

Concerto for Passover

A Christian's Notes from the Underground

by Peter Du Brul¹

Friends, when I look at your faces tonight I see some that I know and this is consoling; I see others that I do not know and that too is consoling. Yet both are also a bit disconcerting because my talk is not completely prepared — I am going to compose it partly from your faces. Napoleon said that he made his battle plans from the dreams of his sleeping soldiers as he walked about the camp on the night before a battle. Similarly, I shall compose my talk partly from your faces and partly from the notes I have prepared.

This talk contains several dates: Passover 1988, with its reference to the first Passover which may be approximately set at 1250 B.C.E.; the 40th Anniversary of the State of Israel refers back to 1948; we may add the fact that this is the 24th of March, and tomorrow is the feast of the Annunciation, the Angel's visit to Mary in Nazareth. That was the occasion of her response, her "yes," to the project in which we are all implicated. Her "yes" is part of the Passover to which I am referring.

Yet I am not concerned only with many Passovers that have been celebrated or made, I am more concerned with the Passover we have not yet made. This talk is an appeal to everyone here to ask whether we do not need to pray for the grace of making this further Passover because our lives, our truths and our witnesses are at issue. I am not a Pied Piper who wants to enchant you to make a decision you do not want to make, but I do want to ask whether we, as Christians in Israel, should not go farther than we have before by addressing ourselves to fellow Christians, to Jews and to Muslims, as well as to those who no longer believe in their religious values, about the situation in which we are living. It is my conviction that Christians here have something to say to their

1. This article is based on a lecture delivered to the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel on March 24, 1988, in anticipation of the 40th Anniversary of the State of Israel.

fellow Christians in the Middle East and in the world. The speaking of these words is one of the forms that Passover takes: these words have to “pass over.”

The Underground

In addition to the dates and the various forms of Passover, the title of this talk mentions the “underground.” That is where I live, where all those who do not make the “passover” are living. But we have to go from the underground to ground-level, which means we must risk exposing our weaknesses in order to offer our part of the solution to the stalemated and murderous situation in which we are living. I do not think I am offering **the** solution, but I offer one little cluster of truths for which I am responsible. With the words “Notes from the Underground,” I want to pay tribute to Dostoyevsky’s story of that name. Published in 1864, some critics think that it is the key to his later work. Let me explain how, for the story may also be a key to my talk:

Dostoyevsky’s hero lives in an underground that is in himself, what I refer to as his “interiority.” At 40 years of age — as old as the State of Israel — he is still not reaching out to other people with much success. He is a victim of subjective difficulties that are focused on his desire to be equal to other people, to be recognized by them. And yet he reflects and asks himself: “If I am rejected, so what? Why bother to be recognized by other people?” He keeps asking so many inner questions that he gets nowhere, and each time he reaches out to provoke someone to recognize him, he fails.

So he struggles on in various relationships: horizontally to other members of his generation (an officer whom he challenges to a duel, a young woman he seduces and tries to humiliate), and vertically to an older servant whom he insults. In fact the hero is struggling to get out of himself. When the abused woman returns to his apartment, he insults and abuses her again, and she runs away from him. He starts to run after her, but turns round and goes back home saying, “Let the insults I have given her be what she carries away with her. Perhaps that will save her.” He thinks of writing a story about it. But why? What difference would it make? Well, he will write it just for spite! And so we read it.

As I said, some critics find this pattern in Dostoyevsky’s other novels. In *Crime and Punishment*, when Raskolnikov goes out to surrender at the end he goes farther than the Underground Man, but he walks in his footsteps. Sonia returns to him and stays with him, and he stays with her long enough to find a release that the Underground Man never found. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, after the long accusation of Jesus by the Grand Inquisitor, the Inquisitor opens the door of the prison after Jesus has kissed him and tells him, “Go and do not come back.” The Inquisitor stays in the underground, the prison of that mentality, but lets Jesus go. I am not prepared to illustrate how this pattern might be found in *The Idiot*, *The Possessed* or other works, but within a tense situation between two people there is a breaking-point, or the approach toward a breaking-point, that results in liberation.

I return to our subject with these questions: How much tension does a community have to experience and live with before it reaches the critical mass and finds that it has to reach out farther than it ever has before? Are both local

and foreign Christians in a sort of underground? By local Christians I mean those who have been born here, whether they are Arab Christians or Jewish Christians. By foreign Christians I mean people such as ourselves, who are working on one side or the other, or on both sides. To what degree have forty years of experiences within the State of Israel, or twenty years under Israeli occupation in the Territories, brought Christians here to the point where they realize they have something to say, at some risk to themselves, to their fellow citizens and to one another? It may be that foreign Christians here are able to say even more than the local Christians. I do not know what the words are, so it is not a matter of my putting them in other people's mouths, but I want to invite us tonight as foreign Christians — which I presume most of us are — to consider making this passover from the underground of forty years' experience.

Eight Notes

I have a word to say about the “notes” that I am going to strike from this underground at this Passover. I change the metaphor from literature to music, for there are eight notes or piano keys that I want to strike tonight.

1. First I am going to refer to a few of my **personal memories**.
2. Then I am going to talk about the **context** we are in: Israel, Jordan, Palestine, the superpowers.
3. After that I can speak of the importance of **interiority** as functioning within theological method. This is the place of prayer, grace, conversion, repentance, profound *teshuvah*, when we come before the Godhead.
4. From interiority I will move on to the relationship between **history and symbol**: history in so far as we are in covenant with God in history, and our notion of God must be flexible enough to respect His mystery; symbol or eschatology in so far as we are being attracted farther into that mystery of God's working in history. In other words, history may be likened to what pushes us, and symbol to what pulls or attracts us. This is an important distinction.
5. The next two steps are at the heart of what I want to say and require that I speak of interiority/exteriority on the one hand and history/symbol on the other. First I will speak of the **Jacob/Israel complex** — not the Oedipus complex but the Jacob/Israel complex.
6. Then I will speak of an Israelite whose name was Jesus, and about the **Jesus/Christ complex**. Both the Jacob/Israel complex and the Jesus/Christ complex turn us inside out in history to get to the symbol — the complexes unfold, one from another, from one to some to all. This unfolding or simplification of the complex is a form of Passover. You may now see why I need to speak of interiority, history and symbol in order to speak of that Passover which simplifies the complex.
7. Beyond these complexes we come to the responses **Yes or No**. A profound No to evil in the various forms it takes as tempter or accuser, as ambiguous duplicitous devilry or satanic shamelessness; and a profound Yes to good in

the various forms of prayer and thanksgiving, single-heartedness and reverence, research and commitment, discovery and celebration.

8. Finally, I will refer to us here in the **Ecumenical Fraternity**, and I will invite us to go beyond our present position in order to connect with other Christian groups in the country, to see if there is some word, some task, some ongoing relationship, some common good that forty years of experience has begun to reveal.

Four Levels

I am not just going to go back and forth over these eight notes or keys, I am also going to go up and down four levels of keyboards — something like an organ with four keyboards, each having eight notes. In other words, there are thirty-two notes. (You might say: “How is he going to finish all that in an hour?” And I might say, like a true Underground Man: “I might not talk about any of those notes!”) But the four levels are not really so complicated, and their introduction here will simplify what is to come later, for they are deeply related to some of the notes we have already listed.

The four levels are stages in our intentional consciousness: Experience, Understanding, Judgment and Decision. I shall begin with the eight notes on the level of Experience, and from there work toward shared Understanding and shared Judgment. Ideally I should like us to consider reaching a shared Decision.

In our effort to communicate with one another, in our effort to bring Note 1 (my memories) and Note 8 (this Fraternity) together on any of these levels, I think that we have to pass through the other notes. We have to understand our context, respect one another's interiority, discover our place in history and the attraction of our various symbols, and we have to take positions with regard to the two levels or stages of the complexes. In other words, I do not think we can come to full communication as a body on the planet without passing through the Jacob complex and the Jesus complex, and saying a full Yes to the other side of the river, to the other side of the Passover experience, and a full No to what we have left behind.

