 1947 it is Hindu communalism which poses the fascist threat and which has to be made the main target of attack by the secular forces. The existence of minority communalism should not detract from this fact."

8. J. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, Ch. XIX "Communalism Rampant".

9. Secular: 1. (temporal) - *lankik - aihik - saṁsārik - duniyāvādī.* 2. (secularistic) - *dharmanirapekṣa - dharma viruddha.*

10. Sanskrit equivalents of "tolerance" in the Lexicon are: *sahanam, sahiṣṇuta, kṣamā, titikṣā.* Bulcke's *Anglo-Hindi Dictionary* gives *udāratā, dhairya, sahanaśīla, sahiṣṇutā, baredast.* Dr. K. Young referred in per presentation to the root *tul* - which led to the word "tolerance", its original meaning being "measuring", "balancing", "weighing". From such a derivation one can easily

come to understand the modern Indian attempt to use the word *samanvaya*, harmonisation as equivalent of "tolerance". I found it interesting that the very recent *Encyclopedia of Religion* ed. by Mircea Eliade, has no entry under the word tolerance. The 3rd edition of *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* has three fairly substantial articles, one by G. Mensching from a history-of-religions viewpoint. He thinks that Indian religions have tolerance "in their very bloodstream".

11. One of the ironies of the Indian situation is, that although Hindus are statistically the absolute majority, their fears and reactions are often that of a minority. There is a reason for that, too. Hinduism has been described as "a vast congeries of sub-caste minorities" in "an ocean of Islam". Thus Hindus very often behave as if their religious and cultural identities were threatened by Muslims or Christians, who are real minorities. See N. Mukarji, "The Hindu problem", in: *SEMINAR* 269 (Jan. 1982) pp. 37-40.

12. V.K. Sinha, "Secularization", in: *SEMINAR* 216 (August 1977) pp. 37-40.

13. A slow change is noticeable, however. Thus an interreligious group organised an "International Seminar on inter-faith dialogue for national integration and human solidarity" at Madras Christian College in January 1986 which came up with the following recommendation: (1) Inter-Faith Dialogue is necessary not only to know the truth and merits of other faiths but also to understand the real significance of one's own faith. Our life will be incomplete unless we reverently study the teachings of other faiths. (2) An attitude of anathema towards the principles and practices of other faiths is not a truly religious attitude. From unreasonable anathema, we must move to meaningful and real dialogue, where we must try to understand each other's viewpoint with the utmost sincerity of which we are capable. (3) One religion is not possible for the entire mankind for reasons of history, tradition, temperament and attitudes. But since all religions are like the different roads leading to the same destination, there is no cause for conflict between the different faiths. One faith supplements and complements the other. Hence, there should have an attitude of willing co-existence and mutual assistance. (4) Politics must be joined to morality and spirituality in order to serve the great causes of national integration and to solve the problems facing humanity. Hence, we have to get rid of the communalistic and sectarian approach of our faiths and try to develop greater and

greater humanistic and universal outlooks based on moral and spiritual world-views.

14. V.K. Sinha, l.c., p. 40.

15. "Hindu" in such a context is not a parallel to "Muslim" or "Christian". Hinduism is not a denomination or a Church which was forced upon a "heathen" population, but it is the native religion and spirituality of India, the response of naturally religious people to their environment.

16. When B. Chandra (op. cit., p. 317) demands "to eliminate the deep-seated Hindu tinge from much of secular thinking and in general to promote scientific thinking and a secular nationalist outlook" he asks most Indians to renounce their historic identity and their cultural roots. Scientific thinking and nationalism cannot - and should not! - replace religious and cultural sensibilities.

17. Nirad Chaudhrui's *Continent of Circe*, albeit somewhat cynical and uncomplimentary, makes an extended argument for this too.

18. The defenders of Hindu-culture see modernity as essentially valueless, based on individualism and unrestrained economic endeavour. "Modernity" is not the modern equivalent of a traditional system, but the absence of sensitivity, thought and reflection, the denial of everything that "tradition" stood for. See also for a different viewpoint of A.D. Moddie, *The Brahmanical Culture and Modernity*, Bombay 1968.

19. Mahatma Gandhi gave to his autobiography the title *Experiments with Truth*. He wrote: "What is Truth? A difficult question, but I have solved it for myself by saying that it is what the voice within tells you.... It is because we have at the present moment everybody claiming the right of conscience without going through any discipline whatsoever that there is so much untruth being delivered to a bewildered world. All that I can in true humility present to you is that Truth is not to be found by anybody who has not got an abundant sense of humility. If you would swim on the bosom of the ocean of Truth, you must reduce yourself to a zero." On "true religion" specifically, he had the following to say: "It is not the Hindu religion, which I certainly prize above all other religions, but the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human

nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the maker and itself. I believe that all the great religions of the world are true, more or less. I say 'more or less', because I believe that everything that the human hand touches, by reason of the very fact that human beings are imperfect, becomes imperfect."

20. T.N. Madan, "Secularism in its Place" *JAS* 64/4 (1987) pp. 747-759.

21. I believe this statement needs qualification. There have been revivalist movements in virtually all major historical religions, including Hinduism: the Hindu Renaissance under the Guptas, with its anti-Buddhist and anti-Jain bias was a Hindu revival; also the Bhakti movement of the Indian middle ages and the sant-movements of the 16th/17th centuries were Hindu revivals. There always existed in "book-religions" people who took their scriptures literally, such as the Mīmāṁsakas among Hindus. This is the essence of "fundamentalism".

22. M.K. Gandhi, *From Yervada Mandir*, p. 55.

23. Secularists find it difficult to realize that religious people have genuine religious concerns (not only "interests"): they honestly seek the will of God, try to live a life according to their religious convictions and strife towards integrity in words and deeds. They may do so very imperfectly and sometimes even unintelligently, but their efforts are real and must be taken seriously.

24. The emergence of such "new" religions like the Abrahamic, the Christian, the Islamic, or the Buddhist, the Jain and the Santpanths occurred on the basis of the claim that the "old" religions had become "false" and that truth was now only available in the "new path".

25. M.K Gandhi, Y.I. 5-8-35.

26. Cf. Dayananda Saraswati, *Cow Protection*, English translation New Delhi 1966. See also K.R. Malkani, "Mother" in SEMINAR 93 (May 1967), pp. 37-9. Also: P. Robb: "The Challenge of Gau Mata: British Policy and Religious Change in India, 1880-1916 in: *Modern Asian Studies* 20/2 (1986) pp. 285-319.

27. See also Dev Dutt, "Conversions" in: SEMINAR 269 (Jan. 1982) pp. 41-5.

28. See R.K. Mohanty, "Dynamics of atrocities on Scheduled Castes in rural India" in *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, XLIX/1 (1988) pp. 51-66.

29. See also, Alexandra George, *Social Ferment in India*, London 1986, Ch. 8: The Scheduled Castes.

30. See: *Swami Anand Tirth: Untouchability. Gandhian Solution on Trial*, by A. Ayrookuzhiel, Bangalore 1986.

31. See: *India Today*, June 30, 1989 and: *India Today*, July 31, 1989, p. 31: "The BJP is bristling with confidence and appears bent upon playing the Hindu card. This resolve is underscored in the first sentence of a recent resolution on the Ram Janmabhoomi issue: The national executive of the BJP regards the current debate on the ram Janmabhoomi issue as one which has dramatically highlighted the callous unconcern which the Congress (I) in particular, and the other political parties in general, betray towards the sentiments of the overwhelming majority in this country - the Hindus. The party is basing its strategy on the assumption that because of the events in Punjab and the kashmir valley, a Hindu backlash has been building up as never before."

32. D. Sundarani (ed.) *Samanvaya* (in Hindi) Samanvaya Asram, Bodhgaya 1965, with contributions by Kaka Kalelkar and Vinoba Bhave. Also: "Towards One World" Ch. 43 in Madho Prasad, *A Gandhian Patriarch*: A Political and Spiritual Biography of Kaka Kalelkar Popular Prakashan, Bombay 1963.

33. *India Perspectives*, August 1989, pp. 4-9.

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TRUTH AND TOLERANCE IN THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN KULTURPROTESTANTISMUS AND CONFESSING CHURCH

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My paper is divided into four parts: 1) some indications of how I approach the subject; 2) a background to the theological epistemology which informs my claims about truth and tolerance; 3) two case studies: a) *Kulturprotestantismus* and the Confessing Church; b) truth and tolerance in a Reformed-theological perspective.

I

Comments by two Christians who have influenced me will help you understand how I see the current situation of the Euromerican world and how I perceive it.

In 1957, the German theologian Ernst Wolf wrote: "Thinking about tolerance is necessary when, in the conflict of ideologies, whose claims to absoluteness allow intolerance to spread its roots, intolerance grows anew at an alarming rate. . . . Every such increase is surely a worrisome symptom of critical changes in the structures of civilized existence." (Ernst Wolf: *Peregrinatio II*, Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1965, p. 284. Cited as *Wolf*.) Three years later, the Reformed theologian from Czechoslovakia and excellent representative of the "First Reformation," Josef Hromadka wrote; "For me, civilization cannot lay claim to highest loyalty. Something exists which is holier than the greatest and noblest treasures of art and music, philosophy and literature, science and technology, legal and social orders, civil rights and freedoms, state and economic organisation. . . . And yet, how poor and miserable would our life be without freedom and justice, without the great traditions of the spirit and politics of our culture! It is as plain as day that the roots of the human intellect, politics and spirit are struck by a serious disease." (Josef Hromadka: Sprung Uber Die Mauer, Berlin: Käthe Vogt Verlag, 1961, p.13-4.)

