

NOTES

- ¹ Maximus the Confessor, *Kephalaia peri Theologias, Hekatomtas A,66; PG 90, 1108A.*
- ² While the Oriental Orthodox churches do not include Chalcedon among the ecumenical councils, they do fully accept its theological conclusions regarding the incarnation of Christ.
- ³ John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, III, 13 (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2d series, Vol. 9, p.57).
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, II,12 (*NPF, ibid.*, p.31).
- ⁵ Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, 16,14 (*NPF*, 2d series, Vol. 5, p.406): "... following out, or rather perceiving beforehand by his power of foreknowledge what, in a state of independence and freedom, is the tendency of the motion of man's will – as he saw, I say, what would be – he devised for his image the distinction of male and female, which has no reference to the Divine Archetype, but, as we have said, is an approximation to the less rational nature."
- ⁶ *Op. cit.*, 3,11 (*NPF, loc. cit.*, p.55).
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, IV,4 (*NPF, ibid.*, p.75).
- ⁸ See John of Damascus, *ibid.*, IV,18 (*NPF, ibid.*, p.66): "He therefore assumed the whole man, even the fairest part of him, which had become diseased, in order that he might bestow salvation on the whole... Therefore, God the Word, wishing to restore that which was in his own image, became man. But what is that which was in his own image, unless mind?"; cf. Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, Discourse III, para. 33 (*NPF*, 2d series, Vol. 4, p.412): "As we are all from earth and die in Adam, so being regenerated from above of water and Spirit, in Christ we are all quickened; the flesh being no longer earthly, but being henceforth made Word, by reason of God's Word who for our sake 'became flesh'."
- ⁹ *Op. cit.*, PG 90, 1152A.
- ¹⁰ St John Chrysostom, *Homily III on Acts* (*NPF*, 1st series, vol. 11, p.18).
- ¹¹ Clement of Rome, *Pros Korinthious*, B'XIII, 1,44.
- ¹² St John Chrysostom, *Homily 86 on John*, para. 4 (*NPF*, 1st series, vol. 14, p.326).
- ¹³ Gregory Nazianzus, *Oration*, 37,6 (*NPF*, 2d series, Vol. 7, p.338).

Women, Power and Social Movements

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The issue of the place and role of women in the church has been raised to a new degree of importance largely because of the changing roles of women in civil society and the development of modern political and social analysis. This is not to downplay the significance of the issue. For the first time the church has been obliged to begin to think about the nature of gender roles in its structure and decision-making institutions. However, the church is a unique institution in society, and for believers these issues have a meaning beyond the immediate, even though the need to address them is very immediate and very real.

For many people – both men and women – this issue raises questions of justice and the equality of persons. And while these ideas have gained new meanings as a result of the political and social struggles beginning with the Enlightenment, they are not foreign to Christianity or in fact to the entire Judaeo-Christian tradition. Many would say that the very claim that there is an intrinsic and inalienable character to "human rights", to the dignity of the human person, is due in large part to this tradition. Who of us would say that God is not just; that God does not demand justice? Who of us would say that God does not love each of his children equally? Thus it seems to me that the question is not whether the church believes in the equality of and justice for all persons. It is what does equality mean? And how does God effect justice?

The difficulty for many within the church today is that these questions are being raised in a language and style that seem foreign. Arguments and rationales have been borrowed from modern political and social thought and given only the slightest veneer of theological language. In itself the fact that the ideas have been borrowed, that developments in civil society are forcing the church to look anew at the underlying principles of its own beliefs, is not bad. But it would become problematic if these forces were to direct not only the church but also society as a whole to an understanding of the nature of creation, human

beings, social interaction and even salvation that in the long view is destructive.

The 20th century will leave a legacy of many ironies. Perhaps the greatest is that this century, when awareness of the rights of human beings both collectively and individually has been raised to a level without parallel in history, has seen killing, war, abuse, social dislocation and the general degradation of humanity and creation in proportions hitherto unknown. In short the principles and presuppositions that we as civil society espouse carry within them hidden contradictions. We need to look at these. We also need to look at the teachings of the church of Christ, which will perhaps give us a different trajectory to follow in addressing these very important questions that have been presented to us.

