

Intelligent Christianity  
for an Age of Folly

J. D. R. de Raadt ∞



*The redemptive and civilising  
mission of Jesus for post-modernity*

## *Intelligent Christianity for an Age of Folly*

This is a book for people, Christians and non-Christians alike, who are disgruntled with the incongruities of post-modernity and who are willing to engage in some serious thinking to understand what is happening to us and what should be done about it. The author argues that, despite our material achievements, modern man has regressed to medieval thinking. He then introduces the historical reasoning of the Bible and the Christian humanists to which we are indebted for much of the scientific and cultural advances of the West. Intelligent Christianity turns out to be a lay Christianity not only because Jesus instituted it so, but because today's society needs it as much as in his times. Although no quick solution is provided, the author illustrates the practical value of historical reason through an account of his own application to redesigning university education in Australia, USA and Sweden.

### *About the Author*

J. Donald R. de Raadt has taught in universities in Australia, the USA and Sweden. In 1993 he was appointed as professor by the Swedish government and held the Chair in Informatics and System Science at Luleå Tekniska Universitet for twelve years. He has served as President of the International Society for the Systems Sciences (USA), President of the Swedish Operational Research Society and Vice-President of the International Federation for Systems Research in Vienna. He has played a leading international role in systems science and philosophy and developed an ethical approach directed towards community development and a humane life. He is the author of several books and his research has been published in most of the international systems journals and presented in conference papers and as guest key-note speaker in Australia, USA, Europe and Latin America.

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Melbourne Centre for Community Development

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Melbourne Centre for Community Development

Australia • 2013

ISBN-13: 978-1481838634

ISBN-10: 1481838636

[www.melbourneccd.com](http://www.melbourneccd.com)

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*Acquire wisdom, acquire understanding;  
do not forget and do not turn aside from the words I speak.  
Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you;  
love her, and she will guard you.  
Wisdom is supreme – so acquire wisdom,  
and whatever you acquire, acquire understanding!  
Esteem her highly and she will exalt you;  
she will honour you if you embrace her.  
She will place a fair garland on your head;  
she will bestow a beautiful crown on you.*

*Proverbs 5:6-9*



*Jaap de Raadt*

# Dedication

## **To the memory of my Grandfather Jacob (Jaap) Adrianus Pieter Gerrit de Raadt (Leiden 29-1-1899, Santiago de Chile 6-12-1951)**

Although not quite six years old when he passed away, I have always had a close affinity with my Opa (grandfather) and I have particularly felt it while writing this book. No doubt much of this fondness was nurtured after his death. I was his first grandchild and was named after him (my family nickname was Jaapie); I was sent to the naval college at the age of 14 to be a sailor like him; and was encouraged – especially by my mother – to emulate his wisdom, integrity and sincere concern for other people's welfare. But there are some memories of him that are my own, snippets here and there, such as when he gave me my first tricycle. I remember only one conversation between us which took place while he was having a haircut at the barber shop. I had asked him why workers at a construction across the road were reinforcing the walls of a new building with steel bars – a necessity in Chile – so he went on to explain to me all about earthquakes. This conversation made a big impression on a five year old child and I retain it to this day. And behind all these memories, I can still feel the attachment of a child to his grandfather, but I find it difficult to translate this into words. Someone described him as a “...cultured and pleasant man who knew how to disguise behind the strong and determined mask of his face, a tenderness and kindness that were truly maternal.” As a child, I would not have been able to appreciate his culture, but his tenderness and kindness would certainly have left an impression on me.

His love of the sea led him to become an officer of the Dutch merchant navy. On my visits to my grandmother's home, I used to admire the pencil sketch of Opa in his officer's uniform, drawn in New York by a street artist. At that young age (22 years old) he had already sailed to far away places in the world, from the Americas in the West to Sumatra and Australia in the east; I dreamed that one day I would do the same. He was

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-serving on the Spaardam of the Holland-America Line when he fell in love with one of the young German ladies crossing the Atlantic from Boulogne to Veracruz with her sister and brother-in-law. Not long after, this lady became his wife and they settled in Rotterdam where my father, their first child, was born. Jaap progressed to become a captain, but the sea and family life did not prove to be quite compatible. He migrated with his family to Chile in 1933, where he bought a German bookshop for, in addition to his love of the sea, he loved books. Although his background was Dutch Reformed, he joined my grandmother's small Christian community in Santiago and eventually became one of their pastors, a responsibility he added to his many other duties, including running his bookshop and also “pastoring” Dutch communities, some of them lying in far-flung places in Chile's south, such as Gorbea. In 1947, on the occasion of the Queen's birthday, he took the Dutch ambassador there to celebrate the event with the Dutch and Afrikaner colonisers.

The decade of the 1930s seems to have been a very happy time for him and his family in their new land, but it was brutally cut short with the outbreak of World War II and the German invasion of Holland in 1940. Not only did my grandparents have many relatives and friends living in Europe who were suffering the Nazi atrocities, but things were tense in Chile too. With its large German colony on the one hand, and an assortment of other European communities on the other, there were bitter divisions at home. This sometimes tore through families and from this time on, German was no longer spoken in my grandparents' home and my grandfather stopped trading in German books – leading to a sizeable financial loss – and switched over to selling English books. But all these reverses did not detract him from serving his people and he became one of the founders of the Holanda Libre (Free Holland) movement in Chile. Its mission was to gather funds for the liberation army as well as provide shelter for Dutch war refugees who were arriving in Chile from war-torn Europe. After the war, this organisation became the Chilean Netherlands Association and he was its first president and for many years, the editor of its official bulletin.

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In recognition of his service to the Dutch people, he was knighted by Queen Juliana and received his award during Prince Bernard's visit to Chile in April 1951. Eight months later he died of cancer, at the prime of his life and not quite 53 years old. The Netherlands Association dedicated the Christmas issue of its bulletin to his memory. I have translated this document (see Appendix 1) to allow the people who knew him describe his character and their deep sorrow at losing him in a manner that I, having only a child's memory of him, could not do. He was known for his "love for the people" and although "not what the world regards as a "great" man, but a good Hollander, free of all conceit, straightforward and solid", yet "a great man" to the circle of people who knew him" and whom he served with "cheerfulness and full of faith". For "Jaap de Raadt regarded himself a child of 'the Child of Bethlehem' and the love of the 'Light of the World' fed his own love and affection for all" his friends.

My father once told me that Opa was a great admirer of Erasmus; sadly I was far too young to discuss philosophy with him. But, from the accounts of his family and friends, I can perceive the influence of Erasmus' *Manual of the Christian Knight* in the way he lived. Since Erasmus' Philosophy of Christ has an important place in this book, it is fitting that I should have chosen it to honour his memory. There are times such as ours, says the Psalmist<sup>1</sup>, when society runs out of godly and faithful men, people whom we can look up to and strive to imitate. I hope this book will remind people – including his grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren who did not share in the privilege of knowing him – that such men as Opa lived and continue to live among the cloud of witnesses who watch over us<sup>2</sup>, encouraging us not to give up, but to fight on and continue our pilgrimage to the city of God.

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<sup>1</sup> (Psalm 12:1)

<sup>2</sup> (Hebrews 12:1)

## Abbreviations

- Gn Strong's Concordance number (n) for Greek words.
- Hn Strong's Concordance number (n) for Hebrew words.
- K&D Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch, F. *Commentary on the Old Testament*.
- LSJ Liddell, Henry George; Scott Robert; Jones, Henry Stuart. *Lexicon of Classical Greek*.
- MIC Mickelson, Jonathan Kristen. *Enhanced Strong's Greek and Hebrew Dictionaries*.
- MLSJ Liddell, Henry George; Scott, Robert. *An Intermediate Greek English Lexicon (Abridged)*.
- n.d. Not dated – this applies mostly to digitalised documents available on the Internet.
- TWOT Harris, Laird R.; Archer, Gleason L. and Waltke, Bruce K. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*.
- VOT Vine, W.E.; Unger, Merrill F. and White, William, Jr. *Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*.

## Preface

I have written this book in a personal manner, for scholars do not work in a sterilised environment that permits them to keep everyday life away from their thoughts. On the contrary, life's joys and vicissitudes have an enormous impact on how a scientist thinks. However, there is a silly convention that stipulates that scientific work should be detached as much as possible from our person. It even commands us to document it in an impersonal manner and write down, for example, "it was observed" when in truth we should say "I observed". Since I acknowledge that my life is closely connected with my thoughts, truth demands that I write down my thoughts without tearing them apart from other aspects of my life. Yet, writing personally does not mean that this book is easy to read; some parts of it require study, in addition to reading. In an effort to make its text as readable as possible, I have placed a large amount of material in footnotes. This helps the flow of words to run smoothly and provides an opportunity for the reader to return later to the footnotes, if desired, for further study and reflection.

I believe that Christianity is a profession and not a religion. Christ calls every follower of his not only to save people but to serve them. Moreover, how we conduct this service and the priorities we assign in our choice of whom we serve must be Christ's and not our own. Thus, if I had been called to be a carpenter, I would have attempted to Christianise carpentry thoroughly – not just cosmetically. If I had been a dentist, I would have done the same with dentistry. I was called to serve my neighbour as an academic, therefore I tried to Christianise my teaching and my science with the same thoroughness. Yet, the present structure of the church regards me as a layman and not "ordained" to do my particular type of work. This is an arrangement that has not helped me fulfil my mission – sometimes it has hindered me; and the people who have been most detrimentally affected by this are my students. Moreover, I am not the only one affected; the vast majority of Christians have been placed in an impossible position to address the ills of this world

## xiv Preface ♣

in an effective and authentically Christian manner. Therefore, in this book I have dismissed theology as an unsuitable science to understand the Bible and criticised the social structure of the church and what is at present regarded as its mission. I have also argued that there is only one type of church membership and any subdivisions within it, such as between clergy and laity, were never intended by Christ and are an obstruction to the accomplishment of his work. This will certainly disturb some people. I recognise however that some of my best friends are church members – regardless of its structure – and I have been greatly blessed by them. This includes clergy from whom I have learnt much. I know that they have followed their vocation with great dedication and integrity. Some, in discussing these matters have privately agreed with me, but have nevertheless decided to work within the present structure because they sincerely believed they could be most effective that way. I respect their decision and am grateful for their work. I hope that others, who have been perplexed by my work and failed to see its worth, will be able at least to see the value of the vision that I pursued, even if my implementation of it has been far less than perfect.

I also think that the quorum of the church is two, that the family is its official seat established at marriage and that marriage is meant to have one single vocation. That is the way my wife Veronica and I have endeavoured to live. And therefore, I would like to thank her, not only for working all these years by my side in our educational endeavour, but for our lengthy discussions on the content of this book which she also has carefully edited. Without such collaboration, our common dream could never have been pursued.

# 1 Introduction

Never underestimate the power of a few committed individuals to change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Attributed to Margaret Mead.

Forty years ago, while studying at the University of Queensland, I became puzzled by two things: on the one hand, the increasing barbarism gradually spreading through every sector of society and on the other, the inability of Christianity, which I had recently wholeheartedly embraced, to do much about it. Gradually, I became aware that this was the folly of modernity and that this folly was not restricted to Australia, but was common to most Western countries; furthermore, it was rapidly spilling over to the underdeveloped world. Chile, my country of birth, was not sufficiently economically developed then to have caught the full swing of these changes. On the other hand, Australia, due to its short history and tragic beginnings, did not have a mature cultural heritage to be aware of what was taking place and became, by the 1960's, intoxicated with the material prosperity with which it was – and still is – seduced.

Modernity, says Ortega y Gasset, has turned the average Western man into a “mass man”<sup>1</sup>, an individual who thinks life owes him the satisfaction of his every wish. He has certainly reached his full bloom in the post-modern<sup>2</sup> age, an age which we may well regard as one of folly. Careful analyses of this man, at least in the English speaking countries, has brought on

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<sup>1</sup> (2004b); he describes the mass man as “niño mimado” (p. 39), an expression which does not have an exact equivalent in English but means something like “spoilt child”.

<sup>2</sup> The term *post-modern* and its derivatives is misleading for it gives the impression that modernity is past. But modernity has not ended, on the contrary, post-modernity is its final realisation and fulfilment. More appropriate names for it would be *full-modernity* or *hyper-modernity*. However, to avoid misunderstanding, I will adhere to the usage of *post-modernity*, but will mean by it the final stage of modernity rather than what comes after it.

## Introduction 2 ♣

a very unfavourable verdict on his life. He has been described as an infantilised adult, an adolescent or kidult<sup>3</sup> exhibiting an idiot culture<sup>4</sup> who amuses himself to death<sup>5</sup>, possesses a closed mind<sup>6</sup>, lives in a McDonaldised society<sup>7</sup> where every aspect is controlled by a new discipline called managerialism<sup>8</sup> and, perhaps as a consequence of the latter, suffers a disease called influenza<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, his enchantment with secularism and hostility towards Christianity – the hand that has culturally fed him in the past – are an outcome of his combined ignorance and disapproval of anything that constrains his self-indulgence. The church has not been able to respond effectively to this, for it has not been immune to post-modernity; on the contrary, it has matched contemporary society with its own version of idiot Christianity. Although this version is new, it has been brewing for a long time and has its roots in the narrowing down of Christ's teaching to a sole message of salvation that began with the advent of modernity. But Christ came not only to redeem people but also to civilise them; and it is the latter that has mostly inspired those achievements of Western culture that we enjoy today, even if they are in an advanced state of decay.

Christ's mission to civilise people, in addition to redeeming them, was implied in his proclamation of the kingdom of God, when interpreted in the context of the Old Testament. Moreover, the redemption and civilisation of humanity are not two separate stages of change, but two dimensions of the Gospel that go hand in hand. This civilising dimension of Christ's teaching was rediscovered during the Christian Renaissance and Reformation of the 16th Century and spearheaded the transformation of northern European society from barbarism to a blossoming civilisation, especially in Holland<sup>10</sup>. How this

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<sup>3</sup> (Barber, 2007)

<sup>4</sup> (Bernstein, 1992)

<sup>5</sup> (Postman, 1987)

<sup>6</sup> (Bloom, 1987)

<sup>7</sup> (Ritzer, 1996)

<sup>8</sup> (Protherough and Pick, 2002)

<sup>9</sup> (de Graaf et al, 2001)

<sup>10</sup> An extensive study of this period is provided by Israel (1995).

### ♣ Introduction 3

Christian injection of life to humanity evaporated in the centuries that follow requires separate treatment and is not the theme in this book. However, it suffices to say here that the civilising component of the Gospel was never fully accepted in England, for it challenged the vested interests of the aristocracy and the ecclesiastical elite's enjoyment of palaces and peerages. The English Reformation was a compromise that made some theological concessions but it excluded the type of social and educational reforms of the Continent. These concessions narrowed the English version of the Gospel. Although they preserved the message of salvation, they left out its civic teaching about social justice, education for all, including poor children and girls, and the cultural development of humanity. Furthermore, with some exceptions – such as Methodism – the non-conformist independent churches that emerged out of Anglicanism were also confined to a purely salvation-oriented view of the Gospel. As Anglo-Saxon dominance of the world expanded, first through Britain and later the USA, the Anglo-Saxon expression of Christianity predominated over the European perspective, at least within Protestantism. Thus the civilising element of the Gospel was lost. This meant that when modernity and secularism raised their heads in the 18th century, the church, especially in English speaking countries, was unable to respond. Instead it settled for a comfortable position that admitted a partial secularism by separating our hearts – in its biblical meaning<sup>11</sup> – from our minds and by erecting a barrier between our convictions and our thoughts. One was expected to believe as a Christian but not particularly to think as one.

I perceived that this barrier was cast in my path and I – with the full enthusiasm of youth – took it to be my life's call to address. This book, written four decades later and in my retirement, is an account of the fight that ensued and what I learned – philosophically – from it. I write it because I would like to persuade my students and other people that, when confronted with the gigantic problems of humanity, we ought not to capitulate without a fight, even if this fight consumes all our life. So-

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<sup>11</sup> (Proverbs 4:23); that is, the seat of faith, conviction and vision for life.

## Introduction 4 ♣

cial change – as I will explain later – comes more often than not from small people with vision, with commitment and with life-long perseverance. Vision by itself, is not sufficient for it must be accompanied by knowledge to realise it and this is the chief role of science – of a civilised science, that is. Vision also implies conviction and therefore there must be an integrity between our convictions and our science, a congruence between our hearts and our minds. Moreover, science must be founded on what we believe – rather than on what other people believe<sup>12</sup> – in order for us to believe it and therefore put it to work. And since the realisation of our vision will not come about by mere thoughts or words but also by action, we must blend science with practice by turning our thoughts into our work; even more, we must live according to the science we espouse.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part, covered in Chapter 2, is an account of my work spread over four decades. Most of it took place in the university – a small part of it in association with the church – and took me from Australia to the USA and then onto Sweden, then back to Australia. Chapters 3 to 7 form the second part; here I summarise the philosophical understanding I have gained over this time. I use the term philosophy in its literal sense of the word: love for wisdom. I think that given this definition, everyone should be a philosopher; Ortega y Gasset insists that “any living creature that is not a philosopher is a brute!”<sup>13</sup>. There are people who call themselves “professional philosophers”, this does not make much sense to me; it is like calling oneself a “professional son” or a “professional daughter”. Much of the work of “professional philosophers” is concerned about what other such philosophers have said, mostly abstract ideas that have little to do with the wisdom needed to live well<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> All science is based on a set of beliefs. The point has been extensively and ably argued by Dooyeweerd (1958) and Ortega y Gasset, (2004a).

<sup>13</sup> (Ortega y Gasset, 1966, p. 541)

<sup>14</sup> For example, Russell, while including Erasmus in his history of philosophy, does not consider him a philosopher “in the strict sense of the word” (1993, p. 499). Given the enormous intellectual contribution that

## ♣ Introduction 5

Finally, I must make two confessions. The first confession is that my writing may wrongly convey the idea that in this story, I am the hero and my opponents are the villains. This is not entirely true; I believe I have fought the right fight, but I know that I have not always fought rightly. Vanity prevents me giving details of failures, but sadly innovation comes about as much with the use of a trowel as with brandishing of a sword. One must both build and fight against the obstacles that people erect to stop the implementation of new ideas; and fighters are seldom regarded as people easy to get along with. The second confession is that, although I mean this book to be helpful to its readers, I have a personal interest in writing it. I know that one day I will have to account for my life to my Maker, therefore, I would like on that occasion – like a good scientist – to have my material neatly ordered before me, rather than embarrassingly bungle around with it. I think he will appreciate the courtesy.

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Erasmus' philosophy of Christ made to wisdom in Europe, we can deduce that "strict" is a rather arbitrary and intellectually narrow criterion.



## 2 Account of a Mission

I was born in Chile, of a Chilean mother of French Basque heritage and a Dutch father. When I was six years old, I was sent to a Swiss school in Santiago where everything was taught in German; I was only allowed to speak my mother tongue in Spanish classes. I completed my primary education there and was then sent to a Scottish school in Viña del Mar, my town of birth. I was rescued from its poor educational system – especially when compared with the Swiss – when I was sent to the Escuela Naval Arturo Prat, Chile's naval college and one of its elite educational institutions. I was fourteen years old and meant to follow in the tradition of my grandfather who also had been a sailor. In 1965 I finished my final year of training on board the sailing ship Esmeralda on a cruise that took us through Panama to Europe. We reached the high latitudes of Norway and then navigated down to Cadiz in Spain, anchored on the way in various European ports and then crossed over to Brazil in order to return home to Valparaíso via the Magellan Strait. I graduated as an officer by the end of 1965 but left the navy in early 1967; although I loved the sea, I realised that naval warfare was not my vocation and therefore entered the university in search of my real call in life.

The decade of the 1960s marked the entrance of post-modernity into the western world and I arrived at the university just at the time when its tidal wave of counter-culture, which has had such a great impact on our generation, the so-called “baby-boomers”, had begun its journey across the world. It was the decade that saw the protest marches against the Vietnam war, the endorsement of Marxist ideology by large sectors of youth, the rise of the “hippie” movement, the introduction of the contraceptive pill and its consequent “sexual liberation”; it was also the decade of university students striking in many countries and rioting in Paris, of young people using marijuana and LSD for “social recreation” or to increase their “consciousness”. It was the decade that marked the emergence of secularism as a mainstream creed. It was the decade of rebellion against anything that stopped people doing whatever they pleased. My genera-

## 8 Account of a Mission ♣

tion, full of the energy of youth, was presented with the widest gate and the broadest road for indulging in pleasure. But it was also a gate that led to disorientation; it was a revolution without agenda and beyond its superficial glitter had nothing to offer. In 1969, at the age of twenty-three and after the three grimmest years of my life, I escaped all this by moving to Australia.

On my flight from Tahiti to Sydney I sat next to a young dentist and his wife who befriended me and became my adoptive family in Australia. They were Anglicans from the Sydney diocese, and through their influence I was led to reconsider my own beliefs. Despite some turbulent years that followed the navy, I had never abandoned my belief in God and still regarded myself a Christian. But these people's Christianity was different and I was touched by their full dedication to the service of Christ. I had no idea at that stage what type of service was expected of me and this was a question that troubled me deeply. For theology has answers about salvation, personal morality and family life, but its views on vocation – unless it is being an evangelist, clergyman or missionary – are ambiguous. Christ commanded us to be the “salt of the earth”, the “light of the world” and to accomplish works far greater than his. But how did this apply to the world in which I lived? Jesus' life spanned a short time – about 33 years – and his chief work, apart from carpentry, lasted only three years. I had to plan for an average life expectancy of nearly 80 years and had therefore more than 55 years of work ahead of me and this had to be performed in an age far more complex than that of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD. How was I to be salt and light in an environment of modern computers, communication and organisations? This was a question for which neither the church nor the university provided an adequate answer to us young people. I was told to seek guidance through prayer, but no one suggested that I should use my brain during prayer; on the contrary this was regarded by some as “un-spiritual”. Ironically, later I discovered that God, like any father, enjoys intelligent conversation with his children and especially talking about our choice of work and how to do it.

## ♣ Account of a Mission 9

After a year in Sydney, I was offered a job in Brisbane and transferred there in November 1970 and began my studies at the University of Queensland. I had previously switched my university studies from law to economics and then to natural science. Now I switched once again to theology, endeavouring to learn about the life and teaching of Jesus. I also wanted to draw up my own plan to confront this new counter-culture head-on, more intensely felt now that I lived in a different country. I was confirmed in the Anglican Church and my long search for my vocation began to crystallise; I was meant to be a teacher. I am not sure how this idea entered my mind, it had been suggested to me before by a Catholic priest in Chile and a friend in Australia, but I had not taken their suggestion seriously. Since my intention was to teach Christianity and, given my understanding of these things at the time, this meant my becoming a clergyman – even though wearing a dog-collar did not appeal to me. I have never enjoyed religious ceremony and have participated in it only out of a sense of solidarity; I regret to say that I have a particular distaste towards high-church ritual. Nevertheless, I applied to enter the ministry of the Anglican church and was invited to attend a weekend retreat at St Francis College in Brisbane to meet the examining chaplains and the Archbishop. I took every opportunity to lay before them with the greatest enthusiasm my grandiose plans to reform the church, to evangelise the whole nation and attack its spiritual and cultural decline. Naturally, these mild gentlemen must have been horrified and thought of me as the equivalent of an ecclesiastical Che Guevara, imported directly from Latin America; I received a polite letter from the Archbishop informing me that – after much prayer – the examining committee decided that I should seek to fulfil my vocation elsewhere.

This rejection by the church – for I certainly felt it to be that – coincided with disappointment in my theological studies. Through my studies I found out that great effort in the study of the Bible was spent on literary criticism dedicated to casting doubt on the traditionally assumed authorships of the books in the Old and New Testaments. We were introduced to evolution-

## 10 Account of a Mission ♣

ary theories built on very thin empirical evidence – such as the JEDP documents<sup>1</sup> – explaining how the books gradually grew from an assembly of oral and written traditions, while the study of its content had limited scope. I was also disappointed with my studies in the history of Christian thought. Christian thought was assumed to be a synonym for theology, which meant that the works of the great Christian humanists and scientists – whose scholarship I discovered much later – such as Erasmus, Vives, Grotius, Boerhaave and Linnaeus were excluded. These scholars and others, who opened up the fields of education, psychology, social welfare, linguistics, international law, clinical medicine, chemistry and botany, and who claimed to have done so inspired by God, the Bible and the philosophy of Christ, did not, according to the theologians, engage in Christian thought. It was incorrectly assumed – at least from an historical point of view – that Christianity could not, and should not, make authentic and unique contributions to botany, biology, sociology, political science and the other sciences. Yet, these sciences were at that very time in a process of accelerated demise, just when they were most needed to civilise modern society. The professors who taught these theological subjects were very kind and interested in their students, much more so than the people who taught me other subjects; their heart was in the right place but their minds were unwittingly stuck in the mire of 19th century philosophy.

Thus having being turned down by the church and disappointed with theology, I looked somewhere else. I returned to my study of economics and political science. To my surprise, it was my studies in political science that led me to grasp the historical roots of the cultural whirlwind I was experiencing. As I was exposed to the political ideologies that produced the French Revolution and subsequent rise of capitalism and socialism and to the intellectual movements that underpinned all this change, such as utilitarianism, positivism, subjectivism and ni-

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<sup>1</sup> This theory argues that the first five books of the Bible are not written by Moses but are a blend of four major traditions spreading through several centuries.

## ♣ Account of a Mission 11

hilism, I realised that our age was the final stage of the development of modernity. It was like a fruit that has reached maturity, had fallen and began decomposing on the ground. My studies in economics confirmed all this; for its models of demand and supply, indifference curves, economy of scales and so on were an application of modernism in order to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. I concluded that modern economics was built on immoral foundations. It was an even greater surprise for me that it was among political scientists and economists – rather than theologians, examining chaplains and bishops – that I had found my vocation. I now had my job cut out for me: to bring Christ's mind to science and the university and develop a new educational agenda integrating the mind and the heart. From 1974 on, this became my life's work and it was an immense endeavour, tantamount to entering through a narrow gate in order to travel on a very rough road.

By now, I was married to Veronica, who had recently graduated as a social worker, and we had started our family with the arrival of our first son, Timothy. I decided to focus my intellectual endeavours on management science because, in contrast to the stuffiness of economics, it had a strong interdisciplinary character. Among its contributors were fine scholars with a diversity of backgrounds including philosophers, sociologists and mathematicians and I was attracted to being a generalist rather than a specialist thinker. In addition to feeling at home with multiple disciplines, I was interested in science that led to action; I thought – at that time – that managers were making most of the important decisions in society. I had been exposed to the philosophical ideas of the French physiocrats, who were precursors to capitalism as promoted by Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill as well as the mechanical sociology of Auguste Comte. All of them advocated selfishness as the chief motor of economic and social interaction and I regarded this as incompatible with Christian principles<sup>2</sup>. Since manage-

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<sup>2</sup> The term for the principles advanced by Smith (1776), Bentham (1791) and Mill (1859) is *utilitarianism*; the name for the corresponding sociological ideas originating with Comte (1839) is *positivism*. Once woven to-

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ment was heavily influenced by capitalism, I began to search for an alternative model.

Another factor that played an important role in my life, coinciding with the advent of post-modernity, was the introduction of computers in commerce, industry and government. When I left the navy to study at the university, I needed to support myself. So far computers had mostly scientific applications but, at this point in time, they started to be used commercially, and there was a large demand for computer programmers. I saw here an opportunity to earn my bread and took a course in programming with IBM. I never realised that, in addition to providing for my family and my own sustenance, my computer skills would eventually open doors for my academic work. Perhaps due to my mathematical abilities, I turned out to be a good computer programmer and systems analyst and people showed far more interest in my skills in this area than in my humanist pursuits. These skills were essential in my being offered each of my academic posts in Australia and the USA and my chair in informatics and systems science in Sweden. Nevertheless my focus on the humanities and their contribution to informatics helped me get these positions, especially in Sweden. For I was living through the vast social, economic and industrial change brought about by the introduction of information technology in all sectors of society, an experience comparable and perhaps even greater than, the transformation caused by the industrial revolution on agricultural society. The aftermath of the 1973 oil crisis and the rise of cost in industrial production in Western countries exacerbated the effect. While the earlier deployment of computerised information systems helped companies cope with the shortage of workers, the decade of the 1970's saw the reversal of this; computers were now used to get rid of employees and cut production costs. The decade also saw the resurrection of the old, unrestrained, *laissez faire* economic doctrine,

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gether, these two strands of thought – utilitarianism and positivism – have provided the scientific foundation behind modern management, economics, technology and government. For a non-technical discussion, see my essay “Hard Times Without Humanity” in Appendix 2.

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and the demise of the welfare state. Fiscal policy was now replaced with monetary policy under the leadership of Milton Friedman, one of the most influential economists of the century and one whose economic ideas were thoroughly inhumane and unethical. Monetarist policy, combined with the mass introduction of information technology, perpetuated the structural unemployment and under-employment began by the oil crisis, a problem that still persists four decades later.

I first became aware of this during my employment in information systems analysis and later in corporate planning in an insurance company in Melbourne (T & G). I was then engaged in postgraduate studies in management at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) during the evenings. Being a witness to these events gave me a greater resolve to search for a bridge between my Christian vision for humanity and the sciences of management that were also being transformed by the rise of information technology. I must add that a school of management was the least likely to provide a propitious intellectual environment for this endeavour. There, the sciences that were taught – economics, organisational behaviour, organisational theory, marketing and finance – were held by the claws of utilitarian and positivist doctrine. These sciences were bent and disfigured in attaining a single objective: to make money. There was, however, an exception at my school and it came from an unexpected quarter. One of the disciplines, quantitative methods<sup>3</sup>, was led by Dr. Graham Lang<sup>4</sup>. Based on mathematics, this discipline was supposed to supply the tools for the hard approach to management. Yet Dr. Lang had a strong ethical concern about management science and practice, and encouraged my interest in using quantitative science to advance human interests rather than the ruthless pursuit of profit. A fortuitous administrative change in the lecturing schedule resulted in my

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<sup>3</sup> This represented the application of mathematics to management practice including statistics and mathematical modelling, also known as operational research or management science.

<sup>4</sup> Sadly, Dr. Lang passed away in January 2013 just before this book was completed. It had been my wish that he could read these lines and realise my gratitude and the high esteem in which I held him.

