

**MULTILINGUAL
ISSUE**

**ECUMENICAL ASSOCIATION OF THIRD WORLD THEOLOGIANS
ASOCIACIÓN ECUMÉNICA DE TEÓLOGOS/AS DEL TERCER MUNDO**

VOICES

**DEEP ECOLOGY, SPIRITUALITY AND LIBERATION
ECOLOGÍA PROFUNDA, ESPIRITUALIDAD Y LIBERACIÓN**

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DEEP ECOLOGY, SPIRITUALITY AND LIBERATION
ECOLOGÍA PROFUNDA, ESPIRITUALIDAD Y LIBERACIÓN

VOICES

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DEEP ECOLOGY, SPIRITUALITY AND LIBERATION

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Y LIBERACIÓN

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**ECUMENICAL ASSOCIATION OF THIRD WORLD THEOLOGIANS
ASOCIACION ECUMÉNICA DE TEÓLOGOS/AS DEL TERCER MUNDO
ASSOCIATION OECUMENIQUE DES THEOLOGIENS DU TIERS MONDE**

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VOICES dedicates this Eco-theology issue, to
Thomas BERRY c.p.
November 9, 1914 – June 1, 2009
on the 100 hundredth anniversary of his birth.



Presentation

This issue of VOICES, a double issue corresponding to the second and third quarter of 2014, was solicited already in January as a normal number. At that time we chose a topic that as yet had not been addressed by EATWOT: DEEP ECOLOGY: an in-depth ecology without further determination, which fortunately had long figured as one of our concerns. However although "deep ecology" was still a stranger to our home, nevertheless we decided to welcome and receive her with our traditional family warmth because of her relation to Liberation. So this issue was finally developed as "Deep Ecology, Spirituality and Liberation." This was back in January.

In fact what made it come true was the immediate response of the authors which was every bit as enthusiastic as ours. This made us realized the possibility of converting this number into a double issue of over 400 pages, Latin America, Europe and Asia have participated extensively; we note the absence of Africa, despite all invitations and requests that we made. The large number of pages in this issue, moreover, is due to its multi-lingual character, as has become a frequent feature in VOICES (four languages are used in this issue, with an occasional article in three.)

We find as a constantly re-appearing theme the fact that it is the new cosmology, the new cosmic story that science is opening up to us which is transforming our consciousness of humanity. It is not just a mater of information, data, science...; it is, above all, a new awareness, a renewed sensitivity, a deeper and more earthy and cosmic spirituality. That's why we talk about "deep ecology". We welcome it and are very interested and desire to make it our theme of theological reflection, just as we have already done, theologically speaking, with "simple ecology".

November 9, 2014, marks 100 years since the birth of THOMAS BERRY, considered to be the top eco- theologian of our time -- the pioneer who's sharp sense (when eco-theological intuitions were still very rare) found a new path for theology, the return-home path to our *oikos* (=home) our ecological niche,

We dedicate this issue to THOMAS BERRY, in homage and gratitude for the road he opened for us. The first two articles in this volume refer to BERRY.

As in past years (four years already), the last issue of VOICES of each year is dedicated to the Latin American MINGA of Theological Journals of Theology, organized by EATWOT of Latin America. The involved Latin American journals publish the articles in print format, during the year, at the end of which, VOICES does a digital publication. It is an initiative of the Latin American Theological Commission of EATWOT (or ASETT, as it is popularly called in Latin America). We are pleased to remain faithful to this which, after five years, we consider a solid Latin American tradition.

However, contravening this year-end cycle, the following MINGA, already the fifth, is advancing its publication to March 2015. This is motivated because it will be dedicated to the memory and critical evaluation of Teilhard de Chardin, whose 60 death anniversary will fall on 10 April 2015. "Teilhard de Chardin today, and from the South" is the theme of our MINGA. As is easy to see, this is in explicit fidelity to the spirit of EATWOT.

We continue expecting issues of VOICES produced by the EATWOT regions of Asia, Africa and North America . We hope to see them without fail in 2015.

Meanwhile whatever be the case, EATWOT will continue its service promoting, hosting and publishing the *VOICES* of the various Souths, by which we maintain our contact and communion with our readers.

Fraernally / sisterly

EATWOT's International Theological Commission
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Presentación

Este número de la revista VOICES, número doble, corresponde al segundo y tercer semestre de 2014. Fue convocado, ya en el mes de enero, pensando en un número normal. Elegimos un tema que todavía no había sido abordado por la EATWOT: la ecología profunda. La ecología sin más, afortunadamente, figura hace mucho tiempo entre nuestras preocupaciones; pero la «ecología profunda» resultaba nueva en esta casa. Decidimos darle la bienvenida, y recibirla con el saludo tradicional en nuestra familia: interesándonos por su relación con la liberación. Así que el tema quedó configurado como «Ecología profunda, Espiritualidad y Liberación». Era enero.

La respuesta de los autores no se hizo esperar, y resultó ser tan numerosa y entusiasta, que pronto entrevimos la posibilidad de convertir el número en número doble: más de 400 páginas, en efecto, lo han hecho posible. América Latina, Europa y Asia han participado ampliamente; sólo notamos la ausencia de África, a pesar de todas las invitaciones y ruegos que hemos hecho. El abultado número de páginas, por otra parte, se debe también al carácter multilingüe de este número, como ya viene siendo una característica frecuente en VOICES (cuatro idiomas se utilizan en este número, y algún artículo está en tres idiomas).

Lo hallamos cada vez más constatado y repetido: de hecho, lo que más está transformando la conciencia actual de la Humanidad es la nueva cosmología, el *nuevo relato* cósmico que las ciencias nos están deparando. No se trata sólo de información, datos, ciencia; es, sobre todo... una nueva conciencia, una renovada sensibilidad, una más profunda y más telúrica espiritualidad. Por eso es que hablamos de *ecología profunda*. Bienvenida sea, nos interesa mucho, queremos convertirla en tema de nuestra reflexión teológica, con tanta o más razón como ya hicimos nuestra, teológicamente hablando, la ecología sin más.

Dentro de unas semanas, concretamente el 9 de noviembre de 2014, se cumplirán 100 años del nacimiento de Thomas BERRY, considerado el máximo eco-teólogo de nuestro tiempo, el pionero que intuyó un camino nuevo para la teología, un camino de retorno a nuestro *oikos*-hogar, nuestro nicho ecológico, cuando todavía estas intuiciones ecológicas brillaban por su ausencia.

Queremos dedicar este número a Thomas BERRY, en señal de homenaje y de agradecimiento por el camino abierto e iniciado. Los dos primeros artículos de este volumen se refieren a Berry.

Como en años pasados (ya cuatro años), el último número de VOICES de cada fin de año estará ocupado por la MINGA de Revistas Latinoamericanas de Teología que organiza EATWOT de América Latina. Las revistas latinoamericanas adherentes publican los artículos sobre papel a lo largo de todo el año, y al final del mismo, VOICES realiza la publicación en formato digital. Se trata de una iniciativa de la Comisión Teológica Latinoamericana de la EATWOT (o ASETT, como es popularmente llamada en América Latina). Nos complace poder permanecer fieles a esta tradición que ya podemos considerar consolidada en América Latina.

Rompiendo sin embargo este ritmo de cada fin de año, la siguiente MINGA, ya la Vª, adelantará su publicación a marzo de 2015. La razón es que va a estar dedicada al recuerdo y la evaluación crítica del pensamiento de Teilhard de Chardin, de cuyo fallecimiento se cumplen 60 años el próximo 10 de abril de 2015. «Teilhard de Chardin hoy, y desde el Sur», es el tema de nuestra MINGA. Como se echa de ver, en una perspectiva explícitamente fiel al espíritu de la EATWOT.

Continuamos esperando los números de VOICES elaborados por las regiones asiática, africana y estadounidense de la EATWOT. Esperamos verlas sin falta en 2015.

Mientras, en todo caso, la EATWOT continuará su servicio de propiciar, acoger y publicitar las VOICES del Sur, de los diferentes Sures de donde venimos, en contacto siempre y en comunión con nuestros lectores.

Fraernal/sororalmente,

Comisión Teológica Internacional de la EATWOT

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Our call for papers for this VOICES' issue was:

Call for papers for VOICES 2014-2

Dear EATWOT's colleagues and friends,
warm greetings from Latin America.

We are glad to announce the theme for the next issue of VOICES is:
Deep Ecology, Spirituality and Liberation

On the one hand, Deep Ecology is a line of thought, spiritual vision and commitment that has been receiving more and more attention in civil society and restlessly raises activities, reflections and popular movements between persons and populations that seek to deepen their personal and communal spiritual maturity. And while this movement grows in society, many churches and theologies remain outside, without accompanying this new presence with his reflection.

On the other hand, the experiential dimension of deep ecology movement challenges the traditional Spirituality, occupying the space, and apparently displacing classic forms of spirituality. It seems like a new ecocentric spirituality comes to compete with traditional spirituality, even with Christian spirituality. Is deep ecology, by itself, a spirituality? Is it compatible with Christian spirituality? Which would be the Jesus role in an eco-centered spirituality? How to imagine an eco-centered re-reading of topics, such as the Church , the Mission , the Sacraments... ?

And also a for us very important question: the large share of attention that claims us deep ecology competes also with the Liberation? Does ecocentric spirituality takes us away from our concern for justice, for the poor, for historical liberation? Where are the poor in eco-spirituality? What do have to say each another deep ecology and theology and spirituality of liberation?

If you want to participate in this collective endeavour of keeping growing our theological journal, please, communicate with us exposing your project for writing. The convocation, run by this time by the Latin American Theological Commission acting as International Commission, is open to the whole EATWOT.

Text must be rigorously original, and not published elsewhere.

Final texts must be «short but thick», not longer than...

Please, feel free to share and send to us your ideas, wishes, suggestions, criticisms... Thanks in advance.

Yours sincerely,

Jose M. VIGIL and Marcelo BARROS

Latin American Theological Commission



Nuestra convocatoria para este número de VOICES fue así:

Convocatoria para VOICES 2014-2

Queridos colegas y amigos de EATWOT:

Saludos cordiales.

Les convocamos con alegría para el próximo número de VOICES, la revista teológica de EATWOT, sobre este tema: :

Ecología Profunda, Espiritualidad y Liberación

Por una parte, la Ecología profunda representa una línea de pensamiento, de visión espiritual y de compromiso que cada vez recibe más atención en la sociedad civil y suscita actividades y movimientos entre segmentos inquietos de población que buscan profundizar en su madurez espiritual personal y comunitaria. Mientras crece este movimiento en la sociedad, muchas Iglesias y teologías permanecen ajenas, no acompañan con su reflexión esta nueva presencia.

Por otra parte, la dimensión vivencial profunda de ese movimiento ecológico desafía a la Espiritualidad tradicional, ocupando su espacio, desplazando aparentemente a formas clásicas de espiritualidad. Parecería como que una nueva espiritualidad ecocéntrica entra a competir con la espiritualidad tradicional, incluso con la espiritualidad cristiana. ¿Es la ecología profunda, por sí misma, una espiritualidad? ¿Es compatible con la espiritualidad cristiana? ¿Cuál sería el puesto de Jesús en la espiritualidad ecocéntrica? ¿Como sería una relectura ecocéntrica de temas como la Iglesia, la Misión, los Sacramentos...?

La gran cuota de atención que nos reclama la ecología profunda entra en competencia también con la Liberación? ¿La mística ecocéntrica nos aparta de la preocupación por la Justicia, por los Pobres? ¿Dónde quedan los pobres en la eco-espiritualidad? ¿Qué se tienen que decir mutuamente la ecología profunda y la teología y la espiritualidad de la liberación?

Dedicaremos este número de VOICES a la memoria de Thomas BERRY cp (*9 noviembre 2014), uno de los mayores eco-teólogos, con ocasión de que el 9 de noviembre próximo se cumplirán los 100 años de su nacimiento.

Si usted desea participar en este esfuerzo colectivo, puede enviarnos su reflexión. Debe ser original y no publicada. Los textos deben ser «cortos pero densos», sin exceder los límites de...

Siéntanse libres de compartirnos sus ideas, deseos, críticas o sugerencias. Muchas gracias, desde ya. Fraternal-sororalmente,

Jose M. VIGIL y Marcelo BARROS

Comisión Teológica Latinoamericana de la EATWOT









Thomas Berry - Terre Sacrée

Richard RENSHAW
Montréal, CANADA

Who is he?

Thomas Berry, 1914-2009, was born and died in Greensboro, N. Carolina. He identified himself as a cultural historian and he often called himself a geologist. Berry was a Roman Catholic Priest of the Passionate Order (a semi-contemplative group). His thinking is inspired by, among many others, a critical view of the work of Teilhard de Chardin. He was, at one point, the president of the American Teilhard Association. He spent time in China and had a broad grasp of Asian religious traditions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism and especially Confucianism. At this point his ideas are part of a broad movement among intellectuals in many fields and are finding an ever wider acceptance. His most important and most influential book, *The Dream of the Earth*, was published by the Sierra Club in 1988. (Later he collaborated with Brian Swimme in *The Universe Story*. Other publications include *The Great Work* and *Sacred Universe*.) It is interesting to note that Berry seldom enters into debate with contemporary authors (though he often critiques classical ones). Rather he gathers up the thinking of many contemporary writers and weaves them into his proposal. They include people like Lynn Margulis, Carl Sagan, Theodore Rosak, and many others.

Berry was one of the early and strong voices crying out that the impact of human activity was putting in danger the future of life on the planet to the point of causing the greatest extinction of species since the time of the dinosaurs when 90% of all species were destroyed. (It should be noted that he does not claim that we will destroy all life on the planet, or that the extinction of species will mean a degradation of all life. Rather he is pointing out that the “great extinction,” as he refers to our time, will mean a tragic setback that will severely test the capacity of the planet to

nourish the diversity of life.) He suggests that we have become deaf and blind to the reality around us. Especially following WW II we thought we could finally dominate nature and remove all its inconveniences. We would finally utterly subdue it. There were no limits; the solution was to consume more and more products, any products. Berry then suggests rather that the solution is to set aside our rage against the inconveniences of our natural situation, recognize our own genetic coding and translate that into a cultural coding in harmony with what he calls the great liturgy of the universe. The solution is to become, in a radical way, ourselves.

HIS QUESTION: But then who are we?

Thomas Berry believed, as do many serious thinkers today (Steven Eisenstein, Lynn Margoulis, etc.) that we have lost touch with who we are. The problem is that we have a distorted sense of who we are and, therefore, of what the world around us is. It is to this distortion that Berry directed his attention. Berry has said that we are blind and deaf to what is right in front of us: the reality of our planet and our cosmos, which are the keys to understanding who we are.

Most societies answer the question about who we are by examining where we came from and what is our destiny. As an historian of cultures, Berry is well positioned to offer us models for exploring the question.

STORIES

Berry begins to build the framework for the thinking that will mark his contribution to the plea for the future of the planet Earth, by noting the importance of story in human life and history. He refers particularly to stories of great magnitude and universality that situate us in the world by offering a vision of where we come from and of our destiny.

It was in fact this reference to story that first drew my attention to Thomas Berry in the early 1990s when I was studying Adult Education at the University of Toronto. I had just returned from a decade in Peru. In the course of those years I had become interested in Andean culture and its traditional stories, particularly their stories of origins. When I returned I also happened to have occasion to hear Art Solomon, an Ojibwa elder, father of two St. Joseph Sisters I came to know: Eva and Priscilla. There again, the explanation of how the First Nations of Canada saw themselves in relation to the Earth and how they explained their origins and destiny as bearers of the fire was extremely interesting to me. My research led me to apply this approach to understand mission of the Church today. I became convinced that story was indeed the best way to communicate with our contemporary generation.

These great, universal stories are called myths, not in the sense of untrue, but precisely in the sense of providing a profound truth in a

highly symbolic way that provides a framework for our lives. He points out that all cultures have such stories. In the Bible we have the story of creation in the first chapters of Genesis; the aboriginal peoples of Turtle Island have a story of how the Sky Mother sent messengers deep into the waters to draw up earth from the depths and place them on the back of the Great Turtle that would become Turtle Island or what we call North America. In the Andes the Aymara people have a story of a union between the Sun and the Waters of Lake Titicaca that gave birth to the first humans. And so on.

In our own times, we seem to have lost that overarching reference to a common story - especially in the Western World and wherever Western scientific and commercial values have taken hold. It is because we do not have that common framework that we have erected extraordinarily fantastic versions of life as continual progress with unending economic growth that have led to the devastation of the thin living ecological skin that covers the Planet Earth and placed it in great danger even as the inequalities between peoples have led to huge imbalances in the quality of life among humans.

By way of introduction to the thought of Thomas Berry, one of his most celebrated collaborators, Brian Swimme, used the story of the eye to illustrate how Berry approaches his fundamental question: Who are we? This is what he had to say in his introduction to the Berry's most famous book, *The Dream of the Earth*, page vii-viii:

We contemporary humans identify so strongly with our visual elements of consciousness that we have some initial difficulty conceiving of a time when life proceeded without any eyes at all, but so it did. And there were great struggles, magnificent strategies, and soaring feelings, all within a blind world. And nowhere was there a vision of waterfalls, nowhere the experience of the blue sky, or the desert colors awakening in their first rain.

These essays of Thomas Berry are like the invention of the eye with which to see the Earth. They are the remodeling of the ear with which to hear the Earth. Of course, in an obvious sense we have eyes and ears and we can regard the Earth. But the vision of Earth, Thomas Berry points to is something more. The full reality of the Earth and the Universe has escaped the narrow spectrum of sensitivity in our industrial eyes and ears.

THE UNIVERSE STORY

Berry, along with many other educators, scientists, historians and philosophers, offers us a model for a new story that provides a way of framing human life for almost all peoples of the world today: it is rooted in the scientific story of the history of the universe. Like all great myths it is a story that tells a history with a particular emphasis on its symbolic

dimension. It is a story that only our current generation can begin to tell. At no previous time in human history was it possible to tell this story in the way we can today. We are the first to be able to recount, in a scientific way, how the universe began, the various phases it went through and the origins and development of the various stages in the development of life from the first eukaryotes to multiple cell bacteria, to complex living organisms and finally to that creature that has become self-reflective, the human being. It is our story in more ways than one.

It is a story that overturns our current cultural references, developed over the course of the last 600 years since the beginning of the renaissance; it revises the whole scientific world constructed by thinkers like Newton, Descartes, Hobbes, Leibniz, Locke, Darwin and others. That world increasingly saw the universe and life on our planet as a mechanical reality governed by immutable laws. Today, with the advent of modern physics, particularly of quantum physics, that whole notion has been overturned. Moreover, Darwin's theory of competition, which then became translated into the economic and political sphere as one of competition for survival, is being revised into one of collaboration and cooperation in the nurturing of a holistic community of life. It is a story, he says, quoting Theodosius Dobzhansky, that is neither determined nor random but rather creative.

Let me outline, in the briefest of terms the story of the universe as it was told by Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme (a physicist who spent several years collaborating with Berry in developing the basic lines of the story). Obviously it is ridiculous to think that I could recount the whole history of the universe in five or ten minutes. I just want to touch on a few points to give you a taste.

In the beginning there was nothing. Then, there emerged a pinprick of time and space containing all the energy that would ever exist in the universe. The force of this initial flaring forth took place at an enormous speed, but also at one that could not have been even one trillionth of a second slower or else the universe would not have continued to exist but would have imploded on itself into nothingness again. Had it been even the tiniest bit stronger, faster (one trillionth of a second), the universe would have expanded into a vast dead space-time without further development. The measure is so narrow as to defy all measurement or randomness. At this stage, in the first second, there was only a foaming of energy without elements, without atoms, only the smallest of particles of matter without stable form or laws governing them. They flashed in and out of the fundamental dark energy, not having yet learned how to function. This period ended when the particles learned, through experimentation, a structure (gravitation, electromagnetism, the two nuclear interactions - strong and weak). Had they established another structure,

what followed would have been entirely different. All this took place in less than a second. Since then, 13.7 billion years of the time-space curvature have elapsed.

At the end of which only one billionth of the original matter continues to exist. What managed to slip through this tiny eye of a needle were photons, protons and neutrons. For a billion years the material universe consisted basically of light. We are children of that light.

At the end of those first billion years, the force of the dark matter that constitutes by far the overwhelming part of the universe, drew everything into its dark hold concentrating the energy into a dense concentration that they exploded once again in a mega supernova that spewed out the elements we know today in a vast array of a billion galaxies, one of which is our spiral galaxy, the one we call the Milky Way.

Every bit of matter formed through this tremendous Supernova explosion still exists today. It just enters into continuous transformations of relationship. Underlying it all is that vast matrix of energy that constitutes 90% of the universe we know, that is entirely hidden from us, even from scientific instruments but that contains 90% of the energy that drives the universe. Even our own bodies are made up largely of this “dark matter,” pure energy that interacts with the particles, atoms and molecules that make up our bodies. Moreover, we know that, in our every breath, are atoms that Jesus and every human in ancient history have also breathed and in the course of a year, we breathe atoms that have passed through the lungs of every other human on earth. We are profoundly inter-related.

This universe, as we know it, is sacred, not just in a normal “religious” language as created by God who is sacred. It is sacred in the most primordial of all senses, the one that gives value to our connecting it with the creator. It is sacred in the sense that it is the framework for everything we are.

Within our galaxy, the planet Earth that came to be some four billions years ago as part of what we call the Solar System. Initially the Earth was a seething chaos of heat and light, of fire. As it cooled, massive quantities of hydrogen and oxygen interacted to form water. Somewhere at the edges of those masses of water, conditions were such that molecules were able to form into strings called protein and the first indices of life emerged. They lived off of carbon dioxide and their greatest enemy was oxygen. Most of them lived in the deepest, darkest ranges of the waters. (And still do, in fact.) It took a long time before these first living things learned to take advantage of oxygen through a manipulation of sunlight as an energy source. Thus life as we know it began. At this point the Earth is entirely covered with a thin “skin” of life that descends several hundred meters below the surface and several kilometers above.

More and more scientists are realizing that this skin is actually a unified, inter-related ecological system. This theory that the Earth has this living component across its entire surface is called the “Gaia” theory after the Greek goddess of the Earth. It is important to recognise this because, in that case, all the creatures (bacteria and primitive organisms but also fish, birds, animals, plants and finally even human beings are products of this living environment. We were not “placed on the earth” but rather “grew out of it.” The recognition is revolutionary because it puts us in an entirely new relationship with Earth and all its living creatures. This is particularly so because human beings are an extraordinary development built upon the less complex species and our body is constructed on the evolutionary learning of those creatures that developed earlier.

We need to remember that for more than 13,4 billion years of the 13,7 of its history, there was no one to see or hear what was happening. It was only with the emergence of multi-cellular living beings on Earth that the process could begin that would lead to those capacities. Those learnings would eventually lead to the emergence of plants with leaves (photosynthesis), then to animals with primitive eyes and then finally to the extraordinarily delicate organ we call an eye. It should be remembered that our eyes are not the most elaborate or fine-tuned that Earth has produced. The eagle, for example, has much sharper eyes. We need to be humble about our evolutionary achievements. And it is important to remember that our eyes, like everything else about us, are entirely dependent on every prior stage in evolutionary history in the last 13.7 billion years.

What is important in the latter stages of this long story is that there emerged at one point a creature that was not only conscious but gradually became conscious of itself. A million or more years ago a process of self-consciousness began to emerge. It seems that the origins of this capacity of self-consciousness emerged when our ancestors initially attempted to scratch lines on stones. Here the pictographs became the first examples of an attempt to externalize something that occurred in their consciousness. Language began.

The human story took a second great leap when that consciousness learned how to manage the processes of seeds and turned to agriculture and the domestication of animals. (Some 20,000 years ago). At that point humans began to have some control over the management of their surroundings, adapting them to their needs and beginning to live together, first in small villages and then, some 5,000 years ago in cities (civilizations).

The important thing is to recognise that, at every moment in this whole long history, our unique selves (here in this room) were being prepared and shaped already.

This story of the universe is made possible for the very first time in human history through scientific studies in recent decades in physics, biology and chemistry. We should not be surprised if it leaves us somewhat disconcerted and confused at first contact. The transformation is not minor. We have become habituated to a mechanical view of the world since the 16th century and it takes some effort to readjust to a vision that restores to us, not the details, but the “enchantment” of earlier periods of our own history. Berry uses the word “numinous” to speak of this aspect of the universe. This numinous quality is a way of speaking of the intentionality of the unfolding of the universe from the first “flaring forth” in the great fireball that was the Big Bang. This numinous quality of the universe is closely related to what he means by the “dream of the earth,” that is to say that, from the very beginning, from the first moment of the flaring forth, there was spontaneity of imagination at work, something similar to a dream. It includes an intentionality ever moving toward greater diversity, greater communion and greater interiority. Berry connects this with the beginning of John’s gospel where it is the Word that is present and operative from the very beginning. This is not just an intellectual word bespeaking content but rather a vital word that bespeaks presence and depth. It is the same imagination that produced the great works of Dante, Shakespeare, Michelangelo, but also the galaxies, the Earth and all it contains. One might also call it an educational process as the universe learned to master various challenges through the evolutionary process. In the genetic coding of our own bodies and those of all living creatures we can detect the history of this learning. Unfortunately we turned to an industrial coding to reinterpret everything in a mechanistic way.

However, with the advent of Descartes and Newton (among others) the process took a strange turn. They separated themselves from the age-old sense of the sacred character of the universe. They separated the “sacred” or “spiritual” dimension from that of the “material” and declared this latter to be subject to laws which they could define and which allowed them to manipulate the material world. This alienation has taken a fatal turn in the last 100 or so years.

What is the lesson? THE PRINCIPLES OF THE UNIVERSE

In studying the story of the universe, Berry identified three fundamental principles that guide it: diversity, communion, subjectivity. In addition there are several dynamics that are omni-present: self-governance, self-organization, self-healing, etc. An examination of each of these principles will reveal dynamics capable of guiding us along a path to the rediscovery of ourselves. If we are the children of the Earth, if we are the Earth thinking, caring, then the dynamics that guide the Earth, as also the entire universe, will be our fundamental framework for being in the world.

Diversity

Everything in the natural world tends toward diversity. The Earth abounds in the production of diversity. No two snowflakes are ever entirely alike, nor are the individual flowers, birds, animals or even ourselves. We tend to think that water is H₂O and that is all. However, scientists tell us that the molecular structure of water varies infinitely. Just as there are many varieties of snow and ice, there are also many varieties of liquid water depending on its context. While there may be many similarities, each is unique. It is that attachment to creativity, to abundance, to diversity that is the first principle of the universe and of all life.

This principle has important implications on many levels. In agriculture, we know that monoculture is quite dangerous, yet it is what we practice for the most part in the last 100 years. We know that the many languages and cultures in the world are a phenomenal source of wisdom and beauty, yet they are dying under the weight of a global monoculturalism. We know that bio-regionalism provides adequate resources for humanity to meet its needs, yet we insist on a global economy that transfers items back and forth across the globe with disastrous consequences for the equilibrium of our ecosystems.

Communion

Communion is another fundamental principle of the universe. Darwin insisted that evolution occurred through competition for survival. More recent biological studies indicate that this is not the case. Trees collaborate with one another in assuring an adequate environment for the flourishing of a forest.

Lichen is a community between a algae and a fungus. Neither can exist without the other and only through their mutual collaboration, do they survive.

The human body is a magnificent example of the collaboration between various organs and cellular structures, but also between an immense variety of bacteria that inhabit every cell of our body and collaborate to make sure everything works together. We really do live in a uni-verse.

It is a basic principle of the entire universe that everything is related to everything else. Thus the apparent chaos at the sub-atomic level as revealed in quantum physics is actually a process through which diversity and creativity are promoted through communion of all parts of the universe even when they are quite separated by both time and space. (In fact, the discoveries of quantum physics have left classical physics, with its universal laws of gravity and thermodynamics in a serious quandary. No longer is the universe an object out there to be studied. We are in it; it is shaped by us in very fundamental ways (as also we are by it). We

participate in nature and can only really learn about Nature through participation in its processes.

Moreover, as humans, the Earth community needs to become for us a place of communion. Berry often refers to the need for us to regain intimacy with the Earth, with Nature. This notion of intimacy runs all through his thinking. He laments that we have lost it and tries to map out a path of recover. Intimacy is the capacity for communion with the Earth, of reciprocity, of hearing and seeing, of being nourished and fulfilled by the Earth. We will come back to this.

Subjectivity

Mary Evelyn Tucker defines subjectivity as “the interior numinous component present in all reality” She says that it is also called consciousness. This dimension is particularly difficult for some to recognise and accept. We can understand it to some extent in mammals and perhaps even in smaller creatures. However, some have difficult recognizing how it could be present in bacteria, or plants. Even more difficult is to recognize its presence in water, air or rock. However, the principle is central to Berry’s thinking. The Universe moves along with a conscious intent. In most of the universe this is not a consciousness like ours and we have difficulty finding the link. Berry insists that we are the universe becoming self-conscious, that we are the Earth thinking. And he insists that this consciousness is an evolution from the underlying bed of consciousness that is everywhere present and without with it would be difficult to understand the way in which the Universe, and our Earth, has evolved.

This leads us further to recognize several functions at work on our planet Earth. I mention two:

Self-governance

Ecologists know that there is a collaboration among the elements of an eco-system to maintain its equilibrium. However, in this case we are speaking of the entire Planet and, in fact of the Universe itself. In the case of the Planet we can use the example of climate equilibrium.

Even though the solar heat reaching the Earth in the last 100 years has nearly doubled, the planet maintained, until quite recently, a stability of surface temperature through its regulation of the atmosphere. If that balance is upset at this point, it is not because of the forces of nature but rather because of our human interference.

In the case of the Universe the matter is even more extraordinary. The original Big Bang could easily have been slightly stronger or weaker than it actually was. If it had been slightly weaker, the universe would have caved in on itself, drawn itself into a black hole and never emerged again. If the burst had been even the tiniest bit stronger, the universe

would have expanded at an accelerated rate that would not have permitted the formation of stars and galaxies. The difference is so slight as to boggle the imagination. This is something far beyond the realm of randomness, which is supposed to have governed the laws of physics and evolution.

It would therefore appear that there is a force at work in the Universe, as also on our Planet and in plants, animals and our own bodies, that assures that the evolutionary process moves along a path that has every appearance of chaos and out of which inevitably derives a push toward new expressions of diversity in equilibrium with everything else.

Self-healing

We all know the story of the forest fire that destroys everything and, with time, gives rise to a new vibrant forest. The crash is a prelude to new expressions of vitality, diversity and creativity. Farmers know that soil that has been depleted can regenerate itself given ample time to do so. Similarly we know that water that has been polluted will cleanse itself given a long enough time to flow or to settle.

We have seen now eco-systems that have been badly damaged will often, with time recover their balance. Everything indicates that there is a principle at work to heal what has been wounded or broken.

The disaster of an asteroid colliding with Earth millions of years ago led to the extinction of almost 90% of all species, including the dinosaurs. However, with time, the Earth brought forth an entirely new range of creatures of all sorts, most particularly all the various categories of mammals. They would probably not have appeared had there not been that disaster.

This is not an apology for what is happening currently. The great extinction taking place today is due to human irresponsibility and we may be the creatures who pay the heaviest penalty in the end. Moreover, human proliferation and destructive technology has reached a point which could entirely upset the balance of the global ecosystem and plunge Earth into a process that would end, as seems to have happened on some other planets, in a desolate wasteland.

IMPLICATIONS

The story offered by Thomas Berry has enormous implications for many dimensions of our life. Berry spent many years trying to extrapolate some of those implications and he called on collaborators from many fields of research to help him in the endeavour. Let us examine just a few:

Ethics

At the end of chapter five of *The Dream of the Earth* (49), Berry has this to say about recognizing the primacy of the natural world and its spontaneous functioning in all we do:

I suggest that this is the ultimate lesson in physics, biology and all the sciences, as it is the ultimate wisdom of tribal peoples and the fundamental teaching of the great civilizations. If this has been obscured by the adolescent aspect of our earlier scientific and technological developments, it is now becoming clear to us on an extensive scale. If responded to properly with our new knowledge and new competencies, these forces will find their integral expression in the spontaneities of the new ecological age. To assist in bringing this about is the present task of the human community.

At one point he put his fundamental ethical principle in a very brief form: What assists the diversity, communion, interiority, self-governance and self-healing of the Earth is ethical and what harms it is unethical.

Education

We need to teach our contemporaries who we are, where we came from and what is our destiny. It is, for Berry, a question of a new cultural coding in coherence with the genetic coding of the human, which derives of course from that of the Earth. Otherwise we, and the planet with us, will perish. For the very first time in human history, the sciences provide us with a fairly coherent explanation of the whole history of the universe based on observation. Our job is to help people understand the Journey of the Universe, the Story of our Earth and its implications for our own cultural coding.

Most of all we need to learn to listen to what the universe is saying to us. And mostly, today, it is saying: Tell the story. Berry says at one point, "I went to the river and asked it, 'What shall I say' and the answer came, 'Tell the story.'" I went to the tree and asked it, "What shall I say" and the answer came, "Tell the story." I went to the bird in the tree and asked it, "What shall I say" and the answer came, "Tell the story."

In *The Dream of the Earth* (Chapter 8), Berry suggests a series of courses that could be given in colleges:

1. A course on the evolutionary phases of a functional cosmology: origin of the universe, formation of galaxies, etc. This must be set in the context of the air, water, food that sustains us.
2. Secondly, a course on the various phases of human cultural development to recognize the genius of the various moments and places and so find their own place in that cultural space.
3. Thirdly, a course on the great classical cultures or civilizations since they have deeply shaped our cultural genome.

4. Fourthly, a study of the scientific technological phase up to the point of the awakening to the story of the universe in human consciousness.

5. Fifthly, a course on the emerging ecological age that is already replacing the current anthropocentric age. It would attempt to situate the human within its cultural context and begin a process of healing.

6. Sixthly, he suggests a course on the origin and identification of values.

I should add that this suggestion has been taken up by some colleges, notably St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto and also at Holy Names University in Oakland, California, to name only two.

Bioregionalism (Agriculture)

We need to learn to live within the context our bio-region affords. (A group of young people once went to Berry and asked him what they could do. He responded: Blow up the bridges, that is to say stop the infernal system of transportation of goods and people that is driving the exploration for oil and minerals and that is uselessly transporting food and other goods globally when most of that could be supplied bio-regionally.) The word "bio-region" is not exactly the same thing as "local." A bio-region is an area large enough and diverse enough to provide sustenance to its population. Thus the region may be larger or smaller depending on the richness of its bio-diversity and on the density of its population. Moreover, we need to develop a mystique for our relationship with the earth, a sense of its sacredness, a way of repeatedly recalling the sacred character of Nature and the Earth through various forms of ritual. Only by recovering this will be able to resist the temptation to destroy it.

In *Dream of the Earth* (chapter 12) Berry suggests several functions of the bioregion for the human community:

1. That we recognize the rights of each species in its bioregion;
2. That we nourish ourselves from the resources offered by the bioregion. Every bioregion has its own economy. We need to learn and respect it.
3. We need to enter into the self-educational processes of our bio-region, which through careful experimentation, designs its future.
4. There is a self-governance within each bioregion that we must learn to respect without imposing what is external. Rituals and celebrations are part of this.
5. Each biological community carries within itself its own self-healing. We need to listen and learn this process and collaborate with it. Our healing too comes through submission to the discipline of that bio-community.

6. The community finds its self=fulfilment in each and all of its components. We need to nourish our spirit at this well. There is an important place here for celebration and ritual.

Unfortunately North Americans are not very good at identifying their bio-regions. We need help with that. Our Aboriginal brothers and sisters could teach us. One of the signals of a bioregion lies in identifying the watersheds.

Economics

Berry considers economics to be a religious issue and from several points of view. First of all, the arguments defending capitalist economy are unsustainable. Unending exponential economic growth on a limited planet is evidently absurd. We all know that and yet both economics and politicians continue to promote it at the risk of our own lives and that of the Earth. We cannot continue to ravage the source of our own sustenance. Economics must include our debt to the Earth system. We need to build an economy that learns from the dynamics of Earth economy. The issues are religious because Christianity needs to recognize its collusion with the development of the mind-set that has led to our current economic rape of the planet. The universe is not just an object; it is subject and we need to learn to respect its subjectivity. This is a distinctly religious issue.

Steven Eisenberg has, rather, suggested that we consider an economy more in tune with that of the dynamics of the Earth. Rather than basing economy on the exchange of goods valued for the rarity, he suggests we consider the abundance offered by the Earth and exchange goods freely. The suggestion is not without foundation. Hundreds if not thousands of small and medium-sized projects all around the planet are demonstrating rather conclusively that such an economy can exist and even flourish especially if societies are structured in such a way as to encourage them. Thus we have organic farming, cooperatives of all sorts, land trusts, worker-owned factories or centres of production, solar energy, etc.

Spirituality (Sacred Universe)

The word “spirituality” here is intended to refer to a set of basic values and insights that guide us along a path in life. Spirituality is also a set of relationships that we establish with other creatures (and with the Creator) that are founded on a nexus of “spirit.” Spirit is not something that is separated or alien from “material” as Descartes would have had us believe. It is rather a dimension of what we call “material” that bespeaks respect for the communion that unites us in our diversity, that provides the energy and direction to govern these relationships wisely and that

provides us with the wisdom to endure the difficult and dangerous movements as we struggle to maintain or to recover equilibrium.

In this sense there is an enormous transformation that needs to happen to the Christian spirituality that has shaped our industrial, scientific, technological culture. He points to millennium thinking, to divine transcendence and to attitudes toward the human body as particular challenges. Our spirituality will be one of listening carefully to what the universe is telling us. And it would seem that today it is mostly saying, "Tell the story."

Indigenous peoples

In all of this, it is important to recognize that those cultures which have historically retained the greatest closeness to Earth and its fundamental principles are the indigenous cultures. We are not all called to simply copy the indigenous cultures of our regions of the world. Like them we need to search together to recover and discover the path forward. However, their wisdom has much to teach us and we need to pay special attention to them in our journey.

More than once I have heard First Nations Peoples tell me, you Europeans have been here for more than 500 years and you still do not have any idea where you are. If you think of all the plants and animals, river courses and wind currents just in our region, how many of us could distinguish and name the majority of them? Do we really know where we are? If not, how can we know who we are?

THE GREAT WORK

Somewhere along the line, Thomas Berry began to speak of the integration of this great story into the fabric of our societal operations as the Great Work, a work that is great because it is so urgent and so utterly transformational of every aspect of our Western civilization. The New Story of the Universe redefines all our relationships and sets new priorities for our interaction. It is great also in the sense that, without its integration into our lives, we are destined to disappear as a species along with most other species on the planet. Already the process is well advanced, as we all well know.

Thomas Berry does not reject the discoveries of modern technology. However, he suggests six principles that should guide their use (The Dream of the Earth, chapter 6). I merely list them:

1. Human technologies should function in an integral relation with earth technologies.
2. We must be clear about the order of magnitude of the changes that are needed.
3. Sustainable progress must be for the entire earth community.

4. Our technologies need to be integral.
5. There is a need for a functional cosmology (one that will provide the mystique needed for this integral earth-human presence”).
6. Nature is violent as well as benign. Our technologies have a defensive role to play.

CONCLUSION

What can we say in conclusion about Thomas Berry?

First of all, we can say that he was uniquely positioned to be able to speak of the contributions of indigenous cultures around the world to a deep wisdom that we have lost as Western people.

Secondly, he was brave enough, as a priest, to suspend, in one sense, the entire theological tradition of his Church in order to recover that deep wisdom that the Earth is speaking to us. (In *Dream of the Earth*, he compares it to St. Augustine’s writing of the City of God, that is to say a reconfiguration of the whole of human history in the light of a new element that transforms, without eliminating, all that has gone before.) While setting out an entirely new framework for positioning human beings in their identity and in the meaning of their lives, he found something that is coherent with his Christian tradition but reinterprets it in a profoundly new way.

Thirdly, he was extremely open to what a variety of scientists were saying: in astronomy, physics, biology, chemistry. Yet he was also critical of the classical scientific world and, in fact, proposes to set it on entirely new foundations that have never been elucidated before.

Fourthly, he has hit upon the notion of story and of listening to the Universe (and all its creatures and expressions) as a core way of moving humanity forward to its next, extremely difficult, step.

Fifthly, he was an optimist who believed that we do have a deep identity and a profoundly important place in the Universe and he called us forth to embrace it.

Sixthly, through his musings on cultural history around the world, and through his intense interest in modern science, he was able to construct a story capable of returning modern alienated humans to their fundamental identity as people of the Earth and to outline the way forward for humanity based on that understanding.

At the end of his essay on “The New Story” in *The Dream of the Earth*, page 137, Berry writes:

If the dynamics of the universe from the beginning shaped the course of the heavens, lighted the sun and formed the Earth, if this same dynamism brought forth the continents and seas and atmosphere, if it awakened life in the primordial cell and then brought into being the unnumbered variety of living beings, and finally brought us into being and

guided us safely through the turbulent centuries, there is reason to believe that this same guiding process is precisely what has awakened in us our present understanding of ourselves and our relation to this stupendous process. Sensitized to such guidance from the very structure and functioning of the universe, we can have confidence in the future that awaits the human venture.

Questions

1. Who is Thomas Berry? (1914-2009, Greensboro, N. Carolina).
Profession: cultural historian.

2. What was his question? (Who are we? Where did we come from?
What is our destiny?)

3. How did he answer it? (We were lost and we are coming home)

a. The alienation of humans today and the destruction of the Earth;

b. Stories (Myth) as bearers of meaning and identity;

c. Creation stories in traditional societies (indigenous);

d. A contemporary creation story as foundation for meaning today:
Story of the Universe (elaborate);

e. The principles of the universe: diversity, communion, depth [interiority, self-organization. (explain each);

f. Implications for ethics, economics, education, spirituality (Sacred Universe); bioregionalism, indigenous peoples; (Touch on each briefly.)

4. The Great Work: The Dream of the Earth.

Resources:

Bullfrog Films : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-cCCKo5rxEO>

<http://www.thomasberry.org/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0XBItUQ8qU> (6 min)

<http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org/film-trailer/>

Baraka (see Youtube and RealPlayer)

Mary Evelyn Tucker and the Thomas Berry Foundation

Brian Swimme, James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis and also her husband, Carl Sagan.

Elisabeth Sahtouris, *The Human Journey from Chaos to Cosmos*

Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God*

Mark Hathaway and Leonardo Boff, *The Tao of Liberation*

Stephen Eisenstein, *Sacred Economics and The Ascent of Humanity*





Thomas Berry - Terre Sacrée

Justice et Écologie

Richard RENSHAW
Montréal, CANADA

Comment est-ce que on regarde sa propre identité ?

Aujourd'hui il faut libérer nos capacités humaines pour servir au Royaume de Dieu qui n'est pas d'ailleurs que sur cette Terre, si on croit au Notre Père. C'est un chemin qu'il faut inventer avec respect pour la tradition mais aussi avec audace pour inventer. Il faut cultiver des qualités qui permettent se mettre au service d'une communauté dont on fait partie. Mais, la mobilisation de ses qualités spirituelles implique une certaine intégration de l'identité fondamentale de la personne. Donc, c'est à cette identité que je vous invite à diriger votre attention.

Malheureusement, notre culture encourage une vision assez individualiste de la vie et aussi de la foi. Moi, je veux suggérer que cette vision n'est pas suffisante et qu'il faut élargir notre sens d'identité pour assez répondre aux exigences du ministère aujourd'hui surtout que nous sommes dans un période de transformation rapide et fondamental partout dans le monde. Nous sommes à la fin d'une époque et nous devinons difficilement comment affronter ce qui s'en vient.

Un tiers de l'humanité vit encore dans la misère. Nous vivons dans un totalitarisme planétaire de gouvernance par des corporations multinationale auquel nos gouvernements comme aussi notre système d'éducation sont soumis.

Au même temps, ces intérêts corporatifs sont en train de détruire la vie sur la planète : pollution de l'aire par le pétrole, de la mer par nos déchets, de la terre par les compagnies minières, de nos corps par des produits alimentaires pleins de chimies et même génétiquement modifiés.

Selon les biologistes nous sommes à la fin de l'ère cénozoïque marquée par la présence des mammifères. 90% des espèces vivantes, toute catégorie confondue, est en train de disparaître. La Terre est en train de devenir un vaste désert.

Le problème trouve ses racines dans notre culture occidentale.

Nous sommes devenus sourds et aveugles à la réalité qui nous entoure. Surtout depuis la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, nous avons pensé être désormais en mesure de dominer la nature et d'en faire disparaître tous les inconvénients. Nous allions finalement la soumettre totalement. On n'y voyait aucune limite ; la solution était de consommer de plus en plus, et de produire n'importe quoi.

La vraie solution est plutôt de mettre de côté notre fureur contre les inconvénients de notre situation naturelle, de reconnaître notre propre encodage génétique et de le traduire dans un encodage culturel en harmonie avec ce qu'il appelle la grande liturgie de l'univers. Ayant perdu le sens de qui nous sommes, nous sommes invités à rentrer « chez nous », à réintégrer notre véritable demeure, à trouver notre véritable identité en tant qu'enfants de la Terre.

Mais alors qui sommes-nous ?

Nous ne savons plus qui nous sommes. Le problème, c'est que nous avons une notion déformée de qui nous sommes et, en conséquence, de ce qu'est le monde autour de nous. Nous sommes devenus aveugles et sourds à ce qui est juste devant nous : la réalité de notre planète et de notre cosmos ; Pourtant ils constituent les clefs de la compréhension de qui nous sommes.

Des Récits

À la question: « Qui sommes-nous ? », la plupart des sociétés historiques ont répondu en examinant notre origine et notre destinée. On ne peut pas sous-estimer l'importance des récits dans la vie et l'histoire humaines. Je réfère particulièrement à des récits de grande envergure et universels, des récits épiques ; ils nous situent dans le monde en offrant une vision de notre origine et de notre destinée.

D'ici je vais prendre la route des idées de Thomas Berry, Passionniste, né en 1914 et décédé en 2009 aux États-Unis. Il était historien culturel, avait vécu en Chine, et fut professeur en plusieurs universités, Fordham entre autres. Il a fondé le Riverdale Center for Religious Research. La plupart de ce qui suit est tiré de mes études de ses idées. (Pourtant les exemples sont tirés souvent de mon propre expérience.)

Ces grands récits universels, on les appelle des mythes, non pas dans le sens qu'ils ne sont pas vrais, mais précisément dans le sens qu'elles offrent de manière hautement symbolique une vérité profonde qui nous fournit un cadre de vie. Toutes les cultures possèdent de tels récits. Dans la Bible, nous avons le récit de la création dans les premiers chapitres de la Genèse (un poème et une fable) ; les peuples autochtones de l'Isle de la Tortue (Turtle Island) ont un récit relatant la façon dont la Mère Ciel envoya des messagers au fond des eaux pour tirer la Terre des

profondeurs et la placer sur le dos de la Grande Tortue : ce qui aurait donné naissance à l'Île de la Tortue ou ce que nous appelons l'Amérique du Nord. Dans les Andes, le peuple Aymara possède un récit de l'union entre le Soleil et les eaux du lac Titicaca qui donna naissance aux premiers êtres humains. Et ainsi de suite. Chacun de ses récits a permis à des peuples entiers de survivre pendant des siècles sinon des millénaires sans perdre le sens de leur présence sur la Terre. Leur récit permettait à ses peuples de se trouver dans la vie et savoir comment s'orienter.

Aujourd'hui il faut trouver un nouveau récit pour aider le monde entier, le monde mondialisé, à se trouver ensemble devant les grands défis de nos temps. Il fait appel surtout à des récits épiques construits ainsi pour nous engager au plus profond de notre être dans le grand exploit cosmologique. Ce sont des récits qui appellent au cœur, à l'émerveillement, au sens numineux du monde, au mystère subjacent notre vie en commune. C'est ici en effet la source primaire de la religion.

À notre époque, surtout en Occident et partout où les valeurs scientifiques et commerciales de l'Occident se sont répandues, nous semblons avoir perdu cette référence universellement partagée à une histoire commune. C'est parce que nous n'avons pas ce cadre commun que nous avons inventé des versions extrêmement fantaisistes de la vie en tant que progrès continu avec une croissance économique sans fin ; cela a mené à la destruction de la mince peau écologique vivante qui recouvre la planète Terre et lui fait courir un grave danger au moment même où les inégalités entre les peuples ont produit d'énormes déséquilibres dans la qualité de vie entre les êtres humains.

Voici ce que Brian Swimme, l'un de ses collaborateurs les plus connus de Thomas Berry, a dit de cette question fondamentale, Je cite l'introduction de *The Dream of the Earth (Le rêve de la terre, p. vii-viii)* :

Nous, les humains d'aujourd'hui, sommes tellement habitués à faire référence à des éléments visuels de la conscience qu'il peut nous sembler difficile d'imaginer une époque où la vie se propageait sans que l'œil en fasse intégralement partie. C'est pourtant bien ce qui s'est passé : un monde aveugle fut le terrain de combats épiques, de stratégies grandioses et d'intenses sensations, sans qu'y intervienne le spectacle de majestueuses cataractes, l'expérience de ciels d'azur ou la palette colorée de déserts s'embrasant sous la première pluie.

Ces essais de Thomas Berry sont l'équivalent d'un nouvel œil permettant de voir la Terre et d'une nouvelle oreille permettant de l'entendre. Nous avons, bien sûr, des yeux et des oreilles et nous pouvons observer la Terre. Mais la vision de la Terre qu'envisage Thomas Berry va plus loin. La pleine réalité de la Terre et de l'Univers a échappé à l'étroite bande de sensibilité de nos yeux et de nos oreilles que le monde industrialisé mobilise.

L'histoire de l'univers

Avec bien d'autres éducateurs, scientifiques, historiens et philosophes, Thomas Berry nous offre un modèle pour un nouveau récit qui apporte à presque tous les peuples du monde actuel une façon d'encadrer la vie humaine : un récit qui s'enracine dans ce que la science nous révèle de l'histoire de l'univers. Comme tous les grands mythes, il s'agit d'un récit qui raconte l'histoire avec une insistance particulière sur sa dimension symbolique. C'est une histoire que seule notre génération actuelle peut commencer à raconter. Jamais auparavant dans l'histoire humaine il ne fut possible de raconter cette histoire de la façon dont nous pouvons le faire aujourd'hui. Nous sommes les premiers à pouvoir raconter, à partir des sources scientifiques, comment l'univers a commencé, les diverses périodes qu'il a traversées de même que les origines et l'évolution des différentes étapes du développement de la vie, à partir des premiers eucaryotes jusqu'aux multiples bactéries cellulaires, aux organismes vivants complexes et finalement jusqu'à la créature devenue pensante, l'être humain. De bien des manières, il s'agit de notre histoire.

Cette histoire met en cause nos références culturelles actuelles, développées au cours des 600 dernières années, à partir du début de la Renaissance ; elle modifie tout le monde scientifique construit par des penseurs comme Newton, Descartes, Hobbes, Leibniz, Locke et d'autres. Ce monde voyait de plus en plus l'univers et la vie sur notre planète comme une réalité mécanique régie par des lois immuables. Aujourd'hui, avec l'avènement de la physique moderne, particulièrement la physique quantique, toute cette notion a été renversée. En outre, la théorie de la compétition de Darwin, qui a alors été traduite dans les sphères économique et politique comme étant une théorie de la compétition pour la survie, est revue pour en faire une de collaboration et de coopération dans le développement d'une communauté de vie globale. C'est une histoire, affirme-t-il, citant Theodosius Dobzhanski, qui n'est ni déterminée, ni le fruit du hasard, mais plutôt une histoire créative.

Permettez-moi d'esquisser le plus brièvement possible quelques éléments de l'histoire de l'univers telle qu'elle a été façonnée en récit épique par Thomas Berry et Brian Swimme. (Vous pouvez maintenant trouver une version en français de ce récit dans *L'odyssée de l'univers*, de Mary Evelyn Tucker et Brian Swimme.)

Au commencement, il n'y avait rien. Surgit alors un infime point de temps et d'espace de la grosseur de la pointe d'une aiguille, qui contenait déjà toute l'énergie qui a jamais existé dans l'univers. La force de cette première étincelle s'est déclenchée à une vitesse extraordinaire, mais aussi à une vitesse qui n'aurait pas pu être plus lente d'un trillionième de seconde, car autrement l'univers n'aurait pas pu continuer à exister,

mais aurait imposé et serait retourné à nouveau dans le néant. Si cette force avait été un tout petit peu plus puissant, plus rapide (un trillionième de seconde), l'univers se serait répandu en un grand espace-temps sans vie, dépourvu de tout développement ultérieur. La différence est si faible qu'elle défie toute mesure ou hasard. À cette étape, dans cette première seconde, il n'y avait qu'une écume d'énergie sans éléments, sans atomes, seulement les plus petites particules de matière sans forme stable ou sans lois pour les régir. À la vitesse de l'éclair, elles sortaient de l'énergie noire fondamentale et y entraient, car elles n'avaient pas encore appris comment fonctionner. Cette période s'est terminée lorsque, à travers l'expérience, les particules eurent appris une structure (la gravitation, l'électromagnétisme, les deux interactions nucléaires — forte et faible). Si ces petites particules de matière avaient créé une autre structure, ce qui a suivi aurait été totalement différent. Tout cela est survenu en moins d'une seconde. Depuis lors, 13,7 milliards d'années de la courbure du temps-espace se sont écoulées, à la fin desquelles seul un milliardième de la matière originale continue d'exister.

Ce qui a pu passer par ce tout petit chas d'une aiguille était constitué de photons, de protons et de neutrons. Pendant un milliard d'années l'univers matériel était fondamentalement constitué de lumière. Nous sommes enfants de cette lumière.

Au terme de ces premiers milliards d'années, la force de la matière noire qui constitue de loin la partie la plus importante de l'univers attira tout dans son emprise noire. Elle canalisa ainsi son énergie en une concentration dense qui l'a fait exploser encore une fois en une supernova qui a éjecté les éléments que nous connaissons aujourd'hui dans un vaste déploiement de notre galaxie spirale, celle qu'on appelle la Voie lactée avec ses milliards d'étoiles.

Chaque petit morceau de matière formée à travers cette énorme explosion de supernova existe toujours aujourd'hui. Il n'a fait qu'entrer dans des transformations continues de relations. Sous-jacente à tout cela se trouve la grande matrice d'énergie qui constitue 90% de l'univers que nous connaissons qui nous est totalement cachée — même des instruments scientifiques. Même nos propres corps sont largement faits de cette « matière sombre », pure énergie qui interagit avec les particules, les atomes et les molécules dont ils sont composés. De plus, nous le savons, dans chacune de nos respirations il y a des atomes que Jésus et tout être humain de l'histoire ancienne ont aussi respirés, et au cours d'une année, nous respirons des atomes qui ont traversé les poumons de tout autre être humain sur terre. Nous sommes profondément et étroitement liés les uns aux autres.

Comme nous le savons, l'univers est sacré, non seulement selon un langage « religieux » habituel, c'est à dire en tant que créé par Dieu qui est

sacré. Il est sacré dans le sens le plus primordial, celui qui donne valeur au fait que nous le mettons en lien avec le créateur. Il est sacré dans le sens qu'il constitue le cadre de tout ce que nous sommes.

Au sein de notre galaxie se trouve la planète Terre qui est apparue il y a quatre milliards d'années en tant qu'élément de ce que nous appelons le système solaire. Au début, la Terre était un chaos bouillonnant de chaleur et de lumière, un chaos bouillonnant de feu. À mesure qu'elle se refroidissait, d'énormes quantités d'hydrogène et d'oxygène ont agi les unes sur les autres pour former de l'eau. Quelque part aux abords de ces masses d'eau, les conditions étaient telles que des molécules étaient capables de former des cordes appelées protéines, et les premiers indices de vie émergeaient. Ces premières formes de vie dépendaient du dioxyde de carbone et leur plus grand ennemi était l'oxygène. La plupart vivaient dans les régions les plus profondes et les plus sombres de ces eaux. (Et c'est encore le cas, en fait). Il a fallu beaucoup de temps avant que les premiers êtres vivants apprennent à profiter de l'oxygène par la manipulation de la lumière du soleil comme source d'énergie. Ainsi la cellule a pu marquer le début de la vie, telle que nous la connaissons. À cette étape, la Terre est complètement couverte d'une fine « peau » de vie qui descend à plusieurs centaines de mètres sous la surface et va jusqu'à plusieurs kilomètres au-dessus. De plus en plus de scientifiques réalisent que cette peau est en fait unifiée, étroitement liée, à un système écologique global. Cette théorie que la Terre possède cette composante vivante à travers toute sa surface s'appelle la théorie « Gaia », du nom de la déesse grecque de la Terre. Il est important de reconnaître cela, car, dans ce cas, toutes les créatures (les bactéries et les organismes primitifs, mais aussi les poissons, les oiseaux, les animaux, les plantes et enfin même les êtres humains) sont le produit de cet environnement vivant.

En un processus extraordinaire de créativité, la Terre a réalisé un grand rêve : produire un être vivant capable de devenir l'auto-conscience de l'univers. C'est-à-dire, nous n'avons pas été « placés sur la terre », mais nous sommes plutôt « sortis de la terre ». La reconnaissance est révolutionnaire parce qu'elle nous situe dans une relation tout à fait nouvelle avec la Terre et toutes ses créatures vivantes. Il en est particulièrement ainsi parce que les êtres humains sont un développement extraordinaire à partir des espèces moins complexes, et notre corps vient de l'apprentissage évolutionniste de ces créatures qui se sont développées avant. Nous devons nous souvenir que pendant plus de 13,4 milliards d'années sur les 13,7 de l'histoire de la Terre, il n'y avait personne pour voir ou entendre ce qui se passait. Ce ne fut qu'avec l'émergence des êtres vivants multicellulaires que le processus de l'évolution de l'œil pouvait commencer et réaliser ces capacités. Ces apprentissages conduiront éventuellement à l'émergence des plantes avec feuilles capables de transformer la lumière

du soleil en énergie (c'est-à-dire la photosynthèse), ensuite des animaux avec des yeux primitifs (encore, d'une autre manière, cette même transformation) et finalement d'un organe extraordinairement délicat qu'on appelle un œil.

Et il est important de nous rappeler que nos yeux, comme notre cerveau et toute autre chose nous concernant, sont totalement dépendants de chacun des stades antérieurs dans l'histoire évolutionniste au cours des 13,7 milliards d'années.

L'important c'est que dans les dernières étapes de cette longue histoire, a émergé à un moment donné une créature qui, non seulement était consciente, mais qui est progressivement devenue consciente d'elle-même. Il y a un demi-million d'années ou plus, un processus de conscience de soi a commencé à émerger. Il semble que les origines de cette capacité de conscience de soi apparurent quand nos ancêtres essayèrent au début de tracer des lignes sur les pierres. Ici les pictogrammes devinrent les premiers exemples d'un essai d'externaliser quelque chose qui se produisait dans leur conscience. Alors est né le langage.

L'histoire humaine fit un autre grand bond en avant lorsque cette conscience apprit comment manier les processus des semences et se tourna vers l'agriculture et la domestication des animaux. (Il y a quelque 10 000 ans). À cette étape, les humains commencèrent à détenir un certain contrôle sur la gestion de leurs environnements, les adaptant à leurs besoins et commençant à vivre ensemble, d'abord dans de petits villages et, ensuite, il y a quelque 5 000 ans, dans des villes. (Donc, l'arrivée des civilisations.)

L'important est de savoir que notre espèce a été préparée et façonnée à travers toute cette histoire. Selon Berry, nous sommes arrivés aujourd'hui à un grand tournant de l'histoire de la Terre. Il constate que l'ère cénozoïque (l'ère des mammifères) est terminée. Nous entrons dans une autre ère : l'écozoïque, là où la conscience humaine gère le destin de la Terre.

Cette histoire de l'univers - que je vous raconte -- est rendue possible pour la première fois dans l'histoire humaine grâce à des études scientifiques des récentes décennies en physique, en biologie, chimie et en archéologie. Nous ne devons pas être étonnés si cela nous laisse un peu déconcertés et confus au premier abord. La transformation n'est pas mineure. Depuis le 16^e siècle, nous nous sommes habitués à une vision mécanique du monde, et un certain effort est nécessaire pour nous réajuster à une vision qui restaure pour nous, non pas les détails, mais l'émerveillement des périodes antérieures de notre propre histoire.

On a tout droit à employer le mot « sacré » pour parler de cet aspect de l'univers. La qualité sacrée est une façon de parler de l'intentionnalité

du déploiement de l'univers à partir de la première « étincelle » dans la grosse boule de feu que fut le Big Bang. Cette qualité sacrée de l'univers est étroitement liée à ce qu'il veut dire par le « rêve de l'univers », c'est-à-dire que, dès les tout débuts, du premier moment de l'étincelle, la spontanéité de l'imagination était à l'œuvre, quelque chose qui ressemble à un rêve. Cela inclut une intentionnalité toujours en mouvement vers une plus grande diversité, une plus grande communion et une plus grande intériorité. Thomas Berry relie cela au commencement de l'Évangile de Jean où c'est le Verbe qui est présent et opérant dès les tout débuts. Il ne s'agit pas uniquement d'un mot intellectuel indiquant un contenu, mais plutôt un mot vital qui indique une présence et une profondeur. C'est la même imagination qui a produit les grandes œuvres de Dante, Shakespeare, Molière, mais aussi les galaxies, la Terre et tout ce qu'elle contient. On peut aussi appeler cela un processus éducatif à mesure que l'univers apprenait à maîtriser les divers défis à travers le processus évolutionniste. Dans l'encodage génétique de nos propres corps et de ceux de toutes les créatures vivantes, nous pouvons détecter l'histoire de cet apprentissage. Malheureusement, nous nous sommes tournés vers un encodage industriel pour tout réinterpréter de façon mécanique.

C'est avec l'arrivée de Descartes et de Newton (parmi d'autres), que le processus a pris ce tournant étrange. Ils se sont coupés du sens ancien du caractère sacré de l'univers. Ils ont séparé la dimension « sacrée » ou « spirituelle » de la dimension « matérielle » et ont déclaré cette dernière sujette aux lois qu'ils pouvaient définir et qui leur permettaient de manipuler le monde matériel. En effet, ils ont mis fin à notre participation à la grande liturgie cosmique, pour ensuite commencer le saccage de la Terre. Cette aliénation a pris un tournant fatal au cours des quelques 100 dernières années.

Quel leçon pourrions-nous tirer de tout ça ? LES LOIS DE L'UNIVERS

En étudiant l'histoire de l'univers, Thomas Berry a identifié trois principes fondamentaux qui la guident : la diversité, la communion, la subjectivité. En plus, il existe plusieurs dynamiques omniprésentes : l'auto-gouvernance, l'auto-organisation, l'auto-guérison, l'auto-génération, l'auto-épanouissement, entre autres. Un examen de chacun de ces principes va révéler les dynamiques capables de nous guider au long du chemin de la découverte de nous-mêmes. Si nous sommes les enfants de la Terre, si nous sommes la Terre qui pense, la Terre qui guérit, alors la dynamique qui guide la Terre, de même que tout l'univers, sera le cadre fondamental de notre existence dans le monde.

La diversité (la créativité)

Tout dans la nature tend à se diversifier. La Terre génère une très grande diversité. Il n'existe pas deux flocons de neige totalement sem-

blables ; ne le sont pas non plus les fleurs individuelles, les oiseaux, les animaux ou encore nous-mêmes. Nous tendons à penser que l'eau se définit par H₂O et que c'est tout. Mais les scientifiques nous disent que la structure moléculaire de l'eau varie de façon infinie. Tout comme il existe beaucoup de variétés de neige et de glace, il existe aussi plusieurs variétés d'eau liquide selon son contexte. Même s'il peut y avoir bien des similitudes, chacune est unique. C'est cette prédisposition à la créativité, à l'abondance, à la diversité qui constitue le premier principe de l'univers et de toute vie.

Ce principe comporte des implications importantes à bien des niveaux. En agriculture, nous savons que la monoculture est très dangereuse, et pourtant c'est en général ce que nous avons pratiqué au cours des 100 dernières années. Nous savons que la multiplicité des langues et des cultures dans le monde est une source phénoménale de sagesse et de beauté, et pourtant elles se meurent sous le poids d'un mono-culturalisme mondial. Nous savons que les bio-régions offrent des ressources suffisantes pour que l'humanité subvienne à ses besoins, et pourtant nous insistons sur une économie mondiale qui repose sur des transferts aller-retour de divers éléments avec des conséquences désastreuses pour l'équilibre de nos écosystèmes partout sur la planète.

La communion

La communion est un autre principe fondamental de l'univers. Darwin insistait pour dire que l'évolution advenait à travers la compétition pour la survie. Des études biologiques plus récentes indiquent que ce n'est pas le cas. Les arbres collaborent entre eux pour assurer un environnement ajusté au développement de la forêt.

Le corps humain est un magnifique exemple de collaboration entre les divers organes et les structures cellulaires, mais aussi entre une immense variété de bactérie qui habitent chacune des cellules de notre corps et collaborent à assurer que tout fonctionne ensemble. Nous vivons vraiment dans un univers.

Le fait que toute chose est liée à tout le reste constitue un principe de base de tout l'univers. Ainsi, le chaos apparent au niveau sous-atomique tel que le révèle la physique quantique est en fait un processus par lequel la diversité et la créativité sont promues par la communion de toutes les parties de l'univers, même lorsqu'elles sont très séparées à la fois par le temps et l'espace. De fait, les découvertes de la physique quantique ont laissé la physique classique, avec ses lois universelles de gravité et de thermodynamique, dans un sérieux dilemme. L'univers n'est plus un objet à étudier comme une réalité en dehors de soi. Nous en faisons partie ; fondamentalement, nous le façonnons de bien des manières (comme nous existons aussi grâce à lui). Nous participons à la nature et

nous ne pouvons vraiment apprendre quelque chose de la Nature qu'en prenant part à ses processus.

En outre, la communauté de la Terre doit devenir pour nous, êtres humains, un lieu de communion. Il est fondamental que nous retrouvions l'intimité avec la Terre, avec la Nature. C'est déplorable que nous l'ayons perdue, et nous sommes devant le défi de tracer la voie pour la recouvrer. L'intimité est la capacité de communion avec la Terre : communion de réciprocité, d'écoute et de regard ; communion dans le fait d'être nourris et comblés par la Terre. Nous y reviendrons.

La subjectivité (intériorité, intentionnalité)

Mary Evelyn Tucker définit la subjectivité comme « la composante intérieure sacrée présente en toute réalité ». Elle affirme aussi que c'est ce qu'on appelle la conscience. Pour certains, cette dimension est particulièrement difficile à reconnaître et à accepter. Nous pouvons la comprendre jusqu'à un certain point chez les mammifères et peut-être même chez de plus petites créatures. Cependant, certains peinent à reconnaître comment elle pourrait être présente dans des bactéries ou des plantes. Encore plus difficile est de reconnaître sa présence dans l'eau, dans l'air ou dans la pierre. Pourtant, le principe est central. L'Univers se meut avec une intention consciente, c'est-à-dire, dans un effort de créativité pour faire émerger la pleine conscience. C'est « l'articulation interne » de l'univers. Dans la plus grande partie de l'univers, il ne s'agit pas d'une conscience similaire à la nôtre, et nous avons du mal à penser qu'il y a là, au fond, une même réalité fondamentale. Nous - les êtres humains - sommes l'univers en train de devenir conscient de lui-même, que nous - les êtres humains - sommes la Terre en train de penser. Et cette conscience est une évolution à partir du substrat de conscience sous-jacent partout présent et sans lequel il serait difficile de comprendre comment l'Univers et notre Terre ont évolué.

Ceci nous amène alors à reconnaître plusieurs fonctions à l'œuvre sur notre planète Terre. J'en mentionne deux :

L'auto-gouvernance

Les écologistes savent qu'il existe une collaboration entre les éléments d'un écosystème de façon à maintenir son équilibre. Cependant, dans ce cas, nous parlons de toute la Planète et, en fait, de l'Univers lui-même. Dans le cas de la Planète, nous pouvons utiliser l'exemple de l'équilibre climatique.

Même si la chaleur du soleil qui atteint la Terre a pratiquement doublé au cours des 100 dernières années, jusqu'à tout récemment, la planète maintenait à sa surface une température stable grâce à sa régulation de l'atmosphère. Si l'équilibre est rompu actuellement, ce n'est pas

à cause des forces de la nature, mais plutôt à cause de notre interférence humaine.

C'est même plus extraordinaire en ce qui concerne l'Univers. Le Big Bang original aurait pu être un petit peu plus fort ou plus faible qu'il ne le fut. S'il avait été un peu plus faible, l'univers aurait implosé sur lui-même, se serait attiré lui-même dans un trou noir et ne serait jamais réapparu. Si l'explosion avait été un tout petit peu plus fort, l'univers aurait pris une expansion à un rythme accéléré qui n'aurait pas permis la formation des étoiles et des galaxies. La différence est si ténue qu'elle défie toute imagination. C'est quelque chose qui va bien au-delà du domaine du hasard qui est supposé avoir gouverné les lois de la physique et de l'évolution.

Il semblerait donc qu'il existe dans l'Univers, tout comme sur notre Planète et dans les plantes, les animaux et dans nos propres corps, une force à l'œuvre qui assure que le processus évolutionniste suive une voie qui a toutes les apparences du chaos, mais qui, inévitablement, donne lieu à une avancée vers de nouvelles expressions de la diversité en équilibre avec tout le reste.

L'auto-guérison

Nous savons tous l'histoire du feu de forêt qui détruit tout et qui, avec le temps, fait pousser une nouvelle forêt pleine de vitalité. Le désastre est un prélude à de nouvelles expressions de vitalité, de diversité et de créativité. Les fermiers savent qu'une terre qui a été épuisée peut se régénérer si on lui laisse amplement de temps pour le faire. De la même manière, nous savons que l'eau qui a été polluée va se purifier elle-même si elle a suffisamment de temps pour couler ou se stabiliser.

Nous avons pu constater que des écosystèmes très endommagés vont souvent, avec le temps, retrouver leur équilibre. Tout indique qu'il existe un principe à l'œuvre pour guérir ce qui a été blessé ou brisé.

Le désastre causé par un astéroïde entré en collision avec la Terre il y a des millions d'années a provoqué l'extinction de 90% des espèces, y compris les dinosaures. Cependant, avec le temps, la Terre a produit une toute nouvelle « gamme » de toutes sortes de créatures, plus particulièrement toutes les diverses catégories de mammifères. Ces derniers ne seraient probablement jamais apparus si ce désastre n'avait pas eu lieu.

Il ne s'agit pas d'une apologie de ce qui se passe actuellement. La grande extinction qui se produit aujourd'hui est due à l'irresponsabilité humaine et nous pourrions être les créatures qui paieront le plus cher en bout de ligne. En outre, la prolifération des êtres humains et la technologie destructrice ont atteint un point qui pourrait briser l'équilibre de l'écosystème global et plonger la Terre dans un processus qui aboutirait en un désert, comme cela semble se produire sur quelques autres planètes.

LES IMPLICATIONS

Le récit que nous venons d'entendre comporte d'énormes implications pour bien des dimensions de notre vie. Examinons-en quelques-uns.

L'éthique

À la fin du cinquième chapitre de *The Dream of the Earth* (49), Thomas Berry affirme :

Je suggère que c'est là la dernière leçon que nous donnent la physique, la biologie et toutes les sciences, comme c'est aussi la sagesse ultime des tribus et l'enseignement fondamental des grandes civilisations. Si cela a été caché par l'aspect adolescent de nos développements scientifiques et technologiques antérieurs, cela devient maintenant clair à une grande échelle. Si nous y répondons correctement avec notre nouvelle connaissance et nos nouvelles compétences, ces forces vont trouver leur expression intégrale dans les spontanités du nouvel âge écologique. La tâche actuelle de la communauté humaine est de faire en sorte que cela devienne réalité. (Traduction de Daniel Laguitton)

Il résume son principe éthique fondamental en ces mots : « Est éthique ce qui promeut la diversité, la communion, l'intériorité, l'auto-gouvernance et l'auto-guérison de la Terre. Et ce qui lui fait tort est contraire à l'éthique. »

Thomas Berry était aussi un grand défenseur des droits de la Nature, c'est à dire de chaque espèce.