In my view, Wolf and Hromadka are right in speaking of worrisome symptoms of critical change, of serious disease in our culture. I see not much cause for optimism. Yet I believe that pessimism can be met with imaginative, cooperative resistance by those who are

not afraid to embrace intolerance towards whatever eats away at the roots of our civilization. My attempts to understand 'tolerance' are guided by what Hromadka called 'loyalty,' namely loyalty to the First Commandment, whose very tenor is an intolerance which liberates in the very way it binds and sets free for genuine tolerance.

II

I would like to speak now about three different ways reality was perceived in the course of Western Christian theology. In these comments, I rely a good deal on the work of my colleague in Halifax, Professor Thomas Mabey; I am grateful for his insights in this matter. As I see it, the development of these ways had a significant impact on the emergence of tolerance as a social value. It is not irrelevant that it is the three hundredth anniversary of the Act of Toleration which has brought us together, just as in May 1981 people gathered in Prague for a conference like ours to celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of the Charter of Tolerance published by Emperor Joseph II. Like the guests in Prague, we recollect, not only in the sense of re-calling but also to make alive and powerful again, an event in which something of value became institutionalized for the benefit of all. How much poorer our lives would be, to repeat Hromadka's exclamation, were we bereft of tolerance.

This development is one in which the claims of mediatorial authority were replaced by those of unmediated authority. What would be increasingly decisive was the authority of immediate, individual experience and consciousness, of evidence rationally interpreted.

However explained, the cumulative effect of this development was to challenge the sense of what constituted a truth claim. Descartes did not *invent* epistemological anthropocentrism, he *observed* it and gave it language. People after him found little difficulty turning this anthropocentrism of the mind into an anthropomorphism of the will: those who were enlightened perceived it to be their destiny to impose form upon what was given. Indeed, what was given achieved only real truth and value to the extent that human form was imposed upon it.

This anthropomorphism challenged the classic sense of truth and the epistemological question arose with a vengeance. In 'classic' culture reality was given, it was there before us to be seen and discovered. Truth consisted, in the medieval sense, of *adequatio mentis ad rem*; it was known insofar as the mind conformed to a given reality. The certitude of the knowledge of truth arose from an intuition of the

connaturality between mind and reality. But when one follows the cry *sapere aude* (dare to use your mind!) and reality is real to the extent that it is formed by the thinking you dare to engage in on your own, what is there for the mind to conform to but its own ideas and its constructs? Descartes' "I think, therefore I am" quickly became "I am what I think" and Bishop Berkeley's "to be is to be perceived." In the new anthropocentric/morphic culture, the world is not there to be seen and objectively discovered, it is what we invent (*invenire*), what we cause to be there when we impose on it the form of rational thought. No longer based on a connaturality with what is, truth is now a construct. The criteria of knowledge move from the emphasis on conformity to the ability to control: *scientia est potentia.*

The whole notion of truth and objectivity was at stake. What can truth mean in this epistemological shift 'to the subject'? When reality has been turned into correspondence to the subject, what do we claim when we claim to know the truth?

As I see it, the Act of Toleration was born also in a profound tiredness of the often violent hostilities between theological positions. Who would not have been relieved in 1689 that an end had come to the rending of the body politic which religious niceties had fueled for so long? That same tiredness was felt when Descartes and others were busy shaping an epistemology free of authoritarianism. The issue of critical reflection was less a calling into question of accepted beliefs and behaviours as it was one of finding how we are to construct a truthful world. In such a context, tolerance is less a matter of benign permission given to others to hold views about reality divergent from one's own as it is to be not so perfectly sure about the truth of one's construct of reality vis-à-vis that of another and the recognition that, for the time being, there is room for others.

In this situation the question of the certainty of religious faith becomes quite poignant, to put it mildly; for many the truth of faith itself was at stake. How are claims of faith to be validated as *true* claims when the objective authorities of former times had been replaced by the authority of the *anthropos*? The option was between (a) a world that is given to which we conform ourselves and in which truth consists in the discovery of the given structure of reality and (b) a world which is constructed in conformity with our minds and wills and in which truth consists in the inventive structuring which our mind imposes on reality. The challenge was to move from the discovery to the invention model of reality. In theology there were (and are still) those who chose option (a), setting themselves up against the project, simply asserting the old continuities and conceiving of theology as a fundamentalist

activity. Others chose (and still do) option (b), entering into the new cultural project and constructing a new theological continuity as a projection of the self, something I identify with 'liberal theology.'

It is to Karl Barth that I owe the recognition that 'fundamentalism' and 'liberalism' are two sides of the same coin. In his stimulating study of 18th century theology he shows that what I just described as option (a) did not cling steadfastly to the pre-critical epistemology but that it, too, accepted the anthro-pomorphistic stance of the critical 'inventor.' Barth calls that stance 'absolutism': the stance of those who determine what form to impose upon reality. Fundamentalists are those who determine, for example, that every word of Scripture is dictated by God and that, therefore, every word means what they mean it to mean. Barth calls this the imposition of a form *claimed* to be divine but in fact *determined* to be divine by the believer. The fundamentalist view is an historical construct of reality just as much as that of the liberal position: by means of a rational-critical method, reality is raised to the level of pure concept, there to be studied and known with full objectivity. Like fundamentalism, the liberal option "reduces the distance between the knower and the known to such an extent that the known can no longer appear to be a limit on the knower. The limit-free knower is . . . radically free from, but also radically free for, reality. . . . For example, God is no limiting 'subject' to cognition since, in the formal relations established by our pure, ontological concepts and constructs, no limiting negation can occur by that which those concepts and constructs noetically name; only our meanings and our naming can change." (Martin Rumscheidt, *Adolf von Harnack -- Liberal Theology At Its Height*, London, Collins, 1989, p.35. Italics added.) If these two options were the only games in town, tolerance would be the only reasonable choice.

Are there options other than those of the form-*giving* critic? I raise this question because when I speak of the Confessing Church and a Reformed-theological view of tolerance, I want to point to a third option in theology which was free to adopt a position of intolerance as a vehicle for truthfulness.

There is a theology which, parallel to 'Critical Theory,' I shall call 'critical theology.' To me, it looks distinct from fundamentalist and liberal theology because of its claim that what we are confronted with is neither a given reality to be discovered nor one to be invented, but with a history the meaning of which is to be discerned. It asserts that theology is neither about the world and its objective status nor about the abstract truth of descriptive statements concerning that world. Instead, it is about the business of apprehending and rendering

articulate the meaning of a story and the truthfulness of life within that story. Theology arises as a second reflective step from the experience of ourselves as having been addressed, both by word and deed, and having been called and empowered by that address to formulate a response. The objectivity with which theology has to come to terms is not the abstract, conceptual givenness of a world or reality to be known, but the givenness of a process of interaction in which we are all participants and agents. Truthfulness, accordingly, is not a matter of demonstrating the adequacy of our statements to what is given for us to see nor of inventing a world that is true because it is our own ideal form writ large. The authority of truth resides in our taking authorship of our lives in a way that is an authentic expression of the full potential of that story.

In this historical scenario we first experience ourselves as acting and being acted upon and then come to know ourselves by reflecting upon the material conditions of that experience. We think *out of*, not *about* experience in the form of a reflection upon and a discernment of its meaning.

Such an historically and materially critical theology refuses *all* authoritarianism. In this it has something in common with the 'liberal' approach and will be critical in the constructive sense. But it will also be aware that in its constructions it is not free simply to be arbitrary but is bound to the word, the action and the story by which it is addressed and which gives rise to it as a reflection on a material history. In this, it will have something in common with the 'fundamentalist' approach. But its stance will be distinct from both in that it recognizes that the process in which it is engaged is one of discernment rather than one either of invention or discovery.

Among the material conditions the one that is of most concern in shaping the structure of a critical theology is the fact of conflicting interpretations which arise as people try to discern the meaning of experience. The question of tolerance and intolerance arises for 'critical theology' at this point. This is not to say that conflicting interpretations are anything new in themselves; what is new is the awareness of the different horizons and methods of interpreting experience. The question of truth then becomes a question of how among these conflicts we can discern the meaning of experience with optimal truthfulness. The process by which we discern truthfulness in the midst of conflict is the engagement in a dialectic which calls on us to find horizons which are more adequate to our experience. Conversion from a narrower horizon to a broader one occurs through the process of sifting and discerning judgment. The authority of that conversion resides in

the degree to which it is open to experience, understands its data, is critical in its judgment and responsible in its decisions.

This dialectical structure represents an approach to doing theology which is more consonant with the basic underlying story which addresses theology and upon which theology itself is a sustained and ever renewed reflection. It is the story of the irruption of God's reign which invites us to, and empowers us for, a new life in the world by envisioning and enacting that world within horizons set for us by God's self-revelation. "The reign of God is at hand; be renewed in your mind and believe the good news" -- this is how the *Gospel of Mark* puts it. This in turn implies a process by which the humanly established horizons and their truth claims are constantly under judgment by the story itself as it unfolds in our experience. That process is dialectical in structure; it is authoritative or truthful insofar as the conversions upon which it is based are faithful.

