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PRESENCE AND VOICE: UNDERSTANDING THE TENSIONS OVER THE AMERICAN CHURCH'S RELATIONSHIP TO ITS CULTURE THROUGH THE WRITINGS OF ORIGEN, CHRYSOSTOM AND AUGUSTINE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

H. Curtis McDaniel

December 2009

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H. Curtis McDaniel

2009

PRESENCE AND VOICE: UNDERSTANDING THE TENSIONS OVER THE AMERICAN CHURCH'S RELATIONSHIP TO ITS CULTURE THROUGH THE WRITINGS OF ORIGEN, CHRYSOSTOM AND AUGUSTINE

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ABSTRACT

PRESENCE AND VOICE: UNDERSTANDING THE TENSIONS OVER THE AMERICAN CHURCH'S RELATIONSHIP TO ITS CULTURE THROUGH THE WRITINGS OF ORIGEN, CHRYSOSTOM AND AUGUSTINE

By

H. Curtis McDaniel

December 2009

Dissertation supervised by Richard H. Thames, Ph.D.

In light of the perceived and demonstrable decline of the church's presence and voice in American culture, this dissertation proposes to examine and to discuss the dynamic viewpoints and tensions within the church over her presence and voice in the American culture by examining the various interpretations over the rhetoric of Christianization in the Roman Empire and how those viewpoints surface in the positions of Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine. The objective of this approach is to review and to continue the discussion first articulated by H. Richard Niebuhr's 1951 work, Christ and Culture, by showing that the way one understands the rhetoric of Christianization in the first five centuries as crystallized in the writings of Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine will reveal not only one's position concerning the church's place and presence in the American culture, but also the inner tensions that exist within many American churches today over the role she plays in a pluralistic society.

In light of this perceived and demonstrable decline, some church leaders are suggesting a fresh examination of the Christianization within the Roman Empire (the first five centuries) in order to learn pertinent principles in rhetorical presence and voice that can find application today. Chapter one discusses and addresses some of the criticisms and misreadings from Niebuhr's discussion of "the enduring problem" as it pertains to his presentation of typology in Christ and Culture. Chapter two takes Niebuhr's understanding of "viewpoints" (also stated as "motifs") and applies fresh scholarship to the study of Christianization in the first five centuries, producing five prominent views in explaining Christianity's success and cultural advancement. Chapters three, four and five discuss and align these viewpoints as they appear in the writings of Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine, arguably the three greatest church fathers/rhetors in the first five centuries of the church. The epilogue summarizes the discussion and presents preliminary considerations for a new hermeneutical prism needed for understanding the rhetorical presence and voice of the church in America today—the understanding and praxis application of the principles surrounding the knowledge and presence of the Kingdom of God.

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For Karen and all the sacrifices she made to make this a reality. Thank you.

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Introduction

> But the God who sent Jesus dissipated all the conspiracies of the demons, and made the Gospel of Jesus to prevail throughout the whole world for the conversion and reformation of men, and caused Churches to be everywhere established in opposition to those of superstitious and licentious and wicked men…Whereas the Churches of God which are instructed by Christ, when carefully contrasted with the assemblies of the districts in which they are situated, are as beacons in the world. (Origen Against Celsus III.29)

> For the church is no barber's or perfumer's shop, nor any other merchant's warehouse in the market-place, but a place of angels, a place of archangels, a palace of God, heaven itself. As therefore if one had parted the heaven and had brought thee in thither, though thou shouldest see thy father or thy brother, thou wouldest not venture to speak; so neither here ought one to utter any other sound but these which are spiritual. For, in truth, the things in this place are also a heaven. (Chrysostom Homily on First Corinthians XXXVI.8)

> For the supreme task, in this world, of the pilgrim City of God, its whole task during this mortal life, is to call upon God; and this fact is commended to us in the person of the one man who was certainly 'the son of the resurrection' of Abel, who was slain. In this one man, indeed, is signified the unity of the whole Supernal City: a unity which is not yet completed, but whose completion in time to come is prefigured by this prophetic foreshadowing. (Augustine City of God XV.21)

These statements from three of the most prominent late antiquity rhetoricians/church fathers depict noticeable differences in the understanding of the

presence and the voice of the church[1] in society. Origen (185-254), the Alexandrian rhetorician and Christian philosopher viewed Christianity as the "true paideia" (Brown The World of Late Antiquity 82, Jaeger 60-4) that moved an untrained society into cultivated sophistication. Chrysostom (349-407), surnamed the "Golden Mouth" (Palladius 151, Baur 206, Brändle xi, Vandenburghe 2, Brown The Body and Society 306, Attwater 11, Kennedy Classical Rhetoric165, Schaff "Prolegomena" IX:5, Maxwell "Lay Piety" 19, Cameron The Later Roman Empire 72, Quasten III:429, Lawrenz 1, Hartney 2, Walter 2, Allies 2, D'Alton 1) archbishop and preacher from Antioch and Constantinople longed for the church to be a "new civic community" (Brown The Body and Society 306) so that her practice of holiness through self-denial, devoted marriages and almsgiving to the poor would shine in stark contrast to the practices of a dark culture. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) saw two lines or cities of humanity with the people who compose the City of God on this earth living as pilgrims until the fullness and fulfillment of God's kingdom (City of God XV.1). In City of God, pilgrim life is marked by grace (XV.2), faith (XIX.4), endurance (II.20) and prayer XV.21).

Why do these leaders fluctuate at times dynamically on the church's presence and voice in culture? Why does Origen suggest an opposition (dominion) mentality, Chrysostom a separatist (removal) mentality and Augustine an enduring (tolerant) mentality?[2] These tensions from late antiquity find fertile ground in current discussion

[1] "Church" is viewed in this study primarily as the Protestant American Mainline Church and the American Roman Catholic Church along with several Protestant American Evangelical denominations in which the author, an ordained Protestant minister for close to twenty-five years, possesses experiential knowledge and professional working experience.

[2] This study wishes to emphasize the dynamic fluctuation (even ambivalence at times) of each rhetorician within their own position as contrasted with the other rhetoricians in late antiquity, yet to do it in a way that brings appreciation to the nuanced distinctions that each rhetor brought to the discussion of this issue. At times Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine agreed on the church's presence and voice in culture, and at times they disagreed over the church's expression and action in the world. This tension needs further rhetorical thought and study today.

within the church on the presence and voice of the church in a postmodern culture. Is the church called to persuade Christians to exercise dominion, or should they tell their parishioners to withdraw or even to desert culture? To state it succinctly, does the church exist to persuade and to enable its people to *change* culture (to "Christianize" it), to *desert* culture (to live life in isolation) or to *endure* culture (to hold on with perseverance)?

Proposal. This dissertation proposes to examine and to discuss the dynamic viewpoints and tensions within the church over its presence and voice in the American culture by examining the various interpretations over the rhetoric of Christianization in the Roman Empire and how those viewpoints surface in the positions of Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine. The objective of this approach is to continue the discussion first articulated by H. Richard Niebuhr's 1951 work, Christ and Culture, by showing that the way one understands the rhetoric of Christianization in the first five centuries as crystallized in the writings of Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine will reveal not only one's position concerning the church's place and presence in the American culture, but also the inner tensions that exists within many American churches today over the role she plays in a pluralistic society.

Importance. The relevance of this study is timely for American churches in postmodern times. Regardless if one is an American Roman Catholic or an American Protestant, the church's influence[3] in American culture has declined[4] and continues to show decline in our day.[5] Gilkey summarizes it aptly:

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[3] Vattimo (97-8) believes that the option for the "church" today (he defines "Christianity" as "Catholic," "Christian" and "believers" is "either to embrace[s] the destiny of modernity (and of its crisis, its transition to postmodernity), or, on the contrary…to be outside it. If the latter option is chosen—and there are signs that this is a temptation—Christianity renounces being a world and a civilization, to become what perhaps it originally was, a sect among other sects and an objective factor of social disruption among others."

> The development of modern culture since the Reformation and the Enlightenment has seen not only the rise of science to cultural dominance; it has also witnessed the decline of the church as foundational to social existence in all its aspects, and, correspondingly, the eclipse of theological understanding as the ground of every valid field of inquiry and so sovereign over all. (Society and the Sacred 79)

When examined from a historical point of view, four perspectives describe the importance of this study. From an ethical perspective, the American church functioned as an integral fiber in the fabric of national morality (Beliles and McDowell 178-9, Woods 203). In many communities, morals and ethical civility originated from the pulpits and classrooms within the American church; however, in current times fewer people are sitting in those pews and learning her ethics and moral teachings. The church's current decline suggests present moral and ethical dysfunction and growing ineffectiveness.

From a social perspective, the American church served as an integral fiber in the fabric of national humanitarianism. James Kennedy states, "From Mother Teresa helping the destitute on the streets of Calcutta to the Salvation Army providing shelter for a

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[4] Mann (302) states, "The hold of Christianity over our culture has weakened in the last few centuries" and Carson (5) concurs, "In much of the Western world, though not, by and large, elsewhere, confessional Christianity is in serious decline."

[5] See the American Religious Identification Survey 2008 from Trinity College, Hartford, CN (http://www.americanreligioussurvey-aris.org that states, "The percentage of Christians in America, which declined in the 1990s from 86.2 percent to 76.7 percent, has now edged down to 76 percent. Ninety percent of the decline comes from the non-Catholic segment of the Christian population, largely from the mainline denominations, including Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians/Anglicans, and the United Church of Christ. These groups, whose proportion of the American population shrank from 18.7 percent in 1990 to 17.2 percent in 2001, all experienced sharp numerical declines this decade and now constitute just 12.9 percent." See also the Hartford Institute for Religion Research's website (http://hirr.hartsem.edu/research/fastfacts/fast_facts.html) and its "fast facts" page that states that "Mainline Protestant denominations continue to decline" combined with the less than one percent growth of the Catholic church in contrast to a faster population growth of the U.S. population from 2006-2008.

family whose home just went up in flames, the sun never sets on Christians—individually and corporately—meeting human needs in the name of Jesus" (28-9). Woods described it aptly, "Suffice it to say that Catholic charity has had no peer in the amount and variety of good it has done and the human suffering and misery it has alleviated…The Catholic Church invented charity as we know it in the West" (170). From the establishment of hospitals and soup kitchens to the eradication of human affliction in numerous ways, America's humanitarian mercy finds its roots historically in the good will and charity of the church; however, in current times fewer parishioners with fewer charitable dollars and fewer volunteer hours are making the scope of humanitarian work more difficult. The American church's current decline suggests deepening erosion and growing ineffectiveness in its mission of charity and good will.

From an economic perspective, the American church served as an integral fiber in the fabric of a national work/industrial ethic. Hart notes, "The Protestant Work Ethic created reliable patterns of behavior, important for the development of a market system…It was certain that a good Protestant would carry out the terms of an agreement with diligence, care and honesty, thus following Calvin's views on how one is to conduct his daily affairs" (135). Hart's statement brings to mind the thought and influence of Max Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, first published in 1904-5 which "examined economic life within the context of the historical development of culture as a whole" (Giddens viii), pointing to Calvin as "the founder of capitalism" (James Kennedy 112). Woods believes that Catholic thought served as the foundation for modern economic thinking (153). Historically, American Protestant and Catholic thought and action have formed the framework for capitalism and its ethic of production;

however, their present stagnation in membership growth suggests possible capitalistic erosion and work-ethic demise.

From a pedagogical perspective, the American church served as an integral fiber in the fabric of national education. James Kennedy observes, "Every school you see—public or private, religious or secular—is a visible reminder of the religion of Jesus Christ" (40). Hart traced the educational legacy and competence of the American system to the Puritan tradition (107). Woods (47) recalled the Roman Catholic Church's contribution of the university system as the distinguishing mark of the Middle Ages. Wood's comment finds fertile ground with John Henry Newman's The Idea of a University and his foundational thoughts which later formed the Roman Catholic University System in America. While education may be one of the more lasting contributions of the American church's presence and voice in culture, their present decline suggests deepening educational and pedagogical erosion from its original founding.

Presence and voice addresses a perennial dilemma that the American church faces in every generation. Ask the question, "How should the church relate and interact with society?" and various internal tensions surface. This reveals that within many American Protestant and Roman Catholic circles, there remains deep disagreement over the church's role and function in its culture. Some fundamentalists believe that since the earth will be destroyed by fire and that a new earth will be created in its place (2 Peter 3:8-13), Christians should forsake the culture and live disconnected with this world. Others from a more Reformed perspective believe that since culture is a part of God's created plan and order for this world, Christians should work diligently to improve, even change culture as a part of its renewal eschatology. Other traditions live in the middle of

these two positions in a "wait and watch" endurance mode, hoping and praying either for the Rapture or for the worst to happen after their lifetime.

Because the church appears to show varying degrees of decline in her presence and voice to the American culture in these days, it is compelling American church leaders to rethink its mission and strategy, and this rethinking has led some of them to reexamine the era of its "hey day," specifically the *Roman era* when the conversion rate to Christianity reached peaks of forty percent per decade (Stark 6). The intent behind this return to study is to uncover any universal principles on Christianization and influence from the Roman era that can find application to present day discussion. This study summarizes and discusses some of the key scholarly viewpoints that caused first to fifth century Christianity to impact its culture and it leads to insights over the dynamic tensions that Christians often give to the way the American church should relate and respond to the culture. And these frictions at times are vividly noticed and illustrated in the writings of Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine.

Presupposition. The presuppositional premise of this study holds that the tensions over the church's rhetorical presence and voice in culture as illustrated in the writings of Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine stem from "various points of view from which the individual historical phenomena may be analyzed and classified" (Niebuhr "Types of Christian Ethics" xxxix). When one applies Niebuhr's notion of "viewpoints" from his study of typology to the Christianization within the Roman Empire, a number of dynamic and varying philosophical frameworks surface that describe how the early church related and responded to its culture. And a number of these frameworks surface in the writings of Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine. *Niebuhr's mid-twentieth century analysis and construction of the five types or motifs of viewing the church's relationship to culture*

gives a reference point for identifying and understanding the present tension over the current debate regarding the church's rhetorical relationship and response to American culture. Those within the church who hold that she must change and "transform" culture (basic affinity with Niebuhr's "Conversionist type," "Types of Christian Ethics" liii, 190-229) most likely conceive Christianization as a direct, frontline attempt to Christianize and to restore society from the fractured effects of the Adamic Fall. Those who hold that the church must withdraw from or escape culture (basic affinity with Niebuhr's "New Law type," "Types of Christian Ethics" xliii, 45-82) most likely see Christianization as a spiritual, social, internal reorganization where professing followers, in protest "against culture," remove themselves from the moral contamination from the world to pursue holiness so that they may confront the powers of wickedness and evil in the world. Those who hold that the church must endure culture (basic affinity with Niebuhr's "Oscillatory type," "Types of Christian Ethics" li, 149-89) most likely see Christianization as a tensional patience and daily struggle "in the paradox" for the Eschatos to come at the divinely appointed time. Seeing these perspectives in light of the interpretations over Christianization within the Roman Empire and their appearances in the writings of Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine enables one to realize why there is continued tension, confusion and disagreement within the American church today over her rhetorical relationship and response to society.

This study approaches Niebuhr's discussion and typology from a favorable standpoint, believing that some of the criticism over his work represents a misreading of the text in Christ and Culture. Marsden states that Niebuhr's work provides "introductory tools" for interpretation (13-4) and Carter (Rethinking Christ and Culture 73), while recognizing its shortcomings, recognizes that "Niebuhr's typology does address a real

problem and that people are helped by engaging in the process of thinking that problem through…the practical everyday issues of how to relate to culture." For the purposes of this study, Niebuhr is appreciated as a starting reference point for research, analysis and interpretation of the many viewpoints used in viewing the advancement of Christianity in the first five centuries AD. In the epilogue, the case for a new hermeneutical prism will be introduced for understanding in deeper ways the advancement of Christianity from the time of St. Paul to the years just following the death of Augustine. This new prism can shed great light in understanding the church's presence and the voice to the North American culture today.

Research Path. Following a review of Niebuhr's discussion of "the enduring problem," the study began with an examination of over one hundred-fifty key texts from the last two hundred thirty years that discussed or interpreted Christianization within the Roman Empire in some form or fashion. Numerous historical and ecclesiastical scholars were reviewed with rhetorical eyes in an effort to answer the initial research question, "Given the present day discussion over the perceived influential decline in the American church, why and how did Christianity make a cultural impact upon the world in the Roman Era, and how do scholars approach and interpret this Christianization?" The intent of this initial inquiry was to discover any transferable patterns and principles from the Roman era that could enlighten church leaders in our era to understand better how to approach Christianization (the church's rhetorical relationship and response to American culture) strategically and effectively in our own times.

Initial findings. What emerged from this research were the clear and noticeable interpretational and philosophical differences that many authors opined over Christianity's success as a monotheistic religion in a polytheistic culture. Some

attributed its success to its rapid evolution from an oral culture to a literary faith formed from textuality and the subsequent articulation of its text (message) through discourse. A second analysis likened its successful impact to the use of Hellenistic thought forms and methods as a school of philosophical thought that produced great centers of scholastic learning throughout the world. A third group touted its expansion and cultural impact through the performance and subsequent written record of supernatural and mysterious powers (miracles) associated with its early proclamation. The performance of this power was fueled by a set of eschatological beliefs deeply entrenched in its early teachings.

A fourth block of scholars viewed the success of Christianization through the religion's emphasis on sociality and ethics through communal order. As a transformed community living in a transgressed society, people became attracted to Christianity's social message of love, equality, peace, hope and civility. A fifth and final contingent saw its success through the imperial influence of Constantine's conversion that subsequently triggered a sufficient number of senatorial aristocratic "converts" within the empire. A working knowledge of Niebuhr's typology discussed in "Types of Christian Ethics" and in Christ and Culture assists in recognizing the various viewpoints and in exposing, perhaps even templating some of the key presuppositions that form the rhetorical impulses of each respected position. *When seen from this construction, one realizes from these interpretations how history becomes rhetoric and rhetoric becomes history*. Oftentimes the confusion, friction and intense disagreements within the church over her presence and voice in American society stems from the differing interpretational classifications that arise out of a scholar's positional point of view.

Niebuhr's work not only encourages ongoing scholarly research and debate, but it also compels scholars to search diligently for additional viewpoints and interpretational

frameworks that await engagement and analysis on the interpretation of first to fifth century Christianization as well as its implications for the North American church and its culture. With the realization that no one has the complete and total perspective and that other viewpoints are possible, this work will offer conclusions that will propose a new viewpoint in the interpretation of the Christianization in the Roman Empire and its communicative expressions in the writings of Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine. This new perspective will bring insight into understanding why there is disagreement—then and now—over the way the American church should approach, address and speak to its culture in this time.

Project Components. The proposed course of study involves five chapters of discussion with an epilogue. Chapter one revisits the discussion of Richard Niebuhr's "The Enduring Problem" to expose some of the most common criticisms and often seen misreadings of his text. Chapter two presents and discusses the five most significant viewpoints involved in the interpretation of the Christianization within the Roman Empire. Chapters three through five show how several of these significant viewpoints find their way into the writings of Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine. As each rhetor/church father's position on issues such as the human condition, society, the church and Christian's life in the world, eschatology and the understanding of the presence and voice of the church in culture is revealed, one sees their viewpoint. The Epilogue offers the opportunity to broaden the interpretive spectrum by suggesting a new hermeneutical prism through which the understanding of the church's rhetorical presence and voice in culture can be seen and understood with fresh meaning.

Thematic Overview. The following themes and subsequent synopses highlight the summary and discussion of the proposed dissertation project.

Chapter one discusses the most common criticisms and misreadings of Niebuhr's text as it pertains to his presentation and discussion of typology and the Ideal-Typological Method. From this discussion and with an appreciation for Niebuhr's typology on "historical points of view" ("Types of Christian Ethics" xxxix), this study classifies five differing scholarly viewpoints used in interpreting the Christianization within the Roman Empire. It is the project's intention to show that these differing interpretations over the expansion, impact and cultural effect of Christianization in the Roman Empire give light to the reasons why present day church leaders differ over the presence and voice of the church in culture today. In asking the question, "Why and how did Christianity make a cultural impact upon the world in the Roman Era?" this discussion provides the background for addressing and presenting the five most commonly used viewpoints for interpreting first to fifth century Christianization today. From an initial study of over one hundred-fifty works, five viewpoints are presented and discussed in separate sections.

Chapters three, four and five of the dissertation project discusses the appearance of several of these viewpoints in the writings of Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine, arguably the three most prominent communication philosophers and rhetoricians in the church during late antiquity. While each church father lived in times and circumstances unique to his day, all of them confronted the dilemma of the church in culture. "What should the church say to the world?" and "How should the church live in society?" were pertinent and pressing questions in their day as they are in our times. And these leaders wrote about the church in culture within a framework of dynamic tension. Sometimes they believed one thing about the church in culture, and then on another occasion at a different time they presented a modified or alternative view. This dynamic tension is intended to depict how each rhetor/church father struggled at times to articulate

adequately the church's role in culture in his own day and it should motivate American church leaders to continue that spirit of struggle in discerning how the church should relate to her culture today.

From these writings, the project attests that their positions on the church's presence and voice in culture are largely governed by their varying beliefs on eschatology, the human condition, the nature of society, the church's place in the culture and how that place is seen in role. And fortunately for rhetorical scholarship, oftentimes each rhetor depicted the presence and voice of the church with the use of metaphor. The significance of these chapters for this study is that it will allow the reader to see each church father's viewpoint and then to link it to one or more viewpoints presented and discussed in chapter two. The intent behind this portion of the project is to show by example how Niebuhr's typological classification at times finds a home in historical analysis and at other times needs ongoing clarification and scholarly development, specifically in the need for a new hermeneutical prism to interpret Christianization within the Roman Empire.

Chapter three will highlight Origen's understanding of the presence and voice of the church in culture as seen in light of chapter one's discussion of viewpoints. Why is Origen important for this study? From an analysis of his life and writings, one learns that he represents an important fusion of the supernatural tenets of Christianity with the philosophic[6] components of Hellenistic philosophy (Banner 202) as Trigg comments:

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[6] Grafton and Williams (16) call Origen "The first Christian biblical scholar and a pioneering philosophical theologian." Patterson (56) states, "With Origen, we reach the end of the pioneering phase of Greek Christian theology. His work and that of Clement paved the way for the theological harvest of the fourth and succeeding centuries: the mature cosmological reflections which flowed from the Trinitarian controversy and the elaboration of the nature of the Christian life in the light of the growing monastic institution of that later time."

> Origen became the archetypal Christian scholar, fully engaged in prayer and in the life of the church, filled with a love for Jesus Christ and, by his learning and intelligence, earning awed respect even from those not sharing his faith. He drew deeply on every possible source—among them Jewish tradition, philology, philosophy, and the natural sciences—to aid him in this principal enterprise, interpreting Scripture. He was convinced that, by means of such study, he was drawing closer to God and helping others do so. His impact on subsequent Christian tradition was immense and is still, to a large extent, unappreciated. (Trigg Origen 62)

By reviewing some of Origen's writings, one sees how the philosophical[7] and supernatural viewpoints find ground and footing in his understanding of the church in culture. Fourth century church historian Eusebius elaborates on this fusion:

> Many other educated people were so impressed by Origen's universal renown that they came to his school to benefit by his skill in biblical exegesis; while innumerable heretics and a considerable number of the most eminent philosophers listened to him with close attention, as he instructed them not only in theology, but to some extent in secular philosophy too, for he introduced any pupils in whom he detected natural ability to philosophic studies as well. First he taught them geometry, arithmetic, and the other preparatory subjects; then he led them on to the systems of the philosophers…with the result that the Greeks themselves acknowledged his greatness as a philosopher…He therefore thought it most

[7] See Banner's discussion (201-2) and footnotes over the writings of Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Sophists, Epicureans and Peripatetics that Origen probably used in his apologetic work.

important that he himself should be skilled in secular and philosophic studies. (Eusebius VI.18)

Trigg provides a fitting summary, "We have Origen, more than any other single person, to thank that Athens and Jerusalem belong equally to our Western heritage" (Trigg Origen 9). It is particularly through the philosophic and supernatural viewpoints that one sees at times Origen's position on the church engaging culture like a battle.

Chapter four will highlight John Chrysostom's understanding of the presence and voice of the church in culture as seen in light of chapter one's viewpoints. Why is Chrysostom an important example in this study? From an analysis of his life and writings, one learns that he represents an important fusion of the social tenets of Christianity's praxis with the textuality components of the religion's development. As a Christian rhetor and pulpiteer par excellence, he articulated an oral message of social life and order through textual exegesis and sermonic publication. Not only is he regarded as the greatest oratorical clergyman in the Greek Church (Kennedy Greek Rhetoric under Roman Emperors 241, Pelikan Divine Rhetoric 67), but also his approach to preaching and hermeneutics is dramatically different at times than Origen's approach. While Origen is remembered critically for his "allegorical" or "threefold layered meaning" approach (Kennedy Classical Rhetoric 157, Bigg 136, Vogt 546) in which he is regarded as a "spiritual exegete and expert on the inner life" (Gorday 104), Chrysostom is known as "completely the typical representative" (Pelikan Divine Rhetoric 72) of the "Antiochene" or "literal" (Mitchell 1) perspective of exposition which concentrates mostly on a "historical" and "typological" meaning (Grant with Tracy 68-9, Mitchell 389). Baur states, "Chrysostom was of very special significance for the history and the destiny of exegesis, in this way, that his surpassing authority tipped the scales in favor of

the historical-grammatical method of interpretation, rather than the prevailing allegorical method" (319). This rhetorical framework propelled Chrysostom to be "the last of the great urban rhetors of the ancient world" (Brown The Body and Society 306, Brändle 31), the "golden lyre of the Holy Spirit" (Baur 225) and one of the most extensive and brilliant exegetes on the writings of St. Paul (Mitchell 5, Vandenburghe 71). By reviewing some of Chrysostom's writings, one sees how the social and the textuality viewpoints find ground and footing in his understanding of the church as a "palace of God" (Homilies on 1 Corinthians XXXVI) with a biblical message to an antagonistic culture.

Chapter five will highlight Augustine's understanding of the presence and voice of the church in culture as seen in light of chapter one's viewpoints. Why is Augustine an important example in this study? From an analysis of his life and writings, one learns that he represents an important fusion of the textuality and philosophical viewpoints of Christianity with the eschatological impulses of the religion's hope. Cameron offers an insightful perspective:

> That Christianity had used, and continued to use, "the language of fisherman" could be a severe embarrassment to a highly trained author of literary ambition, even allowing for considerable exaggeration in their complaints. Yet as Augustine knew best of all, it was also one of the greatest strengths of Christian discourse that it could in some sense reach all levels of society and all levels of education—that is, it could form horizontal as well as vertical links in society. This was also one of its greatest advantages over pagan literature, which for the most part was directed at the perpetuation of the elite. Without that capacity, it is doubtful whether

> Christianization could ever have progressed as far as it did. (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 185)

By reviewing Augustine's writings, one sees how the textuality, philosophical and eschatological viewpoints find ground and footing in his understanding of the church's role in culture. Because of his commitment to "common" language and its ability to reach all kinds of people, Augustine believed that Christians should *not* live in an ascetic, isolated exile as Chrysostom did at points in his life. Instead, they should live *among* the unchurched where they can demonstrate the twofold rule of charity—loving God and loving neighbor (City of God XIX.14). Clark favors Augustine's standpoint:

> Augustine was right; Religious believers cannot separate themselves from the society of which they are a part. Their beliefs may lead them to challenge some of the aspirations and the practices of that society, but they do not live in a separate city, speaking a distinct language and following distinct customs. (Clark 117)

The significance of Augustine's, Origen's and Chrysostom's rhetorical position is captured most distinctively in their use of specific metaphors that depict their understanding of the church's presence and voice in society. Each rhetor's metaphors envision vivid word pictures that convey his respective understanding of the church's rhetorical role in culture, and at times these metaphors contrast distinctly with the other rhetors' metaphors, giving rich insight as to why there was provisional tension in their day and why there is continued disagreement—at times intense and heated—over the church's role in American society today.

The epilogue will offer general conclusions towards the presence and voice of the church in American culture as discussed in the first five chapters and then will make the

case for a new hermeneutical prism in the examination of this perennial issue. The study contends that while each viewpoint presented in chapter two supplies some insight and interpretational credibility, many of them lack interconnection with one another as a united accounting for the passionate motivation and methodical strategy that propelled Christianity's proliferation at a rate of forty percent per decade in its early centuries (Stark 6). The early believers were a social order that *also* believed in the Parousia *and* who spoke and wrote about it in a discourse that was textual, philosophical, ethical, theological and persuadable. In other words, the previously mentioned viewpoints cannot be "siloed" as the separate, stand-alone grounds for Christianity's prolonged expansion and impact. There must be a deeper, more encompassing viewpoint that can sufficiently account not only for the Christianization within the Roman Empire but *also* account for and explain the differing interpretational frameworks seen at times in Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine.

What would enable a religious movement to unite and to grow at a phenomenal pace for several centuries, including and most especially during times of opposition, intimidation and persecution, yet cause three prolific rhetors and church leaders in late antiquity to expound dynamic and at times *differing* positions over the role of the church in culture?

The epilogue contends that an examination of the New Testament literature reveals an important framework (hermeneutical prism) that propelled the church to go to the known world and to impact the culture within the Roman Empire. It equally explains the tensional views in late antiquity among Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine on the church's presence and voice in culture. It involves the awareness, understanding, motivation and application of the knowledge about the Kingdom of God in the mindset of

the followers of Christ in the early church and in the rhetorical praxis of Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine. It is this project's contention that the understanding of Christianization within the Roman Empire and the understanding of the church's presence and voice in culture—in the early centuries, late antiquity and today—can be more fully explained and better understood when examined from the viewpoint and lens of the Kingdom of God.

Rhetoric's value. Analyzing the church's presence and voice in culture among various late antiquity rhetoricians gives opportunity to appreciate the value of rhetoric not only in the interpretation of the advancement of Christianity in the Roman era and in the expression of that interpretation in the writings of Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine, but also in understanding the ongoing tensions and struggles among American church leaders today over the church's role in a postmodern society.

Rhetoric equips scholars and historians to see the importance of persuasion and influence in society and how institutions like the church have succeeded admirably and failed miserably through history. Rhetoric gives insights into understanding the dynamics and factors involved in Christianity's advancement and how those dynamics formed movements and pockets of irresistible influence in the first five centuries AD. Rhetoric also supplies wisdom into understanding why Christianity's presence and voice through the church to American culture is undergoing current influential decline in our present time. By looking at the tenets of the Christian gospel and mission that caused great attraction and that spawned great expansion *then*, perhaps one can glean important insights for understanding the ways and means the American church can regain her slipping influence on society and culture *now*.

Rhetoric helps one to understand how later articulators and interpreters (Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine) of the founding Christian gospel and mission created unique rhetorical positions from the New Testament's metaphoric description of the presence and voice of the church. By fusing their respective personal views on eschatology, ecclesiology and soteriology with their unique historical situation and then overlapping it with the New Testament dogma and narrative, one sees a myriad of possible viewpoints surfacing that contrast and differ at times with other rhetor's viewpoints over how the church should relate and respond to society.

Because rhetoric concerns itself with "an ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion" (Aristotle On Rhetoric I.2.1), one learns important means of persuasion (the elements that comprise each viewpoint) from the Christianization within the Roman era and then sees their application not only to Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine's writings but also to our time in the form of an important equation that defines a church's rhetorical strategy for relating and responding to their culture:

Theological distinctives + Historical moment (situatedness) + Chosen biblical metaphors

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One's unique position on the church's presence and voice in society.

Theological distinctives refer to the specific canons of doctrinal teaching that the particular church affirms in their beliefs and constituting mission. Historical moment refers to the specific time and circumstances that situated the rhetor's life and work. The chosen biblical metaphors refer to the specific New Testament pictures of the church that the rhetor chose to match his theological beliefs concerning the way the church relates and responds to culture. One's rhetorical praxis of the church's presence and voice in

society is born from definitive doctrines formed out of the rhetor's historical moment that match as closely as possible the New Testament's pool of available metaphors depicting the church's identity. Rhetoric is best seen when the chosen biblical metaphors are lived out in the world by the rhetor's church.

Rhetoric also enables communicators, scholars and church leaders to search for and to use available and relevant means of persuasion today in seeking to return the church to its place and position as an important influence and relevant voice to American society. Seeing new viewpoints that can shed insight to past and present discussions over the church's presence and voice in American culture can move present day parishioners and their leaders to greater understanding and unity in presenting the American church as a more formidable institution that speaks with greater power and persuasion to a changing culture. Rhetoric enables scholars and ecclesiastical leaders to uncover key factors that made the American church effective in days past and which can also make her effective again in our time.

Chapter 1

TOWARDS A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF NIEBUHR'S DISCUSSION OF THE ENDURING PROBLEM

These words, first published in 1951, find pertinent application and relevant discussion for today's times:

> A many-sided debate about the relations of Christianity and civilization is being carried on in our time. Historians and theologians, statesmen and churchmen, Catholics and Protestants, Christians and anti-Christians participate in it. It is carried on publicly by opposing parties and privately in the conflicts of conscience. Sometimes it is concentrated on special issues, such as those of the place of Christian faith in general education or of Christian ethics in economic life. Sometimes it deals with broad questions of the church's responsibility for social order or of the need for a new separation of Christ's followers from the world. The debate is as confused as it is many-sided…So many voices are heard, so many confident but diverse assertions about the Christian answer to the social problem are being made, so many issues are raised, that bewilderment and uncertainty beset many Christians. (Niebuhr Christ and Culture 1-2)

In reading these words, people are immediately taken on a journey, led by a scholar described by a close colleague as one with "an undogmatic mind, supported in part by his vast knowledge, by his sense of historical relativity, and by his personal scholarly humility" (Gustafson xxxii). In this excursion, readers are led to engage with a "classic" that "has had a chance to leave its mark" (Marty xiii) as a "pedagogical" tool (Gustafson xxxi), namely, "the relation of the revelation in Christ to the reason which prevails in culture" and "the main ways in which Christians have dealt with [this]

enduring problem" (Niebuhr Christ and Culture 11). In this journey of intense examination and study, H. Richard Niebuhr concluded that from these "two complex realities—Christ and culture—an infinite dialogue must develop in the Christian conscience and the Christian community" (Christ and Culture 39).

In serving as the scholarly guide in this expedition, Niebuhr's role in the discussion came in two ways. First, as a "typologist [who] directed toward neither explanation nor evaluation, but toward understanding and appreciation" ("Types of Christian Ethics" xxxix, Gustafson xxxviii), Niebuhr operated first with a spirit of learning and admiration, then with a "hermeneutic of suspicion" (Gustafson xxxii). In this approach, he attempted "to order" identifiable features or traits "into families in such a way that some of the characteristic combinations of principles may be understood" (Niebuhr "Types of Christian Ethics" xxxvii). This resulted in "brief and summary descriptions" (Christ and Culture 40) that "represent phases of the strategy of the militant church in the world" (Christ and Culture 2), "mental constructs"[8] that possess "definite limitations" ("Types of Christian Ethics" xxxviii) especially as they apply to individuals[9] and to interpretive factors such as psychology, sociology, anthropology and theology ("Types of Christian Ethics" xxxviii).

In this typologist role, Niebuhr readily admitted that these constructions were "partly artificial" (Christ and Culture 43) due to the "rich complexity of individual events," recognizing that "no person or group ever conforms completely to a type"

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[8] Gustafson states, "The typology is an ideal construct of ideas, not generalizations about literature" (xxx).

[9] Niebuhr ("Types of Christian Ethics" lv) states, "Typology helps us to understand the infinite variety of creative morality in Christianity, but every individual man or movement has a unique character which is inexplicable in terms of type alone; further, the types of Christian morality are not measures of value."

(Christ and Culture 43-4). These presentations served as "partial answers" that enabled travelers in the journey to keep their bearings and coordinates in this "great conversation" (Christ and Culture 40). It is here that Niebuhr secondly chronicles[10] and describes the "varieties of belief" and "manifold interpretations" concerning the person of Christ (Christ and Culture 11-2) as well as the "baffling" attitudes that "culture" or "human activity in civilization" (Christ and Culture 6, 32) express toward Christ over the continuums of "spirit" and "matter," "divine grace" versus "human achievement," "tolerance" versus "intolerance" and "divine forgiveness" versus "human justice and moral responsibility" (Christ and Culture 5-9). In this role as chronicler, not only does he describe society's reactions to Christ (Christ and Culture 4-5), but also the struggle "carried on among Christians and in the hidden depths of the individual conscience, not as the struggle and accommodation of belief with unbelief, but as the wrestling and the reconciliation of faith with faith" (Christ and Culture 10). This struggle surfaces in the attempt to define Christ with "concepts and propositions" that are not "relative to a particular standpoint" (Christ and Culture 14).

From this primary role as a typologist, Niebuhr chronicled for "heuristic" or "interpretive" purposes "principal criterions" so that a fuller, more appreciative "understanding" of this "enduring problem" could come (Gustafson xxxi-xxxii). Unfortunately, some scholars have misread both Niebuhr's intentions as well as his frameworks, seeing them as "straitjackets, building silos, or hermetically-sealed containers that would confine and define Christian thought on this issue (Marty xvi). Gustafson (xxix) believes Niebuhr's postulations in Christ and Culture are "not a taxonomy of theological ethical literature" or a product of "historical inadequacies"

[10] Notice in the language of Christ and Culture (12) how Niebuhr carefully chronicles the varying beliefs of "some Christians," distancing himself from personal attachment or disclosure of his own beliefs.

(xxviii); instead, it is the outcome of his use of the "Ideal-Typical Method," presented in his 1942 paper, "Types of Christian Ethics" (Gustafson xxx). From this function as a typologist-chronicler, Niebuhr is approached and understood from rhetorical eyes and is presented favorably with appreciation, recognizing his own admission that these types possessed limitations ("Types of Christian Ethics" xxxviii). When viewed from rhetorical structures, Niebuhr's work finds better traction and clearer perspective in the journey.

Unfortunately, some scholars choose to critique Niebuhr from historical, theological and modernity-casted molds without an understanding of the typological method that Niebuhr employs. At times these criticism represent a "gross misreading" of Niebuhr (Gustafson xxviii) and his intentions to draw awareness to the "great motifs" that have existed through time on "the relation of the revelation in Christ to the reason which prevails in culture" (Christ and Culture 11). It is appropriate to discuss some of the more pertinent and more recent criticisms over Christ and Culture and to see in some cases how Niebuhr's text directly answers and censures the assessed criticism.

Critiques of Christ and Culture and Niebuhr's Textual Response

While Carter (73, 7) recognizes the "real problem" that Niebuhr's work addressed, he views the presentation of Christ and Culture as an "old paradigm" that is "falling apart" with "new ones emerging" to address the issue. Marsden (4-5) concurs by recognizing that it was "a product of its time," yet Hauerwas and Willimon (40) go further to state that it represents a "great hindrance to an accurate assessment" of the issue facing church leaders today. The times in the twenty first century with its emphasis on multiculturalism are vastly different than Niebuhr's era of a "unified civilization" (Marsden 5-6); therefore, Christ and Culture is viewed by some primarily today as a work

that offers "introductory tools" (Marsden 13-5) expressed in the format of an "argument" (Stassen, Yeager and Yoder 10) for a preferred and "presupposed theoretical position" (Carson 8). While some suggest differing approaches from abandonment to revision (Carter 71-3), others suggest understanding the Christ and Culture discussion from the standpoint of "two sources of authority as they compete within culture" (Carson 12). In any case, the call to the church centers in "taking a radical approach and refusing to be either liberal or conservative," not "accommodating to the society around them" (Carter 7, 111). With this in mind, four major critiques of Niebuhr's work are presented, all situated in the light of a false dualism (Carson 62).

Four Criticisms Situated in a Perceived Dualism

Marsden (6-8), Carter (64) and Yoder (Stassen, Yeager and Yoder 43) believe that Niebuhr's choice of the "terms 'Christ' and 'culture' in defining the problem" juxtaposes an inappropriate "dualism" that many scholars reject. On the one hand, scholars see that the Christ in the Bible is often depicted and presented at times enjoying and appreciating culture (food, customs, people, rituals, etc.) while exposing the sin and hypocrisy of those who were in rebellion to God's revealed Word. In reality, Marsden (7-8) believes that Niebuhr's meaning of "Christ" actually refers to "various Christian's efforts to follow Christ"…and even this effort is "very much shaped by culture." In effect, Niebuhr saw in his day that the church became "compromised" over the teachings of the Bible and thus chose the word "Christ" in the title and not "the church" (Marsden 7-8).

To this criticism Niebuhr would reply that a dualism naturally appears when Christ focuses "a single-minded direction toward God" against the "temporality and pluralism of culture" that is absorbed with its own interests, selfish concerns and worldliness (Christ and Culture 39). The rub comes when "Jesus Christ and God the

Father, the gospel, the church, and eternal life may find places in the cultural complex, but only as elements in the great pluralism" (Christ and Culture 39). Here, Niebuhr brings out Christ's claim of exclusivity in terms of the primacy of his relationship with God the Father. Because of this intensely deep devotion, everything else pales in significance:

> He puts no trust in the enduring institutions and traditions of his society. He shows little confidence in his disciples; he is convinced that they will be offended in him, and that the sturdiest of them will be unable to stand by him in the time of testing. Only romantic fictionizing can interpret the Jesus of the New Testament as one who believed in the goodness of men, and sought by trusting it to bring out what was good in them. Yet despite his skepticism he is remarkably free from anxiety. He is heroic in his faith in God, calling the Lord of heaven and earth Father. (Niebuhr Christ and Culture 25)

Some scholars view "culture" not as an enemy of God but rather as a component of his creation activity (Crouch 175, Carter 68) with humanity's brokenness and frailty producing "a mixture of good and bad" in it (Frame 12). Crouch (23) defines "culture" as "what we make of the world" specifically in the form of "cultural artifacts"[11] that affect and alter a public's life, creativity and direction (38-40) from a "previous generation's contribution (73). He defines the "natural stance" of a particular culture as a "posture" and the numerous ways this posture is expressed is through "gestures" (90-3). What Crouch sees in Niebuhr's motifs in Christ and Culture is the product of "grooved Christian thinking" that pits one type (in Niebuhr's opinion, the fifth or "transformation"

[11] See Crouch's five questions about culture artifacts (29-30) that help explain a public's culture-making.

motif) as the only correct posture that exists for Christians when in reality several postures and their appropriate gestures may be the best response to a particular cultural situation (Crouch 180-1). In his mind, too often Christians and churches are depicted as "critics, consumers, copiers [and] condemners of culture" when they should approach life as "creators" and "cultivators" of it (Crouch 97-8), concluding that "the only way to change culture is to create more of it" (Crouch 67).

It is here that Niebuhr's alleged "grooved thinking" represents a misread of his text, as his motifs are not rigid and "siloed" (Marty xvi) but rather possess "family resemblances…along the whole scale (Christ and Culture 40). Because of the "rich complexity" seen in individuals and groups, "no one person or group ever conforms completely to a type. Each historical figure will show characteristics that are more reminiscent of some other family than the one by whose name he has been called" (Christ and Culture 43-4). This is due to the "social" and "human achievement" components in Niebuhr's description of culture (Christ and Culture 32-3), a human-centric display of values, goods and conservation (Christ and Culture 34-6), all situated and positioned under the "living lordship" (Christ and Culture 2) of Christ who "loves man as only God can love" (Christ and Culture 19), a love that includes the human activity in culture.

Carson (115) sees that the understanding of "culture" as applied to Niebuhr's discussion involves a Christian understanding and response to four major influencers: "secularization, democracy, freedom and lustful power." Even the possibility of a "Christian culture" presupposes the influence and shaping of outside forces in the world upon the church (Carson 98). In this respect, "culture-making" involves "people making something of the world" by deciding which dimension of life they wish to cultivate and possibly change (Crouch 40, 48); however, some view Niebuhr's understanding of

culture as "monolithic" (Stassen, Yeager and Yoder 54, Marsden 8-9) and inconsistently applied to his five types (Carson 67), reflecting an era of "consensus" thought rather than today's views on culture as pluralistic and diverse (Marsden 9-10). Here again, Niebuhr's text is misread, for he clearly states in his 1942 paper:

> Typology challenges the assumption that there is only one ethics or one ethical principle; in our particular field it denies the assumption that there is a single Christian ethics or a single Christian ethical principle. It assumes, on the contrary, that there are multiple principles and a large number of creative individual concretions of the Christian life. ("Types of Christian Ethics" xxxviii)

Although the above statement appeared in the prime time of modernity, it carries significant postmodern overtones. With Niebuhr's textual response to his critics' remarks on dualism situated, specific criticisms will now receive attention.

The first alleged criticism involves errors in theology. Critics such as Carter (64), Yoder (59) and Carson (35) see several theological errors in Niebuhr's position on the Incarnation, the Trinity, the biblical canon and biblical theology. Direct attention has focused on Niebuhr's second type, "the Christ of Culture" motif as containing illustrations from Gnosticism and liberalism that many scholars in biblical circles would not deem as "Christian" (Carson 36), provoking Wells (248) to align the "discredited Christ of Culture position" with the demise of "liberal Protestant[ism] as a part of his censure of "open theism." This theologically liberal understanding of Christ provoked Carter to state:

> Does Niebuhr really believe in the historic doctrine of the Incarnation? Does he really believe that, in Jesus of Nazareth, God appeared on earth in flesh and blood?

> The Jesus of Christ and Culture is very different from the very human, flesh-and-blood prophet of the Synoptic Gospels…Niebuhr's Jesus is an otherworldly, almost mystical figure who preached an uncompromising message of the sovereignty of God the Father and who had no interest in the mundane things of human life such as politics, family and social structure. (Carter 64)

Yoder (60) concurs with Carter and believes Niebuhr "set up the question" from the start to make the Christ of the Bible "inadequate" by removing the elements of Scriptural narrative that would suggest that Jesus at times was "against culture" (the motif Niebuhr attacks most in Christ and Culture). Carter (66) and Marsden (7-8) see that the events of Niebuhr's era (World War I and II) likely skewed his formerly held view of "Christ against culture" by removing a spirit of "liberal humanistic optimism" that Niebuhr once favored, as attested in his 1935 work, The Church Against the World.

This understanding of Christ from Christ and Culture is again a misread of Niebuhr's text, for his intention in discussing the "definition of Christ" was to chronicle and to present the views of varying groups of professing believers in his era. Note carefully how the language of the text states that those views represent "some Christians and parts of the Christian community" several times in Christ and Culture (12-29), including the positions held by "religious liberalism" (Christ and Culture 15, 19, 20) such as Bultmann, whose depiction of Christ Niebuhr criticized as a "more Kantian than Markan or Pauline or Johannine" (Christ and Culture 24).

A similar vein of criticism is directed at Niebuhr's understanding of the Trinity. Carter (69) states how Niebuhr's understanding of the Christian Godhead represents "a liberal, pluralistic and relativistic doctrine that functions in his theology in the precise opposite way that it functions for the church fathers and the Eastern Orthodox, Roman

Catholic and Reformation traditions."[12] Yoder (61-5) carries an extended discussion over Niebuhr's understanding of the roles of the Trinity in relationship to the "sources of valid moral insights," questioning whether Niebuhr's belief resembled some form of "modalism" or "Sabellianism" and seeking whether some of Niebuhr's pupils and sympathetic followers really understood him (62-3). Crouch (181) perceives another standpoint, a "subtle temptation" in Niebuhr to structure his argument in such a way that the focus of the discussion ultimately encourages the substitution of "Christ and Culture" with "Christians and Culture," leaving the door open for believers to speculate on their ability to see culture in ways similar to Christ and the biblical Trinity. Such "temptation" as Crouch (182) puts it, "to take over God's role as the transformer of culture, leads to folly."

It is possible to arrive at a premature misunderstanding of Niebuhr's view of Christ when he states in Christ and Culture (16) that "He is God [the Father];" however, careful examination of the language in context shows that the "he" Niebuhr is discussing is God the Father and Jesus' devoted relationship to him as the son. Niebuhr's pertinent point at that moment in the discussion was to emphasize Jesus' "singlemindedness of his devotion" to his heavenly Father and to differentiate this exclusive "level" of love against the love that should come for one's neighbor at a different level (Christ and Culture 17).[13]

A second stated criticism over Niebuhr's Christ and Culture as seen from a juxtaposed false dualism centers around the credibility of the Scriptural and historical

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[12] See Gilkey's discussion (How the Church Can Minister to the World 28-55) on how the Enlightenment and evangelical Christianity were the two "intellectual elements" that brought secularization and liberalism into the church.

[13] This clarification does not overlook the reality that Niebuhr favored positions seen in today's light as neo-orthodox theology; however, in this discussion, the focus is solely upon the language in the text that Niebuhr directly uses in defining what "some" and "others" (Christ and Culture 12) view about Christ.

examples in his typology and discussion. Marsden (10-1) sees Niebuhr's categories as "simply not historically accurate." Yoder views Niebuhr's selection of examples as "skewed" (Stassen, Yeager and Yoder 36-7) because in his judgment, "no major thinker covered by Niebuhr's survey really fits [his] types" (45). Yoder bases his view on the underlying notion that Niebuhr's typology is brutally hard and presented as the standard for judgment when in reality it has not undergone the rigors of testing to determine if it is a credible tool or not (46-7, 51). Of significant importance in this light is Niebuhr's fifth type, "Christ transforming Culture," which Carson (39) questions as legitimate and possible "in the pure form that Niebuhr prefers" because of its "problematic" (39) alignment with historical figures such as Augustine (28) and Calvin (40) who do not fit neatly into Niebuhr's typological system:

> It is not just that Augustine and Calvin do not follow the conversionist ideal to its conclusion, but that Tertullian is not quite consistent in his adoption of the "Christ against Culture" paradigm, while Justyn Martyr and Clement of Alexandria are not consistent in their pursuit of the synthesis pattern, and so forth. Indeed, some figures show up in two or three patterns…The fifth pattern, "Christ the transformer of culture" is found in restricted forms in the New Testament, but certainly not in the strong form Niebuhr would like to see adopted. (Carson 40)

Carson offers a similar vein of criticism at Niebuhr's typological categorization in showing that the "holistic encompassment of the biblical canon needs to address the Christ and culture debate, not one section of Scripture favoring one position and pitted against another passage of Scripture that on the surface suggests a different position" (40-3). His passion focuses on arriving at and implementing "a more comprehensive vision, a canon-stipulated vision of what relations should be…while insisting that the outworking

of that comprehensive vision is sufficiently rich and flexible to warrant appropriate diversity" when application is needed (43).

Again, this vein of criticism represents a significant misreading of Niebuhr's text and his presentation of and discussion of "type." He clearly stated that "no absolute types of Christian morality can be discerned" and also that "no historic individuals conform completely…to classify the historic Christian groups" ("Types of Christian Ethics" xxxix-xl). Niebuhr again underscored this point at the end of his "Types" paper, "Every individual man or movement has a unique character which is inexplicable in terms of type alone; further, the types of Christian morality are not measures of value" ("Types of Christian Ethics lv). Gustafson (xxx) reminds critics that "typology is an ideal construction of ideas, not generalizations about literature" and that "misreading" occurs when there is a " failure to understand Niebuhr's use of the Ideal-Typical Method." In Gustafson's understanding and Niebuhr's presentation and discussion, "taxonomy" is not supposed to represent an exact alignment of historical figures with perfect, exemplifiable qualities; instead, "The purpose of taxonomy is to develop headings about generalizations from a variety a literature which shares similarities" (Gustafson xxx). Niebuhr readily recognized that "the typology method has definite limitations" and that the typologist's "own type" is "one of many" in the analysis, presentation and discussion ("Types of Christian Ethics" xxxviii).

A third stated criticism given to Niebuhr's Christ and Culture as perceived in light of a juxtaposed dualism focuses on the reduction, even minimalization of the lordship of Christ over culture when positioning Christ and culture as the two opposite ends of a polarized continuum. Yoder (Stassen, Yeager and Yoder 58-9) believes that the impression of Christ left by Niebuhr's discussion is that of a "moralist" and therefore "by

definition inadequate" (59-60) and something that "cannot be taken seriously" (64). This reduction comes because of this improper dualism:

> Jesus has become in sum one of the poles of a dualism. It is we, the modern practitioners of Christian ethics, who shall judge to what extent we give our allegiance to him and to what extent we let his critical claims be conditioned by our acceptance of other values, within the culture, which He in principle calls us to turn away from. We also are in charge of defining the other pole of the dualism. We manage our epistemology. We are the moderators in charge of the balancing process. We want to be modest and gentle about this, but (according to Niebuhr) we still have the last word; Christ does not. Jesus is very important; Lord he is not, if "Lord" denotes an ultimate claim. (Stassen, Yeager and Yoder 43)

Carter (66) recognizes that the dismissal of the lordship of Christ was a central element in the historical progression of "liberal Protestantism," and sees Niebuhr's shift in thought (from the "Church against Culture" motif to the "Church transforming Culture" motif) coming from his inability to reconcile the ministry of Christ on earth with God's intent to establish the church as the voice of his resurrection and lordship in the Kingdom of God as a part of obedient discipleship (66-7). Understanding the lordship of Christ[14] as the focal point of thought and interpretation is what is needed to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of culture and the church's presence and voice in it:

> It is agreed that the holy in the church—that which must be preserved against the world—is no particular brand of theology, form of liturgy, or even code of ethics.

[14] See Yoder's discussion of the Lordship of Christ (Stassen, Yeager and Yoder 68-71) as a confession of faith and how this looks in life and culture.

> It is the presence of the claim of its Lord on the total existence of a community, and in response, the surrender and commitment of that community to Him in its thought, behavior, and common life. *This* form of the holy, more than anything else, seems to be absent from our current denominational life. (Gilkey How the Church Can Minister to the World 25, his emphasis)

To this charge of minimalizing the lordship of Christ, Niebuhr would assert to a misreading, even a minimalization of the language of *his* text, claiming that even in the midst of "conflicting Christian groups" who disagree with one another on the role that Christ has in culture through his people, the active sovereignty of Christ is working through it all:

> The belief which lies back of this effort, however, is the conviction that Christ as living lord is answering the question in the totality of history and life in a fashion which transcends the wisdom of all his interpreters yet employs their partial insights and their necessary conflicts. (Christ and Culture 2)

As a chronicler who attempted to describe the "variety" (Christ and Culture 11-2) of responses from the "spokesmen of nationalistic and communistic societies" and "ardent champions of humanistic and democratic civilizations" to the authority of Christ, Niebuhr saw that "not only Jews but also Greeks and Romans, medievalists and moderns, Westerners and Orientals have rejected Christ because they saw in him a threat to their culture" (Christ and Culture 4). In addition to these groups, Niebuhr also saw how "ancient spiritualists," "modern materialists," "nineteenth century atheists," "nationalists and humanists all seem to be offended by the same elements in the gospel and employ similar arguments in defending their culture against it" (Christ and Culture 5). In this

description, the language of the Christ and Culture text shows that Niebuhr was *not* aligning himself with the views of these groups but rather reporting and describing their rejection of Christ's authority over culture.

This position is further strengthened when one sees the way Niebuhr approaches and discusses four central areas (spirit/matter, grace/human achievement, tolerance/intolerance and forgiveness/human justice) where antagonizing cultures and people groups reject Christ's authority in the world (Christ and Culture 5-9) along with the troubles that even professing Christians have "in the hidden depths of [their] individual conscience" over the authority of Christ in their lives (Christ and Culture 10). Niebuhr's point in chronicling this conflict was to depict the real intensity that exists when believers have attempted to engage over the Christ and society issue (Christ and Culture 11). Yet despite this conflict, Niebuhr shows genuine confidence in the place of Jesus Christ in history and in biblical redemption when he says, "The fact remains that the Christ who exercises authority over Christians or whom Christians accept as authority is the Jesus Christ of the New Testament; and that this is a person with definite teachings, a definite character, and a definite fate" (Christ and Culture 12).