Thus my Passover is not just on the keyboard of my notes, but it is on levels of passage from the keyboard of Experience up to the keyboard of Decision. Naturally I am not going to have time to expatiate on all of this, but part of the purpose of this talk is to show the lay of the land from a certain viewpoint, even if we do not now enter into it. This may take some of the pressure off you as you listen, and it will permit me to make two further remarks about this keyboard of notes and their four levels.

If this is a real Passover, then I have to **go back**. In the Talmud it is written that the joy of the Passover is not complete because the Egyptians did not cross with the Israelites. We must not rejoice over the deaths of the Egyptians: those who live in the covenant have the mission of going back to save the Egyptians as well. There is a mission to the nations and vice versa. That is part of what the Jesus complex is concerned with: He challenges us, through giving

His life and the invitation to give ours, to go back and on to each and all of the nations.

If this is a real Passover, then I am able to go **back and forth, up and down**. I not only can go up to Decision, but I can go down to Experience. Our life experience may be so determined by decisions we have already taken that we have difficulty understanding what others mean to say. You may have difficulty understanding what I mean. I may have difficulty understanding what I mean. Sometimes we are working from decisions down and sometimes we are working from muddled experiences up. Yet, it is only in decision that we are free. Like Dostoyevsky's *Underground Man*, we discover that we cannot reach that freedom by ourselves. We need one another, if only the reader for whom the *Underground Man* writes his story. It is only in that full, reciprocal freedom that these notes meet.

Who Is Speaking to Whom?

So, what shall I call it, this piece that I am playing for you tonight? "Concerto for Passover," "Requiem for the Egyptians," or to change the tone "Requiem for Moshe Katz," "Requiem for the Nameless Killed in Gaza"? Although this may seem like a digression, it takes us to the heart of our subject tonight. When Moshe Katz was killed in Bethlehem, his name was mentioned repeatedly on Israel radio, as was the time and place of his burial in Haifa. But when an Arab is killed in Gaza, the radio leaves him unnamed. Where is his funeral? When? What was his first name? What was his family name? Who is speaking to whom? What is the assumed context of the listeners? I realize that I live in a context that is not shared by those who speak on Israeli radio. What kind of communication can really be going on where some names are not just more important than other names, but some people do not even **have** names because the presumed listeners are not interested in them?

The problem of equality will reemerge when we deal with the two complexes in Notes 5 and 6. This inequality is what should lead free people, raised in whatever tradition taught them to be free, to speak out and take notice and to raise the level of consciousness and decision and community. How is it possible to make that point in this society, not just to push people to see it but to draw them to see it for themselves? It is not enough to stamp one's foot, point one's finger and shout: "You are not being just!" Francis de Sales said that you catch more bees with a little bit of honey than with a barrel of vinegar. How can one draw people to see the injustice of the situation in which we are living? There is a fine line between pushing people to see injustice, and bullying them to see it. The bullying sows resentment and creates a vicious circle of continual injustice. In order to reach those places where pushing and attraction work together, one has to know the cultural springs of a person and of a people. How does one speak within Jewish society, within Israeli society, so that one will be understood and maybe received on a level of Decision? How does one speak within Palestinian society so that one's shared experiences, understandings, judgments and decisions can result in common action? A handshake, a cup of coffee, a proverb can only go so far.

Though I do not claim that theological research and discovery have **the** solution for this complex “passover” problem of communication and liberation, it seems to me that theology, insofar as it is a methodical reflection on religion, has an important role to play in the problematic situation in which we are living. I think that the notes and levels I have outlined here can help us focus more carefully on some of the aspects of the problem.

I will now make a few remarks on each of my notes, though I am not sure that I will be able to articulate each of the four levels of each note. Ellipsis and speed are as much part of our method as the effort to discipline our tendency to digress.

1. Memories

- In the United States my family had Jewish friends whom we took for granted. Yet I remember the surprise I experienced the day that a waitress mistook my mother for a Jewess as I toyed with a box on the table appealing for donations to Israel. And I wondered what that meant.
- In Syria, I recall the popular demonstrations against the first version of the text on the Jews in *Nostra Aetate*, the document of Vatican II. I wondered why Muslims protested the text, since they did not believe that Jesus died on the cross. There was a political logic, devoid of theological logic. I also recall the trial and execution of Eli Cohen and the very real questions raised by the proximity and covert operations of the Jewish state.
- In the West Bank, I recall the visit of Pope Paul VI who crossed from Jordan to Israel and back again in January, 1964. That visit somehow relativized the political enmity of the region. I also recall how the Pope's returning of the relics of St. Sabas had a strong effect on the local population, bringing above ground certain strong attachments and fellow-feelings that had been dormant. These attachments were stronger than the animosity, though to a certain degree simultaneous with it.

I am not precisely sure what these memories have to do with the subject of Passover, except that they all involve Christians and Jews and all involve questioning their relationship in different cultural contexts. Though it seems highly abstract to me now, I feel that these memories focus on bonds of friendship that remained permanent despite the cultural, political, and religious changes. Such deep bonds can be discovered and appealed to, and it is in the name of such bonds in our personal lives that I would appeal to other Christians living here to try to go farther in addressing ourselves more courageously to the circumstances in which we are living. In order to go farther, it is necessary to get a deeper grip on the original experiences that have brought us to the present time. In the Acts of the Apostles, as Paul addresses himself to wider and wider audiences he is led to expatiate more and more on his fundamental conversion experience and those experiences in which he discovered his vocation to a particular mission. Here we are a hair's breath from the note about interiority, for we need a deeper interiority in order to expand toward the exterior, just as we need a true interiority in order to recognize the limits of our rightful expansion and the limits of the rightful expansion of others. The struggle is not

just where the two limits meet, interpenetrate and conflict; it also is where one's own self-esteem can reduce the other to a state of namelessness.

The opposite of an appeal to those bonds of real friendship in our lives is to take refuge in reductionism, which is one of the great evils we must refuse. By this mental and verbal operation, people are reduced to something they said or willed, to something they may still say or will, and are held permanently in that reduction. There is no consideration given to the context of the statement, to the interiority of the "reduced" person, to his or her ability to change to a more desirable position. Without respect for the other's full interiority, one chooses certain fundamental positions, selects a few truths, and uses some kind of revisionary system to reduce a present historical enemy to some symbol of the past. One can eliminate a symbol without compunction.

Two contemporary examples of this are Prime Minister Shamir and Chairman Arafat. We would have to be deaf not to notice how often the first reminds us that the Arabs want to push all the Jews into the sea, and the latter keeps warning of Israeli expansionism to the Jordan River and beyond. They hold one another to real historical statements, without considering the changing contexts and without admitting the possibility of change. It seems they forget that their opponents are persons, men like themselves, and that they also have their undergrounds. Indeed, in the political and military sense they have both worked in the underground. Though each is probably the epitome of evil in the other's eyes, one can ask to what degree are these men capable of conversion, capable of waking up from the nightmare mentality of reductionism.

We all have this reductionist tendency in ourselves, but what do we do with it when we see it? How can we discover a more human position without being naive? How to educe or draw out better possibilities from a person or group with which we disagree without reducing them to a stereotype? This is why we have to consider eschatology: history and symbolism. I have to deal not only with my own interiority, but with that of my enemy, with my underground and his. By moving up the different levels I begin to regain some of my humanity. I want to move from what I see and hear to what I understand, but do I understand what you understand, do I understand what your judgments are, do I understand your freedom? To what degree have I judged your understanding, your judgments, your decisions? To what degree am I deciding with you, and to what degree are we deciding together? In other words, we are covenanting? Are we in the covenant? Is the covenant in us?

This is why we have to keep passing over Passover, why we need the feasts to remind us of our vocation to covenant, together, in a mission to all nations. Passover is in a cycle of feasts that continues to Weeks/Pentecost and on to Tabernacles. Here one may regret that the Christian cycle of feasts is not yet completely disengaged: our Easter and Pentecost are still working toward the articulation of the Christian Tabernacles. In the period from the Assumption of Mary in August to the Exaltation of the Cross in September, and on to the Feasts of All Saints and Christ the King in November, we have, as it were, a set of feasts that is celebrating the End Time, the Final Arrival which meets the Second Coming, the consummation of the covenant. While this may be a digression into theological-liturgical fiction, it reminds us that Passover is part of

a set of feasts-events which aims at total communion. Being reminded of this, we are encouraged to pray for liberation from our reductionist self-closure and exclusivist mentality.