In this paper I will highlight what I consider some of the major presuppositions underlying modern criticism of the institutional structure of church and suggest what I believe to be the "way out" of this cycle of abuse and sin, a way offered to us by our Lord Jesus Christ in the example of his life.

Power and human interaction

Simply to speak of "power" is to arouse a range of visceral reactions, especially perhaps from those who perceive that they have been the victim of an abuse of power and those who have been accused of some excess of power. No matter at which end of the power equation one might find oneself, the probability is that power has been objectified as a kind of force that can be contained, possessed, transferred. Most political theory has this sort of understanding of power. Hence, democracies and other "constitutional" political arrangements claim to distribute power according to agreed formulas; totalitarian, autocratic, monarchical political systems seem to concentrate power in a few or even in one person. Political struggles have as their focus taking power from one centre to another. Leaving aside the issue of the justice of one cause over another or of the power configuration of one system over another, the common characteristic is that power is objectified.

Consequently, power becomes a commodity that can be bought, sold and bargained for. I believe that its primarily negative connotation is rooted in this objectification of power as a commodity – for what is actually being bought and sold is not the objective commodity of power, but we ourselves.

Power is one way to describe the dynamic at work in a relationship. Defined in this way it is the exercise of influence or force by one person over another person. It is not inherently negative, even though it usually

tends to be, because most human relationships fall short of true communion and become "abusive". This use of the word "power" has very little in common with its use to refer to non-personal forces such as energy. Power as a non-personal force has an objective character; power as the interaction between persons has a relational character. To objectify power is to objectify relationship, and consequently to misunderstand its true nature.

We interpret the power an impersonal force exerts over us differently from the way we look at the power of a personal agent. A natural disaster might arouse a sense of injustice, but hardly the sense of outrage we feel over disasters caused by some personal agent. In fact, the impersonal forces of nature are often personified as "acts of God" in order to give some personal focus for our sense of injustice. Injustice at the hands of persons is of a different order simply because persons are moral beings capable of moral behaviour. Impersonal forces have no moral capacity. The current that electrocutes a little child has no moral character; we look for culpability in the negligence of someone. An impersonal force that causes a tragedy or presents an obstacle is something that has to be worked around or changed or corrected; a person presents a completely different matrix of difficulties, if that person is to retain his or her character as person. Persons can be, and often are, "dealt with", but once having been handled in this manner they become objectified and cease to be persons.

In order for one person to encounter another person, a relationship between the two is required. Anything short of this risks reducing a personal relationship to one between objects. This, I believe, is the main thrust of Martin Buber's philosophy. It is certainly in harmony with the Orthodox understanding of persons and relationships, while it falls short of a complete understanding of the human in relationship with the rest of creation and with God.

For Orthodox Christians, the person, and especially the person in communion, is central to any notion of power. Anything which depersonalizes, which abstracts the concept of power from actual persons in relationship with one another, violates the very foundation of Orthodox cosmology. It also violates any organic understanding of society as community, whether or not one accepts Orthodox cosmology.

At least one other aspect should be mentioned here. Power does have what appears to be an objective character.¹ Persons have particularities; and these specifics, which make each person different from every other, have a certain objective quality. The danger to avoid is that of seeing these particularities as separate from the person. Nor should the whole person be reduced to the sum total of all the particularities. The particu-

larities are synthesized in the person. Similarly, we should not confuse what have come to be called the "resources of power" with power itself. These resources do have a certain objective quality in that they are at the disposal of any number of persons and can, to a certain degree, be bought, sold, traded, shared, redistributed or exclusively possessed. In that sense, they have a certain commodity-like quality. However, they are not power itself. The same resource in the hands of different persons does not have the same effect. It is synthesized differently.

Having observed that certain people, or even classes of people, have, because of their social standing, accumulated "power" – that is, the resources of power – modern social ethics faces the challenge of presenting a programme that would distribute these resources in such a way that personhood is not diminished and that society as the community of persons is enhanced. This will require an understanding not only of the resources of power, but also of persons in community – with each other and with God.