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having Dr. Lang as my teacher for the three years of my programme. Not only was Dr. Lang a fine teacher, but he encouraged his students to use innovation in their research without being constrained by the disciplinary conventions and orthodoxies.

Since every year we had to undertake a small research project, under his supervision I was able to explore new approaches to management in these projects and in particular to experiment with general systems theory, a new approach to science that had aroused my curiosity for some time. This new philosophy of science was focused on life and therefore rejected the purely physical and mechanical ways of looking at things, since life cannot be understood through pure mechanical means. I regarded its new methods as well as its new philosophy a distinctive step forward. I was particularly impressed with the work of Stafford Beer, a British cybernetician who formulated a managerial theory based on a replication of the way that the human brain managed all functions of our body and kept it alive. This was an important contribution, for it dismissed the utilitarian objectives that used management and economics as tools to make money and re-established the classical purpose of these sciences to sustain life. I enthusiastically immersed myself into studying the work of Beer and other systems scientists, and incorporated their ideas into my project work and later my master's thesis, also supervised by Dr. Lang. To my knowledge, this was the first thesis written in Australia on systems science. The second was my doctoral thesis, which I undertook in the department of sociology at Latrobe University. Stafford Beer was an examiner of both theses. They focused on Ashby's law, a law of cybernetics<sup>5</sup> that I regarded of great sociological and managerial significance. In everyday language, my research endeavoured to demonstrate that social systems, in common with biological systems, can only become viable when they have a significant amount of information available at their inception; although these systems generate some information by themselves, the great bulk of it is received from external sources. Social life

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<sup>5</sup> Also known as the law of requisite variety (Ashby, 1976).

## ♣ Account of a Mission 15

cannot proceed from chaos; it must be engendered in an environment that has a degree of order and satisfies Ashby's law. My thesis ran against most contemporary thinking which emphasises chaos, uncertainty and subjectivity as a social reality and which regards social change and history as a random evolutionary process akin to biological evolution. My father was a firm believer in biological evolution and told me about it as a bedtime story when I was about six years old. I remember thinking of it as a rather dull story; it lacked the imaginative element that not only fascinates a child's mind, but that is essential to science. I now realised through my research that evolutionary theory was not the way the world works but the way modern scientists thought and that their thinking is fundamentally flawed. In particular I still regard evolutionary thought as incongruous, both when applied to biology and society. However, while it must be recognised that the theory of evolution is, in a practical sense, useless and, in my opinion, not even worth debating<sup>6</sup>, theories of social evolution are a different matter altogether and a vigorous critical attack is most justified. These, under the guise of popular expressions such as “the survival of the fittest” and “the law of the jungle”, justify, in the minds of well-to-do people, the inevitability of the present human condition. They release the rich from any responsibility to alter the conditions of society beyond a level of charity and do not challenge their comfort.

In 1985, following the suggestion of a colleague, I submitted a paper summarising my Ph.D. thesis to the annual conference of the Society for General Systems Research in Los Angeles, USA<sup>7</sup>. I travelled to Chile to visit my birthplace for the first

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<sup>6</sup> However it does concern me the way evolution is presented as a definite thing. No science is ever definite. However, I regard as definite, my wish to be an educated, cultured person, who cares for his fellow man and is willing to serve him. Thus, I am interested in a science that helps me to attain this aim, which evolution definitely does not.

<sup>7</sup> The Society for General Systems Research, later renamed International Society for the Systems Sciences, was the first scientific association formed to promote systems science and was then recognised as the “flagship” of this scientific movement.

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time in sixteen years and then headed to California to deliver my paper. Here, I was able to meet, in person, people who so far, I had only known through books and papers; that in itself made this conference a memorable occasion. I had spent most of my money in Chile buying presents for my family, therefore I survived during the conference eating in fast-food restaurants in a rather unsafe part of the city – but I only learned about this later. On the last night of the conference there was a banquet, but, being short of cash, I had to skip it. I had just finished my fast-food meal and returned to the hotel to pack my suitcases when the telephone rang. It was the president of the society, wondering where I had been hiding. I was too embarrassed to tell him. He proceeded to congratulate me and informed me that my paper had won the society's Sir Geoffrey Vickers Award, that I was expected to be a guest at the banquet's VIP table and to hurry because they were waiting for me. Thus I was to have a second meal sitting at a table with some of the most distinguished systems scientists and their spouses – I still treasure the menu signed by all of them and wishing me all the best in my future. I was asked to say a few words when given the prize – a cheque for \$500 – and, still stunned and not knowing what to say, I thought it most appropriate that I should acknowledge my gratitude to my wife and Dr. Lang for their help and support in what I had accomplished. Unfortunately they were both on the other side of the world and could not hear this. I returned to Australia and used the \$500 to buy a mink jacket for my wife.

By this time I had left the insurance industry – where I had conducted the empirical work of my research – and from 1984, I was lecturing at the Graduate School of Management of RMIT. I remember this year because I turned 38 years old, the age at which my mother's life had been cut short, one week after the birth of my youngest brother in 1965. She had courageously gone ahead with a pregnancy, despite being warned by her doctors that she could die. At that young age, her loving work as a wife, mother and voluntary Red Cross nurse serving the poor was complete. She had reached a level of maturity in

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life that was still a long way off for me. At the same age, the work for which I was called was just beginning; it had taken ten years for me to complete my postgraduate studies and obtain my doctorate and I had much to learn both about my profession and about life. I had just began the realisation of my vision by introducing some new ideas into the subjects I taught – management information systems and quantitative methods. Having completed my Ph.D., I could be more daring in my research, for now I was able to launch into this type of work free of the institutional constraints – I must admit, most of the time necessary – that are put upon doctoral students. I had introduced some new ideas in my theses but I now needed to move further, exploring things that I could teach my students and which could lead them to design more humane organisational and information systems. I was encouraged to take a more aggressive stance on these matters by an address delivered by West C. Churchman<sup>8</sup> at the Los Angeles conference. I heard him bring up ethical issues which people in management schools were not talking about in those days, at least not openly. Yet, I thought one should go further than he; it was not sufficient to criticise management science and practice without exposing the flaws that permeated the entire modernist foundation upon which all our social structures, all our industry and our commerce and even other institutions such as the university and the church were being erected. One could not build on such sand, I had to search for rock. So I wrote a paper examining not only the theoretical foundation of management but the crisis of values in contemporary organisations, a crisis which I had witnessed in my work, especially in the insurance industry in Australia. I sought to look at the intellectual and creedal source behind the values espoused by contemporary managers and proposed an alternative Christian and more humane perspective based on the biblical idea of wisdom. To make my contribution practical and

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<sup>8</sup> West C. Churchman was a brilliant systems philosopher who was nominated for the Nobel prize. A few years later I got to know him while we served on the board of the International Society for the Systems Sciences. He shared with me and others his rediscovery of God, sadly, rather late in life. Unfortunately, soon after I moved to Sweden I lost touch with him.

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not merely philosophical, I incorporated Beer's model of management and submitted my results in a paper to the 1986 conference of the Society for General Systems Research<sup>9</sup>, which was hosted at the Wharton Business School of the University of Pennsylvania.

The paper was accepted. While I expected it would ruffle some feathers, I never imagined the storm it provoked in my school and the onslaught that was directed against me by a group of colleagues and head of school. Not only did they slanderously attack me, they also sought to impede my attending the conference by blocking my request for funding. They also endeavoured to stop the renewal of my employment contract with RMIT, which was due at the end of 1986. My scholarship was never challenged; all sniping was aimed at my person and beliefs. Despite all this, the faculty board overturned their endeavour and approved my application.<sup>10</sup>

This paper laid the path for the academic work I would pursue for the rest of my life; everything I pursued from then on, to this very day, fitted the direction that was laid at the beginning of 1986 when I wrote it. But I also learned some useful lessons from this intellectual baptism of fire. We live in a Brave New World<sup>11</sup> that does not understand itself because it has lost its regard for history. It believes, with Henry Ford, that:

History is more or less bunk. It's tradition. We don't want tradition. We want to live in the present, and the only history that is worth a tinker's damn is the history we made today.<sup>12</sup>

The Bible is through and through an historical document and, although almost everything good about Western culture

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<sup>9</sup> (de Raadt, 1986)

<sup>10</sup> I am particularly grateful to Graham Hubbard, now a Professor in Adelaide, who defended my academic freedom, especially since he led the finance department, a discipline which I criticized. Graham Lang, who was on sabbatical, also made it clear to the head of the school that I had his support and confidence.

<sup>11</sup> (Huxley, 1946)

<sup>12</sup> Interview by Chicago Tribune, 25 May, 1916. Cited by Muller (2012).

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can have its origin traced to the Bible, people who do not have an understanding of history will have little appreciation of its relevance. This is especially true in the Fordist culture of a management school. My mistake in the paper was to use theological language that meant nothing to most of my readers, including my colleagues. Theology and modern science cannot converse with each other, not because one represents reality and the other not, but because both neglect the historical context of reality; one cannot live life to the full, in a truly human rather than material sense, without understanding life's historical context. As I became aware of this, I gradually adopted an historical approach to thinking, and due to its emphasis on the dynamics of life, the systems science school of thought provided a congenial intellectual setting upon which to develop my ideas. I found the same congeniality among systems scientists themselves and I owe them much for their encouragement and friendship. Without them, I would have had to cultivate my thoughts in an academic vacuum. Nevertheless, in the middle of 1986, only two and half years into it, I sensed that my academic mission had reached a dead end.

It happened that while I was wondering about what to do next, a position was offered to me at Idaho State University through the initiative of a professor of that university spending his sabbatical at RMIT. Although I did not hesitate in accepting the position, the decision was nevertheless a painful one. Naturally, moving to the USA opened vast professional opportunities for me, but I also realised that it was a move that I had not sought. Even if it took me to greener pastures, it was a retreat from my first battle, one which I had lost. Moreover, my wife, children and I had enjoyed our life in Melbourne. Melbourne, although a large city, still had, in those days, a gentle provincial character to it, perhaps personified by its old trams; it was a good choice for bringing up a family and since we had young children, we considered it the place where we had nested. Moreover, I felt at home in Melbourne and Victoria in a way I did not feel in other cities of Australia. Because of its size, there was plenty of arts to enjoy, especially music. I was then

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the vice-president of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra subscriber's committee and Veronica and I became friends with orchestra players and other music lovers. In fact, we had, and still have, wonderful friends in Melbourne. Naturally, Veronica and the children were excited about the move, especially the day the removal truck arrived at our home in Ringwood, but I had been uprooted before and had experienced the sting of leaving behind dear friends and family and having to start from zero once more. We left Australia in November 1986 and, after a six week visit to Chile, settled in Pocatello, Idaho.

By this time, Veronica had joined me in my academic venture and had undertaken a MA degree in sociology at Idaho State University graduating in 1989. I concentrated my efforts in developing a systemic and humanist approach to information systems, which was the area which I taught in my new position. I was helped in this endeavour by the work of Dooyeweerd<sup>13</sup>, a Dutch philosopher who opened a new path for me. From Dooyeweerd I learned two major principles. Firstly, the scope of God's revelation was much broader than the one held by theology; for Dooyeweerd, the whole of creation was revelation. Secondly, he provided an overarching framework that integrated all the sciences, both natural and human without violating the uniqueness of each. I later found out that these two ideas had been already advanced in the 16th Century by humanists such as Erasmus, Vives, Melanchthon and Calvin and that because of them, they rejected mediaeval prejudices that favoured theoretical knowledge over knowledge obtained by empirical methods. Once the gates of the empirical study of nature, as well as the Bible, had been opened by the humanists, events moved swiftly to lead Northern Europe to the Golden Age of the 17th and 18th Century with its unprecedented advancements in the sciences, arts and humanities. Inspired by these two humanist principles, I set to work to bring together Dooyeweerd's philosophy, the humanities and the insights of systems theory and cybernetics and in 1991, produced my first book – *Information and Managerial Wisdom* – for my stu-

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<sup>13</sup> (Dooyeweerd, 1958)

dents. It introduced a new theory of information systems and management that focused on the human and social aspects of information rather than on the technology used to process it. My objective was to provide students with a tool to design information systems that were subordinate to humanity, using technology as a servant of people rather than a master. The ultimate end of these systems was to help management make decisions based on wisdom rather than on the pursuit of profit.

With some misgivings, I submitted the manuscript to a textbook publisher who had earlier, while I was still teaching in Australia, encouraged me to write it. The book was sent to reviewers who wrote that, in their opinion, the book's content was too advanced and not practical enough for undergraduate teaching. However, they thought that the book could be used at the master's level and definitely at the doctoral level. Given that, in the USA, the largest number of textbooks are sold to undergraduate students, my book was judged as not being commercially viable and the publisher rejected it. It was explained to me by another publisher that the time had passed when publishers printed a book they felt worth reading but which did not bring in a profit. Now, every book printed was expected to be profitable. Therefore, I decided to publish the book myself. Interestingly, since then, I have used it as a textbook at the doctoral, masters and undergraduate levels, including first year university students in Sweden. I think it had the greatest impact among the latter group, despite the fact that the book and my teaching were in English and this was not their first language. There is a freshness of mind in first year students that makes them the most fertile ground for new ideas and different ways of seeing the world. But my sojourn in Sweden was in the future and I was still teaching in the USA.

As I have pointed out, management schools in the English-speaking world are deeply ingrained in the utilitarian-positivist philosophy and as the Anglo-Saxon approach to teaching management, especially from the USA, has been propagated all around the world, this philosophy has become the standard everywhere. This includes a large sector of Christianity, espe-

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cially Evangelical Christianity, which now comfortably and silently shares its bed with capitalism while ignoring its irreconcilable conflict with the teachings of Christ. In order to make students aware of this conflict, I required them to read Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* and write an essay evaluating its meaning. Dickens, in this beautifully written story, inflicts a sound and devastating attack on capitalism. Students appreciated it, but my colleagues in the accounting department did not approve, especially since they wanted me to teach information systems within the framework of their department. For them, neither Dickens, nor the humanities, nor philosophy nor systems science made any contribution to their subject matter. I was branded a socialist. Hostility against me gradually grew, and in Spring 1992 I was informed that some of my colleagues sought the termination of my contract. I was back at the same spot I had been placed in Melbourne six years earlier.

As has happened so many times in our lives, one door opened as the other closed. Before the conflict in Idaho erupted, I had been encouraged to apply for a new professorial chair at a Swedish university in Luleå, located 150 kilometres south of the Arctic Circle. I was interviewed in Sweden in June 1992 and, at the committee's request, presented my humanist vision for the discipline of managerial informatics. I had been invited to apply on the basis of these new ideas for informatics and that were outlined in my book. I was given to understand by the professors who formed the expert panel of the committee, that it was on this basis that I was offered the chair. Since it was also on this basis I had reached a dead-end in Idaho, I decided to accept the position and undergo, once more, the painful process of uprooting my family from familiar surroundings, friends and loyal colleagues and experience the hard task of resettling in a new country. Our arrival in Sweden coincided with the country entering a period of some profound transformations. Its golden age – a product of a paradoxical marriage of socialism at home with aggressive capitalism in the international markets – had come to an end. Starting from the early 1990s several cracks appeared in the economic system, including large losses

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by the banks that required government bailout and a severe drop in the exchange rate of the Swedish crown. Several large companies on which the economy depended, began experiencing financial instability and the level of unemployment rose. This economic downturn was accompanied by the appearance of fractures in the cultural and social arrangements acquired since the beginning of the post-World War II period; several generations of Swedes had lived in almost utopian conditions of prosperity and assured welfare systems “from the cradle to the grave”<sup>14</sup>. Easy life and a free love mentality had been accompanied with the desertion of the old values, such as emphasis on the small community, family focus and the Lutheran work ethic, that helped build up the nation. These values had been replaced by a post-modern attitude of complete dependence on the state rather than on family and community, an orientation towards leisure rather than work, and an inability to cope with hardship, especially when compared with their ancestors. Now that the scene had radically changed and socialism had failed them, a feeling that was intensified by the recent breakup of the Soviet block, Sweden was ill equipped morally and intellectually to face the challenge. We found, especially in the north of Sweden where Marxism had made its greatest inroads, that atheism was quite widespread among people and many were confused and unable to face the uncertainties of the time. People found it difficult to cope with death; amazingly, some parents taught children that they would never die<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> (Svenskt Näringsliv, 2012)

<sup>15</sup> I was told about this reluctance to explain death to children and found it hard to believe until I witnessed it personally. During one of my walks in Uppsala, I descended the hill where the castle is located, and came across a pond with water fowls, including swans and ducks. As I approached it, I saw a dead duck on the path ahead of me. At the same time, walking in the opposite direction, a small group of school children on an excursion were led by two teachers. I noticed that on seeing the dead duck, one of the teachers showed a marked degree of alarm and told the other teacher to move the children back while she pushed the duck's body under some bushes by the side of the path so that the children could not see it. I presume that the teachers endeavoured to avoid a taboo topic.

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As a result of this crisis, Sweden began a slow economic and cultural turnaround. Following many years of isolation from Europe, Sweden joined the European Union in 1995. Our arrival at Luleå more or less coincided with an official acknowledgement that Swedish culture was essentially Christian and although schools taught the five major world religions, Christianity was given a special place as the religion underlying Swedish culture. A new translation of the Bible was commissioned and when it appeared in print it became a best seller. My installation as professor with other colleagues, took place in the cathedral of Luleå with all the Swedish traditions reserved for these occasions. I discovered that these ceremonies had only been recently reinstated after a long period of banishment due to – according to social democracy – their bourgeoisie character. The physical facilities of the university were also undergoing radical architectural transformation at that time. New buildings included a library and a hall for the performing arts. A 200 year old traditional house (Norrbottensgården) from the rural region of the north was brought on-campus to provide a central focus and connection with the history of the county. A new faculty of philosophy was also added. Although this university was one of the best financially endowed in the country and its facilities and equipment were of the highest standard, its campus and the buildings had been originally designed to look like an industrial complex. Originally, there had been no library building or formal entry to campus. Everything had been arranged to avoid any bourgeoisie aspiration getting hold of the students and suggesting to them that this was a place to reflect and develop intellectually. Everything about the place cried out loud that this was a training centre for the industrial and economic development of the nation. But now, there was a swing away from the economic dependence of socialism on large industries and back towards the introduction of small businesses and development of a social economy in rural villages; some of the most successful of these were church initiatives such as in Långviksmon and Gnosjö. This did not signify a uniformly open-arm welcome to these changes, for there still was a strong section of the old es-

tablishment that vigorously fought them. However, the Swedish cultural, political and economic tide had turned and the conditions became favourable to the planting of new ideas.

This then was the scenario I encountered when I began my work on a dark day in mid-November in 1992, when the days had shortened to about four hours of light and the snow had not yet settled to provide the landscape with its main source of luminosity in the Scandinavian winter. Since I had been offered my position on the basis of my research and teaching agenda, I got busy redesigning an undergraduate programme for our students. Veronica now joined me in this work, teaching sociology and, at the same time, conducting her doctoral research and, with her social work background, providing a very substantial contribution to the community orientation of our new educational programme. We operated in a region which, like so many in Europe, was losing a significant amount of population, especially talented young people, to the larger cities. We were witnessing the disintegration of small rural villages, the last remnant of Swedish communal life, and the flow of the best of its youth to metropolitan centres where social fragmentation and consumerism awaited. We saw this as the fulfilment of the physiocrats' aim: to dislodge economics from the community and its sustenance, and transform it into an independent mechanical force for generating wealth. We also saw that young intelligent people were the tools of this aim and that the university had become the place to mould them for this job and transform them into a "human resource".

Thus the challenge Veronica and I faced was to develop, with the collaboration of my doctoral students, an undergraduate programme of studies focused on the community rather than on corporations. The programme opened in 1996 with an International Conference of the Swedish Operational Research Association, of which I was president at the time. We had participants from seventeen countries and our main keynote speaker was the man who had introduced me to systems thinking and cybernetics almost exactly twenty years before, Professor Stafford Beer. Our objective was to educate both the mind and

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the heart of young university students, to teach them to think historically and ethically and to orient their vocation and skills to the community rather than to the corporate world. We endeavoured to expose, in an historical manner, the destructive impact that secularism had had on European society and while we did not proselytise, we demonstrated how, behind Europe's greatest cultural achievements, one finds Christ's teachings and that by comparison, the contribution of secularism is paltry. Thus, by shaping a well educated mind with a visionary heart, we endeavoured to release through these young people a revitalising force into Swedish society, a thrust that would shake the communities out of their daze. We hoped that our students would be like the green shoots that emerge from the Scandinavian birches in spring and which cover the landscape with their shimmering foliage. To provide them not only with a sound theoretical education but also with the practical tools for its application, we linked with a nearby village – Rosvik – that was experiencing a variety of threats to its viability, including the reduction in the number of years of education offered by the village school. With the co-operation of village leaders, we made their village the focus of Veronica's doctoral research as well as the topic of undergraduate research projects. Students visited the village – with at least an overnight stay – interviewed the leaders, organised panels and collected data that formed the basis of projects in social analysis and work design. We expected that in the silent climate of the secular intimidation of modernity, where people are discouraged to disclose what is on their mind, we would find resistance among our students. We encountered the opposite. Students received our teaching with the enthusiasm typical of youth. Moreover, addressing their beliefs as well as their minds allowed us to demand more, rather than less, intellectually. We taught to first year undergraduates material often reserved for postgraduate studies; the students' performance was very high.

Since we emphasised that technological applications should be subordinate to human and community needs, we established the Centre for Technology and Social Systems in collaboration

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with the Free University in Amsterdam and Salford University in the UK with the aim of promoting doctoral research in this direction. The centre organised a yearly conference in Maarsen, Holland, which brought together doctoral students and their teachers from several countries including Sweden, Holland, UK, Chile and South Africa. Our various endeavours even caught the interest of the local Swedish social-democratic press who interviewed us and wrote some very positive articles. In 1997, I described our programme and its philosophical foundation in a paper which I presented at a conference in Madrid<sup>16</sup> and circulated it among members of the international community of systems scientists. I have listed some of the responses I received, not intending self-praise but as an expression of gratitude to people such as these who encouraged us to go on and also to provide some insight of how people, standing outside of it, viewed this work:

"May I wish you well in your adventure and hope that it will be marked with great success. I could not agree with you more about the twin dangers of post-enlightenment stasis and the "idiot culture" of post-modernism... I must acknowledge relief that someone is doing something positive to break out of the circle of banalities with which we are afflicted." (Professor Fenton F. Robb, Managerial Information Systems and Control, The University of Edinburgh and Deputy Chairman of Scottish Gas)

"Thank you for sending me your material on Systems. I found it of great interest. My disagreements with it are trivial compared to my agreements." (Late Professor Russell L. Ackoff, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania)

"Congratulations for your new programme of systems science "centred on the person" and not only on the technology!... I am sure that your experience will be very

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<sup>16</sup> (de Raadt, 1997)

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fruitful for all of us, and more particularly for our various European “Information Systems Programmes”.” (Emeritus professor Jean-Louis Le Moigne, Université d’Aix Marseille, France)

"Your courses certainly look exciting and innovative." (Professor Bill Hutchinson, Management Information Systems, Edith Cowan University, Western Australia)

"As designer of a programme in Informatics and Systems Science at Luleå Technical University, you should be well prepared to bring very useful information about introducing systems thinking in the university..." (Dr. Eric Schwarz, Director, Interfaculty Centre for Systemic Studies, University of Neuchatel)

"I would like to continue discussion with you about your IS educational approach. I highly appreciate your ‘macro model’..." (Professor Pentti Kerola, Department of Information Processing Science, University of Oulu, Finland)

"What you are setting out to do [introducing anew the informatics and systems science programme] has my outmost approval...Go for it!" (Late Professor Stafford Beer)

This paper also generated invitations to present our programme at a conference organised by the University of Neuchâtel in 1998 and at a conference in Italy, organised by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich in 1999. Finally, an educational programme based on philosophical ideas so different to the contemporary ones, needed text books to shape a syllabi for students. This, in itself, is a gigantic task, and around this time I published *A New Management of Life*<sup>17</sup> as an introductory text

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<sup>17</sup> (de Raadt, 1998); the present book follows a similar structure and includes most of its ideas, but expanded and amended by the experiences of

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for our first-year students, outlining the mode of thinking we were to adopt throughout our programme.

All these things happened about 25 years after I had received my first call to accomplish them; in terms of practical application, Veronica and I have always regarded it as the furthest we reached along the road of university education. For amid all the positive experiences, dark clouds were gathering around our department. Unexpectedly, we were informed that our students had been harassed at student union activities and that rumours had been circulated as to the planned closure of our programme. All this destabilised our work just when we were preparing to produce our first batch of graduands, the first fruit of our efforts. When approached, the head of our school strongly denied the veracity of these rumours, but later on we discovered that he not only had been the source of the rumour, but also the main instigator to phase out the programme, despite its success and approval from very distinguished scholars. Essentially, this was yet another battle between academics and university administrators that was waging in many universities around the world. The times dictated that universities be turned into money-making ventures and this opened the doors for people, who had failed as scientists and teachers, to change path and become university administrators. The recognition their vanity craved and that could not be attained due to a lack of intellectual talent and commitment to pursue the painstaking work of science, could now be filled up with the financial and organisational power imbued in administration. Moreover, they introduced the idea that scientific and teaching standards could be raised through managerial practices, such as industrial quality control, rather than by scholarly efforts. The outcome of this delusion allowed the university administration to inflate like a parasitic balloon and consume more than half the budget meant for teaching and research. It is possible that my negotiations with the university rector, the head of school and various committees could have been less confrontational, but the academic demands of my department, added to by an inexperienced – al-

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15 years of research and teaching.

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though very enthusiastic – team of colleagues, did not help stimulate a spirit of tolerance towards a bureaucracy that was contributing nothing towards the education of our students. And this, rather than the affront it amounted to, aggrieved Veronica and I the most; empty-headed and vain bureaucracy denied our students an education that had been endorsed by scholars from various places around the world. The highest priority in any decision made in a civilised university is the moral and intellectual standard of the education it offers its students and we had lost yet another battle for it.

Our programme was officially discontinued in 1999, three years after its inception. Given our age, we did not believe that we would be able to develop such a programme again. Therefore, we decided to concentrate our efforts on research that would produce the educational material we lacked in our programme with the hope that, sometime in the future, it would be helpful to someone else who may attempt this type of venture. While the administration had no power to dismiss a professor from the university, they had the power to take away resources necessary to conduct this work. We therefore moved our offices to our home in Luleå and purchased our own computer facilities to conduct our research. To give a practical orientation to this research, we participated in a variety of community development projects funded by the European Social Fund by acting as their scientific advisers and evaluators. This provided the opportunity to carry out several empirical studies into the sustainability crisis experienced in diverse communities in Europe, including Austria, southern France, Italy, Spain and northern Sweden. Out of these studies we developed a new scientific method to analyse threats to the long-term viability of rural communities and design work to respond to these threats. The Swedish defence forces funded my development of a specialised software package (SmCube) to assist this analysis and design work.

In 2001 Veronica successfully defended her doctoral thesis. Our findings were published in three books and several scientific papers and painted a rather grim picture for rural com-

munities we had studied. It was well known in Europe that most communities removed from centres of industrial and financial power were losing population at the rate of one percent per year. Most of the emigrants were young people who possessed just the type of talents and skills these communities desperately needed to be viable. Although it was generally assumed that the chief factor attracting them to the large centres were economic, our research uncovered a number of other factors. Along with failing economics, we also discovered unsuitable education, a fragmented social structure that affected families, an ethic dominated by self-interest and a belief system of unbelievable naivety to sustain it. These factors attacked almost every institution in the communities and to make matters worse, were inter-connected in such a manner as to make their destructive impact follow an exponential pattern that eventually became explosive. The fragmentation of society had torn apart groups such as the family, church and small businesses that – like the organs in our bodies – had operated in an integrated manner and ensured not only the viability of these groups, but also the long term viability of the whole community. It was urgent that they should be reintegrated, but reintegration required a common vision among members of the community and a will to take matters into their own hands and assume responsibility for their own lives rather than depending on bureaucratic policies and government handouts to coerce people to adopt them.

Bureaucracy, either public, private or somewhere in between, had become the chief instrument of social change everywhere in Europe, in communities, hospitals, universities and every kind of institution including the church. Our research revealed that it had failed in every one of these and rather than change them, it had disrupted their operations and was gradually rendering them unviable. Of course, bureaucratic intrusion into institutions and peoples' lives was not circumscribed to Europe but prevalent all over the modern world; there was a lot of other research witnessing this. On the other hand, we understood that social change driven by vision and education, rather

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than policies and coercion, was the historical mission of the church. Christ meant not only to redeem but also to civilise and had passed on this task to his followers; this task defined the church. There have been times in history when the church had done this very effectively, such as in the Renaissance of northern Europe. Moreover, in our research and visits to diverse small communities, we found evidence that some churches had, either in the past or in the present, fulfilled this mission with great effectiveness. We realised that, because of its particular mission and the absence of any other institution offering a suitable alternative, the church was an essential instrument to bring about development and long-term viability to communities. But, with the few exceptions I have noted, we found that churches were ill equipped and reluctant to carry out this task. We then started thinking about an educational programme to equip them to assume this responsibility. Yet we were confronted with resistance from the churches we approached to engage in such a venture. We found, to our embarrassment as Christians, that civil authorities and the people working in community projects were far more positive to this sort of engagement than members of the church itself.

Nevertheless, at this time the idea of a new master's degree germinated; this degree would be oriented towards community development and aimed at people who wanted to deploy their professional skills for the benefit of the community rather than industry and commerce. This coincided with our leaving Europe and resettling in Melbourne in 2004, mainly due to family reasons. For many years our children had been spread over different countries and since all were born in Australia, it was a natural place for us to reunite. We also nursed some hopes that they would one day take over our work as we became too old to carry on. On arrival, we set to work to design the master's programme. Although it was meant to be undertaken by anyone who had a concern for the community, regardless of belief, we sought the support of the church, because we believed it to be responsible for educating its people in this field. As we became immersed in life in Australia after seventeen years of absence,

we began to experience a cultural shock that deeply disconcerted us. We expected change, but not the kind we encountered. Despite many years of receiving immigrants from all over the world as well as the frequent overseas travel by Australians, people had learnt little; behind its affectation of a “café society” sophistication, in the last two decades Australia had culturally moved backwards rather than forwards. Particularly, we were astonished at the coarseness of its public life, visible as much in business as in government. Political and economic life had become dominated by a version of “neo-liberalism” that commercialised all aspects of life. Everything was for sale, including education, sports, arts, medicine, religion and immigration visas. Even brothels were listed in its stock exchange. But of greatest concern was the abandonment of Australia's youth – the generations “X” and “Y” – whose level of development lagged behind 10 to 15 years and who, on reaching the age of 30 years, were still behaving like teenagers. Not only were they neglected by their parents and communities, but they were released into a world of unemployment or meaningless employment, of unaffordable housing and were constantly manipulated by a socially destructive media. Australians seemed to be well aware of their own version of idiot culture and had even adopted a new – at least, for us – expression for it: “dumbing-down”.

