

# Christianity's Role in a New World Religion

John Nash

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## Summary

This article explores the Tibetan Master's prophecies for a new world religion, with particular reference to the role that Christianity can play in its development. Harmony must be established among the disparate Christian denominations, and the ecumenical movement can be viewed as a valuable start, although much more remains to be done. At the same time, Christianity as a whole will need to make necessary adaptations to participate in—or preferably lead—a new global synthetic religion. In both processes, the Tibetan's statement of basic doctrinal “realities” forms a useful guideline for theological adaptation. However uniformity of beliefs and observances is unnecessary. Rather, shared spiritual experience and collective service may offer a better hope for achieving global synthesis.

## Introduction

In 1943 the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul presented a vision of a new world religion to replace, or in some sense synthesize, the many religions through which people currently express their spiritual aspirations.<sup>1</sup> When we reflect on the sectarian tensions, calumnies, persecutions, inquisitions, crusades, religious wars and *jihads* of yesterday—and more particularly of today—the notion of an inclusive world religion sounds like a utopian dream. However, if we accept that a new religion forms part of Hierarchical plans for humankind, perhaps we should focus not on feasibility or infeasibility but on what can be done to turn those plans into reality.

Importantly the Tibetan referred to “religion,” not to the larger category of spirituality. And we must infer that he had in mind some form of *organization*, an entity with a social dimension, a measure of cohesion, and appropriate leadership. The threefold subjective basis of the new world religion, in his description, will

be “the Church, the Masonic Fraternity and the educational field.”<sup>2</sup> “The Church” and contextual discussion seemed to relate Djwhal Khul's remarks specifically to Christianity. But he often mentioned the role of the Buddha, so we can reasonably conclude that elements of Buddhism will be included. And it would be rash to suppose that other world religions like Hinduism, Islam and Judaism, with their own rich traditions, could not also participate. Similarly, “Masonic Fraternity” may include other elements of the western esoteric tradition like the Rosicrucian movement. The Tibetan's reference to “the educational field,” in the context of a new religion, is evocative and could form the subject of a separate inquiry.

Djwhal Khul warns that development of the new religion will not be entrusted solely to the present religious or fraternal institutions; but they will be eligible to participate to the extent that they provide “a channel for the activity of the second Ray of Love-Wisdom.”<sup>3</sup> Not surprisingly, in view of the second-ray involvement, “[t]he platform of the new world religion will be built by the many groups, working under the inspiration of the Christ.”<sup>4</sup> Finally, efforts to build the new religion will meet with supportive response from the masters:

This new religion will take the form of a conscious unified group approach to the world of spiritual values, evoking in its turn reciprocal action from Those Who are the citizens of that world—the planetary Hierarchy and affiliated groups.<sup>5</sup>

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## About the Author

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Whatever roles non-Christian traditions play in developing the new world religion, Christianity's responsibility would seem to be particularly great; it may in fact be expected to play the leadership role. However it is not clear whether the main initiative will come from institutional Christianity or from the grassroots. Conceivably, a significant proportion of ordinary Christians could turn to a new world religion without the involvement or even the approval of ecclesiastical officials. But much more could be accomplished with the support and preferably the direction of high officials.

In any event, people at every level of every religious tradition have an opportunity to examine their own willingness and potential to participate. This article examines what roles Christianity and Christians can play. The hope is that the article will stimulate discussion by others in Christianity and every other religious tradition.

## The Christian Heritage

### Achievement and Failure

The history of Christianity is a story of paradoxes. Christianity spread the teachings of Christ to every corner of the globe, brought people to God, fed the hungry, healed the sick, and inspired great works of art, music, literature and architecture. Christianity provided environments in which large numbers of people could rise to the heights of saintliness, attain mystical union with God, and gain invaluable philosophical insights into issues of ultimate concern. Significantly, it also provided an environment in which people could reach the stage where global religious synthesis may now be possible.

At the same time Christianity provided environments in which individuals and groups sank to the depths of depravity. From early times to the present, many church officials failed to live up to the moral expectations of their positions. Lust for power, greed, sexual weaknesses, and lack of leadership qualities undermined their ability to serve. Christian institutions demonstrated a willingness to use war, torture, political intrigue, and human degradation to control people. Frequently they suppressed truth. Too often they failed to confront injustice or to

support the needs of repressed segments of society. As Catholic theologian Hans Küng lamented:

It was not the Christian Churches... but the "Enlightenment"... which finally brought about the recognition of human rights: freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, the abolition of torture, the ending of persecution of witches, and other human achievements.<sup>6</sup>

Instead, the churches offered platitudes about a better life in the hereafter. Karl Marx was not entirely wrong when he claimed that religion was the "opiate of the people."<sup>7</sup>

### Persecution and Tolerance

Until conversion of the Emperor Constantine in 312 CE, Christians faced brutal persecution by Roman authorities. However sectarian divisions soon appeared, and Christians started persecuting one another. As early as the fourth century Manichaeans were burned at the stake, and this became the standard method of execution for all "heretics." Intra-Christian persecution increased throughout the Middle Ages. In the 13th century the Cathars of southern France were systematically exterminated by the Albigensian Crusade and the Inquisition. It was one of the darkest periods in Christian history, comparable only with the genocide perpetrated by the Spanish *conquistadores* in the Americas. The effectiveness of the Inquisition as a tool of repression was enhanced when in 1252 Pope Innocent IV approved the use of torture to encourage self-incrimination and indictment of others.<sup>8</sup> In the 16th century the Calvinist Huguenots of France were persecuted by King Charles IX and Queen Mother Catherine de Médici. The St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of 1572 has gone down in infamy.<sup>9</sup> Persecution began again under Louis XIV, and by the time it ended as many as 250,000 Huguenots may have been put to death.

A few brave souls spoke out against religious persecution, and a few nations offered sanctuary. Sebastian Castellio (1515–1563), who was banished from Geneva in 1544 after a disagreement with John Calvin, wrote an influential book, *De Haereticis* ("Concerning Heretics"). Castellio preached tolerance: "Let us

who are Christians not condemn one another, but, if we are wiser than they are, let us also be better and more merciful.”<sup>10</sup> Castellio contrasted this viewpoint with what he considered Calvinist bigotry; and he strongly protested the execution of the antitrinitarian Michael Servetus. He was fortunate to have escaped a similar fate.

