

# BIBLICAL CHRISTOLOGY

## Introduction

The entire New Testament speaks of one and the same Christ and the various books of the NT are complementary. And the entire Old Testament prepared the way for him. It is the faith of the Church that the Jesus of history is the same as the Christ of faith. The Gospels are not life histories of Jesus. They are faith proclamations of the early Church. The Christ of the Church's preaching became the starting point for Christology. The NT teaches that God Himself was acting in Jesus, and in fact, it affirms that the man Jesus was God Himself in human form. The resurrection event ultimately gave the Church the significance of the life and works of Jesus. They realized that God communicated Himself definitively in and through the life, death, and Resurrection of the man Jesus, and has reconciled the world to Himself through him. Every Word and deed of Jesus was full of God's self-communication to man. It had a life-giving and transforming power for all who accept him in faith. Gospels are testimonies to this divine communication, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. So the writers could perceive the true meaning of the events in God's plan of salvation. But they were historically conditioned and were men endowed with freedom. They explained the mysteries in a way intelli-

gible to their audience and maintained their creative freedom, but at the same time they were truthful. For them Jesus was not a simple wandering Rabbi, a charismatic wonder worker, or a simple prophet. He was unique in his teaching and life. His death and resurrection cannot be explained unless we accept the attitude of those who wrote the Gospels. Christology is trying to develop the central place of Jesus in God's plan of salvation and in showing and carrying out this plan.<sup>1</sup>

The first Christian community consisted of Christians from Palestinian Judaism. The second major section of Christians was from Hellenistic Judaism in the Diaspora. The third group emerged from the Hellenistic non-Jewish population. The missionary approaches of the disciples to these three groups varied according to the background of each group. For the Palestinian Christians the early Christian writers drew inspiration from the OT, and for the Gentile population, they selected titles of Jesus from the already existing Christian tradition, which had counterparts in the Gentile world. In other words the NT writers did not employ one and the same method in their preaching to these three above groups. But in no way did they falsify the Kerygma or dilute the revelation of its content. Thus servant (*pais*), Son of David, Prophet, son of man, Rabbi, *Mar*, *Maran*, *Messiah* and Son of God were intelligible to the Early Palestinian population. Titles like Wisdom, High Priest, Logos, and Heavenly man were easily understandable to the second group. Terms like Lord (*kyrios*), god, Son of God were employed in the imperial cult and they were employed by Christians to the Gentiles to convey the Christian worship of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

## Texts Reflecting Early Palestinian Christology

*Jesus Servant and Prophet like Moses:* Ac 3:13-26 reflects the earliest stage of the Church's kerygma. The Acts call Jesus the *Servant (pais)* in 3:13. And 4:27, *the Holy and the Just one* (7:52; 22:14; 2:27; 13:35), the *Author of Life* (3:15), *Archegos (author, prince, and leader, Captain)* in 5:31; Heb.2: 10; 12:2). Here the emphasis is not on the *suffering servant*, but is referring to Moses (a prophet like Moses) Ac.3: 22; 7:37 identifies Jesus with the Prophet Moses (Dt 18:15.18) Moses is the greatest of the prophets (Dt 34: 10) and is called the servant of God (Nb 12:7) In the transfiguration and baptism Jesus is allusively identified as servant.Dt.18: 15 and Is 42:1 are alluded at the transfiguration. Ac 10:38 describe Jesus' baptism as prophetic anointing. It is confirmed by Jesus himself (Lk 4:18). In his temptation Jesus undergoes the experience of Israel (Dt 8:2), the figures of the Servant Moses (Dt 9:9) and of Elijah the Prophet (1 K 19:8). The author is recalling these things at the fast of Jesus. Jesus is referred to by the Baptist as the One who is to come (Mt 3:11; 11:3). See also the exclamation of the crowd, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world" (Jn. 6:14).

*Jesus as the Son of Man:* Jesus identified himself with the expected apocalyptic son of man; but his identity was hidden. He called himself son of man as the one who came, and one who is to suffer, and the one who is to come as the Judge in the exalted state. (Mk 2:10; 8:31; Mt 11:16-19; 19:28). The early church found that the title son of man was not a satisfactory term for kerygmatic proclamation, for confession of faith or for use in Christian instruction and worship. So the Palestinian Christianity employed other terms such as Rabbi

(Teacher, *Didascalos*: Mt 26: 25; Mk 9: 5; Jn 1:38). Even after the resurrection the disciples considered Jesus as their Master. But this form also rapidly came into disuse after Jesus death. It was replaced by *Mar* and *Maran* (Lord). We find the Aramaic expression itself in two places in the NT (1 Cor 16:22; Rev 22:20). Jesus calls himself Lord (Mk 11:3). To the disciples he was known as Lord, particularly on account of his authority as teacher. After resurrection he was called Lord particularly in connection with the future Parousia. The early Palestinian church called Jesus *Messiah* both as the authoritative teacher during his earthly ministry and as the eschatological Messianic king. (See Ac 3 and Hb.7: 25; 10:13). According to Ac 3 Jesus has now a purely waiting character while for the other texts he has now an intercessory ministry in heaven. Another title employed by the Palestinian Church was *Son of David*. It is also connected with the Parousia. 'Finally the term *Son of God* also was in use in the early Church. Its earliest use can be seen in Rom: 1: 3-5, but it is pre-Pauline.<sup>3</sup>

## Christology of Mark

It is difficult to distinguish tradition and redaction in Mark. He wants to correct a false Christology: one that led to an incorrect notion of discipleship (8:27-38). For him genuine following of Jesus is only through the way of the cross (8:34). He does not, however, abandon the concept of the glorious son of man (13:36; 14:62). He gives special prominence to the suffering son of man (8:31; 9:31:10:33-45). The secret of Jesus' divine sonship finally surfaces in Mark's story of the passion. The cross is the place within Mark's story where the secret of Jesus' divine sonship comes to full disclosure.

Mark emphasizes that one can see him as the Son of God only in passion, death, and exaltation of the son of man. Mark reports the miracles, but forbids their proclamation before the passion and resurrection. Here lied the messianic secret in Mark. Because only in the light of these messianic events could the miracles be seen as signs of divine sonship.

In Mark, the manifestation of Christ, the Son of God, will take place in two phases: In ch. 1: 1-8:30- Jesus shows his power in miracles often against the forces of evil. His opponents claim that he is an instrument of Satan. Gradually his disciples recognize in him the Messiah. But they were told to keep this revelation a secret. In ch. 8: 31ff. the true mystery of Jesus' saving mission is revealed: the son of man must suffer, die, and then be risen. The final conflict with the adversaries takes place at Jerusalem. The Centurion will finally testify openly who Jesus is: Son of God.

For Mark, Jesus is the crucified Messiah. He demonstrates two characteristics of the Messiah: 1. The saving power of God has come down to us to establish the kingdom of God. 2. Its establishment is through humiliation and suffering. Jesus has power over sickness, death, evil spirits, and nature. The heavenly Father (1:11), evil spirits (1:24), and centurion (15:29) have identified Jesus that he is the Son of God.<sup>4</sup>

Mark presents the greatest amount of lowliness by describing a pre-crucifixion ministry in which no human being recognizes or acknowledges Jesus' divine Sonship. The Christological identity is a secret known to the readers who are told at the baptism, and to the demons (1:24; 3:11; 5:7), but not to his followers and those around him. Mark 8:27-33

shows how little even Peter understood him (8:22-26). The hidden glory shines forth brightly at Tabor. Still the disciples did not understand. A believing acknowledgement as Son of God is seen only after the death (15:39). In Mark, there is a tension between a ministry of lowliness and a high Christological identity. It is manifested also in Jesus: Markan Jesus does not know things. Only the heavenly Father knows the future things about the world (113:32). Jesus prays to the Father to remove the cup from him. (15:34). Jesus does not gain a new identity after death and resurrection; but the full identity was fully manifested only at the cross.<sup>5</sup>

### ***The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (1:1)***

It shows that Mark is clear that Jesus Christ is the *Son of God*. Jesus Christ himself is the center of the Gospel and of the apostolic preaching. Mark uses also the expression, *the Gospel of God* (1:14). The appellation *Jesus Christ* occurs only here and is personal name. Only once does a human being recognize Jesus as the *Messiah (Christ)* and he is immediately told not to reveal it (8:29-30). Jesus himself gives a qualified approval of it only at the time of his trial (14:61-62). For Mark, Jesus is the *Son of God*. The audience of Mark was from a strict monotheistic background and it took time to reconcile belief in Jesus' divinity with that faith.

### ***Father's beloved Son (1:11):***

The proclamation is a composite quotation of Ps 2:7, "You are my son, today I have begotten you," and of Is.42: 1, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one, in whom I delight." Here the voice from heaven is addressed in the second person as in Luke. Mathew presents it as an

objective event while here it is presented as a subjective experience for Jesus. There was a decisive historical event at the time of the baptism of Jesus and the evangelists are presenting a *midrashic* composition of this great event. In the Jewish Apocryphal writing *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, there are two passages illustrating a trend of thought very similar to that expressed in the baptism scene.<sup>6</sup> It may be referring to the prophetic investiture of Jesus. The descent of the Holy Spirit stands for the power and presence of God. Mark sees Jesus as being equipped by God with divine power and sees God as being fully active in him. This is the heavenly proclamation about Jesus.

#### ***The Holy One of God (1:24):***

The disciples knew Jesus only gradually, but the demons from the beginning of the public ministry declare Jesus' special status. The expression has similarity with the expressions used by the early church, *the Holy and Righteous One* (Ac.3: 14), and God's *Hoy Servant* (4:27.30). John preserved the confession of Peter, "We have believed and have come down to know that you are the *Holy one of God*"(6:69). It appears to be another version of the, "*Christ of God*" in Luke of the Caesarea Philippi episode (9:20). The messianic secret was extended also to the evil spirits (1:34).

#### ***"You are the Son of God"(3:11):***

Here also demons are proclaiming the divine sonship. Here the title changes from Holy one of God to *the Son of God*. It could be an editorial text of Mark for whom Jesus is the Son of God (1:1; 15:39). Mark indicates here that for him both titles are equivalents, denoting the close relationship between Jesus and the divinity. See also Mk.5: 7(Jesus, Son

of the Most High God). 1:24 and 5: 7 have the same pattern.

***The Stronger one (3:27):***

In Mark Jesus appears as the stronger one who vanquishes Satan, the strong one and ruins his power. John the Baptist spoke of Jesus as the one coming as *the mightier* one. (1:7).

***Who then is this One (4:41):***

The context is the stilling of the Sea. Here Jesus is called Rabbi (*Didascalos*), or Master. We find the expression in various forms in the mouth of many. (6:25:35-42). The nature miracles have the purpose of conveying the revelation of the advent of God's kingdom. For Mark, Jesus came to overthrow the power of Satan.

***Who do men say that I am? (8:27):***

The Caesarea Philippi episode opens a new section in Mark (8:27-10:52). There the private instruction of the disciples plays a predominant role. "Who do men say that I am?" Jesus asks and the disciples give the various response of the people. That is how they thought about Jesus. Then Jesus asks them, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter answers, "You are the Christ". It is the shortest version among the three Gospels. It is followed by the first prediction of the passion and the rebuke of Peter (8:31-33). The title had become for Mark a title that was too easily confessed ,that expressed too little and was somewhat vague. So Mark explained it further with the help of the other titles, *Son of man and Son of God*.

***The Son of Man must suffer (8:31)***



We have here a combination of the apocalyptic *Son of man* of Dn. 7 and the *suffering Servant* of Is.53. Jesus adopted it to designate himself. He appeared to be the suffering servant of Yahweh.

***The Rebuke of Peter (8:32-33):***

Mark is warning the Christians that the man Jesus who suffered and died and rose again will also be the judge of the living and the dead. For the sincere Christians this represents a hope, for the others a warning (8:34).

***Listen to Him (9:7):***

The proclamation of Jesus' divine sonship comes at the transfiguration, with the voice from heaven saying, "He is my beloved son. Listen to him" (9:7). It is the central climax of Mark's Gospel, about half way between the initial inscription (1:1), and the Centurion's testimony, "Truly this man was the Son of God"(15:39). *Listen to Him* reminds that this Jesus who suffered and will judge the world, is also the Lord worshipped in the Church. To be Christian is to be his disciple and to follow his example.

*The Ransom Saying (10:45):* it reflects Is.53: 10and Ps.49: 8-9a. The ransom will be paid with the life of the Son of man offered in sacrifice. but the way in which this ransom sets men free is beyond our comprehension. He lays down his life in the service of the humanity.

***Son of David (10:47):***

It is coming in Mark from the blind man bar Timaeus. The Davidic descent of the messiah may have been a sort of

embarrassment for the early church, because of the nationalistic overtone this belief had in Judaism, but the fact remained, rooted in prophecies and in the accepted genealogy of Jesus himself. Romans 1.3f. Modified this kingship as heavenly kingship.

***Nor the Son (13:32):***

It explains the ignorance from the part of the Son in his humanity.

***Truly the Son of God(15:39):***

The centurion here represents the future pagans who would believe in Jesus and acknowledge him as Son of God. The voice of proclamation is now coming from below, the first being from above at Baptism and at Transfiguration. It is the human response to the divine initiative.<sup>7</sup>

## **Christology of Luke**

Christology of Luke is radically the same as that of Mark. Luke tends to associate the high titles of Christ with the resurrection. But these titles are read back to the annunciation narratives (Lk.1: 32-35). The same can be said of the title *Savior* (2:11). Savior appears late in the NT writings. Luke tends to downplay the role of the Baptist (16:16). Jesus assumes in full the role of Prophet in the messianic times. Jesus dies as a martyr after professing to be the Son of God in a transcendental sense (22:7)). Jesus already rules here and now as Lord over the Church, as the Son of God in a sense that transcends the OT Davidic divine sonship.<sup>8</sup>

Luke is sensitive to portray the human limitations of

Jesus or irreverence towards him on the part of the disciples. In Luke also, during the public ministry of Jesus the disciples do not call Jesus *Son of God*. They refer to Jesus as Lord, so that the readers may remain conscious of Jesus' high Christological identity. Luke will not report details too descriptive of Jesus' lowliness, such as those found in Mk, and Mt's passion narratives. Lk does not take from Mark the detailed elements of the passion narratives, i.e. disgraceful particularities of the behavior of the disciples. Lukan Jesus is a noble one who is at peace with God and himself. His disciples remain with him in his trial (22:28). Lk. conceives Jesus with an emphasis on Christ's exaltation *as Lord, as the Son of Man* seated already now at the right hand of the power of God (Ac.2: 36; Lk 22:69). In Acts one finds post resurrection Christology vocalized through Peter.<sup>9</sup>

### ***He will be called Son of God (1:35):***

Son of the Most High (1:32) refers to Messianic sonship and is applied to Jesus as the descendant of David. Son of God should be understood in a transcendental sense. "The holy child to be born will be called Son of God" (1:35). The term *holy (hagion)* denotes an exclusive appurtenance to God and could figure among the earliest designations of the divinity of Jesus. In Luke no human being calls Jesus explicitly *Son of God*. But the angels, the demons (4:41.8:28) and Jesus himself (10:22) use it. Perhaps for Luke the title Son of God was too mysterious for the confession of earthly beings, and perhaps too ambiguous for a Greek readership. In Luke even the Centurion at the foot of the cross says only, "Certainly this man was innocent" (23:47).

### ***A Savior, Who is Christ Lord (2:11):***

Luke puts three Christological titles together in the mouth of the angels. It reflects the faith of the early Church. *Christ Lord (Christos Kyrios)* without article occurs nowhere else in the NT. But we find the same three titles together in Phil.3: 20: “ from heaven we await a *Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.*” Already in the public ministry, Luke calls Jesus Lord (19:31). Savior (*soter*) occurs only here in Luke. But neither Mathew nor Mark calls Jesus Savior, except Mt.1: 21 in its verbal form. John has it more than once (4:42 and 1Jn.4: 14). Christian use of the title *Savior* owes its origin to three chief factors: OT usage, the name of Jesus, and the advent of Messianic salvation. Luke transferred the title of Saviour from God to Jesus (Luke 1:47).

#### ***I must be in my Father’s house (2:49):***

The first words of Jesus recorded in the gospel are found in this context. “Did you not know that I must be in the things of my Father (*en tois tou patros mou*)?”

#### ***No prophet is acceptable in His own Country (4:24):***

Jesus appears clearly as endowed with a prophetic mission. The story serves as a prefiguration of the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews and its acceptance by the Gentiles. The fulfillment story stresses the success of this teaching, but the rejection story symbolizes the opposition. *Today* refers to the actualization of the salvation already in Christ’s ministry. Again in Lk.9: 51; 11:29-32; 113:33, Jesus is referred to as prophet.

#### ***The Lord has need of it (19:31):***

Luke constantly uses the title *Lord (Kyrios)* from 7:13 onwards (10:1; 11:39; 12:42; 17:5f). This form of usages is based

on the Palestinian usage of *Mar, and Maran*. *Kyrios* is applied to Christ in Luke in a variety of contexts: as King-Messiah (Lk 19:31;Ac 2:36), as Savior (Lk2: 10f.Ac 15:11), as Lord of the Church (Lk 10:1;Ac 9: 1), as the risen Lord (Lk 24:3;Ac 1: 21f). The repeated use of *Kyrios* prepared the way for the faith in Jesus as God.

***Blessed is the King (19:38):***

The context is the solemn entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Luke changes the acclamation into *the King* (in Mark, *the One*). This acclamation is similar to that of the angels at the time of the nativity of the Lord. That was from heaven, now this proceeds from below heavenwards. It is as though the fulfillment of Lk 13:35. Jesus appears as King in the Messianic entry. This episode represents for Luke the first of the final stages that will lead the Messiah into exaltation to the right hand of God as Lord and King. But already now he is Lord and King over the worshipping community.

***Three titles in Luke 22:67-70:***

*Christ, Son of God and son of man:* Luke understands *Son of God* as applying to the Messiah, in all the newness of his mystery.

***Made Lord and Christ (Ac 2:36):***

At his resurrection Jesus *became* Christ. Through his resurrection Jesus came into possession of that state in which he enjoys the divine prerogatives to which he was entitled by birthright from the beginning. By his resurrection Christ was enthroned as Messiah, and from then on his human nature enjoyed all the privileges of the Son of God. Ac 3:20 also has the same meaning<sup>10</sup>

## Christology of Mathew

Mathew has underlined the Messianic mission of Jesus. So he gives emphasis to the titles *Son of David and Christ*. In order to give proper value to the meaning of Messiah, he stressed the title *Son of God*. His disciples know Jesus during his ministry and by the church after Easter as *Messiah and Son of God*. But he interacted with Israel and the world as the Son of man. At the end Jesus will appear visibly as the Judge and Ruler of the World. Then he will be seen, as he is, what we see him now with the eyes of faith. In Jesus, God is present with his end-time rule. At the end Jesus will be seen in all the majesty of God as the Son of man. But he remains the Son of God, the King, through whom God exercises his rule. Mathew made kings the commanding figures in several parables (17:25; 18:23:25:34-40) and made the application to Christ. In the last judgment, Son of Man is called King. Mathew has the tendency to attribute to the Son of man the prerogatives of God Himself (i.e., the eschatological Judge). The Son of man is identified with the Son of the Father (16:27). For Mathew Jesus is also Lord of David since he is also Son of God (16:16; 26:63). Mathew's is *Son of God Christology*. Jesus' miraculous healings were closely connected with his messianic call. Mathew represents Jesus as the *Shepherd of Israel* (2:6; 15:24; 10:6).<sup>11</sup> Mathew presents Jesus in a more exalted position than Mark. The followers vocalize the post-resurrectional formulations of Jesus' identity during the public life of Jesus. Mathew communicates the whole picture of Christ and presents him as one who is seen divine by the disciples. It affects the actions of Jesus and his disciples. See the calming of the Sea, withering of the fig tree, curing of the blind man etc. (Mt 9:22; 8:25; 21:19-20)

### ***The Son of David, the Son of Abraham (1:1):***

It contains a distinctive *Davidic Christology*. The title Son of David has a messianic sense in two texts (2030f: 22:42,45). This is common to Mark and Luke. –In Mathew this title occurs in the mouth of several persons: the angel (1:20), two blind men (9:27; 20:30), all the people (12:23), the Canaanite woman (15:22), the children (21:15). The religious leaders oppose the title. Mt.22.41-46 is not denying the Davidic Messiahship but is going beyond the Pharisaic concept of Davidic Messiah, i.e., Son of David. For Mathew Jesus is also the *Lord of David*, since he is the Son of God in a transcendental sense (16:16; 26:63).

### ***Who is called Christ (1:16):***

Jesus is the one *called Christ* is a distinctive Mathean formula. See Mt 27:17.22(Pilate).

In the context *king of the Jews* of the verse, the question of the Magi, “Where is he who has been *born?*” is meaningful, because Herod is not king by birth, but he is a usurper.

### ***Out of Egypt I have called my son (2:15):***

Most of Mt.2 is a midrashic reflection on Scripture. This is one of the eleven fulfillment quotations in Mathew. The passage cited is the translation of Hosea 11.1 in Hebrew, while the Septuagint has a slightly variant reading.

### ***Truly you are the Son of God (14:33):***

The context is Jesus walking on the Sea. Those in the boat worshipped him. It refers to the worshipping community. The twelve disciples do represent the Christian com-

munity that fulfills God's will in following Jesus. The twelve worship Jesus at this early stage as the Son of God. It is already in the infancy narratives. On the mountain Jesus speaks as the Son of God (5:1f). In his thanksgiving to the Father Jesus reveals himself as the Son of God (11:25-27). Mathews underlines the title Son of God during the passion narrative also (26:63) Mathews's *Son of God Christology* reaches its last stage in 28:19 in the Trinitarian formula. Jesus is presented as the *son of man* (16:27), and the *eschatological Judge* and the *Shepherd* (25:32), and as the *merciful healer of infirmities* (14:14: 19:2: 21:14). The blind and the lame follow the New David into the temple, where he heals them.<sup>12</sup>

## Pre-existence of Christ

### Christ pre-existent:

Christian faith identifies Christ with the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. So there is no difficulty in accepting his preexistence as the Son of God. We are analyzing a few NT passages: *First born of all creation* (Col 1:15). The hymn could be pre-Pauline (1:15-20). Son is declared to be the image of the Invisible God. Here the reference is to Wisdom. In the OT wisdom is seen as God's image (Wis 7:26), active at creation and even preexistent to every creature (Pr 8:222-31). *First born of all creation* reflects the special meaning attached to first born in Israel (Ex 4:42) It alludes also to Wisdom (Pro 8:22; Si 1:4) Early Christians applied it to Christ on a higher level. The Christian confession expresses the universal validity of the Christ -event. And Paul echoes this when he says, "one Lord Jesus Christ through who are all things and through whom we exist"(1 Cor 8:6). The preexistence of



Christ is presupposed in Heb. 1: 2 and Jn 1:3.

### **Pre-existent Son of God:**

The Epistle to the Hebrews may be the first NT writing to have embraced the specific thought of a preexistent divine Sonship. Real preexistence was presupposed: e.g. “God brought his first born into the world”(Heb 1:6), “for whom and by whom all things exist”(2:10). Christ entered into the world at a point of time (10:5). For John also the preexistence of Christ is an indisputable fact (8:58). Christ’s preexistence both as Logos and as Son is a revealed Truth for John. See the Testimony of the Baptist (Jn 1:15.30). In John Jesus refers to his preexistence also in the figure of the Son of Man, who will return to the place he was before (6:62). The pre Christian Jewish apocalyptic tradition knew a preexistent Son of Man. John fills the time between the Incarnation and the death of Jesus with a description of his activity on earth. Philippians 2:6-11 retains only the movement from preexistence to glory through incarnation and obedient death. Some say that v.6 does not refer to preexistence but to an *Adam Christology*. Christ’s kenosis took place in two stages: in incarnation and in his obedient death as the suffering servant.

### **The Son who was sent:**

Jesus is described as the one Son sent into the world. This idea is mentioned 24 times in John with the verb pempein (4:34; 5:24) and 15 times with the verb apostellein (8:42; 10:36). God sent his Son into the world (3:17); “God sent his Only Son into the world”(1 Jn 4:9). Sending of the Son involves preexistence. See also Phil 2: 6-11; Heb.10: 7; Gal.4: 4; Rom 8:3; 1 Cor 8:6; 10:4). The spiritual rock is a symbol of the preexistent Christ already present among the Israelites.

# BIBLICAL CHRISTOLOGY-2

## Pauline Christology

The Apostolic Kerygma in the *Acts* and the *Synoptics* are based on the twofold encounter of the disciples with Jesus Christ: first, on their encounter with him in his earthly life and mission, in his rejection and death; secondly on their encounter with the Risen Lord. Their Christology reflects the Christ-event as it took place in history and in the Christian community. But the *starting point of Paul* is his personal experience. It is a reflection on what happened to him. It is a breakthrough to a new understanding of his existence before God. So he does not begin with what happened in Palestine at the time of Jesus, but starts with the human situation, namely the description of man's universal sinfulness. As a Jew, Paul expected justice through the fulfillment of the Law; but he realized that no one could fulfill it (Rom 3:11-20). As long as man relies on the fulfillment of Law, he relies on himself, boasts of himself, but fails (2:17-23). In personal terms also he expresses it (7:17).

In his encounter with the Risen Christ, he realizes that justice is only in God and is through the faith in him, and not by the observance of the Law (3:21-27). How does he reflect on the Christ-event? His is, as we have said, a personalized Christology. It is, however, deeply related to the original un-

derstanding and proclamation of Jesus Christ in the Apostolic Community. It takes over many formulae, uses liturgical hymns used in the communities, accepts the current titles, such as Christ, Lord and Son. However, his personal experience comes to the forefront.

1. He is a slave (servant) of Jesus Christ (Rom 1:1; Phil 1:1).
2. *Jesus Christ is God's gift* (Gal.4: 4; 2 Cor 5:17f). Through his death and resurrection, Jesus brought about our Justification and Salvation. Paul knows only the crucified Christ (2:2). Jesus reveals God's wisdom, and Lordship and His eternal Life by giving up all power. It is the folly of God (1:21). It pleased God to save those who believe through the folly of what they preached. It is a stumbling block the Jews and folly to the gentiles (1:23; 1:30f). *Jesus is our Wisdom, Righteousness and Sanctification and Redemption.*
3. *Faith in Jesus Christ* is the only thing, which saves man from the clutches of sin and death. Faith means acceptance of the Cross-, total surrender and total abdication of all self-styled power and wisdom. In the encounter of Paul with Jesus, God has given his love to Paul and that is what he has. So he rejects everything and glories only in Jesus Christ (Phil 3:3.7-11). Thus *justification* involves sharing in the Cross of Jesus in total loss and surrender (Gal.2: 20ff). Paul says, "Christ lives in me."
- 4 The self-gift of Jesus is realized on *the cross*. It has its origin in the pre-existing Christ, who became man, stripping himself of the divine glory, and emptying himself. (Phil 2:5ff; 2 Cor.8: 9f). The idea of *preexistence and richness* was introduced as the *ultimate foundation of Christian ethics*: abstain from jealousy and party rivalries (Phil) and contribute generously

to the needy (2 Cor). The self-emptying of Jesus is the basis of the Christian ethics. It is the root of our justification. A justified Christian must also do the same in his actual situation in relation to his neighbor.

5. Christ's incarnation has a *cosmic dimension* (1 Cor 8:6; Col: 15-17). The meaning of human life is revealed in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the basis of our new existence. He is central in creation and salvation. Christ has a universal and absolute role for man. Creation itself is rooted in him, "through whom are all things"; i.e., all things are created in view of Jesus Christ.

6. How does the Christ-event reach man and actually bring about his salvation? *Salvation is man's union with God*. Unless man encounters Jesus Christ, the saving event is lost on him (1 Cor 1: 18). He speaks of the "word of the Cross, which is folly to those who perish". He speaks of the *reconciliation through Christ and the ministry of reconciliation given to the Apostles* (2 Cor 5:18-20). The Word makes actual Christ's mission and brings about man's encounter with the salvific Christ-event. I.e., the mission of Christ is realized through the mission of the Church and its ministry of Word and Sacrament.

7. The self-effacement of the disciple is the only way of making Christ's saving power effective in the Church (Col 1:24). Apostles are the actual embodiment of the paschal mystery (2 Cor 4:10-12). The ultimate glory of the Apostle is in the participation of Jesus' Cross (Gal 6:17; 2Cor 11:23-33; 12:9). In Jesus Christ, Paul has realized that man's life is meaningful not by what he is, has or achieves, but by what he gives. We are saved through God's love. Christ gave himself to us. *St. Paul has thus integrated the traditions of the Community. For him the preexistent Christ and the historical Jesus are identical.*

## Some speak of three levels of Pauline Christology<sup>1</sup>

1. *The Archaic level*: Paul represents the outlook of the Jerusalem community as seen in the Synoptics and the Acts. This is seen in *Thess. and 1 Cor 15*. He insists on Christ's resurrection and his expected return at Parousia as the *heavenly Son of Man*: e.g., "Wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Tess 1:10); "at the coming of our Lord Jesus" (3:13); "a messianic kingdom" (1 Cor 15:24). 1 Tess. and 1 Cor 15 reflect Jewish Apocalyptic tradition: *resurrection of Christ, and the resurrection of the believers, followed by the end, transfer of the Sovereignty to God and subjection of the Son to the Father.*

2. *Early level*, represented by Rom. Gal. and Cor: they stress that the work of Christ has put an end to the Mosaic Law. Now salvation is through the faith in Jesus Christ, and not through the observance of the Law. Christ is presented as *the transcendent Son of God*, even as *God* and also as *Lord* beside God the Father. As *the Last Adam* Christ in his glorified humanity embodies the newly redeemed mankind and the new economy of grace. In him Scripture becomes totally intelligible, since the Spirit of God dwells in him fully: e.g. "*Established Son of God*" (Rom 1:4). This text reflects a pre-Pauline confession of faith. Christ is here called *Son of God, Lord and God* and it gives importance to his resurrection. *Son of God* is functional here: at Easter Jesus took up his office as *Messianic King* over the community. Another example: "*Christ Called God*" (Rom 5:9): Here is a passage, which explicitly calls Christ God. It is part of a doxology and could be pre-Pauline. Again, "*One God – One Lord*" (1 Cor 8:6a): We have here a confession in the form of acclamation; Rom 10:9: "Confess Lord Jesus. God has raised him from the dead"; 1 Cor

12:3b: “No one can say *Jesus is Lord* except by the Holy Spirit”; Phil 2:11: God is described as the Creator. Jesus is described as the *Lord*, through whom are all things. For he is the Mediator of creation. *We have further examples of this type: “The Last Adam”* (1 Cor 15:45): Paul makes the comparison between the first Adam and the last Adam. Adam and Christ appear as prototypes of two different humanities, one earthly, and the other heavenly. Here he deals with the resurrection of Christ and the individual resurrection. “*The Lord is the Spirit*” (2 Cor 3:17): Moses represents the letter of Scripture. Christ represents the spiritual sense, which liberates man from the letter of the Scripture. The citation in the context is to ex 34:34; there is identification of *Yahweh and the Spirit*. But *Kyrios* in v.16 is Christ, so that in v.17 also must refer to him also.

3. *Later level* (AD 61-63): Phil.Col.Eph are of this period. Here the mystery of Christ is stressed: i.e., the *cosmic role of Christ* is underlined. Salvation is already achieved through the sacramental participation in the mystery of his death and resurrection. “In him the fullness of Deity dwells bodily” (Col 2:9). He underlines the supremacy of Christ and his closeness to the being of God. (1:16.19). “Recapitulate all things in Christ” (Eph 1:10): The term *anakephalaion* (*recapitulate*) seems to mean in the present context to sum up or comprehend all things in Christ as head. Church is now explicitly identified as the body of Christ, who is the Head (1:22f; 523) through whose influence the body builds itself up (4:15f). Christ is God’s nature. The power and wisdom of God are in Christ.

In short, Paul’s Christology involved above all else the proclamation of Jesus as *Lord* and the confession that *God has raised Jesus from the dead*.

## Hebrews, 1 Peter and the Pastoral Epistles

Hebrews underlines the title *Son* and breaks new grounds with the titles *Pioneer and High Priest*, which is intimately connected with the epistles manifest interest in the sacrificial approach to God. It exhorts the pilgrim people on its way to the true Promised Land. First Peter refers to Christ as the *Chief Shepherd*. The Pastoral Epistles insists on the epiphany of Christ the Savior. It represents Christ as the *Savior– God*.

*God has spoken to us by a Son (Heb. 1: 2f)*: In Heb. Christ is often called Son of God (3:6; 4:14; 5:8; 6:6; 7:3,28; 10:29). The expression, “through whom He created the world”(1:2) echoes the common early Christian belief. Christ appears as the ultimate Messenger and Revealer of God. His words have unique authority; because he is the Son of God .The author connects the title High Priest with Son of God. The passage could be a liturgical confession of faith and it speaks of the preexistence of Christ and of his descent into the world to speak the Word of the Father. This Son effected the purification from sin as the High Priest, who took his seat to the right of the majesty on high. (1:2-3).

*Pioneer of their Salvation (2:10)*: Same idea is seen also in the Acts of the Apostles (*archegos kai soter* (Leader and Savior: 5:31; *archegos tes Zoes*: the author of life: 3:15). He is the Pioneer (Leader or Captain) and Perfecter of our faith (12:2). In Septuagint *archegos* is a political or military leader. But Christ inspires our faith from the beginning to the end. Christ is also called *Forerunner (prodromos)* who entered the sanctuary on our behalf (6:20; 9:24).

*So also the Christ (Heb. 5: 5):* The epistle calls Jesus *the Christ*, the anointed, because it explicitly recognizes his royal and priestly character. The expression *the Christ* designates Jesus rather as the Messiah (3:14; 5:5; 6:1; 9:14,28; 13:21b), while *Christ alone* is more of a personal name (3:6; 9:11,24), like Jesus Christ (10:10; 13:8,21). Christ in 3:6 refers to the glorious Son now ruling over his house. Ch 9:11,24 designates the exalted High Priest entering the sanctuary. The epistle presents Christ as the Messianic King. The Messianic expectation, both royal and priestly, was fulfilled in Jesus and the epistle has admirably expressed it by describing it as an *enthronement* or exaltation of Christ our High Priest.

*Proclaimed High Priest (Heb 5:9):* The Christology of the High priest is combined with that of the Son of God throughout Hebrews. This is similar to Phil 2:5:11. You have here the combination of the deepest humiliation and highest exaltation. As God-man Christ by his very being was destined to be High Priest, which he effectively became gradually during his lifetime, and especially in his sacrificial *transit* to God as Head and Representative of Redeemed Mankind.

*The Chief Shepherd (1 P 5:4):* Both Hebrews and 1 Peter refer to Christ as the sovereign Shepherd using different words: *megas poimen* (great Shepherd: Heb. 13: 20), and *archi poimenos* (chief Shepherd: 1 P 5: 4). The expression as found in 1P is used only here in the entire NT. The Christological use of the Shepherd-figure is not found in the Pauline epistles, but in other NT writings, particularly in Mathew.

*Our Savior Jesus Christ (2 Tm 1:10):* The only properly Pauline text which calls Jesus *Savior* is Phil 3:20f. Salvation is a reality of the future, even though it is founded in the already past redemptive work of Christ. In the Pastoral Epistles



we find the increasingly Hellenized formulations of Christian faith. Jesus is often called *Savior* (2 Tim 1:10; Tt 1:4; 2:13; 3:6) as God himself (1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; Tit 1:3; 2:10).

*Our Great God and Savior Christ Jesus* (Tit 2:13): Here Jesus Christ is presented as the Great God (*megas Theos*). It is an explicit statement where Christ is called God.<sup>2</sup>

## The Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Letters

The central theme of John's Gospel is the impact on the world of the Incarnation of the Word. Before the coming of the Revealer darkness existed, as well as death, and untruth. But they were situations of a temporary character. When he comes, however, everything becomes definitive (12:35-36). Henceforth those who do not believe in the Revealer definitely choose darkness instead of light, falsehood instead of truth, death instead of life (3:18; 5:24; 8:51).

*Seeing is very important* in John. One should see God's presence in Jesus. (11:47-48); Chs. 19 and 20. For John *listening is also very important*. Jesus came to bear witness to what he has *seen and heard* (3:32). He himself is constantly on the listening line with the Father (15:15). Mary of Bethany is the model of the disciples. They should listen to him always. John attaches great importance to the figure of the *Father* (chs 6.8.10.14). But John is *very Christocentric* at the same time. God for John is mainly the Father of Jesus Christ. Christocentricity of John's theology is reflected in several ways: Kingdom was prominent in the Synoptics; the radiant figure of the King is prominent in John. Vineyard is no longer the field of the Gospel laborers (Mt 12:1f) but Christ himself and all his disciples incorporated in him (John 15:1-11). Light

is more than a ray illuminating the faces of Christians (Mt 5:14); it shines forth in the very person of Christ, who says, "I am the light of the World". ( John 8:12). John seldom analyses. He contemplates the fullness of the mystery of Christ. Beyond this visible world, his vision penetrates the supernatural world, dominated by the figure of Christ. Christ for John is *the One Sent*. He is given all authority. He makes the Father known and he returns to the Father.

For John *Christ is the Revealer, the Lamb of God (1:29), the Savior of the world (4:42), the Judge (5:27), the Holy One of God (6:69), the Man (8:40), the Paraclete (the advocate: 1Jn 2:1), the Hilasmos (the expiation or victim of expiation: 1 Jn 2:2), and the Son of the Father (2Jn 3)*. In his *I am (ego eimi)* statement, Jesus makes extraordinary claims.

*Lamb* has reference to the Paschal Lamb: "Not even a bone of him shall be broken" (19:36). He starts with *the Lamb* (1:29) and ends with *the Lamb* (19:36) He speaks of Christ as the *universal Savior of the World*, i.e., the cosmic dimension of Salvation. The Savior of the World exercises a saving sovereignty over the world (17:2). In three successive verses John calls Jesus, *the Son of God, the Son and the Son of Man*. (5:25-27). *Holy one of God* is an expression seen in the Synoptics and Acts (3:14) also. Jn 8:40 are the only NT text in which Jesus explicitly describes himself as man. The statement could be *anti-docetic*. Jn 19:5: "*Behold the man*" by Pilate is meant to show that in his extreme humiliation Christ is still the glorious King, for the passion in John is an elevation, a glorification (Jn 17:1). The *I am* sayings are echoing the *I am Who am* of Ex.3: 14). The images of the *ego eimi sayings* make the saving character of Jesus' mission visible in striking images and symbols-*life, bread, light, door, shepherd, way, truth, vine*. They

are all concerned with the meaning Jesus' person and work have for those who accept him and his message: that they may have life and have it abundantly"(10:10). 2Jn 3 calls Christ explicitly *Son of the Father*. This is the only NT verse, which uses this expression.

John presents an *exalted Christology* and the human weaknesses of Jesus virtually disappear in John. In the very first miracle at Cana the glory of Jesus is manifested to his disciples (2:11). Then there was no need of the *transfiguration* sign. Unlike Phil 2: 7f. in the Johannine "*becoming flesh*," "*we have seen his glory*". In John Jesus has the exalted name even during his life on earth, and not after the exaltation. (17:6,12). For John the disciples in the first encounters with Jesus confess him as *Messiah, King of Israel and Son of God* (1:41,49) Jesus speaks of himself as *the Son* and publicly claims unity with the Father (10:30,38: 14:9), so that his opponents understood him as stating that he is equal to God (5:18; 10:33) Some of the prominent NT passages that call Jesus *God* is found in John.

The Johannine Jesus knows all things (6:5-6; 6:71-71; 11:41-42). In John Jesus is in complete control of himself. (10; 17-18; 13:27-30; 18:6). The disciples of Jesus in John also act nobly, they do not run away (18:8-9). He does not die alone, because the Father is always with him (16:32), the believing community is also with him under the cross (19:25:27). He dies a noble death (it is finished: 19:28-30).<sup>3</sup>

## The Christ of the Apocalypse

The Book of Apocalypse sees Christ as *one like the Son of Man* (1:13), as *the one holding the key of David* (3:7), as *the Amen*,

*the True Witness (3:14), as the redeeming and conquering Lamb (17:14), who shares the same Kingship of God (11: 15). The Christ of Revelation is the Logos of God (9: 13) who stands at the beginning of God's creation (3:14).*

He enjoys some prerogatives of the OT God: *searching mind and heart (2:23=Jr 11:20), judging justly (9: 11=Is 11:4), dispensing what everyone deserves (2:23=Ps 62:13), being the shepherd who guides the sheep to springs of living water (9: 17= Ez 34:23), and his is the book of Life (3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12; 15:21-27: known in OT as God's book: Ex 32:32; Ps 69:28; Dn 12:1, and also referred to by Paul in Phil. 4: 3). Christ is the Alpha and the Omega the first and the last, the Beginning and the End (22:13; 1:17), the one alive for ever (1:18), the Lord of Lords and King of kings (17:14; 19:16).*

The Christ of the Apocalypse is not radically different from the Christ known through the other NT writings. Message of the Apocalypse is this: that God brings to fulfillment in Christ and his redemption, the saving plan of salvation prepared and announced in the OT. Apocalypse owes a lot to the OT prophecies. Rev. 2: 18 speak of Christ as the Son of God, the only mention of this title in the Apocalypse. Christ has unlimited sovereignty over the future world. He alone controls grace and judgment. He decides irrevocably whether a man will have access to the salvation of the last age or whether it will be withheld from him. This is the meaning of Key of David. The Lamb of the Apocalypse is both the triumphant Messiah, who leads his people to victory and the suffering Messiah who gave his life for these followers.<sup>4</sup>

## **Two Approaches - Conservative and Liberal**

There are two types of approach: conservatism and liberalism. The conservative view identifies the NT writings' Christology with the Christology of Jesus himself. They think that Gospels are verbatim accounts of what was said and done in Jesus' lifetime. So there is no Christological development in the NT. Jesus accepted Peter's confession of Faith (Mt 16:13-20). Later Christians called Jesus *Son of God* because of it. All Christians up to 1700 thought like that. With the emergence of *historical criticism of the NT* the attitude changed. The historical criticism taught that there could be difference between NT writers and their outlook, and the era in which Jesus lived. This trend developed to such an extent that some Protestants became radical liberals, even denying the divinity of Christ. There was reaction to it. Some turned out to be conservatives "to protect the fundamentals of Christian Faith". Catholic critics were restricted in 1900 by the Pope in his anti-Modernist propaganda. So ordinary Catholics did not even know that there could be difference between Jesus in his lifetime and Jesus as described in the NT writings. So there was no liberal biblical teaching in the Catholic Church until recently. In 1940 Pope Pius XII encouraged biblical criticism. *Dei Verbum* in 1964 taught that *the Gospels were not necessarily literal accounts of the works and deeds of Jesus (19)*. In Christology, there could be a difference between Jesus self-presentation and the affirmations made of him by the NT writers. Today Catholic Scholars think that *the Gospels manifest a development beyond the era of Jesus*.

Some liberal Protestants consider Jesus as a mere ethical or social reformer. His disciples proclaimed him to be divine (the Deists and the French Encyclopedias of the 18<sup>th</sup> c.). They consider that the high evaluation of Jesus in the NT is not correct. These liberals drew inspiration from the study

of comparative religion and they thought that they found the key to the terminologies applied to Jesus, in the Greco-Roman mythologies. The Christian communities made Jesus the heavenly Son of man, Lord, Judge of the World and God.

All such attitudes changed with the two world wars. Bultmann between 1920 and 1950 radically reversed such trends. He accepted stages in the development of NT Christology. He asserted that humanity needs to escape from the futile existence. It can come only through the delivering hand of God. *Jesus preached that God is acting in his own ministry and challenged the people to accept the divine action.* So we have to accept the NT Christology, he asserted.

Now almost all accept that *there is a discernible continuity* between the evaluation of Jesus during the ministry and the evaluation of the NT writings. For some of them, Jesus employed titles already known in Jewish circles, while the early Church applied the other titles to Jesus, but they had their basis in the action of Jesus himself. *Son of Man* is a title, which Jesus himself used, while *Christ* or *others used Messiah* during the lifetime of Jesus. At the same time not all the Jewish Christians had the same Christology.<sup>5</sup>

## The Knowledge of Jesus

### ***Knowledge that Jesus shows of the Ordinary affairs of Life***

*Texts indicating limited Knowledge:* (chiefly in Mark: e.g., 5: 30-33). As a boy Jesus is described as growing in wisdom, and in stature and the favor of God (Lk 2: 52). Lk 1:80(Baptist) and Sam. 2:26(Samuel) have parallelism to it.