Since we believed that the church had a responsibility to respond to this situation, we approached its leadership, across the denominations, from archbishop to local pastor and almost everything in between, to find a home for the master's programme. Sometimes explicitly and other times implicitly, we were told that the work of the church was best defined and led by the clergy and that our educational task and the rest of the work associated with it lay beyond the boundaries of the church. Their work, led by clergy and mainly focused on Sunday worship, had itself been transformed beyond recognition. Under the guise of a new approach to Christianity couched with terms such as “emerging”, “contextualisation” and “cultural relevance”, the most popular worship now took

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place in a dark night-club atmosphere, with coloured lights flashing on the stage with a set of drums as the centre piece. Trendy preachers delivered their “culturally-relevant” messages by telling people the things they wanted to hear rather than what they needed to hear. With this stroke of genius, the church had now matched society with its own “dumbed-down” version of Christianity and in its endeavour to become relevant it had become irrelevant.

Such was our disillusionment, that in 2006 we decided to leave the country and move to South America, where our ideas had already met with far better acceptance, especially in Brazil and Argentina. But Providence stopped us and made it apparent that we were meant to stay and fight our last battle here, despite the harshness of the terrain. Ours were not just normal emotional reactions of people resettling in a country after many years of absence and having difficulties accepting that things change. In order to explain the gravity of Australia's predicament and how the master's degree we had designed was meant to equip people to respond to this, we replicated the empirical studies we had carried out in Europe. We published our results in an article entitled *Arresting the Collapse of the City Through Systemic Education: A Case Study of Melbourne*<sup>18</sup> and circulated it among community leaders representing the municipal council, churches and welfare agencies operating in the centre of Melbourne. We expected its content to be of interest to them, but received no reply. However, in 2007 we came across an Asian Christian community mainly comprised of university students based in the centre of Melbourne that offered to finance our venture. I must emphasise that this was offered to us without our requesting it; however it was gratefully accepted. We housed the programme in a new centre we started for this purpose and, in collaboration with a college in Sydney, offered a master of arts in community development. Initially, the leadership of this college showed great enthusiasm for the programme and, after long deliberation about how to fit its syllabi into the

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<sup>18</sup> (de Raadt and de Raadt, 2008)

academic structure of the college, we enrolled our first group of students in February 2009.

Sadly, the directors of the community that financed our centre were involved for some years in litigation regarding its very substantial assets, comprised mostly of buildings in the central business district of Melbourne. The litigation was settled out of court about the time we started teaching and despite the settlement, the leaders of the community had to confront a bill of five million dollars in legal costs. Five million dollars represented seventy times the combined salaries of Veronica and I at the time – a fraction of what we would have earned at a university. Yet, to compensate for the financial burden imposed by these legal costs, we were told, five weeks after the initiation of the master's programme, that our income would have to be halved. We were not surprised; when it comes to edifying the body of Christ, the church has traditionally given priority to doing it with bricks and mortar rather than by educating its own flesh and blood. We realised that to salvage the programme with our own resources would require us to move out of Melbourne. We chose Batemans Bay as our new home due to its proximity to Canberra where all our children and grandchildren had settled. Two things decided its discontinuation at the beginning of 2011. On the one hand, living away from major cities such as Melbourne made it difficult for us to promote it among potential students. On the other, the people in the college who offered our programme and with whom we had collaborated from the beginning moved out of the college and, with their exit, the interest and willingness to promote the programme dwindled. Eventually we found out that the principal had been replaced by a chief executive officer who, in our last conversation, informed me that the college was a commercial operation. Christianity had embraced Australian “neo-liberalism” and was now for sale. Our last battle had been lost.



## 3 Biblical Humanism<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

I believe that God decides the historical times in which every person enters this world and gives them the necessary attributes to deal with its peculiarities. I think that one of the attributes given to me is the ability to work alone. I could do my work in a desert if I was given the necessary resources. I know that this is also a weakness and that I am not much of a team-player. But, I feel about my scholarly work the way composers feel about their symphonies; the music must come fully from inside them and this makes it difficult for them to collaborate when they compose. I am lucky to have a wife who understands me and my “music” and that she has been endowed with the necessary gifts to be my co-worker. We were given a job to be carried out in an intellectual desert and, despite its drawbacks, my ability to work alone has been an asset. Many of my colleagues, with whom I share much in common, have found my attitude difficult to understand. Yet, I have observed that, for the sake of expediency, when one collaborates with people with whom one does not agree, ultimately ideas are watered down to the extent that they become insipid. One cannot be, as God expects it, the salt of the earth by putting new wine in old skins; it is like having one's cake and eating it.

However, to claim that new wine, that is, new ideas, comes within me does not mean that all these are originally mine. On the contrary, most of my philosophy, including its definition, is borrowed; my original contribution is to mix and rearrange borrowed ideas in a somewhat different order. The first and most

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<sup>1</sup> I use the words *humanist* and *humanism* in their Erasmian sense, that is, a humanist is a person who incorporates the humanities in his thinking and in his study of the Bible. These terms also reflect the esteem the Bible gives to humanity (Psalm 8:3-8). Due to this, *Biblical humanist* and *Biblical humanism* are often used as equivalent words. This is substantially different from the contemporary usage of these words, where humanism represents a man-centred ideology, often associated with secularism and a 19<sup>th</sup> Century mentality.

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important source is the Bible; there is no other document I have studied as thoroughly and that I respect as deeply. Interestingly, it is the very qualities that lead people to question its legitimacy that I consider affirm it. Later I will argue that the difference between these attitudes lies in the way we think; people who criticise the Bible usually do it on the basis of abstract thinking and principles, while the Bible avoids abstractions and deals with the blunt realities of humanity and history. It is this bluntness that I find so appealing; the people through whom God works do not fit a platonic ideal, but are people of flesh and blood and include the whole spectrum of human characters from saints to prostitutes, brigands and blood-thirsty warriors. Their value lies not in their character, but in the humanity that is common to them all. Moreover, God's word is not a treatise of conceptual philosophy, but the word that is transmitted to us through the historical circumstances these people faced. When David is pursued by his enemies and wishes God to break their jaws and kick out their teeth<sup>2</sup>, the Bible does not smooth out the crudeness of David's words, but on the contrary, presents them not only as they were spoken by David but also as God's very own words. This is meant to comfort us; God sympathetically understands the predicament of a persecuted man and he has empathy for the fear and anger that unjust treatment arouses within him. It may not satisfy the armchair scholar, but it will be full of meaning to the downtrodden, that is, the largest proportion of humanity.

The second source I have borrowed from is the Biblical humanist school that emerged in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, blossomed in the century that followed and despite being trampled on by modernism in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, has re-emerged from time to time to illuminate people disillusioned with modernity. In this latter category we find the works of the Spanish philosophers Unamuno and Ortega y Gasset, and the Dutchmen Kuyper and Dooyeweerd. Biblical humanism gave northern Europe a great social and cultural impulse with the Dutch Republic being its major epicentre, especially during the 17th century. Not only

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<sup>2</sup> (Psalm 3:7)

did the human sciences bloom, but they inspired the application of empirical methods that led to major breakthroughs in the natural sciences such as the work of Boerhaave in clinical medicine and chemistry, of Carl Linnaeus in botany, of van Leeuwenhoek and Swammerdam in biology and microscopy, of Beeckman in mathematics, and of Stevin in engineering. We must also include Grotius' contribution to international and maritime law and include such statesmen as Johan de Witt and Johan van Oldebarnevelt who helped transform "...a wretched little country of boatmen and peasants...[who] had no university"<sup>3</sup> into:

... a society, and culture, which regularly fascinated contemporary diplomats, scholars, merchants, churchmen, soldiers, tourists, sailors and connoisseurs of art from many lands... Visitors continually marvelled at the prodigious extent of Dutch shipping and commerce, the technical sophistication of industry and finance, the beauty and orderliness, as well as cleanliness, of the cities, the degree of religious and intellectual toleration to be found there, the excellence of the orphanages and hospitals, the limited character of ecclesiastical power, the subordination of military to civilian authority and the remarkable achievements of Dutch art, philosophy, and science.<sup>4</sup>

I have no doubt that this is the type of ultimate social transformation that Jesus<sup>5</sup> wished for the derelict villages and towns he visited. And if one judges Biblical humanism by its fruit, that is, by the practical outcome of its philosophy, then one cannot help but be impressed; I have learnt much from it. Therefore, prior to furnishing a sketch of the philosophy I have gradually learnt over the years, I will spell out the main biblical principles upon which this philosophy is based and add a summary of what I have borrowed from biblical humanism.

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<sup>3</sup> (Huizinga, 2007, Chapter 1)

<sup>4</sup> (Israel, 1995, p. 1)

<sup>5</sup> (Luke 4:18-21)

### Hebrew and Greek Cultural Roots

I start by contrasting two systems of thought, Greek and Biblical. Since they provide most of the intellectual ingredients in European culture, it is important to understand how they have been woven together at different times. Both assume that society will benefit the most when we first pursue wisdom, but despite this overlap, there are some major differences in how they perceive wisdom. For Greek philosophers, wisdom is ontological, that is, they seek to understand the universe as a static reality which they conceive as eternal<sup>6</sup> and where wisdom is gained by defining and discerning between things; and by understanding, for example, what is justice or what is perfection. Since their wisdom focuses on static truth, it is itself a static wisdom and its view of society is also static. According to them, people are born into different fixed social classes; wisdom and education are only accessible to the elite. Biblical thought is quite the opposite, it assumes an empirical reality of injustice, which needs no definition, for it is observed and experienced by every person. Injustice is the centre of the Bible's historical and dynamic drama<sup>7</sup> that starts with the creation of man and the world, follows on with his subsequent fall through man's folly and culminates in the eventual redemption and restoration of all things created. The central thrust of this drama is to restore the welfare and dignity of humanity to its original condition. It is especially directed towards the poor and destitute, rather than the elite, in order to reinstitute their full humanity and rid them of being the lowest strata of society. Moreover, wisdom is itself an instrument of change; by acquiring it through education, people are able to move out of the social mire and assume their full status of humanity as images of God.

Since both Greek philosophers and Hebrew prophets sought wisdom with the same eagerness and their teachings shared many commonalities, there has been a long string of scholars spread over the history of thought, especially since the beginning of the Second Millennium, who have attempted to build a

<sup>6</sup> (Aristotle, 2007, Book 12:6-7, 9)

<sup>7</sup> (Boman, 1970)

synthesis from these two modes of thinking<sup>8</sup>. This is not an easy task, for there are important divergences between both traditions, and Philosophers have tried to resolve their differences in two main ways. The scholastic approach<sup>9</sup> gives priority to Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle, and fits Biblical teachings into the Aristotelian mould. This means that Aristotelian philosophy exercises the final intellectual authority over thought. The static view of this approach means that it seeks to force a fixed orthodoxy upon a dynamic history with the purpose of judging people's beliefs and ideas as right or wrong. This search for orthodoxy was central to the Medieval mind, and later, through the rise of a philosophy based on a mechanical view of the world, has reappeared in modernity with the detrimental impact on humanity discussed above. For this is the incorrect way to blend these two traditions; it is like pouring the flour into the water to make bread rather than the other way around. One ends with a mess.

Biblical humanism, led by Erasmus of Rotterdam, attempted the reverse. Although it draws on Greek thought, it uses the Bible as its basis to select the appropriate Greek material. Out of this emerges what Erasmus and his followers termed the "Philosophy of Christ", a way of thinking radically different from the Greek and Medieval formulations. Its merit is evinced in the society of northern Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries which produced the foundation for most of the betterments we enjoy today.

The philosophy of Christ was inspired by a particularly humanist understanding of the Bible which I have summarised in terms of six interconnected guiding-principles: (1) an anthropomorphic and (2) historical view of reality; (3) an historical way of thinking, (4) the idea that history has as its objective, the restoration of justice through the exercise of love; (5) true faith

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<sup>8</sup> One of the earliest and most notable endeavours in this direction comes from Philo (1890) who lived around the time of Christ.

<sup>9</sup> In Medieval times, this approach was adopted by people from the three main traditions, Jewish (Maimonides, 1904), Muslim (Averroes, 2002) and Christian (Aquinas, 1947). Maimonides and Averroes were physicians and philosophers and Aquinas, a theologian.

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implies a life dedicated to history and the fulfilment of its destiny; and (6) God, through his Spirit, is present at all times in the world and is the only source of reality. My numbering of these principles is purely a matter of convenience, it does not indicate an order of dependence or a sequence that must be followed to understand them. They are, all of them, closely linked and interdependent.

### **Anthropomorphic Reality**

The scriptures tell us that God speaks to us through history as recorded by the prophets and through nature<sup>10</sup>. However, how are we humans to interpret this speech and make sense of what we hear and observe? The answer to this is that God has imprinted his image on everything he has created, including man, and this image is human-like or anthropomorphic<sup>11</sup> and provides a common language between God, man and all other created things. Language and understanding in the Bible are bound to each other<sup>12</sup> and this union is realised to the fullest in Christ who, the Gospels claim, is God's speech made man<sup>13</sup>. Moreover, this language must be learnt like any other language. A person who does not speak Spanish and hears two Spanish-speaking people talking to each other, will only hear sounds. It will appear as incredible to him that the sequence of these sounds, each almost indistinguishable from the previous one, is organised according to a grammar, and that each sound is a symbol of something in these peoples' lives. Yet, if it sounds like gibberish to him, it is only due to his ignorance of the

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<sup>10</sup> (Psalm 19)

<sup>11</sup> (Genesis 1:26; Romans 1:20)

<sup>12</sup> (Isaiah 43:10)

<sup>13</sup> (John 1:14). Calvin, following Erasmus, argues that the correct translation for *logos* should be speech rather than word: "I wonder what induced the Latins to render *ὁ λόγος* by *Verbum*, (the Word;)... But granting that they had some plausible reason, still it cannot be denied that *Sermo* (the Speech) would have been far more appropriate. Hence it is evident, what barbarous tyranny was exercised by the theologians of the Sorbonne, who teased and stormed at Erasmus in such a manner, because he had changed a single word for the better." (n.d.b, I, p. 16)

Spanish language. By learning the language he will realise that there is indeed a meaning and a grammar behind these sounds. Likewise to the atheist, God sounds like gibberish only because of his inability to speak God's language. He must learn God's language to understand him and believe in him. And, as with Spanish, one cannot learn God's language overnight; one might learn a small vocabulary to get by, as tourists do, and attain a "milk Christianity", but full command of the language – a "meat Christianity" – requires time and application and, of course, the desire and will to learn it.<sup>14</sup>

Studying languages other than my mother tongue – which is Spanish – has allowed me not only to communicate with the people who speak it, but also has unveiled to me their lives and character, the way they think and the way they perceive the world, for all these impregnate their speech. I have had the same experience with God's language; it reveals to us his character and thoughts and the purpose of everything he has created, including ourselves. By revealing to us his mind, he has opened up the way to the natural sciences to understand how the world functions. He has also opened up the humanities to show us our full potential and the work we must carry out to realise it. It is not only I, an ordinary man, who experiences this; great navigators, scientists and artists have also claimed that the source of their work has been handed to them by God<sup>15</sup>. There are many instances of this but, Jean Sibelius, considered by many as one of the most brilliant symphonists who ever lived, has left us a delightful account in his diary and letters to friends of his dialogue with God during the several stages of composing his best work, the 5th Symphony. He starts with the initial idea, described in a letter to his friend Axel Carpelan in the summer of 1914:

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<sup>14</sup> (Hebrews 5:12)

<sup>15</sup> For example, Colombus (Colón, 1984), Linnaeus (Müller-Wille and Reeds, 2007; Goerke, 1973; Frängsmyr, 1983), Bruckner (Levas, 1973).

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"... I can already make out the mountain that I shall ascend (...) God is opening his doors for a moment, and his orchestra is playing the fifth symphony."<sup>16</sup>

Later, in April 1915, he wrote in his diary:

Spent the evening with the [Fifth] symphony. The disposition of the themes: with all its mystery and fascination, this is the important thing. It is as if God the Father had thrown down mosaic pieces from heaven's floor and asked me to put them back as they were.

These are remarkable statements; composing for Sibelius is not only working with ideas that have been given to him by God, but also assembling them in a manner predetermined by God and not by himself. The creative activity, according to him, is God's contribution. The creative artist is not as creative as we think him to be. Bruckner said a similar thing: "I could indeed compose in another manner, but what would the dear God say about it"<sup>17</sup>. This dependence of man upon God for creative work is at the core of the Bible; it is implied in the Hebrew verb *bara'*, the second word in the Bible, which means *to create*. This verb "has only God as its subject. Only God can 'create' in the sense implied by *bara'*..."<sup>18</sup> The word is used close to fifty times in the Old Testament and, except when it is used as a derivative with a different meaning<sup>19</sup>, in every instance it refers to the creative work of God. Man is only the intermediary worker of God's creativity and with this both Sibelius and Bruckner agree. In January the following year Sibelius is contending with God's demands:

I must confess I am working again on Symphony 5.  
Struggling with God. I want to give my new symphony a

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<sup>16</sup> All citations in this section, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Finnish Club of Helsinki (n.d.).

<sup>17</sup> (Levas, 1973, p. 82)

<sup>18</sup> (VOT, create)

<sup>19</sup> Other usages of this verb are "to cut down (a wood), select, feed (as formative processes)" (MIC, H1254).

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different, more human form. More earthy, more vibrant.<sup>20</sup>

How does God communicate to Sibelius that the symphony needs to be more human, more earthy, more vibrant? Just as Rembrandt's pupils learned to paint by imitating the master, so God's creative language is communicated to Sibelius through God's own creation:

The autumn sun is shining. Nature in its farewell colours. My heart is singing sadly – the shadows grow longer. The Adagio of my fifth symphony? That I, poor fellow that I am, can have moments of such richness!!

I have a lovely theme. An adagio for the symphony – earth, worms and misery, fortissimo and sordinos [mutes], lots of sordinos. And the melodies are divine!!

Sibelius writes this when he is working on the second movement of his symphony. It is Autumn, the bitter-sweet season of the Nordic year. There is the wonderful variety of colours to enjoy, yet the shadows become longer as each day becomes shorter; winter approaches with its icy darkness. This blend of moods, so closely resembling human life with tears and joy, is a pattern that Sibelius lifts from nature and then superimposes on the second movement of his symphony which, according to the sonata form of composition, is meant to be slow and reflective.

In April 1915 Spring had arrived and during one of his country walks, Sibelius watched sixteen swans flying and circling around him. This is a common Spring scene in the Nordic countries; swans fly north to spend summer in the lands where the sun never sets. Despite the scene's commonality, Sibelius was deeply moved on this occasion and recorded it in his diary:

Today at ten to eleven I saw 16 swans. One of my greatest experiences! God, how beautiful! They circled above me for a long time. They disappeared into the

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<sup>20</sup> (Chia, 1997)

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haze of the sun like a shining silver ribbon. The sounds are like a kind of woodwind, the same as the sound of the cranes, but without the tremolo. The sound of the swans is closer to the trumpet, even if it clearly recalls the timbre of the sarrusophone [an instrument similar to the saxophone]. A low refrain, which is like the crying of a small child. Nature's mysticism and the pain of life! The finale of the fifth symphony [extract] Ligature in the trumpets!! This had to happen to me, who has been an outsider for so long. So I've been in a holy place today...

There are many beautiful birds, but perhaps no other bird reflects God's glory as majestically as the swan, especially the swan that flies north of the Arctic circle and which is much larger than the common swan. Their white bodies hint of God's purity and their powerful wings and the long span that propels them into the sky reminds us of God's might. Their movement in the water is gentle and elegant, with their necks erect, yet they are courageous and fierce when defending their young. All this is captured in the "swan hymn" that dominates the last movement of the symphony:

This momentary encounter with nature's glorious beauty evidently inspired the awe-inspiring yet gently heroic swinging horn theme of the Fifth Symphony's finale. The orchestral strings summon a great ascending wind of energy before the mighty breaths that nature breathes into the horns begin their song. Axel Carpelan called it, after the composer's own image, "the incomparable swan hymn" (Dec 15, 1916).

The swinging horns are soon joined by a long-breathed melody on the woodwinds, which intone a beautifully simple hymn-like theme above the undulating current of basses. As the swans soar into ever higher spheres of living spirit, Sibelius modulates the potent music into a glorious C major, creating what many have acknowledged as one of the most magnificent and affirmative climaxes in music.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> (Chia, 1997)

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Work that is thus inspired and put together touches us deeply. It is amazing how, through sounds made by bits of wood, metal and strings made of animal gut, we not only meet God but are somehow changed by them. Osmo Vänskä, Music Director of the Minnesota Orchestra describes it thus:

I began to understand the fifth symphony better after conducting its original version. I feel like crying at the end of that work, there is something purifying about it. It is not so much that I'm touched by the cosmic depths in that piece, but that I feel comforted and guided as a small human being.

More than a decade ago I came across a website dedicated to Anton Bruckner; it was set up by a young man from Shanghai. He wrote:

For me, Bruckner is not only a musician, but also a nice friend and an amiable teacher. Believe it or not, through his music, I learned how to respect my family and friends; I learned how to pursue my goals with faith and efforts; and I also learned how to recognize the existence of God. I can find all the answers in his music.<sup>22</sup>

Without doubt, there are many people who claim to have heard God speak and yet what they say is nonsense or is used to exploit and oppress others. We should always exercise a critical mind, judge things by their fruit<sup>23</sup> and, if necessary, reject and oppose them. But when people, claiming inspiration from God, produce such wonderful masterpieces that engender faith and respect for others and drives them to tears as they feel purified, comforted and guided, then we must listen. For these masterpieces of music, painting, science, literature, technology and of every other art, are the instruments of God to realise our full humanity<sup>24</sup>. For in creating an anthropomorphic world and by revealing himself anthropomorphically to us, God has endowed

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<sup>22</sup> (Zhang, 2001)

<sup>23</sup> (Matthew 7:16-20)

<sup>24</sup> (Kuyper, 2000)

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mankind with the utmost dignity and crowned us with honour and excellency<sup>25</sup>.

Finally, the ultimate expression of human dignity, honour and excellency have been given to us in the man Christ Jesus<sup>26</sup>, the mediator between God and men. Moreover, in Christ, not only are we expected to act as flesh and blood rather than angels or ghosts, but we are expected to meet God in our full flesh and blood without religious and esoteric ritual. The historical thrust of the Bible is to eliminate religion and its ceremonies, for they are the instrument of reaching out to a deity we cannot know. The man Jesus Christ has replaced this with friendship between God and man, like the friendship between God and Abraham<sup>27</sup>. Religion narrows the scope of interaction between God and us; Christ opens it up to include everything in our lives: our work, diversions, music, literature and our sports. Inasmuch as God created all these things, it is natural that they should interest him too, for “gifts and talents come from the Father; are disposed for each personality by the Son; and kindled in each by the Holy Spirit as by a spark from above”.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, this friendship is not individualistic but familial; it should reflect the social quality inherent in our humanity; each one of us is an integral part of a people, organised in a civic structure in which the family is not only the building block, but also its overall model. And in this social structure, God is one of us; for he refers to us as his people in the same manner we regard members of our family or our town as “one of us”<sup>29</sup>. He is present among his people at every event of their lives: at meals and work; dances and concerts; sport contests and every other oc-

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<sup>25</sup> (Psalm 8:5)

<sup>26</sup> (Colossians 2:9)

<sup>27</sup> (John 15:14; James 2:23)

<sup>28</sup> (Kuyper, 2000, p. 51)

<sup>29</sup> For example, Exodus 3:7; the expression *my people* (*am* in Hebrew, H5971) used here occurs more than 1600 times in the Old Testament; ‘...the unique emphasis of ‘am lies in its reference to a group of “people as viewed by one of themselves,”...’ TWOT. That is, God is one of us. A similar meaning is conveyed by the word Emmanuel, “God with us” (*Immanuw’el*, G1694), in Isaiah 7:14.

casation of shared communal life. For it is not good for man to be alone<sup>30</sup>.

### Historical Reality

When the Greek philosophers observed the world, their eyes endeavoured to reach out to a perfect model or form placed beyond the things they could observe and which they regarded as unchangeable and eternal. Plato called it *eidos*.<sup>31</sup> For him, permanency and the unalterable nature of the perfect model ruled the world and was the source of ultimate reality. He thought what stood before our eyes was a mere shadow of this reality<sup>32</sup>.

In contrast to this, the biblical prophets reached out to history in order to comprehend the world. For them, history does not emerge out of the physical world. On the contrary, the physical world rises out of history; history drives nature and not the reverse. Even the creation of the world is an historical event. We have said that the verb *created* is the second word found in the Bible; the first one is *re'shiyth* (H7225), meaning *in the beginning*, which places God's creative activity at a specific point in history: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..."<sup>33</sup>. Everywhere in Scripture, events are explained with reference to history<sup>34</sup>. The Gospels take great pains to present to us all the significant events in Christ's life, from his birth to his resurrection, as emerging from an historical path already perceived and documented by the Old Testament prophets<sup>35</sup>. Moreover, this historical view of reality and its dy-

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<sup>30</sup> (Genesis 2:18)

<sup>31</sup> (e.g. Plato, 2008b, Section 1)

<sup>32</sup> (Plato, 2008a, Book VII)

<sup>33</sup> (Genesis 1:1)

<sup>34</sup> (Deuteronomy 6:20-24)

<sup>35</sup> That is: his birth (Matthew 1:22), his flight from Herod to Egypt (2:15), slaying of the children by Herod (2:17), his residence in Nazareth (2:23), his baptism (3:15), temporary residence in Capernaum (4:14), the content of his teaching (5:17-18), his healing and driving out of demons (8:17), healing and proclamation of justice (12:17-18), his teaching methods through parables (13:35), entry into Jerusalem riding on a donkey (21:4-

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dynamic nature enabled biblical writers to grasp, without difficulty, the idea of pure creativity, that is, *creatio ex nihilo*<sup>36</sup>. It is this very concept of creativity that has provided European culture with its unique character when compared with other civilisations and which drives it to inject creation into almost everything, in music, paintings, sculpture, literature, architecture, technology and in scholarship.

### Historical Reason

Biblical thought focuses on what *happens* rather than on what *is*. It does this on the basis of a reality that conforms to God's own speech<sup>37</sup> rather than to something static as the perfect model of Greek philosophy; God "...spoke, and it came into existence, he issued the decree, and it stood firm."<sup>38</sup> Things exist only while they happen and happen only while God commands them so. Thus, when the biblical writer observes a tree, he regards it as an event rather than something that exists in itself; he understands it as he understands a dance, as a thing with a beginning and an end, that exists only while it is happening. Greek thought reverses this; events can only take place among things that already exist and have neither a beginning nor an end. This opposite perception between Greeks and Hebrews can be seen in their languages as well. Often, the Greek language provides a noun for something that is described

5), his arrest (26:54), the use of Judas' betrayal money (27:9-10), the sparing of the disciples at the time of his arrest (John 18:9), his type of death (18:32), their division of his garment (19:24), the piercing of his side and the integrity of his bones after his death (19:36-37), his resurrection (Luke 24:26-27).

<sup>36</sup> There was no equivalent to the Hebrew verb *bara'* in the Greek language. This presented a difficulty in the Septuagint and in the New Testament. In the absence of a suitable word, the Septuagint uses *poieo* and *ktizo*, but these inaccurately convey the idea of production rather than pure creativity. The writer of the book of Hebrews may have tried to avoid this by choosing the verb *katertízai* (11:3) to stand for *create* and by extending its meaning with the statement "...the visible has its origin in the invisible".

<sup>37</sup> Hebrew *'omer* (H562).

<sup>38</sup> (Psalm 33:9; see also Genesis 1; John 1:1; Hebrews 11:3)

by a verb or adverb in Hebrew. A case in point is *truth*; the Greek word for truth is *aletheia* (G225); it means that something *is*, such as “Socrates is a man”. Hebrew refers to truth by the adverb *'emeth* (H571), the root of which is a verb meaning *to sustain* or *uphold*<sup>39</sup>. The linguistic difference between *'emeth*, and *aletheia* illustrates the divergence between the two modes of reasoning. Greek reason discerns whether a tree is a tree or something else; Hebrew reason searches within the tree for God's speech that sustains it<sup>40</sup>. This type of reasoning Ortega y Gasset calls “historic reason” or “historiology”, which he differentiates from physical reason – or *dialectics*<sup>41</sup> – and which originates in Aristotelian cause and effect thinking.

These are not just differences of mere academic interest, but have important practical implications in the way we think and live. Let us illustrate this by imagining that physical reason views the world as a lake while historic reason thinks of it as a river. Like the lake, which is confined by its shore, physical reason considers the world as a closed system confined by its boundaries. Moreover, the philosopher who reasons this way positions himself outside the world and from this outer position, explains the world in terms of static cause and effect laws. On the other hand, the Bible sees the world as a river where everything is in motion. Furthermore, like a man navigating the

<sup>39</sup> “The basic root idea is firmness or certainty. In the Qal it expresses the basic concept of support and is used in the sense of the strong arms of the parent supporting the helpless infant. The constancy involved in the verbal idea is further seen in that it occurs in the Qal only as a participle (expressing continuance).” TWOT.

<sup>40</sup> The difference between a Hebrew spoken and Greek inert truth must have presented a problem to the authors of the New Testament. While they used the Greek *aletheia* for truth (e.g. John 14:6), they also provided an alternative by combining the word *amen* (G281), a derivative of *'emeth*, with the verb *lego* (G3004), literally meaning “to put forth”. With this combination they are able to convey more effectively the Hebrew idea of truth; in older translations it is usually rendered as “verily, verily, I say...” (e.g. John 3:5).

<sup>41</sup> The terms *dialects* and *physical reason* are commonly used to identify two ways of thinking that, although related, belong to different times in history, that is, antiquity and modernity. However, given the focus of this book, we will regard them as interchangeable and stress their connection.