By speaking of reductionism and the need to counter it by a humanizing process of eduction or education, I am attempting to focus on the subject that arises from memory and leads right across the other notes: how do we propose the good for which we hope, how do we make it attractive to people in deadlock? It is not a question of making a complex attractive, but of making the liberation from the complex attractive. How can one help to make the unfolding or the revelation more powerful and overcoming? Part of this process is the effort to define the complex itself, whether it is the Jacob or the Jesus complex, so that one can see how to come out of it. That process is always a risk. If it were not, then we would know that we are not dealing with the real process.

Part of that process is found on the decisive level of the Jesus complex note, if we ever get up that far. Although I may be getting ahead of myself, I prefer to trust this inner logic which leads me from the underground of Note 6 rather than simply follow the outer logic of the fore-brain which designed a presentation from the outside. The part of the process I am referring to is found in the final image of Jerusalem in the Revelation of John, the image of the "Kingdom of God," as the bride of Jesus. It is not the image of a servant or a disciple, it is not a vertical relationship of master and servant, it is a horizontal relationship of equality. The image shows that we are called to that equality — we may never have expected it, but we are invited to pray to enter into it. It is not a luxury, it is the only way through. It is not enough to follow Jesus, you have to **pass** Him, you have to **pass over!** He is the one who is coming, and He calls us to come. After all, what does it mean to be a disciple? It means to grow up to the point where, sometimes, one outgrows discipleship and enters companionship, where you accompany Jesus, where you move along or dwell at His side and not just behind Him. In John's Gospel Jesus says, "I no longer call you servants, I call you friends." We are invited into a vertical relationship with Jesus as master that leads into a horizontal relationship with Him as friend. This is eminently purifying, for one relationship does not cancel out the others — one fulfills the other. It is what we want, and if we do not admit it to ourselves, we are lying, we are still in our undergrounds as persons and as communities.

It is hard to find one Christian leader in the land who is yet free enough with his people to be able to bring them above ground on this issue. The initiative must come from the bottom, from the top, from the sides and even the margins. I do not know whether we are prisoners of sin, or prisoners of administrative complexity. Perhaps part of what could free us from some of that complexity would be a concerted effort on the part of clergy and laity, foreign and local Christians, to bring the problem above ground, to push it up from the bottom or to call it out: "Lazarus, come forth!" That is the Passover I am talking about. It is part of the effort of Jesus to call us out, lead us out, attract us out, smoke us out of the tomb.

Thus, in the course of this note on personal memories, I have touched each of the notes ending here with the eighth. Consequently the other notes may grow shorter and shorter, since I will have already treated them before I reach them!

2. Context

The context of this talk is the 40th anniversary of the State of Israel. Many others are more qualified than I to speak of what these forty years mean for Israelis, for world Jewry, or for certain Christian churches. But in the context of this Fraternity, I want to ask whether the forty years' experience of the State of Israel has any influence on theology. I believe it does, for good or for evil, by which I mean that the good or the evil of the State of Israel depends also, at least as far as we are concerned, on us. To what degree are we trying, through our prayer and the witness of our lives, to facilitate, bless, explain, change or make more attractive this developing State of Israel?

After forty years, and despite the separate peace with Egypt, it looks as if the hatred and rejection of the State of Israel by its neighbors are as strong as ever. But such a statement can hardly be made without crying for nuance. There is deepened awareness that Israel is a part of something much greater than itself, of global interests, of strategic military and economic importance; there is a growing awareness of Israel's own internal contradictions and vitality, a vitality that depends on strong Jewish support from the Diaspora and billions each year in grants. Faced with this complex reality, a certain cynicism may be more expressive than hatred. Just this afternoon a few students were telling me: "It is all a game, a theater-play. The superpowers are arranging it all behind our backs. The Palestinians could get boiled off like water in a pan. They will be weakened, gotten rid of by Jordan, by Israel, by the superpowers. Those who say they want to help will not be able to get there in time, and in a few years they will forget." Others will say that it is not just a game or a play, but a tragedy. The only ones who seem to have a positive attitude toward the total outcome are those who have faith: either faith in a political ideology, or faith in a religious promise, or faith in both.

I ask: Where is our Christian faith as we face this situation? Why are we all underground? Does not the context call us to theologize, to reflect on our faith, to witness in new ways, or from new depth, or to as yet unreached parties? Does the cycle of feasts this year, as we pass from Passover to Pentecost to Tabernacles, urge us from our underground? Are not the Christians especially under stress in the present situation and unable to find their voice? There are three subjects that deserve attention from us if we, as a Theological Research Fraternity, are to contribute to coming to grips with the rather frozen context in which we live.

A. Christianity in this country is basically an Eastern Christianity. I do not mean that foreign or international Christians do not have a place here, but that their place is next to or within the local churches. Although there are efforts to develop Hebrew-speaking churches or communities such as the Messianic Assemblies and the Catholic parishes, the majority of Christians are Arabs (between 100,000 to 125,000), and half of them are Orthodox. This is a

different world than the one we Westerners come from, but that is Christianity here and it pulses with the Eastern and largely Orthodox world. Nearby there are some six million Coptic Christians in Egypt, and almost a million Maronites in Lebanon. The Armenian and Syrian communities, the Chaldeans and the Church of the East, and a number of Protestant communities can be found with varying degrees of historical seniority in the Fertile Crescent, from the Gulf States to the Caucasus, from the Euphrates to the Nile.

If the State of Israel wants to be a part of the Middle East — which is, of course, overwhelmingly Islamic — it has to come to grips with that reality and let itself be gripped by it. Christians in Israel have to recognize that they are a part of Eastern Christianity, but with a uniqueness that they have barely yet brought to bear on fellow Christians. There is something here that is new, and by sharing it with Middle Eastern Christians the vitality of its newness will be tested, adjusted and proved. It is not just a matter of talking about these things, understanding them or judging them accurately, but of deciding together on moral and spiritual issues — even Christological and ecclesiological issues — on issues such as the unity of the feasts.

B. Communicating and deciding together lead us to the realization that we lack what I would call a sense of agenda which involves planning and the recognition that we create our own future. To what degree is there an agenda in front of the Christians who, from a religious point of view, will continue to be only a small minority in a predominantly Muslim part of the world? How is Islam going to develop? What are going to be the future Christian attitudes toward it? These are questions that should be on the agenda of the Christian churches in the Middle East, with the churches of each region or state contributing from within the depths, limits and needs of its own experience. The experience of the churches in Israel and the Occupied Territories is unique in the Middle East, and it has hardly begun to be understood, judged and decided upon. The Churches seem to be stuck in a *status quo* situation that reflects so little of the economic, political, military and social progress that goes on around them.

C. There is an event that took place during these forty years of Israel's existence which permits us to look at the State from still another perspective: the Second Vatican Council and its text on the Jewish religion. The Council was not just an experience of the Catholic Church, but of the Orthodox and Protestant observers as well. Those were years of dedication and fellowship after the historical backlog and drag of separation, but they have been followed by something of an ecumenical freeze and slow committee work. Intense interest has been given to the paragraphs on the Jewish religion in the document *Nosstra Aetate*, and we might ask whether the existence of the State of Israel over these years has played any role in the interest that the text has raised, not only since the text has been written but even in the years before the issue was raised at Vatican II. I think it has played a role, and will continue to play a role. It is a rich and heavy role, for in addition to the ongoing lobby to obtain the Vatican's recognition of the State of Israel, support for the State of Israel is on the agenda of all the committees that work for the bettering of relations between Christians and Jews.

Nevertheless, though the existence, achievements and adversities of Israel play an important role in inter-religious dialogue and politics, it is but one role among others. Not only do some of the other characters have a hard time finding their roles, but the very nature and plot of the play are sometimes obscured. By this I mean that some of the difficulties Christian-Jewish relations have met in the years after the Council are the consequences of problems that predated the Council. Sometimes problems arise and seem to be solved, but in fact are only solved in a secondary context, not in the primary social, political and religious context of their region. Attention to context can make all the difference in the world.

I will comment briefly on positions taken by three well-known Catholics, and ask a few questions that relate their positions to local realities.