L'éducation

Pour assurer notre survie, nous devons enseigner à nos contemporains qui nous sommes, d'où nous venons et quelle est notre destinée. Cela repose sur un nouvel encodage culturel en cohérence avec l'encodage génétique de l'être humain qui découle, bien sûr, de celui de la Terre. Autrement, nous périrons et la planète avec nous. Pour la toute première fois dans l'histoire humaine, les sciences nous offrent une explication très cohérente de toute l'histoire de l'univers, basée sur l'observation. Notre tâche est d'aider les gens à comprendre le cheminement de l'univers, l'histoire de notre Terre et ses implications pour notre propre encodage culturel pour ainsi devenir intimes avec la Nature. Par-dessus tout, nous devons apprendre à écouter ce que l'univers nous dit. Et surtout, il nous dit aujourd'hui : Racontez l'histoire.

Dans *The Dream of the Earth* (chapitre 8), Thomas Berry suggère une série de cours qui pourraient être donnés dans les collèges. Nous avons devant nous un défi énorme d'éduquer le peuple dans nos institutions d'éducation comme aussi dans nos églises à une nouvelle conscience de leur place dans le monde et la responsabilité que nous partageons pour conserver l'équilibre de la vie sur Terre.

Le bio-régionalisme (agriculture) :

Il nous faut apprendre à vivre dans le contexte qu'offre notre bio-région. Le mot « bio-région » n'est pas exactement la même chose que « local ». Une bio-région est un secteur suffisamment important et diversifié pour soutenir sa population. Par conséquent, la région peut être plus vaste ou plus petite selon la richesse de sa biodiversité et la densité de sa population. De plus, nous devons développer une mystique de notre relation à la terre, un sentiment de sa sacralité, une façon de rappeler constamment le caractère sacré de la Nature et de la Terre à travers différentes formes de rituels. Sans cela nous serons incapables de résister à la tentation de la détruire.

Dans *The Dream of the Earth* (chapitre 12), Thomas Berry suggère plusieurs rôles de la bio-région pour la communauté humaine :

- Que nous reconnaissons les droits de chaque espèce dans sa bio-région ;
- Que nous nous nourrissions à partir des ressources offertes par la bio-région. Toute bio-région possède sa propre économie. Nous devons l'apprendre et la respecter.
- Nous devons prendre part aux processus auto-éducateurs de notre bio-région qui, par une expérimentation soignée, dessine son avenir.
- Il y a une auto-gouvernance au sein de chaque bio-région que nous devons apprendre à respecter sans imposer ce qui ne lui appartient pas. Des rituels et des célébrations en font partie.
- Chaque communauté biologique porte en elle-même sa propre auto-guérison. Nous devons écouter et apprendre ce processus et collaborer avec lui. Notre guérison vient aussi de notre soumission à la discipline de cette bio-communauté.
- La communauté trouve son accomplissement dans chacune et dans toutes ses composantes. Nous devons nourrir notre esprit à ce puits. Il y a ici une place importante pour la célébration et le rituel.

La science économique :

Thomas Berry considère que la science économique est une question religieuse, et de plusieurs points de vue. Avant tout, les arguments qui défendent l'économie capitaliste sont insoutenables. Le postulat d'une croissance économique exponentielle sans fin sur une planète limitée est foncièrement absurde. Nous savons tous cela, et pourtant les économistes et les politiciens continuent à promouvoir cette croissance au risque de nos propres vies et de celle de la Terre. Nous ne pouvons pas continuer à saccager la source de notre maintien en vie. La science économique doit inclure ce que nous devons au système de la Terre. Il nous faut édifier

une économie qui apprend de la dynamique de l'économie de la Terre. Ces questions sont religieuses parce que le Christianisme doit reconnaître sa collusion avec le développement d'une mentalité qui a mené au viol économique actuel de la planète. L'univers n'est pas simplement un objet ; il est sujet et nous devons apprendre à respecter sa subjectivité. C'est clairement là une question religieuse.

Steven Eisenberg suggère que nous considérions une économie plus ajustée à la dynamique de la Terre. Au lieu de baser l'économie sur l'échange de biens évalués en fonction de leur rareté, il suggère que nous considérions l'abondance offerte par la Terre et que nous échangions les biens gratuitement. La suggestion n'est pas sans fondement. Des centaines, sinon des milliers de petits ou de moyens projets autour de la planète démontrent de façon plutôt probante qu'une telle économie peut exister et même fleurir, surtout si les sociétés sont structurées de manière à les encourager. Ainsi, nous avons des fermes biologiques, des coopératives de toutes sortes, des associations agricoles, des usines ou des centres de production appartenant aux travailleurs, l'énergie solaire, etc., etc.

La spiritualité (l'Univers sacré) :

Ici j'arrive à toucher l'apport important qui pourrait faire la religion. C'est ce que vous serez appelés à faire dans vos communautés : réveiller une conscience, mobiliser des valeurs, ouvrir des chemins d'espoir.

Comme on l'entend ici, le mot « spiritualité » réfère à un ensemble de notions et de valeurs fondamentales qui nous guident sur le chemin de la vie. La spiritualité est aussi un ensemble de relations que nous vivons avec d'autres créatures (et avec le créateur) qui trouvent leur fondement dans un lien d'« esprit ». L'esprit n'est pas quelque chose de séparé ou d'étranger au « matériel » tel que Descartes aurait voulu nous le faire croire. L'esprit est plutôt une dimension de ce que nous appelons le « matériel » ; il commande le respect pour la communion qui nous unit dans notre diversité ; il donne l'énergie et la direction pour gérer ces relations de manière sage et il nous donne la sagesse pour supporter les moments difficiles et dangereux alors que nous luttons pour maintenir ou recouvrer l'équilibre.

En ce sens, la spiritualité chrétienne qui a façonné notre culture industrielle, scientifique, technologique doit subir une transformation prodigieuse. Pour Thomas Berry, la pensée millénariste, la transcendance divine, l'idée de rédemption et les attitudes envers le corps humain constituent des défis particuliers.

Notre spiritualité en sera une d'écoute attentive de ce que nous dit l'univers. Et, aujourd'hui, il semblerait qu'il dit surtout : Racontez l'histoire.

Comme l'exprime Thomas Berry,

L'être humain émerge non seulement comme un Terrien, mais aussi comme un être de l'univers. Nous portons l'univers dans nos êtres tout comme l'univers nous porte dans son être. Les deux ont une présence totale l'un à l'autre et à ce plus profond mystère duquel ont émergé à la fois l'univers et nous-mêmes.

Cette présence subjective des choses les unes aux autres est l'une des particularités distinctives de la pensée de Thomas Berry, selon Mary Evelyn Tucker. Il écrit « ... la réalité et la valeur de l'aspect intérieur subjectif sacré de tout l'ordre cosmique sont perçues comme la condition essentielle pour que l'histoire ait vraiment un sens. » (Traduction de Daniel Laguitton).

La religion, représentée par les églises, a un devoir énorme devant l'histoire en ce moment. Pourtant nous sommes en grand faillite de créativité et de volonté. Comme Thomas Berry, je crois profondément que l'Esprit guide l'humanité vers une future nouvelle mais je redoutais de la réponse que l'église et les religions en générale donnaient en ce moment. Le Pape François vient de nous aider en ce sens avec son exhortation.

Il y a beaucoup qu'il faut faire à niveau juridique, technologique, politique et économique pour s'ajuster à la réalité. Mais la responsabilité de la religion réside surtout dans la création d'une nouvelle mentalité et dans le renforcement de cette nouvelle attitude par des célébrations et rituels. Il proposait fortement que l'église profite de son histoire magnifique de liturgie pour créer des moments de célébration de la Terre. On pourrait penser à la Vigile pascale comme aussi au baptême et à la confirmation comme moments de sensibilisation. On peut aussi penser à la spiritualité de François d'Assise et aussi des mystiques comme Hildegard de Bingham et Meister Eckhart comme fonts de repaire.

Les peuples indigènes

Dans tout cela, il importe de reconnaître que les cultures indigènes sont les cultures qui ont historiquement retenu la plus grande proximité avec la Terre et avec ses principes fondamentaux. Nous ne sommes pas tous appelés à simplement copier les cultures indigènes de nos régions du monde. Comme eux, nous devons chercher ensemble à recouvrer et découvrir la voie pour aller plus loin. Cependant, leur sagesse a beaucoup à nous apprendre, et nous devons leur accorder une attention spéciale dans notre cheminement.

LA GRANDE ŒUVRE

Thomas Berry a commencé à parler de l'intégration de cette grande histoire dans le tissu de notre activité sociétale comme étant la Grande œuvre ; une œuvre dont la grandeur tient à son extrême urgence et à

sa capacité de transformer totalement chaque aspect de notre civilisation occidentale. La nouvelle histoire de l'Univers redéfinit toutes nos relations et fixe de nouvelles priorités pour nos interactions. Cette œuvre est grande aussi en ce sens que, sans son intégration dans nos vies, nous sommes destinés à disparaître comme espèce en même temps que disparaîtraient la plupart des autres espèces sur la planète. Comme nous le savons tous très bien, le processus est déjà bien avancé.

Thomas Berry ne rejette pas les découvertes de la technologie moderne. Mais il suggère six principes qui devraient guider leur utilisation (*The Dream of the Earth*, chapitre 6). Je ne fais que les énumérer :

- Les technologies humaines devraient fonctionner dans une relation intégrale avec les technologies de la terre.
- Nous devons être clairs sur l'ordre de grandeur des changements nécessaires.
 - Le progrès viable doit profiter à toute la communauté de la terre.
 - Nos technologies doivent être intégrales.
 - Il faut une cosmologie fonctionnelle (qui offrira la mystique nécessaire pour cette présence intégrale terre-être humain).
 - La nature est tout aussi violente que bienfaisante. Nos technologies ont un rôle défensif à jouer.

CONCLUSION

S'il y a un seul message à retenir de ma présentation ce serait que vous sentiez émerveillés devant l'univers et que ça devient le centre de toute l'énergie de votre vie. La Terre possède un dynamisme psychique profond et notre avenir humain dépend de notre intimité avec ce dynamisme. Nous sommes appelés à devenir le moyen par laquelle la Terre en arrive à exprimer son énergie psychique.

À la fin de cet essai sur « La nouvelle histoire » à la page 137 de *The Dream of the Earth*, Thomas Berry écrit :

Si, depuis les débuts, la dynamique de l'univers a façonné le cours des cieux, allumé le soleil et formé la Terre, si cette même dynamique a produit les continents et les mers et l'atmosphère, si elle a réveillé la vie dans la cellule primordiale et alors a amené à la vie la variété innombrable des êtres vivants, et finalement nous a amenés à la vie et nous a guidé en toute sécurité à travers les siècles turbulents, il existe une raison de croire que ce même processus directeur est précisément ce qui a réveillé en nous notre compréhension actuelle de nous-mêmes et de notre relation à ce merveilleux processus. Sensibilisés à une telle gouverne de par la structure même et le fonctionnement de l'univers, nous pouvons avoir confiance dans l'avenir qui attend l'aventure humaine. (Traduction de Daniel Laguitton)

Questions

1. Est-ce que l'histoire de l'univers vous aide à vous trouver une place dans la vie de la planète?
2. Quels sont les défis pour nous rendre cohérents avec cette histoire?

Resources

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NOVELTY:

The Intellectual Journey of Thomas Berry

Heather EATON

Ottawa St. Paul's University Professor

Lexington Books (USA, UK, Canada), 2014.

The Genesis of an Asian Theology of Liberation



An Autobiographical
Excursus on the
Art of Theologizing
in Asia

*Aloysius
Pieris,
s.j.*

Tulana Research Centre,
Gonawala-Kelaniya
Sri Lanka, 2013





The End of the World as We Know It

Critical dialogue with Thomas Berry

Lee CORMIE
Toronto, CANADA

Like the Pentecost movement among early Christians on the margins of the then-greatest empire in history, the global social justice movements of our time are opening new horizons of possibility for life on earth, forging new possibilities for dialogue, solidarity and collaboration. And in the intergalactic *encuentros* of the Zapatistas, World Social Forum gatherings, Arab uprisings, Occupy Wall Street gatherings, and countless other crossroads, they are witnessing to hope that “another world is possible.”¹

In the dialogues, debates, and conflicts across these movements over the last half century ecological voices (and, in the terms of many Indigenous Peoples, the voice of Mother Earth) have emerged as central. Among them since the 1970s US “geologian” (earth scholar) Thomas Berry’s (1914 - 2009) voice stands out: exposing the grave limitations of established ways of seeing the world in the natural and social sciences and theology; charting a far more expansive vision of interwoven cosmic, biological and social history; pointing to environmental devastation, species extinctions, and looming ecological catastrophes; simultaneously celebrating humanity’s role as the coming to consciousness of the universe and warning of humanity’s role in producing this “WasteWorld;”² calling for radical conversion to a new way of life.

Along with many others I have been deeply inspired by Berry’s early leadership in forging an earth-centered consciousness. And I remain convinced that central intuitions and insights continue to challenge all of us who hope for another future. In the decades since Berry’s pioneering work, though, the Eurocentric dimensions of established scholarly, religious, and political frameworks, including much “critical” and “left” thinking, have also become much clearer. And it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the creative and critical edges of Berry’s thought are also distorted, blunted, even contradicted in being forced into a single story of

cosmic, biological, and cultural evolution. This *pensamiento único* (one right way of thinking) has familiar Eurocentric features—like epistemological hubris, abstract universalism, and disembodied faith—which gravely distort concerns at the heart of Berry’s agenda: to see more widely, to dialogue, to nurture broader solidarities, and to collaborate across differences in forging paths to “a world where all worlds fit.”³

Expanding Horizons

More than any other thinker I have encountered, Berry helps me to see more deeply and widely into the immense contours of the universe, humanity’s place in it, the magnitude of changes underway in our own time, and the scope of the challenges before us. At the risk of distorting such a far-ranging, complex and evolving thinker to the end, let me sketch key features of his perspective which I have found most provocative.

- Continuously throughout his work, he displayed a deep, gentle spiritual awe before the wonders and mysteries of nature. He wrote of the universe as a “liturgy”, and, in era of the US-centered project of aggressive neoliberal globalization, justified by an extreme individualism, rampant extractivism, and unending consumerism, his reverence for Creation, other species and the whole human community has been inspiring.

- He recognized the historical advances in science in the 20th century, and their relevance for understanding the cosmos, the earth, and human history. Like Teilhard de Chardin before him, he drew on astronomy, geology, evolutionary biology, and history of religions in reframing the relations among disciplines, in the service of sketching vastly expanded horizons of space and time.

- Resonating with many indigenous traditions, Berry stressed the central importance of cosmic visions or stories (*cosmovisiones*) in orienting ourselves and our societies. In the past, each society’s story “shaped our emotional attitudes, provided us with a life purpose, energized action. It consecrated suffering, integrated knowledge, guided education. We awoke in the morning and knew where we were.” And “we are in trouble now just because we do not have a good story.”⁴

- Berry did not consider himself a theologian. But he was an ordained Catholic priest, and his reflections had deep spiritual roots and implications. In particular, he insisted that the changes are so profound and far-reaching that they undermine familiar religious frameworks formulated in other times to map the contours of existence and to orient life in different worlds. Fundamentalisms are one response in defense of traditional ways of seeing, as people are overwhelmed with changes, new data, and new perspectives.⁵ In contrast, he pointed to “a new revelatory experience that has given us a new sense of the universe, a new

sense of the planet earth, a new sense of life, of the human, [and for us Christians] even a new sense of being Christian.”⁶ As he and collaborator Brian Swimme argued, “... we are moving beyond any religious expression so far known to the human into a meta-religious age, that seems to be a new comprehensive context for all religions.”⁷ So in the transition from the old world to the new religious thinkers are radically challenged to renewal on a par with the foundational religious experiences at the origins of their traditions.⁸

- Berry also pointed to the epistemological limitations of positivist science: “Even among scientists, there is a growing awareness of the trans-scientific implications of science. There is a belief element at the ultimate reaches of the scientific experience.... The ultimates of science are trans-scientific.”⁹ So new capacities to see on ever more fundamental and far-reaching scales is a function of both recent advances in science and—no less importantly—of efforts like Berry’s in drawing on religious traditions for key sensitivities and insights.

- Berry’s revised and expanded story of creation opens with the origins of the universe 13.8 billion years ago; then the births of stars and galaxies like the Milky Way with its 100-400 billion stars; then the origins of the earth 4.5 billion years ago; and then the origins of life on earth 3.5 billion years ago, with the subsequent births and deaths of species; and five periods of epochal transitions marked by geological upheavals, climate change and mass extinctions creating new biotic worlds, setting the stage for bursts of new very different species in a new evolutionary era.

- Berry also displayed a deep appreciation for the unfinished character of human nature.¹⁰ More than any other creature, humans are born incomplete, requiring culture and a supportive community to survive, grow, and reproduce. For Berry religious and cultural traditions are central features of the human story. In this story hominins appeared about 2,000,000 years ago, with diverse species, like *Homo neanderthalensis* and tiny *Homo floresiensis*, co-existing long after the emergence of archaic *Homo sapiens* between 400,000 and 250,000 years ago; then the transition of *Homo sapiens* to behavioral modernity perhaps 50,000 years ago, reflecting the flowering of languages and cultures and growing floods of innovation—invention of agriculture 12,000 years ago; the transition from village to city 5,500 years ago; quickly expanding into civilizations (5,000 years ago) with their complex divisions of labor, systems of accounting and writing, and tentacles reaching far into surrounding countrysides. It was only in the last 500 years that the modern world as we know it has emerged.

- In our time this story is changing again, radically. Berry was one of the earliest explorers probing beyond the limits of the known world, mapping the many dimensions and vast scales of existence, and

the extraordinary pace of the epochal changes underway in our time. In particular, he pointed to expanding human agency as key to these changes. Positively, he celebrated the scientific discoveries and expansion of human consciousness in recent decades as “the story [of the universe] become conscious of itself.”¹¹

And these developments are earth-shaking:

“... the planet Earth will never again function in the future in the manner that it has functioned in the past. A decisive transformation has taken place, for whereas the human had nothing to say in the emergent period of the universe prior to the present, in the future the human will be involved in almost everything that happens. We have passed over a threshold. While we cannot make a blade of grass, there is liable not to be a blade of grass in the future unless it is accepted, protected, and fostered by the human.”¹²

• Hopefully, he prophetically pointed to the signs of the transition to a radically different, Ecozoic era of mutually enhancing life among humans and all living beings.¹³ And he pointed to continuing advances in science and expanding reflections on the implications of the “new revelatory experience” in nurturing conversion to a new Earth-centered story, for forging a radical change of course in human history, for literally re-inventing the human.¹⁴

• Mostly, though, he focused on the negative aspects of these developments, pointing to the anthropocentrism (human-centeredness) in which “the non-human had no inherent value and no inherent rights and the Earth was seen as a limitless resource for exploitation by humans.”¹⁵ And from the early 1970s onward he was calling attention to environmental devastation, climate change, and mass extinctions.

“... now we are in the terminal phase of the Cenozoic, a period when many of the developments of the past 65 million years are being extinguished. We are not capable of extinguishing everything, but we are wreaking severe damage on the earth process. We have even set in motion forces that are extinguishing many of the major life systems that have come into being during the Cenozoic period.”¹⁶

• In the face of looming catastrophes and daunting challenges to conversion, Berry also witnessed to an intense sense of hope and faith.

“We cannot doubt that we too have been given the intellectual vision, the spiritual insight, and even the physical resources we need for carrying out the transition that is demanded of these times, transition from the period when humans were a disruptive force on the planet Earth to the period when humans become present to the planet in a manner that is mutually enhancing.”¹⁷

In my view, many of Berry’s key contributions—cosmic vision, sense of expanding human agency, grasp of the magnitude of world historical changes underway in our time, prophetic call to conversion, deep hope

and faith—should continue to challenge and inspire all who hope for another future beyond that to which the project of neoliberal globalization condemns the Earth.

New Wine in Old Wineskins

There are many reasons to be thankful for Berry's pioneering insights, passion, and perseverance. But no great thinker completely escapes the conundrum of expressing new ideas in old categories and frameworks.¹⁸ Berry's thinking developed in the midst of vast information explosions and knowledge revolutions marking the end of the 20th century and dawn of the 21st, reflected in vast expansions of education at every level, communications media, schools, universities, publications, conferences, chat groups, etc. These developments have all been marked by the irruptions of the "new" voices of the world's marginalized majorities. And, as the conditions for producing knowledge are being radically transformed, epistemic diversity and epistemic (or cognitive) justice are moving to the center of debates about every issue.¹⁹ In some respects, e.g., awareness of the mythic dimensions of science, multidisciplinary approach, cosmic horizons, appreciation for ongoing cosmic creativity ("cosmogogenesis"), complexity, and multicultural concerns, Berry's thinking helped to advance these trends.²⁰ And more generally, he made immense contributions to rapidly evolving religious and cultural revolutions evident in concern for ecology underway around the world (although the increasingly irrational—suicidal!—opposition of political elites under the thrall of neoliberal progress still prevails).

In certain respects though, his formulations appear to be haunted by the ghosts of Eurocentric thinking evident in the myth of progress at the heart of mainstream scholarship and politics. In myriad expressions, this myth portrays all of human history in terms of developments in knowledge (science) and technology, religion and culture, ethics and politics occurring primarily in the West, from the Hebrews and ancient Greeks to the high point of progress in modern Western Europe and subsequently the US.²¹ Let me sketch two areas of concern.

- Epistemological Hubris

The myth of modern science turns on the epistemological "God trick" of claiming to see everything, everywhere, objectively.²² In asserting that the universe story is self-referential, the only story without a context,²³ Berry appeared to reproduce modern positivistic epistemological claims that science reveals reality as it is, neutrally, objectively, with universal relevance.²⁴ Moreover, in pointing to the new revelatory experience he also clothed revelation with the cloak of open, transparent, empirically grounded, publicly debated science. In doing so, he appeared to reinstate both science and revelation beyond the pale of criticism.²⁵

Like earlier versions of grand evolutionary syntheses, Berry's version of contemporary science reduces "science" to particular expressions of it, claiming both more unanimity within sciences and convergence across them than in fact exists, and avoiding questions concerning the criteria for choosing among diverse, often conflicting "scientific" perspectives. In fact, on many fronts new data, insights, and questions are disrupting old paradigms, requiring rethinking the foundations, and provoking increasing diversity among experts.

Among cosmologists for example, by the end of the 1990s there was a growing sense that we live not just in a universe, but in a multiverse, in some versions of which universes regularly bifurcate generating new universes and trajectories of historical development, and cosmological evolution.²⁶ God only knows what unimaginably larger parameters, forces, dynamics are operating!²⁷ There is no single widely agreed-upon universe story here.

Even closer to home, there is a growing sense among experts, as the evidence of other planets multiplies, that life exists elsewhere. But there is no agreement among experts about the significance—if any—of life in the ongoing evolution of the universe; the image of future humanity manipulating cosmic forces to postpone the "big crunch" at the end of time is pure science fiction.

Similarly, among paleontologists and biologists there is little agreement about the significance of intelligence, or consciousness, in evolution.

There is no consensus either about the place or significance of humanity in the evolution of life on earth, never mind for the universe, or the multiverse! There is a growing sense that "history" matters, including "accidents," like the asteroid that struck the earth 65 million years ago, ending the reign of the dinosaurs and ushering in a new evolutionary epoch. And there is a growing sense that humanity is also the fruit of an historical accident: "Homo sapiens ... is a tiny twig, born just yesterday on an enormously aborescent tree of life that would never produce the same set of branches if regrown from seed."²⁸

And for many scientists humanity is not essential to the future evolution of life on earth either (even though there is wide agreement that 21st century humans are profoundly shaping the next steps). There is no single, natural, inevitable next step in the story of evolution on earth. In scientific terms, there are many possible futures, with—and without—humanity, and/or posthumanities.

As these examples illustrate, there is no single widely accepted way of bridging disciplines, of weaving together findings across the disparate fields of cosmology, geology, biology, the social sciences and the huma-

nities.²⁹ There is no single widely accepted scientific or religious discourse.³⁰ There is no single, authoritative–scientific or religious–vision of the future which magically resolves the most fundamental questions at the heart of the eco-social justice struggles around the world (including, for example, what to do about climate change). Indeed, the dream of forging a single integrated vision of cosmic, geological and biological, and human evolution is part of the problem. This is why the biblical story of the fall of the Tower of Babylon is being so widely re-read among oppressed peoples as a story, not of punishment, but of liberation from the imperial arrogance and power of elites, and a precursor to Pentecost.³¹

A growing number of scholars are concluding that a single totalizing discourse is no longer possible, or desirable. In its place, they point to “epistemologies of the south”³² marked by inclusion of historically marginalized and absent voices, appreciation for the insights of their traditions, deep sensitivity to the challenges of translating across difference,³³ respect for diversity, and a priority on collaboration in concretely forging new ways of living well and lightly on the earth (*buen vivir*).³⁴

And in this spirit there are signs of many revolutions underway with many points of convergence across scholarly disciplines and evolving social movement discourses and practices.³⁵

- Disembodied Faith

As we have seen, liberation activists and scholars have repeatedly discovered that knowledge is always context-dependent, partial, limited, and entangled with wealth and power, in the past and the present. The influence of elites excludes many voices, centers disproportionately on their own experiences, perspectives and concerns, and (mis)shapes the production of what passes for “knowledge” of every aspect of life on earth and in the heavens above.

This pattern is also evident in the construction of the modern scholarly disciplines in the natural and social sciences and humanities, and subdisciplines, as in theology (biblical studies, systematic (or fundamental) theology, church history, ethics, pastoral theology), as well as history of religion, philosophy of religion, world religions, etc.³⁶ The critical hermeneutics emerging in each movement of the historically marginalized converge in seeing the same pattern:

*“The site from which most western academics view the world is the imperial metropolis. The fields of theological, biblical, and religious studies have grown up as cultural products of the same European powers that established empires over other peoples of the world.”*³⁷

And from these privileged perches “religion” and “culture” have been rendered into ethereal essences, collections of abstract ideas and dogmas and individual quests for personal spiritual meaning. And people

have been rendered into an anonymous abstract entity (“humanity,” or “the human”), passive before—even uninterested in—material realities like politics and economics.³⁸ This approach “tends to leave the operations of political-economic power uncontested and [in the late modern era of capitalist consumerism] acquiesces in the commodification of religious expressions”.³⁹ Indeed, the framing of “religion” as *sui generis* (separate from broader cultural, political, and economic dynamics) and individualized have even been incorporated into mainstream (“liberal”) theologies and the policy-making frameworks of religious officials (which all the liberation theologies have rejected, in the name of greater fidelity to the origins and core of their traditions!).⁴⁰ This tendency has implicated officials in the increasing irrelevance and marginalization of mainstream “religion,” and the deepening crises of mainstream religious cultures and churches in the global North, and of mainstream academic theology too.

Of course, the irruptions of historically absent voices of the majorities which we have witnessed in our own time, and the waves of re-readings of sacred texts and traditions confirms that their voices are never totally absent, that in various often crafty ways they keep alive other interpretations of the tradition, current realities, and other hopes for the future.

In this light, religions and cultures are always contested; there is no unitary religion, or culture, or society. In terms of social organization, there is no single human subject, in any society, or in the world as a whole. And appeals to universal subjects avoid addressing the ways in which different groups, differently privileged and/or disadvantaged, are unequally situated in and affected by collective decisions—often made by elites without the knowledge or participation of the majorities—and by their very uneven costs and benefits.⁴¹

Thus, for example in terms of climate change, progress requires acknowledging the immense inequalities in wealth and power between rich and poor around the world. And it requires that wealthy constituencies (the global middle and upper classes) and their governments opt for a path of serious reduction in their levels of consumption, and in solidarity underwrite transitions in poorer populations and countries too.⁴² Simple appeals to “science” or “humanity” or “our future” fail to elucidate these issues, or ways of addressing them.⁴³

In global dialogues across movements around the world a new common sense is emerging: “a retreat of the rich from over-consumption is the necessary first step towards improving the lives of an increasing number of people.”⁴⁴

And such a shift requires just the sort of “new revelatory experience” and almost unimaginable conversion to which Berry invited us.

Conclusion

In many ways, it seems to me, the overturning of Western views of history and unitary images of humanity are more in tune with Berry's deepest intuitions about the immensity of the cosmos, expanding human agency, epochal changes, challenges to conversion, and hope for the future. And the good news is that there are many signs of movement in just these directions, among eco-social justice movements around the world, wrestling as Berry did with the contradictory legacies of modern Western sciences and technologies, and the expanding scales of human organization and capacities to act. ⁴⁵

NOTES

- ¹ This is the slogan of the World Social Forum. And even in the WSF, there is no widely accepted terminology or list of global justice movements and their relationships, which includes 'old' (socialist, labor, Marxist) and 'new' movements, including feminist, ecological, anti-racist, indigenous, LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer), movements of the disabled or differently-abled, Arab uprisings, Occupy Wall Street, etc. In this essay, I adopt as an inclusive term "eco-justice movements," and "liberation theologies" to include all the "new" voices associated with these movements, and appearing in fora like the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) and the World Forum on Theology and Liberation.
- ² Berry, Thomas. "The Seduction of the WonderWorld." *Edges*, 3 June 1988, 11.
- ³ General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation–Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee. "Words of the EZLN in Puebla." Puebla, Mexico, 2001. http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/2001/ccri/ccri_puebla_feb.html (accessed 06/9/18).
- ⁴ Berry, Thomas. "The New Story: Comments on the Origin, Identification and Transmission of Values." *Teilhard Studies* 1 (Winter 1978): 1, cited in Grim, John. "Exploring Thomas Berry's Historical Vision." In *The Intellectual Journey of Thomas Berry: Imagining the Earth Community*, edited by Heather Eaton, 25. Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2014.
- ⁵ See for example Berry, Thomas, and Thomas Clarke. *Befriending the Earth: A Theology of Reconciliation Between Humans and the Earth--Thomas Berry, C.P. in Dialogue with Thomas Clarke, S.J.* Eds. Stephen Dunn and Anne Lonergan, 9. Mystic, CN: Twenty-Third Publications, 1991.
- ⁶ Berry in Berry, and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 7.
- ⁷ Swimme, Brian, and Thomas Berry. *The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era*, 225. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992.
- ⁸ Swimme, and Berry, *Universe Story*, 238.
- ⁹ Berry, in Berry, and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 8.
- ¹⁰ See Berry, Thomas. *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*, 159. New York, NY: Bell Tower, 1999.

- 11 Swimme, and Berry, *Universe Story*, 237.
- 12 Berry, Thomas. "Into the Future." In *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, ed. Roger Gottlieb, 413–14. New York, NY: Routledge, 1996.
- 13 This work continues in many forms, including in settings like the Center for Ecozoic Studies (www.ecozoicstudies.org).
- 14 Berry, *Great Work*, 159.
- 15 Berry, Thomas. "Christianity in an Emergent Universe." In *Light Burdens, Heavy Blessings : Challenges of Church and Culture in the Post Vatican II Era : Essays in Honor of Margaret R. Brennan*, eds. Mary Heather MacKinnon, Moni McIntyre, and Mary Ellen Sheehan, 364. Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 2000.
- 16 Berry, in Berry, and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 5.
- 17 Berry, *Great Work*, 11.
- 18 See Santos, Boaventura de Sousa. "Reinventando la Emancipación Social." *Le Monde Diplomatique* (Edición Peruana) No. 24 (Abril 2009). [Http://www.eldiplo.com.pe/Reinventando-la-Emancipacion-Social](http://www.eldiplo.com.pe/Reinventando-la-Emancipacion-Social) (accessed 09/6/20).
- 19 See Weiler, Hans. "Challenging the Orthodoxies of Knowledge: Epistemological, Structural, and Political Implications for Higher Education." Colloquium on Research and Higher Education Policy of the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research, and Knowledge. Paris, France, 2004. [Http://www.stanford.edu/~weiler/Unesco_Paper_124.pdf](http://www.stanford.edu/~weiler/Unesco_Paper_124.pdf) (accessed 06/8/16).
- 20 Efforts at forging other post-Eurocentric histories are proliferating; see Dussel, Enrique. *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of 'the Other' and the Myth of Modernity*. Trans. Michael Barber. New York, NY: Continuum, 1995. [Http://168.96.200.17/ar/libros/dussel/1492in/1492in.html](http://168.96.200.17/ar/libros/dussel/1492in/1492in.html) (accessed 07/12/12); Christian, David. *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005.
- 21 For further reflections on the history of "progress" and additional references, see my Cormie, Lee. "Another World is Inevitable." In *Asking, We Walk: South as New Political Imaginary*, (Book IV - In the Time of Spring), ed. Corrine Kumar, 367–87. Bangalore, India: Streelekha Publications, 2013.
- 22 Haraway, Donna. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 581.
- 23 See Berry, "Into the Future," 414.
- 24 See Berry in Berry, and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 7.
- 25 There is no space here to address other important concerns about science today, especially the sweeping corporatization, and in the US especially deep and persisting military influence; see Giroux, Henry A. *The University in Chains: Confronting the Military-Industrial-Academic Complex*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2007; and Hamblin, Jacob Darwin. *Arming Mother Nature: The Birth of Catastrophic Environmentalism*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- 26 See Tegmark, Max. "Parallel Universes." *Scientific American* 288, no. 5 (May 2003).
- 27 See Rees, Martin. "Expanding Horizons: Progress and Prospects in Astronomy and Cosmology." In *Images of the World: Science, Humanities, Art*, edited by Aleksander Koj and Piotr Sztompka, 65. Kraków, Poland: Jagiellonian University, 2001.
- 28 Gould, Stephen Jay. *Full House: The Spread of Excellence from Plato to Darwin*, 29. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press, 1996.
- 29 Concerning the limitations of efforts to integrate the findings of biology and history, see Christian, David. "History in the Landscapes of Modern Knowledge." *History and Theory* 43, no. 3 (2004): 366.

- ³⁰ Prominent biologist E. O. Wilson offers a vision of convergence across the sciences: Wilson, Edmund O. *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998; and his *The Social Conquest of Earth*. New York, NY: Liveright, 2012. But this vision too is haunted by the ghost of positivism; see White, Ron. "The Evolution of Evolutionary Theory: Philosophical Observations on E. O. Wilson's *The Social Conquest of Earth*." *Politics and Life Sciences*, 2 June 2012. <http://politicsandlifesciences.wordpress.com/2012/06/02/the-evolution-of-evolutionary-theory-philosophical-observations-on-e-o-wilsons-the-social-conquest-of-nature> (accessed 13/2/26).
- ³¹ See for example Gutiérrez, Gustavo. "Theological Language: The Fullness of Silence." In *Gustavo Gutiérrez: Essential Writings*, ed. and trans James B. Nickoloff, 65–73. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996. And this is why, Oduoye points out, EATWOT has resisted embarking on the construction of a single theology. (Oduoye, Mercy Amba. "The Impact of Women's Theology on the Development of Dialogue in EATWOT." *Voices from the Third World* 22, no. 2 [1999]: 247).
- ³² See Dussel, Enrique. "The Sociohistorical Meaning of Liberation Theology (Reflections about Its Origin and World Context)." Trans. José David Rodríguez. In *Religions / Globalizations: Theories and Cases*, eds. Dwight Hopkins, Lois Ann Lorentzen, Eduardo Mendieta, and David Batstone, 33–45. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001. <http://168.96.200.17/ar/libros/dussel/artics/socio.pdf> (accessed 07/12/12); and Santos, Boaventura de Sousa. *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2014.
- ³³ See Ribeiro, António Sousa. "The Reason of Borders or a Border Reason: Translation as a Metaphor for Our Times." *Eurozine*, 8 January 2004. <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2004-01-08-ribeiro-en.html> (accessed 08/3/4).
- ³⁴ See Morales, President Evo. *Save the Planet from Capitalism*. (Open letter on Climate Change, from Bolivian President Evo Morales in anticipation of the Poznan Climate Conference). Buenos Aires, Argentina: Jubileo Sur / Americas, 2008. <http://www.zmag.org/znet/viewArticle/19911> (accessed 09/1/11). In this spirit, the notion of a common creation story becomes increasingly problematic; see, for example, Knitter, Paul. "A Common Creation Story? Interreligious Dialogue and Ecology." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 37, no. 3–4 (2000): 285–300.
- ³⁵ Concerning revolutions within and across the sciences, see Gallopín, Gilberto, Silvio Funtowicz, Martin O'Connor, and Jerry Ravetz. "Science for the Twenty-First Century: From Social Contract to the Scientific Core." *International Social Science Journal* 168 [2001]: 219–29. http://sustainabilityscience.org/keydocs/fulltext/gg_sci21century_ijss.pdf [accessed 05/7/12].)
- For concrete examples of these kinds of revolutions in theory and practice across Latin America, see Escobar, Arturo. "Latin America at a Crossroads: Alternative Modernizations, Post-Liberalism, or Post-Development?" *Cultural Studies* 24, no. 1 (2010): 1–65. <http://www.unc.edu/~aescobar/text/eng/escobar.2010.CulturalStudies.24-1.pdf> (accessed 11/3/4); more generally, Santos, Boaventura de Sousa. *The Rise of the Global Left: The World Social Forum and Beyond*. New York, NY: Zed Books, 2006.
- ³⁶ Horsley, Richard. "Religion and Other Products of Empire." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 71, no. 1 (2003): 13.
- ³⁷ Horsley, "Religion and Other Products," 13.
- ³⁸ See McCutcheon, Russell T. *Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse on Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia*, 22. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- ³⁹ Horsley, "Religion and Other Products," 39–40.
- ⁴⁰ In this respect, contrary to liberal notions of unilinear progress, the critical hermeneutics of the eco-social justice movements point to the "transmodern", rather than "premodern" or "postmodern", character of their traditions, carrying forward in history the capacities for

renewal through, in part, returning to their origins. See Dussel, Enrique. "World-System and 'Trans'-Modernity." Trans. Alessandro Fornazzari. *Nepantla* 3, no. 2 (2002): 221–44; Sardar, Ziauddin. "Islam and the West in a Transmodern World." IslamOnline.Net, 18 August 2004. <http://www.islamonline.net/english/Contemporary/2002/05/Article20.shtml> (accessed 06/3/15).

- ⁴¹ A recent study of political decision-making in the US confirms that "economic elites and organized groups representing business interests have substantial independent impacts on U.S. government policy, while average citizens and mass-based interest groups have little or no independent influence." (Gilens, Martin, and Benjamin Page. *Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens*, 2, 2014. [TestingTheoriesOfAmericanPoliticsFINALforProduction6March2014.pdf](#) [accessed 14/8/23].)
- ⁴² Athanasiou, Tom. "After Copenhagen: On Being Sadder but Wiser, China, and Justice as the Way Forward." *EcoEquity*, 31 January 2010. <http://www.ecoequity.org/2010/01/after-copenhagen/#more-699> (accessed 10/2/2).
- ⁴³ There is also a tendency in Berry's writing toward what might be called cosmological reductionism, the privileging of cosmic (and secondarily biological) forces and dynamics in interpreting human history. In this connection, it must be noted that Berry's interdisciplinary ambition excludes the social sciences, and their concerns for ideologies, institutions, and social structures, and the power, social order and conflict, alienation, oppression, and liberation. In this sense, his approach, focusing so centrally on "the story," is largely "culturalist," which as Epstein noted regarding postmodernist and poststructuralist approaches, offers little assistance in understanding social change or formulating a strategy to accomplish it. (Epstein, Barbara. "'Political Correctness' and Collective Powerlessness." *Socialist Review* No. 91, no. 3 and 4 [1991]: 28.)
- ⁴⁴ Guha, Ramachandra. "How Much Should a Person Consume?" *Vikalpa: The Journal for Decision Makers* 28, no. 2 (June 2003): 1.
- ⁴⁵ For an excellent expression of the recent explosions of biblical, historical and theological scholarship which resonates with the insights of the various liberation theologies, and their impacts in expanding our perceptions of the past and of present realities and trends, see Patte, Daniel, ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010. <http://discoverarchive.vanderbilt.edu/handle/1803/3906> (accessed 10/11/9). Elsewhere I offer a sampling of references to similar movements in other faith traditions; see Cormie, Lee. "Re-Creating the World: Communities of Faith in the Struggles for Other Possible Worlds." In *The Movements of Movements: Struggles for Other World* (I), edited by Jai Sen. (Challenging Empires, Vol. 4–1). New Delhi, India: OpenWord, forthcoming.





El Espíritu que gime en todos los seres

Apuntes para una eco-espiritualidad liberadora

José ARREGI
San Sebastián, País Vasco, ESPAÑA

O apuntes para una espiritualidad eco-liberadora. Tanto da. Una auténtica espiritualidad es esencialmente ecológica, independientemente de que sea religiosa o no lo sea. Una espiritualidad ecológica es necesariamente liberadora, y una espiritualidad liberadora es necesariamente ecológica. Y solo una vida ecológica y liberadora es realmente “espiritual”, independientemente de que esté o no esté revestida de creencias, normas y ritos que llamamos religiosos.

Espiritualidad eco-liberadora, eco-espiritualidad liberadora, eco-liberación espiritual, Buen Vivir, *Sumak Kawsay*. Tanto da.

1. El Espíritu que intercede y gime

“El Espíritu viene en ayuda de nuestra flaqueza, pues nosotros no sabemos orar como es debido, y es el mismo Espíritu el que intercede por nosotros con gemidos inefables” (Rm 8,26). Este versículo de Pablo me sugiere los elementos fundamentales de una eco-espiritualidad liberadora.

El espíritu, el Espíritu. Con mayúscula o minúscula, poco importa, pues esas distinciones –como tantas distinciones– dependen sólo de nuestros esquemas mentales. Al Espíritu lo reconocemos en todo, y las diversas culturas lo llaman con nombres diversos: ruah hebrea, dynamis griega, prana védico, Qi chino, musubi japonés, mana maorí, Pu-am mapuche, nyama africano... ¡Reverencia y gratitud a la energía misteriosa, al aliento profundo, al impulso imparable que habita en todos los seres!

Intercede por nosotros. ¿Acaso intercede ante “Dios”? Pablo seguramente lo imaginaba así, pero ¿es creíble un “Dios” soberano separado del mundo, al que accederíamos a través de intercesores? Hablar es siempre limitar lo infinito, y la espiritualidad significa devolver al Infinito su infinitud, dando anchura y respiro a todas las criaturas, y también a las palabras.

El Espíritu no “intercede por nosotros” ante un Ser Supremo, sino que es, más bien, la “intercesión”, proximidad y compasión que nos constituye a todos los seres en nuestro ser más profundo, “divino”. Pero ¿cómo intercederá el Espíritu por nosotros si no es en nosotros y a través de nosotros? ¿Cómo consolará a las criaturas en su desolación si no es a través de nuestro consuelo? ¿Cómo las liberará o nos liberará si no las liberamos, si no nos liberamos? ¿Cómo será intercesión universal si no inter-somos, inter-actuamos e inter-venimos los unos por los otros? ¿Cómo será “Dios” en nuestro mundo si no construimos la humanidad y el planeta como una gran intercesión entrelazada a imagen del Espíritu universal? Sólo entonces sabremos “orar como conviene”, a imagen del Espíritu que respira, siente y ora en todos los seres.

Con gemidos inefables. Ora y gime, más allá y más acá de las palabras, que siempre delimitan y muchas veces ahogan. El Espíritu ora gimiendo con la vida misma. A veces, como la vida misma, gemimos de placer y a veces gemimos de dolor.

Las palabras a menudo no llegan, a menudo sobran. Sucede en especial con las palabras que llamamos “religiosas”. La espiritualidad ecoliberadora no es cuestión de palabras –creencias, ritos, normas–, sino más bien de sintonizar en lo profundo –corazón y sentimiento, pensamiento y acción– con el gemido de la creación, del átomo a las galaxias, de la bacteria a los bosques, del gusano a los simios (que somos). Es el mismo gemido, hecho de dolor y de gozo, que recorre toda la creación. Todo el cosmos, y en especial este pequeño planeta azul y verde, este nuestro maravilloso planeta viviente, está atravesado como por un estremecimiento de regocijo profundo –esa agua risueña que corre en el riachuelo, esas hojas de abedul mecidas por el aire, esas golondrinas que vuelan sin cesar–, y también... –¡oh!, también– por un estremecimiento de dolor indecible: los animales matan para vivir, y el ser humano mata más que ninguna especie; 24.000 seres humanos mueren cada día de hambre (casi 9 millones cada año), y no es porque en el planeta no haya (todavía) para todos, sino porque 1000 familias humanas poseen el 60% de los bienes del planeta, y todo va en esa proporción. ¡Cómo el Espíritu no ha de gemir de gozo! ¡Cómo no ha de gemir de dolor! ¿Y en qué podría consistir la espiritualidad sino en hacer propio –con religión o sin ella– el gemido inefable del Espíritu?

2. Más allá de una Biblia antropocéntrica y patriarcal

¿Las grandes tradiciones religiosas de la humanidad inspiran y suscitan todavía una espiritualidad ecológica, liberadora, feminista, pluralista...? He ahí el reto. He ahí el criterio de todo lo que llaman revelación “divina” o verdad recibida “de lo alto”. Sólo es verdad lo que desata cadenas, permite respirar, abre a la reverencia y la comunión de todos los seres.

Es verdad que todas las religiones nacieron, por un lado, del reconocimiento humano profundo de la sacralidad y de la comunión de todos los seres, y, por otro, de la conciencia de la opresión y de la esperanza de liberación universal. Pero salta a la vista que todas las religiones, en diferentes grados y formas, han sido también antiecológicas y antiliberadoras: antiespirituales. Salta a la vista que todas ellas necesitan hacer una profunda autocrítica, una revisión de sus creencias y normas tradicionales de conducta, y muy en particular una relectura de sus textos fundacionales.

Me referiré más directamente a la Biblia, texto fundante de la tradición judeo-cristiana, que ha marcado también al Islam. Muchos consideran que la tradición bíblica es la responsable principal del desastre ecológico provocado por la humanidad, por haber situado tan radicalmente al ser humano, creado en el sexto y último día (Gn 1,26), como centro y corona del cosmos, único viviente creado a imagen y semejanza de Dios (Gn 1,27), imagen única del Dios único, dueño y señor de todos los seres (*llenad la tierra y sometedla*: Gn 1,28), lugarteniente único de la omnipotencia divina. El Salmo 8 representa la máxima exaltación del ser humano por el Salmo 8: *Lo hiciste poco menos que un dios, lo coronaste de gloria y dignidad. Le diste el mando sobre las obras de tus manos, todo lo sometiste bajo sus pies* (Sal 8,6-7).

Así ora un creyente, teólogo y poeta de hace 2.400 años. Al contemplar de noche el cielo estrellado, admira la grandeza del universo, pero más todavía la grandeza del ser humano. No es todavía el estremecimiento pascaliano. El ser humano es mirado como señor de la tierra, rodeada de aguas –las aguas de abajo–, y la tierra es mirada como centro del universo, rodeado también de aguas –las aguas de arriba–. Y más arriba está Dios, rodeado de divinidades menores o de ángeles; es el Dios del ser humano, a imagen humana. La grandeza del mundo y de Dios realzan la grandeza del ser humano.

Hacía milenios que, en el Oriente Medio, los seres humanos habían aprendido a labrar y cultivar la tierra, para hacerle producir más y poder “multiplicarse más” (*creced y multiplicaos*: Gn 1,28). Se habían convertido en dueños y señores de la tierra. Pero todo tiene su precio. Cuando los seres humanos se hicieron señores de la Tierra se convirtieron en esclavos los unos de los otros. El hombre sometió al hombre, y sobre todo a la mujer. El “relato yahvista” de la creación” (Gn 2,4-25) –que hoy se sitúa en la misma época que el primer relato, sacerdotal– es un testimonio claro de la primacía del varón sobre la mujer, creada después del varón con la “costilla” de éste (muchos piensan que la palabra traducida como “costilla” significa, en realidad, el hueso del pene, que muchos mamíferos machos poseen y que al hombre le falta; es como si el varón quisiera excusar la inconsistencia de su falo, símbolo de su voluntad de poder... y de su propia inseguridad no reconocida). El antropocentrismo se traduce espontáneamente en androcentrismo.

El cristianismo llevó el antropocentrismo –y el androcentrismo que le es inherente– a un grado máximo con su dogma fundamental: “Dios se hizo hombre” (Jn 1,14). “Dios se hizo varón”. Y de ahí se sigue que sólo el varón puede representar a Cristo, razón que la teología católica oficial sigue aduciendo para excluir a la mujer de los “ministerios superiores” o de la “jerarquía”. Increíble, pero cierto.

¿Deberemos entonces dejar de lado la Biblia como texto antiecológico y opresor, incompatible con la espiritualidad? No hay por qué. La Biblia –y esto vale todos los “textos sagrados” de las tradiciones religiosas o espirituales en general– puede inspirarnos todavía, pero sólo a condición de leerla de otra forma. A condición de tomarla como el texto humano e histórico que es, un texto contingente de otros tiempos y de otra(s) cultura(s). A condición de releerla desde los signos y retos actuales del Espíritu. A condición de dejarnos inspirar por el Espíritu que alienta en la letra, más allá de la letra. Y a condición de rescatar los motivos eco-espirituales –numerosos– presentes de la Biblia, más allá de formulaciones e interpretaciones que hoy resultan sofocantes y opresoras. Entonces la Biblia –como todos los poemas, religiosos o no– podrá inspirarnos todavía.

3. Un mundo interrelacionado en constante autocreación

Los grandes monoteísmos de origen bíblico (judaísmo, cristianismo, Islam) heredaron la cosmovisión del antiguo Medio Oriente (Mesopotamia, Egipto, Canaán), y las creencias, ritos e instituciones fundamentales de estas religiones siguen ligadas a aquella antigua imagen de mundo: un mundo (la tierra) creado y acabado por Dios de una vez, con el ser humano en el centro; un mundo malogrado por la desobediencia de “los primeros padres”; un mundo regido por Dios a través de profetas, mediadores o portavoces de la verdad y del bien absolutos; un mundo en el que Dios interviene cuando quiere para castigar o curar; un mundo que un día, cuando Dios lo decida, desaparecerá para dar paso a otro mundo eterno y doble: el cielo de los justos y el infierno de los malvados.

No despreciemos ninguno de esos mitos y creencias del pasado. No somos superiores a los antiguos en nada esencial. Ellos buscaron las formas que pudieron para decir el Misterio, aliviar las penas, proteger la vida, mantener el aliento. No es seguro que seamos más espirituales que aquellos antiguos, o más respetuosos de la naturaleza, o más libres de nuestra ignorancia y de los poderes que nos oprimen. No es seguro que respiremos mejor. Pero su mundo ya no es nuestro mundo, y por lo tanto su religión no puede ser la nuestra. Como ellos, necesitamos espiritualidad en justicia y paz con nosotros mismos, con los otros, con todos los seres, pero necesitamos vivirla en coherencia con nuestra cultura y nuestra visión del mundo.

En apenas doscientos años, las diversas ciencias han desbaratado la cosmovisión que durante milenios ha sustentado a las grandes religiones y a la espiritualidad de sus seguidores: el varón no es superior a la mujer, ni el ser humano es el centro de la tierra, ni la tierra es el centro del universo, y el universo que vemos no es quizás el único universo: tal vez existieron otros universos antes que éste o tal vez coexisten hoy con él en dimensiones que no percibimos. Este universo que vemos –todo el espacio y el tiempo que podemos observar directamente o calcular matemáticamente– proviene de una gigantesca explosión de una masa infinitamente pequeña y densa, y desde entonces todo sigue expandiéndose. La materia es energía en movimiento. Todo danza. A medida que la “materia” se organiza o se relaciona de manera más compleja, de lo que llamamos “inferior” surge lo “superior”. Así, de la tierra y del agua “inertes” brotó la vida –¡qué milagro es la vida!, ¡qué milagro es todo!– en este planeta –y tal vez en infinidad de otros planetas–. Y siguen brotando sin cesar nuevos organismos, formas más complejas y “superiores”: de seres “inertes” surgen seres vivientes, sensibles; de seres vivientes sensibles surgen seres “conscientes” y “libres”. Así sin cesar. Todo está en relación con todo –de las partículas atómicas a las galaxias más lejanas, de las bacterias a las ballenas azules– y gracias a la relación todo se desarrolla. La vida seguirá desarrollándose hacia nuevas formas que desconocemos, también hacia nuevas formas –esperemos que más plenas– de relación, de conciencia y de libertad fraterna, liberadora.

En resumen, todo está relacionado con todo y todo está en permanente transformación. El mundo sigue creándose. Y no sabemos qué es comienzo ni qué es fin, ni si hubo “comienzo del mundo” ni si tendrá fin. En apenas 200 años se han tambaleado, pues, los fundamentos del universo que las religiones creían inamovibles. Y para la gran mayoría de nuestra sociedad, el “cambio de paradigma” ha tenido lugar en un lapso de tiempo mucho más breve. Muchos de los que nacimos en torno a los años 50 del siglo pasado crecimos en un paradigma agrario; hacia los 20 años, tuvimos que asimilar el paradigma moderno, racional, científico, de la era industrial; 20 años más tarde, tuvimos que renacer a la espiritualidad y aprender a “hablar” dentro del paradigma posmoderno transracional, holístico y pluralista, de la información globalizada. Tres eras culturales en 60 años. Tres formas de espiritualidad.

La Modernidad no nos ha liberado. Las ciencias y la tecnología eran necesarias, pero no bastaron ni bastarán para saber vivir, para vivir en justicia y paz, para ser libres, hermanos, iguales. En esto que llamamos “Occidente”, en la época moderna hemos accedido a un “estado de bienestar” jamás imaginado, pero fue a un precio terrible: la devastación del planeta, la sumisión y la humillación de los países del Sur, el expolio de sus bienes. Y nosotros mismos estamos pagando ya el precio que hici-

mos pagar; la dura crisis de nuestro Estado del bienestar es el signo de una crisis humanitaria y planetaria mucho más espantosa, provocada por el capitalismo neoliberal en unas cuantas décadas: el hambre asoladora, el agotamiento de las energías fósiles almacenadas por la tierra durante miles de millones de años, el cambio climático debido al calentamiento global, la extinción en masa de especies de vivientes, la escasez de agua...

¿No se trata, en el fondo, de una terrible crisis de espiritualidad que padecen nuestros países llamados “cristianos”? Es un fracaso estrepitoso de la Modernidad “poscristiana”. Sí, pero también es un fracaso estrepitoso del cristianismo tradicional, pues no ha sido capaz de evitar que los “países cristianos”, cuando todavía lo eran mayoritariamente, hayan cometido tantos crímenes y desastres en la Tierra. Necesitamos, pues, volver a las fuentes de la espiritualidad. O a las fuentes del Evangelio. O a las fuentes de la Vida.

O a las fuentes de la Biblia (y de otros textos sagrados), si se quiere. Pero no podemos volver a las creencias y tabúes, normas y formas propias de un mundo que ya no es el nuestro; no podemos creer en “intervenciones milagrosas” de un “dios” arbitrario, ni en mediadores divinos, ni en dogmas inmutables, ni en instituciones “jerárquicas” inamovibles. Vivimos en un mundo interrelacionado y dinámico, en constante transformación.

¿Podemos hallar en las tradiciones antiguas inspiración para la eco-espiritualidad liberadora que necesitamos urgentemente? Podemos, sin duda, si aprendemos a leer, si sabemos releer. Volvamos, por ejemplo, al relato de la creación del Génesis: *En el principio creó Dios el cielo y la tierra* (Gn 1,1). “*Al principio*” no es una referencia cronológica, no se refiere a un tiempo pasado. “El principio” es la fuente permanente del ser y de la vida. La creación tiene lugar hoy, aquí, ahora, sin cesar. Cada instante es el instante primero de la creación. No estamos acabados. El universo está abierto. La creación sigue en marcha. La esperanza –activa, confiada, desapegada, libre de sus logros– sigue en pie.

“*Hágase*”, dice Dios una y otra vez. *Egêtheto*. No significa: “Aparezca de golpe la creación terminada de una vez”. Significa: “Vaya haciéndose”. “Vaya haciéndose el mundo desde dentro de sí, desde el corazón de todos los seres, desde nosotros mismos, inventando su propio futuro, liberando opresiones, creando nuevas formas de vida más libre y hermana, formas de conciencia más universal, solidaria, pacífica”.

El Espíritu que gime en todos los seres, el “Espíritu que aletea sobre las aguas” es el impulso interior que anima el bosón, el quark, el átomo, la molécula, la célula, el agua, el aire, la planta, los bosques, los animales, la Tierra, las galaxias, el universo abierto y sin medida. La eco-espiritualidad liberadora consiste en unir, más allá de todos los credos y formas, el propio aliento con ese aliento creador y liberador que mueve el mundo desde lo más pequeño a lo más grande.

4. “En Él/Ella/Ello vivimos, nos movemos y somos”

Todo cambia, incluso “Dios”, sobre todo “Dios”. Cuando cambia nuestra imagen del mundo, cambia la imagen de Dios. Ha de cambiar para que el credo no ahogue la espiritualidad. ¿No es “Dios” ese dinamismo transformador permanente que hace que todo sea, vaya siendo, se vaya haciendo?

Todo crece, también “Dios”, sobre todo “Dios”. ¿En qué otra cosa consiste la espiritualidad sino en que crezca Dios en nosotros, en los otros, en todo cuanto es, hasta que Dios sea todo en todas las cosas y todas las cosas sean del todo? ¿En qué otra consiste la espiritualidad sino en liberar a Dios, como se dice en la literatura mística judía –tan presente en la “laica” Ety Hillesum–, de cadenas y destierros, hasta que “Dios” alcance su plena liberación en la liberación de todas las criaturas?

Cambio de Dios, crecimiento de Dios, liberación de Dios. ¿Tiene sentido hablar así? Todo depende de lo que se entienda con el término “Dios”, el más polisémico y equívoco de todos los términos. Algo crucial le ha pasado a la palabra, o a su imagen asociada, para que la sociedad occidental por debajo de los 65 años, en masa, haya dejado de “creer en Dios”. No pueden creer en el Dios que imaginan, y tienen razón, pues el Dios que imaginan –cuando les explican la Biblia o el Corán o escuchan el Credo– no existe. El Dios “personal” que niegan no existe. Pero muchos que niegan a Dios –la mayoría, me atrevería a decir– no por ello han dejado de anhelar una profunda espiritualidad ecológica y liberadora.

Llevamos milenios –desde el paleolítico quizás, desde el Antiguo Oriente Medio ciertamente– imaginando a Dios como un soberano supremo, rey del cielo y de la tierra. Un dios separado, dualista, dotado de personalidad ambivalente. Un Dios teísta. Esa imagen sigue presente en los tres grandes monoteísmos (judaísmo, cristianismo, islam). El Espíritu, desde el corazón de todos los seres y de la cultura actual, nos llama a ir más allá del teísmo. Más allá de toda imagen dualista de Dios. Más allá también –hay que decirlo sin tapujos– de una imagen “personal” de Dios, en la medida en que el término “personal” nos siga sugiriendo una alteridad dual. Claro que “no-dualismo” no quiere decir “monismo”. Dios y mundo no son ni dos ni uno, como ya enseñaron las Upanihads indias hace más de 2.000 años.

“Dios” es Aquel/Aquello/Aquella que el ojo no ve pero ve en el ojo que ve. Y así con todos los sentidos. Y con el pensamiento y la conciencia. No es un Ente, sino el Ser de todos los entes. Es el “Espíritu que aletea” o que vibra en el principio actual, eterno, de todos los seres. Es la Hermosura, la Ternura, la Escucha, la Acogida. Es la Vida. Es el Todo en todo. Es la creatividad sagrada, el “más” y la “posibilidad” siempre abierta del bien en todo lo que es. “En Él/Ello/Ella vivimos, nos movemos y somos” (Hch 17,28), dice Pablo citando a un poeta estoico.

Se revela enteramente en todo: la gota de agua, la hoja del árbol, el canto del pájaro. Se revela particularmente en todos los seres que gimen, en el grito de la Tierra y en el grito de los pobres. Se revela de manera definitiva en toda palabra de consuelo y en toda compasión que libera. Y en eso consiste la espiritualidad, religiosa o laica: en mirarlo todo como epifanía de “Dios” más allá de todo nombre, en hacerlo ser en todo, en liberarlo en todos los seres sufrientes, empezando tal vez por sí mismo. “Creer en Dios” es confiar en la Bondad como fuerza última transformadora, y practicarla.

5. Cristo Jesús y el Cristo total

¿Pero acaso no dice la fe cristiana que Dios se reveló y se encarnó plenamente, de una vez por todas, en Jesús de Nazaret, y que en él salvó o liberó el mundo enteramente? ¿No es eso lo que significa la confesión de Jesús como Cristo, Señor, Hijo de Dios? La cuestión es cómo entenderlo hoy.

La fe cristiana en general y la cristología en particular se formularon en el marco de una cosmovisión geocéntrica, estática, antropocéntrica y androcéntrica, patriarcal. Esa cosmovisión ha quedado invalidada, de modo que es necesario reformular la cristología en un paradigma eco-espiritual o en un paradigma global eco-liberador. El ser humano no es el final de la evolución o de la liberación de la vida, y tanto menos lo es el *Homo Sapiens* actual que somos nosotros y que fue Jesús.

Jesús anunció el Reino de Dios o la plena liberación personal y estructural, y nunca se consideró a sí mismo como el Reino, sino como el Profeta final del Reino, y estaba convencido de que con él –y con sus seguidoras/seguidores– ya estaba realizándose el comienzo de la liberación final. Luego, la perspectiva judeo-mesiánica fue suplantada por la perspectiva griega ontológica, y llegaron los dogmas de Nicea (325) y Calcedonia (451), que dijeron: Jesús es “consustancial” a Dios, una persona divina con naturaleza humano-divina. Según eso, en todo el universo o todos los universos, Dios se habría encarnado plenamente por primera y única vez hace 2000 años en un individuo del *Homo Sapiens*, varón y judío, en un estadio concreto de la evolución de la vida, de la conciencia, de la libertad...

Es necesario liberar el dogma cristológico de su esquema geocéntrico, antropocéntrico, androcéntrico. La evolución de la vida sigue abierta en éste o en otros planetas. Lo que queda por aparecer es mucho más que lo ya aparecido en la vida, también en Jesús.

Esta liberación de la cristología es mucho más sencilla si volvemos al Jesús histórico y a su conciencia. No para adoptar su imagen (antropocéntrica) del mundo o su imagen (antropomórfica) de Dios, sino para dejarnos guiar por su inspiración más allá de las imágenes. No se creyó

“Dios”, sino profeta del Reinado liberador de Dios. Y no “encarnó” a Dios en su constitución “metafísica”, sino en todo su ser; no encarnó a Dios por su “doble naturaleza” (humana y divina), sino por su forma de vivir. Cada uno de sus átomos y células, el aire que respiró, el agua y el vino que bebió, el pan y los peces que comió... encarnaban a Dios. Su vida encarnaba a Dios: la compasión que tocaba y curaba, la libertad que arriesgaba e innovaba, la proximidad samaritana que levantaba al herido, la comensalía que abría y acogía, su confianza en Dios en cuanto bondad poderosa, su fe en la bondad de todo ser humano. Esa es la forma humana de lo “divino” de Jesús. Y de todos los seres humanos.

Dios no es un ser extracósmico, que se encarna cuando –por un hecho singular– su “naturaleza divina” se une en Jesús a la “naturaleza humana” o mundana. Dios es el Ser de todos los entes y de todas las formas: el bosón, el quark, el átomo, la piedra, el geranio, la golondrina, el delfín, el canguro, el ser humano... son carne visible de Dios. Pero Dios o lo “divino” no se agota en ninguna forma particular. Tampoco en la forma particular –inacabada– de Jesús.

Dios se encarna en toda carne que sufre y goza, en todo ser viviente, en toda materia que vibra y danza, en todo lo bueno y bello, en toda compasión y ternura, en toda relación que crea y recrea. Dios se encarnará del todo cuando – más allá de cálculos y de parámetros temporales– todas las criaturas alcancen su plena liberación “interna” y “externa”, en una forma que no podemos imaginar, solo anhelar. Entonces –más allá del esquema del “futuro cronológico”– toda la realidad será mesiánica o “cristológica”, liberada. Pero esa esperanza no se cumplirá por la intervención de ningún “dios” exterior, sino desde el corazón de la humanidad y de cuanto es. ¿Y Jesús? Jesús es, para los cristianos, sacramento de esa esperanza anticipada, imagen de nuestro ser y de nuestra vocación, de la tarea de cada ser humano y de todos los seres.

6. Una nueva alianza con todos los vivientes

Es difícil saber si el colapso de las especies vivientes más desarrolladas en el planeta –incluida la especie humana– es ya irreversible o aún cabe solución. Lo que es indiscutible es que todas las alarmas están encendidas, que la acción humana es la responsable principal y que sólo un giro drástico de la civilización humana puede evitar el desastre general. ¿La especie humana, maravillosa forma de la Vida, habrá resultado un cáncer para todo el planeta, maravilloso planeta? La hora es grave. La vida común está en juego.


Es hora de sellar un pacto solemne por la comunidad de la vida en el planeta. “Ésta es la señal de la alianza que establezco para siempre con vosotros y con todo los seres vivos que os han acompañado: pondré mi arco en las nubes; esa será la señal de mi alianza con la tierra” (Gn

9,12-13). Así habla Dios, o la Vida, tras el Diluvio del Génesis. Estamos en pleno Diluvio universal, provocado por la codicia insaciable de unos pocos seres humanos y por la inacción de muchos. Es hora de recordar y restablecer la alianza de la vida. Todos los seres vivientes anhelan su plena liberación (Rm 8,22). Que el gemido de dolor se conviertan en gemidos de gozo.

Es hora de adoptar a todos los efectos la “Declaración Universal del Bien Común de la Tierra y de la Humanidad”, más allá de discusiones abstractas sobre “derechos”, que no deja de ser un lenguaje demasiado antropocéntrico. Todos los seres buscan bienestar. Sólo es bueno para unos lo que es bueno para todos, o el máximo bien común posible. No es justo hacer sufrir a ningún animal sino en caso de necesidad mayor. ¿Y para comer? Tendremos que seguir matando para seguir viviendo –turbadora condición de la vida–, pero lo habremos de hacer con la máxima reverencia y gratitud, causando el mínimo dolor posible, y conscientes de formar parte de la Comunión Mística de la Vida.

Es hora de recordar que la Tierra no nos pertenece. Pertenece a la Tierra, que pertenece a todos los vivientes. *El Señor Dios tomó al ser humano y lo puso en el huerto de Edén para que lo cultivara y lo guardara* (Gn 2,15). Para que lo cuidáramos. Estamos aquí para cuidarla, para cuidarnos. Es hora de detener la maquinaria –letal para todos, sobre todo para los seres más vulnerables– del crecimiento sin medida, de la máxima producción posible y de la especulación sin escrúpulo: la economía al servicio del enriquecimiento. Es necesario que todos aprendamos a vivir mejor con menos. Y es urgente que algunos países decrezcan para que otros puedan vivir. El planeta no podrá sobrevivir ni nosotros en él sin un auténtico ecosocialismo planetario.

Es hora de secundar la ley más sagrada de la Biblia, la ley del descanso. *El séptimo día descansó* (Gn 2,2). Que se implante a nivel planetario al menos un día de descanso cada siete días (Ex 20,8-11), y un año sabático cada siete años (Lv 25,1-7), y un año jubilar cada 50 años, para que la tierra y todos los seres humanos descansen y los pobres recuperen los bienes vitales de los que han sido enajenados (Lv 25,8-17). Para que todos los seres sean felices, pues unos pocos no podrán serlo sin que lo sean todos.

La Vida nos urge a una ecología profunda, o lo que es lo mismo, a una espiritualidad eco-liberadora, más allá de toda frontera cultural, política y religiosa. 



The Spirit who moans in all beings

Notes for a liberating eco-spirituality

José ARREGI
San Sebastián, Basque Country, SPAIN

Translated by Andrés Krankerberger

Or notes for eco-liberating spirituality. Whichever. An authentic spirituality, whether religious or not, is essentially ecological. An ecological spirituality is necessarily liberating, and a liberating spirituality is necessarily ecological. And only an ecological and liberating life is truly "spiritual" regardless of whether it is or is not coated in beliefs, norms and rites that we call religious.

Eco-liberating spirituality, liberating eco-spirituality, eco-spiritual liberation, the Good Life, Sumak Kawsay. Whichever.

1. The Spirit intercedes and moans

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered"(Romans 8:26).

This verse of Paul's suggests to me which the fundamental elements of a liberating eco-spirituality are.

The spirit, the Spirit. Does not matter whether we write it with capital letters or not, because such distinctions -as-so many other distinctions- depend only on our mindsets. We recognize the Spirit everywhere, and the diverse cultures call using different names: the Hebrew ruach, the Greek dynamis, the Vedic prana, the Chinese Qi, the Japanese musubi, the Maori mana, the Mapuche Pu-am, the African nyama... These are all reverences and forms of gratitude to the mysterious energy, to the deep breath, to the unstoppable momentum that dwells in all beings!

Intercede for us. Is this to mean it is to intercede for us before "God"? That is certainly what Paul thought, but is this a sovereign "God", detached from the world and whom we would accede to through intercessors credible? Simply by expressing ourselves, we are always establishing limits to the infinite, and spirituality means returning its infinity to

Infinity itself, providing width and breath to all creatures, and likewise to words.

The Spirit does not "intercede for us" before a Supreme Being, but is, rather, the "intercession" itself, the proximity and compassion that constitutes all of us beings into our deepest, and "divine", being. But how does the Spirit intercede for us if it is not in us and if it does not do this through us? How will it comfort creatures in their desolation if it is not through our consolation? How will it liberate them or us if we do not liberate them ourselves, if we do not actually liberate ourselves in favour of each other? How will universal intercession be if we do not merge, if we do not interact and if we do not intervene amongst ourselves? How will "God" be in our world if we do not build humanity and the planet in the form of a great interlaced intercession made to the image of the universal Spirit? Only then will we know how to "pray as we ought to do", to the image of the Spirit that breathes, feels and prays in all beings.

With indescribable moans. Pray and groan, before and beyond words, which always define and often drown meaning. The Spirit prays by groaning with life itself. Sometimes, like life itself, we groan out of pleasure and sometimes out of pain.

Words often do not come; they in fact often are superfluous. This happens especially with the words we call "religious". Ecoliberating spirituality is not a matter of words, beliefs, rituals, or rules, but rather more a matter of tuning in with deeply heartfelt feelings, thoughts and action, with the groaning of creation, from the atom to the galaxies, of bacteria to forests, from the worms to the apes (which we are). It is the same groan, made of pain and joy, that is present in the whole of creation. The entire cosmos, and especially this little blue and green planet, this wonderful living planet of ours, is criss-crossed by a deep thrill of joy, like water running down a creek, like so many birch leaves swaying in the air, like those swallows flying non-stop all over the place, and ... – oh! Also, by the impact of indescribable pain: animals kill to live, and people kill more than any other species: 24,000 people starve every day (almost 9 million every year), and not because the planet still lacks means for everybody, but because 1000 human families own 60% of the assets of the planet, and everything else follows that proportion. How would it be possible for the Spirit not to groan with joy! How can it not moan in pain! And what would spirituality consist of other than –with religion or without it– seizing the indescribable groaning of the Spirit as one's own?

2. Beyond an anthropocentric and patriarchal Bible

Are the great religious traditions of humanity still inspiring and provoking an ecological, liberating, feminist, pluralist ... spirituality? That is where the challenge is. Here is the criterion of what they call "divine" revelation or truth received "from above". Only whatever releases uncha-

ins us, what allows us to breathe, what brings about the reverence and communion of all beings is true.