*Texts indicating extraordinary Knowledge* chiefly in John:

*Denial of limitation:* Jn 6:5; 6:64; 6:71; 13:11. It was John's tendency to picture Jesus without any element of human weakness. In John's view, the glory of God's own Son constantly shines forth in the Incarnate Jesus. (Jn 10:18). *Capability of reading minds:* Mk 2: 6-8; 9: 33-35; Jn 2: 24-25; 16: 19.30. *Knowledge at a distance:* Jn 1: 48-49; Mk 11: 2; 14: 13-14; Mt 17: 24-27 (Ezekiel at Babylon had visions about the happenings at Jerusalem; also similar things are found in the life of Samuel: 1 Sam.10: 1f). One Gospel tradition manifests a tendency to consider Jesus with limited knowledge of ordinary affairs of life. They are suppressed by Mathew and John as a second stage theological modification. Another tradition shows in Jesus some kind of superior knowledge. Jesus is presented as a man with more than ordinary knowledge and perception about others. In great prophetic figures such a superior knowledge does not exclude limitations and ignorance in other areas, and thus a combination of the two is almost to be expected in Jesus.

### ***Knowledge of Jesus of Religious Matters:***

#### ***Knowledge of Scripture:***

When we refer to Gospel texts, we cannot for certain say that they are *the ipsissima verba* of Jesus. They could be coming from the apostolic preaching or from Jesus himself. There are instances of *apparent mistaken citations*: Jn 7:38(maybe a Targum, and need not be a mistake). Mk 2:26:Abiathar the High Priest (1 Sam 21:2-7:the high Priest was Abimelek). Popular tradition might have confused the two, because Abiathar was later closely connected with David and better known. Mt 23:35(Zechariah son of Barachiah (B.C.520-516: minor Prophet). Zechariah son of Jehoiada was

killed in front of the temple ca 825 BC (2 Chr 24:20-22). There was confusion regarding the persons. So Luke omits, son of Barachiah). *Jesus cites imprecisely as the people of his time*: Mk12: 36=quoting Ps 110, attributing it to David. Jesus thought that David himself composed it. Mt 12:39-41. 16:4: sign of Jonah the Prophet. Jonah is a parable that draws on the figure of an unknown prophet (2 Kgs 14:25). There are Gospel passages that show *Jesus as learned* in Scripture (Mt 7:29; 22:16). *But from these citations we cannot show that Jesus was more than a learned distinguished teacher.*

### ***Jesus' use of contemporary Religious Concepts:***

*Demonology*: Regarding demon possession, both the Evangelists and Jesus reflect the inexact medico-religious understanding of their times (Mk 9:17-18: is epilepsy; 5:4: is dangerous insanity). In certain cases *Jesus corrected* their idea of connecting sickness and calamities with sin. Regarding *after life the language of Jesus is more figurative*. We cannot say that all those words are to be taken literally. In certain cases *Jesus corrected* some of the popular concepts (Mk 12:24-25: no marriage in the after-life). Jesus uses the current apocalyptic ideas in describing the end of time (Mk13: 24-25). In these three areas Jesus repeats the contemporary popular concepts.

### ***Jesus' Knowledge of the Future:***

*Foreknowledge of his own passion* (Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34); *betrayal of Judas* (Jn 6:70-71); *foreknowledge of the destruction of the temple* (Mk 13):

Jesus was convinced beforehand that although his life would be taken from him, God would ultimately vindicate him. Regarding the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple,



like Jeremiah and Ezekiel before him, Jesus would have been threatening a rebellious people with divine punishment and using traditional language to do so.

### ***Foreknowledge of the Parousia:***

There are some texts that speak of *the immediate Parousia*, shortly after the death of Jesus (Jn 14:3; Mk 14: 62); some texts speak of the Parousia *during the lifetime of the disciples* (Mt 10: 23; Mk 13: 30; Jn 1: 51; 21:22). The first generation was puzzled by the fact that Jesus did not come back immediately. They thought that at least he would come while many of their generation were still alive. A third set of passages refers to a *delayed Parousia*, preceded by apocalyptic signs (Mk13; Mt 24-25; Lk 21; 2 Tess 2: 3f). Such sayings were not from Jesus but from the Palestinian Church, using the apocalyptic language of Judaism. The time of the Parousia is unknown(Mt 24: 42-44; Mk 13:32). There was some confusion regarding Parousia in the minds of the first century Christians. *But on the whole one can say for certain that Jesus saw himself as important that the rejection would cause for divine action against Jerusalem. He will be victorious and also has a final role when God completes what was begun during his ministry.*<sup>6</sup>

### ***Jesus reveals his identity in his deeds and words, proclaiming the Kingdom of God***

The fact that Jesus worked miracles proved that the Kingdom of God has come. It is one of the means by which the Kingdom came. The miracles, the *acts of power (dynamis)* were weapons Jesus used to reclaim people and the world from the dominion of evil. When Jesus healed the sick, he was breaking the satanic power that manifests itself in ill-

ness and death (Mt 12: 28; Lk 7: 16). Unlike the OT prophets, Jesus connects these miracles with the coming of the Kingdom. The same could be spoken of regarding his words in parables. He spoke with authority and power (Lk 9). He modifies the Mosaic Law. In Mt's, "you have heard...but I say to you" (5: 21-44) Jesus thinks that he has the authority to modify and even eliminate what God said to Moses. He presents himself as greater than Moses. In the OT, the prophets used to say, "the Lord says", but Jesus speaks with authority, "I say to you". Jesus claims to be greater than any figure that had preceded him in the salvation history of Israel, and even greater than Moses. Jesus presented himself as so close to God, that his followers had to find out titles different from those one that had been used for previous actors in God's plan.

There is uniqueness in Jesus' self-estimation, more than that of the OT prophets. He is the one to bring God's plan to completion. When Jesus proclaimed God's kingly rule through his deeds and words, he acted against the forces of evil with a power that went beyond the range of ordinary experience. From the beginning of his ministry; Jesus shared unshakable confidence that he could authoritatively interpret the demands that God's kingship puts on those who acknowledge it. When he spoke of God's kingly rule, he spoke with originality. Otherwise regarding the last times, he made use of the current ideas. He could declare sins forgiven, modify the law, violate the Sabbath ordinances, make stringent demands, offend against proprieties, and defy common sense. He taught as no teacher of his time taught. He had the conviction that his mission will succeed ultimately. Jesus broke with the past in a radical way. He spoke with certainty and acted so. It implied his unique relationship with

God. Gospel presents him as a man who thinks he can act and speak for God. God was acting through him and in him. Or God was present in the form of Jesus.<sup>7</sup>

## The Titles of Jesus

After the death of Jesus, his followers reflected on his identity and they began to call him with several names. Certain titles were employed during the lifetime of Jesus, but certain others were applied later in the light of the Easter revelation. In order to express the reality of Jesus the first disciples articulated the post resurrection faith back into the scene of his lifetime. Jesus is referred to in the NT writings as the Prophet, Rabbi (Master), the High Priest, and Son of David. He was also known by other titles such as the Messiah, the Lord, the Savior, Son of God and God. The titles *Prophet and Son of David* express the popular knowledge of the contemporaries of Jesus. Such titles fell into disuse in the later preaching of the Church, because such titles no longer expressed the fullness of the mystery that had been revealed. The title *Son of Man* makes explicit reference to Jesus' own understanding of himself. The community kept such titles. The Christian community in the light of the Easter mystery applied the other titles. Definitely they made use of OT images. Such titles are *Wisdom and Lord*. The expression Lord found particular places in the liturgy. The disciples found the expressions *Messiah and Son of God* as best expressing the revelation of God in Jesus. They arrived at it by analyzing the teaching and actions of Jesus himself, his conduct and his general attitude. However in the early stage of development the use of *Son of God* was not very frequent. And its significance also found its development in the course of years.

For example, Mark uses the expression Son of God in the beginning (1:1) and at the end of his Gospel (15:39). But the expression in Mark had, perhaps, primarily the OT nuance: a moral and functional relationship to God. To be *Son of God* means to be obedient to the will of God. Still its use was rare in Mark.

The title *Messiah (Christ)*: The title Messiah did arise in the lifetime of Jesus. Jesus never denied that he is the Messiah. His opponents thought that he or his followers claimed he was the Messiah (King). The followers of Jesus during his lifetime confessed him as the Messiah. But Jesus never clearly or enthusiastically accepted the title in the sense in which his followers and opponents proposed it for him, such as establishing an earthly kingdom, conquering foreign rulers or functioning as an earthly ruler. We have the following *Messiah passages*: Peter's confession (Mk 8: 29-33 and par.), High Priest's question (Mk 14: 61-62), the Samaritan Woman's witnessing (John 4:25-26), and the appellation of Jesus as the King (Mk 15:2).

The title *Son of Man*: was used by Jesus himself. Among the several titles that he encountered in Judaism, he considered it as best suited to describe his mission. It is a combination of the *Son of Man* in Daniel, 7 and the *Suffering Servant* of Deutero-Isaiah.

### ***Son of God***

Jesus considered himself to be in filial relationship with God. We find in the Gospel narratives the term *Son of God* applied to Jesus (Mt. 16: 16-17; Mark 14:61-62). *The virginal conception and the Son of God*: Mathew and Luke agree that Jesus is God's Son in a unique manner, for Mary conceived

her child through the Holy Spirit without a male partner. At baptism and at transfiguration the divine Sonship is affirmed. Jesus refers often to God as his Father in a unique sense: “*My Father, and Abba*”. Jesus often calls himself *the Son*. His Sonship was in some way superior to the sonship of all who would follow him. John wrote his Gospel to show that *Jesus is the Son of God* (20: 31). *We have also NT references where Jesus is called God.*<sup>8</sup>

The Nicene Creed declared that Jesus is true God and true man and the Council of Chalcedon confirms it. This dogmatic declaration had its basis in the NT. And there was sufficient reason for the Fathers to proclaim it as an article of Faith. For a believing Christian, Jesus is God’s eternal Son, who descended in the fullness of time and he became a man like any other man except sin. He showed through his miracles and words that he is the one sent by God, and the one expected by the Hebrews and foretold by the Prophets in the salvation history of the chosen people. They were acts of power and signs of the presence of the kingdom of God. He was Son of God from the beginning with the Father and is equal to the Father in essence and nature in his divinity. And in his incarnate state also he was true God from true God. He did not become Son by human birth or by his baptism at Jordan by adoption, or at Resurrection. He was by nature Son eternally. His incarnation did not change his state of being God’s only Son. But he put on our humanity for us and for our salvation. But it took quite a long time for the disciples to realize that truth. There were stages of understanding in the minds of the early disciples and it is evidently reflected in the various NT writings. They did not catch a glimpse of his divinity all at once. The first disciples were with him, walked with him, ate with him conversed with

him, witnessed his glory at Tabor, listened to his words and witnessed his acts of power over nature and evil spirits and sickness. They saw that he taught with authority and that he had a very unique relationship with God as his Father. The Easter events opened their eyes to see the actual personality of Jesus. From then on they began to reflect on Jesus and turn their attention to the OT prophesies and began to predicate the various attributes to Jesus, which in fact, revealed his true picture.

The realization that *Jesus is God* found its expression in the *liturgical usage* of the early Church, in its prayers and worship. The Christological hymns and some other passages, which call Jesus *God*, had their origin in the liturgical setting (Titus 2: 13; 1 John 5: 20; Rom 9:5; 2 Pet 1:1). *Heb 1: 8-9* cites a Psalm that was applied to Jesus. It was the custom of the Early Church to make use of the Psalms in Christian worship and to apply them to Christ (1 Cor14: 26; Eph5: 19). *The Prologue of John* also was originally a hymn. Pliny reminds us that Christians used to sing hymns to Christ as to a God. *John 20:28* scene is placed on a Sunday: “My lord and my God.” This acclamation is the equivalence of *Yahweh Elohim* of OT address to the Father and we find the exact expression in Ps. 35:23. Along with the acclamation *Jesus is Lord*, this expression might have been a confessional formulation in baptismal or liturgical usage. Later when the NT authors sat down to put into writing the faith of the Church, they incorporated the current ideas of the various Churches in their writings and thus we have the NT books. Thus we find some passages unequivocally calling Jesus *God* (Heb.1: 8-9; John 1:1; 20: 28), and other passages with all probability in the light of the whole NT evidence calls Jesus God (Titus 2:13; Rom 9:5; 1 John5: 20; 2 Pet 1:1). One can look into the follow-

ing passages also (Gal 2:20; Acts 20:28; John 1:18; Col 2:2-3; 2 Thess 1:12). Some may call into question these latter passages on the basis of variant readings or other motives. In the above passages the title *God* is applied to the preexistent Word (John 1:1) or the Son in the Father's presence (1:18), or the resurrected Jesus (20:28). The doxologies confess as God *the triumphant Jesus*; Heb 1: 8-9 is directed to Jesus, whose throne is forever. *He is the Eternal and the Glorified Son of God*. He is God during his earthly life also. Through out the NT writings, Jesus is depicted as the *Son of God* in several other ways. The writers made use of other terms and titles to depict the divinity of Jesus even before the resurrection.

*Jesus is Lord* was a popular confessional formula in NT times and in this formula Christians gave Jesus the title *Kyrios*, the Septuagint translation of *YHWH*. If Jesus could be given this title, why could he not be called *God* (*theos*-the Septuagint translation of *Elohim*)? The two Hebrew terms have become for them interchangeable and in fact *YHWH* was the more sacred term. However, the early writings of the NT do not *explicitly* call Jesus God as we find in the later writings. Thus the *Synoptics* and *Acts*, being early writings, made use of other terms to express the divinity of Jesus. The very clear appellation of Jesus as God comes from *Hebrews* (written in the 80s), *Titus* (between 80 and 120), *the Johannine Writings* (between 90 and 110) and *2 Peter* (still later). That means there was a development in the use of the expression *Son of God* in the early period. However, for the early writers Jesus was

always the Son of God. In other words, the quite clear use of the expression *God for Jesus* becomes frequently attested only in the second half of the century. By the time of *Ignatius of Antioch* (+110) the title became normative in Christian circles. He speaks of Jesus as God: “Our God, Jesus the Christ was carried in Mary’s womb”(Eph.18: 2). “God was manifest as man”(19:3). In Smyrnaeans he gives glory to “Jesus Christ, the God who has thus made you wise”(1:1). 2 Clement states, “We must think of Jesus Christ as of God”(1:1). When we look into the geographical spread of the usage of *Son of God* we find that during the second stage of development it was widely used. Thus when Paul wrote *to the Romans* from Greece, and the *Epistle to the Hebrews to the Roman community*, and the *epistle to Titus* from Macedonia to Crete, and the Epistles of Ignatius *to the Christians in Asia Minor and Rome* and *the Johannine writings to the communities in Asia Minor*, that *Christ is God* we do not find any hesitation in its acceptability by the community. Because they were representing the faith of the Church in *Christ as God and Son of God*. There is no evidence to support a claim that in the late first century the custom of calling Jesus *God* was confined to a small area or faction within the Christian world.

Did the Hellenistic communities contribute to the theological vocabulary *Son of God* to Jesus? Apparently it appears, because of two NT passages where *God* is closely joined to *Savior* as a title of Jesus (Titus 2:3; 2 Pet 1:1). *Savior* is to some extent a Hellenistic title. But we have other evidence to suggest that the usage had its roots in the OT. e.g., Heb 1:8-9 is a



citation from Ps 45, and John 20:28 echoes another OT formula. The background of John 1:1 is the opening of Genesis and the concept of the Word of God reflects the OT themes of the creative Word of God and the personified Wisdom.

The slow development of the usage of the title *God* for Jesus requires explanation. In the earlier strata of NT material Jesus is not *explicitly* called God, the title being reserved to God, the Father of Jesus Christ (Mk10: 18); see also John 20:17; Eph 1:17; John 17:3; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Tim 2:5). During this stage Jesus was called *the Lord*. In the earliest stage of Christianity, the OT heritage dominated the *use of God*; hence *God* was a title too narrow to be applied to Jesus. It referred strictly to the One in heaven whom Jesus addressed as Father and to whom he prayed. Gradually, in the development of Christian thought, *God* was understood to be a broader term. *God had been so revealed in Jesus that the designation God had to be able to include both Father and the Son*. The late Pauline literature seems to fall precisely in this stage of development. By the time of *the Pastorals* Jesus is well known as *God and Savior*. By the time John wrote *his corpus* the usage of *God* for Jesus has become common. Still John preserved some earlier material where he would not favor equating Jesus with God or putting him on the same level as the Father (14:28; 17:3; 20:17).<sup>9</sup>

The Church proclaims that Jesus is the Son of God in a unique and absolute sense. Even though there is no explicit saying of Jesus, it is implied. The faith of the Church made explicit what Jesus himself had said. From the following points it is clear to the Church that he is the Son of the Father: his unique relationship with the Father, and his overall attitude to Father and his general behavior, the authority with

which he taught, the certainty with which he addressed the problems of those who questioned him, the finality of his judgment on the Law, the radical commitment asked of those who follow him.<sup>10</sup>

### FootNotes:

- 1 L. Sabourin, *op.cit.* 119-133.
- 2 L. Sabourin, *op. cit.* 135-145.
- 3 L. Sabourin, *op.cit.* 147-160; R. E. Brown, *An Introduction to NT Christology*, p.121-125; See also p. 196-213(features in the Christology of the Gospel according to John: some approaches to Johannine Christology in contemporary Writing: the explanations of R.Bultmann, O.Cullmann, E.Kaesemann, and F. Dreyfus are presented here).
- 4 L.Sabourin, *op.cit.*p.161-169.
- 5 R. E. Brown, *op. cit.*,6-15.
- 6 R.E. Brown, *op.cit.*,31-59.
- 7 *Ibid.* 60-70; R. A. Kereszty, *JESUS CHRIST- Fundamentals of Christology*, NY, 1991,p.86-91.
- 8 Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, London, 1963.
- 9 R.E.Brown, *op.cit.*,170-195.
- 10 R.Latourelle-R.Fisichella(ed.), *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, St. Pauls, 1990, p.117f.

## 3

## VARIOUS APPROACHES TO CHRISTOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

**Biblical Christology:** It is a doctrinal systematization of the results of exegetical research. It may apply only to a group

of texts with a particular theme, such as the Christology of the individual authors or as a whole. It is not identical with biblical exegesis. A synthesis of biblical data will define Christ as revealed throughout the Scripture. One Gospel alone will not adequately give the whole picture of Christ. We have to take them as a whole. We should not also take individual verses in isolation to the extent as to forget the figure of the Word of God who became man for our salvation. In other words, the analysis should have a *faith approach* and at the same time scientifically verifiable. We should not discard the scientific progress made in recent years in the field of biblical hermeneutics. We try to understand the essential traits of the image of the Lord present in the NT.

***Patristic Christology:*** Basing on the biblical data we examine the contribution of the Fathers of the Church. We try to analyze the doctrines peculiar to each author, the historical development and the salient currents of thought, and we analyse the two major Christian schools of Alexandria and Antioch: insistence on the unity of the Person and the duality of the natures. We go further in analyzing the conciliar definitions of subsequent centuries.

***Speculative Christology:*** it reflects on the revealed deposit of faith in order to produce a systematic account of doctrine and organize it rationally. It confronts problems that incarnation poses for human understanding. It tries to understand with Philosophical concepts the ontological constitution of Christ. It inquires into the psychology of Jesus, the development of his human consciousness and his exercise of the human freedom. It tries to outline the characteristic traits of the human saintliness of Jesus, see how the development of grace and virtue was verified in him and see how

it is possible to reconcile perfect holiness and the experience of temptation, impeccability and freedom. It tries to define the meaning of the Savior's mission, explain the nature of the Paschal Mystery, the value of Sacrifice and the meaning of the glorious triumph after passion and death. Speculative Christology has to rely on the revelation as contained in the Scripture and as expressed in the tradition of the Church. It takes into account the development of Christology down through the centuries.

***Ontological and Functional Christology:*** Ontological Christology analyses the nature of the being of Christ. *i.e.*, *Jesus is true God and true man*. He is the Son of God, who by incarnation became man like us in everything except sin. *Christ is one in two natures*. It refers to the definitions of Chalcedon: union of the two natures in one Person. It tries to establish what precisely constitutes the reality of the Person and its distinction from nature. *Functional Christology* looks into the function of Jesus. It concentrates on the work that Jesus accomplished and on what humanity has received and continues to receive from him. In recent years there is a renewed interest in the functional Christology. Incarnation cannot be separated from its redemptive purpose. Christ is essentially the Savior. So Ontological Christology cannot develop independently of functional Christology. All forms of Christology must try to understand the mission of the Word made flesh. Some say, "what is valid for us is what Christ did for us". But the function of Jesus cannot be determined without his Ontology. *i.e.*, what He is. If he were only a mere man, his actions would be much more limited. If he were God alone, he can easily communicate his divine life. According to the Gospels, Jesus himself posed the Ontological question: "Who do men say that I am?" (Mt 16). He asks

them to tell who he is instead of what he came to do.

**Liberation Theology - a form of functional Christology:** It tries to present Christ's answer to social and political injustice. It discovers principles in the Gospel for social and political reactions. Such reactions should lead to social justice. However, Christ cannot be reduced to that alone. He is more than that. The problem of evil in the world is more acute. Salvation of Christ frees man from all kinds of sins and oppressions.

**Christology from above and Christology from below:** The Christology of R. Bultmann and that of K. Barth are known as Christology from above: it is grounded on the Word of God, while the Christology of Pannenberg and Rahner is known as Christology from below; it proceeds from the historical Jesus.

**Historical Christology and Kerygmatic Christology:** Historical Christology starts with the historical Jesus. The other starts with the *Christ of Faith*. Jesus is the man who lived in Palestine. Christ is the one whom we proclaim. The object of Christology is the Jesus of Palestine. Christianity began with the historical event of the Incarnation of God, with the historical Jesus Christ, his life and his paschal event. It arose not from a mere idea, or dogma or message, but from the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. So all Christology should have their starting point in this historical reality. Christ can only be the historical Jesus. So *Christology is essentially Jesusology*. Jesus of history has to be studied in his earthly life as reported in the Gospels. We cannot take the risen Christ as the starting point for Christology. Jesus was revealed as the Son of God and he manifested his identity in his public life. Even before the resurrection, he asked the disciples for a profession of faith in him. Resurrection brought new light, but it confirmed the words and deeds of Jesus/Christ became manifest as the Son of God and Savior in the historical condition of his earthly life and not only

## 4

# PATRISTIC CHRISTOLOGY

Basically the Christology of the Fathers is deeply biblical exegesis. For them Christ is the center of the Scriptures. All the Scriptures speak of him. They give various kinds of interpretation, such as *literal meaning*, *the allegorical meaning*, *the moral meaning*, *the anagogical meaning*, (explains how the mystery referred to in the text is to be fulfilled eschatologically). They were men of faith, so their exegesis was mingled with prayer and good Christian living. Their Christology was not a mere system of intellectual abstractions, but linked with the faith experience of Christians in the Church. Hence it was ecclesial. They had the task of showing the universal significance of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and at the same time the value of the non-Christian rituals and worship in the economy of salvation. They had to explain the significance of the Trinitarian faith, the Incarnation and Redemption in a language, which was intelligible to their contemporaries. Christianity, for them was not one of the religions among the many religions, but was qualitatively different from other religions. Thus they made use of certain philosophical concepts and initiated a dialogue with the contemporary philosophy with Christianity. They made use of certain terms from philosophy; they coined new words

and in certain cases gave altogether a new meaning to the already existing concepts. They had to fight against the distortions and the accusations of the pagans. They purified the Greek philosophy, transformed it and perfected it. Thus the Greek philosophy became a vehicle for the transmission of the Christian message. Today Christianity has a very similar difficult task of interpreting Christ to the modern man in the midst of a culture of pluralistic religion and a culture of consumerism, capitalism, and atheistic communism. Today's theologian can make use of the insights of the Patristic period in his endeavor to present the relevance of Christ to the modern man.

For the Fathers, the other religions are the result of human effort to find God. However, they did not deny that God was teaching and educating mankind for the reception of the Messiah. In Christ, God Himself has become personally present to mankind. He Himself teaches us without any intermediary. Although we find the *Seeds of the Word* in the other religions and philosophies, in Christianity, the Logos himself is present educating us directly. All the other religions and their rituals are to find their fulfillment in Christ. They are oriented to Christ. In Incarnation, the Logos became the center of the universal attraction. All those who lived with the Word, before the incarnation or after, that is, in accord with and by the revelation of the Word is a Christian. St. Justin writes, "Those who lived with the Word are Christians even if they were held to be atheists like Socrates, Heraclitus and such as these among the Greeks" (*Apology, I, 46*). The Greek philosophy had the same role as the Mosaic Law for the Jews. The Early Fathers appreciated the non-Christian philosophies and religions. On the other hand, they did not hesitate to denounce the ignorance and moral cor-

ruption in the myth of the polytheistic Greco-Roman religions. Their religion was mixed with errors and moral depravity. Their stories may have similarities with the Christian salvation history, but there are more fundamental differences. Hence the attitude of the Fathers was one of openness and at the same time of critical attitude. According to the Fathers, the preexisting Word of God enlightens every soul, which opens himself to his light, but in the fullness of time this same Word has become flesh in the man Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Apostolic Fathers:**

They were mostly witnessing to the biblical *kerygma*. They thought of Christ as born of the seed of David as regards his flesh, but Son of God according to God's will and power. They very strongly asserted the two aspects of Christ, namely his divinity and his humanity. They considered that the second coming of the Lord is imminent. Due to their direct relationship with the Apostolic Church, the person of Christ was still vividly remembered. They had a deep longing for Christ, the departed and the expected Savior. This longing often takes a mystical form as one finds in St Ignatius of Antioch. For them Christ is the preexistent Son of God, who collaborated in the creation of the world.

### ***St Ignatius of Antioch:***

He fought against the *Docetic heresy* prevalent in some parts of Asia Minor. (*Trall. 10-11,1; Smyrn.7*). He explicitly calls Christ God: "Let me imitate the passion of my



God”(Rom.6: 3). He is closer to John than to Paul. However, we find in his pages Paul too speaking in eloquent languages. He says that the expectations of Judaism found its fulfillment in Christ: “Jesus Christ is our only teacher, of whom even the prophets were disciples in the Spirit and to whom they looked forward as their teacher. (*Magn.9: 1-2*). He believed that Jesus Christ is both God and man: “There is only one physician both carnal and spiritual, born and unborn, God become man, true life in death, sprung both from Mary and from God (*kai ek Marias kai ek Theou*), first subject to suffering, and then incapable of it-Jesus Christ our Lord”(Eph.7: 2). “He is really of the line of David according to the flesh, and the Son of God by the will and power of God; was really born of a Virgin, and baptized by John in order to comply with every ordinance”(Smyrn.1: 1). Christ is timeless (*achronos*) and invisible (*aoratos: Epistle to Polycarp, 3:2*).

*Clement of Rome* also reiterates the faith of the Apostolic Church. In the so-called *Second Epistle of Clement*, the divinity and the humanity are clearly stressed: “Brethren, we ought to think of Jesus Christ as of God: as of the Judge of the living and the dead (1:1). He suffered for us: “For he had pity on us and saved us in his mercy, and he beheld the great error and destruction which was in us and he saw that we had no hope of salvation save only through him”. (1:7). The Epistle calls Christ the *Prince of Incorruptibility (archegos tes aphtharsias: 20:5)*.

*Epistle of Barnabas* proclaims the preexistence of Christ. Christ was with the Father for the creation of the world. He makes use of the parable of the sun to explain the incarnation. Christ came willingly to suffer for the iniquity of mankind (5:5.10-13).

*The Shepherd of Hermas* invariably calls the Savior, Son of God or Lord, not Christ or Logos. But the document does not clearly explain the nature of the deity or the persons of the Trinity. There is lack of clarity in the exposition of the *person of Christ*. It appears that the document identifies the Son with the Holy Spirit (9.1.1).

## **The Apologists of the Second Century:**

When we come to the **Apologists** of the Second Century, we find the attempt to have a dialogue of the kerygma with the Greek philosophy. They tried to develop the Logos concept of John. They too are witnesses of the biblical *kerygma* and asserted the preexistence of Christ and his identification with the Logos. The Word became man by being born from the Virgin. They spoke of the two realities in Christ. Justin tried to show that the worship of Christ is not against monotheism. For Justin, Christ is *Logos and Nomos*. He showed that Christianity is the true religion. He transformed the Greek philosophical concepts to express the Christian mysteries. The Logos is the Mediator of revelation until the end of the world. Christ has brought order into the world, so he is the *Nomos* of the human race. The early Christians had the problem of upholding the *strict monarchy* of the Godhead against the polytheistic religions on the one hand, and upholding the *Christian revelation of Father, son and the Holy Spirit* on the other hand. In other words, they had to explain the relation between the Father and the Son. In their attempt, the Apologists tried to make use of the *Logos concept* developed in the Greek philosophy. They held the Apostolic Faith of the first Church, but in their attempt it appears apparently that they held a *kind of subordination of the Logos to*

God. We can explain it as a stage of development. They were quite sure that the Son is God and he is *one* in his divinity with the Father. They affirmed also the identity of the preexistent Logos and the earthly Jesus.

## Irenaeus

He tried to grasp the relationship between the Father and the Son in a speculative manner: “God has been declared through the Son, who is in the Father and has the Father in himself.” According to him, no man understands the generation of the Son from the Father. It is entirely indescribable and unspeakable (*AH.2: 28.6*). For him Christ is identical with the Son of God, with the Logos, with the God-man Jesus, with our Lord and Savior. He thought of Christ as the Second Adam. He explained further the *Adam – Christ parallelism*. He insisted on the unity of the God-man Jesus Christ, repudiating the Gnostic separation of the heavenly Christ from the man Jesus. It was the eternal Word himself who became incarnate. He affirmed that Christ is truly God and truly man. His model was John 1:1. He spoke of the humanity of Jesus as a man. The central theme of his Christology is the *Recapitulation theory (anakephalaiosis)*.<sup>2</sup> It is a Pauline idea borrowed and developed by Irenaeus (Rom 8: 18f; Eph 1:10f). Recapitulation is the taking up of everything in Christ since the beginning. Adam interrupted the divine plan. Now in the *New Adam* who is Christ, God rehabilitates the earlier divine plan for the salvation of mankind. God renews, restores, and reorganizes everything in His incarnate Son (*AH. 5.14.2*). Thus the whole humanity was renovated and restored, and the evil effects of the disobedience of the first Adam are removed. Man is created in the image and like-

ness of God. Man has an immortal soul endowed with reason and free will (image), and man has personal relationship with God (likeness). Adam had to grow in it and become closer in resemblance with his Creator. But since he lost it and offended God, the Second Adam had to come and effect the reconciliation with God. Salvation is the communication of the divine life by God and its participation by man. This is what Christ did in his incarnation.<sup>3</sup>

**Hippolytus** follows Irenaeus and Justin in his Christology and Soteriology. He is closer to Justin in his *Logos Christology* and akin to Irenaeus in his *recapitulation theory*. He sees the one Christ in two stages of his existence: as the pre-existent *Logos asarkos* in the first stage; in the second stage, he entered into history as *Logos ensarkos*, by being born of the Virgin Mary. The OT theophanies also belong to this historical revelation of the Logos; they are a prelude to the incarnation. Formerly the Logos appeared only in part, but not yet in full human form. He assumed the full human form only in the incarnation. The Logos clothes himself with the flesh; he dwells in the body as in an ark, and as in a temple. He compares Christ's humanity to a bridegroom's robe<sup>4</sup>. He speaks of humanity as a man. Word became a real man, and not in appearance or in a manner of speaking. Flesh meant for him the human nature in its integrity. The divine element in Christ is referred to as Spirit. He had a firmer grasp of the duality of the natures in Christ as attested by the difference of operations and manifestations. He contrasts the weakness of the humanity with the sublimity of the divine nature<sup>5</sup>. He speaks of the Sonship properly speaking from the incarnation; the Word was the Creator of his own flesh.

Logos took the flesh of Adam in order to renew: "He

united his power with our mortal body, he mixed the incorruptible with the corruptible, he mixed the strong with the weak, so that he might save the perishing man.”<sup>6</sup> . Logos restored immortality to man<sup>7</sup> . Logos remodeled the old man by a new creation. Logos passed through every period in this life, in order that He Himself might serve as a law for every age. He was present among us men to show His manhood as an aim for all men: to prove that God did not make evil, but it is in the will of man to do good or evil, to show that man has the capacity of self determination. The redeemer is truly man. By a new creation he remodeled the old man. But He is God above all who regenerated the old man.<sup>8</sup> He washed away the sins of men, he regenerated the old man, and Redemption is deification for him.<sup>9</sup>

**Tertullian** had the clear grasp of the two natures (two substances) in Christ. Being divine Spirit, Christ entered into the Virgin. His birth was real, he was born from her, and not simply passed through her as the *Gnostics* taught (*De Carne Christi, 20*). The governing principle in Jesus is the Word. The divine Spirit took the man (*suscepit hominem*) to himself and *mingled* God and man in himself. The Word is in the flesh. He clothed himself in the flesh and not that he was transformed into flesh (*Adv.Prax.27*). Both substances continue unaltered and unimpaired after the union. Each nature preserves its peculiarities and activities, the Spirit performing the miracles and the humanity enduring the sufferings. We observe a twofold condition, not confused but conjoined; Jesus is one Person, at once God and man”(*Ibid.*). The conjunction takes place in the one person (*una persona*). But he does not preoccupy himself with the explanation of the unity of the Godhead and manhood in Christ. The Western Christology finds its consummation in Tertullian, particu-

larly in the formulation of his Christology. He defended the Church's tradition against *pagan polytheism, and strict monarchianism within the Christian Church* (denying the three persons). For him the deepest mystery of Christianity is expressed in the word, *monarchia*, namely that God has a Son. The Monarchian extremists, however, held that Christ was a composite being made up of God the Father and the man Jesus. (*Pater is Deus; Filius is homo*). He held that the *Logos (Sermo)* already has a peculiar reality, a status, and a *persona* in God. As a result of his assumption of human nature, this person of the Son has a twofold status, godhead and manhood.<sup>10</sup>

**Novatian** speaks of the man being joined with God and God linked with the man (*De Trin. 15*). He is a follower of Justin, Theophilus, Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Tertullian, in his Trinitarian and Christological doctrine. He takes a middle road between the *two monarchianisms*: dynamic or adoptionist, and modalist or patripassionist. Christ is not a man filled with divine power, or given divine dignity afterwards. He is not another manifestation of the Father Himself. He uses the expression the *angel of great counsel, and his messenger*. "His is both angel and God. It is obvious that it is Christ who spoke to Hagar. Christ is not man only, but also angel; and He is shown in the Scriptures to be not only angel, but God also. Such is our Christian belief (*Ibid. 18*). Christ is God (*Deus*) and man (*homo*), and Son of God (*Dei Filius*) (9); he has divine authority (31), there is no inequality between the Father and the Son (31). Novatian made use of several expressions of Tertullian to express the union of the two natures in Christ. He coined also new words to explain it further.<sup>11</sup> He speaks of the union as *permixtio, connexio, concordia, concretum, and confibulatio*. He speaks of the incarnate Word of God (*Verbum*

*Dei incarnatum*). He expresses the unity of subject and the duality of natures in Christ in this formula. He was quite sure of the unity of the subject in Christ. To stress the Godhead he uses the *Word-flesh framework*. But in certain cases he sets the Son of God over against the Son of man to give sufficient emphasis on the duality of the natures.<sup>12</sup>

**Clement of Alexandria** also took up the Logos concept. The Logos has come to us from heaven. The Lord has entered into or attached himself to the human flesh (*Strom.5.105.4*). Christ's human soul was a mere copy of the divine Word. In Christ the directing principle (*hegemonikon*), the ground of the organic unity, was the Logos. He was Christ's inner man (*Paid.3.1.2*). Logos is the teacher of the world and the lawgiver of mankind. He is the Savior of the human race and the founder of the new life. Christ as the Incarnate Logos is God and man, and it is through that we have risen to divine life. Christ is the sun of Justice: "Hail, O light. For in us, buried in darkness, shut up in the shadow of death, light has shone forth from heaven, purer than the sun, sweeter than life here below. That life is eternal life; and whatever partakes of it lives." (*Protre.11.88.114*). The *Logos idea* is the center of Clement's theological system and of all his religious thinking.<sup>13</sup>

**Origen** refutes and rejects the modalistic negation of the distinction of the three divine persons. He affirmed the preexistence of the Son and his coeternity with the Father: "there is no time that he was not: ouk estin hote ouk hen. He developed the theory of the Logos. He emphasis the divinity of the Logos. But in some texts there are hints to consider him subordinate to the Father. These could be explained otherwise. Father is autotheos and haplos agathos, the primal

goodness. The Son is deuterios Theos (second God, eikon agathotetos. From such references some use to infer that Origen taught a kind of subordinationism. He introduced the concept of the soul of Christ and thought that the human soul of Christ also preexisted. 'The Logos of the Father was enclosed within the limits of that man who appeared in Judea (De Prin.2.6.2). The soul of Jesus was from the beginning attached to the Word with mystical devotion. All the other souls fell away from the Logos. Origen speaks of the duality of the natures and of the hypostaseos. Both the natures retain their special characteristics. Death and suffering are of the human nature. The incarnate Lord is a unity, a composite one (syntheton chrema). This is actual union (henosis) or commingling or mixing (synchrisis), resulting in the deification of the humanity. It is not mere association (koinonia) of god and man. The Logos and the humanity are really one (C.Cels.2.9; 6.47). Logos is indwelling and is directing the manhood. The human soul is caught up in the divine wisdom and life. Word became the governing principle (hegemonicon) in Christ. He gives insistence to the Word of God as the subject of our redemption, the mediator.

He calls Christ; God-man (Theanthropos) The human soul of Christ, because of its union with the Word was incapable of sinning. (De prin.2.6.5). The union of the two natures in Christ is extremely intimate, "for the soul and the body of Jesus formed, after the oikonomia, one being with the Logos of God"(Contra Cels.2.9). Origen gave to Greek Christology the scientific terms such as physis, ousia, homousios, and theanthropos. Origen was primarily interested in the ontological constitution of Christ. Since the nature of the Father is utterly incomprehensible and transcendent, the Son is revealing the Father and is the mediator to-



wards the world. The Logos is united with the human soul. It is an assumption and a conjunction. It is a permanent one. Origen is called the theologian of the soul of Christ. Unity is achieved through the mediary of the soul of Christ, between sarx and Logos. Origen is himself a key witness to the traditional teaching of the soul of Christ. He distinguishes in Christ body, soul and spirit and the divine pneuma.<sup>14</sup>

## Partial Solutions

Among the *Judaeo-Christians*, the *Ebionites*, the *Elkasites* proposed a distorted picture of Christ. Jesus was no more than a man who had a special call from God. They thought of Christ as one among the prophets in whom the Spirit of God dwelt. He is not the Son of God in the proper sense of the word. The *Christian Gnostics* also had their various fanciful speculations about the Redeemer. From the pleroma or spiritual world of aeons the divine Christ descended and united himself for a time with the historical Jesus. Jesus' body was formed out of psychic substance. Christ was compounded of two distinct substances (ousiai). Groups such as *Docetists* denied the human reality of Christ and affirmed that it is an illusion.<sup>15</sup>

### **Some early *Judaeo-Christians* made use of archaic expressions to designate the Messiah:**

Some continued to use the expression angel to designate him. It is known as Angel Christology: This is seen in Origen, Irenaeus, Hermas and the Apocryphal writing *Ascension of Isaiah*. But these writers did not consider Christ as a creature. In connection with the commentary of Genesis (1: 1), the Son was called *Beginning (arche)*. Clement men-

tions that in the Apocryphal work, *Kerygma of Peter*, this expression is applied to Christ. “In the beginning” means “in the first born” and therefore in the Son. Justin understood the Word and the Beginning and the Son to be one and the same. Tatian, Theophilus and Origen made use of it to refer to Christ. Other archaic expressions include, “*Law (Nomos) and the Covenant (Diateche)*”. Law (*torah, nomos*) is the visible sacrament of the presence of God. Philo identified Logos and Nomos. The *Kerygma of Peter* calls Christ Logos and Nomos. The Shepherd of Hermas calls Christ the *Law of God and the Son of God*. Justin calls Christ sometimes Law and Covenant, but sometimes only the Covenant. Christ is also called the *Name of the Father*. Name is denoting the person, the power the nature of the one named. Thus the name of God meant the divine *ousia*. We have vestiges of it in the NT: Acts.4: 12; 2:21; Rom 10:12f; John 12:8(Father glorify your name), 17:5(And now glorify me, Father). Son is the name of the Father. “I have manifested your name” can mean, “I have manifested myself, who am your name”. “The Word dwelt among us” might have had an older form, “The Name dwelt among us”. Clement of Rome calls for “obedience to the most holy name, full of glory and for submission to the omnipotent and most excellent name” (Ep. 58.1; 60.4). Hermas says that the tower is founded on the word of the name that is omnipotent and full of glory (Vis.3.3.5; See also Sim 9.14.5; 13.23). Irenaeus attests that the Gnostic literature contained abundantly such expression.<sup>16</sup> The Name plays the same role as the Logos in Philo, and Philo does in fact use *onoma* as one of the names of the Logos. Name is a person distinct from the Father. John preferred Logos to *onoma*. Epistle of James says, “Do not they blaspheme the honorable Name which was called upon you?”(2:7). Christ is also called *Day*

(*Hemera*).<sup>17</sup> Eusebius quotes a Logion of Christ from Marcellus, “The Savior said, I am the Day-Ego eimi he hemera”. Clement of Alexandria refers explicitly to the Prologue of John, the Day is the Logos by whom all things were made and without whom nothing was made.

### ***Adoptionism***

Adoptionism is another partial solution. For them Christ is the adopted Son of God. For some it took place at Baptism and for others it was at the Resurrection. Basically they all denied the divinity of Christ from eternity and considered him before the “adoption” as a mere man.<sup>18</sup> Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, taught that there was one God, that the Word of god was not subsistent (*enhypostatos*), but was in God in the way in which a man’s own reason is within him; and it was this Word of God that dwelt in Jesus.<sup>19</sup> Some denied the distinction of persons between the Father and the Son. Sabellians distinguished in the one God, three names, or three activities. They give the example of the sun. As in the sun we distinguish its round shape, its power of illumination, and its power of heating, so in God, the heat, is the Spirit, the light is the Son, and the form of the whole substance is the Father.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Spirit Christology***

This is also another partial solution. In the historical Jesus, Christ, the preexistent Son of God, who is divine Spirit, united himself with the human nature. It took a variety of forms: the pre-existent Christ-spirit indwelt in the man Jesus or he actually became man. Christ the intellect (*nous*) that alone among created intellects remained steadfast in the contemplation and knowledge of God, that is was not overcome by the fall. There was an abasement of the *nous Christ* for the salvation of all creatures in the various degrees of their fallen existence, in order to restore them to their primitive unity. Christ has become all in all, Angel among angels, Power

## 5

# PATRISTIC CHRISTOLOGY - 2

## Eustathios of Antioch (324-330)

The extant dogmatic fragments of his works are entirely Christological. He makes a distinction between God as *Creator and man as created*. God is immutable. When he says *God*, he means the *Most Holy Trinity*. *Created* means that which has a beginning and end and is susceptible to corruption. The distinction between God and man is determinative of his Christology. The same distinction is made within Christ between the human and the divine natures. He objected to the Alexandrian way of predicating all the attributes to the Logos. The divinity, according to him, cannot be the subject of hunger, suffering or any change. It is not the Word “who is born of a woman” (Gal 4:4), but the man. It is incorrect to predicate suffering and death to God. Only the man can be said to die on the Cross. The human attributes must be applied to the humanity. The Word and man are one thing and another thing (*allo kai allo*). They are not one and the same. The one who anoints must be distinguished from the one who is anointed. The temple must be distinguished from the builder of the temple. The Word indwells the man. The

soul lives with the Logos. The body is the temple, the tabernacle, the house, and the garment of the Logos, in which he is concealed and through which he works as through an instrument. This indwelling is full, unlike in the prophets. He gives sufficient emphasis to the human soul of Christ and attributes the human activities to the human soul. If a human soul is excluded from Christ, there can be no human principle of motion and no human subject in Christ. He uses the expression, *man of Christ*. The man of Christ is the first principle and the first fruit of the new humanity. Son is God's image by nature; man is the image of the Word only in secondary sense. In order to discuss the union, he uses more metaphorical categories than metaphysical ones. He says, that the Word is indwelling the man; man is the temple of God the Word.. Man is made a partaker in the glory of the Only Begotten. There is no metaphysical change-taking place in the Word or in the assumed man. In short, in Eustathios we find a double predication. His concern was to answer to the Arian accusation that the Son is a creature. So he distinguished the natures. Just as it is the Word who indwells the Temple, so it is God who bears the man. God's grace has precedence in the act of Incarnation. The man is not moving towards God and ascending to bear God by his own account and virtue and strength. Rather the Word fashioned the Temple, indwelt it by His grace and in this way bore the man. s Perhaps he started with the Logos sarx Christology and later when he found the limitations of this system, and adopted the Antiochene Word-man Christology, in opposition to the Arians. He uses the expression *body for man*, and occasionally attributes human predications to the Logos<sup>12</sup>

### **Diodore of Tarsus (+394)**

Diodore was a monk and presbyter of the Antiochene Church. In 372 he was banished to Armenia and there he entered into relations with Basil the Great. In 378 he became bishop of Tarsus, the birthplace of Paul, the Apostle. As bishop of Tarsus he took part in the Council of Constantinople in 381. The imperial edict of July 30, 381 confirmed the decree of Constantinople, and called Diodore *one of the reliable arbiters of orthodoxy*. He was a strong opponent of Arianism, Apollinarism and Paganism of Emperor Julian, the Apostate. As early as 438 Cyril of Alexandria accused Diodore in his work, *Against Diodore and Theodore* of being responsible for the teaching of Nestorius. In 499 a synod at Constantinople condemned Diodore on this basis.<sup>13</sup> Diodore's works have mostly perished because of the imperial ban after this condemnation. Today what we have is mostly in fragmentary form. Abdiso of Soba (1318) speaks of 60 treatises written by Diodore. A good number of fragments survive in the citations of Severus of Antioch.