Sixteenth-century Transylvania and the kingdom of Poland-Lithuania provided havens from religious persecution. But tolerance ended when the

Counter-Reformation brought those nations under firm Catholic control. Fortunately, by the end of the century the Netherlands had thrown off Spanish control, and it provided the new European haven for religious dissidents. By the late-17th and 18th centuries, the American colonies offered another escape from religious persecution. During the Great Migration, from 1629 to 1642, upward of 20,000 people emigrated from Britain, most of them Puritans. They formed the New England Confederation, loosely uniting

the colonies of Connecticut, New Haven, Plymouth and Massachusetts. Sadly, the Confederation did not offer religious tolerance. Baptist Roger Williams was banished by the Congregationalists of Massachusetts and moved south to Rhode Island. Several Quakers were hanged in Massachusetts when they attempted to return to Boston.<sup>11</sup> Most Quakers sought refuge in the newly founded colony of Pennsylvania. The charters of both Rhode Island and Pennsylvania did pledge religious freedom.

## Separatism and Inclusiveness

True to its Piscean tradition, Christianity has been idealistic but separatist. It sought to teach and baptize *all nations*,<sup>12</sup> suggesting an impulse to inclusiveness. But in practice “baptize” was interpreted as “to bring under doctrinal and disciplinary control.” In the effort to build a secure identity, Christianity sought to distinguish itself from what it was *not*. Believers were distinguished from nonbelievers, saints from sinners, the saved from the

damned, and truth from heresy or “myth.” Creeds were crafted to determine who qualified to be a Christian and who did not. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE wisely decreed that there should be no more creeds. But “confessions” took their place and would play decisive roles in the Reformation, as Christianity splintered into often warring denominations and sects, each defending its truth from others’ falsehood. Creeds and confessions capture the spiritual experience of one group of people and impose it on others—who, by

implication, are discouraged from having their own experiences.

Fragmentation became one of the most conspicuous features of Christianity. Eastern Orthodoxy rejected the Church of Rome, Rome rejected Lutheranism, which went on to reject Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin who in turn condemned the Anabaptists and Antitrinitarians. The process continues today as moderate Baptists sever links with conservatives, and conservative Anglicans threaten to break with liberal Episcopalians.

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Pope Benedict XVI is believed to favor a smaller, more cohesive, Catholic Church limited to the most devout and obedient.<sup>13</sup> Fragmentation might imply more options for people to find churches that express their spiritual aspirations, but this rarely happened. The Protestant state churches were often as intolerant of diversity within their jurisdictions as Rome and Constantinople were in their larger ones.

### **Does Christianity Have a Future?**

Christianity no longer speaks to large numbers of modern people. Most mainline Christian denominations have experienced declining membership, and some complain of an even more serious shortage of clergy. Church buildings are being closed and congregations disbanded because of funding problems. Settlement of child-molestation suits has exacerbated already serious financial problems. Meanwhile, people are turning to Pentecostal and charismatic groups, nondenominational mega-churches, televangelism, and evangelical fundamentalism. Many more are turning away from Christianity altogether.

“Christ,” to quote Alice Bailey, “has not failed.” Rather:

It is the human element which has failed and which has thwarted His intentions, and prostituted the truth which He presented. Theology, dogma, doctrine, materialism, politics and money have created a vast dark cloud between the churches and God; they have shut out the true vision of God's love, and it is to this vision of a loving reality and to a vital recognition of its implications that we must return.<sup>14</sup>

Even some prominent church leaders have concluded that institutional Christianity has reached the end of its useful life. But others argue that, purged of unnecessary baggage, Christianity can still serve its people and the world. If it is to survive, and particularly if it is to contribute to a new world religion, Christianity must address core issues of doctrine, salvation, and the role of the institutional church. It must become intimately and directly involved in the issues of our time. If Christ has a mission for Christianity as part of a new

world religion—or even in isolation—perhaps it is not too late to see if that mission can still be accomplished.

## **Basis for Synthesis**

### **Next Step Forward**

**T**ransition from the present situation of multiple religions to a single world religion will require adaptation on the part of people everywhere. Change in an area of such fundamental concern will not be easy. However the very notion that a new world religion may now be feasible attests to the maturation of humanity. Humanity is now at a point of development where more constructive relationships with people of different faiths and practices are possible and where notions of the unity of all humankind are becoming meaningful. The existing world religions have exhibited all the imperfections typical of human institutions, but they share credit for this process of maturation:

All past divine revelations have brought humanity to the point where (spiritually speaking) man's essential divinity is theologically recognised, where the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God are recognised ideals and where science has demonstrated the fact of an unfolding purpose and the existence of a fundamental, intelligent Agent behind all phenomena. Step by step man has been led through prayer, the voice of desire, through worship, the recognition of deity, through affirmation of the fact of human identity of nature with the divine, to a belief in the divinity of man. Orthodox religion emphasises the divinity of the Christ, and He Himself has told us... that we also are divine, all of us are the Sons of God and that... we are able to do still greater things than Christ did because He has shown us how. Such is the religious background of the spiritual thinking in the world. Therefore... we can begin to realise that the time has now come for the presentation of the new step in this unfolding revelation.<sup>15</sup>

The development of a new world religion will involve at least two processes. One, in which some progress has already been made through

the ecumenical movement, is to bring the diverse and frequently warring Christian sects into mutual harmony. The other is to bring Christianity into harmony with other major world religions. The processes can run concurrently, although substantial progress may have to be made in the first before the second can get very far. On the other hand the vision of global synthesis may inspire and lend urgency to intra-Christian unification. Certain basic principles can guide both processes.