It is true that all religions were born, on the one hand, from a profound human recognition of sacredness and of the communion of all beings, and secondly, from the awareness of oppression and a hope for universal liberation. But it is obvious that all religions, in different degrees and forms, have also been anti-ecological and antiliberating and therefore anti-spiritual. It is obvious that they all need to undergo thorough self-criticism, a review of their traditional beliefs and rules of conduct, and particularly a reinterpretation of their founding texts.

I will refer more directly to the Bible, the founding text of the Judeo-Christian tradition, which has also influenced Islam. Many consider the biblical tradition is primarily responsible for the ecological disaster caused by mankind, for having placed so radically the human being, created in the sixth and final day (Gen 1:26), as the centre and the crown of the cosmos, as the only living creature created in the image of God (Gen 1:27), the only image of the single God, lord of all beings (*Fill the earth and subdue it*: Gen 1:28), the one and only manager of divine omnipotence. Psalm 8 represents the highest exaltation of man: *You've made them only slightly less than divine, crowning them with glory and grandeur. You've let them rule over your handiwork, putting everything under their feet* (Ps 8:5-6).

So thus is how a believer, a theologian and a poet has prayed for the last 2,400 years. By contemplating the starry night sky, admiring the grandeur of the universe, but even more the greatness of man. This isn't Pascal's shudder just yet. The human being is regarded as the lord of the land, surrounded by water –the waters from below- and the land is regarded as the centre of the universe, also surrounded by water, the waters from above. And above that is God, surrounded by lesser deities or angels; He is the God of man, a human image. The greatness of the world and through God the greatness of man is enhanced.

Several millennia ago, in the Middle East, human beings had learned to till and cultivate the earth, and make it more fruitful and "multiply more" (*Be fruitful and multiply*: Genesis 1:28). They had become the lords of the earth. But everything has its price. When humans had become the lords of the earth they also became slaves of each other. Man submitted to man, and women submitted to men even more. The "Yahwist account" of creation (Genesis 2:4-25), which nowadays is placed at the same time as the first story as told by priests, is a clear testimony of the primacy of men over women, who were created after the male with his "rib" (many think that the word translated as "rib" means, in reality, the penis bone, which many male mammals possess and which humans lack, all of this is as if the man wanted to excuse the inconsistency of his phallus, which

is the symbol of the will for power ... and their own unacknowledged lack of confidence). Anthropocentrism thus spontaneously translates into androcentrism.

Christianity took anthropocentrism -and the androcentrism that is inherent to it- to its highest possible degree with its fundamental dogma: "God became a human being" in Jesus (John 1:14). But, since Jesus was a man, the dogma of incarnation is understood as "God became a male." And it follows that only males can represent Christ, and this is the official reason for which Catholic theology continues to support excluding women from the "higher ministries" or "hierarchy". Unbelievable but true.

Should we then ignore the Bible as an antiecolological and oppressive text, that is incompatible with spirituality? There is no reason whatsoever to do so. The Bible -and this applies all the "sacred texts" from religious or spiritual traditions in general- can inspire us even now, but only on condition that it is read in a different manner. Provided it is taken as the human and historical text it really is, a contingent text from other times and other culture(s). Provided it is reread from the current signs and challenges of the Spirit. On condition it is inspired by the Spirit which is breathing in the text itself, beyond its literality. And provided the numerous eco-spiritual motives present in the Bible are maintained, beyond formulations and interpretations which have nowadays become stifling and oppressive. Then the Bible, like all poems, whether religious or not, can still be an inspiration for us.

3. A constant self-creation connected world

The great monotheisms of biblical origin (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) inherited the worldview of the ancient Middle East (Mesopotamia, Egypt, Canaan), and the beliefs, rites, and institutions from these religions are tied to that old image of the world: a world (the earth) created and finished by God all in one go, with human beings at the centre; a world marred by the disobedience of the "first forefathers"; a world ruled by God through prophets, mediators or spokespersons of an absolute truth and good; a world in which God intervenes when he wants to punish or cure; a world that one day, whenever God so decides, will disappear to give way to another eternal and double world: the heaven of the righteous and the hell of the wicked.

Let us not ignore any of those myths and beliefs of the past. We are not superior to those who lived in the past in terms of anything of essence. They searched for ways in which they could tell the Mystery, ease the grief, protect life, and keep the breath of life. There is no way to be sure we are any more spiritual than those who lived in ancient times, or more respectful of nature, or freer from our ignorance and the powers that oppress us. It is not at all sure we breathe any better than they did. But their world is no longer our world, and therefore their religion can

not be ours. Like them, we need spirituality in justice and peace with ourselves, and with the others, with all living beings, but we need to live in line with our culture and our view of the world.

In just about two hundred years, the various sciences have shattered the view of the world that for millennia has sustained the major religions and the spirituality of their followers, men are not superior to women nor is the human being the centre of the earth, nor, for that matter, is the Earth is the centre of the universe, and the universe we see is perhaps not the only universe: perhaps other universes existed before ours or maybe today other universes coexist with ours in dimensions that we do not perceive. This universe we do see -all space and time that we can directly observe or calculate mathematically- comes from a gigantic explosion of an infinitely small and dense mass, and since then it all continues to expand. Matter is energy in motion. All of it in movement, as in a dance. As the "matter" is organized or inter-relates in more complex ways, what we call "inferior" emerges as "superior". Thus, from "inert" earth and water came life – and what a miracle life is! What a miracle it all is! On this planet, and perhaps on countless other planets. And new organisms, more complex forms of life and "superior" beings are constantly sprouting: from "inert" beings, new living beings, sentient beings arise; and from these sentient living beings, other "self-conscious" and "free" beings arise. And so on, incessantly. Everything is related to everything -atomic particles to the most distant galaxies, bacteria are related to blue whales, and all thanks to this relationship everything develops. Life will evolve into new forms hitherto unknown to us, and also to new ways- hopefully more complete ways- of relationships, consciousness and fraternal and liberating freedom.

In short, everything is related to everything else and everything is in constant transformation. The world is still being created. And do not know what is a beginning nor what an end is, nor do we know if there was a "beginning of the world" or whether it will end. In just 200 years, therefore, the foundations of the universe that religions believed immovable have shaken. And for the vast majority of our society, the "shift in paradigm" has taken place in a much shorter period of time. Many who were born around the 1950s in the last century grew up in an agrarian paradigm; when we got to be 20 years old, we had to assimilate the modern paradigm of a rational, scientific, industrial era; 20 years later, we had to be reborn to spirituality and learn to "speak" within the trans-rational, holistic, pluralistic and postmodern paradigm of global information. Three cultural eras in 60 years. Three forms of spirituality.

Modernity has not made us free. Science and technology were necessary, but were not enough and will not suffice for us to know how to live, how to live in justice and peace, how to be free, how to be brethren or how to be equal. In what we call "the West", in modern times

we have acceded to a never-before-imagined "welfare state", albeit at a terrible price: the devastation of the planet, the submission and humiliation of the South, the plundering of their property. And we ourselves are already paying the price that we made them pay before us; the harsh crisis of our welfare state is a sign of a much more dire humanitarian and planetary crisis brought about by neoliberal capitalism in just a few decades: ravaging hunger, the depletion of fossil fuels accumulated on the earth over millions of years, a climate change due to global warming, the mass extinction of living species, water shortages ...

Is it not, in the end, a terrible crisis of spirituality our so-called "Christian" countries are going through? It is a complete failure of the "post-Christian" Modernity. Indeed it is, but it is also a dismal failure of traditional Christianity, as it has not been able to prevent the "Christian countries" when they still had Christian majorities, from committing many crimes and bringing about scores of disasters on Earth. We therefore need to return to the sources of spirituality. Or to the sources of the Gospel. Or to the sources of life.

Or, alternatively, to the sources of the Bible (and other sacred texts), if you will. But we can not return to the beliefs and taboos, rules and forms typical of a world that is no longer our world; we can not believe in a "miraculous intervention" of an arbitrary "god" nor in divine mediators, or immutable dogmas, nor in immovable "hierarchical" institutions. We are living in an interconnected and dynamic world, which is in constant transformation.

Can we find inspiration in the ancient traditions for the liberating eco-spirituality that we are urgently in need of? Yes, we can, without doubt, if we learn to read, if we reread. Let us return, for example, to the story of the creation in Genesis: *In the beginning God created heaven and earth* (Gen 1:1). "In the beginning" is not a chronological reference, it does not refer to a past time. "The Beginning" is the permanent source of being and life. Creation is taking place today, here, now, endlessly. Every moment is the first moment of creation. We are not finished. The universe is open. Creation is ongoing. Hope -a confident, detached hope that is free from its achievements- still stands.

"Let there be", said God again and again. *Egetheto*. This does not mean "creation is to take place at once". It means "let things get gradually created". "Let the world get gradually created from within, from the heart of all beings, from ourselves, by inventing their own future, releasing from oppressions, creating new forms of life that are freer and more fraternal, more universal forms of solidary and peaceful consciousness".

The Spirit groaning in that groans in all beings, the "Spirit that hovers over the waters" is the inner impulse that animates the boson, the quark, the atom, the molecule, the cell, water, air, plants, forests, animals,

the Earth, the galaxies, and the open and immeasurable universe. A liberating eco-spirituality consists of joining, beyond all creeds and forms, breath itself with this creative and liberating breath that moves the world from its smallest to its largest parts.

4. "We live, and move, and are, in Him/Her/It "

Everything changes, even "God", especially "God." When our picture of the world changes, so does our image of God. It has to change so that the creed does not drown spirituality. Is "God" not that permanent transformational dynamism that makes everything be, continue being and getting to be?

Everything grows, also "God", especially "God". What else does spirituality consist of if not that God grows within us, within the others, within everything that is, until God is all in all things and all things are part of everything? What else is spirituality if not liberating God, as they say in Jewish mystical literature –which is always present in the "secular" Etty Hillesum- in her chains and exile, until "God" is fully released in the release of all creatures?

Change in God, growth of God, liberation of God. Does it make sense to speak in this way? It all depends on what you mean by the term "God", the most polysemic and ambiguous of all terms. Something crucial happened to the word, or to its associated image, for Western society under the age of 65, massively no longer "to believe in God". They can not believe in the God they imagine, and they are right, because the God they imagine, -when they are explained the Bible or the Koran or listen to the Creed- does not exist. The "personal" God they deny does not exist. But many of those who deny God- most of them, I dare say- have not stopped craving for a deep ecological and liberating spirituality.

Millennia have gone by since the Palaeolithic, perhaps certainly also from the ancient Middle East –with us imagining God as a supreme ruler, the king of heaven and earth. A separate, dualistic and ambivalent god endowed with personality. A theistic God. That image is still present in the three great monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam). The Spirit, from the hearts of all beings and from current culture calls on us to go beyond theism. Beyond a dualistic image of God. Beyond also – and this must be said openly- a "personal" image of God, to the extent that the term "personal" suggests a dual otherness. Of course, "non-dualism" does not mean "monism". God and the world are not two nor one, as the Indian Upanihads already taught us over 2,000 years ago.

"God" is Him / Her / It which the eye does not see but who sees in the eye that sees. And the same goes with all the other senses. And with thought and conscience. It is not an Entity, but the Entity of all beings. It is the "hovering Spirit" or the Spirit vibrating in the current, eternal principle of all beings. It is Beauty, Tenderness, Listening, Welcoming. It

is Life. It is All in everything. It is the sacred creativity, the "more" and the "possibility" which are always open for good in all that is. "For in Him / Her / It we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28), Paul says, quoting a Stoic poet.

God is entirely revealed in everything: in a raindrop, in a tree leaf, in the chirping of a bird. God is particularly revealed in all the beings that groan, in the scream of the Earth and in the cries of the poor. God is definitely revealed in every word of comfort and compassion God releases. And that is spirituality, whether religious or secular: looking at everything as an epiphany of "God" beyond every name, making it be in everything, liberating all suffering beings, perhaps starting by God him/her/itself. "Believing in God" is believing in Goodness as the ultimate transformative force, and practicing it.

5. Christ Jesus and the total Christ

But does the Christian faith not say that God revealed and fully incarnated himself, once and for all, in Jesus of Nazareth, and that he saved the world or liberated it entirely? Isn't that what the confession of Jesus as Christ, Lord, Son of God means? The crux of the matter is how to understand this nowadays.

The Christian faith in general and Christology in particular were formulated in the framework of a static, anthropocentric and androcentric, patriarchal and geocentric worldview. That worldview has now been invalidated, and it is therefore necessary to reformulate Christology in an eco-spiritual paradigm or in a global eco-liberating paradigm. Humans are not the end of evolution or the liberation of life, and even less so is the current *Homo Sapiens* that we are now that Jesus also was.

Jesus announced the Kingdom of God or a full personal and structural liberation, and never considered he was the Kingdom himself, but the final Prophet of the Kingdom. He was also convinced that with him and with his male and female followers- he was already carrying out the beginning of the final liberation. Then the Jewish messianic perspective was supplanted by the ontological Greek perspective, and then the dogmas of Nicea (325) and Chalcedon (451) came, according to which Jesus is "consubstantial" to God, a divine person with a human-divine nature. According to this, in the whole of the universe or the universes, God would have fully embodied a male and Jewish *Homo Sapiens* individual 2000 years ago, at a particular stage in the evolution of life, of consciousness, of freedom...

It is necessary to release the Christological dogma from its geocentric, anthropocentric, androcentric scheme. The evolution of life remains open in this or in other planets. What is yet to appear is much more than what has already appeared in life, and this is also the case in Jesus.

This liberation of Christology is much simpler if we return to the historical Jesus and to his conscience. Not in order to adopt his (anthropocentric) image of the world or his (anthropomorphic) image of God, but to be guided by his inspiration beyond images. He did not believe he was "God," but a liberating prophet from the liberating Kingdom of God. And he did not "incarnate" God in his "metaphysical" constitution, but in his whole being; he did not incarnate God for his "double nature" (human and divine), but for the way they live. Each of his atoms and cells, the air he breathed, water and wine he drank, the bread and fish that he ate ... incarnated God. His life incarnated God: his compassion touched and healed, the freedom he risked and innovated on, the Samaritan proximity with which he lifted the wounded, his commensality that blazed trails and welcomed, his trust in God as the power of good, his faith in the goodness of every human being. That is the human form of what was "divine" in Jesus. And in all human beings.

God is not an extra-cosmic being, which incarnates himself when -in a singular instance- his "divine nature" binds in Jesus to the worldly or "human nature". God is the Being of all beings and all forms: the boson, the quark, the atom, stones, geraniums, swallows, dolphins, kangaroos, men ... are God's visible flesh. But God or what is "divine" is not confined to any particular form. Also not in the particular -unfinished- form of Jesus.

God is incarnated in all flesh that suffers and rejoices, in every living being, in all materials that vibrate and dance, in all good and beautiful things, in all compassion and tenderness, in every relationship that creates and recreates. God will be completely incarnated when -beyond temporal computation and parameters- all creatures reach their full "internal" and "external" liberation in a way we can not imagine, but only crave. Then, beyond the outline of a "chronological future" - all reality will be liberated, whether in Messianic or "Christological" form. But that hope will not be fulfilled by the intervention of any external "god", but from the heart of humanity and from everything that exists. And Jesus? Jesus is for Christians, the Sacrament of that anticipated hope, the image of our being and of our vocation, and the image of the task of every human being and of all beings.

6. A new alliance with all living beings


It is difficult to determine if the collapse of the more developed living species on the planet -including the human species- is irreversible or whether there is still a solution. What is indisputable is that all the alarms are on, that human action is primarily responsible and that only a drastic turn of human civilization can avoid general disaster. Will the human species, which is a wonderful form of Life, have turned out to be a cancer for our whole wonderful planet? This is a grim moment in time. Common life is at stake.

It's time to seal a solemn agreement for the community of life on the planet. *This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth* (Gen 9.12-13). Thus speaks God, or Life, after the Flood in the Genesis. We are in the universal flood, caused by the insatiable greed of a few humans and the inaction of many. The time has come to remember and restore the covenant of life. All living beings long for their full liberation (Rom 8:22). Let the groan of pain become groans of joy.

The time has come to fully adopt the "Universal Declaration of the Common Good of the Earth and Humanity" beyond abstract discussions about "rights", which continues to be too anthropocentric a language. All beings seek wellbeing. Only what is good for all is good for a few, which is the maximum common good possible. It is not fair to make any animal suffer, except in case of major need. And what are we to eat? We shall have to keep killing to stay alive –which is a disturbing condition of life- but we shall have to do so with the utmost reverence and gratitude, causing the least possible pain, and conscious of being part of the Mystic Communion of Life.

The time has come to remember that the earth is not our property. We are the ones who belong to the Earth, which belongs to all living creatures. *The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.* (Gen 2:15). For us to take care of it. We are here to take care of it, to take care of ourselves. The time has come to get the machinery to grind to a halt. I mean that lethal machinery for all, especially for the most vulnerable of beings, the machinery of unlimited growth, the machinery of maximum possible production and speculation without scruples: economics for enrichment. We must all learn to live better with less. And it is urgent that some countries decrease so that others may live. The planet can not survive and nor will we on it without a true planetary ecosocialism.

The time has come to endorse the most sacred law of the Bible, the law of rest. "By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work" (Gen 2:2). At least one day off every seven days should be implemented on a global level (Ex 20, 8-11), and a sabbatical year every seven years (Lv 25.1-7), as well as a jubilee year every 50 years, so that the earth and all human beings rest and the poor recover the vital goods they have been deprived of (Lv 25.8 to 17). So that all beings may be contented, as only a few could not be content without everybody else being contented.

Life is urging us towards a profound ecology, or what is the same, to an eco-liberating spirituality that is beyond cultural, religious and political borders. 



Sabiduría y quehacer ecoteológico

Desde la Teología campesina latinoamericano-caribeña

Aníbal CAÑAVERAL OROZCO
Bogotá, COLOMBIA

*Invocamos a la tierra que cría nuestro alimento,
el suelo nutricio, los campos fértiles,
los abundantes huertos y sembrados y les pedimos:
Enseñadnos, mostradnos el camino.*
(Plegaria a la Tierra de los pueblos Chinook,
nativos de las praderas)¹.

Estas reflexiones surgen en el camino de tres décadas y media (1980-2014) a propósito del cambio de perspectiva teológica y bíblica que experimentamos en los procesos eclesiales en que participamos en los años setenta, ochenta y noventa, para referir los últimos decenios del siglo pasado (XX). La llegada de un nuevo milenio y el tiempo recorrido en este siglo XXI, denotan otro momento, aunque no perdamos de vista los que fueron referentes fundamentales de la Iglesia de los pobres, la Teología Latinoamericana de la Liberación y las Comunidades Eclesiales de Base (CEBs).

Desde la Teología Bíblica Campesina hacemos este aporte, expresando nuestro agradecimiento a la dirección de la Revista VOICES por invitarnos a contribuir en la reflexión teológica sobre ecología profunda, espiritualidad y liberación. Ante la amplitud de la propuesta temática, considerando que hemos vivido con intensidad la eclesialidad de los años 80, es oportuno abordar el tema de la sabiduría bíblica y campesina.

1. Nota breve sobre antecedentes

Por los años 90, nuestra perspectiva teológica y bíblica produjo un viraje del énfasis eclesial al énfasis más intercultural, intersubjetivo e interreligioso. La llamada conmemoración de los 500 años (1992), abrió las perspectivas para unas miradas teológicas y espirituales más hacia lo

¹ Publicado en marzo 5 de 2013 (antxonolabe.wordpress.com/.../ecologia-profunda-y-nuevos-valores).

profundo de nuestros pueblos. Josef Estermann referencia este acontecer: *A partir de 1992, quinto centenario del inicio del ‘desencuentro’ entre los dos mundos, las voces silenciadas y los rostros invisibilizados de los pueblos originarios y afrodescendientes se hacen notar cada vez con mayor insistencia*².

2. El despertar de una Teología Bíblica Campesina

Hay que reconocer que a la Teología Bíblica Campesina la preceden la Teología de la Creación, la Teología de la Tierra y la Teología de la Ecología.

Desde Colombia, en los inicios de la década de los años 90, dimos comienzo a la formulación de la Teología Bíblica Campesina. Este quehacer teológico se expresó en unos presupuestos vitales, bíblicos, teológicos, espirituales, culturales y metodológicos. Más que darse una discontinuidad con la Teología Latinoamericana de la Liberación, asistimos a una proyección, al menos, en dos miradas: una hacia fuera (común y general) y otra hacia dentro (propia y específica).

2.1 *Las experiencias de vida en las comunidades campesinas*

Fue importante el componente de experiencia de vida, como testimonio personal, familiar y comunitario. Por aquella experiencia de cultivar la Tierra, pudimos nutrirnos de las fuentes de espiritualidad que brotaban de esta sacralidad de la agricultura campesina que revelaba el milagro de la vida, que invocaba la protección de Dios en cada amanecer, en la siembra, en el cuidado, en la cosecha y en el saborear los frutos en la cocina campesina. Por ejemplo, la cosecha era una minga comunitaria, donde vecinas y vecinos disfrutaban los presentes de la solidaridad, pues todavía no se había impuesto el valor monetario al maíz, el frijól o la yuca.

No pasarían muchos años para que apareciera la “avalancha” de la agricultura química y comercial bajo el lema de la “Revolución Verde”. Su ímpetu arrasó y destrozó las relaciones sacramentales y espirituales del campesinado con la Madre Tierra y transformó los campos en extensos plantíos de monocultivos comerciales, espantando la belleza del compartir en la minga comunitaria, fraterna y solidaria. La “Revolución Verde” significó una tragedia para el campesinado y para la Madre Tierra. De conservar el maíz como sacramento de la vida en los techos de las casas, se pasó a almacenar los agrotóxicos, los venenos y los fertilizantes químicos. Hoy leemos en un bello libro de México:

Cuando la Revolución Verde se extendió a zonas campesinas y al maíz, ocupó un lugar central de una política que se empeñaba explícita-

² Josef Estermann, *Interculturalidad. Vivir la diversidad*, La Paz: ISEAT, 2010, p. 13.

*mente en expulsar a los campesinos del campo, para abastecer la mano de obra barata a las ciudades que habían entrado al acelerado proceso de industrialización.*³

2.3 La realidad de destrucción ecológica del campo

Se trata de uno de los presupuestos de la Teología Bíblica Campesina que sigue en continuidad con la Teología Latinoamericana de la Liberación y que desafía nuestra espiritualidad de ecología profunda. Hoy abundan los estudios y análisis de realidad sobre los impactos ambientales en los países latinoamericanos y caribeños que aplaudieron los Tratados de Libre Comercio, incluso llama la atención que el auge de los agrocombustibles comprometa a gobiernos que representaban alternativas esperanzadoras para los pueblos, pero que frente a la Madre Tierra, la naturaleza y la ecología se contradijeron en sus políticas. Nos basta leer críticamente las estadísticas en países como Brasil⁴, Argentina y Colombia, clasificados en los primeros lugares de la producción de biocombustibles. Y a ello se suman tres problemas más: la minería extractiva, el cambio climático y los Tratados de Libre Comercio.

Leyendo la sistematización de la Lectura Campesina de la Biblia en las escuelas bíblicas claretianas, Oswaldo Martínez Cardoso, animador e investigador acompañante, recoge lo siguiente:

*Las montañas, los valles, las quebradas, las sabanas hoy están siendo invadidas por intereses de afuera; las compañías petroleras, los productos de multinacionales: insumos agrotóxicos, semillas transgénicas, bebidas embriagantes, comida chatarra, medios de comunicación mentirosos y modelos de educación que no son campesinos han llegado hasta nosotros; por eso en la Escuela Bíblica Campesina estamos rescatando todo lo que somos y sabemos, nos preparamos para no renunciar a la identidad, para amarnos como hombres y mujeres de la tierra.*⁵

2.4 La perspectiva de integralidad

Cuando fuimos perfilando los trazos de la Teología Bíblica Campesina, cambiaron los mapas pastorales en los pizarrones de los salones de las iglesias, habituados a llenarse de actividades pastorales para engrandecer a veces la imagen de la iglesia y de la parroquia. La catequesis y la evangelización se juntaron con la vida campesina, la Tierra,

³ Colectivo por la Autonomía, Grupo ETC y GRAIN, *¡No toquen nuestro maíz! El sistema agroalimentario industrial devasta y los pueblos de México resisten*, México (Distrito Federal): GRAIN y Editorial Itaca, 2014, p. 51.

⁴ Aloísio Milani, Mauricio Monteiro Filho, Spensy Pimentel y Verena Glass, *El Brasil de los agrocombustibles. Impactos de los Cultivos sobre la Tierra, el Medio Ambiente y la Sociedad - Soja y Recino*, Documento reporte de Brasil, 2008.

⁵ Misioneros Claretianos. Provincia de Colombia Oriental y Ecuador, *Abriendo caminos, sembrando esperanza*, Bogotá: Diseños Educativos Ltda., 2012, p. 225.

el agua, la familia, la naturaleza, la organización campesina, las celebraciones y los sacramentos. De aquella espiritualidad, en buena medida, proveniente de la doctrina cristiana, se tuvo también la expresión de una espiritualidad ligada a la vida y a la creación. No por nada se afirmó la impronta de la “Integridad de la Creación”, sintonizada con los sueños y los anhelos más profundos del ser humano campesino que encontraba diferentes maneras de relacionarse con la Divinidad. Se diría que ahí estaban latiendo los fundamentos de una ecología profunda.

2.5 Una espiritualidad holística

Junto a un terreno pantanoso vimos crecer un pequeño y frágil arbolito de cedro. Después de muchos años, los cortadores de árboles ofrecieron comprar el árbol, para convertirlo en madera y obtener ganancias en el comercio. Mientras las motosierras zumbaban por los contornos talando los grandes árboles, en nuestra familia hacíamos la resistencia en defensa del hermoso árbol. Hurgando y escarbando en la historia familiar, supimos que allí, al lado donde nació el cedro existió la primera escuela rural, dirigida por nuestra bisabuela paterna a comienzos del siglo XX. Allí irrumpieron las primeras enseñanzas de una mujer que nos dejó el legado del compromiso con la transformación humana y social.

Por ello, desde que comenzó a expresarse la Teología Bíblica Campesina fuimos asomándonos a las honduras de la espiritualidad holística que podía conectarnos con esta parte última de la Plegaria a la Madre Tierra: *Por último, invocamos a lo que estimamos más sagrado, la presencia y poder del Gran Espíritu de amor y verdad que fluye por todo el Universo. Para que permanezca con nosotros, para que nos Enseñe y nos muestre el camino.* Se trataba de una espiritualidad holística y sensible, como pudo recogerse en 2001, a propósito de la cercanía con la Teología Indígena:

*Ser sensibles es sentir, percibir y acoger los latidos de la vida desde las más hondas entrañas del seno materno de la Tierra. Allí está la íntima y milenaria afectividad indígena con la Tierra, la Naturaleza y el Cosmos. Tal sensibilidad lleva a disponer todos los sentidos, para entrar en relación amorosa con la Madre Tierra.*⁶

Ecos de esta espiritualidad holística son también estas otras líneas: *En las escuelas bíblicas campesinas se ha venido tomando conciencia de que hacemos parte de la naturaleza, en unas relaciones de hermandad (hombres, mujeres, plantas, agua, animales, Tierra, aire...)*⁷. Tal perspectiva se enmarca en los principios de la ecología profunda, de modo que la *mayor parte de las personas quieren florecer y realizarse*

⁶ Aníbal Cañaverl Orozco, *El escarbar campesino en la Biblia*, Quito: Centro Bíblico Verbo Divino, 2002, p. 53.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 127 y 95.

así mismas en armonía con los otros seres vivos y culturas⁸. Algo similar quedó consignado en 2001, en el libro *El escarbar campesino en la Biblia: Su espiritualidad radica en afirmar una manera y un estilo propio de vivir, donde cuidar tierna y delicadamente la vida es un principio de comunión con el Espíritu de Dios que arroja maternalmente toda la Creación*⁹. Y el florecer integral da razón de esta espiritualidad de la ecología profunda: *Florecen los campos, florecen las hijas y los hijos, florecen las familias, florecen las organizaciones sociales, florecen las relaciones sociales y florecen las comunidades y las iglesias*¹⁰.

3. La sabiduría campesina: ancestral y bíblica

El presente apartado trata de recoger otro de los presupuestos centrales en las reflexiones acerca de ecología profunda, espiritualidad y liberación. En el nivel experiencial, se puede señalar:

*El campesinado latinoamericano está unido e identificado a una larga tradición de sabiduría popular, heredada de los antepasados indígenas, negros y campesinos... En esta perspectiva, la sabiduría popular se inscribe dentro de lo que podemos llamar la academia de la Vida, de la Tierra, de la naturaleza y del cosmos. Una academia milenaria donde los seres humanos hacemos parte de toda una infinidad de vida. Esta academia popular está llamada a dialogar con la academia de la universalidad y viceversa, en un mutuo respeto por las diferentes fuentes del saber, donde las ciencias, los/las profesores/as y los libros nos enseñan, como nos enseñan las comunidades de las hormigas, el escarbar de las gallinas, los rostros de los perros y el crecimiento de las plantas.*¹¹

3.1 La sabiduría ancestral campesina

En una de las regiones más ricas de Colombia, en los Llanos Orientales, donde llegaron las empresas petroleras a esculcar las riquezas naturales, existe una escuela bíblica campesina que tomó como tema de estudio: *“Construyendo caminos de sabiduría campesina”*. Resaltamos la siguiente convicción: *Las seis familias que hacemos parte de esta gran familia campesina, vinimos para dar lo mejor de nuestra sabiduría*¹². Puede percibirse un cambio de perspectiva de la Comunidad Eclesial de Base, adscrita a la parroquia, a la de Gran Familia Campesina. Su manifiesto es el siguiente: *Casi siempre hemos pensado que: lo que sabemos, no sirve para nada, que los que saben son los que vienen de afuera, que*

⁸ <http://ecosofiacjuanpabloii.blogspot.com/2011/09/arnes-naess-padre-de-la-ecofilosofia.html>.

⁹ A. Cañaverall, *El escarbar campesino en la Biblia*, p. 31.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ A. Cañaverall, *El escarbar campesino en la Biblia*, p.154.

¹² Misioneros Claretianos, *Abriendo caminos, sembrando esperanza*, p. 205.

*lo que nuestros abuelos y padres nos enseñaron no vale. En este curso nos propusimos valorar, reconocer, que somos sabios y sabias, y que podemos enseñar con destreza lo que sabemos*¹³.

3.2 La sabiduría como raíz bíblica

Nuestra experiencia de CEBs, Teología Latinoamericana de la Liberación e Iglesia de los pobres acogió prioritariamente la corriente de la liberación en sentido político y eclesial. La corriente de la sabiduría no tuvo mucha acogida y ello se evidenció en que la literatura sapiencial de la Biblia no encontró suficiente eco en los movimientos liberadores de América Latina y el Caribe. Al referirnos a la ecología profunda, a la espiritualidad y a la liberación, nos encontramos con la acogida de esta corriente bíblica de la sabiduría en estrecha relación con la salvación (soteriología), dentro de la que está implícito el horizonte de una liberación más integral y no meramente política, social o económica.

Siguiéndole el pulso a esta vertiente bíblica que atañe a la ecología profunda, encontramos que la sabiduría, personificada en la mujer arquitecta, que está junto a Dios en los orígenes de la creación¹⁴, da cuerpo y sostén a lo que Dietmar Müjig denomina Teología de la Sabiduría¹⁵. En líneas siguientes, dice: *Esta concepción se caracteriza sobre todo por el intento de lograr conocimiento sobre Dios a través de la observación de la naturaleza y sus reglas intrínsecas*¹⁶. En esta dirección pueden interpretarse los desarrollos alcanzados en los procesos de las escuelas bíblicas campesinas en Colombia, que crecen en nuevas relaciones con la Tierra, la naturaleza y las familias. Bonito es leer: *La sabiduría campesina expresada en cada línea, en cada paso, y en cada trabajo personal, familiar o veredal, es una muestra de que estamos madurando y fortaleciendo nuestra identidad campesina*¹⁷.

Cuando damos razón de la fe y la espiritualidad campesina que sentimos como testimonio en la sistematización, encontramos una conexión profunda entre sabiduría y Espíritu de Dios. *Yo salí de la boca del Altísimo, y como neblina cubrí la tierra. En las alturas puse mi morada, mi trono era una columna de nube... Antes de los siglos, desde el principio, me creó, y nunca dejaré de existir. En pueblo glorioso he echado raíces...* (Eclo 24, 3.9.12). Dietmar Müjig, agrega: *Se parece mucho entonces, en este texto, al aliento con el cual Dios dio vida a Adán formado de*

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Dietmar Müjig, *Hacia un cristianismo ecológico. Fuentes espirituales para el cuidado de la Creación*, La Paz (Bolivia): Editorial t'ika & teko, 2012, p. 121.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 118.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Misioneros Claretianos, *Abriendo caminos, sembrando esperanza*, p. 206.

polvo. Además, esta auto-descripción tiene mucha similitud con la imagen del espíritu de Dios que aletea sobre las aguas en Gn 1¹⁸.

El campesinado que ha venido leyendo la Biblia y reflexionando sobre Dios, ha encontrado en la sabiduría y la espiritualidad su fortaleza para resistir y afirmar la esperanza. Es verdad que la liberación, como lenguaje, vino a tener en Colombia unas implicaciones políticas muy fuertes, atrayendo sobre las comunidades y el mundo pastoral un señalamiento y una identificación con la subversión (en un primer momento), pero después con el terrorismo. La represión fue violenta, por lo que puede intuirse un dato importante para recrear una perspectiva más integral y holística, identificada con la sabiduría, la salvación, la transformación y la dignidad.

En nuestras prácticas formativas hemos venido soboreando estos saberes bíblicos que como escribe José Antonio Merino, constituyen una espiritualidad, *pues la naturaleza es la biblioteca viva y palpable de la divinidad. Y desde ese areópago cósmico podemos conectar con el Creador y entablar una gran relación fraterna con todos los seres que habitan el planeta¹⁹.* Y esto es lo que evidenciamos cuando leemos, por ejemplo, en Proverbios 30, 24-28:

Hay cuatro seres pequeños en la tierra, que son más sabios que los sabios: las hormigas, seres débiles, que en verano preparan su provisión de alimentos; los tejones, seres sin vigor, que se hacen su guarida en las rocas; los saltamontes, que no tienen rey y avanzan todos juntos; las lagartijas, que se atrapan con la mano y viven en los palacios reales.

O la dimensión de enseñanza y pedagogía divina que nos llega desde el libro de Job: *Pero pregunta a los animales, que te instruirán, a las aves del cielo, que te informarán; te ilustrarán los réptiles de la tierra, te enseñarán los peces del mar* (Job 12,7-8). Por eso, es de traer a la memoria, el testimonio del campesino Román Ramírez²⁰, *que convirtió su casa en el testimonio vital y simbólico de leer campesinamente la Biblia.* Podría decirse que allí se levanta un santuario a los animales como maestros del escarbar en la tierra. Extraordinario es este otro mensaje: *El árbol tiene una esperanza: aunque lo corten, brota de nuevo y sigue echando retoños; aunque haya envejecido su raíz en la tierra, y en el suelo se esté pudriendo su tronco, en cuanto siente el agua, reverdece y echa ramas como una planta joven* (Job 14,7-9).

¹⁸ D. Múñig, *Hacia un cristianismo ecológico*, p. 121.

¹⁹ José Antonio Merino, *Francisco de Asís y la ecología*, Madrid: PPC, Editorial y Distribuidora S.A., 2008, p. 146.

²⁰ Aníbal Cañaveral Orozco, *Andar en el encanto de la Palabra. Diálogo de saberes en Artífices, Entradas, Llaves y Claves*, Bogotá: Editorial Antropos Ltda., 2012, p.146.

Es significativo referirse al Segundo Testamento, al evento de la encarnación de Dios en Jesús de Nazaret, en un ambiente cósmico y natural. Los evangelios narran la sabiduría de Jesús en las parábolas, en la referencia a las aves del cielo, a los lirios del campo, a las semillas y a los animales.

4. Un andar metodológico en esta perspectiva

El aspecto metodológico representa un esfuerzo de construcción práctica y teórica en esta línea de la Teología Bíblica Campesina en el horizonte de la ecología profunda, la espiritualidad y la liberación. Es bien recordada la metodología del ver, juzgar y actuar en el quehacer teológico de la liberación en América Latina y el Caribe, perspectiva que se mantiene en amplios sectores eclesiales y académicos.

Hace más de 20 años que emprendimos el proyecto de sistematizar y articular un método más propio de América Latina y el Caribe que ha venido expresándose en una escuela y que ha logrado sintonizar con el horizonte teológico, hermenéutico y pastoral de la ecología profunda, la espiritualidad y la liberación. Le hemos dado el nombre de *Diálogo de saberes en Artífices, Entradas, Llaves y Claves*. Tras de sí está la simbología de la casa, del *oikos*, de donde proviene el término ecología. El método, como camino, se propone el facilitarnos andar hacia la profundidad de la casa, de la vida y de la realidad.

5. Desde la sabiduría proponemos un paso de sujeto a artífice

Ciertamente en el quehacer teológico y bíblico en América Latina y el Caribe se afirmó el paradigma del sujeto, cuyo alcance todavía sigue remando en muchos ambientes académicos, aunque vale la pena referir que hoy se levantan voces desde las ciencias para cuestionar su vigencia como. Júlio Paulo Tavares Zabatiero, siguiendo las contribuciones de Michel Foucault, Jürgen Habermas, Rolf Knierim, Rolf Rendtorff y Fernando Segovia, dice: “El paradigma del sujeto está en profunda crisis ya hace algunas décadas”²¹ .

Adentro de los procesos culturales, como el campesino, nos parece que este vocablo no pegó mucho ni provocó siquiera una emoción durable. Es verdad que abunda la literatura y la producción escrita sobre el término sujeto. Sin embargo, desde el horizonte de la sabiduría se vislumbra un término y una palabra más enraizada en la tradición bíblica y que nos atrevemos a percibir como un cambio de paradigma para la ecología profunda, la espiritualidad y la liberación. Se trata del vocablo artífice.

²¹ Júlio Paulo Tavares Zabatiero, “Novos rumos na pesquisa bíblica”, en *Estudos teológicos*, vol. 46, nº 1, São Leopoldo, Brasil, Escola Superior de Teologia, 2006.

Conviene nuevamente referir a tres autores para respaldar la condición de ser artífice: Dietmar MüBig, José Antonio Merino y Albert Schweitzer. Dietmar apunta sobre la sabiduría lo siguiente:

Por el momento, nos quedamos con el rol que tuvo en cuanto a la Creación. No solamente estaba presente de manera pasiva todo el tiempo que Dios creó el mundo. Participó más bien como arquitecta. La palabra hebrea amon en muchas versiones de la Sagrada Escritura, basta en la misma Biblia de Jerusalén, está traducida como 'bija' o 'niña'. Pero significa 'jefa de taller' o 'experta', parecido a Sab 7: 21 y 8: 6, donde a la Sabiduría se la llama 'artífice' (tequnitis en la versión original griega). Además, participa recreando al Dios Creador.²²

Por su parte, Merino, habla de la Palabra divina que se ha dirigido a la naturaleza:

Como una obra de arte se relaciona con su autor, así la naturaleza está relacionada con su modelo. La creación, pues, ha nacido como palabra, como expresión y como lenguaje divinos. Es un sacramento de Dios, un tratado de teología, pues nos habla de Dios, mejor aún, es Dios quien nos habla a través de ella. «Toda criatura es palabra divina porque nos habla de Dios».²³

Mientras tanto, Schweitzer, nos hace recordar la práctica sensible de un campesino que retiraba con cuidado y delicadeza las hormigas del baño antes de soltar la ducha:

Mantén tus ojos abiertos para no perder la ocasión de ser un salvador. No pases de largo, inconscientemente, ante el pequeño insecto que se debate en el agua y corre el peligro de ahogarse. Sácalo del agua con un palito, sécale las alas y experimenta la maravilla de haber salvado una vida y la felicidad de haber actuado en lugar y en nombre del Todopoderoso. A la lombriz que se ha extraviado en el camino duro y seco y que no puede horadar un agujero, retírala y deposítala sobre la tierra.²⁴

6. Desafíos desde la sabiduría divina y campesina

Teniendo a la sabiduría en el trasfondo de la ecología profunda, la espiritualidad y la liberación, podemos potenciar el diálogo de saberes bíblicos, ancestrales y campesinos como sustentadores de nuestras prácticas liberadoras.

Recuperar para nuestras iglesias, comunidades y escuelas bíblicas campesinas la dimensión de sensibilidad hacia el reconocimiento de los animales y los seres vivos como portadores de sabiduría divina, como maestros y maestras que nos enseñan permanentemente.

²² D. MüBig, *Hacia un cristianismo ecológico*, p. 120.

²³ J. A. Merino, *Francisco de Asís y la ecología*, p. 84.

²⁴ Cf. Leonardo Boff, *Virtudes para otro mundo posible*, Santander: Sal Terrae, 2007, p.65

Potenciar las dimensiones de liberación y salvación con arraigo sapiencial hacia una dimensión más integral y holística en nuestro quehacer en ecología profunda, espiritualidad y liberación que trascienda el horizonte político y nos ayude a relacionarnos de manera integral con la naturaleza y la creación.

Fortalecer los niveles de concienciación y compromiso con el cuidado, el respeto y la responsabilidad con la vida en todas sus manifestaciones, buscando superar los discursos que también promueve el sistema neoliberal que se apropia de lenguajes semejantes.

Tender puentes dialógicos entre las diversas espiritualidades que aproximan al ser humano con la Divinidad, el cosmos y toda la creación, resignificando el nuevo quehacer ecoteológico y hermenéutico.

Tener la capacidad, la apertura y el respeto hacia la autocrítica de las prácticas ecológicas, espirituales, salvadoras y liberadoras que se van implementando al interior de las iglesias, los movimientos, las instituciones y las organizaciones que apuestan por la relectura bíblica liberadora y la reflexión ecoteológica.

En esta dimensión ecoambiental de la Teología Bíblica Campesina, vislumbramos uno de los fermentos con potencialidad de futuro que nos queda, sobre todo porque afirma una sensibilidad con la Madre Tierra y la naturaleza; porque emprende proyectos concretos de huertas caseras y agroecológicas; porque hace una recuperación de los valores propios campesinos.

7. Conclusión

Confluir en la trilogía ecología profunda, espiritualidad y liberación, significa andar hacia las profundidades de la existencia cósmica, biológica, natural, humana y espiritual. Esa es la reflexión que trata de plasmarse en estas páginas, en aproximación con Arne Naess, creador del concepto de “ecología profunda”, en 1973. □



Wisdom and Eco-Theological Task

Based on the peasants' theology from Latin and Caribbean America

Aníbal CAÑAVERAL OROZCO
Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Traducido por Thomas Wieser

*“We worship the earth that breeds our nutrition
The fertile soil and fields
The thriving gardens and plantations and we entreat them:
teach us, show us the way”**

The following reflections are the fruit of three decades (1980 – 2014) of roaming in the quest for an innovative biblical and theological approach which we felt to be necessary in the ecclesiastical processes we formed part of during the sixties, eighties, and nineties of the last century. The dawn of a new century and its first years mark a moment which called for a revival of the Theology of the Poor, the Theology of Liberation and the Grassroot Ecclesiastical Communities (CEB), lest they fall into oblivion.

From our stance in the Biblical Peasant's Theology we convey you our contribution as a sign of gratitude towards the directors of VOICES magazine who invited us to submit these reflections about in-depth theology, spirituality, and liberation. Though this invitation constituted a great challenge, we took it on in order to reap the essence of our experience during the eighties about peasants' and biblical wisdom.

1. A concise summary of background

During the 90's, our theological and biblical perspective underwent a sweeping turnaround from the ecclesiastical towards the cross-cultural, cross-subjective, and cross-religious emphasis. The historical commemora-

* Cited from the Entreaty to the Earth by the Chinook peoples from the Great Plains).
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tion of 500 years of Christian influence in South America (1992) opened deeper perspectives about our theological and spiritual insights combined with our ethnical identity. Josef Estermann stated very accurately: "As from 1992, the fifth centenary of the onset of the 'disencounter' between two worlds, the silenced voices and the wiped-out countenances of the original peoples and those dragged here from Africa, cry out and arise all the way more audible and visible"².

2. The Awakening of the Peasants' Biblical Theology

It has to be acknowledged that the Peasants' Biblical Theology is the offspring of the Theology of Creation, Theology of the Earth and Theology of Ecology.

From Colombia, in the early years of the 90's, we engendered the formulation of the Peasants' Biblical Theology. This new theological movement was embodied by biblical, theological, spiritual, cultural, and methodological premises, accompanied by a distinctive way of life. We endeavored not only to create a contrast to the Theology of Liberation in South America, but also wanted to add to it at least two new projections: one outwardly (common and general) and one inwardly (personal and specific).

2.1 *The Life Experiences in the Farming Communities*

The aspect of life experience was essential as witness accounts for persons, families, and the community as a whole. Through the experience of cultivating the earth, we nourished the sources of spirituality that welled up from this holiness of farmer's agriculture, which made us delve into the miracle of life, worship god's protection at every daybreak, sowing, caring and harvesting and while enjoying the fruits of the earth in the community kitchen. For instance, harvesting was a collective effort in which neighbors reveled in the feeling of belonging and solidarity since there had not yet been allotted a monetary value to maize, beans, and cassava.

Unfortunately it was too soon, that the avalanche of chemical and commercial agriculture smothered this environment in the name of the "Green Revolution". Its onslaught wiped out and annihilated the sacramental and spiritual relations of the farming community with Mother Earth and transformed the fields into vast monoculture plantations for commerce, thus killing the beauty of brotherly, communitarian, and solitarian cooperation. The "Green Revolution" constituted a tragedy for the farming community and for Mother Earth. It meant the step from garnering the maize like a sacrament under the roofs to storing agrottoxins

² Josef Estermann, *Interculturalidad. Vivir la diversidad*, La Paz: ISEAT, 2010, p. 13.

and pesticides, poisons and fertilizers instead. Today we can read in a beautiful book about Mexico:

“When the Green Revolution invaded the farming communities including the maize, it entailed a policy that explicitly aimed to expel the farmers from their land in order to dump them into the cheap work force of the big cities sucked up by the industrialization process”³.

2.2 The reality of the environmental destruction of the land

This is one of the premises of the Peasants’ Biblical Theology which always was in line with the Latinamerican Theology of Liberation and which challenges our profound ecological spirituality. Research studies and analysis about the reality of the environmental impacts in Latinamerican and Caribbean countries which initially welcomed the signing of Free Trade Agreements can be found everywhere. This includes the production of Biofuels first hailed as an environmentally friendly alternative by all governments of the region. But when it comes to assessing the real consequences of these measures regarding damages to Mother Earth and Nature, these government prefer to hush them down. Suffice to read statistics from countries like Brazil⁴, Argentina, and Colombia, which rank among the biggest producers of these products worldwide. And there are more assaults on nature’s wellbeing: mineral mining, the climate change, and Free trade Agreements.

Perusing the systematization of Peasants’ Bible Reading in the Claretianas Biblical Schools, Oswaldo Martínez Cardoso, adjunct promoter and researcher, sums it up this way:

“The mountains, valleys, creeks, and plains are nowadays invaded by foreign interests; petroleum companies, multinational products, agrotoxins ingredients, transgenetic seeds, alcoholic beverages, junk food, misleading means of mass communication, and education models not based on the country life experience are closing in on us. That is why in the Peasants’ Biblical School we are salvaging everything that we are and know”⁵.

2.3 The Aspect of Integrality

When we started to outline the traces of Peasants’ Biblical Theology, the pastoral curricula changed on the writing boards of the

³ Colectivo por la Autonomía, Grupo ETC y GRAIN, *¡No toquen nuestro maíz! El sistema agroalimentario industrial devasta y los pueblos de México resisten*, México (Distrito Federal): GRAIN y Editorial Itaca, 2014, p. 51.

⁴ Aloísio Milani, Mauricio Monteiro Filho, Spensy Pimentel y Verena Glass, *El Brasil de los agrocombustibles. Impactos de los Cultivos sobre la Tierra, el Medio Ambiente y la Sociedad - Soja y Recino*, Documento reporte de Brasil, 2008.

⁵ Misioneros Claretianos. Provincia de Colombia Oriental y Ecuador, *Abriendo caminos, sembrando esperanza*, Bogotá: Diseños Educativos Ltda., 2012, p. 225.

class rooms which usually aimed to highlight the role of pastoral activities and the image of the Church. Now, catechesis was wedded to the farming life. The Earth, the water, the family, Nature, peasants' organization, the celebrations and sacraments became the focus of teaching. To a great extent, from this spirituality based on the Christian doctrine, a spirituality linked to Life and Creation was expressed. For a good reason, the motto "Integrity of Creation" was coined representing the heartfelt dreams and wishes of a farming soul who found various manners of relating to the Divine Being. It may be said that here the foundations of a deeply felt ecology was throbbing.

2.4 A Holistic Spirituality

Close to a swamp we saw a feeble and fragile pine tree growing. After many years wood traders offered us an amount of money to cut it down and sell the timber. While far and wide chainsaws were howling in the region, within our family we decided to defend this beautiful creature. By perusing the family chronicles, we found out that next to the place of this tree, there had been the first country school, governed by our great-grandmother on my father's side in the early years of the 20th century. With her teachings, she laid the seed of the legacy for our consciousness about the commitment towards the human and social transformation.

For this reason, since the early stages of creating and living the Peasants' Biblical Theology, we delved into the depths of holistic spirituality by which we became linked to this last part of the entreaty: "Finally we worship what we deem the holiest, the presence and power of Love's and Truth's Great Spirit which permeates the entire Universe, so that She stay close to us and show and teach the way". This was the quintessence of a holistic and sensitive spirituality which was gleaned in 2001, also regarding its links to Indian Theology:

*"Being sensitive means feeling, perceiving, and owning the heart beats of life from the womb of Mother Earth. This is a bright example of intimate and thousand-years-old Indian affection towards the Earth, Nature, and the Cosmos. Such a sensitivity is bound to open all and every senses to be ready in order to enter into a loving relationship with Mother Earth"*⁶.

Echoes of this kind of holistic spirituality also resound in other verses: "In the peasants' Bible schools awareness has been growing that we form part of nature, by establishing fraternal rapports (men, women, plants, water, animals, Earth, air)"⁷. This perspective is enshrined in the

⁶ Aníbal Cañaverál Orozco, *El escarbar campesino en la Biblia*, Quito: Centro Bíblico Verbo Divino, 2002, p. 53.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 127 y 95.

principles of profound ecology in the manner that “the majority of persons yearn to flourish and reach plenitude by living in harmony with other beings and cultures”⁸. Something similar substantiated in the book *The farmer’s toil in the Bible*: “Her spirituality is the endeavor to manifest an autochthonous life style where taking care of life in a tender and delicate way is a principle of communion with the Spirit of God which shrouds the entire Creation”⁹. And the integral blossoming demonstrates the merit of this spirituality of profound ecology. “the fields flourish, daughters and sons flourish, families flourish, social organizations flourish, social relations flourish, together with the communities and churches”¹⁰.

3. Peasants' Wisdom: Ancestral and Biblical

The following chapter deals with highlighting other central premises within the reflections about profound ecology, spirituality and liberation. On the level of what can consciously be experienced, we can identify:

“The Latinamerican peasantry is characterized by a longstanding tradition of popular wisdom bequeathed on them by Indigenous ancestors, African blood, and farmers. ... Under this perspective, popular wisdom is the ‘textbook’ used in the Academy of Life, of Earth, Nature, and Cosmos. A thousands-year-old academy where the human beings form part of the never ending string of life. Any ‘scientific’ University will be incomplete if it does not heed the traditional advice in a mutual conversation using mutual respect for the sources of knowledge, where the sciences, professors and books teach us. Thus we should not scorn the teachings of the ants as they toil, the hens as they scratch, the dogs staring in our eyes, and plants in their wisdom to grow in a perfect manner”¹¹.

3.1 The Ancestral Wisdom of Peasants

In one of the most emblematic regions of Colombia, the Eastern Great Plains, where petroleum companies intruded to exploit the natural wealth, there is a Peasants’ Bible School which selected one topic for its studies: “Building paths for peasants’ wisdom”. We highlight the following conviction found among the members of the congregation: “We, the six families who form the great farmers’ community, came to hand over the most valuable point of our wisdom”¹². This statement bears

⁸ <http://ecosofiacjuanpabloii.blogspot.com/2011/09/arnes-naess-padre-de-la-ecofilosofia.html>.

⁹ A. Cañaveral, *El escarbar campesino en la Biblia*, p. 31.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.154.

¹² Misioneros Claretianos, “Abriendo caminos, sembrando esperanza”, p. 205.

¹³ *Ibid.*

witness of the important change of perspective from the Ecclesiastic Base Community, confined to a congregation, towards the all-encompassing Great Peasant Family. “We used to be of the conviction: what we know is not good for anything. We own the know-how are the experts who live far away from our environment. The legacy of our grandparents and parents has no value. But in this gathering, we value and recognize that we are wise women and men and that we can teach others with expertise all our experience”¹³.

3.2 *Wisdom as Biblical Root*

Our experience in the Base Communities, Latinamerican Liberation Theology, and Church of the Poor understood the Liberation initially under its political and ecclesiastical aspect. Its interpretation as spiritual insight was not very popular – which became obvious in the fact that the Biblical wisdom literature was shunned and sidelined by the liberation movements in South America and the Caribbean. But when we take profound ecology, spirituality, and liberation serious, this aspect of wisdom turns into an essential part for salvation (soteriology) which goes even beyond a mere political, social, or economic liberation.

Adhering to this vein of biblical interpretation, which is tightly linked to the profound ecology, we are able to ascertain, that wisdom embodied in the woman-architect, working hand-in-hand with God in the dawn of creation¹⁴, shapes and maintains what Dietmar Müssig denominates Theology of Wisdom¹⁵. He puts it like that: “An essential feature of this concept is the endeavor to obtain knowledge about God by observing the nature, and its intrinsic laws”¹⁶. Inadvertently, the processes which Colombian Peasants’ Biblical schools have gone through in recent years, have brought us close to this tight link to the Earth, nature, and families. How marvelous is it to read: “The farmers’ wisdom as expressed in each line, each step, in each individual, family-related, or neighborhood-related effort bears witness that we are developing and strengthening our identity as peasants”¹⁷.

Once we realize the importance and power of peasants’ spirituality which is to be felt in the growing influence of this current, we realize

¹⁴ Dietmar Müjig, *Hacia un cristianismo ecológico. Fuentes espirituales para el cuidado de la Creación*, La Paz (Bolivia): Editorial t’ika & teko, 2012, p. 121.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Misioneros Claretianos, *Abriendo caminos, sembrando esperanza*, p. 206.

¹⁸ D. Müjig, *Hacia un cristianismo ecológico*, p. 121.

the profound link between wisdom and God's Spirit. "I flowed out of the mouth of the Supreme Being and covered the earth like a mist. I set up my abode in the elevated spheres and my throne on a pillar of clouds.... Before the beginning of time, in the beginning, he created me, and I will never cease to exist. In the glorious people I have sunk my roots... (Eccl. 24,3,9.12). Dietmar Müjig adds: "This passage seems to refer to the breath of God with which he inspired life into Adam made from dust. Also, this self-description has very much in common with the image of God's spirit as hovering above the waters in Genesis 1"¹⁸.

The peasant community, after many years of reading the Bible and meditating about God has found in the wisdom and spirituality its main source of strength in order to hold up and fortify their hope. As a matter of fact, believers who focused on the discourse of liberation caused a strong movement of political engagement, driving congregation members and even clerics into the hand of subversion and subsequently even terrorism. A severe repression ensued which led to a new concentration on more holistic and integral concepts like wisdom, salvation, transformation, and dignity.

Nowadays, preacher training savors rather biblical knowledge, like José Antonio Merino mentions edify spirituality: "since nature is the living and hands-on library of the Divine. And from this cosmic areopag can we get in touch with the Creator and build up a deep fraternal relation with all beings that fill the planet"¹⁹. This is a very similar message to, for instance, the words of Proverbs 30, 24-28:

"There are four beings on the earth who are wiser than all wise men: the ants, feeble beings which provide for their sustenance in summer, the badgers, who do not own much strength, which build their warren in the rocks, the grasshoppers, which do not have leaders but move in droves, the lizards, which you can catch with your hands and which live in royal palaces".

Also consider the teachings and godly pedagogics which we can find in the book of Job: "Just enquire with the animals. They will teach you; the birds in the sky, the reptiles on the ground, the fish in the ocean. They all can be your masters" (Job, 12, 7-8). That is why we should remember the example of the farmer Román Ramírez, *who converted his home into a living and symbolic witness of interpreting the Bible in the peasants' manner*²⁰. It could be said that in this place a sanctuary for

¹⁹ José Antonio Merino, *Francisco de Asís y la ecología*, Madrid: PPC, Editorial y Distribuidora S.A., 2008, p. 146.

²⁰ Aníbal Cañaveral Orozco, *Andar en el encanto de la Palabra. Diálogo de saberes en Artífices, Entradas, Llaves y Claves*, Bogotá: Editorial Antropos Ltda., 2012, p.146.

²¹ Júlio Paulo Tavares Zabatiero, "Novos rumos na pesquisa bíblica", en "Estudos teológicos", vol. 46, nº 1, São Leopoldo, Brasil, Escola Superior de Teologia, 2006.

animals as teachers how to live close united with the earth was erected. Also the following statement cannot be overvalued: “The tree cherishes a hope: even though they might cut it down, he sprouts again and engenders offsprings. Even though its roots might be wilted, as soon as they sense the water, he becomes green again and drives branches like a young plant” (Job 14, 7-9).

It is well worth while to refer to the Second Testament, to God’s incarnation in Jesus of Nazareth as an event of cosmic scope. The gospels give proof of Jesus’ wisdom in his parables where he also mentions the birds in the sky, the lilies in the field, the seeds, and animals.

4. Following the Methodological Path under this Perspective

The methodological aspect represents an effort of practical and theoretical development of this line of Peasants’ Biblical Theology aiming at the profound ecology, spirituality, and liberation. Many of us might remember the way of observing, judging, and acting within the theology of liberation in Latinamerica and the Caribbean region. Even today many sectors in church and universities maintain this way of thinking.

Over 20 years have elapsed since when we started the project of systemizing and articulating a method which was to be the most appropriate for South America, and the Caribbean, which has found acceptance in a school, and which has shown its compatibility within the theological, hermeneutical, and pastoral horizon of profound ecology, spirituality, and liberation. For it we use the term *Dialogue of Wisdom Among Craftsmen, Entries and Keys*. The backdrop is the symbolic realm of home (*oikos*), hence the expression ecology. The method, as a path, is useful to guide us towards the foundations of the house, of life, and reality.

5. Parting from wisdom, we suggest a step from ‘subject’ towards artificer (‘craftsman’)

For sure, in the theological and biblical activities in Latinamerica and Caribbean, the paradigm of subject is deeprooted whose scope still is represented in academic meditations. But nowadays, some – even scientific - voices claim that the subject’s days are counted. Julio Paulo Tavares Zabatiero, following the suggestions by Michel Foucault, Jürgen Habermas, Rolf Knierim, Rolf Rendtorff and Fernando Segovia states: “The paradigm of subject has entered a profound crisis already some decades ago”²¹.

Within the cultural processes, like the peasants’ one, it seems, this

²² D. MüBig, *Hacia un cristianismo ecológico*, p. 120.

²³ J. A. Merino, *Francisco de Asís y la ecología*, p. 84.

²⁴ Cf. Leonardo Boff, *Virtudes para otro mundo posible*, Santander: Sal Terrae, 2007, p.65

term has never found a widespread acceptance and neither stirred long-lasting emotions. It is true that the literature about the term subject is abundant. Nevertheless, from the horizon of wisdom, there seems to be a more prevailing, more deep-rooted term in the biblical tradition which we deem to initiate a change of paradigm for the profound ecology, spirituality, and liberation: and this term is the word craftsman.

It seems to be advisable, here again, to make reference to three authors in order to add more weight to the conditions to be a craftsman. Dietmar Müssig, José Antonio Merino and Albert Schweitzer. Dietmar makes the following remarks about wisdom:

“For the time being we are left with the role she had referring to the creation. She was not present only passively at the time God created the world. On the contrary, she participated actively as an architect. The Hebrew word ‘amon’ as appearing in many versions of the Holy Script, even in the Jerusalem Bible, is translated as ‘daughter’ or ‘girl’. Actually, it means ‘female head of the workshop’ or ‘woman expert’, like in 7:21 and 8:6 where wisdom is called “bandicrafter” (‘technitis’ in the original Greek version). As well she takes part in the re-creation of the Creator-God”²².

In his own right Merino talks about the Divine Word that addressed Nature:

“Like a work of art cannot deny its relation to its creator, nature is related to its model. Creation therefore was born as a word, an expression, a divine language. It is one of god’s sacraments, a treatise of theology, since it instructs us about God, or even more precisely: it is God who talks to us through nature. “Each creature is divine word since it talks about God”²³.

Even Schweitzer reminds us of the compassionate farmer behavior when he mentions, he picked up all ants caringly from the tub before opening the shower tap:

“Keep your eyes open in order not to miss one opportunity of being a savior. Do not turn a blind eye to the insect that is struggling in a puddle of water about to drown. Give it a leg-up with a wooden stick, dry its wings, and experience the wonder, to have salvaged a life and the happiness in the place and name of the Allmighty. When you see a helpless worm on the hard and dry path, pick it up and place it on a soft ground”²⁴.

6. Challenges from Godly and Peasant Wisdom

Once having installed wisdom as the background for profound ecology, spirituality, and liberation, we can carry out the dialogue among biblical, ancestral, and peasant wisdom more vigorously as support for our liberating practices.

Let us reinstate for our churches, communities and biblical peasant schools the dimension of sensitivity towards the recognition of animals and living beings as bearers of divine wisdom, as teachers which constantly make us receive their knowledge.

Let us fortify the dimension of liberation and salvation rooted in a more integral and holistic wisdom during our daily activities so that they are always dominated by awareness about profound ecology, spirituality, and liberation that bounds beyond the political horizon and helps us to enter into an integral relationship with nature and creation.

Let us strengthen the level of awareness and commitment for the caring, the respect, and the responsibility towards life in all its manifestations. We should do better than the neoliberal discourse that uses a similar terminology.

Let us build bridges of mutual understanding among the many forms of spirituality that aim to bring the humans closer to the Divine, the cosmos and creation as a whole, striving to put into practice what we might call ecotheological and hermeneutical activities.

Having the capacity, the open-mindedness, and the respect towards self-criticism of ecological, spiritual, redeeming, and liberating practices, which will become the main effort within the churches, movements, institutions, and organizations, based on an innovative liberating and ecotheological interpretation of the Bible.

Within this eco-environmental dimension of the Biblical Peasants' Theology we will be able to envisage one the driving forces for the future which we are left with. Above all because its center point is the sympathy with Mother Earth and nature materializing in the caring for concrete projects like our home-grown garden produce and the quest for the genuine values of being farmers.

7. Conclusions

Combining the threesome profound ecology, spirituality, and liberation, means delving into the depth of cosmic, biological, natural, human, and spiritual existence. The meditations about this I endeavored to expose in this essay as inspired by Arne Naess, the creator of the term "profound ecology" in 1973.





Corazonares* desde el Buen Vivir

Sofía CHIPANA QUISPE ²
PERÚ

En este compartir intento abordar la realidad de nuestros pueblos indígenas ubicados en las ciudades y la articulación de las cosmovisiones que no sólo determinan nuestros modos de ubicarnos en el mundo, sino también que influyen en nuestras acciones. De manera especial rescato el sentido de la cosmovisión cosmocéntrica que nos orienta a la conciencia de reconocernos como parte del gran tejido de la vida, desde la que se forjan nuevas relaciones que dejan brotar la vida digna: *Sumak Kausay* o *Suma Qamaña*, que nuestros pueblos indígenas nos aportan no como una ideología, sino como un modo de vida que tiene que ver con las relaciones que conllevan el Buen Convivir, que de algún modo están relacionadas con las cosmovisiones biocéntricas planteadas por los movimientos ecologistas.

Compartiendo desde un pequeño espacio del mundo

Comparto este escrito desde un pequeño Asentamiento Humano de Lima, llamado el Rescate ³, un barrio como muchos en nuestra Abya Yala ⁴, que surgieron del anhelo de una tierra propia de las/os que el sistema ha expulsado de sus tierras de origen hacia la centralización de las capitales. La mayoría de los primeros pobladores del barrio proceden de diversos pueblos andinos del Perú, así como ellas/os las diversas poblaciones

* Uso este término para plantear que no parto de la razón, sino desde el corazón, espacio donde se acuna la sabiduría, según la cultura andina.

² Mujer aymara de Bolivia, que comparte su vida en Perú, es miembro de la Congregación de Religiosas Trinitarias y de la Comunidad de Teólogas Indígenas de Abya Yala.

³ El barrio es una invasión que se hizo en una ex fábrica de ladrillos hacia los años 70s, por eso le pusieron el nombre de Rescate, porque decían que habían rescatado su tierra.

⁴ Palabra Kuna, que designa nuestro espacio geográfico denominado como América Latina.

migrantes articularon una identidad propia, que de algún modo quebró el centralismo “criollo” que sigue los patrones occidentales. Sin embargo, en esa articulación muchas/os dejaron su identidad ancestral para asumir ciertos patrones culturales que la cultura dominante se empeña en difundir, hasta que esas poblaciones consideradas “sin cultura”, asumen la civilización impuesta por el sistema que en cierta medida tienen el objetivo de la alienación cultural y formar poblaciones acríticas, a fin de generar una conciencia enajenada.

En las dinámicas sociales anteriormente planteadas, las otras culturas y pueblos no son asumidas en su dignidad, sino de manera despectiva, valoradas no por lo que son, sino por lo que hacen. Y para los sectores muchos más académicos son sujetos de estudio: vinculados al folklore, guardados en los museos como realidades pasadas y no desde el presente de sus presencias y sus reivindicaciones a favor de la vida, por ello la sociedad peruana en el tiempo de la violencia armada⁵ de los 80s a los 90s, vivió ajena a ésa realidad que desarticuló la identidad de muchos pueblos ubicados en los lugares más pobres de la serranía peruana, hasta que los movimientos armados llegaron a algunos sectores de las ciudades.

Por otra parte, el estado peruano como algunos de nuestros países, asumen las políticas denominadas de “inclusión social”, que en realidad es un nuevo modo de “civilizar” desde los parámetros monoculturales occidentales denominados como “criollo-mestizo”. Ya que la categoría mestizo es usado muchas veces para subsumir las otras identidades culturales. De modo que las políticas de “inclusión social” no asumen las diferencias a fin de dialogar en la construcción de una sociedad inclusiva en el sentido que nadie quede fuera, de modo que se pueda establecer una gran comunidad enriquecida por la diferencia, que rompa con la pretensión de universalizar ciertas verdades desde una perspectiva supracultural, que no considera un proceso real de encuentros, diálogos y debates entre las diferentes culturas y poblaciones (indígenas, mujeres, homosexuales y otras/os).

Haciendo un salto más cualitativo, esa comunidad inclusiva que no se limita a las personas, considera la vida de las/os otras/os seres (mares, animales, ríos, montañas, vegetación, etc.), no porque sea un deber, sino porque compartimos un origen común que nos hermana, y porque somos parte de una gran red de interrelaciones interdependientes. En ese sentido, los derechos humanos quedan limitados, por su centralidad en el ser

⁵ Se trata de una lucha armada al interior del país entre el movimiento denominado terrorista, Sendero Luminoso y el ejército peruano, teniendo como centro las poblaciones más empobrecidas.

humano y no considerar los derechos de la Madre Tierra, casa en la que habitamos todas/os las/os seres vivientes.

Parto de esta realidad compleja de la que somos parte las/os que nos reconocemos como indígenas, ya que la sabiduría de los pueblos indígenas hoy transita en los márgenes de las ciudades, y poco a poco va dejando de ser necesaria, para asumir otras, por ello en las poblaciones migrantes, pese a ser herederas de una rica sabiduría del cuidado de la vida, me atrevería a decir que a la hora de defender la vida de y en la *Pachamama*, hay poca implicancia, porque el sistema lamentablemente nos ha enfilado dentro de sus seguidores/as. Pues la lógica es desarrollar la capacidad de tener, que determina a la persona y le da cierto status, al acercarlo al sistema del “desarrollo”, ya que las sabidurías de sus pueblos están vinculadas al “sub desarrollo” y sus espiritualidades consideradas como supersticiones y parte de una religión no oficial. Desde la alienación cultural, se pierde el horizonte de la dignidad, la plenitud de la vida, lo que llamamos el *Sumak Kasay*, y muchas veces hace de sus espacios habitados propensos a la delincuencia, la violencia, la cultura del “vivo”⁶, el tráfico de droga, el alcoholismo; esto no quiere decir que los otros espacios no sean así.

Por otra parte, si hace años estas poblaciones emprendieron grandes luchas, hoy han perdido su fuerza en las luchas reivindicativas, si ir lejos, en mi barrio la empresa movistar, hizo un trato con una vecina para instalar una antena, pero lo curioso es que las/os vecinos de ésa cuadra no protestaron, fueron otras/os las/os que salieron para denunciar y protestar. Es así que los movimientos sociales barriales hoy están debilitadas, o en algunos casos divididos. Realidad que también se evidencia en algunas poblaciones indígenas a los que grandes compañías, mineras, agroforestales, petroleras, y otras, logran persuadir a comunidades a través de la promesa de un supuesto bienestar.

Por lo tanto, en estas poblaciones habrá muy poca conciencia sobre el cuidado de la tierra, y menos hablar de ecología, cuando las calles están llenas de basura, lo que hace pensar que en un ambiente de sobrevivencia cuesta vivir desde la conciencia del cuidado, ya que su vida misma está descuidada por un sistema político, económico y social, que no considera sus realidades. Y no sólo eso, sino que estas poblaciones son las más afectadas por la contaminación en todos los sentidos, los cambios climatológicos, la contaminación ambiental, la contaminación acústica y por la baja calidad de los alimentos.

⁶ Se denomina cultura del vivo, a las personas que sacan ventaja de todo, sin importar si esto afecte a otras/os. Y se tiene como una virtud y valor, porque aquel que no es parte de esta dinámica es considerado como tonto.

En medio de esta realidad de la que soy parte, me invito a revisar la vida, desde ese proceso que hoy llamamos descolonización, que nos encamina al Buen Vivir, o el Sumak Kausay, o Suma Qamaña, desde el Buen Convivir, que supone la interrelacionalidad, la comunitariedad, la reciprocidad, no sólo entre humanos/as, sino con todo lo que llamamos comunidad de vida (animales, plantas, lagos, mares, montañas, ancestros/as, las diversas personas, las/os espíritus tutelares y la divinidad). Pero para asumirse como parte de la comunidad de vida, es preciso revisar desde donde nos ubicamos en el mundo para asumir una consciencia que supera ciertas visiones centradas en afianzar el poder de unos cuantos.

La tierra es el nido de la vida

En estos tiempos el cuidado de nuestro nido, o casa común, nos desafía a la consciencia de sentirnos miembros de la gran comunidad de vida, es decir, que somos una hebra dentro del tejido de la vida. Que amerita la revisión de nuestra cosmovisión, que es el sentido del cómo vemos y nos ubicamos en el mundo. Se puede decir que no se trata sólo de las creencias, relatos, símbolos, sino también de los comportamientos que permiten analizar y reconocer la realidad a partir de la propia existencia. En nuestros tiempos en que nos reconocemos como multiculturales, podemos plantear diversas cosmovisiones, sin embargo, presentaré de manera muy general, dos cosmovisiones: la antropocéntrica y la cosmocéntrica.