According to some Diodore began with a *Word-flesh* Christology and later developed his mature *Word man* Christology. There are two bodies of evidence to be considered: Diodore's *comments on the Epistle to the Romans* and his *dogmatic fragments*. The exegetical material is to be found in catenae,<sup>14</sup> which would retain Diodore's exegesis only in so far as it did not scandalize the orthodox opinion. The dogmatic fragments derive for most part from hostile florilege,<sup>15</sup> designed to condemn Diodore a heretic.

In the fragments of Romans, Diodore appears as uninterested in developing a technical theology. The tone of the work is totally unpolemical. Diodore's exposition is largely concerned with a full description of God's economy

towards man, and with setting forth man's proper response to that economy. In his exposition, a *divisive Christology is totally absent*. Moreover, Diodore uses language that sounds very much in accordance with Athanasius' way of referring to the incarnation. The commentary of Romans does not supply us with any firm basis for finding out Diodore's Christology. From the dogmatic fragments we can draw the following conclusions: Diodore apparently has no fixed terminology. Reason and Scripture compels Diodore to attempt a double predication. In this sense his Christology is built upon a *Word-man framework*. *Flesh* for Diodore meant *the man born of Mary*. For him the union of the two natures is most profound and inexplicable. The two realities are one thing and another (*allo kai allo*). The humanity is described as the temple. Word of God indwelt in his temple. The union does not in any way change the natures. The humanity is honored with the Word of God. Diodore rejects the Apollinarian body-soul analogy as a model for the Christological union. In essential respects the Christology of Eustathios and that of Diodore are same and there is no radical difference. Diodore fought against Julian, defending the divinity of Christ. In fact, Diodore was a true representative of the faith of the church. Against the pagan accusations, Diodore had to make a distinction in the one Lord Jesus Christ. His opponents might have understood this distinction as a separation of persons in the Lord. Diodore himself rejects the teaching of Paul of Samosata that the Lord is a mere man (*psilanthropos*). He built up his theology of distinction on sound framework. But it was misunderstood and misrepresented by those in the opposite camp. He rejects the confusion of the two natures in Christ.<sup>16</sup>

## Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428)

Theodore, the disciple of Diodore at the monastic school of Antioch was one of the luminaries of the Church. He was thoroughly an Antiochene and as a true pastor of souls opposed the Arians, the Apollinarians and the other heretics. He upheld the kerygma and taught the traditional doctrines of the Church. After serving the Church as a teacher of the same school of Antioch, and as Bishop of Mopsuestia, he died in the communion of the Catholic Church in 428. "Theodore was primarily an exegete, the Interpreter, as he was called, and was so even in his dogmatic writings. He experiences the theology and presence of Christ as a liturgist. His speculative theology is therefore subsidiary, and not an aim in itself. His philosophy stands even further in the background."<sup>1</sup>

In order to understand Theodore, we must see his cultural and philosophical backgrounds. As an Antiochene, he saw the danger in the Apollinarian teachings. He feared also that the Alexandrian way of presentation does not sufficiently explain the mystery of Christ's humanity. He argued against these tendencies and stressed the true and perfect humanity of Christ with all the human faculties and operations, including a rational human soul. This was his first concern. His second concern was to uphold the unique Person of the Word. He made also the distinction of the natures. He taught that the second Person of the Trinity, the Only Begotten Son of God the Father was to be distinguished from that which was begotten of Mary, born of the seed of David, the humanity of the Lord<sup>2</sup>. For him there is no substantial identity between God and man. The Word became flesh only in the sense that he dwelt among us. There is no metaphysical change in the



*becoming*. The Word remains transcendent, but *he became* in the sense of putting on our humanity. Word took a perfect and complete man. The distinction of the natures has to be maintained. The natures can be spoken of as one thing and another (*allo kai allo*), but not one person and another person (*allos kai allos*). By virtue of the close and perfect *conjunction* (*synapheia*), He is one and the same in the Person, but not one and the same in the natures.

It is through the medium of the humanity that the Word of God revealed himself. Human beings come to the understanding of the love, kindness and purpose of God's economy of salvation through this medium. God the Word, *the Form of God* condescended to come down to the level of the creatures and to put on the *form of servant* for our salvation.<sup>3</sup> In addition to that, Word of God chose to put on our humanity to teach us about him, and to show us the prototype of the new life, which he came to bestow upon all. "He chose disciples to Himself, established the teaching of a new law and a new doctrine, promulgated ways of acting congruous to His teaching."<sup>4</sup> Against the heretics, Theodore defended the humanity of Christ by insisting upon the reality of his earthly life.

"He fulfilled thoroughly the law of nature for us, because He was going to reform our nature, and He further observed the law of Moses so that He might pay our debt to the Lawgiver, and he was baptized so that He might give an emblem to the grace of our baptism; and he showed effectively in Himself the Economy of the Gospel to all men. After all these, He went to crucifixion and death so that He might destroy the last enemy, which is death, and make manifest the new and immortal life."<sup>5</sup>

Against the Arians and the Eunomians he says that the Word of God took not only a body, but also a human soul like any other human being. “God indeed wished to put on and raise the fallen man who is composed of a body and of an immortal and rational soul, so that as by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin, so also the free gift and the grace of God by the righteousness of one man might abound unto many. As death was by man, so also the resurrection from the dead will be by man, because as we all die in Adam, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, as the blessed Paul testifies. Therefore it was necessary that He should assume not only the body, but also the immortal and rational soul; and not only the death of the body had to cease but also that of the soul, which is sin”.<sup>6</sup> The assumed humanity was perfect and it guarantees the redemption of all humanity as represented in the rest of us starting from Adam and onward. Through the humanity of Christ the grace of God is communicated to our life in Christ.<sup>7</sup>

The Virgin Mary was the vehicle in and through whom God the Word chose to unite Himself to our human nature. The human nature was taken from her by the power of the Holy Spirit. But it does not mean that the Word of God had His origin from the Virgin. Even in the becoming, the two natures are to be recognized, but by virtue of the Person (*prosopon*) both are one. This union is ineffable and inexpressible. “In saying that He was made of a woman He showed that He entered into the world from a woman according to the Law of the children of men, and the fact that He was under the law to redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons, happened so that He might pay our debt to the Lawgiver and procure life for us”<sup>8</sup>

To further his distinction between the two natures, Theodore cites from Saint Paul the following text to explain his understanding: “Here also blessed Paul clearly made a distinction between the natures and between that which is in the *Form of God* and that which is in *the form of servant*, between that which assumed and that which was assumed and he showed also that that which assumed became in the fashion of a man in that which was assumed.”<sup>9</sup> But at the same time he tells us that the truth about the unity and oneness should be asserted: “If this union were destroyed the one which was assumed would not be seen more than a mere man like ourselves.”<sup>10</sup> For those who could not perceive the true nature of the divinity Lord, He seemed to be a mere man who claimed divinity. Conversely, others who acknowledged his divinity but failed to recognize his humanity also were far from the truth of Christianity.

Theodore, however, recognized the two dangers. So he stressed the *oneness of the Person*, the ultimate subject of the God-man and *the two natures* in him. He makes use of the expression *one prosopon of Union*. This one prosopon is indeed the Divine Person. This one Prosopon, or one subject, we can address now as God and now as man. But what is applicable to the human nature is ascribed to the divine, and what is due to the one nature is also due to the other. Theodore says: “While all these things are clearly and obviously said by the Apostle Paul of human nature he referred them successively to the Divine nature so that his sentence might be strengthened and be acceptable to hearers. Indeed, since it is above human nature that it should be worshipped by all, it is with justice that all this has been said as of one, so that the belief in a close union between the natures might be strengthened, because he clearly showed that the one which was as-

sumed did not receive all this great honor except from the divine nature which assumed it and dwelt in it.”<sup>11</sup> “The one who assumed is the Divine nature that does everything for us, and the other is the human nature, which was assumed on behalf of all of us by the One who is the cause of everything, and is united to it in an ineffable union, which will never be separated. The Sacred Books also teach us this union, not only when they impart to us the knowledge of each nature but also when they affirm that what is due to the one is also due to the other, so that we should understand the wonderfulness and the sublimity of the union that took place.”<sup>12</sup>

Though there are two natures, what is technically specific to one is referred to the other, and there is but a single subject of adoration in Christ. The same Lord Jesus Christ who ascended to heaven will come *again* at the Parousia. The man whom the Word assumed did not come down from heaven but the divine nature did. But the man whom the Word assumed will come again from heaven because he is the Word’s united man. So the subject of our redemption is the Word of God whose instrument is the assumed humanity.<sup>13</sup>

For Theodore, *physis*, *ousia* and *hypostasis* were virtually equivalents. The first two have for him a general sense, the last refers to the concrete expression of a given nature or essence. *Prosopon* expresses the being, but does not define it necessarily. It is true that each hypostasis must possess a *prosopon*, i.e. the two natures in Christ would each have its own *prosopon*. In fact, Theodore does not speak of two natural *prosopa* in Christ. He reserves the term *prosopon* for the union of the two natures. *The authentic Theodore always speaks only of one prosopon in two natures.* This one *prosopon* is the

prosopon of the Logos given also to the assumed humanity. The union is made manifest by the Logos prosopon becoming the means of showing forth Christ's human nature. The one divine prosopon permeates and at the same time shapes the humanity of the Lord. According to him, the duality in Christ is to be sought on the side of the physis and the hypostasis, and the unity is on the side of the prosopon.<sup>14</sup>

As an Antiochene, he prefers the double predication in Christ. He disagrees with the Alexandrians, Arians and the Apollinarians that all the predicates should be predicated to the Word. The *Word-flesh Christology*, in his view, had its defects in explaining the mystery of the Lord. He remained within the *Word-man* framework of the Antiochenes. He used the traditional expressions to explain the union of the two natures in the one Incarnate Lord: He spoke of it as a *conjunction*, which is perfect, undivided, forever, indescribable, never breakable and complete. *Conjunction (synapheia)* is a word used by Gregory Naziansen to describe the most intimate unity in the Trinity and he compares the unity in the Trinity with the unity of the two natures in Christ. So there was no wrong in the use of this expression. It was a traditional expression. Conjunction explains better the unity and the duality than the expression *henosis*. In the same way the concept *taking or assuming (assumption)* was not foreign to the ancient tradition of the church. It is biblical and was in the constant use of the ancient church. St. Paul says, "the Form of God took (assumed) the form of servant" (Phil 2: 6-7). Whatever is spoken of the two natures, are of one Person, the *Person (prosopon)* of the Word, who took to his Person our perfect humanity or complete man. The unity of the divinity and the humanity in the God-man is never broken even in his death in his humanity on the cross.

In Theodore we find the Antiochene way of using concrete and abstract expressions side by side, such as humanity for man and man for humanity, divinity for God and God for divinity. It was not foreign to their way of thinking. When they spoke that “the Word of God took a perfect man”, they meant that the humanity is assumed by the Person of the Word and the Person of the Word became the Person also of the humanity, so that there are not two persons in the Lord but only one ontological Person, which is common to both the natures, one by nature and the other by union with the Word. When they spoke of *complete man or perfect man*, they did not mean an ontologically distinct man, residing side by side with the person of the Word. The expression, “*Word took the man*” does not mean that the man preexisted before the union, just as the Word of God preexisted before the union. The formation of the flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the union of the soul and the Word with the flesh were simultaneous. Word was united with the soul and the body at the moment of the formation of the flesh. This is called *assumption*. The positive contribution of Theodore is that he gave sufficient emphasis on the human soul of Christ. And at the same time insisted on the unity of the God-man.

The Christology of Theodore is orthodox and represents the genuine tradition of the church. But there are different levels of understanding of Theodore and his Christology at different periods.

1. During *his lifetime* nobody had the least doubt about the orthodoxy of Theodore and the legitimacy of his Christological exposition. He died in the communion of the Catholic Church as a great pillar of Orthodoxy and was hailed

as a great Church leader.

2. *Immediately after the Council of Ephesus* in 431, there arose an anti-Antiochene agitation, and precisely it was directed against the chief protagonists of the Antiochene theological thought. Upholding the Christology of the Alexandrian tradition in the version of Cyril as normative, Theodore and the Antiochene theology were began to be judged. The strange thing in this religious drama is that some people of the Antiochene tradition took the lead in the agitations. Rabbula of Edessa was one among them. He was a strong defender of the *mia physis formula* of Cyril. At Constantinople the deacon Basil took up the anti-Theodorian agitation. The Armenian monks collected extracts from the writings of Theodore and presented them to Proclus of Constantinople. In 435 a certain Maximus from Antioch started an agitation there. In 438 Cyril himself wrote a treatise, "*Against Diodore and Theodore*" of which we have only fragments. Cyril harshly condemned Theodore in his letters 67,69, 71 and 74. And charged him of *Nestorianism*. This agitation continued till the Synod of 449. It was reversed at Chalcedon (451). The Synod of Chalcedon basically tried to make a synthesis of both the traditions and upheld more the Antiochene way of thinking. It irritated those of the other camp. The Byzantine emperors tried to pacify the various groups and eventually put forward various formulations. But none of them could bring about the desired religious unity of the Byzantine empire. The anti-Theodorian agitation was gaining momentum in the non-Chalcedonian camps. Philoxenus of Mabbug and Severus of Antioch, two anti-Chalcedonian leaders, gave the lead and they wanted the condemnation of Theodore. Severus named Diodore and Theodore as the true fathers of Nestorianism. The various religious gatherings aimed at the

reunification of Christianity in the Eastern provinces turned out to be failure.

3. *At the Second Council of Constantinople:* The non-Chalcedonians were strongly demanding for the condemnation of Theodore and others of the Antiochene School. At this juncture the court Theologian Theodore Ascidas instigated the Emperor for the condemnation of the *Three Chapters*. The argument of Theodore Ascidas was that, “such a condemnation would make a good impression on the dissenters and leave them no pretext to refuse communion with the Orthodox”. This move led to the condemnation of Theodore in 553 at the Second Council of Constantinople, in spite of the strong protest from the part of the Western Church. The person of Theodore and his writings were condemned. From that time onwards, he was considered the Father of Nestorianism by many in the Roman Empire and this tradition continued until very recently. This uncritical and biased verdict was not accepted by the Christians in the other parts of the world, especially in the Persian Empire, where Theodore was continued to be held in high esteem.<sup>15</sup>

4. *Modern scholars* until recently were divided in judging Theodore’s Christology. Some continued the anti-Theodorian sentiments of the Synod of 553<sup>16</sup>. Others consider him to be perfectly in line with the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. According to the latter, there may be obscure expressions in his works, but the general trend of his Christology is free from any error. The main points of the opposition of the former are the following:

1. Theodore considered the human nature to be an independent subject of attribution.<sup>17</sup> The assumed man in Theodore is a distinct person from the person of the Word<sup>18</sup>.



For him the assumed man is the ultimate subject of the human operations and sufferings<sup>19</sup>. The man is a physical person, a whole subsisting in itself and of one's own right, distinct from the Person of the Word<sup>20</sup>. Between word and man, there is a distinction of Person<sup>21</sup>. Theodore extends the distinction of the natures to see there two subjects of attribution, two sons, which he does not succeed in reducing to a real unity.<sup>22</sup>

2. The unique prosopon of whom Theodore speaks is not to be understood as the Divine Person of the Word (F.A.Sullivan, *op.cit.*260-271). The union of prosopon is the same as the union in dignity, in honor and in glory (*Ibid.*255). It is a prosopon of union, the result of a union of Word and man, by special benevolence. The unity is in the order of an accidental grace (T. Camelot, *De Nestorius a Eutyches*, in **Chalkedon, I, 216-219**).
3. Theodore's one son, unique son, may be only merely morally one: a son who really includes two persons, a natural Son of God and an adoptive son (F. A. Sullivan, *op. cit.* p.268-269).
4. The union of the two natures is a progressive one (K. McNamara, *art. cit.* p .175; F. A. Sullivan, *op.cit.*p.254).
5. The presence of God in the assumed man is a presence by good pleasure (K. McNamara, *art. cit.* 177). The inhabitation is a mere exterior honorific designation; it is a moral union of grace and honor between the Word and man (J.M. Voste, in *Angelicum*, 19(1942) 179-198.
6. Theodore's theological explanations of the unity of Christ is not adequate, and his concept of inhabitation is deficient, and his idea of the assumption by the Word of a true man leaves room for many obscurities (M.Jugie, in *Echoes d'Orient*, 34(1935) 257-271.).

It would be totally wrong to measure Theodore's Christology with St. Cyril's Christology or the Christology of Cyril with that of St. Leo. It is wrong to judge Theodore

with the yardstick of Ephesus, which was very highly influenced by the Alexandrian Word-flesh Christology. From the Alexandrian or Monophysite point of view, Theodore's Christology offered problems, obscurity and even division in Christ. Since the Alexandrian tradition from Cyril became apparently the tradition of the Church at large, it was inherited by the scholastics and by the modern scholars with some exceptions. That is why we find the above-mentioned references regarding the Christology of Theodore. The Antiochene Christology, especially in the version of Cyril was judged on the basis of one particular tradition of the Church. It was the mistake of Ephesus and the Second Council of Constantinople. It is sad that this tradition continued without any reevaluation for centuries. "It has to be kept in mind that during Theodore's life-time the doctrine of the person of Christ, of the relation between *physis*, *hypostasis* and *prosopon* had not been formulated by any Ecumenical Council. It would be an anachronism to condemn him for failure to adhere to the Christological formula of the Council of Chalcedon.... Nobody contributed more to the progress of Christology in the generation of theologians between 381 and 431 than Theodore of Mopsuestia. His refutation of Apollinaris and the Logos-Sarx Christology deserve great credit. He succeeded where Athanasius failed, namely, in assigning to the soul of Christ the theological importance which is absolutely necessary".<sup>23</sup>

5. During *the last few years* there was a renewed interest in the Christology of Theodore. Under the auspices of the **Pro Oriente** foundation in Vienna, the Churches of the Syriac tradition came together to study deeply the Christology of Theodore.<sup>24</sup> The topic came for discussion in the second and the third *Consultations*, and the question of Theodore was

discussed and the participants were convinced that the Christology of Theodore could be considered as one of the Christologies of the one church of Christ. The *Three Chapters controversy* also came under discussion. The Church of the East or the Assyrian Church inherits the Christological traditions of the Antiochene Church in the version of Theodore. They cannot be asked to abandon their venerable tradition. The other churches have to respect that tradition and understand it. The joint communiqué of the Third Consultation reads: "Relying on the accomplishments of the First and Second Syriac Consultations, held in 1994 and 1996 in Vienna, particularly the clarification of the differing senses of the crucial terms: physis, hypostasis, prosopon, kyana, qnoma and parsopa as they are used respectively in our several traditions, we have reviewed the person and works of Theodore of Mopsuestia. In the light of the modern recovery of more of his works than were available to earlier generations, and in the light of the universal esteem in which he was held in his lifetime, we all agree that it is time to re-evaluate the anathema imposed on Theodore's person and works at the second Council of Constantinople in 553 AD, one hundred and twenty five years after Theodore's death. We recommend that our churches consider whether they could remove the anathema from their memories."<sup>25</sup> In his paper on the Christology of Theodore, the Assyrian bishop Mar Bawai argued for such a reconsideration and it was well received by the participants.<sup>26</sup> Even during the first Consultation itself others argued for it. "With the help of Babai's Christology, we are in a better position to understand Theodore, and even Diodore. Babai had at his disposal almost all the works of these authors and his synthesis enables us to make a reevaluation of their positions regarding the union of the natures in

Christ.”<sup>27</sup> “With regard to Theodore of Mopsuestia in particular it must be said that the extracts from his works were collected by his enemies and could be from hostile sources and out of context. And they were interpreted on the basis of the Alexandrian line of thought. Today with the help of Mar Babai’s Christology, one is in better position to understand Theodore. Our discussions should lead us to reconsider at least unofficially the anathemas against the saints of the Church of the East. Down through the centuries they were subject to severe criticism and unjust condemnation. They should have their rightful place in the Church.”<sup>28</sup>

“No matter how misunderstood Theodore may be, he has to be granted the possibility of an orthodox interpretation of the meaning-when stating that the divinity assumed a perfect and complete humanity- that the divinity also assumed the totality of human experience, including suffering of humanity, in the same way that humanity, through its assumption by the Son of God, participates in the divine.”<sup>29</sup>

### **Apollinaris of Laodicea (310-390)**

Apollinaris, the Nicaean Bishop of Laodicea stood for the kerygma of the Church and for the Nicaean Orthodoxy. He was a very close friend of St. Athanasius. In 346 he received Athanasius on his return from exile. He was a very successful teacher who combined erudition with rhetorical ability, so much so that even St. Jerome was among his pupils at Antioch in 374. He was one of the most fertile and versatile ecclesiastical writers of his day. He fought side by side with Athanasius and Basil against the Arians. He wrote biblical commentaries and apologetical works. He wrote 30

books against the Neo-Platonist Porphyry and another set of books against Julian. His works reveal him as a theologian of a keen and reflective mind and exceptional dialectical skill. It was in opposition to the Arians that he was led to devise his theory. He was an outstanding champion and vigorous advocate of the Nicaean doctrine against the Arians.

Apollinaris opposed the Antiochene way of presenting the mystery of Christ, as he understood it, especially in the form it was presented by Bishop Paul of Samosata, Eustathius, Flavian of Antioch and Diodore. He thought that the Antiochenes had not succeeded in presenting the one Son of God. Fear of division and the effort to make the unity in the *Word made flesh* as due and as deep as possible are the two main features of the Apollinarian view. His great aim should not be mistaken. It is the supreme merit of Apollinaris that he tried to insist on the unity of Christ's person. In his day the tendency in his ambient was to fix attention on the deity and humanity of Christ separately. Although he was an Antiochene, he saw some danger in the presentation of the Antiochenes, or in his view, the unity was not sufficiently made clear by his colleagues. In his kerygma he was orthodox, but in his theological formulations, according to his contemporaries, he was not presenting the whole mystery of Christ. However, much of what he says about Christ is not incompatible with an orthodox explanation. A sympathetic understanding and collaboration with other theologians of his own intellectual caliber could have saved him from heresy and contributed vastly to the welfare of theology. But Athanasius was drawing near to death; Basil was too great an ecclesiastic to read books; and Diodore his next door neighbor was utterly committed to the exploration of the two natures".<sup>30</sup> Often in the textbooks of theology, the negative as-

pect of Apollinaris doctrine is presented, that he deprived Christ of his human soul. But there are positive contributions, which are ignored: he attempted to theologize and to seek a unity of the person of Christ.

Apollinaris' Christology is based on a philosophical interpretation of the Pauline Spirit-flesh framework. It reflects a Pauline sense of the dignity of spirit in man; on the other hand, his thought is informed by a strong Christian –Stoic emphasis on the unity of body and soul in the human person. Hence his view is essentially eclectic. There is a biological unity, deriving from the fact that the whole organism lives by the single life of the Logos.

*The Heavenly Man:* The incarnation of Christ meant for Apollinaris, the Logos joining himself to the human, fleshy nature to form a substantial unity and this union constitutes a human being. I.e., a being of body and spirit. Christ is a unity (hen; mia physis). The Incarnate Lord is a *compound unity (synthesis)* in human form. He calls the incarnate Lord, "the heavenly man". He calls so because the fleshy nature of Christ is taken from the Virgin and it becomes divine only through the union with the Godhead. Christ is heavenly man only because of the *divine pneuma*, i.e., Logos, in so far as this Logos enters into a real substantial conjunction with the sarx to make up a human being. For a true compound unity of the heavenly and earthly elements, both these elements must be related as parts of a whole. In the interest of an integral unity in Christ, Apollinaris held that the Logos takes the place of the human soul in Christ. As a Platonist for him there are three elements in man: body (sarx or soma), soul (psyche) and Spirit (nous). In Jesus Christ, there is body, and there is the lower soul(psyche), but the human soul (nous) is absent.

The Logos has taken the place of the human soul. In other words, a human soul is absent in Jesus Christ. The rejection of the human mind in Jesus Christ was the salient feature of his Christology.

### **Mia Physis (One Nature):**

The divine pneuma maintains its preeminence throughout. It becomes the life giving spirit, the effectual mover of the fleshy nature, and together, the two form a unity of life and being. There is only one nature (*mia physis*), composed of impassible divinity and passable flesh. Word is the sole life of the God-man, infusing vital energy and movement into Him. There is unity of nature (*henosis physike*) between the Word and his flesh. He is one nature (*mia physis*) since he is a simple undivided prosopon. Just as a man is one nature, so is Christ one nature, one hypostasis and one prosopon. The flesh of itself is not a nature (*physis*) because it is neither vivifying in itself nor is capable of being singled out from that which vivifies it. The whole power, which gives life to the God-man unity, is concentrated in the Logos as Logos. But the Word cannot be distinguished as a separate nature apart from His incarnate state, since it was in His flesh and not apart from the flesh that the Lord dwelt on earth. Apollinaris sees in Christ only one life, exclusively controlled by the godhead. The whole of man's salvation rests on the fact that an invincible *divine nous*, an inalienable will, and a divine power is *ensouled* in the flesh of Christ, thus making it sinless. Self-determination and immutability are the necessary factors for redemption, but these are realized only in the *divine pneuma* of Christ. He was convinced that if the divine is separated from the human in the Savior, our redemption is imperiled. Considered merely as a man, Christ

had no saving life to offer. If we speak of *two physes*, this gives the possibility for anyone wishing to destroy the unity in Christ. For there can only be division when there is a duality. But there is no duality in Christ. The body by itself is not a *physis*, as it cannot of itself give life. Nor can it be separated from the life giving Logos. *Physis* can only be applied to something, which is an *autokineton*: that which contains the power, which gives it life, which can be regarded as the real source of life in any sphere of being. In Christ only the Logos is the life principle and hence he proposed the *mia physis* theory . The God-man is *one physis, and one ousia*. There is only one life giving power, which completely permeates the flesh; it goes out from the Logos and unites the two in a living and functional unity; it is one because He is a living unity of Logos and Sarx. The vital union of the divine and the human in the Logos-sarx totality is the ground for the one worship. It was Apollinaris who coined the expression, “*one nature of God the Word Incarnate*”( *mia physis tou Theou Logou Sesarkomene*).

### **The Concept of Person:**

Ousia, Physis and Hypostasis were native to the sphere of the Logos-Sarx Christology. The successful use of hypostasis to interpret the unity of person in Christ does seem to have been the work of Apollinaris. The *compositum* Christ is one physis, and hypostasis and one ousia, because the Logos as determining principle is the sole source of all life. Through the symbiosis of the Logos with the fleshy nature, a *henosis physike* is achieved. The flesh and the determining principle of the flesh are one prosopon. Here too the vital element stands in the foreground. Apollinaris says, “Holy Scripture makes no difference between the Logos and His flesh, but



the same is one physis, one hypostasis, one power, one prosopon, fully God and fully man.”<sup>31</sup> “When Apollinaris said that *God took flesh*, or, as he very often expressed it, *God took a body*, he meant exactly what he said, and no more. St. John, he points out, stated that the *Word became flesh*, but he did not add, *and soul*, because the divine activity occupies in the Savior, the place of the soul and human mind (frag.2). Again he says: “Christ, together with soul and body, has God for spirit, that is to say, mind” (frag.25). “Christ is not a man, but like man, because He is not of one substance with mankind in respect to the highest directing principle of His existence”(frag.45). “The directing principle in the constituent of the God-man is divine spirit (frag.32).<sup>32</sup> He speaks of Christ as “*God Incarnate*”, “*flesh bearing God*”, and “*God born of a woman*. The body of Christ is not an independent nature, existing by itself. To exist, the spirit must animate it.

## Criticism

The Christological explanations of Apollinaris could not stand the criticism of his contemporaries. Almost all the Church leaders of his time criticized and pointed out the limitation of the system. According to his critics, in his system there is only a mutilated humanity for the God-man. Christ is perfect God, but without the human soul he is not a perfect man. The human soul is the most important element in the human nature. When Apollinaris denied it to Christ, he was, according to his critics, depriving the incarnation and redemption of its meaning. They argued that what is not assumed is not redeemed. If the human soul is not assumed, it is not redeemed. Apollinaris’ basic premise was wrong, namely the thinking that it is impossible to have two complete entities (humanity and divinity) coalesced so as to form a real unity. The rejection of a normal human psychology clashes with the Gospel picture of the Savior. It failed to meet the essential condition of redemption. It is man’s rational soul, with its power of choice, the seat of sin which has to

## 6

### PATRISTIC CHRISTOLOGY - 3

#### St. Athanasius of Alexandria (+373)

Athanasius is the classic representative of the Word-flesh Christology. He starts from John 1:14. *Word became flesh* is interpreted as the Word has become man, and not as the Word has entered into a man. (C.Ar.3.30). The Word fashioned a body for Himself in the Virgin's womb. He *dwelt* in it as in a temple, the body is his instrument. *He became man* means that he took our flesh and not that he has been changed. Logos is the animating or governing principle of the flesh and the subject of all the sayings, experiences and actions attributed to the Gospel figure. It is the same Word who performed the miracles and who wept and was hungry. Athanasius makes the distinction between Word in His actual being and the Word in His incarnate state. So there are two stages in his existence. The Word is the unique subject of all the experiences, human as well as divine. Logos is the cause of the redeeming work. Death is the separation of the Word from the flesh. Athanasius does not sufficiently stress the human soul of the incarnate Lord. But unlike Apollinaris, he nowhere denies the human soul. On the con-

trary, in his *Tomus ad Antiochenos* of 362 the presence of the human soul is affirmed. We find indication of it in a clause, “nor was the salvation effected in the Word Himself a salvation of body only, but of the soul also”. Both Athanasius and the Arians were standing on the same theological platform: the Word –flesh frame work. In his explanations Athanasius does not give the due prominence to the human soul of Christ. Instead of soul, Athanasius makes the flesh of Christ the physical subject of experiences, which normally have their place in the human soul. The flesh or body is the instrument (*organon*) of the Logos. A stress on the unity remains the basic trend of his Christology. He speaks of *putting on* human nature, of *entering* into the flesh, of *clothing*. The Athanasian picture of Christ is clearly centered on the Logos. *The Lord is flesh-bearing Logos*. A true concept of the personality of Christ is certainly revealed here. <sup>1</sup>

### **The Cappadocians** (*Basil, Gregory Naziansen, Gregory Nyssa*)

Among the Cappadocians, **St. Basil the Great** (+379) does not comment on Christology as an opponent of Arianism or Apollinarism but rather as a critic of local errors, such as Docetism. He uses traditional language. He says, “The flesh of Christ is the *bearer of the Godhead*, made holy by union with God (*Hom. in Ps. 45, 4*). Basil is approaching closer to the Antiochene position of distinguishing the divine and human characteristics in Christ than stressing the unity of Person. Christ’s humanity with a created soul becomes the subject of human suffering, of growth and progress and of ignorance of the day of judgment (*Ep. 236, 1-2*). There is no suffering in the Godhead itself. The subject of the suffering is the flesh endowed with a soul or just the soul in so

far as it makes use of the body as an instrument. The flesh may be destroyed; flesh endowed with a soul may be weary and suffer, feel hungry and thirsty; the soul that has made use of a body, is subject to grief, anxieties and cares. Of these some are natural and necessary to the living being, others are brought on by a perverse will and lack of training in virtue. Christ took upon himself our nature, but there is no place for perversion in his nature. Basil considers the soul of Christ a theological factor and preserves the transcendence of the Word against the Arians.

The Christological position of St. **Gregory Naziansen** (+390) is similar to that of Basil. He opposed the Arians and the Apollinarians and stressed the two natures on the one hand, the unity of the Person on the other hand. “The Word came into his own image and bears flesh for the sake of my flesh and conjoins himself with an intelligent soul for my souls’ sake” (*Or.38.13*). There are two natures (*duo physes*), concurring in unity in the God-man, and He is twofold, but not two persons; he is one from two. His two natures are one thing and another thing (*allo kai allo*), but they are not one person and another person (*allos kai allos*); they form a unity (*hen*). The two natures have been substantially (*kath’ousian*) *conjoined* and knit together. The Lord’s rational soul provides a meeting place for the union. The Word mingled with the soul because of its natural affinity with it. He speaks of a fusion or mixture of the two natures. At the same time he denies any mixing of the natures in the one Person. He uses the expressions, “*birth of God*”, “*God crucified*”, “*blood of God*” and “*Theotokos (divine mother)*”<sup>2</sup>. But he did not sufficiently explain the human experiences of Christ. “We need a God made flesh,” he says, “and put to death in order that we could live again” (*Hom.45, 28*).

Gregory had a clear notion of the soul of Christ. Soul is the mediator between the Word and flesh. His *Epistle to Cledonius* is an important Christological document of the ancient church. The basis of his doctrine of two natures becomes particularly significant against the background of the Apollinarian physis concept: "There are two natures, God and man in Christ, as there are in him both soul and body". (*Ep. to Cledonius*). Thus the humanity of Jesus is a physis, because it consists of body and soul.

It is Gregory who made a comparison for the first time between the Trinitarian union with the Christological union. He knew that in the Trinity there are three Persons and in Christ there two elements. He uses also another famous expression: "That which is not taken is not healed, but whatever is united to God is saved" (*Ibid.*). Gregory does not speculate too much on the natures. He contemplates the mystery of Christ: "And that the cause of his birth was that you might be saved who insult him and despise his Godhead, because of this, that he took upon him your denser nature having conjunction with the flesh by means of the mind, while his inferior nature, the humanity, became God because it was *conjoined* with God and became one with him. In this the stronger part (the Godhead) prevailed in order that I too might be made God so far as he is made man" (*Or. 29, 19*).

**St. Gregory Nyssa** (+394) conceived of the Godhead entering into and controlling the manhood, so that Jesus could be called "*the God receiving man*", "*the man in whom He tabernacled*". Holy Spirit prepared the body and soul as a special receptacle for the divinity. The heavenly Son then mingled Himself with them. The divined nature thereby becoming present in both of them. The manner of the union is mysteri-

ous, as the union between soul and body. It is a *mingling* (*anakrasis*). Flesh is here passive, while the Logos is active. Pain and death belonged to the human part of Christ. The Godhead being impassible remained unaffected. The God-man is “one prosopon” (*hen prosopon*); there is a close conjunction (*synapheia*) and fusion; the attributes and expressions of the one could be correctly ascribed to the other. The expressions such as, “*Theotokos*” and “*God’s suffering*” were not natural to him. He is more in the line of the Antiochenes. The expression, “*the assumed man*” occurs often in his writings. He takes great pain to bring about the theological significance of the soul of Christ. Unity is explained basically in the categories of *mingling*. We find the idea of the divinization of Christ’s manhood through the Logos. Our humanity is absorbed by the divinity like a drop of vinegar in the ocean. Christ’s humanity is transformed by the divinity, and this transformation has already started in the womb of the Virgin. After his earthly life and death there was a still further-reaching transformation in him. He seems to speak of two *prosopon* or *hypostasis* in the God-man. In Ep.38 of Pseudo – Basil (of Gregory Nyssa), Gregory develops his doctrine of *ousia* and *hypostasis*. There is the universal nature (*koine physis*) proper to the different particulars of a species. The particular is described through the particularizing characteristics (*idion*). It belongs to the hypostasis. The particularizing characteristics, the idion belongs to the hypostasis, whereas universality (*the koinon*) is attributed to the physis. The particularizing characteristics (*idiomata*) make the universal a hypostasis. To these particularizing characteristics belong all inward and outward properties, which a particular man can have: position, or the identifying peculiarities of his character. So in Christ there are two realities, Word and man. They

are *conjoined*: “On account of the union achieved between the flesh which is taken and the Godhead which takes, names are communicated and given to each mutually in such a way that the divinity is spoken of in human terms and the humanity in divine terms. Thus Paul calls the crucified one the *Lord of Glory* (1Cor 2:8); and he who is adored by the whole creation, above, below and upon the earth is called Jesus” (*Ad Theoph.adv.Apoll.*).<sup>3</sup>

### St.Ephrem (373)

Ephrem considered the incarnation as miraculous and paradoxical self-abasement of God out of His immense love for humankind. The Form of God assumed the form of servant. How can the Ruler of the world be contained in a single human womb? How can the power that governs all, dwell in a small womb, and dwelling there he was holding the reins of the universe? Not only the fact of incarnation, but also its specific circumstances were miraculous and paradoxical. God deprived the married womb. He made the virgin womb fruitful. God *took* the flesh (*sqal pagra*), or *put on*(*lbes*) the body. This condescension to mankind in the incarnation has brought about a permanent change in the relationship between human beings and their Creator. “The deity imprinted itself on humanity so that the humanity might enter into the field of deity.” The deity is *Alaha* and the humanity is *nasuta*. In Ephrem the language of *images* abound. He expresses the union of the two natures with the language of painting. Like a painter, mixing the pigments for painting, God is uniting the divinity and the humanity: ‘Glorious is the wise one who allied and joined divinity with humanity, one from above and one from below; he *mingled*

the natures like pigments and an image came into being: the God-man.” The God-man is the image, the perfect image (*dmuta, yuqna or salma*) of God. This perfect image is *Yesu msiha the only Begotten (Ihidaya)* and the Supreme Savior of mankind. This image is one Person (*Qnoma*) and he has two natures (*kyane*).

Christ has more than one birth; first in eternity, He was born from the Father without a mother. In time He took a body from the Virgin and was born from her without a Father. He was born from the river after his baptism. On the third day after his death he was born from the tomb. He has to be reborn in the mind and heart of each and every believer. In the birth of Christ from the blessed virgin Mary, he sees the gathering together of all nations unto him. The adorable one came down to be born and gathered to him all adoration. The offering of the Magi was a counteraction to idolatry. The gold with which the idols were made are now offered to him. So also the incense and myrrh, which were previously used for the cult of idols, are now offered to the King of kings. These symbolize the transformation-taking place in the world.

### **St. Cyril of Alexandria (+444)**

St. Cyril’s name is connected with the Christological controversy, the Council of Ephesus (431), and the condemnation of Nestorius. Cyril remains a controversial figure. He was ruthless towards his opponents. He made explicit the theological and religious hostilities between Alexandria and Constantinople, and gave them a personal character. In the Christological controversy Cyril appeared as the champion



of orthodoxy. Cyril and Nestorius exchanged letters over the expression *Theotokos*. Since they could not come to a reconciliation, both of them referred the matter to Rome, where Pope Celestine accepted the version of Cyril. Cyril was entrusted with the task of dealing with Nestorius. The after effect of it was the Council of Ephesus of 431 and all those things connected with it.<sup>4</sup>

St. Cyril wrote a lot. His works fill **ten** volumes of Migne's edition (*PG 68-77*). His style and language are far from attractive; he is diffusive and sometimes over elaborate and ornate. But the content of his writings reveals a depth of thought and richness of ideas, a precision and clarity of argument<sup>5</sup> St. Cyril is a *great Father of the Church*. His memory is venerated by the Latins, Greeks and the Oriental Orthodox as a great pillar of Orthodoxy and he is the common Father for the three groups and common basis for the Christological understanding among them. Cyril developed his Christology in opposition to the Antiochenes, especially to Nestorius of Constantinople. According to him the Antiochens were dividing Christ into two persons, and that they did not sufficiently stress the unity of the two natures in the God-man. There were cultural, philosophical and linguistic differences among the Alexandrians and the Antiochenes.

Cyril was an Alexandrian nurtured in the School of Athanasius and Didymus. In his early stage, Cyril was strictly following Athanasius. With the Council of Ephesus he developed his own thought and he succeeded in imposing his ideas on the participants of the Synod. He ignored completely the Antiochene Christological tradition and considered the Alexandrian as normative to judge the other traditions. It

resulted in the split in the Eastern Patriarchates. In a later stage(433),we find him to be more conciliatory. And he adopted partly the Antiochene terminologies. In the *Union Symbol* he appeared to be more moderate. By 438,he appeared again as one taking a stand against the Antiochene Christology in his work, *Against Diodore and Theodore*. Thus we find a change of attitudes in him.

He thought of incarnation as two phases or stages in the existence of the Logos: the one prior to the incarnation and the other with the incarnation. But the Logos remained the same what he was. Both before and after the incarnation he is the same Logos, same person unchanged in his essential deity. He who had existed outside flesh (*asarkos*) has now become embodied (*ensomatos*). The nature or hypostasis, which was the Word, became enfleshed (*Sesarkomene*) Thus the Word became flesh. Nature (*physis*) meant generally for Cyril the concrete individual or independent existence. It is the same as hypostasis. He adopted the expression, *one nature of God the Word Incarnate*, thinking that it was employed by St. Athanasius. He tried to defend and spread the expression. It caused a lot of scandal in the opposite camp. Cyril was accused of Apollinarism. Nature for him, in fact, meant the concrete individual and in the case of Christ it is the enfleshed nature of the Word. So according to his understanding he was correct. But his opponents did not have such an idea regarding nature (*physis*). Cyril was very clear regarding the duality in Christ. He speaks of the *two things (pragmata)* in Christ. The humanity is real, and the divinity is also real. Christ is *one out of two (ek duo)*. “The single unique Christ is out of two different natures; there has been a coming together (*synodos*) of things and hypostases; Christ is one out of both”. For Cyril the incarnate Lord is none other than

the Eternal Word in a new state; His unity is presupposed from the beginning.

The union of the two natures is absolutely real. It is natural (*physike or katha physin*), and hypostatic (*kath' hypostasin*). This formula simply conveyed that the nature or hypostasis of the Word, i.e., the concrete being of the Word, being truly united to the human nature, without any change or confusion, is understood to be and is one Christ (*Apology against Theodore*). Natural union means that the union is real as the union of body and soul. The Lord's humanity became a nature or hypostasis. I. e., a concrete existence and reality in the nature or hypostasis of the Word. It never exited of its own (*idikos*). It can never be spoken of as *the man*; from the moment of its conception, it belonged to the Word, who made it his very own. The body is the body of the Word; in the union, the two constituted a single concrete being.

Emmanuel is not bi-personal but the same time there is no mixing of the properties (no *synchrisis*). The union is indissoluble; there is no confusion or change (*asynchutos kai atreptos*). The union cannot eliminate the difference of essence. The God-man is one nature; but each of the elements in His being remains and is perceived in its natural property (*Ep.46*). Each nature continued to subsist in its natural quality (*poiotes physike: Ep.40*). Word remained Word while appropriating what was human. Humanity continued unchanged, while having the operations of the Word's nature conferred upon it.

The Jesus of history is God Himself in human flesh, living and dying and rising again for men. Word was God's Son by nature, since the humanity conceived in the womb of the Virgin was exclusively and inalienably His. The Word

did not suffer in His own nature. He suffered as incarnate. I.e., in respect of the human nature which was truly His.

Cyril identified Physis, hypostasis and prosopon. For him the incarnate Word is one physis, one hypostasis and one prosopon, all-referring to the oneness of the Person of the Word. The *mia physis* of Cyril is the result of the fusion of the divine and the human natures. Physis of the Word is the subject. In Jesus Christ the eternal Word Himself (*physis* of the Logos) has become flesh (Incarnate). Yet He is still one and the same person (*mia physis*). The incarnate Word is the subject of the human experiences. He does not say that the deity suffered, but only of God, the personal God who suffered in his humanity. Word of God did not experience death in his own divine nature. It is not the deity, but he incarnate Word who suffered. The Word thus suffered without suffering (*epathen apathos*). Passibility is the property of the humanity and belongs to Christ's humanity. Impassibility is the property of the deity and is so even after incarnation. There is one Christ, and one Son, and one Lord, not as if a man had a simple conjunction or identity of worth to God. The union is real, perfect and natural.<sup>6</sup>

## **Nestorius of Constantinople (428-431)**

Nestorius was a monk and presbyter of the Antiochene Church. Most probably, Theodore was his teacher. He became the Patriarch of Constantinople in 428. He was austere, and eloquent in speech like his predecessor, John Chrysostom. He was strongly opposed to the Arians, Apollinarians, Novatians and other heretics. He earned the title *Defender of Faith*. Later in the Council of Ephesus under

the leadership of Cyril of Alexandria, he was accused of heresy, deposed, and exiled to the Great Oasis in Egypt where he died after 451.