I have described this epistemological shift from a 'descriptive' and 'inventive' mode to a 'performative' one in order to suggest that truthfulness of theology no longer has to lie in its power to 'describe' or 'construct' reality but in its faithfulness to the call into a certain kind of living as set out in the story. The truthfulness of theology's theoretical claims is constituted by the truthfulness of the praxis which arises in response to the story. (I use 'praxis' to mean the relationship between discourse and action wherein each dialectically influences and transforms the other.) In other words, discourse and discernment about the truth claim of faith is an ethical enterprise, or more sharply, a political one. (I use 'political' to refer to that public space in which discourse and discernment occur, that in-between-area where authentic intersubjectivity can be actualized and where truth claims can be made, questioned and verified.) Truth claims advanced in an authoritarian mode simply fill up this space, preclude exchange and critical communication and are, therefore, inadequate.

III

I turn now to the two case-studies. In terms of my discussion thus far, the two structural moments in theology which we will encounter are reason and the concept of being, in relation to *Kulturprotestantismus*, and praxis and the concept of society, in relation to the Confessing Church.

A full explanation of these two phenomena cannot be given here. It will have to suffice to indicate what I regard to be their primary features as they relate to truth and tolerance.

1. *Kulturprotestantismus.* As far as I can determine, *Kulturprotestantismus* is an aspect of German Protestantism between 1870 and 1914, namely that Protestant Christianity which offered itself as the guarantor of a happy culture here on earth and as a eudemonistic ferment of civilization. It insisted that civilization arose from and was driven forward by religious forces. Faith in the progress of humankind, the hermeneutics of historicism and a strong alliance of throne and altar were marked manifestations of *Kulturprotestantismus.* Historical theology places this phenomenon within German liberal theology and cites Adolf von Harnack as its greatest representative.

The dates I spoke of a moment ago, 1870 to 1914, locate this Christianity in a relatively calm period of world history, a period characterized by strong confidence in human culture, by a kind of culture-bliss if not even culture-mesmerization. Kulturprotestants regularly referred to Luther and Calvin as their theological mentors; they made a quasi-doxological invocation of the command to humans to have dominion over the earth and to what was becoming known as 'the Protestant work ethic.' They invoked the parables of the Mustard Seed and of the Dough and the Leaven, asserting that they provided a biblical principle superior to the futuristic eschatological reading of Jesus which Albert Schweitzer and Johannes Weiss were teaching. Those who are 'perfect' contribute to the reign of God by their religious dominion over the earth and their moral faithfulness in their vocations. Faith establishes its visible organism not in the church but in the state. Of great importance is the harmonious cooperation of faith and knowledge, religion and science, in the establishment of the *one* truth. In the labours of culture was the promise of the coming of God's reign. One document of the time called for the association of all who sought "the renewal of the Protestant Church in the spirit of Protestant freedom and in harmony with the whole development of culture in our time.... Seeking to shape the world and life in home and city, among people and nations according to God's will, working to subject all to God: that is religion, is Christianity." (*Kulturprotestantismus*, in *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon*, vol. 2, Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1958, p. 994.) Christianity consists of three principles of faith commitment: the first is futuristic or eschatological, the second is this-worldly or world-freeing and the third is action-oriented. These principles form an inner unity; they are components in the structuring of God's reign, which is the 'progress of culture,' as one representative called it. (Ibid.)

Harnack is of great significance here. His work is a mighty herald of the imperative of freedom: of freedom of thought, of the pursuit of truth everywhere, of freedom for the sake of conscience's full development. It also reflects responsibility towards the object and subject of human speech and action and the rigours of human enquiry and discourse. And in it is a full measure of the awareness that there were limits to what he saw and said. But they were not limits set by doctrines or assertions to be affirmed for the sake of salvation. No, for liberal theologians, the mind had the competence to transcend subjectivity in the endeavour to gain true objectivity.

His theology, as scholarly discipline, and his faith, as faith that knows, are modern in the sense that they embrace the Cartesian assertion that to be human at all is to be about the enterprise of cognitive appropriation of reality. The dignity of human beings resides in their God-given ability to *comprehend*, to get reality into grasp of the mind. That grasp is not arbitrary but methodic, according to Descartes and, consequently, the faith that knows not only knows God, the world and humanity but also knows *that* and *how* it knows. Hence the necessity of affirming confidence in the human mind and its workings, the preoccupation with methodology and its objectivity, the reverence for the competence, authority and dignity of thought.

'Liberal theology' is a theology which insists on freedom as the unrelinquishable condition in the pursuit of truth; surely, no one ought to neglect it. It is a question of considerable weight, however, how that freedom is established and for which interests it is defended. It seems true, indeed, that the truth sets us free but it makes a significant difference if the liberation wrought by the truth is held to be a liberation into the neutrality of the all-seeing arbiter or into the commitment of a disciple. Liberal theology, as it manifests itself in Harnack, decided that it was the former: freedom allows fundamentally for the mediating weighing of, and opting between, various possibilities while urging the contemplation of that higher unity, the existence of which is beyond doubt. It is a freedom one would not freely choose to let go, a freedom which holds fast to its higher vantage point where comparing, assessing, discussing and judging remain always open possibilities. If a stand is taken, it is because one may readily change that stand when new insights occur and a more reasonable position appears more appropriate. Or, if one binds oneself to a position, one does so knowing that one can always unbind oneself in freedom. Such binding is the very triumph of freedom.

Surely, tolerance is quintessential to the pursuit of truth in this view, in fact, one can say that without tolerance truth is humanly

unattainable. But is it irrelevant that this view came to its zenith at a time when the world was relatively calm? Does an epistemology never express the untroubled material condition of its proponents' existence? If you have confidence in the structures of your community and its political institutions, will not your faith urge tolerance as a cardinal virtue?

2. *The Confessing Church.* I can be much briefer in this section because of the foil *Kulturprotestantismus* has already provided. Under the Nazis it had become clear that culture not only did not prevent the emergence of an anti-cultural movement with an anti-human ideology but, in its Christian clothing, actually provided political and religious support. The freedom of the mind's arbiter-role had become the freedom to embrace Hitler as a reasonable possibility of culture. This freedom chose bondage to death.

The Confessing Church sounded a note of resistance, even if it was from within a minority position in the churches. But it said No! However weak in its public effect, it provided a base for intolerance towards a politics and people whose practice had become oppressive and unjust. The Confessing Church said that it was no longer a matter of weighing the possibilities of the Nazi position and how that position was reasoned, what insights it provided but that it was a matter of faithfulness to God; either Hitler or God, not both. To be a disciple now meant uneqivocal intolerance, the First Commandment gave no option. Some of its members called for resistance because of the Nazi injustice; Bonhoeffer and Barth called for resistance against the treatment of Jews. In the experience of the Confessing Church, a situation had arisen which was equivalent to a *status confessionis.*

I do not wish to enter into a discussion now as to whether such a status can or cannot arise for liberal theology, the point is that it did for the Confessing Church. What I want to assert is that it arose because authority in that church lay with the story and its call to people to live authentically in it. It is my view that Karl Barth and others had caused a shift in epistemology for a number of theologically engaged people from that of liberalism to that which earlier I referred to as 'critical.' In the confrontation with the claims of National Socialism truthfulness of theology lay no longer in its power to describe or prescribe the reality of God, the world and humanity but simply in its faithfulness to the call into a certain kind of living as set out in the gospel story. The truthfulness of theological affirmations was constituted now by the truthfulness of the praxis that arose in response to the story, or, truth and truthfulness were political matters not those of ontology. In the shift from reason and the concept of being to praxis and the concept of

society theology had created for itself a radically different position vis-à-vis tolerance. In the quest for authentic existence before the gospel the Confessing Church opened up the possibility that intolerance could be quintessential to faith's pursuit of truth.

IV

In concluding I want to set out reflections on truth and tolerance in a Reformed-theological perspective, shaped by my argument that both tolerance and intolerance are legitimate in Christian existence but that this legitimacy is dependent on the material conditions of a society at any given time.

"The modern development of the idea of tolerance is a function of the modern reformulation of the understanding of revelation." (*Wolf*, p.287) This comment is itself worthy of separate investigation. It makes a significant difference to church and theology whether the gospel is understood as a prophetic religion of revelation manifest in the 'Word' and that it radically claims the whole life of the faithful or whether it is seen as the religion which teaches 'the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the infinite value of the human soul and that God reigns directly in the heart of God's children so that they have a part in eternity,' as Harnack summarized it in his famous lectures on the nature of Christianity. Again, it does make a significant difference to the discernment of truth whether Christianity is seen to be a 'religion of conscience' or, as in the case of the Reformers of the 15th and 16th centuries, the proclamation of the praxis of discipleship in face of God's prevenient grace. Once more: when human *Vernunft* is identified with God's Spirit and all people are by nature in the image of their creator, the divine spark being in all, then the church becomes an institution that cares for a certain subjectively arranged ethical-religious culture in which this natural relation of all people is nurtured. Tolerance as the renunciation of violence towards, and active love for, the neighbour whom one seeks to convert changes to tolerance of the basic freedom of opinion and conscience. A different anthropology and a fundamentally different understanding of community arise here.