Planteo estas dos cosmovisiones porque son las que respaldan nuestros comportamientos concretos. Ya que una cosmovisión, son los lentes que ayudan a interpretar la realidad y a actuar, pero también y sobre todo ofrece una visión de los asuntos esenciales de la existencia humana, es decir, trata del sentido de identidad, y la ubicación en el mundo.

En otras palabras, nuestras cosmovisiones determinan los paradigmas que orientan nuestra vida, por ello me parece pertinente revisar ambas cosmovisiones, la primera porque es la más cuestionada desde las comunidades ecológicas, feministas e indígenas, por tratarse de una cosmovisión centrada no en cualquier ser humano, sino aquel que es poseedor de la culturas dominante que se presenta como “oficial”, y en el ámbito cristiano ha sido asignado como imagen y semejanza de Dios. Aunque esta cosmovisión se afianzó desde el pensamiento moderno que presenta a la Tierra, no como el centro, en partes para bien porque nos ayudó a ubicarnos como parte de la vida de otros planetas, y porque quebró el pensamiento teocrático. Sin embargo, la racionalización hizo que el cosmos, la naturaleza y todo lo que está relacionado con ella, se convierta en una material explotado por los seres denominados racionales, algunos humanos sobre todo varones.

En cambio la cosmovisión cosmocéntrica, asume aquellos otros modos de ver y estar en el mundo, que tienen como referente el estrecho vínculo e interrelación con el cosmos, que es mucho más que la simple defensa de la vida que la cosmovisión biocéntrica pueda presentar, se trata de vincular nuestra “naturaleza humana”, no aislada de la naturaleza de la que provenimos y de la que somos parte. Este es el legado ancestral que hoy vamos escudriñando desde la memoria del corazón a fin de desaprender lo que heredamos de la cosmovisión antropocéntrica.

Lo coronaste de gloria y dignidad

En este apartado no se pretende presentar la cosmovisión antropocéntrica de manera detallada, sino lo que supuso y lo que supone hoy esta cosmovisión que de algún modo es la más asumida por nuestro vínculo con la cultura “occidental” y patriarcal, tal como lo presenté en la primera parte. Para nuestros pueblos indígenas vinculados a las sabidurías ancestrales, esta cosmovisión llegó a nuestras tierras con la conquista y la colonia, que en cierta medida hoy se extiende a través del predominio de una “superioridad cultural” que no reconoce a nuestros pueblos en toda su dignidad, como plantea Eduardo Galeano, que “la cultura dominante admite a los indígenas y negros como objetos de estudio, pero no los reconoce como sujetos de historia; tienen folklore, no cultura; practican supersticiones, no religiones; hablan dialectos, no idiomas; hacen artesanías, no arte”⁷.

Si bien, hoy somos parte de una realidad en la que los pueblos indígenas y afrolatinoamericanos vamos emergiendo del gran silencio y anonimato al que se nos destinó, pero aún percibimos que nuestros aportes no son considerados cuando sale de nuestras propias fuentes, sino que aún necesitamos de mediadores/as, como célebres antropólogos, arqueólogos, sociólogos, y otros/as, hablando por nosotras/os, de modo que la rueda del antropocentrismo occidental sigue girando, ya que es el académico/a poseedor de la “ciencia”, que valida nuestras experiencias. Pues, en algunos casos, también las/os indígenas, que hemos recibido una formación occidental, nos hemos distanciado de nuestras sabidurías ancestrales. Por ello es pertinente para nosotras/os una descolonización del poder, del saber y del ser; y para las/os otras/os provenientes de la “cultura oficial”, un desarme cultural⁸, como plantea Raimon Panikkar.

Mientras no se haga ése proceso de desaprender, seguiremos fortaleciendo la desigualdad en todos los sentidos. Por ello la lucha y la rei-

⁷ Identidad Latinoamericana. En: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Ecu6vmtSRA>

⁸ Presenta que no es posible entrar en un diálogo de iguales, si es que no hay un desarme cultural de occidente. Cf. *Paz y desarme cultural* (1993). Bilbao: Sal Terrae.

vindicación del cuidado de la Tierra de nuestros pueblos, casi siempre es visto como luchas locales, como si lo que pasa en esas tierras no tuviera mayor repercusión en otras latitudes del mundo. Planteamiento que es asumido incluso por los gobiernos socialistas de izquierda de algunos países de nuestra Abya Yala, que asumen y promueven las políticas extractivistas y la criminalización de las luchas de los pueblos indígenas y las otras poblaciones que buscan resguardar los espacios vitales, amparados en algunos acuerdos que se estipulan en el artículo 169 de la OIT, que no se respetan por muchos estados, sino más bien, se privilegian los derechos de las compañías de inversión sobre todo extranjeras, avaladas en las legislaciones de los estados que los presentan como administradores de los suelos y subsuelos ricos en reservas naturales, minerales y petrolíferas; en desmedro de la soberanía de los territorios y los recursos de los pueblos y comunidades indígenas.

La cosmovisión antropocéntrica en la nueva colonización del mercado es mucho más voraz, porque bajo el discurso del cuidado del ser humano, o mejor dicho de algunos seres humanos se depreda las tierras, a fin de dar culto al “señor” o “señora” humano/a, sin importar las consecuencias, incluso que poblaciones enteras sean afectadas en sus cuerpos, pierdan sus tierras y hasta desaparezcan culturalmente por los desplazamientos forzados. Sin embargo, no sólo atenta contra los pueblos como pasó en el tiempo de la conquista y la colonización en la que se extinguieron muchísimas culturas, se trata también de la destrucción de nuestra casa común, ya que “las/os señoras/es”, no tienen otra tierra, y más bien demandan mayor pureza: aguas embotelladas, productos considerados orgánicos y naturales, inventando incluso “comercios justos” frente a la impureza e injusticias que las supuestas estructuras “desarrolladas” o “civilizadas”, provocan.

Aunque no podemos negar que muchas comunidades ambientalistas y otras, han hecho y siguen encaminando procesos interesantes del cuidado de la vida de todas las formas de vida. Sin embargo, la dignidad de éstas comunidades, hoy peligran. Y como respuesta muchas comunidades indígenas han asumido con seriedad su rol de guardianas/es de la tierra, por ello surge una reivindicación identitaria, como lo vivieron los pueblos *Awajún* en la Selva peruana el año 2009, cuando pidieron ser reconocidos como pueblos indígenas y no quedar limitadas a comunidades campesinas, sino pueblos reconocidos en su dignidad y derecho para resguardar su tierra y territorio de las exploraciones petroleras, lo que supuso la muerte de algunos y la prisión para algunos que hasta ahora se encuentran sin una sentencia.

Por otra parte, no es desconocido que las poblaciones más vulnerables y empobrecidas, no sólo sostienen sus vidas, sino la vida de muchas/os, ya que en estos tiempos la agricultura en gran escala cada vez ocupa

grandes extensiones de tierra, demandando mayor consumo de agua, desfertilización de la tierra y mayor contaminación por los fungicidas, pesticidas y abonos químicos, que alteran la vida de las poblaciones indígenas, las que viendo el esplendor de esos otros modos de producción, también insertan en sus prácticas esos modelos, que rompen el sentido de interdependencia y cuidado de la vida, por lo que los ciclos dinámicos y armónicos son alterados, por ejemplo, el uso de las semillas transgénicas y otro tipo de fertilizantes hacen que haya más de una cosecha durante el año, proceso agrícola que no considera el descanso de la tierra a fin de que revitalice su fecundidad.

Desde la cosmovisión antropocéntrica, vemos que el sentido del cuidado de la vida, es asumir lo que la cultura denominada occidental presenta como arquetipo, que es producir y producir, sin importar la calidad de vida, donde la abundancia es el parámetro de bienestar. En ese sentido estamos llamados/as a imitar ese modelo para salir de nuestro “subdesarrollo”. A su vez, ese modelo categoriza lo que es bueno, por ejemplo un producto que por mucho tiempo en las ciudades ha sido despreciado y usado como comida de algunas aves o animales domésticos, como ha sido la quinua⁹, desde que el mercado de exportación presentó sus cualidades nutritivas, hoy es valorada y se lo consume, me atrevería a decir que no sé cuánta conciencia haya de su valor alimenticio, o se consume, pero me atrevería a decir porque es parte del sistema de la globalización, realidad que refleja nuestra fuerte colonización enquistada que el mercado se encarga de reforzar.

Finalmente, otros aparatos que de algún modo sostienen la cosmovisión antropocéntrica es la experiencia religiosa, me limito a algunos aspectos del cristianismo y su influencia. Revisando algunos textos bíblicos podemos encontrar varios textos que hacen referencia a la centralidad del ser humano. Hago mención a un fragmento del salmo 8:8 – 9 “... lo coronaste de gloria y dignidad, lo hiciste de la obra de tus manos, todo lo pusiste bajo sus pies”, este texto deja entrever la supremacía del ser humano, que en muchas iglesias aún permanecen, ya que el ser humano es visto como la corona de la creación (cf. Gn 1:26 – 28). Incluso en el proceso de la teología de la liberación, la centralidad del ser humano prevalece, con la diferencia de que ése ser es el pobre, el excluido, por ello le costará priorizar la vida y la dignidad de las/os otras/os seres. Y no se comprenderá completamente la espiritualidad que subyace en los otros modos de vida, porque la liberación es aún cristocéntrica.

⁹ Un grano nutritivo con alto contenido proteínico, que es uno de los cereales ancestrales, denominado como el grano de oro, por ser un alimento preciado en los contextos andinos.

Aunque es posible que el cristianismo hundiéndose en sus raíces hebreas pueda comprender que no siempre fue antropocéntrica, aunque textos como de Génesis 1:26 y otros parecen plantearlo. Sin embargo, se trata de ubicar los orígenes del pueblo hebreo vinculado a la tierra, a la agricultura y al cuidado de los animales, a la descendencia, por lo tanto, estuvo vinculado a divinidades de la fertilidad, por lo que el pueblo hebreo/judío, el monoteísmo surgió después de una larga travesía programada por un grupo que insistió en el proyecto sólo Yahvé que surge de la centralidad del templo, mientras que el pueblo vinculado a la tierra, aún asociaba el cuidado de la vida, a los Dioses y Diosas de la fertilidad, por ejemplo, Baal el Dios de la lluvia y Asherá, la Diosa de la fertilidad, ambos mencionados en textos significativos del primer testamento, y tradiciones que atestiguan el reino mesiánico desde la interrelación con la naturaleza, como lo refleja el texto de Isaías 11:6ss.

La perspectiva antropocéntrica es la cosmovisión asumida en diversos espacios, por haber sido presentada por el sistema como favorable para el ser humano y sobre todo por el sentido de la dignidad y gloria del ser humano racionalista como el centro, desde el que giran todas/os los seres, que están vinculados con el misterioso dinamismo de la naturaleza al que ciertas poblaciones de personas están relacionados/as, como las mujeres, las/os indígenas, las niñas/os, y los jóvenes.

Somos parte del gran tejido de la vida

La cosmovisión cosmocéntrica, es asumida desde la perspectiva subjetiva¹⁰, mientras que en la cosmovisión antropocéntrica, la centralidad de la razón será importante. Se puede decir que esta segunda cosmovisión rescata lo inédito, aquello que no era tomado en cuenta, esas dinámicas anónimas, que nos llevan a ver el mundo desde nuestras diferencias, desde aquello que no conocemos o no habíamos considerado hasta ahora. Como diría Antonieta Potente, “en realidad la diferencia es lo inédito, lo que todavía no ha sido escuchado profundamente, que no ha sido contemplado, mirado, acogido. Si no aprendemos a rescatar esa dimensión de nuestra vida y de la historia, no podemos entender el camino de la sabiduría” (Potente 2002:45).

Lo inédito es la historia no oficial, o sea la espiritualidad de los pueblos, de las mujeres y de los hombres, de los niños, es su relación con la vida y su confianza en la Divinidad, llámese como se llame. La diversidad siempre ha dado miedo al egocentrismo, a aquel que piensa que es “único” o, simplemente que desconfía de aquello que no corresponde a su categoría mental y a su experiencia. De modo que lo inédito quiebra

¹⁰ Tiene que ver con las dimensiones profundas del ser humano que traspasa el sentido racionalista de la vida, y es el espacio desde donde surge la interrelacionalidad.

cualquier pretensión de universalidad y rompe con las culturas dominantes. Desde esta perspectiva, partimos desde la economía del cuidado de la vida, que expresan muy bien las cosmovisiones de los pueblos indígenas que conciben la interrelacionalidad que restablece el equilibrio y la armonía cósmica, porque se entiende que hay realidades que no pueden ser alteradas, sino más bien guardadas y cuidadas a fin de preservar la casa común, nombrado en el contexto andino, como *Pacha*.

El *Pacha* andino, concepto ancestral, está relacionado a la paridad energética cósmica (*pa* = dos y *cha* = energía y dinamismo). De modo que para el contexto andino, no se concibe un universo, sino un pariverso, entendido como un organismo vivo que cobija a todos/as los/as seres como un seno relacional. Según el principio de relacionalidad, no puede existir nada fuera de la relación, porque es condición para la vida, y por tanto todo lo que existe es gracias a la red de relaciones vitales entre las diversas dimensiones, tiempos y elementos de la vida. Podríamos decir que lo Divino es la misma relacionalidad vital, articuladora, relacionadora, garante y posibilitadora de vida.

En el mundo andino, lo masculino no posee la fuerza creativa, sino lo femenino, gracias a su fertilidad y capacidad de cobijar a los/as seres. Sin embargo, el sentido de pariverso será muy importante porque se trata de la fuerza dinámica generadora de vida, de constante creación y recreación. En ése sentido todas/os las/os seres, son parte de la *Pacha*, por lo tanto portadoras de la “dignidad sagrada”, porque participamos en la fuerza creadora del misterio de vida que está relacionada con lo cosmocéntrico y con la interrelación.

El asignar a la Tierra como *Pachamama*, que responde a una cosmovisión propia que lleva a nombrarla como la madre que nutre, que protege, que sostiene. Sin embargo, en su sentido amplio no puede reducirse a la tierra, que está a la vista y alcance de las manos, si bien está íntimamente vinculada a la tierra, pero *Pacha*, es un término que contiene, tiempo, lugar, naturaleza, cosmos. Se puede decir que es principio y final de nuestra existencia y de todos los/as seres vivos, porque salimos de ella y regresaremos a ella. Ella es la que nos ha visto nacer, crecer, reproducir, vivir, convivir con todo lo creado, y retornamos a ella cuando morimos. En ese sentido, la *Pachamama* es madre de todo ser viviente, confiriendo a todas/os las/os seres un carácter sagrado, desde donde surge el sentido de la interrelacionalidad, la comunitariedad y la reciprocidad de un constante dar y recibir que es expresada a través de una serie de ritos.

En la dimensión religiosa andina, también encontramos, la relación con los espíritus, o protectoras/es, que evidencia que todo tiene vida, nada es inmóvil, tiene sus propias dinámicas, sus ritmos, su vida. Sólo como ejemplo menciono la experiencia del mundo aymara que perso-

nalmente me llega al corazón, el diálogo con las *ispallas* (espíritu de los alimentos), comparto algunos fragmentos del diálogo que se mantiene en el ritual:

*Mama*¹¹ *ispalla tú sacias nuestra sed y hambre, por ti somos gente*¹² *y tenemos voz, basta para gritar. Ahora servite esta coca, te unjo con este cebo*¹³ *para que estés fortalecida para que seas bien fecunda.*

Ante la granizada y helada no tengas miedo, enfréntalo con toda tu fuerza y coraje.

Ahora floreciendo vas a bailar al ritmo del viento de los cerros y las pampas.

Sabes que soy tu hermana y no te abandonaré, que por siempre te acompañaré.

Regresarás pronto, te esperaré día y noche, cuidando que te duermas en el cuerpo de la madre tierra.

Esta experiencia sólo puede ser comprendida desde la conciencia de la interrelacionalidad, de lo contrario se lo catalogaría como animista, en realidad en el mundo andino, la comprensión de que todo tiene vida, surge de su experiencia cotidiana, porque desde la mirada contemplativa y sensible plenamente interdependiente con la naturaleza, llega a comprender que el desarrollo de los productos, de los animales y la vida de todos/as los/as miembros de la comunidad de la vida, tienen una fuerza que les permite desarrollarse como lo hacen los seres humanos. En ese sentido pienso que esta relación es sumamente ética, porque no sólo compromete al cuidado y la responsabilidad con cada uno de esos seres, sobre todo hace que cada ser digno de cuidado, que supera una relación instrumental con la naturaleza. En esa dinámica de interdependencia se reconoce que hay seres que necesitan unos de otros/as, a esto se le llamará reciprocidad.

Con todo lo planteado, rescato que las cosmovisiones cosmocéntricas, surgen desde una conciencia profunda de vínculo con la naturaleza, lo que genera unas nuevas relaciones, donde las relaciones interpersonales tienen la finalidad de mantener el equilibrio al interior de la Pachamama, que a su vez repercute en su relación con las otras/os seres, como dicen las sabias y sabios. Si alguien anda peleado o hace injusticias se genera desorden en toda la comunidad de la vida, por ello serán tan importantes los ritos de reconciliación comunitarios y el cumplimiento

¹¹ Madre, tanto en aymara como en quechua.

¹² Para el mundo andino, el ser gente, hace referencia a un ser humano en plenitud, es decir, un ser que ha integrado todas las dimensiones de su vida.

¹³ Es la grasa de la llama, que se usa como parte de los rituales, por considerar a ése animal como sagrado.

de las sanciones. Por lo que la ritualidad de la vida será muy importante porque es una manera de mantener el equilibrio de todo, que no se limita en ritualismos, sino en la profunda convicción de que la vida será transformada, donde se da la dinámica, “yo vivo, si tú vives”¹⁴.

Sigo siendo

Estoy viajando, estoy viajando, estoy viajando... así se introduce el documental, *sigo siendo*¹⁵. Quiero concluir con el espíritu de la palabra quechua, *kachkaniraqmi*, que se traduce como, sigo siendo, aún sigo estando. Esta palabra es pronunciada cuando una persona quiere expresar que a pesar de todo aún es, que existe todavía. Me parece muy sugerente, en el caminar de las/os migrantes que recorreremos nuestra vida en las tierras que nuestras madres y padres vieron como la tierra que podía ofrecer una vida digna, por la que tuvieron que dejar su tierra, la comunidad, la familia, para desplazarse a fin de que nuestra suerte cambie, porque no querían que seamos como ellas/os, excluidas/os por ser indígenas.

En medio de las ciudades, donde el ruido ensordecedor, el ritmo alocado de la vida, donde la tierra y el aire están contaminados, surge el desafío de seguir siendo, de reivindicar desde las múltiples exclusiones que vivimos, afirmar, *¡kachkaniraqmi!* Que nos permite al igual que nuestras/os ancestras/os a resistir a todas las colonizaciones, y sobre todo a romper con la colonización de la globalización, y con esas políticas de estado que a toda costa buscan convencernos que nos separemos de nuestras raíces ancestrales, que perdamos el derecho de nuestras tierras y territorios, que claudiquemos en el cuidado de nuestras semillas ancestrales que cuidan y protegen la vida.

Seguiremos gritando a los programas de asistencia social que nos hacen creer que somos pobres, y generan sentidos de victimización; de que nuestros pueblos resistieron dignamente la colonización de más de 500 años, y resonaremos nuevamente las palabras de nuestras sabias/os, ¡quemaron nuestros árboles pero no nuestras raíces! Desde el vínculo con las sabias de nuestra ancestralidad, seguiremos haciendo camino desde la intersubjetividad, que reconoce un proceso abierto y respetuoso de intercambio entre los saberes, las sabidurías y cosmovisiones de esos otros mundos inéditos que construyen un proyecto inédito desde un diálogo simbólico y político.

¹⁴ Título del libro de Franz Hinkelammert, editado el 2010 en La Paz: ISEAT. Como respuesta al individualismo occidental.

¹⁵ Es un documental de Javier Corcuera, que se estrenó en Perú el 2013, que refleja a través de la historia de cantantes, la diversidad de las tres regiones del Perú, la selva, la costa y la sierra.

En unas sociedades que privilegian el derecho de unos cuantos, desde la emergencia de lo inédito, buscaremos hacer respetar los derechos de los pueblos indígenas y las otras culturas vinculadas a la vida, los derechos de las mujeres, los derechos de la Madre tierra y los derechos de las vidas que germinan como preludios de esperanza que fluyen por nuestras tierras, los/as niños/as y jóvenes.

Desde nuestras espiritualidades cosmocéntricas, asumiremos el grito de la diversidad que reconoce a la Divinidad, como un Dios de la diferencia, nombrado desde diversos sentires, que nos desafía a la desobediencia o transgresiones vitales, a fin de escuchar lo que gritan los cuerpos que hablan, que tienen vida, como diría Antonieta Potente, “pero ¿qué es lo que grita? Grita el bajo nivel de vida, de bienes y de servicios, la interminable migración, su injusto analfabetismo, su bajo salario, su exclusión cultural, su progresiva colonización. Grita su mediocridad, la violencia con que la explota la mano invisible del sistema neoliberal” (Potente 2002:41)

Por último se trata de establecer relaciones para el Buen Vivir, se trata de diálogos celebrados con la tierra, o en las largas bendiciones de las cosas, de los animales, de las frutas y las semillas, porque todo se multiplica y contribuye al Buen Convivir.

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A Spiritual Reading on Ecological, Biological and Eco-spiritual Knowledge

Rui Manuel Grácio DAS NEVES op
Lisbon, PORTUGAL – INDIA

Translated by Pamela Murphy de Freitas

*“One who has understood, knows. One who explains, lies”
(Sufi mystic Rabi'a al Basrī).*

Eco-Spirituality is, without doubt, one of the present anticipated possibilities (although drawn from the night of time) of most relevance of Spirituality. It is also a transversal proposal, although it does not refer to only one of the spiritual traditions of Humanity. However it is also certain that there are some among them who stand out more than others.

Our article is intended to be an actual debate on determined proposals in the field of Biology which have been misplaced and have opened the epistemic field with a view to more holistic and universal Spirituality. It certainly contrasts with some more dogmatic elements of the economic-civilisation model of today known as neoliberal globalisation. This Eco-Spirituality is prominent because it is far more *inclusive* (beginning with the integration of species), as opposed to exclusive, competitive, individualistic, and, often, even violent approaches, of a *de-finalised* economy of/for the Total Market.

Next let us continue by viewing five thinkers connected to the ambit of Biology, some of whom are rather more heterodox scientists in this discipline of knowledge and very often also suffer or have suffered from rejection by their scientific and investigational work companions.

1. JAMES E. LOVELOCK

1.1. The first of these is James Ephraim Lovelock, born on 26th July 1919 and still alive. He obtained his Ph.D. in Medicine from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He has led investigations at Yale and Harvard. We write this here because we have realised that he is not merely a pseudo-scientist who submit interesting proposals, but one of those who lack scientific grounding. He has invented many scientific

instruments used by NASA for the analysis of extraterrestrial atmospheres and the surface of the planets. In 1958 he invented the *Electron Capture Detector* which has helped him in his discoveries on CFC's¹ persistence and its' role in the decline in the ozone layer.

However what we find most of interest in Lovelock is his proposal on the *Gaia hypothesis*. It was formulated for the first time in the seventies of the last century, as a result of his work for NASA, investigating the possibilities of life on the planet Mars. For him, the contrast between the static balance of Mars' atmosphere (which contains much carbon dioxide and, at the same time, very little oxygen, methane and hydrogen) and the dynamic mixture of Earth is a strong indication of the absence of life on that planet.

However, from that conclusion came the idea of the *Gaia hypothesis*, in that the living and non-living parts of Earth form a complete interactive system which can be conceived as an *organism*. It was so called in honour of the Greek god 'Gaia', on the suggestion of the novelist William Golding. In more scientific terms, the hypothesis consists in that the biosphere and the physical components of Earth (atmosphere, cryosphere, hydrosphere and lithosphere) are intimately integrated, in such a way as to form a complete interacting system, which maintains the climatic and biogeochemical conditions preferable in homeostasis. That is why this hypothesis is also known as *biogeochemical hypothesis*. In other words, Earth is thus conceived as a single living *super organism*. This hypothesis was a conclusion reached by Lovelock through the studies of Lynn Margulis, who tried to explain the systemic behaviour of the planet Earth. But Lovelock and other investigators who defend the *Gaia hypothesis* already consider it as a scientific theory and not just a mere hypothesis, since it has undergone a series of prediction tests. The impact of his concept occurred in his famous book *The Ages of Gaia* (1988).

1.2. This position taken by Lovelock comes from a marked interest for a concept of Deep Ecology and also for Holistic Spirituality. It does in fact take into account and make us aware that Planet Earth is, as it were, a living organism, auto regulated and finite, should we become aware, personally and at a community level, that we/ourselves form part of this same Planet, still the best, we are this very same Planet! Therefore, everything that happens to it also happens to us. The ecological responsibility of caring for the health of the Planet is also a way of caring for all

¹ CFC's are, as is known, abbreviations for so called 'chlorofluorocarbons', that is to say, organic constituted of carbon, chlorine and fluorine atoms. They are produced as volatile derivatives of methane and ethane. They are usually used for cooling in refrigerators, as propellants in aerosol *sprays* and as solvents. Their manufacture is being progressively eliminated after the Montreal Protocol due to the fact that they significantly contribute to the destruction of the ozone layer.

those who form it. The health of the Planet is our health. And our health is its', because we are all One.

In this sense we can consider climate as the temperature of the Planet. Should there be overheating of the Earth it is the Planet which has a "fever" higher than it should, should it have fever this shows that something is wrong with the Planet's health (illness). I think there is nothing new in saying that the majority of scientists today attribute to humanity the greatest part of the responsibility for the *greenhouse effect* from which the Earth is suffering. The influence of the use of CFC's and its' harmful effect was pointed out, precisely, by Lovelock, as one of the pioneers in this diagnostic².

Thus it is no surprise that in his 2006 book, *The Revenge of Gaia*, from the different negative phenomena which attack the Planet and their consequences, our author "prophecies" that, if there be no radical change and a rapid one, of our human civilisation in its' ecological habits, there is a high level of risk that our human species could disappear as such. Consequently, ecological practice rests on a profound spirituality in which we feel ourselves actors in this same process, that of our own planetary evolution.

Here we see a profound intertwining between Spirituality and Ethics, in dialectic interrelation. One does not work without the other. It is a most holistic vision, since in its' concept the planetary phenomena are not isolated but form an *intense network of relationships*. All natural phenomena are interrelated, in such a way that to touch one of them implies ipso facto affecting the others, in their totality. Furthermore, the Whole is more than the sum of the parts, since the Whole implies more than addition of the simple elements of which they are composed. Let us also suppose inclusive integration of all the interrelationships, sometimes complete, which occur between its' same elements. The totality exceeds the addition of its' mere component elements. It is an organism. Since in the case of the Earth, it is a *super organism*.

1.3. An interesting North American theologian, Sallie MacFague³, has for some decades called our attention to the need for the recons-

² However, Lovelock surprised the environmentalists with a book of his in 2004, saying that only nuclear energy can stop global warming. According to him, only nuclear energy would be a realistic alternative for fossil combustibles, to make up for the great need for energy posed today, civilisation wise, by humans, without increasing the emission of gases which cause the greenhouse effect. Evidently, this was a scandal for the activists in defence of Nature. It should be pointed out that, in spite of the criticism (and viability) of his proposal, this was due to his love of and urgency for the salvation of Planet Earth, when thinking that we had already reached a point of no-return, as far as climate protection against global warming is concerned.

³ His book was translated into Castilian under the title *Modelos de Dios. Teología para una era ecológica y nuclear* (Sal Terrae, Santander 1994).

truction of our theological language (which implies our relationship with God) through new proposals of metaphors. Thus a new *metaphoric theology* is proposed when speaking to God, because many of the metaphors have become obsolete over time (especially, those which correspond to a *monarchic theology*. With reference to the relationship between God and the World she proposes we should speak of the world as the *body of God*.⁴ The metaphor is theologically daring, but loaded with an eco-theological content as well.

In effect she thinks that no metaphor is fully adequate for reality, but when speaking of the world as the body of God avoids the remoteness of the monarchic metaphors and provides us with a very close metaphor. It is not the same to speak of God as King of the world, as when speaking of his *very body*. This is a metaphor which stresses the transcendent aspect of God, while his aspect is *immanent*. For her, this metaphor goes beyond the pantheistic model, since this model God is not reduced to the world, although the world could be his body. It would be more appropriate to understand this expression in a pan-en-theist manner, that is to say, as the Presence of God in All, but without wearing him (in the same way as we wear ourselves out of our own body). It is important that this metaphor makes us aware that the world does not exist outside or apart from God. Moreover, as she herself acknowledges:

“...in the metaphor of the universe as auto expression of God –incarnation of God- the notions of vulnerability, shared responsibility and risk are inevitable. This is an interpretation of the relationship God-world notably different from that which corresponds to the metaphor monarch-reign, since it brings out God’s consent to suffer for and with the world, to the point of assuming a personal risk”⁵.

This formula, which very much approaches that of oriental philosophy, especially the Indian *Advaita Vedanta*, is a formula which can be lived to the full in a perspective of holistic Spirituality. It is an essentially holistic formula, which goes far beyond the dualistic relationship of God-Cosmos.

There is no doubt that for a Holistic Eco-Spirituality there is a much stronger action “from the Body of God” which is a mere act of solidarity “with Nature” (dualism). In the first, we are the same Body of God. In the second, we sit epistematically in an arrogant and paternalistic/maternalistic manner “before” It, that is to say, outside It. In the first, we are integrated, included. In the second, we are outside, in front of It. In the first it is a holistic-inclusive outline. In the second, it is an old paradigm cartesian-newtonian, mechanistic and dualist.

⁴ He is spoken of on pages 126 to 139.

⁵ Pgs. 130-131.

1.4. There is another interesting point in our theology. According to Huston Smith's commentary, which compared oriental attitudes with occidental ones, quote:

When Everest was climbed for the first time, the commonly used expression used in the West when referring to this feat was "the conquest of Everest". An oriental, whose writings show profound Taoist influence, pointed out: "We would say it in another way. We would rather speak of 'offering our friendship to Everest'".⁶

For our part, there are many more comments. The first perception, western, shows the presence of a "culture of the ego", of egocentrism, of the "I" ("I dominate"). The second, the oriental, shows a culture of reverence, of much respect, of fraternity/sisterhood between the human being and the mountain, as equals in cosmic brotherhood. In what Leonardo Boff once called "cosmic democracy".

2. RUPERT SHELDRAKE

2.1. There is another person, also a professional geologist, with excellent biochemical training, equally considered as a "heretic" by "main stream" science. Alfred Rupert Sheldrake, born in 1942 and still alive, is a famous English biologist, heterodox for "official science" (or rather, for his main paradigm), which formed an interesting hypothesis, hypothesis which posed interesting consequences for Spirituality, especially for Holistic Spirituality (HS).

The hypothesis of "morphic fields" is his, defended in various books, but principally in his *A new science of life (Una nueva ciencia de la vida)*. This book is certainly dedicated to the Benedictine Bede Griffiths, who lived in India for many years, inculturating Christianity in India. Ironically, this appears in the *Prologue of the second Spanish edition* which, when the first English edition of his book was published in 1981, in an editorial column in Nature magazine, written by John Maddox, the editor, made a contundente attack on the book:

*Not even bad books should be burnt. Books like Mein Kampf have ended up being converted into historical documents for people interested in political pathology. But, what can one say with respect to the book of Doctor Rupert Sheldrake entitled A new science of life (Una nueva ciencia de la vida)? (...) His book is the best candidate for the bonfire I have seen for many years*⁸.

⁶ As cited in SALLIE McFAGUE, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁷ In Spanish: Kairós, Barcelona, 4th. ed., 2011.

⁸ *Op. cit.*, pg. 31.

Well, what does such an aberrant “heresy” of this biochemist and biologist consist of?

2.2. His hypothesis consists in defending the following: “morphic fields” are behaviour patterns which configure any system in the material world. In other words, they are structures which extend in the space of time and which mould the form and behaviour of all the material systems in the world. They are repetitive structures which give form to any natural system. In his own words, in a straightforward manner:

The hypothesis of the Four Causes maintains that the function of living organisms is based on habit. All animals and vegetables participate, contribute their time in the establishment of collective memory of their species. But function based on habit is not limited to organisms, but also affects crystals. Nature, on the other hand, is not subject to eternal laws perfectly established since the moment of the Big Bang, but follows fundamentally evolutive guidelines of nature. In this sense, the process of cosmic evolution runs between the extremes of habit creativity⁹.

Let us suppose, for example, that a certain ape, on Island A, discovers an ingenious manner to break coconuts, in such a way as to make better use of the milk (of the coconut) and its’ pulp (the “flesh”). Through imitation, this procedure is spread among its’ fellow monkeys. But there comes a time when a critical population (“critical mass”) dominates this new methodology. When the hundredth monkey on Island A has learned the recently discovered technique, the monkeys of Island B (faraway island with no physical contact with island A) begin to break the coconuts in the same way (which is why, this hypothesis is also called “the hypothesis of the hundredth monkey”).

We must clearly stress that between the two populations there was no conventional communication (two islands separated and far away in space). Simply, a new idea is incorporated into the habits of the species, without any physical contact.

This is a fictitious story, but serves as an example to explain similar situations, *both in the biological ambit, as well as in the non-biological*. The morphogenetic fields are a presence of the past in the present . For example, the manner in which a certain crystal crystallised for the first time in the history of evolution of the Universe *conditions* (not necessarily pre-determines) all the other times it will do so. Thus, the repetition of the same pattern of crystallisation will be converted into a determined crystal of a fixed form in the future.

⁹ Pg. 15.

¹⁰ See also his book *La presencia del pasado. Resonancia mórfica y hábitos de la Naturaleza*, also published by the Editor Kairós in Spanish version (Barcelona 1990).

The process responsible for this collection of information was named *morphic resonance* by Sheldrake. According to this, information propagates in the interior of the morphic field, thus feeding a kind of collective memory. In this way, in the previous example we cited, the morphic resonance generated by the first crystals causes the occurrence of the same pattern of crystallisation to become more probable in any laboratory in the world. And the more it happens in a determined way, the more probable will it be that it should occur again in future experiments.

Because, initially, depending on the specific characteristics of the molecule, various forms of crystallization will have been possible. Whether by chance or the intervention of purely circumstantial factors, Sheldrake tells us that only one of these possibilities is effective, and this substance or element in question will follow the same (or similar) pattern of crystallization in the future.

2.3. However, this occurrence in inorganic beings, could also occur, and in fact does occur, in organic beings. It also occurs at the origin of any living being. How does one scientifically explain the fact that a conglomeration of absolutely equal cells, which possess the same genetic property, should give origin to a complex organism, in which the different and specialised organs form with millimetric precision, at the adequate place and moment?

The mechanical-reductionist hypothesis of main stream biological science explains this all through the DNA. But, are we not confusing hardware with software here? Because, in fact, the activity of ADN in real life is much more modest. The genetic code written in it coordinates the synthesis of the proteins, determining the exact sequence of the amino acids in the construction of these macromolecules. The genes dictate this structure... and that is all.

But, in Sheldrake's hypothesis, the *morphogenesis*, that is to say, the formal scientific modelling of the biological systems with cells, tissues, organs and organisms, will be dictated better by a specific type of *morphic field*: those denominated as morphogenetic fields.

2.4. To better understand:

**Morphic fields*: are the original fields, and are not energy fields, as are those in physics (however, from a dialogue with David Bohm, the eminent quantum physicist, he thinks that it will be possible to physically reinterpret the morphic fields within his concept of the *implied and explained order*).

* *Morphogenetic fields*: are a specialised type of morphic fields, which organize the molecules, crystals, cells and, in reality, all biological systems.

* *Behaviour fields*: are morphic fields which organise the conduct of animals and social groups. While the morphogenetic fields influence form, the conductible fields, as their name indicates, influence conduction.

* *Social fields*: the morphic fields organize the social groups (for example, flights of birds, schools of fish and colonies of termites).

Consequently, morphogenetic, conductible, social and cultural fields are all different types of morphic fields, which possess an internal memory established by morphic resonance. Thus, our own human memory, for example, does not depend so much on traces of material stored in our brain as on the phenomenon of morphic resonance¹¹.

2.5. Now, if this is so, what consequences will all this bring to our reflexion and life in the line of a Holistic Spirituality?

I would suggest the following way of working:

(1) A profound review of our *habits* (on a physical, emotional, mental and spiritual level).

(2) Carry out an *archaeology* of our habits (for which, it will be necessary to previously *identify them, conditio sine qua non*, as we have already done in the previous point, which we shall do now, in this second point, the understanding of your *genesis*).

(3) Become aware of the great responsibility (personal, communitarian and social) of all thoughts, feelings, what we say and do, as all this generates morphic fields.

(4) In this raising of awareness one should be aware that there are “positive” morphic fields (creating peace, harmony and justice...) and “negative” morphic fields (creating violence, oppression, domination, manipulation...). (Let us reflect on this: which are the criteria of “positive” and “negative”?). Through these we can nourish a collective human memory (perhaps cosmic too?) liberator or oppressor.

(5) Consequently, all that occurs in the Present comes *conditioned* (but not necessarily determined or pre-determined) by the morphic fields from the Past. It is possible to create a *difference* (positive) through conscious awareness of our thoughts-sentiments-words-actions. That is to say, one should live *consciously* and not from *anthropological* automatisms.

Bearing in mind these five points, it should be possible to take a path to the realisation of a Holistic Spirituality. Nevertheless, they are a *necessary condition*, but *not sufficient*.

¹¹ Cfr. pg. 21.

3. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

3.1. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (TCh) is still the most well-known of the previously cited biologists. Born in France (Orcines, on 1st May 1881) and died in the U.S.A. (New York, on 10th April 1955, Easter Sunday) he was a Jesuit geologist and a palaeontologist of world renown, but above all what he is most distinguished for is his *synthesis* between Science and Religion. We could say that above all he was one of the first intellectual Christians who seriously tried to establish a dialogue between Science and Spirituality. He really constructed an integrating vision between Science and Theology. And the problem, which is often so in such cases, in the case of innovator and synthesizer, was that, falling between two waters, he was misunderstood by one and all. He especially encountered much opposition, incomprehension and marginalization on the part of the authorities of the Catholic Church.

Teilhard profoundly accepted the Darwinist reality of Evolution (something which the Catholic Church found difficult to officially recognise, because it seemed that Charles Darwin's proposal destroyed belief in God the creator of humanity and lowered it to a situation of "one more mere animal")¹² and amplified over it, constructed a whole evolutionist conception of the Universe with an ultimate aim: the encounter with the Omega. Thus he recognised a principle of finality for evolutionism, finding an entire process of major complexity, from Cosmo genesis, followed by Biogenesis, the Anthropogenesis, the Noogenesis, and culminating in the *Omega Point*.

Furthermore it received an energy duality in all material beings, in every cosmic entity, especially in all living beings: on one hand that which denominated *tangential energy* (or physio-material energy); on the other, that which denominated *radial energy* (or psycho-spiritual energy)¹³. In the first states of material (pre-life) and life, radial energy is only potential, but as it completes evolution (following the law of Conscience-

¹² Furthermore this was not only a problem for the Catholic Church. It has been said that the Anglican bishop Samuel Wilberforce strongly attacked de Darwin's idea of evolution. Thus, in a meeting of the *British Science Association* in Oxford (1860), the famous bishop violently confronted Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895), Aldous Huxley's grandfather. The bishop asked Huxley if he descended from a monkey on his grandmother's side or his grandfather's. Huxley replied more or less that it is worse to be a descendant of a bishop than of a monkey (cited by ANTONIO FERNÁNDEZ-RAÑADA, *Los científicos y Dios*. Ediciones Nobel, Oviedo 2000, p. 156).

¹³ "Above all, we admit, all energy is of a psychological nature. But, in each particular element, we would add, this fundamental energy divides into two distinct components: one *tangential energy* which makes up the solitary element of all the elements of the same order (that is to say of the same complexity and the same «concreteness») as its' self in the Universe; and a *radial energy*, which attracts towards the direction of a state ever more complex and centred, forwards» (PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *Le phénomène humain (The Phenomenon of Man)*. Éditions du Seuil, Paris 1955, p. 62).

Complexity) the conscience factors go more and more into action, until they reach the human being, in culmination of this process of conscientization, and understanding this in a collective manner (the *Noosphere*, a kind of layer of conscience of Humanity as a whole, a collective memory of the human species). Thus one is an external energy principal (*phenomenic*). The other is internal (*noumenic*, using here Kantian categories, although not in a very “Kantian” manner...). One is mechanical and physical, the “outside of things”. The other is psychic, spiritual (the “inside of things”). But both are present in all material entity. The planetary level in the human being, is where the maximum of Conscience is reached, as in it this becomes reflexive or auto-reflexive. This is to say, not only conscience-of, but also conscience-of-one’s-self (auto conscience).

As we can see, our author extrapolates the idea of Evolution to a universal conception, with a final encounter of Plenitude with this already denominated Omega Point, a Meeting which is precisely the final end of Evolution. In other words, what TCh realizes is a Grand Synthesis between Science and Mystic (for him, the Mystic is the “Science of Sciences”). The Universe has a Meaning, just as Life. We are immersed in a cosmic current which necessarily leads us to the Spirit, that is to say, to states of more conscience and liberty¹⁴.

3.2. It is important to stress that for TCh between Spirit and Mater, between the One and the Multiple, between the Centre and its’ Circumference, there is no antinomy. Our author is above all someone with the desire to make a *Synthesis*. The evolutive synthesis of cosmic evolution posses a *dialectic rhythm*: the first phase is *divergence* (surging and expansion of a multiplicity of elements; the second is the *convergence*, the selection and unification of elements; and the third is emergency, that of the *qualitative jump*, the appearance of the totally new when a critical point of development has been reached. This schema, with a few variations (for example, phases one and two could be proportionate), very much reminds us of the dialectic Hegelian schema. The important thing is that in this gigantic cosmic process there should be an *attraction*, that of Omega, which gives finality to the whole process.

This is the *Theosphere*, the threshold of Omega, the origin of which is in the historic birth of Christ Jesus (here we could also speak of *Christosphere*). Thus God is basically a God of the Future. In other words, He is a Personal God, the Great Human Aspiration, the Final Meaning of all physio-material and psychico-spiritual Evolution.

Certainly, there are some geologists and palaeontologists who share the Teilhardian evaluation that the human being occupies the cen-

¹⁴ See the interesting article by Silvia Jaeger Cordero, ‘La Cosmovisión de Teilhard de Chardin’, in: www.teilharddechardingrupodeestudios.org, pg. 1 (consult 24th July 2014).

tral place in the evolution of life. But abandoning palaeontology, scientists are divided before Teilhard's approach. For many, this introduction of *finalism* is "undue piracy" of Philosophy in the scientific ambit. Modern science has been constituted in accordance with the conception (dogma?) of "religion of the observable", for which it has rejected any formulation ("philosophical" contemptuously erased) which goes beyond the observable empirical data. However, the same development in quantum Physics and other aspects of those previously called "hard sciences" have put this mechanistic and absolute determinism model in crisis.

And if "natural selection" of the Darwinist type is that of a summary between determinism and chance ("chance and necessity", in the words of Jacques Monod), sometimes forgetting the importance of inter-species or intra-species collaboration (as that meticulously Pierre Kropotkin developed), we could say Teilhard's position is that of "directed chance". Those who define the concept of an *Intelligent Universe*, for example, could feel comfortable with the Teilhardian approach.

Another thing is the introduction of the Omega Point, from which it would appear a qualitative jump has been made before the scientific. But it is an interesting convergent proposal with Science. In other words, there would be continuity between Science and Spirituality, without a break. Definitively, Teilhard de Chardin tries to make a religious experience (specifically Christian) intelligible, and, in general, spiritual, for those who wish to begin from scientific concept of the world. That is why our author is a really modern author.

3.3. It is not our wish, here, to show Teilhard's concepts in depth, but only to indicate the most interesting one for an Eco-Spirituality. In our opinion, we point out the following elements for this construction of a Holistic Eco-Spirituality.

3.3.1. Teilhard definitively brought a *dynamic vision* of a cosmic Spirituality. It is not a static Eco-Spirituality. The idea of Process (with Hegelian dialectics and Marxist influences) was brilliantly summarised by him, remaining "faithful to Earth", that is to say, in this case, remaining faithful to a scientific approach which appeared to him to be undeniable: Evolution. But, however, without losing "fidelity to Omega", the other side of the stake.

3.3.2. He was able to formulate a concept which we could qualify as *Pan-en-theistic*, in which God, as Supreme Principle, and always Personal and Personalizing, appears to be immersed (immanently) in this ingent, evolutive process, giving it Finality and Meaning, but at the same time without becoming worn out in it, as the Beginning from which all transcends (transcendence). The *Omega Point* (Christ, God) produces a kind of *Attractor*, a kind of example cause (now dynamic) of which classical scholastic philosophy spoke. We consider that Teilhard does not cease to speak of God as the Alfa Point (today we would say, at the origin

of the Big-Bang), but he stands out more in Omega Point (the Final, the Finishing line of the evolutive Process).

3.3.3. A limitation, has been pointed out several times: his vision of Evil. He has been accused of not having given it all the dramatic *consistency* required. Something strange, for someone who lived intensely and closely no more and no less than the World Wars. We shall make so bold as to stress Teilhard de Chardin's positive and optimistic talent ('mystic'), confident more in the Mercy which surrounds the Earth than in the disasters fed by the personal and collective egocentrism of human beings. However, we think that this (always difficult) question of Evil should today be reconfigured for those Teilhardians, to give us an Eco-Spirituality more in accordance with present social themes, from which questions of social justice, Peace, Human Rights and Respect for Nature (among the Rights of recent generation), freedom from all types of oppression, etc., could form part of an ingent project of evolutive and Holistic Spirituality. We believe this an original point of the "daily world" in which we find ourselves today.

3.3.4. Furthermore, we think that greater debate will be necessary between classical Teilhardians and Oriental currents of philosophy, which could help us in a more universal concept of this cosmic evolutionism. A key figure in this sense is the Indian philosopher, sage and mystic Sri Aurobindo, who we shall see in continuation, soon. Teilhard clearly committed himself to a personalised concept of God, in the traditional Christian sense, but perhaps he did not have time to study deeper other concepts which would balance this: the concept of a *transpersonal* God (they complete each other in a dialectic taoist manner, *yin-yang*, where the poles are not antagonists, but rather complementary: this would be important for an Eco-Spirituality in our day).

For now, we shall not enlarge on Teilhard de Chardin, as his plans are very well known today, due to his difficult style, somewhere between philosophic, poetic and mystic, but ever tremendously suggestive.

4. SRI AUROBINDO

Aurobindo Ghosh or Ghose, known internationally as Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) is one of the most interesting men of learning, philosophers and mystics of modern India. We could call him "the Indian Teilhard de Chardin" (as Teilhard de Chardin we could denominate him reciprocally "the French Sri Aurobindo"). We do not wish to develop his complex thought here. We only pretend to see some brief points on his integral proposal, in connection with a holistic Eco-Spirituality. Let us see¹⁵.

¹⁵ His most famous book is *The Life Divine* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 2006, 7^a. ed.) It originally appeared published in a series of articles in the magazine *Arya*, between

4.1. Ascending and Descending Spirituality have a clear Aurobindian expression. In effect, through it all originates from SatChitAnanda, the Tri-Unitarian Principle origin of all Reality, which is in definitive Brahman. *Sat* signifies Reality, Existence. *Chit* signifies Conscience. And *Ananda*, *Jubilee*, Beatitude, Bliss. These three characteristics are properties of *Brahman*.

Since, from this Principle, in *Vedanta* logic, the entire Cosmos originates, in an involutive process, or rather, in a process of degradation or descending, until reaching Matter. On the contrary, the *evolutive* process or ascendant is that which comes from Matter to reach *SatChitAnanda*. This is an interesting conception where the material form includes part of the process (Aurobindo will even say that 'materialism' forms part of the evolutive process of *Brahman*). In reality, the Cosmos is just a part of *Brahman*, is *Brahman* (although *Brahman* did not become exhausted in the Universe: *pan-en-theism*).

In other words, we also meet here an ingent dynamic process, an Evolution. Or, rather, *Involution/Evolution*. This very much reminds us of *exitus/reditus* of medieval scholastic theology, that is, God's exodus from Humanity and His return at the end. The *Vedanta* might add to this (what possibly reminds us of Hegel), God's going out of Himself and his final return to Himself. The entire History of the Cosmos shall be this metaphysical-historical Process ('negative work', in Hegel), which is very coherent with the Hindu category of *lila* (game, sport). It is the divine game and we ourselves are a game of God, which in other versions in a mere dream of God. The very world is an *illusion (maya)*, but with a *pedagogic capacity*, that of the power to ascend from him to *Nameless*, which transcends every epistemic and ontological category (negative *theology*).

That is to say, He is present in the Cosmos, which is, the visibility of the Cosmos manifests (and hides: dialectics) the Invisibility of God. The human task is to be very similar to that which some Christian theologians, such as for example, Maximus the Confessor, denominated theosis, the divinisation of the human being. Sri Aurobindo could say that the human being is divine, but he does not know it, and must become aware of it. In this way, both Descending Spirituality and Ascending will have this finality of enormous purpose to divinise the Cosmos, of which the human being forms part. But, heed, *Brahman/God* does not wear out in the Cosmos, just as the Artist he does not wear out in his Work of Art. The Work shows something of its' Author, but does not wear out.

August 1914 and January 1919. (There is a translation in Castilian: SRI AUROBINDO, *La Vida Divina*. III Tomos. Kier, Buenos Aires 1980/1981/1980, all dates correspond to the second edition).

4.2. Consequently with the previous, Sri Aurobindo has a most complete classification for the different levels of Reality (which also very much remind us of Greek neo-platonic philosophy, Gnosticism and scholastic philosophy, principally of platonic-Augustinian incision, with specific Pseudo-Dionysian Areopagite influences). In a natural manner, without going into all the discussions which Sri Aurobindo uses and which we can observe in his famous book *La Vida Divina*, these levels are: 1 Satcitananda, 2 Supermind, 3 Overmind, 4 Mind, 5 Life, 6 Matter.

These levels are presented in a schematic and simple manner, because in reality each of these levels allows for many more *intermediate sublevels*. This is the dynamic vision which makes Sri Aurobindo's proposal possible: *Integral Yoga*. It should be mentioned that Integral Yoga is not one more series of *yoga asanas*, but implies a total change of Conscience which leads to the creation of the Supramental Being. The objective is not simply a personal elevation of the Conscience above the ignorant conscience of the world, but rather consists in taking the supramental power of this Divine Conscience to the bottom of human ignorance to manifest the Divinity in the Earth, creating a divine life in matter, an absolute change in the Planet.

For our author, Life is Evolution of Conscience. And the human being is not the final state of Evolution. The next state will be the *Supramental Being*, which is a being capable of manifesting Supreme Conscience in Itself, that is to say, the divine qualities. In Sri Aurobindo's proposal, we ourselves are called to participate in this enormous process of Evolution, growing in Conscience. Thus, we become instruments for the establishment of a new class of life: Divine Life on Earth.

The implications for a holistic Eco-Spirituality are evident, in connection with the previous authors which we have just analysed. With Sri Aurobindo it is clear that Evolution is not a merely material process, but rather it implies, above all, development and progressive deployment of the Conscience. Because all began from *SatChitAnanada* and all will end with him.

5. KEN WILBER

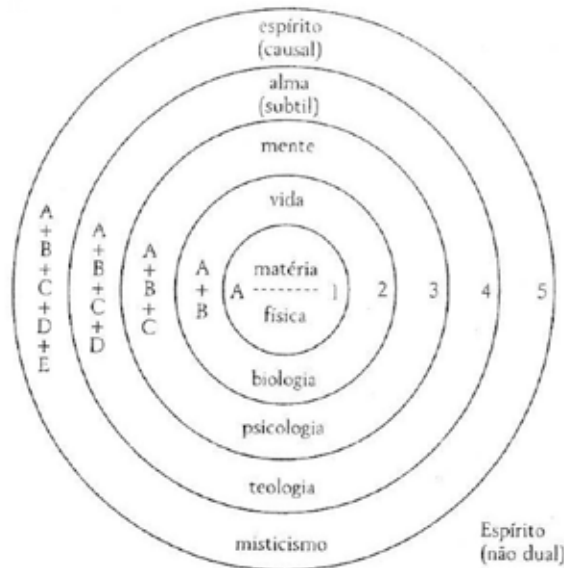
Finally, just a few words on Ken Wilber, one of the best and most lucid representatives of *Transpersonal Psychology*.

To complete our study we shall only cite here one of his points (among many more which would be most useful for a holistic Eco-Spirituality). Going from what we would call Ascending and Descending Spirituality, of clear Aurobindian influence, we wish to point out its' category of *inclusive causality* (although this expression is not used), just as seen in a progressively implicative frame in an hierarchical order (connected to what Rupert Sheldrake calls casualty of "Chinese box type",

but which, personally, remind us better of the famous matryoshkas, the “Russian dolls”: we can denominate inclusive hierarchy¹⁶).

Thus the following schema can be seen correctly¹⁷, denominated by our author as The Great Hierarchy. As can be seen in the diagram on the following page, which is an ascending schema, if we go from the Centre, and descending if we go from the Periphery, and if we go from the simplest to the most complex, we find that the simplest is Material. It follows Life, which implies the previous level and a “plus”. The Mind follows it, presupposing the two previous levels, but it goes beyond them. And finally, the Spirit, which presupposes and integrates the three previous.

In turn, each of these levels has a level of knowledge common to them: Physics, Biology, Psychology, Theology and Mysticism. Each one of them applies in relation to the previous or following, the logical principle of necessary conditions, but not sufficient. This is to say, each of them has the precedent as a necessary condition, but not sufficient to explain it, because every time something more is added, there is something which goes beyo



Suggestive, isn't it??



¹⁶ See his already cited book, *Uma nueva ciencia de la vida*, pg. 124. This type of hierarchy is different from the traditional, in the form of a tree.

¹⁷ KEN WILBER, *Uma Teoria de Tudo. Uma Visão Integral da Economia, da Política, da Ciência e da Espiritualidade*. Estrelapolar, Cruz Quebrada 2005, p.117 (Portuguese version).

¹⁸ Spirit (Causal), Soul (Subtle), Mind, Life, Matter. Physics, Biology, Psychology, Theology, Mysticism. Spirit (Non-dual).

Secularização:



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Maria Clara Bingemer
Paulo Fernando Carneiro de Andrade
Organizadores

EDITORA
PUC
RIO



Una Lectura Espiritual de la Vivencia Ecológica

Biología, ecología y espiritualidad

Rui Manuel Grácio DAS NEVES op
Lisbon, PORTUGAL – INDIA

Translated by Pamela Murphy de Freitas

“One who has understood, knows. One who explains, lies”

(Sufi mystic Rabi'a al Basrî).

La Eco-espiritualidad es una de las propuestas actuales de espiritualidad más relevantes. Es una propuesta transversal, pues no puede ser referida a una sola de las tradiciones espirituales de la Humanidad.

Este artículo pretende debatir sobre propuestas del campo de la biología que la sobrepasan y abren el campo epistémico hacia una espiritualidad holística y universal. Ciertamente, contrasta con algunos elementos más dogmáticos del modelo económico-civilizacional de hoy, conocido como globalización neoliberal. Destaca esta eco-espiritualidad por ser mayormente inclusiva (comenzando por la integración de especies), frente a los planteamientos excluyentes, competitivos, individualistas, y muchas veces hasta violentos de una economía *desfinalizada* de/por el Mercado total.

Vamos a centrarnos en cinco pensadores conectados con el ámbito de la biología.

1. JAMES E. LOVELOCK

1.1. El primero de ellos es James Ephraim Lovelock, nacido en 1919 y todavía vivo. Lo más interesante de Lovelock para nosotros es su propuesta de la *hipótesis Gaia*. Fue formulada por primera vez en la década de los sesenta del siglo pasado, como un resultado de su trabajo para la NASA, investigando las posibilidades de vida en el planeta Marte. Para él, el contraste entre el equilibrio estático de la atmósfera de Marte

(que contiene mucho dióxido de carbono y poquísimos oxígeno, metano e hidrógeno) y la mezcla dinámica de la Tierra es un fuerte indicio de la ausencia de vida en aquel planeta.

Sin embargo, de aquella conclusión le vino la idea de la *hipótesis Gaia*, en la que las partes vivientes y no vivientes de la Tierra forman un complejo sistema interactivo que puede ser concebido como un organismo. Fue llamado así en honor de la diosa griega 'Gaia', por sugerencia de un novelista, William Golding. La hipótesis consiste en que la biosfera y los componentes físicos de la Tierra (atmósfera, criosfera, hidrosfera y litosfera) están íntimamente integrados, de modo que forman un sistema complejo interactuante, que mantiene las condiciones climáticas y biogeoquímicas preferiblemente en homeostasis. Por eso, esta hipótesis es conocida también como *hipótesis biogeoquímica*. La Tierra es entonces concebida como un único *superorganismo vivo*. Esta hipótesis le fue sugerida a Lovelock a partir de los estudios de Lynn Margulis, que intentaban explicar el comportamiento *sistémico* del planeta Tierra. Pero Lovelock y otros investigadores que defienden la *hipótesis Gaia* la consideran ya como una teoría científica y no mera hipótesis, puesto que pasó por una serie de tests de predicción. El aldabonazo de su concepción lo dio en su famoso libro *The Ages of Gaia* (1988).

1.2. Toda esta postura de Lovelock es de un marcado interés para una concepción de ecología profunda y también para una espiritualidad holística. En efecto: darnos cuenta y concientizarnos de que el planeta Tierra es, como tal, un organismo vivo, autorregulado y finito, supone darnos cuenta, personal y comunitariamente, de que nosotros/as mismos/as formamos parte de ese mismo Planeta, o mejor todavía, ¡nosotros/as somos ese mismo planeta! Por consiguiente, todo lo que le ocurre a él nos ocurre a todos nosotros/as también. La responsabilidad ecológica de cuidar de la salud del planeta es también una manera de cuidarnos de todas y todos los que lo configuramos. Su salud es la nuestra. Y la nuestra es la suya, porque todos/as somos Uno.

En este sentido podemos entender el clima como la temperatura del planeta. Si se da un sobrecalentamiento de la Tierra es que el planeta tiene «fiebre», lo que estaría mostrando que algo marcha mal en su salud (enfermedad). No es novedad decir que la mayoría de los científicos atribuye hoy al ser humano la mayor parte en la responsabilidad del *efecto invernadero* que sufre la Tierra. La influencia del uso de los CFC's y su efecto nocivo fue señalado precisamente por Lovelock.¹

Por eso no es de extrañar que en su libro de 2006, *The Revenge of Gaia* (La Venganza de Gaia), a partir de los diferentes fenómenos negativos de ataque al planeta y sus consecuencias, nuestro autor pronostique que, si no se da un cambio radical y rápido de nuestra civilización humana en sus hábitos ecológicos, corremos un elevado riesgo de que

nuestra especie humana pueda desaparecer. Por consiguiente, la práctica ecológica se apoya en una espiritualidad profunda de sentirnos actores de ese mismo proceso, que es nuestra propia evolución planetaria.

Vemos aquí un entrelazamiento profundo entre espiritualidad y ética, en interrelación dialéctica. Una no se puede dar sin la otra. Es una visión muy holística, ya que en su concepción los fenómenos planetarios no son aislados sino que conforman una *intensa red de relaciones*. Todos los fenómenos naturales están *interrelacionados*, de manera que tocar uno implica afectar a los otros, a la totalidad. Además, el Todo es más que la suma de las partes, pues el Todo implica más que adicionar los simples elementos que lo componen. Supone también integrar inclusivamente todas las interrelaciones, a veces complejas, que se dan entre sus mismos elementos. La totalidad sobrepasa la adición de sus meros elementos componentes. Es un organismo. Y en el caso de la Tierra, un *superorganismo*.

1.3. Sallie MacFague², teóloga estadounidense, hace algunas décadas ha llamado la atención sobre la necesidad de reconstruir el lenguaje teológico (que implica nuestra relación con Dios) mediante nuevas *metáforas*. Propone así una nueva *teología metafórica* al hablar de Dios, porque muchas de las metáforas han quedado obsoletas por el tiempo (especialmente, las que corresponden a una *teología monárquica*). En lo referente a la relación entre Dios y el Mundo nos propone hablar del mundo como cuerpo de Dios³. La metáfora es teológicamente atrevida, y cargada de contenido eco-teológico.

En efecto, piensa McFague que aunque ninguna metáfora se adecúa plenamente a la realidad, hablar del mundo como cuerpo de Dios evita la lejanía de las metáforas monárquicas y nos da una metáfora de gran proximidad. No es igual hablar de Dios como Rey del mundo, que de éste *como su propio cuerpo*. Aquella metáfora resalta el aspecto *trascendente* de Dios; ésta su aspecto *inmanente*. Esta metáfora va más allá de un modelo *panteísta*, ya que en este modelo Dios no queda reducido al mundo, aunque el mundo pueda ser su cuerpo. Sería más apropiado entender esta expresión de una manera *pan-en-teísta*, es decir, como la Presencia de Dios en Todo, pero sin agotarse en ello (del mismo modo que nosotros no nos agotamos en nuestro cuerpo). Lo importante de esta metáfora es darnos cuenta de que el mundo no existe fuera o aparte de Dios. Además, como ella misma reconoce:

“...en la metáfora del universo como autoexpresión de Dios –encarnación de Dios– las nociones de vulnerabilidad, responsabilidad compartida y riesgo son inevitables. Ésta es una interpretación de la relación Dios-mundo notablemente diferente de la que corresponde a la metáfora monarca-reino, pues subraya el consentimiento de Dios a sufrir por y con el mundo, hasta el punto de asumir un riesgo personal”⁴.

Esta formulación, que se aproxima mucho a la de la filosofía oriental, principalmente al *Advaita Vedanta* indio, es una formulación que puede ser vivida a fondo en una perspectiva de espiritualidad holística. Es esencialmente una formulación holística, que va más allá de la relación dualista Dios-Cosmos.

Sin duda, para una eco-espiritualidad holística es mucho más fuerte una acción “desde el Cuerpo de Dios” que una mera acción solidaria “con la Naturaleza” (dualismo). En la primera, nosotros/as somos el mismo *Cuerpo de Dios*. En la segunda, de una manera arrogante y paternalista/maternalista, nos situamos epistémicamente “frente a” Ella, es decir, fuera de Ella. En la primera, estamos integrados, incluidos. En la segunda, estamos fuera, frente a Ella. En la primera es un esquema holístico-inclusivo. En la segunda, es el viejo paradigma cartesiano-newtoniano, mecanicista y dualista.

1.4. Al comparar las actitudes oriental con la occidental, siguiendo el comentario de Huston Smith, dice MacFague:

“Cuando se escaló por vez primera el Everest, la expresión comúnmente utilizada en Occidente fue la conquista del Everest. Un oriental, cuyos escritos muestran una profunda influencia taoísta, señalaba: “Nosotros lo diríamos de otra forma. Hablaríamos más bien de ofrecer nuestra amistad al Everest”⁵.

Sobran comentarios. El primer esquema, el occidental, muestra la presencia de una “cultura del ego”, del egocentrismo, del “yo” (“yo domino”). La segunda, la oriental, muestra una cultura de la reverencia, del mutuo respeto, de la fraternidad/sororidad ente el ser humano y la montaña, como iguales en hermandad cósmica. En lo que Leonardo Boff llegó a llamar “democracia cósmica”.

2. RUPERT SHELDRAKE

2.1. Nacido en 1942 y todavía vivo, Alfred Rupert Sheldrake es un famoso biólogo inglés, considerado heterodoxo por la “ciencia oficial” (o mejor, por su paradigma dominante), que formuló una hipótesis con interesantes consecuencias para la espiritualidad, especialmente para la espiritualidad holística (EH). Es la hipótesis de los “campos mórficos”, defendida principalmente en su *Una nueva ciencia de la vida*⁶. ¿En qué consiste la “herejía” de este bioquímico y biólogo?

2.2. Su hipótesis consiste en defender lo siguiente: “Campos mórficos” son patrones de comportamiento que configuran cualquier sistema del mundo material. En otras palabras, son estructuras que se extienden en el espacio-tiempo y que moldean la forma y el comportamiento de todos los sistemas del mundo material. Son estructuras repetitivas que dan forma a cualquier sistema natural. En sus propias palabras, de manera sencilla:

“La hipótesis de la causación formativa sostiene que el funcionamiento de los organismos vivos está basado en los hábitos. Todos los animales y vegetales participan, al tiempo que contribuyen, al establecimiento de la memoria colectiva de su especie. Pero el funcionamiento basado en hábitos no se limita a los organismos, sino que también afecta a los cristales. La naturaleza, por otra parte, no se halla sujeta a leyes eternas perfectamente establecidas desde el momento del big bang, sino que sigue pautas de naturaleza fundamentalmente evolutiva. En este sentido, el proceso de la evolución cósmica discurre entre los extremos del hábito y de la creatividad”⁷.

Supongamos que un determinado simio, en la isla A, descubre una manera ingeniosa de partir cocos, de tal modo que le permite aprovechar mejor el agua del coco y su pulpa. Mediante *imitación*, este procedimiento se difunde entre sus compañeros monos. Pero llega el momento en que una población crítica (“masa crítica”) domina esta nueva metodología. Cuando el centésimo mono de la isla A aprende la técnica recién descubierta, los monos de la isla B (isla alejada y que no tiene ningún contacto físico con la isla A) empiezan a partir cocos de la misma manera (por eso, a esta hipótesis se le denomina también “la hipótesis del centésimo mono”).

Debemos destacar que entre las dos poblaciones no se da comunicación convencional (islas separadas y alejadas en el espacio). Simplemente, el nuevo conocimiento se incorporó a los hábitos de la especie sin contacto físico.

Es una historia ficticia, pero nos sirve de ejemplo para explicar situaciones similares, tanto *en el ámbito biológico, como no-biológico*. Los campos mórficos son una presencia del pasado en el presente⁸. La manera, por ejemplo, en que un determinado cristal cristalizó la primera vez en la historia de la evolución del Universo, *condiciona* (no necesariamente pre-determina) todas las demás veces en que lo hará. Así, la repetición del mismo patrón de cristalización va a convertirse para un determinado cristal en una forma fija para el futuro.

El proceso responsable de esa colectivización de la información recibió de Sheldrake el nombre de *resonancia mórfica*. Mediante ella, las informaciones se propagan en el interior del campo mórfico, alimentando así una especie de *memoria colectiva*. De este modo, en el ejemplo anterior que citamos, la resonancia mórfica generada por los primeros cristales hace que la ocurrencia del mismo patrón de cristalización se torne más probable en cualquier laboratorio del mundo. Y cuantas veces más se llegue a efectivizar de un determinado modo, tanto mayor será la probabilidad de que ocurra nuevamente en experimentos futuros.

Porque, inicialmente, dependiendo de las características específicas de la molécula, eran posibles varias formas de cristalización. Bien sea

por acaso o por intervención de factores puramente circunstanciales, nos dice Sheldrake que es efectivada una sola de esas posibilidades, y esta substancia o elemento en cuestión va a seguir en el futuro un mismo (o parecido) patrón de cristalización.

2.3. Ahora bien, esto que ocurre en seres inorgánicos, puede también ocurrir igualmente, y de hecho ocurre, en seres orgánicos. También ocurre en el origen de cualquier ser vivo. ¿Cómo explicar científicamente que un conglomerado de células absolutamente iguales, que poseen el mismo patrimonio genético, dé origen a un organismo complejo, en el cual los órganos diferentes y especializados se forman con una precisión milimétrica, en el lugar y momento adecuados?

La hipótesis mecanicista-reduccionista de la ciencia biológica *main stream* lo explica todo por el ADN. Pero, ¿no será que estamos confundiendo aquí el *hardware* con el *software*? Porque, de hecho, la actuación del ADN en la vida real es más bien modesta. El código genético inscrito en él coordina la síntesis de las proteínas, determinando la secuencia exacta de los aminoácidos en la construcción de esas macromoléculas. Los genes dictan esa estructura... eso es todo.

Pero, en la hipótesis de Sheldrake, la *morfogénesis*, es decir, el modelaje formal de los sistemas biológicos como las células, los tejidos, los órganos y los organismos, sería dictada más bien por un tipo específico de campo mórfico: los denominados campos *morfogenéticos*.

2.4. Para entendernos:

* *Campos mórficos*: son los campos originarios, y no son campos energéticos, como los de la física (sin embargo, en un diálogo con David Bohm, el eminente físico cuántico, éste piensa que sería posible reinterpretar físicamente los campos mórficos dentro de su concepción del *orden implicado* y el *orden explicado*).

* *Campos morfogenéticos*: son un tipo especializado de campos mórficos, que organizan las moléculas, los cristales, las células y, en realidad, todos los sistemas biológicos.

* *Campos conductuales*: son campos mórficos que organizan la conducta animal y la conducta de los grupos sociales. Mientras los campos morfogenéticos influyen en la forma, los campos conductuales, como su mismo nombre indica, influyen en la conducta.

* *Campos sociales*: son los campos mórficos que organizan los grupos sociales (por ejemplo, bandadas de pájaros, bancos de peces y las colonias de termitas).

Por consiguiente, campos morfogenéticos, conductuales, sociales y culturales son todos ellos diferentes tipos de campos mórficos, que posee una memoria interna establecida por resonancia mórfica. Así, nuestra propia memoria humana, por ejemplo, no depende tanto de rastros

materiales almacenados en nuestro cerebro como del fenómeno de la resonancia mórfica ⁹.

2.5. Pues bien, si esto es así, ¿qué consecuencias traería todo esto para nuestra reflexión y vida en la línea de una espiritualidad holística? Sugiero las siguientes líneas de trabajo:

(1) Una revisión profunda sobre nuestros hábitos (a nivel físico, emocional, mental y espiritual).

(2) Llevar a cabo una *arqueología* de nuestros hábitos (para ello, previamente, hay que *identificarlos, conditio sine qua non*, lo que hemos realizado en el punto anterior, para luego llevar a cabo ahora, en este segundo punto, la comprensión de su *génesis*).

(3) Tomar conciencia de la gran responsabilidad (personal, comunitaria, social) de todo lo que pensamos, sentimos, decimos y hacemos, ya que *todo ello* genera campos mórficos.

(4) En esta toma de conciencia hay que ser conscientes de que existen campos mórficos “positivos” (crean paz, armonía, justicia...) y campos mórficos “negativos” (crean violencia, opresión, dominación, manipulación...). (Para reflexionar: ¿cuáles son los criterios de “positivo” y “negativo”?). A través de ellos podemos alimentar una memoria colectiva humana (¿cósmica también?) liberadora u opresora.

(5) Por consiguiente, todo lo que ocurre en el Presente viene *condicionado* (no necesariamente determinado o pre-determinado) por los campos mórficos del pasado. Es posible *crear diferencia* (positiva) a través de la toma de conciencia de nuestros pensamientos-sentimientos-palabras-acciones. Es decir, hay que *vivir consciente-mente* y no desde los *automatismos antropológicos*.

Teniendo en cuenta estos cinco puntos, sería posible caminar hacia la realización de una espiritualidad holística. Con todo, ellos son una condición *necesaria*, pero *no suficiente*.

3. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

3.1. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (TCh) es todavía más conocido que los dos biólogos anteriormente citados. Nacido en Francia (Orcines, 1881) y muerto en EEUU (Nueva York, 10 de abril de 1955, domingo de Resurrección) fue un jesuita geólogo y paleontólogo. Lo que le distinguió fue, sobre todo, su síntesis entre ciencia y religión. Podríamos decir sobre todo que fue uno de los primeros cristianos intelectuales que intentaron establecer seriamente un diálogo entre ciencia y espiritualidad. El problema, como suele ocurrir en estos casos, fue que, al quedar entre dos aguas, fue incomprendido por unos y por otros. Especialmente, encontró mucha oposición, por parte de las autoridades de la Iglesia Católica.