This "definite character" of Christ includes a complete spectrum of "virtues" that are presented in such a way that "seems extreme and disproportionate to secular cultural wisdom;" yet whether people view him as an historical figure, an eternally-existent being or a resurrected king, Niebuhr sees that these "virtues of Jesus Christ are the same" (Christ and Culture 15) and that "it is better…to take all of his excellencies together" (Christ and Culture 27) because he is "the Christian's authority" (Christ and Culture 14).

A fourth stated criticism levied against Christ and Culture as seen in the perception of a juxtaposed dualism centers in Niebuhr's situating his five types in the

paradigm of "Christendom," defined by Carter (14, 53) as "the concept of western civilization as having a religious arm (the church) and a secular arm (civil government), both of which are united in their adherence to Christian faith…the essence of the idea is the assertion that western civilization is Christian." Closely related to "Constantinianism" (Carter 15), Niebuhr situated his five types (later called motifs) with "the great unexamined presupposition" that "western culture is Christian" (Carter 15-6) and that it is "on the whole a good thing" for liberal Protestantism to serve as the "unofficial state church" so that it can occupy a "key role" in "maintaining public morality, inspiring patriotism in the citizenry, and give religious legitimacy to the government" (Carter 56).

Carter labels this viewpoint as "worldliness" based on "a series of compromises made by the church with the world so that the offense of Jesus Christ is watered down, mitigated, and obscured to the point that the world is satisfied that the church is no longer foreign and dangerous" (78). Looking at "Constantinianism" from the fourth century, Carter concluded that many "evil disasters" came from this improper church-state relationship, namely "anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism" (86), "a declaration of faith in power, violence, and coercion as the only way justice can be done" (103) which resulted in pulling the church "into acts of intolerance, pogroms, persecution of heretics, war, inquisition, invasion, murder, theft, and violence in the name of national security" (104) and the "marginalization" of Christ, "replacing the clarity of revelation with the mists of fog and natural theology" (108). In this interpretation, the clear dividing line occurs over the issue of violence and the use of forceful coercion and power (Stassen, Yeager and

Yoder 57, Carter 17, 200), a position Carter deems as inconsistent[15] with the Christian gospel:

> Within Christendom, the New Testament message of radical discipleship ("Take up your cross and follow me") is transformed into a message of social conservatism (or, in certain circumstances, of social revolution) in such a way that being a disciple becomes a matter of conforming to the world in one's outward behavior, while believing something unique about Jesus and God in one's private, inner being. (Carter 17)

While Carter offers many positive points in his interpretation and view of Niebuhr's position, numerous scholars question partially or totally his conclusions on the effects of Christendom.[16] Carson sees great problems in making "pacifism the dividing line of the discussion," calling some of Carter's conclusions "reductionistic," "a raw championing of pacificism" (222, 225-6) and failing to comes to terms with "the complexities of getting the issues about Christ and culture right" (222) by not scrutinizing any position from the light of Scripture (226). No matter who or how one looks at the relationship between the church and culture, one must understand the complexities and frictions involved and wrestle in the midst of the tension:

> As a stand-alone posture, *against* too often turns into brittle condemnation, a stance of haughty (presumed) moral superiority, wagons circled. *Transform* on its own may degenerate into naïve idealism, even utopianism, a stance concerning which Dietrich Bonhoeffer reserved some of his most severe words. The radical

[15] See Carter's discussion (104-7) on the five things to avoid the perils of Christendom.

[16] See Carson's discussion in chapter 5 (145-203) for a fuller discussion.

> begrudges God and his creation, Bonhoeffer insists, for the radical seeks a self-sovereignty incompatible with recognition of our indebtedness to others in the past as well as the present. The radical is all ultimacy, prepared to sacrifice the penultimate, the here and now, for some eschatological goal. Avoiding these extremes, we must see Christ against *and* for, agonistic *and* affirming, arguing *and* embracing. This is complex but, then, Christianity is no stranger to complexity. (Elshtain "With or Against Culture?" 30)

Elshtain's understanding of "complexity" finds receptive soil in Niebuhr's description of types and of his formulation of the Ideal-Typical Method, for Niebuhr's hermeneutic of "understanding and appreciation" ("Types of Christian Ethics xxxix) recognized "compounds" that came from "sociological" and "psychological variables" as well as "Christian moral forms" in the study of "theological types:"

> If it is possible to construct models in which ethical convictions are correlated with sociological or psychological variables, it is no less possible, and for the theological moralist it is more enlightening, to discover or construct types in which the variable is Christian faith. Hence we raise the questions, whether there is in the gospel itself a source of the infinite variety of Christian moral forms; whether the differences in the ways in which Christians conceive their duty and understand good and evil are simply correlated with the variety of cultural, psychological, and sociological patterns evident in their lives; or whether they may be related to variations in the Christian situation before God. Is Christianity, as gospel, a simple thing which enters into relation with other simple elements, or with compounds, being modified by them, or is it itself a compound so that issues would need to arise within it and

differentiations would need to take place on the basis of Christian convictions alone? ("Types of Christian Ethics" xli)

Because of this rich complexity, no individual aligns completely into an "absolute type" or perfect example; however, Niebuhr is quick to affirm that these variables, when "analyzed and classified" through "individual historical phenomena," produces various "*points of view*" ("Types of Christian Ethics xxxix, emphasis added). With this understanding of "viewpoints" in mind, it challenges and calls for fresh study into the first five centuries of the church, taking Niebuhr's thought structures on "viewpoints" to see the perspectives that scholars have offered in order to explain the rise, expansion, cultural impact and enduring significance of Christianity in the world. It is to this objective that the focus of this project now attends, attempting to learn the viewpoints that explain more clearly Christianity's rhetorical and influential advancement over culture.

Chapter 2

DIFFERING VIEWPOINTS OVER THE CHRISTIANIZATION WITHIN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

> If scholars have found it difficult to draw a history of Christianization in the early centuries, it is because they continue to be pestered by inadequate, but resiliently enduring conceptual frameworks. (Kile 219)

Kile's admission provides a fitting description to the challenge presented in this proposed study. Because of the real and current[17] influential decline[18] (Meacham 34-38) from secularization (Gilkey How the Church Can Minister to the World 20, 145) that many leaders and critics[19] see in the American Church, some have suggested a return to the study of Christianity in its early years, specifically the days of rapid expansion and cultural impact that Christianity delivered[20] during the first five centuries AD. But what they find when they examine the scholarly conclusions drawn from the study of

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[17] Meacham (34) states, "This is not to say that the Christian God is dead, but that he is less of a force in American politics and culture than at any other time in recent memory."

[18] See the American Religious Identification Survey 2008 from Trinity College, Hartford, CN (http://www.americanreligioussurvey-aris.org that states, "The percentage of Christians in America, which declined in the 1990s from 86.2 percent to 76.7 percent, has now edged down to 76 percent. Ninety percent of the decline comes from the non-Catholic segment of the Christian population, largely from the mainline denominations, including Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians/Anglicans, and the United Church of Christ. These groups, whose proportion of the American population shrank from 18.7 percent in 1990 to 17.2 percent in 2001, all experienced sharp numerical declines this decade and now constitute just 12.9 percent" (1).

[19] Rorty and Vattimo (33) state, "It is the view that ecclesiastical institutions, despite all the good they do—despite all the comfort they provide to those in need or in despair—are dangerous to the health of democratic societies."

[20] Cameron (The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 144, 150) questions the role that Christianity played in the development that changed "classical antiquity into a medieval world, or in particular, to decide whether Christianization was the reason for or the result of other changes in the social fabric." Frend (The Donatist Church 333) is even stronger on this point, believing that this "problem has been misconceived. Christianity did not prevail until the Greco-Roman cities which had for so long been the centers of classical influence were themselves falling into irretrievable decay, and their predominance was passing to revived native, prehistoric units of society."

Christianization is a myriad of differing and conflicting viewpoints.

One of the central reasons why continual and ongoing disagreement abounds over the place and role of the American Church in society is because there are widespread and differing interpretations that scholars have given over the factors that made Christianity a powerful force in the first five centuries of its existence.

Some conclude that the church was influential in its beginning days because of its demonstration of miracles; therefore, the American Church needs to rekindle the practice of faith-based supernaturalism. And while these supernaturalists are making their case, others are contending that the early church was effective because of her beliefs in an imminent eschatology; therefore, the American Church needs to emphasize deeper teaching and an "end times" theology. And while these "end-timers" are beating their eschatology drum, another group is lobbying that it was the attraction of "spiritual family" that appealed to many people in the early centuries; therefore, the American Church needs to return to the biblical sense of "community." And while these groups are making their point, other scholars and leaders contend that Christianity became influential and effective through its written message that spawned great philosophical and intellectual discussions; therefore, today's church in America needs to be more intellectually and philosophically-minded. And while these intellectuals are making their case, another group believes that Christianity will make its greatest impact on culture when the American Church targets its conversion "strategies" to the imperial levels of government, much like what occurred during and after the reign of Constantine.

Kile's admission, current research and practical experience by thousands of pastors, priests and church leaders affirm the tensions in many American Protestant and American Roman Catholic churches today. With the recognition that many American

churches have lost some degree of "the religious, transcendent…ultimate dimension or reference in all the facets of life" (Gilkey How the Church Can Minister to the World 20), one of the paramount reasons why American church leaders find it difficult to agree on a strategy for regaining cultural influence is due to the myriad and different interpretations over how Christianity impacted the culture in the early centuries. After all, if scholars cannot agree on the factors that made the church influential *then*, what makes leaders think that they can make the American Church influential *now*?[21]

Using H. Richard Niebuhr's understanding of typology as "calling to attention the continuity and significance of the great motifs that appear and reappear in the long wrestling of Christians with their enduring problem…the question of Christ and culture" (44), the following "motifs" or "points of view" (H. Richard Niebuhr xxxix) that came from personal examination of the sources are offered in an effort to summarize and to organize a host of scholars who have attempted to explain to some extent why and how early Christianity made an impact upon its culture. More than twenty centuries later, church leaders continue to organize praxis ministry models around these viewpoints and classifications. In analyzing the vast literature on the Christianization within the Roman Empire, five major viewpoints are proposed that summarize and classify over two-hundred thirty years of scholarly evaluation and discussion on this issue.

The Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint

Because the Christian religion at its core involves the reception of a divine message (revelation) written and proclaimed through human means (Hellenistic and

[21] Gilkey (How the Church Can Minister to the World 22) is correct in asserting that the entire discussion of "the relation of the church to culture in our age must be set against the massive backdrop of this contemporary absence of God." Part of the reason why many church leaders are suggesting a return to the study of the expansion of Christianity in the first five centuries is because the historical record attests to the presence and activity of God in the religion's growth and influence.

Jewish channels) to a hearing and reading audience, a first block of scholars attribute the success of early Christianity to its cultivation out of familiar Hellenistic thought forms[22] that led to the presentation of its message (morals and symbolism) through various creative forms with rapid articulation through spoken proclamation (preaching) and printed distribution (written gospels and epistles, sermons and biographies). In other words, the *system* whereby divine truth was dispensed (after reception) and articulated creatively to the world is at the heart of this explanation of Christianity's significant success as an influential religion.

Stated succinctly, the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint states that Christianity became an effective discourse out of its cultivated discursive development (A Hellenistic articulation of a Hebrew-lineaged divine oracle) and subsequent presentation to the culture. As this discourse developed through various creative forms, a distinct spiritual, emotional and psychological identity formed among its followers that empowered them to do many things, distinguishing them from other sects and cults of the day. This empowerment produced varying perceptions of and responses to their message. While some viewed their message as superstition, others saw it as a new school of ethical thought and practice while another group opposed it to the point of persecution and martyrdom. From these periods of attack and opposition came the memories and confessions of persecuted followers that appeared in the form of Christian biographies (testimonies) that became great tools of power and persuasion for the faith's followers and to the culture-at-large.[23]

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[22] The central idea of biblical inspiration involves the notion of divine disclosure through the channel of the Greek koinê tongue. The Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint highlights the human side of the Christian message, the cultivation and articulation of the divine message through Hellenistic thought forms that resulted in creative channels of discourse.

[23] See Cross's summary and discussion (192-8) of martyrial literature.

Cameron (Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 42) states decisively, "It can moreover be argued that the successful formation of a religious discourse was one of early Christianity's greatest strengths." Cameron's thought highlights the importance of *formation*. Obviously this discourse and the identity which flowed from it could not have occurred unless was cultivated from thought-forms that were known to the world at the time—the structures of Hellenism.

The Cultivation of Inscripturated Revelation with the Tools of Hellenism

New Testament scholar and historian F.F. Bruce (55) concluded, "The Hellenistic elements in the New Testament should not be written down as accretions or intrusions; they are of the essence of Christian life from the beginning." Penner (77) notes the gaining significance in the minds of New Testament scholars of the place of Hellenism in the inscripturated cultivation of received Christian revelation. This growing awareness brings light to Heitmüller's statement, "Hellenistic Christianity was involved in the origin of the Pauline faith and Hellenistic Christianity influenced the formation of Paulinism" (313).

Martin (135-6) concluded that beyond the borders of Israel, it was the "Christian Hellenists" who not only freed Christian theology from "Aramaic pre-acculturation," but also organized the articulation of the Christian gospel into strategic missionary activity.[24] Part of this strategy involved the place of the Hellenistic synagogue as a means to attract less-strict Jews and open-minded Gentiles to the tenets of the early church's message (Ferguson Backgrounds of Early Christianity 617-8). From its early formulations,

[24] Hinson (10) acknowledges the "immense success of Christianity…within so short a span of time…to the extensive preliminary preparation by Hellenistic Judaism." His study of the Christianization within the Roman Empire examines the ideology, mission, strategy and adaptability of the early church to forge an identity for itself while creating important institutional structures at the same time.

Christianity came out of the womb of Hellenism[25] and her thought structures from infancy bear birth marks of Hellenistic imprint.

The cultivating tools of Hellenism upon Christianity are most clearly seen in four areas: the desire for disclosure, the Greek language as a global prototype, the importance of morals in thought and in practice and the connection between some of the most prominent Christian symbols with Hellenistic substantive thought. These distinctive tools took the Hebrew-reception of the divine Scriptures and cultivated them into a language and a thought-system that was understandable and relevant to the known world at that time.

In regards to disclosure, Randall (45) remarked, "When the Christian cult came into prominence it was Greeks who elaborated it, endeavored to understand it, adjusted it to their philosophies and formulated the theological conceptions of the Christian epic." Von Dobschutz (246) noted that "there is at first a thirst for revelation in Hellenism." Perhaps the concept of revelation is no better seen than in the Greek λόγος, not only a central theme in Johannine thought (Gospel of John 1) but also a word that is "both the measure and the essence of Hellenism" (Peters The Harvest of Hellenism 34).

In regards to language,[26] Jevons (173) stated that "Hellenism made the ancient world a new created world with the use of a common tongue, the koinê." Walbank (62) saw this universal language[27] as the factor which held the known world "into a single

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[25] See Glover's assessment (The Influence of Christ 55, Life and Letters 16) of Christianity's incorporation of Greek thought, Roman Law, myth and mysticism into its belief structure.

[26] Cahill (56) noted that some type of prehistoric lettering system "came to the Greeks probably by way of Phoenician merchants." To this the Greeks added vowels, starting a "general access to literacy, which in its turn encouraged democratic give-and-take," and this "objectivity…encouraged the demystification of the world" (59).

[27] Glover (The Influence of Christ in the Ancient World 107) notes, "Christianity itself has adopted forms of language and dogma that it could never have known, if its early interpreters had not been steeped in Plato."

cultural continuum." From this first century "tongue," the language of the New Testament became a "natural language expressing the universalism of the emergent church" (Ferguson The Heritage of Hellenism 28). As Machen (31) put it, "From the very beginning Christianity was provided with a Greek Bible." This emphasis on language was not only seen in the formulation of the Christian Scriptures (Jaeger 5), but also in their transmission, copying and preservation of their texts by the codex (Peters The Harvest of Hellenism 502). Metzger (149) adds, "Textual criticism originated among the Greeks. Its rise and development were connected with the Homeric epics." Cahill summarizes it aptly, "Greek became the language of Christianity" (256).

In regards to ethics, Benn (280) stated, "The ethical value of Hellenism fully equals its intellectual and artistic value." In this worldview, the "philosopher's task was to discover the best life, to teach it and to live it" in the form of "ethics or practical philosophy" (Barnes 365). In the Hellenistic system, ethics was taught formally in schools (Peters "Hellenism and the Near East" 34) and it found its way into the Christian system formally (inside the synagogue) and informally (Christ's outdoor teaching as exampled in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7) as well as in Paul's thinking and oratory (Knopf 503, 513-4).

In regards to Christian symbols, some of the most cherished pictures of the Christian religion such as the sacraments, the church as a living body and as a community come from templates stamped with Hellenistic thought. Knopf (516) concluded that "washings, blood baptisms, sacred signs and anointings, holy food and holy meals[28] were intermingled with the mysteries of the deities which come from the east." Paul's use of

[28] See Guthrie (The Greeks and their Gods 45-9, 257) for a discussion on the Christian communion.

the body analogy for the church[29] (1 Corinthians 12) is a basic Greek concept seen as early as the fourth century BC from Xenophon's address to Socrates about two brothers created by God for mutual service with pairs of "hands, feet and eyes" (Xenophon II.3.18-19) while the "conduct"[30] that was expected in the early church closely paralleled the ordered affairs of the polis. Many of these symbolic pictures and practices find their origins in the cradle of Hellenism.

From Spoken Culture to Textuality: The Creation of an Intellectual and Imaginative Universe

Because of the role of textuality in the solidification of Christianity's discourse,[31] early Christians first placed great emphasis on words (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 6, 15). Speaking and writing became the "rhetoric"[32] of their empire within the Roman regime (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 14). Seen most specifically when the spoken "culture of myth and conjecture" transitioned to a written form of texts and then to the codex (Fox 304, Brown The World of Late Antiquity 94), textuality distinguished the message of the church from other cults and mystery religions at the time. Sandwell (12) states it aptly, "Religion and writing were thus inseparable for Christianity." This prompted Goldsworthy (99) to recognize the "great quantities of writing" (99) that were attributed to this new faith.

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[29] See Jaeger's discussion (19-23) on the importance of *synkrasis* and *sympnoia* in the Christian body.

[30] In Philippians 1:27, the root word from "conduct yourselves" (πολίτης) is the Greek "polis" (πολίς), an "old verb…to be a citizen, to manage a state's affairs, to live as a citizen" (Robertson 441).

[31] Funk (100) states, "In the beginning the Christians were too much taken up with the spread of the Gospel to have any leisure to indulge in writing."

[32] Cameron (Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 28) states, "Rhetoric—the strategies of discourse—was itself one of the many technologies by which early Christianity implanted "habits of the heart" more powerful than institutions and more lasting than social welfare."

In this transition to writing, the infrastructure of ideological power became secured (Mann 310-11). Crucial connections between orality and textuality were formed through literary "networks" within the Roman empire and many who were abled and enabled to read the Christian message became captive to its persuasive hold from the "conversion process" (Mann 310, 317).

From the "word record, fossilized in textual form," scholars have made definitive conclusions about the life and influential progress of Christianity (Braun 1). Because Christ was "the Word," Christian discourse and exposition of the religion first began with the spoken treatises of Christ and his apostles, heard and then transcribed to a written record, from which the early followers utilized as a spoken witness and as a subsequent written witness for future generations. This spoken articulation of the written faith (Grant The Sword and the Cross 138, Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 32) solidified Christianity's position in history as a world religion.

Kennedy (Greek Rhetoric 182) and Glover (The Conflict of Religions 159) note that the preferred and most successful method used in articulating the written text through speech came through preaching.[33] Harnack adds:

> The unity and variety which characterized the preaching of Christianity from the very first constituted the secret of its fascination and a vital condition of its success. On the one hand, it was simple that it could be summed up in a few brief sentences and understood in a single crisis of the inner life; on the other hand, it was versatile and rich, that it vivified all thought and stimulated every emotion. (Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 84)

[33] Frend (The Rise of Christianity 134) observed that the elements that became central in Christian preaching were "The Lordship of Jesus, his approaching coming bringing judgment, the overthrow of Satan's kingdom and the establishment of the 'city which is to come' (Hebrews 13:14)."

Through the spoken (preaching) and written message, Cameron (Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 6) contends that "an intellectual and imaginative universe" opened prospective audiences to Christianity. Through numerous forms—gospel stories, testimonies of great saints, homilies, letters and other modes of communication, the Christian religion developed steadily, even rapidly at times. Because of this "elasticity" (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 8) and these multiple flexible forms "on the anvil of history" (Rusch vii), a new system of belief appeared within the Roman world:

> If ever there was a case of the construction of reality through text, such a case is provided by early Christianity. Out of the framework of Judaism, and living as they did in the Roman Empire and in the context of Greek philosophy, pagan practice, and contemporary social ideas, Christians built themselves a new world. (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 21)

This new reality was presented creatively in various ways, appealing to the mind "from the known to the unknown" (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 25). Many times rational debate proved ineffective, so oftentimes Christian reality and discourse reverted to the forms of "images and visual art—signs, symbols and the trope of miracles" (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 48, 57, 60). Through this creativity and the standard oratory of the day—an oratory "far from dead" (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 86), Christian discourse appealed to new audiences because it constituted a rhetoric that formed "a pathway, through signs to truth" (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 84). And nowhere in the Christian discourse is this creativity richer than in the form of narrative:

> Christianity was a religion with a story. Indeed, it possessed several different kinds of stories. But two were preeminent. *Lives*, biographies of divine or holy personages; and Acts, records of their doings and often of their deaths. Narrative is at their very heart; for whatever view one takes of the evolution of the Gospels, the remembered events and sayings from the life of Jesus were in fact strung together in a narrative sequence and ever afterward provided both a literary and a moral pattern…The existence of Christian stories within this narrative context cannot be without significance for the diffusion of Christianity as a whole. (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 89)

Wright (372) observed that the earliest followers of Christ were "storytellers." For more than four centuries, Christian stories and biographies became powerful means of rhetoric, "literary innovations" (Perkins "Fictional Narratives and Social Critique" 46) that spoke "to the individual and to the heart—not just to theory, but also to practice" because it "presented ideals of behavior for Christians to follow," written in many literary styles that appealed to "readers of all educated levels" (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 146-7). Through these presentations by story, pictorial drawing and visual art, "figural qualities" were presented at the intellectual, moral and emotional levels of life (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 150-2) as a new and preferred reality, oftentimes advantageous over the current life at the time. Accompanying these presentations at strategic moments was the intertwining of mystery[34] and "paradox," thoughts that connected people to "definitions of the holy"

[34] Wilken (The Spirit of Early Christian Thought 3) states, "Early Christian thinking…was as much an attempt to penetrate more deeply into the mystery of Christ, to know and understand what was believed and handed on in the churches, as it was to answer the charges of critics or explain the faith to outsiders."

(Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 159-60). As people heard or read depictions of Christ or presentations of holy people, it persuaded them to consider personal morals and to ponder the aura of the divine.[35] This parallels Gilkey's (How the Church Can Minister to the World 24) contention that a central feature of the Christian message is the element of the "holy and transcendent."

In his Confessions, Augustine pondered the mystery of the divine:

> But I had other thoughts: I conceived my Lord Christ only as a man of surpassing wisdom, whom no other man could equal. Above all, because he was born in a wondrous manner of the Virgin, to give us an example of despising temporal things in order to win immortality, he seemed by the godlike care that he had for us, to have merited such great authority as a teacher. But what mystery was contained within those words, "The Word was made flesh," I could not conceive. (Confessions VII.19.25)

> O Lord my God, how deep are your secret places, and how far from them have the consequences of my sins cast me! Heal my eyes, and let me share in the joy of your light. (Confessions XI.31.41)

Paralleling the chronicles of biographies, stories, sermons and other forms of symbolic and visual art were the numerous and varied collections of apologetic literature,[36] used to make Christianity "articulate as well as articulated" (Grant The

[35] See Otto for a fuller discussion.

[36] Markschies (32) states, "The Christianity of the second century differs from that of the first simply by the various highly-educated theologians who were concerned to provide a scholarly understanding of the new religion." Apologetic literature played a significant role in the articulation and in the explanation of Christianity's message. Glover (The Conflict of Religions 147) compliments this thought, "No one can read the Christian Apologists without remarking the stress which they lay upon the knowledge of God." See also Chadwick (The Early Church 66) on the importance of "intellectual dialogue."

Sword and the Cross 138) and to "improve the public image of Christianity" (Kennedy Classical Rhetoric 153) to the inhabitants of the known world and most especially to Hellenized Christians (Peters The Harvest of Hellenism 618). Brown notes the confidence of the Apologists:

> The Christianity of the Apologists was not merely a religion that had found a *modus vivendi* with the civilization that surrounded it. They presented it as something far more than that. They claimed that Christianity was the sole guarantee of that civilization—that the best traditions of classical philosophy and the high standards of classical ethics could be steeled against barbarism only through being confirmed by the Christian revelation; and that the beleaguered Roman empire was saved from destruction only by the protection of the Christian God. (The World of Late Antiquity 84)

Pelikan (The Excellent Empire 8) observed that in contrast to the attempts to make Christianity conform within the "syncretistic hodge podge" of Rome, the beginning centuries of the religious life were devoted to "self-defining identity." Apologetic literature, along with the other forms of printed text enabled the new faith to "transcend its environment…to shape and form it" (Brauer 2) because it used many of the "methods and thought forms of ancient philosophy to explain the message of the New Testament, making Christianity attractive to the educated as well" (Markschies viii). Osborn (22) recognizes that this method of "argument was a major Christian activity in the second century."

The Emergence of an Identity of Empowerment from Discursive and Textual Articulation

Coming out of the textual records from the early church, scholars have noted specific beliefs and behaviors that enabled Christianity to expand and to impact its

culture. Some of these beliefs and behaviors include the portrayal of unity (Grant The Sword and the Cross 132, The Apostolic Fathers 137), a spirit of expectancy (Grant Augustus to Constantine 50, The Sword and the Cross 132) in an "apocalyptic perspective" (Shepherd 17-8), a sense of purpose and "mission" (Woodhead 10, Wright 360) a strong ethical code (Gibbon 348, Wright 365), the practice of monotheism in a polytheistic society (Woodhead 9-10, Wright 365, Markschies 203-4), compassionate caring and almsgiving (Cameron The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 78, Fox 324, Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 153, Gibbon 382, Brown Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity 94, Glover The Conflict of Religions 161), the equal treatment of women among men (Frend The Rise of Christianity 180, Walsh 114, Markschies 203-4, Cameron The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 148, Chadwick The Early Church 58, Glover Life and Letters 127, The Conflict of Religions 163) along with equality to all classes of society (Walsh 116, Fox 334, Clark 13, Cameron The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 138, Chadwick The Early Church 59), an "exclusive zeal for the truth of religion" (Gibbon 351) coupled with a rejection of the world's philosophies and practices (Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 98, Lopez 14, 19). Each characteristic functioned as a consequence of the conversion experience (Nock Conversion 220) and emboldened the church to call itself the "new and the true Israel" (Pelikan Jesus through the Centuries 22, Frend Orthodoxy, Paganism and Dissent IV.815).

In displaying many of these features in varying ways, Christianity became recognized as a new society that "promoted its own laws and its own patterns of behavior" (Wilken The Christians as the Romans Saw Them 119), positioning themselves so that they could speak, act and record their own movements in a new rhetoric from

within the Roman Empire (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 14). This new rhetoric initially identified and separated them from their Judaistic and pagan origins and with time and refinement brought great confidence and command in articulating the truths of their message to the public sphere (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 129-30). In this respect, the early and later followers of Christ not only became *empowered*, but also acted *in power* to show many of the religion's central tenets—love, truth, purity, joy, selflessness, compassion, sacrifice and optimism. This concept of empowerment sees that "for early Christian discourse, the problem of authoritative discourse[37] is worked out in a number of rhetorical and material ways" (Castelli Imitating Paul 49).

As this multi-faceted discourse was spoken and written, then subsequently heard and read by the world, varying perceptions and responses came. Because of the place and prominence of miracles in the actions and records of the early church (Markschies 203-4, Gibbon 367-9, Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 131), suspicious minds saw it as "superstition" (Wilken The Christians as the Romans Saw Them 66), educated critics saw it as a system with substance and ethical standards (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 22) while others opposed it with verbal and physical attack, producing a vivid "culture making" record of martyrdom[38] through experience and memory (Castelli Martyrdom and Memory 4). Fox (315) sums it aptly, "Christianity's most public advertisement was martyrdom."

Castelli underscores the importance of sacrifice and death in the Christian culture:

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[37] Castelli provides extended discussion on the rhetoric of mimesis in Pauline thought and action.

[38] Frend (Orthodoxy, Paganism and Dissent IV. 817) observed, "Persecution and suffering were the lot of the righteous from the beginning of time and would endure until the end of the present age. This aspect of remnant theology found a ready reception by Christians in the early centuries."

> Willing and self-sacrificing death on behalf of one's religion, one's political ideals, or one's community—martyrdom—is hardwired into the collective consciousness of western culture and is one of the central legacies of the Christian tradition. (Martyrdom and Memory 33)

The martyrs' rhetoric[39] became powerful *not* from the type or form of public sentence imposed, but rather through the testimonies or "confessions" that came from the believer on the trial stand (Fox 449). These confessions—spoken and written, formed a powerful "framework of meaning" that "drew upon broader metanarratives about temporality, suffering, sacrifice and identity" (Castelli Martyrdom and Memory 25), paralleling "a kind of interpretive overlay upon the life of Christ" (Young 71). As eyewitnesses saw and heard the martyrs' confessions and as later audiences read the accounts of Christian persecution and sacrifice, a "Christian collective memory" that "produced versions of Christian identity" formed that carried forging repercussions through time (Castelli Martyrdom and Memory 200). This powerful type of rhetoric that Young (72) called a "ritual of exaltation" enabled Glover (The Conflict of Religions 165) to conclude, "It was the martyrdoms that made the church."

Perhaps the best examples of martyrdom rhetoric come from the Roman "Spectacle" where opposition, suffering and sacrifice joined to form a powerful public picture:

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[39] Martyrdom rhetoric became so powerful that the "phenomenon" of "the cult of the saints" rose to great significance in the fourth century due to a "shift in the discourse of martyrdom among rabbinic Jews, other Jews and Christians" (Mayer with Neil 11, 13). This compelled Chrysostom to preach a number of homilies and to pen correspondence on the subject, opening "a unique window onto a dynamic and vital period…[to] observe in action many of the conceptual shifts that took place and the way of talking about martyrdom that accompanied them" (Mayer with Neil 19). For fuller discussion, see Mayer with Neil (11-35), Brown, The Cult of the Saints, Trout (165-87) and Johnston and Hayward, eds.

> The spectacle, when read properly, offered a compelling and memorable portrait worthy even of God's eyes…Deriving from a courtroom context where the 'martyr' is the 'witness' who testifies to what he has seen, the cultural production of Christian martyrdom as performance and spectacle transforms the seer into the seen, the testifier into the testimony. And it transforms the readers and consumers of this tradition into uneasy voyeurs of the suffering of others even as it calls them into identification with that suffering. (Castelli Martyrdom and Memory 132-3)

Lopez (73-4) notes four meanings tied to martyrdom that "separatist Christians" experienced as they underwent persecution and death: "renunciation" from the world, the belief that martyrdom was a "divine command," a "fulfillment of Christian expectation" and identification with other Christians as they entered into "communal salvation." These meanings combine to form a spirit of courage and resilience, evidenced in Chrysostom:

> How many tyrants have wished to get the better of the church! How many frying pans, and furnaces, and fangs of wild animals and sharp swords have there not been! Yet they have not succeeded. Where are the oppressors? Silence and oblivion have passed over them. But where is the church? It is more dazzling than the sun. (Homily Before He Went Into Exile 1-2. 52, 429 in Leaves from St. John Chrysostom 90-1)

Themes such as textuality, spoken discourse, Hellenism, the opening of a new reality through discursive forms, empowerment and martyrdom rhetoric define broadly but adequately the values that form some of the fibers of an empowerment identity seen in the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint. In this interpretation of Christianization, the

primary issue is *not* what the early Christians said in their message to the world, but *how* the message's form evolved through time and *how* the early followers of Christ cultivated this message creatively to reach as many kinds of people as possible. Whether it was spoken or written narrative seen in the lives of self-sacrificing martyrs, the spoken or written words of a memorable sermon, the depiction of Christian truth through symbols, visual art or metaphor, the use of varied and multiple forms of discourse positioned and enabled the early church to reach all classes of society in its day—young and old, rich and poor, men and women, slave and free, educated and illiterate and Jew and Gentile. This approach to "aim consciously at common people" (Chadwick The Early Church 72) brought great success in propagating the faith. In its infancy, the church employed creative means and forms to transmit their message; however, in its current institutional state there is great disagreement and tension today among professing followers over the proper forms of its message to the world, especially in light of the claim that the Christian revelation (the Bible) is complete. Can Christian truth be presented in the form of dance? If so, *what* form of dance? Can some present the Christian message in the form of music? If so, *what* form of music? What about art, symbols and instrumentation? Obviously this hermeneutical interpretation of Christianization and its implications not only brings tense and often strong disagreement as to the number of creative forms of discourse available today, but most especially in its praxis application as to how those forms are to be properly utilized.

The Social/Community Viewpoint

Because the Christian religion at its core involves the redemptive formation of a "holy nation" (1Peter 2:9) that calls itself the "new Israel and the true Israel" (Pelikan Jesus through the Centuries 22, Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 431,

Brown The World of Late Antiquity 66) out of a "process of social formation" (Kile 239), a second block of scholars attribute the success of early Christianity to its emphasis on the creation of a new society or "community[40]…held together in sharing in, expressing and devoting themselves to something sacred and ultimate…that permeates their life together, holds them together, directs their common life and makes that common life possible" (Gilkey Society and the Sacred 19).

Succinctly stated, the Social/Community Viewpoint states that Christianity entered history as a new social order with communal implications for its teaching and practice. It is not simply something to believe, but rather a faith to live out, to practice and to observe between human beings who are relating to God and to one another, fulfilling the scope of redemption in its totality. It is here that ethics and morals are taught, modeled and upheld. Kile elaborates:

> Thinking of Christianization as a process of social formation enables us to account for the growing number of people who simultaneously identified themselves with Christianity and with other religious alternatives without minding things that worry modern scholars, that is, notions of intellectual persuasion, cogency or inconsistency, or 'reversion' to paganisms. It allows for conceiving of the process of Christianization other than as a process of partial or failed attempts at ideological persuasion, or of 'nominal' or 'superficial' conversion by recognizing the broad range of interests that could draw a person to Christianity and by providing a basis

[40] A more recent view that combines the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint with the Social/Community Viewpoint is propounded by Brian Stock's model of the "Textual Community," forging Christianity's path and development "somewhere in the interstices between the imposition of the written word and the articulation of a certain type of social organization" (The Implications of Literacy 150, Listening for the Text 150). Philip Rousseau continues this viewpoint (The Early Christian Centuries 56) with the discussion of "reading communities."

for understanding its continued appeal, without depending on the success of explicit, ongoing educational strategies. (Kile 239)

In a social construction, there are "multiple overlapping and intersecting sociospatial networks of power" which create what Mann terms "the Christian *ecumene*" (1, 301). As a "form of ideological power," its drawing influence comes in the alignment between the benefits of the Christian gospel and the wants and the desires of the faith's new believers (Mann 302). As Nock examined its early beginnings, he found that Christianity "offered a cultus in which the individual found his own personal needs and the desire for brotherhood in worship satisfied" (Early Gentile Christianity 102). Daniélou (The Origins of Latin Christianity 405) concluded that the "social aspect" of Christianity was a distinguishing feature of the Latin Church. When scholars examined the dynamics and tenets that contributed to early Christianity's success as a social creation with a divine impression, two potential identities emerged. Either the early followers of Christ saw themselves as a distinct and holy community and lived separately from society or they embedded themselves within society for the purpose of changing it.

The Calling out, Formation and Organization of a Regenerated, Social Society: A New Polis

Florovsky (67) states, "From the very beginning Christianity was not primarily a 'doctrine,' but exactly a 'community'…There was precisely a new community distinct and peculiar in the process of growth and formation, to which members were called and recruited." Allen calls this process of growth and formation "Spontaneous expansion" (7), part of which involves the unstoppable attraction of the church towards those who desire hope, peace and structure, seeing in Christianity the quality of life for which they are searching (7). This finds connection to Stark's three propositions: 1) New social

establishments attract new followers primarily from the "inactive and discontented" (19); 2) Converts coming into a new faith find points of "cultural continuity" that remind them of their previous religious affiliation (55) and 3) Growth happens most effectively and efficiently when the catalysts of growth use "preexisting social networks" (55). Because of these factors, "an extraordinarily powerful sense of community and brotherhood" (Liebeschuetz 2) emerged in the early church.

These preexisting social structures enabled Christianity to introduce to the world through its people "a new conception of humanity to a world saturated with capricious cruelty and the vicarious love of death" (Stark 214). Within this environment of hate, what did the world see from this new society?

First and perhaps foremost, religious inquirers saw and witnessed a supernatural kind of love[41] emanating from the new faith. Founded by Christ who modeled and commanded love, Harnack noted that the "central principle" of this new society was the Johannine statement, "God is love" (The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 148-9). Love became not only the entry point for the new convert (Cochrane 221-2), but also the standard by which they held themselves accountable to each other. To the new followers of Christ, love "was more than a language, it was a thing of power and action" (Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 148-9), compelling them to sacrificial almsgiving (Brown The Rise of Western Christendom 69, The World of Late Antiquity 67), joyful witness (Allen 143), hospitality to travelers (Chadwick The Early Church 56, Hinson 51-3), compassionate humanitarianism to the sick (Funk 36, Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 153, 168-9, Wilken John Chrysostom and the

[41] Gilkey (How the Church Can Minister to the World 27) argues that a church's true life must possess a divine sense of "holiness or transcendence" in order for her to show acts of mercy and compassion to the world. If there is no presence of the holy, there can be no genuine love.

Jews 21) and to the poor (Brown Power and Persuasion 94-5, Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 21, Chadwick The Early Church 57) and the promotion of literacy (Cameron The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 138) among the uneducated. Chadwick (The Early Church 56) sums it aptly, "The practical application of charity was probably the most potent single cause of Christian success."

Second, coming from this love, religious inquirers saw among the members of this new faith an equal treatment of all people regardless of their gender, social status, ethnicity or economic background (Stark 213, Fox 334, 336, Brown The World of Late Antiquity 66). St. Paul's words grounded their praxis, "Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all" (Colossians 3:11). In his Commentary on Romans, Origen described the early believers as "a new body of people but not another race. Their characteristic is universality, not ethnic particularism" (VIII.6). This reveals how Christianity became a message that had "universal appeal" (Mann 305, 307) with a special consequence of elevating women (Stark 128). Brown elaborates on this egalitarianism:

> What would have struck a contemporary was that the Christian Church was unlike the many trade associations and cultic brotherhoods which proliferated in the Roman cities…The Christian church, by contrast, was a variegated group. In that respect, it was not unlike a miniature version of the new empire. High and low, men and women met as equals because equally subject, now, to the overruling law of one God. (Brown The Rise of Western Christendom 64)

Egalitarianism is one exclusive way the church rose to become a new power in social and economic life (Burrus and Lyman 9), for as this shift came about in the course of time, "fundamental changes…in people's self-awareness and in their opportunities and

social organization" occurred (Fox 22). This highlights Florovsky's insight, "To build up the church means, therefore, to build up a new society and, by implication, to re-build human society on a new basis" (131).

Third, religious inquirers saw in this new spiritual community an internal[42] orderly structure (Grant Augustus to Constantine 54, Funk 52-61, Shepherd 30, 35, Brown The Rise of Western Christendom 65, Gibbon 376), a "hierarchical structure" (Daniélou The Origins of Latin Christianity 432) under a "system of elders" (Von Campenhausen Ecclesiastical Authority 76-123) and organizational independence[43] in their daily life and mission (Nock St. Paul 431). In response to the five "contradictions"[44] of the established empires during Christianity's birth and early development, Mann concluded, "Christianity's appeal will be that it provided a solution…better than that offered by the Roman Empire…Christianity found a solution in their combination: a universalistic, egalitarian, decentralized, civilizing community—an *ecumene*" (307).

Harnack (The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 19-23) observed that notable structures within the Roman municipality—"associations" and "provincial organizations" enabled a favorable response to Christianity because the new religion possessed similar hierarchal concepts in its system of oversight to other systems existing at the time. These

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[42] Hinson (111-29, 233-45) points out the importance of moral discipline as an essential internal ingredient in the "preservation of the church's holiness and the restoration of offenders." Inquirers looking at the faith realized that the religion was not simply a system of philosophical thought, but more particularly an ethical system of practice that had accountability (233).

[43] Harnack (470) concludes decisively, "I do not know of a single case from the first three centuries which would suggest any tendency, either upon the part of metropolitans or of bishops, to curb the independent organization of the churches."

[44] Mann (306-7) categorizes these "contradictions" as "1) Universalism versus particularism, 2) Equality versus hierarchy, 3) Decentralization versus centralization, 4) Cosmopolitanism versus uniformity and 5) Civilization versus militarism."

principles of government enabled large city and small town pastors and church leaders to organize their congregations in a way that was reflective of their municipality, yet pattered after the broader church:

> Designed to be essentially a brotherhood, and springing out of the synagogue, the Christian society developed a local organization which was of double strength, superior to anything achieved by the societies of Judaism…Every community was at once a unit, complete in itself; but it was also a reproduction of the collective church of God. (Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 431-2)

From this organization, Chadwick (The Early Church 72) speculates that Christianity's rapid progress came because "it answered best the empire's need for a universal religion with which it could identify itself." This kind of identification and order, coupled with an egalitarian practice that was grounded in sacrificial love, established Christianity as a transformed society—a "new polis"[45] (Florovsky 26).

Redemption's Effect upon the Individual, the Social and the Society

As Christianity expanded and impacted the culture within the Roman Empire, many churches addressed the day's societal ills such as poverty, slavery and the care of widows, orphans and prisoners (Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 153). The Pauline doctrine of reconciliation fueled the early followers' outward actions because they viewed redemption's effect applying not only to the individual (personal) and to the church (social) but also to the world (societal):

[45] Jaeger (15) observed how the "ideals of the political philosophy of the ancient Greek city-state entered the discussion of the new Christian type of human community, now called the church…in Greek *ekklêsia* which originally meant the assembly of the citizens of a Greek polis."

> For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (Colossians 1:19-20)

> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The "all things on earth" and the "new creation" speak of a redemption emphasis that Florovsky (20) terms a "theology of culture:"

> The 'Modern Man' fails to appreciate and to assess the conviction of early Christians, derived from the Scripture, that man was created by God for a creative purpose and was to act in the world as its king, priest, and prophet. The fall or failure of man did not abolish this purpose or design, and man was redeemed in order to be re-instated in his original rank and to resume his role and function in the Creation. And only by doing this can he become what he was designed to be, not only in the sense that he should display obedience, but also in order to accomplish the task which was appointed by God in his creative design precisely as *the task of man*. (Florovsky 20-1, his emphasis)

Cameron (The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 165-6) observed that the effect of Christianization did not come instantly from the spoken message of the gospel (i.e. the church spoke and instantly things changed); instead, many of the societal spheres that Christianization changed (economics, social practices, architecture) worked together to bring about genuine reform in the cities where Christianity held a foothold. Stark (161) likens the reforms brought about by Christianization to a "revitalization movement that arose in response to the misery, chaos, fear and brutality of life in the urban Greco-

Roman world." And he attributes the success of this renewal to "the religion's particular doctrines" (Stark 211).

Because there are social implications to interpretational approaches (Meeks In Search of the Early Christians 192), scholars in the Social/Community Viewpoint understand that early Christianity could not remain a personal faith isolated in the ivory towers of intellectualism. In its very being, it is essentially a "social religion" in which "the whole fabric of Christian existence is social and corporate" (Florovsky 131). While advocating the necessity of the social dimension, Gilkey seeks to ground social effects with strong doctrinal foundations:

> The Christian gospel, then, and the redemption it promises, is both spiritual and political, involving both an inward healing of sin and the outward transformation of history's institutions. To deal only with the first as so much of the sacramental tradition, the kerygmatic or gospel preaching and the pastoral life of the church have sought to do, is to leave countless humans subject to fate…It is also highly suspect—both religiously and socially—for a church to preach inner redemption alone when it lives in, prospers from, and thereby inescapably blesses outward oppressive social institutions…On the other hand, for the gospel to interpret itself only politically, as a commission to deal simply with unjust institutions and the destructive social relations they foster—as many political theologies tend to do—is to leave the deeper issues of sin unbroached and the resources of the Christian grace untapped. (Gilkey Message and Existence 226)

What Gilkey means is that a careful and healthy balance between the outward effects of redemption (societal revitalization from doctrine) and the inward effects of

redemption (personal revitalization from doctrine) is needed. And in this equilibrium, each side informs and nourishes the other in important ways.

Christianity's social implications necessitate not only the outward effects of redemption, but also its inward effects, seen in personal behavioral norms (morals) and standards (ethics) that are practiced within the society of the redeemed (the church) and observed by the society-at-large (the world). Meeks (In Search of the Early Christians xxiii) observes that the great interest by scholars in Christianity through time centers around understanding the inner workings between the formation and practice of morals as it relates to the religion's thought and ethical behavior. In a social arrangement among people, the construction of moral standards from their belief system and the upholding of those standards become critically important. Harnack (The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 15) observed that the early Christian movement was aided by the Jewish law (the Ten Commandments and certain select civil laws) along with other Jewish resources to promote regular worship and "a control of private life." As a result, the new religion became attractive to many because of "the high level of morality enjoined by Christianity and the moral conduct of the Christian societies" (Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 210).

Clark (13) concluded that "Christian teaching and practice transformed Roman society." Perkins (171) understood that the single greatest "change" that came upon the entire world during Roman rule were the "remarkable changes" brought about by Christianity and Islam. Markschies (viii) believed this transformation was possible because Christianity as a monotheistic faith replaced the polytheistic cults of the day and called its disciples to higher standards of living. While Cameron recognized the difficulty in pinpointing the actual effect of Christianization upon antiquity, she does

acknowledge the church's "moral and social control" over its followers which resulted in curbing the "outward pattern of their lives" (The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 148). This kind of restriction was seen most often in church censures against those who were "scandalous" and "polluted" (Gibbon 385).

Brown (The Rise of Western Christendom 70) saw how the church fused "morality, philosophy and ritual" as it progressed through time in the Roman Empire:

> In the Christian churches, philosophy was dependent upon revelation and morality was absorbed into *religio*. Furthermore, commitment to truth and moral improvement were held to be binding on all believers, irrespective of their class and level of culture. Hence the remarkable combination of stern moralizing and urgent theological speculation which absorbed the energy of serious Christians, from a wide variety of social backgrounds, in the third century as in all later ages. (The Rise of Western Christendom 71)

Christianity caught the attention of many people within the Roman Empire because it possessed an internal ethical system that worked within its community. These morals, along with the quality of life promoted within and outside its camp, made it a powerful force for good and social improvement within the fabric of the Roman regime. At the same time, it created a tension in the expression of their identity. As a "new polis" (Florovsky 26), what did it really mean to be "in the world, but not of the world?"

Two Contrasting Identities: In the World or away from the World?

When viewed as an organized, interconnecting and interrelating community whose ethical standards and practices were noticeably different from other religious or nonreligious groups in the world, it enabled scholars to conclude that the early followers of Christ during the Roman Empire possessed one of two possible identities as they lived

as a community in the world. Either believers viewed the culture as broken and in need of reconstruction or they understood the culture as evil and as contaminated, awaiting some form of divine judgment. In the former view (what is deemed "social reconstruction"), culture is understood as a part of God's creation (Florovsky 20-1), marred and disfigured by the Adamic Fall and in need of redemptive overhaul through reconciliation (Colossians 1:19-20). In the latter view (what is deemed "social removal"), culture (Rome) is understood as belonging to the Roman gods and is idolatrous (Kelly 156).

In regards to the Social Reconstruction Identity, Brown (The World of Late Antiquity 82) observed that by AD 300, the Christian Faith possessed a strong presence in the large cities of the Mediterranean world and their leaders could "identify themselves with the culture"…[thus] Christianity had become a church prepared to absorb a whole society." From his analysis, he concluded that this ability of the church to understand and to live within the culture at this period in history paved the way for the impact of Constantine's conversion[46] and reign (Brown The World of Late Antiquity 82). Fox (22) attributed the "changes in people's self-awareness…their opportunities and social organization" and the "new forces in economic and social history" to the church's impact within culture.

Fox believes that our present culture continues to feel the impact of the church's rise to power, "The rise of Christianity…brought a lasting change in people's view of themselves and others. To study it is to realize how we, still, live with its effects" (23). Stark (161) realized that this kind of cultural impact was the "ultimate triumph" of Christianity's "superior capacity for meeting…chronic problems."

[46] See Chadwick's discussion (Studies on Ancient Christianity III.36) that "Origen could echo the language of a blueprint for a coming Christian society."

Paramount to understanding this identity of social reconstruction lies in realizing the place and role of power in the internal and subsequent external workings of the community. While understanding that "societies are organized and power relations emerge in response to very particular historical circumstances," Castelli (Imitating Paul 37) draws upon Foucault's understanding of power and states:

> The emerging institutions of Christianity—ekklêsia, modeled on family, bound up with the language of sameness and identity—need to be interrogated for what they say about early Christian understandings of the circulation of power. They must not be explained as inevitable, pragmatic, or self-evident, but rather explored for what they can tell us about a crucial dimension of the unfolding of power relations in Western culture. (Imitating Paul 37)

What Castelli (and her understanding of Foucault) appears to say is that the outworking of social change and reconstruction brought about by the early followers and churches of Christianity was the organized channeling of their power that persuaded, altered, reconfigured and reconstituted not just the urban and countryside people of the Roman Empire, but also their social structures, institutions and conditions for living. A community outworking of social construction understands Christianity as the power agent and change reconstructionist in the propagation of its gospel to the world. They draw their identity from Jesus' emphasis on doing good works in public as an essential feature of Christian testimony:

> You are the salt of the earth…You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way,

> let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:13-16)

When power was used by the church to bring about social change and desired outcomes, Christianity advanced and the Kingdom of God drew near (Gilkey Message and Existence 243).

In regards to the Social Removal Identity, Brown (The World of Late Antiquity 97-8) concluded that close to the arrival of Origen, Christianity had spread considerably and by reading the renunciation-type passages from Jesus (Matthew 10:37-39, Luke 9:24, 11:23), some chose a complete withdrawal from the world.[47] From these actions along with an anxiety and fear of the final judgment (Brown The World of Late Antiquity 107-8), some Christians adopted a removal-from-the-culture mentality. In this seclusion from society, they focused on living as an ideal community, a "brotherhood" (Nock Early Gentile Christianity 102, Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 431), removed from the fires of future judgment and set apart for godliness until the time of the Parousia. Harnack (The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 98) notes the famous saying of this belief, "He would do anything for the world must have nothing to do with it." This saying suggests a streak of judgmentalism sensed within many of these communities. Because evil is everywhere in the world, Christians must "flock together" to insulate themselves and to isolate themselves from the rest of society.

Paramount to understanding the social removal identity is Brown's discussion of "displacement" or "a total break with your environment" (The World of Late Antiquity

[47] Herrin (59) summarizes the motivation, "a desire to shun the world, and all its evils, to escape to the desert and commune with God alone."

97-8) that described the person who chose to remove himself from the world, namely the one known as "the holy man:"[48]

> The holy man was thought to have gained freedom and a mysterious power…In villages dedicated for millennia to holding their own against nature, the holy man had deliberately chosen "anti-culture"—the neighboring desert, the nearest mountain crags…Above all, in a world where the human race was thought of as besieged by invisible demonic powers, the monks earned their reputation through being "prize-fighters" against the devil…The idea of the holy man holding the demons at bay and bending the will of God by his prayers came to dominate Late Antique society. In many ways, the idea is as new as the society itself. For it placed a man, a "man of power," in the centre of people's imagination. (Brown The World of Late Antiquity 101, 102)

When this "holy man" attracted likeminded people to his "camp," he took upon himself their spiritual accountability before God's Judgment Seat (Brown The World of Late Antiquity 108). His pastoral approach centered on teaching and modeling ethics, morals, Christian behaviors and spiritual attributes, urging, even commanding them to stay away from the world's "contamination." Brown (The Rise of Western Christendom 81) concluded that this base idea of displacement produced two of the most radical forms of ascetic Christianity—Monasticism and Manichaeism.

It is important at this point to highlight a predominant tension between the two social identities seen in Christianization as analyzed in the Social/Community Viewpoint. Because each identity draws its meaning from the community, *both use power*, but in

[48] See Brown "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity" (80-101) for fuller discussion.

different ways. On the one hand, the organized channeling of power *outwardly* marked the identity of the social reconstruction community. On the other hand, the persuasional movement of power *inwardly* (within the camp by the "holy man") marked the identity of the social removal community. In the former, power was used to change societal structures. In the latter, power was used to persuade people to live isolated and insulated from culture in order to pursue godliness and orderly community living.

While the former sees the primary effect of power in the reconstituted and re-ordered social structures and services to people in the world as an evangelistic witness, the latter sees the primary effect of power in the fortification and solidification of the trust and ethical structures that bind parishioners to their leader and to one another.[49]

The two identities displayed in this viewpoint often provoke tense debate and division among present-day Christians who seek to understand the role of the church in a pluralistic society and antagonistic culture. Florovsky summarizes the tension:

> The situation in which the church finds herself in this world is inextricably antinomical. Ether the church is to be constituted as an exclusive society, endeavoring to satisfy all requirements of the believers, both "temporal" and "spiritual," paying no attention to the existing order and leaving nothing to the external world…or the church could attempt an inclusive "Christianization" of the world, subduing the whole of life to Christian rule and authority, endeavor to reform and to reorganize secular life on Christian principles, to build the Christian city. In the history of the church we can trace both solutions: a flight into desert and a construction of the Christian empire. (Florovsky 28)

[49] The emphasis here is on the primary effect most notably seen as the first objective of each identity.

Themes such as community, a "new Israel"[50] (Pelikan Jesus through the Centuries 22, Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 431, Brown 66), social formation, egalitarianism, government, reconciliation, redemption's inward and outward effects, reconstruction, removal and renewal describe broadly but adequately the values that form some of the fibers of a social identity seen in the Social/Community Viewpoint. In this interpretation of Christianization, the primary issue is *not* how they were to live their calling, but *where* it was to be lived—either within the culture or away from it. Florovsky articulates the tension:

> The church is not of this world, as her Lord, Christ, was also not of this world. But he was in this world, having 'humbled' himself to the condition of that world which he came to save and to redeem. The church also has to pass through a process of historical *kenosis* in the exercise of her redemptive mission in the world. (Florovsky 96-7)

Most followers of Christ theoretically realize that they live "in the world but are not supposed to be of it;" however, the true rub comes when discussion arises over the "process of historical kenosis" described by Florovsky above. What does living in this world as a follower of Christ require? What does it look like? Is culture an evil awaiting final judgment or is it part of God's fallen, yet-to-be-restored creation? Obviously this hermeneutical interpretation of Christianization and its implications not only bring tense and often strong disagreement over whether Christians should live in the culture, but most especially how they should relate to the culture.

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[50] Hinson (31) offers a modified understanding, "The early churches understood themselves to be the People of God—not a new Israel but Israel under a new covenant."

The Supernatural/Eschatological Viewpoint

Because the Christian religion at its core emphasizes its founder's remarkable resurrection and his promise of a second return, a third block of scholars attribute the success of early Christianity to the numerous attested miracles, supernatural acts of power (healings, mass feedings, exorcisms), mysteries and to the religion's promise of immortality after physical death.

Stated succinctly, the supernatural/eschatological viewpoint states that Christianity distinguished itself historically in supernaturalism, experienced most especially in a transcreational power in the natural realm, an "authoritarian ideology" (Cameron The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 151) in the spiritual realm and a confrontational power in the cosmic realm that was grounded in the anticipation of an imminent Parousia[51] (Grant Augustus to Constantine xi, 50, Markschies 25, Rusch 7, Peters The Harvest of Hellenism 628, Gibbon 364-5, Frend The Rise of Christianity 128, Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 90, Lopez 49, 89, 107, Daniélou The Origins of Latin Christianity 22, Goldsworthy 353). As supernatural acts were performed, experienced and witnessed, a sense of wonder, fear and awe accompanied the religion's message,[52] producing an identity that was marked by inward humility, upward dependence and outward boldness by her followers. These qualities and actions depict a sharp contrast between spirit and matter.