If there is a 'Protestant' idea of tolerance, then it exists as a product of the secularization of the Reformation. It is not that secularization is problematic; what is problematic is that the material conditions which gave rise to the Reformation are forgotten when this secularization shifts Reformation insights into the realm of personal conscience and individual freedoms. This in fact happened during the Enlightenment. The possibility of a praxis of discipleship in intolerance was lost.

The Reformation established a prophetic understanding of revelation that included an insistence on the authority of the biblically grounded Word of God. The Act of Toleration, on the other hand, advanced an understanding of tolerance which declared that people's faith convictions needed to be tolerated. Faith convictions meant freedom of faith, freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, each undifferentiated from the other. A *theological* reflection on tolerance within the Reformation tradition cannot concede that such individual freedom of faith exists as a principle *within* the Christian community; what it does concede and support is the factual existence of that freedom within the civil community. Given the Reformation understanding of the Christian's responsibility for the world, it is imperative that clericalization of society and every attempt to declare the 'Christian' state to be the aim of religious activity be resisted. It is part of this responsibility to assure that the state become and remain the state; for that reason Christians assist in the establishment of peace, justice, order, human rights for all citizens. This would suggest that Christians have a responsibility for tolerance within the civil community, tolerance not simply as a secular virtue, but one founded in the very basics of Reformation theology.

The Reformation understanding of revelation was that God is revealed to humans in Jesus Christ and his work of justification. Revelation meant that human searching was over; only acknowledgment remained. There could be no tolerance before *God's* revelation. But it is revelation, however intolerant in itself, which holds that in relation to one another, humans need be tolerant. They who proclaim the intolerant claims of God's revelation are the first to be subjected to them. The intolerance of the 'religious' person is not the intolerance of revelation. But it is the very declaration of revelation which, in its intolerant claim that God alone justifies, sets humans free for 'Christian liberty' which is the free service of one's neighbour; it sets free for the acknowledgement of the neighbour as one of God's creatures for whom Christ was crucified. "Protestant theology does not seek its understanding of tolerance or uphold it as a demand of Christian faith because of the image of God which is stamped upon the human creature; that idea has too often been distorted on account of humanistic, natural law based conceptions, presumed rights of conscience or claims of human autonomy. No, it seeks that understanding, rather, in the obedience of faith which has to prove itself in the life of human sanctification" (*Wolf*, 296), that is to say, in the political coexistence of people and one with another and with the environment in a fashion identified now by the World Council of Churches' call for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Thus, for Reformed theology tolerance is a matter of Christians' wordly conduct, which surely demands the exercise of

reason. Here tolerance is rooted in God's *yes* to humans, whom God created for freedom.

According to Reformed theology, this *yes* is spoken in Jesus Christ; in his God-likeness alone is founded the likeness of humans with God. This exclusive assertion of revelation indicates the direction in which the exercise of tolerance on the part of Christians is to move, namely towards the neighbour who is in the image of God and whose being in that image Christ has affirmed and made just.

Here, in the realm of sanctification or, as I said earlier, of politics, where the obedience of faith is confirmed, intolerance as a judging activity, undertaken for the glory and in the name of God, is changed into an activity of confession which gives testimony to the intolerance of the revelation that God alone is Lord. Similarly, tolerance as a proclamation of the unlimited, subjective claim of freedom is changed into an activity of confession which gives testimony to the incompleteness of human knowledge of truth and to the acknowledgment that every human being belongs to God. In such confession tolerance ceases to be an expression of possessing the truth. As activities of confession, tolerance and intolerance do away with the understanding of intolerance as an activity of judging and the understanding of tolerance as an activity of indifference.

It is my conviction that just as authentic knowledge of truth resides in the experience of it *and* the responding praxis, authentic existence in faith may manifest tolerance and intolerance depending on the given *material* circumstances of a community's life. However peculiar it may sound, truth itself demands the praxis of both tolerance and intolerance for its witness in the world.

THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION

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I have been asked this evening to speak to the topic of toleration and to do so in a popular vein. I am grateful for that instruction for I do not presume to aspire to the level of erudition which the distinguished lectures in this symposium can more than justifiably claim. Indeed, I suffer under the handicap of being a denominational bureaucrat and one who in fact on more than one occasion has been met by a response to my speeches and sermons not unlike that of the elderly parishioner who approached me following a service one morning to say that she had not been able to hear a word that I had said. Thinking to be modest, I replied, "Well, madam, I'm sure you're not missing much," to which she immediately answered, "I know, that's what everybody tells me."

Not needing to claim for myself, therefore, a scholarly role permits me to speak to the issue of toleration not so much from an historical or philosophical point of view as from a cultural and practical one. Tolerance is, after all, according to a recent survey by *MacLean's* magazine, the most widely respected civic virtue among Americans and the second most widely respected virtue among Canadians. And yet, popular though it be, tolerance is not inherently all that amusing a topic and hence the charge to deliver an after-dinner speech about it in a somewhat lighthearted way is a challenging one.

Indeed, even we Unitarians who like to pride ourselves on our adherence to this virtue display some ambivalence about it. In a recent denominational survey, a wide sample of parishioners were asked what they liked most about their local congregations and the majority answered "interpersonal relations." And then they were asked what they liked least and the majority answered, "interpersonal relations."

I must say that, as I have reviewed many examples of tolerance in preparation for this occasion, one incident stands out in my mind above all others and it has very little to do with either religion or politics. It concerns the actress Ilka Chase who was married for a very brief time to the producer Louis Calhern. Soon enough Chase and Calhern were divorced and Calhern took one Julia Hoyt for his next wife. Some months later Ilka Chase was rummaging through her dresser drawers when she came upon a box of stationery engraved with the

name "Mrs. Louis Calhern." Being generous of spirit and not wanting the box to go to waste, Ilka Chase wrapped it in a nice bow and sent it to her successor with a brief note. "Dear Julia," the note read, "I hope this reaches you in time."

The kind of tolerance we have in mind at this symposium though is, I suppose, of a slightly different order. Let me turn to our topic in a bit more systematic way then and observe that, though the virtue of tolerance be widely heralded, it is not, I want to suggest, an unmitigated good. I want to offer two broad critiques of the ideology of tolerance, the first being a critique of tolerance when that doctrine is employed as a vehicle of repression; the second being a critique of tolerance when it is employed as an excuse for vacuity.

Let me begin, then, by noting that social, political, or religious tolerance is far less a matter of principle than it is a matter of power. Those who determine the limits of toleration in any particular public context, who decide what will or will not be deemed acceptable, are not those of the minority persuasion for whom tolerance is presumably a protection. Those who determine the *de facto* limits of tolerance, who define its very meaning in any particular instance, are those who hold to the majority sentiment for whom the *status quo* is at least in some sense acceptable. Tolerance, therefore, is a virtue under the control of the powerful for, just as the rich and the poor are not equally free to sleep under the bridges of Paris, so the powerful and the powerless do not have equal say about where the line is drawn between the tolerable and the abhorrent.

The recent controversy in the United States over the Robert Mapplethorpe photographs at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington provides a simple illustration. Mapplethorpe's prints of homosexual love and a cross resting in a jar of urine were deemed offensive to the public taste by Senator Jesse Helms of North Caroline who intimidated the Corcoran into cancelling the show with the threat to withhold federal funds for the arts. In this case it was not the artist or the museum or even the arts community itself -- united as that community was in its outrage -- which set the limits to tolerance. It was Senator Helms and his largely sympathetic Senatorial colleagues who hold the power because they hold the pursestrings.

The powerful define the parameters of tolerance while the powerless have no choice but to abide by them. A group of Polish children were once brought to Auschwitz after having been caught stealing coal. There being no separate block for children at the concentration camp, the youngsters were at first distributed among the

different huts. But then a decision was made that, and I quote, "it is morally intolerable for children to sleep among adult men" and so the children were removed to the medical block and given lethal injections in order, in the words of the Commandant, "to preserve the morals of the camp."[1]

The intimate connection, then, between tolerance and power accounts for the fact that the word "tolerance" carries with it a condescending edge. To "tolerate" an unpopular expression of art or an unusual religious faith is to imply that one is putting up with the aberration for the time being but that one has the power to withdraw toleration on a moment's notice if the art or the faith become too offensive.

In his "Letter Concerning Toleration," John Locke made the elastic nature of tolerance explicit when he excluded from those opinions which deserve protection any which, in Locke's words, run "contrary . . . to those moral rules which are necessary to the preservation of civil society. . . ."[2] But of course it is exactly those who currently hold the reigns of power who determine "those moral rules." The political scientist Ralph Milliband has made a convincing case in his book *The State in Capitalist Society* that Western institutions tolerate a wide range of views on a wide variety of topics as long as none of them seriously challenge the prevailing economic system.[3]

One of the dangers of tolerance in a free society, therefore, is that it may be used by the powerful to lull their less powerful fellow citizens into a false sense of democratic security. If ours is a pluralistic society, we may reason, in which all voices and all perspectives have a right to be heard, then someone will surely bring any injustices to our attention and, absent such an announcement, we may rest content that all is right with the world. The problem with such reasoning is reflected in the story of the elephant who once entered a barnyard crowded with chickens and began to dance the tarantella. Many hens and roosters were crushed beneath the elephant's feet. At his trial the elephant offered this defense: "But, your honor," he said, "I shouted a warning -- 'Every man for himself!' -- before I began to dance."