A. In an article entitled "For the Love of Zion I Cannot Be Silent,"² Msgr. John Oesterreicher affirms that the State of Israel is God's answer to the Holocaust. He does not think that "innocent Arabs" have been made to pay for the sins of wicked Europeans because "first of all, the Arabs are not innocents. The Grand Mufti was by no means the only Arab supporter of Hitler." I recall an incident in *Yad Vashem* Holocaust Memorial where a father stood with his son before the large photo of Hitler and the Mufti and said: "See how evil they are!" Now, one of the hidden points of that photo, which both Msgr. Oesterreicher and the father in *Yad Vashem* overlooked, was precisely themselves! That is, they overlooked or chose to forget that the Mufti thought that Jewish behavior in Palestine at that time was worse than Hitler's. Hitler looked better to the Mufti and his supporters than what they saw happening to them — the rising immigration, the political aims of the Zionists, their international support. It is another instance of the cynical truth: the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

Although there are obvious differences, there is also an obvious similarity in our own day where we are witnesses to Israeli arms being sent to Iran: Imam Khomeini looks better than Saddam Hussein. Is Iran supported because it is particularly needy, or because it is the enemy of Iraq? People who are up against their enemies reach for any means in sight, and they may reach for means that are even more evil than the evil they try to overcome. What is hard for Msgr. Oesterreicher to stomach is that the Zionist Jews were perceived as a real danger. Nothing in his Western experience has prepared him to understand the Middle Eastern context in which the Jews fought to set up their state. And this is a fatal omission for which Israel and the West and the Middle East are still paying the price, both the economic and the military price. In reaching for one evil to overcome another, one is infected by the thing one has touched.

But if the infection is there, we must ask ourselves: Are we doctors or executioners? If the evil is in there, how do we try to draw it out? How is it possible to draw out of the Palestinians, and Israelis, what is better in them and what is best? Not what is worst by pointing a finger and saying: "See how bad they **are!**" rather than "how bad they **were** ... how bad **some** of them were." We

2. *Christian News from Israel* 26:3-4 (1978), 119-121, 171-174.

are right back to the generalizations of accusation that the Bishops at Vatican II worked to overcome when they affirmed that not all Jews at the time of Jesus were responsible for His death, nor are Jews today to be held responsible. It is not enough to point fingers, make judgments of fact and then generalize them. It is not enough to sit down and say: "Well, that is how it is — get your weapons."

I refuse such a vision of things. How can you try to draw or convert something good out of a people who are told that they are evil? How can that give them hope that they are going to be able to change? Msgr. Oesterreicher's accusation is based on a historical judgment that leaves out the point of view of those whom he is judging. Nor, in that article at least, does there seem to be any effort to understand their experience, their values and their aspirations. God's will marches right over them. Now, however, forty years later, they have come back to remind us all of that forgotten context that will not go away.

B. In his book, *On the Church of Christ*,³ Jacques Maritain addresses himself to criticism that he had claimed that the State of Israel is part of the divine plan. He answers the criticism by stating that, in his opinion, it is not the State but the return of the Jews to the Land of Israel that is part of the divine plan. He thinks that those who desire a secularist Palestinian state necessarily, by innuendo, desire the disappearance of the State of Israel, and therefore desire an iniquity. The existence of the State of Israel is a just and necessary thing, but one must ask: What happened to the Palestinians? What rights do they have? Maritain defines their rights as "persons," as members of the Arab population in the State of Israel, and their right to compensation for their losses. Even these losses are defined, not as a result of "unjust aggression," but as a result of the "legitimate installation of a new national and political unity in a part of a territory which up till then, they were the only ones to populate."

Maritain and Oesterreicher refuse to see anything unjust in the way Palestinians were treated in the War of Independence. Benny Morris's very recent book on the various stages in the creation of the Palestinian refugees might lead them to change their perceptions of history and qualify the triumphalism of their political theologies. For Maritain, the Palestinians have no civil or national rights except as members of an Arab population in the Jewish State. One wonders what he might say of contemporary aspirations for an Islamic state, or the various Israeli and Egyptian interpretations of the Camp David notion of autonomy, or the Jordanian proposal of confederation. As long as one remains unaware of the limited cultural context of one's own discourse and its tendency to eliminate or overlook or sidestep the point of view of another people in the area, one cannot expect a breakthrough to an adequate perception of a complicated set of problems. "Divine plans" are brought in too rapidly to cover up for inadequate political analysis of the full historical and social facts.

C. Lastly, I refer to the last paragraph of the conclusion to Pierre Benoit's article, "Israel in the History of Salvation."⁴ He writes:

3. Notre Dame, Indiana, 1970.

4. *Exégèse et Théologie* (Paris, 1960–61).

It is scarcely necessary to state that the creation of the State of Israel, which exists on a secular level and which faces the opposition of some Orthodox Jews, cannot be considered as representing in itself a stage in the plan of salvation. It may be that God wants to draw from this political event some useful consequences on a religious level, but this is a matter of God's secret plan.

This position might be rather close to that of Jacques Maritain, except that Maritain tends to know more about the matter of God's secret plan. After making the clear distinction between the secular and religious levels, Benoit leaves the possible religious benefits that might accrue to the secular political event shrouded in mystery. This mystery is much less shrouded for Oesterreicher and Maritain. But a "mystery" that is not even mentioned in Benoit's article (which is, after all, an article in exegesis) is the possible political, secular and religious consequences of the creation of this state on those Palestinians whose state is *ipso facto* denied by the Jewish state. In other words, the level of abstraction from the Middle East context in this final paragraph is so elevated that we are left gasping for breath and searching for the possible application of this lofty exegetical truth to the real world in which that Jewish state exists.

These three examples of Catholic thinking before and after Vatican II may help us to see how the Western context in which that thinking occurs tends to overlook the point of view of those who are immersed in the real Middle Eastern context as opponents of the *status quo*. As one reads these opinions, one realizes that they are operating on certain assumptions which are very far from the context of those who are living and working in Hebrew and Arabic in the Middle East. Who **are** the people to whom the Oesterreichers, the Maritains and the Benois are addressing themselves? Certainly not the local people here, although the people here have much to learn from them.

I will end this long set of thoughts on context by asking whether the Passover is not blocked by a Red Sea of forgotten or deliberately overlooked contexts: the Eastern Christianity of the region, the weariness and stagnation resulting from a maintenance of the *status quo*, and certain political and theological ambiguities that predate Vatican II and devolve from it. By paying more attention to these aspects of the context in which we live, can we dare to find our way across the bed of that Sea? Unless we do, I am convinced that we shall have no more luck than the Egyptians.

3. Interiority and Exteriority

If we are going to speak about this problem theologically and not just politically, we may be helped by some kind of paradigm of theological methods. The one I have found most helpful is presented by Bernard Lonergan in his *Method in Theology*.⁵ In his analysis of intentional consciousness, he discerns four levels which you will recognize as the levels I presented earlier: Experience, Understanding, Judgment and Decision. He places eight functional specializations of theology on those four levels: four of the specializations ascend from Experience to Decision, while the remaining four descend the same levels. The specializations Lonergan discovers at these eight different positions

5. New York, 1972.

on the four levels are not “field” specializations such as exegesis, moral theology, dogmatic theology, etc., but “functional” specializations that turn in a sort of semi-circle as they move up toward Decision and then down toward Experience. Permit me to take you around that semi-circle.

1. We begin with the functional specialty of Research, which is on the level of Experience.

2. Interpretation, on the level of Understanding.

3. History, on the level of Judgment.

4. Dialectical Theology, on the level of Decision. At this point Lonergan focuses on what he calls conversion or spiritual theology: grace. I refer to it as authentic interiority. It is not strictly a function of theology, but if theology does not have it then it is operating only from the fore-brain and not from the heart. Without it, we will not find the center of equilibrium of theological methods, we will not have a “well-tempered clavier.” But once we discover the centrality of the conversion experience, which is beyond and underlying decision, we can formulate the basic categories of our fundamental theology.