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[51] Walsh (89) states, "Apocalypticism is a constant element of Christianity."

[52] Horsley ("Unearthing a People's History" 4) notes, "Established New Testament scholars, apparently embarrassed by demon possession and exorcism and people swept up in ecstatic spiritual behavior, have given such phenomena little attention, even downplayed them. Yet the spirit possession, prophecy, healings, and similar spiritual experiences may be precisely what catalyzed community solidarity and the motivation for the formation of alternative communities and resistance to the dominant order."

Harnack (The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 237) observed that "almost from the very hour of its birth," the active presence of miracle and mystery accompanied the propagation of the Christian message from Jerusalem to the rest of the inhabited world. Glover (The Conflict of Religions 158) saw that "the rise of the church was accompanied by the rise of mysteries." Allen (13) regarded the expansion of the church as something humans "cannot control" because a "force" was "loosed" in the propagation of the religion's message. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews understood this loosing as a demonstration of "signs, wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit" (2:3), compelling Harnack (The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 199) to conclude that Christianity is "the religion of the Spirit and of power."

Fiorenza (10) observed that in the time of the Roman Empire, the credibility of any religion and the effectiveness of its message depended upon its creator/leader possessing god-like, supernatural powers. Nock (Conversion 119) understood the attraction to Christianity as a "curiosity"…and an "eagerness to penetrate the mysteries of the universe." Because the Roman world was intrigued with "astrology, immortality and the supernatural" (Nock Conversion 99), Christianity became a powerful magnet for the curious who believed that supernaturalism led to higher knowledge (γνῶσις)[53] and insider benefits with the gods in the present and future life (Nock Early Gentile Christianity 102-3).

Harnack (The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 200-2) listed ten different "expressions"[54] as a "proof of the number of phenomena" associated with the mystery

[53] Chadwick (The Early Church 70) also credits the use of fulfilled Old Testament prophecy as an important intellectual tool used by the second century church along with the accounts of the miracles of Jesus.

[54] Some of these expressions include dreams, visions, moments of ecstasy, healing the sick, predicting the future or interpreting the present, eloquent speech or writing, acts of bravery, flashes and smells of immortality and deeper moral purity. Harnack states in his footnote (202), "Belief in miracles

and aura of supernaturalism. Drawing upon the vast supply of early Christian records chronicling the miraculous and the supernatural, he concludes:

> Other religions and cults could doubtless point to some of these actions of the spirit, such as ecstasy, vision, demonic and anti-demonic manifestations, but nowhere do we find such a wealth of these phenomena presented to us as in Christianity; moreover, and this is of supreme importance, the fact that their Christian range included the exploits of moral heroism, stamped them in this field with a character which was all their own and lent them a very telling power. What existed elsewhere merely in certain stereotyped and fragmentary forms, appeared within Christianity in a wealth of expression where every function of the spiritual, the mental, and the moral life seemed actually to be raised above itself. (Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 202)

With the recognition that this constitutes an enormous body of literature in the historical record, three specific "phenomena" within supernaturalism draw special attention as they relate to the understanding of Christianization.

The Place and Power of Miracles in the Christian Story

Gibbon (367) stated, "The Christian church has claimed an uninterrupted succession of miraculous powers, the gift of tongues, of vision and of prophecy, the power of expelling demons, of healing the sick and of raising the dead." MacMullen (Christianizing the Roman Empire 36-7) noted that the early Christians placed great emphasis on the written records of demon exorcisms as a way to impress upon believers that this was a fertile ground of interaction with the unconverted. In his study,

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was strong upon the whole; but in Christian circles it seems to have been particularly robust and unlimited."

MacMullen (Christianizing the Roman Empire 87-8) concluded that a primary way new people became converted to the church was through their experience and reaction to the supernatural acts performed by the empowered followers of Christ. In his understanding, miracles "destroyed belief and created it" (MacMullen Christianizing the Roman Empire 108-9) by giving credence and validation to the message that accompanied their actions and by eliminating false beliefs that contradicted it. These "signs and wonders…gave testimony to the truth of the new teaching" that came with the arrival of the new faith (Funk 36).

Fiorenza (2, 7) saw that in the time of Christianity's birth and early development, Judaism also propagated the "magical and miraculous" in their system and practice; therefore, she believes the early followers of Christ knew that they needed to bolster their rhetoric about supernaturalism as well as substantiate a greater miraculous "capacity" to the apostles in order to make a deeper impression on their audience. She views the supernatural "emphasis of Acts" as St. Luke's effort "to picture the Christian missionaries and apostles more as miracle workers than as itinerant philosophers of the time" (Fiorenza 12). This approach became a "means of winning adherents" (Nock Conversion 83), leaving ripples of rhetorical impression upon subsequent generations.

While one can certainly grapple with the way the miraculous is presented[55] and explained, it is another thing to undervalue the sheer volume of attested material that records numerous healings, exorcisms,[56] mysterious movements of power, prophetic foretellings, fulfilled predictions, dreams, visions and unusual happenings of the

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[55] Fiorenza (12-3) notes, "In ancient literature it is very difficult to distinguish the category of miracle from that of magic. They go hand in hand."

[56] Brown (The Rise of Western Christendom 68) states, "A Christian gathering of around the year AD 200 was expected to include gripping scenes of moral exorcism, through the penance of notable sinners."

unexplainable in the annals of early Christian literature. Cameron (Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 60) concluded that in addition to metaphor, "miracle functioned in early Christian literature as a device—a trope—to allow the articulation of the relation between the human and divine worlds." In response to the doubters and cynics, Allen (53) wrote, "What Christ asks of his disciples is not so much exposition of doctrine about him as witness to his power." The number of records both in the Christian Scriptures and in early church literature along with the specifics they record are difficult, if not impossible, to refute. One of their primary purposes is to attest to the supernatural in some form or fashion (Gospel of John 20:30-31).

Origen offered a "spiritual" purpose for miracles:

> Let us therefore view those signs and miracles which were done by God, as the showers furnished by him from above...From which it follows that everyone's will, if untrained, and fierce, and barbarous, is either hardened by the miracles and wonders of God, growing more savage and thorny than ever, or it becomes more pliant, and yields itself up with the whole mind to obedience, if it be cleared from vice and subjected to training. (Origen On First Principles III.1.10)

Most likely Origen envisioned the Exodus account as he penned the above words. Because the Christian religion uses miracles as a powerful rhetorical instrument, Brauer's (2) comments are pertinent, "Christianity is something more than the sum total of the socio-historical forces of a given moment in time and history. It professes to be more, so it is the historian's responsibility to assess that claim." What many people believe this "more" represents is not only the miraculous, but also its insistence on the divine birth.

The Place and Importance of Conversion in the Christian Experience

When he looked at Christianity as a social development, Mann (310) concluded that "Christianity was not at first a military conquest or an expansion of production and trade, but a conversion process." Since it is a popular, Platonic-originated (Jaeger 10), yet ambiguous term in religious circles, Nock's definition[57] is helpful, "By conversion, we mean the reorientation of the soul of an individual, his deliberate turning from indifference or from an earlier form of piety to another, a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the old was wrong and the new is right" (Conversion 7). Glover (The Conflict of Religions 150) understood it as a "conscious change" in a person's life.

Gibbon (370) understood this "soul reorientation" as a "divine persuasion which enlightened or subdued the understanding" [which] "at the same time purified the heart, and directed the actions of the believer." Perhaps the most eloquent and flamboyant rendering comes from the fourth century church historian Eusebius:

> Thus with the powerful cooperation of heaven the whole world was suddenly lit by the sunshine of the saving word. At once, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, the voice of its inspired evangelists and apostles went forth into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world. In every town and village, like a well-filled threshing-floor, churches shot up bursting with eager members. Men who through the error they had inherited from generations of ancestors were in the grip of the old spiritual sickness of idol-worship, by the power of Christ and through the teaching of his followers and the miracles they wrought were freed, as it were, from cruel masters and found release from galling fetters. (Eusebius II.3)

[57] Nock spent a significant portion of his scholarship to the study of conversion and its effects.

Nock (Conversion 250) observed that the early success of the Christian movement came because its leaders experienced personal conversion first-hand, an "*apologia pro vita sua*." With no previous generational modeling or mentoring, they learned the tenets of the Christian message and practice, things such as "divine power, illumination, salvation…a rigorous standard of life…morality…the regular practice of religious observances" and other elements of noteworthy significance (Nock Early Gentile Christianity 17). And as these tenets were practiced within the larger social web (multiple and deep friendships), their conversion became more successful (Stark 20).

Next to the apostle Paul, perhaps the most familiar recorded conversion comes from Augustine's[58] experience. As an "undeniable theme in the Confessions" (Chadwick Studies On Ancient Christianity VI.29), his spiritual transformation[59] came from some form of spiritual enlightenment:

> And lo, I heard from a nearby house, a voice like that of a boy or a girl, I know not which, chanting and repeating over and over, "Take up and read. Take up and read"…I snatched it up, opened it, and read in silence the chapter on which my eyes first fell: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in strife and envying; but put you on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences." No further wished I to read, nor was there need to do so. Instantly, in truth, at the end of this sentence, as if before a peaceful light streaming into my heart, all the dark shadows of doubt fled away. (Confessions VIII.12.29)

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[58] Chadwick (Studies on Ancient Christianity VI.23) states, "The echoes and harmonics of the passage suggest that we are reading a text nearer to poetry than to plain factual prose."

[59] Augustine states that "the benefit" of his Confessions lies in the realization that it speaks "not of what I have been, but of what I am" (Confessions X.4.6).

Because conversion is often pictured as a contrast between those who receive the light (in contrast to those do not receive the light), Lopez (14) observed how church leaders after AD 135 established a dividing line between the converted and unconverted, instilling in the minds of the converted an attitude of renunciation and separation not only from the Roman culture, but most especially from the philosophy of materialism that it promoted. Through the first five centuries, this deepening line of demarcation defined those who were the elect of God (spiritually converted) and those who were "mired" in the world (Lopez 14). Daniélou (The Origins of Latin Christianity 39) observed how the writings of Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and Origen stressed "demands in conversion to Christianity" while remaining true to the requirements of faith in the gospel. Conversion and the fruit of its effects[60] became the primary criteria not only for discerning genuine Christianity, but also for motivating the early church's witness (Allen 9).

This mindset of renunciation and separation coming from the conversion experience extended not only to the natural or "visible" realms (on the earth), but also to the supernatural and "invisible" realms (in the heavenlies) which were deemed to be just as real and just as "large and varied" (Markus The End of Ancient Christianity 22). It was here that the forces of good and evil battled continually.

The Great Cosmic Battleground

Because Rome embodied the evils of pagan and false religion (Kelly 156), Christians understood that a mirror reality in the heavenlies existed where an ongoing war of cosmic proportions existed:

[60] In his Homilies on Leviticus VIII.11.10, Origen described the process of conversion in relationship to purification in three phases: 1) Turning from sin, 2) Returning to God and 3) "Fruitfulness and fruits which the one who is converted shows in works of piety."

> Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:11-12)

Ferguson (Backgrounds of Early Christianity 236) understands a "demon" as base word for "divine intermediaries." Harnack (The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 125, 131) notes a "far and wide" acceptance of a demonic world and of the movement of demons in "possessing" people, compelling early Christians to unite in missions of exorcism to liberate the spiritually captured and to "purify all public life from them." These "missions" became etched in the believers' psyche and it produced symbolic pictures of the military (Hinson 19-21) in their depiction of the faith as they read and applied the Old Testament Psalms and the Prophets (Harnack Militia Christi 32); however, demonology is not solely confined to Christian revelation, especially as it forms an essential tenet of Platonic philosophy (Daniélou The Origins of Latin Christianity 405-11). Carter recognized the parallel that existed between demon oppression and "contexts of oppression" with government (147).[61]

Tied to these battle-sketched symbols was the notion of "*Sphragis,*" the sign of the Cross on the forehead signifying ownership, protection and army enlistment (Daniélou The Bible and The Liturgy 54-69) and "*Sacramentum*" (Harnack Militia Christi 53, Daniélou The Origins of Latin Christianity 449). Seen as early as in Tertullian's writings (Harnack Militia Christi 52, Daniélou The Origins of Latin Christianity 448-9), *Sacramentum* had a dual-layered understanding in the Latin Church. On the one hand, it stood for a tangible symbol that was united with an eternal

[61] For further discussion, see Fanon (45, 53, 289-93) and Hollenbach (567-88).

truth/principle. On the other hand, it epitomized the pledge of faithful service to the army (Harnack Militia Christi 53). *Sacramentum* was one of eight central concepts[62] listed by Harnack as tied to the church as a "Christian army" at war with the world:

> A warlike mood, which was not morally harmless, had taken possession of third century Latin Christianity. In the devotional literature of the West there appeared a tone which was fanatical and swaggering. The Christian threatened to become a *miles gloriosus* (a boastful soldier). Although the concern throughout was with spiritual warfare, there could also develop in this way earthly lust for battle and conflict, for spoils and victory in the common sense. Apart from fitful persecutions, the warlike language was in no way justified by the actual situation. It was an affectation. (Harnack Militia Christi 61)

One gleans from these concepts a battle-cry mentality[63] that gained permanence in the Christian movement sometime between Tertullian and Origen. Notice the battle imagery depicted by Origen:

> Those, however, especially belong to the sacred number, who are prepared to go forth to the battles of the Israelites, and are able to fight against those public and private enemies whom the Father subjects to the Son, who sits on his right hand

[62] Among the eight concepts, the first four are most pertinent, "1) Baptism remains the *Sacramentum*, the military oath, 2) Christ is the *imperator*, 3) While all Christians are *milites*, it is still the confessors and martyrs who are the real warriors, that is the officers of God. They struggle with the demons and conquer them by their confession, their wounds, and their deaths. 4) Their battle is a glorious warlike spectacle for God and is looked upon in admiration by him and the angels. Christians do not fear the enemies, rather they provoke them" (Harnack Militia Christi 60). See also Hinson's discussions on baptism (73-95, 167-82, 213-31) and the Eucharist (97-110, 183-92, 223-31) in the formation of Christian identity among early followers of Christianity.

[63] Walsh (213-4) notes that from the beginning of the church's establishment up to the first three hundred years, "none of the Christian authors seemed to find it strange to talk about *militia Christi* and to use the language of spiritual warfare or battle with the devil while condemning the real thing."

> that he may destroy all principality and power, and by means of these bands of his solidiery, who, being engaged in a warfare for God, do not entangle themselves in secular business, he may overturn the Kingdom of his adversary; by whom the shields of faith are born, and the weapons of wisdom brandished; among whom also the helmet of hope and salvation gleams forth, and the breastplate of brightness fortifies the breast that is filled with God. (On First Principles IV.1.24)

This warlike mood, combined with an experience of spiritual awakening and the promotion of the supernatural as it contrasted with the natural, corporeal philosophies of "paganism"[64] (Grant Augustus to Constantine 17, Brown The World of Late Antiquity 74, Wilken The Christians as the Romans Saw Them 202, Markus The End of Ancient Christianity 28-9) and "syncretism" (Jones 29) within the Roman environment created a "struggling" (Sider et al xiv) yet forging identity among many of the religion's followers who "used the dichotomy between the spiritual and the corporeal in varying ways" (Lopez 1).

A Separatist Battle Mentality from the Spiritual/Corporeal Dichotomy

Lopez sheds insight into the renunciation attitude involving "things of salvific significance" (1) that quickly developed in the second and third century mindset:

> The attitude revealed in second and third century sources toward corporeal things generally and toward Roman society and government in particular, was notably dissimilar to that of either Paul or Augustine. The differences are aptly epitomized

[64] Chadwick's footnote (The Early Church 152) discusses the etymology of "paganism," noting the "secular usage" of "rustic" and "civilian as opposed to military." He understands "pagans" in the West to mean non-baptized, non-combatants with evil forces whereas "in the East the Christian word for a non-Christian was 'Hellene.'" See Bigg's (235-53) lecture VII and extended discussion on Christianity and paganism in the second century.

> in Origen's allegorical reading of the story of Jahel and Sisera.[65] Unlike either Paul or Augustine, Origen implies that Christians of his day—that is, between the crushing of the Second Jewish Revolt in 135 and the conversion of Constantine in 312 ideally made no distinction either between use and enjoyment of corporeal things, or between state and religion; and that they were therefore predisposed to view the whole of the Roman Empire, and any cooperation with or participation in it, as "corporeal"—that is, as opposed to God's will and their own salvation. (Lopez 6)

This separatist spirit manifested itself in at least four forms. First, in keeping with the line of supernaturalism seen in the miracles and resurrection of Christ, early followers emphasized an imminent Parousia (Grant Augustus to Constantine xi, 49, The Sword and the Cross 132, Pelikan The Excellent Empire 43, Markschies 25, Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 90, Lopez 49, 89, 107, Shepherd 17-8, Florovsky 58) accompanied with a fierce hostility (both physical and political) that brought spiritual and cultural renewal to the world (Lopez 145). Second, martyrdom was viewed as an expression of love for God, witness, sacrifice, "culture-making," and reward (Brown The Rise of Western Christendom 62, Fox 315, Castelli Martyrdom and Memory 4, 33, 51, 54-4, 199-200, Lopez 58, 73-4). Third, apologetic literature appeared not only as a channel to articulate the faith to the unbelieving world (Grant The Sword and the Cross 138, Kelly 156, Peters The Harvest of Hellenism 618, Kelly 156,), but also to "reinforce among marginal Christians" the values and truths of the gospel in order to build belief (Lopez 109, 111, 129). Chadwick (The Early Church 66) describes it as an internal and external "hammering out" debate process for the church.

[65] See Origen Homilies on Judges V.

Chrysostom provides a fitting description of renunciation, incorporating several of these themes (separation, morality and perseverance in the light of the Eschatos):

> And please, above all, you who have recently put on Christ and received the descent of the Spirit, take care every day that the brightness of your clothing receive no blemish or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:27) on any part; neither through inappropriate comments nor through listening to frivolity, nor through wicked thoughts, nor through your eyes darting carelessly and at random over whatever they chance upon. Therefore, let us wall ourselves in on every side with the constant memory of that fearful day, so that through persevering in radiance and preserving the clothing of incorruptibility spotless and unsoiled, we may be rewarded with those inexpressible gifts. (On Baptismal Instructions VIII)

Themes such as separation from the world, an imminent expectation of the Second Coming, battles with the principalities and powers of the demonic world, the fundamental importance of conversion and the mystery and awe of the miraculous in the Christian record summarize broadly but adequately the values that form some of the fibers of a "separatist renewal" identity (Lopez 89, 109, 111, 145) seen in the Supernatural/Experiential Viewpoint. In this interpretation of Christianization, the primary issue is *not* where the early Christians lived their calling (although some did remove themselves from the culture as an expression of renunciation), but *how* they lived their lives as a witness before the world. Since spiritual reconciliation became a paramount tenet in the articulation of the gospel message, early believers realized that a complete removal from the world would not spread the message of conversion to the unbelieving world. Added to this was the conviction that the direct verbal and written communication of the miraculous (healings, resurrections, etc.) and of the dogma (creeds,

apologetic literature) was needed on the front lines to make Christianity credible and relevant to an inquiring world. Battling the forces of darkness before the Parousia was seen as a prelude, at times a *condition* for the final battle against evil when the final judgment would usher the ultimate triumph to Christianity and with it a complete spiritual and physical restoration to the world in the millennium. Because the identity of this viewpoint is deeply connected to spiritual power confrontations with evil forces (Harnack Militia Christi 36), the matter/spirit demarcation and dichotomy (Lopez 1, 14) along with the ultimate triumph of Christ (Grant Augustus to Constantine 47, 51) that brings spiritual and cultural renewal (Lopez 145), many early followers understood the spread of Christianity as a necessary war and as a kingdom (Christ's dominion) to advance; however, this mentality stands in sharp contrast to the attitude of most twenty first century Christians who remain confused over the way they should relate to non-Christians. On the one hand, they read Christ's words, "He who is not with me is against me" (against the Pharisees in Matthew 12:30) but on the other hand they know that Jesus said, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you" (Luke 6:27). And from this supposed paradox heartfelt disagreement comes over how those verses (and others like them) should receive proper implementation. How can I love my enemies if I am supposed to war against them? If Christianity concerns the love of God for the world (John 3:16), why must I "not love the world or anything in the world" (1 John 2:15)? Obviously this hermeneutical interpretation of Christianization and its implications not only brings tense and often strong disagreement among professing Christians in the analysis of its claim, but most especially in the praxis application of its objective in mission.

The Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint

Because the Christian religion at its core emphasizes the love of wisdom, knowledge and truth,[66] a fourth block of scholars attribute the success of early Christianity to the content, interpretation and meaning of its message as a realistic and relevant understanding of truth and its application to the context of the world's affairs. Wilken (The Christians as the Romans Saw Them 202) notes that in the minds of some cynics who viewed the faith as a "privatization of religion…Christianity appeared to be more like a school of philosophy than a religion." Markschies (32-3) saw the transition from first century to second century Christianity as the increase of a number of "highly-educated theologians who were concerned to produce a scholarly understanding of the new religion." Central to this scholarship was the place of γνῶσις, "a special knowledge, union with deity, illumination and the like" (Nock Early Gentile Christianity 102) that lured inquiring minds into an examination of its features (Jaeger 53-4). This approach caused the Roman research-physician and philosopher Galen (129-200) to associate the infant Christian religion as a "philosophical school" (Wilken The Christians as the Romans Saw Them 82).

Stated succinctly, the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint states that in its early stages, some perceived Christianity as a school of philosophy (a fountain of knowledge and wisdom) that utilized the methods and thought forms from ancient philosophy to construct scholarly-type truth-claims to the world. As it became a religion of reading, definition and interpretation, specific methods of exegetical hermeneutics (Allegorical, Antiochene and others) were formulated to explain in deeper, comprehensive ways the meaning of the faith. The Christian faith is "more than a set of devotional practices and a

[66] Funk (35-6) states, "Christianity imported a doctrine which was at once more comprehensive and more comprehensible than any wisdom of this world."

moral code: it is also a way of thinking about God, about human beings, about the world and history" (Wilken The Spirit of Early Christian Thought xiii).

Upon first glance, once could surmise that this viewpoint is an adaptation or an extension of the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint discussed earlier in this chapter. And while there are numerous parallels between these viewpoints, a major difference exists that distinguishes one from the other. The Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint focuses on the *form* of Christianity's message (from its discursive and textual development) and how that form appeared through the first five centuries (spoken discourse, simple creed, letter, martyr confession, biography, dogmatic edict, story, figure, symbol, etc.) whereas the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint focuses on the *content* of Christianity's message and how that content was emphasized, interpreted and taught by the church. While the former viewpoint deals with the *carriers* of the religion's message, the latter viewpoint concerns itself with the *content* of its message. There is an evolutionary development present in each viewpoint; however, the first deals with structure and the last deals with constitution. Cameron (Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 32) summarizes this viewpoint aptly, "Early Christianity was not purely a matter of ritual or ethical behavior, or of miracle cures done by a wonder-worker and his successors; it was always a matter of teaching, of interpretation and of definition."

Kennedy (The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World 608) observed that the Christian belief became a "serious intellectual influence of international dimensions by the mid-second century." Shepherd (35) saw it in contrast to "paganism" as a "unitive system of theology and ethics." Jaeger (31-2) noted how early Christian teaching entered pagan literature because of its "concern with ethics, cosmology, but primarily with theology." Nock elaborated:

> Christianity gave a dogmatic philosophy of the universe, and the philosophic tendency of the time welcomed dogma. Men wanted not to seek truth but to be made at home in the universe. The Christian thinkers, like Clement of Alexandria, found room in their systems for very much of Platonism, which in the second century of our era was a rising force, and both Christians and pagans found a striking similarity between philosophic[67] and Christian teaching. (Early Gentile Christianity 102)

By appealing both to the mind (the presentation of philosophic truth) and to the soul (the offer of forgiveness and peace), Christianity presented a package, derived "from history, from ritual and from text" (Wilken The Spirit of Early Christian Thought xvii) that became difficult to refute and to refuse in the first four centuries. This combination made the faith stand out among the other cults and belief systems of its day (Nock Early Gentile Christianity 102).

The Utilization of Classical Philosophy

Markschies (viii) notes that the church during the Roman rule was "able to make use of a scholarly theology" that "utilized the methods and thought forms of ancient philosophy to explain the message of the New Testament and thus made Christianity attractive to the educated." This "creative contact with the constant ideas of the Greek tradition" (Jaeger 40) insured Christianity's early stability. Peters (The Harvest of Hellenism 635) understood this utilization to include an "approximate" number of "prototypes" common to "asceticism present in many religious cultures" at the time. While this partly addresses the issue, it does not provide a sufficient answer to satisfy the

[67] See Hatch for a fuller discussion.

scope and depth of the question. What patterns within Hellenism did Christianity use to make it attractive to the intellectually-minded?

Nock (Conversion 210) recognized that the appeal of Christianity to the Hellenistic world came not from the supernatural features of its founder, but rather his "winning" and "perfect humanity manifested as an inspiration." Because Hellenism's worldview relied on the dual columns of "rationalism and beauty" (Ferguson The Heritage of Hellenism 152), the presentation of an ideal, thought-provoking human being would appeal to the Greek and Roman mindset of the time.

This fusion of intelligence and beauty (in character and in body) formed a powerful alliance that brought great appeal to the Christian message:

> The success of Christianity is the success of an institution which united the sacramentalism and the philosophy of the time. It satisfied the inquiring turn of mind, the desire for escape from fate, the desire for security in the hereafter; like Stoicism, it gave a way of life and made man at home in the universe, but unlike Stoicism it did this for the ignorant as well as for the lettered. It satisfied also social needs and it secured men against loneliness. Its way was not easy; it made uncompromising demands on those who would enter and would continue to live in the brotherhood, but to those who did not fail it offered an equally uncompromising assurance. (Nock Conversion 210-1)

Harnack (The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 226) expounds upon Nock's assessment by noting that as "the doctrine of pure reason," Christianity "proved a deliverance, not an encumbrance, to the understanding." By presenting it as the "reasonable religion of mankind" (Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 234), Christianity penetrated into the educational and social spheres of the Greco-Roman

world and made great inroads especially when it was "fertilized and fed by the mysteries" (Harnack The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 235). Thus some essential features of Hellenism—the beautiful and the mysterious from Plato and the good and the logical from Aristotle find a home in the belief forms of Christian thought. Because of this alignment, Greek and Roman "intellectuals" were drawn to Christianity by the mid-second century (Wilken The Christians as the Romans Saw Them 92).

A Religion of Content through Reading, Definition and Interpretation

Because the Christian faith placed an "extraordinary premium on verbal formulation" (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 19), the creation of written discourse and its dissemination through print and reading became strategically important in the advancement of Christianization. Through reading, audiences were enabled to absorb, to grapple and to learn the content of the faith's systematic truths as early as the Late Roman Republic (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 42). Harnack (The Mission and Expansion of Christianity 96) concluded that the four elements that made the religion rise above the other beliefs of the day (including Judaism) were its teaching on "the one living God, Jesus our Savior and Judge, the resurrection of the flesh and self-control." Stark (211) saw that the "central doctrines" initiated and fostered lasting relationships between people in such a way that it made Christianity one of the "most successful revitalization movements in history."

In the development of this movement, it became critically important to define in precise words the content of these doctrines, as no definitions existed prior to that time (Kraft 53). Cameron contends that church councils from the fourth to the eighth century "were no mere theological indulgences, but among the dynamic historical factors in the

period," namely, the explanation of a "faith that was in need of definition" (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 225-6).

In addition to church councils, definitions of the faith's content also came through commentary, apology and printed sermons. Of particular importance is the work of Origen, who "had neither the Nicene Creed nor the Chalcedonian definition to assist or to restrict him" (Chadwick 121). In his time, four rivers of thought occupied peoples' minds: "Syncretistic religions, philosophy, Gnosticism and Christianity" (De Faye 16). Against this background, Origen became known as "the first great theologian of the church" (Grant "Forward" 1), "a giant among the early Christian thinkers" (Chadwick The Early Church 100) and "the church's first and greatest[68] biblical scholar" (McGuckin ix) since the apostle Paul, devoting his lifetime to the writing and distribution of "volumes of treatises, commentaries[69] and published sermons" (Trigg Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 8, Lienhard xviii) as a "response to [the] intellectual challenges of the day" (Frend The Early Church 99). Seen as one of the creators of "biblical romanticism" (Cadiou 18) and the "founder of biblical science" (Quasten II: 44, Bruce "Introduction" Origen Homilies on Joshua 3, Prestige 43), Origen understood that his place in life centered in biblical exegesis[70] and in the penning of "commentaries…to ward off Gnostic

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[68] While outside the realm of this study, it is recognized that one of Origen's greatest scholarly works (Bigg 124, Quasten II:44, Daniélou and Marrou 185) was the Hexapla, a massive side-by-side compilation of six texts of the Old Testament (among them the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Septuagint) completed around AD 245 (Cross 125) that were used as a grounds for scholarly rebuttal against the Jews and as a base to write his commentaries (Daniélou Origen 136) and possibly to assist him in sermon development (see Barkley's introduction (6) that cites Origen Homilies on Leviticus IV.27-8 as an example). For fuller discussion on the Hexapla, see Eusebius VI.16, Grafton and Williams 86-132, Altaner (225-6), Chadwick (The Early Church 102), Kraft (53) and Nautin 303-61.

[69] See Bigg's discussion (131) on Origen's ordered plan in structuring his commentaries.

[70] Norris (107-16) provides a helpful comparison and contrast between Platonic and Alexandrian exegesis that sheds important light on the methods and mental framework that Origen used in his exegetical study.

exegesis and to rebut criticism from the pagan intelligentsia" (Chadwick 135). Regarded as the prototype "Hellenized Christian" (Peters The Harvest of Hellenism 623) and "with Jerome, the greatest critical exegete and the greatest literal exegete of Christian antiquity" (Crouzel 61), Origen saw the work of biblical scholarship as centering in the compilation and explanation of Scriptural data,[71] creating a comprehensive pool of knowledge developed through "arguments[72] and illustrations" (Peters The Harvest of Hellenism 625). This "primary task to the exposition of Scripture" (Chadwick The Early Church 109) where "he employs for the first time in Christian literature the traditional forms of Greek scholarship"[73] (Jaeger 57) enabled him to compile two hundred and ninety-one commentaries covering practically the entire biblical record (Peters The Harvest of Hellenism 626) as well as over two hundred homilies in Greek and Latin that survived because of the preservation of Jerome and Rufinus of Aquileia (Kennedy Classical Rhetoric 159, Funk 111). De Lubac (42) concluded that when Origen died, he left approximately one thousand works[74] under his authorship. It is with little wonder that so many later fathers of the church called him "the Man of Steel" (von Balthasar 1, Quasten II: 38, Tixeront A Handbook of Patrology 91, Giordani 36).

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[71] Prestige (59) calls Origen "the father of systematic theology." Quasten (II: 57) believes Origen's On First Principles is "the first Christian system of theology" and "as such it stands in majestic isolation in the history of the early church."

[72] Frend (The Rise of Christianity 375) concluded, "As in almost everything else Origen did, there was an argumentative edge." Because of this, Quasten (II:40) noted, "There is hardly anyone who made so many friends or so many enemies."

[73] Jaeger (57) lists the forms as "critical edition, commentary, scholion, scientific treatise and dialogue."

[74] While it is a vast number, the exact number is unknown. Altaner (225), Tixeront (A Handbook of Patrology 91) and Quasten (II:43) cite Eusebius' list from Jerome that stated "no less than 2000 books." Crouzel's research and discussion (37-39) with input by Nautin (214) provides us with the best working list available in our time. See also von Balthasar (2), Tixeront (A Handbook of Patrology 92-7) and Lienhard (xxi).

What makes Origen's exegesis[75] and exposition of Scriptural content so profound and intriguing is his use of the "allegorical" or "three levels of interpretation" method (Wolfson I:57-64, Kennedy Classical Rhetoric 157, 159, Bigg 136, Torjesen 39-43), structured to "stress the ultimate mystery[76] contained in Scripture [that] "speaks to us only in a language of symbols" (Grant with Tracy 59). Origen explains this allegorical approach clearly in On First Principles:

> Because the principal aim was to announce the connection that exists among spiritual events, those that have already happened and those that are yet to come to pass, whenever the Word found that things which had happened in history could be harmonized with these mystical events he used them, concealing from the multitude their deeper meaning. But wherever in the narrative the accomplishment of some particular deeds, which had been previously recorded for the sake of their more mystical meanings, did not correspond with the sequence of the intellectual truths, the Scripture wove into the story something which did not happen, occasionally something which could not happen, and occasionally something which might have happened but in fact did not. (On First Principles IV.2.9)

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[75] See Wolfson (I: 24-72) for an overview of the history and tenets of the allegorical method. For a concise overview of Origen's method of interpretation, see Barkley's introduction (Origen Homilies on Leviticus 1-16, 14-20) and Crouzel (Origen 61-84). For deeper study, traditional viewpoints are found in De Lubac History and Spirit 103-222 and Daniélou (Origen 139-199) while a contrasting understanding is found in Hanson (Allegory and Event 131-374). A comprehensive critique of each position is found in Torjesen (1-48).

[76] See Hal Koch's discussion (Pronoia und Paideusis 45-6) on Origen's exegesis which corresponds the eternal realities with earthly tangible objects so that the human mind can identify, relate and transport itself to deeper, spiritual meanings. Molland (151) believes Origen is using the "Platonic Theory of Recollection" in his interpretational framework. A good example of this is in Origen's The Song of Songs Commentary III.12 and a further clarification of this dichotomy is provided by Origen in his Commentary on the Gospel according to John I.44-46) where he distinguishes "two gospels, one perceptible to the senses…[and] the other is the spiritual gospel."

Trigg (Origen 15-6) notes how Origen took advantage of a four-step process ("textual criticism, reading, interpretation and judgment") first developed over four hundred years previously at Alexandria in studying Homer and other great Greek works. In light of Origen's deep Hellenistic ties, Kennedy (Classical Rhetoric 159) believes his three layers can be renamed "the logical, the ethical and the emotional…hermeneutic counterparts of Aristotle's logos, ethos and pathos, the modes of rhetorical persuasion." This understanding and interpretation of biblical content comes into noticeable contrast with the Antiochene interpretation approach advocated by Chrysostom.

While Chrysostom "did not rigidly exclude allegorization"[77] (Grant with Tracy 68), he favored most often "the literal interpretation of Scripture" (Sterk 26-7), choosing only a dual-layered meaning when the text presented "typology" (Grant with Tracy 68). When the literal, historically-situated interpretation became the "outline" that pointed to a further, final symbolic interpretation, the "Antiochene concept of theory" (Grant with Tracy 68-9) occupied his interpretational approach. Because of his spiritual presence in preaching and his personal presence in pastoring his people, he "tipped the scales in favor of the historical-grammatical method of interpretation, rather than the prevailing allegorical method" (Baur 319). From this preferred emphasis on the literal meaning and "from the average number of eight hundred discourses delivered by Chrysostom, eighteen thousand biblical quotations have been noted" (Vandenburghe 36).

Brändle sheds insight into Chrysostom's interpretational approach and confirms Vandenburghe's conclusion:

[77] A good example of allegory in Chrysostom comes from his Homilies on Genesis XIX.18 where he allegorizes the "sevenfold curse" that God placed on Cain for murdering Abel.

> With his exegesis he seeks, with the help of historic and psychological considerations, the original sense of the texts in front of him, and takes care, not to wander prematurely into daring theological meanings or allegorical speculations. He pays careful attention to the differences between the various biblical books. The aim of the whole endeavor for him, however, is that the text speaks to the congregation, that the sermon allows the voice of Christ and the call of his apostles to strike a responsive chord. In his sermons and other works John cites around seven thousand quotations from the Old Testament and approximately eleven thousand from the New Testament. (Brändle 35)

Gorday (104) observed that the Antiochene Method found its first advocate in the writings of Diodore of Tarsus (330-393), noting the "distinguishing qualities" of his work as "a concern for context, inner thought development, and logical, clear exposition in interpreting the text" and a "straight-forward, but unspectacular and common sense quality." Diodore's pupil, Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428) added to this approach the importance of "an objective salvation-history" which looked at Scripture from the lens of the Genesis beginnings, the Adamic Fall, Israel's history and the life and ministry of Christ whose work brings consummation and completeness to a broken creation that has received reconciliation and restoration with its creator (Gorday 105-6). Without the understanding of the full scope of Christ's life and ministry, an Antiochene approach is not possible:

> The essential outcome of this Antiochene perspective is that everything comes to be understood from the dynamism of the Incarnation itself and is referred back to it as the source of clarification. Antiochene thought then becomes strongly anthropological, and orients itself to the problematic of how man can be divine or

> partake of the divine precisely as an enfleshed and mortal creature. To be sure, this concern then becomes cosmic and world-historical, but only secondarily and never in a speculative way. The central focus always remains on the relationship obtaining between the believer and God via the Incarnation, moral progress, death and resurrection of Christ. (Gorday 105-6)

Mitchell remarked that through Chrysostom's Antiochene approach, a "reading of resuscitation" (1) occurred that brought to life the words of the apostle Paul in such a way that "makes Chrysostom's interpretation of Paul and his letters a major, though still largely untapped resource for contemporary, historical, religious, and hermeneutical research into Paul and his writings" (1). In this kind of reading, interpretational preaching for Chrysostom is "an inherently necromantic art" (Mitchell xix) where "sobriety and restraint" stand out as the central exegetical principles of the school at Antioch (Pelikan Divine Rhetoric 73).

An Emerging Identity from Utilization, Rationalization and Renunciation

Because the church "became conscious of a call to interpret the revelation made in Jesus Christ in rational terms" (Cross 116), the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint attributes the success of Christianization to the ability of Christianity's early leaders to construct scholarly truth-claims that define the meaning of the faith. As this progressed, specific hermeneutical methods were formulated in an effort to explore the deeper meanings and teachings of the religion's attested revelation. Analyzing these truth-claims and hermeneutical methods gives opportunity to observe the kind of emerging identity that marked the early leaders who sought to explain and to expound the faith to the church's maturing followers. This identity centered in the utilization of Greek philosophy and thought forms to construct interpretational methods and in the active

application of contemplative and intuitive rationalism to pursue freely and imaginatively the deeper meanings of life and its implications for the faith. As this approach matured through apologetic literature, printed sermons and commentaries, noticeable lines of demarcation appeared to mark the things of life that were "spiritual" (from God) and those that were "corporeal" (from Rome), forming a line and a spirit of renunciation that lasted until Augustine addressed it with his "use/enjoyment distinction" (Lopez 3, 113).

The utilization of Platonic philosophy appears vividly in Origen's interpretation of Christian belief (De Faye 26). Trigg (Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 34) noted that "Alexandrian Hellenism fully informed his (Origen's) outlook and categories of thought." Chadwick (122) saw that "Platonism was inside him, *malgré lui*, absorbed into the very axioms and presuppositions of his thinking." Daley states aptly, "Origen's thought…represents a remarkable synthesis between an imaginative, scholarly exegesis and a set of convictions about God and the human person shaped by the church's rule of faith, interpreted with the help of Middle Platonic philosophy" (95-96). In this synthesis,[78] there is an insistence on "the rational, free, morally accountable nature of the whole created order" (Gorday 86). Trigg (Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 73) believed that Platonic philosophy gave Origen the elements missing in Christianity, most specifically an intellectual comprehension of the divine plan as well as the reasons and the "purpose" that brings "contradictory doctrines" into a "coherent whole." On this basis, Berchman (118) concluded that Origen's work "alters the face of Christian Middle Platonic philosophical speculation, and represents the consummation of Middle Platonic theoretical reflection from Antiochus to Albinus." This conclusion reflects a deep connection to "barbarian literature composed in a non-Greek tongue" that Origen used

[78] Berchman (117) states, "Origen's philosophical theology is the first mature expression of a Nous-Henas theology in Christian Middle Platonism."

(Grafton and Williams 81). Norris sums it aptly, Origen was "an expositor of Christian teaching who was at the same a serious and constructively interested student of Greek thought" (Norris God and World in Early Christian Theology 107).

Hellenistic thought appears strongly in the thinking and practice of Chrysostom, most especially in his use of rhetoric in public oratory (Mayer and Allen 28). While in Antioch, this "first and greatest orator of Christian antiquity" (Baur 21) studied under Libanius,[79] the last famed rhetorician of secular history (Baur 21, Mayer and Allen 26, Chadwick The Church in Ancient Society 480, The Early Church 186, Meyer 2, Lawrenz 3, Butler I:93, Quasten III:424, Downey 421, Schaff "Prolegomena" IX:6, D'Alton 2). His schooling in the "stylistic devices" of the Second Sophistic techniques (Kelly Golden Mouth 8), combined with a "directness of speech," "a rare power of intuition" (Brändle 32), an unmatched knowledge and memory of Scripture (McGuckin 10, Baur 316) under Diodore's tutelage (Mayer and Allen 26), a personal life of ascetic values (Sterk 145, 148, Brändle 16), a "fiery enthusiasm of soul" (Baur 210, 291), pulpit eloquence par excellence (Vandenburghe 2, Baur 26) and a constant image of St. Paul before his mind (Vandenburghe 71) made him "the greatest of the Christian sophists" (Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 104), "the best representative of Greek-Christian classicism" (Baur 312), "the most comprehensive commentator on the Pauline Epistles from the Patristic Era" (Mitchell 5), "the greatest rhetor of the Greek Church" (Vandenburghe 19) and most especially the one who bore the title "Golden Mouth" (Baur 206, Brändle xi, Vandenburghe 2, Brown The Body and Society 306, (Kennedy Classical Rhetoric165, Cameron The Later Roman Empire 72).

[79] Pelikan (Divine Rhetoric 16) stated that "Libanius was one of the most eloquent spokesmen of his day for the educational ideals of classical Greek paganism." See also Downey's discussion (373-9).

Mitchell aptly describes Chrysostom's homiletical and rhetorical skill in presenting St. Paul to his congregation:

> In constructing his author, Paul, Chrysostom was engaging in a rhetorical art wedding literary and oral conventions, biblical sources, and authorial imagination and ingenuity to project fresh and vivid verbal images of the apostle before the eyes and ears of his congregations. At the same time, by idealizing Paul as the 'archetypal image' of Christian virtue, Chrysostom's literary portraiture served as a rhetorical vehicle for social construction and replication of the Pauline model in the now-Christian society of Late Antiquity. (Mitchell xviii-xix)

John's rhetorical brilliance, biblical mastery and knowledge of the human mind and soul give important evidence to the utilization of Hellenistic philosophy and thought forms in the construction of an effective exegetical and homiletical pattern for his time.

Another component that marked the identity of early leaders and followers of Christ in the definition and explanation of the faith's content was the use of rationalization in delving into the deeper meanings of the religion's truth and in creating opportunities for their audiences (reading and listening) to ponder the aura and wonder of the divine. In Origen's case, it was a *contemplative* rationalism (Trigg Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 246) that assisted others in knowing God more from their respective "level of comprehension." Trigg (Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 74) concluded that "for Plato, as for Origen, the intellectual elite is a spiritual elite because the intellect is the faculty of the soul which alone can attain to the vision of true being." In other words, the workings of the mind provided the gateway to explore the wonder and panorama of the meaning of life now and in the afterlife. In this respect, Origen became "the Christian Church's first great mystic" (McGuckin ix) because of his "dualistic worldview"

involving the "power of the stars" and the "appetites and passions of the sensible world" (Trigg Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 37). This explains why Origen loved and used the word "mystery" regularly in his writings (De Lubac 103). In Cadiou's (328) mind, this combination of mind and spirit "represents the most candid intellectualism that could be born out of the gospel." It enabled Origen to ponder intensely the infinite wonder of God in a robust, rational way.

Trigg provides a balanced perspective given the issues involving rationalism and revelation debated today:

> The role of the intellect in religion has been a particular problem for the modern era when it seems more and more as if the application of critical reason, whether in the natural sciences or in the interpretation of the Bible, poses a threat to established religious convictions. This is simply not a problem for Origen, for whom the unimpeded application of the intellect in all areas is precisely the way to come to a fuller knowledge of God. Even though it may run the risk of scandalizing the more simple, Origen refuses to retreat into obscurantism. If the Christian revelation is true, then there are reasonable answers to the Gnostics, to the Jews, and to pagans like Celsus. If the Bible is God's word, then the more accurately it is known, the more critically it is examined, the more of God it will reveal. More importantly, the intellect itself can be the prime means of experiencing the reality of God. (Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 258)

Origen's use of contemplative rationalism created the margin and time for the rational exploration of God. In this light, he was much more theoretical than Chrysostom, whose rationalism played out predominantly in his *intuitive* powers to understand the "prejudices in which people are entrapped, [as well as] their worries and

fears" (Brändle 32). As a pastor and "a practical guide of souls" (Altaner 376), his knowledge and rhetorical skills gave him great liberty to pursue what was best for his attentive congregation:

> Chrysostom observed in the treatment of his themes, above all in his explanations of Holy Scripture, the greatest imaginable freedom and independence of the rules of school rhetoric. With him the thought stood higher than the word, the content was more to him than the form, and his particular aim was the spiritual and religious needs of his listeners. He sacrificed every external formal consideration to this point of view. (Baur 218-9)

Perhaps the most practical way Chrysostom applied his intuitive rationalism towards his people came from the alignment of his homiletic topics with the local listing of scheduled community events and festivals (Mayer and Allen 29). To a significant degree, he formulated his discourses to match the activity and thinking of his people who lived in an era of "religious pluralism," "great wealth and great poverty" (Mayer and Allen 12-3, 15-6, 34) and a resurgent Jewish population and pagan population (Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 16-7, 21-2, 32, 162). This multi-faceted population pool, along with the Greek way of life (language, literature and culture) that he loved created times of tension within Chrysostom as he aged because Hellenism and the rationalism that it represented often sparked against the values of his Christian allegiance (Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 5). Yet at the same time, it was his intuitive rationalism that enabled him to craft and to deliver eloquent and powerful messages that were heard and understood by all:

> He always addressed the whole community and never spoke only for the intellectually interested. In the church he tolerated no vanity of status, rather he preached for everyone. The servant, the maid, the widow, the merchant, the sailor and the farmer were also meant to be able to understand his words. (Brändle 31-2)

As exegetes, commentators and proclaimers of the Scriptures, Origen and Chrysostom used rationalism in distinct, noticeable ways in their work. While the former's approach was more theoretical in scope and function, the latter's approach was more practical in purpose and result; however, both approaches produced a similar spirit of world renunciation within them. Because contemplative rationalism enabled him to separate "spiritual" from "carnal" (Lopez 28, 111), Origen could refute Celsus' inability to distinguish the "foolish wisdom of this world" from "the wisdom of God" (Against Celsus III.47) as well as to propose the doctrine of ἀποκατάςταςις (apokatastasis[80]), the belief of a "cosmic redemption…the principle that the end should resemble the beginning" (De Faye 124, 148, 151), a "restitution" (John Clark Smith 42) where a total "restoration of all things" (Daley 96-7) occurred at the end of time.

Chrysostom's use of intuitive rationalism most often expressed itself in practical exhortations and warnings to people to turn away from the wickedness of the "theatres, horse races and dice" (Homilies Concerning the Statutes XV.11) to embrace the values of asceticism instead of worldly wealth and indulgence (Against Those Who Oppose the Monastic Life 1.7, 2.2, 47.321, 333) and to oppose the "disease" (heresies) of the Marcionites on the church (On the Christian Priesthood IV.4, Homilies on Matthew XXVI.9, Homilies on 2 Timothy II, III, Homilies on John XLII.2, XLVIII.1,

[80] See John Clark Smith (41-57), Norris (59-62), Altaner (233-4) and Crouzel (257-66) for deeper discussion.

Commentary on Galatians I.7). Because "the pulpit was his forum" (Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 105), Chrysostom used his rhetorical and exegetical skills along with an intuitive rationalism to "midwife a living conversation and relationship between the dead Paul and the living Christian congregation" (Mitchell 65). These superior rhetorical abilities in John produced an imaginative scene in a number of Greek artifacts showing the great apostle "dictating his commentaries" to Chrysostom in an intimate way (Vandenburghe 71); a supposed myth but more significantly an honor bestowed affectionately to Chrysostom for his ability to wed the human mind with apostolic revelation.

Themes of rationalization, contemplation, intuition, Greco-Roman philosophy, interpretation, intellectualism and rhetoric mark broadly but adequately some of the fibers that form an identity in the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint. The issue in this interpretation of Christianization is not *how* the religion's message became formalized, but *what* constituted its message (content), *what* the message meant (interpretation), and what methods were used to arrive at that interpretation (exegesis). This issue not only produced significant debate in the first five centuries of the church, but it remains a central issue within the American Church today, especially in the transition from modernity to postmodernity. What is the place of the intellect and reason in the handling of divine truth? Can imagination be used in the exposition and application of Scripture? What role does contemplation and intuition play in the exegesis of the Bible and its proclamation to a congregation? Obviously this hermeneutical interpretation of Christianization and its implications not only brings tense and strong disagreement as to the content of the biblical faith, but most especially in the way it is interpreted and applied in the church today.

The Imperial/Aristocratic Viewpoint

In varying degrees, most scholars acknowledge Constantine's conversion[81] (AD 312[82]) as one of the pivotal points in the solidification and advancement of Christianity. On the one hand, scholars such as Grant (Early Christianity and Society 11), Daniélou and Marrou (235), Florovsky,[83] Chadwick,[84] and Peters[85] see it as a genuine conversion that produced spiritually-effected social changes[86] (Cochrane 177) over the culture in its day. Other scholars like Burckhardt[87] (281-2), Grégoire (Cameron The Later Roman Empire 48) and Lopez (139-147) question its authenticity[88] on the grounds of a supposed "revisionist strategy" (Lopez 134-5) by Eusebius, the "able propagandist" (Frend The Rise of Christianity 477) who presented the times[89] to make it look that Constantine ushered in a new era after the evil persecutions and natural disasters of the latter second

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[81] See Van Dam (127-51) and Carter (Rethinking Christ and Culture 79-83) for a fuller discussion.

[82] See Chadwick's critique of Barnes (Studies on Ancient Christianity III. 26) who noted that as early as AD 306, Constantine was publicly aligned with Christianity; however Frend (The Rise of Christianity 484-5) cautions, "Outward manifestations of the emperor's Christianity, [the years from] 312-22, are few."

[83] "The age of Constantine is commonly regarded as a turning point of Christian history" (72).

[84] "The conversion of Constantine marks a turning point in the history of the church and of Europe" (The Early Church 125).

[85] "A Christian Constantine and his Christian sons reigned for just short of half a century, and their rule changed the fortunes of Christianity" (The Harvest of Hellenism 686).

[86] Drake (192) sees Constantine's work as a fusion of Christian belief with a non-Christian form of worldly monotheism to create a type of municipal/civil religious system capable of attracting many different kinds of people with varying faith systems.

[87] Burckhardt (281-2) is overtly critical, calling Constantine "a genius driven without surcease by ambition and lust for power…a man essentially unreligious" and "a murderous egoist who possessed the great merit of having conceived of Christianity as a world power and of having acted accordingly." Most scholars reject this assessment.

[88] Chadwick (The Early Church 125) observes that regardless if it was divine or not, Constantine's conversion "was a military matter."

[89] Grant ("Early Alexandrian Christianity" 133) summarizes the current criticism over Eusebius' "official history:" "It contains a judicious mixture of authentic record with a good deal of suppression of fact and occasional outright lies." See also Barnes (315-6).

century, making it appear to parallel the prophesies leading up to the Parousia and the millennial golden age. Brown (The World of Late Antiquity 86-7), Hinson (24) and Walsh (247) see it as a "conversion" that came about "gradually" over a "prolonged exposure[90] to Christian propaganda…the interpretation of Christianity that had been presented to the average educated layman by the Christian apologists." Naturally this "interpretation" incorporated the awareness of the Parousia, the natural disasters and persecutions of the previous century and Eusebius' personal belief that Constantine was the man for the times. How much this contributed to a genuine or a superficial conversion is hard to assess. While Goldsworthy states, "It is misleading to transfer the novelty of his [Constantine's] faith to analysis of his political career" (179), perhaps Drake's (201) perspective clarifies the issue most clearly when he concluded that the question was not, "Did Constantine become a Christian?" but instead, "What kind of Christian did he become?"

Regardless of how one assesses the legitimacy of Constantine's conversion, it was a conversion "particularly rich in both images and stories" (Van Dam 129) and it enabled Christianity to solidify deep foundations[91] within the Roman state (Cameron The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 79). Chadwick (The Early Church 127) notes that "from 313 onwards…he regarded himself as a Christian whose imperial duty it was to keep a united church." With this in place, what became most significant for

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[90] Frend (The Rise of Christianity 484) concurs with Brown, "The evidence points to a consistent if stormy progress toward accepting the Christian God as the one to whom exclusive service must be given."

[91] While this is the majority view, a vocal minority is well articulated by Mennonite scholar John Howard Yoder (Stassen, Yeager and Yoder 58-65, The Priestly Kingdom 135-47) who regarded "Constantinianism" as an unfortunate concession to the biblical gospel for the sake of social approval and societal persuasion. See Carter's discussion of Yoder's position on "Constantinianism" (The Politics of the Cross 155-78). Kierkegaard (33) also attacked this view of "Christendom", considering it "the betrayal of Christianity."

Christianization in the fourth century were its spiritual and social reforms[92] that came from Constantine's conversion that affected the senatorial aristocratic class and the bishops. Paralleling this was the "abandonment of a civic religion[93] which was closely integrated with secular government" (Liebeschuetz 1). More recent scholarship (Salzman 2, Brown The Rise of Western Christendom 78) recognizes the effects on the senatorial aristocratic families as one of the key and emerging factors in the success and progress of Christianity in the early fifth century (Salzman 2-3) and more scholarly attention is coming to it. When imperial support is interpreted[94] and understood as a historical precedent, some current church leaders could suggest that the way to advance Christianity in today's American culture is to concentrate conversion strategies and discourses to the imperial and aristocratic levels of government and culture which will then produce spiritual and social reform[95] from their positions of influence.

Stated succinctly, the Imperial/Aristocratic Viewpoint believes that the conversion of Constantine became one of the most significant events for the advancement of Christianity and the Christianization of the Roman Empire. Constantine's favor for Christianity injected enormous influence for the church into many sectors of society,

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[92] Rusch (16-7) states, "There is no doubt that the policies and legislation which he enacted from the beginning showed signs of his willingness to affirm Christian values."

[93] Drake (199) states, "Constantine's idea was to form a coalition of monotheists to support a vision of peace with the Emperor as the Divine representative on earth." This new kind of religion would consequently abandon the Roman god-state religion that was in effect for several centuries before Christianity gained prominence.

[94] Carter (Rethinking Christ and Culture 19) calls this thinking "Christendom" and sees it as compromising the purity of the gospel on the altar of gaining more social influence in society for the institutional church, "We live now in the long sad denouement of Western Christendom. A resurgent paganism that never really died, but merely went underground, is now asserting itself. The secularization of Western society has been going on for a long time."

[95] Carter (Rethinking Christ and Culture 80) sees this strategy as dangerous, believing that "it is naïve to assume that Constantine's motives were religious and not political. They have to be described as both, but the evidence suggests that they were more political than religious."

most notably the senatorial aristocratic class who subsequently reformed many societal and social structures in their day. The awareness of this precedent motivates current followers of Christianity to tailor their message, conversion strategies and discourses to the imperial/aristocratic spheres of society in order to form a "trickle down" philosophy of social and moral reform to public life and practice.