The heresy known after him, *Nestorianism*, denies the title *Theotokos (divine Mother)* to the blessed Virgin Mary. The heresy speaks of *two persons* in Jesus Christ, the divine Person of the Word and the human person of Jesus, conjoined in a loose connection, like the union of husband and wife in marriage to become one. There is only a *moral union* in him. Jesus is a *simple man (psilanthropos)*, and the *adopted Son of God*. God *resides in him* as He resides in the prophets and the holy ones. There is *no real unity* in Jesus Christ.

From Ephesus (431) until **very recently** all the Churches, except the Church of the East held that Nestorius was the author of this heresy, and that he is to be condemned by all means, as the second Judas. The echo of this attitude crept into the liturgical traditions of some churches in their sacred acts of worship.

Nestorius was primarily a pastor of souls, and his concern was pastoral. When he became Archbishop of Constantinople he took his office seriously. He tried to purify the city of the heretics; he controlled the monks, and gave direction to the faithful, clergy and the bishops for an orderly life. He met with opposition from all quarters. He upheld the kerygma of the Church and stood for the apostolic faith. But his theological formulations were at variant with the formulations of others, especially those of the Alexandrian camp. Or his way of presenting the mystery of Christ was different from that of Cyril of Alexandria. In the subsequent ecclesiastical quarrels, Cyril prevailed over the views of Nestorius and Cyril's views became normative for the whole

Church.

From the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there is a change of attitude towards Nestorius at least in the Catholic and the Protestant world. As the works of Nestorius were made available, theologians began to have a more critical attitude towards the whole affair connected with the Council of Ephesus (431) and the Nestorian question. It reached its culmination in the **Syriac Dialogue of the Pro Oriente foundation in Vienna**. The Syriac Commission made a distinction between, the heresy Nestorianism, and the teaching of Nestorius in the light of modern research. Nestorianism is a heresy, which all the churches condemn. It made a request that the *attribution of Nestorianism to Nestorius* should be reconsidered by the churches and be made a subject of study in a critical manner. It also indicated that the Christology of the *Church of the East* is to be distinguished from the *Nestorian heresy*. The Syriac Commission concluded that today's Church of the East does not teach the Nestorian heresy.

Cyril of Alexandria was the chief religious leader who brought about the downfall of Nestorius, his brother in the episcopacy. The bishop of Rome, Celestine collaborated with it. Pope Celestine's inability to know the actual situation in the East complicated the matter. It was imprudent from the part of Rome to appoint Cyril to handle the case of Nestorius. Cyril was too hasty and prejudiced to condemn Nestorius. In the Council, Cyril succeeded in getting the condemnation of Nestorius.

Today there is an ecumenical imperative to see Nestorius in a sympathetic way. There is a Christian Church, which sustained millions of Christians to live their evangelical life, which underwent terrible persecutions down through

the centuries from the Persians, the Arabs, the Turks and Mongols for the sake of Christ. This Church upholds the Christological traditions of the Antiochene School, and respects the memory of Nestorius. The more we can show the orthodoxy of the thought of Nestorius, the more ecumenical contact will be possible with the Church of the East. Even apart from that, this is a particular tradition developed in Christianity, and it is the task of all other Christians to understand it and try to appreciate it instead of repeating the unjust condemnation of the past. At the time of Ephesus (431), the Church did not possess a theological method to judge scientifically the kerygma of Nestorius. After Ephesus, the Cyrillian version became normative to measure the validity of other Christologies. The following points may be observed about Nestorius:

1. It was *not Nestorius* who set the *Theotokos (divine Mother)* question in motion. He acted only as a mediator (LH: Driver, p.98).
2. Nestorius' fight was against the Arians and the Apollinarians. But he identified the teachings of Cyril and his adherents with Apollinarism.
3. Nestorius and his opponents had the *Nicaean Creed* as their common starting point.
4. Nestorius speaks of *Logos* as little as possible. He prefers the titles, *Christ, Son and Lord*. For him the subject of attribution is the *Son, Christ, and the Lord*.
5. According to him birth, suffering and death cannot be predicated to the *Logos* as *Logos*. But he was clear on the point of the *oneness of the subject*.
6. He sees duality on the side of natures. But he does not want to make a real distinction between the *Logos* on the one hand and *Son, Lord and Christ* on the other hand. For him *Logos* denotes the *Son* considered in his divine nature. *Son* stands for the designation of the *Person of the Logos* as the subject. *Christ* is the same person in the status of the in-

carnation. Nestorius was serious about the traditional unity in Christ. 7. Nestorius speaks of the human *hypostasis*. He means by that the concrete unconfused reality of Christ's humanity. 8. He uses the expression *synapheia* (*conjunction*) to denote the union of the two natures. In the expression *hensosis*, Nestorius fears *the one nature* of the Apollinarians. 9. Each nature has its own mode of existence, and its own appearance; accordingly there are two *prosopa* in this sense. To be in the form of servant, he says, is equivalent to taking upon himself the *prosopon* of the poor.

"In the *Book of Heracleides* (LH), Nestorius makes *six denials* and *two affirmations*: 1. That the union of divinity and of humanity in Christ is voluntary (LH: *Driver*, 38.179.181-182); however, this union is neither moral nor spiritual, namely, the result of joining two separate persons together (*Ibid.* 60f. 314). 2. The unity of Christ **is not** a *natural composition* in which two distinct elements are combined by the will of an external creator (LH 9,84-86,179,303f.). 3. Incarnation *does not* involve any change in the Godhead nor any suffering on the part of God the Word, whose divine nature is impassible (LH 39-41,179,181,184). 4. Incarnation of the Son of God *was not* effected by a change of Godhead into manhood nor manhood into Godhead, nor by forming a third thing from these two *ousiai*; the divine and the human *ousiai* are entirely and absolutely different from one another and they must remain so in the union if there is to remain perfect God and perfect man in the Incarnate Christ (LH 14,80,182); and so, if either *ousia* is mixed or mingled with the other, Christ would neither be God nor man, but some new kind of being (LH 14,18,22,26-27,80,182,320). 5. Incarnation of the divine and the human *ousiai* in the one Christ **does not** result in any duality of sons/Christs (LH 47-50,146,160,189-190,209-



210,227,314,317). 6. God **was not** in Christ in the same way he was in the saints and prophets (*LH 52*); and that Christ **was not** the Son of God as a consequence of moral progress or by degrees, namely, by adoption as a consequence of proving his merits (*LH 57,59f.252f.314*). 7. That the principle of this union **is** to be found in the combined *prosopa* of divinity and of humanity, in the revealed *prosopon* of Christ incarnate, namely, the Person of the Union (*LH 23,89,218,245f.260-261*). 8. The Incarnation **is** real; both the natures in Christ are *true* and *complete*; neither is his humanity imaginary, nor his divinity *unsubstantial* (*LH 15,80,182,208*).<sup>77</sup>

Nestorius like the other Antiochenes were thoroughly imbued with the Pauline idea of Christ being the second Adam, holding that Christian moral life obliged every baptized person to strive, in cooperation with grace, to imitate the life pattern revealed and fulfilled in the humanity of Christ, who in his humanity, renewed in the fallen man the likeness of God which the first Adam had lost through sin. Since through Adam sin and death appeared in the world, so too, in Christ, the Second Adam sin and death were overcome and life secured for all. The life of Christ modeled in his humanity, therefore, was the example par excellence for all faithful who are initiated into a new life in their Lord through their baptism. He contrasted the life and behavior of Christ to that of Adam, so that believers might discern and choose through their freedom, the path to righteousness. Secondly he refused to attribute the human predicates to the divine nature of Christ. It was due to his understanding of the radical difference in the essence of God's nature and the creation. He insisted on the immutability and the impassability of God. So he could not attribute birth and death to the Word of God. Both the divine and human natures of

Christ were preserved completely and perfectly in order that the pattern of life revealed in Christ's humanity could be a real model of human conduct for those aspiring to Salvation. Human will had to be a constituent part of Jesus' humanity. The more the followers of Apollinaris denied the full humanity of Christ, the more emphasis the Antiochenes laid upon it, and the stronger advocates they became of the two natures Christology.<sup>8</sup>

For Nestorius the union in Christ is **not** between two independent subjects, or persons, but it is between two natures, divine and human, in the one prosopon of Jesus Christ. The human Jesus receives his prosopon-not as an individual separate self, but at the moment of his conception as God-man. There is distinction between the natures but most significantly for Nestorius there is no separation between the two natures; they are inseparably united in the prosopon of union of Jesus Christ. Nestorius understood the man assumed in Jesus Christ as nothing more, or less, than the complete human nature of Christ (*LH 237, 304*). When Nestorius talks about the giving and taking of the prosopa of the two natures, the dynamic is so mutual and perfectly reciprocate that the result of this reciprocity is the absolute unity, making one, the two prosopa of divinity and humanity in the Prosopon of Jesus Christ. (*LH 166-167*). This is not one and another because there is only one Son, one Lord, and one Jesus Christ united in one prosopon of both natures. He wanted to maintain the distinct continuance of the two natures of Christ when united through the Incarnation into the one Person of Jesus Christ (*LH 89*). He defended the complete and genuine existence of the full humanity in the union against any suggestion that it is incomplete. Nestorius affirmed that any nature or *ousia* to exist must have a *hyposta-*

*sis or prosopon*. In the union, the prosopon of God and the prosopon of man are joined in one prosopon of union (*LH 70, 72, 156-158, 163*). In this union the oneness of the two prosopa is so absolute and perfect that it can be said that the manhood, which is the taken, becomes the prosopon of the Godhead, and the Godhead (the Taker) becomes the prosopon of the manhood. (*LH 23, 81, 163-164, 182, 207, 218-219, 260-261*). The prosopon of union is the manifestation of Christ, united in his two distinct, but never separate or separable, *hypostases* as well as his two distinct, but also never separate, natures and essences. The effective ends of the union of the two natures in Christ were dependent both upon God's action (His grace) and upon the cooperative free will of Jesus' humanity (*LH 59, 66*). He refers to the Epistle to the Philippians (2:5-11). For him the Form of God and the form of servant mean respectively the Prosopon of God and the prosopon of man. God, the Taker took the likeness, or the schema and prosopon, not the ousia or nature of the servant, in order that he might participate in the likeness of the servant (*LH 166*); and similarly, in order that the taken humanity might participate in the likeness of God, it receives the Form of God, and so, out of the two prosopa there is now only one prosopon from the two natures (*LH 167*). By an act of humility (*kenosis*) the Form of God becomes the prosopon of servant; and similarly, by an act of exaltation, the form of servant becomes the prosopon of God. This becoming (taking and being taken) occurs without any change or confusion of the nature or the ousia of either the divinity or the humanity.

Prosopon is used as a synonym for image. The coming together and the becoming of the two parsopa-Taker and the taken-is understood in terms of creation, revelation and re-

demption. The recreation of human nature in perfection-through the second Adam-can be depicted as the image of God. The intention of God in creating Adam in his image did not mature to reciprocity in the first man due to his fall; but in Christ, the second Adam, the total fulfillment of human nature was realized in its holiness, freedom and obedience because of the image of God given to Christ's humanity, from the moment of its conception, in its every iota of perfection. Incarnation aimed at the revelation of God Himself in terms that we would be able to comprehend and encounter. Through the united prosopon of Christ a full and complete revelation is made of the image of God (*LH 58-60*). The role of Christ's humanity is to fulfill functionally that which the first Adam was endowed to fulfill but failed at. Through Christ's perfect obedience to the will of the Father, all of creation is endowed with a new relationship with God. But Christ struggled with sin and overcame sin. Thus he has become the prototype of our salvation and through his life shown us the Way towards Life and Truth, drawing us to him and making us fellow-heirs of his kingdom and sons of God. (*LH 67*). Adam completed the image of the devil by his disobedience; Christ completed the image of God, intended by God for Adam, by his obedience. The realness of union of the two natures is of a dynamic relationship that ultimately fulfills what was meant in God's plan in creating human nature. The divinity makes use of the prosopon of the humanity and the humanity of that of the divinity.<sup>9</sup>

Nestorius opposed the Cyrillian way of explaining the mystery of Christ. He opposed the expression, *natural and hypostatic union* (*henosis physike kai hypostatike*). He did not have the understanding of Cyril regarding the expression or he was not prepared to understand it in the way Cyril un-

derstood it. He thought that such a union would result in a combination and confusion of the natures, forming a new composite nature and causing suffering to the divinity. Understood in this way, hypostatic union was in no way admissible to him (*LH 49-50,161.179*). Hypostatic union, he thought, is corruptible and passible, as the union of body and soul. As in a natural union the soul suffers with the sufferings of the body, so the divinity suffers with the sufferings of the humanity (*LH 162*). Nestorius rejects the analogy of body and soul for the union of Word and man. Taken in themselves, soul and body are incomplete natures, and in the union, they mutually suffer and their union is a second creation (*ibid.8-9, 33-39,161-162,313-314*).

Nestorius opposed the teaching of Cyril in attributing suffering, crucifixion and death to the Word of God (12<sup>th</sup> Anathema of Cyril). Nestorius did it standing on the Antiochene platform. He considered Cyril as a teacher, teaching the new doctrine of the death of God (*to Theo-the Godhead*). He says it must be spoken of Christ, Son or Lord, as the subject of attribution: “the name Christ, Son or Lord, employed in the holy books for the unique Son, designates the two natures and it indicates sometimes the divinity and sometimes the humanity and sometimes both (*LH 269*).

Nestorius was happy with the expression Christotokos than Theotokos. Christotokos for him could avoid the errors of Photinians and the Manicaeans. Mary is Theotokos and Anthropotokos: one by nature and the other by union. The better expression to avoid all confusion is Christotokos. Sacred Scripture calls her Mother of Christ and not mother of God; the Nicaean Fathers spoke of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Theotokos in the Apollinarian sense has a nuance of

the confusion of the natures. The expression is not totally free from ambiguity. The Scriptures attribute birth to the human nature of Christ and not to the divinity. Christotokos removes the blasphemy of Paul of Samosata and the malice of Arius and Apollinaris. Just as women are not called Psychotokos, but Anthropolitokos, Mary is to be called Christotokos, which is indicative of both the divinity and the humanity (*Nestorius, Second Ep. to Cyril; Ep. 1 to Pope Celestine: Loofs, Nestoriana, p. 167; Ep. 3 to Celestine, Loofs, p. 181-182*)<sup>10</sup> The Word of God passed through the blessed Virgin Mary in as much as he did not receive a beginning by birth from her, as is the case with the body which was born of her. Nevertheless, in the union the two natures being united are indeed one Christ. And He who was born of the Father as to the divinity, and from the Holy Virgin as to the humanity is one; for of the two natures there was union. Nestorius was not at all opposed to the expression, Theotokos. In one place he says, “ The blessed Virgin is Theotokos.... Because the temple created in her by the Holy Spirit was united with the divinity”(Ep. to Celestine).

Nestorius makes use the comparison, employed by Gregory Naziansen, of the Trinitarian union with the Christological union. Gregory was careful to make the distinction between the persons in the Trinity and the elements in Christ. The elements in Christ are distinct one from another, but they are not persons, they are elements constituting one Christ: *ouk allos kai allos, lego de allo kai allo*. But in the Trinity they are persons: *allos kai allos* (*Ep. 101 to Cledonius*). Nestorius knew the distinction made by Gregory. Nestorius spoke of the duality of natures (*ousiai*) and the oneness of the *prosopon*. He says: “Confess, then, the Taker as He took, and the taken as it was taken, wherein each is one and another and wherein there is one and not two, after the manner of the Trinity (*LH 207*). Again he says in another place, “As in the Trinity, there is one *ousia* of three *prosopa*, and three *prosopa* of one *ousia*, here there is *one prosopon* of *two ousiai*

# 7

## THE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS

There were *two* great theological centers in the ancient Church. They were the *Alexandrian School and the Antiochene School*. In addition to these two, there were two other schools: the School at *Caesarea in Palestine* and the *Edessa-Nisibis School* at Mesopotamia. Caesarean School followed basically the tradition of the Alexandrian School, while the Edessan School, that of the Antiochene school. All the Schools produced great church leaders and had their share in the Christological and theological development of the church. In the ancient church people could not very often see the diverse traditions as complementary, but they were prone to consider difference of opinions and theological expressions as contradictory. So instead of peaceful coexistence there arose rivalry and confrontation and condemnations in Synods. Today people think differently.

### **The Alexandrian School:**

Alexandria was the capital of the ancient Roman Province Egypt and the second biggest city in the Roman empire. It was a Jewish center and when several learned men became Christian, there was an attempt to present the

Christian message in the philosophical categories of the people there. Basically Alexandria followed Plato. So the thought pattern was Platonic and Neo-Platonic. The Christian leaders also inherited the Platonic thought pattern. Philo, the Jew paved the way for it. Platonism was more mystical than rationalistic. And in biblical exegesis, the Alexandrian School followed the allegorical method of interpretation. In Christology they started with the Word of God (Logos). John 1: 14, “The Word became flesh” was their model of presentation of the Incarnation. They predicated all the attributes to the Logos. Logos was for them the subject of all the attributes. They insisted on the *oneness of the Subject or Person*. It is the Logos, the Second Person of the Trinity. It is He who came down and became man. It is known as the Christology from above, namely its starting point is the Word of God, the subject of all the predications. Just as John said, the Word became flesh, they would say, “the Word suffered and the Word died”. They taught a kind of *theopaschism*, which became a matter heated discussion in the opposite camp. From the Word of God, they came down to the historical Jesus Christ. So their Christology is known as descending Christology. They gave emphasis to God’s initiative in the salvation of man. It is God who takes the initiative to come down and save man. Since they insist on the oneness of the Person, it is known as unitive Christology: giving prominence to the uniting element, namely the Person of the Word. When they speak of the Word, they refer to the Person. Since they start with John 1:14, it is called *Logos-flesh (Logos-Sarx) Christology*. Their catchword was “*natural and hypostatic union (henosis physike kai hypostatike)*.” It became the Christology of the Council of Ephesus (431), and that of Constantinople II (553). According to those who opposed this



school, the Alexandrians did not sufficiently stress the human aspect, especially the human soul of Christ. The Arian and the Apollinarian heresies originated in the Alexandrian ambient. Since suffering and death are predicted to the Logos, Arius argued, that the Logos is not of the same nature of the almighty God. Rationally and logically Arius placed the Logos on the side of the creatures. Apollinarism also mutilated the humanity of the Lord, saying that the Logos has taken the place of the human soul of Christ. So also Subordinationism had its origin in the Alexandrian ambient. This heresy considered the Logos as subordinate to the Father. St. Cyril is the best representative of the Alexandrian theological thinking. It was Pantaenus who started the Catechetical School. Clement, Origen, Athanasius, Didymus, Theophilus and Cyril were the more prominent teachers of this School.

### **Antiochene School:**

Antioch was the Capital of the Roman Syria and the third Great city of the Roman Empire. She was the queen of the Orient. It was known by several names, such as Tetrapolis, and Theoupolis (City of God). Antioch was famous for its rich culture .It was here that the disciples of Jesus were first called Christians (Acts, 11: 26) and Catholics (Ignatius, Epistle to the Smyrn.8: 2). After the fall of Jerusalem, Antioch became the chief center for Christians It was here that Peter preached for several years, and from here eventually went to Rome and established the Church of the Romans. There were two Catechetical Schools successively at Antioch. Lucian, who later became a martyr in 312, founded the first one. The second school was founded as a monastic school, attached to the monastery, by Diodore of Tarsus. Mar Theodore of

Mopsuestia, St. John Chrysostom, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Nestorius of Constantinople were the more eminent leaders from this monastic school. Antioch always had Aristotle as its philosophical basis. It preferred rationalism to mysticism. In Biblical exegesis, it adopted the literal and historical method of interpretation. Its interpretation is known as typological. In Christology, Antioch started with the historical and biblical Jesus Christ and from there it ascended to the divinity of the Lord. Hence it is called ascending Christology. It is a Christology from below. It insisted equally on the divine and human natures of the Lord. It is known as *Word-man (Logos-Anthropos) Christology*. It clarified the distinction between the divinity and humanity in Jesus Christ. The authentic Antiochene Christology did not divide Jesus Christ into two persons. On the contrary, it gave sufficient emphasis on the humanity also. Unity of Christ was a matter taken for granted by them. Their chief concern was to explain the duality in Jesus Christ. They stressed on the operation of the Word through the man Jesus or through his humanity. They found the unity on the level of *Person (prosopon)*. It became the Christology of the Council of Chalcedon. Nestorianism is a heresy, which divided Jesus Christ into two personalities, one divine and one human. It is a deviated outgrowth of the Antiochene Christology. But in its authentic form, Antiochene Christology is no heresy. When the Antiochenes speak of Logos, they are primarily referring to the divinity of the Lord. Although they can, with St. John, say that “the Word became flesh”, they would not predicate all the attributes to the Word as such, but to the *Prosopon of Union*, namely Son, Lord, Jesus Christ and our Savior. There is such a very subtle rational distinction between the Word and Son. Word is referring to the divinity, while Son is referring to the Person of the Word.

In the same way, they use concrete and abstract expressions side by side to denote the divinity and humanity of the Lord. When we hear *man*, in the Antiochene version, it means only the full and perfect humanity of the Lord. Authentic Antiochenes never speak of the man or humanity as independent of the Word. When they speak of the *Word-man*, they mean that the humanity is full, endowed with a rational soul and free will and the divinity is perfect. They predicate all the glorious things to the divinity, and the humble ones to the humanity, but ultimately to the one Son who is the unique subject of all the predications. Jesus Christ is God and man; all the operations, divine and human, are his operations. There is duality in Jesus Christ, but his duality is not of persons, but of natures.

These Christologies could be considered complementary, and not contradictory. When the Alexandrians emphasized the unity and oneness of the person, the Antiochenes insisted on the duality of the natures. When one Christology was considered as the yardstick of orthodoxy and the other was measured by it, heresy was attributed to the other. It resulted in endless quarrels and controversies. Generations handed over this tradition to the posterity. Today's ecumenically oriented leaders of the various churches are prepared to see each school of thought in its own background and understand the merit of each one for the enrichment of the one universal church of God.<sup>1</sup>

1 G. Chediath, *Sunnahadosukal*, p.76-78; R.V. Sellers, *Two Ancient Christologies*, London, 1940.

## 8

# CHRISTOLOGY OF THE COUNCILS

## Introduction

The Kerygma and the liturgical tradition of Church firmly confessed and courageously proclaimed that the one divinity is Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, and that the Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man. After the Apostolic period too the Church continued its faith in the Trinity and in the Incarnation. However, eventually, the leaders of the Church were obliged to explain it further and to combine *the absolute Oneness of the Godhead and the plurality in the divinity. They had to find a way between the Monarchy of Godhead and the divinity of the Incarnate Lord.* For them, during the first stage of the development, God was, the Father of Jesus Christ, and Jesus was called the Lord Jesus Christ. When they further tried to explain the kerygma through philosophical concepts, such as the Logos concept, they had to clarify the ideas and give clearer notions. This led to discussions and in certain cases, controversies. Through discussions, the ideas became clearer and clearer and finally they came to the formulation: one God in three Persons (one ousia and three hypostases).

### ***The Council of Nice (325):***

It clarified that the Son is from the essence (Ousia) of the Father<sup>1</sup>. In order to clarify the oneness of the essence of the *Father and of the Son, Nice made use of the non-Biblical expression homoousios* (consubstantial-bar kyana or bar Ituta)<sup>2</sup>. *Furthermore, the Council identified ousia and hypostasis.*<sup>3</sup> *By using the formula, the Council wanted to reaffirm its faith in the Deity of the Incarnate Logos. Thus they abandoned the new teaching of Arius that “the Son is a creature and a thing, which is made” (poiema and ktisma). The Council Fathers rightly saw the place of the Son not on the side of the creatures, but on the side of the Godhead. In effect, the council of Nice was simply repeating the kerygma. It did not, however, clarify how the one divinity can have a plurality of existence. It was clarified by the Second Council (381) and mostly by the contribution of the great Cappadocian Fathers.*

### ***The Council of Constantinople (381):***

*It made a distinction between ousia and hypostasis. In the divinity there is only one divine ousia, but there are three hypostases, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus the Fathers of the Council thought that they could maintain the unity of the Godhead and the distinction of the persons.*<sup>4</sup> *In this background, homoousios became more acceptable to more and more people. Having clarified the relationship among the three persons in the Most Holy Trinity, the Fathers turned their attention to the two natures in Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Logos.*

### ***The Council of Ephesus (431):***

*Its insistence was on the Oneness of the Person of the Incarnate Lord. The Person of Jesus Christ is the Person of*

*the Word. This Synod followed the line of thought of the School of Alexandria in the version of St. Cyril of Alexandria (+444). The Alexandrian Logos-Sarx Christology played a vital role in the Synod and it totally discarded the other Christological developments in Christianity. St. Cyril identified Physis, hypostasis and prosopon and used indiscriminately in the same sense. For him Jesus Christ the Incarnate Logos is one physis one hypostasis and one prosopon, all the three referring to the oneness of the Person and that Person is the Person of the Word. Since he identified the three terms, he can say that natural union and hypostatic union mean personal union. He spoke of the Lord as from two natures one nature. Cyril distinguished hypostasis from ousia, but identified physis with hypostasis. Since Cyril took into consideration only one Christological development, namely that of Alexandria, he could not make a formulation which was satisfactory for all the various groups in the church. The Council of Ephesus did not clarify everything and solve the problems arising out of the use of philosophical concepts to explain the mystery of Incarnation. Hence with the Synod there arose the so-called Nestorian Controversy. The Antiochene version of theology was totally discarded there and the Alexandrian was accepted as dogmatic for the Church and thus impoverished the Christian tradition.*

### **The Council of Chalcedon (451):**

It tried to make a synthesis of the Alexandrian and the Antiochene Christological developments. On the one hand it insisted on the oneness of the Person of the Incarnate Lord, and on the other hand emphasized the duality of the natures. It made a distinction between the Oneness of the Person (ton auton-the same) and the duality of the natures. It saw

unity on the level of Person, and duality on the level of natures. It emphasized sufficiently on the humanity of the Lord, which was not taken seriously by the Alexandrian tradition. It attributed certain predicates to the humanity and certain predicates to the divinity, but ultimately referring to the one Person of the Word. Chalcedon made a distinction between *physis* and *hypostasis*, and identified *hypostasis* with *prosopon*. It taught that Jesus Christ is **in two natures** (*en duo physesin*) and not *from two natures* (*ek duo physeon*). The expression *from two natures* can be interpreted in a Eutychian sense. Since it made a distinction between *physis* and *hypostasis*, it avoided the expression natural and hypostatic union and its identification. The formula of Chalcedon would be, “*in two natures, one hypostasis and one prosopon (person)*” (*hen prosopon kai mian hypostasin*). It followed the line of thought of the *Symbolum Unionis* of 433 of Cyril.

But the *anti-Chalcedonians* understood Chalcedon in a different way. They continued the identification of *physis*, *hypostasis* and *prosopon* and understood “*in two natures*” as in two persons. The *Church of the East* continued the *Nicene identification of ousia and hypostasis* and separated *prosopon* from it. In the Godhead there is only *one ousia*, but in the Incarnate Logos, there are *two ousiai*, Godhead and manhood, or divinity and humanity, God and man. Since they identified *ousia with hypostasis*, their formula was *two physes, and two hypostases in one prosopon of the Lord*. Thus each group understood the philosophical terms differently and understood the others with their own understanding. Thus the controversies continued without any solution. Chalcedon clarified that the two natures subsist in the one person of the Word *asynchutos, atreptos, adiaretos, and achoristos (without confusion, without change, without division, and without separation)*.<sup>5</sup>

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**The Second Council of Constantinople (553):**

In this Synod one finds the ascendancy of the Alexandrian Christology. Chalcedon was interpreted in the light of Cyrillian terminology and tradition, and basing on that particular tradition, the Antiochene Christology was judged as heretical and the leaders of that School were condemned. **The Three Chapters** were condemned in the Synod and it was a great blow to the Antiochene Christological tradition. The following are known in history as the Three Chapters: 1. The Person and Writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia. 2. The anti-Cyrrilian writings of Theodoret of Cyrus. 3. The Letter of Ibas of Edessa to Mari the Persian.<sup>6</sup> Emperor Justinian wanted to bring about the political unity of his empire, and for that he thought that religious unity was absolutely necessary. The Anti-Chalcedonians were demanding since 451 the condemnation of the Antiochene Fathers. It was proposed to Justinian by his court Theologian Theodore Ascidas, Archbishop of Caesarea that the condemnation of the Antiochene Fathers would bring about the desired religious unity, the unity between the Chalcedonians and the non-Chalcedonians. So, in spite of the protests from the part of the Pope, Justinian condemned the three chapters and enacted Canons taking into consideration only of the Alexandrian-Cyrrilian Christological terminology. The 14 Anathemas of the Synod dealt with: the two births of the Logos; insisted on the oneness of the Person of the Word; upheld the hypostatic union and composite union (*henosis katha synthesin*); Word of God is *one of the Trinity*: the expression *Theotokos* was admitted; it explained the expressions *ek duo physeon* and *mia physis*; it taught that the divinity is *one physis with the flesh* and that Jesus Christ crucified in His body is *God and one of the Trinity*. As a positive point we can mention that the Synod insisted on the *oneness*



*of the Person of the Word*, expressed through the Alexandrian terminology. But the Synod did more harm to the cause of Christian unity. It did not bring about the unity of the various groups. By rejecting the Antiochene Christology forever, the emperor was impoverishing the Church of a rich theological system. He changed Dogma and Faith without regard for the doctrinal authority of the Church. Before Justinian no secular ruler had acted in this manner and scarcely anybody followed him in this. It was a great damage done to the memory of the venerable Fathers and Doctors of the Church who slept long time ago in the peace of the Church.<sup>7</sup>

### ***The Third Council of Constantinople (680-1):***

The Sixth Ecumenical council followed the line of Chalcedon. It taught that there are two wills and two energies or operations in the God-man Jesus Christ. It is the natural conclusion of the Chalcedonian teaching of the two natures. There arose during this period people in the Byzantine Empire, teaching a new doctrine of **monotheletism** and **monoenergism**. It is the natural consequence of the Monophysite teaching of the non-Chalcedonians. Emperor Heraclius in 624 taught the new doctrine of *mia energeia* and in 638 proposed the doctrine of *one will (hen thelema)* through the imperial decree *Ekthesis*. Because of the reaction from the various quarters, the next Emperor Constant II in 648 proposed another unsatisfactory document called *Typus*. Consequently in 680 the Emperor Constant IV convoked the Synod and Pope Agatho sent his delegates. The Synod condemned *Monotheletism* and *Monoenergism* as heresies and affirmed the constant teaching of the Church. The Synod adhered to the teachings of the previous Synods and decreed that there are *two natures, two wills (telemata) and*

*two natural operations (energeiai)* in the Incarnate Lord, invisibly, inconvertibly, inseparably, and inconfusedly. They are not to be thought of as naturally opposed; on the contrary, the human will follows the divine and almighty will and far from resisting it and being reluctant to it the human will is rather subject to his divine and omnipotent will. Maximus the Confessor and Sophronius of Jerusalem were very strong supporters of the doctrine of *dyotheletism*. Both the wills and operations are the operations of the one divine person. Although the non-Chalcedonians opposed the terminology, they agree to the content of the Synod.<sup>8</sup> But the formulation of the Synod did not bring about the unity of the quarrelling factions of Christianity. They continued in their antagonism to one another, especially at a time when the Arabs were swallowing the Eastern Christianity. Instead of standing together and presenting the love of God in Jesus Christ to the Arabs, the Christians in the Byzantine Empire miserably failed in their mission in witnessing to the essence of Christianity. They were not capable of understanding one another and they handed over to succeeding generations their inheritance of quarrels and controversy and lack of charity.<sup>9</sup>

### ***The Second Council of Nice (787):***

There arose in the 8<sup>th</sup> century in the Byzantine empire the new heretical thinking that the icons should be destroyed. It is known in history as the *iconoclasm controversy*. The Monophysites who did not sufficiently emphasize the humanity of the Lord, the Manicheism of the Paulistians, who taught that matter is evil, and the Islamic idealism contributed to the iconoclasm controversy. Some of the Byzantine Emperors and the army stood for destroying the icons in the church. In 753, Emperor Constantine V took a strong stand

against the icons. However, in the Synod of Nice II, it was decided that the making and the veneration of the icons is in accordance with the tradition the church and **iconoclasm** is a new heresy in the Church. Christ as God, as the uncircumscribed Logos of the Father, is even for art unrepresentable. Moreover, no one has ever seen God; but once the Son and Savior Jesus Christ who is God over all, was willingly incarnated, being unincarnate, and became what he was not, for us, that is, he partook of our nature, by utter condescension, and became circumscribable and therefore necessarily representable. With the reception of the flesh he also received all of its attributes in which of course, the circumscribable is found. The unformed received form and the one of no quantity has become equal to quantity. Since, therefore, the invisible one made himself visible through the incarnation and thus we have seen with our eyes his face and our hands have touched we became, consequently, capable of inscribing the form of His resemblance. For this reason, since then the Church is redecorated in the bodily icon of Christ which is as a beauty beyond this world and through which the iconography seeks the representation of the incarnation of the Lord of all, of his sufferings and of the other events of his life.<sup>10</sup> Thus the 7th Ecumenical Council was stressing on the humanity of our Lord.

### **Conclusion**

All the seven councils were in one line. The Council of Nice (325), together with the Council of Constantinople (381) has a unique position. All the other synods were interpretation of the mystery of Christ as seen in the first Ecumenical Synod. They all have to be taken together. The synods as a whole deal basically with the ontological constitution of Christ,

namely, the oneness of the Person and the duality of the natures. They were influenced either by the Alexandrian or by the Antiochene School of thought or sometimes by both. But the decisions of the Councils could not bring about the unity of the churches. Each group considered its viewpoint *formulations*. The formulations may be sacred for certain groups, but these formulations cannot be imposed on others, who are basically having the same faith. The basic apostolic faith that *Jesus Christ is God becoming man and is one divine person and he is at the same time God and man* is the common faith of all the churches. We cannot judge the past nor is it our task to judge the Fathers who were very serious about the Apostolic kerygma. The Fathers wanted that the Apostolic Faith must be handed over to the posterity unaltered. But often their attitudes cause suspicion. Today's ecumenical attitudes were lacking at least in some of them. And one can notice church politics meddling with religious sentiments even in the most sacred synods of the Fathers. We should learn a lesson from it for today.

1996, p.131-170; M.Fouyas, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p.102ff.; *Idem, Papers*, p.12-16.

- 6 *Sabhaitakanmar, III, Kottayam, 2000. p.217-220.*
- 7 G.Chediath, The Three Chapters' Controversy, in *Syriac Dialogue*, 2, Vienna, 1996, p.113-125; see also the other articles in this vol. On the issue, G. Chediath, *Sunnahadosukal*, p.171-208.
- 8 Paul Verghese, in *WW.2*, 1974, p.70; M.Fouyas, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p.181.
- 9 *Ibid.* p.174-196; *Idem, Papers*, p.17-18; G. Chediath, *Sunnahadosukal*, p.209-217.
- 10 C. Kalokyris, *The Essence of Orthodox Iconography*, in *G.R.13*. (1968), 69-70; M. Fouyas, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p.199.

## 9

### Three Post-Chalcedonian Developments

The Council of Chalcedon was not understood in the same way by all the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> century Christians and their posterity. There were mainly three types of understanding regarding Chalcedon among them.

#### Anti-Chalcedonians

They were totally opposed to Chalcedon and were not prepared for a compromise with the Chalcedonians. They considered themselves the real and strict followers of St. Cyril of Alexandria. In their view Chalcedon did not take into consideration the Cyrillian formulations of Ephesus (431). The Council of Chalcedon affirmed that Jesus Christ *is one person in two natures*. Chalcedon did not include in its definition the Cyrillian expression, “*one incarnate nature of God the Word*”, “*natural and hypostatic union*”, “*from two natures one nature*”; it did not make use of the twelve anathemas of Cyril. They maintained the Cyrillian identification of physis, hypostasis and prosopon, while Chalcedon made a distinction between physis on the side and hypostasis-prosopon on the other side. Chalcedon tried to maintain a balance between the Antiochene and Alexandrian Christologies, while the Coun-

cil of Ephesus (431) was totally following the line of the Alexandrian Christology in the version of St. Cyril. For peace and concord in the Church and for reestablishing the communion with the Easterners, Cyril himself moved away from his position at Ephesus, in his Union Symbol of 433. There he adopted several of the expressions of the Antiochenes, especially their *double predication*. Cyril was not against the two natures, but he believed in the two natures. He used the expression *one nature*, because he thought that it was coming from St. Athanasius. The followers of Cyril did not have the theological pliability of Cyril, who modified his views and expressions for the sake of the unity of the Church. Severus of Antioch was the chief theologian who tried to sustain the anti-Chalcedonian agitation in the Orient. He spoke of *one composite nature and one composite hypostasis (physis synthetos, hypostasis synthetos)*. By that he meant the existence of divinity and humanity without confusion, *in the one nature or hypostasis (person) of the Word*. At the same time he did not mean any kind of mixing of the properties of the divinity and the humanity. The *one nature (mia physis) is composite (synthetos)*. Jesus Christ is from two natures one nature. Natural and hypostatic union is composite union. In other words, he made use of the Cyrillian expressions of the Council of Ephesus (431) and tried to give a further clarification and synthesis. He was totally against the Antiochene way of expressing the mystery. So in order to be appealing to others, he tried to explain the hypostatic union as synthetic union.

The following are the main ideas contained in the Christology of Mar Severus: “1. God the Son who is eternally born of God the Father took upon Himself a second birth from the Virgin Mary for the salvation of the human race. 2. Christ’s manhood was an individuated manhood, fully like

and continuous with our manhood, with the only exception that He was absolutely sinless. 3. The manhood of Christ was individuated only in the hypostatic union with God the Son, and the manhood continued in the perfection and reality in its union with God the Son. 4. The union did not lead the manhood to a state of confusion or mixture with the Godhead. Therefore, Godhead and manhood were there in Christ with their respective properties. 5. When it is said that the natures were inseparably united, the point made was that Christ was a unity. In concrete terms this meant that the words and deeds of Jesus Christ, as they are recorded in the Gospels were expressions of the one Christ, who was God the Son incarnate. 6. There is a distinction between the pre-incarnate Son and the incarnate Son, so that the hypostasis and prosopon of Jesus Christ, although they were continuous with those of God the Son, were not simply the hypostasis and prosopon of God the Son. 7. The manhood of Christ was real, perfect and dynamic in the union. Severus opposed Julian of Halicarnassus who taught that the manhood of Christ was the manhood of Adam before the fall and insisted that it was our manhood. Thus even though Christ was sinless, He was essentially related to us living in the world of time and space. 8. Between the manhood of Christ and our manhood there are two points of difference. In the first place, we are subject to sin. But Christ was untouched by any sense of sin. Secondly, the actual union of Godhead and manhood in Christ is deeper than the possible union of God and us. By divine grace and a life of obedience it is possible for man to grow in his apprehension of God, and this may be described as a union of God and man. But by this apprehension we do not attain to the union of Godhead and manhood in Christ. In fact, because of the union of Godhead and manhood in Jesus

Christ, He is eternally the Mediator between God and man.”<sup>1</sup>

Severus insists on the one hand the divine impassibility, and on the other, the reality of Christ’s sufferings in body and mind and other human experience, including the death on the cross. He emphasized that the sufferings and death of Christ were the means of our salvation. In other words, he insisted on the one hand, the personal unity of Christ and on the other the human reality. In the incarnation, God the Son, who had Godhead as His eternal nature, united to Himself manhood as a second nature and offered it His own person. Severus calls this enhypostasis. According to him, this view affirms adequately Christ’s unity.

Incarnation is possible because God is ultimately love. It is an expression of His infinite loves that God created man. After his fall, though death reigned over mankind including even those who lived righteous lives, the same love continued to be shown by God. Thus He prepared the race for the incarnation, and in the end God the Son took upon Himself the nature of man through the hypostatic union with one member of the human race, and worked out the salvation of every human being as well as of the race as a whole in principle. The salvation consists ultimately in the human response to the divine love.

Man is created in the image of God. The eternal and uncreated image of the Father is indeed the Son, and He is the effulgence of the Father’s glory. Man is God’s created image, so that in his essential being man can reflect God on the one hand and be the Creator’s vicegerent on earth, on the other. Therefore it is possible for God the Son to become incarnate and be made man, and in the incarnation to participate in some way in the life and experience of man.



God the Son became incarnate by accepting on Himself a voluntary self-limitation. It applies to his incarnate life, and does not affect His divine status in the Holy Trinity or His controlling operation in the universe. He transcends the limitations of space and time, but he united to Himself hypostatically manhood by limiting Himself to be with the manhood according to its human conditions. He let the manhood express its creaturely freedom, human experience of joy and sorrow, physical and mental health and pain, and every thing else essentially human, with the single exception of sin. Manhood with its own soul and mind came into being only in a hypostatic union with God the Son, so that at the very moment in the life of Jesus Christ, the manhood had God the Son united with it indivisibly and inseparably. The manhood was still manhood and it had all essential human faculties and properties without any reduction what so ever and God the Son was the same God the Son, one of the Holy Trinity, without either of them becoming confused with, or changing over into, the other. But there was an exchange of properties, because of which everything human could be attributed to God the Son. The same is perfect God and perfect man. He speaks divinely and humanly. As becoming God, He works miracles and accepts suffering in the dispensation.

There was real conception of the manhood by the Virgin Mary, that the embryo was formed in her womb where it developed to the fullness of an infant over a period of nine months, and that she gave Him birth in due time with a full awareness of the delivery. The body of Christ, which was thus born, had, for Severus, been derived from the mother, in the same way as the body of any human being, with the only exception that the male function required in the case of every other conception was fulfilled by divine action.

He was opposed to the use of the simple phrase, “one nature”, but the usage should be “one nature of God the Word incarnate”. And this one nature is *composite* (*synthetos*). Nature could be taken in the sense of *ousia* or *hypostasis*. In regard to incarnation, nature should mean *only hypostasis*. It was God the Son, an eternal hypostasis (nature understood as hypostasis) in whom the entire Godhead (nature as *ousia*) is individuated, that made the manhood (nature as *ousia*) in its fullness to be individuated (nature as hypostasis) in union with Him. In the sense of *ousia*, nature is abstract, so that manhood as *ousia* cannot exist as a concrete reality without subsisting in a person. Thus the manhood has to be hypostatic, and that is what God the Son did with the manhood by individuating it. The individuation happened only in the union. Christ who is formed in this way is at once perfect God and perfect man. He is one incarnate nature or hypostasis of God the Word and as such one composite hypostasis, which is the same as one incarnate nature of God the Word. As God, He is God the Son, and as man, the same is a man, representing the entire human race.<sup>2</sup>

The concept of hypostatic union is very fundamental to Severus. Christ is a self-subsistent composite hypostasis, the product of a union of a simple self-subsistent hypostasis with a non-self –subsistent hypostasis. A simple self-subsistent hypostasis is one that exists in its own right and is not composite; e.g. Father and the Holy Spirit. Peter and Christ are composite self-subsistent hypostases. They owe their existence to a union of two hypostases, either two non self-subsistent hypostases, or a self-subsistent and a non- self-subsistent one. In the case of Peter, this means soul and body; in the case of Christ, the divinity and the humanity. A self-subsistent hypostasis is a hypostasis existing individual subsistence; a non-

self subsisting hypostasis is a hypostasis that does not exist in individual subsistence. Prosopon is equivalent to self-subsistent hypostasis: i.e., existing in individual existence. A prosopon is a concrete reality and it bears a name, Peter or Christ. A non-self subsistent hypostasis is not a prosopon and is not named. He speaks of one nature, one hypostasis, and one prosopon of God the Word incarnate. Hypostasis refers more to the individual rather than to the generic. Severus accepts that the expression *indwelling* is biblical. But it should not be interpreted to mean that God the Word was in Christ as he was in the prophets. The humanity belonged to the Word, not as a prophet belongs to God, but as a man's own flesh belongs to him. Word used the strength of the soul of Jesus to perform the saving acts. Divinity must remain without confusion as divinity in Christ, the body and soul of Christ also remaining firmly body and soul which belong not only to the realm of creation, but continue to remain human. The boundary line between the created and the uncreated is crossed by the Incarnate Word, but never blurred or removed. It is through God the Word Incarnate who operates all things within the incarnation, that our salvation comes. Christ is one in identity, one nature, to which belong two sets of properties, the humanity and the divinity.