Teilhard aceptó profundamente la realidad de la Evolución. A la oficialidad católica le parecía que la propuesta de Darwin destruía la creencia en un Dios creador del ser humano, relegándolo a una situación de “un mero animal más”. Teilhard construyó toda una concepción evolucionista del Universo con una finalidad última: el encuentro con el punto Omega. Admitió así un principio finalista para el evolucionismo, encontrando todo un proceso de mayor complejidad, desde la Cosmogénesis, seguido por la Biogénesis, la Antropogénesis, la Noogénesis, culminando en el Punto Omega.

Admitía además una dualidad energética en todo ser material, en todo ente cósmico, especialmente en todo ser vivo: por una parte, lo que denominaba *energía tangencial* (energía físico-material); por otra, lo que denominó *energía radial* (o energía psíquico-espiritual) ¹⁰. En los primeros estadios de la materia (pre-vida) y de la vida, la energía radial es sólo potencial, pero a medida que se complejiza la evolución (siguiendo la Ley de Complejidad-Conciencia) los factores concienciales van entrando cada vez más en acción, hasta llegar al ser humano, como culmen de ese proceso de concienciación, y entendido esto de manera colectiva (la *Noosfera*, una especie de capa de conciencia de la Humanidad como un todo, una memoria colectiva de la especie humana).

Uno es entonces un principio energético exterior (fenoménico). El otro es interno (*nouménico*, por utilizar aquí categorías kantianas, aunque no de una manera muy “kantiana”...). Uno es mecánico y físico, el “fuera de las cosas”. El otro es psíquico, espiritual (el “dentro de las cosas”). Pero ambos están presentes en toda entidad material. En el ser humano, a nivel planetario, es donde se alcanza el máximo de Conciencia, ya que en él ésta se torna reflexiva o auto-reflexiva. Es decir, no sólo conciencia-de, sino también conciencia-de-sí-mismo (autoconciencia).

Como vemos, TCh extrapola la idea de la evolución a una concepción universal, con un encuentro final de plenitud con este ya denominado Punto Omega, encuentro que es precisamente la finalidad última de la evolución. En otras palabras, lo que TCh realiza es una gran síntesis entre ciencia y mística (para él, la mística es la “ciencia de las ciencias”). El Universo tiene un Sentido, al igual que la Vida. Estamos inmersos en una corriente cósmica que nos conduce necesariamente hacia el Espíritu, es decir, hacia estados de más conciencia y libertad ¹¹.

3.2. Es importante destacar que para TCh no hay antinomia ninguna entre Espíritu y Materia, entre lo Uno y lo Múltiple, entre el Centro y su Circunferencia. La síntesis evolutiva de la evolución cósmica posee un *ritmo dialéctico*: la primera fase es de *divergencia* (surgimiento y expansión de una multiplicidad de elementos; la segunda es de *convergencia*, la selección y unificación de elementos; y la tercera es de *emergencia*, la del *salto cualitativo*, la aparición de lo totalmente nuevo cuando se

ha alcanzado un punto crítico de desarrollo. Este esquema, con algunas variantes (por ejemplo, la fase uno y dos podrían ser las inversas), nos recuerda mucho el esquema dialéctico hegeliano. Lo importante es que en este gigantesco proceso cósmico hay una *atracción*, la de Omega, que da finalidad a todo el proceso.

Es la *Teoesfera*, el umbral del Omega, que tiene su origen en con el nacimiento histórico de Cristo-Jesús (podríamos hablar aquí también de *Cristosfera*). Dios es así básicamente un Dios del Futuro. En otras palabras, Él es un Dios Personal, la Gran Aspiración Humana, el Sentido Final de toda la Evolución físico-material y psíquico-espiritual.

Ciertamente, hay algunos geólogos y paleontólogos que comparten la valoración teilhardiana de que el ser humano ocupa el puesto central de la evolución de la vida. Pero dejando la paleontología, los científicos están divididos ante el planteamiento de Teilhard. Para muchos, esta introducción del *finalismo* es una “piratería indebida” de la filosofía en el ámbito científico. La ciencia moderna se habría constituido de acuerdo con la concepción (¿dogma?) de la “religión de lo observable”, por lo que desecha cualquier formulación (tachada despectivamente de “filosófica”) cuando va más allá de los datos empíricos observables. Sin embargo, el mismo desarrollo de la física cuántica y de otros aspectos de las así llamadas anteriormente “ciencias duras” han venido a poner en crisis este modelo mecanicista y de determinismo absoluto.

Y si la “selección natural” de tipo darwinista es la de una síntesis entre determinismo y azar (“azar y necesidad”, en palabras de Jacques Monod), olvidando a veces la importancia de la *colaboración* inter-especies o intra-especies (como lo ha desarrollado minuciosamente Pierre Kropotkin), la postura de TCh podríamos decir que es la de un “azar dirigido”. Quienes defiendan la concepción de un *Universo Inteligente*, por ejemplo, podrían sentirse cómodos con los planteamientos teilhardianos.

Otra cosa es la introducción del *Punto Omega*, donde parece haber un salto cualitativo frente a lo científico. Pero es una interesante propuesta, convergente con la ciencia. En otras palabras, se daría una continuidad entre ciencia y espiritualidad, sin solución de continuidad. En definitiva, TCh trata de hacer inteligible una vivencia religiosa (específicamente cristiana), y, en general, espiritual, a quien quiera partir de una concepción científica del mundo. Por eso, TChes un autor realmente moderno.

3.3. No queremos exponer aquí las concepciones de Teilhard; queremos señalar sólo lo más interesante para una eco-espiritualidad. En nuestra opinión éstos serían los elementos principales para la construcción de una eco-espiritualidad holística.

3.3.1. Teilhard aportó definitivamente una *visión dinámica* a una espiritualidad cósmica. No es una eco-espiritualidad estática. La idea de

proceso (con influencias dialécticas hegelianas y marxianas) fue sintetizado magistralmente por él, siendo “fiel a la Tierra”, es decir, en este caso, siendo fiel a un planteamiento científico que le pareció innegable: la evolución. Pero sin perder tampoco, la “fidelidad al Omega”, el otro lado de la apuesta.

3.3.2. Él pudo formular una concepción que podríamos calificar como *pan-en-teísta*, en la que Dios, como Principio Supremo, y siempre Personal y Personalizante, aparece inmerso (inmanentemente) en este ingente proceso evolutivo, dándole Finalidad y Sentido, pero al mismo tiempo sin quedarse agotado en él, como Principio que todo lo trasciende (trascendencia). El *Punto Omega* (Cristo, Dios) resulta una especie de *atractor*, una especie de causa ejemplar (ahora dinámica) de la que hablaba la filosofía clásica escolástica. Pensamos que Teilhard no deja de hablar de Dios como Punto Alfa (hoy diríamos, en el origen del *big-bang*), pero él resaltó más en Punto Omega (el final, la meta del proceso evolutivo).

3.3.3. Alguna limitación, que ha sido varias veces señalada: su visión del Mal. Se le acusa de no haberle dado toda la consistencia dramática que requiere. Algo extraño, en alguien que vivió intensamente y de cerca dos Guerras Mundiales. Nos atreveríamos a destacar el talante positivo y optimista (‘místico’) de Teilhard de Chardin, confiante más en la Misericordia que rodea el Mundo que en las desgracias alimentadas por los egocentrismos personales y colectivos de los seres humanos. De todas formas, pensamos que esta (siempre difícil) cuestión del Mal debería ser hoy reconfigurada por los teilhardianos, para darnos una eco-espiritualidad más acorde con los temas sociales actuales, donde las cuestiones de justicia social, paz, derechos humanos y del respeto por la Naturaleza (entre los Derechos de reciente generación), liberación de todo tipo de opresiones, etc., podría formar parte de un ingente proyecto de espiritualidad evolutiva y holística. Creemos que este es un punto novedoso en la “aventura mundial” en que hoy nos encontramos.

3.3.4. También pensamos que sería necesario un mayor debate entre el teilhardismo clásico y las corrientes filosóficas orientales, que nos podrían ayudar en una concepción más universal de este evolucionismo cósmico. Una figura clave en este sentido es el filósofo, sabio y místico indio Sri Aurobindo (que vamos a ver a continuación). Teilhard apostó claramente por una concepción personalista de Dios, de acuerdo con el tradicional sentir cristiano, pero tal vez no tuvo tiempo para estudiar más a fondo otra concepción que equilibraría a ésta: la concepción de un Dios *transpersonal* (ambas *se complementan* de una manera dialéctica taoísta, *yin-yang*, donde los opuestos no son antagónicos, sino complementarios: esto sería importante para una eco-espiritualidad de nuestros días).

4. SRI AUROBINDO

Aurobindo Ghosh o Ghose, conocido internacionalmente como Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) es uno de los sabios, filósofos y místicos más interesantes de la India moderna. Podemos denominarle “el Teilhard de Chardin indio” (como a TdC podría denominársele recíprocamente “el Sri Aurobindo francés”). No queremos aquí desarrollar su complejo pensamiento; sólo pretendemos ver algunos breves puntos sobre su propuesta integral, en conexión con una eco-espiritualidad holística. Veamos¹².

4.1. Espiritualidad ascendente y descendente tienen una clara expresión aurobindiana. En efecto, para él todo se origina de *SatChitAnanda*, el Principio Tri-unitario origen de toda la realidad, que es en definitiva *Brahman*. *Sat* significa realidad, existencia. *Chit* significa conciencia. Y *Ananda*, júbilo, bienaventuranza. Estas tres características son propiedades de *Brahman*.

Pues bien, a partir de este Principio, en la lógica del *Vedanta*, se origina todo el Cosmos, en un proceso *involutivo*, o mejor, en un proceso de degradación o descendente, hasta llegar a la materia. Por el contrario, el proceso *evolutivo* o ascendente es el que parte de la materia para llegar a *SatChitAnanda*. Ésta es una interesante concepción en la que la materialidad forma incluso parte del proceso (Aurobindo llegará a decir incluso que el 'materialismo' forma parte del proceso evolutivo de *Brahman*). En realidad, el Cosmos no es sino parte de *Brahman*, es *Brahman* (si bien *Brahman* no queda agotado en el Universo: *pan-en-teísmo*).

En otras palabras, nos encontramos también aquí con un ingente proceso dinámico, una evolución. O, mejor dicho, *involución/evolución*. Esto nos recuerda mucho el *exitus/reditus* de la teología escolástica medieval, o sea, el éxodo de Dios por parte de la Humanidad y el retorno a Él al final. Tal vez el *Vedanta* añadiría a esto (lo cual nos recuerda posiblemente a Hegel), la salida de Dios mismo de sí y el retorno final a sí mismo. Toda la historia del cosmos sería este proceso metafísico-histórico ('trabajo negativo', en Hegel), que es muy coherente con la categoría hindú de *lila* (juego, deporte). Es el juego divino y nosotros mismos somos un juego de Dios, o, en otras versiones, un mero sueño de Dios. El mundo mismo sería una ilusión (*maya*), pero con una capacidad pedagógica, la de poder ascender desde él al *Innominado*, que trasciende toda categoría epistémica y ontológica (*teología negativa*).

Es decir, Él está presente en el Cosmos, por lo que la visibilidad del Cosmos manifiesta (y esconde: dialéctica) la Invisibilidad de Dios. La tarea del ser humano sería muy semejante a lo que algunos teólogos cristianos, como por ejemplo, Máximo el Confesor, denominaba la *theosis*, la divinización del ser humano. Sri Aurobindo podría decir que el ser humano es divino, sólo que no lo sabe, y debe tomar conciencia de esto.

De esta manera, tanto la espiritualidad descendente como la ascendente tendrían por finalidad este ingente propósito de divinización del cosmos, del cual el ser humano forma parte. Pero, ¡atención!, *Brahman/Dios* no se agota en el cosmos, así como el artista no se agota en su obra de arte. La obra muestra algo de su autor, pero no lo agota.

4.2. Consecuentemente con lo anterior, Sri Aurobindo tiene una clasificación muy compleja sobre los diferentes niveles de realidad (que también nos recuerdan mucho la filosofía neoplatónica griega, el gnosticismo y la filosofía escolástica, principalmente de corte platónico-agustiniano, con influencias específicas del Pseudo-Dionisio Areopagita). De una manera sencilla, sin entrar en todas las disquisiciones que lleva a cabo Sri Aurobindo y que podemos observar en su famoso libro *La Vida Divina*, estos niveles son: satchitananda, supermente, sobremente, mente, vida, y materia

Estos niveles son presentados de manera esquemática y sencilla, porque en realidad cada uno de estos niveles admite muchos más *subniveles intermedios*. Esta visión dinámica es lo que posibilita la propuesta de Sri Aurobindo: *el yoga integral*. El yoga integral, conviene señalar, no es una serie más de *asanas* yóguicos, sino que implica un cambio total de conciencia que da paso a la creación del Ser Supramental. El objetivo no es simplemente una elevación personal de la conciencia por encima de la ignorante conciencia del mundo, sino que consiste en llevar el poder supramental de esa conciencia divina al fondo de la ignorancia humana para manifestar la Divinidad en la Tierra, creando una vida divina en la materia, un cambio absoluto en el Planeta.

Para nuestro autor, la vida es evolución de la conciencia. Y el ser humano no es el estadio final de la evolución. El próximo estadio será el *Ser Supramental*, que es un ser capaz de manifestar en sí mismo la *conciencia suprema*, es decir, las cualidades divinas. En la propuesta de Sri Aurobindo, nosotros mismos somos llamados a participar en este proceso ingente de evolución, creciendo en conciencia. Así, nos volveremos instrumentos para el establecimiento de una nueva clase de vida: la Vida Divina sobre la Tierra.

Son evidentes las implicaciones para una eco-espiritualidad holística, en conexión con los anteriores autores que venimos analizando. Con Sri Aurobindo queda claro que la evolución no es un proceso meramente material, sino que implica ante todo el desarrollo y despliegue progresivo de la conciencia. Porque todo empezó desde *SatChitAnanada* y todo acabará en él.

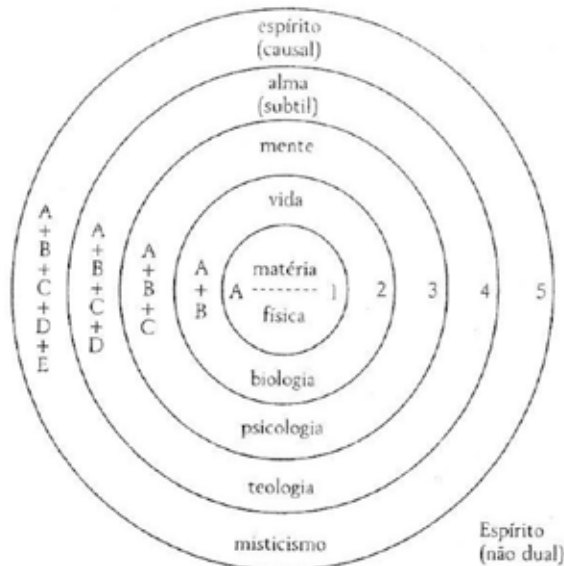
5. KEN WILBER

Finalmente, unas palabras sobre Ken Wilber, uno de los mejores y más lúcidos representantes de la *Psicología Transpersonal*.

Sólo vamos a citar un punto suyo, para una eco-espiritualidad holística). Partiendo de lo que podemos llamar espiritualidad ascendente y descendente, de clara influencia aurobindiana, quisiéramos destacar su categoría de *causalidad inclusiva* (aunque no emplea esta expresión), tal como se ve en un cuadro progresivamente implicativo en un orden jerárquico (conecta con lo que Rupert Sheldrake llamaba la causalidad “tipo cajas chinas”, pero que, personalmente, nos recuerdan más bien las famosas *matrioskas*, o “muñecas rusas”: lo podemos denominar *jerarquía inclusiva* ¹³).

Véase, pues, atentamente el siguiente esquema ¹⁴, que nuestro autor denomina *La Gran Holarquía*. Como se puede ver en el dibujo de la página siguiente, que es un esquema ascendente, si partimos del centro, y descendente si partimos de la periferia, y si vamos de lo más simple a lo más complejo, tenemos que lo más simple es la materia. Le sigue la vida, que implica el nivel anterior y un “plus”. Le sigue la mente, que presupone los dos niveles anteriores, pero va más allá de ellos. Y finalmente, el espíritu, que presupone e integra los tres anteriores.

A su vez, cada uno de esos niveles tiene un nivel de conocimiento que le es propio: física, biología, psicología, teología y misticismo. Cada uno de ellos aplica, en relación al precedente o anterior, el principio lógico de condiciones *necesarias*, pero *no suficientes*. Es decir, cada uno de ellos tiene el precedente como *condición necesaria*, pero *no suficiente* para explicarlo, porque siempre se añade algo más, hay algo más que va más allá de él.



Sugerente, ¿no?

NOTAS

- ¹ Con todo, Lovelock sorprendió a los medioambientalistas diciendo en un libro, en 2004, que sólo la energía nuclear podría detener el calentamiento global. Lovelock piensa que, en lo referente a la protección climática contra el sobrecalentamiento global, hemos llegado ya a un punto de no-retorno.
- ² *Modelos de Dios. Teología para una era ecológica y nuclear* (Sal Terrae, Santander 1994).
- ³ *Ib.*, p. 126-139.
- ⁴ Pp. 130-131.
- ⁵ La cita en McFAGUE, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
- ⁶ En castellano: editorial Kairós, Barcelona, 4ª edición, 2011. Por cierto, dedicado al benedictino Bede Griffiths que vivió muchos años en la India inculturando el cristianismo.
- ⁷ P. 15.
- ⁸ Véase también su libro *La presencia del pasado. Resonancia mórfica y hábitos de la Naturaleza*, Kairós, Barcelona, 1990).
- ⁹ Cfr. p. 21.
- ¹⁰ “Essentiellement, nous l'admettrons, toute énergie est de nature psychique. Mais, en chaque élément particulière, ajouterons-nous, cette énergie fondamentale se divise en deux composantes distinctes: une énergie tangentielle qui rend l'élément solidaire de tous les éléments de même ordre (c'est-à-dire de même complexité et de même «centrété») que lui-même dans l'Univers; et une énergie radiale, qui l'attire dans la direction d'un état toujours plus complexe et centré, vers l'avant » (Pierre TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *Le phénomène humain*. Éditions du Seuil, Paris 1955, p. 62).
- ¹¹ Silvia Jaeger Cordero, 'La Cosmovisión de Teilhard de Chardin', in: www.teilharddechar-dingrupodeestudio.org, p. 1 (consultado 24/07/2014).
- ¹² Su libro más famoso es *The Divine Life* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 2006, 7ª. ed. Traducción en castellano: SRI AUROBINDO, *La Vida Divina*. III vols. Kier, Buenos Aires 1980/1981/1980, fechas correspondientes todas ellas a la segunda edición).
- ¹³ Véase *Una nueva ciencia de la vida*, p. 124. Este tipo de jerarquía es diferente de la tradicional, en forma de árbol.
- ¹⁴ Ken WILBER, *Uma Teoria de Tudo. Uma Visão Integral da Economia, da Política, da Ciência e da Espiritualidade*. Estrelapolar, Cruz Quebrada 2005, p.117.





An Asian Indigenous Perspective on Ecology, Spirituality and Development

Jojo M. FUNG sj

Northern part of Borneo Island, MALAYSIA

The indigenous understanding of ecology, spirituality and development is inseparable from the spirit-world. This is evident with from the survey conducted among the Karen Hilltribes of the Hod District of Northern Thailand.¹ The ecology of the rural Karen communities is deeply embedded in the everyday mysticism of the spirit world in their village life.² I will explain this in in section The second section will deal with indigenous spirituality that represents the other side of the indigenous cosmology of sustainability. The spirituality of sustainability deeply influences the understanding of development. Indigenous peoples' notion of sustainability is rooted in their cosmology/spirituality rather than in development as an economic activity of production and consumption. More of this will be elaborated in the last section which also describes development as a multifaceted and multileveled notion.

1. Pneumatic Ecology

The Karen's lived experience of ecology is best described as a pneumatic ecology since nature is the locus of the spirit-world. The environment is spiritized/spirited by the Creator, the ancestral and nature spirits. This pneumatic ecology informs their sense/notions of sacredness and sustainability.³ The Karen relates to the Great Spirit as *Hti k'ja Cauj k'ja*⁴ whose presence is mediated through the rituals. The recurrent expression of the everyday mystical sense of the Great Spirit amongst the Karen in Dokdaeng has been captured in the phrase "rituals make everything sacred; everything has spirits; everything is sacred."⁵ The Karen's everyday experience of the sacred in their ancestral homeland has to be situated within the mystique and cosmology of the sacred religio-cultural traditions of the indigenous peoples.

The Karen's ecology is suffused by the absolute being acknowledged as *Taj Hti Taj Tau* who is this-worldly yet cosmic. The cosmic presence of *Taj Hti Taj Tau* makes everything in the world sacred.⁶ Besides the Great Spirit is the power that sustains the wisdom, the various fields

of local knowledge in their cosmologies (related to the types of forests, rice and land use, rituals, seeds, soil, taboos, water and rotational farming, the months in the cycle of rice production that guides their sustainable management of the biospecies. Besides, the Great Spirit ensures the fuller flourishing of their largely agro-based livelihood. The Great Spirit is the power of resistance mediated through the ritual celebrations that negotiates the hegemonic power of neo-colonialism and patriarchy embedded in the dominant development ideology of both the market/global capitalism and the nation-state.⁷

This pneumatic ecology acknowledges the spirit-power of *Taj Hti Taj Tau*, the ancestors and nature. These shamanic spirits sacralize the cosmos and *anthropos*. The spirit-power is mediated through the seasonal ritual celebrations and the regular communication of the knowledge of the Karen cosmology from the elders to the succeeding generations. The spirit-power is also mediated to negotiate the rapid changes in the Karen communities. These changes include cash-crop/chemical farming that competes with traditional, rotational and organic farming.

This pneumatic ecology further calls for a “relational ethics of reverence” grounded on the mysticism of everyday sacredness. Reverence is the affective response of the believers whose attitudes, dispositions and motivations in life dictate that all endeavor to live a just, right and harmonious relationship with fellow humankind and the environment. Any violation of the taboos is construed as an affront against *Taj Hti Taj Tau* and a regrettable desecration of God’s creatures and creation. This violation constitutes a failure to live up to the demands of a relational ethics of reverence.

Any rupture in the spirited *cosmic web* of interconnectedness incurs the need to bear and suffer the moral consequences. The consequences can be both global, regional and local such as the ecological crises with the recurrent climate change, natural disasters from cyclones, hurricanes, tsunami to volcanic eruptions with massive loss of lives, livestock and properties. On the other hand, the consequences can be personal such as illnesses, some of which are curable while others, incurable, resulting in ill health or death.

The rupture calls for ritual offerings that resort to the spirit-power of *Taj Hti Taj Tau*, the ancestral and nature spirits. Their power brings about the desired reconciliation to the ruptured relationships between the humans and humans, the humans and the spirit-world, the humans and the environment. With the reconciliation of the interrelationships, the shamanic spirits evoke within the afflicted the need to have a conversion of heart and mind that seeks for forgiveness and reconciliation. In this way, the believers’ behavior and lifestyle are in harmony with the relational ethics of reverence.

In this sense, the indigenous pneumatic ecology is inseparably embedded in the matrix of indigenous spirituality and cosmology of sustainability.

2. Indigenous Spirituality and Asian Cosmologies of Sustainability

Spirituality is the deepest core within the Asian cosmologies of sustainability. Asia abounds in the diverse ‘cosmologies of sustainability’ that Nadarajah (2013, 83) argues are non-materialistic nor growth-oriented.

These cosmologies nurture all life through a dynamic of the mindful and interconnected present. They promote a lifestyle guided by the principles of ‘limit and balance and help us to live sustainably and spiritually ... encourage an active spiritual self-awareness, a ‘universalizing meditative interiority’ that expresses itself through positive ecological, social and symbolic thoughts and practices. They put our spiritual selves in direct dialogic with the exterior world, or the other. (M. Nadarajah 2013, 86-7)⁸

These cosmologies of sustainability are fostered and nurtured by the “dynamic triadic relationship” (Ibid., 87) of the human world, the natural world and the spirit-world. The deepest core of these cosmologies is the diverse ‘spiritualities of sustainability.’ The wo/men elders, healers, mystics, sages, shamans and spirit-mediums in Asia draw sustenance from these sapiential and mystical sources. The diverse ‘spiritualities of sustainability’ situate them

within the larger purpose of the collective and the natural cosmos and within the existential ‘relational and emotional ecologies’ defined by such values as sacredness, compassion, love, respect, balance, empathy, service, joy, wisdom and peacefulness. (Ibid., 79)

Hence the Balinese Hindu believers cross the sacred portal called *candi bentar* into the “temple’s sacred space in harmony with the world, leaving behind their finite pre-occupations.” (Ibid., 91). In a similar way, the Shinto believers pass through the temple sacred gateway called *tori* and move out of the mundane into the sacred space. This spiritual process “transforms an individual from an ‘impure’ being, stained with the contingencies of finite existence, into a ‘pure’ spiritualized being stripped of selfish motives or greed.” (Ibid.)

In fact the spiritual traditions of Asia “present sustainability as the ‘other side’ of spirituality – one side looking outward, the other side looking inward” (Ibid., 77). These diverse ‘spiritualities of sustainability’ spur the visionaries of Asia to be concerned about the sustainability of communities and societies rather than merely sustainable development. For these visionaries, life is primarily about nature around their communities rather than economic development around their societies.

Emerging out of Asia is the spirituality at the heart of an emerging shamanic theology of sacred sustainability (Fung 2010, 401-415)⁹. Sacred sustainability is an Asian spirituality that emerges out of a mystico-theological insight borne of a dialogue with a few renowned indigenous shamans and a subsequent reflection on the initiatory experience of the sacredness of the mystery of life that pervades all of creation. This insight elevates the spirituality inherent in the indigenous cosmology of sustainability. This spirituality nurtures the indigenous wisdom on the sustainability of life on earth.

Sacred sustainability is a felt and embodied mystical sense. This felt mystico-bodily experience is best explained as “bodisciousness” that is borne of a recurrent prayerful experience. In prayer, there is a glowing/growing realization that creation is sacredly sustained by the Great Creative Spirit of God (*ruach elohim*). In this mystical sense of sacred sustainability, there is a growing “bodisciousness” that humankind lives in a sacred web of interrelation and interdependence with all beings, with all the ancestral and nature spirits and with God. Humankind is living in a world that is sacred and spirited because this world is suffused with God’s suffusing Spirit. This mystical sense enjoins humankind to live in gratitude for everything and everyone. Humankind is called upon to show our reverence for all things and consume what we need so that there is enough for today generations and for the future generations.

3. Spirituality as foundation of Development

Development grounded on a pneumatic ecology and spirituality of sustainability has to go beyond the classical model of development.

3.1. *Beyond Brundtland and the UN.* The argument for the inclusion of spirituality in development has its ramifications. The sacred sustainability of the human ecology and the natural world enjoins the world community to move beyond the Brundtland report and its basic tenet that “promoting sustainability is the exact same thing as promoting our own spiritual well-being” (Nadarajah 2013, 87). Lamentably they are not. ‘Having more’ cannot be conflated with ‘being more’. Furthermore, the world community has to go beyond even the UN definition of sustainable development. This definition is still couched in the ‘productivist framework’ of capitalist rationality.

Regrettably the closest the 2012 UN document comes to religion is in the recognition, in no. 58 (j), of the importance of “cultural heritage, practices and traditional knowledge, preserving and respecting non-market approaches that contribute to the eradication of poverty.”¹⁰ The UN notion of sustainable development is admittedly anthropocentric. This notion is driven by what Kasi¹¹ believes to be “an anthropocentrism that

is a major concept in the field of environmental ethics and environmental philosophy, where it is often considered to be the root cause of problems created by human interaction with the environment” (Ibid., 169-190). Kasi believes that anthropocentrism has molded humankind into *homo economicus* who is “an undersocialized loner, concerned only with maximizing his/her own preferences in order to become ‘better off’” (Ibid., 176).

The cosmocentric spirituality is spelt out in the 2012 Kari-Oca 2 declaration. The reference to culture in this declaration denotes the spiritual traditions of the indigenous peoples. Their indigenous traditions speak of the sacredness of the human-earth-space. The Rio+20 Declaration of The International Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Self-Determination and Sustainable Development declares that

cultures are new ways of being and living with nature, underpinning our values, moral and ethical choices and our actions ... We believe that all societies must foster cultures of sustainability, and that Rio+20 should highlight culture as the most fundamental dimension of sustainable development... We call upon the world to reestablish dialogue and harmony with Mother Earth and adopt a new paradigm for civilization based on Buen Vivir in the spirit of survival, dignity and well being. ¹²

Ecological sustainability necessitates that development promote the psychic and organic well being of the *anthropos* and *cosmos*. This total flourishing calls for a spirituality that ‘schools’ and ‘grounds’ humankind in a mystical anthropology and cosmology.

3.2. Development: promotion of a mystical cosmology and anthropology. The mobilization of the self is related to ‘learning to be human.’ In this case, to be human is to be a biocentric mystic in everyday life. This ‘learning’ is all the more urgent when “the glory of the human has become the desolation of the Earth” and the precarious future of the cosmos is becoming the destiny of the human in the twentieth century (Berry 2006, 118).¹³ The era of the mystical age¹⁴ is an opportune time (*kairos*) to become “people of the quantum leap!” (Coyle 2013, 189, Touti 1997, 3). This leap calls for a re-imaging/imagining of the *cosmos* and the *anthropos*.

3.2.1. Cosmos as Space of Sacred Sustainability. The cosmos is understood as a sacred space suffused with the profundity of the God’s Creative Spirit. The cosmos enjoys the richness of the Great Spirit. It is always suffused with primordial creativity and impregnating eros that is understood as “the divine lure that predates the material creation by time spans” (O’ Murchu 2012, 25, 150).¹⁵ At the same time, this eros is “a foundational creativity of ageless existence” with “definite connotations of exuberance, elegance, passion, wildness, and prodigious fertility”(Ibid.,157), even “wonder, awe, contingency, fragility, beauty and a certain quality of self-determination” (Swimme 1991, 230).¹⁶

The creative profundity and eros constitute the inspirational source of sacred sustainability of creation. Its primordial profundity ensures an infinite abundance that makes the current economic and financial crises of unsustainability of global magnitude pale in significance. As directed by the energizing Spirit, this profundity possesses the endowed potentialities to push forward creatively toward enlarged horizons and even flow in patterns, albeit chaotic sometimes, toward a preferred sense of direction (Ibid., 46, 73).

The Christian mystical traditions explain the cosmic omnipresence of God as both pantheism - *all things exist and subsist in God* and 'theo-en-pasism', *God in all things*.¹⁷ These traditions behold "a theadric cosmos in which the Trinitarian self-giving of God holds an emerging universe in a loving embrace" (Panikkar 2010).¹⁸ In this sense, the cosmos is indeed the primary revelation of God for humankind (Berry 2009).

The Trinitarian God's activities (Kaufman 2004, xi, 48; Kaufmann 2008, 142, 284; O' Murchu 2012, 51, 59) include suffusing, spiritizing, sacralizing, sensitizing and sustaining the *cosmos* and *anthropos*.

(a) **Suffusing.** The whole *cosmos* and *anthropos* enjoy the life of profundity, creativity and harmony due to the suffusing presence of the Great Spirit. The suffusing presence of the Great Spirit enlivens all and everything to the extent that all and everything are sacredly alive in the presence and power of the Great Spirit. This suffusing presence ensouls all and everything with a sense of the mystery of creation and of life itself.

(b) **Spiritizing.** Once suffused, the *cosmos* and *anthropos* are "spiritized" by the Great Spirit, the ancestral and nature spirits to become a mystical space that nurtures the spiritual traditions of sustainability in the diverse communities. This mystical space is also the locus by which the Great Spirit nurtures generations of wo/men mystics, healers, prophets and sages who guide the emergence of the New Creation out of the *cosmos* and *anthropoi*. These spiritized personages mediate the spirit-power for healing the ruptured relationship between humans and humans, humans and nature, humans and the Creator. The spiritized *cosmos* and *anthropoi* act as the sacred "burning bush" of the glory and power of the Great Spirit.

(c) **Sensitizing.** The Great Spirit sensitizes humankind to the spirit-presence and power of the Great Spirit, the ancestral and nature spirits through tangible consequences of the rituals illustrated by a better harvest this year than the previous years, the messages of admonition from the dreams and the everyday events in the villages as understood by the wo/men elders. As a result the indigenous communities in the ancestral homeland live with a heightened sensitivity to the presence and power of the Great Spirit, the ancestral and nature spirits. This sensitivity is visibly

manifested through a reverential relationship of awe, marvel, reverence and wonder with nature that the everyday mystics behold as spirited and sacred.

(d) **Sacralizing.** Through the annual agricultural ritual celebrations, the Great Spirit sacralizes the families, the farms and the forests, and in addition the web of relations between the spirit world and the human world, the humans and fellow humans, and lastly, humankind and nature. For this reason, the mystics describe the world as spirited and thus sacralized by the presence and power of the Great Spirit. This sacralization renders all and everything in creation sacred and needs to be beholden with awe, reverence and wonder, tinged with an aura of fear and the mystery of the sacredness of life.

(e) **Sustaining.** The suffusing, sensitizing and sacralizing presence of the Great Spirit is at the same time a 'sacred power' that sustains the cosmic world and the earth-community. This Great Spirit sustains creation through every stage of cosmic implosion-explosion and the epochal changes in the collective memory of the world and humankind.

In the indigenous perspective, the indwelling and presence of the Great Spirit, the ancestral spirits and nature-spirits make space sacred. By virtue of the omnipresence of God's Spirit and the Great Spirit, the human body, the earth and the universe are all sacred. The world is therefore spirited, according to the elders, sages and shamans of the indigenous peoples. By extension, the living and non-living beings inhabiting the earth-space are to be considered sacred as well (Fung 2012, 106).

3.3. *Anthropos as Homo Spiritus/Shamanicus.* The shamanic spirituality of sacred sustainability calls for a re-imagination of humankind. Humans are *homo spiritus*¹⁹ and *homo shamanicus*. *Homo spiritus* connotes that humankind are 'incarnate spirits' of the God's Creative Spirit (Teilhard 1969, 93; Burroughs 1998, 51).²⁰ The 'incarnate spirit' of the *homo spiritus* is transmental, transrational and transpersonal in nature. This 'incarnate spirit' is always already there, waiting for us to be more fully present to this ever-present consciousness so as to live in a state of constant witnessing awareness.

In *Hearers of the Word and Spirit in the World*, Rahner believed that "finitude is placed at the point of departure for transcendence" (Sheehan 2005).²¹ Therefore Rahner spoke of the humans as *spirit in the world* with an infinite openness to God and God's self-disclosure (P.J. F. Peters 2010).²² Philip Clayton (2008) does not fail to insist, "we exist as Spirit and pervasively as Spirit."²³ In the same vein, Teilhard de Chardin postulated that the humans are spirits living in the world.

Besides the phenomenon of heat, light and the rest studied by physics, there is, just as real and natural, the phenomenon of spirit ... [that] has rightly attracted human attention more than any other. We are coinci-

dental with it. We feel it within. It is the very thread of which the other phenomena are woven for us. It is the thing we know best in the world since we are itself, and it is for us everything. (Chardin 1969:93)

All *homo spiritus* are connected with “the greater world of living forms” (Tobin 2012, 55). The *homo spiritus* enjoy the communion or “compenetrative presencing” of being an incarnate spirit in the presence and power of the Great Spirit (O’ Murchu 2013, 138).

Furthermore all humans have the potential of actualizing (Anne Russel 2013, 955) and heightening the spirit-power because all humans are *homo shamanicus*. The everyday practice of “bodisciousness” that deepens the mystical experience of the indwelling of the Great Spirit, the *homo shamanicus* engages in the fivefold activities of the Great Spirit.

During the practice of “bodisciousness”, the breathing exercises of the *homo shamanicus* (a) suffuses the cosmos and *anthropos* with God’s sacred presence and power so that humankind relate to God’s creation with reverence and sensitivity; (b) “spiritizes” all space in creation so that creation teleologically realizes her full flourishing as a New Creation; (c) sacralizes the *cosmos* and *anthropos* through the power of the spirit world especially through ritual celebrations so that everything and everyone is made sacred; (d) sensitizes the rest of humankind to the need for developing and globalizing the mindfulness that gains ready access to the power of God’s Spirit. Through rituals, the sacred power is actualized for the concerted efforts of contestation that reverses the onslaughts at the local, regional and global levels; (e) sustains the *cosmos* and *anthropos* with the sacred power of the spirit world so that creation manifests the glory and splendor of the dynamism of God’s Creative Spirit.²⁴

Engaging in this fivefold activities, the *homo spiritus/shamanicus* endeavors to live the Ignatian sense of being (Pieris 2008, 187) a “discerning person” (*anthropos diatritikos*) who is “perpetually mindful or watchful of God working in all things and at all times.”²⁵ In other words, they live mindfully of the mystical sense that facilitates the connection and communication with the cosmic spirit-world. At the same time, the *homo spiritus/ shamanicus* become the mediatory conduits of the spirit-power. This power is actualized for contesting the radical evil of the corporate cartels and multinational conglomerates (Kanyandago 2008, 461; Wickeri 2008, 466).²⁶

3.4. *Development with a teleological vision.* Giri & Ufford have offered a cosmocentric teleos. This teleos relates to the process of “the humanization of divine, divinisation of the human” (Giri & Ufford 2004, 4).²⁷ This process will bring about the fullness of life (Jn 10:10) in all life forms and life world on planet earth and the entire cosmos. This teleos is akin to the biblical vision of ‘a new heaven and a new earth’ (Rev. 21:1; Is 65:17) and the realization of a “new creation’ (2 Cor 5:17).

This *teleos* presupposed a perception of creation (Keller 2003) out of profundity (*ex profundis*) rather of nothingness (*ex nihilo*). Out of this profundity comes the continuous “flaring forth” of the cosmos. The *cosmos* is ‘streaming toward’ an ultimate destiny. In Wolfhart Pannenberg the New Creation emerges out of our world and its history because of God’s proleptic action through the Easter event.

Pannenberg understands God as Trinity to be at work in the world, both continually appearing in history as the “arrival” of the immediate future and as reaching back from the eschatological future to the Easter Event in order to transform the world into the New Creation; although the New Creation still lies in our future, or more correctly in the “future of our future,” the Easter event is already and normatively a manifestation in our time and history of what is the not-yet-still-future eschatological-apocalyptic destiny for all the world. In the Easter event, the New Creation, reaches back over and into, and is manifested proleptically in, world history. Then, through this proleptic character of Easter, all of history prior to it and following it is filled with the promise of New Creation. (Robert John Russell 2012, 9)

Pannenberg explains his cosmology through three key concepts: duration, co-presence and prolepsis. Duration explains that time involves “temporal thickness” or duration (Russel 2012, 13) not only in our conscious experience of memory and anticipation but also in the fundamental processes of the physical world. This duration is “the temporal structure of eternity.” (Ibid.) Eternity, according to Pannenberg, is not timelessness. It is not a “timeless now” whence temporal thickness is lost. (Ibid.) Nor is eternity “endless ordinary time” in which all temporal events only exist “for an instant as the “present” and then is gone forever.” (Ibid.) Pannenberg understands eternity as “a divine attribute” that “takes up the times of our lives and unifies them via duration, even if we only experience this unity briefly.” (Ibid.) ²⁸

This duration includes an internal structure. Pannenberg calls this inner structure “co-presence.” The past, the present are co-present with the future, held together as “a differentiated unity.” (Ibid.). In other words, this differentiated unity holds “all events in the history of the universe both now and in the eschatological New Creation.” (Ibid.) This differentiated unity understood as eternity is made possible by the “differentiated unity of the Trinitarian God” (Ibid., 14). Events are characterized by distinction and separation. The distinction between events in time will be sustained in eternity while separation between events will be overcome in eternity. In eternity, “all events are equally available to be re-experienced, forgiven and savored endlessly.” (Ibid.) This relation between “earthly time” and divine eternity is already a partial experience in the “now” of our creaturely lives. All the more, this relation becomes

realized in the New Creation “when we shall experience God’s eternity immediately.” (Ibid.) In the New Creation, the distinction between God and creation will remain, but the distinction between the sacred and profane will be overcome.

Pannenberg believes in the “immediate causality of the future.” This concept suggests that “the future is manifested in the present” and the future contributes to “making the present concretely what it is” (Ibid., 15). He also postulates “prolepsis” as a third key concept to describe the relation between creation and the New Creation. Pannenberg understands prolepsis as the “eschatological future [that] “reaches back” (prolepsis) into our world and its history and is revealed in the event of the resurrection of Jesus.” (Ibid.) This proleptic act occasions the emergence of the New creation out of our world. This emergence occurs “through God’s radically new action starting at Easter and continuing until its consummation in the global eschatological future of creation.” (Ibid.)

This emergence of the New Creation out of the current creation offers a personal insight of a simultaneous emergence. Out of the ‘incarnate spirits’ of humankind is the emergence of the ‘eternal spirits’. Besides this emergence of the ‘eternal spirits’ occurs in all cosmic beings and life forms. In other words, besides the co-presence of the past, present and future in a differentiated unity, there is a second co-presence of the ‘eternal spirits’ to the ‘incarnate spirits’ in all beings and life forms.

This second co-presence becomes a conscious everyday reality in all homo *spiritus/sbamanicus* through the practice of what is called a ‘wakeful mystical mindfulness.’ This art is practiced mindfully in the wakeful state of human consciousness. The regular practice sharpens the mindfulness of this double co-presence. This practice adds a cosmic dimension to the intra-consciousness. The humans become constantly mindful that our world is being eternalized every moment by the Easter event. The New Creation is taking place out of our world and its history in the ‘here and now.’

4. Radical Reorientation of Development

This reorientation of the existing model of development calls for spiritual conversion, the initiation of inclusive and sustainable economy, and paradigm shift in the use scientific and technological knowledge.

4.1. *Conversion to Covenantal “bodisciousness”*. Ecological sustainability demands that development needs to relinquish the ‘productivist mindset.’ The religio-cultural traditions of Asia have to be the foundation of the alternative model. Spirituality calls for a conversion of mindset and lifestyle. Spirituality points to God – the God who has initiated a covenant (Gen 8:21, 9:10) with humankind so that we will rise up to the calling to be co-creators with God. God invites and challenges humankind to bring

about a development whence nature, our world, humankind today and tomorrow will attain a 'fuller flourishing' according to God's dream. In collaboration with humankind, God will bring about the full emergence of the New Creation (Rev. 48:6-9).

Spirituality alerts us to the moral demands of the covenant - that life is not about 'having' more profits for one's enrichment but 'being more' so as to heal the earth and share with others who have less. Sustainability begins and ends with our selves, our minds and hearts, our commitment to see the world as a sacred web of life that is interdependent and interrelated. This sacred web of life calls for a profound *reverence* and *respect* for all things, all life forms, all spaces and all persons because God's all-pervasive Creative Spirit is intuitively and mystically experienced as *sacredly alive* in all of creation. It is this omnipresence of God's Creative Spirit that *sacredly sustains* all of God's creation.

The spiritual of reverence dictates an ethical level of human consumption of the earth's resources that is sustainable of life on earth for all life forms. It will be based on a communal ethics of need-to-use rather than greed-for-profit, resembling the *Sumaj Kawsay*,²⁹ a concept of the indigenous peoples of Bolivia that resonates with the Kari-Oca 2 understanding of "living well" or living in harmony with nature and people, rather than the current focus on producing more goods and stimulating consumption based on hedonistic wants rather than actual needs.³⁰

The spirituality of dialogic reverence (Fung 2011: 372-380)³¹ beholds the sacredness of persons in interpersonal relationship. The Other is regarded "as our 'neighbor,' 'a helper' (cf. Gen 2:18-20), to be made a sharer, on par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God."³² The Other is truly an "earthen vessel" (2 Cor 4:7), suffused with God's omnipresence and rightly so, the temple of God's indwelling Spirit (1 Cor 6:9).

4.2. *Ritualization of development.* For the religious farmers and indigenous villagers in Northern Thailand, development is a religio-cultural activity that involves cosmic spirituality. More specifically, people's spirituality involves rituals that offer the people access to the blessings of the good spirits who are related to the Supreme Being or Creator.

The rituals they offered are rituals expressed in their real life. The presence of God helped them to be saved from lack of water. They offered a ritual because they wanted to give thanks to God or Supreme Being they believe in who helped their community to have life again (Thienwiban, Unpublished material, 5)

For the religious farmers and villagers, rituals punctuate every phase of any development project. The religious farmers begin the day with ritual offerings for blessings on their soil and crops. Indigenous elders offer ritual of apology to the spirit of the catchment area where

the pipes have to pass through. When water came to their village, the village leaders offer rituals They gave thanks to the Supreme Being (*Taj Hti Taj Tau*) “who gave them water, enabling all villagers, regardless of small children, widows, the rich and the poor, to live together, giving life to all, promoting unity, and bringing new life to the soil, all trees, plants and animals.” (Ibid.) In other word, development is a multi-dimensional activity that becomes integral when it embraces spirituality that enriches the triadic relationship between humankind, the spirit world and nature.

4.3. *Initiating an inclusive and sustainable economy.* This spirituality-motivated development implies ethical norms for initiating an inclusive and sustainable economy that promotes “the dignity of each human person and the pursuit of the common good” (*Evangelii Gaudium/EG*, no. 203). This emergent economy must realize that “what is sustained in sustainable development is not economic growth or development, but the entire web of life on which we depend for our long-term survival” (Capra 1976). The economy envisioned must “fulfill our needs and aspirations without diminishing the chances of future generations.”³³

An inclusive economy “requires decisions, programs, mechanisms and processes specifically geared to a better distribution of income, the creation of sources of employment and an integral promotion of the poor which goes beyond a simple welfare mentality” (EG 204)³⁴ Due consideration has to be given to supporting sustainable communities in which “its way of life, its social institutions, its technologies, and its business do not interfere with nature’s inherent ability to sustain life.”³⁵ At the same time, this advocacy builds on the “local peoples’ notion of sustainable development view the environment as “what is around their homes” rather than “what is around their economics” (Hildyard 1993, 33).³⁶

4.4. *Shift in Science and Technology.* A spirituality-motivated development calls for a paradigm shift in the use of science and technology. In no. 24, the Special Report on Ecology (2011) maintains that scientific and technological knowledge can be directed to “areas such as clean energy production, energy efficient architectural design, water reclamation, microbial degradation of pollutants, and sustainable agriculture hold promise for climate change mitigation.” (Ibid.) In no. 26, the same report mentions that the strategies of integrated management of resources calls for further scientific research on the properties and potential use of resources. This involves the “innovation of more efficient processes of photosynthesis, photochemical and biochemical transformation, of new technologies of materials, and new energy sources.”(Ibid)

At the same time, science and technology “have opened up the possibility of organizing a sustainable economic process” that is “grounded in the generation of a more complex, dynamic, and flexible technical structure, integrated with the global ecological process of production

and reproduction of natural resources.” (Ibid) This emerging economic process “offers more versatile options for sustainability” in that “it allows for better space distribution of productive resources and more equitable access to social wealth” in contrast with “those that emerged from the valuation of resources by means of market signs and sectorized economic planning.”(Ibid.)

Second, the discourse on sacred sustainability encourages science to seek collaboration at all levels of society. In no. 25 the same report urges professionals to be “willing and able to learn from those working on the ground, the peasants and laborers” (2011, 26). At the same time, this collaboration “needs supportive external institutions” ranging from “local groups and institutions capable of managing resources effectively” and finally “policies that support these features.”(Ibid) This multilevel collaboration leads the professionals to “revaluate, revive and improve an ensemble of traditional techniques and to develop new practical and scientific expertise.”(Ibid.)

Third, science and theology have to be contextual and inter-religious in their endeavor. This means that learning has to be inter-contextual rather than confined to the more familiar context of science and technology. Such inter-contextual engagement will enable science and technology to go beyond the use of a human reason. The reason, Perumpallikunnel (2012, 115) argues is that science and technology are context-specific, imbued with a Cartesian, secularist and ‘this-worldly’ reductionist conception of nature and culture. Human reason realizes an innate capacity for self-transcendence in contexts that value the divine and the sacred. Science and technology need to dialogue with the mystical traditions of the other religions. Through this dialogue the scientists realize that “science without religion is lame and religion without science is blind” (Einstein 1982, 49).³⁷ It is important that the scientists arrive at a genuine mystical experience of the divine emerging from the very heart of humane existence. This sense of self-transcendence connects the professionals to a religious sense of the divine ‘beyond’ all the religions and yet ‘within’ the *anthropoi* and the *cosmos*.

Conclusion

The pneumatic ecology of the indigenous peoples is “deep” in a different sense because it is rooted in the everyday mysticism that postulates that the *cosmos* and *anthropoi* are spirited, suffused, “spiritized”, sacralized, sensitized and sustained by the Great Spirit, the ancestral and nature spirits. At the heart of this pneumatic ecology is a foundational indigenous spirituality of sacred sustainability. This spirituality is inseparable from the indigenous cosmology of sustainability. In lieu of this cosmic spirituality, development is only sustainable in relation to this cos-

mology that enjoins the need to go beyond the “sustainable” development of global neo-liberal/statist capitalism. Sustainability calls for a multifaceted and multileveled notion and practice of development that calls for an intimate relationship with God whose Creative Spirit calls forth the *homo spiritus/shamanicus* in the gradual emergence of the New Creation from the emergent and still evolving universe.

Notes

- ¹ With the kind assistance of Dr. Sunthorn Womjomporn who grew up in the village of DokDaeng, I did fieldwork in his village from April 15-25, 2013, interviewing more than 45 villagers – women, men, youth and children from the diverse economic backgrounds.
- ² For details on the basic tenets of deep ecology, kindly see <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/arne-naess-and-george-sessions-basic-principles-of-deep-ecology>, accessed August 19, 2014.
- ³ The naming and elevation of the indigenous beliefs in the spirit world is an act of solidarity with the indigenous communities worldwide in their movemental/prophetic resistance against the colonial and neo-colonial-imperial missionary Christianity. Colonial Christianity continues to denigrate and erase their religio-cultural cosmologies of sustainability; also see Jojo M. Fung, SJ, “Sacred Space For Sacred Sustainability,” *Landas* 26 (2012): 267-290.
- ⁴ The Inuit of the Arctic of Northern Canada are familiar with the Great Spirit. Every Inuit shaman, known as angakog, has to personally encounter the Great Spirit. For instance, the shaman whose name is Aua who mentioned how his mentor *Perqanaog* exhorted him to think only of the Great Spirit in his time of silence and solitude. During this time, he met his helping spirit who came to him in the shape of a woman. See Roger Walsh, *The World Of Shamanism: New Views of an Ancient Tradition* (Woodsbury, Minnesota: Llewellyn Publications, 2007).
- ⁵ For instance, Chan Kam of the Karen village called Maelid opines that nature “becomes sacred because the spirits come and dwell in nature.” Based on an interview in the Karen village of Dokdaeng, April 15, 2013.
- ⁶ See Jojo M. Fung, SJ “The Great Spirit and the Future of Pneumatology, *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 50 (2013), 262-277.
- ⁷ These ideas are reflected in the reports of Groups 1, 2 and 3 on Day 2 November 7, 2010 during the EATWOT’s Asian Women’s meeting. The meeting is based on the three guidelines: (a) identify and name the root causes of the problems; (b) engage in Asian eco-feminist theological articulation; (c) reclaim traditions – biblical, history, culture, stories.
- ⁸ For more detail, see M. Nadarajah, *Living Pathways: Meditations on Sustainable Cultures and Cosmologies in Asia* (Penang, Malaysia: Areca Books, 2013).
- ⁹ See Jojo M. Fung, SJ, *A Shamanic Theology of Sacred Sustainability: Shamans in Dialogue with Church for a Liberative Struggle* (Manila: Jesuit Communication Foundations INC, 2014).
- ¹⁰ In no. 4 of *The Future We Want*, the reference is made under section III, entitled “Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty Eradication.” In the same document, in no. 58, states that the green economy policies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication should recognize the relevant contribution of traditional cultures and knowledge. See http://conspect.nl/pdf/Our_Common_

- Future_Brundtland_Report_1987.pdf; accessed on December 2, 2012.
- 11 See Rayappa A. Kasi, "Anthropology versus Cosmology: A Schism in Cosmogogenesis," *Journal of Dharma* 37:2 (2012): 171.
 - 12 See <http://cupuladospovos.org.br/en/2012/06/indigenous-peoples-international-declaration-on-self-determination-and-sustainable-development/>; accessed on November 19, 2012.
 - 13 See Thomas Berry, "Twelve Principles for Understanding the Universe," in *Evening Thoughts* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2006).
 - 14 See Frank X. Tuoti, *The Dawn of the Mystical Age: An Invitation to Enlightenment* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1997) and Kathleen Coyle, "Theology and the New Cosmology: A Quantum Leap in Theological and Spiritual Insight," *EAPR*, Vol. 50, no. 2 (2013), 189-205.
 - 15 O' Murchu retrieves Catherine Keller's insight on *creatio ex profundis* to denote an insight that ex profundis "signifies the primordial depths, the impregnating eros, the divine lure that predates the material creation by time spans we dare not try to measure" in which "infinity is the operative scale, and mystical insight alone is likely to plummet the depths of what we are asked to embrace." See Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (New York: Routledge, 2003).
 - 16 Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme, *The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era – a Celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992).
 - 17 Jose I. Gonzalez Faus, *I'm Coming, Lord: Contemplatives in Relation*, Cristianisme I Justicia, 144(2012), 15.
 - 18 See Raimon Panikkar, *Introduction to the Rhythm of Being: The Gifford Lectures* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis books, 2010).
 - 19 Assuming that "the human is that being in whom the universe comes to itself in a special mode of conscious reflection" (Toolan 2001, 177) hence it is safe to conclude that the human is the reflexively consciousness of her/his being as a *homo spiritus* since "we are itself, and it is for us everything" (Chardin 1969:93).
 - 20 See Kendra Crossen Burroughs, *The Essential of Ken Wilber* (Boston & London: Shambhala, 1998), 51.
 - 21 Rahner expanded on the possibility of human knowing to the transcendental dimension although Thomas Sheehan opines, "the stark outcome of *Geist in Welt* is that human knowledge is focused exclusively on the material order, with no direct access to the spiritual realm." See Thomas Sheehan, "Rahner's Transcendental Project" in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Rahner*. Ed. Declan Marmion and Mary E. Hines (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 31.
 - 22 See P. J. Fritz Peter speaks of the humans whose beings are in the world with the *vorgriff's* infinitude that remains open to the transcendent mystery of God. See Peter Joseph Fritz, "Sublime Apprehension: A Catholic, Rahnerian Construction," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 2010.
 - 23 See Philip Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 137. Also see Darmuid O' Murchu, *In The Beginning Was The Spirit*, 138.
 - 24 O' Murchu postulates that "we exist as Spirit and pervasively in Spirit" and "Spirit now becomes the basic ontological category, that which unites all living things." See O' Murchu, *In The Beginning Was The Spirit*, 138.
 - 25 See Aloysius Pieris, "Spirituality as Mindfulness: The Biblical and Buddhist Versions, in Patrick Gnanapragasam and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Negotiating Borders: Theological Explorations in a Global Era* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2008), 185-198.

- ²⁶ See Peter Kanyandago, "Globalization: A Reflection on Its Anthropological Underpinnings in Relation to Social Justice," in Patrick Gnanapragasam and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Negotiating Borders*, 457-464 and Philip L. Wickeri, "Globalization and Transnational Christianity: Notes on Intercontextual Theology and the Present Ecumenical Situation," in Patrick Gnanapragasam and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Negotiating Borders*, 464-483.
- ²⁷ See Ananta Kumar Giri & Philip Qarles Van Ufford, "Development: Ethics, Aesthetics and Responsibility," DIR and Institute for History, International and Social Studies, Working Paper no. 128 (Denmark: Aalborg University, 2004).
- ²⁸ In this vein, David Toolan (2001, 209) opined, "The deepest potential of the universe, we could say – the meaning of 15 billion years of evolution – is that all of nature is somehow to be united to God. Nothing is to be left out." See his book, *At Home in the Cosmos* (Orbis Books, N.Y.: 2001).
- ²⁹ The same concept of the Bolivian indigenous peoples is known as *sumak kawsay* in Quechua (Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia) and *Suma qamaña* in Aymara (Bolivia and Peru), thanks to the August 16, 2010 email communication of Xavier Albo, SJ; accessed on August 16, 2010.
- ³⁰ For more information, kindly see "The Law of Mother Earth: Behind Bolivia's Historic Bill," published in *Truthout*, Friday 22 April, 2011; see <http://www.truth-out.org>; accessed on August 20, 2010; accessed on November 22, 2011.
- ³¹ For a more detail explanation of "dialogic reverence" in the light of the Catholic Social Teachings, see Jojo M. Fung, "GRIEVANCE AND GROANING: A Theological Reflection on the Uprising and Tsunami," *Asian Horizon*, Vol. 5, no.2, June, 2011, 372-380.
- ³² See John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, no. 30.
- ³³ See Fritjof Capra, a physicist and a leading system theorist, calls attention to the need to initiate and nurture new kind of sustainable development that is sensitive to the earth community. See Capra1976, cited in Sunthorn Womjomporn, "Re-creating Sacred Space through the Water Spirit Ritual: A Model for Sustainable Development in Dokdaeng Village, Chiangmai, Thailand." Ph. D Dissertation, Asian Social Institute, 2008, 312.
- ³⁴ Arianna Huggington opines, "What happened is that capitalism was reduced to Ayn Randian selfishness. It was clear among many of the founders of capitalism that there had to be a moral foundation. We need to recapture the principle that you do well, but in the process of doing well, you give back." See her article, "The Future of Capitalism," *TIMES MAGAZINE*, Vol. 173, no. 20, May 25, 2009:28.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ See Nicholas Hildyard, "Foxes in Charge of Chickens," Chap, in *Global Ecology*, ed. Wolfgang Sachs (London: Zed Books, 1993).
- ³⁷ See Albert Einstein, "Science and Religion, " an address at a Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion, New York, 1940; reprinted in *Ideas and Opinions* (New York: Crown, [1954] 1982), 44-49.



Envia teu Espírito e haverá Criação*

Sandro GALLAZZI
Amapá, AP, BRASIL

Quero colaborar com este número da revista VOICES a partir de meus estudos teológicos e bíblicos, mas, sobretudo, a partir da minha convivência com as populações tradicionais da foz do rio Amazonas: quilombolas, ribeirinhos, índios, com os quais celebro a Palavra. Entrar na bíblia a partir das culturas ancestrais latino-americanas fez aparecer mais evidente quais são as “coisas” que o Pai quis revelar aos pequeninhos e fez questão de esconder aos sábios e entendidos e, quem sabe, também, aos teólogos (Mt 11, 25-26).

1. Uma espiritualidade ecocentrada

Espiritualidade é a obra, o sopro, a vida do Espírito de Deus em nós e em tudo que existe, desde que tudo começou, quando *o sopro de Elohim*² *estava tranquilo diante das águas* (Gn 1,2). Para experimentar e viver esta força do Espírito precisamos desconstruir leituras, reinterpretar palavras, tirar véus e paredes que os entendidos levantaram para esconder as “coisas do Pai”. Conheceremos e experimentaremos, assim, como o Espírito de Deus fecunda e gera a nossa “espiritualidade”.

Vamos começar pelas primeiras páginas da bíblia, as páginas que todos conhecem e que se tornaram os pilares de uma civilização que, muitas vezes, foi de morte³.

* Este ensaio é fruto da sistematização de vários outros escritos meus, ao longo destes últimos anos.

² No lugar de usar a costumeira tradução “Deus”, prefiro manter a palavra hebraica Elohim com seu sentido singular e plural ao mesmo tempo. Seria algo como “Toda a divindade” e que se aplica a todas as maneiras com que nos é dado experimentar e conhecer a divindade mantenedora da vida.

³ Parte destas considerações já as escrevi na revista “Convergência”, Nº 434, setembro 2010, p. 535-551 e em outros textos.

1a. Re-lendo a primeira parábola da criação

A chamada cultura ocidental, de matriz grega, caiu na armadilha de pensar que a tarefa que Deus dá ao ser humano de *submeter a terra e dominar sobre os peixes do mar e sobre as aves dos céus e sobre todo animal que se move sobre a terra* (Gn 1,28), significa que o homem⁴, imagem de Deus, é, como Deus, o dono de tudo, o elemento mais importante da natureza, o centro da criação. Movidos por esta “teo-ideologia”, acabamos por teorizar que tudo que existe tem sentido quando orientado para nós e que nós podemos fazer com a natureza tudo o que quisermos.

Em nome deste domínio, o homem *submeteu a terra*, devastou o ambiente, poluiu as águas, matou os animais, sem alguma razão e causou a morte.

Submeter a terra legitimou a propriedade privada, a concentração das riquezas e a violência exploradora e assassina de todas as vidas.

Em todos os mitos ancestrais dos povos originários da Amazônia, pelo contrário, a ação criadora do/s deus/es é sempre uma ação que quebra e vence situações de morte e de sofrimento. É a presença da vida que supera e derrota a presença da morte.

É, exatamente, o mesmo que nos diz a primeira página da Bíblia.

Nada tem a ver com a visão filosófica europeia, na qual os cristãos foram quase sempre catequizados e que define criação como “fazer do nada todas as coisas”, afirmando, assim, a total separação entre Deus e todas as coisas e o seu domínio sobre tudo que existe.

Uma tradução incomum, mas literalmente possível, do primeiro versículo da Bíblia, pode abrir horizontes e significados: *No princípio criou Elohim com os céus e com a terra* (Gn 1,1): Céus e terra participam como co-criadores desta ação de vida.

A palavra de *Elohim* é geradora de vida. Do outro lado está a morte, estão o deserto, as trevas e as águas do abismo: as forças caóticas simbólicas da morte (Gn 1,2).

“*Viva a luz e viveu luz... Viva uma expansão entre as águas e viveu... E assim viveu...*” (Gn 1,3.6.7.9).

Viver: *hyh / hayah*⁵ como ser, acontecer. Um verbo que se repete 27 vezes em Gn 1. O verbo que é o radical do nome de *Yahweh*: o vivente que faz viver.

A mesma “alma vivente” que faz viver Adam (Gn 2,7) faz viver os filhos das águas (Gn 1,20s), os filhos da terra (Gn 1,24) e todos, igual-

⁴ Uso de propósito, a palavra *homem*, no masculino, porque esta ideologia greco-ocidental, não considera a mulher como sujeito filosófico.

⁵ A leitura hieroglífica destas letras nos diz que h é o símbolo da vida, do ser, do que anima e y é o símbolo da potencialidade, da duração, do se manifestar. O verbo *hyh* então simboliza a vida que se manifesta e se potencializa na vida.

mente, recebem a bênção de Elohim de gerar vida: “Frutificai e multiplicai-vos” (Gn 1,22.28).

A parábola da criação de Gn 1, então, longe de ser uma fábula nostálgica de um passado definitivamente perdido, é memória da luta criadora e re-criadora permanente em defesa do “bom” que é tudo o que vive, contra todas as forças caóticas de morte que teimam em transformar a vida em trevas e deserto.

Desde o princípio - assim proclama esta página - *Elohim* se manifesta com seu poder vencedor. Nos três primeiros “dias” canta-se a vitória de Elohim contra todos os “males”, simbolizados pelas trevas, pelas águas do abismo e pelo deserto.

A ação criadora de *Elohim* que “separa” as trevas da luz, as águas de cima das águas de baixo, a terra dos mares, transformando o deserto em prados e florestas, revela aos pobres e aos oprimidos que vale a pena confiar neste *Elohim* capaz de derrotar todas as forças caóticas que produzem o medo e a morte.

A vitória de *Elohim* se completa, nos outros três “dias”, quando, após fazer viver a luz, o firmamento e a terra fértil, ele garante sua continuidade, criando os “exércitos” da luz, das águas, dos ares e da terra. Apesar da conotação negativa e violenta que esta palavra tem para nós latino-americanos, usamos a palavra bíblica “*exércitos*” (Gn 2,1) porque indica que as criaturas que povoam a natureza terão a incumbência de cuidar, de zelar e de defendê-la, combatendo até o fim dos tempos, contra todas as formas de morte.

Caberá ao sol, à lua e às estrelas cuidar e zelar pela vida da luz; aos seres marinhos caberá zelar pela vida das águas; da vida dos ares cuidarão os pássaros do céu e os animais deverão tomar conta da vida do solo fértil.

A criação do ser humano – homem e mulher – feito à imagem e semelhança de *Elohim*, tornará toda a obra de *Elohim* boa, muito boa, pronta para continuar sendo, para todo e sempre, boa, muito boa. Os exércitos de *Elohim*, assim completos, farão com que a vitória de *Elohim* sobre as trevas, os abismos e os desertos, possa continuar ao longo da história. Os *exércitos* de Elohim, guiados pelo ser humano, cuidarão para que trevas, abismos e desertos nunca mais voltem a vencer.

Submeter a terra nos obriga, então, a cuidar e zelar por esta nossa casa comum e por tudo que nela habita com a mesma paixão criadora e amorosa de Elohim, em vista da felicidade de todas as pessoas e de todos os seres vivos.

Como *Elohim*, com a presença de seu espírito, nós, homens e mulheres, devemos continuar sua obra criadora, lutando contra todos os males que ameaçam a vida de todos e do planeta, contra a violência

presente em todas as páginas da história humana. É um permanente processo de criação e re-criação que só terminará quando poderemos viver sem mais dor e luto nos novos céus e na nova terra, na “terra sem males” que todos queremos.

1b. Re-lendo a segunda parábola da criação

A segunda parábola da criação (Gn 2,4b-25) nos fala da relação de Adam com *Yahweh Elohim* e com o jardim das delícias / *Éden*.

Novamente encontramos uma situação inicial de não vida, de deserto.

Na primeira parábola o elemento vital era o “sopro de Deus” sobre as águas. Agora é o “vapor”, que, hieroglificamente, indica uma “força em movimento” que encharca a *adamah*, a terra enquanto geradora de vida (Gn 2,6).

Da *adamah Yahweh Elohim* forma *Adam* que “vive como alma vivente” pelo alento de vida (Gn 2,7); da *adamah Yahweh Elohim* faz brotar toda árvore (Gn 2,9); da *adamah Yahweh Elohim* forma tudo o que vive no campo e nos céus (Gn 2,19).

Tudo que vive tem um único pai e uma única mãe: uma única vida em todas as suas diferentes formas.

Dois verbos definem esta relação com o jardim: *Adam* é colocado no jardim para *`abad* = servir, prestar culto e para *shamar* = observar, obedecer, guardar (Gn 2,15)⁶. Estes mesmos verbos que, em muitos outros textos, definem a nossa relação com Deus, aqui, definem, também, a nossa relação com o jardim, com a *adamah*, com a terra. *Adam* não é o dono do jardim: é o servo obediente.

Quando tudo começou, ainda não havia vida porque nem *Yahweh Elohim* tinha feito chover, nem havia *Adam* para “servir a terra” (Gn 2,5). É desta relação de serviço e de obediência que pode nascer e se sustentar a vida

Na primeira parábola é *Elohim* que dá o nome a todas as realidades de vida quando são criadas: dia e noite, firmamento, terra e mar (Gn 1,5.8.10). Nesta segunda parábola é *Adam* que dá o nome a todas as almas viventes (Gn 2,19-20). É o compromisso de quem conhece, cuida e se responsabiliza, como um pai que dá o nome ao filho recém-nascido.

E, contra toda arrogância antropro-cêntrica de nossa filosofia greco-ocidental, esta página nos propõe uma relação eco-cêntrica, ao proclamar que o *Adam* sozinho não é bom. A imagem de Deus precisa se relacionar

⁶ Nossas bíblias, quase sempre, preferem usar a tradução da bíblia grega: “cultivar e guardar”.

com o jardim, com as árvores e com todos os seres vivos. E reconhece na mulher a sua mesma identidade, seu mesmo nome: ele a reconhece exatamente igual a si, diante de si: *substância de minha substância, carne de minha carne* (Gn 2,23).

A proximidade desta cosmovisão bíblica com a cosmovisão dos mitos dos indígenas e dos afro-descendentes é evidente. Ler a bíblia com os povos da Amazônia é a possibilidade que o biblista tem de se aproximar com maior facilidade do sentido originário das palavras do gênesis.

Como é difícil alcançar esta proximidade quando a bíblia é lida nas academias e até nas nossas liturgias!

1c. Re-lendo a parábola da árvore das vidas e do conhecimento do bem e do mal

A interpretação que nossas comunidades costumam fazer desta página nos leva a aplicar o paradigma do crime-castigo. Um crime tão grande que marcou um castigo para todas as gerações: o pecado original. Um pecado do qual só foi isenta a virgem Maria e, evidentemente, seu filho Jesus, cujo sangue derramado aplacou a ira do Pai e nos lavou de nossas culpas, mas não de nosso corpo de morte. A morte é o castigo definitivo, a inevitável consequência do pecado de *Adam* e de sua mulher.

Uma leitura a partir dos povos da Amazônia, porém, nos conduz por um caminho mais amplo e menos moralista e condenatório. A terra onde estão sepultados os ancestrais é terra sagrada, é terra santa, fonte de vida: essencial para recuperar as forças vitais.

A parábola nos fala do homem e da mulher que quebram as relações de serviço e de obediência porque querem se afastar da terra para ser como *Yahweh Elohim*⁷. A “tentação” é ser como Deus: justamente o que sugeria a leitura equivocada do *submeter a terra* da primeira parábola. Querer ser como Deus é querer ser o dono de tudo. Esta é a causa de todos os males.

O “castigo” é voltar a servir à vida, é voltar a servir a terra. Será com dor e será com fadiga, mas o encontro com a terra será sempre vivificador.

Até que voltes à terra, porque dela foste tomado; porque tu és pó e em pó voltarás. (Gn 3,19)

Voltar, retornar, *shub*⁸. Converter-se: é o mesmo verbo. Converter-se a Deus e converter-se à terra. Voltar a servir e a obedecer; voltar à vida no sentido mais pleno. Não existe a palavra morte nas palavras de *Yahweh Elohim*.

⁷ Este movimento de se afastar da terra para chegar a Deus está presente também nas parábolas do dilúvio e da torre de Babel. Também nestas parábolas a volta para a terra é elemento vivificador.

⁸ A simbologia hieroglífica destas letras é conhecimento para dentro que faz a unidade = reconstrução da tua identidade.

O versículo seguinte é decisivo: é a chave de leitura do “castigo”:

E chamou Adam o nome de sua mulher havah / vida/ Eva; porque vive a mãe de todos os viventes. (Gn 3,20)

Só agora, neste momento que podia parecer de morte, Adam consegue dar um nome à sua mulher: Vida! Adam vai levar consigo a vida para fora do jardim. No conhecimento da mulher e no servir terra, a vida poderá continuar até que tenhamos novos céus e nova terra e nunca mais haverá lágrimas e dor.

E Yahweh Elohim o enviou fora do jardim do Éden para servir a terra da qual foi tirado. (Gn 3,23)

E conheceu Adam a Vida, sua mulher e ela concebeu. (Gn 4,1).

1d. Bendizei ao Senhor, todas as obras do Senhor

Os céus narram a glória de Deus, o firmamento anuncia a obra de suas mãos (Sl 19,1).

Todos nós que celebramos com hinos e salmos ao nosso Deus, fazemos quotidianamente a experiência de convocar a criação toda para aclamar e proclamar as maravilhas do nosso Deus, celebrar sua glória, manifestar seu poder e seu reinado. Tudo que existe proclama: *Teu reino é reino de todos os séculos, teu domínio se estende a todas as gerações* (Sl 145, 13). *De Yahweh é a terra com o que ela contém, o universo e os que nele habitam* (Sl 24,1-2).