Salzman provides an interesting observation:

> The success of Christianity was by no means a foregone conclusion in 312. At the beginning of the fourth century, before Constantine, there were very few attested Christian senatorial aristocrats. Yet somehow, over the course of the fourth and early fifth centuries these two forces—Christianity and the aristocracy—met and merge. (Salzman 3)

Cameron (The Later Roman Empire 77) concluded that if "imperial support" failed to stand behind Christianity, the depth and progress of Christianization would be "doubtful." Because of a number of "favors, powers and immunities…the number of converts swelled so that the church waxed stronger not only among the middle and lower classes...but among the upper classes" (Peters The Harvest of Hellenism 684-5, 635-7). Understanding some of these benefits can shed insight on how Christianity advanced both spiritually and socially in the fourth and early fifth century.

The Advancement of Christianization through Imperial Favor

Cameron (The Later Roman Empire 193) observed that "Constantine unwittingly created a church which for centuries would rival the power of the state." Because of his favor and support of the Christian cause, bishops, monks and presbyters received great power and civic visibility, most notably Chrysostom (Cameron The Later Roman Empire 71-2). With this prominence also came greater numbers of large and small Christian

congregations in major cities and in small towns that arose in response to imperial favor and varying degrees of financial sponsorship (Cameron The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 58-61). Special benefits came to Christians and clergy received numerous tax breaks and required work exemptions (Peters The Harvest of Hellenism 702, Frend The Rise of Christianity 487, The Early Church 248, Rusch 17). A massive church building and architectural movement ensued as the church received not only imperial dollars but also large sums of money and land through inheritance (Cameron The Later Roman Empire 71-2, 115, 124, Chadwick The Early Church 58, Frend The Early Church 248).

Brown describes a feeling of "triumph" sensed by many church leaders from the "supernatural victory of Christ" (The Rise of Western Christendom 72-3) over pagans, demons and gods as the fulfillment of redemption and as a "mopping up operation:"

> In the last decades of the fourth century, Christianity asserted itself for the first time, as the majority religion of the Roman Empire. Mobilized by his bishops, the Christian man in the street had got what he wanted. The Christian congregations of the 380s wanted a Christian empire, purged of the heavy legacy of the gods, and ruled by an emperor who shared their prejudices against Jews, heretics and pagans. The emperor gave them their head. (The World of Late Antiquity 104)

During this time, significant changes came to advance the causes for the female population in the empire (Cameron The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 150). Sensing that it was a "now or never" proposition (Brown The Rise of Western Christendom 73) to remove idolatry and paganism for good, some bishops and monks promoted violence and hostility towards pagans, pagan worship shrines, artifacts (Cameron The Later Roman Empire 76, Chadwick The Early Church 153) and Jews (Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews xvi-xvii, Cameron The Later Roman Empire 76).

Constantius,[96] Constantine's son and successor issued edicts mandating death for people caught in the act of idol adoration, offerings and astrology (Peters The Harvest of Hellenism 701-2). Viewed as a "clash of the gods," the church and its leaders saw these victories as a "triumphant vindication" (Brown The Rise of Western Christendom 73) and Christians were appointed to preferred positions of significant leadership from time to time in the empire (Chadwick The Early Church 154, Cameron The Later Roman Empire 77). From this favor, the church gained great prominence in the fourth century and exerted its influence in public life and government from its superior position (Brown The Rise of Western Christendom 78). From Constantine's conversion, spiritual and social effects were felt for more than a century, most especially in the aristocratic and senatorial sections of public life and government.

Christianity's Appealing Message to the Senatorial Aristocratic Classes

Cameron notes that the effects of Christianity upon the governing Roman elite population did not come into place until ninety to a hundred years after Constantine's conversion (The Later Roman Empire 78). It took significant time to convince the high and cultured Roman sophisticates that converting to the growing religion did not involve rejection of one's "status" or "classic cultural heritage" (Salzman 18, 66-7, Cameron The Later Roman Empire 78). Practically a whole century needed to pass in order for the faith to "modulate the message" so that it could "facilitate the conversion of the senatorial aristocracy" (Salzman 18).

This adjustment of the religion's content (through fourth and fifth century homilies and church leader writings) "Christianized the traditional values of the aristocracy" and "influenced the ideology of Christianity and changed the ways

[96] See Frend's (Orthodoxy, Paganism and Dissent I. 73-11) discussion on the impact of Constantius.

Christianity would appear to subsequent generations," most notably the way latter church and Christian officials in the European Middle Ages viewed themselves (Salzman 18).

This gradual and developmental incorporation of Christian principles with senatorial aristocratic values resulted from a two-fold course of action:

> This two-step process—a moving away by pagans from traditionally pagan religious structures and a breaking down of once significant differences between pagan and Christian aristocrats occurred in episodic fashion. The rising prestige of the church as an institution in secular society as evidenced by its legal privileges and economic expansion was clearly a key factor. In addition, the intervention of determined Christian emperors, like Constantine, Constantius II, Gratian and Theodosius, made Christianity a viable, prestige-laden option for the elite. These changes are reflected by the growth of a respectable aristocratic Christianity, seen too in luxurious Christian artifacts…At some point in the later fourth century a critical mass of aristocratic Christians existed. From that point on, Christianity could be considered a prestigious, status-laden option. (Salzman 136)

What Salzman concludes from this analysis is that in the course of appealing to the fourth and fifth century Roman governing leaders and families, not only did the values of the aristocracy become "Christianized, but also the message of Christianity became aristocratized" (Salzman 18, 218-9). The place that religion assumed in the world of the senatorial elite became an "appealing" and "modulating" role that first recognized the values of the secular elites and then devised a way to "assimilate" the principles of Christianity to bring it into a satisfactory alignment (Salzman 218). In this approach, "the assumptions and practices of this world shaped how aristocrats heard the

message of Christianity and influenced the ways in which Christian leaders communicated their message" (Salzman 218-9).

An Emerging Identity from Modulation and Accommodation

Because "the Romans never separated the secular from the sacred" (Salzman 2), fourth century church attempts to reach the aristocracy involved "appeals to the status concerns of this powerful group" (Salzman 18). This necessitated a "modulation of the message" as "an effective strategy that facilitated the conversion of the senatorial aristocracy" (Salzman 18). Thus coming out of the fourth century church, one observes a stretching, accommodating and adjusting mentality that *could* suggest a tie to pragmatic relativism.[97] On the other hand, this modulation and accommodation could *also* suggest an allowable and acceptable reorganization of the gospel tenets in changing circumstances as an effort to make it understandable and receivable. Which is it?[98]

Florovsky (24) acknowledges the criticism and "censure" often given to the developing faith, that its "purity and simplicity" was sacrificed on the altar for cultural "sophistics" (philosophy) and cultural "idolatry" (art). But his contention is that the followers of Christ were enabled to "re-orient the cultural process" and to "reshape the cultural fabric in a new spirit" (25). This connects to Gilkey's contention that there is a "religious dimension to cultural life" that "individual and social cannot be separated in ordinary secular life…and in religious experience" (Society and the Sacred x, 42). At the

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[97] Carter (Rethinking Christ and Culture 19-23), Yoder (The Priestly Kingdom 135-47), Kierkegaard (Attack Upon Christendom 10, 19, 33, 271) and Bonhoeffer (The Cost of Discipleship 46) attack this position, with Bonhoeffer calling it the "fading of the costliness of grace." Perhaps Carter (Rethinking Christ and Culture 23) says it best, "Christendom was more about covering up paganism than about actually converting it, and now that the veneer has worn thin, a pagan polytheism that never really died is stirring again."

[98] Murray (53-4) provides an interesting and insightful discussion on what the bishops in Constantine's day *should* have done to him (confronting him over his continued allowance of the Unconquered Sun worship, demanding that he become a catechumen, insisting that he exhibit Christian behaviors instead of the arrogance of an emperor with lavish bequests and huge basilicas, etc).

heart of this belief is Cochrane's analysis that fourth century apologists understood that "all truth is Christian truth; and from this proposition…they did much to close the gap between Christianity and classicism without compromising the essentials of the faith" (360).

The suggestion of a viable merger between the Christian faith and the tenets of Hellenistic culture gives understanding to the continued prominence and use of rhetoric in the fourth and fifth centuries (Cameron The Later Roman Empire 167). Because the "post-Constantinian church knew well how to win hearts as well as minds" (Cameron The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 80), orators such as Chrysostom and Ambrose (Cameron The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 13) flourished because of their abilities to articulate the applicable tenets of the faith to the exact human need at the moment. This "high Christian rhetoric" equipped these powerful rhetors to "accommodate themselves to the modes of discourse that already prevailed, and thereby almost to take their audience by stealth, in particular by laying claim to past history" (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 121).

Peters (The Harvest of Hellenism 698) recognizes the importance and contribution of "Aristotelianism" that gave a "facility and sophistication" to Christian doctrine in the fifth century. Cameron (Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 123) sees this Aristotelian emphasis rhetorically in the use of "ambiguity and reenactment" on the part of Christian preachers and authors in this period. On the one hand, orators used "ambiguity" to accommodate their message with the "needs of the state" and on the other hand they employed "reenactment" to connect their audience with Christian personalities of the past to apply "the pattern of Christian truth in action" (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 123). This accommodation and modulation of the Christian

message in the late fourth and early fifth century is described as a "struggle" over the "control of language" between "pagan and Christian culture" (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 123) and as an "adaptation to new circumstances" (Lopez 153).

Lopez provides helpful clarification on "adaptation:"

> These changes thus developed for particular reasons at particular moments…The core content of Christianity was not fundamentally altered by these changes, yet the modes of understanding that the community used to identify itself, and to cohere against the conflicting demands of nonmembers (especially nonmembers who were family members of converts) did significantly change. This flexibility within Christianity to find successful forms of community identity and cohesion in changing circumstances without altering core meaning must be considered one of the fundamental causes of its long-term success. (Lopez 153)

It is this understanding and use of "flexibility" that allowed Christian orators to "adapt old themes and styles to their own purpose" so that their rhetoric could "speak to the individual and to the heart—not just to theory, but also to practice" (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 146). Thus accommodation and modulation became significant themes in defining the identity of some church officials in the late fourth and early fifth century.

Themes such as the spiritual and social effects of Constantine's conversion, their effects on the senatorial aristocratic class, imperial favor and support, cultural triumph through spiritual victory, modulation and accommodation mark broadly but adequately some of the fibers that form expression in the Imperial/Aristocratic Viewpoint. The primary issue in this interpretation of Christianization is *not* what constituted the message of the faith, but *how* that message was adapted, modulated and strategized through

rhetorical "flexibility" to the sophisticates in the aristocratic class so that their acceptance of the religion's message and subsequent conversion would bring about lasting social and cultural change to the land. The modulation and adaptation of Christianity's message to the culture remains an issue that provokes intense debate and division among professing followers of Christ today who struggle to understand, to define and to apply the unchanging message of the gospel to a changing and shifting culture. Is adaptation and modulation a compromise of biblical truth? Does rhetorical flexibility alter or subvert the demands, commands and requirements of the gospel? Is the reorientation of the Scriptural tenets in order to appeal to human concerns a legitimate rhetorical approach or an anti-biblical practice? Obviously this hermeneutical interpretation of Christianization and its implications not only brings tense and often strong disagreement as to the way the Christian message is presented to the public, but most especially in the selection of gospel tenets for use and the omission of those that are deemed inappropriate.

Summary of the Viewpoints

In keeping with the understanding that there are "inadequate but resiliently enduring conceptual frameworks" (Kile 219) that attempt to interpret the success of Christianity's advancement within the Roman Empire, five viewpoints surface that represent the pool of scholarly interpretation that current church leaders often use to address the American Church's current influential decline in culture.

Some hold that Christianity is essentially a "message" of divine truth cultivated with the tools of Hellenism (language, symbolism, etc.) and articulated in a variety of ways and forms in its evolutionary development; therefore, the clothing of the message with its appropriate, creative form will bring relevance and credibility to an audience.

When the church returns to the message and its many and varied forms, she will experience revitalization.

Some hold that Christianity is essentially a "community" formed in history as a new social order that is supposed to live out its beliefs and message as a new polis and as a redeemed society; therefore, either they will remove themselves from the world as a separate community or live in the world as a reconstructionist community focused on renewing and restoring the social structures that plague society. When the church returns to community and to the power that comes from it and within it, she will experience revitalization.

Some hold that Christianity is essentially a "supernatural" system grounded in numerous attested miracles, exorcisms, spiritual conversions and the promise of the Parousia; therefore, the church must do battle against the cosmic principalities and powers in order to experience the ultimate triumph in Christ and to show preparedness for his Second Coming. When the church returns to the practice of faith-based supernaturalism and to the expectancy of an imminent Parousia that comes with it, she will experience revitalization.

Some hold that Christianity is essentially "truth" set in the framework of philosophical knowledge and thought forms; therefore it must be read, studied, interpreted and discussed, using the methods of exegetical hermeneutics in order to understand and to apply its deep teachings for life. In light of this, the church must use rationalism and the intellect to understand and to apply theology in contemplative as well as intuitive ways. When the church returns to intellectualism as a means to explore, to learn and to teach the Christian revelation, she will experience revitalization.

Some hold that Christianity is essentially social "change" from the pagan patterns and practices of the world, seen most especially when Constantine's conversion to the faith produced noticeable spiritual and societal effects throughout the Roman Empire for more than a century; therefore, the church must tailor and modulate its message and conversion methodologies to the imperial /aristocratic spheres of society so that societal reform and Christianization can impact the culture from the top-down.

In the American Protestant and the American Roman Catholic Church, each of these individual viewpoints and their implications has received significant spotlight as *the* answer to the church's current influential decline in culture. Each viewpoint possesses important qualities that characterized the success of Christianity in the first five centuries AD. Each viewpoint brings to light important factors that explain why Christianity became a dominant religion by the fifth century.

But it is important to note at this point that each viewpoint is only a *partial* explanation for the success of Christianization within the Roman Empire. Each position only *partially* explains why the Christian faith made significant inroads into the Roman culture. What confronts scholars and church leaders is a myriad of viewpoints that result in an incomplete explanation of the success of Christianization in the first five centuries AD. And with these limited conclusions come tensions from other scholars and church leaders who insist that their respective viewpoint receive more attention and credence.

Understanding the presence and voice of the church in culture involves recognizing the validity and credibility of these viewpoints in the interpretation of Christianization while realizing at the same time their inadequacy in providing a satisfying, comprehensive explanation for the cultural impact of Christianity in the first five centuries AD. And oftentimes this inadequacy brings dynamic tension, disagreement

and ambivalence in understanding what the church should say and do in the culture now or at any given moment.

These tensions and ambivalences will surface in the next three chapters from the writings of Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine. Many of this chapter's presented viewpoints and their implications find fertile soil in their homilies, letters and commentaries as they wrestled in some form or fashion with the presence and the voice of the church in culture. It is with an understanding of these viewpoints and their implications that we now turn to these three great fathers/rhetoricians in our continued study and discussion of this issue.

Chapter 3

ORIGEN'S DOMINOES THAT TRIGGERED THE CHURCH'S RELATIONSHIP TO CULTURE

In analyzing the thought and influence of significant historical figures, it is imperative to understand the times in which they lived. This is especially important for Origen, as some consider him the most important figure before the Council of Nicaea (Chadwick The Early Church 121, Lienhard xv) and most likely "the greatest of all the early Christian writers, yet one who remains relatively inaccessible for contemporary Christians" (Daly xi). From this perceived inaccessibility, Origen has received numerous criticisms and scathing judgments—some justified and others unwarranted—because he dared to address central "themes that remain to this day permanent troubling questions in the history of Christian thought" (Chadwick Early Christian Thought 66). Therefore, it is important to return to these "themes" because they played an important part in forming his views on the church and culture. This chapter's discussion will show how each theme, like a series of dominoes, triggered other themes to produce his understanding of the church's presence and voice in society.

In the late second and early third century, Alexandria[99] established itself as one of the leading think-tank cities of the known world (Trigg Origen 4). Viewed as an attraction point drawing people with varied beliefs from all directions, it drew pride from its education, spirit of "criticism" and "syncretism" (Wescott 325-6). In an age when creative thoughts emerged to the light (Cadiou vi), Alexandria lured people from practically every walk of life and culture to engage in "argumentative skepticism," "stern

[99] Daniélou and Marrou (128) characterize Alexandria's constitution and greatness during this time period as the city where "Christianity, sprung from a Semitic people, completed its Greek education at the same time as Hellenism completed its Christian education."

dogmatism," "spiritualism" and "materialistic pantheism" (Wescott 327). Drawing from its literary and grammatical heritage for more than four hundred years (Trigg Origen 15-6), Alexandria became a stewpot center for thought, criticism and debate, constituted and fed by "syncretistic religions, philosophy, Gnosticism and Christianity" (De Faye 16, Trigg Origen 52). While Christianity possessed deep, strong ties in the Mediterranean world in general and in Alexandria in particular (Brown The World of Late Antiquity 82), the church, seen as a sect (Trigg Origen 30), faced formidable opposition from Gnosticism and "Pythagorean influences" (Grant "Early Alexandrian Christianity" 136, 138, 140). Chadwick ("Origen, Celsus and the Stoa" 34, 48) also recognized the presence of Stoicism in an undetermined degree.

The late second and the early third century suffered from numerous perils such as "plagues and the empire's wars with Barbarians" along with "inflation, civil wars, oppressive taxation, depressed trade and abandonment of productive land" (Trigg Origen 6). It was a time of "anarchy and societal collapse" (Greer "Introduction" 2) where the discussion of "providence" occupied the minds of critics, philosophers and religionists (Daniélou Origen 74-5). Because of these crises, some of the uneducated church parishioners, known as "Literalists [possessed]…a confident expectation of a crudely conceived millennium" (Hanson 333).

From this background of barbarian warfare, conflict, strife and societal upheaval, personal interest in angelology and an awareness of demons stood in the forefront of Christian thinking. Brown observed that "angels and demons were as close to the Christian of the third century as were adjacent rooms" (The Body and Society 168). In light of this heightened interest and awareness of these "intangible powers that brush against the mind" (Brown The Body and Society 168), the church upheld its faith and

practice with radical demands for commitment" (Trigg Origen 4) in a setting where the Bible was the "rule of faith" and where the values of "heroic asceticism" were regarded with high esteem (Trigg Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 244). Because of the church's tactics and approach, the Christian religion penetrated society while the "Olympian gods" of Rome experienced a declining patronage (Trigg Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 34).

In light of this penetration, both Brown (The World of Late Antiquity 83) and Glover (Life and Letters 18) describe how the church's influence placed it in a position to "absorb" society in the third century. Drawing from its numerical expansion, growing influence and desire to pervade culture, Greer (2) concluded, "In studying Origen, we are witnesses to the death of the old Roman world and the birth pangs of a Christian and transformed Rome." By this he did not mean that Christianity was attempting to replace every tenet of Greco-Roman thought and practice; rather, the church sought in greater ways to align the beliefs and fibers of classical thought to the standards of divine writ. Brown describes this action as a step over a new threshold:

> A Christian, therefore, could reject neither Greek culture nor the Roman Empire without seeming to turn his back on part of the divinely ordained progress of the human race. Christ was the "schoolmaster" of the human race, and Christianity was the peak of his education, the "true" *paideia*, the "true" culture. Origen and his successors taught the pagan that to become a Christian was to step, at last, from a confused and undeveloped stage of moral and intellectual growth into the heart of civilization. (Brown The World of Late Antiquity 84)

This process of educational development made the Christian faith "more open to varied expressions of faith" than would occur over a century later (Clark The Origenist

Controversy 245). Origen's place in the development and articulation of the Christian doctrine[100] before Nicea makes him "stand out in the third century church like an oak on the prairie" (Heine "Introduction" Origen: Homilies On Genesis and Exodus 1) because in many respects his exposition of Christian doctrine positioned him to foresee the Christianization of the Roman Empire under Constantine and his successors a century in advance (Frend The Rise of Christianity 289). This came about largely from the distinctives[101] that marked the Alexandrian School where he and Clement taught.

In an era noted for its social disruption, war, disease, death, economic collapse, anarchy, brutal skepticism and philosophical searching and questioning, Origen lived "fully in the world" as a "responsible teacher of the church" (Kraft Early Christian Thinkers 61), functioning "not [as] a philosopher, but only [as] a theologian…who used philosophical propositions for his theological purposes" (Crouzel "The Literature on Origen" 513). This *modus operandi* enabled him to teach and to write on subjects that "touch nearly every discipline of life and thought of the church" (Heine "Introduction" Origen: Homilies on Genesis and Exodus 1). His exposition and articulation of the Christian message came at a critical juncture in the history of Christian thought[102] when the church needed "an all-encompassing religious vision" (Trigg Origen: The Bible and

[100] Hanson (356) states, "It may well have been true that Origen came at a time when some bold step had to be taken by Christian theologians in dealing with the problem of primitive eschatology. Origen's treatment of the problem was bold enough; indeed it was revolutionary."

[101] Molland (166-9) discusses "the marks of the spirit of Alexandrian theology: 1) The Alexandrian School is eclectic. No theology has ever been more faithful to the Apostle's precept, "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good. 2) Of all philosophies of antiquity, the Alexandrian teachers chose Platonism for the basis of Christian theology. 3) The Christian character of the Alexandrian theology is nowhere more clearly to be perceived than in the idea of education which is common to Clement and Origen. On this point, Clement is more historical in his thought, whereas Origen is more speculative. 4) Clement and Origen are intellectualists…They are persuaded that there is a truth and that man's nobility consists in his being destined to grasp that truth. 5) The two Alexandrian fathers are interpreters of Holy Scripture."

[102] Quasten (II: 56) notes, "The treatise Against Celsus is an important source for the history of religion. In it we see the struggle between paganism and Christianity as in a mirror."

Philosophy 8). Part of this religious vision solidified the final completion of the biblical canon (Lienhard xv) and established his prominence[103] in the mind of the church long after his death (Von Balthasar Origen, Spirit and Fire 2). This prominence came from his actions as an "exegete, spiritual master and speculative theologian" (Crouzel "The Literature on Origen" 499) along with his "rigorous asceticism" (Grant "Early Alexandrian Christianity" 134) and an undying submission to the truths of the Christian Scriptures (Daniélou Origen 131). As "the first great theologian of the church" (Grant "Foreword" Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 1), he "presented the life of a Christian teacher as suspended above time and space" (Brown The Body and Society 162), demanding strict, moral requirements for all officials who served in the church (Chadwick The Church in Ancient Society 136).

In light of his contribution to the articulation and progression of Christian dogma, Origen remains "one of the boldest and most original minds in the church's history" (Wilken The Spirit of Early Christian Thought 10), "one of the most influential Christian writers of all time" (Lienhard xv), deserving a place beside Augustine and Thomas in history" (Von Balthasar Origen, Spirit and Fire 1). Butterworth's concluding summary is noteworthy:

> Origen is one of those figures, none too common even in church history, of whose character we can say that we know nothing but what is good. He was humble and free from envy, caring neither for power nor wealth. He bore unmerited suffering, from friends and foes alike, without complaint. His life, from beginning to end,

[103] Von Balthasar (Origen, Spirit and Fire 2) states, "For there is no thinker in the church who is so invisibly all-present as Origen…[His] is a voice that drives straight through everything, always pushing on, without fanfare and without fatigue, almost, it seems, without an obvious goal, possessed almost to the point of insanity, and yet with a cool, unapproachable intellectual restraint that has never again been equaled."

> was hard and strenuous. His courage never failed, and he died in reality a martyr's death. He loved truth with a sincerity and devotion rarely equaled, and never excelled. Intellectually he stands preeminent and alone, towering above the Greek fathers as Augustine towers above the Latins…For it can be said with truth that there is no father of the church whose works are more profitable for study and whose temper and character are more worthy of our imitation. (Butterworth xxvii)

Because of his place and prominence in the history of Christian thought as a "world celebrity" (Von Campenhausen The Fathers of the Greek Church 51), it becomes paramount to examine Origen's views and positions on the presence and voice of the church in culture by seeing his place in the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint, the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint and the Supernatural/Eschatological Viewpoint as they pertain to the Christianization of the Roman Empire. These viewpoints highlight Origen's use of Hellenistic philosophy, his use of allegorical interpretation, his understanding of the human condition and of the nature of society, his awareness of demonism, his picture of the Christian's life in society and the church's presence and voice in culture with the use of metaphor.

Origen's Place in the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint

In an effort to interpret Christianity's advancement within the Roman Empire, the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint attests that the success of the early church came because of its ability to receive, to cultivate and to articulate a distinct message (received revelation) through creative forms of discourse (preaching, art, printed sermons, music, martyr biographies, creedal formulas, etc.) that were flexible, adaptable and textual (lasting) to the culture. Origen's place in the development and articulation of the Christian discourse is vital to the understanding of the success of the Christian religion

and of the evolution of its message as he represents the place and influences of Hellenism in the definition of its doctrines and in the formation of its discursive structures.

Origen has received the notable title of "Christian Platonist" (Greer 5, Molland 160, 173). This started in his early years of funded study and in his honored position of *grammateus,* an instructor of classical writings (Trigg Origen 15-6, Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 244, Cadiou v). These formative years under the noted Platonist philosopher Ammonius Saccas (Greer 5, Daniélou and Marrou 181, Von Campenhausen The Fathers of the Greek Church 42, Tixeront A Handbook of Patrology 90), along with his own personal reading and study produced thought structures that portrayed a "mélange of Platonism, Stoicism and popular philosophy" (Von Balthasar "Preface" xi). Peters (The Harvest of Hellenism 635) believed these structures enabled Origen to "give Christianity the 'how' and the 'why' to accompany the fundamentalist 'that.'" Chadwick (Early Christian Thought 122) saw that these "Platonic ways of thinking about God" were "necessary" in order for him to be the kind of exegete and apologist that he became in the history of Christian thought. As a "rationalist" (Cadiou viii-ix), his "Alexandrian Hellenism" (Trigg Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 30) enabled him not only to uncover the meaning of a specific biblical text, but also to classify it in the larger body of biblical literature and to systematize it in the pool of revelatory knowledge (Peters The Harvest of Hellenism 24, 623).

Origen was enabled to write and to teach Scripture from Platonic thought structures because Plato presented the human soul on a journey with the purpose of uniting with the good in an intimate, sudden way so that perfection and completeness would come (Plato Republic 490B, Symposium 211E). Norris (109) summarized Origen's journey, "His conception of the point and purpose of Christian teaching is

shaped by the Platonist idea of the soul's intellectual quest for union with intelligible reality." Torjesen (121) saw that this kind of deep knowledge from union arose from "a certain kinship or resemblance between the subject and the object of contemplation" [in which] "the process of achieving the desired resemblance to the object of knowledge is a process of becoming like God." Cadiou (329) understood this process as the "Greek notion of participation."

From this "indebtedness" to Platonic Hellenism (Edwards 11), Origen found common ground between Platonic thought and Christian revelation on creation, divine providence and human free will (Trigg Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 73). This led to pathways of learning on personal character, ethics and moral responsibility from free will (Molland 160), the distinction between "spiritual" and "corporeal" (Lopez 3, 6) and "the rational, free morally accountable nature of the whole created order…for moral improvement and ultimate perfection" (Gorday 86). His justification to draw from "Hellenistic philosophers to express the biblical contents of the faith" (Von Balthasar "Preface" xiii) came from his understanding of the "spoliation of the Egyptians" (Peters The Harvest of Hellenism 614), a practice grounded in his epistemological presuppositions in the "Platonic theory of recollection" where "sensible things can have an analogy[104] to intelligible things" (Molland 150-1).

Greer provides explanation for Origen's justification:

> In principle, he argued, the truth discovered by Plato and the other philosophers is the same truth revealed in the Scriptures. To be sure, the philosophers have made mistakes, and the truth of the Scriptures is the treasure hidden in the field. But if

[104] Molland (151) sees this "analogy" or "the theory of the ascent from the earthly copies of the spiritual reality to reality itself" as "characterizing all Origen's theology."

> one searches wisely and carefully, one begins to find the place where contradictions are resolved and obscurities disappear. Origen is a Christian Platonist not because he has turned Christianity into Platonism or vice versa, but because he has found the Platonic idiom of his day capable of expressing the truth of the Gospel. It is inevitable that tensions appear in his double commitment, but the same verdict may be given of any Christian thinker who takes seriously both the perennial meaning of the Gospel and the thought forms of his own time. (Greer 6)

From this epistemological framework, Origen was enabled to envision the apprehension of truth from "a descending series of images, each one reflecting the image above it" (Kraft Early Christian Thinkers 54), a platform that produced "within us two kinds of senses: the one mortal, corruptible, human; the other immortal and intellectual,[105] which he now termed divine" (On First Principles I.1.9, Commentary on the Song of Songs III.12). Once constructed, Origen's platform strayed from Plato's direction, choosing to explore truth from the pages of divine Scripture as opposed to the Platonic approach of "mathematics, the harmonies of cosmic order, and then beyond, to a grasp of the immaterial truth which is the foundation of cosmic order" (Norris 113). While this difference was sizable, it made Origen "inwardly less critical of Platonism than Clement…incorporat[ing] a larger proportion of Platonic assumptions than is apparent in Clement's writings" (Chadwick The Early Church 101).

With Origen's deep connections to Platonic Hellenism noted, it becomes necessary to turn to his writings to see how Platonic theory and imaging revealed the development of Christian thought and discourse in the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint.

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[105] See Daniélou's (The Bible and the Liturgy 114-26, esp. 120) discussion on *chrisma* and its connection to Origen.

One series of examples will highlight his understanding of the Logos while another series will portray his vision and imagery of martyrdom.

Origen's Understanding and Portrayal of the Logos

Because of his spiritual love for the Scriptures and breadth of knowledge in the Greek classics, it is not surprising to find Origen devoting extended attention and space[106] to the discussion of the Logos in chapter one of St. John's Gospel. Although the Logos is one of the oldest vocabulary words in the Greek language pool, St. John appears to take its form (an issue of morphology) and infuse[107] it with new meaning (an issue of semasiology). As early as 500BC, Logos appeared to mean not only "cosmic reason, universally diffused, present both in nature and in man…held to be synonymous with God" (Adam 77) but also a "primordial experience…out of which speaking proceeded" (Sallis 7). This gives insight in understanding why Origen was captivated in seeing Christ, the eternal God, as the spoken word of God to the world. This led Von Balthasar ("Preface" xii) to conclude, "The central feature of Origen's spirituality is an absolute and passionate love for the Logos." Origen stated that from the union of the human soul with Christ (the Logos), humanity "recovers the divine image" (Commentary on Genesis I.13). This is made possible through Christ's death which "has made the powers which war against the human race ineffectual, and by an ineffable power, has brought the life in sin in each believer to an end" (Origen Commentary on John I.233). Regularly Origen uses metaphors such as "sun of righteousness" (Against Celsus VI.79, Homilies on Joshua I.5), "the armor of God" (Commentary on Ephesians VI.11), "the heavenly

[106] Book 1 of his Commentary on John is more than sixty-two pages.

[107] While outside the scope of this discussion, see Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania" Journal of Biblical Literature 81:1 (March 1962): 1-13 and James Barr, The Semantics of Biblical Language. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1961 for deeper discussion.

physician" (Homilies on Leviticus VIII.1,3), "the spiritual Noah" (Homilies on Genesis II.5), "the light of the world" (Homilies on Genesis I.5, Fragments on Luke xii, xiii) and "the leader of God's army" (Homilies on Joshua I.4) to depict the Logos' work in making God known to the world and in drawing the world to God.

For Origen, the Logos is the immutable personal discloser of God (On First Principles I.2.6), "the light of men" (Commentary on John I.120), the "image of his goodness" (Commentary on Matthew xv.2), "begotten from the Father" (On First Principles I.2.6) who is the First Person of the united Holy Trinity whom Origen describes as "Oneness throughout the mind and fount from which originates all intellectual existence or mind" (On First Principles I.1.16). In this relationship by role, the Logos is presented as a "second God" (Against Celsus V.39) that pulsates from the first source of immortal light.

Norris summarized Origen's position on the Logos' relationship to God the Father:

> Whatever the Father is, the Word is—but in a different way or at a different level. The Son stands between the supreme God and the world, articulating the divine nature in such a way that its power and grace can be made known in and for a creation which is diverse and multiple. In this fashion, the Logos takes his place as the first step below the One in the diffusion and diversification of Being. He is the first expression of that abundant creativity by which God eternally moves out of solitude; and he is the perfect expression, at the same time, of the unity with God toward which the whole creation moves. He is the eternal reconciliation of the two movements of diversification and of return to Unity; and Origen's view of the

> Logos can only fully be appreciated when it is seen that both of these elements are essential to it. (Norris 128)

In this "articulation of the divine nature," the Logos becomes known[108] in three ways: in his "assuming a body" to live in this world with its "pains and griefs" (Against Celsus II.23), in his church who is called his "body and his members" (Homilies on Leviticus VII.2.10, Against Celsus VI.48) and in his written word, the Scriptures, that "overthrows all enemies and places them under his feet, that the whole world may become subjected to God" (Homilies on Leviticus XVI.7.2). These three forms of the Logos[109] encompass the spectrum of Origen's theological system (Molland 90).

Norris provides an insightful summary:

> In a sense, therefore, Origen's doctrine of the Logos provides the focal point of his theological world-picture. At once in his unity with the Father and in his distinction from the Father, he is the exemplar and the pattern for all created intelligences. Participation in the Son's unity with the Father is the goal toward which the creation is meant to move…What Origen concentrates on is the ascent of the rational spirit to a sharing in that eternal Wisdom which is the very image of the divine nature. (Norris 129)

From his position and role as revealer of God's truth, the Logos comes to the soul in two "advents" (De Lubac "Torchbook Introduction" xxi). The first coming involves a

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[108] Daly (xiv) believes that "four interconnected levels of meaning" surface in Origen's interpretation of the Logos: "1) The WORD is the pre-existent, eternal, divine Logos proclaimed in John's prologue, 2) The one who took flesh of the Virgin Mary…3) This same eternal WORD has also become incarnate in the words of Scripture, 4) This same divine WORD also dwells and is at work within us, espoused to our souls, calling us to make progress toward perfection, and to work with him in ascending to and subjecting all things to the Father."

[109] See Wolfson (I: 201-4) for further discussion.

general revelation of Christ whereas the second coming to the soul brings "personal redemption" (Commentary on Romans IX.32) in the form of "Christian maturity" where "Christ appears transfigured in his beauty and his glory" (De Lubac "Torchbook Introduction" xxi, see also the stages of progress in Homily on Numbers XXVII). Because of the Logos' work in revealing God to the world and to the human soul, Origen is believed to be the first church father to use the phrase "the God-Man" in his writings (Kraft Early Christian Thinkers 74), illustrating his deepest and greatest obsession—the practice of "the simple imitation of Christ" (Von Balthasar "Preface" xiv).

Origen's Understanding and Portrayal of Martyrdom

Platonic Hellenism is also clearly seen in Origen's depiction of and imagery in Christian martyrdom, where persecuted believers not only experience "outward martyrdom" as a worldly "contest" or "spectacle,"[110] but also "the martyrdom that is in secret" (Exhortation to Martyrdom XX). In the outward spectacle, the battle is waged over "virtues" (Exhortation to Martyrdom V), supposedly what the watching world will behold from the martyr's character and testimony on trial; whereas, the inward battle is pictured as the soul's progress through "training and hard work…in adversity...in valleys and low places…against the devil and the opposing powers" (Homily on Numbers XXVII). The victorious martyr is the one who neutralizes the demons and spiritual forces and sits with Christ in "triumph as fellows of his sufferings" (Exhortation to Martyrdom XLII). This demonic disarmament takes place before "a great theatre of spectators," mirroring the earthly image of "a crowd gathered to watch the contests of athletes supposed to be champions" (Exhortation to Martyrdom XVIII). And the tools

[110] Origen draws this word and its imagery from 1 Corinthians 4:9b, "We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men, quoted by Origen in Exhortation to Martyrdom XVIII.

needed to drive out the demons are not "curious magical art or sorcerer's device, but…prayer alone and very simple adjurations and formulas such as the simplest person could use" (Against Celsus VII.4, Homilies on Joshua XVI.5). This authority comes "not by any incantations but by the name of Jesus with the recital of the histories about him" (Against Celsus I.6).

Castelli comments on Origen's double imagery in the Spectacle:

> In his portrait of the spectacle of martyrdom, the earthly arena is not the true setting of the contest. Instead, he posits the existence of a great theater (μέγα θέατρον) divided in starkly dualistic terms: "Thus the whole world and all the angels, right and left, and all human beings, those from God's measure and those from the rest, listen to us contesting the contest concerning Christianity." Meanwhile, the angels in heaven and the powers from below constitute the cosmic audience, each side cheering for a different outcome…In Origen's account, the spectacle is itself the very point of the experience, an experience addressed to "the world," both mortal and supernatural. (Martyrdom and Memory 121)

In this great arena on earth and in the cosmic heavenlies, the grappling martyr is pictured in a life-or-death gridlock with evil forces—anti-church personalities on the earth and demonic principalities above and below—to determine if his character, witness and Christo-centric authority is strong enough to conquer them for the cause and advancement of Christianity. Crouzel (Origen 135) sees the imitation of Christ in Christian martyrdom as a central theme in "second century martyrological literature" in that "the martyr participates in Christ's work of redemption" in which "his confession is a baptism which completely purifies him of sin" and his "sufferings…work together with those of Christ in the great task of redeeming and purifying the world."

Another multi-reflectional example seen in Origen's imagery of martyrdom comes from his depiction of martyrdom as a propitious-based sacrifice which mirrors sacrifices made in the Old Testament Israelite culture and in the high priestly work of Christ. Observe the parallelisms evident in this section of Exhortation to Martyrdom:

> For just as those who served the altar according to the Law of Moses thought they were ministering forgiveness of sins to the people by the blood of goats and bulls (Hebrews 9:13, 10:4; Psalms 50:13), so also the souls of those who have been beheaded for their witness to Jesus (Revelation 20:4, 6:9) do not serve the heavenly altar in vain and minister forgiveness of sins to those who pray. At the same time we also know that just as the High Priest Jesus the Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice (cf. Hebrews 5:1, 7:27, 8:3, 10:12), so also the priests of whom He is High Priest offer themselves as a sacrifice. This is why they are seen near the altar as near their own place. Moreover, blameless priests served the Godhead by offering blameless sacrifices, while those who were blemished and offered blemished sacrifices and whom Moses described in Leviticus were separated from the altar (Leviticus 21:17-21). And who else is the blameless priest offering a blameless sacrifice than the person who holds fast his confession and fulfills every requirement the account of martyrdom demands. (Exhortation to Martyrdom XXX)

From this text Origen symbolically links the martyrdom of saints to the Old Testament sacrificial service system. Martyrs are branded with the metaphor of a first-born calf (Homilies on Leviticus XI.1.5). Forgiveness of sins is administered from faithful and, in this case, dying martyrial service on the altar. Martyrs are metaphored as priests whose sacrifice parallels the offering given by the Lamb of God on Calvary. And

just as the Savior's life was characterized by blamelessness, so also the martyr's life is publicly presented as spotless.

Castelli offers insightful analysis of the martyrdom metaphor imagery:

> The mobilization of sacrifice as metaphor by early Christian theorists of martyrdom is enabled by the historical construction of sacrifice as a recognized practice and as a part of the Roman religious system. As it did with legal discourses and notions of lawfulness and orderliness, the conflict between the dominant Roman social order and Christians used the field of "sacrifice" as a staging ground…In this way, they called upon the collective memory of Hebrew sacrifice, which Christians claimed as their heritage, now interrupted by the ultimate sacrifice in the form of the death of Jesus. But they also inverted the expected social framework by embracing the characteristics of the sacrificial victim—willingness, passivity, and submission—and, indeed, using gender to inflect their appropriation of the sacrificial economy. This ideological move was available because certain dynamics were already in play—notably, the arena's operating as a sacrificial staging ground and the dominant discourses of gender providing a broader language for signifying power. (Castelli Martyrdom and Memory 54-5)

Trigg (Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 25) saw "the exaltation of martyrdom" as "the capstone of Origen's training in the Christian life." For the enduring saint who endured public ridicule, shame, blameless torture and vicarious death, there was hope (Exhortation to Martyrdom I)—hope in reward (Exhortation to Martyrdom IV) and hope in the coming resurrection (Exhortation to Martyrdom XXV).

Seeing Origen's place in the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint gives rich insight in understanding how Hellenism, specifically Platonic Hellenism with a mixture of

Pythagorean and Stoic ingredients, gave him a love for and wisdom in Logos-centric revelation and provided him with a perspective on Christian martyrdom. This wisdom and perspective, coupled with his historical position in the developmental line of Christian dogma, makes him a figure of immense importance, deserving a place "beside Augustine and Thomas" in the line of significant contributors to the development and articulation of Christian thought (Von Balthasar Origen, Spirit and Fire 1).

Origen's Place in the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint

In an effort to understand the advancement of Christianity within the Roman Empire, the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint attributes the success of the Christian advancement in the first five centuries to the scholarly truth-claims put forth by the religion that made it in due time a systematized body of wisdom and knowledge that was readable, learnable and knowable. These truth-claims were situated within philosophical thought structures that enabled inquirers to approach its propositions and to exposit its meaning through specific methods of exegetical hermeneutics that brought definition, clarity and articulation to the faith.

Origen's place in the development of Christianity's truth-claims into a systematized philosophical system is one of his most enduring contributions to the cultivation of Christian thought and to the solidification of its message in world history. Von Campenhausen (The Fathers of the Greek Church 45) recognized that Origen was "the only one to present the whole of Christianity in the form of an incipient philosophical system." Smith (xiv) concluded, "Both as a man and as a thinker his influence was so extensive that almost every Christian or religious thinker after the third century AD owes a debt to him and his work." Trigg (Origen: The Bible and Philosophy

9) agreed by stating, "We have Origen, more than any other single person, to thank that Athens and Jerusalem belong equally to our Western heritage."[111]

Brown (The Body and Society 162) believed Origen's "unhurried, timeless scholarship brought a breath of changelessness" into the church in the tumultuous times of the third century. Living within a strategic time window when Christian truth needed clearer definition and distinction (O'Meara 6-7) against the claims of "Noetianism, Gnosticism, Chiliasm, Montanism, Paganism, Sensualism and Fanaticism" (Bigg 303), Origen brought a "meticulous energetic scholar[ship]" (Grafton and Williams 17) from the analysis and study of established, biblical texts. This enabled him not only to become one of the finest theology "builders" in the history of the church (Bigg 280), but also one of the greatest biblical interpreters and "influencers on subsequent Christian tradition" because of "his precise attention to detail" (Trigg Origen 63). Daly (xviii) called him "an avid, curious, dedicated biblical scientist" and "a philosopher of apparently considerable ability." Cadiou (18) likened him to "an experienced lecturer" in humble command of a subject with no notes. Molland (100) respectfully regarded him as "a biblicist and speculative theologian." Perhaps John Clark Smith (15) stated it best, "He stands higher than any thinker as the greatest defender and philosopher of Scripture, a man who knew Scripture as well as any Christian thinker who ever lived…and who lived the way of Scripture."

What made Origen so strategic, valuable and influential in his day and in subsequent generations? Greer (xv) recognized "his Platonizing theology, his allegorical interpretation of Scripture and his service of the church as preacher, apologist and

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[111] Wilken (The Spirit of Early Christian Thought 10-1) states that Thomas Jefferson possessed a Greek and a French text of Origen's Against Celsus in his library because "Origen took great care to present the views of his opponent to his readers."

theological expert" that produced a form of "freedom and hope exercised under the loving providence of God" and "a dialectic between contemplation and the moral life." Crouzel (Origène et la Philosophie 49) believed it was his "philosophical formation" from the "milieu of Neopythagoreanism or Middle Platonism." Cadiou (328) stressed the inseparable factors of "argumentation" and "piety." Trigg (Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 8-9) thought that it was his ability to "make Christianity compatible with the highest aspiration of classical Greco-Roman culture" through the use of "philosophy as the proper preparation for the intellectual study of the Bible" (168). De Lubac ("Torchbook Introduction" x) stressed in addition to his intellectual and rational spirit the belief that Origen was "the man of the Spirit, the apostle" and "the man of the church" with its emphasis on "piety." What exuded from Origen's life and work made modern scholars (Bigg 279, O'Meara 6-7) conclude, "There has been no truly great man in the church who did not love him a little" and that compelled Erasmus to prefer "one page of Origen more than ten pages of Augustine" (Von Balthasar "Preface" xi).

What made Origen stand out as a great rhetorician, theologian, exegete, commentator and church leader was his ability to unite "knowledge and curiosity, insight and eagerness to teach, fidelity to the rule of faith as well as the boldness to correct misconceptions" (Daly xviii). Through his use of "classical grammarian techniques" (Grafton and Williams 17) with an "emphasis on ethics rather than on metaphysics" (Chadwick "Origen, Celsus and the Stoa" 49), he approached the interpretation of Scripture with an "intellectual formation" that was entirely Christian…and ecclesiastic" (De Lubac "Torchbook Introduction" x), producing explanations of the fledgling Christian "gospel into a language intelligible to the pagan, especially the thoughtful and

educated pagan"[112] (Greer 2). From these explanations of the gospel, the spirit[113] and tradition[114] of Alexandrianism thrived in Origen's day and beyond.

In using rationalism and philosophical thought structures to assist in his approach to ἀκρίβεια ("accuracy"[115] Trigg Origen 63), critics later condemned Origen over a series of views and interpretations[116] that were deemed out of the realm of "orthodoxy" (Chadwick Early Christian Thought 96). While no one wishes to overlook or to dismiss these unorthodox errors, it is important to remember when Origen lived and how the use of philosophy and rationalism defined and advanced many aspects of the Christian message in the third century. At a time when Christianity needed greater definition and clarity (O'Meara 6-7) during a time of great social upheaval and turmoil (Trigg Origen 6), Origen stressed not only the contextual unity of the Bible (Miles 454-89), but also the enlightenment and interpretation of Scripture by Scripture (Lienhard xxii, Scheck 29). Trigg (Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 258) believed that "the role of the intellect in religion…[was] simply not a problem for Origen [because] if the Bible is God's Word, then the more accurately it is known, the more critically it is examined, the more of God it will reveal."

It is this understanding of the human intellect and its power that enables scholars to evaluate and to discuss two significant areas that establish Origen's place in the

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[112] Castagno (70) remarked, "Origen almost always preached to those converted from paganism."

[113] See Molland's (169-72) discussion on the five elements of the "Spirit of Alexandrian Theology reflected in the gospel."

[114] Kraft (Early Christian Thinkers 66) describes the "twofold aspect of the Alexandrian tradition " as "man's capacity to receive the revelation of God and the duty laid on man to strive upwards through philosophical training to the vision of God."

[115] Hill (Chrysostom Homilies on Genesis 1-17 18) believes "accuracy" is a mistranslation of the Greek work, preferring the term "precision" instead.

[116] See Clark's discussion (11-2, 120-1, 143) on the list involved in "Origenism" and Quasten's topical discussion (II: 75-93).

Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint: his practice of allegorical exegesis and his depiction of the human condition and society from the lens of free will and the salvific journey of the soul to perfection from educational and intellectual progress.

Origen's Allegorical Exegesis

The fusion of Platonic philosophy with biblical revelation (The Logos) implemented in the methods of allegorical interpretation marked the foundation of the Alexandrian School (Kennedy Greek Rhetoric 184, Classical Rhetoric 157-60, Torjesen 108, Daly xiii, Grant with Tracy 56-62). In this implementation, allegory became a "mentality" (Macleod 371) for Origen that "continually searched for God" not in the sentence (the present day understanding of conveyed meaning) but in "the word"[117] (Lienhard xvi). It was oftentimes an individual word that opened up "an ocean of mysteries" for Origen (De Lubac History and Spirit 159) in the form of "symbols" (Grant with Tracy 58) carrying an "attached holiness" that led to the "knowledge of God" (Kraft Early Christian Thinkers 54). In this holy pursuit to the Almighty's presence, the soul goes on a "journey"[118] (Torjesen 70-1, Litfin 149) where "stages of growth"[119] align with the actions of the Christian Godhead (On First Principles I.3,7,8). Thus, mutual participation with the Godhead is vital not only in Origen's theology of salvation (On First Principles III.2.2) but also in his method of Scriptural interpretation (Macleod 371). Reason (Homilies on Leviticus III.3) and the Holy Spirit's assistance (Homilies on Leviticus VI.1,2) are equally important.

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[117] Edwards (20) states, "Just as for the Platonist every being sustains its character through aspiring to its source, so Origen holds that no word in the Scriptures would have any meaning for us were it not a discreet expression of the One. This speculation sanctifies the premise on which Origen grounds his numerous expositions of the Scriptures."

[118] See Dawson (26-43) for a deeper discussion.

[119] See Torjesen's helpful and enlightening discussion (77-85).

In this journey, three possible meanings[120] (Kennedy Greek Rhetoric 184, Classical Rhetoric 157-60) emerge that correspond to the physical (body), moral (soul) and eternal or theological (spirit) dimensions of human life (On First Principles IV.2.4); however, it is dependent upon the interpreter's spiritual progress to uncover these meanings (Lienhard xxii). While the "literal" meaning (also called the "historical" or "fleshly," "carnal" meaning) is "by no means unimportant[121] (Daly xiv), the interpreter must move from the "sensible world" (the common historical meaning) to the "intelligible world" (the invisible and eternal meaning) in order to experience any progress and maturity (On First Principles I.7.5, III.6.7, IV.1.1,2, Against Celsus VI.20). This applies especially to the εὐαγγέλιον as Origen propounded a "sensible gospel" and a "spiritual gospel" (Commentary on John I.3, 7).[122] The exegete who is able to unlock the teachings of Christ in deeper ways unlocks the mysteries of God's kingdom to his people (Molland 139-40), resulting in "a process of restoration" that leads to "resemblance to God" or "divinization" (Torjesen 85).

In this process, the searching interpreter's soul looks for "the manifold forms of the Logos' activity in Scripture and the pedagogical use of Scripture by the Logos in its present interpretation" (Torjesen 108). This "soul search" in Scriptural exegesis parallels in many ways Origen's understanding and practice of prayer as a "transcending lift" to contemplate God:

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[120] Daly (xvi) notes Origen's "triple schema" appearing two ways in his interpretations: The "first variation" involves 1) the historical or literal meaning, 2) a moral meaning, an application to the soul and 3) a mystical meaning relating to Christ, the church and all the realities of faith. The "second variation" involves 1) the historical meaning relating to the things of Israel, 2) A mystical meaning relating to the mystery still to be fulfilled (i.e. Christ and the Church) and 3) A spiritual meaning relating to the soul.

[121] Molland (115) likened Origen's "historical" and "spiritual" meanings to the human body of Christ and his concealed divinity. While some saw him only as a Jewish man, those with "spiritual eyes" saw that he was God.

[122] Torjesen's discussion (66-7) on the terms "sensible gospel" and "spiritual gospel" is helpful.

> When the eyes of the understanding are lifted up away from converse with earthly things and occupation with material impressions, and when they are elevated so high that they can transcend created things and fix themselves solely upon the contemplation of God and of reverent and seemly intercourse with him who hears, it must needs be that the eyes themselves derive the greatest benefit. (On Prayer IX. 2)

Origen's allegorical[123] exegesis became well-liked in his day because it encouraged the incorporation of the Old Testament in the unified study and teaching of the Bible (Trigg Origen 62-3, Jaeger 48) and for its emphasis on mysticism as a central activity (Macleod 369), making it likely to receive a "new hearing" in the days of postmodernism (Trigg Origen 63).

Origen's Understanding of the Human Condition and of Society

While the contemplation of God is an essential activity for the journeying soul in Origen's thought, it is this soul's free will that is central to this contemplation (Molland 161, Gorday 86, Crouzel Origen 210, Rist 176-80, Alexandrian Christianity 200, Chadwick The Early Church 107, Lauro 100-1, Daniélou Origen 209, Bigg 200, Jaeger 65). Daniélou (Origen 214) sees free will as "the basic principle of Origen's cosmology," found frequently throughout his writings (On First Principles I.8.1, II.2.1, II.9.2,6, On Prayer VI.2, XXIX.13,15, Commentary on Matthew 12,41 as a few instances. Von Campenhausen (The Fathers of the Greek Church 47) sees free will as Origen's "justification" of the actions of a perfect God with the flaws of human authority.

[123] Dawson (26) provides a helpful analysis, "Just as Platonic erôs can be understood as the striving of the world of particulars for the forms of the Good and the Beautiful that would complete them, so allegorical reading can be seen as the striving of a reader confronted with incomplete or 'thin' literal meanings for the fuller or deeper meanings that would complete them."

Two of Origen's clearest statements on free will are found in On Prayer:

> Therefore, they who hold that we have no free will necessarily take up an extremely foolish position. (VI.2)

> For God does not wish that good should come to anyone as of necessity, but of free will. (XXIX.15)

In Origen's speculative rationalism, free will existed before the creation of the world as rational minds existed in a pre-matter estate engaged in the pure contemplation of God (On First Principles I-III). Eventually they fell from communion with the divine because they became "satiated" (On First Principles I.3.8, I.4.1) or "weary," then "psychotic" or "cold" (On First Principles II.8.3), drifting away from the heat of God's consuming fire (Crouzel Origen 210, Smith 39). In this long, progressive decline (On First Principles I.6.2), God created a material world to accommodate the diversity of individual choices made by these rational minds toward God (On First Principles III.6.4). As a result, an established hierarchy was formed involving angels, cosmic bodies (planets and stars), humans and demons (On First Principles I.8), each level reflecting a greater or lesser departure from the contemplation of God (On First Principles II.9.3). Therefore in Origen's system, the creation of the material world was not the beginning, but rather a middle stage that is moving toward a grand and glorious end, a consummation (Homilies on Jeremiah XII.10.1, VII.1-2, Homily on 1 Kings XXVIII.10, On First Principles III.6.8) where final and complete restoration (ἀποκατάςταςις), a complete return to the original beginning (Homilies on Jeremiah XIV.18.4, On First Principles I.6.1,2,4) will occur so that "God will be all in all" (On First Principles III.6.2,3). This includes not only

humans, but also the present, groaning creation (Homilies on Leviticus I.3, Commentary on Matthew XIII.8).

With such an emphasis on the will and its freedom, it is not surprising that Origen would need to expound and to define the nature and cause of evil that spiraled the fall. From his prologue to the Commentary on the Song of Songs (II.4-13), Origen learns from the apostle Paul that two types of "persons" were divinely created within each human being: an "outer person that came from "the dust of the earth," corrupted, decaying and dying; and an "inner" person (the "soul" in Against Celsus VII.38) that God made in his "likeness and image" that, although fallen, can determine its direction back to God from its rationality (On First Principles II.9.2). The reason for humanity's fall is due to two types of disobedient choices: one made by Adam, their physical father who gave them a "body of sin" (Commentary on Romans V.1, 9) and the other by the rational choices that free, sinning people make involving their daily relationship to God (On First Principles I.4.5, II.9.2, III.1, Against Celsus IV.62, 66, VI.54,66). This stress on human responsibility and the absolute goodness of God who does not cause evil[124] (Against Celsus VI.55) enabled Origen to clarify, to define and to distinguish the Christian gospel from the tenets of "Hellenistic determinism (particularly astrology), Gnostic and Marcionite views" (Lauro 100). Just as a person's reason turned him away from God, so also can he return to God in that starting, original perfect condition (On First Principles II.8.3). The issue revolves around choice (On Prayer XXIX.13).

In light of human free will and choice (On First Principles I.8.1, II.2.1, II.9.2, Commentary on Matthew 12,41), earthly life for Origen is not the "best of times" nor

[124] In Against Celsus VI.55, Origen gives an interesting metaphor of the "shavings" and "sawdust" of a carpenter on a building site to show that although God is the source of the goodness (the wood), He is not the cause of the "mess" (sawdust).