Christ is our Model and our Legislator. Adam was originally created incomplete, in order that, of his own free will, he might be able to share in the good things of God. He was given the Law to help him in his development. It was to test his free will. The fall however, cost mankind not only its immortality, but also the evangelical and spiritual law, which was written in Adams's heart. So later God gave them the Mosaic Law, a law written on tablets of stone. From Moses to Christ God was disclosing the law, which was finally fully

revealed in Christ. Human dignity was lost through the fall. Mankind plunged into the world of change. But through the second Adam comes a new era in which we are able to leave the old world of corruption and decay and reenter the realm to which we properly belong. At the end of time, creation itself will no longer be subject to corruption, but restored to its original splendor. The soul at the resurrection will receive a perfect human body with all its members intact, even though they will not be used; the resurrection of Christ is the model of what we will be. This state, to which we shall come, will be higher than that of Paradise.<sup>3</sup>

In short, Severus held that God the Word assumed the mortal and passible body of men, and he upheld the natural and hypostatic union. He compared the union with that of body and soul. But he did not consider it as a forced union. He did not believe that the divinity suffered with the suffering of the body. For him, before the incarnation, the Word was simple nature, but by becoming man, he became composite in regard to the flesh. In Christ, he conceived two essences in abstract, and considered him as a composite nature and composite hypostasis, but at the same time he opposed any idea of a mingling of the natures.<sup>4</sup>

## **Neo-Chalcedonians**

From 451 to 553 there were various attempts to bring about the religious unity among the Chalcedonians and the non-Chalcedonians. The Byzantine emperors took most of the initiatives. There was an attempt to make use of the Cyrillian expressions without abandoning the Chalcedonian definition of faith. These people were orthodox and they

stood for Chalcedon, but tried to make further clarifications. They took the Cyrillian expressions and gave a further meaning. The non-Chalcedonians also did the same thing as we have seen a little earlier in the case of Severus. They interpreted the “one nature”, and the “from two natures,” “natural and hypostatic union”, of Cyril and tried to show that Cyril agrees with Chalcedon. For them natural union or hypostatic union is *synthetic union (henosis katha Synthesin)*. Christ is called *synthetos*. During this period a new expression, “*one of the Trinity*” emerged. “One of the Trinity suffered in the flesh and died in the flesh”. Divinity is one nature with the flesh. So the neo-Chalcedonians used both the *one nature formula (mia physis)* and the *two-nature formula (duo physeis)*. They understand the one nature formula in the sense of the twofold consubstantiality of the one Christ with the Father according to the divinity, and with us according to the humanity. The distinction in Christ is according to *vision or theoria*. It guarantees the unmingled existence of both the natures, and also their real undivided union. From the two natures, that is, from the divinity and humanity, there is one composite Christ. God Logos is united to the human nature, (*physis*), and not to the hypostasis or person of another. The union coincides with the act of creating Christ’s human nature. The divine hypostasis creates this spiritually ensouled human nature for him, for the purpose of being hypostasis for it and to exist humanly in it as divine hypostasis. *One of the Trinity* is an expression, which expresses the unity of Christ in the real divine subject, the Person of the Word. The Incarnate Word is the bearer of suffering. The one hypostasis is applied to the preexisting Logos. The assumed human nature participates in the hypostasis only by *inexisting* in the hypostasis of the Logos. It happens by the creative action of

the Logos, centered on the Logos, who creatively makes for himself permanently the human being, for it remains inseparably *his nature*. Neo-Chalcedonians make use of the expression one composite hypostasis, but they would not say, one composite nature (*mia physis synthetos*), as would the non-Chalcedonians say.

The neo-Chalcedonians abandoned the synonymous use of *physis-hypostasis* of the non-Chalcedonians. They made a distinction of *physis-ousia* on the one hand, and *hypostasis-prosopon* on the other. The God-Logos and Christ are not one and another (*allos kai allos*). It is the question of one and the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, Word, who became flesh and a human being.<sup>5</sup>

The development of neo-Chalcedonism took place in the Byzantine circles. Leontius of Byzantium, Leontius of Jerusalem, Emperor Justinian and finally St. John Damascene contributed to it. It was John who made a synthesis of the Orthodox thought in the Byzantine circles.

### ***St. John' Damascene's Christological Synthesis:***

Since the whole man fell in Adam, the whole human nature is in need of cure, namely deification or glorification. Thus the Logos became everything that man is by way of constitution and assumed everything that man has except sin. The expression, "that which is not assumed is not cured" (*to aproslepton atherapeuton*) is a cornerstone of John's Christology. Christ is the concrete Old Testament Lord and Angel of Glory and of Great Counsel, who Himself is the Logos and Wisdom of God. He became man or a complete man by His birth from the Theotokos, from whom He took the human nature. This human nature of the Logos is not

without a hypostasis or individuality (*anupostatōn*) nor is it a hypostasis or individual in independence or of itself (*authypostatōn*), but rather a complete human nature with all natural properties in the hypostasis or individuality of the Logos. Logos did not assume or unite Himself to an individual man or bring into existence an individual man simultaneously with His hypostatic union with the human nature born of the Theotokos. Rather the hypostasis or individuality of the Logos is the hypostasis or individuality, which is born as man from the Blessed Virgin Mary and became thus the individual or hypostasis, anointed by nature in His humanity and thus is called Christ. The hypostasis or individuality of the Logos became and was at all times the hypostasis or individuality of the human nature, both body and soul, of the Logos. Still there is a distinction between the created nature and hypostasis of the Logos, because the hypostasis is that of uncreated Logos. The Person in Christ is Uncreated, but the divine nature is Uncreated and the human nature is created.

The Logos took upon Himself our compound nature and this not subsisting of itself or as being originally an individual, and in this way assumed by him, but as existing in His Hypostasis. For the hypostasis of God the Word became the hypostasis of the flesh and according to this, the Word became flesh (John 1:14), clearly without change (*atreptos*). Likewise the flesh became Logos without alteration, and God became man. For the Logos is God and man is God, because of the hypostatic union. Incarnation is becoming man (*enanthropesis*); it signifies that the conjunction is with flesh, with man, just as heating of iron implies its union with fire. The hypostasis of the Logos which was formerly simple, became composite from two perfect natures of divinity and hu-

manity. The living body is not a deified man (*ouk anthropon apotheotheonta*), but God Incarnate (*alla Theon enanthropesanta*). Thus incarnation gave back to man whatever he had lost through the sin of Adam—the possibility of incorruptibility in the state, after His image and His likeness, by defeating the devil. According to him, the unique hypostasis of the Word of God, which had preexisted before Incarnation, simple, uncomposed, uncreated, bodiless, unseen, untouchable, uncircumscribed, has become at incarnation the hypostasis of the body, and composite: composed of two perfect natures, of divinity and humanity. He is both God and man at the same time but not two persons (*ouk allos kai allos*). In the union the humanity stays on in the hypostasis of the word, but *enhypostatos*, that is, united with Him *katha Synthesin*. He says, every nature is either hypostasis or enupostatical; also every hypostasis is *enousios*; therefore, there is no nature *anupostatos*, or *hypostasis anousios*. The union of the two natures exists even in death, and beyond the Savior's death. The body and soul, separated by death, remain united to the Word of God, that is, in the same unique person. The composite hypostasis refers to the two natures, and not two persons. The natural properties of the two natures of our Lord are twofold and distinct, but the natural properties of the hypostasis are simple. Christ is made of two natures and in two natures after their union. The unity of hypostasis means that both divinity and humanity poses in Christ a single source of existence. Their respective actions have but one agent. Thus he upholds the oneness of the person and the duality of the natures.<sup>6</sup>

## East Syrian Contribution



In the Assyrian Church of the East in the Persian Empire, there was a third synthesis taking place. It was **Mar Babai the Great**, (553-628), who made this synthesis and development. He was a monk and Abbot of the Great monastery of Mar Abraham at Mount Izla in today's South-Eastern Turkey. He tried to develop and clarify the Antiochene position of Theodore and Nestorius and answered the accusation of the opponents that the Church of the East teaches the so-called Nestorian heresy. His Christological teaching is seen primarily in his *Book of Union (Liber de Unione)*. He continued the Nicæan identification of *physis (kyana)*, *ousia (ituta)* and *hypostasis (qnoma)*. He separated the *prosopon (parsopa)* from *ousia, physis and hypostasis*. Since he made use of the Syriac language for communication, we shall make use of these Syriac terms to express his Christology. Since there are two essences, there should be two *kyane* and two *qnome*. *Kyana* is an abstract nature. It exists as *qnoma*. Humanity is generic and it is *kyana*, Peter and Paul are different *qnoma* of this one human *kyana*. In order to affirm the real existence of the two essences in Jesus Christ, he speaks of two *qnome*. It simply means that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man. The particularizing characteristics of each *qnoma* are the *parsope*. It is the *parsopa*, which distinguishes one *qnoma* of a species from another *qnoma* of the same species. Hence in Jesus Christ there are two *kyane*, and two *qnome*. This is when we consider the duality. But when we consider the unity there is only one ontological *parsopa* and this is the *Parsopa of Filiation* of the second *Qnoma* of the Trinity. Jesus Christ has only one *parsopa*, and that is the *parsopa of Filiation* of the Divine Word. But Jesus as Jesus of Nazareth, distinct from Peter or Paul has his natural human *parsopa*

(that is, the accidental qualities which make him distinct from other human beings). Jesus as a man does not have a distinct independent ontological person other than that of the Word of God. So there is unity and there is duality.

As a believing Christian, Mar Babai speaks of the need of faith in discussing matters pertaining to faith. He demands faith from his audience for the understanding of the divinity and Incarnation. The mystery of the divinity is beyond all human comprehension and it has to be accepted by the faithful in faith. Without any qualification whatsoever, Babai accepts the fact of the union of the two natures in Jesus Christ, namely the human nature and the divine nature. When he analyses the ontological constitution of Christ, he sees a duality in him that he is of the two. He firmly believes that it is the second Qnoma of the Trinity, who is united to our humanity. That at the angelic salutation to the blessed Virgin Mary, there effected a perfect and everlasting union in the womb of the Virgin of the divinity and of the humanity in the one *parsopa* of Filiation of the second Qnoma of the Trinity, is also one of the basic Christological concepts accepted by Babai as dogma. Babai has absolutely no doubt regarding the intimacy of the two natures in Christ. He speaks of the union of Christ as most intimate and inseparable as possible. His faith is above every philosophical argument and metaphysical principle. That the Son is one and unique and that He has two perfect natures in the union without mixture is also an unquestioned fact for Babai. His concern was to explain the duality in the union.

Mar Babai's Christ-picture is biblical and in accordance with the Tradition. "Jesus Christ is the Head of our life, our hope and our God. Jesus Christ is our God. He is our Lord

Jesus Christ, Head of our life, and our God. Christ is our hope. Christ is our God and we are His servants. He is to be adored and we with all the creatures are His adorers. He is the Cause of our salvation and our life. Christ is the principle of our life and our God and our Teacher. He is our Wisdom, our hope, and our power and our Consolation. Christ is the sublime Head of the Church.”<sup>7</sup>

Mar Babai tried to make a synthesis of the various traditions. As a follower of the Antiochene tradition, he begins with the historical Jesus Christ and ascends to the divinity. On the other hand, in certain parts he begins with the Word of God, as the Alexandrians do, and comes down to the union. As a follower of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Babai uses concrete and abstract expressions side by side. He uses humanity instead of man, and man for humanity, divinity for Word and Word for divinity. On one and the same occasion, he may use both the expressions side by side. Babai says, “God the Word...assumed the man and joined him to Himself parsopically in one Filiation.” In the same context we read, “God the Word assumed our humanity and joined it to Himself in one Filiation”.<sup>8</sup>

It is the Word of God who assumed our humanity. Word is the second Qnoma of the Trinity. The term Word is indicative of the divine nature shared by the three divine Qnome equally and eternally. The natural, unique and unchangeable property of the Word is the Parsopa of Filiation, by which he is distinct from the Father and the Holy Spirit, and related to them. The Parsopa of Filiation is ontological and essential to the Word. Babai thus makes a very subtle distinction between Word and Son. Word is pointing to the common nature (divinity) and the qnoma, while Son is indica-

tive of the particular property of the nature, the parsopa of Filiation. So he would not say that the Word suffered or the Word died. He would rather say, the Son died and the Son suffered for us.

For Babai the Oneness of Christ, the Son of God was a matter taken for granted. But the Christians in the Persian tradition were repeatedly accused of dividing Christ, while they constantly denied it. God the Word, the Second Qnoma of the Trinity, having the Parsopa of Filiation, assumed our humanity to His Parsopa and gave His glorious Parsopa to the man or humanity formed in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Thus the Parsopa of Filiation of the Word became the Parsopa of that which was formed in Mary. The Word of God is a perfect Qnoma and the humanity is a perfect qnoma as any other man.<sup>9</sup>

The unity in Christ is expressed as a *giving and taking of Parsopa*. Jesus of Nazareth possesses a fixed qnoma with his natural parsopa, but he has no human filiation and independent existence. By his natural parsopa he is Jesus of Nazareth. God the Word assumed the man Jesus and gave him His glorious Parsopa of Filiation at the moment of his formation in the womb. At the same time, God the Word, received the humble parsopa of the human nature and revealed Himself through it. The man apart from the Word and independent of him and without union with him never existed and can never exist. The human nature is formed to be united; formation and union were simultaneous. At the very moment of its formation, the human nature received the Parsopa of filiation and thus he became the Son of the Most High, because of the parsopa of the Word. But the human nature was perfect, endowed with a rational soul and body. The Word

did not take the place of the soul. He in fact was united to both soul and body.

Repeatedly all through *the Book of Union* Babai teaches that Christ is one, and the Son is one. In His divinity, Christ is Son by nature, and in his humanity, he is Son by union and assumption. It is the same Son. One and the same is the Son of the Most High in heaven and in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary. The one who is formed from her is called Son of the Most High by the union with the Eternal Son of the Most High. Christ is Son in His humanity, *not by adoption*, but by union. One is Christ in His human nature and in His divine nature. One is Christ the Son of God and the Son of man.<sup>10</sup> One may notice here a kind of duality or a language of duality. But it is only in the conceptual level. The speaking of one and another is to explain the mode of the union.

Christ is one in His Filiation, the Son is one in His anointing. There is only one honor and one adoration to Christ. The double *qnome* is not against the most intimate union between the two natures in the one *parsopa*. There is no distinction between Christ and Son. Christ and Son are not one and another. Christ is the Son and Son is Christ. This *Parsopa of Filiation* is called the *Parsopa of Union*, indicating the uniting element, namely the Filiation, that is one. It is called *common Parsopa* because it belongs to both the *qnome*, to the one by nature and the other by union and assumption. The common *parsopa* is not the result of the fusion of the two natural *parsope*. It is also called *Parsopa of Economy* because it is the Son who became man. It is through His adorable *Parsopa* that he undertook all the salvific economy for our renovation and salvation.

Babai also makes use of the old comparison of St. Gregory Naziansen: comparing the Trinitarian union with the Christological union. Just as the three divine Qnome are one eternal nature, and essence and existence, the two natures and two qnome constitute one Son. The two natures of Christ are preserved in the one Parsopa of the Son of God with the properties of each qnoma being preserved without confusion, and each qnoma is acknowledged in the same parsopa not separately.<sup>11</sup> Just as the three divine Qnome are entirely one without any limitation, the two natures in Christ constitute an absolute oneness. This analogy is made use of to show the most intimate union existing between the two natures and at the same time the unconfused existence of the two natures in the one Parsopa of Filiation. In both cases, while united, they are distinct, while distinct, they are united.

#### ***Union expressed in various ways:***

Babai says that theologians make use of a variety of terms to describe this adorable economy. I.e., the union of the two natures in the Incarnate Son, such as *assumption, indwelling, temple, vestment, adhesion and union*. This adorable union is all these and above all these. All these terms have their limitations, but the union is an inexplicable mystery. It is ineffable, unspeakable, inscrutable, and indivisible and unmixed. Each of these expressions expresses a part of the truth, which other terms may not be able to convey. The most commonly used expression is union. This union is called *assumption*. Assumption alone indicates “the diverse natures in their properties”.<sup>12</sup> This union is more than assumption. Assumption has biblical basis. But not all assuming is indwelling. But this union is *indwelling*. There is difference between indwelling, and *putting on the vestments and union*.

We put on our clothes, but it is never said that we indwell in our clothes, nor do we say we are united to our clothes. Fish dwell in water, but nobody says that they put on water. Word of God put on the nature of our humanity. He dwelt in it and is united with it in one ineffable union. The humanity is called the dress of the divinity. It does not mean that there was no union.<sup>13</sup> Christ's dress, namely, his humanity, is ever united and never separated and it belongs to Him forever. The dress and the one who dresses it are not one and the same and they do not constitute one nature and one qnoma. The example of the dress helps us to show the distinction of the natures. Just as the dress hides the members of the body, the divinity was hidden in the humanity. Since it is assumption, it is not a simple putting on. The Word of God put it on by assuming it. It is His dress, belonging to Him in the union forever.<sup>14</sup> This union is called *adhesion or conjunction (synapheia-naqiputa)*. Man and woman adhere to each other, fish adhere to water, our dress adheres to our skin, but they do not constitute a union. So there is difference between adhesion and union. In the union of the humanity and the divinity, one thing (*had medem*) is constituted in the one parsopa of Filiation.<sup>15</sup> But neither between water and fish, nor between dress and the skin is one thing (*had medem*) because of the parsopa of union, so that the fish is called water and water fish, and we our dress and our dress we. All things united are not called adhered. Body and soul are united, but they are not adhered. Adhesion makes clear the distinction of the properties.

Even though Christians are united to Christ in faith and in one direction of Christ, and in the spiritual birth and by the bond of charity to one another, we do not say, we are adhered to one another; we not dwell in one another, nor are

we temples of one another. The parts of a house adhere to each other, but they do not indwell mutually. The adhesion of husband and wife is no indwelling nor do they mutually put on, nor are they temples of one another, nor do they have Parsopic union through assumption. When it is said that God dwells in heaven and in Jerusalem, it is no indwelling conjunctively and parsopically, so that they be gods and God may be they assumptively through the union of the parsopa.<sup>16</sup>

Indwelling shows that one is in another and that God the Word has not adhered extrinsically and finitely to the form of servant, whom He assumed to His parsopa. Adhesion shows that the natures are not mixed in any way and that there is no union of the natures through assumption. Word of God did not become the qnoma of man and man did not become the qnoma of Filiation. But both are united in the one Parsopa of the Word. This union is not an extrinsic adhesion nor an intrinsic limitation or inclusion, nor is made parsopically in distance, nor voluntary with separation. The Infinite is in the finite, without any confusion or mixture or admixture, composition or parts.

This ineffable union is more than all these terms put together can express. Because of the parsopa of union, “this is that and that is this” and the names of the humanity also are applied to the divinity assumptively in the union and vice versa. When all the terms are put together, they in some way express the ineffable mystery. The different terms together show that the divinity is not distant from the humanity: the humanity assumed the parsopa of Filiation of the divinity adhesively; the property of each nature exists without any confusion; union is non-composite, and free, unlike the union of body and soul.



### **The Duality in Christ:**

In order to explain satisfactorily the duality in Christ, Mar Babai proposed the two-qnome system. He thought that the one nature (*mia physis*) Christology of the non-Chalcedonians and the *hypostasis synthetos* of the neo-Chalcedonians couldn't adequately explain the mystery of the two natures and their union in the one Person of the Word. Mar Babai's formula is **two natures, two qnome and one Parsopa of Filiation**.

Mar Babai held firmly that Christ is God and man; the two natures subsist in Him without any mixture or confusion in the one parsopa of filiation. He is Son in His divine nature and in His human nature. The formula, "preserving the properties of each nature" is an ever-recurring expression in Babai.<sup>17</sup> He finds the duality on the side of natures. Christ is God and man. The Son of God became the son of man, by assuming a complete man. If He is perfect God, He is a perfect qnoma. If He is perfect man, it means one visible human qnoma. On the contrary, preserving the properties of the divine Qnoma, the Word of God assumed to His Parsopa of Filiation the human qnoma, with its humble parsopa. The human properties subsisted in the human qnoma. Hence he affirms two natures and two qnome.

If there is only one qnoma after the Incarnation, namely the Eternal Invisible Qnoma, Word, either it has undergone change in Incarnation by becoming man, and has become a composite qnoma by adding that which is of man, or it has not assumed anything from us. Both are impossibilities. In this system, Christ is visible and Invisible, the Assumer and the assumed, the form of God and the form of servant, God and man, the subject of passion and the Lord of Glory. He

suffered and died in His human nature; in His divine nature He did not suffer or die. Babai attributes the infirmities to the humanity. It is the Son who underwent all the humiliations; it is Christ who died for us in His humanity.<sup>18</sup>

Mar Babai finds the duality on the side of nature and qnoma. But there is no independence for the human qnoma. Even for a moment, the human qnoma of Christ has no separate existence of its own. It is a perfect human qnoma, but its parsopa of Filiation is that of the Word. The human qnoma, man, does not have a human father, no human filiation. At the moment of its formation, the Word assumed the humanity and it received the Parsopa of Filiation of the Word. The man has no autonomous and independent existence. It exists united with the Word in the one Parsopa of Filiation.

Even in the union, which is everlasting and ineffable and never breaking, the natures do not come into any kind of mingling. Each nature keeps the properties proper to it. When they are united, they are distinct; when they are distinct, they are untied. They are united in the one Parsopa of Filiation; they are distinct in the properties of each nature. They are distinct, but not distant, and independent.<sup>19</sup> Babai speaks of the Son as the subject of all the attributes. But he follows the line of thought of the *Union Symbol* of 433 and Chalcedon, where certain predicates are attributed to the divinity and certain to the humanity and certain to the one subject. Because of the one Parsopa of Filiation, all are spoken of one subject. But Babai makes a distinction: *by nature and by union*: that which by nature pertains to the divinity, pertains to the humanity by union; in the same way, that which pertains to the humanity by nature, pertains to the divinity by union. "The Son of the most High is the son of man, and the son of man is the Son of the most High". He is ~~God Incarnate and man deified~~

Just as the natures are united in the one Parsopa, the names also are united in the one Parsopa. There are certain

## 10

### ECUMENICAL CHRISTOLOGY

The Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451) were the two great stumbling blocks among the churches for centuries, which hindered the reunification of the ancient apostolic churches. Christology was the main issue of contention and separation. Ephesus was more in line with the Alexandrian terminological line, while Chalcedon was more in line with the Antiochene way of thinking. The various churches inherited the traditions from either of these councils and considered the rest of the Christians who are not agreeing with them terminologically as heretics or schismatics. Thus the Byzantines and the Catholics, both Chalcedonians, upheld the orthodoxy of both the councils and made use of the terminology of both the councils. Hence they make use of the *one nature Christology* and *two natures Christology*. The anti-Chalcedonians (Oriental Orthodox) make use of only *one nature (mia physis) Christology*. The Assyrians have the formulation: *two natures (kyane), two existences (qnome) and one person (parsopa) of Filiation*. Christology seemed to be an insurmountable obstacle for Christian reunification. It continued for centuries.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the churches be-

gan to have a reevaluation of the councils of Chalcedon and Ephesus and make an intense effort to see whether the languages of the various churches could be made understandable to the other churches. Thus the **Byzantine Orthodox churches and Oriental Orthodox churches** entered into ecumenical dialogue and it bore abundant fruits. After their meetings they came to the conclusion that the difference existing among the churches in Christology is chiefly due to terminology and not based on the essence of the Christological faith. In the content of faith, both the church families hold the same apostolic faith. After their first meeting under the auspices of the World Council of Churches at Aarhus in 1964, the participants made a joint statement. It reads: "In our common study of the Council of Chalcedon, the well-known phrase used by our common Father in Christ, St. Cyril of Alexandria, *mia physis (or mia hypostasis) tou Theou Logou Sesarkomene* (the one physis or hypostasis of God's Word Incarnate) with its implications, was at the center of our conversations. On the essence of the Christological dogma we found ourselves in full agreement. Through the different terminologies used by each side, we saw the same truth expressed. Both sides found themselves fundamentally following the Christological teaching of the one undivided Church as expressed by St. Cyril. The Council of Chalcedon can only be understood as reaffirming the decisions of Ephesus and best understood in the light of the later Council of Constantinople (553). The significant role of political, sociological and cultural factors in creating tension between factions in the past should be recognized and studied together. They should not, however, continue to divide us. We see the need to move forward together."<sup>14</sup>

After the second unofficial meeting at Bristol in 1967

the participants made the following common declaration: “God’s infinite love for mankind, by which He has both created and saved us, is our starting point for apprehending the mystery of the union of perfect Godhead and perfect manhood in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is for our salvation that God the Word became one of us. Thus He who is consubstantial with the Father became by the Incarnation consubstantial also with us. By His infinite grace God has called us to attain to His uncreated glory. God became by nature man that man may become by grace God. The manhood of Christ thus reveals and realizes the true vocation of man. God draws us into fullness of communion with Himself in the Body of Christ, that we may be transfigured from glory to glory. It is in this soteriological perspective that we have approached the Christological question. We were reminded again of our common Fathers in the universal Church. Based on their teaching, we see the integral relation between Christology and Soteriology and also the close relation of both to the doctrine of God and to the doctrine of man, to ecclesiology and to spirituality, and to the whole liturgical life of the church.”

“Ever since the fifth century, we have used different formulae to confess our common faith in the One Lord Jesus Christ, perfect God and perfect man. Some of us affirm *two natures, wills and energies* hypostatically united in the one Lord Jesus Christ. Some of us affirm *one united divine-human nature, will and energy* in the same Christ. But both sides speak of a union without confusion, without change, without division, without separation. The four adverbs belong to our common tradition. Both affirm the dynamic permanence of the Godhead and manhood, with all their natural properties and faculties, in the one Christ. Those who speak in terms of

two do not thereby divide or separate. Those who speak in terms of one do not thereby commingle or confuse. The *without division*, and *without separation* of those who say **two** and the *without change*, and *without confusion* of those who say **one** need to be specially underlined, in order that we may understand each other.”

“In this spirit, we have discussed also the continuity of doctrine in the councils of the church, and especially the *monenergistic and monothelete controversies* of the seventh century. All of us agree that the human will is neither absorbed nor suppressed by the divine will in the Incarnate Logos, nor are they contrary one to the other. The uncreated and created natures with the fullness of their natural properties and faculties were united without confusion or separation and continue to operate in the one Christ our Savior. The position of those who wish to speak of *one divine-human will and energy* united without confusion or separation does not appear therefore to be incompatible with the decision of the Council of Constantinople (680-1), which affirms *two natural wills and two natural energies* in Him existing indivisibly, inconvertibly, inseparably and inconfusedly.”<sup>15</sup>

During the third unofficial meeting at **Geneva** in 1970, the body reaffirmed its conviction regarding the basic Christological agreement: “We have reaffirmed our agreements at Aarhus and Bristol on the substance of our common Christology. On the essence of the Christological dogma our two traditions, despite fifteen centuries of separation, still find themselves in full and deep agreement with the universal tradition of the one undivided Church. It is the teaching of the blessed Cyril *on the hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ that we both affirm*, although we may use differing ter-

minology to explain this teaching. We both teach that He who is consubstantial with the Father according to Godhead became consubstantial also with us according to humanity in the Incarnation, that He who was before all ages begotten from the Father, was in these last days for us and for our salvation born of the blessed Virgin Mary, and that in Him the two natures are *united in the one hypostasis of the divine Logos*, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation. Jesus Christ is perfect God and perfect man with all the properties and faculties that belong to Godhead and to humanity. The human will and energy of Christ are neither absorbed nor suppressed by His divine will and energy, nor are the former opposed to the latter, but are united together in perfect concord without division or confusion. He who wills and acts is always the one hypostasis of the Logos Incarnate. One is Emanuel, God and man, our Lord and Savior, whom we adore and worship and who yet is one of us.”<sup>16</sup>

After the preliminary unofficial meetings there were several official meetings of the delegates from both churches at Chambesy (1985), Wadi Natrun (1989), and Chambesy (1990). In 1987 the Coptic Patriarch signed a Christological agreement with the heads of the Byzantine Orthodox Churches in the Near East. The following is the text: “Fundamentally and essentially we on both sides have preserved the same faith in our Lord Jesus Christ in spite of diverse formulations and resulting controversies. We affirm our togetherness in the true understanding of the person of Christ who being God of God, the Only Begotten Son of the Father, became truly man, fully assumed our human nature without losing or diminishing or changing his divine nature. Being perfect God, he became perfect man without confu-

sion and without separation.”<sup>17</sup>

At the joint commission of the official meeting of the Theologians of the Byzantine and Oriental Orthodox Churches in June 20-24<sup>th</sup>. 1989 at *Wadi el Natroun* in Egypt, the following **Christological Statement** was prepared for the consideration of the two families of Churches. It was *the second official* meeting. There were participants from 13 churches. Pope Shenouda of the Coptic Orthodox Church in his inaugural speech said, “*The division is an anomaly, a bleeding wound in the body of Christ, a wound which according to His will that we humbly serve, must be healed.*”

“We have inherited from our Fathers in Christ the one Apostolic Faith and Tradition, though as churches we have been separated from each other for centuries. Throughout our discussions we have found our common ground in the formula of our common Father, St. Cyril of Alexandria: *mia physis (hypostasis) tou Theou Logou Sesarkomene*, and in his dictum that “it is sufficient for the confession of our true and irreproachable faith to say and to confess that the Holy Virgin is Theotokos” (Hom.15; Ep.39).

“Great indeed is the ineffable mystery of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, for us and for our salvation. The Logos, eternally consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit in his divinity, has in these last days, become incarnate of the Holy Spirit and Blessed Virgin Mary Theotokos, and thus became man, consubstantial with us in his humanity but without sin. He is true God and true man at the same time, perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity. Because the one she bore in her womb was at the same time fully God and fully man, we call the blessed Virgin Mary *Theotokos.*”



When we speak of *one composite (synthetos) hypostasis* of our Lord Jesus Christ, we do not say that in him a divine hypostasis and a human hypostasis came together. It is the one eternal hypostasis of the second Person of the Trinity that has assumed our created human nature, in that act uniting it with his own uncreated divine nature, to form an inseparably and inconfusedly united real divine-human being, the natures being distinguished from each other in contemplation (*theoria*) only.”

“The hypostasis of the Logos before the incarnation, even with his divine nature, is of course not composite. The same hypostasis, as distinct from nature, of the incarnate Logos, is not composite either. The unique theandric person (*prosopon*) of Jesus Christ is one eternal hypostasis who has assumed human nature by the Incarnation. So we call that hypostasis composite, on account of the natures, which are united to form one composite unity. It is not the case that our Fathers used *physis* and *hypostasis* always interchangeably and confused the one with the other. The term *hypostasis* can be used to denote both the person as distinct from nature, and also the person with the natures, for a hypostasis never in fact exists without a nature.”

“It is the same hypostasis of the second Person of the Trinity, eternally begotten from the Father who in these last days became a human being and was born of the blessed Virgin. This is the mystery of the hypostatic union we confess in humble adoration—the real union of the divine with the human, with all the properties and functions of the uncreated divine nature, including natural will and natural energy, inseparably and inconfusedly united with the created human nature with all its properties and functions including natural will and natural energy. It is the Logos in-

carnate who is the subject of all the willing and acting of Jesus Christ.”

“We agree in condemning the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies. We neither separate nor divide the human nature in Christ from his divine nature, nor do we think that the former was absorbed in the latter and thus ceased to exist. The four adverbs used to qualify the mystery of the hypostatic union belong to our common tradition-without comingling (or confusion-asynchutos), without change (atreptos), without separation (achoristos), and without division (adiaretos). Those among us who speak of **two natures** in Christ do not thereby deny their inseparable, indivisible union; those among us who speak of **one united divine-human nature** in Christ do not thereby deny the continuing dynamic presence in Christ of the divine and the human, without change, and without confusion.”<sup>4</sup> In 1990 at Chaambessy the joint committee signed an agreement in Christology.<sup>4a</sup>

The **Oriental Orthodox Churches** entered into ecumenical discussions with the **Catholic Church** and reached Christological agreements. The **Pro Oriente Foundation** in Vienna gave the leadership for the unofficial dialogue between the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Churches. There were five unofficial consultations in Vienna in 1971, 73, 76, 78, and 88. The participants could reach substantial agreement in Christology. It is known as the *Vienna Christological Agreement*. In the *communiqué of the first unofficial consultation* we read: “We all agree in rejecting both the Nestorian and Eutychian positions about Jesus Christ. We have endeavored for a deeper understanding of the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Christologies that

have separated us until now. We believe that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is God the Son Incarnate, perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity. His divinity was not separated from his humanity for a single moment, not for the twinkling of an eye. His humanity is one with his divinity without commixture, without confusion, without division, and without separation. We in our common faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, regard his mystery inexhaustible and ineffable and for the human mind never fully comprehensible or expressible. We see that there are still differences in the theological interpretation of the mystery of Christ because of our different ecclesiastical and theological traditions. We are convinced that these differing formulations on both sides can be understood along the lines of the faith of Nice (325) and Ephesus (431). Realizing that there can be different emphases in the theological and dogmatic elaboration of Christ's mystery, we wish to encourage common efforts for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of this mystery in harmony with our different ecclesiastical traditions."<sup>18</sup>

In the *communiqué of the Second Consultation* we have the following Christological consensus: "Together we confess our faith that He who is the Second Person of the Trinity came down for us and for our salvation, became man like us in all respects except sin. The Son of God was incarnate and became the Son of man, so that we the children of men may become the children of God by His Grace. Great is the mystery of the God-man; no created mind can fully comprehend the mystery of how Godhead and manhood became united in the one Lord Jesus Christ. Neither can human words give adequate utterance to it. We recognize the limits of every philosophical and theological attempts to grasp the mystery

in concept or express it in words. If the formulas coined by the Fathers and Doctors of the Churches have enabled us to obtain an authentic glimpse of the divine truth, we recognize that every formula that we can devise needs further interpretation. We saw that what appears to be the right formulation can be wrongly understood, and also how even behind an apparently wrong formulation there can be a right understanding. We understand that when our Common Father in Christ, St. Cyril of Alexandria speaks of the *one incarnate nature of God's Word*, he does not deny but rather express the full and perfect humanity of Christ. We believe also that the definition of the Council of Chalcedon, rightly understood today, affirms the unity of person and the indissoluble union of Godhead and manhood in Christ, despite the phrase *in two natures*. We all agree that our Lord Jesus Christ, who is consubstantial with the Father in his divinity himself became consubstantial with us in his humanity. He perfectly unites in himself perfect Godhead with perfect manhood without division, without separation without change and without commixture. The flesh possessing a rational soul did not exist before the union. The flesh remained flesh even after the God-befitting resurrection and ascension. Though the body of God, it has not been changed into the Godhead. We are partaking in the holy Eucharist, the life giving flesh of the Lord which He united with his divinity."

"The problem of terminology remains with us. For those of us in the Western tradition, to hear of the *one nature* of Christ can be misleading, because it may be misunderstood as a denial of his humanity. For those of us in the Oriental Orthodox Churches to hear of *two natures* can be misleading because it can be misunderstood as affirming two persons in Christ. But both sides are agreed in rejecting Eutychianism

and Nestorianism. We all agree in our confession of the one Lord Jesus Christ, very God of very God, begotten before ages from the Father; who was born of the Virgin Mary, grew in wisdom and stature as a full human being, suffered, died, was buried, rose again on the third day and ascended into heaven, and is to come again as judge and ruler of the living and the departed.”

“Our common effort too clarify the meaning of the Greek terms *hypostasis* and *physis* in the Trinitarian and Christological contexts made us realize how difficult it was to find a satisfactory definition of these terms that could do justice to both contexts in a consistent manner.”

“Furthermore, we realize our common need to reinterpret our faith in Christ in relation to problems that confront man today. There is urgent need to interpret in contemporary terms how the Son of God becoming one with us in the Incarnation affects the life of man today.”<sup>19</sup>

After these unofficial agreements in Christology, there were **official Christological declaration** between the Pope and the heads of the various Oriental Orthodox Churches. Thus we have the following agreements in Christology:

### **1. Catholic Church and the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch:**

In 1984 we have from Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, the following official joint statement on Christology: “They denied that there was any difference in the faith they confessed in the mystery of the Word of God made flesh and become truly man. In our turn we confess that He became incarnate for us, taking to him a real body with a rational soul. He shared our humanity in all things except sin. We confess that our Lord and our God, our Sav-

ior and the King of all, Jesus Christ, is perfect God as to his divinity and perfect man as to his humanity. In him the divinity is united to his humanity. This union is real, perfect, without blending or mingling, without confusion, without alteration, without division, and without the least separation. He, who is God eternal and indivisible, became visible in the flesh and took the form of servant. In him are united, in a real, perfect, indivisible and inseparable way divinity and humanity, and in him all these properties are present and active. Having the same conception of Christ, we confess also the same conception of His mystery. Incarnate, dead and risen again, our Lord, God and Savior, has conquered sin and death.”<sup>20</sup>

There is a joint official theological commission to discuss further ways and means of perfect and full communion between the Catholic Church and the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch. From the Syrian Orthodox Church, the participants are solely from India. This commission has so far prepared a document for the **Inter-church marriages** between members of both Churches and is already approved by the heads of both the Churches. The commission continues its work.<sup>21</sup>

## **2. Catholic Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church:**

In 1973 Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Shenouda III made this joint statement on Christology: “In accordance with our apostolic traditions transmitted to our churches and preserved therein, and in conformity with the early three ecumenical councils, we confess one faith in the One Triune God, the divinity of the Only Begotten Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, the Word of God, the effulgence

of His Glory and the express Image of His substance, who for us was incarnate, assuming for Himself a real body with a rational soul, and who shared with us our humanity but without sin. We confess that our Lord and God and Savior and King of us all, Jesus Christ is perfect God with respect to His divinity, perfect man with respect to His humanity. In Him, His divinity is united with his humanity in a real and perfect union without mingling, without commixture, without confusion, without alteration, without separation and without division. His divinity did not separate from his humanity for an instant, not for the twinkling of an eye. He who is God eternal, and invisible became visible in the flesh, and took upon himself the form of a servant. In him are preserved all the properties of the divinity and all the properties of the humanity, together in a real, perfect, indivisible and inseparable union.”<sup>22</sup>

A mixed official International theological commission was working since 1974 and in 1988 they made a **shorter Christological formula** for the use of the faithful. Patriarch Shenouda of the Coptic Orthodox Church and Patriarch Ghattas (now Cardinal) of the Coptic Catholic Church signed it. It reads: ‘We believe that our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Logos is perfect in His divinity and perfect in His humanity. He made his humanity one with his divinity without mixture nor mingling nor confusion. His divinity was not separated from his humanity even for a moment or twinkling of an eye.’<sup>23</sup>

### 3. Catholic church and the Malankara Orthodox Church

A joint international theological commission was set up to facilitate the full communion of the Catholic Church and

the Malankara Orthodox Church. The commission prepared a joint Christological statement in 1989 and in 1990 both the churches accepted it. Following are the pertinent parts of the joint statement: “We seek to express our common understanding of, and our common witness to the great and saving mystery of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God Incarnate. We affirm our common faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, the Eternal Logos of God, the second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit from the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, is true God and true man. The Word of God has taken a human body with a rational soul, uniting humanity with divinity.”

“Our Lord Jesus Christ is one, perfect in his humanity and perfect in his divinity- at once consubstantial with the Father in his divinity and consubstantial with us in his humanity. His humanity is one with his divinity-without change, without commingling, without division, and without separation. In the Person of the eternal Logos Incarnate are united and active in a real and perfect way the divine and human natures, with all their properties, faculties and operations.”

“Divinity was revealed in humanity. The glory of the Father was manifest in the flesh of the Son. We saw the Father’s love in the life of the suffering Servant. The Incarnate Lord died on the Cross-that we may live. He rose again on the third day and opened for us the way to the Father and to eternal life.”

“All who believe in the Son of God and receive him by faith and baptism are given power to become children of God.



Through the Incarnate Son into whose body the Holy Spirit integrates them, they are in communion with the Father and with one another. This is the heart of the mystery of the Church in which and through which the Father by His Holy Spirit renews and reunites the whole creation in Christ. In the Church, Christ the Word of God is known, lived, proclaimed and celebrated.”<sup>24</sup>

#### **4. Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East:**

The Catholic Church made an official joint statement regarding Christology with the Assyrian Church of the East in 1994. The following is the pertinent part of the declaration: “ We confess one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten of the Father from all eternity who in the fullness of time came down from heaven and became man for our salvation. The Word of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, became incarnate by the power of the Holy Spirit in assuming from the holy Virgin Mary a body animated by a rational soul, with which he was indissolubly united from the moment of his conception.”

“Therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ is true God and true man, perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity, consubstantial with the Father and consubstantial with us in all things but sin. His divinity and his humanity are united in one person, without confusion or change, without division or separation. In him has been preserved the difference of the natures of divinity and humanity, with all their properties, faculties and operations. But far from constituting **one and another**, the divinity and humanity are united in the person of the same and unique Son of God and Lord Jesus Christ, who is the object of a single adoration.”

“Christ, therefore, is **not** an ordinary man, whom God **adopted** in order to **reside** in him and inspire him, as in the righteous ones and the prophets. But the same God the Word, begotten of His Father before all worlds without beginning according to his divinity, was born of a mother without a father in the last times according to his humanity. The humanity to which the Blessed Virgin Mary gave birth always was that of the Son of God himself. That is the reason why the Assyrian Church of the East is praying the Virgin Mary as the **Mother of Christ, our God and Savior**. In the light of this same faith the Catholic tradition addresses the Virgin Mary as the **Mother of God** and also as the **Mother of Christ**. We recognize the legitimacy and rightness of these expressions of the same faith and we both respect the preference of each Church in her liturgical life and piety.”

“This is the unique faith that we profess in the mystery of Christ. The controversies of the past led to anathemas, bearing on persons and on formulas. The Lord’s Spirit permits us to understand better today that the divisions brought about in this way were due in large part to misunderstandings.”

“Whatever our Christological divergences have been, we experience ourselves united today in the confession of the same faith in the Son of God who became man so that we might become children of God by his grace. We wish from now on to witness together to this faith in the one who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, proclaiming it in appropriate ways to our contemporaries, so that the world may believe in the Gospel of Salvation.”<sup>25</sup>

This joint Christological declaration is the result of the discussions since 1984. There is at present a joint **official international theological commission** to go further and look into the ways and means for the full communion between the two churches.

Basing on the Official Christological Agreement, be-

# 11

## LITURGICAL CHRISTOLOGY

Liturgical Christology is one of the favorite expressions of the contemporary theologians. The expression refers either to the Christology based on the liturgical texts or the analysis of the liturgical texts to see the Christology of these texts. Basically when we analyze the liturgical texts, we see very clearly the Trinitarian and Christological dimensions of salvation in them. Revelation teaches us that the God whom we adore is one God in three persons. Every good thing comes to us from the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. This is the Trinitarian and Christological dimension of salvation. In the Pauline writings we find a twofold movement: from the Father through the Son and the Holy Spirit to us, and from us through the Spirit and Christ to the Father (Eph 1: 3-14; Rom 8:3-17; Gal 4:4-6). These texts show that the early Christians had a clear vision of the Trinitarian and Christological dimensions of salvation, and that too even before the Gospels were written. All the liturgies, especially the Oriental liturgies have imbued this spirit of the primitive church. The liturgies echo the basic kerygma of the New Testament and the traditions of the early church. The New Testament writings gave the Trinitarian and Christological meaning to the entire Old Tes-

tament. The liturgical tradition multiplied the prayers to reaffirm the elements denied by the Arian and Apollinarian controversies. In the first phase one finds prayers affirming the equality of the three Persons. But later some of the liturgies have become more and more Christocentric in the expressions.

The Oriental liturgies are the gold mine for theology because of their richness and variety. They are life experiences than mere dry doctrinal systems. One may miss a logical systematic thinking or order in them, but one must owe at the deep insight into the mystery of the Trinity and salvation history, presented there. That is why today the Western Church is looking to the East for guidance in liturgical matters: *ex Oriente lux* (from the East is light).

We cannot present here in detail the liturgical Christology of the various Churches. What we intend to do is just to give the references. We have new studies and documentation on the topic, especially from the ecumenical discussions of the **Pro Oriente Foundation**. There was occasion to present the Christology of the various Churches and the participants found to their satisfaction that the various liturgies witness the apostolic kerygma shared by the churches. Thus the Christology of the Syrian Antiochene<sup>1</sup>, the Alexandrian<sup>2</sup>, the Armenian<sup>3</sup>, the Byzantine<sup>4</sup>, and the Assyrian<sup>5</sup> Churches were presented.

## The Syrian Antiochene Tradition

The West Syrian liturgical tradition is entirely Trinitarian and Christocentric. In the *Eucharistic liturgy* the prayers are mostly addressed to the Father, together with the Son and

the Holy Spirit, and also to the Son and at times to the Holy Spirit. The Syriac tradition starts all the prayers with the glorification of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The original form was “glory be to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit”. And later it became, “glory be to the Father with the Son and the Holy Spirit”. And with the Arian denial of the divinity of the Son, we have the present form, “glory be to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”, affirming the equality of essence of the three persons. The prayers are addressed either to the one God, because there is only one divine essence, or to any one of the Persons (sharing the same essence). The full humanity and full divinity of the Lord is thoroughly emphasized. The preparatory service, in secret behind the veil, is mostly Trinitarian, but there are prayers intermingled, either addressed to the Trinity or to Christ alone.