I shall focus on three aspects of this problem: (1) philosophical presuppositions underpinning much of the modern discussion of power and powerlessness; (2) the nature of the self and identity in relationship to power; (3) how these issues are taken up and addressed in the Orthodox Christian understanding of the Cross. A discussion of power that excludes God is, from an Orthodox Christian perspective, bound to be partial and incomplete. If power is in the final analysis relationship, then God is intrinsic to any discussion.

The philosophical presuppositions of social analysis

The philosophical presuppositions of any dominant system are rarely questioned. Michael Parenti describes at length how reality is shaped and defined by the classes in power so as to retain and expand their power, how the less powerful support this by their acquiescence and how institutions encourage this. While Parenti's analysis could be described as "leftist", his fundamental presuppositions would probably be accepted by many on the "right" as well. He operates from a modern, scientific, post-Marxian worldview, in which God is not so much denied as relegated to irrelevance.

From an Orthodox perspective the denial of the centrality of God in any discussion concerning the world is certainly considered to be a mistake of the highest order. However, much of what is said concerning the world and human nature from the modern perspective can nevertheless be appreciated and accepted. The Orthodox believe that truth is one and that all ideas contain, in varying degrees, elements of the truth. Nothing is to be rejected out of hand or as totally devoid of worth. The essence

of philosophical dialogue is to find points of agreement and to continue to discuss hoping to expand the field. In this way the process is both deductive and inductive.

At the heart of the modern worldview are two principles, one epistemological and the other hermeneutical. The first says that everything, all of reality, can be measured. While the natural sciences have become less and less certain that various methods of measurement are either truly accurate or universally applicable, the underlying hope has not faded that someday we will be able to "understand" how things work. Implicit in this approach is that in order to understand, one has to dissect and measure. The second principle, which is based on the first, says that all "reasonable" people, once fully informed of the *facts*, will come to the same conclusion. This is at the heart of the Marxian doctrine of "mystification", as well as almost every other modern political and philosophical system. But since the facts as presented are rarely "conclusive", we are left to search for more and better facts, or to dismiss those who disagree as either irrational or ill-informed.

Now the difficulty with questioning these two principles is that they are so compelling. It is very hard to argue with facts. As empirical data they have a "seeable" quality. To deny what we *see* in front of us, especially when it is verified by those around us, is to forfeit any hope of knowing anything. To dismiss those instruments which extend our "sight" as fundamentally flawed is to question our ability to perceive reality at all. While reality might be (the Orthodox would say "definitely is") more than what we see, it certainly does include that which we see. And while reality might be (again, "definitely is") more than what we see, what we do not see is not any "more real" than is the world around us which we do see. The empirical can be accepted as real and legitimate without accepting it as constituting the whole of epistemology and hermeneutics.

However, one of the great drawbacks to an entirely empirical approach is that an understanding of systems needs to be reconstructed from data dissected out of an organic whole. Such a synthesis tends to be artificial. In short, while the empirical is an extraordinarily compelling way of looking at the world, it does not necessarily have priority.

One could even say that the empirical forms the beginning point for all dialogue, simply because it is more easily verifiable than other methods of knowing. In order to have any discussion we need to be convinced that something exists to be talked about. We need to agree on what we will both be referring to. However, the empirical – and the epistemological and hermeneutical principles based on empiricism – do not form the beginning point for knowing. They form the middle point between how

we first experience an object and how we then synthesize it into our whole understanding of reality.

Along with the belief that the empirical forms the basis for all knowing comes another implicit assumption, almost universally agreed upon in the modern worldview, but also fundamentally flawed: that value is socially or culturally derived and is added to our empirical observations. One reason a discussion of “only the facts” can appear to be a common denominator is that facts are assumed to be neutral – totally without intrinsic value. Value is seen as something defined or given by a society, a class, a philosophy, a political system, a person. In this conception, the family, for example, has no intrinsic worth. It has a culturally given worth. Different societies define it and value it differently. Therefore in most discussion of public policy, of social restructuring, everything is negotiable because everything is seen as a human construct. And while one might use the phrase “inalienable rights”, these rights are in reality only seen as a figure of speech tied to a specific socio-political construct.