5. Fundamental Theology, which is on the level of Decision but descending back toward Experience. There is no way from dialectics to fundamental theology without passing through the conversion experience. There is no way through the Oesterreicher-Maritain-Benoit dialectics, or any others, unless there is an appeal to grace. This appeal is not an escape from the dialectics, it is not an anti-intellectual approach that would say, “Just solve it in your heart and that is enough.” But there must be an appeal to the internal spiritual experience of your opponent or you will never reach the truth together.

6. After working out the categories of our fundamental theology, we move down to the Doctrines or dogmatic theology, which is on the level of Judgment.

7. Systematics, which is on the level of Understanding. We can use several different systems to express our truths — we might use a Platonic or Aristotelian system, a Marxist or Teilhardian system, an eclectic or existentialist system. We do not want to confuse the systems we use to formulate our truths with the truths themselves. Nor do we want to confuse the doctrinal truths with the fundamental categories.

8. Communications, which is on the level of Experience again. Here we are concerned with communicating to others by means of certain systems the truths that we have reached, which are based on fundamental categories that have arisen from spiritual experience.

This forms a semi-circle, and when the anode and cathode of my semi-circle meet the cathode and anode of your semi-circle, communication might take place: I have my internal experience and you have yours, I have my grace and you have yours, I have my biases and you have yours. If we are going to do theology and work with fellow Christians and Jews on such issues, this paradigm of theological methods may be helpful to situate ourselves with regard to one another. We may be deeply conditioned by decisions and judgments that were made for us by others, but how, for the Lord’s sake, can we appeal to spiritual

experience (or interiority) so that we can be reached by the grace that corrects us and draws us toward shared truth and covenant? In other words, since we are trying to “theologize” our way across the Red Sea in this Passover, the functional specializations that Lonergan outlines may help us keep our balance and recognize the centrality of interiority.

We must give the full dimensions of exteriority to the issues of peoples, lands and histories, so that we may search for their interiority. It is true that we are talking of peoples who have these various levels within them, and peoples are in space, on lands and in time, in “their times.” They are living in their histories and believe in their various religious revelations, their political experiences, their interpretations of those experiences, the systems in which they have found public or underground expressions of those experiences and the truths they have learned from them. But peoples, space and time are not adequate notions to grasp the full dimensions of our problem. Here I would use Einstein’s general theory of relativity as a metaphor. In his special theory he worked with the three notions of space, time and motion, but in his general theory he added two further notions which I think we also have to add to our problem: acceleration and gravity. We are moving in time, even the land is moving in time, but we are sometimes accelerating and sometimes decelerating, and we are always being drawn by a gravitational force which is in the inner depths of other persons — even persons who are in deep conflict with themselves. This force that is drawing us is what I referred to earlier as symbol.

I will never get out of my underground alone. The only way I can get out is through other people. We are “condemned” to either getting out of this together, or locking ourselves into our own hells. Who is this that is drawing us together, toward one another? I believe it is the Lord, and He is in other people, even those other people who do not like me. Maybe they see something in me that they really should not like, and it is through their rejection of me, or polite indifference to me, that I discover that I have something to learn about myself. Unless that person also loves me a little bit, and unless I begin to open his or her criticism of me, I will remain closed.

The belief in another’s interiority and the hope of finding the complementarity of our truths are implied in the attraction or gravity of which I speak. As we look at this fully dimensional external field of people, land, history, acceleration and gravity, and as we try to discern the interior truths and spiritual experience underlying each of them, we have a much richer problem to deal with than we thought. It is not just a question of playing with domino-like notions of people, state, land and history. There is not only a deeper interior to these notions, but a larger exterior field involving such notions as acceleration (and here we might think even of nuclear accelerators) and gravity (here we might also think of *kavod*).

4. History and Symbol

In the course of playing on the other notes, I think I have already said all that I had to say about this.

5. The Jacob/Israel Complex

In both the Jacob complex and the Jesus complex we have to deal with the problem of election, the passing from a unique and particular election to unique, particular and universal elections. The particular election of one people was made in view of a universal election from which no one would be excluded except by their own will. The election is linked to the covenant, and we approach here the problem of the eternity of the election and of the covenant. I believe in the eternity of the covenant, but this is not really the point that I want to get at. I want to get at the problem of preferential love and how it triggers animosity and hatred unless it is put in the context of the promise and fulfillment of a universal love that does not detract from what is particular and unique. I want to focus on the story of Jacob and his sons, which is a pre-Passover story but which prefigures an aspect of the Passover experience, of the Passover from underground to ground-level.

The story of the twelve sons can be generalized to the story of the twelve tribes. When one son is loved preferentially by the father, this provokes the jealousy of the other brothers. Two brothers make efforts to save him, but Joseph is sent off to Egypt with the Ishmaelites. He is saved, partly through the efforts of Reuben (Gen. 37:22), but especially through the efforts of Judah (37:26–27). Later, in Egypt, when Joseph puts pressure on his brothers by accusing Benjamin of theft, it is Judah who offers to take the place of Benjamin in prison. This is a horizontal self-sacrifice of one brother for another in order to save the vertical relationship of sons to father, and it is an effort to reconcile the basic axes of the social cell which have been broken since the sins of Adam and Eve and of Cain and Abel. Judah not only confesses the truth under Joseph's pressure, but he is willing to pay the price with his own life.

A scene that occurs between the selling of Joseph to the Ishmaelites and the self-sacrifice of Judah in Egypt prepares us to understand something about the character of Judah, and also has much to do with undoing the knot or unfolding the complex. This is the story of Judah and Tamar, a story of applied pressure and eventual confession of the truth. It is less sophisticated than the story of Joseph's use of the hidden cup, for Benjamin had not really stolen the cup but was falsely accused by Joseph to see if the brothers had grown to the point of social solidarity. Judah's behavior shows that they had. But Judah was not falsely accused by Tamar: he was indeed the father of her child, and it is a moment of personal integrity that is narrated. And Jesus of Nazareth eventually descended from that illicit union which is somehow blessed by the confession of the truth (Matt. 1:3).

Before describing the Judah/Tamar story more fully, we might ask if we at present are not being pressured to communicate our truths? As Christians in the present situation, are we able to find what we have to say? Jacob is something like King Lear: his preferential love is integral to a tragic period of his life. If we have children, students, employees, we know how hard it is to be just. We do have preferences, and maybe one is truly better than another, but one must maintain justice and equality despite these preferences. Jacob did not do that, and the story is the saga of his correction. If we have a preferential love

for one people more than another (and most of us do), what are we doing about it? If we say that God loved the Jews first and made a covenant with them so that through them He could reach all peoples, does that mean that He loves the Jews more than the others? It is true that Jesus of Nazareth's preaching on the Kingdom was precisely a preaching of the good news that the time had come for the Father's universal and particular and unique love to be manifested? Our mind boggles at this, for we are only creatures with limited minds and hearts. How can it be that peoples that come after the Jews, that co-exist with the Jews and that even preceded the Jews, can be loved as much as the Jews? The fact and problem is that God retracts nothing of His love for, election of and covenant with the Jews, by revealing His love for, election of and desire to covenant with all other peoples. His relation with the Jews remains unique and is the proof of His permanent and unique relation with all peoples who are peoples.

It may be helpful to see this in more personal terms. I will never have the kind of relationship with my parents that my brothers have; each of our relationships with our parents has unique as well as common aspects. Similarly, my relationships with my friends do not exhaust the relationships that we each have with other friends. Unique relationships can co-exist and also share common characteristics. It is what some psychologists call maturity, and what sociologists or philosophers call justice. It is hard to accept that your best friend also has another friend, that your wife might have a deeper relationship with someone else (and I am not thinking of adultery) than she has with you. Can one bear that? Can one grow with that? This justice or maturity is something to be discovered and prayed for: it is sometimes an excruciating and purifying experience to recognize that one is not loved as much as someone else.

A problem we face here is that when we say Jesus reveals that God loves other people as much as He loves the Jews, someone may think or say this means we are taking away something from the Jews. We are not. God's love is infinite. Our minds cannot occupy His throne or His point of view. We are not generalizing God's love away as if we were spreading it thin. God loves each and all in a unique way, and we are now spending time and hope to spend eternity at the task of appreciating the subtlety and depth and power of His ways. God is a living God and He draws people in subtle interlocking ways. My big question is: To what degree are we aware of this in our own situation? To what degree are we aware that we are in Judah's situation? To what degree are we "coughing up" our truths? Let us return to the story of Judah and Tamar.

