

*MAJOR STAGES OF WORLD  
AND CHURCH HISTORY*

Here I should like to situate the history of the Latin American Church in a broader context, so that we may be able to get a clearer glimpse of our place as Latin Americans in world history. One of the weak points in our cultural life is that we do not realize the extent to which we are absent from this history. Hence we do not really know what role we might possibly play within it, and what it means to be Latin American Christians in the context of world history.

I shall allude to many different matters in very summary fashion. A truly adequate discussion of them would take much more time than is available here. My desire is to provide an overall sketch of the general context in which our present topics are framed.

THE ORIGINS OF MAN

If we want to interpret the place and role of Latin America in world history, we must begin at the beginning. And the beginning in question here is the very beginning of mankind itself. Starting there, we would have to consider the growth and evolution of humanity as a whole in order to be able to explore the place of our own continent and culture within that story. Only then can we probe the present con-

figuration of our culture and determine what role falls to us in the near future.

Right from the start we are confronted with interesting and relevant theological questions which I cannot treat in detail here. Consider the whole matter of "the appearance of man." It is certain that mankind arose from within the animal kingdom. From within the class known as mammals there arose the insectivores. The latter gave rise to the primates, and man developed out of that group. *Homo* transformed the magnificent pageant of biological evolution into history, and God's revelation arose within this history. Divine revelation in history is continued in the history of Latin America too.

If we want to relate our faith to the universe, we must look at the whole ensemble of creation. Only then will we be able to relate our faith to the distant galaxies, intergalactic space, the sun and the solar system, and the animals who frequent the jungle or our fields and city streets. We do not know the precise date when our universe came into existence. It now seems fairly certain that the galaxies expanded from some point. Our own galaxy, for example, is 100,000 light years in diameter and 5,000 light years in depth at its center, having the shape of a plate. That is the "home" in which we live. There are millions of galaxies, the nearest ones to ours being at least a million and a half light years away. In this vast expanse, the solar system is a tiny section. Some five billion years ago the earth solidified within the solar system, setting the stage for the next advance.

It now seems that life appeared on earth some three or three-and-a-half billion years ago. The appearance of life marked a new stage in the whole process of creation, and life too underwent evolution. One-celled organisms were followed by multicelled organisms. In their groping, the latter "discovered" the vegetable kingdom; the animal kingdom developed as a parasite out of the vegetable king-

dom. The exploratory groping of the animal kingdom led to the discovery of various possibilities: first there were the insects, later the vertebrates. The members of this sub-phylum found many different ways to reproduce. One class came to nourish its young on nutrient fluids generated by the female. Within this class, known as the mammals, are such insectivores as the anteater. About seventy million years ago the tarsiers, members of the insectivore group, paved the way for the first true primates. From the higher primates there developed the first beings we now label *homo*. As far as we can tell at present, the latter genus appeared on the scene somewhere around two million years ago. One of the oldest fossils of this genus is that of *homo habilis*, a tool-making creature. So we are dealing with a creature that had fashioned something of a culture, because it had altered its environment to some extent.

Here we encounter a topic that is most interesting and that would deserve a whole book in itself. It certainly would be worthwhile to consider the fact that it is a metaphysics of creation which provides the underpinning for a theory of evolution; evolutionism could appear on the scene only through Judaeo-Christianity. Another interesting question is how God might have created man within the evolutionary process. Such an event is quite possible, as Xavier Zubiri has tried to show in a recent article ("El origen del hombre," in *Revista de Occidente*, no. 17, 1964). When primates had attained the cranial capacity required for reflective thinking—that is, the millions of nerve cells necessary for such an operation—God could have created the "mark" of intelligence intrinsically within man, within the evolutionary process itself. There is evolution because the will of God chose to be evolutionary in its approach.

I do not want to get sidetracked into a long discussion of this particular subject. But it is important if we are to be able to dialogue with our world. Just remember all the false problems we raise in the Church with regard to evolution-

ary thought. We never seem to advert to the fact that the Greeks believed the world was eternal because it was divine. The cosmos had to be desacralized before it could be regarded as a creature, as a created reality whose species had a definite origin and starting point. Only such a viewpoint could lead people to realize eventually that the origin of species entailed a process of evolution, that species were not divine as the Greeks had thought. Darwin, then, is a product of Christianity; yet we Christians repudiated him as a pagan. It is one of those strange contradictions in which history abounds, and I want to point it out here even though I cannot explore the issue more deeply.

The further evolution of the genus *homo* can be represented as a flowering tree of human life. Proceeding through various forms, we ultimately arrive at *homo sapiens*. This species may have appeared around two hundred thousand years ago. Today all human beings are members of the species *homo sapiens*. With the appearance of *homo sapiens*, the whole evolution of the cosmos is concretized in an unfolding process which we call history. The life of *homo sapiens* today is part of the two-million year history of man's presence on this earth.

## NEOLITHIC CULTURE

The first period of man's cultural life is known as the paleolithic. It is the vast expanse of time when man shaped stone into rough but useful tools. Leaving aside that period, we can say that there have been three basic cultural stages in world history which will help us to appreciate the place and situation of Latin America within that history. The first stage is the neolithic period and the rise of the first great civilizations. The second stage is the invasion of the Indo-European cultural groups. The third stage is the invasion of the Semitic peoples. I shall now discuss these three periods, but I ask the reader to remember that I am not talking

about a chronological order of events but about a series of events that had major cultural impact.

The first stage, then, is the period of neolithic culture. It entailed a great urban revolution. Thanks to the development of agriculture and the domestication of animals, man could settle down in groups and live in towns. The division of labor became possible and grew in complexity. This led to further progress, and eventually to the rise of large urban centers and the first great cultures or civilizations.

The first great civilization arose in lower Mesopotamia, on the Persian Gulf, around the fourth millennium before Christ. The second great civilization arose in Egypt around the start of the third millennium. Thus it was not just mere chance that a man named Abraham would set out from the city of Ur, or that his descendants would find themselves in Egypt. Israel lived its life between these two great centers of civilization, the two oldest centers of world history. Israel's life is *rooted in history*, even as the life of Jesus would be later on. The Israelites would always remain a very poor people, but they would undergo intense cultural evolution because they lived between the two oldest civilizations of mankind. The fact is undeniable.

The third great culture appeared in the Indus Valley around 2500 B.C. The fourth appeared on the Yellow River about 1500 B.C. By contrast, the last two civilizations to be mentioned here appeared on the American continent. The Mayan- Aztec civilization flourished after the time of Jesus Christ; its classical period is dated from 300 to 900 A.D., when the great city of Teotihuacan was a cultural center. The classic period of Inca civilization, with its great center at Tiahuanaco, was contemporaneous with that of the Mayan-Aztec civilization.

These six civilizations are the great cultural pillars which will enable us to understand world history. Five thousand years separate the start of Mesopotamian civilization from the rise of the American civilizations. The cultural process

moves from East to West, and our prehistory is centered on the Pacific Ocean. Needless to say, the Incas and the Aztecs were not the only groups involved in our cultural history. There were the Chibchas in Colombia, the various Indian cultures of North America, and other groups besides. But the overall configuration of our *prehistory*, which includes the existence of two great civilizations, will help to explain our *history*.