### **Fundamental Articles of Faith**

Given that all religious traditions, and certainly all Christian denominational traditions, address issues of God, man and the world, it should be feasible in principle to identify a basic set of beliefs and practices that all parties can agree on. These beliefs and practices would have to be meaningful to people with a vast array of backgrounds and must meet their spiritual expectations, needs and aspirations. The Tibetan proposed six fundamental articles of faith, or what he called “realities”:

1. The fact of God, transcendent and immanent
2. Humanity’s relationship to God
3. Immortality and the eternity of life
4. The brother- sisterhood of all humanity
5. Ongoing revelation and the appearance of divine avatars
6. The path to human perfection.<sup>16</sup>

In broad terms all six realities fit within the framework of Christian doctrine although, in the case of the last two, the fit may be somewhat strained.<sup>17</sup> Christian theologians might accept that Christ was a divine avatar but would regard the term as inadequate to capture their understanding of his divine sonship. The New Testament suggests that Christ will return. But, underlying the refusal to acknowledge the validity of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, Christianity rejects the suggestion that other avatars have appeared on earth or even the possibility that a single divine reality such as the Christ might have appeared in forms other than Jesus. To persuade the formulators of Christian dogma to reconsider the Christological doctrines—in which they invested centuries of effort (one might even say blood,

sweat and tears)—would be extremely difficult. On the other hand the Gnostics, Arians, Copts, Nestorians and Unitarians would hardly agree that earlier creedal deliberations promoted Christian unity.<sup>18</sup>

Almost as difficult for Christian theologians to stomach would be the notion that other dogmas may in some way be expendable, perhaps to be retained during an interim period but eventually to be treated as optional. For example, they would be asked to accept that the trinity represents just one way to view the nature of God; or that the interlocking doctrines of judgment, heaven and hell represent just one way to view moral imperatives, immortality and our approach to God.

### **Synthesis and Religious Conviction**

Dogma has always been divisive. Numerous times over the last two millennia Christian groups have driven people out of the fold or have gone to war against other Christian groups who could not accept particular doctrinal formulations. On the other hand it is obvious that religious conviction is very strong, reflecting the sense that God has spoken. People will not abandon traditional beliefs easily; nor should they. The notion of a world religion in which everyone subscribes, voluntarily or involuntarily, to the same body of doctrine is unrealistic. It is also unnecessary.

If synthesis is to be attained it must occur in some other way than through uniformity of belief—except for core principles, like those outlined above, without which “religion” might be a meaningless concept. There is great potential for a religion in which pluralism of belief is transcended by shared experiences and activities. People holding strong convictions can come together with others holding similarly strong convictions without having to compromise what they regard as central truths and without condemning one another.

Precedents show that this is possible. In the famous meetings between the Dalai Lama and Trappist monk Thomas Merton (1915–1968), shortly before the latter’s death, neither sought to convert the other; nor could they have hoped to do so. Rather they met in a spirit of mutual

respect, focusing not on doctrine but on the mystical insights each had gained during decades of meditation. In the inner knowingness that comes from the contemplative life they found an unexpected degree of commonality and an understanding of each other's faith. The Dalai Lama praised Merton as having a more profound understanding of Buddhism than any other Christian he had known. Similar commonality has been reported by people of different faiths working together on service projects, particularly those like rescue missions where great urgency suppresses needless questioning.

However, traditional notions of doctrinal absolutism present an obstacle to synthesis. And herein lies an urgent need for change. The churches must acknowledge that Christianity is a human response to the message and experience of Christ and subject to the limitations of human understanding. Other religious traditions and spiritual paths may also be blessed by Christ. In certain areas, other world religions and philosophies may have produced doctrines that are closer to ultimate truth. Christianity formulated doctrines for a limited audience: its own members. As a result, many dogmas seem irrelevant to outsiders, even though Christ's message might speak to them also. The body of Christian dogma should be examined to see whether rewording or reformulation could make it more generally acceptable.

## **A New Christianity**

**A** number of initiatives have already been taken to make Christianity more relevant to modern needs and to move toward internal harmony and eventual global synthesis. In what follows we shall examine some of these initiatives to see how appropriate and effective they might be.

### **The Ecumenical Movement**

The disintegration of Christianity was a matter of grave concern to many people—including ecclesiastical officials—and numerous, sincere efforts have been made over the centuries to restore harmony. In 1438–1439 high-level representatives of the Latin and Greek Churches met in Florence to try to heal the

Great Schism of 400 years earlier. A compromise agreement was reached, but the Greek clergy and laity rejected it.<sup>19</sup>

Many attempts were made to heal the doctrinal rifts caused by the Reformation, including those among rival Protestant factions; but in every case the outcome was disappointing. The famous meeting in 1529 between Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli failed to reach agreement on the meaning of the eucharist. A few influential people on both sides of the Protestant–Catholic divide were interested in rapprochement: among them Protestants Philipp Melancthon and Martin Bucer and Catholic Cardinals Reginald Pole and Gasparo Constarini.<sup>20</sup> Moderate Catholics Georg Witzel (1501–1573) and George Cassander (1513–1576) proposed a version of Christianity based on the teachings of the early Church, in the hope that both Catholics and Protestants could support it.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately their voices were not heard above the din of mutual belligerence. Anti-papal polemic continued and Rome launched the Counter-Reformation

If Witzel and Cassander tried to reconcile Catholics and Protestants, the English philosopher Edward Herbert of Cherbury (1583–1648) was even more ambitious. He proposed a set of universal religious beliefs intended to unite people of all faiths, Christian and non-Christian. Herbert offered five “articles”:

- Belief in the existence of a single supreme God
- Humanity's duty to revere God
- Linkage of worship with practical morality
- God will forgive us if we repent and abandon our sins
- Good works will be rewarded (and punishment for evil) both in life and after death.<sup>22</sup>

Herbert's ideas were generally ignored in Christian circles, although they found favor with 18th-century Deists in Europe and the United States.<sup>23</sup> The Hussite *Unitas Fratrum* and its famous bishop, Czech scholar Jan Comenius (1592–1670), promoted the unity of all Christendom.<sup>24</sup> But little remained of *Unitas* after the ravages of the Thirty Years War.

As an institution the Russian Orthodox Church has often been criticized for reluctance to reach out to other branches of Christianity; but influential members have made it a high priority. Nineteenth-century philosopher and mystic Vladimir Soloviev (1853–1900), who was influenced by Comenius, worked tirelessly to heal the Great Schism, at one point even trying to gain an audience with Pope Leo XIII. Sadly his efforts came to nothing, and he was wrongly accused of converting to Catholicism.<sup>25</sup> A generation later, Orthodox theologian and priest Sergei Bulgakov (1871–1944) also devoted much effort to the cause of reunification.<sup>26</sup>

In the West, the Edinburgh Missionary Conference was convened in June 1910 by Protestant groups to explore the potential for joint missionary activity. Almost as a side-effect it also provided opportunities for ongoing dialog; and this dialog eventually led to foundation of the World Council of Churches in 1948.<sup>27</sup> The WCC, which currently has 347 member churches in 120 countries,<sup>28</sup> has provided a meeting place where Christian denominations can discuss common concerns and affirm common aspirations. Although the Catholic Church never joined,<sup>29</sup> and some other denominations have been less-than-full participants, the WCC has become an important corporate voice for Christianity in the world.