A criação toda é viva: os montes pulam, os rios batem palmas, as tempestades revelam o nosso Deus.

Impressiona o cântico dos três rapazes jogados pelo imperador na fornalha ardente (Dn 3,57-90 LXX). Escrito em grego, este texto confronta o modelo grego de ecologia e economia que pretendia se impor a toda a *oikoumene* mediterrânea: uma natureza inanimada, pura matéria, cujos recursos inesgotáveis deviam ser explorados para gerar riquezas em prol dos mais fortes. A criação, pelo contrário, é viva, é animada e participa da grande louvação: *Bendizei o Senhor, celebrai-o e exaltai-o para sempre!*

É assim no *turé*, uma dança típica dos nossos índios: tudo o que existe e vive é chamado a entrar na roda, a participar da única festa do povo, a se fazer uma coisa só conosco, penetrando na vida dos que dançam e festejam. É assim nos terreiros do candomblé e da umbanda: tudo é vida, tudo é interação: céus e terra se encontram, se fecundam, produzem e se reproduzem num processo permanente de criação. Assim é na Bíblia.

Terra santa, tempos santos, comunidade santa: uma trindade indivisível que experimenta a circulação de uma única vida, a do Espírito!

Os tempos da natureza são tempos santos: novilúnios, sementeiras, colheitas, vindimas, cios das ovelhas, primícias, vinho novo, azeite perfumado, tudo vira festa, marcando os tempos, os ritmos deste útero fecun-

do e gerador, os gestos sagrados de um povo que celebra seu *Elohim*/deus(es), singular e plural ao mesmo tempo.

Precisamos nos libertar da visão economicista que – seja ela capitalista ou socialista – considera a natureza “matéria prima” que só adquire valor quando transformada em mercadoria, em riqueza.

Se Deus colocou tudo aos nossos pés é para que seja manifesto quão grande é o nome de Deus em toda a terra e quanto Ele nos ama (Sl 8,3-9).

Esta é a raiz de uma espiritualidade profunda. Esta espiritualidade significa entrar em sintonia, em comunhão holística, com a ação do Espírito de Deus que, desde que tudo começou, continua criando e renovando a face da terra: *Envia teu espírito e haverá criação e renova a face da terra*” (Sl 104,30).

2. Espiritualidade eco-centrada é espiritualidade cristã

Na arrogância de nossa cultura ocidental, a nossa lógica racionalista nos levou a usar palavras de conotação negativa, para falar desta cosmovisão comum às populações tradicionais: sincretismo, politeísmo, panteísmo, animismo, pois elas acreditam que todas as coisas e todos os seres têm “alma/vida”, a mesma vida de Deus.

Na melhor das hipóteses, chegamos a dizer que estas páginas bíblicas são narrativas “míticas”, próprias do “antigo” testamento e que devem ser superadas pela perspectiva racional, revelada no “novo” testamento.

Precisamos aprofundar: esta espiritualidade é compatível com a espiritualidade cristã? Qual seria o lugar de Jesus na espiritualidade eco-centrada?

Vamos voltar à afirmação de Gn 1,27: *E criou Deus o homem à sua imagem: à imagem de Deus o criou; homem e mulher os criou.*

A plena compreensão destas palavras e, por isso, da nossa missão de “imagens de Deus”, só é possível a partir de Jesus, a mais autêntica e completa “imagem de Deus”. Como nos disse a carta aos Colossenses:

“Ele é imagem do Deus invisível, o primogênito de toda a criação; pois é nele que foram criadas todas as coisas nos céus e na terra. Tudo foi criado por ele e para ele. Ele existe antes de todas as coisas e nele todas as coisas têm consistência”. (Col 1,15-17).

A “única” vida que perpassa tudo que existe é a vida de Cristo. É o que repete, também, o evangelho de João que se abre com a afirmação do novo gênesis, num claro paralelismo com a primeira página da Bíblia:

“Todas as coisas foram feitas por ele e sem ele nada do que foi feito se fez” (Jo 1,3).

Dominar a terra, então, significa fazer com que toda a criação participe do plano amoroso que Deus tinha quando criou tudo que existe:

Colocar Cristo como cabeça de tudo o que existe no céu e na terra (Ef 1,10).

Submeter a terra significa, assim, conduzir tudo e todos a Jesus, ao seu Reino de vida e de luz, no qual todas e todos tenhamos a vida, a paz, a abundância, sem distinção de raça, de credos, de classes sociais e nem das nomenclaturas científicas.

É o que a criação toda espera de nós que, com Cristo, em Cristo e por Cristo, somos a imagem de Deus na terra.

A criação espera ansiosamente a revelação dos filhos de Deus (Rm 8,19).

Assim saberemos que o gemido de dor da criação é, na realidade, um gemido de parto (Rm 8,22)⁹, sinal supremo de vida e de invencível esperança (Jo 16,2-22).

Na contramão do pensamento greco-romano que afirmava ser a natureza algo totalmente inanimado e, por isso, subordinada aos interesses dos humanos racionais, a carta aos Romanos afirma que a criação está indissolivelmente ligada aos seres humanos: conosco ela geme, conosco ela espera, conosco ela anseia, conosco ela sofre. No horizonte da humanidade e da criação está a mesma esperança de serem libertados da *escravidão da corrupção, em vista da liberdade que é a glória dos filhos de Deus* (Rm 8,21).

O Espírito que, desde o princípio, está na origem da vida, une seus gemidos aos nossos gemidos e aos gemidos da criação e vem em socorro da nossa fraqueza, diante de um desafio tão grande (Rm 8,26-27).

As comunidades eclesiais, alimentadas pela certeza que tudo *concorre para o bem dos que amam a Deus* (Rm 8,28), deverão sempre ser as testemunhas do ressuscitado, viver segundo a *nova criatura*, buscando sempre, em primeiro lugar o reino de Deus e a sua justiça, contra os falsos reinos geradores de injustiça e de morte.

É o que o Espírito nos impele a fazer. Lutar, como Jesus, em favor da vida, contra todas as forças caóticas da morte e da exclusão, buscando fazer com que a criação toda possa alcançar a plenitude da vida que nela é contida.

Neste texto (Rm 8,19-26), a criação, os filhos de Deus e o Espírito, também, formam uma espécie de trindade, na qual os três elementos formam uma única realidade, na construção da liberdade dos filhos de Deus que significa a liberdade de toda a criação. Hoje a ciência, também, vem confirmando esta visão holística que Paulo e João, fiéis à cosmovisão semita, proclamavam, na contramão do pensamento lógico grego.

⁹ O termo grego *florá* significa, sobretudo, destruição, ruína, aniquilamento, devastação.

3. Deus criador, Deus de todos os pobres

A outra questão que provoca esta reflexão é decisiva, sobretudo, na América Latina: O que têm a se dizer mutuamente a ecologia profunda e a espiritualidade da libertação?

Na memória dos povos da Amazônia a divindade é sempre o Pai da bênção e da promessa, da vida. Herdeiros de uma longa história de brutal exploração, eles recorrem à divindade, a santos, orixás, benzedores, pajés, mães de santo, pois, guardam a certeza, celebrada, também, em inúmeros salmos, que Deus cuida deles, faz justiça, não abandona os que nele confiam.

A memória do *Elohim* criador da natureza, de tudo que existe, não deve ser, em hipótese alguma, separada da memória do *Yahweh* salvador dos pobres e dos oprimidos.

Bem-aventurado aquele cuja esperança está em Yahweh, seu Elohim, que fez os céus e a terra, o mar e tudo o que neles há e mantém para sempre a sua fidelidade.

Que faz justiça aos oprimidos e dá pão aos que têm fome.

Yahweh liberta os encarcerados. Yahweh abre os olhos aos cegos,

Yahweh levanta os abatidos, Yahweh ama os justos.

Yahweh guarda o peregrino, ampara o órfão e a viúva, porém transtorna o caminho dos ímpios.

Yahweh reina para sempre; o teu Elohim, ó Sião, reina de geração em geração. Aleluia! (Sl 145,5-10 e inúmeros outros salmos. Ver, também, Jd 9,11-12)

Usar a narrativa da criação para justificar a dominação sobre a natureza e sobre os outros seres humanos será, sempre, uma blasfêmia.

Não podemos esquecer que a primeira página da Gênesis encontra, possivelmente, sua origem literária nos capítulos 40-55 do livro de Isaías, conhecido como Segundo Isaías¹⁰. Estas páginas nasceram nos momentos difíceis em que escravos e escravas, viviam oprimidos no cativeiro em Babilônia.

Foi deste grupo de excluídos e excluídas que surgiu a boa notícia. Lá, do fundo do poço, surgiu uma teologia com dimensões completamente novas, inauditas, mas que vinha acontecendo desde o princípio, desde sempre (Is 41,26; 43,19).

¹⁰ A vitória de Deus contra trevas, águas, abismos e desertos, as forças caóticas da morte, está presente de maneira significativa, no Segundo Isaías (Is 42,7; 43,2; 43,16; 44,3; 44,4; 45,7; 48,21; 49,9; 50,2; 51,3; 51,10) Diga-se o mesmo da palavra *tohu* / caos. O mítico adversário das origens, também, está muito presente nos textos do Segundo Isaías (Is 34,11; 40,17. 23; 41,29; 44,9; 45,18; 49,4). "Porque assim diz o Senhor, que criou os céus, o Deus que formou a terra, que a fez e a estabeleceu; que não a criou para ser um caos/*tohu*, mas para ser habitada: Eu sou o Senhor, e não há outro". (Is 45,18). Ver, também, GALLAZZI, Sandro. *Por meio dele o desígnio de Deus há de triunfar*. In RIBLA, vol. 21. Vozes, Petrópolis.

É o anúncio do Deus Criador, da grande mãe, a única mãe geradora da vida de todos e de tudo: *Eu te formei,... eu te fiz,... eu te criei,... eu te modelei,... eu te tomo pela mão,... eu te ajudo,... eu estou contigo,... eu te dou forças,...*

Nestas páginas, Deus deixa de ser somente o Deus de Israel. Deus é Deus de todos, até dos filhos sem família, dos sem genealogia, dos sem povo, das culturas oprimidas, excluídas, marginalizadas (Is 45,9-12). Todos são filhos dele, também os não judeus, filhos da violência, da guerra e da deportação (Is 45,23-24). Nunca uma mensagem foi tão universal, tão abrangente, tão inclusiva!

Esta gente sofrida nos fala de um só Deus, mas com uma incrível quantidade de facetas. Tudo que é fonte de vida para o pobre cansado e desanimado é parte deste Deus que é único, mas que para cada um dos pobres assume um rosto diferente, capaz de gerar vida. Deus é único, não porque exclui, mas porque reúne em si mesmo todos os elementos de vida das religiões populares. Encontramos nele o Deus cananeu da chuva e do orvalho fecundante (Is 45,8; 55,10-11); o oleiro modelador da mitologia mesopotâmica (Is 45,9); o dominador dos mares agitados (Is 51,15) e, de maneira especial a deusa-mãe comum a todas as culturas semitas (Is 46,3-4; 49,15; 66,9-13). Pela primeira vez Deus é chamado de Pai:

Repara desde os céus e olha desde a tua santa e gloriosa morada: Onde estão o teu ciúme e as tuas forças? O frêmito das tuas entranhas e das tuas misericórdias¹¹ para comigo acabou? Porque tu és nosso Pai, quando Abraão não nos conhece, e Israel não nos reconhece; tu, Yabweh, és nosso Pai; nosso Redentor desde a antiguidade é o teu nome (Is 63,15-16)

É um Deus único, mas “completo”: tudo que for elemento de vida, de segurança, de esperança para os pobres, ele reúne, ele soma, ele engloba numa só divindade, boa, materna, protetora, consoladora para toda esta gente sofrida: um único e completo Elohim. Os outros deuses não existem: se forem dos pobres, já estão contidos nele; se forem dos opressores, são ídolos, imagens, não são nada/*tohu!*

Única imagem de Deus é *Adam*, a humanidade, no mesmo tempo imagem de Deus e produto da terra fértil/*adamah*. *Adam*: homem e mulher, criado/os para serem os herdeiros do domínio de Deus sobre a terra. Representantes de Deus não serão os reis, os sacerdotes, os grandes, mas o homem e a mulher. Ídolos nunca mais!

Os valores presentes nestas páginas bíblicas têm muito a ver com os valores presentes na vida cotidiana dos povos da Amazônia. Trata-se de estabelecer um diálogo atento e humilde, na atitude evangelizadora de Paulo que poderíamos assim parafrasear: Fazer-nos índios com os índios, caboclos com os caboclos, negros com os negros, ribeirinhos com

¹¹ Literalmente “úteros”. É um Deus Mãe e, agora, Pai.

os ribeirinhos, seringueiros com os seringueiros, fazer-nos tudo a todos e a todas.

Este imaginário de vida e de salvação inspirou os profetas que proclamaram as promessas de Deus ao seu povo sofrido:

Vou criar novos céus e nova terra... Já não haverá ali criancinhas que vivam apenas alguns dias, nem velhos que não completem a sua idade... Construirão casas para nelas habitarem, plantarão videiras e comerão de seus frutos... Os meus eleitos comerão eles mesmos o fruto do trabalho de suas mãos... (Is 65, 17-25).

É assim que o jardim vai entrar em nossas casas e no nosso cotidiano e o sinal da paz e da vida será descansar, esposos, filhos e filhas, debaixo das vinhas e das figueiras (Mq 4,4; Zc 3,10; 1Mc 14,12).

É a “terra sem males” do mundo indígena.

4. Ecumenismo, economia, ecologia

A interação entre espiritualidade ecocentrada e espiritualidade da libertação nos leva a ampliar nossa reflexão sobre o que devemos entender por ecologia.

As palavras economia, ecologia e ecumenismo vêm todas da língua grega e se originam do verbo *oikeo*: habitar. O particípio presente passivo feminino deste verbo é *oikoumenen*: a realidade que está sendo habitada. O substantivo derivado é *oikoumene*.

Esta palavra foi, logo, entendida como “todo o universo habitado”, “toda a sociedade humana”, “toda a terra”, A esta palavra costuma-se dar uma dimensão universal.

Quase todas as vezes que a palavra *oikoumene* aparece nos textos bíblicos¹² tem a conotação que lhe é dada no texto clássico:

De Yaweh é a terra e a sua plenitude, o mundo (oikoumene) e aqueles que nele habitam (Sl 24,1).

É, porém, interessante notar que a palavra *oikoumene* nunca aparece nos textos paulinos¹³ e é muito pouco usada no Segundo Testamento. Apesar do seu esforço em dialogar com o mundo grego, Paulo não usa esta palavra, preferindo usar, como em geral no Segundo Testamento, a palavra *kosmos*¹⁴.

¹² A palavra *oikoumene* aparece na LXX e no NT: 2 Sm 22,16; 1 Es 2,2; Est 3,13; 2 Mc 2,22; Sl 9,9; 17,16; 18,5; 23,1; 32,8; 48,2; 49,12; 71,8; 76,19; 88,12; 89,2; 92,1; 95,10, 13; 96,4; 97,7, 9; Odes 7,45; Pr 8,31; Sb 1,7; Is 10,14, 23; 13,5, 9, 11; 14,17, 26; 23,17; 24m1, 4; 27,6; 34,1; 37,16, 18; 62,4; Jr 10,12; 28,15; Lm 4,12; Ep. Jr 1,61; Dn 2,38; 3,2, 45; Dat 3,45; Mt 24,14; Lc 2,1; 4,5; 21,26; At 11,28; 17,6, 31; 19,27; 24,5; Rm 10,18; Hb 1,6; 2,5; Apoc 3,10; 12,9; 16,14.

¹³ Rm 10,18 é uma citação dos LXX.

¹⁴ A palavra *oikoumene* aparece 15 vezes no Segundo Testamento, enquanto a palavra *kosmos* aparece 150 vezes.

Para os gregos a palavra *oikoumene* indicava, quase sempre, as populações que eram conectadas com o projeto político e comercial grego. Os bárbaros e os escravos não faziam parte da *oikoumene*.

Diga-se o mesmo para o império romano: *oikoumene* eram as nações que formavam o império, os povos tributados e comercialmente explorados pelo império¹⁵. *Oikoumene*, que parecia ser uma palavra inclusiva, era, na verdade, um forte elemento de exclusão. Uns eram *oikoumene* e muitos outros não.

Esta ambiguidade justifica a ausência desta palavra nos textos paulinos. Suas afirmações são claras:

Eu sou devedor tanto a gregos como a bárbaros, tanto a sábios como a ignorantes (Rm 1,14).

Não há grego, nem judeu, circuncisão, nem incircuncisão, bárbaro, cita, escravo ou livre; mas Cristo é tudo em todos (Cl 3,11).

O Reino de Deus é uma coisa, a *oikoumene* é bem outra (ver também, Mt 24,14; Lc 4,5; 21,26): a ela deve ser anunciado o evangelho do Reino.¹⁶

Por que fiz estas considerações? Porque do verbo *oikeo*, deriva, também, as palavras *oikia*, *oikos*: habitação, casa, residência, lugar habitado, família.

A *oikoumene* é o conjunto das “casas”, de todos os espaços que são habitados. Não há como separar o universal do local.

Aqui, porém, precisamos levar em consideração que casa, também, nunca foi sinônimo de igualdade entre os que habitam nela. Tem o homem e tem a mulher, tem o pai e tem o filho, tem o amo e tem o escravo.

As relações internas da casa são determinantes, podem ser igualitárias:

Não há judeu nem grego; não há servo nem livre; não há macho nem fêmea; porque todos vós sois um em Cristo Jesus (Gl 3,28).

Ou as relações dentro da casa podem ser de domínio, de governo:

Todos os escravos que estão debaixo do jugo estimem os seus senhores dignos de toda a honra, para que o nome de Deus e a doutrina não sejam blasfemados (1Tm 6,1).

¹⁵ Com este sentido a palavra *oikoumene* aparece, por exemplo, em Lucas 2,1 e em Atos 17,6 e 19,27.

¹⁶ Temos que dizer que também a palavra *kosmos*, sobretudo em João, não tem o significado global de mundo, de universo, mas identifica as forças negativas que se contrapõem ao Reino. É bom lembrar que esta ambiguidade se mantém, também, nos tempos atuais: a palavra *ecumenismo* – que deveria significar a atitude de encontro e de respeito entre todos os que vivem no mesmo mundo habitado – é quase sempre usada para falar da unidade das igrejas cristãs, excluindo do *ecumenismo* as demais expressões religiosas. Para estas foi preciso criar a palavra *macro-ecumenismo*: uma evidente redundância.

As mulheres idosas (...) ensinem as mulheres novas a serem prudentes, a amarem seus maridos, a amarem seus filhos, a serem moderadas, castas, boas obreiras de casa, submetidas a seus maridos, a fim de que a palavra de Deus não seja blasfemada (Tt 2,3-5).

Quanta diferença entre o homem: dono/patrão da casa (*oikodespotes*) e a mulher trabalhadora da casa (*oikourgous*)!

É por isso que precisamos definir qual é a nossa “ecologia”¹⁷. Qual é o nosso discurso sobre a casa? De que casa nós estamos falando quando usamos a palavra ecologia?

Ecologia é dizer o que pensamos da nossa casa, como um todo. Quase sempre – e, nisso, empresários e ambientalistas costumam ser iguais – se entende ecologia como a nossa relação com a natureza, com o meio ambiente, podemos dizer com o nosso quintal. Discute-se o ambiente, discute-se como deve funcionar o quintal, mas não se discute que tipo de casa nós queremos.

Tem muita gente que, quando pensa em casa, não pensa numa casa comum, onde todos sentam ao redor da mesma mesa e repartem o mesmo pão, sem distinção; continuam pensando em “casa grande” e em “senzala”.

Muitos falam em ecologia, mas se preocupam só com o quintal, com a natureza, com o ambiente que está fora da casa e, assim, falam em desenvolvimento sustentável, em defesa da terra e da água, mas continuam sem por em discussão a “casa grande” dos países mais ricos, das classes dominantes, das corporações industriais e financeiras, das elites privilegiadas e corruptas que engordam às custas de uma imensa, incalculável “senzala” que é explorada, oprimida, excluída.

Progresso, crescimento, desenvolvimento, para eles, significa entrar a fazer parte da casa grande, nem que seja como uma remediada classe média. A senzala ainda não saiu da cabeça de muitos de nós.

Precisamos nos converter, pois a economia (a lei, a organização, a administração da casa) vai depender da ecologia (de que casa estamos falando, em que tipo de casa queremos viver).

Se continuarmos a acreditar na casa grande¹⁸, teremos uma economia centrada na especulação financeira, nos monopólios industriais, na privatização dos serviços públicos - realidades estas que nada teriam a ver com a ecologia. Uma economia baseada no agronegócio, na monocultura, na mineração, nas exportações de matéria prima, no trabalho escravo, na concentração fundiária, nas sementes transgênicas, nos agrotóxicos.

¹⁷ Ecologia vem do grego: *oikos* = casa e *logos* = discurso. Diga-se o mesmo da economia que vem de *oikos* = casa e *nomos* = lei, norma.

¹⁸ Não vamos esquecer que a palavra faraó significa, literalmente, “casa grande”.

Na melhor das hipóteses, faremos os estudos de impacto ambiental e as audiências públicas para tentar minimizar e corrigir a inevitável destruição que será compensada com poucas esmolas sociais, com uma oferta temporária de empregos, com a promessa de impostos que, depois, serão sempre descontados e com algumas medidas compensatórias regularmente abatidas do imposto de renda devido.

A casa grande ficará com os produtos e os lucros; a senzala ficará com o trabalho e as migalhas da assistência social e o quintal será devastado. Os pobres perderão a terra! A terra perderá a vida!

A verdadeira e mais importante diferença está na maneira de olhar a terra, a água, a natureza: socialistas e capitalistas enxergam tudo isso como matéria prima que adquire seu valor ao virar mercadorias que deve ser comercializada e privatizada, deixando de ser direito e bem coletivo. Nós queremos olhar a terra, a água, a natureza como a nossa casa, a nossa mãe e fonte de vida para todas as criaturas.

Nós entendemos que a luta pela terra é, hoje de maneira especial, luta pela TERRA, com a T maiúscula. É a luta pela vida do planeta que é violentamente ameaçada por um falso conceito de crescimento, desenvolvimento, progresso e por uma ainda mais falsa ideia de que os recursos naturais são infindáveis.

Aprender com as comunidades tradicionais o que significa uma casa feita tenda comum, aberta a todos, não significa atraso. Significa vida abundante para todos e todas.

Lutar pela terra e pela vida da Terra é um imperativo ético que testemunha nossa fidelidade à memória, à tradição, à ancestralidade, às nossas raízes. É a fidelidade aos pobres de Deus.

Lutar pela terra e pela vida da Terra é uma exigência que testemunha nossa relação sagrada com a terra, nossa mãe, nossa amiga, nossa amante, à qual devemos “servir” e “obedecer” pois dela todas as gerações terão vida em abundância. É a fidelidade à terra que é de Deus e de todos e todas nós.

Lutar pela terra e pela vida da Terra é uma obrigação que testemunha a fé no nosso Deus. Da ecologia, depende não só a economia, mas, também, a teologia. A casa que pensamos e queremos determina qual é o Deus ao qual nossa casa deve ser fiel. É a fidelidade ao Deus dos pobres.

Este testemunho de fidelidade ao Deus dos pobres, aos pobres de Deus e a terra que é de Deus e de todos, levou inúmeras companheiras e companheiros a amar até o fim, até derramar seu sangue. São os mártires/ testemunhas que as igrejas nunca devem esquecer.

5. Ecologia e eclesiologia

Nossas igrejas, muitas vezes, seguiram e seguem a lógica da casa grande e da senzala que deturpou nossas relações: templos, altares, sacrifícios, hierarquias, governos são coisa da casa grande, de um sacro-negócio blasfemo e diabólico, o mesmo que, aliado ao império opressor, condenou à morte Jesus de Nazaré.


O evangelho do Reino de Deus nos convida a fazer a diferença dentro e fora da igreja: casa, mesa, pão repartido e serviço devem substituir templos, altares, sacrifícios e dominações. Foi isso que Jesus celebrou na ceia pascal. É isso que devemos continuar testemunhando em memória dele e de seu martírio.

Pão repartido quer dizer terra repartida, bens partilhados, luta contra toda concentração, contra o latifúndio excludente, devastador e violento. É a defesa da vida contra todas as formas de escravidão, mesmo as que são mascaradas de crescimento e são chamadas de mercado.

Pão repartido é crer que nossa casa é uma oca comum ou, usando a linguagem bíblica, uma “tenda”. Nem palácios, nem templos, nem quartéis, nem armazéns, nem bancos, nem especulações financeiras.

Vamos repetir uma vez mais: a palavra faraó significa “casa grande”.

O nosso Deus, o Deus dos nossos pais e das nossas mães, o/s deus/es dos nossos povos ancestrais nunca estará na casa grande, apesar dos templos gigantescos que eles construíram e continuarão construindo.

Iahweh será sempre o Deus dos hebreus¹⁹, dos marginalizados que só querem viver em paz, podendo desfrutar do fruto da terra e do seu trabalho, do pão e do vinho que ofertamos ao Senhor para que seja sempre de todos e de todas. 

¹⁹ Segundo muitos estudiosos, o termo *hebreu* vem de *hapiru* que na literatura egípcia indicava alguém que estava à margens da sociedade, muitas vezes, com a conotação negativa de bandido, assaltante, mercenário, etc.

Diarmuid O'Murchu MSC



ON BEING A

Postcolonial Christian

Embracing an Empowering Faith

Diarmuid O'MURCHU moves the theological debate into the only valid perspective for today: the global one, interdisciplinary, in cosmic and evolutionary dimension, beyond religions... He presents a panoramic vision, so courageous as challenging and enthusiastic, witnessing the axial transformation we are currently crossing.

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Send Your Spirit and There Will Be Creation*

Sandro GALLAZZI
Amapá, AP, BRAZIL

Translated by Yashá José Rizzante Gallazzi

I want to collaborate with this issue of Voices magazine with my theological and biblical studies, but especially with my familiarity with the traditional peoples of the Amazon River: maroon, riparian, Indians, with whom I celebrate the Word. Enter the Bible from Latin American cultures ancestors did appear more clear what the "things" that the Father wanted to reveal the little ones and made sure to hide the wise and prudent, and who also knows the theologians (Mt 11,25-26).

1. A eco-centric spirituality

Spirituality is the work, the breath, the life of God's Spirit in us and in all there since it all began when *the breath of Elohim² was quiet in the face of the waters* (Gen 1,2). To try and live this power of the Spirit we must deconstruct readings, reinterpret words, draw walls and veils that the experts have raised to hide the "things of the Father." We will know and will experience how the Spirit of God generates our "spirituality."

Let's begin with the first pages of the Bible, the pages that we all know and that became the pillars of a civilization that often was death³.

1.a Re-reading the first parable of creation

Western culture, of Greek origin, fell into the trap of thinking that the task that God gives man to "subdue the earth and have dominion over

* This essay is the result of the systematization of several other my writings over the last few years.

² Instead of using the usual translation "God", I prefer to keep the Hebrew word Elohim with his singular and plural at the same time sense. It would be something like "All of the

the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Gen 1,28), means that man⁴, God's image, is, like God itself, the owner of everything, the most important element of nature, the center of creation. Moved by this "Theo-ideology", we ended up theorizing that everything that exists has meaning only when directed to us and when we can do with nature all we want. In this domain name, man "submitted the land", devastated the environment, polluted waters, slaughtered animals, without any reason caused death.

Subdue the land legitimized private property, the concentration of wealth and the violence exploitative and murderous of all lives.

In all the ancient myths of the native peoples of the Amazon, on the contrary, the creative action of the god/s is always an action that breaks and beats death and suffering situations. Is the presence of life that overcomes and defeat the presence of death.

It is exactly the same thing that we read in the first page of the Bible. It has nothing to do with the European philosophical vision, in which Christians were often indoctrinated and defining creation as "making all things from nothing," thus affirming the total separation between God and all things and his dominion over all that exists.

An unusual, but literally possible translation of the first verse of the Bible, is able to open horizons and meanings: In the beginning Elohim created whit the heavens and whit the earth (Gen 1,1): Heaven and earth both takes part as co-creators of this life action .

The word Elohim is a generator of life. In the other side there is death, desert, darkness and the deep: the symbolic chaotic forces of death (Gen 1,2).

"Live light and light lived... Live an expansion between the waters and lived ... And so lived ..." (Gen 1,3.6.7.9).

Live: *hyh / hayah*⁵ as being, happen. A verb that is repeated 27 times in this chapter. The verb that is also the stem of the name of Yahweh: the living that gives life.

The same *living soul* who gives life Adam (Gen 2,7) gives life to the children of the waters (Gen 1,20s), to the children of the earth (Gen 1,24)

divinity" and that applies to all the ways in which we are given to experience and know the divinity of sustaining life.

³ Apart from these considerations already wrote in the "Convergência" magazine, 434 (September 2010) 535-551 and elsewhere.

⁴ Use of purpose, the word man, the male, because this Greek-Western ideology does not consider women as a philosophical subject.

⁵ The hieroglyphic reading of these letters tells us that h is the symbol of life, of being, which animates and y is the symbol of potentiality, the duration of the manifest. The verb *hyh* then symbolizes the life that manifests and enhances life.

and them all received the blessing of Elohim to generate life: *Be fruitful and multiply* (Gen 1,22.28).

The parable of creation in Genesis 1, then, far from being a nostalgic fable of a lost past, is memory of the creative struggle and permanent re-creators in defense of "good" that is all that lives, against all the forces of chaos death hell-bent on transforming life in darkness and desert.

From the beginning - so proclaims this page - Elohim manifests himself with his winning power. In the first three "days" sings the victory of Elohim against all the "evils", symbolized by darkness, the waters of the deep and the desert.

The creative action of Elohim that "separates" the darkness of light, the waters above from the waters below, the land of the sea, turning the desert into grassland and forests, reveals the poor and the oppressed that is worthing trust in this Elohim that can defeat all the chaotic forces that produce fear and death.

The victory of Elohim became completed in the other three "days", when, after making a living light, the sky and fertile land, it ensures its continuity, creating the "armies" of light, of water, air and earth. Despite the negative and violent connotations that this word has for Latin Americans, we use the biblical word "armies" (Gen 2,1) because indicates that the creatures that populate nature will have the responsibility to take care to watch over and defend it, fighting until the end of time, against all forms of death.

It will be up to the sun, moon and stars to take care and watch over the life of the light; to the marine life, watch over the life of the waters; to the birds of the sky watch over the life of the air; and the animals should take account of the life of the fertile soil.

The creation of the human being - man and woman - made in the image and likeness of Elohim, will make all the work of Elohim good, very good, ready to remain, forever and ever, good, very good. The Elohim's armies, so completed, will make sure that the victory of Elohim over darkness, deeps and deserts, continue throughout history. The "armies" of Elohim, guided by the human being, will provide to guarantee that darkness, deeps and deserts never come back to win.

"Submit the land" forces us, then, to take care and ensure that our common home and all that dwell therein with the same creative passion and love of Elohim, in view of the happiness of all people and all living beings.

As Elohim, in the presence of his Spirit, we, men and women, must continue his creative work, fighting against all the evils that threaten the lives of everyone on the planet and against the violence present on all pages of human history. It is a permanent process of creation and re-crea-

tion that will end only when we live no more pain and grief in the new heavens and the new earth, in the "land without evils" that we all want.

1.b Re-reading the second parable of creation

The second parable of creation (Gen 2,4b-25) tells us about Adam's relationship with Yahweh Elohim and the garden of delights / Eden.

One more time we find an initial situation of non-life, of desert.

In the first parable the vital element was the "breath of God" over the waters. Now is the "steam", which hieroglyphically indicates a "moving force" that drenches the *adamah*, the earth as a generator of life (Gen 2,6).

From the *adamah* Yahweh Elohim makes Adam who "lives as a living soul" for the breath of life (Gen 2,7); from the *adamah* Yahweh Elohim causeth every tree (Gen 2,9); from the *adamah* Yahweh Elohim makes everything that lives in the countryside and in heaven (Gen 2,19).

Everything that lives has a single father and a single mother: a single life in all its different forms.

Two verbs defines this relationship with the garden: Adam is placed in the garden to *abad* = to serve, worship and to *shamar* = observe, obey, protect (Gen 2,15)⁶. These same verbs that in many texts define our relationship with God, here also define our relationship with the garden, with *adamah* with the earth. Adam is not the owner of the garden: he is the obedient servant.

When it all started, there was still no life because Yahweh Elohim had not sent rain, and there was no Adam to "serve the earth" (Gen 2,5). It is from this relationship of service and obedience that life can rise and sustain.

In the first parable is Elohim who gives name to all the realities of life when they are created: day and night, firmament, land and sea (Gen 1,5.8.10). In the second parable is Adam who gives name to all living souls (Gen 2,19-20). It is the commitment of those who knows, cares and takes responsibility as a father who gives name to the newborn child.

And, despites of all the anthropocentric arrogance of our Greco-Occidental philosophy, this page offers us an eco-centric relation, proclaiming that Adam himself is not good enough. The image of God needs to relate with the garden, with trees and with all the living beings. And recognizes in the woman his same identity, his own name: he recognizes she exactly like himself, in front of him: the substance of my substance, flesh of my flesh (Gen 2,23).

The proximity of this biblical worldview with the worldview of the myths of indian and african descendants is evident. To read the bible

⁶ Our bibles almost always prefer to use the translation of the Greek Bible, "till and keep".

with the peoples of the Amazon is the possibility that the biblicist has to approach himself easily to the original meaning of the words of the Genesis.

How difficult is to reach this closeness when the Bible is read in academies and even in our liturgies!

1.c Re-reading the parable of the tree of life and the knowledge of good and evil

The interpretation that our communities often make of this page leads us to apply the crime-punishment paradigm. Such a great crime which marked a punishment for all generations: the original sin. A sin which was only exempt the Virgin Mary, and of course, his son Jesus, whose shed blood appeased the Father's wrath and washed us from our sins, but not from our body of death. Death is the ultimate punishment, the inevitable consequence of the sin of Adam and his wife.

A reading from the peoples of the Amazon, however, takes us on a broader and less moralistic and judgmental way. The land where the ancestors are buried is sacred land, is holy land, source of life: essential to recover the vital forces.

The parable tells us about the men and women who break the relationship of service and obedience because they want to get away from the earth to be like Yahweh Elohim⁷. The "temptation" is to be like God, just suggesting a misreading of "subduing the earth" the first parable. Wanting to be like God is wanting to be the owner of everything. This is the cause of all evils.

The "punishment" is turn back to serve life again, is back to serve the land. It will be with pain and fatigue, but the encounter with the land will always be quickening.

Until they return to the earth, because out of it wast thou taken; because you are dust, and to dust you will return. (Gen 3,19)

Come back, return: *shub*⁸. Convert: is the same verb. Convert to God and convert do earth. Return to serve and to obey; return to life in the fullest sense. There is not the word death in the words of Yahweh Elohim.

The following verse is decisive: it is the key to reading the "punishment":

And Adam called the name of his wife Havah / life / Eva; because he lives the mother of all living. (Gen 3,20)

⁷ This movement away from the earth to reach God is present also in the parables of the flood and the tower of Babel. Also in these parables back to the land is vital element.

⁸ The hieroglyphic symbols these letters is inside knowledge that makes drive = reconstruction of your identity.

Only now, at this moment what might appear to death, Adam manages to give a name to his wife: Life! Adam will carry the life out of the garden. Knowledge of women and serve the land, life may continue until we have new heavens and new earth and never will be tears and pain.

And Yahweh Elohim sent him forth from the garden of Eden to serve the ground from whence he was taken. (Gen 3,23)

And Adam Knew Life, his wife and she conceived. (Gen 4,1).

1.d Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord

The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands (Ps 19,1). All of us who celebrate with hymns and psalms to our God, we daily experience of calling all of creation to acclaim and proclaim the wonders of our God, to celebrate his glory, to manifest his power and his reiGen. Everything that exists proclaims, *Thy kingdom is the kingdom of all ages, your dominion extends to all generations (Ps 145,13).* *From Yahweh is the land with what it contains, the world and those who dwell therein (Ps 24.1-2).*

The whole creation is alive: skip the mountains, the rivers clap their hands, storms reveal our God.

Impresses the singing of three boys played the Emperor in the fiery furnace (Dan 3,57-90, LXX). Written in Greek, this text confronts the Greek model of ecology and economy that intended to impose the whole Mediterranean *oikoumene*: inanimate nature, pure matter, whose inexhaustible resources should be exploited to generate wealth in favor of the strongest. The creation, by contrast, is alive, is lively and participates in the great praise: Praise the Lord and celebrate him and magnify him for ever!

It is so in Turé, a typical dance of our Indians: everything that exists and lives is called to join the circle, only to join the party of the people, to do one thing with us, penetrating the life of dancing and celebrating. It is thus in the yards of *Candomblé* and *Umbanda*: everything is life, everything is interaction: heaven and earth meet, fertilize, produce and reproduce in an ongoing process of creation. So is the Bible.

Holy land, holy days, holy community: an indivisible trinity experiencing the movement of a single life, the Spirit!

Times of nature are holy times: crescents, plantings, harvests, vintages, estrus sheep, firstfruits, new wine, scented oil, everything becomes party, marking the times, the rhythms of this fruitful womb and generator, the sacred gestures of a people that celebrates their God / god (s), singular and plural at the same time.

We must free ourselves from the economic view that - whether capitalist or socialist - considers the nature "raw material" that only acquires value when turned into a commodity, into wealth.

If God has placed at our feet is all that is manifest how great is God's name in all the earth and how He loves us (Ps 8,3-9).

This is the root of a deep spirituality. This spirituality means to tune in holistic communion with the action of the Spirit of God, since it all began, continues creating and renewing the face of the earth: *Send thy spirit, and will create and renew the face of the earth* (Ps 104,30).

2. Eco-centered spirituality is Christian spirituality

In the hubris of our Western culture, our rationalist logic led us to use words with negative connotation, to speak of this common worldview to traditional populations: syncretism, polytheism, pantheism, animism, believing that all things and all beings have "soul / life, "the very life of God.

At best, we get to say that these pages are biblical narratives "mythical" typical of the "old" testament and that must be overcome by rational perspective, revealed in the "new" testament.

We need to advance: this spirituality is compatible with Christian spirituality? What would be the place of Jesus in ecocentrada spirituality?

Let's go back to the assertion Gen 1,27: *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

A full understanding of these words and therefore our mission of "images of God", is only possible through Jesus, the most complete and authentic "image of God". As the Apostle said in the letter to the Colossians:

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; because that is were all things created in heaven and on earth. Everything was created through him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things have consistency. " (Col 1,15-17).

The "single" life that pervades everything that exists is the life of Christ. Is that also repeats the Gospel of John that opens with the statement of the new Genesis, a clear parallel with the first page of the Bible:

"All things were made by Him and without Him nothing was made that was made" (Jn 1,3).

Subdue the earth, then, means to make all creation participates in the loving plan that God had created everything that exists when:

"Put Christ as head of everything in heaven and on earth" (Eph 1:10).

Subdue the earth, thus driving means everyone and everything to Jesus, his Kingdom of life and light, in which all and all have life, peace, abundance, without distinction of race, creed, social class and or scientific realms.

That's what the whole creation waiting for us that with Christ, in Christ and through Christ, we are the image of God on earth.

"The creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God" (Rom 8,19).

So we know that the moan of pain of creation is actually a groan of birth (Rom 8,22), the supreme sign of life and invincible hope (Jn 16,2-22).

Going against the Greco-Roman thought that claimed to be something totally inanimate nature and therefore subject to the interests of rational humans, Romans says that the creation is inextricably linked to humans: us she moans, she expects us, us she craves, she suffers with us. On the horizon of humanity and creation is the same hope of being freed from the *bondage of corruption*⁹, *given the freedom that is the glory of the children of God* (Rom 8,21).

The Spirit who, from the beginning, is the source of life, unites their groans to our moans and groans of creation and helps us in our weakness in the face of such a challenge (Rom 8,26-27).

Ecclesial communities, fueled by the certainty that everything "works for good with those who love God" (Rom 8,28), should always be the witnesses of the risen, living according to the "new creature", always seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, against false generators realms of injustice and death.

This is what the Spirit prompts us to do. Fighting, like Jesus, for life, against all the chaotic forces of death and exclusion, seeking to make the whole creation may reach the fullness of life that is contained therein.

This text (Rom 8,19-26) the creation, the children of God and the Spirit also form a kind of trinity, in which the three elements form a single reality, the construction of the freedom of the children of God that means freedom of all creation. Today science also comes confirming this holistic view that Paul and John, faithful to the Semitic worldview, proclaimed, against the Greek logical thinking.

3. Creator God, the God of all poor

The other issue that causes this reflection is crucial, especially in Latin America: What have another say deep ecology and spirituality of liberation?

In Memory of Amazonian divinity is always the Father's blessing and promise of life. Heirs of a long history of brutal exploitation, they resort to the deity, the saints, deities, healers, shamans, holy mothers, therefore keep sure, also celebrated in many psalms that God cares for them, do justice, not abandon those who trust in him.

The memory of the Elohim Creator of nature, of all that exists, should not be, under any circumstances, separated from Yahweh the savior of the poor and oppressed memory.

⁹ The Greek term *florá* mainly meant destruction, ruin, destruction, devastation.

*Blessed is he whose hope is in Yabweh, your Elohim,
Who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that therein is:
and keep your loyalty forever.*

*Doing justice to the oppressed and gives food to the hungry.
Yabweh frees the prisoners. Yabweh gives sight to the blind,
Yabweh raises the lowly, Yabweh loves the righteous.
Yabweh saves the stranger, sustains the orphan and the widow,
But the way of the wicked.*

*Yabweh reigns forever; thy Elohim, O Zion, reigns from generation to
generation. Hallelujah! (Ps 145,5-10 and countless other psalms. See also
Jd 9,11-12)*

Using the creation narrative to justify the domination over nature and over other human beings will always be blasphemous.

We can not forget that the first page of Genesis possibly finds its literary origins in chapters 40-55 of the book of Isaiah, known as Second Isaiah¹⁰. These pages were born in the difficult moments that male and female slaves, oppressed lived in captivity in Babylon.

This group was excluded and excluded that came the good news. There's rock bottom, a theology with completely new, unprecedented dimensions emerged, but what was happening from the beginning, since forever (Is 41,26; 43,19).

It is the announcement of the Creator God, the great mother, the only mother-generating life of everyone and everything: *I have formed you, you... I did... I created you, you... I modeled... I take you by the hand... I got you... I'm with you... I'll give you strength...*

In these pages, God ceases to be only the God of Israel. God is God of all, even the children without family, without genealogy, without the people, the oppressed cultures, excluded, marginalized (Is 45,9-12). All his children are also non-Jews, sons of violence, war and deportation (Is 45,23-24).

Never a message was so universal, so comprehensive, so inclusive!

These people suffered speaks of one God, but with an incredible amount of facets. Everything is a source of life for the weary and discour-

¹⁰ God's victory against darkness, waters, deserts and pits, the chaotic forces of death, is a significant presence in Second Isaiah (Isaiah 42,7; 43,2; 43,16; 44,3,4; 45,7; 48,21; 49,9; 50,2; 51,10) Tell yourself the same word *tohu* / chaos. The mythical origins of the opponent is also very present in the texts of the Second Isaiah (Is 34,11; 40,17,23; 41,29; 44,9; 45,18; 49,4). *For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it; who did not create it to be empty / tohu, but to be inhabited: I am the Lord and there is none else* (Is 45,18). See also GALLAZZI, S., «Through it God's plan will triumph», In *RIBLA*, vol. 21, Vozes, Petropolis.

raged poor is part of God that is unique, but for each of the poor takes on a different face, capable of generating life. God is one, not because it excludes, but because it combines in itself all the elements of life of popular religions. We found it the Canaanite God of rain and fertilizing dew (Is 45,8; 55,10-11); the modeler potter from Mesopotamian mythology (Is 45,9); the ruler of the seas (Is 51,15), and especially the mother goddess common to all Semites cultures (Is 46,3-4; 49,15; 66,9-13). For the first time God is called the Father:

Repairs from the heavens, and look from your holy and glorious habitation: Where are your jealousy and your strength? The thrill of thy bowels and of thy mercies¹¹ toward me over? For thou art our Father, when Abraham does not know us and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, Yahweh, are our Father; our Redeemer from of old is your name. (Is 63,15-16)

It is one God, but "full": all that is part of life, safety, hope for the poor, he meets, he adds, it encompasses a single deity, good, motherly, protective, consoling for all this suffering people : a unique and complete Elohim. The other gods do not exist: if the poor are already contained in it; if the oppressors, idols, pictures, are nothing / *tohu* are!

Single image of God is Adam, mankind, in the same time God's image and product of the fertile earth / '*adamah*. Adam: man and woman, created / to be the heirs of God's rule on earth. Representatives of God are not the kings, priests, the great, but the man and woman. Idols ever again!

The present values of these biblical passages have much to do with the values in the daily life of people of the Amazon. This is to establish a close and humble dialogue, evangelization attitude of Paul so we could paraphrase: Make us Indians with Indians, mestizos with mestizos, blacks with blacks, bordering with riparian, with the rubber tappers, do us all to each and all. This imagery of life and salvation inspired the prophets who proclaimed God's promises to his people suffered:

I will create new heavens and a new earth... there will no longer little children who live only a few days old or who do not complete their age... build houses to dwell in them, plant vineyards and eat their fruit... My elected themselves eat the fruit of the labor of their hands... (Is 65,17-25).

This is how the garden will come into our homes and in our daily lives and the sign of peace and life is resting, husbands, sons and daughters, under the vines and fig trees (Micah 4,4; Zech 3,10; 1Macc 14, 12).

It is the "land without evil" of the indigenous world.

¹¹ Literally "wombs". It is a God Mother, and now Father

4. Ecumenism, economy, ecology

The interaction between eco-centric spirituality and spirituality of liberation leads us to broaden our thinking about what we should understand by ecology.

The words economy, ecology and ecumenism come all the Greek language and originate from *oikeo* verb: to dwell. The feminine participle present passive of this verb is *oikoumenen*: the reality being inhabited. The derived noun is *oikoumene*.

This word was thus understood as "the whole inhabited world", "all human society", "the whole earth", at this saying it is customary to give a universal dimension.

Almost every time the word appears in the biblical texts¹² *oikoumene* has the connotation given to it in the classic text:

Of Yabweb is the earth and its fullness, the world (oikoumene) and those who dwell therein (Ps 24,1).

It is, however, interesting to note that the word *oikoumene* never appears in the Pauline texts¹³ and is very rarely used in the Second Testament. Despite his efforts to dialogue with the Greek world, Paul does not use this word, preferring to use, as in general in the Second Testament, the word *kosmos*.¹⁴

To the Greeks the word *oikoumene* indicated, almost always, people who were connected with the Greek political and commercial project. Barbarians and slaves were not part of *oikoumene*.

Let it be the same for the Roman Empire: *oikoumene* were the nations that formed the empire, the people taxed and commercially exploited by the empire¹⁵. *Oikoumene* what appeared to be an inclusive word, was, in fact, a strong element of exclusion. Some were *oikoumene* and many others do not.

This ambiguity explains the absence of this word in the Pauline texts. His statements are clear:

I am debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to the foolish (Rom 1,14).

¹² *Oikoumene*, the word appears in the LXX and NT: 2 Sam 22;16; 1 Es 2,2; Est 3,13; 2 Macc 2;22; Ps 9,9; 17,16; 18,5; 23,1; 32,8; 48,2; 49,12; 71,8; 76,19; 88,12; 89,2; 92,1; 95,10,13; 96,4; 97,7. 9; Odes 7,45; Pr 8,31; Sb 1,7; Is 10,14. 23; 13,5. 9. 11; 14,17. 26; 23,17; 24,1.4; 27,6; 34,1; 37,16,18; 62,4; Jer 10,12; 28,15; Lm 4,12; Ep. Jr 1,6,1; Dn 2,38; 3,2.45; Dat 3,45; Mt 24,14; Lk 2,1; 4,5; 21,26; At 11,28; 17,6.31; 19,27; 24,5; Rom 10,18; Heb 1,6; 2,5; Rev 3,10; 12,9; 16,14.

¹³ Romans 10,18 is a quote from the LXX.

¹⁴ *Oikoumene*. The word appears 15 times in the Second Testament, en as the word *kosmos* appears 150 times.

¹⁵ In this sense the word *oikoumene* appears, for example, in Luke 2.1 and Acts 17,6; 19,27.

There is no Greek or Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free; but Christ is all and in all (Col. 3:11).

The Kingdom of God is one thing, *oikoumene* is quite another (see also Mt 24,14, Lk 4,5; 21,26): it must be preached the Good News of the Kingdom¹⁶.

Why did all this explanation? Because the *oikeo* verb, also derives the *oikia* words *oikos*: home, house, residence, inhabited place, family.

The *oikoumene* is all the "homes" of all spaces that are inhabited. There is no way to separate the universal site.

Here, however, we must take into consideration that house, too, has never been synonymous with inhabiting it. Has the man and the woman has, has the father and the son has, is and has love slave. Internal relations within the home are determinants can be egalitarian:

There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal 3,28).

Or relationships within the home can be a domain of government:

All slaves who are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor; that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed (1 Tim 6,).

Older women (...) teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, good foraging home, subject to their husbands, so that the word of God be not blasphemed (Titus 2,3-5).

How much difference between man: owner / boss of the house (*oikodespotes*) and working woman of the house (*oikourgous*)!

That is why we need to define what our "ecology"¹⁷. What is our discourse about the house? Which house we're talking about when we use the word ecology?

Ecology is to say what we think of our house as a whole. Almost always - and this, entrepreneurs and environmentalists tend to be equal - it is understood ecology as our relationship with nature, the environment, we can say with our backyard. It discusses the environment, discusses how to run the yard, but not discussed what kind of house we want.

¹⁶ We must also say that the word *kosmos*, especially in John, has no global meaning of the world, the universe, but it identifies the negative forces that oppose the Kingdom. Is worth remembering that this ambiguity was also keeps us current times: word ecumenism - which should mean the attitude of encounter and respect among all who live in the same world inhabited - is almost always used to speak of the unity of the Christian churches, ecumenism excluding other religious expressions. For these it was necessary to create a word macro-ecumenism: an obvious redundancy.

¹⁷ Ecology comes from the Greek: *oikos* = house and *logos* = discourse. Tell whether it's coming from *oikos* = house and *nomos* = law, rule economy.

There are many people who, when they think of home, do not think an ordinary house, where all sit around the same table and break the same bread without distinction; still thinking about "big house" and "Slaves house".

Many speak in ecology, but are concerned only with the yard, with nature, with the environment that is out of the house and thus speak of sustainable development, in defense of land and water, but still not in a discussion "big house" of the rich, the ruling classes, industrial and financial corporations, privileged elites and corrupt countries fattening at the expense of an immense, incalculable "Slaves house" that is exploited, oppressed, excluded. Progress, growth, development, for them, means entering a part of the big house, even if it is remedied as a middle class. The slave quarters still not out of the minds of many of us.

We need to convert us, for the economy (law, organization, administration of the house) will depend on the ecology (which house we're talking about, what kind of house we want to live). If we continue to believe in the *big house*¹⁸, we have an economy based on financial speculation in industrial monopolies, privatization of public services - these realities that have nothing to do with ecology. An economy based on agribusiness, monoculture, mining, exports of raw materials, the slave labor, land concentration in the transgenic seeds, pesticides in the economy.

At best, we'll do the environmental impact studies and public hearings to try to minimize and correct the inevitable destruction that will be matched with few social handouts, with a temporary offer of employment, with the promise of tax that they then will always be discounted and some compensatory measures regularly slaughtered from income tax.

The big house will get the products and profits; the slave quarters and will work with the crumbs of social assistance and the yard will be devastated. The poor lose the land! The land will lose life! The real and most important difference is in the way of looking at the land, the water, the nature: socialist and capitalist they see it all as raw material that gets its value around goods which should be commercialized and privatized, leaving law and collective well-being. We want to look at the land, water, nature as our home, our mother and source of life for all creatures.

We understand that the struggle for land is today a special way fight for TERRA, with a capital T. It is the struggle for life on the planet that is violently threatened by a false concept of growth, development, progress and by an even more false idea that natural resources are endless. Learning from traditional communities which means a house made common tent, open to everyone, does not mean delay. Means abundant life for all and all.

¹⁸ Let's not forget that the word pharaoh means literally "big house".

Fighting for land and life on Earth is an ethical imperative to witness our fidelity to memory, tradition, ancestry, to our roots. It is fidelity to God's poor.

Fighting for land and life on Earth is a requirement that witness our sacred relationship with the earth, our mother, our friend, our lover, to which we must "serve" and "obey" her because every generation will have life in abundance. It is fidelity to the land that is of God and everyone and all of us.

Fighting for land and life on Earth is an obligation that bears witness to our faith in God. Ecology, depends not only on the economy but also theology. The house we think and determines what we want is the God to whom our house must be true. It is fidelity to the God of the poor.

This witness of fidelity to the God of the poor, the poor and the earth that God is God and everyone, took numerous comrades to love to the end, to shed their blood. Are the martyrs / witnesses that churches should never forget.

5. Ecology and ecclesiology

Our churches often followed and follow the logic of the big house and the slave quarters that misrepresented our relationship: temples, altars, sacrifices, hierarchies, governments are a thing of the big house, a blasphemous and diabolical sacral business, the same as, coupled with the oppressive empire, condemned to death Jesus of Nazareth.

The gospel of the kingdom of God invites us to make a difference inside and outside the church, home, desk, broken bread and service should replace temples, altars, sacrifices and dominations. That's what Jesus celebrated at supper. That is what we must continue testifying in his memory and his martyrdom.

Broken bread means land divided, shared assets, combating all concentrations against the exclusionary, violent and devastating landlordism. It is the defense of life against all forms of slavery, even those that are masked and are called growth market.

Bread broken is to believe that our home is a common hollow or, using biblical language, a "tent". Nor palaces or temples, or barracks or warehouses, or banks, or financial speculation.

Let us repeat once again: the word Pharaoh means "big house".

Our God, the God of our fathers and our mothers, the god/s of our ancestral peoples will never be in the big house, although gigantic temples they built and continue building.

Yahweh will always be the God of the Hebrews, the marginalized who just want to live in peace, and enjoy the fruit of the earth and its work, the bread and wine that we offered to the Lord to always be all and all.





An Ecological Theology of Liberation: Empowering Ecological Advocacy

Karl M. GASPAR CSsR
Manila, PHILIPPINES

Introduction

Of almost a hundred million people who constituted the population of the Republic of the Philippines, around 16 million Filipinos living in 14 provinces located along the typhoon's route suffered the brunt of super-typhoon Haiyan when it made a landfall in various islands in the central part of the country on 8 November 2013. Battered by the 378 km/hr winds thousands of Filipinos across the six central regions experienced the tragic consequences of a major catastrophe.

This is most especially true in the islands of Samar and Leyte, specifically Tacloban City and the towns of Tanauan and Palo. As estimated by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) 6,268 individuals died in the aftermath of Yolanda, with 28,689 persons injured. Until today, there are still 1,069 persons who remain missing.

The poverty statistics issued regularly by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) across the different regions, show that Region VIII (which include Samar-Leyte), is one of the poorest in the country. In 2012, the poverty incidence was 63.7% in Eastern Samar and 43.0% in Southern Leyte.

The impact of Haiyan was that it made the already poor people more destitute. This is most certainly true for those relying on fishing and farming, especially the coconut farmers. Yolanda damaged 3.3 million coconuts across 295,191 hectares of land affecting one million farming households. With around 30,000 boats damaged by the storm and crucial fishing equipment such as nets and cages smashed, fisherfolks are desperately hoping they could find livelihood assistance.

Located beside the vast waters of the Pacific Ocean, the Philippines is one of the most vulnerable countries in terms of the occurrence of typhoons or cyclones. On an average, 26 typhoons hit the Philippines every year.

The rise of ecological consciousness

Long before the rise of ecological consciousness in the past twenty years with the popularization of data related to global warming and climate change, there had been a gradual rise of resistance on the part of sections of the Filipino people to development projects – usually decided on by multinational corporations with support from State agencies – that were seen as impacting people’s lives. During the martial rule years under the Marcos dictatorship (1970s-1980s), various development projects were being aggressively pushed, allegedly to benefit the population. In fact, these only benefited the corporations, as well as Marcos and his cronies.

To generate more electricity, the State planned to set up a number of giant dam projects involving the Chico River in the Mountain Province north of Manila, Lake Sebu and Pulangi River in central Mindanao and the expansion of dams along the river that flows out of Lake Lanao. The Lake Lanao and Pulangi sites succeeded despite the opposition from various groups, but those of the Chico River and Lake Sebu were stopped by the strong resistance of local communities supported by civil society agencies including Church groups.

Towards the end of the martial rule, there arose a movement to stop all logging operations in Mindanao. When President Cory Aquino took over as President, local communities in various parts of Mindanao staged people power barricades to stop logging operations.¹ These were the Base Ecclesial Communities (BECs) organized in the post-Vatican II Local Church of Mindanao through the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference mainly composed of rural peasants who relied on waters flowing from watersheds to their rice paddies. Through the years, they had noticed how the rivers were affected by the logging operations. When the State refused to heed their call to stop the logging, they took to the streets and barricaded the roads so logging trucks could not bring the cut logs to the ports in the coastal cities.

The people in their BECs were supported by members of religious congregations who had missions in the upland areas including the Columbans, Redemptorists and Scarboro Missionaries. This ecological grassroots movement drew the attention of the members of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference in the Philippines (CBCP) which made them issue a historic pastoral letter, the first to arise of any Bishops’ Conference in the world. Issued on 29 January 1988, it was entitled - What is happening to our beautiful land?

¹ These took place in Midsalip, Zamboanga del Sur and San Fernando, Bukidnon. See Karl M. Gaspar, *A People’s Option: To Struggle for Creation*.

A theology arising as ecology becomes a pastoral priority

Among other things, this statement attempted to reflect the cry of the people as they saw nature being damaged. They referred especially to the cry of the indigenous people who had seen the destruction of their world at close range. It pointed to the exploitative mentality as the root of the problem which they saw was in variance with Jesus' Gospel. They commented that this attack on the natural world benefited only a very few Filipinos. They warned that the rapid destruction of the very base of the living world endangered its fruitfulness to benefit future generations.

For them, this assault on creation was sinful and contrary to the teachings of the Christian faith. They asked the people not to ignore and disregard the Earth. They reminded them that God will hold everyone responsible for plundering it and leaving it desolate. They ended their statement with these words: "We reap what we sow; the results of our attitude and activities are predictable and deadly. There is an urgency about this issue which calls for widespread education and immediate action."

Despite the end of martial rule, the residue of the military dictatorship remained. The peasants who barricaded the streets were not only harassed and threatened with arrest and imprisonment. When they persisted with their people power, they were attacked by the military at the barricades. The security guards of the logging companies were also mobilized to harass those who persisted in their campaign to end all logging operations. Fr. Nery Lito Satur, a young diocesan priest of the Diocese of Malaybalay, who was at the center of this campaign, was killed on 14 October 1991 allegedly by armed guards of a logging company backed up by the military. His martyrdom sparked more mobilizations which strengthened the call for the State to implement a logging moratorium.

When bishops, religious and lay leaders came together for the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines in Manila two years later, they issued its Acts and Decrees. The Filipino members of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) echoed the same theological reflection.

A Filipino theology of creation springs from involvement in liberation struggles - whether against economic exploitation, political repression, gender oppression, ethnic discrimination or ecological destruction - is necessarily an integrated one. It is in touch with the movement of the Holy Spirit not only in the people's lives but in the whole of creation. It is rooted in our Christian faith tradition and at the same time aware of our animist rootings which consider sacred our soil, forests and rivers, which are concerned with concrete bodily needs while caught up in the spirit world, which have produced a richness of popular symbols and rituals.²

² Ligo, Arche and Virginia Fabella, eds., *Dugo-Duga ng Buhay (Vital Sap of Life)* 1995, p. 15.

EATWOT has not ceased to draw attention to ecological issues, as can be viewed at its theological journal VOICES of the Third World: <http://eatwot.net/VOICES> EATWOT has also dedicated some of its assemblies and meetings to the same issue.

Earlier, the World Council of Churches (WCC) assemblies dealt with ecological realities. In Vancouver in 1983, they pointed to the need for Christians to be engaged in actions to promote Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. In May 1994, it published a statement on global warming with a document entitled – Sign of Peril, Test of Faith, Accelerated Climate Change. In 2002, they came up with another document on climate change – Solidarity with victims of Climate Change – pointing to the extreme weather conditions caused by climate change that was costing a fortune. Eventually, the Church's central Magisterium also issued pastoral exhortations and other documents. Catholic social teaching that tangentially dealt with ecological issues already appeared in 1971 with Pope Paul VI's two documents—*Octogesima Adveniens* and *Iustitia in Mundo*. The Pope critiqued the exploitative model of development and the unjust economic systems that promoted extreme inequalities.

However, it was John Paul II who would advance the Magisterium's exhortations dealing with ecology. During his papacy's twenty-seven years, he issued four important documents, namely, *Redemptor Hominis* (1979), *Laborem Exercens* (1981), *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987), and *Centesimus Annus* (1991) which all mentioned the need to deal with the environmental issues. Also in *Centesimus Annus*.

On 1 January 1990 he issued the document – Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all Creation – which called attention to the moral and religious dimension of the environmental crisis. He posited that “modern society will find no solution to the ecological problem unless it takes a serious look at its life style.” On 17 January 2001, in a statement he referred to the ecological reality as a “catastrophe” and called for an ecological conversion for everyone.

In 1989, the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) issued an FABC Paper No. 54 with the title *Peace, Justice and the Integrity of Creation*.” In 2004, the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church's Chapter on Safeguarding the Environment* echoed many of John Paul II's ecological exhortations.

His successor, Pope Benedict XVI, continued this ecological advocacy in the encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), containing four sections on environmental concerns. His message for the 2010 World Day of Peace was also devoted to the theme, *If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation*.

Since 2000, many other church groups and institutions dealt with Ecology during their gatherings. In its annual convention in 2007, the

Catholic Biblical Association of the Philippines (CBAP) centered its theme on the Bible and Ecology. In 2010, the Damdaming Katoliko sa Teolohiya (DAKATEO), which is the Catholic Theological Society of the Philippines, chose Reimagining Christianity for a Green World as the theme for its theological reflections. In its seventh General Assembly at Yogyakarta (Indonesia) in April 2012, the EATWOT released a strong statement on Ecological Vision and Planetary Survival.

More theologians would write on this theme, too. Holman wrote: "Ours is a project of hope for a better future: that God's creation will be treated with reverence, that the poor will be better off and that we will be living more true to ourselves and to what God has created us to be – one family, living in solidarity with one another and many generations yet to come."³ O'Brien reminded us that God created the earth and passed on the responsibility to us to care for this earth. But, "we have seriously neglected this important responsibility. It is now time to restore a more sustainable relationships with our environment, so that all human beings have the opportunity to live in dignity."⁴

A theologian who has extensively written his reflections on the Theology of Creation is the Columban Sean McDonagh. In one of his documents, he posits that the Christian tradition is to be blamed for the worsening ecological crisis. He quotes the historian White: "... (W) e shall continue to have a worsening ecological crisis until we reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence but to serve man.... Both our present science and technology are so tintured with orthodox Christian arrogance towards nature that no solution for our ecological crisis can be expected from them alone."⁵

McDonagh finds this ironic considering that "the biblical tradition gave rise to people like St. Benedict of Nursia whose monks cared for the land and did so much to revolutionize agriculture in Medieval Europe; it also gave rise to St. Francis of Assisi who saw all creatures as neighbours and part of the family of God... and it nurtured Hildegard of Bingen – a remarkable woman, poet, mystic, musician, painter, herbalist and counsellor to popes and kings (whose) ... poetry pulsates with a rapturous, sensuous love for the earth, full of ardour and passion."⁶

³ Holman, Michael. "The Amazon Changed me." *The Tablet*, 5 December 2009, pp. 10-11.

⁴ O'Brien, Keith. 2009. "Stewards of Creation." *The Tablet*, 19 September 2009, pp. 6-7.

⁵ Lynn White, US historian, in a lecture to the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1966. In Sean McDonagh's, "Consuming the Earth in a Few Decades". January 2010

⁶ McDonagh, Sean. *Ecology and the Bible*. 2010.

A Filipino theologian, Rey Raluto has recently proposed that for the Philippines, the theology of creation model is one that he labels “the emerging ecological theology of liberation”.⁷ As a theologian, he continues to challenge theology practitioners to be part of a movement to develop a non-anthropocentric perspective on liberation. This move is meant to critically appropriate the ecological insights of both the emerging Earth sciences as well as the ecological worldviews of the indigenous peoples.

Raluto expands the view of liberation so that it encompasses the structurally oppressed class of poor people, the culturally excluded indigenous peoples, the sexually dominated women, and the ecologically exploited earth. A preferential option for the poor thus becomes more inclusive of all that which is marginalized. It leads to the insight that the being of creatures is relational on both the horizontal and vertical frames. Injustices do not just fall from the sky; oppression arise within the context of relationship impacting human society and the planet at the local and global levels.

Finally, Raluto posits that “the Kingdom of God must be treated with absolute importance...The normativity of God’s Kingdom serves as the central hermeneutic mediation in our construction of an ecological theology of liberation. In fact, from a Christian perspective, our struggle for human and ecological liberation becomes meaningful only when it is done in view of our hope for the coming of God’s Kingdom—the total salvation of the whole creation.”⁸

Twenty years after their landmark pastoral letter, the members of the CBCP issued another very strong statement – Upholding the Sanctity of Life, issued on 5 November 2008.

In his statement on 5 June 2014 which celebrated World Environment Day, Pope Francis has sustained the ecological stances of the two previous Popes.

My own journey towards an ecological faith praxis

Having worked with indigenous peoples and rural poor communities, mainly in the southern part of the Philippines, I have been immersed among the poorest of the poor. I have shared their lives, listened to their stories, engaged in their struggles and participated in various pastoral programs aimed at responding to the issues – socio-economic-political ,

⁷ Raluto, Rey. Raluto Rey. “To Struggle for Human and Ecological Liberation, Towards an Ecological Theology of Liberation in the Philippine Context.” 2010.

⁸ Ibid.

cultural and ecological – affecting the most disenfranchised communities. I have been a witness to how the poor have suffered because of their poverty and powerlessness, the neglect of the State who have continued to ignore their plight, and lately, owing to the impact of climate change.

I have been engaged in campaigns and programs of non-government organizations and the Church in the fields of human rights, alleviating poverty, engaging in issues linked to justice, peace and the integrity of creation. I have also been privileged to listen to their cry and lamentations. I have been touched by their deep faith in God's providence and compassion. Despite their poverty, they continue to trust and depend on God's love for them. They are convinced that God is Creator of everything in creation and that we all share the responsibility of loving one another as well as the whole creation. This is why they can so easily be convinced of the need to work for social and ecological issues.

On the part of the indigenous peoples, I have been very moved by their wholistic view of their cosmic religion, namely, that everything in the universe is inter-related. There is a wholeness in their respect and appreciation of creation; their believe in their Deity is such that nothing - human beings, forests, the soil, animals, trees, etc. – is to be considered useless and have no purpose. All are intertwined, and thus, we should do our best to protect them from being destroyed.

I share many of the beliefs and commitments of the poor to reverse what used to be the dominant discourse of most people, namely, that the world was created for peoples and that human beings can just decide what to do with the environment. We have to change this mentality that has led to ecological destruction and which has provided the loggers, miners, construction firms, fruit plantation companies, with the power to be the ones to solely decide on what to do with nature. We should view the whole universe from the lens of those who have been provided by God with the wisdom to value the integrity of creation.

My own awareness of the ecological crisis and my faith commitment to help protect Mother Nature only arose in the late 1980s when I was immersed among peasants opposed to the continuing logging operations in their locality. Through the years, I deepened this commitment in advocating for the end of aerial spraying in the fruit plantations and destructive open-pit mining. These engagements have not been easy as we've been faced with powerful enemies, greedy corporate firms supported by a corrupt government with a military-police machinery supporting the interests of the elite. But I continue my ecological commitment because:

As a Christian, I fully believe that taking a preferential option for the poor today also means taking a preferential option for creation, since the ones who suffer the most from the ecological crisis are the poor.

As a Christian, I fully believe that all of God's people have a right to a fullness of life. Today in terms of the context of all kinds of crises including the ecological one, there is fullness of life if we are able to contribute to a movement that will eventually provide what the poor needs in the context of their biological, physical, social, cultural, faith and ecological concerns. All these cannot be attained if the whole of creation is fragmented, disrupted and destroyed. The fullness of our life necessarily require the full integrity of creation which is the locus of God's love for the whole of humanity.

As a Christian, I fully believe that God's gift of salvation for humanity is situated within God's gift of creation. We cannot be saved only from the perspective of a dream of a heaven beyond life and beyond this earth. We are also saved in the here and now, in the joys and pleasures that we are able to enjoy with the people, communities and persons we love. But these expressions of joys and pleasures are brought about by the beauty, goodness and generosity of the universe which is our abode and the locus of our being creatures of the one Creator. As a Christian we show compassion for the rest of humanity – people of various races, genders, creeds, cultures, faith traditions, ages, social classes, ethnicities – by doing the little we can so that the whole of humanity are not made to suffer in a world characterized by pollution, diseases and suffering brought about by ecological damnation. Instead, that we are able to do the little we can to provide humanity with a world that was truly God's gift to all of us, an earth that manifests God's love and generosity because it is an earth that mirrors creation when it first appeared in the horizon before human beings began to destroy it.

A choice of life or death, blessing or curse

When super-typhoon Haiyan struck the islands of central Philippines on 8 November 2013, the members of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer were gathered together with their Father General from Rome at a retreat house in Cebu City. We were having a conference on our congregation's missiological thrust for the Asia-Pacific Region. We shared on how we were going to be more relevant to the needs of this Region in the years to come. Haiyan showed us one of the paths we need to follow as the new normal for us in the Philippines is the occurrence of mega-disasters.

We have a parish in Tacloban City at ground-zero of Haiyan. The church was filled with 3,000 survivors of the typhoon that brought a storm surge that drowned thousands of residents in the city and the nearby coastal areas. We immediately organized a relief program to assist the survivors distributing food, potable water and other urgent needs of the people. We also set up medical teams to take care of the wounded

and sick. Within a month, we had a missionary team composed of our confreres, lay associates and formands who went to the affected areas to assist the survivors. From our parish in the city, we moved to the affected villages in the outlying coastal areas. We were to spend four months among the survivors who found temporary shelters in wherever there could be a place for them to stay from churches to tents to temporary dwellings. The impact of the catastrophe was widespread; the devastation was so severe. Thus, there was so much that needed to be done.

We conducted various activities in these villages. As we visited their homes, we listened to the people's stories of struggle and survival. In many cases, the retelling of the stories brought tears as the survivors continued to process their grief and sorrow at the death of so many relatives. As many families lost not just one but a few members of their families, it was heartbreaking to listen to their narratives of survival. As they were sharing their stories, they were engaged in the self-healing of their trauma.

Our presence among them and the mere act of just listening to their narratives brought relief for which the people were grateful. Many had received relief goods and material assistance from various groups and agencies but we usually were the first to spend time listening to their stories in their homes and to provide them a listening ear as well as words of consolation. We did family rituals in these homes that helped to assuage their fears and anxieties as well as bless their newly built shelter. We also visited the sick, persons with disabilities and senior citizens.

As thousands died in the areas we covered, we conducted various liturgical celebrations and rituals to commemorate the event, remember the dead and to pray for the living. Masses for the dead were celebrated; at the start of the Mass we read the list of names of victims. We did blessings and cleansing of spots where dead people were deposited for a while before the dead bodies were brought to the mass graves. We also conducted these rituals at the mass graves where thousands of people were hastily buried days after they perished in the deluge.