*The liturgy of the Word* is mostly Christocentric. It commemorates the birth of the Lord from the Blessed Virgin Mary, his baptism by John at Jordan, his preaching, sanctifying, and healing ministries in Palestine. At the beginning of the public celebration, the veil of the sanctuary is removed in order to show the revelation and the manifestation of the Lord to the World. The Words of the Priest and the response of the faithful echo this manifestation:<sup>6</sup>

“Mary, who brought you forth and John who baptized you, shall be suppliants to you on our behalf. Have mercy on us.”

The response (*Manisa*) was that of Severus of Antioch. It contains the complete Christology, the full orthodox faith of the apostolic church: Christ is called, my Lord (*Moryo*), the king (*Malko*), the Only Begotten Son (*Ihidoyo Bro*), and

the Word of the heavenly Father (*Melteh dabo smayono*). “By your nature you are Immortal”, referring to the divinity, and “ by your grace you came down for the life and salvation (*phurqono*) of mankind. You did become incarnate (*etgasam*) of the holy, glorious and pure Virgin, Mother of God (*yoldas Aloho*), Mary. You became man (*hwo barnoso*) without change (*lo suhlopo*), and were crucified for us. Christ our God, you trampled our death and destroyed it by your death. You are one of the Holy Trinity (*had men tlitoyuto qadisto*). You are worshipped and glorified in unity with your Father and your Holy Spirit. Have compassion on us all.”

The *Trisagion* is addressed to our God and Savior Jesus Christ who is Immortal and at the same time “*crucified for us*”. In the original form it was Trinitarian, but in the midst of the anti-Chalcedonian agitation, it was changed to a Christological prayer by Peter the Fullo, the non-Chalcedonian Patriarch of Antioch. Christ is God, Almighty, and Immortal, all referring to His divinity; at the same time the affirmation that “he is crucified for us” refers to his humanity, taken from us.

All the *anaphoral prayers* are addressed to the Father together with the Son and the Holy Spirit, except one or two prayers. The ending of all the prayers is: “glory and thanksgiving to you and to your Only Begotten Son and to your Holy Spirit now, always and forever”. The first and the third blessings within the **anaphora** are Trinitarian while the one just before the fraction is Christological.

The narration of the *creation and redemption accounts* are addressed to the Father; and the Son and the Holy Spirit are commemorated together with the Father. The redemptive paschal mysteries of Christ also are addressed to the Father:

“When the sinless one was prepared to accept the voluntary death for us sinners, He took bread etc.” It is just the institution narrative of the Eucharist. After the blessing of the bread and cup, the prayers are addressed to the Son and through the Son they are referred to the Father. The response of the faithful is to the Father, “Have mercy upon us O God, Father Almighty.” The next prayer also is addressed to the Father asking Him “to send the Holy Spirit upon these offerings”. Then the activities of the Holy Spirit are remembered. In other words, the epiclesis is also addressed to the Father.

The blessing just before the fraction of the bread is in the name of the Son: “May the mercies of our *Great God and our Savior* Jesus Christ be with you all, my brethren”. Then the *crucifixion and death of Christ* are commemorated symbolically, but vividly through the fraction. The celebrant in the form of narration recites privately what happened at the time of the crucifixion of our Lord and breaks the bread and mixes it with the chalice of Salvation: “Thus truly the *Word of God* did suffer in flesh, and was sacrificed and broken on the Cross, and his soul separated from his body, while his Godhead never separated either from his soul or from his body. And he was pierced in his side with a spear, and there flowed out of him blood and water, the atonement of the whole world. And his body was stained with them. And for the sin of the whole world, **the Son** died on the cross and his soul came and united with his body. And he turned us from the work of the left to that of right. And by the blood of *his person*, he reconciled, united and combined the heavenly with the earthly, the people with the gentiles and the soul with the body. And on the third day he rose from the tomb. One is Emmanuel, and cannot be divided **into two natures** after the indivisible unity. Thus we believe and thus we confess

and thus we confirm that this flesh is of this body and that this blood is of this flesh.”

This most sacred recitation of the redemptive death of our Lord brings to the mind of the celebrant the meaning of the death and resurrection. The prayers, which follow, are addressed again to the Father. After the Lord’s Prayer and the Trinitarian blessing, the *Triune God is glorified together with the elevation of the species*. The church once again proclaims the *holiness of God*, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Here again the creation, redemption, and the fulfillment of everything by the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are commemorated.

The *final prayer is addressed to the Son* who gave us the heavenly food: “O great and wonderful God, who descended from heaven and came down for the salvation of our human race, have compassion and mercy upon us so that at all times, we may glorify you and God the Father who begat you and your Holy Spirit, all holy, good, adorable, and life giving, who is of one substance with you, now always and for ever. Amen.”

Finally the celebrant blesses the faithful in the name of the Most Holy Trinity and he commemorates once again the redemption achieved by the victorious Cross-of our Lord.

In short, **the Eucharistic liturgy** of the Syro-Antiochene Church is a wonderful drama reenacting the whole dispensation of God from the creation, stretching forth to the Parousia.

Now we shall mention a few points regarding the **manhood of Christ** emphasized at the **Christmas celebration** of the West Syriac church tradition. The divinity is very clearly



affirmed from the very beginning of the prayers:

“1. Mary the virgin really conceived him in her womb. She received him at the time of the annunciation of Gabriel through her ears, and he formed for himself a body from her very body. Like any human child, he remained in the womb for a period of nine months and was brought forth at the completion of the days of her conception. 2. While carrying him in her womb, Mary was a pregnant woman; and when she brought him forth, she endured the actual pain of child bearing. 3. When he was born, He cried like any human child; and his mother gave him feed from her breast. He was borne and carried around by Mary in her bosom; he was fondled and carefully looked after by his mother. He crawled like a babe and grew like a child. 4. He was God the Son who had become incarnate, passing through all these different stages of human life in order to redeem us from the fall, which has come upon us in consequence of the trespass of our first parents. 5. The conception, birth and the life following these events were all perfectly real, and they were necessary for our salvation.”<sup>7</sup>

**Now we pass on to the ideas emphasized in the *Holy week Services*:**

“The Holy Week services describe most vividly the humiliation, suffering, death and burial of our Lord: 1. Our Lord was betrayed by one of his disciples. He suffered mental and physical agony when it actually happened to him. 2. While being spitted at, scourged and ridiculed, he endured physical and mental pain in a genuine sense. 3. In order to redeem the human race that had fallen from communion with God on account of Adam’s trespass, God the Son became

incarnate and entered the world. The first man had been a glorious creature on a Friday, but he fell away from that original state because of disobedience. Now on a Friday God the Son endured passion and death in his incarnate state in order to redeem him from destruction. 4. "The daughter of Zion turned to madness. She crucified the Son of God on the cross of Golgotha. She beat him on his head. She showered spittle on his face, but he healed their infirmities, glory be to him who suffered torture, flogging and insult on behalf of our incapacitated race with a view to bringing us back to paradise." 5. All these sufferings were real, because they were necessary for our salvation. Since God is beyond suffering, incarnation was also necessary. 6. The incarnate Son was a unity, so that the suffering was not merely of the human nature; it was of God the Son incarnate. The union of Godhead and manhood also was real that even when our Lord died and was buried, his body remained indivisibly united with the Godhead."<sup>8</sup>

*Summary:* "Jesus Christ was perfectly human. He followed the course of any human being. He took a real manhood from his mother. He had all the human faculties intact. He was endowed with reason and will. Jesus Christ was at the same time consubstantial with God the Father as to Godhead. The same person was God and man. The manhood assumed by God the Son was our manhood, not of Adam before the fall. Therefore, although he was untouched by sin, he was vitally related to us in a real sense. God the Son united to himself the manhood, which he individuated in the union. Although he represented the whole human race, Jesus Christ was also an individual man who lived in the world of space and time. As man, he was really born of Mary. His earthly life, passion and death were all perfectly real. He

was therefore “from two natures” not only at the time of his conception in the womb, but also at every moment of his life. Neither of the natures was at any time lost or quiescent. Therefore, the two natures were there in him always. By thus uniting manhood to him from the Virgin. God the Son took upon himself the incarnate state. In that state manhood was there in its absolute integrity and perfection. Jesus Christ is therefore, the Mediator between God and man eternally.”<sup>9</sup>

“The *Qurbana* derives its meaning and significance from the Christ-event. This bears witness to the community’s faith in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of God. The community is symbolically commemorating and representing the mysteries of Christ’s birth, life, passion, death, burial and resurrection and is offering thanks and praise to the Trinity for the dispensation of salvation.”<sup>10</sup> The whole temporal cycle is reenacting the life events of the Savior, and in every Eucharistic celebration, the whole redemptive plan is bringing to the present memory of the faithful.

## East Syrian Tradition

In our **liturgy** we contemplate Jesus the Christ in action. This action is recorded in the liturgical texts (of Eucharist, the other Sacraments, and the divine office for the whole year). We meditate Christ in this activity. Christ is the celebrant and the celebrated. The East Syrian liturgy is also full of symbolism. The liturgical action concentrates on Christ’s ministry and Pascal mystery. The first part is clearly referring to his coming to us. The beginning of the Mass is a clear allusion to the birth of Christ, “Glory be to God in the highest”. The procession going to the *Bema* symbolizes the

Christ's going to preach. The procession from the *Bema* to the sanctuary symbolizes the return of Christ to his Father in heaven. The presentation of the sacrifice actualizes Jesus the Pontiff of the New Covenant and the glorious Lord and makes present there through the coming of the Holy Spirit. This is the same offering as that of heaven, now. What Christ did by his incarnation and redemptive death is very well depicted in the prayers of the East Syrian liturgy.

Christ is presented under different lights, but supporting the unity of the one Person, or the personal identity as the Son of God, and the duality of the natures. In other words, his ontological constitution is very clearly brought out. Christ is presented as the **Mediator** and **Redeemer**, *revealing the Godhead and teaching us the path to God*. He is presented as the Son of God coming to us. The holy Eucharist celebrates him as the Incarnate, Messenger, the crucified and the glorious Lord. Liturgy presents him as a real man and real God, acting properly through the **two concrete qnome** and so realizing effectively our redemption.

The Church of the East believes in the one Son, who is *one of the Trinity*, and who became man, taking a concrete human nature (**qnome**): "At the end of days, through your true Son you have spoken to our race. And made us know that in three *qnome* is confessed your glorious divinity."<sup>11</sup>

This is clear also in the scene of **Jesus' baptism**:

"Creation is renewed by her Lord and has recognized her salvation, since he was baptized and revealed her the confession of the Trinity; The Father who proclaims and says: This is my Beloved in whom I am pleased", and the Spirit who came and stayed on him and made known his glory to

the universe”.

Jesus is the splendor of the Father and he is born before the time. The final blessing of the *vespers* says, “Glory to You, Jesus our conquering King, the brightness of the eternal Father, begotten without beginning, before all times and things, which came into being; we have no hope and expectation unless it be you, the Creator. Before the final blessing of *Sunday mass* the celebrant chants, “Christ our God, and our Lord, our King and our Savior and Pardoner of our sins.”

1 V.C. Samuel, *The Manhood of Christ in the Tradition of the Syrian Orthodox Church*, in *Greek Orthodox Theological Review (= GOTR)* 13/2 (1968), 152-169.

2 Hakim Amin, *The Orthodox Faith in the Liturgies and Prayers of the Coptic Church*, in *ibid.* 226-239.

3 M.K. Krikorian, *Christology in the Liturgical Tradition of the Armenian Church*, in *ibid.* 212-225.

4 John Kamilis, *The Christological Dogma in the Orthodox Worship*, in *ibid.* 241-257.

5 *East Syrian Liturgy as an Expression of Christology*, by Baby Varghese (p.158-165), P. Maday (p.162-172), P. Poulos (p.173-184), day.. and M. J. Birnie (p.185-191), in **Syriac Dialogue, II**, Vienna, 1996;

See also, S. Athappilly, *Christological Faith-Expression in the Syro-Malabar Church*, in **Christian Orient** 14/2 (1993) 76-90.

6 **Christmas (Yalda) and service of Light**, the Magi saw the star and the light, and they went to Bethlehem and saw the child **Christ**, **Christian Orient**, *ibid.* (1996) 41.

7 Through the **desert from the East**, importance is given to the act of **leaving a road** **shippings** of the **Faring** **On the best possible** things as a sign of **ones own self-offering** to the Child who is born and being manifested in the world. **Epiphany (Denha)**:

8 V.C. Samuel, *The Manhood of Jesus Christ in the Tradition of the Syrian Orthodox Church*, in **GOTR** 13/2 (1968), p. 160-161

9 *ibid.* 161.

At Trichur areas there was formerly a local feast

**Pindikuthiperunal**: Children used to light lamps on *pindi* and play around it saying: **El payya, El payya, El payya, kulikkan poyi** (The shining God went to take bath.). It was a custom in Palai and several other places until recently to take bath in the night or early morning on January 6<sup>th</sup> in the river

- 10 S. Athappilly, *art. Cit.* p.89.
- 11 Onita of Vespers of Second Sunday of Epiphany: quoted by P. Yousif, *art. cit.* p.182.(Syriac Dialogue, II, p.173ff.). The following section is taken from the same article.
- 12 Syriac Dialogue,II,p.165
- 13 *Ibid.*p.169.

## 12

### CONCEPT OF PERSON

Christian theology made use of the concept *Persona*, *Person* (*prosopon*) to describe the nature of the Godhead and also the nature of the Incarnate Lord. It was *Tertullian* who made use of the term in Latin theology for the first time. He said that there is one substance in the divinity, but there are three persons. Tertullian could not explain the concept further in detail. It was repeated by the subsequent generations and they tried to give meaning to the expression. The concept of Person was for long thought to be a static one. So we have in this line the Chalcedonian expression, *one person in two natures*. And it continued for centuries. In Incarnation, the divine Logos with his divine nature assumed also our human nature to his person. Thus the person of the Logos became the person also of the assumed humanity. Hence there is only one person in two natures. He is at the same time man and God.

Today modern men try to understand person in a new perspective. They consider person in terms of *relationship*. When we say that in the Trinity there are three Persons, we understand as the three related to one another. Father is related to the Son and the Son is related to the Father and out

of their relationship is the Holy Spirit. In other words, Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father and the Holy Spirit is the love of the Father and the Son.

When we come to the human person, we can speak of it as relationship: to God and to others. Relationship to others is the constitutive element of the human person. Our primary relationship is to the Triune God, and then to our fellow beings. But man by himself cannot rise above himself and open up to the Almighty. So it was needed that God himself, out of love for mankind, come down to raise man and make him divine and give him participation in the glory of God.

God who is love itself has condescended to come down and put on our humanity to communicate with mankind. Jesus Christ is God's love in human form. The eternal love of the Father, eternally dialoguing with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is now dialoguing with mankind. He is relating himself to mankind. The Son, who fully gives himself to the Father, is now giving himself to mankind. In this act of giving is the person of the Son. In the same way, the Eternal father loves the Son and he loves also mankind. He loved the world so much that He sent his only Begotten Son to us to love us and to show his love towards us. The Son loves the Father and at the same time he loves mankind. It is He who gave us this model of selfless love towards the Father and towards mankind. His person is identical with his act of self-donation. Jesus is putting himself in relation to the Father and in relation to us. He is with us and with the Father. He is Emmanuel. He speaks to us, he walks with us and he loves us, not only for some time or 2000 years ago in Palestine, but he is still here with us and amidst us as the revealing and loving *Mediator and Savior*. And in this is his person. "According to Scripture, Jesus



Christ is the man for other men. His nature is devotion and love. In this love for men he is the concrete form of existence of the rule of God's love for us. His fellowship with men is therefore the form of appearance (*epiphany*) of his divine sonship. His transcendence to his fellow men is the expression of his transcendence to God. As in relation to God he is wholly existence in receptivity (obedience), so in relation to us he is wholly existence in devotion and representation. In this dual transcendence he is *mediator* between God and men.<sup>1</sup>"

Jesus is the Christ, present as the crucified and risen Lord. He is present in the Church as a person. That means he is related to each and every one of us. He presents himself before every human being as the eternal love of the Father. He proclaims every moment to each and every human being that God loves you. He is present and his influence is being felt. He is walking with us and is contemporaneous with us. He is the second person of the divinity, present to us as a living man. God is God in the man Jesus. He is the starting point and end of Christology. He is present to us by virtue of being God and man. We have a variety of his presence among us. He is the center of our human existence and the center of human history and the *unique mediator* between God and men. Each and every one must feel the life in Christ. Christ should not be limited to some set of doctrines or dogmas. Christ is the living dynamic person, ever present in the world and in the Church. It appears that the discussions in the later centuries perhaps turned their attention from the authentic face of Christ and they limited him to the doctrine of two natures. In the classical Christology Logos became the predominant designation for Jesus. It was considered the essential content of Christology. But the Logos

concept is not the whole Christ.

## **The Relevance of Christology and the Christological Definitions**

Christology is relevant even today because Christ is relevant today and tomorrow. The Christ-event stands at the beginning of Christianity. From the beginning there was an intellectual struggle over this event. Each generation tried to understand, appropriate and assimilate the Christ-mystery. We are not indifferent to the understanding of any age. Each generation of Christians has contributed to the understanding of the Christ-event. We do not limit ourselves to those points, which are live issues to us, or appearing to be interesting to us. The Christian past can never be merely an academic matter to a believing Christian.

### ***We can draw the following conclusions from the past:***

1. The Christian leaders of the past were open to the world around them. They realized that the Christian message is for the salvation of the world. But at the same time they were not uncritical in accepting everything from the outside world. They debated with the world around them and were alert to find points of agreement and disagreement. In certain cases they took over the terminologies in order to express the Christian mystery. They realized that the revelation should be expressed in the language of the ordinary man that he can understand and appropriate it.
2. Ancient Christology puts Christ in the middle of time and sees in the development of faith in him a process which will only end with the second coming of the Lord.

3. We must be able to distinguish the **content of their message** and the **formulation** of the message. We may have to use other formulations for today .We are not living in the fourth or fifth centuries. We are not living in the Byzantine Empire. Today we live in a global village. We have better communication facilities and at the same time we have new problems. We live in a multi-religious ambient, which was not the case of the Fathers, especially after the conversion of Constantine. We have now new problems to encounter, which the Fathers never thought of.

4. In whatever way we formulate the Christ-event we can in no way ignore or dilute the humanity and the divinity of the Lord. Jesus Christ is both God and man. This is the perennial truth of Christianity and the basis of our salvation and our life. All the struggle of the Fathers was to uphold these two realities in Jesus Christ. So they were very serious about their faith.

5. A Christian Christology must relate itself to a Christian community with the Gospel and liturgy, which affirm that Jesus Christ is God and man. There is no way of secularizing the Gospel without denying either of it.

6. The fourth and fifth century debate is relevant, not for their quarrels, but for their good intentions and their earnestness. We have to pay also sufficient attention to the Christian mystery. We have to take our faith seriously. We have to believe what the Gospel tells us and uphold the Apostolic kerygma undiluted. Often we do not take Jesus' message seriously. To them it was an existential problem. They could not tolerate anyone who appeared to be denying either the divinity or the humanity of the Lord.

7. The fourth and fifth century Christologies are not the ultimate answer to the whole Christ-event, for the entire humanity till the end of time. Those discussions did not solve the problems entirely; in fact, they complicated the issues raised, because of the intolerance and lack of understanding and mutual respect of those handled the issues. Chalcedon divided Christianity and generations of Christians sustained the division in the name of Chalcedon. They transmitted the mutual distrust, suspicion and caricature.

## **Influence of Chalcedon on Christian piety**

*In the Roman Church:* Feasts of the Saints connected with Chalcedon were introduced: e.g. Leo, Cyril, Pulcheria, Flavian, Abbot Eutymius, and Euphemia. Readings of the Fathers connected with Chalcedon were taken directly or indirectly in the Liturgy. Reference to the faith, defined at Chalcedon, was introduced in the Leonian Sacramentary. In the piety of the Western Church we find various forms: the Monks of *Cluny* emphasized on the mystery of Christmas. The joy of Christmas characterized it. Other *Benedictines* stressed the passion of Christ: the five wounds, especially the pierced side. *Franciscans* developed a devotion centered on Jesus. They meditated on the life of Christ. *Ignatius Loyola* also meditated on the mysteries of the life of Jesus. In General, the Western Church stressed the passion of Christ while the Eastern Churches stressed the resurrection of Christ and the Lord's glorification. *In the Persian Church:* Mar Babai composed a hymn with the double qnoma expression to perpetuate their Christological formulation. *The non-Chalcedonians:* They introduced the creed in the liturgy, changed the Trisagion into a Christological prayer, added a

*Manisa* at the beginning of the public celebration of the Mass and added a lot of anti-Nestorian prayers in the Liturgy, including the condemnation of Nestorius in the various church services. They introduced the condemnation of the Chalcedonian Saints.<sup>2</sup>

1 Walter Kasper, *Jesus Christ*, p.217.

2 **WWS**, I.138ff.166.

## FUNCTIONAL CHRISTOLOGY

Soteriology is the study of Jesus Christ as our Savior (*soter*). Soteriology is the doctrine of salvation in Jesus Christ. The object is the redemptive work of Jesus Christ our Lord. It contains the doctrine of the history of salvation through the self-communication of God through Jesus Christ. *Christology* strictly speaking deals with the *ontological constitution* of Christ, while *Soteriology* deals with the *saving activity of Jesus Christ*. The early Church did not make such a distinction. The distinction between Christology and Soteriology is of later origin. The Fathers explained the mystery of Christ and his saving mission as one reality and it seems that that is the healthy method than dividing into compartments. Still for convenience sake we make such a rational distinction. The salvific activities of Christ are his Incarnation, public life, paschal mystery (passion, death, and resurrection).

The doctrine of Salvation or Redemption is seen in all religions of the world. Salvation in non-Christian religions is the liberation from inferior or superior powers. Man is trying to liberate himself from such forces. But in Christianity, salvation is a gift of God, a personal invitation of God, offered to man to come to Him and to accept His divine life in a personal relationship with him. Christianity offers a better life before God, a new life in the presence of God. Each man has to appropriate for himself the objective redemption achieved by Christ and offered to man. In our analysis of Christology we had ample chance to speak about the redemptive activity of Christ. Here we may speak a little bit about the terms used in connection with the redemptive activity of Christ.

### **Terms used:**

**Salvation** :(saving, salus, Reksha): The central theme of Christian preaching is salvation. The root is *sozo* = to save. *Sozein*, *soteria* (saving), *soterion* (deliverance), *soter* (savior or deliverer). In the OT Yahweh is the Savior (1 Sam 10:19). Salvation is protection from the enemies of Israel. Liberation from Egypt is a phase of salvation (Ex 14:13). During the later prophetic period the spiritual aspect of salvation, namely the spiritual warfare, was stressed. They had there the hope that the fullness of salvation is only during the messianic era. In the NT, Christ inaugurates this new messianic era of salvation. It is the time of salvation (Mt 1, 21; 10,22; 24, 13). Christ preached that he came to save (John 3, 17; 5,34). Salvation begins in Jesus and will be perfected in his glory. Christ has declared to be the expected savior (Lk 1,69; 2,11). He inaugurates an era of salvation. In him God's salvation was objectively present. Salvation is the realization of God's plan or design for humanity. Salvation is for the whole man (for both soul and body). To the healed leper Jesus says, "Your faith has saved you (Lk 17,19). The very name of Jesus signifies Savior (Mt 1,21).

Salvation encounters the believer in **three** stages: 1. Salvation is presented as something already offered to him now. Paul exhorts the Corinthians to be aware of the hour of salvation: "Behold now is the acceptable time, behold now is the time of salvation" (2 Cor 6,2). 2. Actual Salvation is still to be fulfilled (Tit 2,4-7). Present renewal is a guarantee of the final liberation (Rom 5,9). In this hope we were saved (Rom 8,22-24). We wait for the Savior (Phil 3,20f.). 3. In this process of salvation we are actively involved, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling"(Phil 2,12f.). Through the death of Jesus Christ, we are justified; but our transforma-

tion is gradual.

***Redemption(Lytrosis,Apolytrosis), Ransom (Lytron), Redeeming (liberation-Lytrousthai):***

It refers to the liberation from slavery. Lytron is the price paid for the freedom of a slave from the master. The price by which something was bought or someone was liberated. Lytotes=liberator. In the OT Yahweh is the liberator: "I will deliver you from the bondage and redeem you" (Ex 6,6). Israel is God's own people because the Lord had liberated them: "The Lord your God redeemed you" (Dt 7,6-8). In the NT God has visited His people and redeemed them. Here also God himself is the one who redeems us (Rom 3, 24; Eph 1,7; Col 1,13f.). The act of redeeming us from the slavery of sin is therefore God's own sovereign act of love. In 1 Peter (1,18f.) there is a **price** involved: ransomed through the precious blood of Christ (Mk 10,45). (Ransom=**Lytron**). Some thought that the price was paid to Satan. In the OT there is no reference to a price to be paid to any body by Yahweh. In the NT some say that the price had to be paid by the fallen humanity, but since the humanity was incapable of it, Christ paid it. Price refer to the personal cost, and is not referring to something to be paid to any one. God redeems us through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. This meant for Jesus a very heavy price. *Lytrosis* is used thrice in the NT (Lk 1,68; 2,38; Heb 9,12). It is always connected with the gratuitous redeeming work of God. *Apolytrosis* is used 8 times indicating the eschatological character of redemption (Lk21, 28; Rom 8,23; Eph 1,14; 4,30). According to the NT, *Redemption* is the fulfillment of God's promise made in covenant.

***Buying (agorazo) and Acquisition:***



Salvation or Redemption is connected with *Buying and Acquisition* (1 Cor 6,20; 7,22-23; Gal 3,13; 4,5). Among the Greeks it was the custom of buying the slaves from their owners and setting them free. In the OT Yahweh liberates and acquires them as His property (Ex19, 5ff.; IS 43,21; Ps 73,2; 134,4). Liberation is always linked with acquisition. Often they are identified. NT also understands in this sense (1 Pt 2,9; Tit 2,14; Acts 20,28; Eph 1,14). Buying or *agorazo* stresses the absolute right of Jesus Christ over whom he has bought with his blood (2 Pt 2,1; Rev5, 9).

### ***Expiation (hilasterion):***

It is propitiation, forgiveness or act of atonement (Rom 3,25). *Hilaskesthai* (Heb 2,17), and *hilasmos* (1 John 2,2; 4,10) are used to describe the redemptive work of Christ. For the Greeks the word was used in the context of placation of the gods or attempts to please them. In the OT, expiation is linked with the remission of sins rather than with the placation of God. In the NT: Heb 2,17(Christ is the High Priest); 1 John 2,2; 4,10 (remission of sins); **Rom 3,25** :(hilasterion and the reference is to the OT). In Lev 16,12-16, it denotes the *covering* of the golden Ark, the *throne* of God where God dwells, *meeting place* of God with his people, *instrument of purification* on the day of expiation. Christ as hilasterion is the presence of God in the world, as a propitiation for the sins of men through his own blood and presence. Christ is *the true hilasterion* as symbolized in the OT; he *destroys and condones our sins* by his own blood. So the redemptive work is a true expiation. He *purifies* mankind from their sins. It is God who forgives our sins and expiates them by revealing his mercy.

**Reconciliation (katallazo):**

Christ effected our reconciliation. He is the one unique Mediator (1 Tim 2,5). We were reconciled to God by the blood of His Son (Rom 5,10). Father was in Christ, reconciling the world to Him (2 Cor 5,17f.).

**Justification (dikaioo, to justify, dikaiosyne, dikaiosis):**

All righteousness is rooted in God alone. That is to say, man's right relationship to God is not rooted in man's own capabilities, but in God's self revelation in Jesus Christ (Rom 3,21f.). It comes to us as a gift through the redemption, which is in Christ (3,24). Jesus' righteousness becomes ours through the faith in Jesus (4,25).

**Covenant (diatheke):**

Jesus has sealed a new and eternal covenant in his blood. The covenant in his blood (Mk 14,24; Lk 22,20; 1 Cor11, 25) is more perfect one than the one at Mount Sinai (2 Cor 3,6-18). It frees us from the law (Gal 4,21-31) and it is universal (Eph 2,2-18).

**Merit:**

Merit signifies right or claim for a reward based on good works. Jesus has merited our salvation through his fidelity and love. He has conquered hatred by love, death by life and darkness by light. So in a certain sense he deserves this award for himself.

**Satisfaction (atonement):**

In the Roman circles among the pagans the term was

used in connection with the solving of a debt or repairing of a damage. Satisfaction or atonement refers to the restoration of the order violated by sin or expiation of the punishment for sin. In general satisfaction is the reparation of a damage caused or restoration of God's glory, violated by sin: violation of the right order through the destruction of the image in man, and despising of God, expressed through disobedience. Satisfaction consists in the restoration of the violated order and the image of God in man. It means also obedience towards God, acknowledging the absolute dominion of God. This satisfaction must be adequate and abundant. Jesus has satisfied for our sins in fulfilling God's plan of salvation.

### **Sacrifice:**

Sacrifice is an external act of religion by which man offers a created good to God through an imputative action to acknowledge God as his Lord and ultimate end. It is an act of worship. It tends to obtain union with God and to express the totality of the revelations of man with God. It is offered in two ways: 1. through one's on life expressing one's relationship with God and God's dominion over him: by acknowledging God's graces and gifts given to him, by confessing his sinful states and accepting the miseries of life, being hopeful in God, and by seeking God and living in his presence under his law. 2. Ritually through visible signs that signify the above relationships.

## **Soteriology of the Fathers**

The Fathers of the Church insisted on the saving work of Christ. In one way or other they repeated that Christ is our *Savior and Mediator* because he is God and man. The *Judeo-*

*Christian communities* understood the redemptive work mainly in accordance with Christ's decent into Sheol and ascent to the Father. He descended into Sheol in order to have *victory over death, and deliverance* of many from their captivity. From there he ascended to the Father for his *glorification*. His descent comprises the descent of the Word from heaven into earth, namely his incarnation and in the second stage his death and descent into Sheol, the last stage of his *kenosis*. We are associated with his death, struggle over evil powers, triumph over them and glorification by the sacrament of baptism. The Judeo-Christians express the glorification from the point of view of ascension rather than of the resurrection. Nevertheless, resurrection and ascension are considered as one event (John 20,17). It is the final stage of the victory of Christ. In John even the cross-represented essentially his victory. The sign of the cross has its origin not in an allusion to Christ's passion, but as a sign of his glorification. For them the cross symbolized the *cosmic dimension of redemption*. The four arms of the cross are looked upon as the symbol of the cosmic significance of the redeeming act.

### **The Apostolic Fathers**

Christ imparted to us *knowledge, life immortality and fellowship with God*. The Apostolic Fathers follow in general the NT line of thought in expressing the redemptive act of Christ. That means they had the very correct perspective regarding the redemptive work of the Savior. St. Ignatius speaks ***of theosis or divinization***. God became man in order to make us divine. This is an ever recurring idea in the early Fathers. Justin, the Apologist, considered redemption as *illumination*.

**Irenaeus** has the same line of thought. He speaks of incarnation as a wonderful exchange in which the Son of God's incarnation brought our **divinization**. He borrowed the idea of **recapitulation (anakephalaiosis)** from St. Paul (Eph 1,10ff.) and developed it further. It is the heart of his Christology and Soteriology. Christ takes up in himself everything since the beginning. Adam interrupted the divine plan by his fall. God *rehabilitates* the earlier plan for the salvation of mankind and *gathers up* his entire work from the beginning **to renew, to restore and reorganize** in his Incarnate Son. Christ became the *Second Adam* for us. He *recreated* the lost human race by becoming man (AH 5.14. 2). By this the whole human race is *renewed and restored* (3.18.1). Christ *destroyed* the evil effects of the disobedience: he *killed* sin, *deprived death of its power and vivified man* (3.18.7). The Second Adam *renewed* the conflict against the devil and *conquered him* (5.12.2). He *renewed everything and gave life to man* (4.34.1). Man is God's **image and likeness**. He is image through his reason and free will, namely the immortal soul. He is the likeness through the supernatural grace, namely the personal relationship with God. Adam had to grow in the image and likeness. That means he had to acquire closer *resemblance* to his Creator and acquire *immortality and incorruptibility*. But he lost it. Since mankind offended God, the second Adam had to come *to reconcile* us with God. Salvation is *communication* of the divine life by God and participation in it by man. Because of his infinite love for us he became what we are in order to enable us *to become what he is* (AH. preface). Christ passed through all the stages of human life in order to *sanctify everything and every stage*. He became the master in every thing (2.22.4; 3.18.1). "He came even unto death that he might be the first born from

the dead, having himself preeminence in all things, the prince of life, first among all and going before all”(2.22.4). He became obedient unto death, even the death on the cross, *healing* the disobedience enacted on the tree by the obedience on a tree”(5.16.3). His death is the supreme act that culminates the work of our redemption. Christ’s salvific work is extended to the whole Christ-event. Irenaeus stressed also the *revelatory function* of incarnation: Christ *shared with us* the divine *incorruptibility and immortality*. As the immanent principle he *restored* to man and *perfected* in him the divine likeness. Thus Christ *inaugurated a new redeemed humanity*.

*Hippolytus* follows Irenaeus in his Soteriology. He also develops the *recapitulation theory*. Logos took the flesh of Adam in order to *renew* mankind: “He united his power with our mortal body, he mixed the incorruptible with the corruptible, he mixed the strong with the weak, so that he might save the perishing man”(Antichrist, 4). Logos *restored immortality* to man (Contra Noetum, 17). Logos *remodeled the old man* by a new creation. Logos passed through every period in this life, in order that He Himself might serve as a *law* for every age. He was present among us men to show His manhood as an *aim* for all men, to prove that God did not make evil but it is in the will of man to do good or evil, and to show that man has the capacity of self determination (Philosophumena, 10.33). The redeemer was truly man. By a *new creation* he *remodeled* the old man. But he is God above all *who regenerated* the old man (Ibid.34). He *washed* away the sins of men, and he *regenerated* the old man. Redemption is *deification*.

Clement of Alexandria considered the aspect of *illumi-*

*nation* and bestowing of *immortality* by Christ. He imparted us *true knowledge*: “The Word became man, so that you might learn from man how man may become god” (*Protrepticos*, 1.8.4). He was sure that we are *redeemed* by the sacrificial blood of Christ.

*Origen* also explained further the idea of *illumination and divinization*: “With Jesus human and divine nature began to be woven together, so that by fellowship with the divinity, human nature might become divine, not only in Jesus himself, but also in all those who believe and embrace the life which Jesus taught” (*Contra Celsum*, 3.28). The death of Christ *overthrew* the dominion of Satan (7.7). His resurrection signified the final *defeat* of the powers of darkness. Christ’s death was a *propitiatory sacrifice*. Origen seems to speak of the *right of the devil* over humanity. Christ made a transaction with the devil and paid the price to the devil. Christ’s blood is the price paid to the devil, who had held power over enslaved sinners.

*Tertullian* introduced the concept of *satisfaction* into Christian theology. It was a substantial contribution from his part. He did not develop it extensively. As a lawyer, he introduced this legal term in order to explain the saving activity of Christ.

*St. Athanasius* shows how the *deification and divine sonship* are realized in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ: “The Word became man, so that we might be deified” (*De Incarnatione*, 54). “By becoming man, he made us sons to the Father, and he deified men by himself becoming man.” (*Contra Arianos*, I, 38). The Incarnate Word *restores to man incorruptibility*. He is the principal of life (*De Incarn.*8). Redemption is *recreation*. Christ achieved it through his sac-

rificial death on the cross: “The Word became flesh in order both to offer this sacrifice and that we, participating in his spirit, might be deified” (*De Decret. 14*). “By the sacrifice of his own body, he both put an end to the law which was against us, and made a new beginning of life for us. By the incarnation there has come about the *destruction* of death and the resurrection of life”(*De Incarn. 10*). Christ’s death is ordained to his resurrection and the victory over sin to the conferring of life. But the debt had to be paid for the restoration. Christ, therefore sacrificed himself on our behalf on the cross and paid the debt. The death of all of us was accomplished in the Lord’s body, so that being one with him as we had been with Adam, we might share in his victory as well.

*St. Leo*: Through his battle with the forces of evil and his victory over them, Christ *destroyed* the tyranny of sin, death and devil. Redemption is a victory in battle. His cross is a trophy erected on the site of the triumph, because resurrection turned the crucifixion into a victory.

*Gregory Nyssa* also sees the connection between the cross and the resurrection. Resurrection and glorification is the culmination of incarnation. The whole Christ-event is a salvific process. By becoming man Christ took on himself the disintegration of the human nature, namely death, which had resulted from our solidarity with Adam’s sin. He overcame death through his resurrection. The whole humanity is sharing in the resurrection of Christ. (Rom 5,12-15). Christ’s death is a *sacrifice* offered to the Father. At the same time there are hints to show that he too considered the death of Christ as a *ransom paid to the devil*. *St. Basil* also thought like this.

*St. Gregory Naziansen*: He stated that the devil had no



right over mankind. The Son was not handed over to the devil. Christ did not pay any ransom to him: "Admittedly we were held in captivity by the devil. But if the ransom belongs exclusively to him who holds the prisoner, I ask to whom it was paid and why? If to the devil, how shameful that the robber should receive not only a ransom from God, but a ransom consisting of God Himself, and that so extravagant a price should be paid to his tyranny before he could justly spare us"(Oratio, 45.22). Christ's blood is not even a ransom paid to God. For it is inconceivable that God should have found joy in the blood of His own Son. But the *sacrifice was meant for our sanctification and divinization*: "Is it not clear that the Father accepted the offering, not that he asked for it or needed it, but because of his divine plan and because man had to be sanctified by the humanity of God" (*Ibid.*).

*St John Chrysostom*: By sin men placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the devil but the devil exceeded his rights by lifting his hands against the sinless Christ. Thus he lost his hold over those whom he had kept in bondage (*Hom. in John.67.2*). Thus the devil *abused* his right. So he had to be subdued.

*St. Hilary*: *Hilary* developed the idea of *satisfaction*. Christ offered the sacrifice as our representative. We are redeemed by the offering of his blood: "The Lord was smitten taking upon himself our sins and suffering for us, so that in him, smitten even unto the weakness of crucifixion and death, health might be restored to us through his resurrection from the dead"(*Tract. in Ps.68.23*). Satan by inflicting death, the punishment for sin, on the sinless one, the author of Life, was *condemning himself*.

*St. Ambrose*: Christ offered himself as a *sacrifice* for

our sins (*In Ps.37.53*). Christ *redeemed* us sinners: “What was the purpose of the incarnation except that the flesh which had sinned should be redeemed by itself” (*De Incarn.56*). He too insists on the *rights of the devil and the compensation* due to him for surrendering mankind in Christ. According to Ambrose, devil was *deceived*. He did not know who Christ was. He would not have accepted Christ’s blood as a ransom, had he known who Christ was. In that sense the devil was deceived.

*St. Augustine*: Augustine explained the Soteriology against the Pelagians and the Pagans so that the cross of Christ might not be rendered empty (1 Cor 1,17). Christ is our *Mediator*. He emphasizes the nature and uniqueness of the mediation. Christ mediates between God and man because He is God and man. He is the mediator of freedom, of life and of salvation for all men (*De Trinitate, 4*). This way is open to all. Christ is the *Redeemer*. The motif of incarnation is the *redemption of all*. Augustine examines over 60 texts. Christ came to *vivify, liberate, redeem and illuminate* all those who were in death, weakness, slavery, prison, and shadow of sin. No one can belong to Christ who does not have need of life, salvation, liberation, redemption, and illumination. No one can be saved without Christ. It does not consist only in the example of virtue to be imitated. It consists in *the reconciliation* with God. It is an objective fact that Christ died for all. Original sin is the separation from God. Christ has in fact *reconciled us* with God. Now the whole humanity is reconciled with God. Christ is the *Priest and the Sacrifice*. He offered to the Father a sacrifice, which was true, free and perfect in every way. By means of it “has atoned for, abolished and redeemed all the faults of humanity, ransoming us from the power of demons.” Christ had to fulfill the will of the

good Father, and *not to pay a debt* to an evil principle. “The only Begotten participated in our mortality so that we might participate in his immortality”(Ep. 187.20). “He who was God became man so as to make those who were men gods” (*De Doctrina Christiana*, 1,38). “As a Priest receives the victim from us and offers it for us, so too Christ received the humanity from us and became a victim for us. He sacrificed himself for us in his death and offered himself to God as the first fruit in his resurrection.” (*In Ps. 129*, 3,7).

*St. Cyril of Alexandria*: Christ *sacrificed* himself for us and has done *expiation* for our sins and thus he *rescued* mankind from the evil. The purpose of incarnation is that the life giving Word, by assuming human nature with all its corruption, might infuse his own *incorruptibility* into it, just as fire impregnates with its nature the iron with which it is brought into contact (*Hom.Pasch. 17*). “When he shed his blood for us, Jesus Christ *destroyed death and corruptibility*. For, if he had not died for us, we would not have been saved. (*Glaph. in Exod.2*). Christ offered this sacrifice of his body as our representative.

## The Concept of Sin

Sin entered in the world through the influence of Satan and by the free will of the first parents. It was transmitted to posterity. Man by himself was unable to *undo the evil effects of sin*. Human nature itself was affected by *corruptibility* and has been pushed into the brink of nothingness. We were *estranged from God*, and a result from ourselves and from each other. The greatest tragedy of sin was that we lost our *communion with God*. And as a result the original *harmony* in the universe was destroyed. Unwilling to know God, humanity turned to the world of matter. Our will was incapable of break-

ing out of its self-induced imprisonment. Our sins earned *death* for us. We have come under the dominion of the *devil*. We could not give ourselves over to God as a gift in sacrifice. We could not fulfill our vocation of uniting the cosmos with God. Man lost his gift of *immortality* and by refusing to contemplate God who is life; mankind has separated itself from life and has been destined to corruption. The sinner attributes to himself what belongs to God. He wants to possess himself in a false way, as if he did not depend on God. He wants to be his own norm of action. Sinful man becomes the instrument of the devil's projects. Sin alienates man from his own nature, deprives him of the freedom to change the direction of his life, results in death, and subjects one to the dominion of Satan. Sin by its very nature, implies a diminishing of freedom. So man cannot free himself from it. The evil effects of his deeds far exceeded man's comprehension and intention.

### **Redemption and its Need**

Man needed redemption. In order to undo the evil consequences of sin and assume mankind into God's Trinitarian life, God himself sent his only Begotten Son. We needed a Redeemer who recreates our human nature and restores it to health. We needed a redeemer to be reconciled and united with God and thereby recognize and accept our true selves and the selves of our fellowmen as creatures and images of God. Our sight needed healing so that we may see again God's sight. We needed our will to be restored to true freedom. We needed someone who did not have to die so that by dying freely out of love for us he may save us from death. We needed to be rescued from the dominion of devil. We needed someone to help us in our utter helplessness. We needed some one who can help us to accomplish the task of uniting the cosmos with God.

## CHRISTOLOGY OF THE MIDDLE AGES

During the Middle Ages we have four representatives: St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109), Peter Abelard (1075-1142), St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) and St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74). They were all discussing the salvific activity of Jesus Christ.

### St. Anselm

St. Anselm tried to develop the theory of *satisfaction*. Christ's redemptive work consists essentially in providing adequate satisfaction for our sins. During the Patristic period one of the dominant ideas was *divinization*. Incarnation was a wonderful exchange, by which our divinization is effected. Another idea was the *buying back and redeeming* and setting free by paying a ransom (1 Cor 6,20; Gal 3,13; 4,5; 1Pet 1,18). Then there was discussion over the ransom *to which it was paid*. It was suggested that it was paid to the devil. They spoke even of the right of the devil over mankind. Thus Christ's blood was paid as a ransom to the devil. Later the theory of the fight against devil and the deception of the devil were developed. Though the devil was the rightful owner

of the souls, Christ tricked the devil and defeated him. Devil abused his power by putting to death the innocent one. So he lost the right. Although Gregory Naziansen and others strongly contested the whole idea of redemption as a ransom paid to the devil,<sup>1</sup> such thoughts dominated during the early part of the middle Ages. Anselm protested against such ideas and he developed the idea of *satisfaction*.