The Church of Rome has taken its own steps toward ecumenism; and the Second Vatican Council was an important turning-point. In place of the intolerant, polemical attitudes of the Counter-Reformation, the Council urged Catholics: “to avoid expressions, judgments and actions which do not represent the condition of our separated brethren with truth and fairness.”<sup>30</sup> The Council went on to urge dialog among “different Churches and Communities,” which could prepare the way

for cooperation between them in the duties for the common good of humanity which are demanded by every Christian conscience; and, wherever this is allowed, there is prayer in common. [Furthermore], all are led to examine their own faithfulness to Christ’s will for the Church and accordingly to un-

dertake with vigor the task of renewal and reform.<sup>31</sup>

Clearly much has been accomplished. The ecumenical spirit has grown stronger in recent years, and inter-denominational relations and mutual understanding are better than they have ever been. But tangible results have been few and far between. Hardliners often derail denominations’ attempts to explore possible union with neighbors. The Russian Orthodox Church was lukewarm toward possible union with the Anglican Communion, citing the latter’s “pluralism” of beliefs and ordination of women.<sup>32</sup> Prominent members or congregations may develop strong links with other denominations only to be denounced by their own leaders. Evangelical Christians have reached out to conservative Catholics, although the main purpose has been to build political alliances rather than to explore commonality of faith.

Perhaps the ecumenical movement tried to do too much. Instead of pressing for full communion, churches might have achieved more by working toward mutual understanding, leaving eventual “union” to take care of itself. Also it was probably a mistake to begin by addressing doctrinal issues, which are the hardest to resolve, whereas there might have been a great deal of agreement in other areas. More promising are recent movements such as United Religions Initiative, founded in 2000, whose agenda extends outside Christianity. URI’s charter urges “respect [for] the sacred wisdom of each religion, spiritual expression and indigenous tradition” and commits members “to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings.”<sup>33</sup>

### Service Mission

Christianity already has perhaps the most meritorious record of corporate service to humanity in the history of the world. In the Middle Ages religious orders were the only institutional providers of human services. When monasteries were dissolved by the German princes, King Henry VIII of England, the Emperor Jo-

seph II in Austria, and Tsar Peter the Great in Russia, vast numbers of people were deprived of medical and welfare services. However, new non-monastic religious orders and lay orders were established with important service missions. Vincent de Paul (1580–1660) founded the Congregation of the Daughters of Charity and the Congregation of Priests of the Mission (Lazarists). Inspired by his example eight men founded the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in 1833. These orders did immense good among the poorest segments of society.

John Wesley (1703–1791) and his followers, the forerunners of the Methodist Church, visited prison inmates and spoke out against slavery and oppression. In 1865 William Booth (1829–1912) and his wife Catherine formed an evangelical group dedicated to addressing the appalling poverty in London's East End. The Booths' initiative, which recognized the interdependence of material, emotional and spiritual needs, evolved into the worldwide ministry of the Salvation Army. The Anglican Order of St. Luke the Physician was founded in 1955 as a fellowship of clergy and laypeople dedicated to a healing ministry.

Churches representing virtually the whole spectrum of Christian denominations are involved in service at some level. In addition to providing services on an ongoing basis, they respond to disasters by collecting food, supplies and money. Many hospitals in Third World nations are dependent entirely on missionary support. Large-scale human services,

disaster relief and other essential services may be administered by governments or secular agencies like the Red Cross. But they tend to be impersonal, and there is still great need for the kind of ministry that only a Francis of Assisi (c.1181–1226), an Abbé Piere (1912–),<sup>34</sup> or a Mother Theresa (1910–1997) can provide.

If there is near-universal agreement about the churches' role in service, there is less agreement about a role in social activism. Efforts to make Christianity more socially responsible,

and responsive, go back several centuries. The 15th-century Russian hermit Nilus of Sora was an important social activist in the Orthodox Church. The Religious Society of Friends (the Quakers), founded in 1652 by Englishman George Fox (1624–1691), took up the cause of those downtrodden by the powerful political establishment, which often had the support of major religious bodies. Soon the Society would take a leading role in efforts to abolish slavery in early 18th-century America.<sup>35</sup>

The Social Gospel movement, associated

primarily with Washington Gladden (1836–1918) and Josiah Strong (1847–1916), dates from the end of the 19th century. The movement produced the important book: *In His Steps*, published in 1896 by Congregationalist minister Charles Sheldon (1857–1946). Although it was influenced by left-wing ideals, Social Gospel rejected class warfare in favor of negotiated agreements between management and labor. Initially Protestant, Social Gospel later spread to Catholic circles, where it influenced Liberation Theology. But it never received enthusiastic support from ecclesiastical

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leaders in any major denomination. Liberation Theology, which was particularly active in South and Central America, was suppressed by papal edict in the 1980s because of perceived Marxist leanings.

Swiss-German Karl Barth (1886–1968), better known as a theologian, was also a social activist. He spoke out against the political and social problems of his time, including the rise of Nazism and the Vietnam War. He continually urged the reunion of Christianity, which he said must begin separately within the Protestant and the Catholic Churches before they could hope to achieve larger unity.

Activism has extended in recent decades to environmental concerns; and, again, mainstream Christianity has not been in the forefront of efforts to increase public awareness or to address key issues. Nevertheless, certain religious groups have given high priority to environmental concerns, notably the Unitarian-Universalist Church and the Creation Spirituality movement. Individual congregations have also taken a leadership role.

Religion, by its very nature, involves realities that transcend the level of mundane, everyday life. However, the transition from sixth- to seventh-century influence is changing the relative emphasis. The purely devotional, idealistic religion of the past is giving way to a strongly grounded religion which focuses on conditions in the everyday world as much as on preparations for the hereafter. Accordingly, Christianity's service mission, already exemplary, has a unique opportunity to expand still further. Importantly, sharing and caring can unite denominations, as well as Christians and non-Christians, that in most other ways find little in common. In few other areas is Christianity better prepared to participate in a new world religion.

### Teaching Mission

Christianity has supported higher education for more than 1,200 years. Charlemagne (742–814), king of the Franks and first Holy Roman Emperor, established schools of classical education. Teachers at these schools were known as *scholastici*,<sup>36</sup> giving their name to scholasticism, the great intellectual revival of the high

Middle Ages. The most famous Carolingian school was at Aachen, capital of the empire, and another was founded at Chartres by Bishop Fulbert (c.957–1028). These schools lay the groundwork for the great universities of the later medieval period.