We also facilitated psycho-social-spiritual integration (PSSI) sessions with children (7 to 12 years old) and the youth (13 above) giving special attention to those who lost significant elders of their families and clans. We had feeding programs during these sessions as the kids go hungry during these kind of sessions. We also had PSSI sessions for adults, separating the mothers from the fathers. These sessions always ended with either a Eucharistic celebration or rituals to provide solace to their sense of guilt, grief and desperation. We also raised resources for the rehabilitation needs of the people as we supported efforts in the areas of housing, provision of livelihood possibilities and income-generating projects.

This four-month experience with the survivors of Haiyan has further strengthened my resolve to sustain my engagement in ecological advocacy and action in the Philippines. Within the church circles, I continue to help popularize the emerging ecological theology of liberation for Filipinos. However, in the post-Haiyan, my engagements have taken on a greater urgency having experienced the enormity of the impact of a mega-disaster.

Indeed, we have only one choice and it has to be a choice for life and for blessings as we seek to do our share in the promotion of the integrity of creation.

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Theology of Liberation, Epistemology and Spirituality

From the new interpretations of the world

Ivone GEBARA
São Paulo, BRAZIL

Translated by Alice Médez

One has to feel life before searching for meaning.

Iris María Landrón.

Today we are experiencing a time of new attempts at understanding the complex being we are. The more we think we know what we are, the more we find ourselves in unexpected and new situations. The perceptions and statements are varied depending on the point of view from where we see and describe the human being. Each science has its own epistemology conditioned by the different contexts of scientists and their sciences. The physicist will say we are an aggregate of atoms, the biologist that we are a living organism with a genetic code. The religious will say we are creatures of God. The modern scientists stress reason, the post-modern distrust reason as a road to truth. The colonialists impose their beliefs and visions, the same can be said of different popular groups marked by different contexts and experiences. We approach different “objects” of the world, of people around us as “blank slates”. We are engraved with ancestral memories, different influences, values, times, places, beliefs, fears, desires, rages by which we end up all different. But this distinction is not a division; it is the trademark of our individuality, of our own subjectivity open to social life and dialogue with people aiming at the plural construction of our world. It is that sociability we collectively build the world where we live.

Meanwhile, we realize the difficulty of a dialogue and of finding the happiness we desire. Each person and each group tries to impose what they believe imagining they are true and victorious. For this reason they fight and kill each other, considering them many times as enemies.

We persist in dreaming that our group and our way of seeing the world and of thinking should dominate the point of view of others. We do not break from universalism, hierarchies and exclusivism of beliefs from the past and we try to impose our visions and passions to the history of our contemporaries. We live hence different forms of totalitarianism most of the time unaware of our limits. All this invites us to scribble some ideas about what we perceive in ourselves and in our circumstances trying to learn from each other the lessons of our lives.

1. Something about our world today: instantaneous perceptions

We are attending and participating in something more or less new in the long history of humanity. This process began to take shape and to be significant since the XVIII and XIX centuries until today. In each historical moment and sometimes concomitantly it influenced ways of thinking and acting. We sharpen so well our knowledge that we end up tapping on essential references of our life and of our beliefs of past centuries. For example, the so called “deep ecology” not only just touched all the complex matter of Earth dwellers, but also of the planet as a living thing born from a stellar explosion. That knowledge placed the truth of religious myths in check, mainly the monotheists who placed the beginning of the world in the will of a unique God who created and submitted all beings so his sovereign will. The ecological movements of all diversity of flags and ideologies removed humans from the centre of the universe and stated the centrality of all living beings. From human-centrism we went to talk of bio-centrism or of zoo-centrism overthrowing the human being or imagining him dethroned of his prerogatives of dominance over living beings. Meanwhile we know well that the ecological movement has great contradictions having been co-opted by the capitalist world which found the word ecology positive as a new way of continuing the present exploration. What is “ecologically correct” many times is what favours a type of agriculture, of exploration of the earth and of consumption with a nice cloak that covers national and international groups of economic interests. As well, many groups continue to work on the concept of nature as if the human being was not part of it, as if we were not the fruit of the same vital order or as if the riches we now explore such as oil did not come as a fruit of huge catastrophes of the planet. In other words, we let ourselves be eluded by nice words and fashionable strong arguments not having a clear idea of what we can do with the dumps and disposable materials we permanently produce. The garbage we produce is in some way also what we are. Our body is a consumer and producer of garbage. It is us who “produce” the tonnes that are daily collected. We cannot underestimate the garbage that is there nor ignore it as if it was something we had nothing to do with.

We run the risk of idealising ecology by mistaking it for “self-help” and with a romantic view of animals and plants as different from human beings. Although the present ecologic novelty is fruit of new perceptions and conquests of human beings it is not exempted from big contradictions, especially when it makes use of propaganda to enforce vested interests.

A displacement is also verified of the symbolism that expresses the relationships between all beings. The hierarchical and pyramidal forms are criticised in favour of circular forms marked by interdependence. Along this line the vision of the cosmos of native peoples has been re-valued and used by the new currents that criticise the anthropological centralism. Despite that cultural valuation, many were and are now being used outside their original contexts in something like a new syncretism led by the most varied groups, mainly of the middle class. The new syncretism present in Latin America many times sinned by using and appropriating themselves of the indigenous and African traditions which were brought by the colonial black slavery, in an attempt to make justice to those peoples, generating identity conflicts and disrespect for those traditions. The idea that we have to show inclusive behaviours, an idea also used in a limited way, ended up mixing and reducing the originality of the differences in many religious expressions. And not only this, it ended up misrepresenting symbols and meanings typical of a religious tradition trying to include everything in everything without going deep into the differences or similarities of those meanings born from specific histories. This procedure is important indeed to live a plural dialogue. These traditions are vulgarised, making of them an exposed show in big celebrations of brotherhood among peoples and exposing them to the mass media as a cultural novelty and example of inclusive behaviour. But when the white consciousness, maybe to alleviate its historical guilt, wants to act in good faith, it immediately takes hold of another tradition in its own way. Trying to save it and respect it, many times it turns it into an object of research and policies without direct participation of those involved. It established in this way a new colonialism while proclaiming a post-colonialism. This criticism does not invalidate the efforts towards an inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue which we attend to at this time and place, but we bring to the attention the risks of a probably unconscious and naïf manipulation we are used to doing. Good faith and respect for the other do not substitute the need to place ourselves in the shoes of other persons subject to our benevolence or our new interpretations of human relationships.

The feminist theological movement as well built up walls and ditches in relation to ancient meanings of the patriarchal monotheist religions. We lose past references not being able to make the new inter-

pretations valid in the middle of the world of women and, most of all of the poor women. When looking for new meanings the theological feminism was rejected as well by religious hierarchies and by the mass Christianity in its different forms. The big masses dependent on devotional Christianity, dependent on celestial beings and their masculine terrestrial power could not assimilate the challenges the women were sending to Christianity. They did not understand the revolution of the images of the divine nor the proposals of equal rights within the ecclesiastical institutions. The feminist movement, mainly the theological, remained tied to certain groups without strong references in popular sectors. We made new biblical and theological interpretations for ourselves and a few men who are sympathetic with the cause of feminine dignity. Our old convictions of introducing a new feminine role in churches, with our own vindications and new meanings continued being rejected by those institutions where the role of women is only accepted in the domestic area. The “war between the sexes” and between “genres” is still open or concealed and very present within the social spheres and mainly the religious ones. Many speeches are being given also by the hierarchy in churches in relation to women’s dignity, but the effective changes have not touched the hearts and minds in a significant way thus opening the possibility of a real change. Meanwhile, the movement continues with its ups and downs in the hope that the processes of maturation of knowledge and of critical conscience keep going and, many times, in unpredictable ways.

The philosophical movement initiated particularly in the XIX century, overcoming the traditional metaphysics, that is, the death of transcendence that leads human actions beyond human will was accentuated in the XX and XXI centuries. A new wave of metaphysical atheism imposed itself on the different anthropological, theological and social interpretations. An elite of intellectuals and social movements was the protagonist of the new ideals born especially in the European continent. Reality appeared more complex and marked by unpredictability which not even God dominated. Life was stated in its constitutional fragility of life and death. The mixture we are appeared even more clear and paradoxical. On the one hand a new value is given to the possibilities of the human being and on the other the inter-dependence in relation to many experiences and events. But, despite this, a new loneliness appears, an indefinite feeling of the value of the human being in the middle of the violence and cruelty of which we are capable to produce and also in the midst of actions of solidarity and brotherhood we demonstrate. The “death” of the metaphysical God also killed some human hopes, maybe utopian hopes, but able to move bodies and hearts, able to console and warm up lives when the cold of “lack of meaning” ravages and the “dark night” turns too long.

What was called post-colonialism also shook the structures of many religious and social traditions. We realised we were living religious experiences, social and political beliefs that came from those who historically were dominators of others and especially our ancestors. We then wanted to de-construct those beliefs, show their political and ideological motivations, reveal the atrocities they were capable of and assert ourselves finally as post-colonial. Are we really in practice what we say we are? Or is it that a new colonialism of certain characteristics, that is one without a definite place and time of birth and of expansion is imposing itself? And it is expanding beyond our traditional concepts of space and time which our humanist compasses used to orientate? Maybe now it is about a new colonialist face giving the impression that we are free from the old lords, the old metropolis, from the gods imposed on us for adoration, from laws coming from without. It seems we woke from a dream and of dreams that lasted for centuries and now, finally, free from our old currents we can affirm our freedom to proclaim our own word. But, what forms to they have? How do we live them and expand them to other persons? What new solidarities are surging in our immediate horizon? How are we beating the weapon industries who win ever more clients with their innumerable provoked wars? I do not have answers but I am convinced that love has not left the world and it is necessary to recognise it in our new languages and situations.

Through those new situations we find that we have changed the paradigm or the references for our knowledge of the world. We no longer represent with certainty how the world of the future must be as in the XVIII and XIX centuries. We no longer talk of structures that sustain society as in the first half of the XX century and of the consequent urgency of changing economic and cultural structures of society. This old reference seems not to take into account the complexity of events lived and of the change we have experienced. And the question about us as human beings comes back again inexorably.

At present the new paradigm of knowledge has to do with information, of social processes that change but the human aim of our common history does not appear in a different way. We are permanently being "formatted", disorganised and re-organised. We bear for a short period a certain way of being, acting and consuming and suddenly we realise that the novelty is already another one. And we are no longer the teachers, the professors, the ancient traditions of wisdom which invite us to converse, but it is the new technologies of the market that make the previous forms of communication and knowledge obsolete. It is not a previous time from the past century, but a present that is permanently changing. Enough to see the always new programmes of computing, mobile phones, automata, airplane and car models. Everything seems to be an extension of our

body marked by the immediacy and acceleration of the present history. It is enough to realise how the virtual world governs our lives and our consent without a choice, without rebellion in relation to the massification of everyday life. Despite its limits, the virtual world appears as a new way of bringing us together, but without the direct interaction of our bodies. Our struggle maybe virtual, within my room in front of a computer or walking in the streets with my mobile phone connected. In a certain way we do without the physical body of the other, of his context, in the same way as the other does without my body for something to happen between us. Our perception of the world, that is, the relationship between ourselves and the world where we live and construct, is so immediate and changing that we are not even able to think in an organised way about it. We are driven by the current of the metropolis with consequences in small cities that copy the models in fashion. And, in this current, no doubt good things may happen in ways we did not know in the recent past. A lot of attention is needed to apprehend and understand what they tell us.

The feeling many of us have, mainly those who have lived half a century, is that we are lost in a jungle of stones where buildings are destroyed over the night and other strange buildings appear. We are talking and speaking another language, with electronic signs, with another spelling, with other meanings. Our deities have changed, as well as the purpose of life and our causes. Songs dear to our ears, libertarian poems, the hope that one “day will turn” when the poor will be liberated and the “weapons of war will be turned into ploughs”, seem many times naïf dreams of our infancy, although it nurtured and attracted us in the past.

All this also means that we have changed or try to change our epistemologies and our spiritualities. That change is marked by the pluralism of the many interpretations in conflict, at our disposal in our time and global space. What is more, it attests the presence of many epistemologies that co-inhabit or exclude themselves in many spaces and times, as well as virtual ways in which the space and time are no longer absolute references for us. All that is too new and was not incorporated in the lives of many of us.

2. Epistemological changes and imprecisions

What happens when we change epistemology? This change really implies a different view we assume gradually in life. It is not just a theoretic work where we fix our theories about the world in another way, but there is something that changes within us and makes us feel and take a different view of the world. To know is not only an intellectual act, but a bodily act, a social act, a political act, an intra and inter-worldly act that modifies our being and our behaviours. To know is to know oneself, to see oneself, to open oneself to know the others always in the chiaroscuro of our approximations. And that knowledge is expressed in the different

areas of our life even in what we call “inner life”. The inner life is at the same time an external life in which we express to our world the choices we make and what we choose not to live. Those choices not always are in favour of our well-being or a common well-being, but maybe ideological and illusory choices marked by individualistic or corporate interests. To choose is not always to choose well as to know is not always to know well. We are not exempt of passions, vices, hatred, grudges, revenge in our cognitive and behavioural processes. The “art” of war or the many fights we start do not necessarily mean we are on the good road, that is, the road which is most favourable to the common life. Our roads frequently encounter dead end streets and crossroads. This is our human condition.

One question arises: is it possible to know our world and ourselves in a radically different way to that in which we were initiated? Or is it that we can ignore the most important events of the world and preserve our little world? And when we talk of knowing the world, what are we indeed talking about? To which part of the world do our knowledge and its explanation as a theoretical discourse refer? It is clear that we refer in the first place to the immediate world, the world of home, of survival, of very proximate relationships and only in the second place to the vast world. Therefore, this small world or this part of the world seems to be our point of initial reference for any form of knowledge. And this world includes my personal history, my interests, my values and choices interacting with others.

I think change is possible, but we always keep residues of the past, of our previous way of seeing and thinking the world. We keep as well the new information that comes to us from social and cultural movements of our time, despite the possibility of keeping ourselves away from it all.

Many times we have the illusion of the new classifications and we imagine the novelty is able to overcome the old models of knowledge. It would be enough that some scientists or people of prestige criticise the previous systems or the new ones to believe that the changes or fissures appeared under an alleged previous homogeneity. Some of us are led by the new words of science thinking that it gives us the new line of truth to which we must adhere and trust. But we do not perceive how much contradiction can be hidden in new theories, and worst of all, provoke existential breakdowns in relation to common human beings. We create new casts, new churches, new clubs, new dictionaries where all talk the new language and feel well with the new interpretations. My question is in relation to the changes that favour the common well-being, mainly that of those marginalised. Who is transformed and what is transformed with our new philosophical, social and theological theories? What is more, how can we understand the real and ordinary knowledge when virtuality, seems to have invaded all the areas of our life? That changing

virtuality drags us from our previously known space and time that were our standing point. Now it seems we are entering something changing and fluid. This is a challenging question that encompasses as well our philosophical notions of the past as well as the post-modern theories. We are all in a world with no fixed space and no fixed time. We sail through many times and spaces simultaneously as if we were de-contextualising contexts. It is enough to access the computer, connect ourselves to be in a world apparently bigger than our world, a world where knowledge and information are there for us just with a click of our machines. Many times we mistake information with knowledge. In a certain way, we dispense with interiority and maturation of the assimilation processes when we deal with virtual information.

There are groups, and no doubt the majority of the outskirts of the world, who totally ignore the new approximations of the physical sciences and particularly of the human sciences. There are Christians who absolutely ignore the liberation theology, the feminist theology, the eco-theology, and live as if these things were not part of the wider history. They live their “minimal history”, their everyday wrapped by the fight for survival. Their Christianity refers to the mythical world of their devotions, a world that gives them security from the menaces of the day to day life, from the suffering and cruelty that surround us. They live invoking protection “from above” seeing suffering as something terrifying and devastating. And by living this relationship with beings from another realm or living on other planes, as it is frequently said, they are undoubtedly introducing and maintaining forms of knowledge or interpretative epistemologies of their world. These have the function of exorcising fears and introducing more promising hopes in their lives. They follow a hierarchical model of power where we are all dependent from extra-terrestrial forces that lead us and condition us. This is not new, but it survives as all the novelties of the moment.

3. Spirituality: what is it really?

The present challenges invite us to re-think what spirituality is, and, above all what we live and call spirituality in daily life. We are seeing an erosion of the traditional meaning which linked spirituality with religions. The novelty of modern times is the many people and groups claim having spirituality, but they are not affiliated to any religious faith in particular. They detach one thing from the other and they do not have any link with one cultural tradition of the past. There is in many persons a growing conscience of finding a new humanism although it is imprecise and vague.

That is why we are challenged to re-contextualise meanings and searches of that “something” said to be our lives’ spiritual nutrient. The

world spirituality, beyond its etymology (*spiritus* = spirit, breath of life) reminds us of something good, something that helps our life, gives us directions, convictions, helps us cultivate the taste for life, to have certain limits and not to succumb before the many difficulties of every day. There are words that have a positive force able to awake in us good things. Spirituality is one of them.

Many of us have already left the conceptions of ‘spiritual schools’ present in Christianity and in other religions to assert a different search anchored in the discovery of ourselves and our world. We depart from the idea that some must dictate norms over our spirituality and constitute themselves as authorities over us. Many have already introduced certain separation between a spiritual search of self-knowledge and social and political order that seem to contradict that search and situate spirituality in a superior level to ordinary life or as a parenthesis of everyday life. Meanwhile, we well know that the Christian perspective of liberation emphasizes the priority of a change of heart and at the same time a change of the unjust social order. The presence of the oppressed and the suffering is a permanent challenge for many who do not separate their life from the unjust order in which we live. A personal and collective responsibility seems to impose against the many sufferings of our brothers. The problem, meanwhile, is in the difficulty to find new collective roads of action within a present erosion of social norms and respect towards values of coexistence. An aggressive individualism seems to take account of human relations in the middle of speeches about the importance of pluralism and human rights. We want to find the guilty, make justice with our hands, solve situations in a manner first convenient for ourselves. In this climate of insecurity and mistrust in human relations I believe it necessary to be connected as well to what we reject as social experiences to see how to transform garbage into fertilizer, how to recycle what is there, how to rescue from past traditions new meanings for the present in contemporary and plural languages. We have to learn to ask again “what do you want me to do” and listen to the request with the ears of the heart. Many times the challenge seems immense, especially when we think everything depends on us. We may do something, but not all according to our conceptions and possibilities. We live in a complex system of interactions, where, as I see it, we are invited to collectively transform but in different ways the rubble and construction materials that are disregarded, the garbage of the world. We must try to transform them into healthy places where life can be re-born from “the impossible ground”. This somehow poetic and provoking language of our creativity is so because we are aware of the rational incapacity to delimit new strategies and tactics. Poetry is revealing of nice things we cannot see in daily life that assaults and frightens us. We protect ourselves from others

because we are capable of killing each other in different ways. We no longer have eyes for gestures apparently unimportant such as those of the picker of cans who did her work in the middle of a crowd or of a man who leaves the crowd to offer a flower to a police woman in position of attack or defence. To rescue in the middle of violence something beautiful is to open for us the possibility to nourish our life in a positive way. I think the Gospels have an incredible force expressed in the little narratives, apparently naïf, but which make us think, that takes us back to the immediacy of survival, that immediacy that has consistency in the present and are vital to keep life. The salt that makes salty the shared bread, the light that is lit in the wedding party, the cure of the mother-in-law or the children on Jesus's lap. And then the ungrateful lepers and the woman who insists on the cure of her daughter, there is treason and fear of friends and fidelity of the women. And yet there is the long walk among friends who make memory and discover the meaning of life after many losses. What can be learnt from these snapshots of life? Nothing, some think, but others think much when today they see young and old women at visiting queues of prisons, when they see workers sharing a refreshment and children playing in a garden. All those apparent trivialities, things without importance and superfluous, really remind us of the value of life, the importance of the "joy of living" as the old Teilhard de Chardin said. And this instantaneous taste of life that lifts us from the cruelty and violence around us, that makes us forget the new colonialism that multinational companies, new owners of our lands, impose on us. It is the pain in the stomach that reminds us we eat vegetables full of agrotoxics. It is the cry of a child that reminds us hunger is still a scourge. It is the stench in the streets that reminds us of the importance of hygiene. It is water streaming through leaky pipes of our neighbourhoods that reminds us of the preciousness and scarcity of it. It is not the speeches about perfection or about God's will or the life of a saint that move our entrails. It is not elaborate social theories in a perfect logic that transform our feeling of life. But it is something else, something small, with no apparent importance that makes the difference and makes us love and act. To feel life in its smallness, greatness, beauty and contradiction opens us to new roads. For this reason beyond modernity, post-modernity, post-colonialism, freedom, words that in themselves do not change our heart, we need to walk the streets, feel the stench, clear tears for the impure, ill, mad, lacking to touch us and open alleys in us for the transformation of our heart.

We do not really know how to define spirituality. But I think this is not important. We are there inside bodies, among bodies, we are bodies, and we have bodies, the need for bread and flowers, of a friendly shoulder and a hand to hold on.

I believe spirituality is going through those new deserts, the winding roads, the new technologies and so many other things that make our world a small spiritual adventure. It also goes through the discovery of pearls in sties and graves we built for ourselves and even find the "lost coin" we were looking for. Spirituality is a way of living and coexisting with people recognising in them my image and my similarity to them. It is something simple and because it is simple it seems difficult. But this is life, our bare life, stripped of the gadgets that hide it from us.

A very brief conclusion: It is dark but I sing

I believe this is a road, a small road, maybe insignificant... To sing stubbornly in the darkness so as not to lose our foot against those who want to hide the beauties of life from us, the joy of living. To listen to and tell short stories that teach us old lessons capable of awakening in us tenderness and solidarity, stories that tell us "go and try to do the same".

It is dark but I sing!

In those times Jesus told his friends the following parable...





WHAT IS
NOT SACRED?

AFRICAN SPIRITUALITY



LAURENTI MAGESA





Teologia da Libertação, Epistemologia e Espiritualidade

A partir das novas interpretações do mundo

Ivone GEBARA
São Paulo, BRASIL

Hay que sentir la vida antes de buscarle el sentido.

Iris María Landrón.

Hoje estamos vivendo um período de novas tentativas de compreensão do complexo ser que somos. Quanto mais pensamos que temos posse do que somos mais nos vemos em situações inesperadas e inéditas. As percepções e afirmações são variadas dependendo do ponto de vista a partir do qual se vê e se descreve o ser humano. Cada ciência tem sua epistemologia própria condicionada pelos diferentes contextos dos cientistas e de suas ciências. O físico falará que somos um agregado de átomos, o biólogo que somos um organismo vivo dotado de um código genético. O religioso dirá que somos criaturas de Deus. Os modernos acentuam a razão, os pós-modernos dela desconfiam como caminho da verdade. Os colonialistas impõem suas crenças e visões, os pós-colonialistas as desconstruem e mostram seus equívocos e sua dominação. O mesmo se pode dizer dos diferentes grupos populares marcados por diferentes contextos e experiências.

Aproximamo-nos dos diferentes “objetos” do mundo, das pessoas que nos cercam não como ‘tabulas rasas’. Temos gravadas em nós, memórias ancestrais, diferentes influencias, valores, tempos, lugares, crenças, medos, desejos, raivas que acabam nos distinguindo uns dos outros. Mas a distinção não é separação, é marca de nossa individualidade, de nossa subjetividade própria aberta à vida social e ao diálogo com as pessoas em vista da construção plural de nosso mundo. É essa sociabilidade que constrói coletivamente o mundo no qual vivemos.

Entretanto, nos damos conta da dificuldade do diálogo e de encontrar a felicidade que buscamos. Cada pessoa e cada grupo tenta afirmar o que acredita imaginando ser verdadeiros e vitoriosos. Por isso comba-

tem e eliminam os outros, considerando-os muitas vezes como inimigos. Persistimos sonhando que nosso grupo e nossa maneira de ver o mundo e pensá-lo deveriam ter o domínio sobre a visão dos outros. Não nos desvencilhamos do universalismo, das hierarquizações e do exclusivismo das crenças do passado e buscamos ainda impor nossas visões e paixões à história de nossos contemporâneos. Vivemos assim diferentes formas de totalitarismo na maioria das vezes sem nos darmos conta de nossos limites. Tudo isso nos convida a rabiscarmos algumas idéias sobre o que percebemos em nós e em nossa circunstância na tentativa de aprendermos uns dos outros os ensinamentos cotidianos de nossas vidas.

1. Algo de nosso mundo de hoje: percepções instantâneas.

Estamos assistindo e participando de algo mais ou menos novo na longa história da humanidade. Esse processo começou a tomar corpo e tornar-se significativo a partir do século XVIII e XIX até os dias de hoje. Em cada momento histórico e às vezes de forma concomitante foi influenciando maneiras de pensar e agir. Aguçamos de tal forma nossos conhecimentos que acabamos tocando em referências essenciais de nossa vida e de nossas crenças de séculos passados. Por exemplo, aquilo que se convencionou chamar de ‘ecologia profunda’ não apenas tocou toda a complexa questão dos seres vivos terrícolas, mas do planeta como ser vivo nascido de uma explosão estelar. Tal conhecimento colocou em cheque a veracidade dos mitos religiosos, sobretudo dos monoteístas que marcavam o princípio do mundo na vontade de um Deus único que criara e submetera todos os seres à sua vontade soberana. Os movimentos ecológicos na enorme diversidade de suas bandeiras e ideologias tiraram o ser humano do centro do universo e afirmaram a centralidade de todos os seres vivos. Do humano-centrismo passamos a falar de biocentrismo ou o zoo-centrismo destronando o ser humano ou imaginando tê-lo destronado das prerrogativas de domínio sobre o seres vivos.

Entretanto sabemos bem que o movimento ecológico guarda em si enormes contradições tendo sido em parte também co-optado pelo mundo capitalista que encontrou no positivo da palavra ecologia uma nova forma de continuar a exploração vigente. O ‘ecologicamente correto’ é muitas vezes aquilo que favorece um tipo de agricultura, de exploração do solo e de consumo com uma capa bonita que encobre interesses econômicos de grupos nacionais e internacionais. Além disso, muitos grupos continuam trabalhando o conceito de natureza como se o ser humano não fosse natureza, como se não fôssemos fruto desse mesmo meio vital, ou como se as riquezas que hoje exploramos como o petróleo não tivessem surgido como fruto de grandes catástrofes no próprio planeta. Em outros termos, nos deixamos iludir pelas palavras bonitas e discursos contundentes da moda sem ter claro o que de fato podemos fazer diante das lixeiras e materiais descartáveis que continuamente criamos. O lixo

que criamos é também o lixo que de certa forma também somos. Nosso corpo é consumidor e produtor de lixo. Somos nós que ‘produzimos’ as toneladas recolhidas diariamente. Não podemos desprezar o lixo que está aí e nem o ignorarmos como se fosse algo que nada tem a ver conosco.

Corremos o risco de idealizar a ecologia confundindo-a com “auto-ajuda” e até com uma postura romântica em relação aos seres animais e vegetais distintos dos seres humanos. Muito embora a novidade ecológica atual seja fruto das novas percepções e conquistas dos seres humanos ela não é isenta de enormes contradições, sobretudo quando usa da propaganda para fazer valer interesses escusos.

Verifica-se igualmente um deslocamento de lugar na simbologia que expressa as relações entre todos os seres. As formas hierárquicas e piramidais são criticadas em favor das formas circulares marcadas pela interdependência. Nessa linha as cosmovisões dos povos nativos foram revalorizadas e utilizadas pelas novas correntes críticas do centralismo antropológico. Apesar dessa valoração cultural, muitas foram e ainda são utilizadas fora de seus contextos de origem numa espécie de novo sincretismo liderado por grupos os mais variados, sobretudo, de classe média. Querendo fazer justiça aos povos nativos esquecidos e às tradições africanas trazidas pela escravidão negra colonial, o novo sincretismo presente na América Latina pecou muitas vezes pela utilização e apropriação indevida dessas tradições gerando conflitos identitários e desrespeito às mesmas tradições. A idéia de que devemos ter comportamentos inclusivos, idéia igualmente utilizada de forma limitada acabou misturando e até reduzindo a originalidade das diferenças das muitas expressões religiosas. E não só isso, acabou por desvirtuar símbolos e significados próprios de uma tradição religiosa querendo incluir tudo em tudo sem de fato aprofundar os diferentes ou semelhantes significados nascidos em histórias específicas. Tal procedimento é importante para de fato vivermos um diálogo pluralista. Vulgarizamos essas tradições, fazendo delas espetáculo exposto em grandes celebrações de confraternização entre os povos e expondo-as aos meios de comunicação de massa como novidade cultural e exemplo de comportamento inclusivo. Mais uma vez a consciência branca, talvez para aliviar sua culpa histórica, quer atuar de boa fé, mas no mesmo ato se apropria de outra tradição á sua maneira. Querendo salvá-la e respeitá-la muitas vezes a tornou objeto de suas pesquisas e políticas sem a participação direta dos interessados. Instaurou assim um novo colonialismo em plena proclamação do pós-colonialismo. Essa crítica não invalida os esforços de diálogo inter-cultural e inter-religioso que também assistimos em nosso tempo e espaço , mas chama a atenção para os perigos de uma manipulação talvez meio inconsciente e ingênua que costumamos fazer. A boa fé e o respeito pelo outro não substituem a necessidade de nos colocarmos no lugar do outro/a sujeitos à nossa benevolência ou às nossas novas interpretações das relações humanas.

O movimento teológico feminista por sua vez também criou barreiras e fossos em relação aos antigos significados das religiões monoteístas patriarcais. Perdemos referências do passado sem conseguir fazer valer as novas interpretações em meio ao mundo das mulheres e, sobretudo das pobres. Ao buscar novas significações o feminismo teológico foi rechaçado igualmente pelas hierarquias religiosas e pelo cristianismo de massa nas suas diferentes formas. As grandes massas dependentes de um cristianismo devocional, dependentes dos seres celestes e de seu poder terreno masculino não conseguiram assimilar os desafios que as mulheres lançavam ao cristianismo. Não entenderam a revolução das imagens do divino e nem as propostas de igualdade de direitos no interior das instituições eclesiais. O movimento feminista, sobretudo o teológico ficou mais ou menos ilhado a alguns grupos sem grandes referências nos meios populares. Fizemos novas interpretações bíblicas e teológicas para nós mesmas e alguns poucos homens simpatizantes com a causa da dignidade feminina. Nossas antigas convicções de introduzir um novo protagonismo feminino nas igrejas, com reivindicações próprias e novos sentidos continuou sendo rejeitado pelas instituições onde ainda só se aceita o protagonismo doméstico das mulheres. A “guerra entre os sexos” e entre os “gêneros” continua aberta ou velada e muito presente nas esferas sociais e, sobretudo religiosas. Muitos discursos são proferidos também pela hierarquia das igrejas em relação a dignidade das mulheres, mas as mudanças efetivas ainda não tocaram os corações e as mentes de forma significativa abrindo possibilidades de mudança real. Entretanto, o movimento continua com seus altos e baixos na esperança que os processos de maturação de conhecimentos e de consciência crítica continuem a acontecer e até, muitas vezes, de forma imprevisível.

O movimento filosófico iniciado especialmente no século XIX de superação da metafísica tradicional, ou seja, de morte de uma transcendência que dirige as ações humanas para além da vontade humana se acentuou no século XX e XXI. Uma nova onda de ateísmo metafísico se impôs às diferentes interpretações antropológicas, teológicas e sociais. Uma elite de intelectuais e de movimentos sociais era a protagonista das novas idéias nascidas especialmente no continente europeu. O real se tornou mais complexo e marcado por uma imprevisibilidade da qual nem Deus tem domínio. A vida se afirmava em sua fragilidade constitutiva de vida e morte. A mistura que somos aparecia cada vez mais clara e paradoxal. Por um lado se dá uma nova valorização das possibilidades do ser humano e por outro uma interdependência em relação a muitas experiências e acontecimentos. Mas, apesar disso, uma nova solidão se instaura em muitos, um sentimento indefinido do valor do ser humano se faz sentir em meio à violência e crueldade de que somos capazes de produzir e também em meio aos gestos de solidariedade e irmandade que

demonstramos. A “morte” do Deus metafísico matou também algumas esperanças humanas, esperanças, talvez utópicas, mas capazes de mover corpos e corações, capazes de consolar e de aquecer vidas quando o frio do ‘sem sentido’ podia nos assolar e a ‘noite escura’ tornar-se longa demais.

O que se chamou de pós-colonialismo também abalou as estruturas de muitas tradições religiosas e sociais. Nos demos conta de que vivíamos experiências religiosas, crenças sociais e políticas que vinham dos que historicamente foram dominadores dos outros e particularmente de nossos ancestrais. Quisemos então desconstruir essas crenças, mostrar suas motivações políticas e ideológicas, revelar as atrocidades de que foram capazes e afirmar-nos enfim como pós-coloniais. Será mesmo que na prática somos isso que dizemos ser? Ou será que um novo colonialismo de características atópicas e acrônicas, ou seja, sem um lugar e um tempo definidos de proveniência e de expansão estaria se impondo? E especialmente se expandindo para além de nossos conceitos tradicionais de espaço e tempo nos quais nossas bússolas humanistas se orientavam? Trata-se agora, talvez de uma nova cara colonialista dando-nos a impressão de que estamos libertos dos antigos senhores, das antigas metrópoles, dos deuses impostos para nossa adoração, das leis vindas de fora. Parece que acordamos de um sono e de sonhos que duraram séculos e que agora, enfim, libertos de nossas antigas correntes podemos afirmar nossa liberdade e proferir uma palavra que é nossa. Mas, que formas têm elas? Como as vivemos e contagiamos a vida de outras pessoas? Que novas solidariedades estão surgindo em nosso imediato horizonte? Como estamos vencendo as indústrias de armas que ganham cada vez mais clientes com as inúmeras guerras provocadas? Não tenho respostas, mas estou convencida de que o amor não desapareceu do mundo e que é preciso reconhecê-lo nas suas novas linguagens e situações.

Constatamos através dessas novas situações que mudamos de paradigma ou de referências para nosso conhecimento do mundo. Já não representamos com clareza como deve ser o mundo futuro como nos séculos XVIII e XIX. Já não falamos de estruturas de sustentação da sociedade como na primeira metade do século XX e da conseqüente urgência de mudar as estruturas econômicas e culturais da sociedade. Esta antiga referência parece que não dá conta da complexidade dos acontecimentos vividos e nem da mutação que se operou em nós. E a pergunta sobre nós mesmos como humanos reaparece inexoravelmente.

Agora o novo paradigma do conhecimento gira em torno da informação, dos processos sociais mutáveis onde já não aparece de forma distinta a finalidade humana na nossa história comum. Estamos continuamente sendo “formatados”, desorganizados e reorganizados. Sustentamos por um período curto numa forma de ser, agir e consumir e de

repente nos damos conta que a novidade já é outra. E agora não são mais os mestres, os professores, as tradições antigas de sabedoria que nos convidam à conversão, mas são as novas tecnologias do mercado que tornam obtusas as formas de comunicação e conhecimento de ontem. Não é um ontem do século passado, mas é um ontem do presente sempre em mutação. Basta ver os sempre novos programas de computação, os celulares, os autômatos, os modelos de automóvel e avião. Tudo parece ser extensão de nosso corpo marcado pela imediatez e aceleração da história atual. Basta nos dar conta do domínio do virtual sobre nossas vidas e do nosso consentimento quase sem escolha, sem rebeldia em relação a massificação de nosso cotidiano. Apesar dos limites o mundo virtual também aparece como nova forma de congregar-nos, mas sem a ação direta dos corpos. Nossa luta pode ser virtual, dentro de meu quarto diante de um computador ou caminhando pelas ruas com meu celular conectado. De certa forma prescindimos do corpo físico do outro/a, de seu contexto próprio assim como o outro/a prescinde de meu corpo para que algo aconteça entre nós. Nossa percepção, ou seja, a relação entre nós e o mundo no qual vivemos e construímos é tão imediata e mutante que já não conseguimos sequer pensar de forma organizada sobre ela. Somos levados pela correria das metrópoles com repercussão nas pequenas cidades que copiam os modelos em voga. E, nessa correria, sem dúvida coisas boas podem acontecer nas formas que desconhecíamos no passado recente. É preciso muita atenção para apreendê-las e compreender o que nos dizem.

A sensação que muitos de nós temos, sobretudo, os que já passaram de meio século de vida, é a de estarmos perdidos numa selva de pedras onde edifícios são implodidos do dia para noite e outros de estranhas arquiteturas são erguidos. Estamos falando e escrevendo outra língua, com sinais eletrônicos, com outra grafia, com outras significações. Nossas divindades mudaram, assim como nossa finalidade de vida e nossas causas. As canções caras aos nossos ouvidos, os poemas libertários, as esperanças de que um “dia virá” em que o povo pobre será liberto e as “armas de guerra transformadas em arados” parecem muitas vezes ingênuos sonhos de nossa infância, muito embora ainda nos nutram e atraíam.

Tudo isso significa também que mudamos ou tentamos mudar nossas epistemologias e nossas espiritualidades. Essa mudança é marcada pelo pluralismo das muitas interpretações em conflito, disponíveis em nosso tempo e espaço global. Além disso, atesta a presença de muitas epistemologias que convivem ou que se excluem nos muitos espaços e tempos, assim como nas formas virtuais em que espaço e tempo não são mais referências absolutas para nós. Tudo isso ainda é muito novo e não se incorporou na vida de muitos de nós.

2. Mudanças e imprecisões epistemológicas

O que acontece quando mudamos de epistemologia? Na realidade essa mudança implica numa postura diferente que passamos a assumir gradativamente na vida. Não se trata apenas de um trabalho teórico onde ajeitamos nossas teorias sobre o mundo de outra maneira, mas há algo que muda em nossas entranhas e nos faz sentir e tomar posições diferentes no mundo. Conhecer não é apenas um ato intelectual, mas um ato corpóreo, um ato social, um ato político, um ato intra e inter mundano que modifica nosso ser e nossos comportamentos. Conhecer é conhecer-se, é ver-se, é ouvir-se e conhecer os outros sempre no claro escuro de todas as nossas aproximações. E esse conhecimento se expressa nas diferentes áreas de nossa vida inclusive naquilo que denominamos de 'vida interior'. A vida interior é ao mesmo tempo uma vida exterior na qual manifestamos para o nosso mundo as escolhas que fazemos e as não escolhas que vivemos. Essas escolhas nem sempre são em favor de nosso bem ou do bem comum, mas podem ser escolhas ideológicas e ilusórias marcadas por interesses individualistas ou corporativistas. Escolher não é sempre escolher bem assim como conhecer não é sempre conhecer bem. Não estamos isentos de paixões, vícios, ódios, rancores, vinganças em nossos processos cognitivos e comportamentais. A 'arte' da guerra ou as muitas lutas que começamos não significam necessariamente que estamos no bom caminho, ou seja, no caminho que mais favorece a vida comum. Nossos caminhos encontram com frequência ruas sem saída e encruzilhadas. É nossa condição humana.

Uma questão surge: será que podemos conhecer nosso mundo e a nós mesmas/os de forma radicalmente diferente daquela em que fomos iniciadas? Ou será que poderíamos ignorar os acontecimentos mais importantes do mundo e preservarmos o nosso pequeno mundo? E quando falamos de conhecer o mundo, de que mundo de fato estamos falando? A que pedaço de mundo refere-se nosso conhecimento e sua explicitação em forma de discurso teórico? É claro que nos referimos em primeiro lugar ao mundo de nossa circunstância espacial e temporal mesmo com as mudanças virtuais que nos rodeiam. Nosso mundo é segundo nossa experiência o mundo mais imediato, o mundo da casa, da sobrevivência, das relações mais próximas e só em segundo lugar o mundo mais vasto ou o vasto mundo. Portanto esse pequeno mundo ou esse pedaço de mundo parece ser nosso ponto de referência inicial para qualquer forma de conhecimento. E esse mundo inclui minha história pessoal, meus interesses, meus valores e escolhas interagindo com outros.

Creio que as mudanças são possíveis, mas guardam sempre os resíduos do passado, de nossa maneira anterior de enxergar e pensar o mundo. Guardam igualmente as novas informações que nos chegam dos movimentos sociais e culturais de nosso tempo, apesar das possibilidades de mantermos distancia de tudo isso.

Muitas vezes temos a ilusão das novas classificações e imaginamos que as novidades são capazes de superar os antigos modelos de conhecimento. Bastaria que alguns cientistas ou pessoas de prestígio critiquem os sistemas de outrora ou os vigentes para acreditarmos que mudanças ou fissuras aconteceram na pretensa homogeneidade anterior. Alguns de nós se orientam pelas novas palavras da ciência acreditando que esta nos dá a nova linha da verdade à qual devemos aderir e confiar. Mas, não percebemos o quanto o mundo das novas teorias pode encerrar contradições e, sobretudo provocar rupturas existenciais em relação ao comum dos mortais. Criamos novas castas, novas igrejas, novos clubes, novos dicionários onde todos passam a falar a nova linguagem e se sentem em dia com as novas interpretações.

Minha pergunta é em relação às mudanças que favoreçam o bem comum, sobretudo o bem dos marginalizados. Quem se transforma e o que transformamos com nossas novas teorias filosóficas, sociais e teológicas? E mais, como entender o conhecimento real e ordinário quando a virtualidade como, já mencionamos, parece ter invadido todos os setores de nossa vida? Essa virtualidade cambiante nos tira de nosso espaço e tempo outrora conhecidos e que nos serviam de ponto de apoio. Agora parece que entramos em algo fluido e mutante. Essa é mais uma desafiante questão que engloba também as noções filosóficas do passado assim como as teorias da pós-modernidade. Estamos todos num mundo sem espaço e sem tempo determinados. Navegamos por muitos tempos e espaços simultaneamente como se descontextualizássemos os contextos. Basta acessar o computador, conectar-se para estarmos num mundo aparentemente maior que nosso mundo, um mundo onde os conhecimentos ou informações estão aí presentes tendo apenas que clicar nas nossas máquinas. Muitas vezes confundimos informações com conhecimentos. Prescindimos de certa forma da interioridade e da maturação dos processos de assimilação quando se trata de informações virtuais.

Há grupos –e são sem dúvida a maioria presente nas periferias do mundo– que ignoram totalmente as novas aproximações da ciência física e particularmente das ciências humanas. Há por exemplo, cristãos que ignoram totalmente a teologia da libertação, a teologia feminista, a eco-teologia e vivem como se estas coisas não fizessem parte da história maior. Vivem sua ‘história mínima’, seu cotidiano envolto pela luta pela sobrevivência. Seu cristianismo se refere ao mundo mítico de suas devoções, um mundo que lhes dá segurança diante das ameaças do dia a dia, do sofrimento e crueldade que nos envolvem. Vivem invocando proteção “do alto” visto que o sofrimento cá em baixo é assustador e devastador. E ao viverem essa relação com seres de outra esfera ou vivos em outros planos, como se costuma dizer, estão sem dúvida introduzindo e mantendo formas de conhecimento ou epistemologias interpretativas

de seu mundo. Estas têm a função de exorcizar medos e de introduzir esperanças mais alentadoras em suas vidas. Seguem um modelo hierarquizado de poder onde nos encontramos todos/as dependentes de forças extraterrestres que nos conduzem e condicionam. Isto não é novidade, mas subsiste com todas as novidades do momento.

3. Espiritualidade: o que é mesmo?

Os desafios contemporâneos nos convidam a repensar o que é espiritualidade, e, sobretudo o que vivemos e chamamos de espiritualidade na vida cotidiana. Estamos assistindo a uma espécie de erosão do sentido tradicional que ligava a espiritualidade às religiões. A novidade dos tempos atuais é que muitas pessoas e grupos reivindicam ter uma espiritualidade, embora não tenham adesão a nenhuma fé religiosa em especial. Desvinculam uma coisa de outra e não têm necessariamente nenhum vínculo com uma única tradição cultural do passado. Há em muitas pessoas uma consciência crescente de encontrar um novo humanismo embora este seja impreciso e vago.

Por isso, somos desafiados/as a recontextualizar sentidos e buscas desse 'algo' dito como nutriente espiritual de nossas vidas. A palavra espiritualidade para além de sua etimologia (*spiritus* = espírito, sopro de vida) nos remete a algo bom, algo que ajuda nossa vida, nos dá direções, convicções, nos ajuda a cultivar o gosto pela vida, a ter certos limites e não submergir diante das muitas dificuldades de cada dia. Há palavras que têm uma força positiva capaz de despertar em nós coisas boas. Espiritualidade é uma delas.

Muitos de nós já saímos das concepções de 'escolas espirituais' presentes no cristianismo e em outras religiões para afirmar uma busca diferente ancorada na descoberta de nós mesmas/os e do mundo. Afastamos da idéia que alguns devem ditar normas sobre nossa espiritualidade e se constituírem como autoridades sobre nós. Muitos/as já introduzem certa separação entre a busca espiritual de auto-conhecimento e a ordem social e política que parece contrariar essa busca e situam a espiritualidade num nível superior ao da vida ordinária ou como um parêntesis na vida de cada dia. Entretanto, sabemos bem que a perspectiva cristã da libertação enfatiza a prioridade da mudança do coração e concomitantemente mudança da ordem social injusta. A presença dos/as oprimidos e sofredores é um desafio contínuo para muitos que não separam sua vida da ordem injusta na qual vivemos. Uma responsabilidade pessoal e coletiva parece se impor diante das muitas dores de nossos semelhantes. O problema, entretanto, está na dificuldade de encontrar novos caminhos coletivos de atuação em meio à erosão atual de normas sociais e respeito aos valores de convivência. Um individualismo agressivo parece tomar conta das relações humanas em meio aos discursos sobre a importân-

cia do pluralismo e dos direitos humanos. Queremos encontrar culpados, fazer justiça com as próprias mãos, resolver situações de maneira conveniente primeiro para nós mesmos. Nesse clima de insegurança e desconfiança nas relações humanas creio que é preciso estar conectados também àquilo que recusamos como vivência social para percebermos como transformar o lixo em adubo, como reciclar o que está aí, como resgatar das tradições passadas novos significados para o presente em linguagens plurais e contemporâneas. Temos que aprender a perguntar de novo 'que queres que eu faça' e ouvir os pedidos com os ouvidos do coração. Muitas vezes o desafio parece imenso, sobretudo quando achamos que tudo depende de nós. Na verdade apenas algumas coisas e talvez poucas dependam de nós. Podemos fazer algo, mas não tudo segundo nossas concepções e possibilidades. Vivemos num complexo sistema de interações onde, a meu ver, estamos sendo convidadas/os a transformar coletivamente embora de maneiras diferentes os escombros e materiais de construção desprezados, as lixeiras do mundo. Temos que tentar transformá-los em lugares saneados onde a vida possa renascer 'do impossível chão'. Esta linguagem meio poética é provocativa de nossa criatividade visto que nos damos conta da incapacidade racional de delimitar novas estratégias e táticas. No fundo a poesia é reveladora de coisas bonitas que não conseguimos ver ou enxergar no cotidiano que nos agride e amedronta. Nos protegemos uns dos outros porque somos capazes de aniquilar-nos uns aos outros de diferentes maneiras. Já não temos olhos para gestos aparentemente sem importância como os da catadora de latinhas que fazia seu trabalho em meio a manifestações de rua ou de um homem que sai do meio da multidão e oferece uma flor a uma policial já em posição de ataque ou de defesa. Resgatar em meio à violência algo de belo é abrir para nós mesmos a possibilidade de adubar positivamente nossa vida. Creio que os Evangelhos possuem uma incrível força expressa nas pequenas narrativas aparentemente ingênuas, mas que servem para nos fazer pensar, que nos devolvem ao imediato da sobrevivência, aquele imediato que tem consistência no presente e é vital para a manutenção da vida. O sal que salga e o pão partilhado, a luz que se acende e a festa de núpcias, a cura da sogra ou as crianças no colo de Jesus. E depois há os leprosos mal agradecidos e a mulher que insiste na cura da filha, há a traição e o medo de amigos e a fidelidade de mulheres. E ainda há a longa caminhada entre amigos que fazem memória e descobrem o sentido da vida depois das muitas perdas. O que se pode aprender com esses instantâneos da vida? Nada pensam alguns, mas muito pensam outros quando vêem hoje as mulheres jovens e velhas na fila de visita das prisões, quando vêem trabalhadores partilhando uma refeição e as crianças brincando num jardim. Todas essas aparentes banalidades, coisas sem importância e supérfluas, na verdade nos remetem ao valor da

vida, a importância do ‘gosto de viver’ como já dizia o velho Teilhard de Chardin. É este sabor instantâneo de vida que nos tira da crueldade e da violência que nos rodeiam, que nos fazem esquecer o novo colonialismo que empresas multinacionais, novas proprietárias de nossas terras, nos impõe. É a dor de barriga que nos lembra que comemos verduras cheias de agro-tóxicos. É o choro de uma criança que nos lembra que a fome continua sendo um flagelo. É o mau cheiro nas ruas que nos lembra a importância da higiene. É a água escorrendo pelos canos furados de nossos bairros que nos lembra a preciosidade e escassez da mesma. Não são os discursos sobre a perfeição ou sobre a vontade de Deus ou a vida de um santo que nos movem as entranhas. Não são as teorias sociais elaboradas em uma lógica perfeita que transformam nosso sentir a vida. Mas é outra coisa, algo pequeno, sem aparente importância que faz a diferença e nos leva a amar e agir. Sentir a vida em sua pequenez, grandeza, beleza e contradição nos abrem novos caminhos. Por isso para além da modernidade, da pós-modernidade, do pós-colonialismo, da libertação palavras que por si não mudam nosso coração que precisamos andar pelas ruas, sentir o mau cheiro, enxugar lágrimas para que algo impuro, enfermo, louco, carente nos toque e abra em nós vielas para a transformação de nosso coração.

No fundo não sabemos mais definir espiritualidade. Mas acho que isso não tem importância. Estamos aí dentro de corpos, em meio a corpos, somos corpos, temos corpos, necessidades de pão e de flores, de ombro amigo e de mão para segurar as nossas. Talvez seja tempo de voltar a olhar as coisas ordinárias da vida e ver nelas o extraordinário capaz de transformar nossas vidas. Talvez seja tempo de reaprender o que nos esquecemos de olhar porque estamos muito apressados/as; talvez seja tempo de ouvir músicas alheias aos nossos ouvidos e tentar entender uma poesia diferente da nossa.

Creio que a espiritualidade para mim atravessa esses novos desertos, os caminhos tortuosos, as novas tecnologias, as ecologias e tantas outras coisas que fazem do nosso mundo uma pequena aventura espiritual. Atravessa também o descobrir pérolas em meio dos chiqueiros e sepulturas que construímos para nós mesmos e até achar a ‘dracma perdida’ que tanto buscávamos. A espiritualidade é uma maneira de viver e conviver com as pessoas reconhecendo nelas minha imagem e minha semelhança a elas. É algo simples e porque é simples parece complicado. Mas assim é a vida, nossa vida nua, despida dos aparatos que querem escondê-la até de nós mesmos.

Brevíssima conclusão: Faz escuro, mas eu canto

Creio que é este um caminho, um pequeno caminho, talvez insignificante... Cantar teimosamente em meio à escuridão de nosso tempo.

Cantar balbuciando canções de amor, de ninar, de cirandas aprendidas para não se deixar morrer antes do tempo, para não perder o pé diante dos que querem ocultar-nos as belezas da vida e o gosto de viver. Ouvir e contar pequenas histórias que nos ensinam velhas lições capazes de despertar em nós ternura e solidariedade, histórias que nos dizem 'vá tente fazer o mesmo'.

Faz escuro, mas eu canto!

Naquele tempo, Jesus contou a seguinte parábola a seus amigos...





Teología de la Liberación, Epistemología y Espiritualidad

A partir de las nuevas interpretaciones del mundo

Ivone GEBARA
São Paulo, BRASIL

Hay que sentir la vida antes de buscarle el sentido.

Iris María Landrón.

Hoy estamos viviendo un período de nuevos intentos para comprender el ser complejo que somos. Cuanto más pensamos que tenemos la posesión de lo que somos, más nos vemos en situaciones inesperadas e inéditas. Las percepciones y afirmaciones son variadas, dependiendo del punto de vista desde el cual se ve y se describe el ser humano. Cada ciencia tiene su propia epistemología, condicionada por los diferentes contextos de los científicos y de sus ciencias. El físico dirá que somos un agregado de átomos. El biólogo, que somos un organismo vivo dotado de un código genético. El religioso dirá que somos criaturas de Dios. Los modernos acentúan la razón; los posmodernos desconfían de ella como camino de la verdad. Los colonialistas imponen sus creencias y visiones; la crítica post-colonial la deconstruye y muestra sus equívocos y su dominación. Otro tanto puede decirse de los diferentes grupos populares marcados por diferentes contextos y experiencias.

Nos abrimos a los diferentes "objetos" del mundo de las personas que nos rodean, no como una 'tábula rasa'... Tenemos grabados en nosotros: memorias ancestrales, diferentes influencias, valores, tiempos, lugares, creencias, miedos, deseos, rabias... que acaban haciéndonos diferentes unos de otros. Pero diferencia no es separación; es signo de nuestra individualidad, de nuestra propia subjetividad abierta a la vida social y al diálogo con las personas, en vista a la construcción plural de nuestro mundo. Es esta sociabilidad la que construye colectivamente el mundo en el que vivimos.

Sin embargo, nos damos cuenta de la dificultad de diálogar y de encontrar la felicidad que buscamos. Cada persona y cada grupo trata de hacer valer aquello en lo que cree, imaginando tener la verdad y ser triunfadores. Por eso combaten y eliminan a los otros, considerándolos muchas veces como enemigos. Continuamos soñando que nuestro grupo y nuestra forma de ver el mundo y de pensarlo debería predominar sobre la visión de los otros. No nos desprendemos del universalismo, de las jerarquizaciones y del exclusivismo de las creencias del pasado, y buscamos, todavía, imponer nuestras visiones y pasiones a la historia de nuestros contemporáneos. Vivimos así diferentes formas de totalitarismo, la mayor parte de las veces sin darnos cuenta de nuestros límites. Todo ello nos invita a esbozar algunas ideas sobre lo que percibimos en nosotros y en nuestra circunstancia, en la intención de aprender unos de los otros las enseñanzas cotidianas de nuestras vidas.

1. Algo de nuestro mundo de hoy: percepciones instantáneas

Estamos asistiendo y participando de algo, más o menos nuevo, en la larga historia de la humanidad. Este proceso comenzó a tomar cuerpo y hacerse significativo a partir del siglo XVIII, hasta nuestros días. En cada momento histórico –y a veces de forma concomitante– fue influenciando maneras de pensar y actuar. Afinamos de tal forma nuestros conocimientos, que acabamos afectando a referencias esenciales de nuestra vida y de nuestras creencias seculares. Por ejemplo: aquello que se convino en llamar «ecología profunda», no se limitó a la compleja cuestión de los seres vivos terrícolas, sino que acabó abarcando al planeta entero como ser vivo, y nacido de una explosión estelar. Tal conocimiento entró en conflicto con la veracidad de los mitos religiosos, sobre todo de los mono-teístas, que dejaban claro el principio del mundo por la voluntad de un Dios único que creó y sometió a todos los seres a su voluntad soberana. Los movimientos ecológicos, con la enorme diversidad de sus banderas e ideologías, han puesto al ser humano en el centro del universo, y han afirmado la centralidad de todos los seres vivos. Del humano-centrismo pasamos a hablar del biocentrismo o el zoocentrismo, destronando al ser humano, o imaginándolo despojado de sus prerrogativas de dominio sobre los seres vivos.

Por otra parte, sabemos que el movimiento ecológico guarda en sí enormes contradicciones al haber sido, en parte, cooptado también por el mundo capitalista, que encontró en lo positivo de la palabra ecología una nueva forma de continuar la explotación en curso. Lo «ecológicamente correcto» viene a ser, muchas veces, aquello que favorece un determinado tipo de agricultura, de explotación del suelo y de consumo, con una capa bonita que encubre intereses económicos de grupos nacionales e internacionales. Además, muchos grupos continúan trabajando el concepto de

naturaleza como si el ser humano no fuese naturaleza, como si no fuésemos fruto de ese mismo medio ambiente de la vida, o como si las riquezas que hoy explotamos, como el petróleo, no hubiesen surgido como fruto de grandes catástrofes en el propio planeta. En otros términos, nos dejamos engañar por las palabras bonitas y discursos contundentes, sin tener claro qué vamos a hacer con la basura y materiales descartables que continuamente producimos. La basura que creamos es también la basura que en cierta forma también somos. Nuestro cuerpo es consumidor y productor de basura. Somos nosotros los que “producimos” las toneladas recogidas diariamente. No podemos ignorar la basura que está ahí y desentendernos, como si fuera algo que no tiene que ver con nosotros.

Corremos el riesgo de idealizar la ecología tomándola como si fuera una «auto-ayuda», o como una actitud romántica para con los animales y vegetales. Aunque la novedad ecológica actual sea fruto de nuevas percepciones y conquistas de los seres humanos, ella no está exenta de grandes contradicciones, sobre todo cuando se la utiliza como propaganda para intereses oscuros.

También se ha dado un desplazamiento de lugar en la simbología que expresa las relaciones entre todos los seres. Las formas jerárquicas y piramidales son criticadas a favor de las formas circulares marcadas por la interdependencia. En esta línea, las cosmovisiones de los pueblos nativos han sido revalorizadas y utilizadas por las nuevas corrientes críticas respecto al centralismo antropológico. A pesar de esta valoración cultural, muchas han sido y todavía son utilizadas fuera de sus contextos originales, en una especie de nuevo sincretismo liderado por grupos de lo más variado, sobretodo, de clase media. Queriendo hacer justicia a los pueblos nativos olvidados y a las tradiciones africanas traídas por los esclavos del tiempo de la Colonia, el nuevo sincretismo presente en América Latina, ha pecado muchas veces por la utilización y apropiación indebida de esas tradiciones, generando conflictos identitarios y falta de respeto a las mismas tradiciones. La idea de que debemos tener comportamientos inclusivos –idea igualmente utilizada en forma limitada–, ha acabado mezclando y hasta reduciendo la originalidad de las diferencias de las muchas expresiones religiosas. No sólo eso. Ha terminado desvirtuando símbolos y significados propios de una tradición religiosa, queriendo incluir todo en un todo, sin profundizar las diferencias y semejanzas de significados nacidos en historias concretas. Tal procedimiento es importante para que de hecho tengamos un diálogo pluralista. Vulgarizamos esas tradiciones, haciendo de ellas espectáculo en grandes celebraciones de confraternización entre los pueblos, y exponiéndolas a los medios de comunicación de masas como novedad cultural y ejemplo de comportamiento inclusivo. Una vez más, la conciencia blanca, tal vez para aliviar su culpa histórica, quiere actuar de buena fe, pero en el mismo hecho,

se apropia de otra tradición, a su manera. Queriendo salvarla y respetarla, muchas veces la ha tomado como objeto de sus investigaciones y políticas, sin la participación directa de los interesados, instaurando así un nuevo colonialismo en plena proclamación del poscolonialismo. Esta crítica no invalida los esfuerzos del diálogo intercultural e interreligioso al que también asistimos en nuestro tiempo y espacio, pero llama la atención hacia el peligro de una manipulación –tal vez medio inconsciente e ingenua– de lo que acostumbramos a hacer. La buena fe y el respeto por el otro no dispensa la necesidad de colocarnos en el lugar del otro/a, convertidos en objeto de nuestra benevolencia o a nuestras nuevas interpretaciones de las relaciones humanas.

A su vez, el movimiento teológico feminista también creó barreras y brechas en relación a los antiguos significados de las religiones mono-teístas patriarcales. Perdimos referencias del pasado sin conseguir hacer valer las nuevas interpretaciones en el centro del mundo de las mujeres, y sobre todo, de las pobres. Al buscar nuevas significaciones, el feminismo teológico fue rechazado por las jerarquías religiosas e igualmente por el cristianismo de masas en sus diferentes formas. Las grandes masas, dependientes de un cristianismo devocional y de los seres celestiales con su poder terreno masculino, no consiguieron asimilar los desafíos que las mujeres lanzaban al cristianismo. No entendieron la revolución de las imágenes de lo divino, ni las propuestas de igualdad de derechos en el interior de las instituciones eclesásticas. El movimiento feminista, sobre todo el teológico, fue más o menos reducido a grupos aislados, que no han sido referencia mayor en los medios populares. Hicimos nuevas interpretaciones bíblicas y teológicas para nosotras mismas y para algunos pocos hombres simpatizantes con la causa de la dignidad femenina. Nuestras antiguas convicciones de introducir un nuevo protagonismo femenino en las Iglesias, con reivindicaciones propias y nuevos sentidos, ha continuado siendo rechazado por las instituciones en las que todavía sólo se acepta el protagonismo doméstico de las mujeres. La “guerra entre los sexos”, o entre los “géneros”, continúa abierta o veladamente y muy presente en las esferas sociales, sobre todo religiosas. Muchos discursos son proferidos –también por la jerarquía de las Iglesias– en relación a la dignidad de las mujeres, pero los cambios efectivos todavía no han llegado a los corazones y las mentes de forma significativa, ni han abierto posibilidades de un cambio real. Mientras, el movimiento continúa, con sus altos y bajos, con la esperanza de que los procesos de maduración de conocimientos y de conciencia crítica prosigan su marcha, incluso, como ha ocurrido tantas veces, de forma imprevisible.

El movimiento filosófico –iniciado especialmente en el siglo XIX– de superación de la metafísica tradicional, es decir, la muerte de una trascendencia que dirige las acciones humanas más allá de la voluntad

humana, se ha ido acentuando en el siglo XX y XXI. Una nueva onda de ateísmo metafísico se ha impuesto sobre las diferentes interpretaciones antropológicas, teológicas y sociales. Una élite de intelectuales y de movimientos sociales ha sido la protagonista de nuevas ideas, nacidas especialmente en el continente europeo. Lo real se ha vuelto más complejo, y ha quedado marcado por una imprevisibilidad de la que no tiene dominio ni Dios mismo. La vida se ha ido afirmando en su fragilidad constitutiva de vida y muerte. La mezcla que somos ha ido apareciendo cada vez más clara y paradójica. Por un lado se da una nueva valoración de las posibilidades del ser humano, y por otro, se reconoce una interdependencia en relación a muchas experiencias y acontecimientos. Pero a pesar de ello, una nueva soledad se apodera de muchos, un sentimiento indefinido del valor del ser humano se hace sentir en medio de la violencia y crueldad que somos capaces de producir, y también en medio de los gestos de solidaridad y hermandad que demostramos. La «muerte» del Dios metafísico ha matado también algunas esperanzas humanas, esperanzas tal vez utópicas, pero capaces de mover cuerpos y corazones, capaces de consolar y calentar vidas cuando el frío de lo «sin sentido» nos podía destruir y la «noche oscura» se hacía demasiado larga.

Lo que se llamó el «pensamiento poscolonial» ha sacudido las estructuras de muchas tradiciones religiosas y sociales. Nos dimos hemos dado cuenta de que vivíamos experiencias religiosas, creencias sociales y políticas que venían de los que históricamente fueron dominadores de los otros, particularmente de nuestros ancestros. Quisimos entonces deconstruir esas creencias, mostrar sus motivaciones políticas e ideológicas, revelar las atrocidades de que fueron capaces de causar, y afirmarnos finalmente como poscoloniales. ¿Somos en la práctica eso que decimos ser? ¿O se tratará de un nuevo colonialismo de características atópicas y acrónicas, o sea, sin un lugar y un tiempo definidos su origen o su expansión? ¿Se estará expandiendo especialmente más allá de nuestros conceptos tradicionales de espacio y tiempo con los que se orientaban nuestras brújulas humanistas? Se trata ahora, tal vez, de un nuevo rostro colonialista que nos da la impresión de que hemos sido liberados de los antiguos señores, de las antiguas metrópolis, de los dioses impuestos para nuestra adoración, de las leyes venidas de fuera. Parece que despertamos de un sueño o de los sueños que duraron siglos, y que ahora, al fin, liberados de nuestros antiguos grilletes podemos afirmar nuestra libertad y pronunciar una palabra que por fin es la nuestra. Pero, ¿qué forma van a tener esa libertad y esa palabra? ¿Cómo las vamos a vivir y cómo vamos a contagiar la vida de otras personas? ¿Qué nuevas solidaridades están surgiendo en nuestro inmediato horizonte? ¿Cómo estamos venciendo a las industrias de armas que ganan cada vez más clientes con las innumerables guerras provocadas? No tengo respuestas, pero estoy

convencida de que el amor no desapareció del mundo y que es preciso reconocerlo en sus nuevos lenguajes y situaciones.

En estas nuevas situaciones constatamos que cambiamos de paradigma, o de referencias, en nuestro conocimiento del mundo. Ya no tenemos claro cómo debe ser el mundo futuro, como nos parecía tenerlo en los siglos XVIII y XIX. Ya no hablamos de las estructuras que sustentan la sociedad, ni de la consiguiente urgencia de cambiar las estructuras económicas y culturales de la sociedad, como en la primera mitad del siglo XX. Esta antigua referencia parece no dar cuenta ya de la complejidad de los acontecimientos vividos ni de los cambios que se han producido en nosotros. Y la pregunta sobre nosotros mismos, como humanos, reaparece inexorablemente.

Ahora el nuevo paradigma del conocimiento gira en torno a la información, a la evolución de los procesos sociales mutables, en los que ya no aparece en forma distinta la finalidad humana de nuestra historia común. Estamos constantemente siendo «reformateados», desorganizados y reorganizados. Por un período corto tiempo tenemos una forma de ser, hacer y consumir, y de repente nos damos cuenta de que la novedad ya es otra. Ahora ya no son los maestros, los profesores, la sabiduría antigua de las tradiciones, los que nos invitan a conversar, sino las nuevas tecnologías del mercado, que vuelven obsoletas las formas de comunicación y el conocimiento del ayer. No es un ayer del siglo pasado, sino un ayer del presente, siempre en cambio. Basta ver los siempre nuevos programas de computación, los celulares, los robots, los modelos de automóviles y aviones. Todo parece ser una extensión de nuestro cuerpo, que nos marca con la inmediatez y aceleración de la historia actual. Basta darnos cuenta del dominio de lo virtual sobre nuestras vidas y sobre nuestro consentimiento, casi sin elección, sin rebeldía posible en relación a la masificación de nuestra vida cotidiana. A pesar de las limitaciones el mundo virtual también aparece como una nueva forma de congregarnos, pero sin la acción directa de los cuerpos. Nuestra lucha puede ser virtual, mediante un computador, dentro de mi cuarto, o caminando por las calles con mi celular conectado. En cierta forma prescindimos del cuerpo físico del otro/a, de su contexto propio, así como el otro/a prescinden de mi cuerpo para que algo acontezca entre nosotros. Nuestra percepción, o sea, la relación entre nosotros y el mundo en el que vivimos y construimos, es tan inmediata y cambiante que ya no conseguimos ni siquiera pensar de forma organizada sobre ella. Somos arrastrados por la prisa de las metrópolis, influenciando en las ciudades pequeñas, que copian los modelos en boga. Sin duda, en esa carrera pueden darse cosas buenas, en formas que desconocíamos en el pasado reciente. Se necesita mucha atención para captarlas y comprender lo que nos pueden enseñar.

La sensación que muchos de nosotros tenemos, sobre todo los que ya pasaron del medio siglo de vida, es la de estar perdidos en una

selva de piedra donde los edificios son destruidos de un día para otro, y otros, de extrañas arquitecturas, son construidos. Estamos hablando y escribiendo en otra lengua, con señales electrónicas, con otra grafía, con otras significaciones. Nuestras divinidades han cambiado, así como nuestra finalidad en la vida, incluso nuestras Causas. Las canciones queridas a nuestros oídos, los poemas libertarios, las esperanzas de que un día llegará en que el pueblo pobre será liberado y las «armas de la guerra serán transformadas en arados», parecen sueños ingenuos de nuestra infancia, aunque todavía nos nutran y atraigan tanto.

Todo eso significa también que cambiamos o intentamos cambiar nuestras epistemologías y nuestras espiritualidades. Este cambio es marcado por el pluralismo de las muchas interpretaciones en conflicto, disponibles en nuestro tiempo y en el espacio mundial. Además, testificamos la presencia de muchas epistemologías que conviven o se excluyen en muchos espacios y tiempos, así como en las formas virtuales en que el espacio y el tiempo no son ya referencias absolutas para nosotros. Todo esto también es muy nuevo, y todavía no se ha incorporado a la vida de muchos de nosotros.

2. Cambios e imprecisiones epistemológicas

¿Qué ocurre cuando cambiamos de epistemología? En realidad ese cambio implica una postura diferente que pasamos a asumir gradualmente en la vida. No se trata solamente de un trabajo teórico por el que ajustamos nuestras teorías sobre el mundo de otra manera, sino que hay algo que cambia en nuestras entrañas y nos hace sentir y tomar posiciones diferentes ante el mundo. Conocer no es solamente un acto intelectual, sino un acto corpóreo, un acto social, un acto político, un acto intra e inter mundano, que modifica nuestro ser y nuestros comportamientos. Conocer es conocerse, es verse, es escucharse y conocer a los otros siempre en el claro oscuro de todas nuestros planteamientos. Este conocimiento se expresa en las distintas áreas de nuestra vida, incluso en aquello que denominamos vida interior. La vida interior es al mismo tiempo una vida exterior en la que manifestamos a nuestro mundo las elecciones que hacemos y las elecciones que no realizamos. Esas elecciones no siempre son a favor de nuestro bien o del bien común, sino que pueden ser decisiones ideológicas e ilusorias marcadas por intereses individualistas o corporativistas. Elegir no es siempre elegir bien, así como conocer no siempre es conocer bien. No estamos exentos de pasiones, vicios, odios, rencores, venganzas en nuestros procesos cognitivos y comportamientos. El «arte» de la guerra o las muchas luchas que comenzamos no significa necesariamente que estemos en el buen camino, o sea, en el camino que más favorece a la vida común. Nuestros caminos encuentran con frecuencia calles sin salida y encrucijadas. Es nuestra condición humana.

Una cuestión surge: ¿podemos conocer nuestro mundo y a nosotros mismos de forma radicalmente diferente de aquella en que fuimos iniciados? ¿O podríamos ignorar los acontecimientos más importantes del mundo y preservar así nuestro pequeño mundo? Cuando hablamos de conocer el mundo, ¿de qué mundo estamos hablando? ¿A qué pedazo del mundo se refiere nuestro conocimiento y su explicitación en forma de discurso teórico? Está claro que nos referimos, en primer lugar, al mundo de nuestra circunstancia espacial y temporal con los cambios virtuales que nos rodean. Nuestro mundo es, según nuestra experiencia, el mundo más inmediato, el mundo de la casa, de la sobrevivencia, de las relaciones más próximas, y sólo en segundo lugar es el mundo más vasto, o el vasto mundo. Por tanto ese pequeño mundo o ese pedazo de mundo parece ser nuestro punto de referencia inicial para cualquier forma de conocimiento. Ese mundo incluye mi historia personal, mis intereses, mis valores y elecciones interactuando con otros.

Creo que los cambios son posibles, pero guardan siempre los residuos del pasado, restos de nuestra anterior manera de ver y pensar el mundo. Guardan igualmente las nuevas informaciones que nos llegan de los movimientos sociales y culturales de nuestro tiempo, a pesar de las posibilidades de mantenernos distanciados de todo eso.

Muchas veces nos dejan admirados las nuevas clasificaciones, e imaginamos que las novedades son capaces de superar los antiguos modelos de conocimiento. Basta que algunos científicos o personas de prestigio critiquen los sistemas anteriores o los vigentes, para que creamos que los cambios o fisuras ya se han dado en la supuesta homogeneidad anterior. Algunos de nosotros nos orientamos por las nuevas palabras de la ciencia, creyendo que ésta nos da la nueva línea de la verdad a la que nos debemos adherir y confiar. Pero, no percibimos cuántas contradicciones puede encerrar el mundo de las nuevas teorías y, sobre todo, cuántas rupturas existenciales pueden provocar en el común de los mortales. Creamos nuevas castas, nuevas iglesias, nuevos clubes, nuevos diccionarios con los que todos pasan a hablar el nuevo lenguaje y a sentir que están al día con las nuevas interpretaciones.