Satisfaction is a term drawn from the Roman law. Tertullian is the first one to use it in ecclesiastical circles. He applied the idea of satisfaction to penitential practices. St. Anselm developed the idea of satisfaction. In his work, **Cur Deus homo?** (Why God man-1098), he argues that every sin must be followed either by satisfaction or by punishment (1,15). Punishment brings with it dishonor to God and frustration of his plans. But it is impossible that God should lose the honor due to him. God does not want to punish, but he desires the perfection of his works (2,5). Satisfaction demands that man should stop sinning, seek pardon and do something more than what is obligatory. Man by himself is incapable of satisfying God who is offended infinitely by the sins. So incarnation was necessary. Only the God-man could offer something infinite. Christ did it freely. The human actions of the God-man have in God's eye an infinite value. Christ satisfies for the sins of humanity superabundantly by the free acceptance of his death on the cross. It was not a penal substitute; it was not a passive suffering to placate the angry God. Although the expression satisfaction occurs in Augustine and Hilary, Anselm made an original synthesis that has exerted an enormous influence on the Catholic and Protestant Soteriology.

## Peter Abelard

He criticized all the theories of redemption, including that of St. Anselm. He rejected the theory of the right of the devil as well as that of God's justice being satisfied by the criminal slaying of an innocent man. Christ's cross, according to him, is a *proof of divine love* intended as an incentive for our response of love. Our redemption is that supreme love present in us through the passion of Christ. Abelard's contemporaries, especially St. Bernard severely criticized him, saying that this theory does not adequately explain the objective redemption. Eventually by the influence of Bernard and others it was condemned in a local synod of Sens.

## St. Bernard

He developed his Christology in a spiritual and mystical way. He had a major influence on the devotion to the *human Jesus* as friend and lover. It grew in the 12<sup>th</sup> c. and flourished through St. Francis of Assisi (1181/2-1226), the popular piety inspired by the Franciscans, new development in Liturgy, painting, sculpture and architecture.

He appropriated and synthesized the theological and spiritual heritage of the Fathers. His main concern was personal and spiritual: how can the sinner return to God and be united with him? Bernard's interests are God and his own personal self. It is in Christ that he finds the key to understand both God and himself in the wider horizon of God's relationship to all humankind.

### The universality of salvation

He thought that the historical stages of Christ's redemptive work are structured according to the needs of fallen humanity. Christ gradually reveals and communicates God to the human race through the stages of redemption. He stresses the consequences of our relationship to Adam: through generation we all share in Adam's sin, which we also imitate by our personal sins. All experience concupiscence in our flesh and deserve to die. Christ redeemed all human beings through his death. His blood freed also those who died before his coming. Thus not only baptized Christians, but also the Jews and even the pagans had a chance to be saved through faith. He cannot conceive of a God who would save only a few people before the coming of the Son. The coming of Christ fulfilled the desire of all the just of the OT. He was the kiss for whom all the just were longing. When Christ began to teach, God opened his own mouth, the same God who used to open the mouths of the prophets in the OT. Through his blood, Christ redeemed all who were before him, and who came after him. Now is the privileged period of salvation history. Thus Bernard speaks of the universality of salvation in Christ.

**Sin: threefold alienation:**

The human beings attempted to become gods on their own way by determining through their own will what is right and wrong. As a result he fell into sin. He does not want to face himself, runs away from self-knowledge and loses himself in sensing, knowing and craving the manifold material things of this world. We wanted to become our own wisdom and we became foolish. Instead of becoming like God, our senses and instincts dominate and enslave us and our bodies drag us down. The harmony and unity of body and



soul became shattered. The original simplicity and immortality and freedom of the soul could not be eliminated. But it was covered up and distorted by the opposite qualities. In this state the sinner could not know God because he ignored himself. As a result he is alienated from others also.

### **The coming of the Savior and the first phase of our redemption:**

In creation God gave ourselves to us, in the work of redemption he gave us himself, and, by giving himself, he restored us to our real selves. He reversed the threefold alienation. This total gift of God to us in Christ calls forth a reciprocal gift of our whole selves to God. Every stage of the Word's history effects in some way our salvation, and our spiritual development results in a gradual conformation to the incarnate, crucified and glorified Word. What happened once in salvation history unfolds its effects everyday in individual souls. Christ passed through all the stages of human development in order to purify it. The Word has two phases; in the one he descends and empties himself. It begins with incarnation and is consummated in his death on the cross. The second is his ascent, which begins with the Resurrection and is completed with his Ascension and Pentecost. There is a close link between incarnation and the cross. Incarnation has revealed God's humility. Incarnation opened a way towards a true human self-understanding and real human greatness. Since we aspire to be like God, we should imitate God in his humility. Since the Son of God has freely taken upon himself the necessary consequences of our sins which consisted in undergoing physical death and enduring suffering, we should also take up our cross and suffering. Since

he had compassion for us we should be compassionate to our neighbors.

**The mystery of redemption: Liberation, satisfaction, sacrifice, buying us back at a precious price:**

Bernard makes use of all these terms to express the redemptive work of Christ. The passion and death of Christ were nothing but the revelation of God's love for us. Christ's love for us results from his love for the Father for whom he has intended to save mankind. His blood has become a most pleasing sacrifice to the Father; it has satisfied for our sins and thereby obtained for us forgiveness from the Father, and liberated us from the power of the devil. St. Bernard calls it the *sacrament of redemption (sacramentum redemptionis)*. God did not thirst for the blood of his Son but for our salvation, which was in the blood; nor did he require the blood of his Son but he accepted it when it was offered to him. Christ's will to satisfy for our sins comes from the Son's initiative. Christ died in the place of the sinner and for the sake of the sinner. He could satisfy for all of us and could free us all from both physical and spiritual death. Jesus came to show us an example of humility and love. The humility and love of Christ can only be imitated if they are first participated in; and they can be participated only as a result of Christ's death on the cross, which obtained the forgiveness of our sins.

**The Ascension of Christ and our Ascension**

The death of Jesus is the focal point of the mystery of our redemption. Our gradual conformation to Christ, which begins by becoming like the child Jesus and continues through our Ascension with Jesus, is the real participation in

his mysteries. Through Christ we reach God himself; everything in the history of the Word incarnate, the infant Jesus, the preaching and miracles but especially the pierced side of Christ reveal and communicate God to us. We start with the emotional love and rational love to reach God himself through Jesus Christ. This we do through the humanity of Christ. The risen Lord has now glorified body and glorified affections. He cannot suffer either in the body or in the soul. He cannot be approached carnally. The Ascension changes not only our love but also our faith. Our carnal faith is to be transformed into a faith, which transcends the limits of the senses and embraces the infinite dimensions of Christ's divinity and touches with its fingers the one who is transformed into divine beauty and endowed with God's majesty and glory. The perfect soul who has ascended with Christ to the realm of the spirit, does not abandon the *memoria* of the mysteries of the Word made flesh. She discovers ever more the divine love opened up for us into the wounds of the crucified Lord. Her prayer life is stretched out between the two poles of *memoria and praesentia*. She recalls the mysteries of the earthly life of Jesus in order to enkindle her desire for the presence of the glorified Lord. To the extent that we love the glorified Christ for his own sake, we become the spouse of the Word or rather we realize in ourselves the love of the one unique Spouse, the Church. To the extent that we pass into God and become one spirit with God, we come into our own perfection and beauty, and the Word/Bridegroom will find in us his desired and unique Spouse. Our eschatological consummation includes the glorification of our bodies and the deification of our affections. The eschatological salvation is celebrated as the overcoming of the alienation in our full unity with God, with us and with our neighbors. Our emotions

will be healed and finally deified. This healing takes place to the extent that we participate in the various stages of the self-emptying and the glorification of the Son.

Jesus has truly risen in his body but he cannot appear to us as he really is in his glorified and divinized state because we are still fleshly beings who can perceive and love only that which is proportionate to our sense experience. The role of the body in the earthly life is to honor the soul, to help the soul to be reconciled to God and thus regain her own spiritual identity. If the body consumes itself in serving the salvation of the soul in her earthly life, then the body itself will be saved at the end.<sup>2</sup>

## St. Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas tried to make a synthesis of the Latin Fathers and some Oriental Fathers. His basic principle is the *hypostatic union*. The person is, for him, the subject (*suppositum*) of an intellectual nature existing as one in himself and distinct from anything and anyone else. In the Incarnation the eternal divine Person of the Word united to himself a human nature in such a way that the human individual does not exist in himself but in the person of the Word. This union between the man and the Word is so intimate that the eternal Person of the Word exists not only as the subject of the divine but also of the human nature. The man Jesus is closer to the eternal Son than the Son is to the Father, since Jesus is the same person as the Son while the Son is not the same person as the Father. The purpose of the hypostatic union is *soteriological*. God has become man so that fallen man may return through the incarnate Word to the happi-

ness of divine life. Because of the union, Christ's humanity was endowed with all perfections. The man Jesus possesses the fullness of grace both for himself and for all mankind. He enjoys beatific vision from the moment of his conception. He had also the infused knowledge of the angels. He has also the fullness of typical human knowledge that he acquired through the senses. Jesus the man knows all that man can know by knowledge through sense experience. With regard to the latter type of knowledge there was growth or development in Jesus. He is the teacher of mankind and he was not ignorant of anything. He used pedagogical methods when he asked questions. Christ took upon himself our humanity to redeem us. His humanity was that of the fallen man. It was passible and mortal. Christ's soul participated in the sufferings of the body. He participated our human nature completely except sin. The earthly life of Jesus, his suffering, death, Resurrection and Ascension, all have a theological significance. Our humanity, which he assumed, was an instrument conjoined to the divinity.

He attributes a central role to the passion. The passion brought about our salvation by way of *merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, redemption and efficient causality*. Thus St. Thomas makes use of the several Patristic expressions to explain the saving activity of the Lord. He reads at times the gospel story in the light of his own religious vocation. He looks down the well of history and sees Christ almost as a Dominican in anticipation. Christ handed on the fruits of his contemplation by acting as a preacher of the Word of God and combining the contemplative and active life. He takes up the notion of satisfaction, but does not endorse its absolute necessity. Incarnation was necessary for the destruction of sin and the repairing of human beings themselves more than the repairing of sinful

offences against God. He holds the view that God could pardon sin even though adequate satisfaction was not made. Christ's passion is expressed as a meritorious sacrifice. The specific point of sacrifice was understood by him to be that of placating God. He dealt with Christ's passion and sacrifice in the light of satisfaction as the act of a particular form of justice, namely penance which involves a penal or punitive element. This opened the way to the idea of Christ propitiating an angry God by paying a redemptive ransom. God's love for us is everlasting. God began to love us even before the ransom was paid. It is we who are changed by the washing away of sin and the offering of a suitable compensation. According to St. Thomas salvation came not only from outside (from the part of God), but also from the human race. He combined the best biblical exegesis and the philosophical terminology he could find at his time. Christ was mediator as priest, prophet and king. He had a comprehensive vision of the mysteries of the life of Christ and sufficiently emphasized the human story of Jesus. His Christology from above highlighted the incarnation. At the same time he treated extensively the resurrection of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

### **To the Reformers**

The soteriological concern of St. Anselm remained the dominant trend of the Reformers and beyond. Renewed devotion to the Eucharist was one of the major developments. Juliana of Liege (1192-1258) gave the leadership for the establishment of the Feast of Corpus Christi in 1204. Many including St. Thomas encouraged it. The feast celebrated the Eucharistic presence of Christ and a sense of the Mass as an expiatory sacrifice for sins. That meant fostering faith in the sacrificial and expiatory death of Christ on the cross. The

infinite merit of that death, made available preeminently through the Eucharist, could supply the penance, which living and dead sinners have failed to perform.

Another development was the promotion of belief in the infinite merits of Christ's sacrificial death: the doctrine and practice of indulgences. Understood as the remission before God of temporal punishment required by sins for which repentance had already been expressed and pardon received, indulgences were granted by the official church out of the treasury of the merits of Christ and his saints. It rested on the conviction that Christ's own redemptive work was infinitely valuable.

## **The Reformers- Luther and Calvin**

### **Martin Luther**

Luther continued the soteriological line of the Patristic period and that of Bernard but his presentation shows one-sidedness and distortions. There is a new emphasis on the horror and gravity of sin, which "not only disturbs the order of creation but also offends God himself". Therefore redemption deeply involves God himself. There is God's justice, holiness and wrath on the one hand, and his tender mercy and fatherly love on the other. God's involvement in our sin is stretched to the breaking point. God declares the Son *guilty and a sinner because of our sins*. He presents the Father as condemning the Son into hell temporarily. Here Luther risks suggesting the opposite of what he intends to say. Instead of appearing infinitely holy, Luther's God may seem arbitrary and unjust. This way of presentation of Luther is contrary to the NT and Patristic evidence. The Fathers never taught that

the Son is guilty because of our sins and suffers damnation for our sins. But the Fathers were very clear that by accepting suffering and death as the consequence of our sins in this life, the innocent Son does carry the burden of all sins.

Christ carries the anguish of the sinful conscience and suffers in a new and unique way the horror of evil in its totality. Luther describes it in a powerful way. God voluntarily identifies himself with all sinners and with all their sins out of love for us. Luther integrates the theme of the *miraculous exchange* with that of *victorious struggle* by showing what reality lay behind the mythical images used in describing the struggle between Christ and the devil. Christ conquered sin, death and the devil not by some mythical combat, but by taking upon himself the guilty conscience of the sinner and by loving the Father in the sinner's stead with a glowing love. Thus Luther's notion of the miraculous exchange is a step forward in understanding the meaning of redemption. But the exchange is not quite complete: on the side of Christ, his free human will does not take an active part in the work of God; on our side, Christ's divine life does not quite become ours since our good works cannot share in the merits of Christ himself.

He does not insist on the ontological constitution of Christ. For him to know Christ means to know his benefits and not to reflect upon his natures and the modes of his incarnation. The *saving work of Christ is imputed to the sinner for the remission of his sins through faith*. Christ does not satisfy for our sins. Luther rejects the idea of satisfaction. He says Christ suffered for us. It is *penal substitution*. Christ suffers not because of his solidarity with us, but as our substitute. God's vindictive justice does not spare him. The punishment



for sin is the pain of damnation. Christ has experienced it on the cross. God's vindictive justice being completely appeased through Christ's death, God looks upon us as justified in virtue of our faith. For him the redemptive act is exclusively God's act. The humanity of Christ plays no part in it. It is but little more than a garment for an action that is wholly divine. It is the stage where the drama of salvation takes place. But the sole actor is God. *His justice is thus imputed to us.* There is no cooperation from our part. The only thing needed is faith in Christ (*sola fide*). Luther's main concern was to show the involvement of the divinity in our redemption, to the point of attributing divine properties to the human nature of Christ.<sup>4</sup> Also for *Melanchton*, the Lutheran theologian, to know Christ means to know his benefits and not to reflect upon his natures and the modes of his incarnation.

### **John Calvin**

Calvin also accepts the traditional doctrine of the Church about the divine and human natures of Christ united in one person. Calvin emphasizes the transcendence of God even over against the human nature of Christ. The *idiomata of the two natures* are not mixed or fused in the same way as in Luther's works. Scripture attributes the sufferings and death of the human nature improperly but not without cause to the divine nature. In his thought Christ the man has an active role in the redemptive act and does *merit our salvation*. Christ merited our salvation because through God's pure mercy, the man Christ, without any merit of his own, was assumed into personal union with the eternal word. Thus the ultimate source of Christ's meritorious works is God's free mercy. Christ is our Mediator. Because of his sins, fallen humanity experiences the holy God as his enemy and tries

to escape from him. Hence it needs a Mediator who can show the sinner the mercy of God the Father and reconcile the sinner to God. Calvin systematizes the mediating work of Christ under the threefold office of Prophet, King and Priest. His mediation is coextensive with the whole of salvation History. God was teaching humanity always through Christ. The goal of incarnation and glorification of Christ is to carry over the work of mediation. Christ's mediation comes to an end with the consummation of history and the last judgment. There is a correspondence and causal relationship between the various phases of the mystery of Christ and our redemption. By the death of Christ, sin was abolished and death was annihilated, but by his resurrection, righteousness was restored and life revived. His resurrection is the effective cause of a new life in us. *Righteousness indicates only imputed external righteousness*, but the sanctification in the Holy Spirit refers to a real inner transformation of our being. Calvin presents a close link between Christology, Pneumatology and Ecclesiology. For him the Christian life is a real and gradual participation in Christ. <sup>5</sup>

## **Council of Trent (1545 - 63)**

The council in explaining the question of justification, made use of the terms merit and satisfaction in interpreting Christ's work of redemption: "The meritorious cause of our justification is the beloved, only begotten Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who, while we were sinners, out of the great love with which he loved us, merited for us justification by his most holy passion on the wood of the cross and made satisfaction for us to God the Father." (DS 1529). Trent did not define the terms. It took up the terms from Aquinas and

Anselm. In dealing with the Eucharist against the reformers, also Trent dealt with the salvific activity of Christ. In dealing with the sacrifice of the mass, it repeated the traditional Catholic teaching: the bloody sacrifice Christ offered once and for all on the altar of the cross is represented in an unbloody manner, but not repeated, under visible signs to celebrate the memory of Christ's passage from this world and to apply the salutary power of his sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins (DS 1740). Trent considered the mass as a sacrifice because of its connection with the once and for all historical sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Trent did not define the term sacrifice, but tried to explain it some way. Christ's clean oblation was prefigured by various types of sacrifices under the regime of nature and of the law; as their fulfillment and perfection it included all the good that was signified by those former sacrifices (DS 1742). It stated that as a truly propitiatory sacrifice, the Eucharist serves to appease (*placare*) God who grants grace- the gift of repentance and pardon. This sacrifice is rightly offered for the sins, punishments, satisfaction and other necessities of the faithful living and dead (DS 1743). Thus the Council included also penal elements to the idea of satisfaction... Satisfaction was now depicted as involving punishment. It was absent in Anselm. But the Council did not speak of the divine anger being discharged against Christ as the one who literally carried the guilt of the world's sins.

The Protestants did not accept the teaching of Trent on the sacrifice of the Mass. But they too used the language of punishment and propitiation for Christ's sacrificial death on the cross. Some spoke of a war between God the Father and God the Son. They understood Christ to have literally taken upon him the guilt of human sin, just as if he had personally committed all these sins himself. He suffered as our substitute on the cross and his death placated the angry God and so made justification available for us. This view of redemption as penal substitution was supported by misusing and

## CHRIST OUR REDEEMER

The redemptive activity of Christ has been traditionally expressed through the biblical expressions such as expiation, love and conquest. Much biblical language about Christ's doing and being has been strongly symbolic: he is the bread of life, the good shepherd, the light of the world, the vine, the suffering servant, the head of the body, or the last Adam. He is called the Lord, the Mediator, the Messiah, the Redeemer, Savior, Son of God, and Son of man or Word. The primary biblical language of Christology is analogical and symbolic. The post biblical language has often been less blatantly symbolic. It shows that we are guided towards the ultimate realities not only by abstract concepts but also even more by symbolic language.<sup>1</sup>

St. Paul realized the value of Christ's death and resurrection in a very substantial manner. Before his conversion he was scandalized by the folly of the cross. But after his encounter with the Risen Lord, he came to the deepest dimensions of these mysteries. According to Paul, Christ died for our sins and was raised for our justification (Rom 4, 25). He died to destroy the sin of disobedience and give life (Rom 5,12). He died to reconcile us with the Father (2 Cor 5,17). He

died in order to liberate us from the power of evil and give us the freedom of the children of God (Gal 3,4). These are some of the categories used by Paul in expounding the mystery of redemption. Almost every page of St. Paul has something to speak of redemption. Pauline and Johannine theology converges in pronouncing the divine love to be the major key to redemption. God's initiative of love clarifies the story of salvation (John 3, 16-17; Rom 5,8; 2 Cor 5,14-15; 1 John 4,9-10; Gal 2,20). The redemptive love was revealed and at work in Christ. We find a lot of images in the NT: parents/children (Lk15, 11-32; John 11,52; Lk 13,34), bride and bridegroom (Eph 5,25-27; Rev 21,2,9-10), friends (John 15,13.15), the High Priest (Heb 4,15), the merciful doctor at table with the sinful sick (Mk 2,15-17), and the good shepherd (John 10,1-16). It is also reconciliation (Rom 5,10-11; 2 Cor 5, 18-20), adoption and covenant. It is God's love, which moved him to be reconciled with us sinners (Rom 5,5.8; 2 Cor 5,14), and make us adopted sons and daughters (John 1,12-13; rom 8,29; gal4, 4-6). The new covenant, which he established, is a covenant of love (1 Cor 11,25; Heb 9,15). It is also a gift of the Holy Spirit, deification and transformation into the divine image. It is an extraordinary exchange (*admirabile commercium*). It is also a victorious conflict. Christ's exorcising activity was a victorious conflict with satanic powers (Mk 3,27). The post Easter situation was a triumph over and deliverance from the forces of evil: sin, death and the diabolic powers (John 16,33; 1Cor 15,24-26; Col.2, 14-15; Rev 19,11-16). In the place of slavery and death, Christ brought freedom and life. In the book of Revelation also one sees a sense of the paradoxical nature of the triumph (5,6-14; 17,14). When St. Augustine said, "slain by death, he slew death" he was expressing this paradox. This is evident in the liturgies and

Patristic tradition, especially in the Syriac churches. Christ is considered as the priest and victim. Once and for all he offered a sacrifice, which expiated the sin and established the new covenant between God and humanity. The Epistle to the Hebrews develops extensively this aspect of redemption. This is seen also in the other NT writings (Mk 14,22-25; John 1,36; Rom 3,24-25; 1 Cor 5,7; 11,23-26). The concept sacrifice includes: the obedient self-sacrifice in life (Rom 12,1), which involves personal loss and even violent death. The sufferings of the innocent servant (Is 53) expiate the sins of others. Sacrifice is understood also in the cultic sense: something is symbolically offered to God. It is God who makes the things, offered, holy and sacred. Sacrifice expiates sin and inaugurates a new covenant. Sacrifice includes also adoration, praise, thanksgiving and intercession. We should think of the passion and crucifixion as the inevitable consequences of Jesus' loving fidelity to his mission, which he lived out for us in a cruel and sinful world (Gal 1,4). His total innocence and his divine identity gave unique value to his self-sacrifice. By raising him from the dead and glorifying him, God accepted and made holy this victim, the High Priest who entered into the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 8,2; 9,24).

We are saved by love. Love is God's being. That is why St. John says, "God is love" (1 John 4,8). *Love constitutes God's redemptive work.* The NT associates redemption with creation (Col. 1,15-20; Heb1, 2-3). Creation is there for redemption. The incarnate Logos who mediates the divine revelation and redemption was already the agent of creation (John 1,1ff.). The mystery of love that was creation reaches its climax at redemption. In the beginning God showed infinite love by creating the universe and its center, human beings. God's overflowing goodness gave birth and gives birth to every-

thing that is. All created reality is the fruit and expression of the divine love. As Augustine puts it, “because God is good, we exist”. Divine love lies behind the new creation in which God gives and will give new, transformed, and definitive life to what once existed but has died. The divine love sets us free from the forces of evil; it heals and transforms us. The activity of God’s redeeming love will reach its climax at the eschaton. The love of Christ made him utterly vulnerable and weak; he died at their hands and on their behalf. God’s self revelation is essentially redemptive, and vice versa, redemption through the divine love must be known, in order to be effective or at least fully effective. God’s love for us means self-manifestation and self-revelation. The loving God reveals himself to us and it is one aspect of redemption. And God’s love reconciles and unites us.

### **Christ is the Universal Redeemer**

According to the teaching of the NT Christ is the Savior for all people. Christ’s redemptive role is universal (for all), unique (without parallel), complete (fullness of salvation), and definitive (unequal and unsurpassed). Universal role signifies that through him sin is forgiven, the life of justification and grace is imparted, and the new existence as God’s adopted children made available. Christ’s role is indispensable and necessary for human salvation: *extra Christum nulla salus (outside Christ no salvation)*.

Paul insists that Christ died for all (2 Cor 5,14-15). He says that God was in Christ reconciling the world to his own self (5,19). In contrast to Adam, who brought sin and death to all human beings, the obedient Christ has led all to justification and life (Rom 5,12-21; 1 Cor 15,20-28. 45-49). The re-

demption will have its impact on the whole of creation (Rom 8, 18-23). The Epistle to the Colossians also presents the universal role (1, 15-20). St. Mathew's conclusion is that Christ is for all (28, 18-19). Acts 4, 12 is very explicit on the matter, "there is salvation in no one else, and for us there is no other name under heaven given among human beings by which we must be saved". I Tim. Also has a similar statement: "There is one God, and there is one Mediator between God and human beings, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself as a ransom for all (2, 5-6).

St. John presents Christ as light, way, truth and salvation (life). Christ is the true light that enlightens every human being (1, 9; 9, 5). Jesus himself says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, except through me"(14, 6). 1 John presents Christ as the sole source of eternal life: "God gave us eternal life and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life (5, 11-12). Through these terms St. John also teaches the universal relevance of Christ.

In his discourse at Areopagus, St. Paul expresses his esteem for the religious traditions *before and outside Christ* (Acts 17, 22-23). The speech announced that the end of the times of ignorance had come with the message of Christ's resurrection. But it did not invalidate the prior quest for the unknown god. NT upheld the universal impact of the Savior, but at the same time respected those who were not aware of how salvation worked. The covenant with Abraham and Moses did not abrogate the universal covenant of God with all humanity and with all living creatures (Gen 9, 1-17). That covenant with Noah remained firmly in place (Sir. 44, 7). Melchisedek (Gen 14, 18-20), the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10, 1-13), Ruth



and Job refer to a universal call to faith in Christ as Savior (Acts 4,12). It is recognition of how the Holy Spirit operates before that call can be effectively received (10,1-11). The Book of Jonah demonstrates how God is concerned with all men.<sup>2</sup>

## Syriac Tradition

The Syriac Tradition is basically following the NT pattern of thought and uses biblical imageries to denote Christ and his saving mission. The hymn preceding the public celebration of the Mass of the Antiochene liturgy has two stanzas calling Christ explicitly *the light*. The exegetical, dogmatic, ascetical and liturgical writings of the Syriac Churches have given a central place to Soteriology. The Catechetical Homilies of Theodore and Cyril of Jerusalem give ample evidence of the interest of the early Antiochene-Palestinian Fathers for Soteriology. The Syriac Fathers begin their soteriological consideration with a theological consideration on the name Jesus (*Yesu or Iso*). The name Yesu was designated from heaven itself and this stands as the principal idea of the theology of redemption. In Hebrew the name signifies *Yahweh is salvation*. In the NT it means *Jesus is Savior*. In the OT it was used for the first time to designate the son of Nun (*Iso bar Nun*: Joshua, 1,1). In the NT **Iso** reveals the saving activity: "You will conceive in your womb a child and you shall call him the name Jesus (Iso), because he will save his people from their sins (Lk 1,32).

Redemption etymologically means a buying back. Redemption presupposes a falling into a dangerous situation. The redemptive activity of Christ is seen by the Syriac Fathers as ranging from creation to eschatology. Hence the role

of the redeemer should begin with his role as Creator. In the Christian tradition the fall story of Gen 3-4 forms the preamble to Soteriology. After the fall the merciful God had given him the hope of a future Redeemer. The first parents had the freedom to obey or disobey the commandment. “You will die on the same day you eat the fruit from this tree”(Gen 2). The Proto-parents had to choose between mortality and immortality. For that the temptation was necessary. They had to *merit immortality* by themselves through the victory in a struggle. Hence the devil appears in the scene and instigates the first parents to disobey God: “You will become like God if you eat from this tree”. Here we see the tension between the precept of God and that of Satan. Transgression was a free choice of the first parents. God blessed them with all honor and high considerations. Adam was created in the image and likeness of God. He was formed with His own hands and God breathed the immortal soul into him. He set him in authority within Paradise and over the things outside Paradise. He clothed him with his glory and gave him his counsel. But the first parents followed the counsel of Satan and as a result they were deprived of their glory and began to feel shame of their nakedness. It was the deprivation of the glory with which they were clothed in. It was *heavenly clothing* that they lost. The Syriac Fathers compare the splendor and glory of the first parents to that of the face of Moses as described in Exodus 34,34. The foundation of the visible splendor was their righteousness and holiness, which affected their nearness to God. It expresses their familiarity with God.

In Adam the whole humanity lost the divine glory. According to St. Paul all men have sinned and fell short of the glory (Rom 3,23). From Adam down through the centuries

men began to live with the absence of glory. Adam returned to the earth in the sense that he died to the life of glory. By transgressing the divine commandment, Adam sealed a bond of debt to humanity. It had its effects on the entire human race, because of our solidarity with him. The sin of Adam was a leaven in the lump of the human race and anything sinful in each man could be traced back to the influence of the leaven of Adam's sin. Because of the sin of Adam, he was expelled from Paradise and the door of Paradise was sealed. On account of his sin he died a hidden death in Paradise and that was symbolically expressed in Adam's hiding among the trees of Paradise as if in a grave. When he lost the divine life he had to flee from the presence of God. He lost the familiarity with God.

### **Jesus' redemptive life and mission**

The events of the earthly life of Jesus are called mysteries, because they have a unique revelatory and redemptive significance and value. Since Jesus is the incarnation of God's saving love for mankind, every event in this earthly life reveals and communicates this mysterious plan of redemption? The ordinary events of his life as a poor, hidden, humble, self-sacrificing servant of God constitute the elements of an implicit Soteriology, which will become explicit after his resurrection. Because of the uniqueness of the Person and mission of Jesus, his earthly activities are salvific events, which reach their climax in the paschal mystery. The incarnation of Christ is redemptive from its beginning and its purpose is the liberation of humanity from its alienation and transformation into a holy people by participating in the mysteries of Christ.

### ***Birth of the Lord***

The relation between the first Adam and the Second Adam is a capital theme of the Syriac tradition. “The virgin earth had brought forth that Adam, the head of the earth; the virgin womb has brought forth that Adam, the head of heaven,” says St. Ephrem in his Nativity hymn. The first Adam symbolizes the principle of the orientation of man to bind up himself in earthly things and so remain alienated from God. That is the meaning of the expression “head of the earth”. Incarnation is a counter action to the evil effects of the fall of the first Adam.

Ephrem speaks of the incarnation as follows: “Father begot him and created the creatures through him; the flesh brought him forth and through him killed the human desires; baptism brought him forth, so that it might remove the stains through him; Sheol brought him forth so that its treasures might be dispersed. Christ put on flesh in order to overcome the flesh which is the symbol of sin.” Incarnation is a counter action to the pride of Adam. The exalted one humbled him from the highest to the lowest state, so that he might humble the pride, which had cast down Adam from the highest state. On the day of his birth our Lord changed his brightness into disgrace as a humble child because Adam had changed rectitude into iniquity.

The Adam-Christ parallelism is further made use of in the case of the formation of the body and the animation. Adam was first formed in all his limbs. And once he was perfect in all his limbs, the soul was infused into the body (Gen 1,26; 2,7). The first man was formed from the dust and he was perfect in his organs, but he lacked vitality and sensibility. Therefore he lay there without life and soul. Once the

soul was infused he became alive and animated and soon admirably stood up to praise his Maker. In the same way the Holy Spirit formed the body of the Lord in the womb of the Virgin. But like the body of all children it took 40 days for the reception of the fetus to be a body for the reception of the soul. Several early and medieval writers shared this successive animation<sup>3</sup>. But Mar Ephrem, Philoxenus and others did not teach that there was successive animation in the case of Christ. Those who spoke of successive animation wanted to speak of Christ like other human beings. Though Christ was formed in a miraculous way in the womb, in all the rest he was like any other human being. It was through the action of the Holy Spirit that the flesh was formed in the womb of the Virgin. He formed it and anointed it that it be united with the Word of God. Formation and anointing were simultaneous. This union in the womb is forever and perfect. Even though Mary conceived not in a miraculous way, the fetus followed the natural course like any other human child. At the time of the annunciation there was the manifestation of the Trinity. It was a revelation. Incarnation had a revelatory function also.

### ***Baptism of the Lord***

Jesus Christ before his public ministry was baptized by John in the river Jordan (Mt 3, 13ff.). At baptism Christ received an anointing by the Holy Spirit. It has more soteriological and ecclesiological implications. The human nature taken from us was not perfect in everything. It followed the natural course of growth like any child. His human nature was passible and mortal. He had to be justified through obedience and in fact he perfected all justice in his passion. Christ the New Adam did not know that he was

born to immortality and immutability. He had to grow in wisdom. As the human nature matured and the power was made known to him from above, the humanity came to the full understanding of the divinity.

At baptism Christ did not receive any additional unction from outside. The descent of the Spirit is not to be understood as coming from above. At the time of baptism there occurred a special manifestation of the Spirit and it is taken as a second anointing. Christ in his human nature knew the pledge of immortality and incorruptibility. By his baptism Christ received the spiritual nativity and the mystery of immortality and incorruptibility, so that he might be first in everything and first-born of many brothers in the adoption of filiation through the resurrection from the dead for the redemption of our bodies. Through this he has mystically portrayed in himself the reason of the new life, which we attain after the resurrection. Through this second anointing Christ became the head of the Church, and of the faithful who are his members. We are baptized into it and receive the name Christians. By undergoing the baptism of John, Christ was inaugurating the new baptism for his followers. In baptism mystically (*razana'it*) we receive the pledge of adoption of life for the salvation our bodies through the grace of the Holy Spirit and as first fruits, immortality and incorruptibility. Christ preceded us first and is made first in everything. Thus he became the Giver of immortality and incorruptibility to all those who believe in him. Christ remits sins and gives adoptive filiation through the baptism in the spirit to immortality. In baptism we Christians receive mystically the pledge of immortality, incorruptibility and the adoptive filiation. By participating in his baptism we are able to participate in his filiation by adoption. Because of his baptism,

Christ became our Head and we became his members. He became the First-Born and the Cause of our salvation. So it was for us that he was baptized in Jordan and he thus became the First-Born of many brothers and our head and the giver of immortality to us who believe in him.<sup>4</sup> At the time of baptism also there was the divine revelation of the Trinity.

### ***Fasting and Temptation***

The first parents were tempted to take the fruit. But Jesus fasted for 40 days. By his fasting, Christ washed away the dirt of the ancient serpent. Christ's fasting was to counteract the poison of Satan who made the first parents to sin by offering them the forbidden fruit. The poison of the serpent spread to the whole of humanity. "Jesus fasted and through that he gained victory over Satan and granted it to the one who was conquered on account of food", says St. Ephrem. The fasting of Christ is closely connected with his temptation and both together form an antithetic parallel to the temptation and fall of the first parents in Paradise. Satan puts a question to the first parents: "Did God say, you shall not eat of any tree of the garden?" (Gen 3,1). Through this question Satan defeated them. In the first temptation of Christ, Satan puts a question, "If you are the Son of God command these stones to become loaves of bread". But Christ retorted and defeated him. The arrow, which Satan shot at Jesus, was the bread, which he was in need of. This bread is the symbol of Adam's greed. But Christ's arrow was humility. The second temptation was a temptation to vainglory and the third one was to pride. Satan had made the first parents believe that man could become God by eating the forbidden fruit, but he did not succeed in the case of Christ. The first parents yielded to the temptation of pride but Jesus humiliated the tempter. "Lord,

he tempted you upon the mountain and the mountain ceased from being the place of worship. While he set you on the highest of the temple, you pulled down the highest of his temples”, says St. Ephrem. He makes use of the context to describe the role of Christ in overthrowing the dominion of Satan by the destruction of idolatry. The idol worship on the mountains and high places and sanctuaries built for them are adversely affected by the temptation of Christ on the mountain. By these, the evangelists wanted to show the defeat of Satan and the victory of Jesus over them.

### ***Jesus sitting at the table in the Pharisee’s house:***

It was not on account of a banquet that our Lord associated himself with the eaters and drinkers as the Pharisees thought, but that he might mix for them his doctrine as the medicine of life, in the food of the mortals. As the wicked one gave his bitter counsel to Adam on the occasion of food, so also the good one gave to the children of Adam his life-giving counsel on the occasion of food. Here Ephrem takes us from the house of the Pharisee to Paradise. Christ counteracts the serpent’s action of giving bitter counsel to the first parents by giving them the forbidden fruit. Christ gives to the children of Adam his life-giving doctrine. It is opposed to the falsehood, which come from the devil. Ephrem says, “The primal serpent had bitten the primal Adam not with teeth but with advice. Our Lord healed the wound not with drugs but with his counsel”.

### ***Cursing of the Fig tree***

When Adam sinned he was divested of the glory with which he was clothed in. Our lord came so that he might heal the wound and give the garment of glory to cover his



nakedness. Therefore he made the fig tree wither as if to make it known that there after the leaves of the fig tree were not needed for the vesture of Adam, because he returned to his first glory. As a result of his coming, Adam got back his lost glory.

### ***Opening of the eyes of the blind man and other miracles***

In the curing of the blind man Ephrem sees the curing of the blindness of the human hearts. Christ opened our hearts to the Word of life, conquering darkness, because he himself is the true light. In the raising of the son of the widow of Naim, Christ's triumph over death is manifested. The other signs and wonders also have the same message. They have a deeper meaning in the redemptive plan of God. They were signs having deeper redemptive significance.

### ***Jesus' visit to Jerusalem and the Last Supper***

Jesus went up to Jerusalem to make a last effort to bring his people to the right path and to observe the Passover like any other Jew. He did not wish that some his hearers to react by killing him, but his absolute loyalty to his Father prevented him from escaping from it. Jesus celebrated or anticipated the celebrations of the Jewish Passover. During the celebration Jesus added two prophetic actions: 1. Washing the feet of his disciples. 2. The institution of the Eucharist as a sign of his total self-gift. Mk 14,25 most probably is an announcement of his imminent death and has salvific value in the context of Jesus action. Jesus' offering of the final cup of fellowship is a sign that he is not simply allowing death to overtake him, but has actively integrated it into his mission. It is a valid sign to his disciples that they understand his death as a final and extreme service to God and humanity. Thus

the last supper clearly reveals the consciousness of Jesus with regard to his mission and impending death. He felt his death to be part and parcel of the salvation offered by God. He was sure that God's kingdom would be established and his mission would be fulfilled precisely and concretely in his own passion and death. The bread and wine in the last supper are prophetic and anticipatory signs of his death. The early church had developed the salvific interpretation of the death of Jesus as the death of the eschatological prophet, as the death within God's plan of salvation and as a redemptive and atoning sacrifice.

### ***Prayer at Gethsemane and the sweating and the passion of Christ***

The prayer at Gethsemane was to counteract Adam's disobedience in Paradise and to take him back there. In the first garden the will of Adam doubted about his creator. As a result he ate the forbidden fruit. Jesus entered the garden of Gethsemane and prayed and made worthy the will of Adam. Jesus prayed, "Let not my will be done but your will". Adam misused the freewill given by God and yielded to the devil. Christ on the other hand affirms his full obedience to the will of God.

*The sweating of Christ* at the garden is a counter action to the sweating of Adam. The sweating of Christ cures the curse on Adam and it is also a sign of the cursing of the earth itself. Adam's sickness consisted in his fallen state. Adam's hardship outside Paradise was symbolized by the sweating of his brow. The idea that the earth was sick may signify that it had incurred the curse on account of Adam. The Syriac tradition specifically includes the material creation also within

the sphere of the salvific work of Christ.

*The restoration of the ear of the servant* cut off by Peter, points to the restoration of the fallen man. The *silence of Jesus* signifies his vicarious undergoing of the punishment due to man. By his silence he set us free. The innocent Jesus *appears before the tribunal* of the unjust. This was the symbol of Christ's taking upon himself the wickedness of the human race and the appeasing before the judgment seat of God for us.

The *flagellation* he underwent was to impart life to us through his suffering. The scene of *mocking* signifies the removal of malediction on Adam, the defeat of the enemy and the removal of the shame from the face of the first parents. The *crown of thorns* removes the curse on Adam. The *reed in the hands* of Jesus symbolizes that Satan should become a broken reed under the feat of the just one. The *spitting upon the face* of Jesus symbolically announces the wiping away of the shame from the face of the first parents.

The *tree of the cross* is an instrument to remove the havoc caused by the tree of Paradise. "The divine goodness has produced a Son to the ancient tree, the killer. The tree became the source of death and the cross became the cross of life", says Ephrem. Man became a debtor through a tree; Christ solved the debt through the wood of the tree. No one has been *so proud* as the first parents who stretched out their hands towards the forbidden tree in order to become like God. No one is so humble as Christ who stretching out his hands on the cross has destroyed the transgression.

## The Death of Christ

The crucified Jesus was a scandal to the Jews and folly to the gentiles. But he was the power and wisdom of God to the believers (1 Cor 1,23). It was the mysterious plan of God to choose a scandalous way to reveal his divine wisdom and love. There is a profound connection between the message of Jesus and the death of Jesus. From a particular moment in his life, Jesus must have come to the knowledge of the possibility, in the long run with the probability and at the end with the actual certainty of his death. Jesus had the awareness of his impending death. Jesus knew well the history of his own people. He was aware of the tragic end of the prophets and the righteous ones. NT gives ample evidence regarding his knowledge of his death (Mark 8,31; 9,9.31; 10,32.45; 14,22). Jesus had to give life and freedom in the world of sin and slavery. The death of Jesus was not an accident, not a tragic error, not a purely arbitrary act, but a historical necessity, which included the guilt of those responsible. His violent death was the natural and logical conclusion of his message. His view of Yahweh as Abba and of God's kingdom was different from those of the religious and political leaders. His radical fidelity to his Father and total solidarity with his people led him to a strong confrontation with the leaders. The mission of Jesus was to proclaim the depth of the love of the heavenly Father to the humanity. It was not the Father, but the human sinfulness in its rejection of such a love that created the cross. The only necessity for the cross is to be found in that freely chosen rejection of the love of God. The cross is first and foremost the ultimate symbol of mankind's rejection of the divine love and only so can it become the perfect symbol of divine love.

Paradoxically, the passion and death has been seen as a saving event, something, which in spite of its darkness and

horror as a public execution, offers the possibility of wholeness and authenticity. The killing of the innocent one is a desperate crime, executed by the civil and the religious officers. But that story turned into the Gospel of salvation so that those who hear the preaching of the cross are forced to follow him and find true life in this death.

### ***The God-forsakenness***

The faith of Jesus did not diminish at the cross. But he experienced the darkness and distress of death more deeply than any other human being. When he called out God in death, he called the God whom he called Father in an exclusive sense. He experienced God as the one who withdraws in his very closeness. This intimacy of emptiness enabled him to become the vessel of God's fullness. Thus the cry of Jesus on the cross expresses clearly that God forsakenness is the precondition of the fundamental God relatedness or the Godliness. It was the cry of God to God. There is a tension between the Father relatedness and rejection of sinful humanity of God. Hence it is the tension between identification with the Father and representation with sinful men.

### ***Meaningless and meaningful death***

When we look at the death of Christ we see a God not of power and glory, but a God who empties himself in order to give himself. The meaningless death, caused by envy, rejection and hatred, acquires a sacred meaning when seen within the perspective of the mystery of God's infinite love. In the death of Jesus, God embraces the world as it is. The divine answer to Jesus' question, **why** on the cross is contained in the early Christian proclamation, **God raised Jesus**. The scandal of the cross is that the one who was raised was

this man who had been condemned as a blasphemer and died as one cursed by God (Gal. 3, 13). The cross becomes the victorious cross and the new tree of life. The mysteries of Baptism, Eucharist and the Church are all seen as flowing from the event on the cross. (1 Cor 1,23; 2,2;Gal 3,1; 5,11; 6,14;Phil 3,18).

### ***Descent of Jesus***

The Syriac Fathers gave high emphasis to the descent of Jesus into Sheol. It provides the imagery for the ultimate conquering of death and the prince of the under world. The death and descent of Christ into Sheol are the culmination of the descent of the Son into our world (Eph 4,8;Rev. 1, 18; 1 Pet 3,18f. Heb 2,14-15). The death of Jesus was the judgment over sin and death. The Jewish authorities condemned Jesus to death but death has been conquered and the devil has been sentenced by his death. Those who have condemned the real judge of the world, are being condemned now (John12, 31): “And since our debt had risen against all in its magnitude to such an extent, that to pay it were not sufficient the prophets, nor the priests, not the just ones, nor the kings, and even when the Son of the Lord of all came, although he was omnipotent, he did not pay our debt in the womb of his mother, nor at his nativity, nor at his baptism, but he waited until he was handed over to the cross and tasted death so that the payer of our debt might be his death through which was paid that which all the creatures were not sufficient to pay”(CSCO-145). “It is going to happen that the Son will be crucified and will die”. But Satan turned out and fought with our Lord through the mouth of Simon, as he did once through the mouth of Eve: “Let this be away from you Lord”. But the Lord said to him, “Get behind me Satan”. Have

you not learned for what my coming was? As I became an infant and lay in a manger, so it is necessary that I should descend into Sheol and console the dead there. For the prophets, the kings and the just ones are ardently looking for me. Abraham was expecting to see my day. Therefore, I should descend and see them. Who is it unless Satan that did not want that I should ascend to the cross and liberate the creation? Therefore, get behind me because you have not thought of the things of God but those of men (CSCO 145,13)

***The thoughts on the Cross in the writings of Balthasar, J.Sobrino, and L.Boff***

The crucifixion of Jesus is a scandal to be accepted in faith. Incarnation itself has a painful character because it is oriented towards the passion and suffering. Incarnation means that God assumes the totality of human experience including death. Christian tradition regarding the death of Jesus has two basic propositions: 1. The death on the cross is actually the elevation and glorification of Jesus. 2. By incarnation and death God has not only redeemed the world but has also revealed his deepest reality. His passion is his hour (John 17,1), the hour towards which he goes and which he cannot avoid because it is the hour of his glorification, the hour of the revelation of the Father and the outpouring of the Spirit.