We must realize that conquering the Incas was not the same thing as "pacifying" nomadic tribes of Indians. The conquest of a great center such as Cuzco meant the conquest of an empire containing millions of people. By contrast, the nomadic tribes of North and South America were never really conquered. The European newcomers to North America moved forward slowly, killing Indians as they went. General Roca did the same thing in Argentina as he pushed forward with the "conquest of the desert." We should not imagine that the story of English settlement is one of complete malice while the story of Spanish settlement is one of sweetness and light. Prehistoric factors help to explain why the method of conquest in the two cases was different, even though they may not justify the method used.

### *The Aztec Worldview*

War was an essential element in the ethos or *Weltanschauung* of the Aztecs. They were a warrior people by nature, and this tendency found expression in their cult of the sun. Intermingled in this cult were elements borrowed from the agricultural peoples of the valley and from the primitive hunters of the north whence the Nahuatl people came. The uranic element was not only united with the sun but also intermingled with various animals. Such is the case with the gods worshipped at the great temple in Tenochtitlan. This temple was dedicated principally to *Huitzilopochtli*. He had



this culture, and the mentality of the mercenary or the soldier of fortune. It was these people who held sway over the sedentary groups and effected a certain measure of symbiosis by syncretizing various elements, without achieving the degree of unity visible in the cultures of Eurasia or Africa. Uranic and chthonic elements were syncretized by hunting peoples who were gradually changing their way of life and settling down as agriculturalists. The short duration of the Aztec empire enables us to see that it was a culture which was still at an embryonic stage but evolving steadily; it had not yet attained complete maturity when the Spaniards arrived.

A characteristic feature in the primitive mentality is quite evident among the Aztecs: namely, the a-historicity of human existence. The "Great Year" and the repetition of creation are themes which underlie the developing theology proposed by the priesthood in the Aztec empire. To this must be added belief in the predestination that applies to every life. This belief and its attendant rites produced familiar effects: concrete existence was elevated to the realm of the sacred. Every action was lived out in "mythical time," being a repetition of the archetypal sacred action performed by the gods.

Three categories of people possessed life in "the beyond": the warrior slain in battle, the victim sacrificed to the gods, and the woman who died in childbirth. All three were made equal to the gods, or at the very least immortalized as companions of the Sun, since the Sun was the first paradise. The conquistadores were horrified by human sacrifice, regarding it as an offense against human dignity. In fact, however, it signified a false exaltation of the human person based on a faulty appreciation of divine dignity. Mircea Eliade points up the deeper underlying motif: "To find the meaning of these human sacrifices we must look into the primitive theory of the seasonal regeneration of the forces of the sacred... A regeneration sacrifice is a ritual



"repetition" of the Creation. The myth of creation includes the ritual (that is, violent) death of a primeval giant, from whose body the worlds were made, and plants grew.... The object in sacrificing a human victim for the regeneration of the force expressed in the harvest is to repeat the act of creation that first made grain to live. *The ritual makes creation over again....*"<sup>1</sup> The mythical scheme is identical whether we are dealing with the creation of the cosmos, of all humanity, of a particular race of people, or of other species. Nothing can be created without immolation. Sacrifice brings about an awesome transference in which the life concentrated in one person is diffused to others, manifesting itself on a collective or even cosmic scale.

When the Aztecs ate the flesh of a victim who had undergone voluntary self-immolation, they were eating the flesh of a god because the victim was apotheosized. Not only were they gaining a hold over the will of the gods, they were actually ensuring the existence of the gods, the world, and the human race. It was not simply a matter of ensuring their military power and supremacy; it was a matter of ensuring the continuance of cosmic and biological existence. A typical instance was the annual feast to the god *Tezcalipoca*. A similar outlook is evident in the pilgrimage which took place at the end of each "Great Year" (comprising fifty-two solar years). The people journeyed to the "hill of the star" near Colhuacan. At night, after all the fires of the land had been extinguished, they sought to light the "new fire" over the blood of a victim. If the priests succeeded, it meant that the gods would grant cosmic and biological existence for another period of fifty-two solar years. In orgiastic revelry the "new fire" was distributed throughout the region. It was the divine fire symbolizing and ensuring heat and life.

The monuments and documents left behind by this civilization give us a glimpse into the cosmic "home" which the Nahuatl peoples fashioned for themselves. The key to their symbolic world is to be found in their ancient myths, in their

religious doctrines, and in the thinking of their sages, the *tlamantinime*. We cannot go into great detail about the beliefs and doctrines of the Aztec world, which indicate some first steps towards self-conscious rationalizing. Here I shall merely allude to four *tlamatinime* whose thinking indicates certain basic elements in the Toltec and Aztec vision of the cosmos. All four are historical personages. They deserve the same study and attention that is now accorded to such figures as the pre-Socratic thinkers.

*Quetzalcoatl* (9th century A.D.), a solitary young man from the region of Tulancingo, was sought out by the people of Tula. He became their governor, wise man, and priest; and he was also the first great Toltec thinker. He taught that the world was an immense island horizontally divided into four directions, with a navel at its center. The east was the region of light, fertility, and life—symbolized by the color white. The west was the home of the sun, symbolized by the color red. The north was the land of the dead, symbolized by the color black. The south was the region of seedland, symbolized by the color blue. Above the earth was the blue sky which was formed by all the waters and in which the sun, moon, and stars travelled along their paths. Below the earth was Mictlan, the realm of the dead. This world, filled with gods and invisible forces, had existed on and off four different times. In their cosmogonic battles the gods produced different periods or ages of the world, each age coming to an end in a cataclysmic upheaval. The present age was the age of the "sun in motion," and the chief god was Ometeotl, the god of duality. As a Toltec poem expresses it:

*The Toltecs knew quite well that there are many heavens, 5,  
that there are twelve divisions superimposed above  
where lives the true god and his consort,  
the celestial god, the Lord of Duality.*

This great sage gave form and structure to the whole complex of Toltec wisdom (*Toltecáyotl*), which would be idealized in later ages:

*The Toltecs were wise peoPle.  
Tolteciyotl, the whole body of their arts  
and wisdom, came from Quetzalcoatl....  
The Toltecs were very rich and happy....*

The most well-known of the Nahua *tlamatinime*, *Nezahualcoytl*, was born in Tezcoco in 1402. After serving as the leader and ruler of that city, he died in 1472. He may be regarded as a real Solon by virtue of his creativity as a legislator; but he was also a sage thoroughly acquainted with Toltec tradition because he had studied at Calmecac, the educational center for the nobility. Opposing the official ideology of the Aztecs, he had a temple built to Tloque Nahuque, the one god who overcomes change and death. This sage described him as "the one who is fashioning himself" (*Moyocoyatzin*). But it was the tragic contingency of human life that preoccupied this sage:

*Togetherness lasts only for a moment,  
glory for but a brief period....  
Your beautiful flowers ...  
are nothing but dried-up flowers.  
Where shall we go  
that death does not exist?*

Perhaps the sage who had the greatest practical impact was *Tlacaélel*, who was born in 1398. He fashioned a theoretical system that served as the basis for real-life action, and he was the undisputed counselor of the first Aztec king, Itzcoatl. It was he who gave the Aztec empire its mythical, warrior vision of the cosmos. To do this, he rethought all the theogonies of the valley area. All the codices of opposing groups, those of the city of Azcapotzalco in particular, were burned. The utmost unity was needed to weld the Aztec empire together; to integrate its religious, economic, educational, military, and socio-political life. Huitzilopochtli, a forgotten god, would now take first place.