By the 13th century the University of Paris had become the intellectual center of Europe, attracting among its scholars Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas. Other great universities, like Bologna, Oxford, Modena, Cambridge and Padua, date from the same period. From the late-16th century onward new Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed universities were established. Even with the great proliferation of secular universities, religious colleges continue to make important contributions. Almost by necessity higher education is linked to research, and for centuries they have been joint pursuits at leading institutions.

The churches could have a bright future as the sponsors of teaching and research institutions. Existing educational institutions should be strengthened and new ones established to provide centers of spiritual learning whose mission extends beyond ministerial training. However, important changes must be made if religious universities can regain the prominence they enjoyed in the Middle Ages.

Ecclesiastical oversight must be relaxed to allow full academic freedom for faculty and students.<sup>37</sup> Nobody should have to choose between scholarly integrity and job security or graduation.<sup>38</sup> Christianity must drop its traditional defensiveness in the face of challenge and change. Religious leaders must be willing to embrace the results of scriptural research and scientific discovery even if they conflict with existing dogma. This was a strong tenet of Renaissance humanism. The tension of inconsistency may itself prompt the emergence of new insights.

Institutions will be judged not by their orthodoxy but by the stature of their teachers, the quality of their teachings, and the climate of exciting discovery they create. And their religious sponsors must realize that they have more to gain by being in forefront of discovery

than by fighting rearguard actions to defend failed dogma.

The churches must recognize that all truth formulated by the human mind is incomplete and provisional, eventually to be replaced by or incorporated into a larger truth. Diverse viewpoints should be encouraged, inconsistencies tolerated, and theology allowed to evolve. In the Tibetan's vision of the new world religion the churches

will recognise the onward march of revelation and the new emerging truths. These truths will be founded on the ancient realities but will be adapted to modern need and will manifest progressively the revelation of the divine nature and quality. God is now known as Intelligence and Love. That the past has given us. He must be known as Will and Purpose, and that the future will reveal.<sup>39</sup>

Much Christian doctrine was formulated when the prevailing scientific worldview was very different from what it is today; in consequence, such figures of speech as "ascended into heaven" now have questionable meaning. Certainly religion and science address different categories of reality, but doctrine must not demand the suspension of reason or rejection of the legitimate findings of physics, biology, psychology, or any other field.

Christianity can no longer claim to have under its institutional control the best intellects, the most knowledge, or the clearest insights. The churches must be willing to embrace truth from whatever source it may come. As Djwhal Khul insists:

[The Churches] must learn to recognize that the Lord is not with them and they too must go forth, as Mary did, and seek him anew. If they will do so, they will surely find Him and again become His messengers... [T]he Living Christ will walk among men and lead them onward towards the Mount of Ascension... All men will come under the tide of inspiration from on high, and though they may speak with many tongues, they will all understand each other.<sup>40</sup>

Christianity's teaching mission extends from higher education down to the week-by-week

preaching by parish clergy. Preaching was central to Jesus' charge to the apostles, and increased emphasis was a positive outcome of the Reformation. During most of the church's history this was the only source of religious teachings for the masses. Unfortunately, preaching too often became mechanical and empty of meaning. Many clergy are poorly educated or are not good communicators. Worse, they do not always tell the truth. Even today, seminarians are warned to withhold certain information—such as the results of modern scriptural criticism—on fears that its disclosure could undermine the faith of their congregations. This kind of dishonest paternalism is insulting to those whom the churches are committed to serve, and it calls clerical integrity into serious question.

Some members of the laity are more highly educated—and perhaps even more committed to their faith—than their preachers. They struggle with the same issues as do church theologians, with the same sincerity, with the same doubts. Moreover, they have access to alternative sources of religious teachings and can make comparisons. Religious censorship of the sources of information is no longer feasible. The attitude that ecclesiastical authorities are shepherds protecting their poor sheep from being led astray was resented even in the Middle Ages, and certainly it has no place in today's sophisticated society. The greater danger now is that the churches will lead people astray.

### **Theological Developments**

The new world religion, in the Tibetan's words, will emphasize spiritual experience over dogma:

[I]n the new world order, spirituality will supersede theology; living experience will take the place of theological acceptances. The spiritual realities will emerge with increasing clarity and the form aspect will recede into the background; dynamic, expressive truth will be the keynote of the new world religion. The living Christ will assume His rightful place in human consciousness... but the hold of the ecclesiastical orders will weaken and disappear. Only those will remain as guides and leaders of

the human spirit who speak from living experience, and who know no creedal barriers.<sup>41</sup>

However theology remains a valid and essential endeavor to seek new insights into the nature of God and God's relationship with humanity. Then-Dominican priest Matthew Fox commented on "the immense importance of ideas for people's freedom, integrity, courage, and ecstasy."<sup>42</sup>

Much of the theological effort over the last 150 years has taken place within mainstream Protestant denominations. And in many ways the new ideas have been as revolutionary as those of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. Some of these developments could take Christianity closer to the core articles of faith discussed earlier.

The 20th century saw a general attempt to demythologize doctrine. However, two contrasting movements emerged from this single base. One, often referred to as "neo-orthodoxy," was fathered by Karl Barth and German theologian Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976). It emphasized God's transcendence, which can be overcome only by revelation. And, consistent with Protestant orthodoxy, this was scriptural revelation. The movement stressed the "Christ of faith," as contrasted with the "Jesus of history" whom Bultmann regarded as irrelevant.

Lutheran minister Paul Tillich (1886–1965) fathered the other movement, usually labeled "liberal theology," which emphasized the immanence of God. It targeted traditional no-

tions of a theistic God: a transcendent, supernatural "person" (or "persons," to take a trinitarian perspective), particularly a deity that can be described in anthropomorphic terms such as "father," "lord" or "he." Anglican Bishop John A. T. Robinson (1919–1983) built upon Tillich's work. In his best-selling book *Honest to God* (1953) Robinson argued that we must replace the notion of a God "up there" or "out there" by one "down here."