God must be sought where he seems not to be found. Where he seems to have withdrawn, there is God in his highest reality. This is the logic of the cross, not of reason. Hence it is a scandal for the reason. Reason seeks the root cause of suffering and evil; cross offers the deepest experience of God in suffering and death. (Eph 4,10; 1 Cor 1,27). Where reason

saw the absence of God, the cross perceives the highest and deepest revelation of God. The one who rises is the crucified one. Only the one who is abandoned, rejected and condemned is risen to a new and eternal life. Often philosophy fails to accept the inner meaning of the cross; likewise any theology simply wastes on philosophies whether Greek, Latin or Indian which fails to perceive the fundamental sense of the cross. Cross implies suffering and change which philosophy removes from its picture of God. Cross implies death which philosophy finds absurd to speak of God. Philosophy stands for wisdom and power whereas cross shows weakness and debt. God is to be discovered in the poverty and humility. In the scene of the last judgment it turns out that the Son of man was concealed in the oppressed, in the needy and in the persecuted. The cross does not exist to be understood and analyzed, but to be assumed and experienced, following the path of the Son of man who assumed it. If one wants to follow Jesus, one has to stop the rational arguments. Instead, one has to take up the cross and follow Jesus in his daily life.

## **The Theology of Resurrection**

Christianity is known as the face of the Risen Christ. Jesus continues to live in the faith of his disciples (R. Bultmann). He lives in the Church; his mission is perpetuated in the Church. He lives in the very person of the historical Jesus of Nazareth in the transformed and glorified manner (Walter Kasper, Hans Kung). This constitutes the uniqueness of Christ and Christianity. The other founders of religions left their examples, inspirations or writings, but Jesus has left Himself (Schillebecks)



The resurrection of Jesus is at the same time historical and trans-historical. It is a mystery and miracle. His death was historical; the experience of his risen life by the disciples was also historical. However, no one did or could witness the event of Jesus' resurrection, because it was a passage from history to meta-history, from the phenomenal to the real world. The resurrection-event implies the passage of Jesus himself from the condition of death to that of a new creation. Jesus who now lives in a transformed and glorious state maintains a personal continuity with his prior earthly and bodily existence. Secondly his risen condition definitely anticipates the end of all things to come with God's new creation. This eschatological aspect of the resurrection turns it into a unique event, which is qualitatively different from all the events in history, since it has truly inaugurated the new and final creation; the resurrection of Jesus eludes any adequate description and explanation. Asking how the resurrection occurred is harder than asking how creation itself occurred (Collins).

### ***The mystery of resurrection in the NT***

We depend on the NT for the understanding of the mystery of resurrection. The NT expounds it in the following ways:

(1) *Confession of Faith* (1 Thess 1,10): "Jesus was raised from the dead." 1 Thess. 4,14: "We believe that the Son died and rose". 1 Cor 15,3: "Jesus died and was raised from the dead". Rom 6,9: "For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again. Death no longer has dominion over him". Rom 10,9: "God raised him from the dead".

(2) *Acclamations*, which go back to the early Christian litur-

gical celebrations. 1 Cor 12,3: "Jesus is Lord" (see also Rom 10,9). 1 Cor 16,22: "Maranatha, Come Lord, Jesus."

(3) *Early Christian Hymns*: Phil 2,6-11; 1 Tim 6,16; 1 Pet 3,18.

(4) *Missionary Sermons* (in the Acts). Some of the elements in the Acts go back to the very early period of the preaching. Peter says, "You crucified Jesus, but God raised him from the dead" (Acts 2,24; 3,15). At times the formulations give the impression of apostolic witness: "This Jesus God raised up and we are witnesses of it" (Acts 2,32).

(5) *Pauline Conversion*: The events connected with the conversion of Saul are considered as one of the clearest proofs of the resurrection of the Lord. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians he speaks of the kerygma which he received at his conversion and which he had preached to the Corinthians: "I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ..Last of all he appeared also to me" (15,3-8; see also 9,1; Rom 4,24; Gal 1,15f). According to scholars, St. Paul received this formulation of the primitive faith of the Christian community in the resurrection of Jesus at the time of his conversion and was probably coming from a very ancient Aramaic original.

(6) *Jesus anticipates his resurrection*: Mt 16,21: "From that time on Jesus began to show his disciples that he has to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and be killed and on the third day be raised." John 11,25: "I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in me, though he dies, yet shall be alive".

(7) *Jesus speaks about his resurrection*: Mt 6,19f.7, 13f.25, 1f.22,

23; Lk 16,19f.19, 12f.23, 43.

(8) *Three resuscitations*: Mt 9, 18f. (Daughter of Jairus); Lk 7,11f. (Son of the widow of Naim). John 11,1f. (Lazar).

### ***Resurrection Narratives and the Apparitions***

*Mark (16, 1-8)* records how the women set out at the sunrise to the tomb of Jesus, where they found a young man dressed in white. He tells them: “He is raised up, he is not here”. There is no apparition of the risen Lord there but only a statement that Peter and other disciples will see him in Galilee. *Mathew (28, 1-8)* reports the discovery of the empty tomb and the proclamation that “he is not here, for he has been raised exactly as he promised”. Mathew mentions an appearance of the risen Christ to the women in Jerusalem and his promise to see the disciples in Galilee (*Mt 28,9-10*). *Luke (24, 1f.)* describes the women going to the tomb, finding two men in dazzling garments, asking them, “why do you seek the living among the dead. He is not here; he has been raised up”. Then the risen Lord appeared to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus. *John (21, 1f.)* speaks of another appearance of Jesus to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias.

### ***Empty Tomb***

All the Gospels attest the discovery of the empty tomb. It cannot be a mere legend, created by the early Christians to prove the resurrection of Jesus because of the testimony of women. Moreover, there was the early Jewish polemics against the resurrection. The tomb of Jesus was known to be empty (*Mt 28, 11f.*). The empty tomb symbolizes the way God thinks about the redemption of the human beings and of this world. Every part of the creation will be fully redeemed. God

redeemed the body of Jesus and it indicates God's plan to transform this material world with all its history. So it expresses the nature of the redemption. The empty tomb expresses a personal continuity between the earthly Jesus and the risen Christ. Jesus of Nazareth has become the Christ of Glory and the Christ of Glory is identified with Jesus of Nazareth. It expressed the identity of Jesus. The humanity of Jesus was the visible sign and means of our redemption. Hence it is incorporated into his transforming resurrection.

The empty tomb could generate faith for those who are perfectly disposed to believe, as it happened to the beloved disciple (John 19,35): "he saw and he believed". Instead of leading to faith it gave rise to fear, so much so that the women fled from the sepulcher (Mk 16,8). Mary Magdalene interpreted the fact as a stealing of the body of the Lord (John 20,2). For the Apostles the fact was no more than the women's talk (Mk 16,11.13.14). As is clear, the empty tomb taken by itself is an ambiguous sign, subjected to various interpretations. One interpretation may be the resurrection but there is no intrinsic necessity that obliges such a conclusion. It is only with the apparition that its ambiguity is cleared up. Empty tomb is an invitation to faith; it is not yet full faith.

### ***Jesus was raised***

The language of rising or being raised is taken from the daily experience of awakening or rising up from sleep. When used in an apologetic context, it is intended to indicate the transition from one mode of existence into a new mode of existence. With regard to the resurrection, this is explained in *1 Cor 15,42*. The passage speaks of a change from the physical body to a spiritual body. In the risen Christ, the

fleshified being is transformed into a spiritualized existence, being filled with the transparency of the Spirit of God. This personal transformation is expressed with the metaphorical language of resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus is not a mere physical resuscitation or a revitalization of the dead body. It is physical, but it is more than that. The resurrection of Jesus involves a real transformation that can be described symbolically in terms of change, difference and newness. A few days after Jesus' death an unheard of event, unique in the history of mankind, occurred. God raised him up and revealed him to his disciples not as one who returns to the biological life that he had before, but as one, who, while conserving his identity as Jesus of Nazareth, manifested himself as totally transfigured and fully realized in his divine and human possibility. What occurred was not a revitalization of the dead body, but a radical transformation and transfiguration of the earthly reality of Jesus and that is precisely the resurrection."

Resurrection is the Father's salvific event on behalf of his obedient Son. Jesus' resurrection means the total integration of his humanity into the divine sphere and consequently his perfect humanization. Death is conquered and a new creation begins: a new human existence that shares fully the divine life. The resurrection of Jesus is the epiphany of the future liberation which man hopes for (1 Cor 15,14). The death and resurrection of Jesus can be understood only if the intrinsic relationship of the two realities and their unity are kept clearly. The death of Jesus is such that its very nature is subsumed into the resurrection. It is a death into the resurrection (1 Cor 15,53). The resurrection of Jesus is actually the permanent, redeemed, final and definitive validity of the unique life of Jesus. So the soteriological significance of these

events can only be expressed from the point of view of wholeness.

Jesus underwent a bodily resurrection: It means the whole humanity of Jesus, his whole personality, his very body, everything in him is transformed a transfigured. In the resurrection, Jesus' body became a spiritualized or pneumatic body. It is a body entirely filled with the Spirit of God. The corporality of the resurrection means that Jesus Christ, while entering God's dimension through his resurrection and exaltation is at the same time completely in the world in a new divine way and is with us to the end of time (Mt 28,20). Through the resurrection of Jesus, a piece of the world finally reached God and was fully accepted by God (Walter Kasper). In this sense we can say that heaven is the risen body of Christ. It is an eschatological phenomenon. It comes into being when the humanity of Jesus is being eschatologically and finally taken up by God. The glorified body of Christ is the medium where the Triune God reveals and communicates himself fully to his creatures. We are made sons in the Son and co-heirs with him. Heaven takes shape in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. It is the pneumatic and resurrected body of Christ. Heaven actually projects into time. The Church celebrates this mystery in the liturgy and therefore the liturgy is known as the heaven on earth. The risen Christ is filled with the Spirit in order to become the life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15,45). The mode of existence of the *Kyrios* is the *Pneuma*. That is why St. Paul can actually identify the two: "Now the Lord is the Spirit"(2 Cor 3,17).

### ***The Theology of the Apparitions***

There are **six** accounts of the apparitions, which can be divided into two traditions: those in Galilee and those in Jerusalem. The discrepancies of these two traditions cannot easily be harmonized. These narrations contain a high degree of development and dramatization, which has been determined by theological and apologetical interest. But the substance is the same: the experience that Jesus of Nazareth is raised and is alive. By these apparitions the disciples move from the situation of doubt and hesitancy to a state of assurance in the risen Lord. They point to the likeness and change in the reality of the risen Jesus, who is now recognized. It is this tension between the identity and difference that constitutes the theology of the apparitions.

The element of identity is brought out in the stress on the corporeal continuity that exists between the crucified and risen Jesus. Hence the touching (John 20,27), eating (Lk 24,48), and speaking (John 21,15f.) of Jesus. This physicalisation of the Apostles' experience with the risen Jesus has the purpose of illustrating the identity and continuity between the historical and the risen Jesus. The element of difference consists in the transformation that has taken place in the historical Jesus. Thus the disciples do not recognize him at first (Lk 24,16f. John 20,14f.), or doubted (Mt 28,17f.; Lk 24,41f.). Besides, the risen Lord comes and goes in a way different from any earthly human being and thereby showing that he is no longer bound by space and time (Mk16, 12).

In reporting the encounters with the risen Christ, NT shows a preference for the language of **sight**. The risen Christ was seen by the disciples. He let himself be seen and be recognized by them. In the OT Theophanies, the prophets were *hearing* Yahweh, the NT pictures the Easter witnesses as seeing of the Lord. They use the expressions: Jesus appeared,

was seen or was made manifest. They suggest a becoming visible of that which belongs to a world of invisibility. They suggest also a kind of revelatory experience for those who were the recipients of these manifestations.

The disciples have seen the glorified Lord (1 Cor 9,1; 15,8). The encounters were not merely a revelation of some truth about the Son of God, but the revelation of the Son himself. They were not mere subjective visions or psychological conviction to overcome the scandal of crucifixion, but they were objective perceptions of the same person of Jesus and therefore a real encounter with the risen Lord.

The Easter appearances were objective encounters with the risen Christ, going beyond history. They can also be called Christophanies in the sense that Christ is manifesting himself to the disciples. Some say that the apparitions are faith encounters. Yet the apparitions to the apostles and to St. Paul were distinct from the faith-encounters and the experiences of the other faithful with the risen Lord. The disciples to whom the risen Christ appeared knew him before his death. Hence they could identify him through the historical appearances. The Apostles call themselves the privileged witnesses of the risen Lord. This encounter with him was unique. It is unrepeatable and was unique.

### ***Theological Significance of the Resurrection***

1) *Resurrection as God's full revelation*: The resurrection of Jesus is not only God's decisive eschatological act, but also his eschatological revelation of himself. God reveals his own self in the Son. It is the realization and revelation of the kingdom of God. NT wants to show the identity of Jesus with the risen Christ. The resurrection language exposes before us



the place of God in the Christian community. Resurrection is not simply a miracle worked on Jesus but the inauguration of the real kingdom of God. Resurrection speaks about God's presence that man can experience in charismatic or sacramental form. Resurrection is not a theoretical answer to the question of what will happen at death to the body and soul. The proclamation of the resurrection is an invitation to commit oneself to Christ in the church.

2) Resurrection as Jesus' full revelation: Resurrection has revealed the true personality of Jesus as the Son of God. In the light of resurrection, the disciples predicated various attributes to Jesus. He is now recognized as the Christ, the Son of God, Lord and eventually the Word.

3) Resurrection as Jesus' exaltation: The personal transformation, which took place in Jesus with the resurrection, is named exaltation. It is an apocalyptic category representing the elevation and glorification of the Messiah. Here we have the theology of Easter in all its greatness. The dying Jesus gives himself in obedience to the will of his Father. Father accepts that obedience, so that Jesus' self-offering fulfills its purpose. Good Friday, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost form a single indivisible mystery, the one Passover of the Lord, the one transition of Jesus through death to life.

4) Resurrection as the eschatological event: Resurrection of Jesus from the dead stands out as the unique event, which fulfills the Jewish apocalyptic hope of the final resurrection. The expected cosmic upheaval of the end of time took place in the personal and corporeal resurrection of Jesus who became the cosmic Christ and the new creation (2 Cor 5,17). With the emergence of Christ from the sepulcher the new heaven and the new earth already began to ferment. With

Jesus' resurrection, the end is imminent and the end of the revelatory history has been anticipated.

5) Resurrection as origin of the Church: In the risen Christ God's kingdom has been fully realized. As a result, the kingdom and nearness of God on earth have been set up in Jesus as the risen Christ. This reign of God in the risen Jesus is communicated historically through the community called the church. Thus the new Israel sprang from this faith in the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is alive and active within humanity. The resurrection then is not a belief that grew up within the church, but it is the belief around which the church itself grew up. Without this resurrection, the disciples would never have preached the crucified Jesus as Lord. Without this resurrection there would never have been a Church, worship, martyrdom and monasticism.

6) Resurrection as the guarantee of our resurrection: Our resurrection is essentially related to the resurrection of Jesus (Rom 8,11; 10,9; 1 Cor 6,14; 2 Cor 4,14; Phil 3,21). Since Christianity is the face of the risen Christ, the presence of Christ within mankind as the risen one should transform this world because of the resurrection. Christianity is not a religion that commemorates the past, but a religion of the present that celebrates the certainty of the living and personal presence of the Lord. Man's perfect and total self-realization is being guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus. In that sense the resurrection signifies the introduction of the human person into the kingdom of God. Human hope is realized in the resurrected Jesus. Thus within the horizons of man's longing for fulfillment, resurrection appears as the realization and crystallization of man's deepest feelings.

A theological understanding of the liturgies of the

church which are centered around the mystery of resurrection, the fidelity to the NT traditions which bring out the deeper meaning of the suffering and death of Jesus, the readiness to accept any sort of suffering, the openness to understand the sufferings of others, a spirituality rooted in the suffering, a meaningful reception of the sense of the cross, and the practical experience of administering the sacraments will all help us to deepen our faith in the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

#### FootNotes:

- 1 O'Collins, *Christology*, p.11-12.
- 2 O'Collins, *op. cit.* p.279-305.
- 3 G.Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai the Great*, p.155-162.
- 4 *Ibid.* p. 164-168.
- 5 Balthasar, *Die Personen in Christus*, (Theodramatic-III) Einsiedeln, 1980; Sobrino, *Christology at the Cross Roads*, N.Y., Orbis, 1978; Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator- A Critical Christology for our Time*, N.Y., Orbis, 1979.

## JESUS CHRIST AND THE WORLD RELIGIONS

### Christianity and Judaism

There was once a view that Christianity was influenced by the primitive oriental religions. The protagonists of this theory tried to explain the mysteries of Christianity on the basis of such mystery cults. But today this theory is discarded. Because Jesus is a historical figure, deeply rooted the life and history of the Jewish people in Palestine. So there arose the tendency to look deep into the Jewish background of Jesus. Christianity was more influenced by Judaism than by any other religion or cult. In order to know Christ better, one has to study his Jewish background seriously. The Gospels present him as a man culturally rooted in his society. So the writers tried to find out parallelism between Jewish writings and the NT writings: the relation between the rabbinical traditions and the teachings of Jesus. They came to the conclusion that Jesus is like the religious leaders of the OT, a wonder worker, the brother Jesus. Some compared his passion with that of the suffering servant of deuterio-Isaiah. The Jewish background of Jesus will surely help us to understand Jesus, but this is not enough for the full understanding of Jesus. One can have it only in the Church on the basis of the

NT writings. <sup>1</sup>

Jesus was a Jew and his early disciples were all Jews. Many Jews in Palestine believed in him and accepted his message and they became his first messengers. He was not against his own people. But the religious leaders of Palestine at the time of Jesus rejected him. It was due to their false concept of the Messiah. They considered the Messiah to be a political liberator from the dominion of the Romans. They understood the Covenant of God with his people into a moral system. They misunderstood their unique vocation into a national asset and forgot all about their universal vocation. They, together with the Roman political authorities, crucified him. But the followers of Jesus strongly believed in him and worshipped him as the Risen Lord and Messiah. So there arose an ever-deeper antagonism between the Jews and the Christians. Although in the beginning Judaism in the Diaspora was a protection for Christianity, later it turned against it as an accuser before the secular rulers. It led to the complete separation between Judaism and Christianity. The Christians also developed an anti-Jewish attitude, leading to the persecution of the Jews. Jews were, then, driven into more and more defensive and negative attitude not only towards Christians but also towards Jesus himself. We have a typical example in the *Dialogue of Justin with the Jew Trypho* (48,2; 49,1). It continued down through the centuries. The anti-Semitic attitude crept into the liturgical prayers of the Christians. The Jews also introduced anti-Christian prayers in their prayer services. Only after the Vatican Council II one finds a change of this attitude from the part of both the Jews and the Christians.

*Martin Buber*, a Jew, has his own view of Jesus Christ.

He considered Jesus as a genuine Jew, having absolute trust in God. God was with him in every life situation with his saving power. Jesus demanded this faith from his followers. This faith is abandonment to God's ongoing presence and guidance. He says: "From my youth onwards, I have found in Jesus my great brother. That, Christianity has regarded and does regard him as God and Savior, has always appeared to me a fact of the highest importance, which, for his sake and my own, I must endeavor to understand...My own fraternally open relationship to him has grown ever stronger and clearer. I am more than ever certain that a great place belongs to him in Israel's history of faith and that this place cannot be described by any of the usual categories."<sup>2</sup> According to him, Jesus belongs to the Jews, but the Christians alienated him from them.

Some of the Jews argue that Jesus has to be reclaimed. *Shalom Ben Chorine* uses the parable of the prodigal Son. Jesus against his will was taken away: "Almost two millennia he spent far away, while the elder brother, the Jewish nation, remained in the hard discipline of the father. But it seems that now a process of bringing him home into the Jewish nation has started. He returns into his own land, and the elder brother should join in the joy, because this our brother Jesus had been dead for us and has returned to life; he was lost to us and has been found a new."<sup>3</sup> According to him that return is possible only if all the Christian additions to his person are removed. NT is a testimony of Jesus' faith. He sees Jesus as his brother: "For me Jesus is the eternal brother, not only the human brother but the Jewish brother. I sense his brotherly hand, which grasps me that I may follow him. It is not the hand of the Messiah, this hand marked with wounds. It surely is not a divine hand, but a human hand in

whose lines the deepest sorrow is marked. This distinguishes me the Jew from the Christian, and yet it is the same hand by which we are touched. It is the hand of a great witness of faith in Israel. His faith, the unconditional faith, the absolute trust in God the Father, the readiness to humble himself totally under God's will, this is the attitude which Jesus has lived before us and which can unite us, Jews and Christians. The faith of Jesus unites us. But the faith in Jesus separates us".<sup>4</sup>

For him Jesus is the man of faith who failed, and his failure lives on in the tragedy of his own people: "Jesus of Nazareth has lived and he continues to live not only in his church, but also in his people whose martyrdom he embodies. Has not the suffering Jesus, ridiculed, dying, on the cross become a symbol for his entire people that was scourged on in time and again hang on the cross of the hatred of Jews."<sup>5</sup>

The Jews do not consider Jesus as God or Son of God. Some of them may think of him as a prophet. Others do not even think of him as a prophet. For many Jews he is a great teacher of morality and an artist in parables.<sup>6</sup>

In short, the Jews do not consider him as the Christians consider him. But they think of him as a unique personality of their nation. He stands in the midst of their history of faith. They think of him as one among them trusting and waiting in common with them for God's rule.

## **Jesus Christ in Islam**

Muhammad accepted the God of the OT and his revelation through the prophets. Muhammad sees Jesus in the line of the OT prophets. Jesus is the last prophet before him.

He attributes to Jesus special prerogatives such as his virginal conception. He thought that Jesus did not die on the cross. For the rest, Jesus was a human being. He rejects the Christian faith that Jesus is the divine Son of God. For him it contradicts the uniqueness of God. In one place, Quran says as a dialogue between Allah and Jesus: "O, Jesus, son of Mary, was it you who said to the people, take me and my mother as two gods, apart from Allah? He (Jesus) replied, glory be to you. It is not for me to say what is not true. If I did say it, you know it. You know what is in my inner self, but I know not what is in your inner self. Truly it is you who are the knower of secret things. I did not say anything to them but what you did command me: serve Allah my Lord and your Lord. I was witness over them as long as I remained among them, but when you took me to thyself, it was you who were the watcher over them. For you are witness over everything."<sup>7</sup>

In our dialogue with Islam we can start with the concept of Jesus as the prophet.<sup>8</sup> Muhammad had his contact in his early life with the heterodox Jews and heterodox Christians. Such Christians considered Christ as a prophet. The Judeo-Christians were abundant in Trans-Jordan and Arabia. Moreover Mohammad saw a divided Christianity: divided on the basis of terms and expressions. The Christians in the early 7th century in Syria and Arabia were divided into Chalcedonians, non-Chalcedonians and Nestorians. And there were several sub groups in the anti-Chalcedonian camp. These divided Christians could not show the shining face of the Son of God who came to unite the mankind. Muhammad realized that in Christianity the unity of the Arabs cannot be achieved. So he turned to found a new religion. Moreover the Christian doctrines were not authentically preached



among the Arabs even 600 years after Christ. Arabs continued to be idol worshippers and animists and polytheists. Muhammad took up the strict Monotheistic idea from Judaism and abandoned the concept of the Trinity of Christianity. And he took several things of the Christians, which he thought useful for the Arab unification. The Bible was not accessible to him in Arabic. He learned about Christianity from traveling merchants and wandering monks. It was the failure of the Syriac Christianity that paved the way for the emergence of Islam in its present form.

## Hinduism and Christ

The concept of Avatar is typical of late Vaishnavism. The idea of Avatar has its roots in Buddhism. The Hindu tradition of Avatar is the profoundest expression of man's desire and destiny to meet God not only in his transcendence, but also in the closeness of human consciousness.

The person of Jesus has a profound impact on the Indian mind as can be seen in men like Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave. The great Indian leaders were highly influenced by the person of Christ. Various leaders have variously understood Jesus.

**Swami Akhilananda of the Ramakrishna Mission:** he presents Jesus as Avatar. "The Hindu view of Christ," writes Swami, "is closer to Christian Orthodoxy than to liberalism. The Hindu will agree with the Orthodox in regarding Jesus Christ as unique in comparison with ordinary men. Yet he will differ in holding that there have been and will be numerous incarnations of god. The Hindu would reject the view of those Christian liberals who regard all men as equally divine, Christ no more than any one else. The Hindu accepts

many special revelations and special manifestations in the form of divine incarnations.”<sup>9</sup> Swami considers Jesus as Avatar of God, but he disregards the humanness of Christ. He says: “The teachings of Christ are applicable to our daily life. We even go a step further and say: if they are not followed, life is not worth living”. “Jesus is the way to perfection both for Christians and Hindus”<sup>10</sup>

*Dr. Radhakrishnan* sees in Jesus the embodiment of a spirit in whom elements of Eastern mysticism blended with the spiritual tradition of the Jews: “Jesus enlarges and transforms the Jewish conceptions in the light of his own personal experience. In this process he was helped considerably by his religious environment, which included Indian influences as the tenets of the Essences and the Book of Enoch show. In his teaching of the Kingdom of God, life eternal, ascetical emphasis and even future life, he breaks away from the Jewish tradition and approximates to Hindu and Buddhist thought.”<sup>11</sup> He says again: “The cross is not an offence or a stumbling block to the Hindus, but is the great symbol of the redemptive reality of God”<sup>12</sup> According to him, there is no very serious difference between Hinduism and Christianity on the question of the nature and means of salvation. Christ gives us assurance that it is possible for us to conquer the world, the flesh and the devil and attain perfection. As any other saint, Jesus helps us to turn away from sin and to convert towards God. But the sacrifice of Christ has no significance for man as a propitiation for sin.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Christ-an inspiration for many Indian leaders***

Christ’s social teaching was a source of inspiration for some Hindu leaders, such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-

18333), Mahatma Phule (1827-1890), Lokamanya Tilak (1856-1920), and Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1863-1915). They did not in any way profess to be Christians. But they considered the teachings of Christ to be useful to promote the good of the country. Christ had great impact on their personal life and thinking.

**Raja Ram Mohan Roy** was a pioneer of liberal form of Hindu religion and society. He found that love of one's neighbor was woefully lacking in India. He looked for a remedy and found it in the teaching of Jesus. He wrote: "The consequence of my long and uninterrupted search into religious truth has been that I found the doctrine of Christ more conducive to inculcate moral principles and better adapted to rational beings than any other that has come to my knowledge." As a Hindu he says, "No other religion can produce anything that may stand in competition with the precepts of Jesus, much less can pretend to be superior to it".<sup>14</sup> He tried to present Christ as a guide to happiness and peace.

**Mahatma Phule** saw in Jesus Christ the teacher of the truth, which alone could lead India to harmony and prosperity. **Mahatma Gandhi** professed: "I shall say to the Hindus: your lives will be incomplete unless you reverently study the teaching of Jesus".

### ***Committed Hindus***

Some Hindus were committed to Christ, but because of various reasons, they found it impossible to join any of the existing Christian Churches. Such were Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884) and Pratap Chandra Mazoomdar (1840-1905).

In 1879, April 9, **Keshab Chandra Sen** asked his fellow Hindus: "You, my fellow countrymen, can you help accept-

ing Christ in the spirit of your national scriptures? You find that thee Spirit of Christ draws you through your national instincts.” Sen gave a lecture in the town hall of Calcutta: “India asks: Who is Jesus Christ?” He gave the answer: “Gentlemen, you cannot deny that your hearts have been touched, conquered, and subjugated by a superior power. That power-need I tell you-is Christ. It may seem strange, but it is a fact that India knows not yet this power, though already so largely influenced by it. She is unconsciously succumbing to its irresistible influence. Therefore India ought to be informed as to the real character of the source of this dominant moral influence, Christ. None but Jesus, none but Jesus, none but Jesus ever deserved this bright, this precious diadem, India and Jesus shall have it”<sup>15</sup>

For him Jesus Christ has become an overpowering experience: “My Christ, my sweet Christ, the brightest jewel of my heart, the necklace of my soul; for twenty years I have cherished him in my heart. Though often defiled and persecuted by the world, I have found sweetness and joy unutterable in my master Jesus. The mighty artillery of his love he leveled against me, and I was vanquished, and I fell at his feet saying: Blessed Child of God, when shall others see the light that is in thee?”<sup>16</sup>

He says the *Western Christ* is not congenial to the Indian mind: “Perhaps you will tell me that he question, who is Christ? Has been answered already. Look at the flood of Christian literature that has swept over the length and breath of the country. Doubtless, from these sources India has gathered some knowledge of Christ of Nazareth. But such knowledge has not given her complete satisfaction. It is true that people of India have been satisfied in some measure with

what they have heard and read of Jesus, but they have been disappointed in a much greater measure. For England has sent us, after all, a Western Christ. This is indeed to be regretted. Our countrymen find that in this Christ, sent by England, there is something that is not quite congenial to the native mind, not quite acceptable to the genius of the nation. It seems that the Christ that has come to us is an English man, with English manners and customs about him, and with the temper and spirit of an English man in him.... But why should you Hindus go to England to learn Jesus Christ? Is not his native land nearer to India than England? Is he not, and are not his apostles and immediate followers more akin to Indian nationality than English men? Indeed when reading the gospel, we cannot but feel that we are at home when we are with Jesus, and that he is altogether one of us. Surely Jesus is our Jesus.”<sup>17</sup> Keshab Sen felt that a Church, which is merely an extension of the Western Church, could never flourish in India. So had launched a movement, which he called the **New Dispensation (the Naba Bidhan), a Hindu Church of Christ**, a Church fully resting on what was best in the religious tradition of India and fully loyal to Jesus Christ and his teaching<sup>18</sup>. He believed that Hindu tradition and Christian revelation need one another and complete each other. Hindu tradition prepares man’s mind by rousing an intense desire for union with God. Jesus Christ fulfills this desire. Jesus is the Son of God who leads men to union with God. Genuine Indian theology will be inclined to sit restfully at the feet of Jesus whom we may imagine saying to her Western sister, Martha, Martha, you are troubled over so many things, but just one thing is needed <sup>19</sup>.

In one of his lectures, **C. Mozoomdar** spoke in America: “Christ has reached us, the missionaries have missed us”.

When we speak of an Eastern Christ, we speak of the incarnation of unbounded love and grace; and when we speak of the Western Christ, we speak of the theology of incarnation, formalism, ethical and physical force.”<sup>20</sup> Mozoomdar wholeheartedly joined the movement of Keshab Chandra Sen. Both of them were fiercely opposed to the acrimonious controversies which existed among the churches. So they did not become members of any existing churches. The Christian leaders at that time working in India were representing sectarian Christianity. They could not comprehend or include the new development in India. Mozoomdar stated: “None except Christ can fully interpret Christ”. Missionaries often forget that Western Christianity has behind it two thousand years of search and clarification. A really living theology cannot be simply transplanted. It needs time to grow.<sup>21</sup> He spoke extensively of Christ: “The dead are raised to life if they believe in his name; the living become more fully alive if they love him. All that is lovely and all wisdom are raised to their height through the humble dignity of the Son of God.”.

Another group of Hindus became Christians, but claimed to remain Hindus. We have the examples of Brahmabandhab Upadyaya (1861-1907). He became a Catholic. Manilal C.Parekh (1885-1967). He was Jain, and became an Anglican. Narayan Vaman Tilak (1861-1919). He was a Brahmin, and became a Protestant. Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922). She was a Brahmin. Mahadev Aiyer (1868-1922). He was a Trichy Brahmin and became a Catholic. Sadhu Sundar Sing (1889-1929).

**Brahmabandhab** was from Bengal. He says, “Ever since I became a Catholic my one objective has been to bring India to the faith.” He became a sannyasi. From the beginning a

number of Catholics reacted rather violently to the idea of a Catholic sannyasi, to a Catholic moving about in the saffron garb of a Hindu Sadhu. Once a parish priest expelled him from the church because of his dress. Quietly he went out and changed his dress. Archbishop Dalhoff of Bombay reported the matter to Zaleski; the Apostolic Delegate in 1898. Zaleski strongly opposed the project of training Catholic sannyasis. Brahmabandhab wanted to go to Rome and get the approval of the Pope for his vision. But somehow he could not execute his plan. He tried to reconcile what is best in Hinduism with the Catholic faith. Bring India to Christ was his only ambition in life. A person need not sever his social and cultural connections with the community in order to believe in Christ. "By birth we are Hindus and shall remain Hindus till death. But as **Dvija (twice born)** by virtue of our sacramental rebirth, we are Catholics, we are members of an indefectible communion embracing all ages and climes." "We are Hindus so far as our physical and mental constitution is concerned, but in regard to our immortal souls we are Catholics. **We are Hindu Catholics.**" He earnestly believed that the real progress of his country would result from reconciling and harmonizing what was best in Hinduism with what was best in the Christian religion.

**N.V.Tilak** had come to the conclusion: If India was to return to prosperity it would be by the great door of religion. He, therefore, went in search of the ideal religion. After he had found Christ, he repeated over and over again: "Our country will never attain to its true greatness without bringing the teaching of Christ into practice."

**Pandita Ramabai** saw in Jesus Christ the hope and salvation of Indian womanhood.

V. Chakkarai, Padipeddy Chenchiah (1886-1959), Abhishiktananda (1910-1973), Bede Griffiths and others tried to develop a cosmic and mystical Christology.<sup>22</sup> “For **Chakkarai** the Christ experience centers on the Spirit through whom we know Christ. In fact the Holy Spirit is the Christ. He understands avatar as a progress from historic to the spiritual, from external to the internal, from time to eternity. This process happens in the Spirit. Jesus Christ is the avatar of God. The Holy Spirit in human experience is the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Thus in Chakkarai, the historical Jesus is subsumed by the spiritual Christ. Jesus is the only full revelation of God. God is unmanifested and Jesus is the manifested. For Chenchiah **Jesus Christ is the Adipurusha** of a new creation. He is the starter of a new stage in the process of evolution. Chenchiah is more interested in the fact of Jesus than the act of Jesus. Jesus is beyond creeds, churches and they can at best only point to him. In Jesus God has come down to us to abide with us forever as a new cosmic energy. Jesus is the power of God and the first fruit of a new creation. Jesus brings mankind and cosmos to a new creative destiny than as one who saves man from original sin by a sacrificial death. In this sense Christianity begins not with Genesis but with the New Adam, Jesus.

**Abhishiktananda or Henri le Saux**, a Benedictine monk, wanted to be a monk according to the Hindu tradition. He spoke of the Christology of **Satpurusha**. His life mission was the search for the Advaita experience in relation to the Christian experience. He too tried to present Christ in his own way so that it may be appealing to the Hindus. But has he succeeded in his attempt? He seems to be more complicated than the simple biblical message and the attempt of other earlier Hindu-Christians. **Fr. Bede** also tried to make



use of philosophical expressions to present the mystery. The recent Indian thinking has not substantially contributed to the development of Christology. One cannot see something new which can attract the Hindus, or dalits or tribals. Several of their expressions are couched in terms unintelligible to many and confusing.

### ***Hostilities and oppositions***

Some of the admirers of Christ encountered fierce hostility on account of their loyalty to Christ. The **Western garb of Christianity** was one of the reasons for the opposition. Those who professed to be the followers of Christ, the missionaries, were strongly opposed to the ideas circulated by the above-mentioned Hindu visionaries. They forgot that the spirit of Christ is meant to become incarnate in every culture. Every culture should become a medium for the spread of the Gospel message. That is the meaning of the Catholic Church. But the mentality of those days was contrary to it. They made use of every means to hinder its growth. Colonialism was very powerful and it was intermingled with religion.

Many missionaries did not remember this when they came to India. Instead of implanting the seed of Christ in the rich soil in Asia and allowing it to take root and to grow, they tried **to transplant the fully-grown tree** as it had developed in the West. They tried to transplant the Christian religion in a garb it had acquired in a different climate. The foreign garb prevents Asians from recognizing Christ's true significance. Christ's true significance rests on his being **the redeemer of all mankind**. He is the fulfillment of the desires expressed in the Asian religions.

Christ did not come to destroy but to **transform the religions of Asia**. Becoming one with Christ involves a dying to all that is not Christ-like and a rising to a new life in Christ. The Asian religions have to be transformed. We should come to the realization that the faith in Christ and the Asian religions are not mutually exclusive but complementary. *M.C.Parekh* says: "To me to be a Hindu was to be a true disciple of Christ and to be a true disciple of Christ meant to be more of a Hindu than less." *Brahmabandhab* said: "The more strictly we practice our universal faith, the better we grow as Hindus. All that is best and noblest in the Hindu character is developed in us by the genial inspiration of the perfect **Narahari** (God-man) our pattern and guide". *Keshab Chandra Sen* said: "I am reminded of the passage in the gospel where Christ says: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. The Mosaic dispensation only? Perhaps the Hindu dispensation, too. In India he fulfills the Hindu dispensation". *Tilak* also maintains that for India, Hinduism is the OT.

**Fr. Matheo Ricci** had seen already centuries earlier that it was possible to be a follower of Christ and a follower of Confucius at the same time. One can become a **Catholic Buddhist**. The original Buddhist doctrine is not in opposition to the Catholic Faith. The Catholic faith teaches a way to union with God. Buddha does not propose to do that. His aim was much more limited. Buddha did not pretend to know the answers to the ultimate questions of human existence. His aim was strictly practical: to teach a way of attaining deep peace. When a Buddhist priest, the head of a Buddhist monastery in Thailand became a Catholic, he said that it is possible to be Buddhist and a Catholic at the same time. He believed that if Buddhists believed in Christ, the Buddhist religion would become perfect. "I think I have found this Lord,

the Creator, in Christianity. If my dear Buddhists would find the Lord, I think the Buddhist religion would become perfect. This nobody has told me. I have found it myself and I hope to have found the truth in it.” In the same way one can be a **Catholic Zoroastrian**. Likewise in India we need a Hindu Christianity.

Asian religions are a guide to Christ. God was preparing them for centuries for the reception of the Word. There are **seeds of the Word** in Hinduism in its various forms. But there are certain elements in Hinduism that requires purification. Just as Jesus purified the Jewish religion, Hinduism needs purification. *Worship of many gods* is a characteristic feature of Hinduism. Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Dayanand Saraswathi, the founder of Arya samaj, The Brahma samaj and Prarthana samaj and many modern Hindus were against polytheism. Most Hindus are aware that God is one without a second. But in popular Hinduism there are gods and goddesses. It is a puzzle for many Hindus. **Madhavacharya** and other Philosophers attribute to gods and demons a similar position as angels and devils hold in Christianity. Some understand gods and goddesses as symbols and personifications of divine qualities. Thus the goddess Saraswathi is worshipped as the personification of god’s wisdom. Many myths about gods and goddesses are beautiful poetry and often have deep meaning. To a person who believes in Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son of God the worship of the many gods becomes pointless. The *caste system* is another evil, which has to be corrected in Hinduism.

In 1982 **Kannadasan** published an epic of 400 pages named *Jesu Kaviam*. Kannadasan is the best-known Tamil poet of our days. He remained a Hindu, but he had great admira-

tion for Christ. At the end of the book he states: “The great wisdom had its origin in the land of Israel and it spread over the whole world as the Religion of Truth. An infinite amount of good has come into the world because Jesus has been born. If mankind is still alive today it is due to his influence. Christ will certainly come again. As long as there is wound, there is need of a healing power. The Kingdom of Christ will be established everywhere in the world. Let our minds and hearts be directed towards him and let us put our trust in him.”

We must have an earnest attempt for inculturation. We cannot be satisfied with the assertion that our form of Christianity is already Indian. It is for us, but not for the masses of Indians. There is a variety of culture in the Indian subcontinent. Christ must incarnate in these cultures also.

Today the division among the Christians in India is a very serious obstacle to the proclamation of the Gospel. Division is counter-witnessing. There must be a very strong common program for Christians in presenting Christ to the vast majority of the Indian population. There must be a united movement. As a first step the Churches in Kerala, especially the Episcopal Churches should come together and find a mode of ecumenical living together. We can come to certain kind of understanding and reconciliation even before the final full unity of all the churches.<sup>23</sup>

### ***Guidelines***

In proclaiming Jesus in Asia, one has to take special note of the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, **Ecclesia in Asia**. The Asian Synod was indeed a special moment of grace. The document affirms that

salvation in Jesus Christ is for the whole humanity. God offers his love and new life to all humankind in and through Jesus Christ and this revelation and salvation is Trinitarian.<sup>24</sup>

From the *Second Vatican Council* onwards, the Church has rediscovered the importance of the non-Christian religions in the salvific plan of God. It stated that they are related to the people of God in various ways (LG 16). The Council recognized truth and goodness, and a ray of truth which enlightens all (NA 2), and the seeds of the Word (AG 11) in other religions and spoke of the possibility of salvation for those who are not Christians (LG 16).<sup>25</sup> The First Plenary Assembly (1974) of the FABC affirmed the same thing.<sup>26</sup> The document **Dialogue and Proclamation** issued jointly by the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of People (1991) paragraph no 29 clearly taught the same doctrine of the council.<sup>27</sup> We have also the latest document on Jesus Christ, **Dominus Jesus**, where the uniqueness of Jesus and the relevance of other religions are well demonstrated.<sup>28</sup>

Finally we have **a message from the Christian community to all our fellow citizens of India** on the occasion of the National Celebration of the Yesu Christu Jayanti 2000<sup>29</sup>. In that document the Christians in India tried to expose what they think of Christ and their commitment to him in India and in the world.

### FootNotes:

- 1 J.A.Fitzmeyer, *Scripture and Christology*, London, 1986,p.69.
- 2 Martin Buber, *Two Types of Faith*, 1961,foreward, p.12f.
- 3 Shalom Ben Chorine, *Jesus the Brother*, Munich, 1969(Second Edition), p.101.

- 4 *Ibid.* p.12.
- 5 *Ibid.* 28.
- 6 Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, London, 1925, p.413f.
- 7 V.116f.
- 8 J. Neuner, *The Christ of Mystical Union or the Prophetic Christ?* In *The Indian Journal of Theology*, July-Dec. 1975, p.143-150.
- 9 Cfr, H.Barlage, *Christ the Savior of Mankind-a Christian Appreciation of Swami Akhilananda*, p.43.
- 10 Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu View of Christ*, New York, 1949, p.139.
- 11 *Eastern Religion and Western Thought*, p.176.
- 12 *The heart of Hindustan*, p.113. see also, p.82-83.
- 13 *Ibid.* p.102.112ff.
- 14 *The Precepts of Jesus, Guide to Human Peace and Happiness*, Calcutta, 1820; H. Staffner, *The Significance of Jesus Christ in Asia, Anand* 1985, p.5-6.
- 15 David C. Scott, *Keshub Chunder Sen*, p.199; in H. Staffner, *op. cit.* , p. xiii.
- 16 Staffner, *op. cit.*, p.39.
- 17 Staffner, p.39ff.
- 18 *Ibid.* 54-55.
- 19 *Ibid.* 71.
- 20 *Ibid.* P.72ff.
- 21 *Ibid.* p.85.
- 22 Errol D'Lima, Ed. *What does Jesus Christ Mean?* p.48ff.
- 23 Hans Staffner, *The Significance of Jesus Christ in Asia*. Anand, 1985; Idem, *Jesus Christ and the Hindu Community*, Anand, 1988; Idem, *What does it mean to be a Christian?* (St Paul's), 1984; Idem, *Christuvinte Aunayayi Aar?* (St Paul's), (tr.P.C.Chacko), 1989; Errol D'Lima, *What does Jesus Christ mean? The meaningfulness of Jesus Christ amid Religious Pluralism in India*, Ban galore, 1999.
- 24 *Gaudium et Spes, Evangelii Nuntiandi* ( 1975), *Redemptoris Missio*,

- 1990 (No 28), and *Ecclesia in Asia*, (1999) affirm strongly the centrality and uniqueness of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world.
- 25 LG 16;AG 7;GS 22;Cfr, **Vidyajyothi**, 59/2(1995) 126-131;**Indian Theological Studies**, 37/3-4 (2000), p. 231ff.
- 26 *Ibid*.p.233-4.
- 27 *Ibid*.p.234; see also other references in *ibid*.p.235-6.
- 28 See the separate notes on this document.
- 29 **Vidyajyothi**, 64(2000) 932-5;G.Chediath, *Some Reflections on the Mystery of Incarnation*, in **Christian Orient** , 21/4(2000),p.153-163.