We know why Judah refused to give his third son to Tamar. Each of the first two sons had died shortly after marrying her and Judah did not want to lose his third and last in a similar way. Meanwhile, one day when he was out in the fields and feeling lustier than usual, he went to lie with a field harlot, not knowing that this harlot was really Tamar in disguise. Tamar intended thereby to use Judah's weakness, but also his strength, to gain an end that she believed was just. The harlot asked Judah for a sheep as wages for her services, and since he had to go off to get it, she asked for his belt, his staff and his ring as pawns until he paid. On returning with the sheep, Judah found that the harlot had disappeared with the pawns. Some months later when Tamar was brought before

Judah to be stoned because she was found to be pregnant, Tamar claimed that the father of the child could be identified as the owner of the pawns in her possession. Now here is the moment of truth where the complex unfolds. Something happened in Judah's relationship with himself, with his truer self. He looked at that woman across the courtroom and let the truth come out. As her presence had once played on his weakness, now her pressure worked upon his strength and he rose to the occasion, or we might say he bowed to the truth. He admitted that the pawns and the child were his, and in so doing he gave his third and only son to the woman who thereby gained a legitimate father for her illegitimate child. Child? Not one child, but twins!

What is this story telling us about Passover, about breaking sound-barriers, about reaching critical mass, about rising to or submitting to moments of truth? The complex comes undone in that admission of sinfulness, but the admission could never be made unless something stronger than the sin was there in the first place. I cannot say more than this. But it is Judah's ability to turn, to repent, to convert under the stress of such a tense situation that prepares us for his act of self-sacrifice in Egypt, when Joseph (also in disguise) threatens to keep Benjamin in prison.

I think we see similar moments in the life of Moses in Exodus 32 and 33 where he haggles with God and pleads with Him to come with the people through the desert to Canaan. God agrees to send one of His angels with the tribes, but Moses persists: an angel is not enough. You have to come with all of us (33:15–16), and God finally agrees to accompany them. This is one of the great contributions of the Jewish scriptures and tradition to the peoples of the world, this revelation that God is a living God, a God with whom you have to haggle, to convince, and who responds to the arguments and prayers of His creatures. Abraham similarly prayed for Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:22–23), only Abraham did not go all the way to zero and beyond. He did not ask God to save Sodom and Gomorrah even if there were no just people there at all, he did not offer God his own life as a pawn for the lives of others. The haggling process in Genesis and Exodus did not go as far as it does in the Gospels, a process at which Paul of Tarsus does not cease to be amazed.

The point here, however, is not that we must haggle with God, pray to Him and offer pawns. The point is that God's interiority has somehow been revealed through this: that He cares infinitely about what happens to us, that He has an interiority, that He is "dying," so to speak, to give His own interior life to us.

6. The Jesus Complex

If, as we say, God becomes man, there is no act by which man can better express who God is and what God means, than the act of giving his whole life away to others for free, despite the fiercest opposition. Jesus' task was more complex than that of Moses or Joshua. It was not just a matter of leading and herding the twelve tribes across the river onto the game-board of the lands allotted to them. Jesus had to bring them across that game-board to the place (Jerusalem) at the time (Passover) when they would be empowered (or "kinged" as they say in checkers) to reach beyond Jerusalem toward all na-

tions. The ability to dispossess oneself to the point below the zero is the condition of being able to reach to “the ends of the earth, until the end of time.” Jesus could pass the leadership over to the disciples when they had been empowered enough to be able to “pass” Him, that is, to “rise” to Him, by faith in what His resurrection means.

The Jesus complex was unfolded as Jesus brought Himself, under pressure, to that moment of truth when He laid down His life. As in the case of Judah, that moment of truth had been prepared for, and it is found in His teaching on what he meant by giving His body to eat and His blood to drink. As we know from the sixth chapter of John’s Gospel, many turned back from that moment of truth. It is not just a question of identification with the land or the city or the temple, but of a presence of the Father in Him. There is a temple, a Holy of Holies, in our own bodies, and every person on our planet, each person in history, has the capacity to receive that presence. We are temples, habitations that God wants to fill and is trying to fill and whose filling we resist! The divine Presence is trying to incarnate Itself and is “dying” to get into us, to operate through us. In the Christian tradition, God does so through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In that breaking, not just the breaking of the body but the breaking of the meaning so the truth emerges, He asks us to believe He loves us so much that He wants to enter and live in us all. He wants to bring with Him, into our persons and communities and peoples, the Father who lives in Him and who is sending Him on the mission to enter us and dwell in us through faith, to give us hope that nothing can destroy or diminish this love which motivates the whole movement.

The meaning of the act of self-sacrifice is expressed in the prayer of Jesus “that they may be one even as We are one, I in them, and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You have sent Me and loved them even as You have loved Me” (John 17:22–23). There is a variant text which says not “that **You** have loved them even as You have loved Me,” but “that **I** have loved them even as You have loved Me.” Jesus was sent, not just to reveal the equality of His Father’s love, but so that through His particular love He might reveal the Father’s universal love. The point is that by entering into a deep relationship with us, Jesus brings us into relationship with His Father who dwells in Him. This relationship between the Father and the Son is older than the world, it was there “before the world was made.” Thus Jesus brings us into contact with a relationship that is older and stronger than anything in the world around us. It is important to be reminded of this, for it can increase the confidence that we carry in us, as members of a community that is the Church, a power and a hope that is vital to others who are desperate. But we may not be giving it.

On television a few nights ago, a Palestinian peasant described the situation of the Uprising: “We are going up a burning ladder. Every time we take our foot off a rung, it burns up. There is no way back. We are just going to have to keep going up without knowing what is at the other end.” I wonder if we, as Christians, have something to offer to give hope to those who are climbing their burning ladders. Are we so far from any sense of an agenda that we do not experience something of the urgency of the times we are living in? Are we living

in some West that is far from the East where we find ourselves? Are we living in a post-Vatican II world, but among so many people who find that Vatican II did not address itself to their difficulties? Are problems that have been too long overlooked during these past forty years finally catching up with us? Have Christians any comfort to find, any encouragement to give, as they meditate on the way that Jesus, under pressure, unfolded His universal intention and paid the price which makes us a community today?

To end this note I would ask whether we should not be trying more carefully to discover with one another what this relationship is that is older than the foundation of the world. Can we find it in order to give some hope to the others who, like ourselves, are locked in mortal combat? This hope lies not just in the content of our witness, but in the quality of the presence of our witness to the universal, particular, and unique love of a living and covenanting God who is in our histories, who is attracting us to a life with one another and with Him which, here, can only be symbolized.

7. Response: Yes or No

The unfolding of the particular and universal complexes does not happen automatically. It happens by saying “yes” to it, by praying for it, by believing and hoping that the prayer has been answered, by acting as if it has been answered. If we pray to walk on water, the only proof that the prayer has been answered is the walking. If we really believe that this hope is present in our society, can we find ways of communicating it?

In the complex set of cultures and religious values that are gathered and compounded in Jerusalem, it seems that theologians have a permanent task of trying to understand and articulate the changing and recurrent problems. One of the acts of hope is that of working at clearer theologies: rejecting misunderstanding, prejudice and sterile dialectics in the search for adequate foundations, and affirming the central truths irrespective of the systems in which they are handed down. Respect for the various systems, and recognition of their differences, could greatly facilitate the communication of the truths they convey. The judgment’s arrival at truth is liberating, as is the recognition of the lie inherent in hypocrisy. This liberation has to be sought for on all the previous notes, from the inter-subjectivity of our personal memories, to our encompassing contexts, to our respective interiorities, histories, symbols, complexes and unfoldings.

8. Our Fraternity

Finally we come to the Experience, Understanding, Judgment and Decision of our Fraternity of Theological Research. Do we too have a complex to unfold, a Red Sea to cross over? Do forty years of the State of Israel lead us to want to respond in new ways to the situation that those forty years created? Has the time come for us to take stock of the situation of various groups of Christians living and working here, and to make an effort to invite them to work more closely together, or at least to recognize one another and begin communicating with one another?