This god of war was born as the son of Coatlicue on the "Mountain of the Serpent." It was he who led the Mexica-Aztecs through the northern plains to Lake Tezcoco. While this sage modified earlier traditions, he took great care to provide continuity with Toltec tradition also. Thus he made Huitzilopochtli the god who presides over the age of the Sun in motion. In fact, this god was the Sun itself. If he died, the fifth age of the world would come to a catastrophic end. To get back the vital energy he needed, this god had to have blood. Blood was the "precious water" (*chalchihuatl*) that would restore his vitality. By offering victims to him, the Aztecs carried out a sacred and important duty. Their battles were sacred functions, their wars were "holy wars." In short, Tlacaelel worked out a whole theology of the Aztec military conquest:

*This is the office of Huitzilopochtli,  
our God.  
For this has he come. To bring into his service  
all the nations  
by the strength of his brave breast and head.*

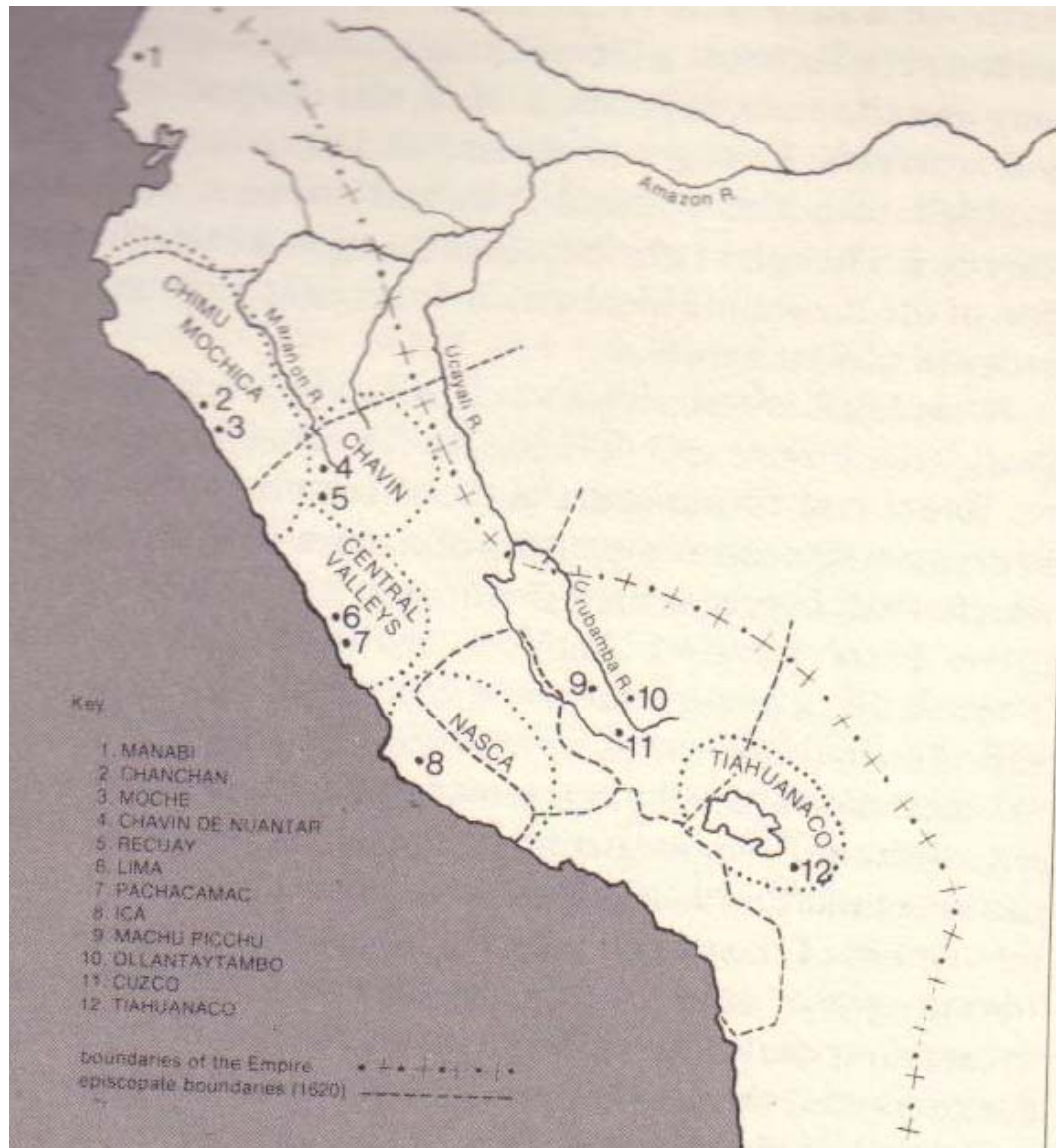
The fourth *tlamatinime* we shall mention here was *Tecayehuatzin*. He ruled Huexotzinco around 1501. He might well be regarded as the sage of Nahuatl poetry, symbol, and speech.

### *The Inca Worldview*

The principal divinity of the Inca empire was called different names at different points in history. In an earlier period the people of the coastal area had called him *Pachacamac*, but later the Incas called him *Huiracocha* (or *Viracocha*). This creator god, too, was a product of syncretism. We must remember that the Incas cannot be viewed as a non-specialized people. Nor were they simply hunters or herdsmen. They were a settled, sedentary civilization with a highly developed culture.

Uranic religions-that is, religions with sky gods-are typical of non-specialized peoples or peoples at an early stage of development. Their limited supply of tools and their freedom with respect to nature enables them to evince an attitude of supreme respect for the "heavenly father." This god is a creator god, at least in the sense that he has formed or shaped the world and other gods. *Huiracocha* certainly was the great sky god. In the eyes of the Inca elite he was an abstract, spiritual god who was also present. In

### ESQUEMA 3 HIGHER CULTURES OF THE PRE-INCA AREA



the eyes of the common folk he was a remote and incomprehensible god. That is why we find so few temples dedicated to this god. Most of them gave way to all sorts of idolatry as the familiar processes of fusion and substitution took place.

There is a tendency for the sacred to undergo a gradual "fall" into the concrete. Various divinities become more dynamic, accessible, and concretely effective. A process of specialization takes place, so that a *deus otiosus*, a god with nothing to do, turns into a *deus pluviosus*, a god of rain or thunder. And thus we get a cult of the sun.

*Inti*-the holy Sun-represents the solarization of the creator. He becomes a fecundating god in a world of stunning and dramatic vegetation. He is also the god of hunters and warriors. Vestiges of theism and animism are intermingled with the political role and function of hunter-warriors. The solar ruler becomes the monarchical incarnation of the masculine ideal which dominates a hierarchically ordered civilization.

We are presented with a whole new world when we meet *Quilla* (the moon) and *Pachamama* ("Mother Earth"). Here we find a real counterpart to the theism described above. Sedentary agricultural peoples of a more feminine or matriarchal cast organize their theology around chthonic structures. Here we find animism, manism, and totemism. There is a link among woman, the earth, the moon, fertility, and the rhythmic cycles of biological and cosmic life.