Discussions concerning the objectivity of a certain study or the bias of a given scholar presuppose that things in themselves have no value until they are given some, and, similarly, that value can be taken away. So, for example, when Parenti discusses the impossibility of keeping “empirical descriptions free of normative consideration”,² it is not because he thinks that there are intrinsic values in things which political theory must accommodate, but rather because he believes that every political theory is replete with its own value system, that different political theories have different value systems, and that to suppose that people are capable of ridding themselves of their politics is not only totally naive, but part and parcel of the mystification that keeps the ruling class in power.

Valuation is however prior to all thinking, to all systems, to all culture. This is not to deny the social context of thinking about the value of one thing or another, or that thinking itself is not to a large degree a social or cultural artifact. Different people and different cultures have thought about and valued things differently. To say that valuation is prior to thinking is not yet to say that everyone perceives the same value in a given thing, much less to say that the value of a given thing remains static. For now, it is only to say that, for example, when we promote a certain public policy, we promote it because we believe it is good; we do not believe it is good because we promote it.

Robert Neville develops this idea that valuation is prior to thinking in what he calls the axiology of thinking.³ I believe that he is essentially correct in saying that valuation is prior to reason; that valuation supplies and justifies the norms that guide thinking to be rational when it is; and

that when reason is a function of false consciousness, it is founded on a deeper valuation.⁴ Valuation – what we define to be good – underlies all “ideological” struggle. This points to the hopelessness of eliminating “value judgments” from the study of the problems of society and redistribution of power. It also urges systematic thinking about the values intrinsic in what is being promoted, and what relationship this has to the “good”. In short, it encourages holistic thinking.

To summarize the discussion thus far:

- At the heart of the modern worldview is an epistemological and hermeneutical assumption that there is a fact/value distinction.
- It is assumed that the facts pertaining to a given object can be separated from its value and measured, although there is generally less faith that these measurements can achieve universality.
- Since values are virtually immeasurable, they have been increasingly seen as cultural or ideological interpretations of an object, relative at best, irrational at worst.
- Although the distinction between fact and value is flawed, the hypothetical neutrality of facts does provide a common ground between cultures and ideological systems, as a kind of “middle point” between our first experience of an object and its synthesis into a whole cosmology.
- What now needs to be understood is that valuation is not incidental nor merely culturally conditioned, but is rather the foundation for all thinking; therefore, value and valuational thinking must be at the forefront of discussions about social theory.

Personal identity and power relationships

One objection raised against grounding an understanding of power in interpersonal relationships is that people start out with unequal standing vis-à-vis one another. Instead of a communion of persons there is generally a relationship of exploitation. This is at the heart of Parenti’s critique of the “exchange” theory of power relations. He says that habit and custom generally blind us to the elements of asymmetry and coercion involved in most social relations.⁵ A related criticism is that in order for inequality in a relationship to be rectified, the weaker party must have some standing, some self-esteem. But the weaker party, almost by definition, will have little if any self-esteem; usually it has been beaten out of him or her. Thus, the argument runs, any attempt to define power in terms of relationship tends inevitably to perpetuate the current power configurations.

Before taking up the basic question of inequality in power relationships, I would like to discuss the idea of the self and personal identity.

The Christian tradition universally condemns pride – generally understood as self-love – as the worst sin. Humility, the chief virtue, has often been understood as self-denial. Without entering into a detailed discussion of pride and humility, let me simply say that the spiritual writings of Eastern Christianity understand pride as self-love in the sense of believing oneself to be autonomous and self-sufficient. It is a denial of the need for communion with God and other people. Humility, on the other hand, is not self-hatred, but the constant willingness to be open to the other. Pride and humility have to do with the self in communion with others. As vice and virtue they establish normative behaviour for persons in community.

Orthodox Christianity has always defined person-in-community as normative. God, the ground of all being, is understood as having revealed himself as a triad of Persons-in-community. While one could argue that this is arbitrary and mistaken, at the very least the empirical data support the norm of persons-in-community. It is not possible for any living thing to come into being without having been touched in some way by another living being. Even the self-dividing amoeba is a being-in-relation. How two amoebae relate to one another is different question, but we do not in any case consider amoebae as persons. Persons are of a higher order of being. Human beings require the communion of two persons, male and female, to come into being. Medical advances have not taken away the need for a male sperm and a female egg; and a “test-tube baby” still needs to be reared by someone. The structure of creation as we know it tends to support the idea that we are not self-sufficient beings, but that all of humanity, all of creation, is interdependent.