The problem is that the ideology of tolerance may serve all too easily as a smokescreen for the maintenance of the *status quo.* In a truly pluralistic society all voices have not only the right to be heard but the means as well: the artist as well as the Senator; the chickens as well as the elephant. But if the claim of tolerance is not accompanied by relative parity between the competing parties in terms, for example, of

access to the media, then tolerance turns into little more than a Trojan horse in the battle for repression.

This, then, is one of the pitfalls to which a doctrine of tolerance may fall prey: that it may be used not to encourage diversity but to control it. And yet an equally dangerous pitfall tempts toleration from the other end of the social and political spectrum.

It has been said that four types of sermons have been preached over the centuries in Oxford University Chapel, distinguished respectively for their Altitude, Latitude, Platitude, and Longitude. It has been said further that all were tolerated except the last. Despite my preacherly profession, I could not be more sympathetic. I am reminded of the woman who slipped into the back of a church in the middle of a sermon. Turning to the parishioner next to her, she whispered, "How long has the minister been preaching?" "Thirty-five or forty years," came the reply. "In that case," said the woman, "I think I'll stay. He'll surely be done soon."

And yet I want to contend that refusing to tolerate sermonic "longitudinality" alone is not sufficient. Having been subjected to more than my share of altitudinous, latitudinous, and especially platitudinous sermons, I want them all banished to whatever netherworld bad sermons go when they die.

The greatest danger to liberalism, be it social, political, or religious, is not that it will be too narrowly focused and admit too little to the realm of the acceptable but that it will eschew all standards and admit too much.

Philosophical liberalism is based upon three fundamental assumptions: first, that the goal of life is to pursue the "Good," as each individual conceives it; second, that the good of society is to help each individual pursue his or her own "Good" as long as that pursuit does not unfairly interfere with the pursuits of others; and third, that the way to accomplish this social goal is to establish fair procedures, fair rules under the names of tolerance, civil liberties, human rights -- which each player must follow in the course of her personal pilgrimage. Note that liberalism provides no preconceived overarching vision of what the "good society" will look like, but trusts instead to right procedure, to the simple and straightforward faith that, if everybody plays by the right rules, the results -- whatever they may turn out to be -- will surely be acceptable.

Justice Oliver Wendell Homes reflected such liberal sentiment perfectly when, in an answer to the question as to whether a free

society may place any limits on the advocacy of dictatorship, he wrote, "If in the long run a belief . . . in . . . dictatorship [is] destined to be accepted by the . . . community, the only meaning of free speech is that [it] should be given [its] chance and have [its] way."[4]

But do we really believe that? If we substitute the words "genocide" or "slavery" for "dictatorship" in Holmes's sentence, do we still approve it? "If in the long run a belief in genocide is destined to be accepted by the community, the only meaning of free speech is that it should be given its chance and have its way."

Now of course there are many subtleties involved in this argument -- the question, for example, as to whether it is ever possible to predict ahead of time that a currently unpopular notion will eventually come to prevail. There is no doubt that a free society sets limits to free speech only at its gravest peril. The point I want to make at the moment, however, is simply this: that if we set no limits at all to what is deemed tolerable, we end up in a philosophical vacuum.

The philosopher Antony Flew has put much the same point in a different context with his application of the principle of falsifiability to theological statements.[5] If, Flew says, I make a statement about God which cannot conceivably be declared false, then I have made a meaningless statement. If, for example, I say that "God is Everything," this is an assertion against which no countervailing evidence can be put. But to be a meaningful assertion, a sentence must at least conceivably be falsifiable. "That tree is purple" can conceivably be disproved through countervailing testimony about the color of the tree.

What this means is that rational discourse itself is dependent upon our willingness to set limits to what we will tolerate. For us Unitarians this is a particularly nettlesome issue. We certainly pride ourselves on our broad-mindedness and acceptance of a wide variety of different religious views. We are so broad-minded in fact that it is often said that we direct our prayers "To Whom It May Concern." But such wide tolerance turns into absurdity if, as sometimes happens, it is taken to an extreme. How frequently we ministers hear novice Unitarians declare, "This is a church without a creed so we can believe anything." And how frequently we ministers reply, "It's true we have no creed but we certainly do have a set of principles which, while we don't require your assent to them as a condition of membership, define quite clearly what Unitarianism is all about." The simple fact is that a religion which affirms everything ends up affirming nothing or, to put it another way, if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there.

The common liberal reticence to set limits to toleration is at the heart of a dispute which currently grips many an American college campus. In the face of frightening new expressions of racial hatred, anti-gay taunts, or anti-Semitic incidents, the University of Michigan and other institutions of higher learning have adopted codes of conduct for students which prohibit any conduct which "stigmatizes or victimizes" people on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, handicap, and, interestingly enough, "Vietnam-era veteran status." The American Civil Liberties Union has lodged objection to any effort to punish those who utter ethnic slurs.[6]

Here is a classic confrontation between those who have an overarching vision of the "good society" (or at least the "good" college community) and those who would trust to right process, regardless of the consequences. There is a world of difference of course between the expression of controversial views in an academic context -- something which should be defended vigorously -- and the use of speech as a weapon to intimidate, harass, or degrade. Any community -- be it university, church, or state -- which is unwilling to set limits to toleration because it lacks a conception of the commonweal is at best an immature community and at worst in danger of coming apart at the seams.

But how do we reconcile the twin dangers of tolerance to which I have addressed myself this evening? How de we guard against both repression, on the one hand, and vacuity, on the other? How de we rationalize, if we would, the defense of a Mapplethorpe photograph with sanctions against racist propaganda?

The question is a complex one. But the answer, I suspect, lies in St. Augustine's conception of "overlapping loves." Despite our great differences one from another, Augustine said, there are some things which as human beings, indeed, as children of God, we hold in common.

Ronald Dworkin, a distinguished political philosopher, wrote recently:

> Since the Enlightenment political philosophers have debated the merits of two rival views about what democracy . . . really is. The fist is a majoritarian conception: that a majority of voters should always have the power to do anything it thinks right or in its own interests. The second is communal: it insists that democracy is government of, by, and for not the majority but the people as a whole.[7]

If we marry Augustine's notion of overlapping lives to the communal conception of democracy, we end up with an organic vision of society in which the common needs of humankind -- to food and shelter surely, but to liberty and free expression also -- form a kind of moire pattern which guides us in our decision-making. Is it, for instance, worth sacrificing the creative power of artists in service to the majority's biases about taste? Is it possible to build a just society if citizens are subjected to racial hatred at their every turn? The answers will be derived not just from our understandings of right process but from our vision of the world we want to live in.

Political and religious toleration must surely be a part of such a world -- there is no question of that. But in addition to our preoccupation with getting the rules right, let us attend as well to our overlapping loves. The good society deserves no less.

Nine hundred years ago a Chinese philosopher struggled to articulate a vision of such a society: "An emperor has governed successfully," the philosopher wrote, "when artists are free to make plays, children are free to chase bubbles, young people may grumble at taxes, and old men find fault with everything." Not a sufficient vision surely, but not a bad start. Not a bad start at all.

NOTES

1. Ascherson, Neal, "The Death Doctors," *The New York Review of Books*, May 28, 1987.

2. Locke, John, "A Letter Concerning Toleration," in Hutchins, Robert M., ed., *Great Books of the Western World*, Chicago: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Inc., 1952, vol. 35, p. 17.

3. Milliband, Ralph, *The State in Capitalist Society*, New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1969.

4. Quoted in Bickel, Alexander, *The Morality of Consent*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975, p. 72.

5. Flew, Antony, "Theology and Falsification," in Mitchell, Basil, ed., *The Philosophy of Religion*, London: Oxford University Press, 1971, pp. 13-22.

6. See Bernstein, Richard, "On Campus, How Free Should Free Speech Be?" *The New York Times*, September 10, 1989.

7. Dworkin, Ronald, "The Future of Abortion," *The New York Review of Books*, September 28, 1989.

THE CONCEPT OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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The expression "religious freedom" is not ambiguous simply because of the casual way in which ordinary speakers of English and careless scholars bandy about words and phrases. The expression may be said to be "systematically" ambiguous for several reasons: there are serious disagreements about the precise meaning of the terms *religion* and *freedom*; there are different theories about the nature of religion and of freedom; both ordinary speakers of our language and scholars tend to be prepared to acknowledge that there are different types of religion and different types of aspects of freedom as well as different religions and different freedoms; the relative importance of the descriptive and evaluative aspects of uses of the expression may vary from user to user or even use to use; the expression is often used rhetorically in order to manipulate attitudes or behavior; and high-minded thinkers sometimes feel that they have a moral right (or even obligation) to employ the expression in a more "valuable" way than ordinary speakers do. Thus it is prudent for us not to rush into trying to lay down a general formulation. A safer course to follow is to keep an eye on historical discussions of the relations of religion and freedom and to consider some of the more obvious ways in which a person might be said to enjoy religious freedom.