"the worst of times" (Dickens 7) but rather a sphere of "diversity" (On First Principles II.1.1-4) where many things can happen to many people such as "weakness" (Against Celsus IV.73), "temptation" (On First Principles III.5.1), "neediness" (Against Celsus IV.76), "the disease of contention" (Commentary on Romans II.6.4), "struggles and trials" (On First Principles I.6.3, III.2.3), "frailty" (On First Principles II.6.1,2), the "horrors of human misery—disease, defections in hearing, vision and speech, slavery and savage disposition" On First Principles II.9.3), "uncleanness" (Homilies on Isaiah 3,2), "lying" (Commentary on John XX.22), the "desires of the flesh" (Commentary on Romans VI.9.10), "corruption" (Commentary on Romans VII.4.8), "affliction" (On First Principles II.8.5) and "calamity" (Against Celsus II.42) to name a few. Origen believed that these "evils (loosely defined) were inflicted for remedial purposes to purify and educate those who are unwilling to be educated by reason and sound teaching" (Against Celsus VI.56). Therefore, although earthly life can be a "prison house" (Against Celsus VIII.53, 54) where the "six kinds of sinful leprosy" (Homilies on Leviticus VIII.5-10) attempt to control and to corrupt the outer man (Commentary on Romans VII.48), "a man may still love life even though he has attained a conviction that the essence of the rational soul has a certain kinship with God" (Exhortation to Martyrdom XLVII). In summary, Origen defines the human condition: "rational animals" (On First Principles I.1.6, I.5.2) created by God (Homilies on Exodus 6, 9) whose souls were hardened by "negligence and wickedness" (On First Principles III.1.14) who have the free will to return to God (i.e. cooperate with his salvation, On First Principles III.1.18) or to neglect him (On First Principles II.9.6).

Although the earthly, bodily dimension of human existence was created by God (On First Principles Preface 4; I.3.1,3; I.7.1; II.1.1; II.9.1,4,5,6; III.6.7) it is also a "world

of wickedness" (On First Principles II.3.6) and "darkness" (Commentary on John I.120) where "the weak, the ungodly and sinners" dwell (Commentary on Romans IV.11.2) in "affliction" (On First Principles II.8.5) and where "ungodliness" (sin against God) and "wickedness" (sin against people) occurs (Commentary on Romans I.16.5). In his Commentary on Romans (I.19.6), Origen stated that St. Paul elaborated on the "ungodliness of society" under three distinct classifications: 1) "Those who worship idols (pagans in general)," 2) "These who serve created things rather than the Creator (their wise men and philosophers)" and 3) "Those who have not approved to acknowledge God (heretics who deny or blaspheme God)." It is from these types of people that many leave behind "seeds of evil" that lead to damnation such as "schools of philosophers," "sacrilegious magic and erroneous teaching," "heresies and perversions" and "schisms in the church" (Commentary on Romans II.4.5). These groups operate according to "a wisdom of this world, and a wisdom of the princes of this world" (On First Principles III.3.1, IV.1.7, 11), led by "the opposing powers or the devil himself" who "contends with the human race, inciting and instigating men to sin" (On First Principles III.2.1). Although God the Father sustains and upholds the world[125] with his immutable power (On First Principles II.1.2-3), "the whole of this world…lies in the wicked one" (On First Principles I.5.5).

In his religious vision where human freedom operates unrestrained under the providence of God, Origen's place in the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint is secured when he responded to Celsus' attacks on providence and evil by stating that the knowledge of natural law established under providence provides the grounds for harmony and justice in society (Against Celsus VIII.52). Providence uses sound reason as a

[125] Origen defines "world" as "every rational creature, not trees, stones, grass, seeds and chaff" (Commentary on Romans III.6.6).

vehicle in those who understand natural law to do good to all in the culture (Against Celsus IV.82, 83). When cities contain evidences of cultural life—art, music and law—sound reason is present (Against Celsus IV.81). Virtue is required for proper relationships between people and moral law must ground the way people govern themselves in a community (Against Celsus V.40).

Seeing Origen's place in the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint gives rich insight in understanding his place in the history, development and defense of the Christian gospel and dogma. Not only did he bring initial clarification and definition to some of Christianity's deepest truths, Origen also articulated the vision of an integrated world where the proper wisdom learned from human observation and study (philosophy) could find a home in the study of the Scriptures, thus making Christianity's fledgling message understandable, influential and attractive to the educated inquirer. His understanding of sound reason as a gift of God's providence enabled him to defend Christianity against pagan attack and it provided him with the philosophy and the tools to construct a method of exegesis (allegory) that is gaining an audience with postmodern thinkers (Trigg Origen 63). In Origen's mind, "Plato and philosophy" represented the "most powerful allies for Christianity" (Jaeger 65). His insistence on human free will enabled him to articulate a widely popular apology on the source and place of evil and its relationship to providence at a time when Christianity needed this type of clarification. Free will also empowered him to recognize that the church in his day lived in an age of darkness surrounded by evil powers and principalities (on earth and elsewhere) who chose to rebel against God, his laws and his people, creating daily instances where hostility, spiritual warfare, prayer and spiritual empowerment was needed. In Origen's system, his philosophy and reason enabled him to see the corporeal and incorporeal

opponents to God and to his people. And it compelled him to cry out to God for supernatural victory and to envision a future day when final restoration would come.

Origen's Place in the Supernatural/Eschatological Viewpoint

Some scholars have often attributed the successful advancement of Christianity within the Roman Empire in the first five centuries to a number of recorded supernatural acts (healings, resurrections, exorcisms, etc.) associated with the Christian gospel along with the mysteries that accompanied them, all grounded in the promise of future immortality and peace. The Supernatural/Eschatological Viewpoint attests that the distinctives of Christianity and its rise to world prominence came because of its numerous instances of public spiritual power that reinforced its teaching as well as the founder's promise that he would return again to earth in power and glory. Origen's emphasis on mysticism, the coming consummation and likely restoration (ἀποκατάςταςις) along with his deep awareness of demonism and the devil as the arch enemy of God and his church place him in an important position in the history of supernatural and eschatological thought. As the church's "first great mystic" (McGuckin "Preface" ix), his twofold sourcing of body and soul (a preexistent permanent soul housed in a non-permanent body (Against Celsus IV.32) gave him the ability to espouse human autonomy while struggling[126] in an environment surrounded by spiritual principalities (Trigg Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 37). Origen saw this struggle as a constant dialectic between bad spirits who are "able to urge us on to sin" and good spirits who can "assist us to salvation" (On First Principles Preface V.111. This highlights his emphasis on mysticism.

[126] Brown (The Body and Society 168) notes that Origen's mystical struggle "entered the blood stream of all future traditions of ascetic guidance in the Greek and Near Eastern worlds."

Origen's Mysticism

It is imperative to remember that rationalism and mysticism[127] are essential partners in Origen's theological and rhetorical tool box. Each one compliments the other (Trigg Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 75). An intellectual contemplation of God leads interpreters to the "deep mysteries[128] of God" (De Lubac History and Spirit 103, Trigg Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 246, Alexandrian Christianity 208) and in this practice of "speculative spirituality" (Molland 132), exegetes "breakthrough" to the "interior" of the purity and holiness of God (Von Balthasar "Preface" xiii), producing a "humble and quiet person[129] who trembles at the Word" (Homilies on Leviticus VI.2). Ledegang (3-4) summarizes Origen's "le paradox du mystère:"

> His starting point is that the object of religious knowledge is a mystery…On the one hand the mystery is unknowable to man. Only the three Persons know the truth. And that this truth is unattainable to man is on account of his still dwelling in a body…However, he who transcends the visible, can acquire some knowledge of the mystery. First of all, one must endeavor to disengage oneself from visible truth by a moral and ascetic conversion, by a holy way of life. For by these means a fertile soil is created for revelation. This revelation is to be in creation, in the Holy Scripture, but in particular in the incarnate Word. Without revelation no

[127] Quasten (II: 94) states, "Going through Origen's spiritual thoughts frequently reminds one of the language and ideas of St. Bernard of Clairvaux and St. Teresa Avila. He is in fact one of the great mystics of the Church…We shall not be able to do justice to his teaching and personality without a study of his mysticism and piety, because these are the ethical forces behind his life and doctrine."

[128] Macleod (370) correctly notes Origen's emphasis of *mysteries* (plural) that contributes to the mystical "ecstasy."

[129] Vogt (542) states, "Origen prepared the way for a pious church-consciousness…for the ecclesiology of Augustine and his successors, but at the same time laid the foundation for nuptial mysticism and for Christian mysticism generally." Greer ("Introduction" 25) believes this mysticism "prepared the way for Gregory of Nyssa."

knowledge is possible. That is to say: it is a question of divine grace. (Ledegang 3-4)

Origen was more concerned for his readers to see the spiritual or mysterious meaning of a passage than its literal, historical meaning (Homilies on Joshua I.3) because he wanted them to obtain "the grace of heavenly words…in order to uproot and demolish nations and kingdoms…not in a bodily sense" (Homilies on Jeremiah I.7). This spiritual sight came only when they were "set apart" unto God and from the world's system[130] so that they could prepare[131] for the Parousia by battling the forces of darkness.

Origen's Eschatology and Demonic Emphasis

While Koch questioned if Origen possessed an eschatological system (33, 89), Hanson outlined the basic tenets[132] of Origen's eschatology, a system whose ultimate "end" or "sudden consummation" (Homilies on Jeremiah XXVIII.11, On First Principles I.6.1) culminates with "God being all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28 in On First Principles III.6.2-3), a time of perfection and completion (On First Principles I.6.1) when all the enemies of Christ are subdued (On First Principles I.6.2, Homilies on Joshua I.5, Homilies on Leviticus IX.11.2, XVI.6.5, Homilies on Luke VI.5, XXXI.6, Fragment on Luke 112) and when everything is renewed and restored[133] to its original condition (On

[130] Origen's idea of "set apart" is explained in Homilies on Leviticus XI.1.6, "Not from places but from deeds, not from regions but from ways of life."

[131] Giordani (164) observed, "As imperial hostility grew more bitter, the spirit of the Apocalypse became more diffused; and since the Empire was persecuting Christ, the Christians began to couple Caesar with the Anti-Christ."

[132] Hanson (334-56) overviews Origen's positions on wrath, chiliasm, the Anti-Christ, the Parousia, the Last Judgment, the resurrections and the Kingdom of God. See also Daley's summary (95-6), Bigg's discussion and footnotes (224-9) on Hades, Paradise, the resurrection and the future life. Molland's (157) remark, "The perfection of all spiritual beings is [Origen's] ultimate goal" represents a major part of Origen's eschatological system. See also Molland's three characteristics (144-7).

[133] While "restoration" or "reintegration" (ἀποκατάςταςις from Acts 3:21) refers to the total transformation of all creation to its original glory and completeness, it became one of Origen's greatest doctrinal controversies. For further discussion, see Norris, "Apokatastasis" 59-62, De Faye 124, 148-51,

First Principles I.6.2,4, II.1.1-2, Homilies on Jeremiah XIV.18.14, Commentary on Romans II.2.2). This means sin is defeated and punished (Homilies on Jeremiah XII.10.1, On First Principles I.6.1) and when the church beholds "the face of God the Father…as eyewitnesses" (Commentary on John I.16, XX.7). Until that time of glorious fulfillment, the earthly church is engaged in an all-out battle against the spiritual forces of wickedness who are deemed as enemies or adversaries of God and his church (Homilies on Joshua I.5-6, Homilies on Leviticus IX.11.2, XVI.6.5, On Prayer XXX.2, Exhortation to Martyrdom 7,13,32,36, Commentary on Romans I.18.6, V.3.7, Commentary on John I.78, 233, II.167, Homilies on Jeremiah V.17.2, XII.11.2, 17.2, XXVII.1.5).

While so many aspects of Origen's eschatology[134] merit deeper examination, the subject of this study compels a narrow focus on one tenet of his eschatological system—the presence of the devil and his forces (powers, demons, principalities) and the church's role against them. Castagno (77) believed that "the devil and his angels held the scene" in Origen's preaching.

In the preface to On First Principles, Origen discusses the devil's angelic beginning:

> In regard to the devil and his angels and the opposing spiritual powers, the Church teaching lays it down that these beings exist, but what they are and how they exist it has not explained very clearly. Among most Christians, however, the following opinion is held, that this devil was formerly an angel, but became apostate and

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Greer 16, Daniélou Origen 287, Heine "Introduction" 49-70) and Smith's discussion (41-44) on the elements of the restoration.

[134] See footnote 84.

persuaded as many angels as he could to fall away with him; and these are even now called his angels. (On First Principles Preface 6)

Heine ("Introduction" Origen: Commentary on John: 13-32 60) believes Origen understood Lucifer's fall to be "the first rational being to turn away from the contemplation of God" which triggered the process of the creation of the material world. From this fall, his "murder of the whole human race" (Commentary on John XX.224) ensued out of his chosen jealousy (Commentary on John XX.234-6). While his created, perfect nature came from "being" (God), his evil and wicked choice came from "not being" (Commentary on John II.96-99) and this choice changed him. Therefore, God is not the source or cause of the devil's evil and this led Origen to conclude that the devil *could*[135] be restored (ἀποκατάςταςις) as a part of the "all things into his hands" of John 13:3 (Commentary on John XXXII.27-9, 33-39).

What makes Origen's understanding on this issue so significant is how the "not being" characteristic of the devil and his wicked comrades operates in this material world. His most succinct statement on the devil and the church comes from his Commentary on Romans V.3.7, "The present time, however, I would say seems not so much a time of reigning as of war." This intellectual-mystical framework—seeing the church's life on this material earth as a "battleground" where Lucifer came after his fall (Commentary on John I.78) in which the "world rulers of darkness wrestle against the human race" (Commentary on John II.167) as a "contest" (Exhortation to Martyrdom V, XX) forms the foundation for understanding Origen's position on the presence and voice of the church in the culture of his day.

[135] Despite the condemnation over his views on restoration, Origen stated twice (On First Principles I.6.3, Commentary on John XXVIII.8) that it was a "suggestion" rather than a fixed doctrine.

Several descriptive metaphors depict Origen's understanding of the devil's ferocity. He is a "lion to destroy nations" (Homilies on Jeremiah V.17.2), a "dark mountain" (Homilies on Jeremiah XII.11.2, the Catena Fragment 41), a "giant" (Commentary on the Song of Songs III), "the evil one" (On Prayer XXX.1), the "opposing powers" (On First Principles III.2.1, Homilies on Joshua XI.2, Commentary on Matthew XVII.2, Commentary on Luke VI.5, XXXI.6, Fragment on Luke 112, Commentary on Ephesians VI.12), the "wicked one" (On First Principles I.5.5), a "powerful adversary" (Homilies on Joshua I.6), a "hammer" (Homilies on Jeremiah XXVII.1.5), the "enemy" (Homilies on Leviticus IX.11.2, XVI.6.5, On Prayer XXX.1,2, Exhortation to Martyrdom 7,13,32,36, Commentary on John VI.287-90, On First Principles I.6.2, Commentary on the Song of Songs III, Homilies on Joshua XI.2) and an "invisible foe" (Homilies on Joshua XVI.5).

When seen as a panoramic whole, these micro pictures paint a macro portrait of an earthly life that is predominantly occupied with the mindset of spiritual battle[136] (Homily on Numbers XXVII.12, Homilies on Genesis IX.3, Homilies on Exodus IV.7, Homilies on Joshua I.5, V.2, VII.3, VIII.3, IX.2, XI.4-5, XII.1, Commentary on the Psalms 118, 157, Homilies on Leviticus XVI.6.5, Commentary on Romans I.18.6, V.3.7, Commentary on John I.78). In Origen's corporeal world, the devil along with his spiritual powers and principalities not only attempt to thwart the advancement of God's truth, but also they seek to afflict the lives of Christians through temptation (Homilies on Joshua XV.5, Homilies on Genesis I.10, IX.3, Homilies on Leviticus XVI.6.4, Homily on Numbers XXVII.5, Commentary on John XX.176, Commentary on Romans I.18.6, On

[136] In his Commentary on Ephesians VI.12, Origen "surmises" that the Old Testament battles between David and Goliath, Israel and the Philistines or other nations "likely" serve as a "symbol of spiritual rulers," thus revealing a strong connection between his intellectual approach (allegory) and his supernatural understanding of the Christian life.

Prayer XXIX.1-2, On First Principles I.6.3, III.2.1, III.5.1) and hostility (On First Principles III.2.6, Homilies on Joshua XI.2, Against Celsus IV.32, VII.31, 70, VIII.64, 70, 73).

Brown (The Body and Society 168) noted that the intuitive awareness and nearness of the spirit world was great in Origen's time. This heightened sense of evil and hostility not only challenged Christians to stay on the spiritual alert outwardly, but also it confronted them with the need "to conquer the evil in their souls" (Homilies on Genesis IX.3, Homilies on Exodus VI, IX, Homilies on Leviticus XII.1.3, XVI.6.4, Homilies on Jeremiah I.7.1-2, On First Principles I.6.3, III.2.1, III.5.1, Commentary on the Song of Songs, IV, Commentary on Romans VI.9.10). In his Homily on Numbers XXVII, Origen likened and pictured the Christian journey to the stages of wandering and soul-testing that the Israelites encountered in the wilderness (7, 9). In his Homilies on Joshua, Origen metaphored the Christian's battle against the devil and his forces to the conquering campaigns of Joshua (I.5-6, V.2, VI.4, VII.3, VIII.3, IX.2, XI.4-5, XII.1). His words in the Homilies on Joshua V.2 state it most succinctly, "When we cross over the river Jordan, we cross over to battles and wars."

With spiritual hostility and warfare clearly seen in his mystical mentality, the place of the church in the grand theatre of life comes to the fore. What role does the church play in Origen's world? In his mind, what is the church's presence and voice to the culture?

Origen's Understanding and Depiction of the Church's Presence and Voice

The threads of Origen's vision of the church[137] were intricately woven with his other fibers on the Logos (Christ), the doctrine of God and the end times (Rusch

[137] See Smith's discussion 83-88, 254-5) on Origen's concept of the church.

"Church" 78). Perhaps part of the reason why his ecclesiology was overlooked in the timeline of theological crystallization is because his depiction of the church was deeply tied to Christological mysticism (Ledegang 1, 6). Many of his doctrinal articulations were "radically and profoundly ecclesiastical" (Daly xvii) because he understood the earthly church as "the great total sacrament"[138] (Von Balthasar Origen Spirit and Fire 20) while at the same time a defective shadow of the heavenly original (Commentary on the Song of Songs II). It was defective and obscure not only because its constitution was mixed (Cadiou 313) with the elect and the pagans[139] (Homilies on Joshua XXI.1-2), but also because "leprous stones" (an imagery of sin, Homilies on Leviticus IX.7.6) were crippling it. Much of Origen's adult life was spent in rapturous contemplation of the church's holy grandeur[140] as the beautiful bride of Christ (Commentary on the Song of Songs I-II) in a unified oneness with him (Against Celsus VI.79, Commentary on Matthew XII.25, XIV.47, Commentary on John X.35); however, he "assumed near the end of his life that the majority of ostensible Christians, including many of the clergy, were not genuinely part of the church" (Trigg Origen: The Bible and Philosophy 197). This explains why he exposited the existence of two churches (Homilies on Luke XIII), an imperfect one on earth (Homilies on Joshua XXI.1-2) and a "spotless, holy church in heaven" (Commentary on Matthew XII.12).

Bigg succinctly depicts this dichotomy:

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[138] Von Balthasar understands Origen here to mean the corporate entity which houses a number of sacraments: the Scriptures, Baptism, the Eucharist, confession and matrimony which form the continuing presence of Christ to the world.

[139] Augustine, like Origen used the metaphors of the Wheat and the Tares (Matthew 13:24-30, seen four times in City of God Book XX: XX.5, three times in XX.9) and the Dragnet (Matthew 13:47 in City of God XVIII.49) to espouse the view that the church on earth was not a "pure church;" instead there were spiritually unconverted people in the "assembly of saints."

[140] Chadwick (Early Christian Thought 122) stated, "Origen had a passionate sense of the church as a divinely ordained society and of the normative character of its belief and practice for all believers."

> The thoughts of Origen turn with constant hope and longing from the church on earth, where tares grow side by side with the wheat, to the spiritual invisible church, the church of the faithful and true, which has neither spot nor blemish nor wrinkle. It is linked in close and vital union to the church above, the church of the first-born, of saints and martyrs and angels. These two form the Body, the Temple of the Lord, older in the counsels of God than creation itself. This is the saving ark, the church outside of which there is no salvation. Men might belong to the visible church, and yet be dead in trespasses and sins; they might be cut off from the visible church, and yet be true brothers of Christ. So different is the view of Origen from that of the organizing law-loving West. (Bigg 222)

Despite this internal frustration over the deficiencies and impurities with the earthly church from "the Jebusites who tread underfoot" (Homilies on Joshua XXI.2), Origen still loved the church because of her connection to her "mother,"[141] the Heavenly Jerusalem (On First Principles IV.22, Against Celsus IV.44). Because there was "no salvation outside the church" (Homilies on Joshua III.5), the earthly church pictured the house of Rahab,[142] the harlot (Homilies on Joshua III.5).

Origen's mystical mentality and its regular expression in metaphoric language gives rich insight into seeing what he believed about the function and role of the church to its culture. A review of a respectable number of his commentaries, homilies and apologies gives the ability to glean and to categorize at least five clusters of meaning that he attributed to the church's presence and voice.

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[141] De Lubac (History and Spirit 71) noted, "Origen's sense of the church is warm, calling her 'mother.' The more spiritual one became, the more one saw the beauty of her face."

[142] Daniélou (The Origins of Latin Christianity 310) believed that Origen was the "first Christian writer to use the image of the house of Rahab as a type."

A first cluster of metaphors centers in the picture of the church before the world as a "city of God" (Commentary on the Song of Songs II, Against Celsus IV.2, Homilies on Jeremiah IX.2, Homilies on Joshua VIII.17, the Catena Fragment 48), an "assembly of saints" (On Prayer XXXI.5, Commentary on the Song of Songs I) who dwell in peace (Homilies on Jeremiah IX.2), "drinking from the evangelic and apostolic fountains which never fail" (Homilies on Genesis VII.5). It is the picture of a "society" (Against Celsus VIII.47) that lives in peace from the rule of law[143] in the human heart.

A second cluster of metaphors centers in the picture of the church before the world as a "treasury," resembling a "temple built from living stones" (Homilies on Luke XV.3) and a "tabernacle adorned with virtues"[144] (Homilies on Exodus IX.3). In this depository, there is "wisdom" (Against Celsus III.68), "holiness" (Homilies on Leviticus V.12.9, VII.2.10) and "no stain" (Homilies on Luke II.2). Likewise, there are also "concealed vessels of wrath" (Homilies on Jeremiah XXVII.3.3), an obvious reference to its imperfect earthly composition symbolized in the Wheat and Tares (Homilies on Jeremiah XXI) and the Dragnet imageries (Homilies on Leviticus VII.5). Yet despite this imperfection, it was the "Body of Christ" (Against Celsus VI.48, Commentary on Matthew XIV, XVII) and its value exceeded "the wisdom of Plato" (Against Celsus III.68), an obvious effort on Origen's part to distinguish the church from the world and to situate its quality beyond the realms of human existence.

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[143] Molland (92) noted, "In his [Origen's] writings, the rule of the church generally means the cannon of the Scriptures recognized as the authority of the church."

[144] The Tabernacle's features and the church's equivalent virtues are: "Gold=faith, silver=preaching, bronze=patience, incorruptible wood=knowledge from the Cross or purity, linen=virginity, scarlet=suffering, purple=splendor of love, blue=hope of the kingdom of heaven and the priest's garments=justice."

A third cluster of metaphors centers in the portrait of the church before the world as a "servant" with pictures of a "footstool" (Commentary on Matthew VIII), a "medical clinic" (Homilies on Leviticus VIII.1.3), a "waistcloth" (Homilies on Jeremiah XI.6.3) and "salt" (Against Celsus VIII.70). Although members of his church lived in detachment from the things and philosophy of the world (Against Celsus IV.26), *this did not mean removal from society*; instead, it involved enough of a distance from the culture so that they could return to it in order to do "deeds of mercy" (Homilies on Leviticus IV.9.2) and "spread the faith" (Against Celsus III.9), thus preserving the world from declining evil (the function of salt, Against Celsus VIII.70) by pointing it to the light of God (Homilies on Genesis I, V).

Closely related to the "servant" cluster of metaphors is the "witness" cluster, portraying the church's proclamation of the Christian gospel as "the moon" (Commentary on John VII.287) and as "lights in the world" (Against Celsus III.29, Homilies on Genesis I, V). As new converts entered the faith, the church acted as the harvester or "threshing floor of God" (Against Celsus I.43), thus "freeing the human race from destruction" as the "spiritual ark of Noah" (Homilies on Genesis II.5). In this role of witness, "almost the whole world came to know the preaching of Christians better than the opinions of philosophers" (Against Celsus I.7) because "the hand of God was fighting for Christians" (Against Celsus V.50).

While each set of metaphoric clusters reveal Origen's picture of the church as a distinct, proactive force for good in the world, none portray a more comprehensive, powerful picture than the "battle" cluster, depicting the church at war against the spiritual forces of evil who are hostile to God (Commentary on John XX.176). In this "war" (Commentary on Romans V.3.7) against "the enemy, the devil" (On Prayer XXX.2,

Exhortation to Martyrdom 7, 13, 32, 36) and his "opposing powers" (Homilies on Luke VI.5, XXXI.6, Fragment on Luke 112), the church battles and gains the victory (Homilies on Genesis IX.3, Homilies on Exodus IV.7, Homilies on Numbers XXVII.9-12, Homilies on Joshua I.5-6, V.2, VII.3, VIII.3, IX.2, XI.4-5, XII.1) through the power of the Word of God and prayer (Homilies on Leviticus XVI.7.2, Homilies on Joshua XI.2, XVI.5, Commentary on Ephesians VI.11-12) and the protection of angels (On First Principles I.8.1) by the hand of God (Against Celsus VIII.27,36, On Prayer XI.3, XXX.1).

Smith (254) sees Origen's Exhortation to Martyrdom as the "extreme example" of "Christianity working in the culture of the Roman Empire." In a setting depicted by Origen as a "contest" (V, XVIII), Christian martyrs battle against evil to "win perfectly" (XX) so that through their victory, seen as a "baptism" (XXX) from "suffering" (XLII), the "principalities and powers are disarmed" (XLII), "the comfort in Christ abounds" (XLII), the martyr "shares in the triumph of Christ" (XLII) and the hope of reward (IV) and of the resurrection (XXV) is assured.

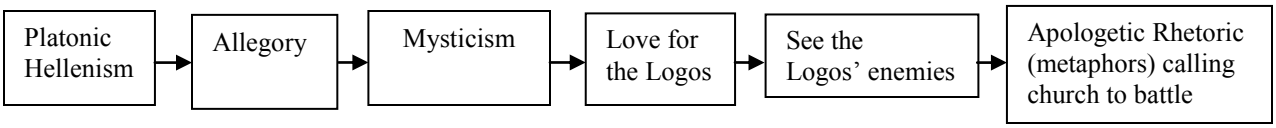
Conclusion on Origen's Understanding of the Church and Culture

In this chapter, Origen's important place in the Textuality/Discourse, the Philosophical/Intellectual and the Supernatural/Eschatological Viewpoints of the Christianization within the Roman Empire is rightfully and respectfully noted. In a time of great conflict and social upheaval, Origen was a stable force in the advancement of Christianity. His fusion of Platonic Hellenism with the Christian revelation structured his approach and practice of allegorical interpretation. From this rationalistic and intellectual framework, he searched for the deep mysteries of God and it led him into a consuming love for the divine Logos. In this experiential and mystical love, he saw the enemies of God and of his Logos and it envisioned in his spirit a larger, cosmic audience who

witnessed the martyrdom of saints. His passion for the truth equipped him to be one of the first systematic builders of religious knowledge[145] and it led him to put human free will as the centerpiece of his apologetic rhetoric. From this rhetorical position, he was able to pivot and to leverage the church to spiritual warfare against the devil and his host of opposing powers by using a host of metaphors that called his parishioners to outward spiritual battle in prayer and to personal spiritual battle through self-denial and death to besetting sin. His understanding of the church's relationship to the culture was driven by the tenets of Platonic Hellenism that governed his interpretation of Scripture.

Origen's understanding of the church in culture is likened to a series of interconnecting dominoes that click when Platonic Hellenism governed his approach to Scriptural understanding. Platonic theory formulated his practice of allegory. Allegory led him to experience mysticism and the experiential holiness of the Logos. In this experience, Origen saw the enemies of the Logos who sought to destroy the church's march in the world. This led him to devise an apologetic rhetoric built on a number of clustering metaphors that called his church to spiritual battle (outwardly in prayer against the devil and inwardly to personal holiness). Origen's church is an imperfect-constituting, mercy-initiating, mystical-battling, and holiness-witnessing body of believers who suffer in mortality, long for immortality and battle in the here-and-now.

Origen's Dominoes that Trigger the Church's Relationship to Culture



[145] Von Campenhausen (The Fathers of the Greek Church 44) stated, "The new element which Origen gave to the church was primarily the great systematic summary."

Chapter 4

CHRYSOSTOM'S HOMILETIC ARTICULATION OF CHRISTIAN IDENTITY AND ITS CITY-TRANSFORMING OBJECTIVE

While Origen's thought and influence has continued in several ways up to the present, many scholars acknowledge in varying degrees that his direct impact upon the dogma, interpretation and overall spiritual climate on the Greek Church rescinded at the close of the fourth century (Trigg Origen 253). Constantine's conversion (AD 312) and the subsequent Council of Nicaea (AD 325) dramatically altered the course of Christianity within the Roman Empire, propelling the Church eventually to become the chief social institution within the state as it shared the platform and spotlight with the government (Cameron The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 130). From this dramatic turnabout and favorable change, Christianity made successful advances within the Roman senatorial aristocracy due to an effort to "modulate its message" as a means to obtain status within the elite ranks of society (Salzmann 18, 66). This successful strategy produced an "excessively triumphalist tone" (Lopez 147) that grew over time as followers and church leaders applied the tenets of the Nicene Creed to create "a vision of spiritual aristocracy" (Cochrane 359-60).

One tangible way this "spiritual vision" became realized occurred when church bishops received prominent stature and presence in public and political life (Cameron The Later Roman Empire 71-2, Goldsworthy 179). In varying ways, their civic orations and proclamations "gave new meaning to public oratory" (Cameron Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire 135), establishing the church as a growing and powerful player in civic and political life. From this rise in ecclesiastical and civic prominence, no rhetor or church father gained greater prominence than John Chrysostom.

Although he did not become bishop until AD 398 in Constantinople, Chrysostom's years in Antioch (386-97) established him for centuries to come as a "saintly shepherd" in the church and as a "lamp of justice" (Palladius XX) to the world, compelling Peter the Great (1672-1725) to decree into Russian law that every national pastor read and study Chrysostom's writings and homilies for ministry in the Orthodox Church (Brändle 1). To this day, Chrysostom "enjoys the love and veneration of all denominations" (Von Campenhausen The Fathers of the Greek Church 144) because of his "tender piety, undaunted courage and zeal in the cause of virtue…he holds an eminent place among the greatest pastors and saints of the church" (Butler 92).

Like Origen, it becomes paramount to examine from Chrysostom's life and writings how he understood the role and function of the church in society. To do this, a careful review and understanding of the times of the late fourth century are needed, especially at Antioch where Chrysostom established himself as one of the greatest leaders of the Greek Church. Uncovering the social conditions and issues at Antioch provides rich insights into understanding how John viewed the world and how the church was to operate in its culture.

In many respects, Antioch in John's day resembled a city of two extremes with great turbulence in the middle. With its foundations planned by Alexander the Great (Downey 54), Antioch was first and foremost a Hellenistic city (Sandwell 40) despite its religious heritage as the founding city of Gentile Christianity (Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 5, 18, Maxwell "Lay Piety" 19, Sandwell 34-5). As the "third city of the Roman Empire" and "the chief centre of Greek civilization in Asia for nearly a thousand years" (Attwater 8), it enjoyed a "highly marked individuality—mixed population,

strategic position,[146] wide commercial connections especially with the East and political importance first as a Seleucid, then a Roman administrative center" (Downey 11).

As a city with a vibrant population of Jews, pagans and Christians (Mayer 12-3, Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 21-22, 162, Maxwell "Lay Piety" 19), Antioch possessed a growing Christian population, yet in Chrysostom's day it was far from being the dominant religion of belief and practice as attested by the community calendar (Liebeschhuetz Antioch 228, Mayer and Allen 15), the "normal range" of the "Isis and Dionysius mystery religions[147] of Rome" (Sandwell 41), the practice of "astrology, magic, lucky charms and amulets" (Attwater 51) and the continued existence of many pagan temples and festivals (Sandwell 42). Wilken aptly noted, "It is commonly thought that by the end of the fourth century…the Christian religion had come to dominate the society…to those living through this period, things did not appear that way" (John Chrysostom and the Jews 31).

As a city that headquartered the *Comes Orientis* and the center for strategic operations for the Persian front, Antioch was a major imperial and military center (Sandwell 34, Downey 378, Cameron The Later Roman Empire 173), located close to the Mediterranean and to the Persian border (Sandwell 35) drawing soldiers, government officials and civic dignitaries on a continual basis (Downey 378). Its clientele supported an imperially-run flagship school along with many private academies that trained youth and adults in the classics of Greek literature and rhetoric (Sandwell 34-5), attracting scholars and educated people throughout the empire. Because of its emphasis on

[146] See Downey's discussion (15-23) of Antioch's physical resources.

[147] See Takács (198-9), Norris ("Antioch on-the-Orontes as a Religious Center" 2322-79) for further discussion.

education and rhetoric, it was a center for public speaking and many types of civic oratory (Maxwell Christianization and Communication 42-5, 63).

As a city constructed from the south bank of the Orontes River (Attwater 8), Antioch enjoyed a "brisk commercial life" (Downey 378) along a nearly five mile long main street with "spacious colonnades paved with red granite" (Schaff "Prolegomena" 10), making it a major center of trade and commerce that drew merchants, aristocrats and well-to-do entrepreneurs (Maxwell "Lay Piety" 19) who possessed great wealth, living "sophisticated and enviable lifestyles" (Mayer and Allen 12-3), many of whom showed little acceptance to Christianity's message (Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 18), choosing to attend the theatre, circus, civic entertainment and the public baths" (Sandwell 35) instead of the two great Christian churches in Antioch (Baur 30). Because of its wealth, education, political power, architecture, trade, cultural opportunities, prestigious people and "cosmopolitan life" (Sandwell 35), "the years that John Chrysostom lived in Antioch…[were] the acme of splendor, rivaled by only one or two other cities in the Roman Empire" (Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 2). It was in this "upper class, well-to-do environment" (Von Campenhausen The Fathers of the Greek Church 130) that "the first and greatest orator of Christian antiquity sat at the feet of the last great rhetorician of pagan antiquity—Libanius" (Baur 21).

Great commerce, education, wealth and luxurious opulence also creates vivid contasts within society. As great as Antioch's wealth appeared, so also were its social problems, namely poverty and homeless beggars (Liebeschhuetz Antioch 258, Downey 377-8, Laistner 3), a church-registered population of eighteen hundred widows, orphans and destitutes (Cameron The Later Roman Empire 126), social and political intimidation

and oppression (Downey 376-7), civic hypocrisy and public discrimination in the courts (Downey 425, Attwater 63, Laistner 4).

Without question the state of the poor gripped Chrysostom as he preached about it regularly (Homilies on John XVI, XXXIII, XLII, LIX, LXXXI, Homilies on Hebrews XI.7, XVIII.4-5, XXXII.8, Homilies on 1 Corinthians XIII.8, XXI.10, XXVIII.4, XXXIV.8), convinced that Christians and churches[148] should take responsibility "to nourish the poor of ten cities" (Homilies on Matthew LXVI.4). In his mind, "all people are equal, since they are brothers" and therefore deserve "what is common to all—light, water and air" (Homilies on 2 Corinthians XXXIV. These convictions earned him the affectionate title "John of Almsdeeds" (Butler 103, Walter 186) for his battles to gain "social justice…as a moralist" (Attwater 59) and as "the ambassador of the poor" (Brown The Body and Society 309).

Troubles over poverty in Antioch led to parallel dilemmas over food supply and social oppression. The supply of food was an issue of regular public discussion (Downey 377, Liebeschhuetz Antioch 258) and it resulted from many of the social and economic consequences that came when Diocletian and Constantine expanded the army, the government and their elaborate building programs at the time,[149] matching his "religious revolution with a radical political reformation" (Kelly The End of Empire 15). This resulted in new and excessive burdens on local officials, farmers and common workers to keep city services going with little municipal-funded assistance. This dilemma, combined with excessive taxation and the effects of a torrid winter in AD 381-2 that damaged spring crops and food supply for the next two years (Downey 419-20) made

[148] Hewitt (26) states, "With the exception of the church, it was doubtful if any social agency helped the poor."

[149] Downey's discussion (376-7) is especially helpful and enlightening.

"material existence hard" (Laistner 3) and clearly contributed to the people's revolt in 387 which established Chrysostom's presence in Antioch with his sermon series surrounding the desecration of the statues (Downey 426-30, Attwater 38-47).

While the poor evoked sympathy and compassion from Chrysostom, the Jews[150] did not, provoking him to call them a "sickness" and "disease" in the city (Against Judaizing Christians I.4.3) that housed "demons in their synagogue and in their souls" (Against Judaizing Christians I.6.6). Wilken (John Chrysostom and the Jews xvi) notes that Jews were a "lively presence" throughout the fourth century and at times "Judaizing Christians were a source of embarrassment and concern to Christian leaders, especially in Syria and Palestine." This active role of a "rival" (Wilken "Insignissima Religio" 40) compelled Chrysostom to label them as "wolves going against the flock" and it caused him to "fight with them and spar with them" to protect his flock (Against Judaizing Christians IV.1.1-2). The "rescue of brothers" (Against Judaizing Christians VII.6.8) from this "captivity" because they "strayed" (Against Judaizing Christians VII.9.6) was a paramount issue in John's ministry. He saw the church's task as the "army of Christ" to be "overly careful in searching to see if anyone favoring an alien faith has mingled among them" (Against Judaizing Christians I.4.9).

Judaism and Judaizing Christianity played a significant role in Antioch and in the latter part of the fourth century as a whole (Stark 49, Mayer and Allen 3, Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 16-7, Maxwell "Lay Piety" 19, Sandwell 46, Maxwell Christianization and Communication 4), causing Harkins to call them a "divisive menace to Orthodox Christianity" ("Introduction" Chrysostom: Against Judaizing Christians xxxviii), yet Christo (The Church's Identity 6) believes Chrysostom's "censorship is not

[150] Wilken ("Insignissima Religio, Certe Licita?" 40) states, "It is a colossal understatement to say that little attention has been paid to Judaism and its relation to Christianity in antiquity."

really directed towards the Jews themselves…rather he flatly denounces the disease (or passion) that infests their souls and inhibits them from confessing Jesus as the Christ." Apparently this "disease" had particular sway upon women and slaves as Chrysostom stated that they should "be kept at home and away from the synagogue" (Against Judaizing Christians II.3.4-6, IV.7.3). Perhaps part of this was due to the way they held their audience mesmerized from their use of incantations and amulets (Against Judaizing Christians VIII.7.1-5).[151]

In addition to Jews, pagans provided stiff and "fervent competition" to the growing church in the latter fourth century (Cameron The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 13). Paganism had a "tenacious hold on the public space" (Mayer and Allen 3) and often it contended with Christians in the public arena over values and public mores. Wilken states:

> Hellenism was still very much alive in cities such as Antioch, not only in the writings of intellectuals, but in the schools and other social institutions, the mores of the citizens, the art that adorned people's homes and the architecture that graced the streets, and the values that shaped people's ideas and attitudes…It cannot be overemphasized that the fourth century was not medieval Europe and that the cultural and social traditions of the cities of the Roman world were not only independent of Christianity, but often innocent of Christian influence. (John Chrysostom and the Jews xvii)

In Antioch a number of Hellenistic gods were worshipped alongside Syrian deities (Sandwell 40) and while Constantius and Gallus' years during Chrysostom's time

[151] Augustine also discussed this in On Christian Doctrine (II.20.30)

made Greco-Roman religion difficult, it did not automatically remove it from public life and practice. In a gradual way, "Christianity was taking over the function of providing citizens with holidays and entertainment with a calendar of feasts and martyr festivals" (Sandwell 44), yet Chrysostom continuously blasted the evils[152] of the theatre, horseracing, the circus and other popular pagan amusements of the day,[153] calling them "Satan's Spectacles" (On Baptismal Instructions VI.1, 5, 14) and the "pomps of the devil" (On Baptismal Instructions XI.2, XII.52). Often these worldly attractions lured sheep from the fold, so Chrysostom instructed his under-shepherds to possess "a lot of concentration, perseverance, and patience…and a heroic spirit to lead him back to the true beginning from which he has fallen away" (Six Books On the Priesthood II.4). In addition to pagan amusements, Chrysostom also attacked Hellenistic philosophy, labeling Plato's philosophy[154] "a deal of nonsense in his day" (Homilies on Acts IV); therefore, the shepherds of God's flock must prepare themselves properly against this and all forms of "the devil's art:"

> We must take great care, therefore, that the word of Christ may dwell in us richly. For our preparation is not against a single kind of attack. This warfare of ours assumes complex forms and is waged by various enemies. They do not all use the

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[152] See Hewitt's discussion on the "evils against which Chrysostom preached:" Immorality (166-7), theatre (167-71), circus (171-2), drunkenness (173-6), vainglory (177-80) and the peril of riches (186-93).

[153] Hartney (29) observed, "Since the inhabitants of the late antique city demonstrated themselves to be particularly reluctant to give up the activities that characterized urban living, Chrysostom seems to have decided that it was the nature of civic behavior itself that needed changing. To this end much of his preaching and writing targets the institutions defining the ancient city."

[154] Wilken (John Chrysostom and the Jews 30) stated, "The full impact of paganism, however, can be seen not in popular amusements or pagan holidays; its most significant impact was on the upper classes, on the way they educated their children, in the web of traditional values that formed their lives and behavior."

> same weapons and they have not all trained to attack us in the same manner. Anyone who undertakes to fight them all must know the arts of all. (Six Books On the Priesthood IV.3)

While there were many and varied rivals outside the church in Antioch, there were also many problems with "many different groups" (Goldsworthy 277) inside the church in Chrysostom's day. Wilken stated, "To grow up in the Christian Church in Antioch during the late fourth century was to know a divided community, with competing parties seldom presenting a united front to outsiders…The division within the church was profound" (John Chrysostom and the Jews 13, 16). Of particular importance in this understanding of division were the presence of "Demi-Christians," a category of professing believers who lived a dichotomous life[155] with one foot in the world's amusements and the other foot in the church. From this study, Guignebert (65-102) noted that several of the most prominent reasons for this condition were the mixture of philosophies or "syncretism," inadequate teaching of the faith and the drifting of supposed Christian converts back into partial or total worldliness. The presence of this fickle group, along with the normal ranges of doctrinal shallowness and biblical immaturity within the church, made Chrysostom's task a formidable one.

Wilken summarizes John's pastoral dilemma in Antioch:

> John came to maturity in a competitive religious environment, in which the loyalties and allegiances of Christians were constantly shifting. Much of his time during his early years as deacon and presbyter was devoted to winning and holding the allegiance of the mercurial throng of Christians who crowded the churches on

[155] Wilken (John Chrysostom and the Jews 26) described these people as those with "a conventional pagan lifestyle concealed under a thin veneer of Christianity."

festivals and holy days, but at other times could be found joining other assemblies. (John Chrysostom and the Jews 30)

Certainly one of the growing changes that created division within his congregation was the spreading influence of asceticism and monasticism in the late fourth century (Brown The World of Late Antiquity 108, Mayer and Allen 4, Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 27, Von Campenhausen The Fathers of the Greek Church 130 Attwater 4, Hartney 23, Krueger 11), a practice Hartney (29) calls "the new martyrdom" that became "a means by which Christianity could be announced and displayed to all." In his early years, Chrysostom was exposed to ascetic values (Brändle 16) from a group likened to the Syrian "Sons of the Covenant" (Sterk 142-4). Following "six years of monastic withdrawal in the mountains and caves" (Sterk 145), John returned to Antioch to serve the church and became one of the leading spokesmen for ascetic and Christian frugality, "presenting monastic life as a heavenly *politeia* rivaling the Hellenic ideal of the city and the benefits of Greek culture" (Sterk 145). His repeated admonitions against the vice of wealth and luxury (Homilies on John XLIV, LXXIX, LXXXVII, Homilies on Genesis XXXVII.19, Homilies on 1 Corinthians XIII.7, XIII.8, XIV.9, XXIII.8, Homilies on 1 Thessalonians IX, Homilies on Romans IX, XX, Homilies on Genesis XX.17, XXII.21, On Baptismal Instructions VIII.11) and encouragement to endure affliction (Homilies on the Paralytic Let Down through the Roof II, Homilies on Ephesians VIII, Homilies on Hebrews XXVIII.7, XXXIII.9, Homilies on John LXXVII) with almsgiving[156] (On Baptismal Instructions VII.27, Homilies on John XVI, XXIII, XXIV, XXXIII, XXXIX, L, LXIX, LXXIII, LXXVII, LXXXI, LXXXVIII, Homilies on

[156] Brown (The Body and Society 309) states that in his series on Matthew, Chrysostom mentioned almsgiving forty times, care for the poor thirteen times, avarice thirty times and the abuse of wealth twenty times.

Hebrews IX.8-9, Homilies on Acts XXV, Homilies on 1 Corinthians XXI.11, XLIII.7, Homilies on 2 Corinthians XII.5, XIII.4, XVI.5, Homilies on 1 Thessalonians III) as a soldier of Christ (Homilies on 2 Timothy IV, IX, Homilies on Matthew LIV.8, LIX.5, Homilies on John XL, On Baptismal Instructions V.27, XII.61, On the Priesthood IV.3) and as a sojourner and pilgrim in the world (Homilies on Hebrews XXIV.1,4, Homilies on John LXXIX, LXXV, Homilies on Genesis V.3) in light of the coming "fearful tribunal" (Against Judaizing Christians VII.6.4, Homilies on John XXXIX, XLV) before Christ the Judge (Demonstration Against the Pagans VIII.1-2, XI.1) reveal his ascetic and monastic leanings. Yet despite these controlling and guiding virtues, he modeled a tender and compassionate shepherding and preaching ministry that impacted the city as testified by Palladius (V.100-66, especially V.158-61).

In summary, external forces such as paganism and Judaism along with the social problems of poverty, food supply, civic injustice, municipal corruption, moral laxity, magic, excessive taxation and opulence at the expense of basic municipal services together with the internal forces such as the presence of "Demi-Christians," asceticism, the proper understanding and handling of gender and virginity, spiritual immaturity of his flock and clergy laxity (Tixeront A Handbook of Patrology 200) combined to present a formidable challenge to his work as "a renowned preacher, moralist and zealous reformer" (Sterk 145). Laistner summarizes well:

> Injustice and corruption in public life, grinding taxation, the extremes of wealth and poverty…for the mass of the people the conditions in which they lived and worked from day to day were at best uncertain, at worst engendered an all but hopeless despair—these were the material hardships that turned men to beliefs and cults which offered hope of an afterlife and of rewards and compensation for earthly

> suffering. Contrary to what has often been maintained, one can say that interest in religion, which showed itself in a multiplicity of ways, was more real and more widespread in the third and fourth centuries than at any other period of ancient history. (Laistner 4)

This dimensional picture of social and spiritual factors in Antioch in the latter fourth century puts into proper perspective the varied and numerous accomplishments and accolades that properly belong to Chrysostom as a "pillar of light in the golden century of the primitive church" (Vandenburghe 3) and as an "eminent figure in the church of Late Antiquity (Brändle xi).

While many reforms within the clergy and within the church came during Chrysostom's leadership, he is noted secondarily as a social moralist, designating church offerings to construct hospitals and care centers for the poor, sick and needy (Sterk 152) and primarily as a homiletical commentator of Scripture (Schaff "Prolegomena" 17) who strove to educate and to impact his readers spiritually through the exegetical, theological, intellectual and moral preaching of the Scriptures. Harkins ("Introduction," Chrysostom: On Baptismal Instructions 5) stated, "As an orator and exegete he was without peer." Attwater (187) believed "his greatness as a teacher was that of a practical moralist and expounder of the Holy Scriptures." Baur (207) saw that he was "born to be an orator and preacher. Nature bestowed her gifts on him in extraordinary abundance."

Chrysostom's preaching produced voluminous writings[157] that are still read and studied throughout Christendom today (Schaff "Prolegomena 5). His direct incorporation of Scripture is easily seen in his homilies and commentaries as Greely (32) tabulated that in six hundred sermons, eighteen thousand direct quotations were identified (two-fifths

[157] See Quasten III:434-50 for a full discussion of Chrysostom's writings.

from the Old Testament). From the New Testament gospels, Matthew's gospel contained the most quotes (two thousand four hundred), then John (one thousand three hundred), Luke (nine hundred) and Mark (two hundred). From the Pauline Epistles, the Corinthian letters contain the most (two thousand one hundred) followed by Romans (nine hundred). Chrysostom's ninety homilies on Matthew represent the oldest homilies in the Patristic period; his series on Acts is the oldest surviving set of homilies in the first ten centuries, and his exposition of Romans is the "most outstanding Patristic commentary and the finest of his works" (Quasten III: 442). Mitchell (5) sees Chrysostom not only as "the most comprehensive commentator on the Pauline Epistles from the Patristic period" but also as the greatest "admirer of Paul in the early church."

What was it that made Chrysostom so effective as a preacher and commentator? What would compel Augustine to call him "the holy bishop" (Against Julian I.6.22)? When he was sent into exile in AD 403, what caused his people, when they learned of his capture by night, to scream with fervent emotion, "Rather let the sun be blotted from the firmament than the mouth of John be silenced!" (Walter 28)? Why was he "destined to become the brightest ornament of the church" (D'Alton 1) and the father that "still deservedly enjoys the highest honor in the whole Christian world" (Schaff "Prolegomena" 5)?

Baur (210) believed it was a "soul of fire" that accompanied Chrysostom in the "apostolic service of the Word." This passion "stirred to the depths the spirit of his times" (Baur xii), making Walter conclude, "Wherever the heart is to be poured forth in thoughts that breathe and words that burn, St. Chrysostom is without a parallel" (5). Many believe that only Augustine was his equal, a combination of east and west that "approaches to the perfection of Christian wisdom" (Walter 5):

> Chrysostom in the east, Augustine in the west, caused the echo of their voices to resound above the clamor of pagan dissipation and the profane songs of a dying civilization. These men preached evangelical morality with unaffected elegance, and, emboldened in the Christian ideal, transformed a world saturated with sensuality. Out of the ruins of a once proud but dying pagan culture, they succeeded in erecting a great religious movement. Surely the fourth century is the greatest epoch of the early church. (Vandenburghe 1)

Kennedy (Greek Rhetoric 243) believed it was his combination of "theological, moral and intellectual virtue…in a personality with both strength and gentleness." Baur (4) saw how these virtues produced "an unmistakable union between Roman firmness and strength of the will and the various versatile spirit of the Greeks." This made him "the most charming of the Greek Fathers…one of the most congenial personalities of Christian antiquity" (Quasten III: 429) and the greatest example of "the monk-bishop ideal" (Sterk 141).

What made Chrysostom's preaching so "excellent" as "the greatest pulpit orator of the Greek Church with no superior or equal among the Latin Fathers" (Schaff "Prolegomena" 22) was his "spotless reputation" of character and "deep passionate of the soul" (Baur 291) that stayed with him in the pulpit and in the streets of Antioch and Constantinople:

> The sound practical religion practiced and professed by this great reformer of the corrupted morals of his age, his love of Christ, and obedience to his commands, the holiness of his life, while in the exercise of high power, and amidst the most stormy political changes, invested him with a character of the deepest sanctity in the eyes

of his fellow-countrymen, and made him an object of mingled reverence and admiration. (Neander v)

What made Chrysostom effective in his day and revered for our time was his emphasis on moral holiness and the demonstration of practical Christian virtue in everyday life. He was not esteemed as a philosophical theologian; rather, he was revered as a Christian moralist whose life and actions paralleled the virtues of the Christian gospel. Vandenburghe (2) stated, "Not theory, but practice, attracts him: not science, but life. He is an active man, a teacher and a pedagogue." It is this holiness of life, practice of virtue and mentoring of Christian conduct and actions that marked his life and revered his memory. With Christ as his master and St. Paul as his love (Mitchell 1,5,65, Greely 35), "no man since the days of the apostle John ever possessed more sublime views of the dignity and happiness of Christianity than he" (Walter 5).

What brings Chrysostom's life and accomplishments to the forefront of history so dramatically is how his categories[158] of work and legacy were performed in a "mortified" (Walter 43) and "plain and homely" appearance (Von Campenhausen The Fathers of the Greek Church 134). He was short (Vandenburghe 19, Tixeront A Handbook of Patrology 201, Schaff "Prolegomena" 16, Walter 43), possessing ascetic, emaciated and wrinkled facial features (Vandenburghe 19, Tixeront A Handbook of Patrology 201, Walter 43) with sunken, deep eyes that formed an unhealthy complexion in contrast to his large bald head and stubby gray beard. His ascetically-pounded body made him an unimposing physical figure (Vandenburghe 19, Schaff "Prolegomena" 16), a "real spiderhead as he termed it" (Vandenburghe 19). Yet from his decaying and breaking physique came forth

[158] Schaff ("Prolegomena" 17) organized Chrysostom's work into five categories: 1) Moral and ascetic treatises, 2) Homilies and commentaries, 3) Occasional festal and panegyrical orations, 4) Letters and 5) Liturgy.

a “soul of fire” (Baur 210,291) and a “pillar of light” that shook the late fourth and early fifth centuries with elegance, morality, gentleness, Christian truth, piety, holiness and a God-produced power, making him the most biographied Greek Father in the history of Christendom (Baur xii).

Few possessed a greater devotion and tribute to Chrysostom than John Henry Newman:

> Great as his gift of oratory, it was not by the fertility of his imagination, or the splendor of his diction that he gained the surname of “Mouth of Gold”…He spoke because his heart, his head, were brimful of things to speak about. His elocution corresponded to that strength and flexibility of limb, that quickness of eye, hand and foot, by which a man excels in manly games or in mechanical skill. It would be a great mistake, in speaking of it, to ask whether it was Attic or Asiatic, terse or flowing, when its distinctive praise was that it was natural. His unrivalled charm, as that of every really eloquent man, lies in his singleness of purpose, his fixed grasp of his aim, his noble earnestness. (Newman 234)

With this understanding of his life, accomplishments and accolades established in light of the material, social and moral conditions of his day, this study now directs its attention to the place that Chrysostom occupies in the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint, the Social/Community Viewpoint and the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint. Recognizing Chrysostom’s rightful place in these viewpoints in the Christianization of the Roman Empire gives significant understanding in seeing his position on the presence and the voice of the church in culture.

Chrysostom's Place in the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint

As a way to understand and to analyze the progress and development of Christianity within the Roman Empire, the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint sees that the growth and spread of the Christian church came because of its skill in making and fashioning a discrete and definitive message through inventive and at times innovative structures of presentation (creeds, printed sermons, music, art, preaching, etc.) that were elastic and pliable, yet lasting to the culture. Chrysostom's place in the strategic selection and use of preaching and writing in Christian discourse is central to understanding the place and importance of Christian identity formation in an era when Christianity sought to distinguish itself from the Greeks, Jews, pagans and other sects and religions that were present in Antioch and Constantinople (Sandwell 6). Through "the power of words" (Litfin 206) we see in Chrysostom's "categorical labeling" (Sandwell 63-5) a deliberate strategy to "construct a clear cut Christian identity" that consistently contrasted and elevated Christianity over Greek philosophy and Jewish ritual as the preferred system of belief and practice in his day.