Whereas uranic religions tend to discover the *transcendent god*, chthonic religions tend to interpret *immanent life* in sacral terms. The moon itself is a symbol of this immanent movement of death and rebirth. It "grows" and goes into a "death agony." It "dies" for three days and then is "reborn" to carry out its twenty-eight-day cycle anew. In like manner, the earth and the soil are interpreted as a god or goddess.

The Incas, like the Aztecs, were a higher culture in which there was a great deal of amalgamation or syncretism. Gods

from the uranic religions of hunting peoples intermingled with gods or goddesses from the chthonic religions of agricultural peoples. Alongside the sun god of the Inca empire we find the totemic deities of Ayllu.

The idea of *rhythm* is discovered quite early by primitive peoples with a chthonic religion. Rituals and cultic ceremonies enable the community to relive the sacred happenings which the gods live out in an exemplary manner .

The feast of the sun was celebrated on June 22, when the days began to get longer. It was the people's invocation for the gift of a new year. Representatives of the people and the Inca himself gathered in the great plaza of Cuzco. There, in silence, they watched the sun rising above the mountain ranges to the east. The Incas believed that one day the sun would refuse to rise, and that this would mark the end of our world. So when the Sun did rise on that date, the Inca himself offered a juice prepared by consecrated virgins from sacred fruits.

The feast of the moon was celebrated at the start of spring, on September 22. It bears witness to the close relationship among the rebirth of life, the seeded earth as a "mother ," and the moon which guides this process of rebirth. For total rebirth, however, pardon was necessary. (In Hebrew the term is *purim*.) The people waited for the moon to appear in the nighttime sky. Then they raised a cry, pleading for the removal of their faults and for the elimination of all threats and dangers. Soldiers set out in pursuit of "evil spirits" while the people proceeded to undergo ablutions for the sake of ritual purification. The gods responded by renewing and purifying the life of the people in town and countryside.

I cannot make a thorough analysis of Inca religion here. I simply want to point out its general features: a complex cultural base; ritual and cultic syncretism; intermingling of uranic and chthonic religious elements; a highly developed religious awareness which brought sacral unity to human

life on every level, from the most private acts of the Inca and the elite to the most secular manifestations of community life. Anything unforeseen or unexpected, which might leave room for "the profane" to steal into the picture, was immediately sacralized upon its appearance. Thus sick people and premature infants were declared divine and given special protection-quite in contrast to the sacral attitude of the Spartans, for example.

Socio-cultural dualism was an indisputable fact in the Inca empire. The Inca nobility did not adore the sun as a supreme being; they adored *Huiracocha* or *Pachacamac* with rites and liturgies of their own. The Great Priest (*amauta* or *Uillac Umu*) was the head of the most important priestly institution in the empire. Once a province was conquered, the cult of the sun was established and a temple was set up in the most important localities. A local clergy was formed from among the aristocracy of the conquered people. All the lands of the empire were divided into various sectors for administrative purposes; one sector, the sector "of the sun," was set aside for temples and the clergy. But priests were never very numerous.

Among the Aztecs, by contrast, cultic worship utilized a far greater number of priests. There were more than 5,000 priests in the capital. Two Great Priests were in charge of the cultic life of the empire. The priestly school, noted for its strict asceticism, was located in Calmecac.

In Yucatan there was a Great Priest called *Ahaukan Mai*; his function was hereditary. In the Mayan empire the members of the priestly class came from the nobility and performed military functions; they were the *Nacon*. They must have been behind all the great construction work of his culture, for the products are temples and cities of pilgrimage, i.e., religious centers. The name *Ahkin*, which was given to the common Mayan priest, is now given to the Catholic priest.



Throughout the major American civilizations, the priesthood was an imperial one. Thus it opposed or restricted the local priesthood (sorcerers, diviners, shamans, and so forth). Given enough time, the imperial priesthood would probably have suppressed the local priesthood almost completely, but it had not imposed its supremacy on the local priesthood when the Spaniards arrived. The disappearance of the Indian empires inevitably led to the rebirth of local idolatry. The Spanish Church, recently organized itself, did not realize exactly what was taking place.

For its part, the indigenous civilization was unable to dialogue with the new invaders. It had not reached the stage where it could rationalize or justify its "mythical world" adequately. We now know that philosophy did not originate in psychological "wonder." (Perhaps we should say "theology" rather than "philosophy," since the latter, as a rational science reduced to the study of non-divine things, is of recent vintage.) Its origin is to be sought in a historical fact which is easily verifiable, namely, the incomprehension of the hellenic elite when faced with the conflict or contradiction between the primitive mythical tradition of Crete and the Mediterranean on the one hand and the Indo-European mythical tradition imported by the Achaeans and Dorians.

The process of rationalization had only begun among the Incas, the Aztecs, and the Mayans. The Mexican priests, for example, were trying to bring a little order into the chaotic welter of myths which stemmed from different sources. Thus they reduced the chief gods to four, corresponding to the four cardinal points and deriving their descent directly from the primordial pair. But such rationalizations were scarcely accepted by everyone, and they even contradicted other myths that were still very much alive—such as the various myths about mother goddesses. Religion was pre-

dominantly a local, folk affair, as Toynbee suggests, and theological rationalization played a minimal role.

## THE INDO-EUROPEANS

A second cultural stage occurred when a series of invasions from the north swept over the Eurasian continent during the second millenium before Christ. Gradually the existing original cultures were submerged totally under alien domination. These aliens were the Indo-Europeans.<sup>2</sup>

Around 4000 B.C. the Indo-Europeans lived somewhere north of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Their original homeland was the Eurasian steppe area. The first to domesticate the horse, they were skillful riders and roamed from Chinese Turkestan to Spain. In successive waves they invaded the richer regions to the south.

The first great Indo-European invasion was that of the Hittites, who possessed a real empire in the second millenium. Other Indo-European groups went into Europe-e.g., the Celts, the Italic tribes, and the various groups that invaded Greece. Still other Indo-European groups were the Medes, the Persians, and the Aryans who invaded India in the fifteenth century B.C.

These peoples had a *worldview* of their own. Features of this view can be deduced from various elements in the vocabulary of their languages. But this is not the precise area that is of interest to us here. I simply would like to consider four aspects in their mentality and outlook on the world.

### *Anthropological Dualism*

First, in almost all these peoples we find a view of man that is always dualistic in one way or another. For all these peoples, the body is somehow a "prison" or "mere appearance" (*maya*) or something negative. For the Manicheans, it was the root of sin. The view of the body as a prison can be

found among the Greeks: *sōma/sēma*. Among the Hindus, the body is mere appearance or *maya*. Among the Iranians, the body was something evil; and from them would come Manicheanism.

In other words Greece, Persia, and India were focal points of Indo-European cultures, and they all possessed an anthropology that was in some way dualistic. Someone might interject here that men such as Aristotle got beyond this dualism, and I would certainly agree that Aristotle did "to a degree." But it cannot be denied that the outlook of a cultural world is predetermined to some extent by its history, even though men of genius may get beyond this influence by looking closely at reality and then challenging the *a priori* ideas of their people. Aristotle may have done this, but unfortunately those who came after him fell back into dualism. This dualism reached its culmination in Plotinus, who represents the synthesis of all the Indo-European cultures.