I

Let us being by considering certain matters concerning agency. To have religious freedom can be a matter of being able to do certain things. Specifically, it can be a matter of being able to do various things directly associated with religion. Viewed positively, such a freedom involves simply having certain capacities, and viewed negatively, it is a matter of not being constrained in such a way that one cannot do religious things. A person who is religiously free in this sense ordinarily can do some of the following things: hold religious beliefs, attitudes, and values; observe religious rites and customs; belong to a community of religious believers; celebrate religious festivals; act in public as well as in private on the basis of his religious commitment; and promote his faith through teaching and proselytizing. This list is not exhaustive, but it takes into account the main religious activities that have been at the heart of historical struggles carried on in the

name of religious freedom. It is clear that even solely with respect to matters of agency, there are countless degrees or gradations of religious freedom. The more things directly associated with religion that one can do, the more religious freedom one enjoys. A person who can observe religious rites but cannot belong to a community of religious believers has a certain amount of religious freedom, but he obviously has, *ceteris paribus*, less religious freedom than the individual who can both observe religious rites *and* belong to a community of religious believers.

Moreover, a person who can act on the basis of the religious world-view she accepts is obviously very much freer than a person who can only act on the basis of *some* religious commitment. To be able to do things associated with religion as such, and not to be determined to be a secularist, constitutes something that can reasonably be regarded as a primary form of religious freedom. But one clearly enjoys *more* religious freedom to the extent that one has not been determined to act on the basis of a *particular* religious world-view, especially insofar as one finds that particular world-view to be unacceptable. A committed Protestant who is forced to behave at certain times as a Roman Catholic behaves still enjoys religious freedom in that he is not forced to be, say, a secularist materialist (or even a non-Christian); but he does not have the degree of religious freedom that he would have if he were able to behave consistently as a Protestant, on the basis of a world-view that he genuinely, whole-heartedly *accepted*, and on the basis of the concomitant beliefs, attitudes, values, responsibilities, and special personal relationships. It is actually useful to distinguish *qualitatively* between freedom to do religious things and freedom to act on the basis of a specific religious world-view that one sincerely accepts.

With respect to agency, however, religious freedom can be a matter of being able to do various things only *indirectly* associated with religion. If we look at a wide range of historical struggles carried on in the name of religious freedom, we see that a person is often regarded as religiously free to the extent that, *ceteris paribus*, she enjoys the same civil rights and privileges and the same social courtesies that are enjoyed by people in her community who do not share her particular religious commitment. If someone is not permitted to own land or to attend a university because she is a Methodist or a Jew, then she is in one important sense not religiously free even though she is not being directly prevented from doing the things that being a Methodist or Jew involves. She would be freer if she were able to do those things without suffering disabilities in the civil and other secular domains of culture. Also, religious freedom has often been associated with one's ability to *avoid* religious activities; thus we can understand what, say, a secularist materialist means when he says that by being forced to practice certain

religious rites -- or being prevented from avoiding the practice of those rites -- he is being denied religious freedom. Religious freedom is often construed to include the capacity or right to avoid religious activities of any kind.

When one does things "associated" with religion -- in the various ways indicated above -- one's religious freedom involves either doing what one wants, or doing what it is prudent for one to do, or doing what it is morally right for one to do, or some combination of these. Of course, ideally one always wants to do what it is prudent and morally right for one to do; but this ideal, like all ideals, is one that mere mortals can only hope to approach. In the sphere of religion, as in other spheres, we can conceive of conflicts between what we want to do, what it is prudent for us to do, and what we ought to do. One kind of religious freedom is the power to do whatever things "associated" with religion one wants to do, regardless of prudential or moral considerations. This may well strike one as being as close to the "ordinary" conception of religious freedom as we are likely to get. But think closely. If we prevent a person from practicing a bizarre religious rite that involves the death of thousands of innocent people, we are in a sense restricting his religious freedom; yet we do not *normally* think of religious freedom as involving one's capacity or right to do such a thing. And that is not simply because our religious views differ from those of such a fanatic, but because we believe that religious freedom must always be understood within a wider moral context, one which involves the agent's other interests, the interests of his fellow human beings and other creatures, the interest of civilization, ideals other than freedom (such as justice), and forms of culture or experience other than religion (for important and embracing as religion is, human beings are never *simply* religious). Of course, we can say that preventing the fanatic from carrying out his bizarre rite is a restriction of his religious freedom in one sense of the expression. When one does what one wants, then regardless of whether one's action is prudent or morally right, it is a manifestation of a certain form of personal autonomy. Nevertheless, the case of the fanatic illustrates something that also applies in less extreme cases, that there is nothing especially "ordinary," "basic," or "fundamental" about the conception of religious freedom as doing whatever things "associated" with religion that one *wants* to do.

Yet we can also see from history that the idea that religious freedom is properly understood only within a wider moral context is a potentially dangerous idea that can be mischievously exploited by those of a reactionary, authoritarian disposition. Such a position, after all, has often been cited by people unjustifiably professing to be moral experts when they have argued that the restrictions they have placed on

someone's religious activities cannot be regarded as restrictions on his religious freedom in the "true" sense of the expression. It is hardly coincidental then that some of the major disputes about religious freedom over the centuries have turned on the questions of what constitutes the difference between the virtue of tolerance and the vice of permissiveness and what constitutes genuine moral and spiritual authority. Nor is it surprising that people of a liberal inclination are invariably suspicious when they hear theologians, politicians, and ideologists insist that "true" religious freedom is essentially a matter of doing what is prudent and right. We may think here of Yves Simon's assertion that, "One who is ruled for his own good or for the common good is a free man."[1] When we hear such a statement, we should immediately consider whether there are good reasons for sharing the speaker's view on who is fit to do all this ruling.

The issue of religious freedom does not arise solely with reference to agency; we can contrast freedom to do with freedom to be. To have religious freedom can be a matter of being able to be a certain kind of person. Of course, some types of freedom to be can be explained by reference to freedom to do. There are circumstances in which it is appropriate, for example, to understand being a Muslim or being a religious person as being someone who does certain things. Hence, if a person is unable to do various things "associated" with religion, he is not free to be a certain kind of religious person. However, such reduction is not always appropriate.

I particularly have in mind here the various types of "spiritual" and "psychological" freedom. Viewed positively, these freedoms are optimum states of the "soul" or "mind." Viewed negatively, they involve one's personality's (the "internal," "interior," or "inner" self's) not being constrained in such a way that it is unable to attain a well-being variously conceived (or characterized) as health, peace, happiness, blessedness, and salvation. In the case of spiritual freedom, this well-being is seen as involving the individual's relationship with a transcendent or ideal order, while in the case of psychological freedom it is normally analyzed in a purely functional manner or in terms of pleasure.

Most religions teach that it is only through a religious faith and life (either a particular religious faith and life or one from among several adequate religious faiths and lives) that one can attain spiritual freedom or psychological freedom or both. In fact, I cannot think of any prominent religion, living or dead, that has not taught some version of this proposition. The proposition is usually if not always seen as having the corollary that only through a religious faith can one live well, consistently in a virtuous and socially constructive as well as

satisfying way. To the extent that one does what one does because one is what one is, we may say that freedom to be is a condition of freedom to do.

There is another kind of freedom to be that has been much discussed in recent years, and it is quite different from the freedom to be *well*. The most poignant comments on this form of freedom have been made by philosophers and other writers associated with the intellectual movement known as "existentialism," and in their honour I shall characterize this freedom as "existential" freedom. Existentialist writers, along with such celebrated precursors as Pascal, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche, have stressed the extent to which at least some human beings have the capacity not only to determine much of what they do, but more radically, to determine much of what they are. Interestingly, most of these writers have been religious, although perhaps not in a traditional or conventional way, while a few of them, such as Nietzsche and Sartre, have been among the most passionate and most powerful critics of religion. In either case, the phenomenon of religion, and the question of its precise relation to human self-determination, have occupied a large part of their attention.

To some who are concerned with existential freedom, the expression "religious freedom" must seem hallow if not self-contradictory. But to others, religion, perhaps more than any other form of experience or culture, makes possible the kind of insight into oneself and others that stimulates one to abandon deterministic notions and transcend other determining factors and get on with the human project of self-determination through choice and commitment. A central theme of Christian and Jewish existentialism is the importance of this kind of freedom to be, a freedom at least partly known through religious experience and one which qualifies for the title of "religious freedom" along with the other types or aspects of freedom we have been considering.

II

Although I have indicated how various things that can be usefully characterized as forms of religious freedom can be seen as involving absence of constraints, I have not directly addressed the matter of what the actual constraints are. Even if freedom as such is not simply the absence of constraint, constraints are important in relation to freedom because they prevent one from enjoying the various types or aspects of "positive" freedom.

In a sense there is no limit to the number of things that might prevent one from enjoying the various religious freedoms. If one is hit by a truck while one is crossing the street, one's religious activities and one's chances of attaining spiritual and psychological well-being may be dramatically curtailed. But it would be foolish to brand the driver of the truck "an enemy of religious freedom." The constraints that concern us are those that we can see from history to be directly relevant to religious freedom.