It would be interesting and helpful to draw up a typology of the various Christian groups that are aiming more or less in the same direction, but from very different starting points, with different theological and cultural assumptions, different spiritualities, different political experiences. There are not just the church denominations — Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant hierarchies and parishes — there are also various traditional religious orders, works and institutions, together with the theological, biblical, archaeological, educational and charitable services that they provide. In addition to these, there are many new movements which are eager to have a foothold and an experience of the Holy Land and the State of Israel. The Messianic Jews and the Hebrew-speaking Catholic parishes in Israel affirm a dimension of Christian living that does not exist anywhere else in the Middle East. But beyond these, and interpenetrated by these, we have such associations as the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity, the Rainbow Club, the Justice and Peace Commission, Geris Khoury's conferences at Tantur on local Christianity and Islam, the views and works that may be associated with the names of Marcel Dubois at the Hebrew University, Bruno Hussar at Neve Shalom, Jacob Willebrands at Deir Hanna, Elias Chakour at Ibillin, Ratisbonne, and the Little Brothers of Jesus. Then there are such movements as the Christian Embassy, the Christian Friends of Israel, the *Montées de Jérusalem*, not to mention the informal study groups. Some of these groups hardly know one another. Recently I was surprised to learn how little contact there is, in Haifa for example, between the Catholic Hebrew-speaking parish there and the Messianic Jews in the city. Although some might find it helpful to draw up a typology of such groups, others might shun such an effort, asking who is going to profit from such a typology. Still a further group? A further set of interests? The secret service? The "underground"?

After forty years, have the Christians who live and work in this land had enough experience, and reached enough understanding, and reflected enough to make the judgments that could ground the decision to work together more openly toward the presentation of a Christian view (or set of Christian views) on the present deadlocked situation? Or are our visions so contradictory, so different, so divided that we do not yet dare push for more unity than we can bear without breaking apart even further? Must we admit that the symbolic and real date of the 40th Anniversary of the State of Israel is not yet a very real date in the long march of the Christian churches, institutions, movements and associations here? Is it a fact that we simply are not ready for such a movement from the underground to ground-level at the present time? Could it also be a fact that we are not yet courageous enough, inspired enough, pressured enough and perhaps (unlike Judah) honest enough to work harder, in real and humble ways, for our concrete unity in the form of modest yearly agendas? Could our hesitation and prudence be partly due to lack of leadership and lack of vision? Do we lack a Tamar who can cast out before our eyes and the eyes of others that belt, staff and ring which we left back there in the fields as we went off to find a sheep? What **is** that sheep that we are all running off to procure, as if **that** is the solution to the problem? When the moment of truth comes, will we have the heart to recognize our own duplicity in the name of an

interior truth that grounds our histories and unites those histories in a symbol that does not destroy them but subsumes them and blesses them?

Conclusion

And so I come to my conclusion, in which I will describe something of the temptation in a symbol that we have inherited in our faith, a symbol which personifies and even socializes the Passover from prudence to courage, from the past to the future, from security to risk. This symbol is composed of the two images of Jerusalem that have been given to us in our Christian scriptures: the Jerusalem of Paul and the Jerusalem of John. They correspond to the two crossed axes (the vertical and the horizontal) of our constitution as men and women in societies in history. For Paul in Galatians, Jerusalem is a mother; for John in Revelation, Jerusalem is a bride. For Paul, the Christian community is neither Jew nor Greek; for John, there is not only Jew and gentile in the New Jerusalem, but there is also a group called “the Apostles of the Lamb.” Thus Paul approaches this community through negation while John approaches it through affirmation. In Romans, the Spirit calls out “*Abba*, Father”; for John, in the same image of the bridal city, the Spirit calls out “Come, Lord Jesus.” By his references to the City Mother and to the Father, Paul describes the vertical axis and the relation between one generation and another; by his references to the City Bride and to the Bridegroom Jesus, John describes the horizontal axis and the relation between members of the same generation. I would dare say that one relationship does not exclude the other: the passage from Mother to Bride is a passover from security to risk, but the future generation depends upon it. Although we are here presented with images that are highly visual and even tactile, we may discern within them the same simple relationships we noticed in the words of Jesus at the Last Supper in John’s Gospel. The closer we approach Jesus, the more we enter into a relationship with His Father, and the Spirit is there where the Father and the Son keep passing over to one another. We are invited and attracted by the gravity and glory of their relationship.

The image of Jerusalem in Revelation teaches us something about Jewish, Christian and gentile relationships that Paul’s image of the natural and wild olive trees does not. Each metaphor has its limits as well as its strengths, and we may not have contemplated these images long enough to find their true force and their real weaknesses. We all know how easy it is to misunderstand the olive-tree image, but the Jerusalem image in Revelation may be too easily overlooked as if it were just a pretty ornament up on the top of the Christmas tree. It asks us to see the Holy City as composed of three different groups: the gates of pearl are the twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve foundation stones are the twelve Apostles of the Lamb (might we say Christians?), and the gentiles come from all four directions to pass through the gates. The Jews do not all become Apostles of the Lamb, nor do all the nations become Apostles of the Lamb. They remain truly who they are, but what clusters them is the attractiveness of the One who is on the throne, someone who gave His life. The scandal of Revelation is that at first we do not see God on the throne (where we had seen Him back in chapter four), but rather the Lamb who was slain and who yet

stands. Within the Lamb, who is also a lamp, one can see the light of God just as one can see within the light of a light-bulb, if one focuses, the incandescent filament of wire, even if one cannot see without an electron microscope the passover of electrons from the cathode to the anode. From under the throne comes the water that gives life to the trees. We are invited to drink that water and to eat the fruit of the trees. In other words, the inner life of the Father and the Son which comes from beneath their throne is made accessible to us through food and drink so that we can let that inner life enter us. We share in their inner life and this enables us to see, not just the light of God within the Lamb, but the face of God. It is something like the fairy tale where the princess comes to the stream and sees a frog. She drinks the water and suddenly sees that the frog is really a prince. Ah! She is on to what is truly there; she sees what the poet, Hopkins, calls "the dearest freshness deep down things."

At the end of Revelation the vision of the Lamb, the drinking of the water and the eating of the fruit of the trees of life, lead to the vision of the face of God. As Jesus told His disciples and friends at the Last Supper: if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father. The image of Lamb passed into the image of lamp, and from outer lamp we passed to inner light, thence on to eating and drinking, and finally we passed over to the vision of the face of God. This recognition of the inner vitality of God, as revealed to Jesus' death and resurrection, **is** the marriage of the Lamb, the marriage with the Lamb. Within the imagery of marriage we might call this its consummation, the sharing of joy with one another. This marriage is not a fuzzy identification with one another, it is not a fusion but a form of unity where identities are quite articulate and glorious.

The marital imagery of the Book of Revelation is not just another variation of the marital imagery of the Old Testament prophets, it is a breakthrough to a relationship that "eye had not seen, ear had not heard, nor had it entered the mind of man to conceive." The whole thing had been achieved by the willingness of Jesus to pass beyond the zero, to be utterly rejected, stripped and crucified outside the walls. It was by that "pass over," or "down-going" as Nietzsche would call it, that Jesus revealed the identity of the One who dwells in Him, the One whom He has been carrying to us. Can we rise to this down-going? Can we pass over to this one who is coming? Can we respond? Are we ready to risk a deeper response to others within the situation in which we are living? Are we approaching a moment of truth? Are we in a moment of truth? Or will a future generation say that our generation missed, avoided or fled from a moment of truth? And can we not all hear our own interior voices, our little interior Pontius Pilates, ask the question: "What is truth?" Can we also hear the voice that said: "I am the truth...."

One vision of Jerusalem does not exclude the other. Our lives as Christians are a constant passing over from one to the other, and an effort to combine them occasionally into a single vision. It is a binocular vision, focused on a single but infinitely deep subject. This subject brings together the two sides of each of us and of any group to which we belong, as we come to those moments where we have to risk telling the truth even when it reveals our weakness and our sin and our selfishness.