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river, historic thinking is done, not outside but within the world, experiencing, like a navigator in the river, the constant flow and change of events. This flow is not haphazard; as the waters follow the river bed from their source to the ocean, history also follows an unchangeable path<sup>42</sup> that connects all events, past, present and future, into an organic whole. The source of this path is the creation of the world and has its ultimate destination in a new community, the New Jerusalem<sup>43</sup>. Thus, in physical reason, the cause behind all things is in the past<sup>44</sup> while in the Bible, it is in the future. Everything exists because it happens and everything that happens leads to the New Jerusalem. Biblical historiology makes a selection of specific past historical events in order to delineate this path and to illuminate our life's journey through it, carrying us beyond mere biological and psychological life<sup>45</sup>.

This is most important; an historical purpose to life is not an option, it is essential. In the words of Unamuno, “[the] essence of a people and an individual is their history...” and therefore, to be truly human one must “live in history and live history”<sup>46</sup>. Moreover, this endeavour provides the objective of true science which differs radically from the one attributed to it by physical reason. In theory, the physical philosopher and scientist, observing the world from a comfortable detached point of view, reaches out to hypotheses and explanations without much regard to the circumstances that afflict humanity. This is in theory, for in practice his reaching out is strongly motivated by prestige and money, which often means his science is for the rich. The historical thinker is in a different boat altogether; he must use

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<sup>42</sup> Ortega y Gasset calls it “invariable historic nucleus” (1924, p. 31).

<sup>43</sup> (Revelation 3:12, 21:2)

<sup>44</sup> Aristotle (2007) identifies the Prime Mover with God, who beyond being the first cause in the chain of cause and effects, has no further dealing with the world.

<sup>45</sup> An illustration of historical reason is found in Genesis 45, where Joseph explains to his brothers that all events of his life have been driven not by causal circumstances but by an ultimate historical event: the rescue of his father Jacob and his people from the severe consequences of a seven-year drought.

<sup>46</sup> (Unamuno, 1927, p. 4)

all his wits to negotiate the turbulence, rapids and dangerous rocks through which the river of history takes him. The priorities of his science are therefore decided, not by money or prestige, but by the needs and despair of humanity. His work must be for a philosophy and science for the poor. But, in addition to negotiating the historical vicissitudes, he must also ensure that his science takes us to the right destination, that is, the city of God. Science for the poor must also be a civilising science, which makes the biblical philosopher and scientist also a prophet. Science must guide us to live our lives as a pilgrimage to the new society and concurrently teach us how to be truly human. This link between history and life leads Ortega y Gasset to use the expression “vital reason” as a synonym for historic reason because it is a form of reasoning that not only explains history, but also tells us how to live in a civilised manner. This is precisely where pure physical reason<sup>47</sup> has failed us. For, “[t]he prodigious ability of natural science to understand material things contrasts brutally with its failure to address what is properly human.”<sup>48</sup>

Biblical historiology is woven together from a succession of events involving a people chosen, not because they are extraordinary but, because they fully reflect the frailty of ordinary human beings. Like most of us, their weaknesses are often greater than their strengths and their failures more abundant than their successes. They are not the intellectual, military or administrative elite of a nation, but start as slaves in Egypt, later become captives in Babylon and end up as vassals of Rome. While travelling along this painful path, they are subjected to every injustice and oppression in common with the greater proportion of humanity throughout history. Yet, the historical path that pulls these people along this road is not hindered by their weaknesses, for God is on their side<sup>49</sup> and drives them on to their future liberation and the restoration of

<sup>47</sup> I will refer from now on to physical reason that excludes historical reason as *pure physical reason*, to distinguish it from physical reason which, within an appropriate scope, is a useful way of thinking.

<sup>48</sup> (Ortega y Gasset, 2004a, V)

<sup>49</sup> (Deuteronomy 4:7; Psalm 10:14)

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their full humanity. Though the biblical recollection of past events is important, its chief purpose is to cast light on the future by blending past and future in an ongoing organic connection. That is why the prophets at times speak about future events in both the present or past tense; they regard the future as real as if it stood before their very eyes.<sup>50</sup> If it was not truly real, there would be no hope for humanity and life, beyond an animal type of satisfaction. Life would have no meaning.

Let us not think, as many modernists claim<sup>51</sup>, that historical reason is inferior to physical reason. “On the contrary, historic reason is even more rational than physical reason, more rigorous, more demanding.”<sup>52</sup> Physical reason proceeds from an initial cause and follows the track left by the chain of resultant cause and effects. It has the advantage – as Descartes claimed – to commence “...with objects the simplest and easiest to know... [and]...ascend by little and little, and, as it were, step by step, to the knowledge of the more complex;”<sup>53</sup>. Should things become too complex, we can always split them into parts easy enough for our minds to comprehend.

Historic reason offers none of this ease and makes high intellectual demands on us right from the start. It does not commence with the most simple of objects but, on the contrary, starts from the complex vision of a perfect society, a “city of God”<sup>54</sup>. This in turn requires us to grasp its totality and demands a simultaneous understanding of the sciences and their mutual interaction. And historic reason is prophetic, it is always ahead of its time and certainly ahead of physical reason. People who are guided by pure physical reason cannot see beyond the short term effects of the actions they undertake to cause them. When these effects show no promise, they abandon hope and stop acting. People who are guided by historical reason act, not

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<sup>50</sup> (e.g. Psalm 22:1-22; Isaiah 53:5-10). Note that at the end of these passages the tense changes from past or present to future.

<sup>51</sup> (Comte, 1896; d'Holbach, 2005)

<sup>52</sup> (Ortega y Gasset, 2004a, IX)

<sup>53</sup> (Descartes, 2007, II)

<sup>54</sup> Psalm 46:4; note that this city is also God's *mishkan* (H4908), literally meaning his residence and commonly translated as *tabernacle*.

in order to reach effects, but as they ought to as dictated by the vision of the city of God. Because this vision is an historical reality, they do not lose hope and continue to act accordingly, despite short term disappointments.

We will later return to discuss in detail the scientific methodology to tackle this demanding kind of reasoning and how to teach it to the young. But before we proceed, we must clarify one more feature of historical reason: it is a reason based on facts and not on myth. By adopting a more tolerant attitude towards myth and giving it a legitimate role in thought, post-modernism has eased the pressure that pure physical reason has put on the Bible. But the biblical authors, when challenged about the veracity of their account, energetically rejected any doubt and insisted that their writings were based on historical facts and not myth<sup>55</sup>. Just as they were convinced that the future events they wrote about would happen, they were meticulous about the empirical accuracy of the past events they recorded. And they were well justified in claiming accuracy, for a vast amount of scholarship attests to it<sup>56</sup>. This is not the place to enter into a detailed debate on this, but we may cite as an example a statement by a respected historian, Sir William Ramsay, about the writings of Luke:

Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy; he is possessed of the historic sense [i.e., a historiology]; he fixes his mind on the idea and plan that rules in the evolution of history; and proportions the scale of his treatment to the importance of each incident. He seizes the important and critical events and shows their true nature at greater length, while he touches lightly or omits entirely much that was

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<sup>55</sup> There is a difference between the audiences of the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament was mainly written for Israel and within its community, the historicity of the prophets' account was part of their culture. The New Testament addressed not only Israelites, but also the Hellenic world. Therefore, the apostles had to argue its historicity amongst a people unfamiliar with Israel's history (e.g. John 19:35, 1 Corinthians 15:14-16 and 1 John 1:1).

<sup>56</sup> (Kaiser, 2001; Bruce, 2003)

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valueless for his purpose. In short, this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians.<sup>57</sup>

Of particular importance is the historicity of Christ's resurrection, for it occupies a central place in the Bible; everything else rotates around it. Paul goes as far as to state that, without it, the Gospel is worthless and its promoters are deceivers. Therefore all minute matters of the resurrection are carefully documented as they were observed by eyewitness – more than five hundred on one occasion. Pure physical reason states that once a body dies, it cannot rise to life again. Historical research cannot physically prove this event, but it has effectively demonstrated that, if one rejects Christ's resurrection, then scholarly consistency obliges us to reject a great part of what is today indisputably regarded as the history of antiquity<sup>58</sup>.

Ironically, the word *history* is Greek rather than Hebrew and it literally means investigation by observation<sup>59</sup> or empirical study. Greek philosophers regarded it as inferior to theoretical abstraction based on logic, and dedicated most of their efforts to the latter. By contrast, history was the foundation of Hebrew thought and was applied not only to history but to all the sciences. While the Hebrews did not document their knowledge of the empirical sciences, nevertheless, there is evidence that they valued them and practised them to their advantage with good results. Solomon, around the 10<sup>th</sup> Century BC, mastered administration, jurisprudence, zoology, botany, ichthyology, music and poetry and was outstanding and matchless in all of them. Agronomy was well developed in Israel<sup>60</sup>. It was the Hebrew

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<sup>57</sup> (Ramsay, 1920, p. 222)

<sup>58</sup> There is an abundance of studies supporting the resurrection's historicity; see for example Anderson (2005); Ankerberg and Weldon (2012) and Morison (2011). Morison's book has become a classic on this subject.

<sup>59</sup> From the Greek *historia*, meaning either "a learning by inquiry" or an account of such learning (MLSJ).

<sup>60</sup> (1 Kings 4:29-34; Isaiah 28:24-25). Therefore, the claim that Aristotle, living in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC, was the first to study natural life (Lennox, 2011), is incorrect. Aristotle may have been the first to document his findings, but one must consider that in ancient times there were a very limited amount of books available and consequently reading and writing had a

empirical and practical method of science, rather than the theoretical thought of the Greeks, which was rediscovered in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century by the Biblical humanists and gave impulse to the great scientific advancements of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. All society benefited from these, not just the rich.

### **History Driven by Justice**

Biblical history is driven by the thirst and hunger for justice<sup>61</sup>, the New Jerusalem is to be a “city of justice”<sup>62</sup>. This explains its meticulous attention to all juridical matters; God insists that the spirit of the law be observed at all times. It must be so, for any “turning a blind eye” is an injustice, injustice breeds hatred and people who harbour hatred can never have peace. Peace and justice are inseparable; they are a necessity. Therefore, from Genesis to Revelation, the rule “eye for eye, tooth for tooth”<sup>63</sup> is strictly observed to ensure that the juridical books balance at all times. But biblical history is also about the liberation of oppressed people who, paradoxically, oppress each other. Juridically, this predicament of humanity presents a problem; the victims are also the perpetrators. According to Hebrew law, this can only be resolved by an innocent party atoning for the guilty and the Old Testament symbolically represents this atonement by the slaughtering of unblemished animals as a temporary measure pointing forward to the final juridical resolution

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limited value. Oral transmission was a far more effective means of dissemination of knowledge and of passing it onto the next generation. This was especially important for the sciences associated with nature because they had practical significance for everyone, regardless of whether they could read or write.

<sup>61</sup> (Matthew 5:6); English versions of the Bible translate the Hebrew and Greek words for *justice* (*tsdaqah*, H6666 and *dikaioisune*, G1343) as *righteousness*. This is often interpreted as referring only to personal morality, but the Bible implies a far wider scope and associates justice with the full scope of God's law which covers every aspect of human life, from agriculture and health to civic order.

<sup>62</sup> (Isaiah 1:26)

<sup>63</sup> (Exodus 21:24)

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in the death and resurrection of Christ<sup>64</sup>. Now the events leading to the forgiveness of human sins are arranged in a rather ingenious manner that leaves anyone rejecting such an acquittal looking rather silly or plainly ignorant. For if the death and resurrection of Christ stand as historical facts, then there should be no reasonable objection for accepting, by faith alone, their power to acquit people from their sins. Anyone who does not accept the latter must confront the former. People seldom do, I presume because delving into history requires brains; it is much easier to ignore the whole thing<sup>65</sup>.

The New Testament teaching of justification by faith has produced great divisions in the church. People have found it difficult to conciliate passages written by James and Paul<sup>66</sup>, which appear – to pure physical reasoning – to state exactly the opposite. Yet these two men, who knew each other and were familiar with their mutual ideas, found no conflict between them. This is significant since Paul responded vigorously against anyone denying justification by faith. But neither Paul nor James reasoned in a physical manner; their understanding of faith – as we will discuss next – was historical and, due to this, saw no conflict between their writings. They perceived that the dynamics taking hold of the life of the Gentiles was also bringing about a particular transition for many Jews, from strict but sincere observance of the law<sup>67</sup> into a new freedom granted by Christ. Under this freedom, work was no longer an instrument to erase one's guilt, but evidence of the sincerity of one's faith. Apparent contradictions were a peculiarity of history and rather like our river illustration. Due to the shape of the riverbed, a river at times looks like its waters flow upstream for a short distance in the opposite direction; but eventually all travels out to sea.

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<sup>64</sup> (Hebrew 9:11-12)

<sup>65</sup> Jesus used this line of arguing when some scribes objected to his forgiving a paralytic man's sins (Mark 2:9-12); pronouncing forgiveness was easy, but ordering the man to pick up his bed and walk was a different matter. It left the scribes dumbfounded.

<sup>66</sup> (e.g. James 2:24 and Romans 4:5)

<sup>67</sup> (Acts 21:17-26)

## Historic Faith

Many people today associate the meaning of the word *faith* with the Greek noun *pistis*, which is used by the New Testament for want of a more suitable equivalent of the Hebrew *'emuwnah* in the Old Testament. The latter denotes not a passive, but an active faith that drives a person to live by believing<sup>68</sup>; I think *vision* would be a better word to convey the Hebrew meaning, for vision impels action. Perhaps it is this difference between the Greek and Hebrew conception of faith that led the author of the book of Hebrews to dedicate a full chapter to the subject. He starts with a definition of faith and then lists several illustrations from people who in the past have exercised it. The definition is as follows: "...faith is being sure of what we hope for, being convinced of what we do not see."<sup>69</sup> From this definition and the illustrations that follow it, we can gain a clear picture of biblical faith. Firstly, faith looks towards the future rather than the past. The substance<sup>70</sup> of faith is hope for the future<sup>71</sup>. Except for faith that God created the world out of nothing, all other illustrations in this chapter refer to faith about things that will happen in the future. Past events are taken as historical facts rather than the substance of faith.

Secondly, people mentioned in this chapter had a vision shaped by the New Jerusalem, the "city of justice" we mentioned earlier, a city of which God is the architect and builder and where these people were the labourers, the "...one who repairs broken walls, the one who makes the streets inhabitable again"<sup>72</sup>. It is within this context that we are to understand Christ's announcing the Gospel of the kingdom and its civilising

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<sup>68</sup> *Emuwnah* is derived from the verb *aman*, meaning "to confirm, support, uphold (Qal); to be established, be faithful (Niphal); to be certain, i.e. to believe in (Hiphil)" (TWOT). See for example Habakkuk 2:4, where, according to K&D faith implies "fidelity in word and deed", that is, an active rather than passive faith.

<sup>69</sup> (Hebrews 11:1)

<sup>70</sup> *Hupostasis* (G5287)

<sup>71</sup> *Elpizo* (G1679)

<sup>72</sup> (Isaiah 58:12)

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mission<sup>73</sup>. This not only meant granting people citizenship<sup>74</sup>, but also transforming them to form part of its nobility, no matter how humble their origin; for in the city of God everyone is a part of royalty<sup>75</sup>. As I have stated above, the vision of this city lying in the future is meant to be projected back into the present in order to guide our work. This is the synergy that James<sup>76</sup> identifies between faith and work, that is, between the vision of God's city and the work that this vision sets out before us today. Any type of work that does not fit this vision is not Christ's work, no matter how honestly conducted; one cannot dedicate oneself to feathering one's own nest. For Christ's work does not focus on our own nest, but on shifting the vast proportion of humanity out of its miserable predicament, both materially and culturally. While this is indeed a monumental task, he does not permit us to exchange it for a more comfortable one.

Thirdly, faith is exercised by very ordinary people and in some cases, even less than ordinary. Rahab was a prostitute, Jephthah<sup>77</sup> was the son of one and Samson was a philanderer. However, they all acted in a manner that changed the course of history. Their actions were not necessarily extraordinary – Rahab only hid spies in her home – but they demanded a life of dedication or even risking their lives. Many “...were stoned, sawed apart, murdered with the sword...”<sup>78</sup>. They lived humble, even disreputable, but yet historical lives. For the city of God is like marriage<sup>79</sup>, “for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health”. The only difference is that, in this case, the tough circumstances precede, rather than follow the wed-

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<sup>73</sup> (Matthew 4:23); English Bibles generally translate *kerugma* (G2782), *kerux* (G2783) and *kerusso* (G2784) as *preaching*, *preacher* and *preaching* respectively. But in today's usage, unless used in a missionary context, they lack the sense of novelty implied in the original Greek words.

<sup>74</sup> (Philippians 3:20)

<sup>75</sup> (Psalm 113:7-8:1 Peter 2:9)

<sup>76</sup> (James 2:22); *sunergeo* (G4903).

<sup>77</sup> (Hebrews 11:31-32; Joshua 2:1; Judges 11:1)

<sup>78</sup> (Hebrews 11:37)

<sup>79</sup> (Revelation 21:2)

ding celebration. And like marriage, what makes it happy is not necessarily the enjoyment of the richer and the better, but the ability to persevere in the face of the worse; this is a mark of true love.

### God's Providential Presence

What drives people to endure the worse? The author of Hebrews states that it is hope. Once more, the Greek word for hope does not convey the true biblical idea. For the reliability of this type of hope is subjective, that is, it is only grounded in the person who holds it. Moreover, it does not imply that the hope is held in an adverse situation; one can hope in comfort. The equivalent Hebrew expressions – “a place of refuge”, “a place to flee for protection” and “shelter”<sup>80</sup> – differ in both these counts. They assume conditions of adversity that leads one to seek refuge and the dependableness lies on the refuge and not on the person who seeks it, for the refuge is God himself who is ever present in this world<sup>81</sup>. Yet, it is not an escape from adversity, disappointments and frustrations, but a shelter against our giving up and turning back in the face of setbacks. God does not remove our enemies, he prepares a table for us to dine in front them. After our meal is finished<sup>82</sup>, he expects us to return to our fight.

Greek philosophy places God outside of the world. While the Bible never depicts him as being contained within the world, let alone in temples<sup>83</sup>, it nevertheless states that he is fully present in the world. His feet are firmly set on earth and he sits in the sky, both of which serve him as footstool and throne respectively<sup>84</sup>. Neither the Hebrew nor the Greek word for sky, rendered as heaven in English, refer to places geographically

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<sup>80</sup> (MIC); the original Hebrew words are respectively: *betach* (H983, Psalm 4:8), *chacah* (H2620, Psalm 5:11) and *machaceh* (H4268, Psalm 14:6).

<sup>81</sup> (Psalm 18:2, 28:7)

<sup>82</sup> (Psalm 23:5)

<sup>83</sup> (1 Kings 8:27)

<sup>84</sup> (Isaiah 66:1)

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beyond our world<sup>85</sup>; when used in relation to God, they mean to convey high status rather than geography and to emphasise that, despite his infinitely higher character and magnificence, he still dwells with us. He is not just omnipresent, he is really present in our daily reality through his Spirit. There are some important attributes that distinguish the biblical Spirit with the various notions of spirituality held today, even those held within the church. The Bible assigns to God's Spirit the same anthropomorphic qualities given to God the Father and to Jesus; he is a person. He is the creator of the world<sup>86</sup> and he displays wisdom, understanding, knowledge and creative skills in such crafts as silversmith work, masonry and carpentry<sup>87</sup>. Thus, to be spiritual, in a Biblical sense, is to shape our person in the anthropomorphic image of the Spirit, that is, to be real flesh and blood men and women planted firmly on this earth and living in harmony with all that the Spirit has created. Spirituality of the mystic kind that many religious people seek, is foreign to the Bible. On the contrary, and except in some extraordinary circumstances, God's revelation of himself and the giving of his Spirit is plainly directed to our flesh and blood<sup>88</sup> and not delivered through esoteric or mystical experiences. We are told in plain terms that all we need to live meaningfully is revealed to us and that what is not revealed is none of our business<sup>89</sup>. Neither does the Bible speak of two separate realms, natural and supernatural; on the contrary, the complete reliance of the

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<sup>85</sup> (MIC); *shamayim* (H8064, Isaiah 66:1) and Greek *ouranos* (G3772, Matthew 3:2).

<sup>86</sup> (Genesis 1:2, Job 33:4); “*Ruach Elohim* [Spirit of God] is not a breath of wind caused by God... for the verb does not suit this meaning, but the creative Spirit of God, the principle of all life [Psalm 33:6; Psalm 104:30]... which worked upon the formless, lifeless mass, separating, quickening, and preparing the living forms, which were called into being by the creative words that followed...” (K&D, emphasis in the original).

<sup>87</sup> (Exodus 31:3-5)

<sup>88</sup> (Job 19:26; Isaiah 40:5, 49:26; Joel 2:28; 1 John 4:2). In each of these passages the flesh is literally referred to by the Hebrew *basar* (H1320) and Greek *sarx* (G4561), respectively, words with a meaning that excludes a mystical experience (MIC).

<sup>89</sup> (Deuteronomy 29:29)

world on the Spirit's sustenance would suggest that everything is in this sense supernatural, but nevertheless, neither the concept nor the word supernatural ever appears in Scripture.

The same applies to miracles. Unfortunately, the meaning of the word miracle has changed and taken a connotation different to that given by the Bible. The Oxford dictionary defines miracle as:

an extraordinary and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore attributed to a divine agency...

This interpretation of the word is the product of physical reason. That is, if one cannot explain something, then one attributes it to God's intervention, but if it can be explained, then God is assumed to have nothing to do with it. The Bible attributes all events – ordinary or extraordinary alike – to God's intervention through his Spirit<sup>90</sup>. At times, extraordinary events happen simply to demonstrate God's authority over all things<sup>91</sup>. At other times, extraordinary events mark momentous historical shifts of which we are expected to take careful note<sup>92</sup>. However, the division between ordinary and extraordinary events is purely a convention reflecting the limited capacity of the human mind to understand. All events are equally willed by God<sup>93</sup>.

The Spirit is not only God's presence in the world but also his hands at work<sup>94</sup>; he is the constant labourer in this world, both in nature and in history; we are only meant to be his co-la-

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<sup>90</sup> Hebrew words such *mowpheth* (H4159, Deuteronomy 13:1), *'owth* (H226, Deuteronomy 6:22) and the Greek *teras* (G5059, Acts 2:22) and *dunamis* (G1411, Matthew 22:29) – normally translated as *miracle* in English – do not imply a supernatural realm distinct from an autonomous natural one, but are a demonstration to man of God's power over everything. Even the Latin *mirari* which provides the root for *miracle*, means no more than to look with admiration.

<sup>91</sup> (Matthew 8:27)

<sup>92</sup> (Deuteronomy 11:2-6)

<sup>93</sup> (Job 42:2); this verse should be read in the context of the two previous chapters.

<sup>94</sup> (Exodus 8:19, 31:18; Deuteronomy 9:10; Psalm 3:3-7; Matthew 12:28, Luke 11:20)

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bourers. Since he never stops working, nothing should detract us from continuing our labour regardless of the circumstances. We fight on because God's Spirit fights on for us<sup>95</sup>. Moreover, even if we cannot see the Spirit, it is through empirically observing his work that we learn how to perform ours, as Jesus' metaphor of the wind explains: "...wind blows wherever it will, and you hear the sound it makes, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going."<sup>96</sup> Sailors know this, they manoeuvre their ship guided by the work of the wind on the sails. And since the wind is dynamic and changes constantly, they must keep a constant eye on the sails, the boom and the pressure on the rudder. God expects us to observe the work of the Spirit in the same manner by keeping a sharp eye on what is happening in order to grasp historically the pattern of his work. The Bible calls this *prophecy*<sup>97</sup>.

I have called the above *guiding-principles* rather than merely *principles*, because the idea of principle by itself gives an impression of something motionless. These guiding-principles are for building a vision of our life that transcends its vicissitudes and even death; they are the most effective antidepressant to cheer us up through hard times. They set before us a beautiful picture of our humanity crowned with honour and glory<sup>98</sup> and inject us with a drive to pursue our goal with undeterred obstinacy; to write music, erect buildings, design and nurture gardens and do many other works. One day, at the final culmination of history, we shall see all of these works with our own eyes; and the promise is that they will be perfect<sup>99</sup>.

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<sup>95</sup> (Joshua 23:10; Psalm 35:1; Romans 8:31)

<sup>96</sup> (John 3:8). The Bible uses the Hebrew word *ruwash* (H7307) and the Greek *pneuma* (G4151) for Spirit. Both words mean breath, breeze or wind.

<sup>97</sup> The scientific significance of the idea of prophecy was observed by Ortega y Gasset when he stated that "history can only be a scientific work inasmuch as prophecy is possible" (n.d., p. 40). Science depends upon the Spirit revealing to us the dynamic patterns of his work.

<sup>98</sup> (Psalm 8:4-6)

<sup>99</sup> (Philippians 1:6)

## 4 The Biblical Humanists

Historical reason, with its future vision of the city of God which is to be realised in the present, needs science and a philosophical framework to hold its many branches together. But, prior to undertaking a description of such a philosophy, as I understand it at this point in my life, I must acknowledge the contribution that others have done in the past to biblical humanism. My share has been but mere garden maintenance when compared to the work of those who planted it and first nurtured its seedlings. Space will allow us to deal only with the earlier work of biblical humanism – mostly carried out in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century – and only with the writings of Erasmus, Vives, Melanchthon and Calvin for, important as they are, they belong to a much wider pool of like-minded thinkers. However, there is a systemic cohesiveness of ideas among this intellectual quartet of thinkers so much so that we can consider them enjoying an intellectual progression spanning three generations, with Erasmus as the grandfather, Vives and Melanchthon the sons and Calvin<sup>1</sup> the grandson. Despite their intellectual disagreements – they are common to all scholars – they expressed great regard for each other's scholarship and sincere affection when they knew each other personally<sup>2</sup>. The master is of course, Erasmus; the others

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<sup>1</sup> A distinction must be drawn between Calvin and Calvinism (Muller, 2009). The latter is a theological school that developed after Calvin's death; it represented a return to mediaeval thought displacing the humanities and placing once more dialectics as its main form of reasoning. Calvin's work is firmly placed among the biblical humanists and he is, in many important aspects, far closer to Erasmus than to latter Calvinism (Bouwsmma, 1988) to the extent that he is considered to be “the heir of Erasmus” (Trevor-Roper, 2001, p.24).

<sup>2</sup> Erasmus addresses Vives as “most erudite” and “most learned” (Biblioteca Valenciana Digital, n.d., p. 195 & 197) while Vives refers to Erasmus as “beloved master” (p. 313) and “the best of my masters” (p. 425). Of Melanchthon, Erasmus remarked “...[t]o what hopes does this young man or rather this boy, give rise! What acumen of innovation, what purity of language, what mature erudition!” (Kommunale Datenverarbeitungsgesellschaft Wittenberg, 1997) and in his oration dedicated to Erasmus, Melanchthon (1999, p. 255) exhorts to “...preserve his memory with grateful minds, read his works and honour him gratefully.” Calvin was only 27 years old and had just published the first edition of his *Insti-*

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are his pupils. Sadly, theologians often regard Erasmus as superficial and prone to sitting on the fence; Luther bears a good measure of responsibility for this<sup>3</sup>. But, if one dismisses ecclesiastical politics and centres instead on Erasmus' thought, one will find that his ideas for reform were far more radical than Luther. His avoiding taking sides in disputations was due to his gentle personality and distaste for confrontation. This influenced his style of writing, which by his own admittance sought to "dissimulate" his thought<sup>4</sup>. Thus, on first reading, Erasmus' position appears to be moderate, but on second and third reading, one discovers behind his sometimes gentle and at other times, ironic style of writing, a profound intellect of great relevance, especially to the layman. For he was undoubtedly the layman's reformer and this may perhaps indicate his neglect by theologians. Yet, Erasmus played a major role shaping the Renaissance in northern Europe and we are well justified to examine his ideas and how these were further developed by his three main disciples.

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*tutes* when Erasmus died, thus it is unlikely that the latter became familiar with his scholarship. But Calvin (1998, p. 5) regarded him as "...the second glory and the darling of literature...", that is, second after Budaeus. Both Calvin and Melanchthon expressed profound appreciation and friendship for each other in their correspondence (Wengert, 1999). Vives (n.d.c) recommends Melanchthon's works for teaching Latin and includes him among the great humanists and Melanchthon approves "the acumen of Vives" (1999, p. 147) shown in his book on psychology (Vives, n.d.e). Finally, Calvin opens his *Institutes* with the same thought with which Vives (n.d.a) closes his *Introduction to Wisdom*, that is, the knowledge of God and self.

<sup>3</sup> A great rift between Luther and Erasmus emerged as a result of their differing views of the freedom of man's will. I regard this as one more example of physical reason trying to comprehend things that can only be understood by historical reason. Nevertheless, over time, too much attention has been given to this matter, which has led to bitter divisions among people who shared the same thoughts about far more important matters. These divisions have undermined their work where unity could have brought much greater benefits to the community.

<sup>4</sup> (Tracy, 1996, p.96)

## The Humanities and the Bible

Erasmus must not only be credited with the establishment of Scripture as the foundation of the philosophy of Christ, but also with setting up the methodological principles for its study. Calvin, who today is best known among the humanists for his biblical scholarship, heavily depended upon Erasmus' methodology. According to Haroutunian:

Erasmus' influence on Calvin as critic and exegete was far-reaching. The former's insistence upon the necessity of knowing the original languages of the Bible; his principle that the more obscure passages of the Bible should be interpreted with the help of those which are clear; his plea for understanding the Bible in its "natural, or historical and grammatical" sense ... all this, together with the example of free and competent examination of Scripture he sets in his emendations and annotations, are written large in Calvin's Commentaries.<sup>5</sup>

The tools to achieve this task were the humanities, but chief among them was history, for it sets the historical context of the Bible as well as of all other humanities in order to "nurture, expand and perfect them"<sup>6</sup>. This turned the humanists into historical thinkers. Although they did not use the term *historiology*, they understood the difference between the historical event itself and its historiological meaning. Calvin, for example, in dealing with the three synoptic Gospels and John, shows this discernment between the account (history) of the events concerning the life of Christ and their significance (historiology) when he writes that "...the three former [Gospels] exhibit his body, if we may be permitted to use the expression, but John exhibits his soul."<sup>7</sup> And, in contrast to medieval scholasticism, the humanists did not reach the soul through speculative dialectics, but by the careful empirical study of the events. They did this in two stages: firstly, they grasped the historical totality<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> (1958, p. 7f)

<sup>6</sup> (Vives, n.d.c, V, I)

<sup>7</sup> (Calvin, n.d.b, p. 12)

<sup>8</sup> (Vives, n.d.c, V, II)

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or “history of all times”<sup>9</sup> and then secondly, they examined a particular event in relation to the historical totality.