The most obvious of all "external" constraints related to religion are those involving authority, illegitimate authority, and abuse of authority. We would not be far off the mark if we concluded from historical studies that the major struggles for religious freedom have been attempts to shake off constraints established and justified in the name of authority. The pattern is familiar: individuals and groups have wanted to do certain things and be certain types of people, and the someone "in authority" or some supposedly "authoritative" group or institution has stood in their way. Sometimes the dictates of those rightly or wrongly in authority have been accepted with humility, sometimes they have been accepted only grudgingly, and occasionally they have been met with rebelliousness.

The idea of authority has received much attention from theologians and political philosophers and has been the subject of considerable theorizing. For example, in a study of the idea in Christian literature, J.H. Schutz, drawing on theological and sociological sources, concludes that authority is the "interpretation of power" and corresponds to what Weber calls "legitimate domination."[2] The term *authority* appeared in English as far back as the thirteenth century and is ultimately derived from the Latin *auctoritas* (meaning among other things, "advice," "opinion," and "command"), which is related to the term *auctor* (meaning "master" or "leader"), a term also related to the English term author.[3] In Kersey's 1708 dictionary, two distinct but related definitions of the term are worth noting: on one hand, the word refers to "Power, Rule, Preheminence[sic]," but it also refers to "a Testimony, or passage of an Author, quoted to make good what one says."[4] Reflecting on these two usages, which are still employed today, we can see how systematic ambiguities arose with respect to the term. We still often use the word to indicate power to command, enforce obedience, influence opinion and behaviour, judge, and so forth; and often we use the word to indicate some person, group, or institution that possesses the power. At times, however, we also imply that the power possessed by the people in question is in fact legitimate; we then mean to suggest by use of the term that we accept or endorse their exercise of power. At still other times, we play a more active role in determining authority by

appealing to what we consider to be the wisdom or other virtue of some person, group, or institution that we have determined to treat as an authority (whether she or it wishes to be treated that way); and thus we may say, "My authority on such matters is so-and-so."

Authority is derived from very different sources. Actual authority may be derived from the ability of leaders to inspire fear, sincere respect, or even just a sense of the futility of attempts to overthrow it. Legitimate authority is derived from the ability of leaders to convince those subject to it that the leaders merit obedience; those who exercise legitimate authority are perceived by the totality of subjects as representing the most competent and trustworthy leaders available. "Availability" is an amorphous criterion, and legitimate authority almost always falls far short of being ideal authority.

Many disputes over religious freedom arise as a result of the perception that there is an intolerable gap between actual authority and legitimate authority. Sometimes these arise because those hitherto subject to an authority have lost confidence in the competence of the present leadership or the integrity of an institution. Sometimes they arise because people believe that more competent leaders are now available. Sometimes they arise because people no longer consider it futile to attempt to overthrow the entrenched leadership, or because they are not as worried as they once were about the danger of anarchy or disorder setting in once the present leadership has been abandoned. Sometimes they arise because people have gradually become convinced that what is legitimately authoritative in one sphere is only actually authoritative in another. Sometimes they arise because people have developed radically individualistic, anti-authoritarian, anarchical ideas, at least with respect to religious matters. When the actual authority of leaders is put under attack, they may respond with repressive measures or reasoned defences, and occasionally they may even abdicate. Disputes over religious freedom often develop into violent conflicts; indeed they have figured prominently in many of the most infamous wars that have been waged throughout history and in all parts of the world.

Actual authority, even when legitimate or ideal, represents a limitation on personal autonomy to the extent that there is regret or dissatisfaction on the part of those acquiescing to it. However, it is reasonable to expect less regret and dissatisfaction from those who quite willingly acquiesce to actual authority that they regard as legitimate than from those who grudgingly acquiesce to actual authority that they do not regard as legitimate. Where one recognizes authority as legitimate, one will be prepared to grant that though one's personal autonomy has been to some extent limited by such authority, one has

religious freedom in a more profound sense, one that takes into account such factors as one's actual interests, one's communal responsibilities, and the need for guidance and order in one' community. Of course, when one sees one's spiritual and psychological well-being and one's existential integrity as threatened, one may no longer be willing to regard any authority that poses such a threat to be legitimate, at least where religious matters are involved. Authoritarian leaders and institutions sometimes defend their repressive handling of dissent among their subjects by insisting that in the long run those subjects will be compensated for restrictions on their religious activity by the spiritual freedom that is so much more important. But the fact remains that dissenters have lost confidence in the ability of those in authority to deliver on precisely that promise.

The form of authority that represents perhaps the most obvious possible interference with religious activities and the religious quest for well-being is political authority. Leaders of the *polis* can have all sorts of motives for restricting the religious activities of at least certain subjects. They may fear the danger of religious pluralism as a source of conflict within the community; they may be heavily under the influence of the leaders of a particular religious denomination, either because they require the political support of those leaders or are committed members of the denomination; they may find it politically useful to curry favour among religious (or secularist) bigots who wish to see religious minorities humiliated and kept down; they may sincerely find the rites of some denominations to be abominable; they may feel it prudent to remind religious leaders that they have the power to inconvenience them and their flock; and so on. Sometimes disputes over religious freedom arise because the civil government is too closely involved with a particular denominational hierarchy (and in theocracies, there is more than just "involvement"); sometimes they arise because the civil government is militantly secularist and anti-religious; sometimes they arise because the civil government has failed to keep the peace among conflicting denominations and has failed to establish and safeguard civil liberties with respect to religion; and sometimes they arise because political leaders are prepared to try almost anything that might conceivably secure or extend their power and influence.

Another major threat to religious freedoms is posed by denominational hierarchies themselves. Here medieval popes and bishops may come to mind; but the fact is that almost all clergymen of all faiths -- and lay religious leaders -- are constantly working to see to it that those subordinate to them in the pecking order, and particularly the rank and file, are doing what they think such people should be doing. It was, of course, religious institutions that endowed the world with such

categories as heresy, heterodoxy, apostasy, nonconformity, and idolatry. It was high-ranking clerics who created the Inquisition and hundreds of less conspicuous institutions that foreshadowed it or copied it. But of equal importance, it is the clergyman who lives next door or down the street who uses his power as pastor and teacher to limit the activity and influence of co-religionists with "strange" notions; and it is the academic theologian, in his clerical garb or his tweed suit, who through clever mockery of unpopular opinions may induce those who look up to him to follow the straight and narrow course of consecrated tradition and established truth. And these people are not only eager to limit the activity and influence of "wayward" members of their own denomination, but are often at least as zealous in their attempts to limit the capacities of upstarts and overreachers in rival denominations.[5] It is hardly surprising then that despite their fears of state interference in religious matters, many of the greatest advocates of religious freedom have looked to the state to promote and protect it by checking the influence of high-handed ecclesiastical bureaucrats.

Even if we only consider the two aforementioned types of authority, those involving political and denominational (in the case of Christianity, ecclesiastical) leadership, we can see that it may be an oversimplification to characterize the constraints they represent as purely "external." For often if not typically the agent who considers herself constrained by such forms of authority can choose to reject the dictates of leaders, risk the consequences, and carry on with the religious activities that the leaders have called into question. If, say, fear of loss of property or social position is a factor contributing to her acquiescence, then clearly there is an "internal" dimension to the constraint, no matter how arbitrarily and aggressively the leaders have been exercising their authority. Some notable passages in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* come to mind. At the beginning of Book III Aristotle makes some famous distinctions that have greatly influenced subsequent philosophical reflection on freedom and responsibility. He asserts without qualification that actions are compulsory when the cause is in the external circumstances and the agent contributes nothing. But he recognizes that in many important cases compulsion is not as obvious as in the case of someone being carried somewhere by a wind. He allows then that some acts are "mixed," for while not involuntary in the strictest possible sense of the word, they are involuntary in another sense, for people would not choose to do such acts unless they were under some significant pressure. Aristotle recognizes that it is often difficult to determine the degree of an agent's responsibility under such circumstances.[6] Still, we can see that the "internal" dimension of constraint is more significant in the case of a person who acquiesces to authority because of fear of loss of social

position than in the case of a person who acquiesces to authority because of torture. Even in the former case, however, we must not forget that the political or denominational leaders' repressive exercise of authority is an important "external" dimension of the constraint limiting the agent's activity. "External" constraint is present even when the political and denominational leaders limit their subjects' activities through subtle forms of indoctrination and conditioning, although when no pain is involved in these processes, one might be inclined to believe that the constraint is primarily "internal" or even to agree with Aristotle that there is no compulsion at all.[7]

Political and denominational authority are not the only forms of authority that constitute a threat to religious freedoms. Much less discussed but perhaps more important in the long run is parental authority. Parents normally do not offer their children a choice of what religious world-view they wish to accept, nor do they typically encourage their children to visit various religious communities in order to decide which one they will join. Parents exercise tremendous power over their children, and it is no coincidence that most children grow up to worship according to the "faith of their fathers." The main reason that this form of constraint historically has not received as much attention as the others we have considered is that it has been widely and rather arbitrarily assumed over the centuries that children, being immature, have few if any rights because they are incapable of responsibly exercising freedoms. There is perhaps no more dramatic instance of the importance of parental authority in the religious sphere than the not uncommon situation in which parents decide for ostensibly religious reasons that their child should not receive life-saving medical treatment.