Along with these new perspectives, there has been much interest in the changing form of Christianity. Lutheran minister Dietrich Bonhöffer (1906–1945) asserted that organized religion impeded genuine faith and argued for a new "religionless Christianity," free from the trappings of belief in the abstract deity of philosophical and theological speculation. Writing in 1944 from his jail cell, awaiting execution by the Nazis, he explained:

What is bothering me incessantly is the question what Christianity really is, or indeed who Christ really is, for us

today. The time when people could be told everything by means of words, whether theological or pious, is over, and so is the time of inwardness and conscience—and that means the time of religion in general. We are moving towards a completely religionless time.<sup>43</sup>

According to Bonhöffer, God must be known through his operations and interaction with humanity in daily life. As Robinson would later ask: "What place does God have in my life or in society today?" We should focus not on the promise of eternal reward in heaven but on acting in an ethical, loving compassionate way in this world. We should do what is right because it is right.

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**Sharply contrasting with Protestant efforts to demystify religion and eliminate empty ritual, another movement, identified with Gnostic-revival and Theosophical traditions, seeks to recover Christianity's esoteric dimension. The problem with conventional religion, according to this latter view, lies not in mystery and mythology but in the failure to interpret them correctly: not in outmoded ritual but in the fact that ritual has been stripped of its true meaning.**

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Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong (1931–) argues that we must separate “the experience of Jesus from the theological interpretation of that experience found in the New Testament as well as in the doctrinal development of the church.”<sup>44</sup> Importantly, from the standpoint of global religious integration, Spong asserts that Christ should no longer be considered the exclusive property of a denomination or tradition or even of Christianity. Rather, Christ will say “Come unto me and discover the infinite dimensions of transcendent wonder” within each human being.<sup>45</sup> In view of these infinite dimensions, Spong argues that the clergy should be transformed from intermediaries between God and humanity into liturgical facilitators.

Catholicism has moved toward greater openness. However, as Meister Eckhart, Giordano Bruno, and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin discovered, reformers’ voices have often been stifled. Matthew Fox, a former Dominican priest, left the church rather than submit to ecclesiastical constraints on his work. Now an Episcopal priest, he is best known for the “Creation Spirituality” movement. Fox agreed that doctrine has its proper place; but he warned: “When doctrine becomes a starting point for faith, I fear faith is already dead.”<sup>46</sup> In a later article he praised what he observes to be a trend to acknowledge our own weaknesses rather than projecting evil onto convenient scapegoats:

To talk about evil is not to think only about Osama Bin Laden hiding in a cave in Afghanistan. It is to ask: How are we complicit with evil? How is our culture itself far from perfect and needing to wrestle with its own evil spirits?... Hitler was elected by ordinary Germans whose wounded and resentful souls he appealed to. So can we, ordinary American citizens, participate in evil if we are not alert? A raising of consciousness about evil is a raising of awareness about our very nature as human beings.<sup>47</sup>

The de-mystification and de-mythologizing of religion approaches its ultimate form in modern Unitarianism—albeit with strengthening of the intellectual aspects of religion.<sup>48</sup> However the danger is that this whole trend removes not only the mythology and mystery but also the *sacred*. Well-meant changes may throw out

the baby with the bathwater. In many Protestant and Catholic churches efforts have been made to make religion more liberal, inclusive and tolerant. They have become less *demanding*. But churches will not necessarily survive by doing so. Like all institutions that compete in the marketplace, they must also add *value*. People resent being coerced, but they do want to be led, inspired and taught. People today are hungry for ideas, honest answers, truth, and spiritual leadership.

### Esoteric Christianity

Sharply contrasting with Protestant efforts to demystify religion and eliminate empty ritual, another movement, identified with Gnostic-revival and Theosophical traditions, seeks to recover Christianity’s esoteric dimension. The problem with conventional religion, according to this latter view, lies not in mystery and mythology but in the failure to interpret them correctly: not in outmoded ritual but in the fact that ritual has been stripped of its true meaning. In Theosophist Annie Besant’s (1847–1933) words, the churches have “vulgarised Christianity [and] presented its teachings in a form that...repels the heart and alienates the intellect.”<sup>49</sup>

The esoteric movement would return Christianity to a form that may have existed in Gnosticism two thousand years ago, although it does not preserve Gnosticism’s pessimistic dualism. Proponents have also turned to the long tradition of Trans-Himalayan esotericism. Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) sought to westernize Theosophy and give greater emphasis to the role of Christ and his death on the cross.<sup>50</sup> Christ, he said, “had to die... in such a way that this was not grounded in the wisdom of the gods, but in... human error.”<sup>51</sup> Among Steiner’s works are published lectures on the four gospels and a major work: *Christianity as Mystical Fact*.<sup>52</sup> Besant’s *Esoteric Christianity* has similar goals.

One of the bolder suggestions is that the ceremonial magic of the ancient mystery schools be reintroduced into the liturgy. Rebirth of the ancient mysteries is considered “the gravest need of mankind: namely, the public, semi-public, and secret restoration into an ever in-

creasing ascendance of the mystery tradition.”<sup>53</sup> Close links have been noted between the Christian sacraments and rituals of ceremonial magic; and the long experience of the latter no doubt prompted Djwhal Khul to call upon the help of the “Masonic Fraternity.” Former Catholic priest and Freemason Alphonse Louis Constant (1810–1875), who wrote under the pseudonym “Éliphas Lévi,” encouraged church leaders to acknowledge the magical nature of the sacraments:

Religion... can no longer reject a doctrine anterior to the Bible and in perfect accord with traditional respect for the past, as well as with our most vital hopes for progress in the future... The crook of the priesthood shall become the rod of miracles.<sup>54</sup>

Charles Leadbeater (1853–1934) made a useful contribution with his book *Science of the Sacraments*. Geoffrey Hodson (1886–1983) relates the sacraments to the Lesser Mysteries of the ancient mystery schools.<sup>55</sup>

An interesting experiment in esoteric Christianity was establishment of the Liberal Catholic Church, which has close ties to the Theosophical Society. Both Leadbeater and Hodson played leading roles. The church was founded in 1916 by James Wedgewood (1883–1951), a priest in the Anglican and later the Old Catholic Church.<sup>56</sup> The LCC’s stated mission is to combine “Christian sacramentalism of which the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican Churches have long been the principal custodians” with “the esoteric Wisdom Tradition.”<sup>57</sup>

The Liberal Catholic Church is just one possible model of esoteric Christianity. Other models should also be explored, not all of which need focus on the sacraments, at least as they have been viewed for the last 1,000 years. Rich opportunities exist for work in spiritual healing. This is one of the most neglected areas of Christian ministry. Roughly 25 percent of the gospel content is concerned with Jesus’ healing activities.<sup>58</sup> But, bent on de-mythologizing scripture, early-20th-century Protestant theologians had us believe that the “healings” were nothing but primitive superstition. There has been some change of heart, but even now few mainstream Protestant, Catholic, or Eastern Orthodox churches offer healing services

on a regular basis. Christian Science, founded by Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910), was primarily a healing ministry. And healing has become a conspicuous activity in Pentecostal churches and New Age churches. It should become a major focus of esoteric Christianity, and the incoming seventh-ray energy makes this particularly timely. We should remember that the Tibetan devoted a whole book to esoteric healing.<sup>59</sup> Such work should include the integration of esoteric healing modalities with conventional medicine. Significant steps have already been taken in this direction, but much more remains to be done.