Historiology helped the humanists gain a richer picture of the content of Scripture than that which had been held by theology, especially medieval theology. Humanists were the first to observe that Jesus' mission was not only to redeem his people, but also to civilise them. Erasmus' “...heart and his greatest effectiveness lay in propagating the idea of a Christian civility”<sup>10</sup>. Paradoxically, the chief source of this civility was not Israel but Greece and especially Athens, “... the mansion-house of wisdom, the fountain of all arts, the mother of humanity...”<sup>11</sup>. In particular, the humanists were interested in science, for “...the light of the Gospel is extinguished without erudition.”<sup>12</sup> The arts constituted the chief instrument to civilise people, for “these arts, called humanities, restore our humanity”<sup>13</sup> and therefore deserve praise: “[h]ow richly deserving of honour are the liberal sciences, which polish man, so as to give him the dignity of true humanity!”<sup>14</sup>. However, this raised a difficulty, for how could humanists justify incorporating pagan Athens into Jerusalem, that is, Greek philosophy into the Bible, without compromising Biblical thought? Erasmus' answer to this was that Christ's sovereignty was not confined to nature, but also extended to all history; he was the author of the arts and their civilising power, and it was his will to deliver them first to Greece in prior preparation for his people:

It was Greece, devoted to study, which discovered the arts...[e]verything in the pagan world that was valiantly done, brilliantly said, ingeniously thought, diligently transmitted, had been prepared by Christ for his society. He it was who supplied the

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<sup>9</sup> (Melanchthon, 1999, p. 13)

<sup>10</sup> (Tracy, 1996, p. 44)

<sup>11</sup> (Calvin, n.d.a, 2, p. 114)

<sup>12</sup> (Melanchthon, 1999, p.15)

<sup>13</sup> (Vives, n.d.c, V, II, 11)

<sup>14</sup> (Calvin, n.d.a, p. 60)

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intellect, who added the zest for inquiry, and it was through him alone that they found what they sought.<sup>15</sup>

As an aside, this statement demonstrates that the belief in God's sovereignty over all things, which people commonly associate with Calvin, had an earlier champion in Erasmus<sup>16</sup>. The sovereignty that Christ exercised over history made the humanists aware of the importance of the arts as well as providing them with an historiological criterion to select from them what could enrich the teachings of Scripture without tainting it with paganism. Their discovery of the works of antiquity in this particular Biblical context imbued in them a wonderful vision for humanity to be attained not only through the reform and development of the church, but through the reform and development of the whole of society. Like most pioneering people, they did not live to see this, their dream had to wait a hundred years to be realised in the society of the Golden 17<sup>th</sup> Century in Holland.

However, let us not think that the brilliance of Greece's intellectual and cultural achievement blinded the humanists so as not to see its eventual demise. On the contrary, cultural decline – both in the past and in their own times – was a topic that occupied much of their attention as they perceived that the effects of sin was not limited to the loss of the individual but was capable of bringing down whole nations. Erasmus' concern in his first book is:

...the sad state of affairs in our Holland...we fell to discussing that prime topic of complaint in our times, long-standing indeed but absolutely justified: we tried to dis-

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<sup>15</sup> (Erasmus, 1978, p.60); see also Calvin's comments on Psalm 104:29 (1999b, 4, p.118): "Even Plato knew this, who so often teaches that, properly speaking, there is but one God, and that all things subsist, or have their being only in him. Nor do I doubt, that it was the will of God, by means of that heathen writer, to awaken all men to the knowledge, that they derive their life from another source than from themselves."

<sup>16</sup> Erasmus (1978, p. 59) writes: "It was he [Christ] who willed that the Golden Age in which he had chosen to be born was to be sovereign over all epochs which came before or followed after..."

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cover, and not without sharp wonder, what the disaster was that had swept away the rich, flourishing, joyful fruits of the finest culture, and why a tragic and terrible deluge had shamefully overwhelmed all the literature of the ancients which used to be so pure.<sup>17</sup>

Erasmus' conclusion in this work was that social decadence was caused by the demise of the humanities<sup>18</sup>. But Vives, also concerned with cultural decline, took it a step further and argued that the humanities themselves carried the seed of their own destruction due to the intellectual arrogance of the classical scholars<sup>19</sup>. Calvin, in the same passage cited above, warns us that the vastness of Athen's grandeur, was matched by the immensity of its perversion.

### **The Philosophy of Christ**

The humanities, especially the knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, opened the Bible not only to scholars but, through its translations into the vernacular, also to ordinary people; this in turn exposed an Achilles heel in the ecclesiastical, political and social establishments of their times. For the humanities were invaluable to understand intelligently the scriptures and to liberate them from the control of the Pope and the clergy. By delivering the Bible into the hands of the laity<sup>20</sup>, a social revolution took place driven not by force or violence, but by the education of all people. Erasmus' *Manual of the Christian Knight*, was written not for the clergy but for the laity, with the aim that students and teachers should not remain in separate social classes, but should become an integral people, one body. Everyone was meant to be simultaneously a student and a teacher and a per-

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<sup>17</sup> (1978, p. 23)

<sup>18</sup> A significant thought for our day, when many universities are shrinking or altogether closing their faculties of humanities and are relocating their resources to more "relevant" subjects oriented towards economic growth (Engell and Dangerfield, 1998; Pan 1998; Tapp, 1997).

<sup>19</sup> (Vives, n.d.b)

<sup>20</sup> By *laity* I mean its Greek etymological sense – *laos* – meaning the people.

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son's gain of knowledge imposed upon him an immediate duty to teach it to others. This breaking of social barriers was not restricted to the acquisition of knowledge, but it applied also to work and possessions. Thus, Erasmus exhorts us:

... to teach the ignorant: to lift up him that is fallen: to comfort and courage him that is in heaviness: to help him that labours: to succour the needy. In conclusion to refer all riches and substance, all your study, all your cares to this point, that you in Christ should help as much as your power extends to.<sup>21</sup>

Vives, Melanchthon and Calvin<sup>22</sup> wrote similar words to express a common “socialistic” vision – as Kuyper defined it<sup>23</sup> – inspired by the study of the Bible with the aid of the humanities. These provided a two way flow of understanding. On the one hand, the humanities allowed a better understanding of the Bible, especially its social, economic and educational vision. On the other, they became the conduit by which biblical wisdom could be applied in practice to all relevant aspects of individual and social life. It took the Bible away from the narrow constraints of religion and opened its historiological vision for all human life. In this manner, the humanities became the vehicle to implement the Bible's social agenda, including its teaching about social justice, love, human dignity, liberty and its own brand of democracy, i.e., the government of God's people exercised by himself through the people as a communal body. All these ideas crystallised in the humanist society of the Dutch Republic in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and their impact was so profound that even the French Revolution pales before it. In fact, the motto “liberty, equality and fraternity” originated from biblical ideas, but sadly, were taken out of context. For, while the instrument of the French Revolution was power and violence, the humanists' tool was education which they, like Christ, considered the

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<sup>21</sup> (Erasmus, 2011, p. 85)

<sup>22</sup> (Vives, n.d.d; Melanchthon, 1992, comment on Romans 3; Calvin, 1999a, comment on Isaiah 58:7)

<sup>23</sup> Kuyper (1950, p. 41) uses this term to distinguish biblical social justice – and the limits it imposes upon private property – from state socialism.

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only humane manner of bringing about social change. Education was conceived as a transferral of knowledge<sup>24</sup> inherited just like the land, to be held in common among the people, but unlike the land, an inheritance that could be continuously increased and passed on to others without any loss to the giver. The kernel, as well as the overarching structure of this knowledge, Erasmus and his followers called “*Philosophia Christi*” (Philosophy of Christ), a new approach to philosophy that moved away from Aristotelian pure physical reason and adopted the historical reasoning of the Bible. It opened up a new foundation for thinking and a far wider and richer landscape than the one offered by mere physical logic:

Read Demosthenes or Cicero, read Plato, Aristotle, or any other of that class: you will, I admit, feel wonderfully allured, pleased, moved, enchanted; but turn from them to the reading of the Sacred Volume, and whether you will or not, it will so affect you, so pierce your heart, so work its way into your very marrow, that, in comparison of the impression so produced, that of orators and philosophers will almost disappear; making it manifest that in the Sacred Volume there is a truth divine, a something which makes it immeasurably superior to all the gifts and graces attainable by man.<sup>25</sup>

This new way of reasoning based on God's speech and written down by His Spirit in everything that man contemplates, allowed the permeation of the biblical vision into every discipline:

...the liberal arts, and all the sciences by which wisdom is acquired, are gifts of God. Hence they must occupy the place of handmaid, not of mistress: nay more, they must be looked upon as empty and worthless, until they have become entirely subject to the word and Spirit of God.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> (Vives, n.d.c)

<sup>25</sup> (Calvin, n.d.c, I, 8, 1)

<sup>26</sup> (Calvin, n.d.a, p. 115f)

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This vision gave unity to the various arts without suppressing their diversity; it prevented their fragmentation and compartmentalisation and kept them together in the body of an overarching philosophy dedicated to the welfare of human life:

And in the same way, just as there is a natural relationship of the various letters with each other, the various arts are associated and yet separated. And those who feel that the lower disciplines are useless for life, because their benefit is not so visible, disturb this chorus of the arts.<sup>27</sup>

This new philosophy, that so deeply transformed Northern Europe, also redefined religion. Religion, so far as it had been a part of human life, comprised a number of activities – prayer, worship, chanting, symbolic acts – that were conducted mostly in a particular building, such as a cathedral or parish church. How the activities within this building connected to the life outside of it was, except for personal morality, left unclear. Christ's philosophy liberated us from all this and replaced it with human life in its totality, life that was to be shaped after his own life; man's body was now the temple of God, and the worship within this temple took place in ordinary human work for God's city. Unamuno describes it thus:

Prayer is not something that must be fulfilled at this or at that time, in a place set apart and withdrawn and in a solemn posture, but it is a way of doing everything devotedly, with all one's soul and living in God. Prayer ought to be eating and drinking and strolling and playing and reading and writing and conversing and even sleeping. Everything must be prayer and our life must be a continuous and mute "Your will be done" and an incessant "Your kingdom come", not any longer pronounced, not even thought, but lived<sup>28</sup>.

Although the humanists continued to use the word religion, they meant it in the context of the philosophy of Christ which

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<sup>27</sup> (Melancthon, 1999, p. 5)

<sup>28</sup> (Unamuno, 2003, p. VII)

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taught people to live according to the humanity of Christ, that is, it particularly reflected the Gospel objective to civilise humanity which theology had neglected. With this in mind, this philosophy redefined religion and replaced theology with Biblical studies aided by the arts, for the latter were regarded as essential to understanding the Bible: "...one needs not only a ready mind and a certain knowledge of the sacred books, but also the art of disputation, fluent speech and a knowledge of history, antiquity and judgements of the past."<sup>29</sup> Theology, as a single discipline based on dialectics was condemned, rejected and labelled "ignorant theology"<sup>30</sup>. Calvin, who avoided presenting himself as a theologian, referred to his biblical work as "philosophy"; he repeatedly criticised theology in his commentaries and claimed that it "...has more of the savour of Egyptian theology, than it has of accordance with Christian philosophy."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> (Melanchthon, 1999, p. 16)

<sup>30</sup> (Melanchthon, 1999, p. 127)

<sup>31</sup> (n.d.a, 1, p. 358)

## **5 Three Points of Major Divergence**

The two prior chapters have outlined for us the unique vision the philosophy of Christ provides for humanity. It is a beautiful vision that ennobles every human being; it is not utopian, for history has demonstrated that it can radically transform societies despite their human imperfections. Moreover it is not a philosophy that relies upon coercion or bureaucratic policies but exerts its influence through education, enlightening and equipping people to take hold and assume responsibility for their own lives and the lives of their communities. This is the philosophy that inspired our own academic work and naturally, since it threatens the comfort of the bureaucracy, we experienced opposition. But we also experienced indifference and even resistance from the church and this I ascribe to the conflict that exists between the philosophy of Christ and theology.

In particular, I identified three interlinked divergences that must be resolved before the church can assume the role that Christ assigned it as a preventer of social demise and re-builder of “broken walls”. The first divergence is the lack of understanding of historical reason and its civic focus; most Christians, including the clergy, are limited, like all other modern people, to physical reason. The second point of divergence is understanding vocation and work; again, the modernist idea of humanity as a resource has permeated all people alike, regardless of their beliefs. The third divergence relates to the structure of the church itself. Therefore, prior to talking about the philosophy of Christ and the education of people in our times, we must look at these divergences in more detail.

### **Historical-Civic Focus**

In contrast to other philosophies that are bound to a particular point in time when they are conceived, the philosophy of Christ transcends time because it is founded on a historiography, that is, on the previously mentioned historical path. This path does not change with time; on the contrary, time changes according to this path. And here lies the source of our difficulty in understanding the Bible and the ways of God.

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People experienced a similar difficulty when they were told that the earth moved around the sun rather than the other way. We have been taught, from primary school on, that time moves history. But, the opposite is the case and history moves time in two dimensions, one seasonal and the other chronological. These dimensions trace a pattern like a sinusoidal curve where the peaks – the historical summers – represent the “milk and honey” seasons, with their blossoming of society and its civic institutions, its arts, its sciences, etc. The troughs – history's winters – stand for the dark ages with all their ignorance, barbarism, oppression and injustice<sup>1</sup>. In between these historical peaks and troughs are the transitional periods – the springs and autumns of history. The Bible often gives significance to events by placing them on a seasonal rather than chronological dimension of history. For example, the events of the following passage:

Your perpetual ruins will be rebuilt;  
You will re-establish the ancient foundations.  
You will be called, ‘The one who repairs broken walls,  
the one who makes the streets inhabitable again.’<sup>2</sup>

refers to the restoration of Jerusalem following the return of Judah's exiles from Babylon around 538BC. They also refer to Christ's first coming, to the work of the church building a community in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century and to Christ's second coming and his New Jerusalem. Furthermore, the passage also has an important connection to the past, the forming of the nation of Israel from the slaves of Egypt and the provision of a land of “milk and honey”<sup>3</sup> for them. One can then link together these five events with a line that progresses from the founding of Israel as a nation to the culmination of God's city at the time of Christ's return. This line represents a continuum or a constant path – in this case, the formation of God's people into a nation – that re-

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<sup>1</sup> This is the topic that occupied Erasmus' first book (1978). See also Calvin's comment on Acts 17:26 (2012, 2).

<sup>2</sup> (Isaiah 58:12)

<sup>3</sup> (Exodus 3:8; Ephesians 2:19-22, 4:12)

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appears several times in the shape of similar types of events. There are many lines such as these that connect one or more events together – e.g. the passover meal and Christ's last supper – and these lines are woven together into a historiological path that is indispensable for understanding biblical thought. Such an historiological path significantly broadens the meaning of the text; ignoring it leads to the limitations that have afflicted theology. Theology has a rather artificial and somewhat monastic view of humanity that fails to grasp the full psychological and sociological make-up of man as we encounter him at particular points of biblical history.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the historiological lines are not confined to the historical period spanned by the biblical documents. They do not stop with the last chapter of the book of Acts, but project themselves beyond the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD and go on to shape the development of every nation, as well as the biography of each person living in our very own times.

Contrary to the optimistic spirit of our age, the greater proportion of these times is spent by humanity wading through historical troughs rather than enjoying the benefits of peaks. For:

[o]ne of the most dangerous errors instilled into us by nineteenth-century progressive optimism is the idea that civilisation is automatically bound to increase and spread. The lesson of history is the opposite; civilisation

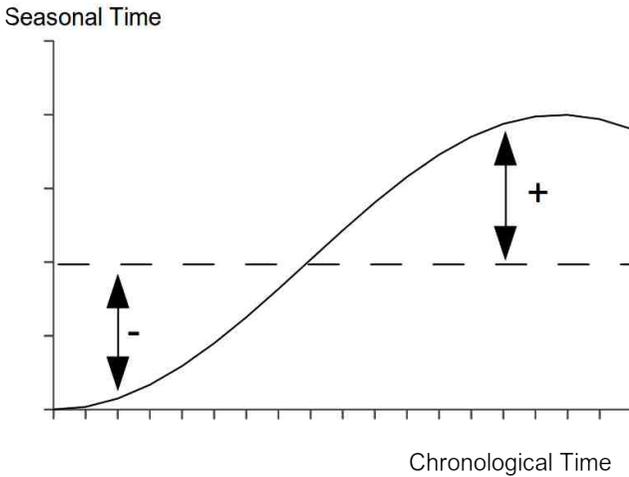
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<sup>4</sup> This also biases the translation of the Bible where the meaning rendered from the original is often inaccurate. Two instances may suffice here. In Genesis 43:34, the literal meaning of the passage indicates that Joseph and his brothers got drunk (*shakar*, H7937) and not just “merry” as translations often insinuate. The fact that the writer of Genesis did not hesitate to disclose a weakness in this otherwise upright man does not only add to the authenticity of its record, but also shows, by neither condemning nor endorsing this escapade, that God is a forgiving father, especially in the circumstances of overwhelming joy that Joseph experienced at being reunited with his brothers. A New Testament example is found in the translation of Romans 12:1, which modern versions render as “spiritual worship” when the literal meaning is the logical (*logikos*, G3050) service of a hired labourer (*latreia*, G2999; see LSJ). Paul means that the sacrifice that is demanded makes sense, which is confirmed by my own research where I have demonstrated that such sacrifice is sociologically necessary for a community to be viable (de Raadt, 1996).

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is a rarity, attained with difficulty and easily lost. The normal state of humanity is barbarism, just as the normal surface of our planet is salt water. Land looms large in our imagination of the planet and civilisation in our history books, only because sea and savagery are, to us, less interesting.<sup>5</sup>

To pull communities out of barbarism and into civilisation requires workers who understand the historiological path and the heavy demands that it imposes upon them, something that can be better explained with the help of Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Historical Peak and Trough**

The horizontal and vertical axes respectively stand for chronological and seasonal times. The curved line represents the transition between a trough (barbarism) and a peak (civilisation). Let us assume a group of people working to move society from barbarism to a civilised state; the dashed horizontal line represents a degree of social progress that is proportional to the efforts that these people put into improving the conditions of

<sup>5</sup> (C. S. Lewis, cited in Martindale, 1990, p. 111)

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their communities. One will note that on the right side of the figure, the curved line is above the horizontal line indicating that social progress is more than proportional to the effort made by people (marked by a + sign); these are the fruitful times where work yields generously. But in the left side of the figure the situation is the reverse; the same amount of effort produces far less than proportional results (– sign). This is the cross that some people must carry and which is indispensable to pull society out of its misery. Cynics, who often think only in terms of pure physical reason and have short term expectations, usually brand this work a waste of time. But, historical reason tells a different story; even, if in the short term, the yield of hard work may be disappointing, sometime in the future, in God's own time and in the appropriate historical season, the seed planted by dedicated and selfless people will flourish and draw society into a golden age.

This seed cannot be planted by pure homiletic effort – often referred to as “preaching the Gospel” – combined with charitable work. The non-biblical idea that mere preaching and charity are able to transform the world is an error that has plagued the church and its missionary endeavour. Not only is the decline of Western civilisation rooted in this conception, but also the cultural stagnation of whole continents, such as Africa, which has been for centuries targeted by Christian missions. We may consider as an example the thoughts of an Anglican bishop who served as a missionary in Kenya when he describes the changes occurring in that country after World War II:

Africa is changing so rapidly today that no one would dare to predict the course of events in another ten or twenty years. Forces of tremendous strength and unknown destiny are sweeping through the country, released by, or born out of, the impact of civilisation, money economy, industry and white settlement on millions of primitive African people. One sees today simultaneously the growth of strong national feeling among Africans – particularly the Kikuyu of Kenya – and an unprecedented expansion of industry and other develop-

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ments, including the establishment of a big military base; a situation which has inevitably produced misunderstanding, friction and resentment.<sup>6</sup>

While the bishop points out with concern some of the powerful implications of these changes on the Kenyans, he does not seem fully aware of what was taking place at the time; that is, of the takeover of people's land and resources by foreign industrialists, miners, bankers and other exploiters ready to plunder them. While I do not attack the bishop personally – I am aware that he endeavoured to serve the African nation at great personal cost – his notion of Christian mission was flawed. It lacked the Gospel's component of civic education necessary for the local people to act against the “forces of tremendous strength and unknown destiny” and assume control and responsibility over their own lives, communities and resources. What a contrast it is to compare this with the visionary and educational breadth of the Biblical humanists' agenda that transformed Northern Europe into a centre of civilisation!

### **Work versus Worship**

This brings us to the important subject of Christ's work, for the ineffectiveness of Christian intervention in society is due in great part to mistakenly identifying work with ceremonial worship<sup>7</sup>. Worship of a deity is an activity that originates from cultures outside Israel; it was adopted into the Mosaic law after some significant modification but it always remained problematic. It is significant in this regard that while the Ten Commandments – the kernel of the law – expressly forbids the worship of idols, they do not include a command to worship God ceremo-

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<sup>6</sup> (Thornton, 2007, p. 78)

<sup>7</sup> The English word worship, which has no literal equivalent in other European languages, adds to the confusion. It is used to mean different New testament Greek words such as *latreuo* (G3000, to serve) which should be mostly understood as work, *proskuneo* (G4352, to prostrate) which means adoration but not necessarily in a ceremonial setting. *Threskeia* (G2356&7), ceremonial observance, is used in five instances only and James (1:26) makes it clear that the time for this is passed.

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nially. Instead, they command people to abstain from work on the seventh day and rest following God's own pattern of work. Finding the common origin of worship in the pagan cultures that surrounded it may explain, in part, Israel's tendency to relapse into idol worship<sup>8</sup> and the counterbalancing shift of focus by the prophets from ceremonial worship to work. As early as the 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC, Isaiah condemns worship that runs in conjunction with social injustice and oppression and rejects it as repulsive to God<sup>9</sup> who commands to replace worship with the pursuit of social and economic justice:

Is this really the kind of fasting I want?

Do I want a day when people merely humble themselves,  
bowing their heads like a reed  
and stretching out on sackcloth and ashes?

Is this really what you call a fast,  
a day that is pleasing to the LORD?

No, this is the kind of fast I want.

I want you to remove the sinful chains,  
to tear away the ropes of the burdensome yoke,  
to set free the oppressed,  
and to break every burdensome yoke.

I want you to share your food with the hungry  
and to provide shelter for homeless, oppressed people.

When you see someone naked, clothe him!

Don't turn your back on your own flesh and blood!<sup>10</sup>

The final transition from ceremony to work took place with the receiving of the Holy Spirit by all the people, rather than by

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<sup>8</sup> (Exodus 32:4; 1 Kings:11:4-8,12:28-29; 2 Kings:17:10-12, 21:3)

<sup>9</sup> (Isaiah 1:13-14)

<sup>10</sup> (Isaiah 58:5-7)

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Israel's political and religious leadership only<sup>11</sup>. At this point, God's Spirit, the worker, was given to people in order to learn the necessary skills and do the labour that was expected of them. The switch from ceremony to work is also pointed out by Christ when a Samaritan woman asked him which was the right place, Mount Gerizim or Jerusalem, to worship<sup>12</sup>. Jesus answered that now she should not worry about places but ought to "... worship in spirit and truth..."<sup>13</sup>. What did Jesus mean by *spirit*? The key to understanding him is not only in the above citation from Isaiah, but also in a similar passage by John where he replaces the word *spirit* with *work*<sup>14</sup>; this swapping of words makes great sense, "for the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in [work]."<sup>15</sup>

This work is not some religious or magical power, nor is it the material energy studied by physics, but it is nevertheless an energy that manifests itself concretely in the motion of this world, the planets, the rivers and the seas, in the feeding of plants and animals and in the provision of everything necessary for us to be a living, flesh-and-blood humanity. It is also the energy that pulls people out of barbarism and into civilisation. This was the urgently needed civilising labour that Jesus requested to bring aid to the sorrowful communities during his journeys through the country<sup>16</sup>. People were confused, harassed and leaderless. Jesus did not request for clergy or Pharisees, but rather for labourers. He witnessed conditions not unlike that experienced in third-world countries today: appalling sanitary facilities, poor nutrition and health, lack of education and ab-

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<sup>11</sup> (Isaiah 44:3; Joel 2:28-29; Zechariah 12:10)

<sup>12</sup> (John 4:20-24; the Greek word used in this passage is *proskuneo* (G4352), that is, to prostrate oneself.

<sup>13</sup> (John 4:23)

<sup>14</sup> (1 John 3:18); "... let us not love with word or with tongue but work [*ergon*, G2041] and truth."

<sup>15</sup> (1 Corinthians 4:20); *dunamis* (G1411) means literally *energy*. While the common translation into English is *power*, it should be interpreted as a power given by the Spirit that throughout Scripture is always doing something, something that God the Father and Christ call *work* (John 5:17, 17:4).

<sup>16</sup> (Matthew 9:35-38)

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sence of economic resources and civic organisation. And the labourers he must have had in mind were people who could address these needs and, given today's professional expertise, this would mean doctors, nurses, builders and architects, town engineers and teachers. According to Melanchthon:

“God cast the church into the midst of these occupations because he wants to become known among men in a common society. He wanted all offices of society to be exercises in confession, and at the same time exercises of our faith and love.”<sup>17</sup>

In other words, our profession is the confession which Christ demands from us<sup>18</sup>.

### **Ekklesia versus Church**

Professions, in order to be effective, need to be organised<sup>19</sup> – in a social sense – and thus Jesus set his followers to work within a body that would enable them to be collaborative as well as effective. We do not know the exact name he gave this body, since he taught mostly in Aramaic, but his apostles chose the Greek word *ekklesia* (G1577) to denote it. They did not choose the term *synagogue*, a synonym of *ekklesia*, presumably to distinguish it from the Jewish institution. Nor did they use *temple*, for Jesus made the temple redundant and transferred it to the physical bodies of his followers<sup>20</sup>. Moreover, the temple is a building and not a social unit. The church has obstinately persisted, almost throughout history, in adopting the temple and the synagogue as its models of organisation and dedicating most of its resources to erect and maintain brick and mortar

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<sup>17</sup> (Melanchthon, 1992, Chapter 13)

<sup>18</sup> (Matthew 10:32); the word *homologeō* (G3670) in the original, normally translated as *confess*, bears with it the meaning of agreeing or promising to do something (LSJ). Seen in the context of the whole Bible, this passage lends support to the notion that one's profession and one's confession – and in a negative sense, not being ashamed of Christ (Mark 8:38) – go hand in hand.

<sup>19</sup> (Kuyper, 1950)

<sup>20</sup> (1 Corinthians 6:19)

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rather than to edify its flesh and blood as is commanded by the apostle<sup>21</sup>. The church has organised itself somewhat as a theatre company, with the clergy being the actors and the congregation sitting in the stalls joining in the show by singing hymns, by kneeling, standing and sitting down and by listening to homilies. There is nothing wrong with this in itself if people like to do it, but it is certainly incorrect to call this a “service” to God<sup>22</sup>, for Christ taught that service to God is service to humanity<sup>23</sup>, and God, says Erasmus:

...has no need of these things. Paul calls charity to edify your neighbour, to count that we all be members of one body, to think that we all are but one in Christ, to rejoice in God of your neighbour's wealth even as you do of you own, to remedy his discomfort or losses as your own.<sup>24</sup>

The meaning of the word *ekklesia* is quite different. It was originally used in Athens to denote “an assembly of the citizens regularly summoned”<sup>25</sup> and in the Septuagint it is used to denote a convocation of Israel's people<sup>26</sup>; in both these usages, the term unmistakably conveys a civic rather than religious meaning. This is confirmed by the various passages of Scripture we have discussed and therefore can safely conclude that the church, as instituted by Christ, is unmistakably a civic convocation with a civic mission instituted by Jesus<sup>27</sup>. Furthermore, rather than providing the church with coercive powers, Christ's Spirit endowed it with persuasive energy, making education the chief driving force of civic renewal and reform. And the sole purpose of education, delivered by apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers<sup>28</sup>, was to equip people to turn the

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<sup>21</sup> (Ephesians 4:12)

<sup>22</sup> “Service to God” is the literal meaning given in some European languages such as the Swedish “gudstjänst” and the German “Gottesdienst”.

<sup>23</sup> (Matthew 25:40)

<sup>24</sup> (Erasmus, 2011, p.85)

<sup>25</sup> (MLSJ)

<sup>26</sup> (Deuteronomy 4:10; Joshua 8:35; Judges 20:2)

<sup>27</sup> Christ's bride (Revelation 21:2) is described as a “holy city” and “new Jerusalem”.

<sup>28</sup> (Ephesians 4:11-12)

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miserable villages and towns Jesus visited in his day into civilised communities. In the same Spirit, we must renew the dysfunctional societies that modernism has produced in our times.

This education was founded on God's law. When God redeemed the Hebrew slaves, he gave them land and delivered to them the law through his Spirit. This law contained the foundation of all knowledge they needed to live as a civilised people in the territory they had been promised. In addition to priestly ceremonies – made obsolete by Christ<sup>29</sup> – the law covered agriculture, social structures, economics, health and other requisite subjects to allow Israel to thrive as a nation despite its hostile neighbours. However, Christ gave us not just the law, but the author of the law himself and through this has put before us a vast field of knowledge to comprehend, which requires the church to turn itself into a *universitas scholarium et magistrorum* (a community of students and teachers). Everyone should be a student of Christ; he was principally a teacher and regarded himself as such<sup>30</sup>. This imposes a responsibility on everyone to pass on Christ's philosophy and in turn become a teacher. In this scheme of things, the architect<sup>31</sup> should be a teacher of Christ's architecture and the horticulturist should be a teacher of Christ's horticulture<sup>32</sup>, thus pulling the university out of its ivory tower and into the world<sup>33</sup>. Referring once more to Figure 1, the transition from the historical trough to the peak required to make a community truly civilised, needs not only architects and horticulturists, but also the teaching of these. Therefore Christ delegated to the church the development of arts and sciences and the design and implementation of appro-

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<sup>29</sup> Made obsolete by having offered one sole sacrifice effective for all times (Hebrews 9:12,10:10).