A related form of authority that receives too little attention is academic and professional authority. For example, if a pseudo-liberal professor gives a student low grades solely because he is offended by certain religious assumptions and attitudes that the student brings to her philosophical and social-scientific essays, or even if he simply encourages other students to ridicule their classmate's piety, he may well be abusing authority. So too may be the fundamentalist teacher who uses his position to intimidate or otherwise indoctrinate those who are disinclined to interpret historical and scientific matters as he does. The social influence of academic "experts" -- and professional "experts" in general, particularly journalists, broadcasters, physicians, lawyers and economists -- is even greater in highly advanced societies than in others, and because it is usually more subtle and indiscernible than most traditional forms of the exercise of political and ecclesiastical power, it is often an even more dangerous threat to religious freedoms than they are. For example, in recent years the periodical press in North

America has perhaps done more, on balance, to limit the religious activities of individuals and churches on this continent than any group of elected politicians has. I grant, however, that the exercise of authority tends to be more subtle and indiscernible in precisely those situations in which the "internal" dimension of constraint is more significant.

The "internal" dimension figures even more significantly in cases in which an individual acquiesces to the authority of such things as tradition and convention (including "peer group pressure"). And the authority of such faculties as reason and conscience is usually deemed to be primarily an "internal" constraint despite the fact that such faculties are heavily influenced by input from "external" authorities.

III

We have already considered in passing certain things that may qualify as "internal" constraints and how they blend together with "external" constraints to limit religious activity in such a way that one may be said to have been prevented from doing what one wants to do. There are many reflective people who are troubled by the notion of an "internal" constraint. They see this notion as leading us down the garden path to radical determinism of a kind that leaves no room open for personal responsibility. However, in everyday life people recognize not only the existence of the kinds of acts Aristotle characterized as "mixed" but also various kinds of mental or psychological compulsion. Outside of mental illness, the most obvious of these is addiction. Alcoholism, for example, not only prevents one from attaining spiritual and psychological well-being but prevents one from performing certain activities that qualify for one as religious obligations. Even if a person were largely responsible for allowing himself to turn into an alcoholic, we would still recognize that in his present state he does not enjoy certain religious freedoms. Certain habits that are seen as falling short of being outright addictions are also often regarded as qualifying as "internal" constraints. Since the time of the ancients it has been recognized that while people usually are largely responsible for their vices, vices are sometimes instilled in a person through poor upbringing and other corrupting influences, and deep-rooted vices are extremely difficult to throw off. The same applies to certain rigid ways of thinking that have been derived mainly through corrupt systems of "education" that amount to little more than indoctrination and conditioning. Although many children as well as most adults have highly developed powers of critical reflection, open-mindedness is an important and often undervalued *virtue* that needs to be patiently and

carefully nurtured, and people cannot always be fairly blamed for having failed to cultivate it on their own without any support from parents, teachers, and broad-minded peers.[8]

One could say, I suppose, that ignorance itself -- combined with the atrophy of the rational and other cognitive faculties that remove this obstacle to religious and other freedoms -- is the most important "internal" constraint. There are, as Aristotle observes in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, intellectual as well as moral virtues.[9] We should remember, however, that many people dismiss as "ignorance" any world-view that differs significantly from their own, even if commitment to it has been the result of lengthy and disciplined reflection. When, say, a shallow Christian asserts that it is the thoughtful Buddhist's "ignorance" that is preventing him from attaining spiritual freedom or well-being of one sort or other, she is not saying much more than that her views differ from the Buddhist's, although she is also giving us an indication of her own shallowness.

Those who distinguish between "external" and "internal" constraints tend to think of the latter as constraints that *as individuals* we are in a substantially stronger position to remove. However, as we have now seen, this view may involve wishful thinking. Moreover, the various constraints typically characterized as "external" and "internal" are often blended together in such complex ways that it is impossible to determine whether the dominant aspect of a particular constraint is "external" or "internal." With respect to this point, let us consider one more major obstacle to religious freedoms.

Although we may not think of it as such, absence of opportunity represents a very significant constraint in the sphere of religion. For example, if one lives in a part of Asia or Africa where one has little if any contact with Christians or Christian literature, then as Christian missionaries are given to reminding us, one is lacking a certain kind of freedom: if one is not actually being deprived of the possibility of spiritual freedom, then one is at least being deprived of the possibility of doing certain religious things that, were one offered a choice, one might elect to do. In a certain sense one is not free to the extent that one is not able to choose from among more alternatives than one now is. The more alternatives open to one, then *ceteris paribus*, the freer one is. We think in these terms particularly when we recognize that in a specific situation an agent has fewer alternatives to choose from than other people have, either because she lives in a certain place, comes from a disadvantaged socio-economic background, has the wrong social connections, has a physical handicap, or whatever. There are obviously countless reasons why a person, in the religious sphere or any other,

might have fewer alternatives from which to choose than other people do, even the people who live next door, or her own brother and sisters.

These countless ways in which one may be constrained by absence of opportunity would seem, for the most part, to be "external" constraints. No one chooses to be born in a particular place, to particular parents, in a particular socio-economic stratum, with such-and-such ailments, and so one. It is a fact of life that some people are born with advantages that you and I were not given at birth; similarly some people inherit burdens that you and I never have to bear. And as life goes on, each one of us picks up more advantages and more disadvantages in relation to his various fellows.

But we need not be fatalistic about all of this. Social theorists and social reformers have always been sensitive to the extent to which absence of certain kinds of opportunity is a function of systematic exploitation and oppression of the disadvantaged by cultural and even trans-cultural elites. Opportunities in the realm of religion are among others that have been systematically denied to oppressed people. Often such oppression is directly related to abuse of political and denominational authority. Sometimes, however, it is a result of more complex factors, such as social structures themselves. (This is a major theme of recent liberation theology). In any case, we are obliged to recognize that absence of opportunity, whether an obstacle to our own personal freedom or to the freedom of others, is often something that we are in a position to do something constructive about. To regard absence of opportunity as invariably something that we and others simply must learn to accept stoically is itself to be incapacitated by a constraint that has a significant "internal" dimension. No one can single-handedly solve all of the world's social problems or ameliorate the condition of all of the oppressed people of the world; but almost all of use are in a position to make some *contribution* towards eliminating hindrances to freedom that severely disadvantaged people have had to suffer. And most of us are also often in a position to do something to remedy our own lack of opportunity. There are many ways in which one can better oneself; and although it may be unfair that one should have to work at achieving a condition (intellectual, economic, or whatever) that is not nearly as desirable as that for which others have not had to expend the slightest effort, this does not justify a fatalistic attitude. To some extent people are free to make themselves freer through disciplined and imaginative efforts at personal growth. As Piet Fransen has observed, "Freedom never comes to us as full-grown adult creativeness but is given to us as a risk-fraught and daring adventure, as a splendid human task in fulfilling which we must freely grow toward an even deeper, fuller and more ample freedom, an ever more transparent authenticity.

We are called to freedom rather than being empowered with freedom or set up in a completely free human situation."[10] Yet however, we may be inspired by evidence of what courageous people have managed to accomplish under very difficult circumstances, we must always be mindful of those things that are genuinely beyond our control, or the control of the agents whose situation we are considering.

IV

No general definition of the expression "religious freedom" will be offered here. Such a definition would inevitably be either vacuous ("religious freedom is freedom somehow related to religion"; or "religious freedom is ability to do or be something involving the spiritual or transcendent"), or too narrow ("religious freedom is the absence of political constraints upon one's religious worship"; or "religious freedom is spiritual health"), or convoluted and ever expanding. We could perhaps say that there is at most a family resemblance between one and another usage of the expression. That does not mean, of course, that the expression is so ambiguous that it is consistently worthless and misleading and should be scrapped. But why, you may wonder, have I concentrated on the expression rather than just on the relations of religion and freedom? Part of the answer is that use of the expression gives us some guidance as to what people consider to be the most important relations of religion and freedom; and in any event, the ambiguity of the expression mirrors the ambiguity of its component terms. Part of the answer is that it may be contrasted with such expressions as "freedom of religion," "liberal religion," "religious liberty," and "religious autonomy," all of which have a narrower range of applicability and which may lead us to neglect certain important relations of religion and freedom. But most importantly, when we focus on the expression itself, we are reminded of all that rhetoric by which people with one or another axe to grind try to influence the attitudes, policies, and practices of political and denominational communities. Thus we hear references to religious freedom and related matters by defenders of religion, critics of religion, politicians, jurists, orthodox clerics, radical religious reformers, theologians, social scientists, resentful laymen, and many others; and they all want to see something changed. But somewhere in the distance there is an ideal -- a moral and intellectual ideal, an ideal of civilization -- and it should not be left to careless or sophistical rhetoric to determine our vision of that ideal.

NOTES

1. Yves Simon, *Freedom and Community*, ed. Charles P. O'Donnell. New York: Fordham University Press, 1968, p. 53.

2. John Howard Schutz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostilic Authority*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, pp. 14, 17.

3. Cf. *Klein's Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*. 1971.

4. Kersey, *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum*. 1708.

5. Cf. Jay Newman, *Competition in Religious Life*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, for the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, 1989.

6. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. 1109b-1110b.

7. *Ibid.*, 1110b.

8. Cf. William Hare, *In Defence of Open-mindedness*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985.

9. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. 1103a.

10. Piet Fransen, "Grace and Freedom," in John Courtney Murray, ed., *Freedom and Man*. New York: P.J. Kenedy and Sons, 1965, p. 35.