### Concluding Remarks

Christianity has the opportunity to play a leadership role in the development of a new world religion. Adaptations will be necessary, and some of them will threaten entrenched institutional and doctrinal forms. But, as we are fond of saying, forms must either adapt to changing conditions or be destroyed to free the indwelling life to expand and grow. The adaptations needed to bring Christianity into harmony with other major religions are scarcely more sweeping than those needed to heal sectarian divisions within it. In both cases, success will require Christianity to drop traditional attitudes of intolerance. Significant religious tolerance has existed only where churches lacked the political power to impose monopoly in their respective jurisdictions.<sup>60</sup>

The adaptations may be painful, but they will also bring an enormous sense of liberation. Equally liberating will be the acknowledgment that ordinary Christians no longer need to be “children of God” but can become “adults of God”—with all the opportunities and responsibilities that entails.<sup>61</sup> The laity’s role in future synthesis is likely to be at least as significant as that of clergy and ecclesiastical officials.

Important changes have already been made, and large numbers of Christians appear ready and willing to move individually or as a group toward intra-Christian harmony and eventual global religious synthesis. Synthesis does not mean homogeneity, still less enforced homo-

geneity. The new world religion can tolerate—even celebrate—appreciable diversity of beliefs and observances. Have we not all, at one time or another, been moved by the sincerity and meaning of a religious ceremony led by people with whom we little in common on matters of faith? Synthesis will require mutual respect, goodwill and compassion—or what we can properly refer to as Love. Joint service projects and shared spiritual experiences offer the best chance of bringing Christians together with one another and with sibling world religions.

The development of a new world religion will not negate the traditional impulses that have urged individuals and groups forward on their spiritual journeys. Service, devotion, mysticism, and the search for truth will continue to play major roles. Theological inquiry is a valid endeavor and one that will continue because of humanity's insatiable intellectual thirst. We want to know about God and all the things that relate us to God, including our own destiny. However to imprison theological insights in the fortress of dogma has always stifled spiritual experience and divided the faithful. Intellect, by its very fifth-ray nature, has the potential to be separative. On the other hand it can also provide the royal road to wisdom.

Religion must acknowledge not only the variety of experience but also the wide range of spiritual abilities and potential. Christianity wisely sought to serve the needs of the masses. To those few who were capable and willing to make a greater commitment to their faith it offered the ministry and religious orders. But in many respects the churches have not known what to do with exceptional mystics, outstanding theologians, even the greatest saints. Given their pastoral instincts, ecclesiastical authorities find it easier to herd sheep than goats—and we note the Tibetan's explanation that goats symbolize "initiated disciples and... those who have climbed the mountain of initiation."<sup>62</sup> In the future, opportunities must be provided for different kinds of people to find paths that give expression to their highest aspirations and challenge them to develop in consciousness as rapidly as they choose. Other-

wise Christianity will fail its greatest success stories.

One way to accommodate different spiritual abilities will be to establish initiatory grades, as did the mystery schools and as Masonic and other occult organizations still do. Annie Besant pointed out that people at all levels need religion, but "Religion must be as graduated as evolution, else it fails in its object."<sup>63</sup> However truth must not be sacrificed, even if it is simplified at the lower levels. Moreover, such a system is workable only if those in positions of ultimate authority are themselves high initiates, not simply capable administrators or effective communicators. When Masters of the Wisdom emerge from the shadows, where it is believed they have spent the last 12,000 years, they would provide the ideal religious leaders. In this regard the Tibetan's comment about the role of the planetary Hierarchy in the development of the new world religion seems particularly apt.

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<sup>1</sup> The Tibetan's presentation took the form of an essay communicated to his amanuensis Alice A. Bailey and made available to a group of disciples. Excerpts from the essay were later included in Bailey's *The Reappearance of the Christ*, Lucis, 1948; and *The Externalization of the Hierarchy*, Lucis, 1957. The original essay is contained in a booklet: *The New World Religion*, published by the School for Esoteric Studies. See the advertisement in this issue.

<sup>2</sup> Bailey. *The Externalization of the Hierarchy*, p. 511.

<sup>3</sup> Alice A. Bailey. *Discipleship in the New Age*, I, Lucis, 1944, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 38.

<sup>5</sup> Alice A. Bailey. *Education in the New Age*. Lucis, 1954, pp.122-123.

<sup>6</sup> Hans Küng. *On Being a Christian*. (Transl: E. Quinn.) Doubleday, 1974, p. 29.

<sup>7</sup> Marx' comment appeared in an article Frederick Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (1844).

<sup>8</sup> Innocent IV. Papal bull *Ad Extirpanda*, Rome 1252.

<sup>9</sup> Novelist Alexandre Dumas wrote a fictionalized, but mainly historically accurate, account of the massacre: *La Reine Margot*, published in 1845

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in: Marian Hillar. "Sebastian Castellio and the Struggle for Freedom of Conscience."