<sup>30</sup> The Greek word he used to describe his profession was *didaskalos* (G1320, John 13:13).

<sup>31</sup> A brilliant illustration of God-inspired architecture is found in the buildings of “God's architect” designed by the Catalán, Antoni Gaudí (Navarro Arisa, 2002).

<sup>32</sup> (2 Corinthians 10:5)

<sup>33</sup> I have demonstrated that this model of education is today perfectly viable thanks to our information and communication technology (de Raadt, 2000).

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priate educational systems to put them at the service of the poor and oppressed. Unless the church assumes this responsibility, knowledge and education will fall into the hands of the wealthy who will subordinate them to their vested interests to increase their riches and exploit the poor and ignorant. This is the bondage that afflicts our present educational system.

Unless the church makes an effort in transforming itself into what it is meant to be and regains an historical reasoning to understand the work before it, and restructures itself to support its lawyers, architects, carpenters, horticulturists and all other appropriate vocations to labour for the city of God, our society will continue to sink into the modernist swamp. It will continue to disobey Christ to the detriment of all communities including its own. People, including clergy, are exiting the church at an alarming rate, not because they have lost faith in Christ, but because the church and its narrow religion has become irrelevant. Many, like Erasmus, wonder – “Why do we make so strait and narrow Christ’s religion which he would have so large?”<sup>34</sup>

Sociology teaches us that change in a large social system – such as the institutional church – is painfully slow; far too slow to respond to the urgent human needs of today. Moreover, the larger the system, the slower its responds, which makes those who yearn for a social renewal feel totally powerless. But, despite this impasse, there is hope for the opposite is also true. The smaller the social unit, the faster it can respond to surrounding events. Here we see Jesus’ organisational skill for, although he did not say so, he vastly increased the speed of response of his ekklesia by setting up a suitable minimum size to operate with his authority<sup>35</sup>; only two persons are required to assemble in his name to become a branch of the church. Christian marriage is by default such a branch – with all the prerogatives and re-

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<sup>34</sup> (2011, p. 19)

<sup>35</sup> (Matthew 18:19-20); in verse 20, the original Greek word *eimi* (G1510) indicates more than just presence, it is used only in an “emphatic” manner (MIC; see also John 8:58 and 14:16). Moreover, the Septuagint uses the same term in Exodus 3:14 to translate it from Hebrew to Greek. Therefore, there should be no doubt that when one meets two who gather in his name, one meets Christ.

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sponsibilities that this body entails. One should not underestimate the energy that is deposited in such a small social unit, for its power is not limited to what itself does, but is extended by its ability to teach others by example. Marriage is a micro-university, with the capacity to inject wisdom and intelligence into society like the mustard seed that in time grows to an immense tree<sup>36</sup>. For post-modern society will not be pulled out of its idiot culture and self-destructive ways by bureaucrats and political leaders, nor by bishops, cardinals, tele-evangelists and mega-churches, but by the Aquila and Priscilla of our times suitably equipped with the philosophy of Christ. We turn to this in the next chapter.

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<sup>36</sup> (Matthew 13:31-32)



# 6 Philosophy of Christ I

## Organising the Sciences

The building of the city of God demands work in this world and this in turn requires educating people so that they can labour with competence and become worthy citizens of it. The humanist agenda of education is shaped according to the philosophy of Christ which is founded upon God's speech. This speech, Calvin discerns, is of two kinds:

...God speaks in a different way to the insensate works of his hands, which he silently subordinates to his will by secret laws impressed upon them, than he does to men who are endued with understanding, for these he teaches with articulate language, that they may obey him intelligently and with consent.<sup>1</sup>

We will call the first kind of speech determinative for, through it, God dictates what happens; there is no human interference just as there is none when a stone thrown out of the window falls to the ground and does not float away towards the sky. The other kind of speech is normative; it is specifically addressed to humanity and tells us what we “ought to do”. However, we need to consider that biblical norms are different to the norms in Greek philosophy as well as to the norms of post-modern relativism. Greek norms are based on absolutes which, like the conception of the universe, are static. Biblical norms are historical and driven, not by fixed absolutes, but by the historical struggle to establish the city of God and therefore can only be fully understood by historical reason. Thus in the Old Testament, Israelites were commanded by God to fight, shed blood and burn cities to the ground in order to attain this objective. People often criticise the Old Testament for endorsing such actions but they, at the same time, accept history's judgement of the greatness of Alexander, Julius Caesar and other famous conquerors. Prior to Jesus, advances in civilisation

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<sup>1</sup> (Calvin, 1999b, 5, p. 214f)

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were impossible without coercion, even if they demand violence and killing. However, Christ inaugurated a new era in history and although the Old Testament vision of the city of God remained his ultimate criterion for all norms, he definitely abolished fighting for a new society with coercive weapons. His weapons for fighting are not coercive but intellectual; God's city is to be built by educating people<sup>2</sup> rather than by crushing them. I must stress, however, that making norms relative to an historical objective, rather than to absolutes, does not imply a modern type of relativism<sup>3</sup>, that is, a relaxation of standards so as to make norms suit our personal convenience. On the contrary, our exploration of Hebrews 11 should have convinced us of the ponderous demands imposed upon us by its historical definition of faith and the norms that flow from it.

God's speech, which makes everything happen, whether normative or determinative, is delivered to us in a variety of languages which we shall call *modalities*. For ease of comprehension, let us consider the following illustration; assume that, as an anniversary present, a man gives a flower vase to his wife. There are many modalities in this vase. There is the physical modality that forms the crystal molecules, the aesthetic modality that identifies it as a thing of beauty, the ethical modality that makes it a gift of love and the juridical aspect bestows legal ownership to his wife. All these modalities are not particular to the vase but are found in everything we experience, for they are the ones that make things happen. Since each modality

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<sup>2</sup> (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). I am aware that my interpretation of this passage is different from some customary ones that tend to exclude, or at least undermine, the exercise of the intellect in the Christian contest against Godless thought. But seen in the total context of the scriptures, it is absurd to assume that God, who himself invites us to reason with him (Isaiah 1:18) should command us to stop thinking when engaged in persuading people from their error.

<sup>3</sup> Relativism and subjectivism, which have dominated post-modernism, have their roots in the work of Kant (2007). I have not dealt with Kant's theory here, because I consider it an integral part of physical thinking. It is physical thinking back to front, where the mechanical nature of the world is considered not as real, but as subjectively assumed. But whether it is real or assumed, the practical outcomes in society are the same.

is God's speech in a particular language, each one of them must have a special science so we can understand that specific language. These make the sciences the grammar of God's speech<sup>4</sup>. Table 1 lists 18 modalities, arranged from the most normative (ethical) to the most determinative (logical) with their respective sciences alongside<sup>5</sup>. They are organised into domains that we shall discuss shortly. Although each of these modalities is unique, there are similarities<sup>6</sup> between them. Since each modality is a kind of language, we can use one modality as a language to describe the properties of another. We have already done this in Figure 1; there, we have used geometrical shapes in the spatial modality to describe patterns of change in the historical modality. Since each modality utters God's speech and God's speech commands, each modality commands the others, but in a different manner. Let us consider any two modalities in Table 1. According to the way we have built this table, one of them will be more determinative – and therefore less normative – than the other. Therefore, if the command originates in the more determinative modality, then we will regard it as a determinative command. That is the situation in Figure 1, which tells us that history is, in part and but not wholly, commanded by geometrical patterns<sup>7</sup> emerging from the spatial modality. If, on the other hand, the command originates in the more normative modality, then we will classify it as a normative command. Given the order of the modalities in Table 1, we can deduce that commands that run upwards are determinative and those

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<sup>4</sup> Vives (n.d.c, I, II,3) was perhaps the first to observe the existence of these modalities in nature and to relate them to the diverse arts; each art studied a particular modality. Melancthon (1999, p. 4) added to this insight by noting that all the arts needed to be linked together like letters of the alphabet reflecting the links that bind each modality with the others.

<sup>5</sup> This organisation is mostly based on the work of Dooyeweerd (1958) and the general system theory of von Bertalanffy (1971). In scientific circles it is known as Multi-Modal Systems Thinking or MMST.

<sup>6</sup> The technical term used in cybernetics and systems science for these similarities is *homomorphisms*, a concept borrowed from mathematics.

<sup>7</sup> I emphasise that the spatial modality only partly determines history in contrast to Spengler's (1918) theory of civilisation which implies that such sinusoidal patterns fully determine history.

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that run downwards are normative. All these commands represent an assemblage that hold things together and, for that reason, we use the term *link* as a technical synonym for *command*. In the illustration of the vase, it is the linkage of its modalities that makes the vase happen – we must remember that in historical reasoning things do not exist, but happen – as distinct from other things.

Based on our definition, which we admit is a significant simplification, there are 306 possible links between the eighteen modalities listed in Table 1<sup>8</sup> illustrating the interconnected richness of the world and the limitation of our minds to understand it. For these links are dynamic and, when assembled together, they create circular phenomena that are even more complex to grasp. The proper approach to deal with this complexity is not – as Descartes suggested – to tease it apart into independent units small enough for our minds to understand. For in tearing things apart, we lose all the connectivity which is most important. We must do the reverse: we must grasp the dynamic totality – even if it must be heavily simplified in order to know where we are going. Then we can focus on its parts in greater detail but without ever dismissing from our mind their interconnections with the totality.

We have grouped the modalities into six domains (see Table 1), three of them belonging to culture and the other three to nature. This makes it easier for us to understand how the modalities operate in the things we experience. We will start by examining the intellectual domain in order to grasp what I mean by “Intelligent Christianity” as well as to establish the kind of thinking that will help us understand the remainder of the domains.

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<sup>8</sup> Permutation of 18 modalities, taken two at a time.

**Table 1: Modalities and Sciences**

	<i>Domains</i>	<i>Modalities</i>	<i>Sciences</i>
<b>Culture</b>	<b>Character</b>	ethical	ethics
		aesthetic	aesthetics
		juridical	jurisprudence
	<b>Civic</b>	operational	methods, work science
		economic	economics, management
		social	sociology
	<b>Intellectual</b>	epistemic	arts and sciences, philosophy, pedagogics
		informatory	philology, rhetoric, journalism, informatics
		historical	historiography
		credal	historiology
<b>Nature</b>	<b>Vital</b>	psychic	psychology
		biotic	biology
	<b>Material</b>	regulatory	cybernetics
		physical	physics, chemistry
		kinetic	physical mechanics
		spatial	geometry, trigonometry
	<b>Order</b>	numeric	mathematics
		logical	logic

### **Intellectual Domain**

We must note that the concept of the intellect, as well as of culture as a whole, cannot be comprehended by physical reason. Physical reason recognises only the natural domains. Moreover, it assumes that knowledge is a natural process func-

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tioning in the psychic modality without the intervention of belief or any other aspect of culture, at least not as we have defined it here<sup>9</sup>. Thinking, which we associate with the intellect, is replaced by cognition, its psychological counterpart. This has meant that psychology has taken over from philosophy the explanation of things that were once its realm and placed psychologists as the oracles of wisdom for almost every aspect of our lives. We should not be surprised, therefore, when we are subjected to a battery of psychological tests to assess our ability to do almost anything<sup>10</sup>. Above all, education has been the hardest hit by it. Psychologists, who now define the objectives of what they call “education”<sup>11</sup> in terms of their own fanciful psychological categories, are greatly to blame for the decline of educational standards. Therefore, we must wrestle our humanity – for which Christ died on the cross – from the claws of post-modernity by first regaining our intellect and ability to think and then restoring our culture. Once we have recovered these, we can then turn our eyes to nature in order to develop the natural sciences and apply them in a civilised manner.

The humanist idea of intellect regards life as extending over the two planes of nature and culture, which we have already introduced in Table 1. In turn, culture is made concrete in history as humanity marches towards the civilisation of God's city, a march that, as we have seen, is plagued with setbacks, but which does not detract the people who live historical lives from struggling on. Since Christ dismissed any attempt to coerce people into civilisation, but made teaching the only legitimate medium to attain it, we place the intellectual domain below the civic domain, that is, the domain of civilisation, in order to provide its foundation; civilised society is an intelligent and wise society. Although psychology does not shed blood, it does

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<sup>9</sup> Some have defined culture as a biological phenomena, such as the well known biologist Humberto Maturana (2008, pp. 251-259).

<sup>10</sup> Even Christian missionaries must put up with this intrusion (Koteskey, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> The most popular methods used by schools and universities is Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. See for example: Center for Teaching & Learning, University of North Carolina, Charlotte (2012).

use manipulation as a form of coercion to alter human behaviour and thereby attain its objectives, be it educational or job-related. There are instances when this manipulation is justified – such as in remedial cases – but the humanist way to alter behaviour is through education of the intellect and not through pulling the strings of our cognition<sup>12</sup>. Only education can provide people with the requisite understanding of life and equip them to live wisely and assume their civic role. Given that the intellectual domain is the foundation of civilisation and civilisation is by nature social (civic), the focus of the Christian intellect is social rather than individualist; the philosophy of Christ is indeed a social philosophy.

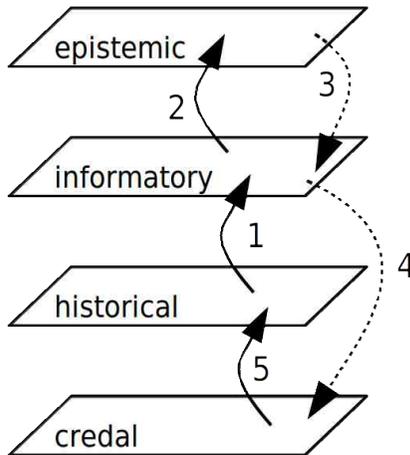
Theories of knowledge based on physical reason explain thinking as a determinative phenomenon, that is, something which we humans cannot alter. Historical reason is practical and normative, it aims to show us how we ought to think in order to attain a civilised life; it does not accept the way we think as something beyond our control but, on the contrary, regards us as responsible and able to think wisely and with intelligence. It tells us to look attentively at the world from the particular historical point in which we live and observe the dynamics of what is happening as God speaks to us through history. This sets the historical modality as our point of departure and takes us through a number of links to travel along the four modalities of the intellectual domain. There are many links, but for the sake of simplicity, we will examine only five of these links – illustrated by the arrows in Figure 2. Note that arrows with dashed lines represent normative links and arrows with full lines represent determinative ones. The first link – Arrow 1 – connects the historical modality with the *informatory*<sup>13</sup> and converts histor-

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<sup>12</sup> Most post-modern homiletics, especially as delivered by tele-evangelists and trendy mega-church and emergent-church preachers, is aimed at cognition rather than the intellect.

<sup>13</sup> Dooyeweerd refers to this modality as “lingual”, although he admits that the choice of this term in the English translation of his work was forced due to the absence of a more suitable word (1958, II, p. 126, note 1). Due to today’s technology having vastly broadened the alternative forms of communication, I have named it *informatory* to reflect more accurately the

ical facts into information and communication. It is a determinative link because the historical modality is more determinative than the informatory, which in practical terms means that information that is not based on historical facts, that is, on things that have happened, is false information<sup>14</sup>.



**Figure 2: Loop Formed by an Intellectual Process**

Information must be novel to qualify as information. Just as an historical event vanishes once it occurs and can only be witnessed by those present when it happens, so information ceases to be such once it is received – e.g., for a person who has read it, yesterday's newspaper is no longer news. Yet, while historical events vanish, information can be stored as data and held as evidence of these events<sup>15</sup>.

In turn, stored data provides access to the empirical material that connects our thoughts with the concrete historical reality

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breadth of communication means available to us.

<sup>14</sup> Another term for false information is disinformation. I have discussed in detail the impact of disinformation in society (de Raadt, 1991).

<sup>15</sup> The greatest repository of evidence – and an adjunct to speech – is the written word.

of the world, this is represented by Arrow 2, reaching from the informatory to the epistemic modality. This link is also determinative, for our thoughts must be formed by language and the empirical data that it conveys; without language, we cannot think. In our philosophy, the epistemic modality is the seat of historical reason and therefore, where all the arts, sciences and philosophy itself are minted. That is, each link that originates in the epistemic modality and connects it with another modality defines a specialised science – as listed in the rightmost column of Table 1 – that studies the specifics of the second modality. For example, the link between the epistemic and the economic modality renders the science of economics. Since all these sciences are based on empirical data – residing in the informatory modality – and these data attest to events in the historical modality, these sciences should enable us to examine critically and in full, the times in which we live, and equip us to respond to the challenges which they bring to us. However, we can only respond intelligently when we understand all these sciences in the context of a general philosophy that over-arches them. This philosophical grasp of the totality is then the mark of an educated mind; without it, all expertise is reduced to what Erasmus termed an “uneducated erudition”<sup>16</sup>. For, specialised knowledge is only useful to humanity when it is understood from a generalist perspective.

There are three reasons for this. Firstly, an over-arching philosophy provides a chart that ensures that the application of any particular discipline is in harmony with the other sciences and is implemented for the good of humanity. The specialist who has no mastery of such a philosophy is like a sailor who knows how to manoeuvre a ship but has no understanding of navigation and charts. He may stay afloat, but will sail aimlessly without ever reaching a destination, for he has none. This is typical of the modern professional, be it in medicine, in the law

<sup>16</sup> (Erasmus, 1978, p. 26). The English word *education* has lost its original meaning that is still preserved in other European languages such as Spanish. In Spanish, to be educated means not only to master one's mother tongue and Pythagoras' theorem, but also knowing how to drink soup without irritating one's neighbours at the table.

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or even in education; there is an abundance of narrow erudition, but a lack of broad and generalist education that equips the professional to evaluate his practice in the wider context of how it benefits human and social life. The end result of this is a humanity that is driven by technology rather than a technology that is driven by humanity. For example, advances such as sophisticated medical procedures are often applied to cure diseases caused by the intense technological nature of modern life; we need technology to cure the effects of technology<sup>17</sup>. Secondly, specialisation often fails to see that a much more simple and better solution to a problem is provided by another discipline. Much of modern litigation and its exorbitant costs could be eliminated by a legal profession with an understanding of social ethics, a commitment to promote it as well as an active engagement in ensuring that all legislation is just and does not protect the unfair privileges of the wealthy and powerful sectors of society. Thirdly, and contrary to the general perception, generalist knowledge is far more intellectually demanding than specialist knowledge. The specialist can narrow his field of expertise to suit himself by pruning its intellectual demands; the generalist cannot cut down the totality to match his intellect, but must stretch his intellect to match the totality. This enhances his professional intelligence, fends off becoming an “uneducated erudite” and makes his service far more valuable to humanity.

From the epistemic modality we now travel downwards along a normative pair of links, the first of which reach the informatory modality – Arrow 3. The thinking that has taken place in the epistemic modality must now be expressed in language in order to communicate to others. This communication should then be directed to the credal modality – Arrow 4 – in order to inspire and convince people of our thoughts. This demands not only that we should express our ideas in language, but that our language itself should be convincing for, as we said, humanists seek to persuade by mastering the science of

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<sup>17</sup> Jacques Ellul (1964) has extensively studied the technological impact on society.

rhetoric rather than by scheming through psychological trickery<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, to avoid falling prey to artful language and credulity, it is paramount that the credal modality be integrated with all other intellectual modalities.

Table 1 lists historiology rather than theology as the science pertaining to the credal modality. Both the word and the definition of theology as the “science of things divine”<sup>19</sup> originates in Greece; Aristotle regards it as the best of sciences “for it deals with the highest of existing things.”<sup>20</sup> Christian theology has been strongly influenced by such Greek ideas. But separating “things divine” from other things is neither biblical nor desirable. In the Bible, all things that are created by God are good<sup>21</sup>, by virtue of being the work of his own hands<sup>22</sup>, and what is good for him is certainly good for us. Moreover, because of its heavy reliance on physical reason – again, under the influence of Greek thought – theology is an unsuitable science to understand the Bible; it is an attempt to put material of an historically dynamic nature into a static straight-jacket. Thus, theological branches of study such as eschatology, soteriology and ecclesiology are of little use to humanity because they do not address the historical reality of culture and nature in which we are meant to live. For nature and culture rest on the historical modality and these demand historical reasoning that is beyond the traditional scope of theology. Since theology cannot address this concreteness, it places its teaching in the ethereal plane of religion whence it looks down upon the world, God's own creation, with scarce ability to have a positive effect on its ills. We are not to be surprised, therefore, if Erasmus found the life of religious men “grievous and tedious”<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Manipulation would be attained by Arrow 4 being directed to the psychological modality rather than to the credal, by using a language that entices feelings rather than thought.

<sup>19</sup> (LSJ)

<sup>20</sup> (Aristotle, 2007, Book XI, 7)

<sup>21</sup> (Genesis 1:31)

<sup>22</sup> (Psalm 95:5; Job 34:19). Any blemish that has resulted from the fall of man has been removed through the death of Christ (Colossians 1:20).

<sup>23</sup> (Erasmus, 2011, p. 85)

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To live historically we need not theology, but historiology; we need a map – the “river bed” mentioned earlier – that charts the historical continuum that will lead us to lives dedicated to changes for the benefit of humanity. This is described by the last link – Arrow 5 – moving from the credal to the historical modality. This link is determinative, since the credal modality is the floor and foundation upon which all our culture is erected; we ultimately become what we believe<sup>24</sup>. This last arrow closes a loop that marks different stages of historical reasoning. Our starting and ending with the historical modality is purely arbitrary, for the loop represents an ongoing intellectual process, involving all four modalities, that progressively should expand our understanding and as well as our convictions of what we ought to do with our lives. These convictions should be active; that is, they encourage us to intervene in history and not merely contemplate it with the same feeling of helplessness with which we take in the weather. They need to be converted into work to construct the city of God.

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<sup>24</sup> (Ortega y Gasset, 2004a)

## 7 Philosophy of Christ II

### Civic Domain

The city of God is no socialist paradise on earth nor is it the work of idealists. The idealist builds an uncertain future by positioning himself in the certainty of the present. A Christian is not an idealist but a prophet; by reasoning historically, he places himself in the certainty of the future and projects it back into the uncertain present<sup>1</sup>. Specifically he projects it into the three modalities of the civic domain – see Table 1 – where the action takes place. Of these three, the operational modality, the modality of work, is the most normative, for it considers that the ultimate aim of civilised people is to be a servant community. When ancient Israel entered Canaan, it conquered by drawing its inhabitants out of the land – much as modern Israel has done in our day. The New Israel is expected to do the opposite, it must welcome people into its city in order to serve them. Its task is not to pull down the walls of Jericho, but to erect and mend the crumbling buildings and streets of every town<sup>2</sup>. To attain this, Jesus separated work from remuneration, liberating people from the economic burden imposed upon Adam as a consequence of his fall<sup>3</sup>. Just as God provided the manna for the Israelites in the desert<sup>4</sup>, Christ promised to provide for our needs when we work to rebuild his city<sup>5</sup>. This frees us to do meaningful work by addressing the true needs of humanity. He has liberated us from the need to work in order to live so that we may live in order to work. This does not exclude remuneration for honest work; naturally, a worker is worth his pay just as he needs his sleep. It is however as absurd to say that getting

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<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, Marx, who had a Jewish background, devised a conception of utopian socialism that was influenced by the Old Testament (Tar, 1985) and engaged in a form of historical thinking borrowed from Hegel.

<sup>2</sup> (Isaiah 44:26, 58:12; Jeremiah 30:18, 31:38; Ezekiel 36:10, 33)

<sup>3</sup> (Genesis 3:19; Matthew 6:24; John 4:34)

<sup>4</sup> (Exodus 16:15)

<sup>5</sup> (Matthew 6:33) I interpret Christ's seeking after God's kingdom (*zeteo*, G2212) as meaning, in harmony with Old Testament prophecy, the projection of this kingdom into the present.

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paid is the objective of our work as it is to affirm that we must work in order to be able to sleep.

Capitalism has robbed us of this freedom. By following the principles of the physiocrats, it has reversed the order of the operational and economic modalities, placing the economic modality above the operational and making it the most normative within the civic domain<sup>6</sup>. Now the accumulation of wealth has become the ultimate purpose of society and this has forced people into employment and into giving up their freedom in order to produce such wealth<sup>7</sup>. But this exposes a grave contradiction for, on the one hand, capitalism seeks to employ people to produce wealth while, on the other, it is constantly endeavouring to rid itself of employees by replacing them with cheaper technology in order to maximise its wealth. Thus, like some spiders that eat their young, capitalism simultaneously creates and destroys employment, and the ratio of one over the other is such that it has placed humanity in the absurd situation of having to cope with unemployment in a world where there is much work to do. Jobs must now be “created” to keep people busy and all this – contrary to the pious but false claims of econom-

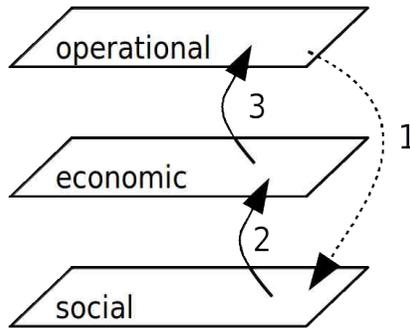
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<sup>6</sup> The first to introduce this new order were the French physiocrats led by Quesnay, who “... transformed economics from the role it had occupied from Aristotle to Rousseau as the management of the social household – first the city, then the state – to its modern role as the science of wealth. In so doing he disengaged economic process from its anthropological role as servant of the socio-political order, and established its claim to be the direct manifestation of the natural order. In other words, he argued that economic process itself embodied natural law and should thus dictate the socio-political order.” (Fox-Genovese, 1976, p.10)

<sup>7</sup> Employment, that is, turning humanity into a workforce and a production resource such as steel or timber was abolished in the Bible as early as the time the Hebrew slaves were released from Egypt. Solomon forcefully reintroduced it among his people (I Kings 5:13-16, 9:15) and subjected the captives he took from neighbouring communities to forced labour (I Kings 9:20-21). He also established a bureaucracy in order to manage his empire (I Kings 9:22). These and other violations of the covenant, exhausted God's patience and resulted in the division of Solomon's kingdom after his death which stained his name for posterity.

ists – is making the rich, richer and the poor, poorer and disrupting the very foundations of society<sup>8</sup>.

Jesus' idea of economics and work was far more wise and humane. He did not allow economics to dictate work, but made economics subservient to work by introducing an appropriate social structure to accomplish it; I have illustrated this in Figure 3 with a normative link – Arrow 1 – travelling from the operational to the social modality.



**Figure 3: Loop Generating Sustainable Growth**

The ideal structure for a serving society is the family, which Christ extended beyond familial and blood relations to all who regarded God as their Father<sup>9</sup>. According to Kuyper:

...the *family* is pictured for us and enjoined on us as the wonderful creation through which the rich tapestry of our organic human life must spin itself out. And here also we need not hesitate. We do not have to organise society, we have only to develop the germ of organisation which God Himself has created in our human nature.

<sup>8</sup> Davies (2004) provides a well argued exposition on the flaws and destructiveness of capitalism.

<sup>9</sup> (Matthew 12:48-50)

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And therefore, away with false individualism, and an anathema on every attempt to break up the *family*.<sup>10</sup>

The family then, is not only the building block of society, but the blueprint that shapes the city of God as a familial city. As we have stated earlier, each family is also a fully commissioned branch of the church<sup>11</sup>, which, says Calvin, is a:

...magnificent eulogium, inasmuch as the name of the Church is applied to a single family! At the same time it is befitting, that all the families of the pious should be regulated in such a manner as to be so many little Churches.<sup>12</sup>

The choice of the family as the model of society brings with it a humane and sustainable type of economics<sup>13</sup> that not only applies to the household but to the whole community. That is, out of the social modality emerges a determinative link to the economic – see Arrow 2 – for, as people are assimilated into a familial structure and become workers<sup>14</sup> serving each other, they generate the resources needed by the whole community to be viable. These resources provide, in turn, the economic sustenance to all workers in the operational modality and is represented by Arrow 3, a determinative link that closes a loop generating an ongoing process of sustainable economic growth than can, in turn, provide the needs of people in the community.<sup>15</sup> There is nothing new about this arrangement, for it is

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<sup>10</sup> (Kuyper, 1950, p. 56, emphasis in the original)

<sup>11</sup> Paul repeatedly refers to actual households as seats of the church (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 1:2).

<sup>12</sup> (Calvin, n.d.a, II, p. 66)

<sup>13</sup> From the Greek *oikonomia* (G3622), literally meaning “management of a household or family” (LSJ).

<sup>14</sup> Paul often addresses members of the church as “fellow workers” (*sunergos*, G4904, 2 Corinthians 1:24), or as “fellow soldiers” (*sustratiotes*, G4961, Philemon 1:2).

<sup>15</sup> This concept of sustainable economic growth is aimed at equitably providing for human needs. It differs from the corresponding capitalist idea of providing for every indulgence of the wealthy which disregards – despite claims to the contrary – warnings that the poor and the environment cannot sustain this extent of indulgence.

the kind of community that existed prior to modernity and its industrial revolution and reflects a far more humane way of living than what we experience today. Reintroducing such a social structure does not mean that we would have to give up the advances of science and technology. On the contrary, given these advances, we can live with the necessary material comfort we require as humans – comforts which are very modest and need not at all threaten our natural environment – and still enjoy all the cultural richness science opens to us.

However, the effectiveness of the loop described in Figure 3 requires that we share resources and services rather than hoard them<sup>16</sup>. It means that our modern concept of private property should be thoroughly reviewed. Kuyper argues that:

...absolute property can be spoken of only by God; that all our property is only *loaned*; that our management is only *stewardship*; and thus that on the one hand only the Lord God can relieve us of the responsibility for that management, and on the other hand, that you have under God no other right of rule that in union with the organic association of mankind, and thus also with the organic association of its possessions... an absolute community of goods is excluded everywhere in Scripture; but Scripture excludes just as completely every illusion of a property right by which you would dispose of it absolutely, as if you were God, without reckoning the needs of others.<sup>17</sup>

That such an attitude was held by the 1<sup>st</sup> Century church is evident from the measures taken by the people immediately after its foundation. For the new community to function, it must

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<sup>16</sup> Accumulation of wealth, even when the owners are generous in sharing it with the poor, produces an imbalance in the economic ecology. While the Bible does not condemn a man for being rich if that is the state in which he became a Christian, it commands him to be generous to the point of selling it all and giving the proceeds to the poor. Moreover, it condemns the pursuit of wealth, especially through the employment of other people. This makes perfect sense today, given the environmental impact the generation of wealth has on the earth's limited resources.