### *Moral Dualism*

This dualistic anthropology had a determining influence on the *ethos* of these peoples—that is, on their predominant attitudes and views of things. Thus their morality was dualistic too, because the body was a source of evil in one way or another. Hellenic ethics is a process of asceticism, of liberating man from the body so that he can rise towards the values of the spirit and attain contemplation. The Buddhist strives for liberation from the body, even for the destruction of the body, since it multiplies desire; the goal is to lose one's individuality in Brahman. And just as the body is something negative for Buddha, so it is for the Hindus in a different way. And then there were such groups as the Manicheans, who were later succeeded by the Cathari and the Albigensians. They opposed all bodily contact and physical pleasure; their moral code was against marriage. The body and everything having to do with the senses was evil.

Note that this is a dualistic morality, and that we have accepted this morality, at least to some extent; Manichean morality has had a profound impact on many peoples in the West. The prototype of such a dualistic morality is the morality of the Iranians, because they ontified good and evil by turning them into two principles of being. As they saw it, there were two gods: a god of good and a god of evil. Saint Augustine had to tackle this issue when he wished to get beyond Manicheanism. He would find his solution in another view of the world.

### *Ahistoricism*

A third element to be studied here is the historical consciousness of the Indo-Europeans. In their eyes real *being*, the divine, was *eternal*. There was no consistency or solidity to the corporeal realities of this world, hence they were subject to generation and corruption. Holding this view, the Indo-Europeans could not discern the *meaning* of history. Deeply imbedded in their consciousness is the doctrine of eternal return. Individual things completely lose their sense of being particular individuals; of necessity they are reabsorbed in an unending process of repetition. In his treatment of the history of religions, Mircea Eliade describes how primitive peoples-and the Indo-European is the last great instance of a primitive people-de-historify everyday happenings. Primitive peoples feel that in each act of everyday life they are repeating the archetypal actions of the gods. If a primitive decides to contract marriage, for example, it is not a personal act; rather, it is an act which imitates the marriage of some god to some goddess. The act of sowing seed is not a personal action; it is the act of a sower god. Thus the actions of everyday life become mere imitations of eternal archetypes, History does not exist because neither the corporeal realm nor history have any real solidity. History is bound up with corporeality and liberty; hence it lacks consistency. Such an outlook is ahistorical,

### *Panontic Totality*

For all these peoples, then, the divine is eternal. It is the only reality, the only true being, the Totality. It is the *being* of Parmenides, which stands over against non-being. And so, paradoxically enough, one moves from anthropological dualism towards a monist thrust in ontology. What is, is one. The plural entities in this world of appearances have no real consistency. If any worldview offers a good explanation of this, it is the worldview of the Hindus. If any Indo-European philosophy represents a culmination of this viewpoint, it is the philosophy of Plotinus.

Plotinus lived in Alexandria in the third century A.D. All the great Indo-European currents from the past came together in the Alexandria of that day, and Plotinus gave them paradigmatic expression. Yet as far as I know, there is no book of philosophy which points up this connection among all the Indo-European peoples. It is a task that we have just begun to tackle.

This cultural outlook will have enormous repercussions during the course of time, for many peoples, the Romans and the Celts, for example, will come to share it to some extent. By understanding it, we can gain some insight into the *basic underlying structures* of the whole Indo-European mentality. This mentality evinced scorn for the body, for plurality, and for history: it valued the One, the All, and contemplation. And while this One might be called the divine, it was very different from what we would call God.

### *Some Consequences*

The person who held this view of the world believed that the way to attain perfection was to leave the city and lead a *solitary* life of goodness. It was the *solitaria bonitas* of the Romans. Intersubjective relationships took place on the level of corporeal life whereas perfection was to be attained in solitude away from city life. The Platonic sage chose to

leave the city, contemplate the divine in solitude, and then come back to tell people how he had arrived at truth. The Aristotle of the *Nichomachean Ethics* (Book X) is also a contemplator of the divine, who makes use of the city to enjoy the benefits of additional but secondary values. Buddha leaves his parents and the city in order to go away and "kill" his desires in solitary contemplation-outside history and community life.

Hence one can justifiably say that this approach is *aflight* from political intersubjectivity designed to ensure the attainment of perfection in solitude. This, in very brief form, is an outline of the Indo-European worldview. In my book on hellenistic humanism I have treated this whole subject in greater detail.

## THE SEMITES

There was another view of man, however. It was found in the third cultural world that I wish to discuss here-the cultural world of the Semites. The cultural outlook of the Semites was radically different from that of the Indo-Europeans. Hence their ethos and their way of using the things of this world were radically different also. I hope to show that the interplay of these two different views forms the backdrop for our own history as Latin Americans. The starting point for our culture does not go back to the independence movements of the early nineteenth century or to the explorations of the sixteenth century. It goes much farther back, to the influences which helped to form the mentality of the European and to fashion the outlook of the Church itself.

The Semites did not originate in the Eurasian steppe area. They came from the Arabian desert region. The first Semites known to history were the Akkadians. (The Sumerians were not Semites.) The Akkadians were followed by many other Semitic peoples-such as the Amo-

rites, the Babylonians, and the Phoenicians. The Semites also include the Hebrews and the Arabs.

At a certain point in history, just before the start of Christianity, we could very well say that the Indo-Europeans had taken control of the situation. The Roman empire dominated in the west, the Persian empire existed in the Near East, and the Hindu empire predominated farther east. Then a revolution occurred. Christianity, which embodies a Semitic view of the world as we shall see, spread all over the Indo-European area. Islam would come later to complete the trend. This cultural transition, I believe, justifies my hypothesis about three cultural stages. As I noted above, we first have six major civilizations. Then the Indo-European outlook gained dominance in the Eurasian world. Finally, the whole area was "semitized" culturally; and our own culture today shows marked traces of this process.

Let us now consider the outlook of the Semites, which differed radically from that of the Indo-Europeans.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Unitary Anthropology and Intersubjective Bipolarity*

First of all, the Semites regarded man as a unity. For the Greeks, man was a participation in the divine and the terrestrial. (Aristotle was an exception here.) Man was man by virtue of the *psychē*, the "soul," which was an independent substance or *ousia* in man. The Semites, by contrast, regarded man as a unitary entity. Here we shall use the Hebrews as our example of the Semitic mentality.

Three Hebrew words are relevant here. The word *basar* signified "flesh," "man," or the "totality," not "body" in the Greek sense. The word *nephesh* signified "life" rather than "soul" as we use the term. And the word *ruah* signified the "divine breath" or "spirit."

In the outlook of the Israelites, man was a unity-but a unity totally given in two different orders. One order was

that of *basar*, the "flesh," which is translated in the Greek New Testament as *sarx*. The other order, which signified man as a wholly open totality, was *thatofruah*; that term was translated as *pneuma* in the Greek New Testament.

Paul has an interesting discussion of resurrection (1 Cor. 15), which is more easily understood if we appreciate the distinction in Semitic anthropology between *sarx* and *pneuma*. Before the resurrection we have a merely natural or fleshly body, a body in the order of *basar*. After the resurrection we will have a spiritual body, a body that is wholly in the order of *ruah*. The contrast is between two totalities that represent two wholly different ways of living. The fleshly man lives in the closed totality of the created world. The spiritual man lives in the world of the divine spirit; he is open to God and his covenant.