Identity may be a more useful term than self. Neville says the identity of a thing is rooted in both its “conditional” and its “essential” features. The former are the features which things share in common: other-relatedness, the sameness that things share which relates them to one another, the features that *condition* a thing. This is what the Orthodox call nature or *ousia*. Essential features, on the other hand, are the unique elements of a particular thing – the features that make *this* thing different from every other thing. This is what the Orthodox would call an *hypostasis*. “An account of identity would express sameness in its self-identity, and difference in its other-relatedness. Being or reality is that which has both self-identity and other-relatedness, sameness and difference.”⁶ Identity, then, has a dyadic character; to be something is to be *this* rather than *that*. It also is to be *something* rather than *nothing*. Neville emphasizes that “it is important not to hypostasize ‘nothing’ as if it were a funny ‘other thing’ in relation to which the determinate thing has cosmological contrast. Nothing does not condition determinate

things. Most important, nothing is not real; it does not exist.”⁷ Here he is laying the foundation for his conception of creation *ex nihilo* as the primary conditional feature which all things hold in common.

A determinate thing then is what Neville calls the “harmony” of conditional and essential features. Every thing is a composite of both essential and conditional features. Neville denies that this harmony “is some kind of determinate ‘third thing’ over and above the features which integrate them... The ‘third thing’ argument is typical of idealism, supposing that any two or more different things require yet another to give them position or relation relative to one another.”⁸

From an Orthodox perspective, this dyadic argument for self-identity can be accepted in an elementary way. All determinate things are *this* rather than *that*. And the most basic notion that things have been called by God from “non-being” into “being” – creation *ex nihilo* – is also accepted. Neville’s argument that things are harmonies follows very closely the Orthodox idea that “nature” or *ousia* does not exist in the abstract, but is always “en-hypostasized”. For example, we do not know human nature in the abstract, we only know it in given, determinate human beings. Neither do we know God, or the divine *ousia*, abstractly; rather, we encounter the divinity hypostatically through one of the divine Persons.⁹ And while Orthodox theology has not generally been as systematic as Neville about locating identity (and especially the identity of “things” as over and against “persons”), there is agreement that every *created* thing is a composite, that its unity is a harmony of these composites and that this unity is not a “third thing” but rather is the thing itself. On this view, every thing is composed both of elements that connect it to other things (and in some cases to every other thing) and of elements that make it unique. Thus, identity, self-identity, cannot be conceived of as a kind of self-sufficiency, but as an interconnectedness without loss of uniqueness.

To admit the dyadic character of self-identity is not to say anything about the triadic character of reality, which finds its fullest expression in the tri-hypostatic relationship of the holy Trinity. Orthodox theology claims that the dyad in terms of relationship quickly becomes self-referential. Ideally, Orthodox theology does not think of a community as simply two, but as three or more. As opposed to the “vicious infinite regress” which Neville attributes to the idea of the “third thing”,¹⁰ Orthodox theology posits the concept of *perichoresis* (mutual indwelling), in which the three are totally united in love without the unique aspects of each hypostasis disappearing. This act of communion constitutes the true nature of being.¹¹

If the self is based not on a kind of individualistic self-sufficiency but on communion with the other without loss of identity, and if the true

nature of reality is this triadic conception of persons in communion, then all modern political philosophies and theories of power are inadequate. Each in its own way posits the atomistic self, which either contracts with (Rousseau), or is at war with (Hobbes), or individualistically universalizes towards (Kant), or holds commonality of empirical experience with (Locke, Hume) other human beings. On the other side are the Hegelian and Marxian dialectics which tend to swallow up individuals in the sweep of historical progress or class struggle. Of course, these are gross generalizations. Each of these systems does attempt to harmonize individual and society. But all of them fall short in maintaining the integrity of the individual person in relationship with others.