<sup>17</sup> (Kuyper, 1950, p. 53f, emphasis in the original)

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have required economic resources to sustain its members and these were provided by people selling property and contributing to those in need. It was not an “absolute community of goods”, for people did this voluntarily, motivated by an immediate need that may have been created by the church assimilating a large number of poor people and others coming from out of Jerusalem.<sup>18</sup> This was not just a temporary arrangement to cope with the initial situation, but followed the Old Testament arrangements where all land was owned by God and was only made available on trust to communities and families; it could not be sold<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, families were to be self-sustainable because employment for pay was excluded from the economic system. Usury was forbidden and money was used only as a means of exchange.

Although self-sustenance should be the economic aim of a community, there will always be a needy sector in it that requires relief, thus suitable provision should be made for it. The Bible does not limit this relief to “soup-kitchen” charity. Immediate relief is undoubtedly needed for people who are hungry, homeless and destitute, but we should not stop there; one must move up-stream and meet this problem at its source and block the flow of people, especially the young, before they become indigent. This requires more than the usual contribution of money and goods. Kuyper remarks that:

...charity which knows how to give only *money* and not also *itself* is not yet Christian love. Then alone will you be justified when you also offer your time, your ability and the sympathy of your inventiveness to help end such injustice for all time, and when you let nothing hidden in the treasure house of your Christian religion remain unutilized against the cancer which is destroying the dynamic of our society in such disturbing ways.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> (e.g, 2 Corinthians 8:1-4)

<sup>19</sup> (Leviticus 25:23); Solomon broke the law when he sold land in Galilee (1 Kings 9:11).

<sup>20</sup> (Kuyper, 1950, p. 50)

To dedicate our lives and our possessions to such an endeavour requires the visionary faith we have discussed above, a faith that gives us such certainty, that we are willing to sacrifice every comfort in order to work for a civilised society. But, such work also requires competence and competence that serves humanity, in turn, requires not only expertise in each particular field of work, but also a general philosophy, a knowledge of the totality. This knowledge will equip every worker with an “educated erudition” and ensure that their work fits within a total vision of a civilised humanity. We have argued that, to attain this, we must turn the community into a *universitas scholarium et magistrorum* for social change not to be imposed by coercion but brought about by persuasion. The question arises, therefore, what kind of leader is required to build such a social structure. Paul describes his attributes by using the titles *episkopos* and *presbuteros* interchangeably<sup>21</sup>. These are not religious roles but, in common with the term *ekklesia*, are civic offices. Apart from character, which we will deal with in its appropriate domain later, there are only two competences that Paul specifies for this leader. The first one is that he must be pedagogical. The Greek word used by Paul is an adjective (*didaktikos*, G1317); this is normally translated into English as “able to teach”, although this does not convey the full meaning of the original. Describing a person as pedagogical implies more than the ability to teach. It suggests a teaching attitude that is part of their personality and has a bearing on almost everything they do; this quality makes the best teachers<sup>22</sup>. Furthermore, this education should cover every vocation necessary for the community and there-

<sup>21</sup> Compare 1 Timothy 3:2 with Titus 1:5. *Episkopos* (G1985) means *supervisor*, while the Latin equivalent of *presbuteros* (G4245) is *senator*. The usage of the Greek term *presbuteros* in the LXX and its corresponding Hebrew *zaqen* (H2205) in the Old Testament refers to communal leaders; it does not refer to priests or other religious offices (e.g. Exodus 19:7). The role of priest as a separate office disappears in the New Testament; priesthood is bestowed in a symbolic manner upon all Christians (1 Peter 2:9); nor do the terms *episkopos* and *presbuteros* lend any support to the Episcopal, Presbyterian or Roman Catholic church structure.

<sup>22</sup> Jesus' own pedagogical skills have been branded as “brilliant” by one of Sweden's most recognised educationalists (Kroksmark, 1996).

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fore every science and art on which this depends. For Christ, civics is not merely about government, but about every profession needed to rescue people from their oppressors and integrate them into a civilised society. The church's greatest mistake today is to have theologians as its leaders. We need leaders who, in addition to being able to think historically, are equipped with a thorough understanding of the Bible, and who also have a grasp of sociology, jurisprudence, technology, economics and other such disciplines that are essential to address today's problems of humanity and liberate them from their oppressors. I do not say this lightly. I say it after years of researching sociologically the needs of communities in crisis and after careful consideration of how the prophets expected these needs to be addressed in the city of God. Some may think that this puts unreasonable intellectual demands on leaders, but this implies a narrow concept of education and an underestimation of the ability of people to learn. As a teacher, I have witnessed my students<sup>23</sup> coping well with several disciplines simultaneously – just as they were fluent in more than one language. People who are not prepared to put in the necessary effort should not aspire to leadership. In the Bible, God thoroughly educates his leaders – e.g. Moses, Solomon and Paul – and equips them for their task.

The second competence demanded of an elder is an ability to care<sup>24</sup> for his community. His eligibility for this role must be proven by his conduct as a husband and father; for now he must be a father not only to his family, but to the community. Love, marriage and fatherhood are essential skills for the well-being of the family as well as for the whole community. These are skills that a man must learn and a woman must understand, for their love is pulled by normative and determinative strings intertwining the modalities of both the vital and intellectual domains in a manner that differs between a man and a woman. The epi-

<sup>23</sup> Student is a synonym of disciple, *mathetes* (G3101) in the New Testament (e.g. Mathew 10:24).

<sup>24</sup> (1 Timothy 3:5); the original word translated as *care* is *epimeleomai* (G1959). It is also used in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:34-35).

centre of a family is the woman; her womb is her childrens' first home and her milk their first food. The family is imprinted in the body and psyche of a woman. It is not so for a man; for him, domesticity and love is a learned skill. This starts right from the moment they fall in love. Falling in love is something that happens in their psyche. In a woman, that love remains and grows permanently in her psyche. The psyche of a man and its emotions are less permanent than in a woman. Unless the man transfers this from his psyche to his convictions – that is, from the psychic modality to the credal modality – and commits himself to love, his love will easily evaporate. This may often be observed after a divorce; the father is more likely to distance himself or even to abandon his children, while the mother will hold onto them regardless of her circumstances. And, as we have seen above, conviction and commitment are part of the intellect and therefore man must, far more than a woman, be taught how to love.

Yet the emotional constancy of a woman, as well as her lesser physical strength when compared with a man, makes her vulnerable. Therefore it is normal for her to seek stability and avoid risk both to herself and her children. On the other hand, man's lesser emotional intensity makes him more audacious and numb to risk. This can be either positive or negative. For man, especially when he is young, is like a motorcar with a powerful engine that needs weight on its wheels to stay on the road. Normally, this weight is supplied by the responsibility of leading and protecting his family. If he marries and is committed to his love<sup>25</sup>, he will want to steer his wife and children, for it is instinctive in man to desire to be in charge. This should be viewed in a positive light, for it does not necessarily reflect selfishness, but, on the contrary, shows a desire to realise his dreams from which his wife and children should benefit. A woman intuitively knows this; if she loves her husband and she knows that he loves her to the point of being ready to lie down his life for her,

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<sup>25</sup> This does not mean that single men or women cannot live meaningful lives and make positive contributions to society, but a community needs families and the normal path is marriage and family.

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as God demands of him, she will willingly follow him. Deep in her woman's femininity is a desire to follow the man she loves, and who loves her, and help him realise his dreams. I must stress again that these desires, dreams, intuitions and knowledge comprise a mixture of both normative and determinative links within love; that is, they combine things that are already part of masculinity and femininity with things that men and women ought to do or be.

All of this can sound old fashioned or traditional and unjustly be labelled as mere “male domination”<sup>26</sup>, but I do not think people today realise how much has been lost by rejecting such love. Feminism has played an important role in destroying it and the main victims of this are women themselves. For feminism and its notion of equality has allowed the average post-modern man to shed his familial and communal responsibilities and, to put it bluntly, to become a drone to society and a menace to woman, whom he treats not as his wife, but as his mistress. Expressions such as “partner”, “de facto spouse”, and “significant other” are mere euphemisms to conceal that he does not really love her for better, for worse, in sickness and in health and until death do them part. Rather, he loves her only while she remains physically attractive and allows him to do as he pleases. If these criteria are not met, he leaves her and gets another woman, “partner” that is. Despite all the glamour attributed to female executives and women in high places, which relatively few enjoy, the plight of many women today is that of an abandoned mistress, often with children in tow. This is not just folly, but cruelty.

### **Character Domain**

We now reach the domain that sets the standard for our character, both individually and communally. Two things should be noted before examining each of the three modalities that comprise it. Firstly, the standard of character is extremely high;

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<sup>26</sup> There is a vast difference between “male domination”, which Christianity deplores, and “fatherly leadership”, which it promotes.

it is perfection. We are to be as perfect as God<sup>27</sup>. This naturally, in an anthropomorphic manner, he reveals to us as a father, especially as he shows us his character in Christ<sup>28</sup>. Any vision of life and society that sets its eyes on something less than perfection will offer humanity less than what it ought to be. Tolstoy insists that "...only this ideal of complete infinite perfection has power over men, and stimulates them to action. A moderate perfection loses its power of influencing men's hearts."<sup>29</sup> Secondly, perfection in character ought to be made concrete in all other domains, starting with the operational modality, for character is perfected by work. Character is not attained by retiring from the world and engaging in religious activities; on the contrary, it is developed by confronting the world in order to make it a better place. Just as one knows a tree by its fruit, one should discern people by what they produce rather than what they pretend to be<sup>30</sup>. Jesus was perfected by the carrying of his cross, which included working among sinners and publicans – ignorant and helpless people – in the disreputable side of town and with the constant pestering of Pharisees and priests<sup>31</sup>.

There are many aspects that describe what our character ought to be, but they can be summed up in three modalities representing justice, beauty and ethics. Each of these has its own science – see Table 1. Moving in an upward direction, the first modality in this domain is the juridical; it represents the law of God<sup>32</sup>. When considering what it means to be just, we must take into account the vast span of the Mosaic Law; it addresses all aspects of human life, including health, agriculture, social relations, nature and so on. Moreover, being just in the Biblical sense is not limited to our dealings with others. Nor is it limited to defending the rights of the poor and destitute. We are required to go beyond defending and do, according to the Bible,

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<sup>27</sup> (Matthew 5:48)

<sup>28</sup> (Colossians 1:19)

<sup>29</sup> (Tolstoy, 2003, IV)

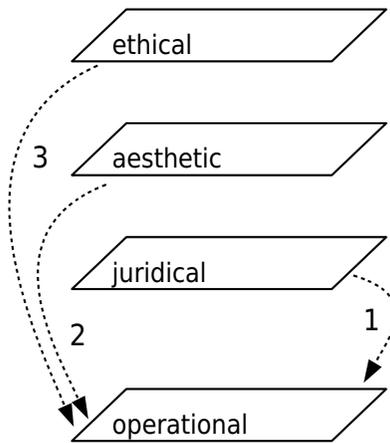
<sup>30</sup> (Luke 6:43-44)

<sup>31</sup> (Hebrews 2:10, 5:8-9; Philippians 2:6-8; Matthew 12:2, 14, 24)

<sup>32</sup> (Psalm 19:7; Deuteronomy 32:4)

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the judging itself<sup>33</sup>. This must be interpreted within historical reason, that is, it means that we must strive for a just society as a whole, by projecting the city of God – which happens to be also named the “city of justice”<sup>34</sup> – into every part of our communities. To attain this, justice must imbue every form of work: work must not only be carried out with justice but must also contribute to justice through the normative link flowing from the juridical to the operational modality. This is illustrated by the downward direction of Arrow 1 in Figure 4 (we will discuss its upward direction, and that of the other arrows, shortly).



**Figure 4: Character Domain – Normative Links**

What does the normative link specifically mean in our work? It means, for example, that the responsibility of a physician is not limited to dealing fairly with his patients, but that it also extends to the practice of medicine as a whole; it means that he should be a voice of justice in the medical profession acting as an advocate for all patients and not only his own. This extension of

<sup>33</sup> (Psalm 82:2; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3). The Hebrew word *shaphat* (H8199) is often translated as *defend*, suggesting merely advocating. But its literal meaning is not to advocate, but to judge.

<sup>34</sup> (Isaiah 1:26)

responsibility is needed in every type of work. I find it hard to think where, in our day and age, this is not a pressing necessity.

If we step up from the juridical modality we encounter the aesthetic modality where beauty resides, not in the eye of the beholder but, in the character of God<sup>35</sup>. It is imprinted in his creation and in humanity; everything that he has created is beautiful. Although the Bible attributes beauty to men<sup>36</sup>, it is far more often referred to as a feminine quality, “beautiful in form and beautiful to look upon”<sup>37</sup>. An appreciation of such beauty and its divine origin is not the monopoly of the Hebrews; a wonderful expression of this beauty – one which can be witnessed at the Louvre – is carved out in stone in the Hellenic Venus of Milo. The gentle feminine curves of Aphrodite have a tender and poetic quality that inspire an emotion in the observer akin to falling in love. But it is an emotion that follows reflection, for there is an important difference between beauty and allure, whether feminine or otherwise. While allure is directed to our psyche, beauty is first aimed at our intellect and then at our psyche. Allure can reach every living creature; beauty captured by the sculpture of Venus is only grasped by humans; a bee is allured by a flower's bright colours but only man can appreciate its aesthetic. Of course, allure is not necessarily bad; the bee produces honey as a result of it and the allurement of sex within marriage stimulates affection and produces children. But, due to its power to manipulate, it can be used in a destructive manner such as in modern commercial advertising. Pure beauty, on the other hand, is always good, for it can be intellectually discerned by its perfection<sup>38</sup>; that is why the fine arts require education to be appreciated. Naturally, works of arts such as painting, symphonies and literature are par excellence a product of

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<sup>35</sup> (Psalm 27:4; 90:17); the ancient usage of the root of the Hebrew word *no'am* (H5278) supports its translation as the *beauty* of God (TWOT).

<sup>36</sup> For example Joseph (Genesis 39:6), David (1 Samuel 16:18) and Absalom (2 Samuel 14:25).

<sup>37</sup> (TWOT, H3308)

<sup>38</sup> (Psalm 50:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:21); although they are not always translated as such, the literal meaning of the original words (*yophiy*, H3308 and *kalos*, G2570) is *beauty*.

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the normative link between the aesthetic and operational modalities (Arrow 2). But this link should not be limited to works of art, but must become the standard of excellence of every work.

We next reach the ethical modality which, being the last modality, is also the most normative both over culture and nature. Christian philosophy defines ethics as being distinct from justice, a difference that is not always understood in our times for often, what is branded as ethics is actually only justice<sup>39</sup>. Justice imposes a right on one person and an equivalent duty on another, which is why justice is usually represented by a set of scales. Ethics, as defined by Jesus, requires us to go beyond this and to go the extra mile<sup>40</sup>, imposing a duty on one person for which another has no right. It is like a set of scales out of balance, with one side giving more than the other. The essence of this ethic is signified by the Greek word *agape* (G26) used by the New Testament, meaning a type of love implying self-denial and applying to the whole of our person, including our convictions, feelings, thoughts and our physical strength. *Agape*, as the essence of Christian ethics, sets it apart from all other conceptions of ethics by requiring us to take up our own cross and follow Christ<sup>41</sup>. This cross does not represent our own problems, but our neighbour's problems, for Christ's ethics is always directed towards serving our neighbour, as he illustrated in his parable of the Good Samaritan<sup>42</sup>.

In a world full of needy people, carrying our cross cannot be satisfied by mere charitable activities that are ancillary to our day's paid work; it demands the whole of that day's work as illustrated by the normative link – Arrow 3 – between the ethical and operational modalities. Unamuno says that:

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<sup>39</sup> Dooyeweerd (1958), a lawyer, makes a clear distinction between these in his philosophy; I have provided a systemic analysis of ethics in society (de Raadt, 2006).

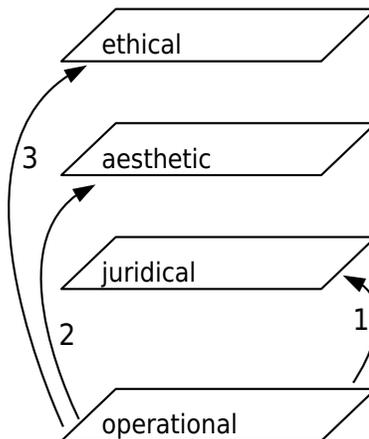
<sup>40</sup> (Matthew 5:41)

<sup>41</sup> (Mark 8:34)

<sup>42</sup> (Luke 10:30-37)

...there is nothing better for each one of us than the cross of our work in our own civil occupation. For Christ did not tell us “take my cross and follow me”, but “take your cross and follow me”: each one his own cross, for the Saviour bears his cross alone. And therefore, the imitation of Christ does not consist in that monastic ideal that shines in the book with Kempis' vulgar name, an ideal that can apply to a very limited number of persons and is therefore anti-Christian. But, to imitate God is for each one of us to take our own cross, the cross of our own civil occupation – as Christ took his own cross of his civil as well as religious occupation – and embrace it and carry it with our sight set on God, aiming to make a true prayer of the activities proper to our occupation. By making shoes, the shoemaker can gain glory if he aims at perfection as our heavenly Father is perfect.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, we must examine the upward arrows in Figure 5 running from the operational modality to each one of the modalities in the character domain and determining how we attain nobility of character.



**Figure 5: Character Domain – Determinative Links**

<sup>43</sup> (Unamuno, 1912, p.130); in a similar spirit, Sibelius regarded his symphonies as “professions of faith” (Goss, 2009).

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While there are many criteria of human nobility, they all separate some people from others; that is, nobility has a social connotation and divides people into classes. Some believe that nobility is inherited by birth, and this separates a person from the commoners and makes him a member of the aristocracy. It is a pagan idea which, when carried to its extreme, allows some people, usually kings and emperors such as Domitian, to declare themselves gods. This has been gradually replaced with the modern idea that nobility is reflected by one's possessions and especially one's ability to make money. Our modern aristocracy is comprised of "successful" businessmen and businesswomen who, depending on how much money they own, are admitted to specific social groups such as "millionaires club" or "billionaires club". Then, there is the monastic approach to nobility, which requires that one step out of the world and join a monastery and develop character through religious practices. But Christ set work as the means of character building, for one cannot develop character in a vacuum. As our work progresses, our character will also grow leading us to the type of nobility that Ortega y Gasset points out does not depend on our being members of a better group than others, but consists in demanding more of ourselves<sup>44</sup>.

### **Natural Domains**

"[L]ife must be cultured, but culture must be vital" says Ortega y Gasset<sup>45</sup> warning us that the exaltation of nature – typical of our times – and neglect of culture leads to barbarism and that the opposite is as bad; it leads to decadence. Any notion of spirituality that does not connect with the work of God's hands – the fish, the mountains and the trees – is decadent and non-biblical. We may hope for a new sky and a new earth<sup>46</sup>, but that does not imply that we should neglect, let alone, despise our

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<sup>44</sup> (Ortega y Gasset, 2004b)

<sup>45</sup> (n.d., p.51)

<sup>46</sup> (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:1)

present sky and earth; certainly not in this life. For while the sky and the earth will physically be re-created, they will nevertheless retain their historical continuity due to Christ having reconciled and taken possession of all things<sup>47</sup>; even when our bodies be eaten by worms, yet in our flesh will we see God<sup>48</sup>. And our bodies not only belong to Christ, but are his limbs<sup>49</sup>; limbs through which Christ continues his work in this world.

This makes the natural sciences as important as the human sciences; "...one who lacks a knowledge of natural philosophy practises moral philosophy like a lame man holding a ball."<sup>50</sup> We have integrated the natural sciences into our philosophy by defining three domains in nature (see Table 1) which are somewhat symmetrical to the domains in culture. That is, there is an analogy between the three natural domains and the three cultural domains. For just as the intellectual domain provides the foundation for an intelligent community, the order domain is the foundation upon which nature has been created<sup>51</sup>. Its two modalities – logical and numeric – offer us valuable tools to understanding nature. Its corresponding sciences – formal logic and mathematics – are most useful for physical reasoning, for they permit us to model a whole gamut of aspects of the universe and our lives. We must emphasise that there is nothing wrong with physical reason itself, as long as we do not regard it as independent from historical reason. That is, as long as we do not endeavour to understand things through pure physical reason pretending that we are thinking independently from historical reason.

Just as the intellectual domain provides the foundation for the civic domain, so the order domain provides the foundation of the material domain. In this domain we find four modalities with their main corresponding sciences (see Table 1). The regulatory modality is most important to the vital domain and is placed immediately below it, for regulation is essential to biolo-

<sup>47</sup> (Colossians 1:16-21)

<sup>48</sup> (Job 19:26)

<sup>49</sup> (1Corinthians 6:15); *melos* (G3196) literally means a limb.

<sup>50</sup> (Melanchthon, 1999, p. 129)

<sup>51</sup> (Proverbs 8:22-31)

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gical life. We have said that the character domain must find expression in civic life; likewise the vital domain manifests itself concretely in the material domain. Yet, this does not mean that we can reduce life to mechanics<sup>52</sup>; we can manipulate life only as it presents itself in regulation, energy, motion and space, but none can handle life in itself. Despite all the scientific and technological advancements, laboratory experiments aimed at producing life, even in its most elementary form, have failed. Life cannot be produced, it needs to be created. But there is another way in which the character domain finds an analogy in vitality and especially in the psychic modality. Not only are love, beauty and justice perceived through our psyche, but they are also expressed through it. Thus kissing and hugging are important means by which we communicate love. This not only provides a bridge that unites humanity, but also a bridge from humanity to the rest of creation. When a dog licks us with its moist tongue, we are not only aware of the animal's affection for us, but we are reminded of the love of God, even to the point of commanding this creature to pamper us with caresses.

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<sup>52</sup> This, de La Mettrie (2009) and d'Holbach (2005) attempted in the 18th Century and some naive scientists still endeavour to do today.

## 8 Conclusion

I am now retired from university life and have completed my part of the task to provide students with an education that addressed both their hearts and their minds. I designed a syllabi that would inspire them and orient them professionally into service in their communities. I wanted them to understand the demands that true ethics imposed upon their lives and equip them with the intellectual tools to attain these demands. All this I founded on the philosophy of Christ which I have delineated in the previous chapters. This has not been a straight journey. On the contrary, like Bunyan's pilgrim, I have repeatedly taken the wrong turn only to find myself in a place in which I had not wished to be and having to walk all the way back. Moreover, I have not worked totally alone; despite my opponents, I have had the support of loyal friends – chief among them, my own wife – without whom I would have achieved nothing.

To what extent have we succeeded in our task, especially in the light of the many setbacks we have experienced in accomplishing it? There is at least something in which we can claim concrete success; despite the opposition encountered, we have demonstrated that it is possible to implement such an educational programme and have students appreciate it and produce excellent academic results. There is nothing that can match Christ's life and ideas to inspire and enthuse young people. Has this education resulted in a perceptible impact in communities? At this stage I only know that there are hundreds of our former students who have been exposed to our form of education and who have sufficiently learned to think historically to pass their exams. Whether they practise what they learned I do not know, but historical reason tells me that sometime, most probably long after we have departed this world, some of these students, or their successors, may start turning the world upside-down and bring into reality things we could only dream about. That this may already be happening is suggested to us by a note recently received from one of our students (from Singapore) on graduating. What she says warms my heart, so I will let her have the last word in this book:

I would like to thank both of you, from the very bottom of my heart; thank you for the academic and more importantly non-academic mentoring and guidance for the past 4 years. I don't think I can ever capture the goodness and direction you have both given me in my life enough in words. I have gained more than just knowledge with Multi-Modal Systems Thinking. It has given me a systemically justified path and a purpose in life and that means more than the grades I have achieved or the certification I have just earned...I have started to meet quite a few like minded people, and I think we might be onto something bigger as the Lord leads...

# Appendix 1

In memory of Jacob de Raadt  
(1899 – 1951)

Netherlands Association in Chile

Monthly Bulletin, Volume 4, Number 8, December  
1951<sup>1</sup>

I met him many years ago in a rather rude manner, when I was still a reckless youth. On my first visit to the Ivens bookshop I discovered on its counter a book that seduced me. I was attended by a blond girl, almost a teenager. I haggled over the price because of an inveterate bad habit of mine. Since despite my efforts I did not get any discount, I asked uneasily:

“Who do I talk to, to get a rebate?”

“With this gentleman”, said the girl sweetly, pointing to a tall, skinny, slightly gawky, white-haired man with a stern look.

“You speak to him, I beg you”, I pleaded intimidated. “He looks like an ogre! I dare not...”

“He is my uncle!” she said embarrassed, as if afraid to confess the truth.

Then she went to her relative and spoke to him briefly in German, as they peered with eager curiosity, studying me with care. Then, the uncle approached me saying with a thick and low accent:

“So I look like an ogre!”

As he spoke to me his face changed as if by magic. An inflexible sweetness relaxed its tight lines: kindness brightened the blue of his cold and calm eyes and a look of subtle irony was in the corner of his mouth.

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<sup>1</sup> This is my translation from the original containing eulogies written both in Dutch and Spanish.

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“Since you have been frank to label me as an ogre, I will be happy to you a give a small discount”, he said smiling, “for we are not as bad as we look”.

The person who thus spoke was don Jacobo de Raadt.

That was the first lesson he gave me, without hurting my feelings, but none the less rewarding. It was not the last! Attracted by the gentlemanliness and nobility of his manner and perhaps moved by the secret and unspoken hope of getting other discounts, I went back to the Ivens bookshop. These short visits became a habit. I liked to talk, even if for a few moments, with this cultured and pleasant man who knew how to disguise behind the strong and determined mask of his face, a tenderness and kindness that were truly maternal. Nothing led one to suspect the former sailor behind his current work. But undoubtedly it was this earlier profession that helped shape his character and heart. For the sea expands horizons and gives perspective to things and persons and the frequent dealing with multiple and disparate people softens the harshness of temper, it grinds down with its regular contact the rough edges of our character and makes it tolerant and understanding.

If talent does not dismiss sensitivity and imagination, and does not despise the accumulation of experience, then it is wise. And don Jacobo de Raadt was just that: one of those privileged beings who did not set up as the north of their lives to treasure riches, which bring enmity and division, opening unbridgeable chasms of hatred and resentment. On the contrary, he judged that the sublime mission of mankind is to give oneself entirely to the other... without seeking a mean reward. And his kind heart: paternal, guileless, transparent as glass, early discovered that, to the extent that one denies oneself, in that proportion, one is richer. And that great spiritual treasure of his he made available to his neighbour without limit or measure. He was a needed and requested man. Many sought his disinterested advice while searching for peace and tranquillity. And there was none of those who approached him who did not leave richer and more peaceful and joyful.

## ♣ Appendix 1: In memory of Jacob de Raadt 123

The last time I saw him was at the funeral of his niece, the younger sister of the girl who many years earlier had introduced me to him that shopping morning. I never suspected then that I was looking at him for the last time. On that sad and mournful ceremony, he was magnificent. He farewelled the sad remains of the girl who withered in the prime of youth; he lavishly endowed her many troubled friends, with comfort, encouragement and hope. And all of us wept like children as we listened to him speak with such deep feeling and thought of the dearly departed friend. That is the supreme gift of those who do not know what they say ... because it is the heart that speaks, and not convenience that dictates the words.

That is what we his friends deplore in his untimely demise: the lack of a mentor, a guide who, watching events unfold from a high lookout and a cleanliness of soul, does not put his efforts in gathering that misleading dust that glitters, which is gold, and which brings disgrace by kindling the burning greed of men.

His existence was not in vain or sterile for, after all – as he himself claimed – what matters is not how long you live, but how you live. Jacobo de Raadt is not dead! His bright and great spirit was too large to be locked in the confined enclosure of his privileged heart. He lives with us; because his existence extended beyond the narrow limits of his frail and worn out body to flow over magnificently on so many bereaved friends, like fertile seeds charitably dropped in the wide furrow of others' pain ...

Alfonso G. Huidobro Toro

—o—

I have been invited to contribute to the farewell and remembrance of our friend Jaap de Raadt, who recently and prematurely departed from us to enjoy his rest from the works left behind.

## 124 Appendix 1: In memory of Jacob de Raadt ♣

This is a painful task, but enjoyable at the same time, for it concerns a true friend, whose friendship I have enjoyed for the past 28 years. I met him while he was in full practice of his chosen profession as an officer of the Dutch merchant navy, travelling on almost all the seas of the globe.

It was at Boulogne, in March 1923, when, along with my wife, daughter Elsie and sister-in-law Alma, we met the transatlantic "Spaarndam" of Dutch flag, to take us to Mexican shores, because at that time, my family and I were based in the capital of the Aztec nation. I have never forgotten the moment when we approached the charming "Spaarndam" on the bridge of which, we sighted from a distance, several young officers, blond and good-looking, with their eyes very interested in their new travelling companions, for it was a cargo steamer, with few accommodations for cabin passengers.

We made a very pleasant journey, for we formed in it a single family of passengers and officials. Miss Alma on her first Atlantic crossing, fully enjoyed the charms of such an event. And her older sister, more expert in such ventures, soon realised that a fire had begun on board.

"But he truly loves me", said the younger sister "it is not a joke, he has told me!"

"Nonsense, nonsense, these sailors are all the same, on each trip they leave one more love. Do not believe him!"

"No, sister, Jaap is not like that. Ask him, he is an exception!"

And so things went on, until we reached the beautiful harbour of Havana, where Jaap took off with his conquest on a tour of those tropical landscapes. A few days later, on landing at Veracruz, Jaap obtained special permission from his captain, who was also our guide and good friend during the crossing, in order to accompany us on our journey to the capital. And there the two happiest people in the world promised each other eternal fidelity. But the protective sister remained suspicious and only began to believe that there are sailors and sailors, when Jaap visited us again on his next trip. On that day, the ice was broken and the pledge between the two was definitely sealed. Less than a year later, our sailor, with his captain's dip-

♣ Appendix 1: In memory of Jacob de Raadt 125

loma in his pocket, called again; this time in Europe to take his chosen future life partner to his side.