A similar outlook can be found in the Koran, where there is no distinction between body and soul. And the Syrian Fathers of the Church use the terms *basar* and *nePhesh* to describe equivalent totalities.

The point I want to make here is that man is viewed as a unified and unitary being in the Hebrew tradition and in the Bible. Where dualistic formulations are evident, as in the book of Wisdom for example, it is hellenic influence that is making itself felt. There one reads comments on the corruptible body and on the soul that separates itself from the body after death.

### *An Ethos of Liberty and Liberation*

The ethos deriving from this particular understanding of the world was one which ascribed to man in his totality-not merely the body-the responsibility for the evil in the world. The Hebrew worked out a morality of liberty and liberation.

Liberty was not ascribed to the body or the soul as separate entities. It was ascribed to man in his totality as an autonomous being. The myth of Adam attempts to explain



the mystery of evil and its origin. This account tells us that evil is not brought about by God, nor is it a god; instead it has its roots in the liberty of man, in the liberty of Adam. Adam is not presented as someone tragically enslaved, but as someone dramatically tempted as a free agent. In the eyes of the Semite, the body was not the root of evil but the root of liberty. Instead of maintaining an ethos of dualistic forces, the Semite followed an ethos of liberty and liberation.

If the reader would like to explore the meaning and deeper import of the myth of Adam, I would recommend that he or she read a book by Paul Ricoeur on the symbolism of evil. He provides a good analysis of the problem of good and evil as described in the book of Genesis.<sup>4</sup> In his analysis he uses the term "myth" in a different sense than Bultmann does; he shows just how myth can be regarded as something reasonable and rational. Symbol, because of its ambivalence, is likewise as important and necessary today in our technological age. Ricoeur tackles this important subject in a later book.<sup>5</sup>

### *Perfection as Personal Commitment and Involvement*

A third area where the Semitic outlook differs radically from that of the Indo-European is the area of personal life and the quest for perfection. For the Semite, intersubjectivity is a necessary prerequisite for perfection. Whereas the Greek sought to escape the body and interpersonal relationships in order to attain perfection, the Hebrew saw man as a totality interrelated with other human totalities. Man could be saved only in this intersubjective web of relationships. The Hebrew could not be saved alone, by contemplating the divine in solitude. He could be saved only by belonging to the people of Abraham, sharing the promise and hoping for its fulfillment. The Hebrew felt closely bound up with his forefathers, and ultimately with Ab-

raham: hence the great concern for genealogy in the Old Testament.

Lacking such intersubjectivity, neither the Hebrew nor the Arab Muslim could be saved. Perfection was always a community affair. He had to belong to the *polis*, the "city of God"; in that sense perfection was always a "political" matter. For the Greek, by contrast, perfection was utterly apolitical.

The Greek sage would attain perfection by solitary contemplation. The Semite would attain perfection by active involvement in his community and personal commitment to history. Hence Semitic perfection is the perfection of the *prophet*, who gives his life to the task of liberating the community of the poor and the oppressed. A prophet such as Moses must go and tell his people what God has told him. He is bound to history and to personal involvement. Semitic perfection, then, is personal involvement in the task of liberating the community. The "Servant of Yahweh" (see Isa. 40ff.) must be willing to give up his life for his community.

### ***Awareness of History***

The Greek devalued history because he devalued the concrete realm, seeing that it could not be reduced to some universal formula. The Hebrew restored value to history and, in fact, discovered history and its value. This is what Hegel suggests when he says that self-awareness begins in world history with Abraham. And this is what Mircea Eliade suggests near the end of his fine book, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*.<sup>6</sup>

The Semite, and the Hebrew in particular, made history the horizon of his existence. It is the concrete fact of Abraham's existence that enables his people to be saved. It is that historical promise which provides the context for Hebrew salvation. Abraham is not a myth or a god. He is not Hercules, Prometheus, or Ulysses. Abraham is a historical

figure who lived in Ur at one point and then journeyed through the real world.

Concrete realities are suddenly "discovered." For now the corporeal realm of the individual and the unforeseen-*basar*-can be the starting point for salvation. History is now the starting point for salvation. The prophet is the perfect human being because he discovers the import of history, ponders it, and then proclaims it to his people. He tells people how God sees history and mankind's place in it.

This worldview came about because the Semites saw the world as something radically separated from the Creator , the Other. Using the term *barah*, the first verse of Genesis tells us that the creator God fashioned a world that was radically distinct from himself. In other words, the Transcendent de-mythified *this* world and turned it into man's instrument. So long as the world was divine, so long as it was "full of gods," man could not possibly dominate nature. Thanks to the Hebrew view, he can.

The first important step in man's attempt to dominate nature was the de-mythification of the universe. Modern science, as Pierre Duhen observes, is based on the simple principle of a creator God. It is this principle that allowed man to de-mythify the universe and take scientific control over the world. If the moon is something created, then I can go about the task of studying it. But if the moon is a god or goddess, then astronomy becomes mixed up with theology . and science becomes impossible. As you can see, the topic is an interesting one which deserves further study.

## THE PHENOMENON OF CHRISTIANITY

Christians appeared on the scene during the third Semitic stage of world cultural history , and they evangelized the Roman empire. Islam, too, is a Semitic phenomenon which spread far and wide. This Semitic history of Europe has

been extended down to the age of secularization. In a secularized form it has to be extended even to China, which eventually was won over to a way of thinking that is ontologically Semitic to a certain extent: i.e., Marxism. Thus only one group remains Indo-European still: India and South-east Asia. All the other groups in the world have been "Semitized," practically speaking.

Christianity, then, appears within the context of this vast cultural process of Semitization. Indeed it appears in the very bosom of Semitic culture. For our purposes here, I shall divide the history of Christianity into three periods and discuss them briefly in this section.

The *first* period is the period of the apostolic community in Palestine. There Jesus founded his Church after teaching his disciples and carrying out his work. The community grew in Jerusalem and Palestine. Eventually some disciples set out for Antioch, and sister Churches were established there and at Corinth.

During this period, which lasts up to about 50 A.D., the group of disciples underwent certain key experiences that would be of great importance for the Church in the future. The disciples in Jerusalem made up what Paul called the "community of saints." Those who went to Antioch underwent a basic and pivotal experience. The Christians at Antioch were people who came both from Judaism and paganism. This was a new experience, not shared by the Jerusalem community. Saint Paul was the prototype of the Antiochean apostle. He was the apostle to the gentiles because Barnabas introduced him to the pastoral approach of the Antiochean community. Corinth was still another type of community. All the people there were pagan in origin, so the Judaizing tendency was not found in its midst.

At the Synod of Jerusalem James presided. But he gave the floor to Peter, who set forth the general lines that would be followed. But it was Paul who imposed his view on the

group, and we enter the second main period of Church history .

The *second* period is the one in which Christianity spread all over the Mediterranean world. As is well known, one of the first great crises occurred when a dispute arose between two factions in the Church: the hellenic faction and the Judaizing faction. When the synod was held in Jerusalem around 49 or 50 A.D., the maturing consciousness of the apostles brought them to the realization that Christianity could not be confined to Jewish people, that it had to be open to the hellenic world and the culture of the Mediterranean world. A new period in Church history had begun.