The victory of the Cross

While it is not possible here to explore how the different understandings of the Cross in Eastern and Western Christianity have influenced their different interpretations of power, suffering, good and evil, and their effect on human relationships and on the relationship between humans and God, I will outline what I believe to be the uniqueness of the Orthodox perspective and its important implications for this discussion of power.

First, and most importantly, the Cross is understood only as the Cross of Jesus Christ the incarnate Logos. His suffering is different because Christians understand him as having no sin. The other aspect of his sacrifice is that it is totally voluntary. What he does, he does out of love for humanity and all of the creation. He is not a "victim" who has been taken and sacrificed against his will.¹² Rather, he is the one who has chosen this path out of love for the other. He allows himself to be taken. It is his outstretched hand towards even his enemy that lifts up the other. Also, because of who this Jesus is, his suffering is of an entirely different order from any other, and is capable of repairing the relationship between God and the creation.¹³ In this sense the Cross is intrinsically bound up with an entire Christian theology of salvation and redemption. And while this theology may not be persuasive to non-Christians, I believe there is a principle in harmony with the above discussion of relationship and community that may be helpful in understanding a place for "taking up the Cross" in order to set relationships aright even for non-Christians.

The Romanian Orthodox theologian Dumitri Staniloae builds on Buber's idea of I-Thou relationships as the dialogue between subjects. True dialogue is that which lifts each of the participants from the status of an object to that of a subject. The "word" is the means by which this dialogue takes place; and it is through the word that the one subject recognizes the integrity of another subject and speaks to the other, as first

person to second person. This is the true communion of persons which is necessary if a relationship is to be without abuse of power.

Yet this is not the norm in human interpersonal relationships. Rarely is a true I-Thou dialogue established, and few if any would even recognize this as the norm to which we are called. Abuse, violence, subjugation of the one by the other are by definition a refusal to recognize the status of the other as subject. We are blinded by a total egocentrism which refuses to acknowledge the other. All struggle by oppressed persons against oppressors – against being oppressed – is this objection to having been relegated to the status of an object. It is typified by the slogan "We want to be heard". In order to be heard, the other person has to be willing to listen.

The tragedy in most social struggle is that in order to make their point, those struggling for liberation, having been objectified themselves, must objectify the oppressor. Dialogue between subjects is impossible – first because those in power have objectified the subjugated, then because the subjugated, denied their status as subjects, strike back. Of course, those in power have no status as subjects. Having objectified other persons, they have objectified themselves. It is the double-edged sword of having refused to dialogue. This gives those in power their "unfeeling" quality, and in some sense allows the oppressed to justify their striking back at what are no longer persons, but objects who hold power. In this configuration liberation never occurs; there is only the tragedy of people speaking past each other, of doing violence to one another.

True liberation requires breaking this cycle of violence, this violation of one person by the other. It is clearly not broken by revolutionary political struggle as it is commonly understood. Nor is it broken by democratic processes in which the minority can be easily subjugated by the majority in very subtle ways. And in every system, institutional inertia tends to support those in power – power defined here not as dialogue but as objectification.

The Cross is the breaking of this cycle of objectification. It is the unilateral recognition of the subjectivity of the other, frozen in the objectivity of egocentrism. Staniloae says:

But the way in which we gain the overwhelming and earth-shaking insight which reclaims a subject to the status of a second person is not through his or her word, rather it is through her or his sacrifice. Your sacrifice is for me the most jolting word you could speak. It raises me to the highest ethical standing; it imposes the most intense obligation on me; it completely and radically removes from me any thought of individualism or egoism that I might have as towards things and places me in a relationship of service towards the other.¹⁴

This requires from me an act of love for the other, an act of love which might even require my life. St Paul speaks of the difficulty of doing this when he declares, "Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die" (Rom. 5:7). In order to be able to sacrifice ourselves for the sake of the other we have to remove from ourselves any thought of our own self-interest and focus on the love of the other, who might even be our enemy. This is the uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice, devoid of any self-interest, any sin.