Eight years went by and the sea lion grew tired of his odyssey, which continuously separated him from the side of his young wife and first child, Rudolf. They then came to settle in these hospitable lands of Chile, which over the years became his beloved second fatherland. During his 19 years living in Chile, he forged through his perseverance, intelligence and tenacious work not only a comfortable living, but also sincere friendships and many of those relationships that enhance human life.

His years among us, during which we have been blessed with his friendship, have been too short. In human terms, we think that his stay among us should have lasted for a long time to come. But we should not murmur! The creator of everything and everyone, whose thoughts and ways are higher than ours, has called him to his deserved rest and we welcome it. Jaap's footsteps will forever be indelible; we will continue our pilgrimage by following them.

Till we meet again!  
Juan Suter

—o—

To Mrs. de Raadt and all Netherlanders.

His advice, we must now grudgingly miss,  
his work full of character, erased will not be.

He has his name with noble leadership,  
In the heart of many Dutchmen inscribed.

Whether it was early or late,  
everyone could come to him with questions,  
he responded tactfully,  
always providing his generous advice.

## 126 Appendix 1: In memory of Jacob de Raadt ♣

But now; perhaps we demanded too much of him?  
Now he is taken away from us.

Yet, the Dutchmen will not flinch  
they will help to carry your load with solidarity.

He regretfully from us departed  
He will always in our hearts remain.

And we know, we have not lost him  
He abides, in the eternal dawn.

A Netherlander

—o—

### The Burial

The rapid pace by which we live has been suddenly halted by the appearance of death. We cannot escape its all entrapping grasp. In the recent war that has hit our fatherland, the survivors there have been more prepared than we are here that some day, they would have to visit a grave. Yet, the burial that has now taken place has struck us with unexpected swiftness. Despite the short time of preparation, the funeral of Jaap took place in a quiet and ordered atmosphere. This was not only appropriate for the occasion, but also a token that the character of the departed had impressed itself upon those he left behind.

On this shimmering summer day, in which nature showed itself at its greatest beauty, friends of Jaap gathered from all parts of Santiago and its vicinities, to accompany him to his last place of rest. At the meeting point, the house of his brother-in-law, few words were said. We were too startled by the sudden removal from our midst of this faithful friend. We shed a gentle tear where the coffin stood between candlesticks.

Prior to the start of our sorrowful procession, his brother-in-law led our thoughts to the land towards which Jaap de Raadt had began his journey, a land where there is no mourning and

## ♣ Appendix 1: In memory of Jacob de Raadt 127

all tears are dried. He prayed God's strength to be given to the family members on this difficult march to Jaap's grave.

Inside and later outside the house, people formed two rows, between which the pall was carried by his sons and nearest friends to the hearse. Wreaths and flowers were placed above the pall. A procession of thirty cars followed the hearse; in the first car travelled Jaap's immediate family and The Netherlands' ambassador and Mrs. Kasteel. The procession travelled slowly through the streets of Santiago onto the city's General Cemetery. Here friends and acquaintances of Jaap joined those already in the procession to pay their last respects to him and to follow the pall as it was carried to the grave. At our arrival, we formed a semicircle around the pall now placed before the open grave, to hear the final farewell words.

In addition to what he said at his home, Jaap's brother-in-law spoke further words on behalf of the church where he had exercised such a prominent role. Any hopelessness, which may have seized us as we stood before the open grave were now wiped away by the words assuring us that what was here buried was only the material sheath. Jaap's spirit himself is now with the celestial father. We then jointly prayed "Our father..."

Afterwards, the President of the Dutch Association in Chile, Mr. van Dorp, expressed the feelings of the members of the Dutch colony. In a few simple words he set Jaap de Raadt before our eyes and reminded us of his position in our small group. He was a man with a large heart for all of us who left a void that will not be filled.

Finally, the Dutch ambassador in Chile, Dr. P. A. Kaasteel, conveyed words of sympathy to the family on behalf of the Dutch government. He reminded us how, on a distant post, this son of the Netherlands had always faithfully served his fatherland whenever the opportunity arose. He had always exalted the name of the Netherlands. Dr. Kaasteel concluded with the comforting words of the Bible:

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on".  
"Yes", says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labour, for their deeds will follow them".

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After this, the coffin was gently lowered down into the grave and we quietly walked back, leaving behind a great and faithful friend. His life and his friendship should be an inspiration to us Netherlanders in Chile that when there is a need or an appeal we should come to the aid of our fellow man.

His brother-in-law assured us that Jaap de Raadt now rests as in his younger days.

He rests in peace  
Author unknown

—o—

Christmas 1951

This issue will bring to you, as life often brings, an apparent yet strong incongruity.

On the one hand, we have the season of Christmas, the festival of a birth. On the other, there is mourning among the circle of Dutch citizens in Chile, due to the death of one of its best members.

To express the grief that we surely experience, this issue of "Small but Dutch" is dedicated to the memory of him who gave so much of his strength to our association and its bulletin.

Yet — it is as if he himself still would remind us — the "Light of the World" as well as the "Light" of his own life cannot be overshadowed.

Being modest of character, he did not use the pages of this bulletin to promote his own philosophy of life, but now we can use them to reveal what lay deep inside him.

Deep within him, Jaap de Raadt regarded himself a child of "the Child of Bethlehem". The love of the "Light of the World" fed his own love and affection for all of us.

We spoke deliberately of the "apparent" incongruities of life, because the light that de Raadt trusted can cast all darkness away. His family, at this time, also feels surrounded by this light.

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For this reason, it is remarkable that the death of de Raadt should coincide with the season of commemorating the birth of the "Child of the Light". For in a personal conversation, he affirmed to me his belief in a perfect life after this earthly life. His passing away in Christ, was for him only an entrance to that new life for which he had been prepared.

We honour Jaap de Raadt's memory in this Christmas 1951 issue of "Small but Dutch" in his own spirit: above his grave toll the bells of Jerusalem.

Author Unknown

—o—

Jacob Adrianus Pieter Gerrit de Raadt, one of the founders and first President of the Dutch Association in Chile and an editor of its bulletin "Small but Dutch".

As a young man, he felt called to serve in the merchant navy. Later and for almost twenty years, he lived in Chile, where his dedication and hard work gained him the respect of his peers.

The material needs of life did not lead him to forget its spiritual side; this old sailor also was an ordained pastor of the New Apostolic Church.

He came across as a strong and high-spirited man. On Sunday 25 November, he was still full of courage; the medical treatment to which he had to submit himself did not frighten him or deter him. He remained the same until the last days in the hospital: cheerful and full of faith.

We were taken by surprise when a fast developing and treacherous sickness struck his seemingly strong body in a few days. On 6 December, he died, gently and calmly and lovingly surrounded by his own.

Cheerfulness and kind-heartedness were the foundation of his character.

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A good husband and father, he was also a friend and helper, a role model of a real Dutchman, who loved his country and upheld its name.

For all this, all of us will remember him gratefully and all Dutch people, who have known him in Chile, will feel a heavy loss at his passing away.

This, and the knowledge that in God's providence everything works for our good, will give comfort and strength to his family now undergoing a heavy trial. Each one of us shares with them in their grief.

Dr. P. A. Kasteel  
Ambassador of the Netherlands

—o—

The Dutch association in Chile mourns. It has lost its best member. Jaap de Raadt, its real founder, its President for many years and later editor of "Small but Dutch" has been removed from our midst.

However, he was more than these official functions express; he was a worthy friend of all compatriots in Chile, a most energetic worker for the interests of the Dutch association.

Many of his compatriots, from Santiago as well as from other places, came regularly to him. Sometimes they just came to have a chat and to hear the latest news about the colony, to speak with him concerning some special matter or to ask him for advice. They not only came because he could be easily reached in the centre of the city. But also because they knew that he always had a pleasant word and that he would listen with interest to what they had to tell. They knew they would find good advice and moral — and frequently also material — support.

Jaap was broadly educated and had an intense interest in almost everything. This explains why both as a merchant navy officer and as a bookseller — two very divergent professions — he found such success and joy in his work. He loved nature and

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the outdoors. As soon as he had a couple of days free, he would set off for a drive with his wife and children. Moreover, he was an articulate speaker, who could win over an audience for his ideas or effectively set them down in writing.

He was kept busy, for many friends would bring their problems only to him. He was a compassionate and religious man; he always tried to help his fellow men whenever this was possible, he brought consolation to the sorrowful and sought peace where there was conflict.

It is not surprising that someone with his character traits would be convinced of the need to form an association for Netherlanders in Chile, to achieve together what one single person would never be able to attain. The Dutch Association owes him great gratitude, not only for his role in founding the association, but especially for the way in which he, first as President and later as editor of the bulletin "Small but Dutch", brought compatriots in Chile closer to each other. Let us honour his memory by continuing building on the work that he has started and to which he gave, for many years, his best efforts.

However, if the blow with which we have been struck feels heavy, it is small compared to what his wife and children are experiencing. How visible was Jaap's great love for his family manifested in everyday life! With how much interest he followed the work of his oldest son and with how much fatherly care he often spoke concerning the future of the young boys!

May his wife and children find some consolation in the knowledge that so many compatriots accompany them in their deep pain. In their present situation they are able to receive the same sincere understanding that Jaap himself showed so many times to so many of his compatriots.

J. F. van Dorp

—o—

So gods are wandering yet upon the earth.  
One of them sits, perhaps, beside your hearth.

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Think not that any god can ever die,  
He walks beside you, but you shield your eye.

He bears no spear, nor wears a purple gown.  
But by his deeds a god might be made known.  
It is a rule unbroken, be advised:  
when gods are on the earth, they go disguised!

When with a beck'ning glance  
we are welcomed to love's feast  
and answer, cold and careless,  
the very least;

when comes a heav'n-sent healing  
for souls in deep distress,  
and when, free from all reck'ning,  
a hand will bless:

then comes a light to spread  
such joy to a soul surprised –  
that seated by our side  
was A GOD DISGUISED.

From the poem "God in Disguise" by Hjalmar Gullberg

—o—

It is almost taken for granted by the Dutch colony now living in Chile that there exists a Dutch Association. We know each other and sympathise with each other. We have a support fund that provides for the hard days and those of us who find themselves in difficulties are assisted with advice and action. Moreover, the newcomer does not find himself "entirely on foreign ground" but always meets a compatriot who will help him stand on his own feet.

We are indeed no longer the "alien Netherlanders" of former times: the ones that knew no one, with nothing else than letters

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to and from "home" and without a network of friends who could give us advice and who could share our sorrows. If you are sick and you must be hospitalised, you are now grateful when one of your new friends or colleagues pays you a visit. In the past, things were different; you would be alone with your thoughts and with Spanish [non-Dutch] speaking doctors and nurses.

I remember the burial of a young Dutchman, just before the war. There were only four or five people to pay their last respects. This was the way in former days and we were simply quite lonely in our foreign surrounds.

Nevertheless, the Dutch Association in Chile has introduced great change. During the years of its existence a new feeling of solidarity has grown; the joy of others is together celebrated, the sorrow, mutually borne. We prize knowing each other but it is even a greater gift when friendship is delivered with love in a situation of need.

How did this fellowship arise in our colony and who gave it its momentum? We must go back in time to the establishment of our association. During the war years, an organisation "Holanda Libre" [Free Holland] was formed with the objective of raising money for the liberation of the fatherland and to give support to the destitute among us. Holanda Libre, under the leadership of Mr van Oven, consisted of a committee of five persons with the task of allocating the funds gathered through the fixed monthly contributions of a number of compatriots.

In the first years following the invasion of the Netherlands, there was plenty of interest in "Holanda Libre" and given the small number of compatriots living in Chile, much good work was performed. In the end, however, a difference of opinion arose within the committee concerning the direction that should be followed. A section of the people who contributed to the fund felt that their minor influence on the committee represented a small voice in the colony. Most of these people had lived in Chile for many years and had given their support to the temporary organisation.

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In several private conversations members of the committee insisted on a reorganisation. After a lively debate during a general meeting of Holanda Libre, it was proposed to the committee that Holanda Libre should be democratised. A general meeting would be called to write out provisional statutes that would then be presented to the committee for approval and would be followed by an election of a new committee. After mutual consultation the committee rejected this proposal, and proposed instead the formation of an association.

That evening, the compatriot's small voice found its spokesman and defender in Jacob de Raadt. De Raadt, a deeply religious man and pastor of his church, was not easily persuaded to take on the leadership of the new association. It was not easy to persuade him to sacrifice some of the time he dedicated to his pastoral duties in his church for the benefit of the Dutch colony. Yet, once he gave himself to the task, he worked with heart and soul for the establishment of the new association. The way he worked and his great enthusiasm was so contagious, that even most of the antagonists joined in as members and Mr. van Oven himself assumed the honorary chairmanship.

At the beginning of July 1943 were gathered at my home Messrs. de Raadt, Dr. Tuyl, van der Goes, van Oordt and Zimmerman. We formed a provisional governing board of which de Raadt became President. On 27th July 1943 all who were interested met and the association was set up. With the approval of all present people, the objectives of the association were set. Namely, the association would be open to all compatriots in Chile and their descendants in order to uphold the cultural values brought from the fatherland. It would reinforce the links with the fatherland and the old relations; it would help and support the needy and immigrants who would come after the war. It was here that de Raadt pressed his stamp on the Dutch Association through his deeply felt conviction that we should stand by each other's side and help each other. Thus, it has been his personal victory, to bridge the division that existed in our colony and to lay the foundation for the solidarity that exists now. His example, his generosity and his healthy democratic

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principles made it possible for our association to become a success.

Eight good years have gone by. Life has its bitterness. Although the fight of the first years has been wiped out, some painful scars always remain. An increasing number of new members have been added to the old members. Following the war, we relaxed the requirement of paying in advance to join as a member. During these years, the association has been under varying leadership of diverse quality, but at all times de Raadt was and has remained the pivot of our association. No task was for him too much trouble, if it was for the interest of the association. If he thought that the principles of the association were compromised, then he fought hard and did not give them up. He brought together antagonists; de Raadt was the man who could attain reconciliation with calm and in friendship. He who knew his life realises that to his last, de Raadt worked with a constant love and devotion for the association.

We who helped along, have seen how the association has grown, how people who did not know each other, became first acquaintances and later friends. We have also seen how de Raadt has grown and how he became greater by the work that he did with so much generosity for the Dutch colony. From acquaintance, he became first a friend and from a good friend, he became a highly esteemed man. New members, still recently arrived in Chile, have sometimes asked me why de Raadt had so much influence on the life of the association, even if he was no longer President. He had that influence not only because we, ordinary people, were important enough for him to discuss matters with us, but because we knew that he was a wise man. He had a wisdom, which one does not learn at schools.

Jacob de Raadt, our old friend, our Jaap, was not what the world regards as a "great" man, but a good Hollander, free of all conceit, straightforward and solid. However, he was a great man in our small circle of Netherlanders in Chile because he brought a new spirit to us, a spirit of love to our fellow man.

W. Gastelaars

Which compatriot of us, here resident in the south of Chile, did not know Jaap de Raadt and considered him as a "friend" in Santiago?

How many of us, after having refreshed ourselves in the hotel and tidied up following the long trip to the capital, did not afterwards direct our first steps to the "Libreria Ivens"? If we had the good fortune of finding him in, then we were immediately invited to the back of his bookshop into his small office, where he sat in front of his typewriter amidst a pile correspondence.

But the papers were pushed aside, smokes were lit up and after the cordial exchange of greetings, a sociable and interesting conversation always followed. Showing the greatest interest in our families, friends and news, he would often listen to our problems. Then immediately, he would assist us with advice and practical help.

For Jaap it was never too much trouble to help a compatriot. Regardless of the scarcity of his time, he would sacrifice his well-earned rest devoting late hours until the matter at hand was dealt with.

Jaap's little office was a rendezvous for all Dutch expatriates, either from province or from Santiago itself. There you met everyone. Many wholesomely wise decisions were taken under his leadership and many a burden removed in that little office.

And when the need arose in Gorbea, almost a thousand kilometres south of Santiago, to set up a branch of the Dutch Association, it was he with whom we first consulted. He readily supported our plans and helped us put the branch on its feet.

The celebration to honour the anniversary of our Queen will remain for us an unforgettable event. Then Jaap and our ambassador Dr. Kasteel, accompanied by their respective wives, came all the way from Santiago to celebrate with us. Jaap showed the films he took on his previous holiday trip to the south and he had a cordial word and a sociable chat with everyone.

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And now unexpectedly, we have been informed by the bulletin of his passing away. It leaves us with the deepest feeling of sadness as we think of our enjoyment of his friendship and cordiality.

This blow must be almost impossible to bear for his wife and family and our greatest sympathy and deepest feeling are for them, who must suddenly suffer heavily in this way.

We here, in the distant south, also feel strongly this heavy loss. We will keep in high honour his name and his memory.

Dear Jaap, thanks for everything you gave us and "rest in peace".

Valdivia, C. van Hasselt

—o—

From Gorbea

Due to the sudden passing away of Jaap de Raadt, I am pleased to dedicate a couple of words to his memory.

We here in Gorbea met him for the first time well in the summertime of 1947. The family de Raadt arrived at our place unexpectedly; and because the house was full with guests, they had to spend the night in their sleeping bags on the hay in the stable!

It was a pleasant visit. The next day we visited by car the old colony where we could see the wheat being threshed.

Following that visit, Jaap and his wife came here twice again. The second time, he showed us the film he took during his first trip. Later we celebrated the anniversary of the installation of our Queen; Jaap came again, and we had a very pleasant time.

He always planned to return to old Gorbea, but this will no longer take place.

We, here in Gorbea, will always remember him by his friendship.

Koos Beijnen

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—o—

A LETTER

10 December 1951

Dear Jaap,

On 7 December I got a telegram communicating that you had died.

I was gravely shocked and dreaded the idea of my first trip to Santiago. I would no longer meet you in your business, I would not find in your office, where I always came to you to talk and discuss everything with the complete trust that we had in each other. We also talked concerning each other's family matters. That this has now stopped and no longer can happen is incomprehensible to me and gives me pain.

But today I have been in Santiago and in your office. Now that it has happened, I must honestly confess to you that it has not been without tears. Yet, I now look at things very differently from the way they looked that morning on 7 December when I received that miserable telegram. I simply refused to accept that you were not there; lad, you surely were there.

Now yes, your son sat on your chair and discussed all sorts of things with me, but that is only fair, that he should sit there. But you were also there, and Alma, your wife was there and I have also met the boys. Dead or deceased, nothing will change; you were there and you always will remain there. I nevertheless see you, lad. I find it impossible to shake hands with your son Rudy without seeing you there. When I spoke in the morning with Rudy, I nevertheless spoke to you. Perhaps others may not understand this, but you and Alma and your son and I, we nevertheless understand it, and that is in this case the main point. You cannot simply walk out of life. I cannot and will not allow it.

As always your friend,  
Anton Disselkoen

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—o—

The first Dutchman whom I knew here in Chile was Jaap de Raadt. That was in June 1949. Now at the end of 1951, I understand that it was inevitable that Jaap should be the first Dutchman whom I would know here. For Jaap was the centre of our Dutch family in Chile. It was he who gave us, "young" immigrants, advice in every possible subject. He was, however, more than just a counsellor. He stood behind us both materially and non-materially. His help was always given with pleasantness and in a manner that made you feel that he completely understood your situation. For me personally, Jaap's type was that of a generous, religious Dutch sailor. A clear mind and a respect for other people's convictions were some of the many good properties that he possessed.

We Netherlanders, are a strange type of people. We are reluctant to show our emotions to others. When we grieve, we keep it to ourselves. We say — surely, it is none of the other person's business. Thus, it is the same with the loss of our Jaap. We will no longer have with us his remarkable quality and his humane character. One thing he has left behind with us and something important enough to mention: the love for people and the love for our Dutch people.

I believe therefore, that the best manner to commemorate JAAP de RAADT is, not to continue to grieve for his departure, but to continue on the road that JAAP de RAADT walked before us. That road was:

Love for the people  
Love for the Dutch people  
Love for our Dutch colony in Chile.

Jan Bartelsman



## Appendix 2

### Hard Times Without Humanity

For many years, I required my university students in the USA, Sweden and Australia to read Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*. It is difficult for science to match the devastating blow with which Dickens strikes down the ideas that have shaped modern and post-modern society. Dickens summons us to reflect on the consequences of the way we think and the ideas that dominate not only the university, but also the average person, including the average person in the church pew. *Hard Times* provides a piercing insight into the immorality of these ideas conveyed through Dickens' deeply touching and humane story. As G. K. Chesterton rightly said:

“If ever there was a message full of what modern people call true Christianity, the direct appeal to the common heart, a faith that was simple, a hope that was infinite, and a charity that was omnivorous, if ever there came among men what they call the Christianity of Christ, it was in the message of Dickens.” (*Appreciations and Criticisms of the Works of Charles Dickens*).

What is this message? You will find the core of it after Louisa, having been tempted by Harthouse to betray her husband, flees and seeks refuge in her father's home while declaring to him:

“All that I know is, your philosophy and your teaching will not save me. Now, father, you have brought me to this. Save me by some other means!”

Distraught by the unhappiness and desperate predicament his ideas have brought upon his daughter, Gradgrind must admit that there is “a wisdom of the Heart”, in addition to the “wisdom of the Head”, which his philosophy endeavoured to suppress by combining two ideas. The first one, positivism, recognises as reality only the things that can be perceived through the senses; that is, things that are subject to “rules, and figures, and definitions” and which are “Facts” according to Gradgrind, who

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carts “a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his Pocket”. Other things, such as beauty, belief and compassion, are to him intangible; about such one should “never wonder”. Education and scientific inquiry are therefore limited to the natural sciences for they are supposed to study “facts”. The humanities — the wisdom of the heart — including aesthetics, history and ethics are barred from science.

However, without the guidance of the humanities, how can one understand the difference between right and wrong or beautiful and ugly? The answer to this is provided by utilitarianism. According to this second idea, something is right or wrong, beautiful or ugly to the extent that it produces pleasure and reduces pain. Jeremy Bentham, the father of utilitarianism, spelled out this article of faith as a definite guide to all our actions. With time, this faith gradually gained control over every aspect of human life and became individualised so that its reference to pleasure and pain became “my pleasure” and “my pain”. It became a licence to do as one pleased and it accounts for the self-indulgence of our “me” society. Gradgrind’s philosophy is not just mere theory, but an intellectual aberration that has taken a tight hold of society and shaped every aspect of its culture including education, economics, social manners and the family, with disastrous consequences.

In his story, Dickens endeavours to expose these consequences by weaving together a number of characters whose lives are thoroughly ruined by Gradgrind’s dogma and by providing us with a delightful young heroine who embodies the Spirit of Christ. Although unable to save the situation, Sissy brings love, comfort and hope to those who suffer. The characters of *Hard Times* represent different strata of society and different philosophies of life: Mrs Sparsit and Harthouse are upper-class people, they represent the old values, but in a state of decadence. At the other end of the scale are the guardians of “wisdom of the Heart”: circus people Sleary and Sissy and cotton mill workers, Stephen and Rachel. Placed in the middle of this social range, as if to be better positioned to agitate its intellectual and moral maelstrom, are placed the politician Grad-

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grind and his family and the industrialist Bounderby. Gradgrind and Bounderby are the prophets of the “nothing but Facts” gospel; they orchestrate the events that lead to tragedy and the unhappy end of the novel. The gloomy backdrop to this is provided by “the Hands”, the multitude of workers that worked the cotton mills of Coketown; a sea of toil that, as a result of Bentham’s unholy doctrine, maximises the pleasure of the few through the suffering of the many.

What can we learn, today, from *Hard Times*? In answering this question, we must consider the way this novel speaks to us. A novel can become a parable, that is, events in it may resemble events in our times. As an illustration, it may help us to understand our own lives, but we cannot claim that what happens in the novel determines the way we live. *Hard Times* goes beyond illustration; what happens within its pages is historically linked with the lives we live now. Positivism and utilitarianism not only harmed people such as Gradgrind and Bounderby, but harm us even more. These ideas, which were still in the bud in Dickens’ times, have now fully blossomed and blown to pieces our education, our economics, our social manners and our families. *Hard Times* takes us to the source of this “muddle”.

The “muddle” starts with Gradgrind’s educational philosophy dismissing the humanities — the “wisdom of the Heart” — the sciences which, according to the Spanish humanist Vives, “turn us into humans”. Ultimately, without the guidance of the humanities, our schools and universities are defenceless against the commercialisation to which they are fettered today. We must remember that the Reformation was made possible by the humanities, including philosophy; they not only made the language and history of the Scriptures accessible, but also helped 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century people implement the message into their spiritual life. Therefore, while their Christianity was cultured, ours is not. Absence of the humanities in science and education does not just lead to lack of culture; it also opens the doors to widespread decline. Gradgrind’s son’s conscience is not troubled by his stealing money from the bank and by his design to involucrate innocent Stephen in it. Why should he?

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His education has ruled out any concept of responsibility; his behaviour, he has been taught, is ruled by laws of nature for which he is not responsible. Thus, when Gradgrind, on discovering his crime, is shocked, Tom grumbles:

'I don't see why.... So many people are employed in situations of trust; so many people, out of so many, will be dishonest. I have heard you talk, a hundred times, of its being a law. How can I help laws? You have comforted others with such things, father. Comfort yourself!'

Thus, according to Tom, we must be comforted and not troubled by corruption in our own institutions when, for example, a survey shows that few people are disturbed by the Australian Wheat Board bribes or by the government's role in it. We consider it normal that industrialists submit to the golden rule of business and cross the line that divides criminal from non-criminal activities. Modern economics is packed with such men who have turned it into a system of deceit and exploitation. They deceive by declaring that a healthy and dignified life can only be attained through the consumption of the vast variety of goods that industry produces, a lie that is sustained as much by them as it is by us, the consumers. They (and we) exploit because the variety and volume of goods and services can only be mass-produced by the monotonous drudgery of helpless people who must earn subsistence level wages in order to keep prices competitively low. Neither consumers nor industrialists show any compassion for them. On the contrary, the suffering and clamour of "the Hands" is, according to Bounderby, only a pretence to conceal their lust for "turtle soup, and venison, and gold spoon".

Almost five centuries ago, Philip Melancthon warned us that the banishment of the humanities from education and science would lead to "savage barbarism". Bounderby, with his multiple attributes, provides us with the ready instance. Not only is he vulgar but also, like our contemporaries, wallows in it: "Whoever expects refinement in me will be disappointed", he insists. Were he to be born today, we can be assured he would

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also dress in attire matching his coarse speech and bad manners. He loves to flatter Mrs. Sparsit's urbanity and to underscore their dissimilarity of birth only to humiliate her. Later in the novel, we learn that his pitiable childhood, when he was a "ragged street-boy who never washed his face unless it was at a pump", is pure fabrication; in fact, he was loved by his parents and they diligently gave him a good education. But Bounderby despises education, either the humanist kind or Gradgrind's school of facts — "Education! I'll tell you what education is - To be tumbled out of doors, neck and crop, and put upon the shortest allowance of everything except blows." He obeys St. Paul's exhortation in the reverse order: he takes off the new man, as nurtured by his parents, and puts on the greedy and uncouth old man, as shaped by his own imaginary "blows". He is a barbarian by choice, loving money but despising dignity.

A barbarian does not fall in love with a woman, he does not court her and he does not propose marriage to her; he just takes possession of her with whatever means he has at hand; Bounderby takes possession of Louisa with money. Granted, marriages arranged to serve financial interests are not new. What is new is that there is now a utilitarian law under which matrimonial questions are considered "simply as one of tangible Fact". This must stand behind the eventual decline of marriage and of children born within wedlock and the emergence of an affluent but plebeian society. Civilisation cannot be built on fragmented families.

In the midst of this cultural disarray, and in contrast to the Gradgrinds and Bounderbys of this world, we find Sissy, a truly feminine heroine. She is a reminder that, what the world has rejected as foolishness is indeed wisdom and that God will turn us into patricians, regardless of our rank when we first meet Him. By patrician, I mean the etymological sense of the word (*patris*, i.e. fathers) that stresses the parental qualities of true nobility. A true patrician is a parent to his fellow man, just as Sissy becomes a mother to Jane, Louisa, Rachel and others and soothes their affliction with "hope and strength". Such patrician qualities, according to another Spanish humanist, Ortega y Gasset,

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are not inherited by birth but by a life of discipline that is defined by duties rather than by rights. Plebeians act as they please, true patricians shape their lives by meeting, as parents do with their children, the needs of others. For people experience a deep sense of belonging to their community only to the extent that they encounter it first in the family. This is cast in different and yet complementary masculine and feminine roles; the one providing strength, the other tenderness, with the added humane stamp that within man's strength one finds paternal tenderness and within woman's tenderness, maternal strength.

Such patrician attributes come to the fore when Sissy confronts Harthouse to save the honour of Louisa and are underlined by her being announced to him as a "young lady". Although Harthouse's aristocracy is decadent, there is still enough of it to recognise Sissy's nobility and to treat her accordingly. Despite her plain dress, she appears to him "very quiet, very pretty" and "even prettier" under the candlelights. She is devoid of the modern "sexiness" which arouses lust, but instead she possesses grace that inspires his respect and admiration. She has had scant formal education, yet her speech, though frank, is genteel, no doubt due to her love of reading. When she commands that Harthouse should undertake never to see Louisa again and should immediately leave town, he senses that within her young tenderness she is "very strong". Gentlemanly manners oblige him to reciprocate by submitting to her request just as it required him to place a chair for her when she entered the room.

Feminists will no doubt criticise Dickens for casting Sissy in a nurturing and caring role. For them this limits her womanhood, but that is only because the familial nature of human civility and the obligations that these impose upon a woman are foreign to them. If we like women to be released from these obligations and to do as they please, then we must also accept men to behave like the plebeian Bounderby who acts purely according to his "own opinions". He, unlike Harthouse, "with his legs wide apart... hands in his pockets and his hat on" would boorishly instruct Sissy to "mind her own business".

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Dickens ends *Hard Times* by gazing into the happy or unhappy future of his characters and then turns to his reader with the following words: “Dear Reader! It rests with you and me, whether, in our two fields of action, similar things [the fate of his characters] shall be or not.” He expects us not just to read *Hard Times*, but like Sissy, to devote ourselves to making “facts and figures subservient to Faith, Hope, and Charity” and thus bring in better times to this broken world.



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<sup>1</sup> All translations from original Spanish works are my own; where available, I have provided a reference to an English translation in a footnote.

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