This period runs from 50 A.D. to 1962, covering almost two thousand years. During this period Christians evangelized the Mediterranean area, and a Christianized Mediterranean remained the fundamental base and site of Christianity for this long period of time. During this period Christians also evangelized the eastern Roman empire and , the Russian area. This was an extension of the Mediterranean experience because the Greek language remained a fundamental component in the experience.

The basic experience of the Latin-speaking portion of the Roman empire also perdured until 1962. Indeed it was only in the last decade that the whole debate over the use of Latin was resolved. Up to then the culture and language traditions of the Mediterranean basin were the only ones given due consideration. We did not realize that every culture and language is sacred when it is part of the life of a consecrated Christian, whether that Christian is European, Papuan, or whatever. To be more precise, it is the consecrated Christian who gives sacredness to what he touches, speaks, and produces. All languages are sacred insofar as their speakers are consecrated people.

The *third* period has just begun. We might call it the period of crisis engendered by Vatican II. At this point

someone might well complain about such a division of Church history, asserting that there were certainly many more periods and phases. But I would still maintain that a very good case can be made for the division I have presented here. I would say that we have only just moved beyond the second period of Church history outlined above. The evangelization of the Roman world and its perimeters-including Latin America-has been going on since 50 A.D. The tacit understanding was that the Church was meant only for Mediterranean peoples. Only with the advent of Vatican II have we come to realize pointedly that the Church was meant to be for the whole world. Only now have we begun to truly open up to the world outside the Mediterranean.

It will take more than a day to effect such openness. We will have to shed much cultural baggage in order to go out to the world at large. We are just beginning to realize, for example, that the Islamic world was never missionized. It was not interested in Latin, Greek, or the structures of the Roman and Byzantine world. Its experience was different, and it would have to be missionized from within the context of its own life. The Greco-Roman experience of the Mediterranean world did not leave much room for the evangelization of the Islamic world.

Neither were we able to truly go out and evangelize the Hindu or Chinese world. The latter is a very instructive instance. Matteo Ricci made direct contact with the Chinese emperor in the sixteenth century. The emperor was somewhat disposed towards conversion, but Rome opposed the idea of a Chinese rite. Speaking Chinese and dressed as a mandarin, Ricci arrived at the court and presented two gifts: an icon of the Virgin and a map of the world which also depicted the overall organization of the heavens. The Chinese emperor was impressed with Ricci's wisdom and explanations. Ricci, in turn, wanted to modify the Christian rituals so that they would conform to cultural beliefs and

practices in China. When Ricci brought his request to Rome, he was refused. Latin, you see, was a sacred language but Chinese was not. So Ricci's great missionary exploit ended in failure.

Before I consider Christianity in Latin America, I should like to close this chapter with some remarks on Church history during the second long period described above.

## CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

There are two main phases in the second great period of Church history which I have outlined above. The first is the era of persecution, and it runs from about 50 A.D. to 313-314 A.D. During this phase Christians stood outside the established order, and the martyrs fearlessly faced that fact.

The martyrs were killed in the arena as atheists. We may feel that the Romans were ignorant indeed to kill Christians on such grounds. But if we are to appreciate the why and wherefore of their martyrdom, we must realize that they were "atheists" with respect to the Roman gods, and with respect to the values propounded by Roman culture. Such "atheism" is a serious matter indeed. To say that the sun was not a god was to empty temples all over the empire and to leave countless people without any gods. To say that the moon was not a goddess was to leave the night without any trace of divinity; and since the moon goddess was closely related to the earth goddess, it presaged catastrophic happenings in agriculture and field work. Finally, to say that the emperor was not a god was to engage in political subversion.

When we hear the early apologists saying that the moon and sun are not gods, we are likely to feel that their remarks are rather purposeless for us today. We forget that the "gods" change, and that we must always know who and what they are at a given moment. When the Christian does perform his prophetic task, when he points out that money

or the existing political order is not a god, then his remarks take on a subversive tone and he is once more dragged into the arena. It is there that the enemies of the reigning false gods are taken care of. The true Christian will always have to die the death of a martyr, giving up his life for the sake of the Other. And the Other is the poor and lowly person who, like Jesus, does not have his own army. The martyr bears witness to the poor, for the sin of domination is fundamentally a denial of Jesus and God himself.

Consider all the theological revisions we are going to have to make. The death of the Christian martyrs in the Roman empire is something very relevant today because we have just started to get beyond the Mediterranean experience and we are feeling the full force of the rough weather ahead. This does not mean we should go back to the primitive Church of the first century. It does mean we are going to have to experience the full process of universalizing the Church which started then, and that certain features of the primitive Church are pertinent for us today.

Let us consider some of the features of the primitive Christian communities before Christianity became an established religion and turned into Christendom. First of all, there was a great deal of freedom in the area of liturgical innovation and inventiveness. Each community had its own liturgy. There was no "folk religion" because the devotion of the average person found expression in the key liturgical rites. Christian groups and grass-roots communities met to formulate their liturgies on the basis of simple frameworks which took their day-to-day life into account.

Second, these grass-roots communities were relatively small. People knew each other personally, so they could share each other's joys and sufferings. They were not the impersonal crowds that would come on the scene later. Third, on the philosophical or theological level, there was a confrontation between two different ways of comprehending being and existence. The Indo-European out-



look saw reality as that which was *present* and *permanent* before people's eyes. That was "being" (Greek *ousia*), and it was One. Hence in this view there was a strong thrust towards pantheism. Over against it stood Judaeo-Christian thought. Note that I say "Judaeo" because the first Christians were Jews for the most part, and because on the metaphysical level Christians did not contribute any new thesis. The vision of man and history held by the first Christians was a Jewish one. Christianity rooted this vision in Jesus Christ and thus formulated a new anthropological phase within Jewish tradition, but it did not introduce any metaphysical novelty.

What ensued was really "culture shock," perhaps the most interesting and noteworthy shock in world history. The Mediterranean community lived out this basic experience from within hellenistic culture. It had to transcend the existing horizon of Indo-European thought and inject a new horizon for understanding and comprehending existence. In so doing, it radically transformed the prevailing outlook, because the Greek world saw the being of the cosmos as something that was eternal and divine. Since Judaeo-Christian thought saw the cosmos as something created, it radically transformed everything. Christians desecralized the cosmos and its realities, making them tools of man. And this secularized cosmos is the modern world in which we now live. Man would never have reached the moon if that theological revolution had not occurred previously. It was a fundamental revolution in human history, and it was brought about by those early Christians who were persecuted in the first centuries of Church history.

Those early centuries are thus of the utmost importance. We will have to go back and study them more closely because we may presently find ourselves in a very similar situation. The situation of the Christian thinker today may be very similar to that of Justin, Tatian, and the other Christian apologists.

## CHRISTENDOM AS A SYSTEM

As time went on, Christianity turned into a political force. Thanks to Constantine, the Church persecuted became the Church triumphant. Constantine liberated the Church, possibly for political reasons. As a result the Church came to constitute what is referred to in theology as *Christendom*. The distinction between Christianity and Christendom is an important one. "Christianity" is the Christian religion. "Christendom" is a cultural reality. The former is a religion, the latter is a cultural totality which derives its basic orientation from Christianity. That is the way in which I am using the terms here.