Maxwell (Christianization and Communication 1) and Hartney (5,34) remind scholars of the place and importance of Christian preaching not only in the development and articulation of the Christian message, but also in its reception and interactive application as a rhetorical tool to audiences. In response to "Quid sit christianum esse?"[159] (Markus The End of Ancient Christianity 19), Mitchell (xviii-xix) believes John's use of intuition, creative thought and literary skill with the Bible attempted "to project fresh verbal images" of Pauline Christianity to his audience in a way that

[159] Markus (The End of Ancient Christianity 19) believes the question, "What is it to be a Christian?" represents the primary issue of the era (AD 400-600), thus forming the framework of Chrysostom's identity-based approach to preaching.

showcased the way a "Christian society in Late Antiquity" should look. This rhetorical output, seen by Baur (312) as "the best representative of Greek-Christian classicism," enabled John to speak to all classes of society—"the servant, the maid, the widow, the merchant, the sailor and the farmer" in such a way that they could understand his message (Brändle 31-2). It represented a skill, together with his use of authentic, unpolluted Attic Greek (D'Alton 33, Goodall 1) that made Chrysostom not only the most impressive preacher in Antioch, but also in the entire Roman Empire (Baur 223-4).

Harkins ("Introduction" Chrysostom: On Baptismal Instructions 14) characterized John's preaching into five major categories: "The richness and concrete character of his language, the abundance of examples taken from the political and social life of his times, the predominance of moral considerations over speculative theology, the primacy of pastoral preoccupations and an unflagging eloquence." What makes this even more impressive is the observation that the arrangement, vocabulary, feel and mood of Chrysostom's texts suggests that they were conjured, delivered and only perfected later in minor ways after they were written down by scribes (Maxwell Christianization and Communication 6). His youthful rhetorical training in Antioch, combined with his natural bestowed gifts enabled him to take the beauty and order of the Greek language with his keen powers of memory to sketch verbally before his audiences "rich images and comparisons, dazzling arguments and magnificent climaxes" in a courageous fullness of thought that "never floated in the clouds but stood always on the firm ground of actuality…and practical experience of life" (Baur 26, 223-4). Although literacy in the Roman Empire in the late fourth century separated the elite from the common person (Horsley 11), Chrysostom's heritage is seen in a "vast literary legacy" given to the Greek Church (Meyer 1) that defined and distinguished the tenets of the Christian gospel and

kept many of the "pagan superstitions" from infiltrating and polluting it, distinguishing it from the Greek, Roman and Jewish beliefs of the day (Hewitt 16).

Hartney elaborates on this rhetorical strategy as "an admirable public relations exercise:"

> The Bible becomes the new literary corpus and Christ's teachings the new philosophy. The homiletic form then becomes the means by which this new culture is transmitted…By appropriating classical rhetoric to this end, the Christians appropriated an institution of power, refigured it according to their own purposes, and disseminated it through the society. (Hartney 50)

While his mastery of language (Attwater 35), excellent memory and rhetorical eloquence are significant in his ability to create images in a hearer's mind (Baur 223-4), it is important to remember that the end of this strategy for Chrysostom was the definitive creation (verbal and written) of a distinct and moral Christian identity that separated and promoted the Christian cause above those of the Greeks and Jews in Antioch and in Constantinople (Sandwell 18). Chrysostom's significant contribution to the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint lies in this distinct verbal and written construction and articulation.

The Verbal and Written Construction and Articulation of a Distinct Christian Identity

Because Christianity's presence and power was gradually replacing the pagan and Greco-Roman forms of belief and practice of the day (Hewitt 16), Sandwell[160] recognizes that Chrysostom's greatest efforts centered in the "construction of a distinct Christian identity in a situation that challenged that construction" (16). In effect, what he (and

[160] Sandwell's research, analysis and conclusions on Chrysostom's preaching in establishing and articulating Christian identity represents a significant contribution to the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint.

Christianity) attempted to do at this moment in history was to state verbally and textually, "This is what Christianity is and this is why you should be Christian" (Sandwell 12). In stating these distinctives, he attempted not only to distinguish the faith from Jewish and Greek "categories" of belief and thought (Sandwell 13, 64) but also to teach and to inspire his audience to see a new picture of reality from the Christian message and how they could find satisfaction and meaning in it (Sandwell 13). To do this, careful distinctions and boundaries were drawn and defined with exact language that enabled hearers and readers to recognize their "selfhood" and to subscribe to this new articulation of truth (Sandwell 13, 64).

In this identity construction, "religion and writing were inseparable" (Sandwell 12). Through the various forms of Christian discourse (Scriptural texts, martyr stories, printed sermons, verbal homilies, etc.), Sandwell (134) believed that Chrysostom attempted to "construct a Christian mythology…that could rival the Greek foundation myths told by Libanius and could be found on the mosaics throughout the city. He could use these myths to instill in his audience a quite different, Christian way of thinking about their city." In so doing, Chrysostom attempted to create a new "sense of community" for his hearers and readers, thus forming a "possible textual community," although the makeup of his audiences (educationally and socially) made it difficult to assess whether this kind of affinity could have formed (Sandwell 241).

One can clearly see how Chrysostom attempted to form a kind of "textual identity" through the public and private reading of the Holy Scriptures:

> The reading of the Holy Scriptures, dearly beloved, is a great blessing. This it is that arouses the soul to an appreciation of wisdom, this directs the mind to heaven, this brings the man to a thankful attitude, this prevents our getting excited over any

> earthly reality, this brings our thinking to rest in the world beyond and ourselves to do everything with a view to reward from the Lord and to deal with the trials of virtue with great readiness. From this source, you see, you can gain a precise understanding of the providence of God's prompt retribution, the fortitude of good people, the Lord's goodness and the greatness of his rewards. From this source you can be stirred to ardent imitation of noble men's good sense in not fainting under the struggles of virtue but rather maintaining hope in God's promises before their realization. (Homilies on Genesis XXX.1)

By urging Christians to follow the Bible and thus to act and to think Christianly, Chrysostom attempted to etch into the mindset of his hearers and readers the patterns of distinct behavioral practices that would separate and distinguish them from other religious groups and sects in the city. Thus, Chrysostom is seen and viewed to this day as one of the great moral-minded and virtue-centered preacher-teachers in Christendom (Baur 2, Harkins "Introduction" Chrysostom: On Baptismal Instructions 5, Attwater 187, Neander 5, Schaff "Prolegomena" 19).

Hartney (29-30) aptly observes that much of Chrysostom's behavioral-based preaching largely addresses the civic and pagan activities/evils of urban living in an attempt to redefine and to redraw the borders of community life so that a new and different "Christian environment" would emerge as light to the city. This is why he often attacked the "carnal" behaviors of the world (Homilies on Hebrews XVIII.4) such as drunkenness (Homilies Concerning the Statues I.12, On Baptismal Instructions V.9, Homilies on Matthew LXX.2), arrogance and vainglory (Homilies on John IX, XVI, XXIX, XXXV, XXXVIII, LXIX, Homilies on Genesis XXII.21, Homilies on Matthew XV.3, LVIII.5), laxity (Homilies on John XXXVIII), jealousy and envy (Homilies on

John XLVIII, LV, LXIV), anger (Homilies on John LXVIII, Homilies on Matthew XVII.2, On the Incomprehensible Nature of God IV.4) and greed and covetousness (Homilies on John LXV, Homilies on Genesis XX.17, XXXVII.19), urging Christians to "do everything so as to cleanse away the defilement of sin" (Homilies on John LVVIII) and to adopt "the first virtue, yea the whole of virtue…to be a sojourner and stranger in this world, and to have nothing in common with things here, but to hang loose from, as from things strange to us" (Homilies on Hebrews XXIV.1). This spoken and written appeal to renounce the "passions of the flesh" (Homilies on Genesis IX.15), to see "the world as our enemy" (Homilies on Matthew XXXIII.4), to "despise the affairs of this life" (Homilies on John LXVII), to live on earth as a "stranger, sojourner and traveler" (Homilies on John LXXV, LXXIX, Homilies on Hebrews XXIV.1,4, Homilies on Genesis V.3), to love and to do good to enemies (Homilies on Hebrews XIX.5, Homilies on John LXXXIV), to battle against the devil and the demons (Homilies Concerning the Statues XVI.6, III.7), to witness to others by virtue (Homilies on Acts XLVII, Homilies on Matthew XLIII.7, Homilies on John LIV, LXXII, On Baptismal Instructions IV.21) by "boldness of speech" (Homilies on Acts XVII, XLVII) and to think of heaven as their final home (Homilies Concerning the Statues IV.6, XVII.12, Homilies on Hebrews XXXIV.8, Homilies on Acts XVIII, Homilies on John LXXIX). In thinking and practicing these virtues, a distinct Christian behavior would outwardly distinguish them from others in the city and would also weave internally the fibers of Christian maturity and identity in the church.

However, virtue on paper and virtue in practice are two different things. Chrysostom's greatest strength in the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint (the presentation of a distinct Christian identity in late fourth century Antioch and early fifth century

Constantinople) can also reveal a glaring weakness in the apparent disconnect that existed between the presentation of virtue and Christian ideals to the congregation and their willingness, desire and ability to live out these ideals as a corporate, united witness to the world:

> While Chrysostom's audiences might well have thought they were still being "Christian," this was not in the sense that Chrysostom meant (and that modern scholars mean) of a constantly visible, fixed identity. However Chrysostom sought to mark out religious identities in what people did as well as what they said, the distinction between Christian, Greek, and Jew was far less marked in practice than it was in texts and preaching. (Sandwell 276)

In the end, while the difference between the knowledge of Christian virtue and its proper application may have created friction, even hypocrisy within his congregation at times as they lived in the city, no inconsistency existed between Chrysostom's preaching and his personal practice, for his "spotless reputation" and "greatness as a pulpit orator" (Schaff "Prolegomena" 5) made him "in the final analysis of his life…his [own] best sermon" (Hewitt 248).

Seeing Chrysostom's place in the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint gives rich insight into the place and importance of Christian identity formation through the forms of preaching and writing, the primary vehicles used by him to articulate and to promote the distinctive patterns of behavior that he believed should define and contrast Christianity with the two other belief systems in the city—Judaism and paganism (Greco-Roman polytheism). By studying his homilies, commentaries and other writings, ones sees from his interpretations and verbal image constructions his picture of practical and moral Christianity and how it expressed itself in daily life in an urban context. It was his

passion and aim to see these morals and behavior lived out not only on an personal level, but most especially on a social level in the home and in the church.

Chrysostom's Place in the Social/Community Viewpoint

In an effort to interpret and to understand the advancement and influence of Christianity within the Roman Empire, the Social/Community Viewpoint attributes the success of Christianization to its ability to portray the church as a new social community, a bonded conglomerate of people mutually practicing and living under a defined system of meaningful morals that produce harmony, peace, order and satisfying relationships, fulfilling the totality of redemption vertically (towards God) and horizontally (towards others). Chrysostom's understanding of the human condition and the nature of society in contrast with his preaching on the practice of morality was intended not only to construct and to portray a new Christian identity (Sandwell 152) to the city but also to show people within the church the kind of "authentic New Testament life" (Von Campenhausen The Fathers of the Greek Church 144) that he expected of his congregants as they lived in the world.

Chrysostom's homilies continually portray him as "the orator of the struggle against the passions" (Vandenburghe 38). He saw human life as "ashes and dust…and smoke and a shadow" in which things were "wasting away" (Homilies on Hebrews IX.10, Letters to the Fallen Theodore II.5), concerned only with "temporal affairs" that enslave people (Homilies on John XXXVIII, On Baptismal Instructions IV.3). Because of sin, human nature was decayed (Homilies on Matthew XV.10) and imprisoned (Homilies on Matthew XIV.6) under "the heaviest of all burdens" (On Baptismal Instructions VI.22), suffering life in an "abyss" (Homilies on Genesis III.17).

From his understanding of Scripture, sin was "the cause of all evils—pain, disturbances, wars, diseases and all the incurable passions that assault us" (On Repentance and Almsgiving VII.18). Because of the human nature's "transgression of the law," humanity was "taken in the foulest of evils…locked in a prison by the curse" (Against Judaizing Christians II.1.7), filled with shame (Homilies on Genesis XVII.7) and became like Cain who took on "the character of a wild beast" (Homilies on Genesis XIX.2), "unable to know the nobility of moderation or the beauty of wisdom" (Homilies on John V) and unable to "plead any excuse before God" (Homilies on Romans XIV).

Chrysostom believed that the remedy for this life of "endless toils" (Homilies on 2 Corinthians IX.4) was repentance set in the context of the church.[161] As a central tenet for church membership, life and practice (Christo "Introduction" Chrysostom: On Repentance and Almsgiving xv, xvii), repentance cancels the "entire sum of expenses" that exists between the sinner and God (On Repentance and Almsgiving VII.7) and keeps the Christian's "bright robe spotless and without wrinkle" before the world (On Baptismal Instructions IV.20, 32). In other words, repentance is the beginning of morality for Chrysostom. And the church is the home for this new beginning.

Repentance is one of many actions from human free will, viewed by Chrysostom as "depending on everything after the grace from above" (Homilies on Hebrews XIII) and "what shows the obedience from the heart" (Homilies on Romans XI). Although he held to a deep and terrifying view of sin and evil, his position on total depravity is unclear.[162] His philosophy of moral education, human rehabilitation from evil and

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[161] In his On Repentance and Almsgiving (II, III), Chrysostom discusses the "road to repentance" which involves 1) Initiating the confession (II.9), 2) Mourning and annulling the sin (II.10), 3) Showing humility (II.21), 4) Practicing almsgiving (III.5), 5) Praying continuously (III.14-16) and 6) Weeping (III.20-23).

[162] Hewitt (70) believed that Chrysostom did not accept total depravity because this would inhibit human nature to "possess the potential for virtue and wisdom" (Maxwell Christianization and

Christian living in the world centered in the primacy of free will operating within the "cottage of holy people" (Brändle 16, 22), the small component of society called the Christian family that makes up the "race of Christians" that were forming a "new Christian world" (Sandwell 152). In this new life, Christians live with an identity marked by moral thinking and virtuous behavior.

Christian Identity Construction through Moral Thinking and Behavior

In light of his dependence on human free will to empower believers to choose Christian truth over pagan vices (Sandwell 152), Chrysostom was "practical in his approach to the Christianization of daily life…[advising] people to adopt new Christian habits by associating them with established daily routines" (Maxwell "Lay Piety" 24). His thoughts were both "practical" and "idealistic" (Neville 16), seeking to condemn the sins and atrocities of human life on the one hand and to elevate the high moral standards of the gospel on the other hand. His power as a Scriptural interpreter and as a preacher came from his exposition and "application of practical and moral problems" (Von Campenhausen The Fathers of the Greek Church 134), portraying the role of "a moralist who draws from the Christian doctrine its practical consequences" (Tixeront A Handbook of Patrology 201). In this role, he depended heavily on the redeemed mind and the power of free will.

Chrysostom's "pastoral efforts in moral theology and dogma" (Harkins "Introduction" Chrysostom: Discourses Against Judaizing Christians xxiv) did not put him in a "realm of abstract truths," but rather positioned him to "get down to the brass tacks of specific problems in daily life" (Attwater 47) where he could "rouse men's

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Communication 89, Liebeschhuetz Barbarians and Bishops 178); Schaff offers a different perspective, "We look in vain in Chrysostom's writings for the Augustinian and Calvinistic doctrines of absolute perfection, total depravity, hereditary guilt, irresistible grace, perseverance of saints, or for the Lutheran theory of forensic and solifidian justification" ("Prolegomena" 20).

hearts" and "kindle their moral energy, developing in them pure love and an unfeigned spiritual outlook" (Von Campenhausen The Fathers of the Greek Church 132). This kind of nitty-gritty preaching (some today would label it "meddling") and pastoring focused on the primacy and application of Christian thinking to the practices of daily life:

> Chrysostom, like other church authorities of this period, called for people to think consciously about things that they normally could not question—their patterns of thought, their food, their clothes, their speech, their laughter. Everyone would have a Christian response to any situation, he believed, if their religious disposition structured all of their thoughts and actions. (Maxwell "Lay Piety" 21)

In attacking the evils of immorality, the theatre, the circus, drunkenness, vainglory and the perils of riches[163] in an era when moral laxity abounded in the public, in the clergy and in the monasteries (Tixeront A Handbook of Patrology 200), Chrysostom saw how his calling and holy objective centered in teaching precisely what was correct and incorrect thinking and actions; therefore, he approached his pulpit and pastoral ministry with the aim of persuasion (Maxwell Christianization and Communication 4), convinced that "the Christian *politeia* [should] take over the Roman *politeia*" (Sandwell 131). This approach revealed his attempts to brand individual Christians and the church with a distinct uniqueness and character apart from the rest of society:

> Chrysostom understood that religious practice could be a marker of Christian identity. He continually exhorted his audiences to display their Christianity to make clear their difference from Greeks and Jews. In so doing, he was utilizing the

[163] See Hewitt (34-43, 160-80) for a fuller discussion on these "evils."

> great potential that religious practices had to enact and display differences publicly…Chrysostom constructed these religious practices as markers of religious identity and used them to display the differences between the two religions. (Sandwell 251)

Christian identity branding centered in many tenets of biblical thought and behavior, some of which include the denial of the present life (Homilies Concerning the Statues VI.8, Homilies on Hebrews XXIV.1,4, Homilies on John LXVII, LXXV, LXXIX, Homilies on Matthew XXXIII.4, LIV.8, Homilies on Genesis V.3, Letter to the Fallen Theodore I.9, II.5), the acceptance of trials (Homilies on the Paralytic Let Down Through the Roof II, Homilies on 2 Corinthians XXV.3, Homilies on Ephesians VIII, Homilies on Hebrews V.7, XXVIII.7, XXXIII.9, Homilies on John LXXVII), faithful church attendance (Homily to Those Who Had Not Attended the Assembly III, Homilies on Acts XXIX), Christian witnessing (Homilies to Those Who Had Not Attended the Assembly II, Homilies on Matthew XII.5, Homilies on Acts XVII, XX, XLVII, Homilies on Colossians III), good works (Homilies on Acts XLVII, Homilies on Hebrews XIX.5, Homilies on John LII, LIV, LXXXIV, Homilies on Genesis XXXVI.17, On Baptismal Instructions IV.20,21), mortifying personal sin and the passions of the flesh (Homilies on Eutropius II.4, Homilies on John LXXIII, LXXIV, Homilies on Matthew LVI.8, Homilies on Genesis IX.15, On Baptismal Instructions IV.32), battling the devil and the spiritual forces of darkness (Homilies Concerning the Statues III.7, Homilies on Ephesians XXII, Homilies on 2 Timothy IV, Homilies on 1 Corinthians XIII.7, Homilies on John XXIII, XL, On Baptismal Instructions III.9, V.27, X.5, Six Books on the Priesthood IV.3,13, Homilies on Romans XX, Homilies on Genesis LXIV.26, Homilies on Philippians II, Homilies on 1 Thessalonians III, On the Incomprehensible Nature of

God IV.16), persistent prayer and almsgiving (Homilies on 1 Timothy VII, On Baptismal Instructions VII.27, On the Incomprehensible Nature of God V.48, Homilies on Matthew IV.17, V.7,8, X.8, XI.8, XV.3, XXI.5, XXIII.12), preparing for and thinking of heaven (Homilies on Hebrews XXXIV.8, Homilies on John XXXI, LXXIX, Six Books on the Priesthood III.4, Letter to a Young Widow 6), shunning omens, amulets and superstitions (On Baptismal Instructions I.39, II.5, Homilies on Acts LIII, Homilies on 1 Corinthians XII.13), forsaking the Spectacles (On Baptismal Instructions VI.5,5,14, XI.25, XII.52, Homilies Concerning the Statues III.11, XV.1, XIX.2, Homilies on Romans XVII, Homilies on Acts XXIV, XXX, XLIII, Homilies on Matthew VII.7, XXXVII.8,9) and helping the poor (Homilies on Matthew XV.13, XXX.11, XLI.6, LIV.9, LVI.8, LXIII.1,2, LXIV.1).While strands of ascetic thought and behavior are seen in his model before the people (Hartney 11, 28), Chrysostom attempted to build up his congregation's belief and to shepherd their lives in the truth (Harkins "Introduction" Chrysostom: On Baptismal Instructions 5).

The effect of Chrysostom's identity branding upon his people brought noticeable, yet mixed results. Naturally his eloquence and efforts in bringing "social justice" to the sick, poor and oppressed brought great relief to the needy in his day, situating him higher than any other early church father on compassion and almsgiving (Attwater 59, 66). Wilken summarizes:

> Christianity was a powerful new force. Its presence could be felt in the decurions who sat on the city council and the artisans who made and sold their wares in tiny shops throughout the city. The church owned property; its presbyters were active in the distribution of grain; its bishops wielded influence in the city and beyond…In the city's economy, the church was a factor to be reckoned with; it purchased food

and wine from local merchants, owned horses. Christians also operated hospitals for the sick, maintained hostels for travelers, cared for the poor and needy. (John Chrysostom and the Jews 21)

Hartney (191) observed that the effect of Chrysostom's social initiatives was not the creation of "an entirely new city where everyone will be poor and humble, but rather a more ordered version of what currently exists." This involved the pastoral and preaching efforts to "work a personal change in each individual member of his congregation" (Hartney 191) and revealed Chrysostom's "Aristotelian notions of urban living" where "each household can be seen as a microcosm of the greater urban community, with the system of order in the one being representative of order in the other" (Hartney 192).

Obviously this approach brings with it assorted results and mingled reviews. While few question the fact of social impact that Chrysostom's congregation and social justice ministry produced upon the city in his day, some have questioned the *degree* of its impact.[164] Since Chrysostom's aim was in reforming the order of the city and his objective was the "substantial alteration in the behavior of its inhabitants" (Hartney 6) in order to evoke "change from the bottom up" (Hartney 5-6), the natural assumption that comes with this premise is that a widespread improvement in moral behavior will

[164] Considerable discussion has recently surfaced over Chrysostom's congregation's laxity and resistance to his reforms, and in return his pastoral frustrations when the sheep did not "fall in line." Maxwell puts it aptly, "In his sermons, Chrysostom expressed both his vision of an ideal Christian society and his frustrations when confronted with resistance from people with different conceptions of orthodoxy" (174). Sandwell (211-2) concurs, "Despite Chrysostom's ideals, it was very difficult for him to insure that his audience primarily mixed with other Christians and did not mix with non-Christians, which is something we need to bear in mind when we use the terms 'Christian' and 'Christian community'…We must recognize that Chrysostom's audiences would have been divided in a number of ways…We must challenge the assumption, so often made without thought of its implications, that we can talk of a Christian 'community' around Chrysostom." Hartney (194) also states, "Unfortunately we have no real means of monitoring the success or failure of Chrysostom's city."

automatically improve the social and cultural structures that support and define a society. Certainly improved morality will possibly translate itself into greater and more conscious humanitarianism along with a possible reevaluation of civic priorities that will address social evils and municipal deficiencies. But to assume that permanent, enduring social structural overhaul will come automatically to a city just because Christianity is now a foothold is problematic at best and naïve at worst. In addition to morality, there must be education, skillful analysis, discernment, intuition, leadership, relationships with difference-makers and timely public rhetoric to effect deep and lasting changes in an urban environment. What Chrysostom needed (and it is unsure if he had) was a group of social change leader-implementers who not only understood and grasped his vision of a reconstituted city, but also knew how to take this new biblical-social vision and translate it into a working, grassroots model for Antioch and Constantinople. Certainly some of this implementation existed at Antioch; however, it is impossible to glean its depth of effect.

Seeing Chrysostom's place in the Social/Community Viewpoint gives rich insight into understanding the vision, strategy and tactics that underlie his understanding of the role of the church in culture. In an age of social laxity, immorality and public preoccupation with personal entertainment and affluence to the neglect of poverty and municipal responsibility, Chrysostom believed that societal reform would only occur from a change in the home and from a repentance-preaching, alms-giving, compassion-minded church. Biblically based rhetoric served as his *modus operandi* for changing behavior and for branding his congregation with a new identity and a new way of thinking.

Chrysostom's Place in the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint

As a way to analyze and to interpret the advancement of Christianization within the Roman Empire, scholars in the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint credit the remarkable spread of Christianity to its ability to present and to expound truth-assertions about itself in a systematized body of knowledge that was knowable, learnable, exegetical and debatable. These presentable truth-propositions were situated within philosophical frameworks that enabled inquirers to examine its claims and to interpret its beliefs through specific methods of exegetical hermeneutics that brought meaning, focus and understanding to the faith. John Chrysostom's practice of Antiochene exegesis applied to the practice of moralistic preaching set in the pattern of Second Sophistic Rhetoric (Kelly 8) to a diverse and divided audience established his lasting place in the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint as "a homilist more than a theologian, a moralist more than a theorist" (Tixeront A History of Dogmas 9), "tipping the scales in favor of the historical-grammatical method" (Baur 319) and reconstructing Paul's writings back to life through a "reading of resuscitation" (Mitchell 1). This defined the essential features of the Christian faith to a people divided between pagan and Christian customs (Maxwell "Lay Piety" 20, Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 13) in a "decidedly pluralistic metropolis" full of "temptations and distractions" (Harkins "Introduction" Chrysostom: Discourses Against Judaizing Christians xxvi). By examining several significant principles of his Antiochene exegesis and their connection to his style of preaching before a broad and diverse audience, one can glean insights into his approach to Christian identity formation as a strategy to situate the place and the role of the church in culture.

Litfin (197) notes, "There is scarcely any biblical book, moral topic, theological point or issue that John Chrysostom did not tackle." This shows his "preference for

directness" (Mayer and Allen 26-7) that hallmarked his use and preaching from the Antiochene method,[165] an approach governed by "the original sense of the text" (Brändle 35) set in its "historical" context (Mitchell 389) with a view to determine primarily the "literal" meaning of a passage before any spiritual meaning is uncovered (Litfin 200). Often in difficult passages "grammatical and linguistic considerations" are applied to "disentangle" the meaning so that "the moral teaching of the text" will come to light (Tixeront A Handbook of Patrology 202). This "literal sense" governed the entire perspective of the author, including the use of special literary features (Greely 34). As a primary rule of thumb, any "spiritual sense" was limited to "typology" and to a restricted "number of types in the Old Testament" (Greely 34). Historically seen as a response to Julian's love of mythology (Brändle 11), Antiochene exegesis contributed to the promotion of internal Scriptural research (Greely 34) because it made the Bible the principal tool for study and for personal theological construction (Greely 31). Together with asceticism, it molded Chrysostom's life (Von Campenhausen The Fathers of the Greek Church 130) and shaped the timeline and direction of hermeneutics (Mitchell 5) away from the allegorical method in his day (Mayer and Allen 26-7, Baur 319). Gorday notes several of its important features:

> The Antiochene approach to Paul…is focused on the appreciation of the series of events and personages of the Old Testament who anticipate Christ at their particular moments in history, on the simultaneous affirmation of divine foreknowledge and human moral responsibility, on the Christological moment of the *homo assumptus* by which the possibility of salvation is offered, and on the life of obedient faith by

[165] See Guillet (252-302) for a significant study on the Alexandrian School versus the Antiochene School.

which one appropriates the Christological moment and identifies with it. (Gorday 105-6)

Because this exegetical method is centered squarely in the actions of biblical figures and their relationship/ethical responsibility to God, it is not surprising to see how moral instruction and practical life issues take primacy in the Antiochene exegesis and application (Harkins "Introduction" Chrysostom: On Baptismal Instructions 6, Von Campenhausen The Fathers of the Greek Church 134). As a discipline where "matter-of-fact historical comment" and "pragmatic theological debate and observations" governs the process (Mayer and Allen 26-7), two specific exegetical principles highlight Chrysostom's practice of the Antiochene method—συγκαταβάσις and ἀκρίβεια.

Συγκαταβάσις refers to "the incarnational aspect of the Scriptures" where "God's gracious acceptance of the limitations of the human condition" shows his "considerateness" to communicate to humanity in a way that can be received and understood (Hill "Introduction" Chrysostom: Homilies on Genesis 1-17 17-18). This "missionary dialogue derived from ancient pedagogic…describes how a teacher, for didactic reasons, descends and adjusts himself to the level of a disciple" (Kahlos 79). Hill sees this "considerateness" as a "working for inculturation…of the Christian message in a particular cultural context in such a way that the Christian experiences transmitted in the Scriptures evoke a response of faith through elements proper to that culture" (Breaking the Bread 45). This "inculturation…is a positive enrichment" to the Scriptural message and "bound" Chrysostom to the plight of the hearer in the audience (Hill Breaking the Bread 46, 48). Chrysostom regularly used συγκαταβάσις in his descriptions of the ministry (Against Marcionites and Manicheans III, Homily on the Paralytic Let Down through the Roof 7, Homilies Concerning the Statues XIX.12,

Homilies on Matthew VI.4, XVI.2, XVII.5, XXVII.5, XXXVII.3, XC.2, Homilies on Acts I, XLVI, Homilies on 1 Corinthians III.5, XII.1, XXII.5, XXIII.1, XXV.3, XXXII.9 as several examples of many) to drive home this significant exegetical principle.

Along with συγκαταβάσις, Chrysostom employs the use of ἀκρίβεια or "precision" (Hill "Introduction" Chrysostom: Homilies on Genesis 1-17 18) to denote the exactness[166] of God's Word in speaking in clear and understandable ways. Found regularly in his writings (Homilies on Genesis XV.4,7, 14, XXII.6, XXIV.5, XXV.10, XXXV.9, XXXVI.12, Against Marcionites and Manicheans 2, Letter to the Fallen Theodore I.19, Homilies on Matthew VI.6, XL.2, LVII.1, LXVI.3, Homilies on Romans VI, XVI, Homilies on 1 Corinthians VII.6, X.1, XX.4, Homilies on Colossians XII), ἀκρίβεια denotes the sharpness of God's Word that penetrates the reader's/hearer's mind and soul, bringing to light the function of the Holy Scriptures as a "double-edged sword" that "penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). As a student of Scripture, Chrysostom realized that this double-edged function of the Word of God resulted in the salvation of those who believed (John 6:63, see Homilies on John XLVII.2) and the judgment of those who rejected it (John 12:48, see Homilies on John LXIX.2); therefore, he understood that truth (dogma) and its life application (morality) must be the "twofold context" of his preaching (Lawrenz 16).

With God's "considerate" truth and "precise" words in place for human understanding and application, Chrysostom preached a "practical Christianity that proves itself in holy living and dying" (Schaff "Prolegomena" 22). As a preacher that gave "witness to the main streams of Eastern theology" (Lawrenz 19), John approached his

[166] Hill notes that often the word "accuracy" is applied incorrectly to this term.

ministry of the Scriptures and the shepherding care that flowed from it as "a biblical commentator, a homilist, an orator and as a pastor" (Hill "St. John Chrysostom: Preacher on the Old Testament" 268). Tixeront summarizes:

> As an orator he surpassed all the Greek Fathers; but, like his theology and exegesis, his eloquence was pre-eminently popular and practical. He was perfectly acquainted with the rules of oratory, and no Christian Greek writer can rival him for purity of language. This purity, however, never degenerates into purism, and it is with the widest flexibility that he applies the rules of elegance. Nothing in him savors of the rhetorician or the student. In his discourses there is very little philosophy or abstract reasoning, but much illustration, comparison, and popular argument. As he knows the life of his people thoroughly, his descriptions of customs and habits have nothing artificial or unnatural about him. Here is a father who converses with his children and who instructs, corrects, and encourages them without reserve. (Tixeront A Handbook of Patrology 202)

Kennedy notes Chrysostom's "evident qualities" of "imagery" taken from the Scriptures and daily life that were drawn from the "stylistic devices of the Sophists" (Greek Rhetoric 246-8) which were "a part of his nature" to use (Classical Rhetoric 166). He was not bashful in applying the methods of the fourth century schools of rhetoric (Kelly Golden Mouth 8), fusing Scriptural truth and power with rhetorical art and skill to create "the united power of his elegance, zeal and piety" (Butler 96) in a form of consistent teaching (Attwater 32) that offered "lively comparisons, vivid descriptions, the whole range of figures of speech, passionate denunciations, enthusiastic praise and every trick that will move an audience to enjoyable emotion" (Liebeschhuetz Barbarians and Bishops 182). This "inherently necromantic art" (Mitchell xix) mesmerized admiring,

applauding and repenting audiences (Harkins "Introduction" Chrysostom: On Baptismal Instructions 5) not only because of its sheer eloquence, but also because Chrysostom often spoke freely without notes or books before him (Baur 221). It brings to light how fourth century audiences not only came to listen to the preacher, but also to interact with him in a discourse on spirituality (Hill "Introduction" Chrysostom: Homilies on Genesis 1-17 9).

Mayer ("John Chrysostom: Extraordinary Preacher" 122) notes, "In this famous individual…the rare coincidence of a rich body of evidence, a remarkable preacher and a diverse range of audience[167] transpires." This "diverse range" included the wealthy and social elites (Mayer and Allen 34), successful members of the "middling classes" who did not travel in the socialite circles (Maxwell Christianization and Communication 72), shoplifters, servants, farmers, women,[168] children, people with wide educational backgrounds and those who possessed awareness of Jewish beliefs and practices (Maxwell Christianization and Communication 75-90). In most cases they were learned people, but oftentimes chose not to read the Bible (MacMullen "The Preacher and His Audience" 508). They attended church regularly on normal occasions and in greater frequency during times of calamity and celebration; however, when the Hippodrome sported a civic event, attendance was recognizably lower (Maxwell "Lay Piety" 22).[169] Attwater (2) depicts these crowds as a "society in the main no longer heathen but not yet properly Christian," a crowd that "might have thought that they were still being

[167] See MacMullen ("The Preacher and His Audience" 503-11) for a fuller discussion.

[168] A growing area of study in Chrysostom research concerns the place of women in his thought, life and practice. See Clark (Jerome, Chrysostom and Friends) and Hartney's discussion (183-95) on gendered divisions and ordered households for a fuller review.

[169] Sandwell (210) concluded from analyzing Chrysostom's occasional remarks in his sermons about the audience and their fascination with the theatre, horseracing and the circus that the crowds that came to hear him held many interpersonal relationships with people outside the church.

Christian…but not in the sense that Chrysostom meant" (Sandwell 276), living with "nominal" Christian beliefs that were "mingled with pagan elements, ill-instructed…[and] unready for the stern discipline of right living" (Attwater 1-2). Apparently they lived "a conventional pagan lifestyle concealed under a thin veneer of Christianity" (Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 26).

Added to this educational, economic and social diversity was the longstanding, "profound and aggravated" division (Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 16) that existed for eighty-five years (330-415) within the Antioch Church (Schaff "Prolegomena" 10). This division came from doctrinal troubles, superstition, vice and avarice (Attwater 9) by people who frequented church services to show off new fashions, to discuss politics and to make business deals (Homilies on 1 Corinthians XXXVI, Maxwell Christianization and Communication 108), refusing to give up the ancient, customary traditions and festivities seen in marriages and funerals (Maxwell "Lay Piety" 35-6) along with their "fondness for the chariot race" (Sawhill 73). These "sensualities and excessive loves" (Schaff "Prolegomena" 10) made professing believers from the wealthy classes "hardly distinguishable in lifestyle" from their neighbors who were not Christian (Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 21).

Maxwell ("Lay Piety" 20) sees one dilemma centering on the prevailing "old customs, the force of habit and the differing conceptions of common sense." What some Christians thought was satisfactory behavior came from a mixture of church teachings, common sense and established civic traditions that had not been challenged before Chrysostom's time (Maxwell "Lay Piety" 20). Obviously this was not John's "version of the faith" (Maxwell Christianization and Communication 174) as oftentimes he indicated his dissatisfaction over their level of Christian thinking and behavior:

Chrysostom's sermons give the impression that most Christians did not live up to his expectations. Like many other church authorities of his time, Chrysostom envisioned a more intensely Christianized world, where the laity would be just as religious at home, at work and in the streets as they were in the church. The laity did not always fit this mold and sometimes actively disagreed with their preacher. (Maxwell "Lay Piety" 19)

Listen to the words of a disturbed preacher with his congregation:

> I want to take up the usual line of teaching, yet I hesitate and hang back. A cloud of despair has settled upon me, and has confused and upset my train of thought—not simply despair but anger as well. I am not sure what I should do; uncertainty is paralyzing my brain. I mean, when I consider that at the merest suggestion from the devil you have put out of your mind all that unremitting teaching of ours and the daily exhortations, and have all rushed off to that diabolical concourse and been absorbed in horse racing, what sort of zest can I bring to the task of teaching you any more, when my former words have so lightly slipped away? (Homilies on Genesis VI)

It is this kind of "pastoral dissatisfaction" that made Hartney (50) state, "the preaching exercise…is the means by which church authorities worked to present Christianity as the dominant power institution within society." Chrysostom's frequent use of this "pastoral power" reveals not only his "sole desire"…to gain an influence over the lives of men" (Walter 259) but also to "construct and to reemphasize the defining features of Christian identity" (Sandwell 11).

Christian Identity Construction through Preaching

With an extraordinary memory and command of Scripture constructed from the Antiochene method and polished by the techniques of the fourth century Second Sophistic, Chrysostom attempted to "impress upon his audience" (Sandwell 74) the trademark characteristics of the Christian faith so that in ordered fashion, from the individual to the home to society in an "upwards and outwards" movement, a "reordered city" would emerge (Hartney 5-6). In this new construction, religious leaders at various levels would lead the community in a new standard of living, focusing on prayer, fasting, worship and almsgiving (Hartney 9-10), "rewriting the boundaries of the ancient urban community so that a recognizably Christian environment could be created" (Hartney 30). In essence, his aim through preaching and moral instruction was "to establish his own Christian city in the very epitome of the secular city" (Hartney 30); therefore, "preaching became essential to the public presentation of the Faith within the polis" (Hartney 34). Through preaching, Chrysostom's aim was not to destroy the city and to start from scratch, but rather "to overlay an existing structure with a Christianized lens or worldview" (Hartney 191).

In this new reordered polis, gender divisions played a major part in stabilizing the infrastructure of the polis so that preaching in the public square in *addition* to the church pulpit becomes a primary community event:

> Chrysostom's ideal Christian household, therefore, would be one in which these boundaries between the sexes were strictly upheld, with care of the domestic sphere being entrusted entirely to the female party, and civic matters falling the part of the male…But the realigned priorities of these Christians will hopefully become evident far beyond the walls of the home. Should the preacher succeed in

> persuading the members of his congregation to live more frugal, more spiritual lives within the private sphere, the ideas and motivations brought to their activities in the public arena will shift correspondingly. And so the traditional appearance of the civic unit will become overlaid with a set of Christianized values. Ecclesiastical congregations will take the place of secular social gatherings, and preaching such as performed by Chrysostom himself will function as an alternative to public entertainments such as the theatre or sporting events. (Hartney 193-4)

In this objective, preaching first serves to establish internal order and harmony in the church, and then mushrooms through the people like leaven, gradually spreading over the city and realigning its individuals and households into an expanding blueprint of Christian morality and actions. Hartney is correct in portraying Chrysostom's city as an ordered, Christianized polis that replaces the ancient pagan model; however, it is incorrect to believe that "little of the basic structure of the ancient city is changed by Chrysostom's preaching…rather the perspective given to this underlying base" (Hartney 194). Sandwell is correct to point out that Chrysostom did not use "rhetorical play" in using metaphors to project this vision of a Christianized city (140); however, it is incorrect to assert that his effort to "bring together Christianity and civic life in these metaphors allowed Chrysostom…to manipulate the idea of what the essence of a city was" (Sandwell 140). Chrysostom was *not* a manipulator, nor was little changed by his preaching. It is important to understand what preaching meant to Chrysostom as it related to the formation of Christian identity.

Chrysostom's purpose for and practice of preaching drew heavily upon his Scripturally-constructed understanding of the church's identity in the world before God. Christo (The Church's Identity 11) notes, "Chrysostom reveals that the church is the holy

body, or flesh, which God's Son assumed at his incarnation and raised to heaven. This body belongs to a new race in which God and human beings are united and not estranged. It is the new Adam." Because it is a "new race" or the "gathered community, it is the location where God resides and where Christians must come in order to worship/adore God, participate in the way of life laid out by God and have the affairs of their lives progress more smoothly" (Christo The Church's Identity 125).

Because the church housed the incarnate person and Word of God, Chrysostom understood that the truth of God was its pillar and ground (Homilies on 1 Timothy XI); therefore, the vehicle used by God to impart his inscripturated wisdom was preaching (Homilies on 1 Corinthians VI). Through weak people, God's power was magnified through proclamation (Homilies Concerning the Statues I.16), a power that preaches conviction, accusation and testimony to unbelievers (Homilies on Matthew LXXV.2) as well as a power that brings forgiveness to those who repent (Homilies on Acts XXIX). Chrysostom believed that "God's power was not bound…so neither was the preaching of the Word" (Homilies Concerning the Statues XVI.12). The preacher's role was likened to a herald:

> For as a herald proclaims in the theatre in the presence of all, so also we preach, adding nothing, but declaring the things which we have heard. For the excellence of a herald consists in proclaiming to all what has really happened, not in adding or taking away anything. If therefore it is necessary to preach, it is necessary to do it with boldness of speech. Otherwise, it is not preaching. On this account, Christ did not say, tell it "upon the housetops," but "preach upon the housetops (Matthew 10:27), showing both by the place and by the manner what was to be done. (Homilies on Titus I)

Sandwell (141) states that "in a competitive context" of an urban environment filled with diverse people, "persuasion and conversion of non-Christians was of paramount concern." She also aptly points out in the church's hierarchy of authority that God's leaders (preachers) serve as "God's mouthpiece on earth" (127); however, God's mouthpieces and heralds are *not* manipulators, for manipulation would suggest some degree of personal, selfish motive, something Chrysostom's piety, humility, ascetic-driven holiness and "spotless reputation" (Schaff "Prolegomena" 5) would not permit. Also, he would not use the understanding of the demonic[170] in Holy Scripture as a rhetorical "option" (Sandwell 144) to excuse or to dismiss the efforts at Christianization within and/or outside the city. In his mind, the devil was not a rhetorical construction to excuse progress of the Christian truth; likewise, the devil did not reign over heaven and earth, for "He rules over those who have surrendered themselves to him" (Homilies on John LXXV). As in many places and also here, free will plays an important part in Chrysostom's philosophy, theology and preaching.

Chrysostom's purpose in preaching was to proclaim the presence and reign of God's truth and power through the church to the world. To him, "The church is not wall and roof but faith and life" (Homilies on Eutropius II.1). As this truth came to the minds and hearts of people, God's power working in cooperation with human free will changed and converted people to the Christian understanding of life and its way of living. A distinct Christian identity came to those who freely chose to embrace the tenets of God's truth in the Scriptures. Those who did not exercise their free will from Chrysostom's preaching did not experience genuine Christian conversion; however, Chrysostom's eloquence, rhetorical power and Scriptural mastery impressed them so much that they

[170] See footnote 144.

continued to come and to hear him preach. In Chrysostom's mind, the reason why the church in his day showed laxity and indifference was not due to the inefficacy of the Scriptures or in God's inability; rather, it was because of their sin, stubbornness and failure to choose God's truth and to live under its blessing. In his mind, Christian identity formed *after* human free will surrendered to God's reign in repentance (Letter to the Fallen Theodore I.10, Homilies on Acts VII, Homilies on Romans V, Homilies on 1 Corinthians VII.5, Homilies on 2 Corinthians IX.4, XV, Homilies on Ephesians IV, XVIII, Homilies on 1 Timothy X, Homilies on John XXXIV.3, Homilies on Hebrews XII.7).

Seeing Chrysostom's place in the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint gives insight into seeing the rationale and logic of his approach to Christian ministry. His ascetic background and practice of Antiochene exegesis impressed him to preach "plain Christian morality" (Neville 15) with rhetorical skill and biblical power to a diverse audience—committed and indifferent Christians, socialites, common people, Jews, Greco-Roman polytheists and religionists—who assembled in a church that was beset with divisions situated in a community that was crumbling economically and politically. Through his clear moral homilies and writings, Chrysostom sought to present and to define clearly a distinct Christian identity that would differentiate the church (a one-of-a-kind community of truth, compassion, love and peace) from a world that was falling apart. His exegesis and asceticism provided a biblical, moral base that enabled his preaching to construct a vision of a "demonstrably Christian city in all its components" (Hartney 11).

Chrysostom's Understanding and Depiction of the Church's Presence and Voice

This chapter has highlighted the social conditions and municipal environment surrounding John Chrysostom in the late fourth/early fifth century. It has documented and discussed his rightful and significant place in the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint, the Social/Community Viewpoint and the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint. In reality, John also occupies an important place in the Supernatural/Eschatological Viewpoint[171] and the Imperial/Aristocratic Viewpoint,[172] but perhaps in lesser ways as it relates to this discussion on the church's presence and voice in culture.

What is clear from this study is that Chrysostom attempted from his Antiochene exegesis and moralistic preaching to "convert the city into a collection of Christian households" (Brändle 47) as a new civic community (Brown The Body and Society 306) with a distinct spiritual branding that repelled their interests away from Jewish and Greco-Roman religion (Sandwell 6, 11-13, 18, 64-5, 74, 82, 152). This new identity sought to establish a new social order that would not replace the existing structures of the

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[171] Like Origen, Chrysostom possessed a strong understanding of the demonic in his writings, believing that it was plain "stupidity…not to think the present a season of war" (Homilies on 1 Thessalonians III). He describes the devil's activity with metaphors such as a "villain" (Homilies on Philippians II), a "dog" (Homilies on Romans VII), the "prince of the world" (Homilies on John LXXV), a "wolf" (Homilies on John XXIII, LIX) and a "murderer" (Against Judaizing Christians VIII.8.6), focusing on Satan's work of deceit (Homilies on 1 Corinthians XXXIII.5), his "shafts" such as "evil desires, unclean thoughts, deadly passions, lust, envy, jealousy, pride, hatred, avarice and every other form of laxity" (Homilies on Genesis III.19) with discouragement appearing as his greatest weapon (On Repentance and Almsgiving I.17). Chrysostom saw that the current time on earth was short (Against Judaizing Christians VIII.9.5, Homilies on John XXXIV) and that the Parousia "will be filled with terror and fright from the angels…because God in full manifestation will come" (Demonstration Against the Pagans VIII.1-2). As they await the Eschatos, Christians must be watchful against the devil (Homilies on John XXIII) and repel his assaults (Homilies Concerning the Statues XVI.6) and live in prayer, piety and virtue (Homilies Concerning the Statues IV.6).

[172] Hartney (45) states, "Aside from the redistribution of wealth, Chrysostom hoped to effect more wide-ranging changes in the civic environment. The forces for such changes lay in the control of those who possessed power and influence within society, and once again these were the well-to-do members of the community. With such an ambitious aim as Chrysostom's it would serve little practical power to assist in the remodeling of the city, and time was certainly of the essence in Chrysostom's mind." Further textual study from Chrysostom's writings is needed to determine if he possessed a distinct rhetorical strategy among the social elite.

present city, but instead would center in a "reinterpretation of existing models in a Christian framework" (Hartney 11). The power that created this new identity was union with Christ, the "basic presupposition of Chrysostom's ecclesiology" (Greely 119). It placed the church as the central social structure within the polis (Sandwell 131), drawing its meaning and power from the heavenly city-church (Greely 43) and her mysterious and vivacious union with Christ the perfect and holy bridegroom.

Chrysostom regularly spoke of the mysteries of the church and their truthful power:

> Awe-inspiring, in truth, are the mysteries of the church; awesome, in truth, her altar. A fountain sprang up out of paradise, sending forth sensible streams; a fountain arises from this table, sending forth sensible streams…This fountain is a fountain of light, shedding abundant rays of truth. And beside it the powers from on high have taken their stand, gazing on the beauty of its streams, since they perceive more clearly than we the power of what lies before us and its unapproachable flashing rays…The mystery lying before us here affects the soul, but much more so. (Homilies on John XLVI)

Greely (44) observed, "The heavenly city was not something cut off from or intrinsically foreign to the earthly, but was present in it in a way that was both hidden and manifest." This is because Christ's flesh is present within the earthly church and within her mysteries (Christo 9). With this type of incarnational indwelling, Christians would be empowered "to maintain a totally changed way of life" (Torrance 170).

In light of this mystical and powerful union, the earthly "church has everything to do with Christ and nothing to do with the world" (Christo 410). This union enabled Chrysostom to see "unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity" as it pertained to

Christian churches in every land and community who were united to Christ and were genuine representations of his body (Christo 33, 258). The transformation of existing pagan structures in the ancient city came from the power of Christ working mysteriously through his virtuous people:

> If it were not the power of God which accomplished this, the church would not have had a preface, much less a beginning. (Demonstration Against the Pagans XIII.6)
>
> The church is great and has spread over the world. Since there were so many obstacles to hinder its progress, how did it have such a glorious outcome, an outcome which bears testimony to its truth? Only through the divine and invincible power of him who foretold these things and then brought them to accomplishment. (Demonstration Against the Pagans XV.5)
>
> Had Christ not been with us, the church would not have been victorious. (Homilies on 1 Corinthians VI.6)
>
> It would not be by wielding weapons, nor by expenditure of money, nor by strength of body, nor by abundance of armies, nor by any other such means that the apostles would conquer the world. They would gain victory by a mere word since that word had great power and was proved by signs and wonders. (Demonstration Against the Pagans V.2)
>
> We should be constant to our own virtues and when socializing with them attract them to piety. (Homilies on Genesis XL.17)

> Let us be trustworthy witnesses. But how shall we be trustworthy? By the life we lead. (Homilies on Acts XLVII)
>
> In truth, nothing has such an influence on the pagans as virtue; nothing offends them as much as vice. (Homilies on John LXXII)
>
> Let us perform all actions in such a way that our life will be virtuous. (Homilies on John LIV)
>
> Let your light be so bright, he says, that it not only illumines yourselves, but shines before men who need it to guide them. (On Baptismal Instructions IV.20)
>
> Your virtue, your well-disciplined conduct and the uprightness of your deeds is what people need to see in your life. (On Baptismal Instructions IV.21)
>
> "A city set on a hill cannot be hid, neither do men light a candle and put it under the bushel." Again, by these words he trains them to strictness of life, teaching them to be earnest in their endeavors as set before the eyes of all men, and contending in the midst of the amphitheatre of the world. (Homilies on Matthew XV.11)
>
> For when men see us despising all things present, and preparing ourselves for that which is to come, our actions will persuade them sooner than any discourse. (Homilies on Matthew XV.12)

From these and other numerous examples, Maxwell ("Lay Piety" 37) concluded, "The stark difference between the behavior of Christians and pagans would emphasize Christianity's superiority if only the flock would behave in ways consistent with their faith." Obviously what clogged this transforming power from flowing into the city to

bring about social change was the non-virtuous life of Christians caused by sin and division. Chrysostom preached against themes such as carnality, indolence and worldliness that weakened the church's presence and voice:

> The whole life of men in ancient times was one of action and contention; ours on the contrary is a life of indolence. (Homilies on Titus II)

> We say that we have heard Christ and that we believe the things which he has promised. Show it, they say, by your works: for your life bears witness of the contrary, that you do not believe. (Homilies on Acts XLVII)

> Abide with the church, and the church does not hand thee over to the enemy: but if thou fliest from the church, the church is not the cause of thy capture. For if thou art inside the fold, the wolf does not enter. But if thou goest outside, thou art liable to be wild beasts' prey. (Homilies on Eutropius II.1)

> Let us then cast out carnal minds. But what are carnal? Whatever makes the body flourish and do well but injures the soul, as for instance wealth, luxury and glory. (Homilies on Hebrews XVIII.4)

> For nothing is worse than to relegate spiritual things to human reasoning. (Homilies on John XXV)

> Of how many evils are we now full, without being conscious of them? We bite one another, we devour one another in wronging, accusing, calumniating, being vexed by the credit of our neighbors. (Homilies on Hebrews XXI.7)

> In the church…all the diseases of the soul are represented. (Homilies on John XXIII)
>
> I am saying this because I see you spending all your time in temporal affairs…For this reason our life is ineffectual…our efforts are not of much avail. (Homilies on John XXX)
>
> The church is a dyer's vat. If time after time perpetually ye go hence without receiving any dye, what is the use of coming here continually? (Homilies on Acts XXIX)
>
> But the present church is like a woman who hath fallen from her former prosperous days, and in many respects retains the symbols only of that ancient prosperity, displaying indeed the repositories and caskets of her golden ornaments, but bereft of her wealth: Such an one doth the present church resemble. (Homilies on 1 Corinthians XXXVI.7)

This internal carnality and spiritual indifference led to division, seen by Chrysostom as "the devil's weapon" against the church (Homilies on Romans XXXII). John believed this internal weakness was created when believers socialized with Greeks and Jews in non-evangelistic ways. In his Homilies on 1 Corinthians (III.8), he became irritated about a "Christian disputing in a ridiculous manner with a Greek…about Paul and Plato." He became noticeably incensed when he learned that Christians and Greeks would converse and joke together in the agora and in physician clinics about harassments made by believers against monks (Against Opponents of the Monastic Life I.2). Likewise he believed that a professing believer's priorities were wrong when he "loitered about" in public and "took part in meetings that were no wise profitable" instead of being

"with your own brethren" in the church assembly (Homilies Concerning the Statues X.1). On the one hand, this great preacher possessed a high and holy vision of a pure and "precious" church (Homilies on John LIX) that was "Christ's special army" (On Baptismal Instructions II.1) operating as "a garrison against the devil" (Homilies on Acts XIX), a place "truly frightening and filled with fear" because of God's presence" (Against Judaizing Christians I.4.1); however, in real life it was "not pure," filled with "blemishes" and was "ugly and cheap" (Homilies on Ephesians XX). How does one reconcile this conception of the church?

As one begins to look more carefully at the numerous metaphors that Chrysostom ascribes to the role and function of the church, it appears that a differing function existed between the purpose and relationship of the church to its own flock (internal function) and her purpose and function to the world (external relationship). As he saw the church in relationship to the saints, he perceived one thing. As he viewed the church's relationship to the world, he envisioned something different.

In her internal role to believers, the church served as a "mother" (Against Judaizing Christians I.8.4, III.6.1, On Baptismal Instructions IV.1, IX.5), a "spiritual clinic" (Homilies on John II), a "hospital" (On Repentance and Almsgiving III.19), a "family of Christians" (Demonstrations Against the Pagans I.6), an ark superior to Noah (On Repentance and Almsgiving VIII.3), a "harbor" (On Repentance and Almsgiving VIII.2), the "city of God" (Six Books on the Priesthood IV.3), the "flock" (On the Incomprehensible Nature of God XI.3, Six Books on the Priesthood II.4), a "spiritual market and a surgery for souls" (Homilies on Genesis XXXII.2), the "harlot" that became a "virgin" when Christ touched her (Homilies on Eutropius I.3, II.6, 7, 11), the "bride" of Christ (Homilies on Eutropius II.8,9,14,15,16, Homilies on Ephesians XX), the branches

of the main vine who is Christ (Homilies on 1 Corinthians VIII.7, Homilies on John LXXVI), a "spiritual bath" where souls can be cleansed through repentance (Homilies on 2 Corinthians XV.5) and the "house" or "building of God" (Homilies on Ephesians VI, X, XI, Homilies on 1 Corinthians XXXVI.8) where prayer is given to God (On Baptismal Instructions I.38, On the Incomprehensible Nature of God III.36, V.48). These metaphors suggest functions of nurture, care, rejuvenation, nourishment, cleansing, recovery, wellness and protection. As Christ's body, the church houses the "indwelling of the Son and the Spirit" (Christo 26) and carries "the depository of the Scriptures" (Christo 410) in order "to encourage a lifestyle conducive to collective salvation" (Maxwell "Lay Piety" 21) to the end that "religion…permeates every aspect" of a Christian's life (Sandwell 181).