As I opened this talk tonight, I referred to the two sets of faces before me from which I was going to compose my talk: the known, secure faces, and the unknown faces I had a risk with. The passover from security to risk, the passover from forty years of experience to the risk of making decisions that might forge a new unity among us Christians on this occasion, has been the subject of my talk. The message from the underground to ground-level, not alone but together, a concerted Passover. The talk is ended, and you and I will slip back into the underground of our lives. But I will leave this talk out here, in some written form, as a sort of gift — offered on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the State of Israel — for those who want to pick it up. Not a belt, not a staff, not a ring. Just words. Notes ... of a Concerto for Passover.

Discussion

Malcolm Lowe: You spoke about reductionism, which is increasing especially among those people who come to this land for a short period. For example, there are people who say that fifty percent of the Jewish population of Israel comes from countries that have no democratic tradition. Of course, they mean the Sephardi Jews. But they ignore the fact that most Sephardi Jews here have gone through the same Israeli school system and army service as most Ashkenazis; many married Ashkenazis. So those who say that end up with a reduced idea of the people who actually are comprised of great variety. So also there seems to be a certain variety among Christians here — Western Christians who are living among Jews, Western Christians who are living among Arabs, and the local Christians, who need to be in more communication with one another.

Du Brul: I wonder whether we can ask to what degree we, as Western Christians, living here, are sort of “Ashkenazi Christians”? We are Western Christians who arrived from abroad, and yet to a certain degree we belong here too. There does not happen to be now a Christian state, nor do I hope for that. But in the past there has been, and Western Christians who came were attracted here. (I do not know to what degree there was that much commerce with Eastern Christians, but certainly not friendly ones with the Orthodox Christians.) To what degree are we Christians from the West attracted to Jerusalem? Some are attracted by the western gates of the city; others are coming for the eastern gates of the city. I think, very differently from what I did ten years ago, that as Western Christians — faced with Eastern Christians, being put down by them at times, listening to them — we should affirm and try to work out what is our right to be here as Western Christians or to be part of the on-going process of adoration. I think, too, that there is a real vocation here for us as theologians, or at least as people who are trying to talk. It might be artists, scientists, people involved in charitable work, development work, professionals, housemaids. But there is something about the attraction of the city and of the land that we should not just leave for the romantics.

Henry Backhouse: You raise the question of the validity of the place of the State of Israel. I heard you say that you could have Jews here, but you question the validity of the State. I was interested that you accepted the validity of Judah's offering of himself, which was obviously the result of a process. Is not Israel in the state of process? Is she not changing? Why do you question the validity of the State?

Du Brul: I have quoted three people who bring me into the silence of disagreement, into areas where I would want to read more: Pierre Benoit, Jacques Maritain and John Oesterreicher. Maritain's point here was his answer to the accusation that he claimed that the State of Israel was a state by divine right. It was not a question of international or personal validity, but of divine validity as a state. He qualified what he meant by that. What does it mean to say that a state is "valid"? Internationally recognized by my country? Do you mean to ask me whether personally I believe that the State of Israel is a true state? I would be lying if I said it was not a true state. That it is growing, that there are degrees of validity, that it can make mistakes, that it can be put into question, that as Bruno Hussar once told me — I remember being shocked, even pleasantly shocked, to see the freedom with which he said it some ten years ago, out on that hill at Neve Shalom — he said, "I am not sure how long the State is going to last." He said that he did not believe, at least at that time, that the State was something that you could count on forever. The attachment of the Jewish people to the Land, absolutely forever. Their coming at this time in history to this land to make a state? Yes. How long will it last? It will depend partly, you can say, on the justice with which they live in the Land. And to what degree could they lose it? Through God's mercy, despite all kinds of injustice, He might still leave them there.

Backhouse: Hosea's prophecy seems to touch so much on this very point of validity which is, at the final end, the goal toward which you work, however terrible the process may be.

Bargil Pixner: I think the distinction that Maritain makes has been very helpful, saying that theologically it is of greater importance to think that the Jewish people have a right to return here and have a special relationship with this land. But the other question, whether theologically they must have a state, that has no theological basis. If you look at the history of the Jewish people, how long did they have a state? Maybe three hundred years. Under the kings it was united. The Northern Kingdom was destroyed, and the Southern Kingdom as well. And then there was the Second Commonwealth for about a hundred years, and then it was finished. After the Exile some of them came back. And now they are coming back again. I think that this is of theological significance for us: that the Jewish people do come back and have a special relationship to this land. But that they must necessarily have a state? Just as Bruno Hussar said, I am beginning to think myself that the state might vanish. But the Jews have a right to stay here. Whether they do stay here is another problem. But God is with His people.

Du Brul: There are, however, people here — Christians as well as many Jews — who do believe that it is a divinely-willed state, in this 20th-century world.

And there are Christians who do not necessarily believe that, but might be attracted by the situation here. We are faced with the problem of how to respond to it. And if one disagrees, to what degree does one have the freedom to disagree on this issue? I think I have much to learn from people who have another conviction. I am not sure that they would convince me, but I want to be open to the on-going communication.

Pixner: One thing is the return, and the Zionist ideal of the return to the Land. The other thing is the *medinah* — they want to have their own state in order to live, to defend themselves, to be really closer to the Land.

Du Brul: We heard Prof. Moshe Greenberg here in October speaking about the importance of a Jewish State so that Jews would be able to have their own defence, their own hospitals, their own place to solve problems such as prison reform ... and to do this as Jews.

Heinrich Pollack: As long as the majority of the Jews do not believe in Jesus, they have their own customs. They need a state in order to live according to the laws given them. Many laws that touch on their daily life require that they have a political frame. It is a practical question for most Jews to have a state. I do not see why it has to have theological foundations for peoples to have state. We do not look in the Bible to see if the American people have the right to have a state. Nobody is questioning their right to it.

Du Brul: I do not know whether the right of the American people to have a state is as unquestioned as you think it is. Wait a hundred years. Regarding the State of Israel, however, the argument is not ours, we cannot represent it. The issue is really in the mouths and hearts and arms and lives of the people who do contest that state, whose right to have a state is being rejected. This is an argument where the Palestinian Christian must be present and must be listened to. And one has to be willing also to be hurt by that. Leon Bloy has said that there are certain places in our hearts that do not exist until they suffer. That is what I wish we would expose ourselves to, with the belief that in our hearts there is someone who lives, who alone is able to take this.

Pollack: Here I would come back to what you said about the Mufti, because he is one example of those who wanted to throw out the Jews. If I were a Jewish father, I would also show my children that. I would say: "Look, here is a man who pretended he would kill all the Jews. Nobody believed it could happen. Here is the other man (Arafat). Be careful, he may do it also." But there were other Palestinians who could live together with the Jews and were friends of the Jews. The Mufti was one of those who destroyed them. This book has yet to be written, about Arabs who were friendly with the Jews and believed that both people could live together, but they were killed, oppressed and ousted to this day.

Du Brul: One of our professors at Bethlehem University did his thesis in political science on what is called the "Opposition" (*Mu'arada*), from the 1920s right down to the 1940s, which was an Arab opposition to the Mufti.

Pollack: So we cannot say that all the Palestinians were against the Jews and, therefore, they had to call on Hitler.

Du Brul: That is where the historical context can be so fierce, and we might be in one now, where a lot of people are just moved along by the historical moment, and do not have the courage, the friendship, the support. I have been rereading some sections of Camus' book, *The Plague*, where in Fr. Paneloux's last sermon before he dies, he tells a story of the plague back in the 14th century and how in Marseille there was a monastery where some 81 monks lived. Seventy-seven of them died, four survived, three because they had escaped the monastery. One survived although he stayed. Paneloux ended the sermon by saying: Each of us must be the one who stays. And the staying is not just "staying" in Oran, or in Jerusalem, or in the Holy Land; it is staying and standing up to the reductionists and saying, "I will not be reduced." That is part of what the stones mean. The stones are speaking, the stones are part of what it means. So I say there is a certain despair behind the stones. People also say that there is a great Power behind the stones, that it is America that is behind the Uprising, or it is Israel behind the Uprising in order to push Israel to the negotiating table, or it is Iran behind the Uprising. It is all these things behind the Uprising. Well, there had to be something there to uprise, so that others could get it to rise up, and so on.... But there is also a despair, a last gesture, a burning ladder.

Immanuel 22/23