- Essays in the Philosophy of Humanism*, vol. 10, 2002, pp. 31-56.
- <sup>11</sup> Matilda Wildman Evans. "Elihu Embree, Quaker and Abolitionist, and Some of His Co-Workers." *Bulletin of Friends Historical Association*, vol. 21, no. 1. Spring 1932, p. 29.
- <sup>12</sup> *Matthew* 28:19-20. Emphasis added.
- <sup>13</sup> The Congregation of Catholic Education has issued an edict banning most homosexuals—even celibates—from seminaries. In his book *The Changing Face of the Priesthood*, Father Donald B. Cozzens estimates that 23 to 58 percent of Catholic clergy have homosexual orientations.
- <sup>14</sup> Alice A. Bailey. *Problems of Humanity*. Lucis Trust, 1947, p. 124.
- <sup>15</sup> Bailey. *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, pp. 55-56, 400-401.
- <sup>16</sup> Bailey. *The New World Religion*, pp. 7-9. See also: *The Externalization of the Hierarchy*, pp. 404-405. The articles are paraphrased.
- <sup>17</sup> Some branches of Buddhism might also have difficulty accepting the notion of God.
- <sup>18</sup> See for example: Harold O. J. Brown. *Heresies: Heresy and Orthodoxy in the History of the Church*. Hendrickson, 1984, pp. 158-195.
- <sup>19</sup> Timothy Ware. *The Orthodox Church*. Penguin Books, 1963/1997, pp. 70-71.
- <sup>20</sup> Diarmaid MacCullough. *The Reformation*. Penguin Books, 2003, pp. 226-230, 237. In 1550 the English Cardinal Pole failed by one vote to be elected pope upon Paul III's death. Had he succeeded the subsequent course of the Council of Trent might have been very different.
- <sup>21</sup> Harold O. J. Brown. *Heresies: Heresy and Orthodoxy in the History of the Church*. Hendrickson, 1984, p. 371.
- <sup>22</sup> Edward Herbert. *De Veritate* ("On Truth"). Paris, 1624; London 1633.
- <sup>23</sup> Prominent Deists included Voltaire, Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson.
- <sup>24</sup> *Unitas Fratrum* was the principal branch of the church founded by Jan Huss, former Catholic priest, who was burned at the stake in 1415 after being lured to the Council of Constance on a false promise of safe conduct. To avoid a similar fate Martin Luther was spirited away from the Diet of Augsburg before sentence could be pronounced on him.
- <sup>25</sup> Eugenia Gourvitch. *Vladimir Soloviev: the Man and the Prophet*. Rudolf Steiner Press, 1992, pp. 46.
- <sup>26</sup> Sergei Bulgakov. *Sophia: the Wisdom of God*. (Transl: P. Thompson, O. F. Clarke, & X. Braikevitch.) Lindisfarne Press, 1993, p. 136.
- <sup>27</sup> The history of the World Council provides interesting confirmation of the idea that the motivation for service can become refined and purified as the work proceeds.
- <sup>28</sup> As of August 2005. Source: World Council of Churches.
- <sup>29</sup> The Vatican sends observers to WCC meetings.
- <sup>30</sup> Paul VI. Decree: *Unitatis Redintegratio*, ch. 1, item 4. Vatican, 1964.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>32</sup> Timothy Ware. *The Orthodox Church*. Penguin Books, 1963/1997, pp. 318-324.
- <sup>33</sup> Source: United Religions Initiative.
- <sup>34</sup> "Abbé Pierre" was originally a pseudonym given to Henri Pierre Grouès by the French Resistance. Later, Grouès used the name exclusively.
- <sup>35</sup> Jean R. Soderland. *Quakers and Slavery: A Divided Spirit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.
- <sup>36</sup> Manly Palmer Hall. *Pathways of Philosophy*. Philosophical Research Society, 1947, pp. 46ff. The teachers were known variously as *magisteri*, or *doctores, scholastici*.
- <sup>37</sup> This is certainly not the case in the seminaries which have come under strict control by fundamentalist denominations.
- <sup>38</sup> A seminary faculty member was dismissed for participating in the Jesus Seminar. See: Robert W. Funk *et al.* *The Five Gospels*. Harper-Collins, 1993, p. 35.
- <sup>39</sup> Bailey. *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, p. 202.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, p. 471
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, p. 202.
- <sup>42</sup> Matthew Fox. *Passion for Creation*. Inner Traditions, 1980/2000, p. 24.
- <sup>43</sup> Dietrich Bonhöffer. *Letters and Papers from Prison*. MacMillan, 1981.
- <sup>44</sup> John S. Spong. *Why Christianity Must Change or Die*. Harper-Collins, 1998, p. 73.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, p. 189.
- <sup>46</sup> Matthew Fox. *Original Blessing*. Bear & Co., 1983
- <sup>47</sup> Matthew Fox. "Ten Reasons to be Thankful Today." *Contra Costa Times*, Nov. 22, 2001
- <sup>48</sup> Most observers agree that modern Unitarianism now lies outside the boundaries of Christianity.
- <sup>49</sup> Annie W. Besant. *Esoteric Christianity*. Theosophical Publishing House, date, foreword.

- <sup>50</sup> Rudolf Steiner. *Spiritualism, Madame Blavatsky, and Theosophy*. Anthroposophic Press, 1912/2001, pp. 126-130.
- <sup>51</sup> Rudolf Steiner. "Exoteric and Esoteric Christianity." Lecture, Dornach, Switzerland, 2 April 1922. (Bibliographic Survey, Vol. 211).
- <sup>52</sup> Steiner's books are published by the Anthroposophical Society and SteinerBooks.
- <sup>53</sup> Sandra Hodson (ed.). *Light of the Sanctuary: the Occult Diary of Geoffrey Hodson*. Theosophical Publishers, 1988, p. 466. Emphasis removed.
- <sup>54</sup> Éliphas Lévi. *The History of Magic*. Samuel Weiser, 1913, p. 374.
- <sup>55</sup> Geoffrey Hodson. *The Call to the Heights*. Theosophical Publishing House, 1976, pp. 158-159.
- <sup>56</sup> The Liberal Catholic Church claims apostolic succession through the Old Catholic Church in the Netherlands.
- <sup>57</sup> Source: The Liberal Catholic Church Worldwide.
- <sup>58</sup> Morton L. Kelsey. *Healing and Christianity*. Harper & Row, 1973, pp. 22ff.
- <sup>59</sup> Alice A. Bailey. *Esoteric Healing*. Lucis, 1953. The non-sectarian International Network of Esoteric Healing was founded to implement the Tibetan's recommendations. Presently there is no comparable Christian organization.
- <sup>60</sup> See the discussion in: MacCullough. *The Reformation*, pp. 674ff.
- <sup>61</sup> The laity's role has too often been characterized as "pray," "pay" and "obey."
- <sup>62</sup> Alice A. Bailey. *Discipleship in the New Age*, II. Lucis, 1955, p. 62.
- <sup>63</sup> Besant. *Esoteric Christianity*, Ch. 1.