From these metaphors that describe the internal function of the church, Christo (412) listed Chrysostom's primary "characteristic signs of the church" as "1) Absolute faith in and fear of Christ as God, 2) Love, 3) Temperance, 4) Moderation, 5) Equality, 6) Humility, 7) Piety, 8) Total dedication to God, 9) Almsgiving and 10) Repentance." In this administration, the function of the priest is critical, for although "the priesthood is discharged on earth, it ranks among heavenly ordinances" (Six Books on the Priesthood III.4). Priests "must take great care "to have "the Word of God dwelling richly" in them and to make sure that their "flock is following them" (Six Books on the Priesthood II.4, IV.3). With godly leadership, effective preaching and spiritual pastoring of the flock, Chrysostom sought to project the identity of a church to his own people that mirrored "a place of angels, a place of archangels, a palace of God, heaven itself" (Homilies on 1 Corinthians XXXVI.8). In other words, what he sought to do was to brand spiritually and idealistically upon his people the notion that the church was "a little piece of heaven on

earth" (Sandwell 132) that lived as a new "form of ethnicity" (Sandwell 181) as "a Christian city in the very epitome of the secular city" (Hartney 30). Anything less than this perfect picture of holiness, power and virtue was unacceptable and rejected, for the church's greatness, power and success came directly from God (Demonstrations Against the Pagans V.2-4, XII.9, XIII.6, XV.4-5, XVI.3, Against Judaizing Christians V.2.8).

While these "internal metaphors" reveal to some degree a sense of idealism and perhaps some measure of prototype romanticism, other metaphors used by Chrysostom to describe the church's relationship to the world (external) depict a deeper sense of realism and sensibility when seen from his ascetic interpretation of earthly life as temporal, sinful and decaying (Homilies Concerning the Statues VI.8, XVII.12, Letter to the Fallen Theodore I.9, Homilies on Romans XX, Homilies on John XXXVIII, XLIV, Homilies on Matthew XIV.6, Homilies on Genesis III.17, On the Incomprehensible Nature of God VI.4, Against Judaizing Christians VIII.9.5). From this background of decay and demonic warfare (Homilies Concerning the Statues III.7, XVI.6, Homilies on Ephesians XXII, Homilies on Acts XVII, Homilies on 1 Corinthians XII.7, Homilies on Genesis LXIV.26, Homilies on Matthew XXXIII.4, LIV.8, LIX.5, On Baptismal Instructions V.27, XII.35, III.8-9, Six Books on the Priesthood IV.3, VI.13), Chrysostom's philosophy of evangelism[173] was derived from Christian discipline, virtuous behavior and sacrifice. From this standpoint, four metaphors surface that describe Chrysostom's understanding of the church's presence and voice in culture: the church as a "pilgrim people," a "contestant," an "army" and as "salt and light."

Because the temporal things of the world are passing away quickly as a shadow (Letters to the Fallen Theodore I.9, II.5, Homilies on Hebrews IX.10, Homilies on

[173] See Hewitt (159-63) for a fuller discussion.

Romans XX, Homilies on John XLIV, On Baptismal Instructions VIII.11, Against Judaizing Christians VIII.9.5, Homilies Concerning the Statues VI.8) in contrast to the eternal city (church) in heaven (Homilies Concerning the Statues XVII.12, Homilies on Hebrews XXXIV.8, Homilies on John LXXIX, Homilies on Matthew I.1, LIV.8), Chrysostom likens the believer's engagement with the world as a "sojourning pilgrim, stranger or wanderer" (Homilies Concerning the Statues XVII.12, Homilies on Hebrews XXIV.1,4, Homilies on John LXXV, LXXIX, Homilies on Genesis V.3), a picture that positioned the earthly church as a "voyager" in the "between-times" (Greely 47) of the first and last advent of Christ:

> Dost thou not know that the present life is a sojourn in a far country? For art thou a citizen? Nay, thou art a wayfarer. Understand what I say? Thou art not a citizen, but thou art a wayfarer, and a traveler. Say not: I have this city and that. No one has a city. The city is above. The present life is but a journey. We are journeying on every day, while nature is running its course. Some there are who store up goods on the way: some who bury jewelry on the road…The present life is an inn: we have entered it, and we bring the present life to a close. Let us be eager to depart with a good hope; let us leave nothing here that we not lose it there. (Homilies on Eutropius II.5)

Sandwell (132-3) understands this sojourning mentality to be a possible option or response that permitted Christians to "disengage themselves" from civic life" so that heavenly citizenship becomes the prized, primary reference point; however, Chrysostom did not see earthly pilgrimage as an optional or possible response. To him wayfaring and sojourning was deeply rooted in his ascetic convictions and frugal ideology that

originated from the corporeal-incorporeal dynamics and "renunciation" of "Separatist Christianity" (Lopez 1, 3, 14, 58, 89, 147-50).

What do pilgrims do? They think often about heaven (Homilies on Hebrews XXXIV.8, Homilies on John XXXI, LXVII), see little value in, even despise the things of this world (Homilies on Hebrews IX.10, XXIV.1, 4, Homilies on John LXXIX, Homilies on Matthew XV.12, Homilies on Romans XX), shun wealth, possessions and luxury (Homilies on 1 Corinthians XIII.7, 8, 22, XIV.9, Homilies on John XLIV, LXXXVII, Homilies on Romans IX, Homilies on Genesis XX.17, 21, On Baptismal Instructions VIII.11) and mortify the carnal passions, sins and addictions (Homilies on Hebrews XVIII.4, Homilies on John XXV, Homilies on Matthew XVII.2, Homilies on Ephesians XXII, Discourse on the Blessed Babylas LIII). One of Chrysostom's famous statements brings this lifestyle to light, "The outward appearance can be a clear image of the inner condition of the soul" (On Baptismal Instructions IV.26). If a person's outer life showed only luxury, extravagance, excessive possessions, opulent jewelry and clothing at the expense or lack of charitable almsgiving, compassionate care for orphans, widows, prisoners, the poor, Chrysostom would call it "bondage" (Letters to the Fallen Theodore II.5) and "slavery" (Homilies on John XXXVIII, LXXXVII) to a "chain" (Homilies on 1 Corinthians XIII.7) and a "drunkenness of the soul" (Homilies on 1 Thessalonians IX). The pilgrim saw life as "ashes and dust" and as "smoke and a shadow" (Homilies on Hebrews IX.10), things that portrayed the "business of temporal affairs" (Homilies on John XXXVIII).

Chrysostom occasionally paralleled this earthly pilgrimage to the running of a race where "contestants" enter to "run the race of virtue…desirous of leaving earth to reach heaven [and] surrenders all visible things here below" (Homilies on Genesis

XXVIII.16). With this metaphor of "contest," the emphasis lies on the virtue of the performer as an effective witness to a watching world. From this central metaphor of contesting, a number of sports metaphors[174] arise in Chrysostom's writings. Because athletic contests were intensely popular in the late fourth century as a "popular pagan amusement" (Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 30), it was natural for Chrysostom to use this pagan imagery to depict a Christian theme.

In this contest, the amphitheatre constitutes not only unbelieving observers but also angels (On Baptismal Instructions III.8-9, Homilies on Matthew XXXIV.3) with God serving as the "Judge of the games of piety" (On Baptismal Instructions III.8-9, XII.35). Concentration (Homilies on Genesis XXVIII.16) and struggle (Homilies on Genesis XLII.5) characterized the contestant who wished to succeed. In this "amphitheatre of the world," Christians were called to "be earnest in their endeavors…before the eyes of all men" (Homilies on Matthew XV.11) and to witness to others with a "trustworthy life" (Homilies on Acts XLVII). This kind of "shining life" served as a "useful light…in service to others" (Homilies on John LII) and effected the greatest influence on pagans (Homilies on John LXXII).

Perhaps here more than anywhere else Chrysostom oozes frustration as a preacher. He held high expectations that his congregation would live up to the holy standards of Christian morality as a witness, but at times he felt and expressed disappointment over their laxity and indifference to Christian spirituality:

> Furthermore, tell me who of you, when at home, ever takes the Christian book in his hands and goes through what is contained therein, and studies Scripture? No

[174] Sawhill (9) states, "Chrysostom's use of athletic allusions is the most complete and illuminating of all early Greek Christian writers." See his work for fuller discussion on athletic metaphors.

> one would be able to say he does. However, we shall find that games and dice are in most houses; but never books, except in a few. And the latter have the same attitude as those who do not possess books, since they tie them up and store them away in chests all the time, and their whole interest in them lies in the fineness of the parchment and the beauty of the writing, not in reading them. They have not bought them with a view to obtaining help and profit, but are eager to acquire them to make a display of wealth and ambition, so excessive is their vainglory. Actually, I hear no one priding himself because he knows their contents, but because he possesses one written in gold letters. (Homilies on John XXXII)

Despite times of deep pastoral disappointment, Chrysostom resolved "to bear all things with longsuffering" (Homilies on John IV.4), experiencing in his own ways the trials of a contestant who combated against the devil and his forces in the games of life (Homilies on Genesis XLII.5). In his mind, "this is the time for contest and for fighting" (Homilies on Hebrews V.7). There was no better time to fight the battles, to persuade unbelievers by virtue and to advance the cause of the church than today.

Closely aligned to the metaphor of contesting is the image of a soldier who signed up for service in the Lord's army (On Baptismal Instructions I.8), a position of "great dignity" (Homilies on 2 Timothy IV) because it results in "great crowns" (Homilies on 2 Timothy IX). Being a soldier meant realizing that you are at war (Homilies on Matthew LIX.5), "taking up arms against the heretics" (Homilies on John XL), "putting on the armor of light" (Homilies on Matthew LVI.8), facing times of blood shedding in battle (Homilies on Hebrews V.7), showing valiance and vigilance in shining your spiritual weapons every day (On Baptismal Instructions V.27) as a part of readiness (On

Baptismal Instructions XII.61) and watching out for aliens who may "mingle among you" (Against Judaizing Christians I.4.9).

Chrysostom believed that preparation for battle was the key to success:

> We must take great care, therefore, that the word of Christ may dwell in us richly. For our preparation is not against a single kind of attack. This warfare of ours assumes complex forms and is waged by various enemies. They do not all use the same weapons and they have not all trained to attack us in the same manner. Anyone who undertakes to fight them all must know the arts of all. (Six Books on the Priesthood IV.3)

Chrysostom saw that the success of the early Christian movement (first and second century) came from God's powerful and miraculous hand that was "victorious over barbarians, pagans and every nation" (Demonstration Against the Pagans V.36, XIII.6, XV.5). In this battle, "the church won over not two, or ten, or twenty, or a hundred, but almost every man living under the sun" (Demonstration Against the Pagans XII.9). Even though "wars came upon the church," she "flourished and raised itself to new heights" (Demonstration Against the Pagans XVI.3). The "church's trophy" came against the devil and his hosts when they suffered injury and were persecuted for the cause of Christ (Homilies on 2 Corinthians V.1, XXV.3, Homilies on Ephesians VIII). They fought and "stood in opposition" using "reason and self-command" and not personal anger (Homilies on Acts XVII), "looking to salvation on behalf of all, and cheering them that stand, and raising up them that are down" (Homilies on Matthew LIX.5).

Certainly one of the best metaphors that Chrysostom uses to portray presence and voice is the picture of "salt, leaven and light" (Homilies to Those Who Had Not Attended

the Assembly II). Each is not "useful to itself…but is of service to others" (Homilies on John LII) to shine before them and to guide them (On Baptismal Instructions IV.20). This applied especially to those who were "melting in luxury" and who were "darkened by the care of wealth" (Homilies on Matthew XII.5), for "salt stings the corrupt and makes them smart" (Homilies on Matthew XV.10).

Chrysostom's explanation of the salt metaphor shows his philosophy of the church's presence and voice in society:

> For by saying, "Ye are the salt of the earth," he signified all human nature to have "lost its savor" and to be decayed by our sins. For which cause, you see, he requires of them such virtues as are most necessary and useful for the superintendence of the common sort. For first, the meek, and yielding, and merciful, and righteous, shuts not up his good deeds unto himself only, but also provides that these good fountains should run over for the benefit of others. (Homilies on Matthew XV.10)

What one gleans from this explanation is Chrysostom's "new view of the civic community" (Brown The Body and Society 30)—the creation of a "Christianized version of civic life" (Sandwell 140, 144) where a virtue-oriented philanthropic demonstration of deeds and good will to all people is used to persuade them to consider the Christian message and way of life. Notice how Chrysostom connects compassionate deeds with the "pilgrim" metaphor:

> Let us show forth then a new kind of life. Let us make earth, heaven; let us hereby show the Greeks, of how great blessings they are deprived. For when they behold in us good conversation, they will look upon the very face of the kingdom of

> heaven. Yea, when they see us gentle, pure from wrath, from evil desire, from envy, from covetousness, rightly fulfilling all our other duties, they will say, "If the Christians are become angels here, what will they be after their departure hence? If where they are strangers they shine so bright, how great will they become when they shall have won their native land!" Thus they too will be reformed, and the word of godliness "will have free course, not less than in the apostles' times. (Homilies on Matthew XLIII.7)

Chrysostom believed that moral behavior and good works in an "upwards and outwards" fashion constituted the most effective way to transform the city (Hartney 12). As a result of these efforts, Palladius commented how "the church put forth daily more abundant blossoms" so much that "the tone of the whole city was changed to piety" (V), although some have questioned this assessment (Sandwell 280, Hartney 194-5) because of the difficulty to change "old customs" and "bad habits" (Maxwell "Lay Piety" 20, Christianization and Communication 143-5). Even Chrysostom acknowledged that "when doctrines are the subject matter of the custom, it becomes yet more deeply rooted" (Homilies on 1 Corinthians VII.15). In any effect, he *attempted* to overlay "a new model of the city in Late Antiquity" (Hartney 195) through the virtuous behavior and humanitarian deeds of Christians who sought to persuade unbelievers in the quality of life that Christianity offered against the values of the Jews and the Greeks. While he may not have conceived of a "Christian empire" (Wilken John Chrysostom and the Jews 32), he certainly attempted "to transform the city by applying true ascetic values to an urban context" (Sandwell 139), although his temperament at times in implementing and evaluating this process of change could have resembled the perceived effects of a "blunt sledgehammer" (Hartney 195).

Conclusion on Chrysostom's Understanding of the Church and Culture

In this chapter, Chrysostom's important place in the Textuality/Discourse, the Social/Community and the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoints of the Christianization within the Roman Empire is appropriately and admirably noted. In an age of great social and economic change and decline, municipal turbulence, religious competition and intra-church division, John Chrysostom preached with eloquent skill, personal godliness and biblical power as a social moralist reformer to a vast and diverse audience in Antioch and in Constantinople. Through his preaching and writing, he sought to "construct a clear-cut Christian identity" through "categorical labeling" (Sandwell 163-5) that would define and promote the Christian cause as a new moral order in society. As a pastor and teacher, he understood the wickedness of humanity from the Bible's teaching on sin and positioned repentance in the church as the place for new beginnings in morality and behavior. Through his emphasis on human free will and the Scriptures' repeated themes of moral behavior and gender roles, he approached pastoral ministry and civic responsibility as a moralist, seeking to change individual and household behavior within his church first so that through an "upwards and outwards" movement, a new Christian city would emerge within the secular city (Hartney 30) that would exert growing persuasion and effective social change. His early grounding in ascetic values and Antiochene exegesis fused with his oratorical skills made him a prominent rhetorical figure for articulating the tenets of the Christian faith in a post-Nicene setting and for creating a distinct Christian identity for the church at a time when paganism and Judaism continued to thrive.

From this construction, Chrysostom saw the earthly church as the centerpiece of society, drawing its earthly meaning and power from union with Christ and from the eternal church in heaven. This identity and power would express itself specifically in the

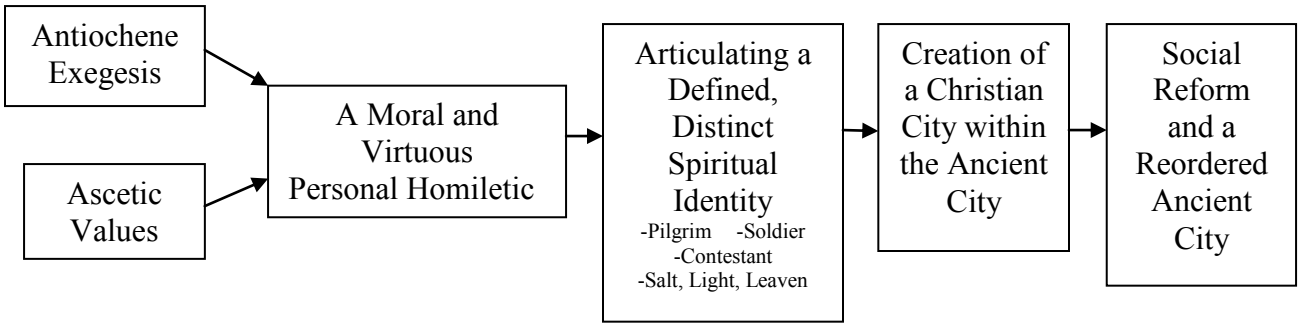
ways Christians related to one another within the church and in the manner that believers behaved and acted in society. John believed that "virtue" and a "well-disciplined life" was what "people need to see" from a Christian in order to bring credibility and integrity to the Christian faith (On Baptismal Instructions IV.21). Virtuous behavior and philanthropic deeds enabled Christians to act like salt, leaven and light to their culture. And while they were doing good deeds and showing appropriate behavior to unbelievers as a contest witnessed by humans, angels and God, they were also fighting the forces and principalities of the devil as competent Christian soldiers, caring nothing for this world because they saw themselves as pilgrims and sojourners in a strange land.

Chrysostom's understanding of the church's relationship to culture is idealistically flawless, yet pragmatically problematic and practically ambiguous at times. Obviously his emphasis on social change through the moral behavior and actions of Christians is commendable and ideal as a primary objective. But moral behavior alone will not change the social systems and municipal structures that threaten and oppress the well-being of a community. It takes discernment, skill, leadership, knowledge of community resources, municipal networking and determined will power to bring about lasting change in the social structures that either enslave or liberate a city's life and well-being. Associated with this dilemma were Chrysostom's own fears and tensions about the ongoing engagement between his parishioners with unbelievers and the concern that this could potentially weaken and contaminate the faith and purity of his congregation and their witness.

John Chrysostom presents a compelling objective for social change through the morality and virtuous actions of a church that he attempted to brand with a defined spiritual identity. His ideal church is an ascetic-minded, moral-practicing, pilgrim-

journeying, demon-battling and philanthropic-demonstrating body of believers who willingly suffer affliction in the battle, long for the heavenly city and shun the pagan amusements of this world. His vision came from ascetic values and Antiochene exegetical principles which constructed a moral and virtuous personal homiletic that articulated a defined spiritual identity (external metaphors) which attempted to construct a Christian city within the ancient city that moved towards greater social reform and reorder.

Chrysostom's Homiletic: The Articulation of a Defined Christian Identity that Mobilized the Church to Social Reform in the Urban City



Chapter 5

AUGUSTINE'S AMBIVALENT TRIANGLE OVER THE CHURCH'S PRESENCE AND VOICE IN CULTURE

The ongoing scholastic fascination and continuing voluminous published research over Augustine causes many scholars like Ellingsen to admit, "It is difficult to imagine what can be said about Augustine that has not already been said" (1). And while it is virtually impossible to keep up with contemporary research over Augustine's thought, it is perhaps *more* challenging to claim mastery over his *own* writings which represent the equivalent of close to forty three-hundred-plus paged books that were authored by him in the final forty-three years of his illustrious life (O'Donnell 135). Added to this challenge is the realization that in his intellectual and theological journey his positions either matured or changed; therefore, an obvious challenge for any Augustine admirer and student is to encompass enough of the African bishop's writings and beliefs so as to sense some degree of knowledge and understanding of his own thought along with the important implications that flow from it.

Like Origen and Chrysostom, Augustine holds a significant place not only in the viewpoints over the interpretation of Christianization within the Roman Empire, but also in the understanding and depiction of the church's place and role in culture. This chapter attempts to examine the times in which the African father lived, his important accomplishments in the history of thought in several areas as well as his understanding of the human condition and the nature of society as it relates to the part the church plays in and to a changing culture.

Although each theme in this discussion depends on and informs the other in varying ways and degrees, taken and seen together they provide important insights

concerning Augustine's view of the church's rhetorical voice to a changing society. This chapter concludes with the postulation of what is termed as "Augustine's Ambivalent Triangle," a prevalent dynamic tension active in Augustine's thought (ambivalence depicted here as a conflicting tension between more than two bodies of thought). Obviously some of this tension came from his developing maturity of thought and a continuous reflective experience. Some of this also came from his changing times. Life in the fourth and early fifth century contained many changes, turnovers and transitions coming from the fall of Rome and the blame that was cast upon the Christians who allegedly caused it (City of God I.1). In this discussion, it is important to feel this tension and to appreciate it as an "Augustinian ambivalence" (Markus Saeculum 167) in order to progress and to appreciate Augustinian thought. To begin, a basic overview of Augustine's times is needed.

In the late fourth and early fifth century, the Christianization within the Roman Empire from Constantine's conversion effected visible changes in many areas of life, most especially in the reallocation of monetary supplies toward the church (Cameron The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 165-6). This redistribution of wealth, cresting off the waves of more than two centuries of agricultural fertility[175] in Roman North Africa which produced a "wealthy urban civilization" (Frend The Donatist Church 33) and ushered in "a golden age in Africa" (O'Donnell 11), caused Augustine's home region to reap from a time of unparalleled prosperity[176] with progressive societal advancement seen as a genuine opportunity for individuals with ingenuity and a strong work ethic

[175] Frend's discussion (The Donatist Church 32-47) is instructive and illuminating in understanding Augustine and the times surrounding his life.

[176] Frend (The Donatist Church 47) notes from Arnobius how "Africa's chief sources of wealth were olive-culture and sheep-rearing… [along with] corn, fruit, trees, slaves, and cloth-working." But most especially, "the country was above all famed for its [olive] oil."

(Ellingsen 8). It represented an age of "two worlds" where "the old" was passing away and "the new was entering upon its heritage" with Augustine standing as the "watershed" between them (Warfield 118).

From this economic boom, a great social divide existed in North Africa between the "haves" (tax collectors, judges, bishops, local Roman officials, monks) and the "have-nots" (women, bandits, slaves, the sick) (O'Donnell 11-12, 194-5, 199) with little "egalitarian sentiment" to remedy such conditions (O'Donnell 12). This contributed to waves of intense personal and community fear (O'Donnell 12) as prosperous effects of original expansion in earlier centuries came "to a sinister halt" from the retreat of wealth from several of Africa's central population cities (Brown Augustine of Hippo 7). While successful trade attracted prosperous and cultured people (doctors, lawyers and grammar teachers) to towns like Carthage (Chadwick Augustine 6), Hippo was viewed to a lesser degree as a "small stage" city of thirty to forty thousand residents (O'Donnell 12) composed primarily of farmers (Brown Augustine of Hippo 8), businessmen and the distinct social classes brought about by the earlier and broader economic prosperity of North Africa (O'Donnell 12).

Over time this economic ambivalence created a multicultural population base comprised of indigenous Africans (Berbers), generations of long-term Phoenician settlers (Punics) and Italian migrants that settled in the region (Ellingsen 7). Although Augustine commented that he was a "Punic Cyprian" (Against Julian III.17.32), it is believed that his mother Monica was a Berber by ancestry (Brown Augustine of Hippo 21). In this light, Frend (The Donatist Church 230) notes how Thagaste, Augustine's home town, was "one of the centers of Libyan or proto-Berber culture." The deep Romanization of this region made personal life "very public" in numerous ways "with nothing under

covers, not even sex" (Ellingsen 8). This shaky and revealing public life, together with the anxieties associated with a mental shift to the Eschatos and final judgment (Brown The World of Late Antiquity 107-8), a rigid educational system in a patriarchal environment (Ellingsen 8, 10) and the presence of "forceful personalities such as Chrysostom and Ambrose" (Cameron The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 13) contributed to a "very fragile" and "out of doors" public platform (Ellingsen 8) where the church became a personal retreat to obtain peace, grace and divine hope (O'Donnell 194-5).

In this "close knit" public realm where economic life "became stagnant" (Brown Augustine of Hippo 12, 20), Christianity was recognized as the authorized and preferred religion (O'Donnell 13); however, vicious antagonism continued to exist between pagan and Christian groups throughout the empire (Cameron The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity 13) and the division within the professing Christian movement was clearly seen between Augustine's small fledgling church and the larger, "austere" Donatist community (O'Donnell 6-7, 14). Added to this tension were the oftentimes "drastic" and "ecstatic experiences" that many professing African Christians pursued through acts of "drunkenness, chanting, wild dances, dreams and trances" (Brown Augustine of Hippo 21), showcasing a tenuous and tumultuous religious sphere housed inside a feeble and eggshell-thick public sphere.

In this realm of numerous tensions, ambivalences and instabilities, Augustine was called to "clarify and codify ambiguities in Christianity's relationship to the physical and political world, ambiguities that dated back to Paul" (Lopez 4). It became Augustine's destiny "to mediate the transference of the culture of the old world to the new world" (Warfield 118); therefore, much of this transfer arguably came about from his crafting

and using a Ciceronian-based, biblically-nourished and church-channeled "Christian rhetoric" that was seen in his teaching, preaching, leadership and writings (Hermanson, et al.1). Like a "Westernized Russian in the nineteenth century established in Paris" (Brown Augustine of Hippo 22), the famed Bishop of Hippo emerged as a great thinker, philosopher, teacher, leader, writer and culture-changer because his perilous times and Christian wisdom forged in him a "complex and profound personality" (Trapè 350) that made him "the first modern man" (Chadwick Augustine 3) on the timeline of human history.

As a prototype thinker for a new era in human history, Augustine's accomplishments compel scholars to conclude that he was "unquestionably the greatest doctor of the church" (Tixeront A History of Dogmas 352), "one of the greatest geniuses of humanity" (Trapè 342), a "revolutionary force" (Warfield 114) and a "founder of the Christian culture of the Middle Ages" (Hagendahl 10). Wilken (The Spirit of Early Christian Thought xix) notes, "He is the most discerning, his thought flows at a deeper level, his range of interests is greater, he wrote with more elegance, and he has been the most influential, at least in the West." His contributions register a first in several important areas. Trapè (351) underscores Augustine's ability to create "the first great philosophical synthesis" which organized and categorized western thought around the knowledge of God and human selfhood with the subjects of truth, existence, love, justice, sin and peace that came from them. In this respect, O'Donnell recognizes "the fundamental impact" of his "organization of civil life and society" (202) that was derived from his two central "poles of thought"—"God and the human soul" (290). Because he pursued God deeply, he was enabled to make the most extensive contribution to the "spheres of psychology and metaphysics" (Warfield 124) in a way that "revolutionized

political theory" (Brown "Saint Augustine and Political Society" 18) and established "the basis for a synthesis which serves for a principle of order" in human life and social experience (Cochrane 399, Brown "Saint Augustine and Political Society" 21). It was this philosophical synthesis of order that overhauled the thought of the Middle Ages (Warfield 126), that provided "a way of escape from the riddles of classicism and its marginal spirits of thought" (Cochrane 399), that gave the West a system of "Christian ethics" (Warfield 125), that fostered the rise of modern science out of theology and anthropology (Chadwick Augustine 3) and that "sanctified the practice of pagan rhetoric" with the introduction of a new "Christian rhetoric" which came from the "unification" of wisdom and eloquence in the classical tradition (Cicero, Isocrates) with the truths of the Christian tradition (Hermanson et al 7). This movement to a "Christian rhetoric" enabled Augustine to become an eloquent "orator," a "formidable polemicist" and a "consummate master of rhetoric" (Trapè 351-2).

What compelled Augustine to become "a master of religious science" and a "doctor of Christian piety" who was equipped with a "speculative theology" to pen "an extensive theology of the heart" and of human "inner experience?" (Tixeront A History of Dogmas 354). What allowed him to give "an impulse and direction" to several categories of thought that "shaped the Catholic theory of the church," "founded the scholastic philosophy of the Middle Ages" and that paved the roads for the birth of the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation? (Glover Life and Letters 194). Tixeront (A History of Dogmas 355-6) attributes Augustine's impact to his "marvelous intelligence," "tender and compassionate heart" and his innate knack for "contemplation." While O'Donnell acknowledges his "talent," "connections" and personal "drive," he sees Augustine's penetration and depiction of the human soul that set him apart:

> Augustine writes and worries at length about the nature of the human soul because that soul is central to his understanding of himself, of humankind, and indeed of his god. If "heart" was always metaphor, "soul" was regularly insisted on as standing for something quite real. Augustine's soul is a spiritual creature, somehow both coterminous with the body but immortal, whether destined for heaven or for hell, often torn by emotions and distraction but potentially a serene unity at the heart of human existence. Augustine knows his soul well enough to talk to and sees his life's work to reside in soul management. (O'Donnell 326)

It was this exploration and observation of the human soul that would make Augustine "one of the most forceful and insistent exponents of a distrust of the flesh" (Roberts 287) who was equipped to interpret human life before God as "a great philosopher, a great theologian, a great orator, a great mystic and a great saint" (Tixeront A History of Dogmas 355-6) and to produce a "mature philosophy which seeks to do justice to all aspects of experience, and in particular to overcome the apparent discrepancy between the demands of order and those of process, between the so called Apolline and Dionysiac elements in life" (Cochrane 399). This philosophy revealed a distinctive "Christian rhetoric" (Hermanson et al 2) that "ignored" and "supplanted" sophistic rhetoric (Baldwin 188) by incorporating eloquence back into "active service" and partnership with biblical truth in the teaching of the Christian Scriptures and in the preaching of the Christian gospel (Murphy 217), thus escaping the dangers of what Murphy calls "an opposite rhetorical heresy:"

> The sin of the sophist is that he denies the necessity of subject matter and believes that *forma* alone is desirable. An opposite vice, one to which historians of rhetoric have never given a name, depends on the belief that the man possessed of truth will

> *ipso facto* be able to communicate the truth to others. It is a dependence upon material alone. Its chief proponent in ancient times was the young Plato, and it would seem fair to label it the "Platonic rhetorical heresy" just as we apply the term "sophistry" to its opposite theory…Augustine apparently recognized a danger in this aspect of the cultural debate of his times, and used the De Doctrina to urge a union of both matter and form in Christian preaching. (Murphy 217-8)

Because of Augustine's many contributions in human thought to theology, anthropology, psychology, sociology and philosophy, it is little wonder that he stands out as a significant contributor to the thought and to the "development of western life in all its phases" (Warfield 118) and that his writings through the centuries continue to receive study and admiration to this day (O'Donnell 4). His contributions to these subjects shed insight to his place in the various viewpoints of interpretation of the Christianization within the Roman Empire.

Augustine's Place in the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint

As a way to interpret and to understand the expansion of Christianity within the Roman Empire in the first five centuries, the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint claims that the remarkable growth of the church came primarily because of its skill in devising, cultivating and expressing a clear and discrete message through creative and inventive types of discourse (printed sermons, music, martyr biographies, apologetic literature, art) that were diverse, resilient and durable (textual) to the culture. Augustine's place in the maturation, explanation and proclamation of the Christian faith in the early fifth century reveals the vitality of the spoken word, the introspective personality behind it and the resurgent elevation of eloquence in oral delivery that began a new epoch in homiletical theory.

O'Donnell (135) aptly notes how "Augustine was always busy with words." His formal training in rhetoric[177] prepared him "to become a master of the spoken word" (Brown Augustine of Hippo 23). In his time, orality in the projection of a "living voice" was prevalent:

> The paradox of Christianity in Late Antiquity is that people were taught to believe in a written teaching that most could not read but only heard. The authority of the written text was conveyed by a living voice, which gave the text an effect far beyond what silent reading affords. (Schaeffer 295)

The active voices of the bishops, steeped in classical rhetoric and literature, secured their prominent standing and ongoing influence with the people (Cameron The Later Roman Empire 72). Their command of knowledge and language, together with the known fears in public life from Romanization and economic decline, the significant rise of asceticism (Brown Augustine of Hippo 152) and the active presence of the Manicheans and the Donatists (O'Donnell 53) gave Augustine an almost instant audience for his preaching and, most especially, for his Confessions.

Chadwick (The Early Church 216, 219) describes the Confessions as "one of the most moving works of Christian prose" and "an original masterpiece of introspective autobiography." Presented as a "testimony" (Litfin 216, Confessions X.4.6), it describes the human journey with "truthfulness, observation and experience" (Glover Life and Letters 195) in a way that "made sense to others"[178] and that "sustained and helped him

[177] Hagendahl (9) notes, "As a student and teacher of rhetoric he lived, up to the age of thirty-two, in the literary tradition cherished in the pagan school in the West; it formed his intellect and left too deep an impression for it ever to be obliterated." See Hagendahl's work which centers in "establish[ing], as accurately as possible, his knowledge of profane Latin authors and works" in order to have "a right understanding of Augustine the thinker, writer and controversialist."

[178] See Confessions II.3.5, IX.12.33 as examples.

shape the way he could lead his people and achieve his goals" (O'Donnell 7). In the Confessions, careful and prayerful readers are introduced to a "manifesto of the inner world" (Brown Augustine of Hippo 162, Confessions X.8.9) where intense pursuit and enjoyment of God (Glover Life and Letters 196, Confessions I.1.1, 2.2, 4.4, 5.5, 6, 13.21, II.7.15, V.1.1, VII.10.16), fear (O'Donnell 7, Confessions I.17.27, 19.30, III.1.1, IV.6.11), Scriptural reflection and internalization (Trapè 425, Brown Augustine of Hippo 155, Confessions I.1.1, 4.4, 8.10, VII.10.16, VIII.12.29, IX.1.1, XI.27.34), an "ideology of doubt" (O'Donnell 43, Confessions V.14.25, VI.2.2, 4.5, VIII.1.1), an "anxious turning to the past" and a "note of urgency" (Brown Augustine of Hippo 157) is read and sensed. Prayer is often seen as Augustine's preferred tool for introspective investigation (Brown Augustine of Hippo 159, Confessions I.5.5, 6, 7.12, 9.14, 15.24, III.4.7, 11.19, VI.1.1, X.2.2, XI.2.3, 9.11) and from his times of "intense personal involvement in the ideas he is handling" (Brown Augustine of Hippo 160), readers catch glimpses of God (Glover Life and Letters 196, Confessions I.4.4, VII.10.16, XI.5.7, XI.31.41, XII.7-10, XIII.2.2), personal confusion (O'Donnell 43, 59, Confessions II.2.2, IV.4.8), the "tension between the 'then' of the young man and the 'now' of the bishop" (Brown Augustine of Hippo 157, Confessions I.9.14, 11.17, 13.20, 19.30, II.1.1, 3.6, 4-6, III.1-2), weakness "failure" and "fragility" (O'Donnell 76, Confessions VI.20.26, VIII.1.2, 8.20, IX.2.4, X.4.6), a "personality" that breathed "freshness, depth and brilliancy" (Warfield 247) in an atmosphere situated with life "triumphs and gains…and losses" (O'Donnell 76). Brown depicts his quest as a nomadic, restless philosophical roving through the seasons of human life:

> These incidents are always placed in relation to the most profound philosophical concepts available to a Late Antique man: they embodied, for Augustine, the great

> themes of the Neo-Platonic tradition in its Christian form; they are suffused with a sense of the omnipresence of God, and they illustrate the fatal play of forces in a wandering soul, the tragedy of a man "disintegrated" by the passing of time. (Brown Augustine of Hippo 161)

As an "act of therapy," Augustine penned the Confessions to arouse the "intellect and feelings" of people to align their memories and experiences of the human journey with the exploration of the nature of God (Brown Augustine of Hippo 158-9). It is *not* the product of a "big frog in a small pond" for a "moment of opportunity" (O'Donnell 41); instead, the Confessions represent a "masterpiece of strictly intellectual autobiography" (Brown Augustine of Hippo 160) where in a "poignant" way (Brown Augustine of Hippo 157) readers are welcomed into the world of an exploring, restless God-searcher who yearns for meaning and perspective in a personal journey that encounters success and defeat in an environment of fragility and uncertainty. This introspective chronicling and journaling not only represented a different form of discourse in Augustine's time, but also it revealed his desire to see content (Scripture) and form (eloquence) reunited in written and oral discourse.

While eloquence is seen throughout all of Augustine's writings, it appears as a cornerstone element in his rhetorical presuppositions in Book IV of On Christian Doctrine. In keeping with the Ciceronian orator's duties of "teaching, delighting and persuading"[179] (On Christian Doctrine IV.17.34), Augustine's preacher and teacher uses "the faculty of eloquence, which of great value…for the uses of the good in the service of truth" (On Christian Doctrine IV.2.3) so that the audience may be persuaded, for persuasion is "the end of eloquence" (On Christian Doctrine IV.25.55). In cultivating

[179] Augustine derives this from Cicero (Brutus XLIX)

eloquence, the internalization of Scripture plays an important role, for it enables the student-rhetor to mature "through the testimony of the great" (On Christian Doctrine IV.5.8). Combined with the written and spoken "disputations and sayings of eloquent people" (On Christian Doctrine IV.3.5), they represent a formidable learning environment for nurturing and fostering eloquence in public speaking, teaching and preaching.

Augustine's insistence on eloquence with content ushered in a new era for rhetorical theory by injecting Ciceronian theory into homiletical practice (Baldwin 187). Book IV of On Christian Doctrine served as the grounds for sermonic preparation all the way to the thirteenth century (Murphy 214) and it "remains one of the most fruitful of all discussions of style in preaching" (Baldwin 191); however, Augustine's discussion in Book IV is not a carbon-copy regurgitation of Cicero:

> A fresh look at the relevant texts suggests that Augustine has in fact profoundly modified the Ciceronian doctrine on two major points at least: first, by asserting the priority of the teaching function of the orator over the two other functions, and, secondly, by investing the terms *docere* and *doctrina*, which best express that function, with a meaning that could never have been ascribed to them by Cicero. (Fortin "Augustine and the Problem of Christian Rhetoric" 221)

Certainly one cannot disavow Cicero's impact upon Augustine's thinking (Fortin "Augustine and the Problem of Christian Rhetoric" 232); however, it is also important to recognize that "Augustine's preacher teaches in a way in which even Cicero's perfect orator could never be said to teach" (Fortin "Augustine and the Problem of Christian Rhetoric" 226). The partnership of wisdom and eloquence for Augustine "is more than preoccupation with Cicero, more than repudiation of sophistic. It springs from the

cardinal importance of the truism for homiletic" (Baldwin 194). Certainly Scripture is "the soul of Augustine's theology" (Trapè 425); however, eloquence is its spokesperson.

Seeing Augustine's place in the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint gives rich insight in seeing not only the resurgent return of eloquence to the arena of pulpit homiletics but also the introduction and popularity of introspective rhetoric as a means to lead people to self-examination, worship, confession, repentance and personal resolution. Both forms of Augustinian rhetoric reflect his passionate desire to teach so that persuasion can follow in proper line (On Christian Doctrine IV.12.28).

Augustine's Place in the Supernatural/Eschatological Viewpoint

In an effort to analyze and to explain the rapid progression of Christianity in the first to the fifth centuries, scholars in the Supernatural/Eschatological Viewpoint direct attention to the abundance of attested and recorded acts of paranormal and mystic power (resurrections, exorcisms, healings, miracles) that accompanied the proclamation of the Christian message and the expansion of the church, all grounded in Christ's power to build the church against the forces of evil and his promise to return a second time in glory and splendor. Augustine's development and propagation of thought on supernaturalism and eschatology place him in an important position on the timeline of this viewpoint as "the relative dominance of philosophy and eschatology may be found to lie at the roots of his intellectual development" (Markus Sacred and Secular XV.432). Likewise, Trapè (451) sees his system of dogma as "decidedly eschatological, in as much as it takes its orientation, illumination and significance from eschatology."

Arguably, nowhere does Augustine's system of thought or supernaturalism shine more brightly than his introspective discussion of mystery and mysticism as it pertains to God, creation, the incarnation, redemption and the church. In the Confessions, he

mentions the "mystery of providence" (V.6.11), the mystery in "the Word made flesh" (VII.19.25), "the nature of the saint's eternal life" as a mystery in discussion with his mother Monica shortly before her death (IX.10.23), the "secret place of God's mystery" (XI.31.41) and the mystery of human dominion over creation (XIII.24.35). In the City of God, he discusses the "mystery of the Old Testament" (IV.33), the "mystery of eternal life" (VI.11, VII.32), the mystery of Christ's sacrifice for the believer's purification, something that was unintelligible to "Porphyry's pride" (X.24), the mystery of Christ's incarnation (X.25), the mystery of the virgin birth (X.32), the mystery of the animals in Noah's Ark (XV.27), the mystery in the "inner man" (XVI.2), the mystery of anointing (XVII.6), the mystery of the revelation of salvation outside of Israel before the first advent (XVIII.47), the mystery of Christ's shed blood (XVIII.49), the mystery of the sacrifice of God's people, "His own city" (XIX.23) and the mystery of iniquity (XX.19). In On Christian Doctrine, Augustine refers to the "mystery of the most pure church" (II.16.25) and to the "mystery of the crucifixion of the Lord's flesh" (IV.21.46). It is little wonder that Warfield (152-3) recognized how Augustine's "doctrine of mystery lies at the heart of all our knowledge."

A significant portion of Augustine's understanding of mystery lies in "the question of evil" and how it "was very much before the minds of men in Augustine's day" (Glover Life and Letters 202). In his mind, "evil is only the privation of the good" (Confessions III.7.12), something that came from "the division of irrational life" that was "not a substance" (Confessions IV.15.24, VII.12.18, 16.22) and not from God (Confessions V.10.20, VII.4.6); rather, evil is "perversity of will, twisted away from…God, and towards lower things" (Confessions VII.16.22). This aids in the

Augustinian understanding of demonism, a belief deeply felt in the lives of North Africans going back at least to the third century (Frend The Donatist Church 94):

> Augustine believed in demons: a species of beings, superior to men, living forever, their bodies as active and as subtle as the air, endowed with supernatural powers of perception; and, as fallen angels, the sworn enemies of the true happiness of the human race. Their powers of influence were enormous: they could so interfere with the physical basis of the mind as to produce illusions. Thrust into the turbulence of the lower air, below the moon, these condemned prisoners, awaiting sentence in the Last Judgment, were always ready to swoop, like birds, upon the broken fragments of a frail and dissident humanity. (Brown Augustine of Hippo 310)

The theme of demons runs powerfully through the City of God. In his discussion, Augustine believes that demons, "the Roman gods who looked after their own affairs" (II.22), have limited power to do only what God permits (II.23, XVIII.18), provoke people to wickedness and crime (II.25), are teachers of a wicked and impure life (II.26), do not have the power that they are reputed to have (II.29), are "watchful to deceive" (III.7, IV.19), "terrify or incite the minds of wicked men" (III.10), are "innumerable" (IV.25), "teach depravity and rejoice in vileness" (IV.27), can possess those whom they falsely deceive" (IV.32), "persuade people in the name of religion to receive as true those things that are false" (IV.33), called "angels of the devil," "false gods" (V.9) and "foul" (VII.21), are worshipped by human superstition (VII.35), are subject to the passions (VIII.17, IX.6), empower the wonders of the sorcerers (VIII.19), are more miserable than man (IX.10), are rational creatures (IX.13), "false and deceitful mediators" (IX.18), called "demon from a Greek word for knowledge…without charity" (IX.20), "do not

contemplate the wisdom of God and often err" (IX.22), are "devoted to the magical arts and incantations" (X.8), are "granted power to vent" against the people of the God (X.21) and are full of arrogance (X.26) with a "life that is most miserable, full of errors and fears" (XX.1).

Mystery is also woven in other eschatological teachings such as the resurrection body (City of God XIII.18, XXII.12-21, 30), judgment (City of God XXII.30), the believer's fullness with God in eternity (Confessions X.28.39)—an abode that encompasses reward, peace and worship (City of God XXII.29-30) as well as "truth, dignity, holiness"…and "felicity" (City of God II.29) with no change (City of God XI.6). What intensifies this Augustinian appreciation of mystery is when it is understood in direct "juxtaposition" to the earthly world of "existence" and "contemplation, human misery since the fall of Adam to the Last Judgment" known as the "*Saeculum*" (Brown "Saint Augustine and Political Society" 22-26). Set in this dynamic contrasting tension, Augustine's depiction of earthly life as a "pilgrim" on a "pilgrimage" comes to light (Confessions XI.2.4, XIII.16.23, XIII.14.15, City of God I.15,29, V.16, 18, XI.31, XIV.9, XV.6, XVII.3, 4, 13, XVIII.51, 54, XIX.14, 17, 23, 26, 27, XXI.24, On Christian Doctrine I.30.31).

Seeing Augustine's place in the Supernatural/Eschatological Viewpoint gives valuable insight into understanding the power of his vision that was "all the greater because of its ambiguities, dangling threads of argument and suggestion" (Roberts 289). His understanding of reality was surrounded by dynamic contrasts and forces—the demons' ferocity warring against God's perfect good, the forces of worldliness grinding against the verities of the spiritual, the present temporal state groaning and yearning for the glories of the eternal state, the sojourning days of pilgrimage hoping for a final abode

of peace and rest, the weakness of the outer man crying for spiritual redemption for the inner man and the darkness of worldly wisdom opposing the light of holy revelation—all situated between the *Civitas Terrena* and the *Civitas Dei.*

Augustine's Place in the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint

As a way to explain the expansion of Christianity within the Roman Empire in the first five centuries, scholars in the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint point to the faith's intellectual qualities as a system of truth that developed over time into an organized interpretation and articulation of reality that was ascertainable, apprehendable and teachable. These attributes were embedded within philosophical frameworks that allowed searchers to examine its claims and to draw out its meaning and implications through specific hermeneutical methods that gave clarity, explanation and distinction to the faith.

Augustine's place in the explanation and advancement of Christian truth as a scholarly system of philosophy lay in his understanding and articulation of the active partnership between God and the human soul in the work of "theistic intuitionalism" (Warfield 143-4, Augustine On the Trinity XI.1.1), his emphasis on faith before reason and its importance for objectivity and immutability, and his view of authority and its implications for interpretation and for the understanding of signs.

Brown (Augustine of Hippo 161) recognizes that the Neo-Platonists gave Augustine "the theory of the dynamics of the soul." This enabled Augustine to begin the quest of knowledge not from the outside, but from the "inward gaze" (Warfield 125, Augustine On the Trinity X.8.11, XIII.1.2, XIV. 3.5). This approach was made possible because of his understanding of the "image of God and…dependence on God" (Warfield 145, Augustine On the Trinity I.8.18, VII.6.12, IX.2.2, 12.17, 18, XII.3.3, 7.12). With

this direction, Augustine began the search for truth and knowledge in life with the recognition that God was the "*causa subsistendi*, the *ratio intelligendi* and the *ordo vivendi*" (Warfield 143-4, Augustine On the Trinity III.4.9, 9.19) who gives knowledge of the sensible and the intelligible (Warfield 146-7, Augustine On the Trinity IX.3.3) through love (On the Trinity VIII. Title, VIII. 7. Title) from a process likened to that of "imprinting" of a "stamp or seal" upon wax (On the Trinity XIV.15.21). Therefore, greater knowledge and deeper understanding comes when faith, a "gift from God" (On the Predestination of the Saints 3-5), comes before reason (On the Profitability of Believing 22, On the Trinity IX.1.1). Faith acts upon the soul and thereby enables the soul to act and to see the light given by God (Warfield 145-6, On the Trinity I.8.17, 10.21, 13.31, II.17.28, 32, IV.18.24). Because of this order, comprehension comes as a "reward of faith" (Trapè 403, On the Trinity IV.18.24, VII.6.12); therefore, "what faith affirms, reason also understands" (Ellingsen 17) because God dwells in the memory (Confessions X.25.36).

The starting focus on "interiority" (Trapè 407, Augustine On the Trinity II.17.28) makes the "inner consciousness" the place where "truth can be found" (Warfield 139, Augustine On the Trinity III.3.9, IX.4.5) as opposed to the approach of "sensationalism and empiricism which teach respectively that our knowledge is derived exclusively from sensation or experience" (Warfield 139-40, Augustine On the Trinity III.1.5, IV.16.21, XI.2.3, 5.8). In this inner sanctum, the soul acts "under laws of its own" and through its reasoning or "participation" (Trapè 407, Augustine On the Trinity III.3, IX.3.3, 4.4) "brings over from the intelligible world the forms of thought under which alone the sensible world can be received by it into a mental embrace" (Warfield 142, Augustine On the Trinity III.8.13, IV.7.12, XII.3.3). This produces what is known as "indubitable

objectivity" (Warfield 141, Augustine On the Trinity XI.1-3) that is grounded in "immutability" because its source is from God (Trapè 407, Augustine On the Trinity IV. Preface).

This understanding of objectivity that is based on immutability puts the attainment of knowledge and knowledge itself on solid ground:

> The effect of such an ascription of all human knowledge to a revelation from God is naturally greatly to increase the assurance with which truth is embraced. The ultimate ground of our certitude becomes our confidence in God. In the last analysis, God is our surety for the validity of our knowledge; and that, not merely remotely, as the author of our faculties of knowing, but also immediately as the author of our every act of knowing, and of the truth which is known. (Warfield 149)

Augustine's "phenomenology of the mind" was remarkably different than Cicero's (Leff 241), situating authority before reason (Of the Morals of the Catholic Church II.3, On the Trinity III.11.22) so that the human being can progress with reason on the "road to truth" (Warfield 164). By putting authority at the beginning, Augustine established the ultimate rule or source to center in God, his disclosure to humanity in the Scriptures (On the Trinity XIII.9.12, XV.4.6) and in the recipients of that Scripture (the Apostles) who would establish the authority of the church (Warfield 178, Augustine On the Trinity IV.6.10). This understanding of authority did not forsake reason; instead, it elevated reason to its proper place as the tool to apprehend and to discover unrevealed truth (Warfield 164, Augustine On the Trinity III.2.8, 3.8, IV.18.24, 21.31, IX.6.11). It also gave reason the solid ground to pivot and to move to the truth, a guarantee deeply connected to the quality of a person—God:

> In our vocabulary, authority is often associated with coercion, with power and force, with the ability to enforce laws or impose regulations that exact obedience from us. We speak of submitting to authority and of obeying authority and assume that authority has to do with bending the knee or, in the case of ecclesiastical doctrines, sacrificing the intellect. In Augustine's day, the term *authority* carried overtones that differ from our usage. In the Latin language *authority* (*auctoritas*) derives from the term *auctor*, the word for author, and in its original sense referred to the person who guaranteed the validity or authenticity of a will or some other legal document. Authority referred to the quality of a person, for example, a magistrate or testator, that makes it possible to act on the basis of what someone has said. In this sense authority is a common, indeed indispensable, aspect of human life and society. (Wilken The Spirit of Early Christian Thought 170-1)

Augustine's positioning of authority as the grounds for human exploration guided him in his approach to interpretation, for he understood that humility was a prerequisite for uncovering truth (Sermon I.6, On the Trinity VIII.7.11). It enabled him to adopt a fourfold sense of Old Testament Scripture: "the historical, aetiological, analogical and the allegorical" (On the Profit of Believing 5); however, he appeared to move more towards a "literal signification" and a "figurative signification" (Sermon 39.4). While scholars recognize his use of a "polysemous understanding of the literal sense" when discussing issues of philosophy, dogma or unity, they also see his preference for the "plain, literal meaning" when he was interpreting the Bible or answering those who challenged the faith (Ellingsen 30-1, Tixeront A History of Dogmas 357). Ellingsen explains:

> He never abandoned allegory and the endeavor to relate reason to faith when he sought to offer apologies for Christian faith or dealt with sanctification. But when

> dealing with heresies or expositing the logic of the Christian faith, he concentrated more on the literal sense of the biblical text as the norm, if not the source of hermeneutical conclusions. And when concerned with apologetics in more implicit ways while explicating the faith, the African Father employed something like the modern method of Critical Correlation. Augustine's contextually conditioned use of these distinct hermeneutics, allegory and a kind of narrative approach to Scripture, provides significant insights into his own theological method. (Ellingsen 16)

Ellingsen (19) recognized that Augustine's shift to a more literal approach later in life could have occurred simply because the matters of his study favored the literal interpretation. Whatever the reason for his turn, scholars generally acknowledge in him "an increasing preference for figural over allegorical interpretation" (Ellingsen 29). This helps explain his development of thought and use of signs[180] in his system of hermeneutics.

Seeing Augustine's place in the Supernatural/Eschatological Viewpoint gives valuable insight concerning his understanding of authority and objectivity as they situate him to observe and to discuss the place and purpose of human life (soul and body) in a fractured, broken world that was initially created pure and orderly at the beginning. From this base of "indubitable objectivity" (Warfield 141) that was grounded in divine revelation, he could see not only the good and the bad, but also express moments of

[180] While outside the realm of this study on the Christianization within the Roman Empire and its implications on modern day understanding of the presence and the voice of the church in culture, the study of signs in Augustine's theory of language is fascinating. Watson (248) states, "Augustine's business was with words and language right through his life…He saw all the world as a sacrament or sign of a hidden reality, and among the signs the most striking were words. For fuller discussion on Augustine's understanding of signs, see Pelikan (The Mystery of Continuity 123-9) and Marcus (Sacred and Secular XIV).

wonder and inadequate understanding (especially the "mysteries" previously discussed) in human life. This experience created numerous moments of conflict, tension and ambivalence within him and his views as he sought to understand and to explain the meaning of life and how people should live it in light of the certain and promised Eschatos that awaited all people.

The Human Condition: An Ambivalence between Good and Evil

Although he believed that God created all things good and everything together as very good (Confessions VII.12.18, XIII.4, XIII.28), Augustine understood that the first couple's initial evil deed consisted in their "falling away from the work of God to their own works" (City of God XIV.11) through the "perversive appetite of pride" (City of God XIV.13). This descent from God's resolute goodness resulted in corruption (Confessions VII.12.18), a distortion that Augustine labeled as "wretched" (VI.6), "perverse and twisted" (VII.16) and "carnal" (VIII.5.10) in the Confessions. Because evil was simply the privation of good (Confessions III.7.12, City of God XI.22), man's turning and decline from God contaminated not only his soul, but also his body as a consequent punishment (City of God XIV.3). In this contamination, everything about human life was disfigured and fractured; however, it was *also* a world of good because a good God created it good (City of God XI.20,22; XII.5, XIII.38; Confessions I.6.7; I.20.31; XIII.2.2, 4.5, 28.43, 38.53). In this respect, "Augustine is the first Father to have clearly established the character of guilt inherent in the sin that has passed from Adam to all mankind" (Altaner 522).

Brown notes that this belief of a catastrophic "sin" that polluted the human predicament was held by the church and by non-Christians in Augustine's time (Brown Augustine of Hippo 390). O'Daly (157) states that this perverse decision "involves no

ontological loss, but it is a kind of approximation to nothingness" that "degrades man." Richard Niebuhr defines this degradation as a "disordered soul [that is] corrupt in all its parts" because of the primary loss of its relationship to God (Christ and Culture 212). This kind of state Augustine called "monstrous" (Confessions VIII.9.21) and a "seedbed of bitterness" (Confessions VII.3.5); therefore nothing was more impacted than the human will, most especially his *own* will as he saw the teaching of Scripture against his own experience (TeSelle 96, Confessions I.18.31, II.6.12, VI.15.25, VII.3.5, IX.12.33, X.41.66, 43.70). Yet as he reflected on his own corruption, he acknowledged the goodness of God in this dynamic ambivalence (compare Confessions VII.3 with VII.4).

Regularly in the Confessions Augustine describes in particular detail the conflict that raged within his will because of the sin and corruption in his Adamic life (IV.7.12, VII.3.5). Calling it a "sickness in the mind," (VIII.9.21), he depicts the struggle as an ambivalent war in his will:

> As for me, when I deliberated upon serving the Lord my God, as I had long planned to do, it was I myself who willed it and I myself who did not will it. It was I myself. I neither willed it completely, nor did I refrain completely from willing it. Therefore, I was at war within myself, and I was laid waste by myself…Therefore, it is no more I that did it, but sin that dwells in me, sin that issues from punishment of a more voluntary sin, for I was Adam's son. (Confessions VIII.10.22)

This kind of honest admission earned Augustine the title of the "first great realist in Western history" (Reinhold Niebuhr 120). He understood the authenticity of evil, defined by Elshtain as "the unbearable lightness of nonbeing" (81). He did not see the Adamic Fall affecting only the soul, but also the soul and the body together simultaneously (Troup 149-50). Because of this, his rhetoric in the Confessions is

brutally honest, strenuous, and even painful at times as he recalled the times of "torment" that he experienced from his own sin and a wounded will (VII.7.11). Yet in the same breath he gave thanks to God for his goodness at times (Compare Confessions VIII.4 with VIII.5).