Christendom first unified the liturgy and established it in a fixed form. Instead of continuing to grow and change with real life, the liturgy was fixed once and for all. Fluctuation and diversity could not be allowed much room in the new empire, so the number of differing liturgical families was gradually reduced. This process affected the Latin rite almost from the very start. In a relatively short time the Roman rite liturgy was, practically speaking, the only one left in the West. Simultaneously we see the appearance of huge conglomerates of people and of basilicas. In many cases these crowds of people were baptized and entrusted with a serious responsibility towards history without being adequately instructed. Unlike the early converts, these people were often baptized as children and hence entered the Church as such.

Some Christians realized that all this was quite remote from the Gospel message. They began to remove themselves to deserted areas, and even deserts. As the Church became the majority force, monasticism also began to come into prominence. Men and women devoted to God began to realize that their culture was not Christian. The fact is that no culture as such can be Christian, because Christianity can never be a culture. Those who are "gathered together"

by Christ form a Church, not a culture. Christendom, as a cultural totality, was a mixture of Christian and hellenistic elements. It was a political unity. Hence Constantine convened and dissolved Councils. Theological disputes were often bound up with other issues, including economic ones. The course of a Council might be affected by such questions as whether the crops of Alexandria could be sold in Constantinople.

Christendom was not just an ecclesiastical unity; it was also a military and economic unity. The bishops who had lived under persecution now became important authorities, passing judgment on a variety of issues. Ambrose, for example, forced an emperor to get down on his knees before him. Simultaneously this culture, now labelled "Christian," became a matter of tradition. What it meant to be a Christian was taken as something well known and obvious, and it was handed down from generation to generation. One became a Christian by birth, not by *conversion*, and people stopped asking what it really meant to be a Christian.

This mixture of Christianity and culture known as Christendom had its own philosophy. It was predominantly Platonic or Neoplatonic in cast, although its panoply of logic was more or less Aristotelian. The great Fathers of the Church around this time-Origen, Irenaeus, Basil, Gregory, and Augustine-were well versed in philosophy. All of them were faced with problems that could not be solved in terms of hellenistic conceptualization. Origen's book on first principles, is a model example of their problems and procedures.

In this book Origen tries to be a hellenist for the hellenists and a Christian for the Christians. His anthropological doctrine goes something like this. In the beginning God created pure spirits. Some sinned excessively; they were the demons. Some sinned slightly; they were the angels. Others sinned moderately. For them God created the material cosmos and inserted them into bodies; they are the souls of

human beings. On the one hand Origen wants to defend the doctrine of creation; on the other hand he wants to uphold the body-soul dualism. For him, man is an unstable unity of soul and imprisoning body. When man dies, his immortal soul will be set free whereas his mortal body will suffer corruption and decay. This much is acceptable to the Greek. To satisfy the Christian, however, he must also include the whole aspect of resurrection. Origen seems to do this insofar as he does maintain that the body will rise again. But the fact is that his risen body is so spiritualized that it is really a pure and unsullied soul.

Now it might seem that Origen did succeed in defending both a Christian and a Greek doctrine. But the fact is that Christianity has never taught "the resurrection of *the body*." It talks about the "resurrection of the dead" or the resurrection "of the flesh." The dangers inherent in Origen's thought were soon sensed, and opposition to him grew. This critical conflict, which deserves our attention, was centered in Alexandria because that city was a focus of culture and of hellenism. The "school of Alexandria," which began with Clement, taught a doctrine of "gnosis." It was a Christian "gnosis," to be sure, and it continued to grow as time went on. Gradually this hellenizing theology sought to work out an epistemological approach which would bring it in line with the approach of Aristotle. In this form it came to the West, and theology lost all sense of history and its meaning.

A new start was made in the nineteenth century by the Tübingen School. Hegel, Schelling, and Hölderlin studied in the Lutheran school of theology in Tübingen, and Hegel's thought would have a profound influence on Ferdinand Baur. A few blocks away, Möhler was teaching at the Catholic seminary. One might well say that modern theology stems from the basic notion of "salvation history" (*Heilsgeschichte*), which enabled theology to recover its sense of history after centuries of neglect.

## BYZANTINE, LATIN, AND HISPANIC CHRISTENDOM

In the fourth century A.D., there were distinct geo-cultural spheres in Christendom. Byzantine Christendom had its focal point in the city of Constantinople, the chief city of Christendom. Constantinople came into being as a Christian city and faded out as a Christian city-struggling to the very end to preserve Christian culture as a unity. Constantine founded it in 330 A.D. with the aim of making it the seat of a new empire, allying himself to the Christian majority living in Anatolia. As a seat of Christian culture it met its demise in 1453, when it was conquered by the Turks. It was the only center of Christian culture, the only version of Christendom, which went through its full cycle.

From Byzantine Christendom there arose the Russian version of Christendom. The Russians, who appeared on the scene for the first time in the ninth century, derived from the Varangians. The latter were Scandinavian traders and warriors (the word *Wahr* signifies "economic goods" or "merchandise"). The Russians came into contact with Byzantium and eventually built the third Rome: Moscow. This Russian culture was a marginal Byzantine culture. Through it, Christendom moved eastward and reached the Pacific Ocean.

Latin Christendom was much smaller in numbers at the start of the fourth century. Due to the civilizing efforts of the monks, the newly arrived Germanic tribes were evangelized and the foundations of a future Europe were laid. It would be a Europe dominated by Christendom, thanks to the baptism of various barbarian leaders. Soon Spain boasted great theologians and saints. Isidore of Seville was the last representative of the tradition embodied in the Latin Church Fathers. In 710-711 A.D., this tradition was buried under the encroaching wave of Arab invaders. From 718 A.D. on, the effort to expel these invad-

ers gave shape and form to Spain. By the sixteenth century the Christian people of Spain were inured to war. The ideals of Christendom and Crusade continued to live on in Spain long after they had faded from the consciousness of other peoples in Europe, because the struggle against the Muslims continued for many centuries. They gradually pushed back the frontiers of the encroaching Muslims, conquering Granada in the same year that Columbus discovered America.

These frontier-fighters continued their struggle here in the new world, crusading against the native empires of this region. Only when victory was achieved here did these warriors lay down their arms. It was all part of one great battle, which extended over almost a thousand years. If one does not realize that fact, one cannot understand the events which took place here from 1492 on. It is the old ideal of the Christian cavalier that is upheld by Cortez, Pizarro, and the other conquistadores. It is Latin Christendom, in its hispanic form, that is brought to our shores.

## NOTES

1. Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, Eng. Trans. (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958), pp. 345-56.
2. See my book *El humanismo helénico* (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1975).
3. See my book *El humanismo semita* (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1969),
4. Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, Eng. Trans. (New York: Harper & Row, 1967). See Part 11, Chapter 3, for example.
5. Paul Ricoeur, *Truth and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, Eng. Trans. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970).
6. For some interesting remarks on man's dread of history, faith, and the unforeseen, see the last chapter of Eliade's book, *Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History* (Princeton University Press, 1954).