For our part, it is difficult enough to remove selfishness from even normal relationships, much less to take up love of enemy. The usual state of relations between husband and wife, parents and children, points to the lack of true communion, the extent of the objectification of subjects, even within the family. In order for us to be able to sacrifice ourselves for the other there has to be no agenda in us. In order for us to shake the consciousness of the other, to wake them up, there must be a purity on our part. Power struggle as currently defined is totally incapable of purity of intent.

The dilemma for the typical analysis of power is that the burden is placed on those already oppressed and there is no incentive for the already powerful, those who have the upper hand, to share their power, to cease their objectification of the powerless. It is the powerful who can afford to reach out and lift up, but because of their own selfishness they refuse to. And nothing changes. The powerful remain powerful and the oppressed remain oppressed.

From the Christian perspective, this is sin and the cycle of sin. To attempt to rectify sin with more sin is not possible. In those instances where political arrangements have become less oppressive, it is precisely because the level of objectification has decreased and the recognition of the other as a subject worthy of communion has increased. Staniloae says that the sign of the Cross has been imprinted on the world – on the world as the gift of God. It stands before us as the way towards the fullness of relationship. The victory of the Cross is that it breaks this cycle of sin. It re-establishes communion between one human being and another, between God and creation.

NOTES

¹ Michael Parenti, *Power and the Powerless*, New York, St Martin's Press, 1978, p.7. This is what Parenti calls the "resources of power"; however, he tends to distinguish these from the interpersonal responses that create power relationships.

² *Ibid.*, p.33.

³ Cf. Robert C. Neville, *Reconstruction of Thinking*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1981.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.12.

⁵ Parenti, *op. cit.*, pp.9-10.

⁶ Robert Cummings Neville, "Recovery of the Measure: Interpretation and the Philosophy of Nature", unpublished manuscript, 1988, p.15.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.47.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.54.

⁹ According to Orthodox theology, the divine *ousia* remains totally outside the human capacity to comprehend. What is encountered are the divine energies through one of the divine Persons. St Gregory Palamas articulated this distinction between "essence" and "energy" in the 13th century in reaction to the influence of Thomist theology; on this, see John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, London, The Faith Press, 1964.

¹⁰ Neville, *op. cit.*, p.54. The denial of the "third thing" can be accepted if it refers to the identity of a determinate thing. But if all reality is reduced only to dyadic categories, then one has to posit a God that has no discernible relationship to the world except as "creator" in a limited sense (as Neville does, pp.192-94). For the Orthodox, a God that is "unreal except as actually creating" is totally unreal. This, from the Orthodox perspective, is completely unacceptable.

¹¹ For a fuller discussion of the triadic nature of being, see Dumitru Staniloae, "The Holy Trinity: Structure of Supreme Love", in *Theology and the Church*, Crestwood NY, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980, pp.73-108; John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, Crestwood NY, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985. For a brief outline of Orthodox trinitarian theology, see John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* New York, Fordham U.P., 1974, esp. pp.180-89. For a discussion of the concept of *diastema* (space-time) with regard to the internal relationship among the Persons of the Trinity, see Paulos Mar Gregorios, *Cosmic Man: The Divine Presence*, New Delhi, Sophia Publications, 1980, esp. pp.69-99.

¹² This points to one of the objections which oppressed peoples justly raise against holding up the Cross as a model for dealing with abuse. A victim is someone who is victimized against his or her will. It is not the voluntary act of suffering on behalf of another person, but rather violence and evil directed against someone who is essentially an innocent or unwilling focus for this violence. The nature of evil that delights in the abuse of the helpless is another matter and the subject of much of the spiritual writing of Eastern Christianity.

¹³ The theories developed in the West of "justification" and "satisfaction" (such as Anselm of Canterbury) were seen in the East as possible but incorrect understandings of the Cross. They were rejected in favour of the restoration of communion between humans (and all of creation) and God. This theology of "reaching out" is iconographically depicted in the icon of the "Descent into Hades" (that is, the resurrection), in which Christ, having conquered the Devil, is seen as physically lifting Adam and Eve out of their tombs – in contrast to Michelangelo's *Creation* in the Sistine Chapel, where Adam is reaching towards God the Father, but their fingers never touch.

¹⁴ Dumitru Staniloae, *Iisus Hristos sau Restaurarea Omului*, Sibiu, 1943, p.241.