Mackinnon (350) summarizes Augustine's position this way, "The source of conflict in history is the soul and its Adamic nature." Augustine found in the function of the will the important link that resolved for him the ambivalence between theology (knowing God) and ethics (man's behavior). Contrasting his position with Plato's, Cushman comments:

> If Plato wrestled to account for the ignorance of the sophist and the materialist, neither was he altogether successful in explaining why any of the Cave dwellers emerged into the light. As Augustine conceived the matter, men are in the Cave and willingly committed to Cave-knowledge. The will is the problem. (Cushman 290)

It is this kind of depravity that made Pagels (373) conclude that Augustine's "bondage of the will depicts humanity as sick, suffering, and helpless, irreparably damaged by the Fall." Without undergoing the transforming work of grace, the fallen will cannot choose the virtuous (Sanderlin 134). It is a dilemma affecting man not only on an individual level, but also on a societal level.

Society: An Ambivalence between Two Cultures

In the Confessions II.5, Augustine asks a revealing question, "A man commits murder: why did he do so?...Would anyone commit murder without reason and out of delight in murder itself?" He answers this dilemma in the next chapter with the realization that man's rebellion and perverse turning from God causes "soul fornication"

and "deepest death" (II.6.14). In City of God, he states, "Mankind everywhere is generally divided against itself, and when one part is the stronger, it oppresses another" (XVIII.2). No doubt the biblical influence of St. Paul's Roman letter, especially chapter 1 framed his understanding of this perversion in society.[181] Augustine lived in a world where "the struggle between Christianity and paganism was not just a conflict of two religions; it was a conflict of two different cultures, associated with two different types of religion" (Brown "Christianity and Local Culture in Late Roman Africa" 90).

Augustine believed that lust and pride were the "chief kinds of iniquity" that fueled this kind of cultural war (Confessions III.8.16, City of God XIX.12). Using Cain and Abel (Genesis 4) as examples, he states:

> The wicked, therefore, strive against the good and the good against the wicked…Thus the spiritual desire of one man can strive against another's spiritual desire, just as the good and the wicked strive against one another. Or even the carnal desires of two good men...may strive. (City of God XV.5)

One will not receive from Augustine a surreal "and they lived happily ever after" vision of a utopian society. In fact, Markus (Sacred and Secular IV.374) believed that Augustine would characterize any utopian-conceived society as a "dangerous delusion." In the African bishop's world, hate, lust, division, war and contention were realities seen and felt every day (City of God XXII.22). They occur within the *Saeculum* (O'Daly 76, Brown "Saint Augustine and Political Society" 22-26, Markus Christianity and the Secular 39, Saeculum 55, 62-71, 83, 101-4, 122-3, 133, 158-86), a term that represents Augustine's philosophical sphere of the *real* world—a world of pain and suffering,

[181] Confessions III.8.16 (Romans 1:16), V.3.5 (Romans 1:21-25), VII.9.15 (Romans 1:21, 22), VIII.1.2 (Romans 1:22) and X.6.8 (Romans 1:20).

misfortune, grief and persecution where the church and pagan culture coexist side-by-side since the time of Cain and Abel and until the final resurrection. In this "temporal period between the Fall and the end-time" (Elshtain 94), Augustine sees life as "profoundly sinister" (Brown "Saint Augustine and Political Society" 25), grinding out a struggle, a "wrestling-match" with the world and its hostile forces (Brown Augustine of Hippo 240). In this conflict, he saw himself as a soldier (Confessions VIII.5.11) and a pilgrim (Confessions X.4.6, XII.11.11, City of God XIX.17) living with "gnawing cares, disturbances, griefs, fears, insane joys, discords, litigation, wars, treasons, angers, hatreds, falsehood, flattery, fraud, theft, rapine, perfidy, pride, ambition, envy, homicides, parricides, cruelty, ferocity, wickedness, luxury, insolence...the crimes of wicked men" (City of God XXII.22), a life "doomed to remain incomplete" (Brown "Saint Augustine and Political Society" 26).

Markus offers added insight to the understanding of *Saeculum*:

> The *Saeculum* for Augustine was the sphere of temporal realties in which the two 'cities' share an interest. In Augustine's language, the *Saeculum* is the whole stretch of time in which the two cities are 'inextricably intertwined;' it is the sphere of human living, history, society and its institutions, characterized by the fact that in it the ultimate eschatological oppositions, though present, are not discernable. (Markus Saeculum 133)

The *Saeculum* represents a world "lacking a homogeneous culture, one in which no agreement can be assumed among its members on their value-systems, their world views, religions: in short a 'pluralist' society" (Markus Sacred and Secular IV.376). In this "intermediate realm" that was mixed with the "sacred" and the "profane" (Markus Sacred and Secular II.85, IV.376), human institutions and life as a whole were

"irretrievably infected with man's sin" and man can not heal this "dislocation" (Markus Saeculum 105, Sacred and Secular IV.374). As a consequence, depraved man—both individually and corporately—needs restraint (Brown Augustine of Hippo 234); therefore, in Augustine's understanding of the world, the state's function in the *Saeculum* is "to contain the disorder, to control the conflict, to secure the shared good needed by all…to control the distribution and exercise of power, to prevent dangerous invasions and takeovers…to protect the conditions in which individuals, families and groups can pursue their legitimate purposes" (Markus Sacred and Secular IV.374). In Augustine's mind, Cicero's "true justice commonwealth" (City of God II.21) could not survive; instead, the only kind of *possible* society that could endure was one which contained "an assembled multitude of rational creatures bound together by a common agreement as to the objects of their love" (City of God XIX.23). In other words, the most kind of "common loves" between people would hold them together and at bay as a functioning community in the world. But even in *this* type of society, there was still plenty of ambivalence present because of sin.

In Augustine's view, one sees this ever present ambivalence between people and cultures. Evil is actively present and working, but good is also present because of God's creational imprint. Kraft (112) and Richard Niebuhr (Christ and Culture 217) link him with Calvin and Wesley's "conversionist" view of culture that "holds fast to the radical distinction between God's work in Christ and man's work in culture, [and] they do not take the road of exclusive Christianity into isolation from civilization, or reject its institutions with Tolstoyan bitterness" (Niebuhr Christ and Culture 190). Kraft offers an interesting elaboration:

> Conversionists are akin to both the synthesists and the dualists in understanding Christ more as redeemer than as lawgiver. They understand sin more as the dualists do, focusing on its pervasiveness in all human activity and the consequent corruptness of all that humans do. All culture is therefore under the judgment of God. Yet they see culture as under God's sovereign rule as well, and the Christian as under obligation to 'carry on cultural work in obedience to the Lord.' (Kraft 113)

In this fractured *Saeculum* where debasement and corruption of the good is seen everywhere and where conflict repeatedly occurs, how does the Christian and the church live? How does Augustine depict the life and daily actions of the obedient Christian?

Pilgrimage: An Ambivalence between Suffering Misery and Enjoying/Doing Good

Hazelton (93), Brown (Augustine of Hippo 323) and other scholars bring to light a rich biblical metaphor used philosophically by Augustine—the *homo viator*, or "pilgrim" (Confessions X.4.6, XII.11.11, City of God XIX.17), one who is "tossed about on the stormy sea of the world" (Cranz "The Development of Augustine's Ideas on Society" 259) as a "sojourner in Thy Tabernacle" (Exposition of the Psalms LXI.5) and as a "stranger" in the earthly city, "subject to the temptations and vicissitudes of earthly existence" (Burleigh 178).

On the one hand, Augustine describes this disposition as the human soul's thirst and passion for God in the earthly journey (Confessions XII.11.13), a life marked by faith and love that looks with hope to God by serving him in the here and now (City of God XIX.17) with humility (City of God XIV.13), love (City of God XIV.28) and justice (City of God XIX.21). On the other hand, it is a life lived in a world of hardship and misery kept intact by God's goodness (City of God XXII, 23-24).

At the beginning of the City of God, Augustine gives a fitting description of this "pilgrim perspective:"

> The whole family of the highest and true God, then, has a consolation of its own: a consolation which depends neither upon falsehood nor upon hope in those things which falter and fail. Also, its members have a life in this age which is not in the least to be regretted: a life which is the school of eternity, in which they make use of earthly goods like pilgrims, without grasping after them, and are proved and corrected by evils. (I.29)

This theme is like a thread running through the City of God (V.16, 18; XI.31, XIV.9, XVII.3, XVII.13) and in the Confessions (X.4.6, XI.2.4, XII.16.23, XIII.14.15). This "heavenly city is a pilgrim on the earth" who brings together a "society of pilgrims" who obey the laws of the land as long as they do not conflict with the laws of God (City of God XIX.17).

Augustine depicts pilgrimage as a sojourning through time in the corridor of evil:

> The church proceeds on her pilgrimage in this world, in these evil days: a pilgrimage which began not simply in the time of the corporeal presence of Christ and His apostles, but with Abel himself, the first righteous man, slain by his ungodly brother; and which extends from that time even to the end of this world, amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God. (City of God XVIII.51)

As he lives in the world, the pilgrim displays a notable ethic, "First, to do no harm to anyone, and, secondly, to help everyone whenever possible" (Elshtain 96, City of God XIX.14). Augustine presents this as a "sacrifice of mercy" (City of God X.6), a life

marked by peaceful obedience to the governing authorities if at all possible in a spirit of dependence upon God's order while also dealing with the pressures of life inside the *Saeculum* (Brown "Saint Augustine and Political Society" 25). Kaufmann (79) sheds insight on this dependence, "As long as pilgrims were alive, subject to grief and temptation, their will to subordinate sorrow and self-love to their love for and trust in God was the surest indication of God's will to save their souls." A pilgrim's only security in an insecure world came from his security in God (Fortin "Augustine's City of God and the Modern Historical Consciousness" 309).

As a result, the pilgrim's life in the world resembled a war and prayer ambivalence. On the one hand, the sojourner was called by God to "live at peace with all men if at all possible" (Romans 12:17); however in recognition of the fact that "the days were evil" (Ephesians 5:16), he cried out to God in hope (City of God XV.21). This unrelenting ambivalent rub—prayer and war, love and hate, trust and distrust, eternal hope and earthly finitude—marked the sojourning pilgrim city of God through time.

Eschatology: An Ambivalence between Signum and Res

Perhaps the greatest ambivalence in Augustine's worldview which brought tension to many other areas in his praxis was his eschatological understanding of the *senectus mundi*, the "end times era" between the first and second advents of Christ. Fredriksen (156) states that in Augustine's time, "an uncomplicated millenarianism" was held with strong belief as Christians anticipated that the coming Kingdom of God was imminent. In City of God, Augustine devotes whole chapters in Book XX to the discussion of the "thousand years," understood either as the Seventh Millennium since the creation of the world or as a representation of the fullness of time in which the earth has been in existence (XX.7). During this millennium, the devil is bound and thrown into

"the bottomless pit," kept from luring the nations from Christ. After this thousand years, he will be "loosed for a little season" (Augustine sees this as three years and six months from his interpretation of Revelation 11-13 in XX.8). During the devil's binding, the saints reign with Christ as a "kingdom militant" in the world (XX.9). This kind of excitement, associated with conquering and reigning with Christ dominated the attitudes of many Christians in Augustine's time.

Naturally, when this kind of expectancy existed, Christians felt no need for physical separation from the world in a sociological sense; instead, they saw themselves as redeemed *in* the world and their distinction from non-Christians came primarily from their eschatological outlook and hope (Markus Saeculum 167). For Augustine, this meant that Christians were to live *alongside* unbelievers, at times "suffering violence" from them (Exposition of the Psalms LXI.4) just as the wheat grows with the tares until the final resurrection (City of God XX.5, XX.9) when they would be separated by "winnowing" (City of God XVIII.48, XX.25). It is a time of "fear and desire, pain and gladness" (City of God XIV.9) as Markus comments:

> The Augustinian vision springs from a sense of conflicting purposes, of uncertainties of direction and of tensions unresolvable in society. In place of the Aristotelian confidence in the established order, the Augustinian tradition is inspired rather by a sense of its precariousness, and by an awareness of the perpetual proximity of disintegration. (Markus Saeculum 177)

Augustine never envisioned the church as the predominant "Christianized society" on the earth (Markus Christianity and the Secular 65). To state it with "Augustinian ambivalence" (Markus Saeculum 167), it was a church that *was* the Kingdom of Heaven and at the same time *was not* the Kingdom of Heaven (City of God

XX.9). The difference between the two comes from seeing Augustine's philosophy of the church as a *res* (thing) and as a *signum* (sign) from the outworking of his eschatology (Markus Saeculum 181-6, Van Fleteren 420, Augustine On Christian Doctrine 8-9). As a sign (*signum)*, it "points to the heavenly city" (City of God XV.2) and is characterized by the proclamation of the gospel (City of God XVIII.31, 49-50), worship (City of God I.36, V.19, VII.29-30, X.1-4, 25, XIV.28 and XIX.17) and godliness (City of God XIV.28). As a thing (*res)*, it is an imperfect human institution mixed with believers and unbelievers (City of God XVIII.49, XX.5, XX.9, Cranz "De Civitate Dei, XV, 2") whose "strivings in the flesh" work against the world and at times against each other (City of God XV.6).

Richard Niebuhr (Christ and Culture 215-6) elaborates by stating that Augustine never envisioned a Christian takeover of the world as the fulfillment of an "eschatological possibility;"[182] rather "what is offered instead is the eschatological vision of a spiritual society, consisting of some elect human individuals together with angels, living in eternal parallelism with the company of the damned." Augustine describes it as "two cities, created by two loves: that is, the earthly by love of self extending even to contempt of God, and the heavenly by love of God extending to the contempt of self" (City of God XIV.28). It is the "intermediate realm" where "sacred" and "profane" are "allowed to overlap" in "ambivalence" to form the "secular" (Markus Sacred and Secular II.85, IV.376).

With his eschatological understanding of the church as a sign and a thing in focus, it enables us now to discuss the issue of our study. In light of Augustine's understanding of the human will as corrupted and fractured and his depiction of society as divided and

[182] Markus (Sacred and Secular IV.373) modifies Niebuhr's position by showing that only in Augustine's older age (his fifties) that with "mature thought" he offered "an alternative to the idea of a Christian society." Up until that time, he shared the position that was prominent among other professing believers in his day.

suffering in the *Saeculum* with Christians living as "restless wanderers" (Litfin 215) on a sojourning march, what marks the presence and voice of the church in the culture? How does the City of God on the earth live and speak to society?

The Church's Presence in Culture: Augustine's Use of Two Prominent Parables

With the use of two familiar Gospel parables—the dragnet (Matthew 13:47) and the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13:24-30), Augustine believed that the church was not only *not* an isolated entity from the world, but rather a "mixed body in which the holy rub shoulders with the wicked" (Markus The End of Ancient Christianity 52-3, Sacred and Secular I.106, 113, Tixeront A History of Dogmas 352, Litfin 230, Pelikan The Mystery of Continuity 119, Reinhold Niebuhr 124, Trapè 447). He used the dragnet parable to explain that "many reprobate are mingled in the Church with the good. Both are as it were collected in the net of the Gospel; and in this world, as in a sea, both swim together without separation, enclosed in the net until brought ashore" (City of God XVIII.49, Tixeront A History of Dogmas 385). Four times in City of God XX (XX.5, three times in XX.9), he used the wheat and the tares metaphor to show that "from the church…the reapers are to gather out the tares which the Lord has allowed to grow together with the wheat until the harvest…in the end of the world" (City of God XX.9). Markus states:

> Augustine had come to relinquish the image of the church as a spiritual elite set in the world. Like any other society of men, it was irretrievably tinged with sin and contained within itself both the City of God and the earthly city, inextricably interwoven. Only at the end beyond their historical careers, would the two cities be distinct, made visible in their separate realities by the divine judgment. The church is forever caught in the inescapable tension between what is here and now, and what it shall be. (Markus The End of Ancient Christianity 79)

Unlike the Donatists who viewed the church as a "gathered faithful, holy and unspotted, alien to the hostile world of secular society around it" (Markus Sacred and Secular I. 112), Augustine's choice of the dragnet and the wheat and tares parables reveals another ambivalence as the church lives before the world and among its own professing people. On the one hand, Christians recognize that this world is plagued by "great and grievous ills" (City of God XIX.4, XIX.5) with "no security even in the home from the common evils" (City of God XIX.5) because of "perils, wars, slaughters and misery" (City of God XIX.7) that mark the "wretchedness of man's condition" (City of God XIX.6). Summarizing it succinctly, Augustine wrote, "The earth is full of this great mass of evils" (City of God XIX.8). This articulates the everyday reality of living with "tensions, frictions, competitions of interests and overt conflicts" (Reinhold Niebuhr 125) as a Christian in the world as Augustine experienced it in his time.

On the other hand, Augustine believed that this pilgrim life is "a walk by faith and not by sight" (City of God XIX.14), a life of "the prayers of the saints who are spiritual within the church" (On Baptism Against the Donatists III.17.22) who "live rightly with God's help" (City of God XIX.4) as they give time in contemplation of God (Confessions XII.12.15, XIII.18.22) so that the desires of the flesh are subordinated" (City of God XIX.4). In this way they function much like a "congregation and society of men, wherein brotherly charity[183] may operate" (On Faith and the Creed IX.21). As a result, it is a life that is neither happy nor miserable (City of God XIX.4), a life that looks forward to a future happiness with God in hope, yet one that must live with endurance and patience

[183] With this thought, Augustine is espousing a central tenet in the Social/Community Viewpoint—the church as a society, a community of people bonded by love and acting as a family. Tixeront (A History of Dogmas 383) states, "Being a society the church's sanctity does not consist essentially in the holiness of each one of the faithful, but in the fact that her doctrine, sacraments, ministry, nay, her very existence have for their aim the sanctification of souls, and effect this sanctification through the spread of the truth and the transformation of conduct."

now on earth (City of God XIX.4). Augustine contrasted this eternal happiness versus earthly infirmity clearly:

> This is our final happiness, our last perfection, a consummation which will have no end. Here, in this world, we are said to be happy when we have such little peace as a good life can afford. But such happiness is found to be mere misery in comparison with that happiness which we call final. (City of God XIX.10)

While the faithful pilgrim sojourns on the earth, he/she is called to do specific things that will mark his/her life by faith before God and each other. While he/she recognizes the temporary blessings of God such as "temporal peace, bodily health, soundness, light, air, water, food, clothing and shelter" (City of God XIX.13), he/she is called to pursue domestic peace with all who are around him/her (City of God XIX.14). This specifically means obeying the two "chief precepts" in the Bible: Loving God and loving neighbor as oneself (City of God XIX.14, XIX.23). Augustine believed that if this was practiced humbly and properly in the world, the pilgrim "will be at peace with all men as far as in him lies: there will be that peace among men which consists in well-ordered concord…first, that a man should harm no one, and second, that he should do good to all, so far as he can" (City of God XIX.14). Thus the church takes advantage of this earthly peace and "desires and maintains the cooperation of men's wills" from "every good act which it performs either for God…or for neighbor" (City of God XIX.17). By obeying the laws of the earthly city so long as they do not violate the teachings of the heavenly city, harmony is preserved (City of God XIX.17) and temporary "solace for our wretchedness" is attained (City of God XIX.27).

The parables of the dragnet and the wheat and the tares remind readers of a prominent Augustinian ambivalence as it pertains to the church's presence in the world.

Surrounded by a world of great ills, evils, perils, misery and woes (City of God XIX.4, XIX.5, XIX.7, XIX.8), the pilgrim citizens of the City of God on earth are called to do *everything they can* to create, to foster and to maintain the *greatest* amount of peace with their pagan neighbors in *every way possible* at *every available time* and in *every possible place*. And while this is going on, they benefit from this social peace and use it to continue their pilgrim activities.

But what about the church's voice? In Augustine's mind, how should the church speak when it encounters hardships and persecution in the *Saeculum*? What should the church voice to the world and to her people when she encounters troubles in the journey? Does Augustine shed any insight on *how* and *to whom* the church speaks to in her time?

The Church's Voice to the World: Augustine's Use of Three Pertinent Metaphors

Augustine believed that there would always be a church on the earth even in the worst of times (City of God XX.8). As the bearer and articulator of the gospel, how are they to speak to the culture? Given his eschatological framework, does Augustine offer any insight into this important role?

Because he used and relied on signs as a part of his epistemological paradigm (Confessions I.8.13, I.11.17, IV.10.15, VII.19.25, X.10.17, X.12.19, X.15.23, X.16.24 to cite just a few of many possible examples), it would prove valuable to search the text of the City of God to determine if Augustine depicted the church's voice with specific metaphors or "pictorial signs." What came from this examination was Augustine's use of three picturesque metaphors that embodied his rhetorical understanding of the pilgrim church's voice as they lived in the *Saeculum* in anticipation of the Second Advent and the end of time. These "voicing metaphors" are the church as a *house*, the church as a *camp* and the church as the *Ark of Noah*.

One sees the house metaphor clearly in City of God VIII.24, "A house is indeed now being built for the Lord in all the earth: The City of God, which is holy church" where former demon-possessed "prisoners" have now become "living stones." As a house under construction by God, it continues to grow and to expand across the world as a result of the Jewish expulsion (City of God XVIII.47).

Augustine's "living stones" imagery (City of God VIII.24, XVIII.48) from 1 Peter 2:5 gives insight into his understanding of the church's voice to the world as a *voice of worship*, a concentrated cry from a pilgrim people directed to God, but spoken in a language that is heard and understood by the watching world. Augustine articulates this worshipping voice clearly:

> Let the Church of Christ speak, therefore: the 'City of the great King,' full of grace and fruitful offspring. Let the Church speak the words which, as she acknowledges, were spoken of her long ago by the mouth of this pious mother, 'My heart indeed rejoices, and mine horn is exalted in the Lord.' (City of God XVII.4)

As an earthly imperfect city, it will have a mixture of good and bad "stones" just as the dragnet of the Gospel collects both good and reprobate fish in the waters of humanity (City of God XVIII.49). At the same time, it will clearly show the love *of* God and the love *for* God in the world (City of God XIV.28) as a part of its worshipping voice and presence in society. The pilgrim church on the earth is a worshipping church that is expanding in numbers (living stones) and in love.

One sees the camp metaphor clearly in City of God XX.11, "For the camp of the saints and the beloved city are simply the Church of Christ spread throughout the whole earth…hard pressed, shut up in the straits of tribulation; yet she will not cease from her struggle: that struggle which is here called 'the camp.'" This kind of struggle inflicted

from the cruelty of the world "trains the Church in patience and in wisdom" (City of God XVIII.51).

Seeing the image of struggle helps one to appreciate Augustine's view of the church's voice to the world as a *voice of sacrifice* in two ways. Certainly they were called by God to "offer their bodies as living sacrifices to God" (Romans 12:1) in worship just as Christ sacrificed himself, but also they would *be* sacrifices of persecution and hardship just as Christ suffered in his earthly life (City of God X.20). As a voice of sacrifice, they would echo to God the pilgrimage of Christ to Golgotha and the church would benefit from this type of internal rhetoric by building belief in its message and by instilling in its parishioners that there was truly something "worth dying for."

Augustine's theological presuppositions enunciate clearly the suffering of life and living in a pain-filled world (Confessions X.28.39, X.31.43, X.34.53, City of God I.8, 9, 10, 12, 29; II.29, V.10, 18, VII.31, X. 30, 32, XII.21, XIII.3, 4, 8, 12, 19, 20, XIV.8, 15, XV.6, 15, XVI.2, 13, XVII.12, XVIII.33, 36, 48, 49, 50, XX.2, 3, 13, XXI.2, 3, 13, 14, 23, 26, XXII.10, 19, 30). His understanding of the sufferings of Christ and the pilgrim sufferings of God's people in a hostile world give clear insight into the radical differentiation between the City of God and the City of man.

A final metaphor that completes Augustine's trilogy for the pilgrim church's voice is their dynamic connection with the Ark of Noah, a man Augustine believed was as complete an example of a pilgrim sojourner as was humanly possible (City of God XV.26). The rewards of his God-graced labor—a family-saving ark—was "a symbol of the City of God on pilgrimage in this world: that is, of the church which is saved through the wood upon which hung 'the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus'" (City of God XV.26).

Understanding the image of protection as symbolized in the ark helps us to see Augustine's position on the church's voice to the world as a *voice of salvation* in two ways. To those who are inside the ark (church), it is a voice of security and protection, as experienced by Noah and his family. To those outside the ark, it is a voice of condemnation and judgment, another consistent theme in Augustine's worldview (City of God XII.4, XIII.3, 14, XIV.2, 15, XV.3, 21, 24, XVIII.32, XX.5). Since many in his day believed that the end was near, the church's voice of repentance—akin to that of Noah (Hebrews 11:7), John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-2), Peter (Acts 2:38) and Paul (Romans 10:9-13) would clearly resound within the church and then to the world.

It is important to realize that each of these voicing metaphors do not stand alone in Augustine's depiction of the pilgrim church's voice. The sojourning people of God struggle as they worship, love as they declare God's judgment and pray as they sacrifice. This ongoing ambivalent tension, creating continuous life paradoxes depicts the "inner-outer" conflicts often attributed by Augustine to the pilgrim church's voice to her people in a fractured world. She is a voice of vertical worship yet she suffers horizontal pain; she possesses inward disturbance at sin yet she shows outward expectancy in God; she offers upward prayer for deliverance yet she perseveres with downward determination for the moment. Seen alongside Augustine's understanding of the end times, his view of the corruption of society and the nature of pilgrimage, it gives one a keener insight into his view of a true church's presence in the culture and its voice to the world.

Conclusion on the Augustine's Understanding of the Church and Culture

In this chapter, Augustine's vital place in the Textuality/Discourse, the Supernatural/Eschatological and the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoints of the Christianization within the Roman Empire give valuable insight into his positions on the

soul's activity in introspection, the creation of a Christian rhetoric, the central place of mystery, the place of demons in opposing God and the church, the attainment of knowledge, the importance of objectivity and the grounds of authority and how this was used to interpret the Bible and the actions of human beings in the world.

Augustine would take each of these important tenets and many others to construct a philosophical framework that would look at God, the church and the world in a different way than previous church leaders and public rhetors. From his understanding of epistemology, he formed definitive positions on authority and objectivity that allowed him to see not only his own frailty, sin and brokenness, but also the fractured and corrupt society around him. Thus he was empowered to use introspective rhetoric (Confessions) and a Christian-based philosophy of civic rhetoric (City of God, On Christian Doctrine) to lead his audience to understand the meaning of the Bible and its direct application to a Christian's and to a church's life as they dealt with the miseries and pains within the *Saeculum*.

Because of the deep consequences of sin, Augustine believed there will never be a "heaven on earth" society before the second advent of Christ. Christians are sojourning pilgrims on a journey to the Heavenly City of God; however, their pilgrimage in this world and with the church is shared and mixed with nonbelievers. In this light, a mixture of sacred and profane is seen on *two* levels—the world-at-large and inside the church. In some respects when examined from this point of view, one can possibly surmise that there are *potentially two saeculums*[184] in Augustine's thinking—one on the "world level"

[184] Since the *Saeculum* is understood as the mixture of the profane and the sacred to form the secular, it would make sense to see two *Saeculums*, for in Augustine's mind, there was a "mixture" of profane and secular from the earthly City of God living with and in the world as well as inside the earthly City of God whose constitution comprised both believers and those who were "reprobate" (City of God XVIII.49).

intermixing the church and society and one within the "church level" intermixing the sheep and the "tag along" goats who are masquerading like sheep for a temporary period of time. Perhaps this explains why Augustine used *two* metaphors to explain this issue.

Within the "Church *Saeculum*" (best pictured in the dragnet parable), the presence and voice of the believer to the mixed Body of Christ "in the net" is to worship truthfully and sincerely, to pray, to encourage, to teach, to exhort to holy living, to show hospitality, to build up the flock, to counsel, to exercise proper spiritual discipline, to ensure the proper administration of the sacraments and to promote effective stewardship in all dimensions. The way a sojourning pilgrim lives inside the Church *Saeculum* is with a life of modeling and exhortive correction, always urging members in the body to "set their minds on things above," yet doing all things to promote faith, hope and love in a spirit of unity.

Within the World *Saeculum* (best pictured in the wheat and the tares parable), the presence of the church to the world is a work of peace-building, peace-making and peace-sustaining. While they live side-by-side with their pagan neighbors, Augustine believed Christians were to love God by loving their neighbors. This meant finding every area of common ground and every element of common "love" or interest that was legally and morally possible between them and unbelievers. Finding these mutual areas of love and interest would create and cultivate periods of peace within the field of ambivalence. These times of peace would allow the church to witness by word and by deed to the culture and to continue its own internal pilgrim activities on the journey.

In this arrangement, Augustine saw no "privileged position" for the church like Chrysostom did; instead, it was one of any number of "pressure groups" (Markus Sacred and Secular IV.377) that should be allowed to speak its mind and its concerns to the state

about any matters that pertain to its life and well-being while living in the earthly domains of ambivalence. In regards to the state, Augustine believed that government was not obliged to follow the laws of the church; instead, it simply "provides the space" in society for the church to worship, to work and to promote peace (Markus Sacred and Secular IV.377).

If any "terms of endearment" exist between Augustine's church and society, it is the terms of mutual loves and peace. Since the church occupies the same land as their pagan neighbors, they should do everything possible biblically, morally and legally to create and to sustain relationships around common interests that will promote mutual peace. Certainly in any community the church and morally-minded unbelievers can and should participate in areas of mutual interest (education, public safety and health, disaster assistance, economic improvement, recreation, etc.) so that the community is improved for *both* of them; however, it is not a model of detailed agendas and prolonged preoccupations. It is rather the patient, cooperative effort to keep disorder down to a minimum so that the church and the sojourning pilgrim can live their life and do their work in peace.

Is this type of model possible in today's culture? Markus comments:

> Does such a model of a tolerant secular state which refrains from meddling with matters of religion and religions which refrain from meddling with the affairs of the state foreclose any possibility of the Gospel meeting the world, making its impact upon it, even being rejected by it? This implication would follow only if "church" were understood in a way Augustine could never have imagined: as meaning the ecclesiastical institution, clergy or hierarchy. The church as the community of the faithful is bound to be present and acting within, and upon, society wherever

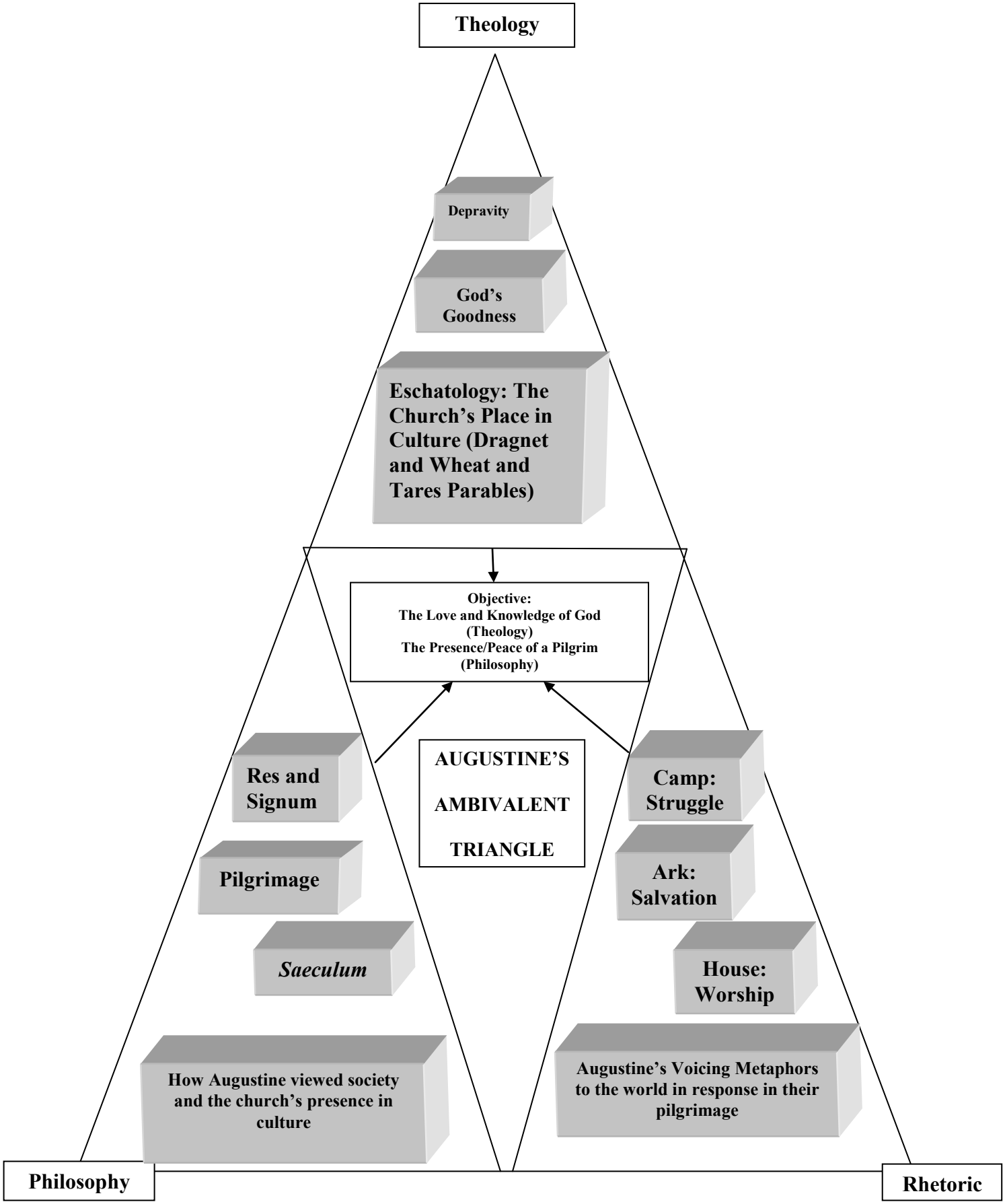
> Christians are present and acting in the society. Its action, whether prophetic or not, is anonymous and diffuse, channeled through the committee, the party branch, the board of directors of whatever group the acting Christian happens to belong to. (Markus Sacred and Secular IV.377)

Wilken (The Spirit of Early Christian Thought 204) concurs with Markus' conclusion in seeing that Augustine's church possessed a "religious interest in the affairs of the earthly city," and this interest is what motivated her members and her leaders to create, to maintain and to sustain peace with the world in every way, at every time and in every place possible.

With Augustine, one possesses that rare opportunity to see somewhat clearly three realms where his work and thought intersect. As a church father, he defined, articulated and depended upon his *theological* understanding of human depravity, divine goodness and eschatology to inform his view of mortal life and society. This enabled him as a *philosopher* to see the church as a pilgrim society living in the in-between domain of the *Saeculum*, yearning and longing for the heavenly city (*signum*), but feeling the realities of an impure mixed body (*res*). Because of this reality, Augustine urged his people to live and to work for peace at all times and in many ways with all people. Sometimes this would work; other times it would not work. As a consequence, his *rhetoric*, informed by his philosophy and his theology, was primarily focused internally to his own people, encouraging them to worship God with a voice of sacrifice, to live with the struggles within the *Saeculum* for the present time and to realize that they were inside the Ark (church) where God's protection and help were found.

These three realms of thought (theology, philosophy and rhetoric) intersect in Augustine's world to form a dynamic triangle. It is here that one learns how Augustine's

thought life produced many instances of ambivalence. His theology intersected with this philosophy to picture a torn, broken world where Christians struggle in contentment and in sadness as sojourning pilgrims who yearn for eternal rest but who work for earthy peace. When they pursue peace with nonbelievers in their world, they experience ambivalent results, forming and feeding a rhetoric that voices worship, struggle, pain, gratitude and cries of deliverance from evil and harm. These are the varying voices one would expect to hear from Augustine's church in the ambivalent world of the *Saeculum*. This underscores that for some unbelievers, the church is the presence and voice of peace; however, for others it is the voice of condemnation. These three intersecting strands in Augustine's thought—theology, philosophy and rhetoric—informed and structured in an environment of ambivalence—come together to form what is seen as "Augustine's Ambivalent Triangle." In the mind of the African Church Father, this is how the presence and voice of the church in culture is seen when one sees and understands his theology, philosophy and rhetoric in action.


Theology
Depravity
God's Goodness
Eschatology: The Church's Place in Culture (Dragnet and Wheat and Tares Parables)
Objective:
The Love and Knowledge of God
(Theology)
The Presence/Peace of a Pilgrim
(Philosophy)
AUGUSTINE'S
AMBIVALENT
TRIANGLE
Res and Signum
Pilgrimage
Saeculum
How Augustine viewed society and the church's presence in culture
Camp: Struggle
Ark: Salvation
House: Worship
Augustine's Voicing Metaphors to the world in response in their pilgrimage
Philosophy
Rhetoric

Epilogue

SUMMARIES, CONCLUSIONS AND THE NEED FOR A NEW HERMENEUTICAL PRISM

As this discussion reaches its final phase, it is important to reflect on the journey experienced up to this point. It was noted in the introduction that there remains continued and intense internal debate and division *within* the church over her proper presence and voice in the American culture and life. This is a different issue than the approaches the church can take in engaging the social and political front in American life today.[185] And because of her perceived decline in influence, some leaders and scholars believe that she should return to the principles practiced by the early believers in the first five centuries in order to regain some degree of persuasion; however, when scholars and leaders examine the church's expansion and influence in the first five centuries, they offer differing and often contrasting viewpoints.

The contention of this project's research and discussion is to show that the primary reason for the American church's internal disagreement and division over her presence and voice to society today is due to the conflicting interpretations and viewpoints over the early church's expansion and influence in the first five centuries, the time of Christianity's "hey day." The main reason why leaders cannot agree over the role of the church in culture *today* is that scholars cannot agree over what made the church strong and powerful *then*.

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[185] The engagement (presence and voice) of the church with society *assumes* that the church desires to engage society. As this study has shown, there is considerable debate and disagreement *within* the church as to whether it *should* engage with culture, and if so, *how* she should do it. See Budziszewski for a helpful starting discussion over how four Christian scholars have addressed the church's role in political life and action.

After revisiting H. Richard Niebuhr's understanding of "viewpoints" in his study of typology (chapter one), a review of over one hundred-fifty texts spanning over a two hundred-thirty year time frame (1776-2008) occurred. This classified five major viewpoints over the Christianization within the Roman Empire in the scholarly discussion over the reason for Christianity's rise in prominence. Behind each viewpoint is a group of respected and credible scholars whose research and work sheds valuable light to the way Christianity rose from its humble beginnings to become a fifth century global power. Chapter two presented and discussed these five major viewpoints.

The first prominent position over Christianization within the Roman Empire was the Textuality/Discourse Viewpoint. Scholars in this arena hold that Christianity became a discourse out of its evolutionary textual development (cultivated with the tools of Hellenism) and subsequent articulation of its tenets to the culture. As this discourse articulated itself through various creative forms, a distinct spiritual, emotional and psychological identity formed among its followers that empowered them to do many things, distinguishing them from other sects and cults of the day. This empowerment produced varying perceptions of and responses to their message. While some viewed their message as superstition, others saw it as a new school of ethical thought and practice while another group opposed it to the point of persecution and martyrdom. From these periods of attack and opposition came the memories and confessions of persecuted followers that appeared in the form of Christian biographies (testimonies) that became great tools of power and persuasion for the faith's followers and to the culture-at-large.

The theme that depicts this viewpoint's emphasis most accurately is their stress on the importance of *relevance*. Because Christianity was abled and enabled to create and to develop rich and varied forms of discourse that appealed to broad and diverse people

groups, its message gained credible traction as the gospel captured individual lives through narrative, printed sermons and commentaries, art, music, biographies, apologetic literature and interpersonal dialogue (to name only a few of the most prominent forms). Because Christianity used flexible and relevant forms of discourse, it was enabled and empowered to send its message to a broad, inquiring audience. Gilkey (How The Church Can Minister to the World 2) echoes this sentiment, "The church, then, if it is to be itself and do its work, must mediate to the world some Word, some Presence, some norm and standard, that are both transcendent in their origin—in some measure "holy"—and also relevant to the world's life."

The second prominent position over Christianization within the Roman Empire was the Social/Community Viewpoint. Scholars in this camp believed that Christianity's success and impact came because it entered history as a new social order with communal implications for its teaching and practice. It was not simply something to believe, but rather a faith to live out, to practice and to observe between human beings who are relating to God and to one another, fulfilling the scope of redemption in its totality. It was here that ethics and morals were taught, modeled and upheld.

The theme that depicts this viewpoint's emphasis most accurately is their stress on the importance of *family*. Because Christianity was abled and enabled to present itself as a "new humanity" where peace, harmony and interpersonal relationships are fostered and cultivated, many people became attracted to its life because of her demonstrations of compassion, charity, unity, humanitarianism and gender equality. Once assimilated, new converts were instructed and mentored in morals and ethics that produced an identity that either sought to reconstruct society or to remove society from their daily involvement.

The third prominent stance taken over Christianization within the Roman Empire was the Supernatural/Eschatological Viewpoint. Scholars using this standpoint believe that the church's rapid rise came because of its practice and record of numerous feats of supernaturalism (healings, exorcisms, miracles) that reinforced an authorial dogma and a confident, yet humble identity among her followers. From this practice of supernatural power, people became attracted to Christianity's message not only because of its ability to call upon transcreational power to come to a given situation, but also because of its promise of deliverance through an imminent Parousia and the underlying aura and mysticism that accompanied it.

The theme that depicts this viewpoint's emphasis most accurately is their stress on the importance of *mystery*. Because Christianity was abled and enabled to experience, to eyewitness and to record numerous displays of humanly unexplainable feats of supernatural power, many people became persuaded by the sense of wonder and divine favor that accompanied its missionary message when it entered new towns and countries for the first time. This forged a separatist identity that was deeply rooted in the awareness of and the battling of spiritual forces, evil principalities and active demons in the world through prayer.

The fourth prominent position over Christianization within the Roman Empire was the Philosophical/Intellectual Viewpoint. Scholars in this group believe that Christianity's success came because it presented itself as a school of philosophy and wisdom that utilized the methods and thought forms from ancient philosophy to construct scholarly-based truth-claims to the world. As it became a religion of reading, content and interpretation, specific methods of hermeneutics (Allegorical, Antiochene and others) were formulated to explain in deeper comprehensive ways the meaning of the faith. This

allowed Christianity to articulate and to apply its truth-assertions to the specific situations in the world as opportunity allowed it.

The theme that depicts this viewpoint's emphasis most accurately is their stress on the importance of *doctrine*. Because Christianity was abled and enabled to present and to explain its teachings as a systematic compilation of revelatory truth, many people were attracted to its message because it embodied a package that encouraged examination, reason and interpretation. This propelled the church over several centuries not only to develop different methods of Scriptural exegesis, but also to define and to refine the meaning of the faith through apologetic treatises, printed commentaries, creedal resolutions and distributed homilies. Many of these second to fifth century formulas and apologetic discussions are still read and studied today.

The fifth and final position over Christianization within the Roman Empire was the Imperial/Aristocratic Viewpoint. Scholars in this affinity see Christianity's success as a dominant world religion coming from the conversion of Constantine and the subsequent social and imperial reforms that followed it for at least one century. This compelled many people to abandon the old practices of civic religion and to adopt in varying ways and forms the rituals of the Christian belief whether they understood them or not. This allowed the church and especially her bishops to receive unparalleled prominence and public stature among the people, and it resulted in significant changes in the senatorial aristocratic spheres in the Roman government who initiated moral and social reforms that benefited and propagated the growth of the church.

The theme that depicts this viewpoint's emphasis most accurately is their stress on the importance of *strategy*. Because Christianity was abled and enabled to experience and to effect national reform through the "conversion" of the Empire's most influential

person (in this case Constantine), many people, most especially the senatorial aristocratic population were impacted and changed through this "rippling effect;" therefore, the advancement of the church in society happens best when these "strategies for conversion" are creatively constructed and properly implemented.

Each of these scholarly viewpoints over the Christianization within the Roman Empire find adamant support in modern time church circles when the discussion over the church's present day decline in influence is brought to the table. One group says the message must be relevant. Another group says the church must become more of a family. And while these groups tout their tenets, another camp believes that Christians should emphasize and return to miracles, healings and the mysterious "new birth." Still another group believes the answer lies in reemphasizing doctrine and teaching while a final group is shouting, "Strategy! Strategy!" as the preferred solution to the dilemma.

What makes each of these viewpoints so appealing and yet so intriguing is that a number of their tenets find their way into the writings of Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine, arguably the three most influential rhetors/church fathers in the first five centuries of church history. When one examines their numerous homilies, commentaries and apologetic treatises, one sees not only dynamic tension and internal struggle over the church's presence and voice in culture, but also differing positions as to how the church should approach and interact with its society.

Each rhetor/church father agreed with the other fathers/rhetors on a number of issues. Each held to a high and holy view of Scripture and sought to model its godly message of moral purity to their people. Each held to a deep and uncompromising commitment to the truths of the Christian revelation and spoke loudly and boldly against heresy and compromise. Each gave tireless efforts to define, to expound and to articulate

the meaning of Christian truth through their printed homilies, commentaries and doctrinal treatises. Each possessed a strong understanding of demonism and its efforts to derail the church's advancement on earth. Each understood the human condition as deeply depraved and fractured, producing a society that needed help, harmony and hope. Each saw the church as the recipient and the embodiment of God's truth to the world (the Body of Christ). Finally, each operated with a strong eschatological framework that governed their view of life and the importance of the Christian proclamation of the Scriptures to the world.

Yet despite these and numerous other points of agreement, each father/rhetor also differed from the others as to *how* the church should approach, engage and interact with its surrounding culture. Certainly some of this difference rests in the historical situation of the times (In Origen's time there was more persecution than in Chrysostom's and Augustine's era) as well as in the economic, cultural and social differences between Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople and Hippo. Yet even with these considerations noted, there are recognizable differences of thought from each father/rhetor over what the church should do and say to its surrounding community.

In chapter three's discussion on Origen, one sees an extraordinary emphasis on mysticism and free will rationalism that constructed a philosophical framework of viewing the world as a battleground against demons and spiritual principalities who sought to lead people astray from the church. While battling the forces of spiritual wickedness through prayer, Origen's church is noticeably distinguishable from the culture (not removed, but distinctly separate) so that in their distance they can interface with society *on specific occasions* through acts of mercy, service and witness. Through one's love of and for the Logos, if one did not love the church, one was her enemy.

There was no in-between ground. In his approach, the gospel called for a sanctified separation from and a battle against the evil in the world's system, yet it also called for a sanctified service to sinners in the world through mercy and witness with the hopes that some would experience spiritual conversion. Thus, Origen finds partial alignment in Niebuhr's "Christ against culture" (his emphasis on demonism in the world) and in the "Christ and culture in paradox" (his emphasis on mercy and service) motifs.

In chapter four's discussion on Chrysostom, one sees an extraordinary emphasis on biblical morality packaged in a powerful, yet eloquent spoken and written homiletic that assembled the tenets of ethical Christianity into a clearly defined Christian identity that served as a plumb line for Christian behavior and action in public. Like Origen, he believed in Christian separateness from the world's system and compassion to sinners; however, his moral-based homiletic attempted in greater ways than Origen to create a new internal order within the secular city, starting with proper gender roles within the homes of his own congregation. As his church lived out the tenets of the gospel to the city, he hoped and worked for a "mushroom effect" to ripple positive changes that would bring moral reform and social order to the city. Thus, his engagement with culture attempted to form an ordered, harmonious and expanding "new city within an old city," finding partial alignment with Niebuhr's "Christ against culture" (his frequent preaching against the popular forms of worldly entertainment) and the "Christ transforming culture" (reordering the city from the inside-out) motifs.

In chapter five's discussion on Augustine, one sees an extraordinary emphasis on mysticism (like Origen) situated in a deep consciousness of sin and human misery that was packaged in an introspective rhetoric whose authority rested upon divine revelation. This created numerous ambivalences in his life over the goodness of God and the evils of

human existence and society in the *Saeculum* as professing Christians were called to live as sojourning pilgrims alongside unbelievers and to create as many opportunities for peace as possible by loving God and by loving neighbor. Augustine's church was not only *not* called to live distanced lives before the culture, but also to realize that they were a mixture of converted and unconverted people (unlike Origen and Chrysostom[186] in principle). This did not give Augustine's church an elevated status in society (as Chrysostom envisioned); rather, the church at Hippo functioned like any other special interest group who spoke out on issues affecting the city from a religious point of view. Thus, Augustine's church's engagement with culture finds primary alignment with Niebuhr's "Christ and culture in paradox" (his numerous ambivalences) motif and partial alignment with the "Christ against culture" motif (his emphasis on demonism).

One can now see the difficulties and tensions involved when one attempts to classify and to align each rhetor/father's position with Niebuhr's types/motifs presented in Christ and Culture. Perhaps this helps explain why an increasing number of critiques have surfaced over Niebuhr's work in the last fifteen years, often due to a misreading of his text.

A Proposal: Looking at the Issue from the Metaphor of a Prism

Over the past five decades, serious study and debate has occurred over the relationship between "Christ" (the followers of Jesus historically embodied in the church) and the "culture" (the actions, views, mindsets and practices of a pluralistic society—both

[186] This is not to suggest that Chrysostom (or Origen for that matter) believed in a "pure church" constituency. As Chrysostom grew older, he became deeply disappointed over the ways many of his parishioners mixed religion with the cultural practices of the day. The difference lies in ecclesiastical organization and pastoral shepherding. Augustine readily acknowledged that the tares were with the wheat, but that they should remain in keeping with Christ's parable, for *it is difficult at times to distinguish the tares from the wheat in the growing process*. In Chrysostom's opinion, the tares needed to be removed now, provided their behavior is thoroughly consistent with the behavior of a tare.

good and evil). What would happen if an honest look at the historical Jesus of the Gospels were given as it pertained to his interactions with society in the line of his stated mission? Does one uncover a theme that undergirds his mission and divine objective?

Any degree of study in the Gospels on this question will reveal that the Kingdom of God occupied a central theme in the ministry of Christ and the first century church (Stassen and Gushee 19, Fee 8). In discussing the significant position that John the Baptist occupied in the Incarnation, Jesus stated in Matthew 11:12, "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been forcefully advancing,[187] and forceful men lay hold of it." This assertion made it clear in a day of Pharisaic tradition and hollow religious practices that the power of the Incarnate Word and Spirit were aggressively moving a sovereign spiritual dominion[188] forward. And its credibility and progress was validated by the visible evidences of physical power that accompanied Christ's activity (Matthew 11:4-5). The healing of the sick and the mercy ministries to the disadvantaged and deserving would accompany the progressive proclamation of the gospel to the world. In other words, noticeable evidences in the physical realm would indicate activity in the spiritual realm. This underscores how the Kingdom of God was not only a current actuality, but also a forthcoming phenomenon[189] (Fee 11).

If the Kingdom of God was such a prominent theme in the Scriptures, in the ministry of Christ and the early church, one would expect to see any number of ministry models reflecting the first century prototype as it pertains to the interface between Christ

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[187] The context in the Greek favors the present middle indicative.

[188] Though different components are often seen in presenting a definition of the Kingdom of God, practically every definition conveys the idea of a sovereign, spiritual, divine dominion.

[189] Stassen and Gushee (20) make a careful, necessary distinction in explaining Fee's "both-and" understanding of the Kingdom of God, "God's reign has been *inaugurated* in Jesus Christ, but its ultimate consummation remains a future event" (their emphasis).

and culture. Unfortunately, one does not. The twentieth century brought the American church the "Purpose Driven" model, the "Seeker Sensitive" model, the "Irresistible Influence" model and other church growth models that attempt in one way or another to make the church more effective in its life and work. Many of them emulate sensible and practical principles for ministry in the world. Many of them have points that need careful consideration. But there has yet to appear a praxis model for church ministry in culture today that closely embodies the performance structure—divine and human (Chilton and McDonald 24) which housed the primary elements of Christ's mission and ministry objective. If Jesus of Nazareth sent his disciples to announce the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick (Luke 9:2), should not the North American church? Crouch elaborates:

> In announcing that the Kingdom of God was near, in telling parables of the kingdom, Jesus was not just delivering "good news," as if his only concern was to impart some new information. His good news foretold a comprehensive restructuring of social life comparable to that experienced by a people when one monarch was succeeded by another. The Kingdom of God would touch every sphere and every scale of culture. It would reshape marriage and mealtimes, resistance to the Roman occupiers and prayer in the temple, the social standing of prostitutes and the piety of the Pharisees, the meaning of cleanliness and the interpretation of illness, integrity in business and honesty in prayer. (Crouch 138)

As this project comes to a close, it seeks to propose for further study that the Kingdom of God[190] and its distinctive themes of "eschatology, transcendence, judgment, purity and radiance" from the Psalms (Chilton 32-41) along with "salvation/deliverance,

[190] See Groh for a good starting study on this subject.

righteousness/justice, peace, joy, God's presence as Spirit or Light, healing and return from exile" from Isaiah (Stassen and Gushee 25) become the driving operative[191] behind the presence and voice of the church to society. In other words, the theme of the Kingdom of God needs to become the interpretive and centric "prism" for understanding the success of Christianity in the first five centuries as well as for the Protestant and Roman Catholic Church in America today. Seeing the metaphor of a prism helps one to realize that all the presented viewpoints in chapter two (and perhaps several more) are important explanations for the advancement of Christianity; however, each viewpoint itself is only a partial explanation. The metaphor of a prism helps one to see that each viewpoint is like a refracted line of light when the Kingdom of God is the driving operative or central prism in understanding the success behind the advancement and impact of Christianity in the first five centuries of the Christian Church.

The Kingdom of God held a prominent place in the life and mission of Christ in the Incarnation. Following his resurrection and ascension, his earliest followers embodied this theme and received power to launch a significant movement on the earth at a rate believed to reach peaks of forty percent per decade (Stark 6). The Kingdom of God represents the fullest and most holistic description of "God's salvation…and it means that—at last—God has acted to deliver humanity and now reigns over all of life, and is present to and with us, and will be in the future" (Stassen and Gushee 29).

It is this project's contention that the reason for the modern American church's decline is largely due to the failure of its leaders to recognize this paradigmatic prism as

[191] To some degree, Chilton's themes and Stassen and Gushee's elements find traction with Gilkey (Message and Existence 243) who argues that "the kingdom…stands for a theonomous church in a theonomous culture" where "the rule of God" occurs "in social history as well as in individual hearts and in small religious fellowships," seen in "objective social structures representing justice, equality, freedom, and order as well as to the piety and personal holiness of a religious fellowship." The difficulty in establishing a clear connection is the lack of any praxis model for church ministry that embodies these directives.

the operative praxis behind the early church's divine favor and progressive expansion. The time has come to adopt this new paradigm and to flesh out a new praxis model based on the Scriptural principles of the Kingdom of God:

> What an amazing picture of the church is presented to us through this apostolic symbol of the people of God: the recreation of human community around Christ into a community of love! In Adam all men had died; in our sinful history, in other words, the created differences between men, differences of sex, race, culture, and nationality have become, not a source of richness within a common human community, but the source of mistrust, exploitation, conflict, hatred, and tragedy…But now in Christ a new age has arrived. The old humanity of sin is to be cast off, and men have in Christ become new creatures who are to serve rather than to oppress one another, and love rather than hate. *In the church these amazing powers of the Kingdom are, moreover, manifested*. (Gilkey How the Church Can Minister to the World 64-5, emphasis added)

The reason why the American church is in rhetorical decline to its culture is because of her internal differences and disagreements over the way she should interface and engage with society instead of reexamining the first century church's use of the themes of the Kingdom of God and developing them into a working, flexible, adaptable and applicable praxis model for life and mission.

Further study is needed on the church's understanding of the Kingdom of God as it progressed through time as well as on the praxis components that make up an adequate, yet comprehensive understanding of a "Kingdom-of-God-driven-church." It is when the present day American church takes seriously the understanding and application of the

Kingdom of God that true progress and rhetorical presence and voice will return to her life and mission in the world.

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