Mi pregunta es con respecto a los cambios que favorecen el bien común, sobre todo al bien de los marginados: ¿quién se transforma y qué transformamos con nuestras nuevas teorías filosóficas, sociales y teológicas? Más: ¿cómo entender el conocimiento real y ordinario cuando lo virtual, como ya he dicho, parece haber invadido todos los sectores de nuestra vida? Esa virtualidad cambiante nos saca de nuestro espacio y tiempo, anteriormente conocidos, que nos servían de punto de apoyo. Ahora parece que entramos en algo fluido y mutante. Es ésta una cuestión desafiante que engloba también las nociones filosóficas del pasado, así como las teorías de la posmodernidad. Estamos todos en un mundo

sin espacio y sin tiempo determinados. Navegamos por muchos tiempos y espacios simultáneamente, como si descontextualizásemos los contextos. Basta acceder al computador y conectarse, para estar en un mundo aparentemente mayor que nuestro mundo, un mundo donde los conocimientos o informaciones están ahí presentes, simplemente pulsado una tecla en nuestras máquinas. Muchas veces confundimos informaciones con conocimientos. Prescindimos en cierta forma de la interioridad y de la maduración de los procesos de asimilación cuando se trata de informaciones virtuales.

Hay grupos –y son sin duda la mayoría presente en las periferias del mundo– que ignoran totalmente los nuevos enfoques de la ciencia física y particularmente de las ciencias humanas. Hay por ejemplo cristianos que ignoran totalmente la teología de la liberación, la teología feminista, la eco-teología... y viven como si estas corrientes no fuesen parte de una historia mayor. Viven su «historia mínima», cotidianamente envueltos en su lucha por la sobrevivencia. Su cristianismo se refiere al mundo mítico de sus devociones, un mundo que les da seguridad frente a las amenazas de la vida diaria, del sufrimiento y crueldad que nos rodean. Viven invocando protección de «lo alto», en vista de que el sufrimiento de acá abajo es aterrador y devastador. Y al vivir esa relación con seres de otra esfera, o vivos en otros planos, como se acostumbra decir, están sin duda introduciendo y manteniendo formas de conocimiento o epistemologías interpretativas de su mundo. Éstas tienen la función de exorcizar miedos y de introducir esperanzas más alentadoras en sus vidas. Siguen un modelo jerarquizado de poder según el cual nos encontramos todos/as dependientes de fuerzas extraterrestres que nos conducen y condicionan. Esto no es novedad, pero está ahí, en medio de todas las novedades del momento.

3. Espiritualidad, ¿qué es?

Los desafíos contemporáneos nos invitan a repensar qué es espiritualidad y, sobre todo lo que vivimos y llamamos espiritualidad de la vida cotidiana. Estamos asistiendo a una especie de erosión del sentido tradicional que ligaba la espiritualidad a las religiones. La novedad de los tiempos actuales es que muchas personas y grupos reivindican tener una espiritualidad, a pesar de no adherirse a ninguna fe religiosa en especial. Desvinculan una cosa de la otra y no tienen necesariamente ningún vínculo con una única tradición cultural del pasado. Se da en muchas personas una conciencia creciente de encontrar un nuevo humanismo, aunque sea impreciso y vago.

Por ello, estamos desafiados a recontextualizar sentidos y búsquedas de ese “algo” como nutriente espiritual de nuestras vidas. La palabra espiritualidad, más allá de su etimología (spiritus = espíritu, soplo de

vida), nos remite a algo bueno, algo que ayuda a nuestra vida, nos da direcciones, convicciones, nos ayuda a cultivar el gusto por la vida, a tener ciertos límites y no hundirnos por las muchas dificultades de cada día. Hay palabras que tienen una fuerza positiva capaz de despertar en nosotros cosas buenas; espiritualidad es una de ellas.

Muchos de nosotros ya hemos salido de las concepciones de las «escuelas espirituales» presentes en el cristianismo y en otras religiones, para pasar a afirmar una búsqueda diferente, anclada en el descubrimiento de nosotras mismas/os y del mundo. Hemos abandonado la idea de que algunos deben dictar normas sobre nuestra espiritualidad y constituirse como autoridades sobre nosotros. Muchos/as introducen ya una cierta separación entre la búsqueda espiritual del autoconocimiento, y el orden social y político que parece contrariar esa búsqueda, y sitúan la espiritualidad en un nivel superior al de la vida ordinaria, o como un paréntesis en la vida de cada día. No obstante, sabemos bien que la perspectiva cristiana de la liberación enfatiza la prioridad del cambio del corazón y, concomitantemente, el cambio del orden social injusto. La presencia de los oprimidos/as y los que sufren es un desafío continuo para muchos que no separan su vida del orden injusto en el cual vivimos. Una responsabilidad personal y colectiva parece imponerse ante los muchos dolores de nuestros semejantes. El problema está en la dificultad de encontrar nuevos caminos colectivos de actuación en medio de la erosión actual de normas sociales y respeto a los valores de la convivencia. Un individualismo agresivo parece apoderarse de las relaciones humanas, en medio de discursos sobre la importancia del pluralismo y los derechos humanos. Queremos encontrar culpables, hacer justicia con nuestras propias manos, resolver situaciones de manera conveniente, en primer lugar para nosotros mismos.

En ese clima de inseguridad y desconfianza en las relaciones humanas creo que es necesario estar conectados también a aquello que recusamos como vivencia social, para poder percibir cómo transformar la basura en abono, cómo reciclar lo que está ahí, cómo rescatar de las tradiciones pasadas nuevos significados para el presente, en lenguaje plural y contemporáneo. Tenemos que aprender a preguntar de nuevo: ¿qué quieres que haga? Y escuchar los pedidos con los oídos del corazón. Muchas veces el desafío parece inmenso, sobre todo cuando pensamos que todo depende de nosotros. En verdad algunas cosas y tal vez pocas, dependen de nosotros. Podemos hacer algo, pero no todo lo que sería necesario según nuestras concepciones y posibilidades. Vivimos en un complejo sistema de interacciones donde, a mi modo de ver, estamos siendo convidadas/dos a transformar colectivamente –también de maneras diferentes– los escombros y materiales de construcción desechados, los basureros del mundo. Tenemos que intentar transformarlos en lugares saneados donde

la vida pueda renacer «del imposible suelo». Este lenguaje medio poético es provocado por nuestra creatividad, en vista de que nos damos cuenta de la incapacidad racional de delimitar nuevas estrategias y tácticas. En el fondo la poesía revela cosas bonitas que no conseguimos ver o descubrir en lo cotidiano que nos agrede y amedrenta. Nos protegemos unos de los otros porque somos capaces de aniquilarnos de diferentes maneras. Ya no tenemos ojos para gestos aparentemente sin importancia, como los de la recogedora de latas en la calle que hacía su trabajo en medio de manifestaciones, o de un hombre que salió de una multitud para ofrecer una flor a una policía ya en posición de ataque o de defensa. Rescatar en medio de la violencia algo bello es abrir para nosotros mismos la posibilidad de fertilizar positivamente nuestras vidas.

Creo que los Evangelios poseen una fuerza increíble, expresada en las pequeñas narraciones, aparentemente ingenuas, pero que sirven para hacernos pensar. Nos devuelven a lo inmediato de la sobrevivencia, aquel inmediato que tiene consistencia en el presente y es vital para el mantenimiento de la vida. La sal que sala y el pan compartido, la luz que se enciende y la fiesta de nupcias, la curación de la suegra o los niños en el regazo de Jesús... Están además los leprosos mal agradecidos, y la mujer que insiste en la curación de su hija; está allí la traición y el miedo de los amigos y la fidelidad de las mujeres. Además está la larga caminata entre amigos que hacen memoria y descubren el sentido de la vida después de muchas pérdidas. ¿Qué se puede aprender con esas «instantáneas» de la vida? Nada, piensan algunos; mucho, piensan otros, cuando ven hoy a mujeres jóvenes y ancianas en la fila de la visita a las prisiones, cuando ven trabajadores compartiendo un refrigerio, o a los niños saltando en un parque. Todas esas aparentes banalidades, cosas sin importancia y superfluas, en realidad nos remiten al valor de la vida, a la importancia del “gusto de vivir”, como decía Teilhard de Chardin. Es este sabor instantáneo de vida que nos arranca de la crueldad y violencia que nos rodean, y nos hace olvidarnos del nuevo colonialismo que nos imponen empresas multinacionales, nuevas propietarias de nuestras tierras. Es el dolor de tripa que nos recuerda que comemos verduras llenas de agrotóxicos. Es el lloro de un niño que nos recuerda que el hambre continúa siendo un flagelo. Es el hedor de las calles que nos recuerda la importancia de la higiene. El agua que corre por cañerías agujereadas de nuestros barrios nos recuerda la preciosidad del agua y su escasez. No son los discursos sobre la perfección o sobre la voluntad de Dios, o la vida de un santo, lo que nos estremece las entrañas. No son las teorías sociales elaboradas con una lógica perfecta lo que transforma nuestro sentir la vida. Es otra cosa, mas bien pequeña, aparentemente sin importancia, lo que hace marca diferencia y nos lleva a amar y actuar. Sentir la vida en su pequeñez, grandeza, belleza y contradicción, nos abre nuevos caminos. Por ello,

más allá de la modernidad, de la posmodernidad, del poscolonialismo, de la libertad de palabra, que de por sí no cambian nuestro corazón, necesitamos caminar por las calles, sentir el mal olor, secar las lágrimas para que algo impuro, enfermo, loco, menesteroso, nos toque y abra en nosotros carriles para la transformación de nuestro corazón.

En el fondo, no sabemos definir la espiritualidad, pero supongo que eso no tiene importancia. Estamos dentro de cuerpos, en medio de cuerpos, somos cuerpos, tenemos cuerpos, necesidades de pan y de flores, del hombro amigo y de una mano para asegurar las nuestras. Tal vez sea tiempo de volver a mirar las cosas ordinarias de la vida y ver en ellas lo extraordinario, capaz de transformar nuestras vidas. Tal vez sea tiempo de reaprender lo que hemos olvidado de mirar, por estar demasiado apresurados/as; tal vez sea tiempo de oír músicas extrañas a nuestros oídos e intentar entender una poesía diferente de la nuestra.

Creo que la espiritualidad, para mí, atraviesa nuevos desiertos, caminos tortuosos, las nuevas tecnologías y tantas otras cosas que hacen de nuestro mundo una pequeña aventura espiritual. Pasa también por descubrir perlas en medio de los chiqueros y sepulturas que construimos para nosotros mismos, e incluso por encontrar la «dracma perdida» que tanto buscábamos. La espiritualidad es una forma de vivir y convivir con las personas, reconociendo en ellas mi imagen y mi semejanza con ellas. Es algo simple, y porque parece simple es complicado. Pero así es la vida, nuestra vida desnuda, despojada del aparataje que quiere esconderla hasta de nosotros mismos.

Brevísima conclusión: está oscuro, pero yo canto

Creo que es éste un camino, un pequeño camino, tal vez insignificante... Cantar obstinadamente en medio de la oscuridad de nuestro tiempo. Cantar balbuciendo canciones de amor, de cuna, canciones aprendidas para no permitirnos morirnos antes de tiempo, para no perder pie ante los que quieren ocultarnos las bellezas de la vida y el gusto de vivir. Escuchar y contar pequeñas historias que nos enseñan bellas lecciones, capaces de despertar en nosotros ternura y solidaridad, historias que nos dicen: “ve tú e intenta hacer lo mismo”.

Faz oscuro, mas eu canto! Está oscuro, ¡pero yo canto!

En aquel tiempo, Jesús contó la siguiente parábola a sus amigos...





Rare Earth, Rare Humans:

A celebration of humanity

Marcelo GLEISER
Professor of Physics and Astronomy at Dartmouth College
UNITED STATES

It's easy to bash humans. We are making a mess of this world. We kill each other. We are incapable of respecting differing points of view. We are selfish, destructive, parasitic. In the midst of so much negativity, it's time to offer an alternative viewpoint, more uplifting and hopefully inspiring. The ongoing media blitz concerning our planetary future provides a unique opportunity to reflect upon our relationship with our planet, not only from the usual global warming and population explosion vs. sustainability and green energy resources, but also from a more cosmic perspective. Even more, it offers a chance to understand the spiritual dimension of our connection to our planet, and to life in general, a dimension that modern life and the race against time make all too easy to overcome.

Central to the scientific description of the world, which has served us extremely well for centuries, is the notion that the more we learn about the universe the less important we become. Sometimes this is called the Copernican Principle, or simply Copernicanism: just as Copernicus moved the Earth from the center of the cosmos, as science progresses we find that our location and role in the grand scheme of things has become less and less important. Given that the same laws of physics and chemistry apply across the cosmos, there are other suns out there, surrounded by other planets. Our solar system is one among trillions of others, apparently not very important.

When you consider the teachings from modern cosmology, things get even worse. Our galaxy, the Milky Way, is one of hundreds of billions in the cosmos, each with hundreds of billions of stars. In 1929, Edwin Hubble showed that the universe is expanding and that no one point in the cosmos is more important than any other. During the 1990s, a radical

new idea was put forward: that our universe is not all there is but simply one out of myriad universes, bubbling forth from a timeless realm called the multiverse. We don't know if the multiverse is real or not—and we may never know, as I discussed in my recent book *The Island of Knowledge: the limits of science and the search for meaning*—but many modern cosmological theories support the idea. Are we really that irrelevant? Or can modern science invert this argument and offer a more positive existential perspective of our place in the cosmos?

I propose that we can. The more we learn about the universe the more we also learn something that counters the Copernican Principle: yes, we don't occupy the center of all things, and yes, our galaxy is one among hundreds of billions. However, as we peer into our solar system neighbors—the planets and their moons—we see stark environments, dead and prohibitive. Earth stands alone as an oasis, rare and precious. The Pale Blue Dot, as Carl Sagan called it.

Add to this what we have learned of how life developed here over the past 3.5 billion years, and we come to what I consider a transformative revelation: even if we find life elsewhere in the cosmos, chances are that this alien life will be simple, made of unicellular organisms. (I will leave speculative notions of life-as-we-don't-know-it aside.) The many qualitative jumps from single-celled to multi-cellular organisms, and then to highly functioning, intelligent beings are immensely unlikely, the results of a series of random, unrepeatably accidents. Every planet has a history, and the life in the planet reflects this history in unique ways. There are no two Earths in the cosmos, we can be sure. It follows that there are also no other humans in the cosmos. Even as products of random events, we remain unique and special. The fact that life isn't the result of purposeful planning—cosmic or supernatural—doesn't mean it is meaningless.

Even if complex life exists elsewhere in the cosmos—and we can't say that it doesn't—it is so far removed from us that for all practical purposes we are alone. And if we are alone and have the ability to think, we are rare and precious. For all that we know, we are how the universe thinks about itself. And if we are rare and precious, we have a new directive that should lift us beyond the divisive tribal morality that has ruled human history for millennia. We must preserve life at all costs, be the guardians of this world. To counter the Copernican Principle, I propose the "Humancentric Principle": being rare, we alone have the power to ruin or to save this precious world we live in. And I don't mean this in some kind of naïve way. I mean it quite literally. If we don't mend our ways we will only have ourselves to blame. Judging from the accumulated evidence from the past few thousands of years, no one, alien intelligence or God, will come to our rescue. It's really up to us.

Humancentrism proposes a new form of natural worship that expresses our deep connection to the planet that, alone, allows us to exist. This connection is clearly spiritual, even if grounded on natural—as opposed to supernatural—values. Spirituality does not necessarily refer to the world of immaterial spirits, but to a feeling of transcendence that one experiences when exposed to something grander than himself. Our connection to our planet is vital to our collective future; and it is also vital as a unifying force for a very divided humanity. Our link to Earth is more than simply useful: it is defining, inspiring, essential. We are molecular machines capable of self-awareness, of experiencing the passage of time. That we now know of our uniqueness, and of the uniqueness of our planetary home, should only strengthen our drive to redefine our future, to strengthen our commitment to future generations. We have no right to do otherwise.



VIDA ETERNA: UNA NUEVA VISIÓN

John Shelby SPONG



VIDA ETERNA: UNA NUEVA VISIÓN

Más allá de las religiones,
más allá del teísmo,
más allá de cielo e infierno



JOHN SHELBY SPONG



Extraña Tierra, Extraños Humanos:

Una celebración de la humanidad

Marcelo GLEISER

Professor of Physics and Astronomy at Dartmouth College

UNITED STATES

Traducción de VOICES

Es fácil criticar a los seres humanos. Estamos haciendo un lío de este mundo. Nos matamos unos a otros. Somos incapaces de respetar los diferentes puntos de vista. Somos egoístas, destructivos, parasitarios. Pero entre tanta negatividad, es el momento de ofrecer un punto de vista alternativo, más constructivo y espero que inspirador. El bombardeo mediático en curso sobre el futuro planetario ofrece una oportunidad única para reflexionar sobre nuestra relación con nuestro planeta, no sólo sobre el habitual calentamiento y explosión demográfica mundial contra la sostenibilidad y los recursos de energía verde, sino también desde una perspectiva más cósmica. Aun más, ofrece la oportunidad de entender la dimensión espiritual de nuestra conexión con nuestro planeta, y con la vida en general, una dimensión que la vida moderna y la carrera contra el tiempo lo hacen todo fácil de superar.

Central a la descripción científica del mundo, que nos ha servido muy bien durante siglos, es la idea de que cuanto más aprendemos sobre el universo, menos importantes parecemos. A veces esto se llama el Principio de Copérnico, o simplemente copernicanismo: igual que Copérnico sacó a la Tierra del centro del cosmos, a medida que ha ido progresando la ciencia, nos encontramos con que nuestra ubicación y función en el gran conjunto de las cosas se ha vuelto cada vez menos importante. Dado que las mismas leyes de la física y la química se aplican por todo el cosmos, hay otros soles por ahí, rodeados de otros planetas. Nuestro sistema solar es uno entre miles de millones de otros, y al parecer no muy importante.

Si tenemos en cuenta las enseñanzas de la cosmología moderna, las cosas se ponen aún peor. Nuestra galaxia, la Vía Láctea, es una de cientos de miles de millones en el cosmos, cada una con cientos de miles de millones de estrellas. En 1929 Edwin Hubble demostró que el universo se está expandiendo, y que ningún punto en el cosmos es más importante que cualquier otro. Durante la década de 1990 se propuso una nueva idea radical: que nuestro universo no es todo lo que hay, sino simplemente uno de los universos innumerables, bullendo hacia adelante en un reino eterno llamado multiverso. No sabemos si el multiverso es real o no, y puede que nunca sepamos, como ya comenté en mi reciente libro *La Isla del Conocimiento: límites de la ciencia y búsqueda de sentido*, pero muchas teorías cosmológicas modernas apoyan la idea. ¿Estamos realmente tan irrelevante? ¿O puede la ciencia moderna invertir este argumento y ofrecer una perspectiva existencial más positiva de nuestro lugar en el cosmos?

Afirmo que podemos. Cuanto más aprendemos sobre el universo, tanto más aprendemos algo que contradice el Principio de Copérnico: sí, no ocupamos el centro del cosmos, y sí, nuestra galaxia es una más entre cientos de miles de millones de ellas. Sin embargo, como nos asomamos a nuestros vecinos –los del sistema solar, los planetas y sus lunas– vemos ambientes rígidos, muertos y prohibitivos. Nuestra Tierra se destaca como un oasis, singular y precioso. El «pálido punto azul», como lo llamo Carl Sagan.

Añádase a esto lo que hemos aprendido sobre cómo se desarrolló la vida aquí, durante los últimos 3,5 millones de años, y llegamos a lo que yo considero una revelación transformadora: incluso aunque encontremos vida en otro lugar del cosmos, lo más probable es que esa vida extraterrestre será sencilla, hecha de organismos unicelulares. (No entraré ahora en nociones especulativas de la vida). Los numerosos saltos cualitativos, desde los organismos unicelulares a los multicelulares, y luego hasta los seres altamente inteligentes, son inmensamente improbables, resultado de una serie de accidentes, aleatorios e irrepetibles. Cada planeta tiene una historia, y la vida en el planeta refleja esta historia de una forma única. No hay dos Tierras en el cosmos, podemos estar seguros. De ello se desprende que, también, hay otros seres humanos en el cosmos. Aun siendo resultado de acontecimientos al azar, seguimos siendo únicos y especiales. El hecho de que la vida no sea el resultado de una planificación deliberada-cósmico o sobrenatural, no quiere decir que no tenga sentido.

Incluso si la vida compleja existe en las otras partes del cosmos –y no podemos decir que la haya– está tan lejos de nosotros que, a todos los efectos prácticos, estamos solos. Y si estamos solos y tenemos capacidad de pensar, somos raros, y preciosos. Por todo lo que sabemos, somos

como el universo pensando en sí mismo. Y si somos raros y preciosos, tenemos ahí un nuevo motivo que nos debe levantar más allá de la moralidad tribal divisiva que ha gobernado nuestra historia humana durante milenios. Debemos preservar la vida a toda costa, ser los guardianes de este mundo. Para contrarrestar el Principio Copernicano, propongo el "Principio Humanocéntrico": aun siendo raros, sólo nosotros tenemos el poder de arruinar o salvar este precioso mundo en el que vivimos. Y no lo digo ingenuamente. Lo digo muy conscientemente: si no enmendamos nuestros caminos, sólo tendremos a nosotros mismos la culpa. A juzgar por la evidencia acumulada de los últimos varios miles de años, nadie, ninguna inteligencia alienígena, o ningún Dios, vendrá a nuestro rescate. Estamos únicamente en nuestras manos.

El Humancentrismo propone una nueva forma de culto natural, que expresa nuestra profunda conexión con el planeta, la que, por sí sola, nos permite existir. Esta conexión es claramente espiritual, aun cuando se base en la física, no en los valores sobrenaturales. La espiritualidad no necesariamente se refiere a un mundo de espíritus inmateriales, también puede ser referida a un sentimiento de trascendencia que experimentamos cuando nos exponemos a algo más grande que nosotros mismos. Nuestra conexión con nuestro planeta es vital para nuestro futuro colectivo, y también es vital como una fuerza unificadora para una humanidad tan dividida. Nuestro vínculo con la Tierra es más que simplemente útil: nos está definiendo, nos inspira, es esencial. Somos máquinas moleculares capaces de tener conciencia de sí mismas, y de experimentar el paso del tiempo. El hecho de que ahora sabemos de nuestra singularidad y de la singularidad de nuestro hogar planetario, debe fortalecer nuestra decisión de redefinir nuestro futuro, para fortalecer nuestro compromiso con las generaciones futuras. No tenemos derecho a hacer lo contrario.



AUNQUE NO HAYA UN DIOS AHÍ ARRIBA

Vivir en Dios, sin dios

ROGER LENAERS

Colección «Tiempo Axial»: <http://tiempoaxial.org>

AUNQUE NO HAYA UN DIOS AHÍ ARRIBA

Roger LENAERS

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The Logics of Liberation Spirituality and Eco-Espirituality

Two facets of Creation Spirituality

Roger HAIGHT sj*

Union Theological Seminar, New York, USA

This essay seeks to isolate an inner core that liberation and eco-centered spirituality share together. The meaning of the term “logic” points to such a central rationale. These spiritualities can take many different forms when faced with various local situations and mechanisms of human and ecological degradation. But if these two spiritualities are looked upon as distinct species that fall under the umbrella of a common genus or family, each of them will be found to possess an essential structure that analogously aligns with a critical reformist genus. I aim first of all to capture the inner logic of these two spiritualities and, by laying them side-by-side, to implicitly compare them. On this formula, this could be called an essay in comparative spirituality.

Liberation and eco-centered spiritualities extend beyond Christianity. One needs to be neither Christian nor religious to take up either one of these spiritualities. From different perspectives one could say that Christian faith was either grafted on to these spiritualities or they were absorbed into it. In either case one can both distinguish them from Christian faith and, on that assumption, one can ask what specifically Christian faith contributes to this secular commitment. I will offer this analysis in the third part of the discussion. It will show that these spiritualities relate as two species that fit under the genus of creation spirituality and that both enrich Christian spirituality and are enriched by Christian faith.

Before moving forward, however, I should describe meaning of the term “spirituality” as it is being used here. Spirituality refers to the way persons or groups lead their lives in relation to what they consider ultimate, transcendent, or of all embracing importance. This is a secular definition; all human beings who live consistent lives have a spirituality that is essentially defined by the way they live. What is ultimate for them appears in the consistent patterns of their action. This may or may not

* Roger Haight, S.J., is the Director of the PhD Program at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He works in the area of Spirituality; his most recent book is *Spirituality Seeking Theology* (Orbis Books, 2014).

exactly correspond with their stated purpose in life. But on the premise that we are what we do, that our real commitments are those borne out in our actions, ultimate reality for us manifests itself in the way our lives actually unfold.

Spirituality so defined always bears two forms or levels: the one is the existential level of actual life, and the other is the reflective level of analysis. The one level is lived out in action, with or without explicit analysis. The intellectual analysis can be simple or highly developed into different schools or disciplines of the spiritual life. It should be clear that what follows is a highly abstract examination of what can be compelling ways in which human beings direct their lives on the ground.

The Logic of Liberation Spirituality

I begin with an attempt to schematize the logic of liberation spirituality. There is no single way of doing this; what is going on in a corporate human commitment can be depicted in any number of ways. To represent this spirituality without a historical account of one or other of these movements compounds the abstraction. But I suppose that readers are familiar with liberation movements and liberation theologies. The point then is not to contribute new knowledge about liberation spiritualities but to set up a framework that can be used to enable a comparison between both of these forms of spiritual commitment. Thus both spiritualities are considered according to a structure with three dimensions: first, a negative experience of contrast; second, a categorical imperative that urges a moral response to the situation in a purely formal way, and, third, a positive moral commitment or fundamental option that constructively guides responsive action and even programs.

Negative experience of contrast. I draw this category of a “negative experience of contrast” from Edward Schillebeeckx who borrowed it from neo-Marxian critical social theory (Schillebeeckx, 621-22). The term indicates an experience that something is radically and intrinsically wrong. This is in varying degrees a direct intuitive experience, whether beginning with a vague sense or developed into an absolute conviction. The feeling or perception indicates that a certain social situation or action or an event is more or less radically wrong: “this should not be!” This experience has roots that are deeper and prior to the explanation of why something is wrong. Such perceptions can be occasioned by situations or events that are personal and limited, but it also applies to convictions that accepted social behaviors are wrong and that the social conventions that sustain them are corrupt.

Some negative kind of negative experience of contrast lies beneath all liberation movements. Some social situation is widespread and scandalous, a situation that causes outrage, not only for those who are its victims, but also on the part of anyone who knows about it. The experience

does not depend on understanding: one can be shocked by gratuitous injury to a child before as well as after understanding why it happened. Historical and social explanations frequently intensify the moral reaction. I do not need to recite the statistics of hunger in the world, the greedy politics of poverty, or the lack of concern that supports fundamental massive deprivations of what are considered fundamental human rights by most peoples. There are too many situations that summon forth a negative experience of contrast between an existing situation and what should be.

In Latin American liberation spirituality the conditions of poverty in which such large percentages of citizens of various countries exist provide the contrast experience that fuels the demand for liberation. In North America black liberation movements react against the racism that remains long after the institutions of slavery have been officially dismantled. Women who are protected by law are still openly discriminated against in a culture that allows institutions to continue to practice what law and morality forbid. Other communities such as gays have mobilized to represent their situation and their cause. Wherever groups form a collectivity that is consciously aware of patterns of human oppression, one has the seeds for a liberation movement and spirituality.

Categorical imperative. A negative experience of contrast gives rise to reflection both on what is wrong and what should be done. The language of a “categorical imperative” comes from the moral reasoning of Immanuel Kant. It has the merit of rooting moral response in the essential social structure of human existence. The demand to act morally is not imposed from outside a person or society. As a formal structure it can be experienced within the self in a most rudimentary sense of duty. The idea that such an inner command is “categorical” means that it is absolute and unconditioned; it is a structure of being human. A categorical imperative transcends particular situations so as not to be dependent on certain particular cultural or social conditions but forms part of conscious existence itself. To achieve this status it must be a formal or structural demand rather than a material course of action.

Kant formulated his view of the categorical imperative in different ways, but the gist all of his formulas is that the human person enjoys an inalienable value; a person should never be used merely as a means to another end (Kant, 58). No human person should be treated in a way that would be unacceptable as a common standard for all including oneself. One can see that this absolute norm has a direct bearing on life in society. Any social system or institutionalized pattern of behavior that does not respect the absolute value of the human person is objectively wrong. This absolute moral rule cuts through relative secular or religious ideologies that are used to rationalize social injustice.

Fundamental option. If the categorical imperative provides a formula for discerning why an action or a situation departs from basic moral standards of humanity, a fundamental option points more positively the direction for negating the negation and righting the wrong. I use this term in a non-technical way to distinguish an all-encompassing orientation of a person or group as distinct from a concrete choice of this or that object. It refers to a deep orienting commitment of the will towards certain values that influences concrete decision-making. A fundamental option consists of a commitment to channel behavior in a way that counteracts the prevailing negative situation in its personal, social, political, or cultural form. A fundamental option remains quite distant from strategy or policy for social change; any complex social situation will require a good deal of concrete planning and negotiating; everyone sees the common good from the perspective of their own interests. But without a fundamental commitment to the task, prior to agreement on specific goals, there will be no action at all.

The “preferential option for the poor,” formulated by Latin American liberation theology, provides one of the best examples of a fundamental social option directed against massive poverty and generally dehumanizing conditions of life. It is important to notice that the poor spontaneously buy into an option for the poor because it is in their interests. This is true even though the masses of the poor may not agree on what will truly ameliorate their situation. Still, much more interesting is whether a cross section of society can be attracted by a common good that embraces all in society. This requires that those who fully participate in society and the economy have a sense of social responsibility that is not satisfied with a fundamentally unjust, or racist, or sexist community. The preferential option for the poor, therefore, is an example of a response to a negative situation that tries to engage everyone in a society where all have a stake in what is truly a common good. In short, the option for the poor is most evidently moral when it is an option of those who are more advantaged. It is true that the goal of liberation theology is to give poor and oppressed people their voice so that they can perform as subjects of history. But it is also clear that without buy-in from the powerful the goals of liberation theology will not be achieved.

In sum, the inner core of liberation spirituality consists of an experience of scandal and outrage at human degradation, a moral critique of the status quo, and a positive and pervasive commitment to a course of action that will ameliorate the situation.

The Logic of Ecoentered Spirituality

This second section will offer an account of the most rudimentary logic of eco-spirituality. I use the same pattern of analysis as the one used in liberation spirituality. This provides axes for comparison between the

two spiritualities. There is a good deal of interpretive contrivance in the setting up of these patterns of analysis. These analytical structures are not meant to be restrictive but to open up a fuller descriptive and imaginative conception of what is going on in these spiritualities.

A negative experience of contrast. To some extent, but not absolutely, the negative contrast experience that underlies eco-spirituality occurs against the background of an appreciation of the scientific story of the formation of the universe. This story begins with an unimaginable explosion of energy at the beginning of our universe about 13.7 billion years ago. From that moment the universe has been expanding at the speed of light in all directions forming millions of galaxies of stars analogous to the Milky Way, each containing innumerable stars that may have local system of planets like our own. Our planet was in existence for billions of years before it first generated life. Organic living things emerged from one primal ancestor that gradually evolved into the millions of species of life now found on the planet and millions more that came into being and have gone extinct. *Homo sapiens*, our own species among the mammals, is rather late in the whole story of the universe and in the story of life.

Several features of this story make it more than a bundle of scientific information. First of all it is a story: reality came into being and developed over time. Because of its size and age, the story has an awesome mesmerizing character; because it is our story, we are engaged in it; because it binds all reality together in a temporal causal connection, it communicates a sense of solidarity with all creation. That is the case chemically: as individuals we are constructed of the material of the universe, and we bear the history of its coming to be within us. In other words, the world of nature and especially of life is not merely an external context of our autonomous rational lives. Rather, we are that part of the physical biosphere that has become conscious of itself. This sense of an inner bond with other creatures is a part of eco-spirituality.

The negative contrast experience that forces eco-spirituality to the surface of human consciousness consists of the destruction of life on the planet. Long-range, this entails destruction of our own habitat and with it destruction of human life as well. But the essence of eco-spirituality is not anthropocentric. One can distinguish three phases of evolution on the planet earth after its initial formation: the gradual geological rearrangement of the planet, the rise and development of plant and animal life forms, and the appearance of human beings. The prehuman biosphere has had a spectacular history of development and interconnectedness within itself before the emergence of human self-conscious freedom. The intricate, dynamically interrelated existence of so many species of life, the integrity of the whole sphere of plant and animal behavior, especially as manifested in local systems, together form a biosphere that is valuable in itself and not simply because it is our prehistory. The destruction of

species on a mass scale, not just by “natural” extinction but simply by “clearing away” in order to “make room for” human activity appears as something massively wrong. The statistics of this destruction are just as stunning in size as the statistics of human hunger, and they are often interrelated. In other words, there is an enormous violation and degradation of nature going on here.

Categorical imperative. The categorical imperative that condemns wanton destruction of life forms is, like Kant’s, also unconditional. But it does not lie on the surface of consciousness. It has to be mediated by premises and always needs discussion in its application. First of all, this categorical imperative is founded on the ontological value of various forms of life. Ontological value refers to the intrinsic importance of a form of being and its individual instantiations. One could easily design scales of value among the intricacies of life along various axes. But each species has a value in itself. This means that its value cannot be reduced to its usefulness to human beings. Construing them in a one-way relationship to the human, as beautiful, entertaining, and useful for human consumption, health, and recreation, easily overlooks the “in-itself” or ontological value of other beings

This introduces a contentious area that is intrinsic to eco-spirituality and frequently rises to the surface of perception. It has to do with the place of the human in the spheres of planetary existence. To oversimplify, on one side an anthropocentrism regards the emergence of the human as the vanguard of evolution. As the highest form of life, a life that broke out of subaltern forms into self-conscious freedom, the human dominates creation and has assumed responsibility for its development. On the other side of the equation lies not biocentrism, which would assume in its turn dominant rights, but a conception of integral interconnected life on the planet that recognizes the ontological value of species independent of human assessment and usefulness. Eco-spirituality depends on a transition from reliance on “instrumental reason” operating within an anthropocentric bias to a form of “embedded reason” that thinks within a broader horizon of human life constituted in an integrated matrix of many interconnected forms of life. Without this conversion against the grain of anthropocentrism eco-spirituality will not be convincing.

The categorical imperative for eco-spirituality may be expressed in different formulas, but one of its moral philosophers is Thomas Berry. He articulates the eco-categorical imperative in this way: “The one thing necessary is to appreciate that the Earth itself and all its living and non-living components is a community, that the human is a member of this integral community and finds its proper role in advancing the well-being of this community. There can be no sustained well-being of any part of the community that does not relate effectively to the well-being of the total community” (Berry, 63).

Fundamental option. It is much more difficult to construct the fundamental option of eco-spirituality in concise language than it is in the case of the various forms of liberation theology. Of course it may be an option for a definite plant or animal that is threatened in a specific eco-system. But the individual cases, even when they are piled up, do not convey what is at stake in eco-spirituality.

Perhaps the best approach to this dimension of eco-spirituality will be through a contrast and an adjustment of a point of view that most would accept. One can find a general resonance with John Calvin's principle of stewardship. He formulated it this way in his *Institutes*: "all those things [creatures] were so given to us by the kindness of God, and so destined for our benefit, that they are, as it were, entrusted to us, and we must one day render account of them" (Calvin, III.10.5). All would agree with this implicit charge and resultant commitment to care for the earth. The religious form that Calvin gives it finds resonances in a naturalist anthropocentrism: human beings are in charge, and even eco-spirituality has to make its appeal to human beings. But the problem is that responsibility for care easily slides into domination: what is good for humanity is good for the world (Johnson, 265-67).

The fundamental commitment of an eco-spirituality has to be elicited out of an "embedded reason," one that thinks ecologically in terms of respect for all forms life and harmony of the species within their environments. This form of consciousness is both lord and servant; it has to admit that the ontological value of other forms of life make a claim on moral decision-making. To call this a fundamental option for social and cultural patterns of behavior or laws that respect the varieties of life in their specific differences does not have much rhetorical punch. But it describes the fundamental desire, option, and commitment of eco-spirituality.

In sum, eco-spirituality rests on an epistemological appreciation of the autonomous value of life forms other than the human and a respect for them. On this basis it is shocked by the wanton destruction of the planet's systems of life, apart from self-interested concern for the survival of the human species. The categorical imperative of this spirituality is the intrinsic demand that the human be fitted into the communitarian web of life out of which it was generated. And the fundamental option of this spirituality consists of a commitment to promote policies and behaviors that respect the integrity of life.

What Christian Faith Adds to These Spiritualities

The object of Christian faith is God as God is revealed in the person and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. The doctrines of this faith are presupposed here. The question I raise pertains to the influence Christian spirituality may have on each of these two spiritualities and how they in their turn influence Christian spirituality. One does not have to be a

member of any religious body or a believer in transcendent reality to be a liberationist or to have an eco-centered spirituality. But being a Christian injects into these spiritualities new depths and relevance, and drawing these spiritualities into Christian faith transforms that faith. The impact is felt in both directions. There is surely a space for these spiritualities within Christian faith, and when they are absorbed, they affect the shape of Christian belief. They force faith to expand under the pressure of these imperatives and fundamental options and give it contemporary relevance. And when Christian faith merges with liberation and eco-spirituality, it instills in them new breadth, depth, and height of meaning. I offer only a line-sketch of these transformations in keeping with the restraints of this statement. Each of the points that are simply stated here could be expanding through existential historical examples.

God, as personal creator, injects intentionality into the universe. Faith in God as creator of heaven and earth lies at the foundation of Christian faith. This creator God is personal. Christian faith goes further and describes the character of God as good, as friendly, and as the lover of what God creates. At the center and very heart of reality is divine goodness and love. Faith supports and confirms a deep inner bond of unity to the whole of creation. All human beings share more than a common descent: they are a community of persons under a single loving God.

But one must understand that God cannot be construed as an individual person because of the limitations that are inherent in the image. To be God, God must be infinite being, the power that creates finite reality other than God's self out of nothing. Such a God cannot be imagined accurately, and therefore is not designated as a person but an infinite source and ground of being that incorporates within God's self all that we know of personal being. To imagine God as an individual, as the term God inevitably suggests, creates enigmas that cannot be resolved. But once that has been said, the conviction that the source and permanent ground of being itself is personal transforms all reality with intentionality. The attributes of personhood applied to God, intelligence, will, feeling, desire, intention and purpose, will always be subject to anthropomorphic distortion. Nevertheless, criticism of that inherent tendency opens up the human spirit to a transformed view of the evolutionary world, the whole biosphere, the phenomenon of the human, and its place in this overwhelming scene or space. Acceptance of a personal creator paradoxically introduces deep ideas of intentionality and purpose into a system that runs on the basis of contingency and randomness mixed with steady patterns of behavior.

God is present to and accompanies the unfolding of evolution and history. The first point entails this second aspect of Christian faith when it is brought to bear on liberation spirituality and eco-spirituality. The first point displays God as encompassing all reality by creating power; this

second point emphasizes how this entails God's personal presence within all of reality as the power of its being. In other words, because creation is an ongoing action of God, God constitutes the "within" of all being as the sustaining cause of its being. To put this in personalist terms, God does not remain "up there" and "out there;" such "physicalist" language distorts the transcendence of God as well as God's suffused presence within created reality. God's transcendence is precisely that which allows God's immanent presence to all reality. To communicate this idea Christians used the language of the Jewish bible and spoke of God as Spirit: God as Spirit is no other than transcend God at work within the finite world of spirit and matter (Johnson, 134-43).

Faith's conception of God has implications for the existential character of spirituality. It means that God accompanies reality in its evolutionary and historical development. God sustains the becoming of reality, God empowers it, and God is present to it in a personal way. Human beings are accompanied in their spiritual quest, in their making their way through life, in their commitments. Human beings are not isolated or alone in the universe.

The description of the Christian faith through the lens of liberationist and eco-centered spiritualities brings out another dimension of its character. It is not the case that God is a known object whose existence is threatened by the suffering caused by human oppression or the violence of the evolutionary process. It is rather that these are the givens of the natural world and history. Human suffering does not undermine religious faith but is its point of departure. God appears within these processes as a power of actual being and thus in some measure as revealed in or by these negativities. In both cases God "appears" dialectically within the negative contrast experiences as a source of empowerment to resist what liberationist and eco-spirituality confront. God gives meaning to both spiritualities by being a God who is the basis of justice and of life.

God who sustains and encompasses reality offers a promise of permanent value. Christian faith brings a third dimension to the spiritualities of liberation and eco-centeredness, namely, a promise that the processes of evolution and history have permanent meaning and value. This conviction marks the significance of faith in the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus is not an isolated individual phenomenon but a revelation from within a religious tradition that has universal import. His ministry and his destiny reveal both the character of God and of human existence. The story of Jesus as a mediation of a revelation of God tells not only of his destiny but reveals what has always been going on within the dynamics of ongoing creation from the beginning. The inner Spirit of God who raised Jesus out of death and into the eternal life of God bears witness to the permanent ontological value of what evolution and history constructively create. From a secular point of view the destiny of the evolving universe

and life in this world is death and a return to nothingness. The promise of resurrection transforms that death into life. Faith mixed with hope bestows on the evolving universe, the human history in it, and each individual person an ultimate value.

Conclusion

Liberation spirituality and eco-spirituality are both secular spiritualities that respond to scandalous negative experiences of destruction that is perpetrated by human beings against other human beings and against the natural world. The massive negativities of social suffering and destruction of nature's web of life evoke committed resistance. And this in turn becomes an authentic and coherent secular spirituality. The value of oppressed human persons in themselves and the besieged biosphere in itself are worthy objects of the commitment of individual persons and the social movements sustained by them. Both are from different perspectives liberation movements; and both address forms of destruction of the creation that has evolved up to this point in time.

The thesis of this essay is that Christian faith enhances these spiritualities and is enhanced by them. Christian faith in the God of life, creator of heaven and earth, revealed in the ministry and person of Jesus of Nazareth, gives these spiritualities a qualitative new transcendent depth, height, and meaningfulness. Nothing positive in these spiritual ways of life is lost; but new dimensions of permanent meaning and fulfillment transform them. In absorbing these spiritualities, Christian faith too is transformed; it is given a new language for understanding itself and new relevance for life in the present moment. It would be an absolute mistake to read these two distinct spiritualities as competing for human investment. Read in the context of a larger creation spirituality that is revealed in Jesus' ministry they can only be understood as enhancing each other. They not only coexist but also at certain points entail each other because so much of the despoliation of the earth serves the interest of certain groups at the expense of others.



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La Lógica de la Espiritualidad de la Liberación y de la Eco-Espiritualidad

Dos caras de la espiritualidad de la creación

Roger HAIGHT sj*

Union Theological Seminar, New York, ESTADOS UNIDOS

Este ensayo busca aislar un corazón central que comparten la espiritualidad de la liberación y la centrada en la ecología. El significado del término “lógico” apunta hacia un centro racional. Estas espiritualidades pueden tomar diferentes formas cuando se enfrentan a varias situaciones locales y a mecanismos de degradación humana y ecológica. Pero si estas dos espiritualidades se ven como de diferente especie, que caen bajo el paraguas de un gen o una familia común, encontraremos que cada una de ellas posee una estructura esencial que se alinea analógicamente con un gen crítico reformista. Aspiro, antes que nada, a captar la lógica interna de estas dos espiritualidades y, poniéndolas una al lado de la otra, a compararlas implícitamente. Con esta fórmula, esto se podría llamar un ensayo de espiritualidad comparada.

Las espiritualidades de liberación y las centradas en la ecología se extienden más allá del cristianismo. Uno no necesita ni ser cristiano ni religioso para tomar una de estas espiritualidades. Desde distintas perspectivas uno podría decir que la fe cristiana o fue fundada en estas espiritualidades o estas fueron absorbidas por ella. En ambos casos, uno las puede distinguir de la fe cristiana y, sobre esta suposición, uno puede preguntar qué parte específicamente de la fe cristiana contribuye a este compromiso secular. Ofreceré este análisis en la tercera parte de la discusión. Mostrará que estas espiritualidades se relacionan como dos especies que encajan en el gen de la espiritualidad creadora y que ambas enriquecen la espiritualidad cristiana y son enriquecidas por la fe cristiana.

* Roger Haight, S.J., es el Director del PhD Program en el Union Theological Seminary de New York. Trabaja en el área de Espiritualidad; su más reciente libro es *Spirituality Seeking Theology* (Orbis Books, 2014).

Antes de proseguir, sin embargo, tengo que describir el significado del término “espiritualidad” como es usado aquí. Espiritualidad se refiere a la manera en que las personas o los grupos llevan su vida en relación a lo que consideran último, trascendente, o de importancia global. Esta es una definición secular; todos los seres humanos que viven vidas consistentes tienen una espiritualidad que se define esencialmente por la forma en la que viven. Lo que es último para ellos, aparece en un patrón consistente en sus acciones. Esto puede o no corresponder exactamente con su propósitos de vida establecido. Pero con la premisa que somos lo que hacemos, que nuestro compromiso verdadero es el que nace de nuestras acciones, la realidad última para nosotros se manifiesta a sí misma en la forma en que nuestra vida se desarrolla.

La espiritualidad así definida siempre conlleva dos formas o niveles: uno el nivel existencial de la vida actual, el otro es el nivel reflexivo de análisis. El primero se vive en la acción, con o sin un análisis explícito. El análisis intelectual puede ser simple o altamente desarrollado en diferentes escuelas o disciplinas de la vida espiritual. Debería de quedar claro que lo que sigue es un serio examen abstracto de lo que pueden ser caminos obligados en los cuales el ser humano dirige su vida en la tierra.

La Lógica de la Espiritualidad de la Liberación.

Empiezo con un intento de esquematizar la lógica de la espiritualidad de la liberación. No hay una sola forma de hacerlo; lo que acontece en un compromiso corporativo humano puede ser representado en diferentes formas. Representar esta espiritualidad sin un recuento histórico de uno u otro de estos movimientos constituye la abstracción. Pero supongo que los lectores están familiarizados con los movimientos de liberación y la teología de la liberación. El punto entonces no es contribuir a un nuevo conocimiento de las espiritualidades liberadoras, sino a crear un marco que pueda ser usado para lograr una comparación entre ambas formas de compromiso espiritual. Así ambas espiritualidades se considerarán de acuerdo a una estructura con tres dimensiones: primero, una experiencia negativa de contraste; segundo, una categórico imperativo que exige una respuesta moral a una situación de forma puramente formal, y, tercero, un compromiso moral positivo o una opción fundamental que guie constructivamente una acción de respuesta y también de programas.

Experiencia negativa de contraste. Tomo esta categoría de una “experiencia negativa de contraste” de Edward Schillebeeckx que la tomó prestada de una teoría social crítica neo-marxista (Schillebeeckx, 621-22). El término indica una experiencia de que algo está radicalmente e intrínsecamente mal. Este es, en varios grados, una experiencia intuitiva directa, tanto si empieza con una vaga sensación o si se desarrolla en una absoluta certeza. Este sentimiento o percepción indica que cierta situa-

ción social o acción o evento, es más o menos radicalmente equivocado: “esto no debería de ser!”. Esta experiencia tiene raíces más profundas y anteriores a la explicación de por qué algo está mal. Estas percepciones pueden ser ocasionadas por situaciones o eventos que son personales y limitados, pero también aplican para la certeza de que algunas conductas socialmente aceptadas están equivocadas y que las convenciones sociales que las sostienen son corruptas.

Algunas experiencias negativas de contraste, de tipo negativo, subyacen a todos los movimientos de liberación. Alguna situación social es difundida y escandalosa, una situación que causa escándalo, no solo para sus víctimas, sino también de parte de cualquiera que las conozca. La experiencia no depende de la comprensión: uno puede estar escandalizado por el daño a un niño antes o después de entender por qué sucedió. Las explicaciones históricas y sociales frecuentemente intensifican la reacción moral. No necesito recitar las estadísticas del hambre en el mundo, la avara política de la pobreza, o la falta de preocupación que sostiene las carencias fundamentales masivas de lo que, la mayoría de la gente considera un derecho humano fundamental. Existen demasiadas situaciones que suman una experiencia negativa de contraste entre una situación existente y lo que debería de ser.

En Latino América, la espiritualidad de la liberación, las condiciones de pobreza en la cual vive una gran porcentaje de los ciudadanos de varios países, provee una experiencia de contraste que alimenta la demanda de liberación. En Norte América, los movimientos de liberación reaccionan en contra del racismo que ha quedado mucho después de que la esclavitud institucional ha sido oficialmente desmantelada. Las mujeres protegidas por ley, todavía son abiertamente discriminadas en una cultura que permite que las instituciones practiquen lo que la ley y la moral prohíben. Otras comunidades como la homosexual se han movilizado para representar su situación y su causa. Dondequiera que los grupos forman una colectividad que es consciente de la existencia de patrones de opresión humana, uno tiene las semillas para un movimiento de liberación y espiritualidad.

Imperativo categórico. Una experiencia negativa de contraste da pie para la reflexión tanto de lo que está mal como de lo que se debería de hacer. La expresión del “imperativo categórico” viene del razonamiento moral de Immanuel Kant. Tiene el mérito de plantar la respuesta moral en una estructura social esencial de la existencia humana. La obligación de actuar moralmente no se impone desde fuera a una persona o a una sociedad. Como estructura formal se puede experimentar dentro del yo en el más rudimentario sentido del deber. La idea de que la obligatoriedad como tal es “categórica” significa que es absoluta e incondicional; es una estructura del ser humano. Un imperativo categórico trasciende las

situaciones particulares de manera que no dependen de unas condiciones sociales o culturales específicas, sino que forma parte del consciente de la misma existencia consciente. Para lograr este estado tiene que ser una demanda formal o estructural, en lugar de una acción material.

Kant formuló esta visión del imperativo categórico en diferentes formas, pero el punto central de su fórmula es que el ser humano disfruta de un valor inalienable; una persona nunca debería de ser usada solamente como medio para un fin (Kant,58). Ningún ser humano debería de ser tratado de forma que sea inaceptable para cualquier estándar común a todos, incluyendo a sí mismo. Uno puede ver que esta norma absoluta tiene un efecto directo en la vida social. Cualquier sistema social o en un patrón de conducta institucionalizado que no respete el valor absoluto de la persona humana, está objetivamente mal. Esta regla moral absoluta corta a través de las ideologías religiosas o seculares que se usaron para racionalizar la injusticia social.

La opción fundamental. Si el imperativo categórico provee una fórmula para discernir porqué una acción o una situación de aleja del estándar moral básico de la humanidad, una opción fundamental apunta, aún más positivamente, la dirección para negar la negación y la afirmación del mal. Uso este término de una forma no-técnica para distinguir una orientación totalmente incluyente de una persona o un grupo como distinto de una opción concreta de este o aquel objeto. Se refiere a un compromiso profundo de la voluntad hacia ciertos valores que influyen concretamente la toma de decisión. Una opción fundamental consiste en un compromiso para cambiar la conducta de tal forma que equilibre la situación negativa prevaleciente en su forma personal, social, política o cultural. Una opción fundamental queda muy distante de la estrategia o la política del cambio social; cualquier situación social compleja requerirá de una gran cantidad de planeación concreta y de negociación; todo el mundo ve el bien común desde la perspectiva del propio interés. Pero sin un compromiso fundamental con la tarea, con un acuerdo previo en el fin específico, no habrá ninguna acción.

La “opción preferencial por los pobres”, formulada por la teología de la liberación Latino Americana, provee uno de los mejores ejemplos de una opción social fundamental dirigida hacia la pobreza masiva y las condiciones generales de vida deshumanizada. Es importante notar que los pobre espontáneamente aceptan la opción por los pobres porque defiende sus intereses. Esto es cierto aunque las masas de pobres puedan no estar de acuerdo en lo que realmente mejoraría su situación. Sin embargo, es mucho más interesante ver si una sección de la sociedad se puede sentir atraída por un bien común que incluya a toda la sociedad. Esto requiere que aquellos que participan totalmente en la sociedad y la economía tengan una sentido de responsabilidad social que no se satis-

face con una injusticia fundamental, o racista, o sexista de la comunidad. La opción preferencial por los pobres, por lo tanto, es un ejemplo de respuesta a una situación negativa que trata de involucrar a toda la sociedad en la que todos participan en lo que realmente es el bien común. En breve, la opción por los pobres es evidentemente más moral cuando es una opción para aquellos que tienen más ventajas. Es cierto que el propósito de la teología de la liberación es darle a las personas pobres y oprimidas su voz para que puedan actuar como sujetos de la historia. Pero también está claro que, sin la aprobación de los poderosos, los propósitos de la teología de la liberación no se alcanzarán.

En resumen, el corazón de la espiritualidad de liberación consiste en una experiencia de escándalo e indignación frente a la degradación humana, una crítica moral del status quo, y un compromiso positivo y permanente de acción que mejorará la situación.

La Lógica de la Espiritualidad Ecológica.

Esta segunda sección ofrecerá un resumen de la más rudimentaria lógica de la eco-espiritualidad. Uso el mismo patrón de análisis que usé con la espiritualidad de la liberación. Este provee un eje de comparación entre las dos espiritualidades. Existe un buen ejemplo de plan de interpretación al optar por este patrón de análisis. Estas estructuras analíticas no fueron hechas para ser restrictivas, sino para abrir un concepto totalmente descriptivo e imaginativo de lo que pasa en estas espiritualidades.

Una experiencia negativa de contraste. Hasta cierto punto, pero no absolutamente, la experiencia negativa de contraste que subyace a la eco-espiritualidad ocurre en el ámbito de la apreciación de la historia científica de la formación del universo. Esta historia empieza con una inimaginable explosión de energía al principio del universo, hace como 13.7 billones de años. A partir de ese momento el universo se ha estado expandiendo a la velocidad de la luz en todas las direcciones, formando millones de galaxias de estrellas parecidas a la Vía Láctea, y cada una contiene innumerables estrellas que pueden tener sistemas locales de planetas como el nuestro. Nuestro planeta comenzó a existir hace billones de años antes de que generara la vida. Los organismos vivos emergieron de un ancestro primero que gradualmente evolucionó en millones de especies de vida que ahora encontramos en el planeta y millones más han existido y se han extinto. El *homo sapiens*, nuestra especie entre los mamíferos, es bastante tardía en la historia del universo y de la vida.

Algunas características de esta historia constituyen todo un paquete de información científica. Primero que nada es una historia: la realidad primero existió y luego se desarrolló en el tiempo. Debido a su tamaño

y a edad, la historia tiene un carácter asombroso; puesto que es nuestra historia, nos enganchamos con ella; como aglutina toda la realidad en una conexión causal temporal, nos comunica un sentido de solidaridad con toda la creación. Ese es el caso químicamente: como individuos estamos contruidos con material del universo, y cargamos la historia dentro de nosotros mismos. En otras palabras, el mundo natural, y especialmente el la vida, no es meramente un contexto externo de nuestra vida autónoma racional. Más bien, somos parte de la biósfera física que se ha vuelto consciente de sí misma. Este sentido de una conexión interna con las otras creaturas hace parte de la eco-espiritualidad.

La experiencia negativa de contraste, que obliga al surgimiento de la eco-espiritualidad en la consciencia humana, consiste en ver la destrucción de la vida en el planeta. De largo alcance, esta implica la destrucción de nuestro propio hábitat y también con la destrucción de la vida humana. Pero la esencia de la eco-espiritualidad no es antropocéntrica. Uno puede distinguir tres fases de evolución en el planeta, después de su formación inicial: el reacomodo gradual geológico del planeta, el inicio y desarrollo de las plantas y las formas de vida animal, y la aparición de los seres humanos. La biósfera pre-humana ha tenido una historia espectacular de desarrollo e interconexión en sí misma antes de la aparición de la libertad humana auto consciente. La existencia intrincada, dinámica e interrelacionada de tantas especies de vida, la integridad de toda las esfera de plantas y de comportamiento animal, especialmente manifiestos en los sistemas locales, juntos forman una biósfera que es valiosa en sí misma y no simplemente porque es nuestra prehistoria. La destrucción de las especies a escala masiva, no solo por extinción “natural” sino sencillamente “eliminando” para “dar lugar” a la actividad humana, parece algo masivamente equivocado. Las estadísticas de esta destrucción son tan absolutamente asombrosas en tamaño como las del hambre humano, y seguido están correlacionadas. En otras palabras, está pasando una enorme violación y degradación de la naturaleza.

Imperativo categórico. El imperativo categórico que condena la destrucción masiva de formas de vida es, según Kant, también incondicional. Pero no aparece en la superficie de la conciencia. Tiene que ser mediado por premisas y siempre necesita la discusión de su aplicación. Para empezar, este imperativo categórico se funda en el valor ontológico de las diferentes formas de vida. El valor ontológico se refiere la importancia intrínseca de la forma de ser y de sus instancia individual. Uno puede fácilmente designar escalas de valor entre la complejidad de la vida sobre varios ejes. Pero cada especie tiene un valor en sí misma. Esto significa que su valor no se puede reducir a su utilidad para los seres humanos. Interpretarlos como una relación unidireccional con los

seres humanos, porque son bellos, entretenidos y útiles para el consumo humano, la salud y la recreación, fácilmente olvida el valor que tienen “en sí mismos” o el valor ontológico de los otros seres.

Esto introduce una área de contención que es intrínseca a la eco-espiritualidad y surge frecuentemente a la superficie de la percepción. Tiene que ver con el lugar del ser humano en la esfera de la existencia planetaria. Para simplificar, por un lado un antropocentrismo respeta la emergencia del ser humano como una vanguardia de la evolución. Como la forma de vida superior, una vida que emergió de formas subalternas para tener la libertad de la auto-conciencia, el ser humano domina la creación y ha asumido la responsabilidad de su desarrollo. En el otro lado de la ecuación, no se encuentra el bio-centrismo, que asumiría la posesión de derechos dominantes, sino un concepto de vida integral interconectada en el planeta que reconoce el valor ontológico de las especies independientemente de la apreciación y la utilidad para los seres humanos. La eco-espiritualidad depende de una transición de la dependencia de la “razón instrumental” que opera dentro de una tendencia antropológica, a una forma de “razón incrustada” que piensa dentro de un horizonte más amplio de la vida humana constituida en una matriz integrada de muchas formas de vida interconectadas. Sin esta conversión en contra del antropocentrismo, la eco-espiritualidad no será convincente.

El imperativo categórico para la eco-espiritualidad se puede expresar en distintas fórmulas, pero una es la del filósofo moral Thomas Berry. Él sostiene el imperativo categórico de la siguiente forma: “Una cosa necesaria es apreciar que la tierra en sí misma y todos sus seres vivos y los elementos inorgánicos son una comunidad, que el ser humano es un miembro de esta comunidad integral, y encuentra su lugar correcto en la promoción de esta comunidad, No se puede sostener el bienestar de ninguna parte de la comunidad, si no se relaciona efectivamente con el bienestar de toda la comunidad” (Berry, 63).

La opción fundamental. Es mucho más difícil construir la opción fundamental de la eco-espiritualidad en un lenguaje conciso que en las diferentes formas de la teología de la liberación. Por supuesto puede ser una opción para una planta o un animal específicos que está tejido en el sistema ecológico. Pero los casos individuales, aún cuando se amontonan, no transmiten lo que está en juego en la eco-espiritualidad.

Quizás el mejor acercamiento a esta dimensión de eco-espiritualidad será a través del contraste y el ajuste a un punto de vista que la mayoría pueda aceptar. Uno puede encontrar una resonancia general con el principio de gobierno de John Calvin. Lo formuló de la siguiente fórmula en su *Institutes*: “todas aquellas cosas (creaturas) nos fueron dadas por la gracias de Dios, y fueron destinadas para nuestro beneficio, y nos fueron

encargadas, hasta hoy, y un día tendremos que rendir cuenta de ellos” (Calvin, III.10.5). Todos podrían estar de acuerdo con esta carga implícita y el consecuente compromiso de cuidar de la tierra. La forma religiosa que le da Calvin, encuentra resonancia en un antropocentrismo natural: los seres humanos están a cargo, y aún la eco-espiritualidad tiene que recurrir a los seres humanos. Pero el problema es que la responsabilidad de cuidar, fácilmente se convierte en dominación: lo que es bueno para la humanidad es bueno para el mundo (Johnson, 265-67).

El compromiso fundamental de una eco-espiritualidad tiene que ser sacado de una “razón incrustada” que piense ecológicamente en términos de respeto para todas las formas de vida y la armonía entre las especies dentro de sus entornos. Esta forma de conciencia es al mismo tiempo señora y sirvienta; tiene que admitir que el valor ontológico de las otras formas de vida, reclaman una decisión moral. Llamar a esto una opción fundamental para patrones de conducta sociales y culturales o leyes que respeten las diferentes variedades de vida en sus diferencias específicas, no tiene un impacto retórico. Pero describe el deseo fundamental, la opción y el compromiso de la eco-espiritualidad.

En resumen, la eco-espiritualidad descansa en la apreciación epistemológica del valor autónomo de las formas de vida diferentes a la humana y el respeto por ellas. Con esta premisa, impacta la destrucción del sistema de vida en el planeta, a parte de la preocupación del propio interés por la sobrevivencia de la especie humana. El imperativo categórico de esta espiritualidad es la demanda intrínseca de que la vida humana encaje en la red comunitaria de la vida de la cual se generó. Y la opción fundamental de esta espiritualidad consiste en un compromiso para promover políticas y conductas que respeten la integridad de la vida.

Lo que la fe cristiana aporta a estas espiritualidades

El objetivo de la fe cristiana es Dios, como Dios se revela en la persona y el ministerio de Jesús de Nazaret. La doctrina de esta fe supuestamente está ahí. La pregunta que pongo se refiere a la influencia que puede tener la espiritualidad cristiana en estas dos espiritualidades y de qué forma ellas, a su vez, influyen la espiritualidad cristiana. Uno no tiene que ser miembro de ningún grupo religioso o creer en una realidad trascendente para ser liberacionista, ni tiene que tener una espiritualidad eco-centrada. Pero al ser cristiano inyecta en estas espiritualidades nuevas profundidades y relevancia, e incluir estas espiritualidades en la fe cristiana transforma esa fe. El impacto se siente en ambas direcciones. Seguramente existe un espacio para estas espiritualidades dentro de la fe cristiana, y cuando son integradas, afectan la forma de la fe cristiana. Obliga a la fe a expandirse bajo la presión de estos imperativos y opcio-

nes fundamentales y le dan una relevancia contemporánea. Y cuando la fe cristiana se mezcla con la liberación y la eco-espiritualidad, le inculca un nuevo aliento, profundidad y altura de significado. Ofrezco solo un esbozo de estas transformaciones para mantenerme en los límites de esta propuesta. Cada uno de los puntos que sencillamente se plantean aquí se podrían expandir a través de ejemplos históricos.

Dios, como creador personal, inyecta intencionalidad al universo. La fe en Dios como creador del cielo y de la tierra está en la base del fundamento de la fe cristiana. Este Dios creador es personal. La fe cristiana va más allá y describe el carácter de Dios como bueno, como amigo, y como amante de lo que crea. En el centro y el corazón de la realidad divina está la bondad y el amor. La fe apoya y confirma una unión interna de unidad con toda la creación. Todos los seres humanos comparten un descendiente común: son una comunidad de personas bajo un único Dios amoroso.

Pero uno debe entender que Dios no se puede construir como una persona individual por las limitaciones inherentes a esta imagen. Para ser Dios, Dios tiene que ser un ser infinito, el poder que crea una realidad finita más allá del ser de Dios, que sale de la nada. Dicho Dios no se puede imaginar adecuadamente, y por eso no es una persona designada, sino una fuente infinita y la base del ser que incorpora en sí mismo todo lo que conocemos del ser personal. Imaginar a Dios como un individuo, como el término "Dios" sugiere inevitablemente, crea enigmas que no se pueden resolver. Pero cuando eso se ha dicho, la convicción de que la fuente y la base permanente del ser es personal, transforma toda la realidad con intencionalidad. Los atributos de persona aplicados a Dios, inteligencia, voluntad, sentimientos, deseo, intención y propósito, siempre serán sujetos de una distorsión antropomórfica. Sin embargo, la crítica a esa tendencia inherente abre el espíritu humano a una visión transformada de la evolución del mundo, toda la biósfera, el fenómeno humano, y su lugar en este sobrecogedor escena o espacio. La aceptación de un creador personal, paradójicamente introduce la idea profunda de intencionalidad y propósito en el sistema que funciona en base a contingencia y azar mezcladas con patrones de conducta estables.

Dios está presente y acompaña el desarrollo de la evolución y la historia. El primer punto implica el segundo aspecto de la fe cristiana cuando se toma en la espiritualidad de la liberación y la eco-espiritualidad. El primer punto explica que Dios abarca toda la realidad con su poder creador; el segundo punto enfatiza cómo esto implica la presencia personal de Dios dentro de toda la realidad con su poder. En otras palabras, como la creación es una acción continua de Dios, Dios constituye

lo “interior” de todos los seres como la causa de su ser. Poniendo esto en términos personales, Dios no está “allá arriba” y “allá afuera”; este lenguaje “físico” distorsiona la trascendencia de Dios así como la presencia infusa de Dios dentro de la realidad creada. La trascendencia de Dios es precisamente lo que permite la presencia inmanente de Dios en toda la realidad. Para comunicar esta idea los cristianos usaron el lenguaje de la biblia judía y hablaron de Dios como Espíritu: Dios como Espíritu no es otro que el Dios trascendente que trabaja dentro de espíritu finito y la materia (Johnson, 134-43).

El concepto que tiene la fe de Dios tiene implicaciones de carácter existencial de la espiritualidad. Significa que Dios acompaña la realidad en su desarrollo evolutivo e histórico. Dios sostiene el devenir de la realidad, Dios la empodera, y Dios está presente en ella de una manera personal. Los seres humanos están acompañados en su búsqueda espiritual, en la construcción de su camino a través de la vida, en sus compromisos. Los seres humanos no están aislados ni solos en el universo.

La descripción de la fe cristiana a través de la mirada de la liberación y de la espiritualidad eco-centrada aporta otra dimensión a su naturaleza. No es el caso de que Dios sea un objeto conocido cuya existencia está amenazada por el sufrimiento causado por la opresión humana o la violencia del proceso evolutivo. Más bien estas son características del mundo natural y de la historia. El sufrimiento humano no destruye la fe religiosa, pero es el punto de partida. Dios parece dentro de estos procesos como el poder de un ser concreto y así, en cierta medida, se revela en o a través de estas negatividades. En ambos casos Dios “aparece” dialécticamente dentro de una experiencia de contraste negativo como la fuente y el empoderamiento para resistir a lo que los liberacionistas y la eco-espiritualidad se enfrentan. Dios le da sentido tanto a las espiritualidades al ser el Dios que es la base de la justicia y la vida.

Dios quien sostiene y engloba la realidad, ofrece una promesa de valor permanente. La fe cristiana aporta una tercera dimensión a las espiritualidades de la liberación y las centradas en la ecología, una promesa de que el proceso de la evolución y la historia tienen un significado y un valor permanentes. Esta seguridad marca el significado de la fe en la resurrección de Jesús. Jesús no es un fenómeno individual aislado, sino la revelación dentro de una tradición religiosa que tiene una importancia universal. Su ministerio y su destino revelan tanto el carácter de Dios como el de la existencia humana. La historia de Jesús como mediador de la revelación de Dios nos dice no solo de su destino, sino que además revela lo que ha pasado desde el principio dentro de la dinámica de una creación constante. El Espíritu interior de Dios que levantó a Jesús de la muerte y lo llevó a la vida eterna de Dios, es el testimonio de un valor

ontológico permanente de lo que la evolución y la historia crean constructivamente. Desde un punto de vista secular, el destino del universo que evoluciona y la vida en este mundo, es la muerte y el regreso a la nada. La promesa de la resurrección transforma esa muerte en vida. La fe mezclada con esperanza considera el universo que evoluciona, la historia humana en sí misma, y a cada persona individual como un valor último.

Conclusión

La espiritualidad de liberación y la eco-espiritualidad son ambas espiritualidades seculares que responden a la experiencia negativa escandalosa de destrucción perpetrada por los seres humanos a otros seres humanos y en contra del mundo natural. La negatividad masiva del sufrimiento social y de la destrucción de la red natural de la vida, evoca una resistencia comprometida. Y esto, a su vez, se vuelve una auténtica y coherente espiritualidad secular. El valor en sí mismo de las personas humanas oprimidas y la biosfera acosada son objetos dignos de un compromiso de personas individuales y de movimientos sociales sostenidos por ellos. Ambos vienen de diferentes perspectivas de movimientos de liberación; y ambos se dirigen a formas de destrucción de la creación que se ha desarrollado a este grado en esta época.

La tesis de este ensayo es que la fe cristiana abraza estas espiritualidades y también se engrandece con ellas. La fe cristiana en el Dios de la vida, el creador del cielo y la tierra, revelado en el ministerio y la persona de Jesús de Nazaret, dona a estas espiritualidades una nueva profundidad cualitativa trascendente, altura y significado. Nada positivo de estos caminos espirituales de vida se pierde; pero nuevas dimensiones de significado y plenitud permanentes lo transforman. Al absorber estas espiritualidades, la fe cristiana también se transforma; se le da un nuevo lenguaje para comprenderse a sí misma y una nueva relevancia de la vida en el momento presente. Sería un error absoluto leer estas dos espiritualidades diferentes compitiendo por un patrimonio humano. Leer el contexto de una espiritualidad de la creación más amplio, que se revela en el ministerio de Jesús, se podría entender solamente en conjunto. No solo coexisten, sino que también en algunos puntos se entrelazan porque mucho de la expoliación de la tierra sirve los intereses de ciertos grupos a expensas de otros.

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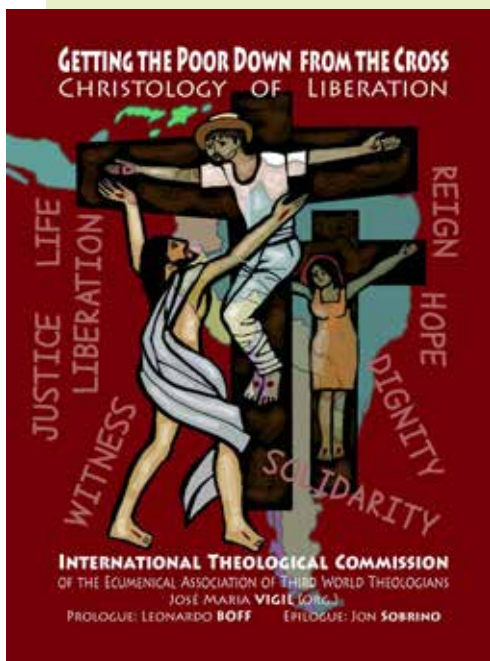
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Deus não fez a morte, nem se alegra com a destruição dos vivos

(Sb 1,13)

Dom Erwin KRÄUTLER
Bispo do Xingú, BRASIL

Introdução

Vivo há quase cinquenta anos na Amazônia brasileira e sou testemunha de uma devastação programada em nome do progresso. Essa destruição implacável e cada vez mais intensa não é um assunto interno do Brasil, mas tem consequências para todo o planeta. Durante as últimas décadas, milhares de quilômetros quadrados de floresta tropical sucumbiram às chamas. Há 150 anos, as florestas tropicais cobriram 12% da superfície do planeta. Mais da metade já foi destruída. Pastagens em grande escala, plantações de soja ou de cana-de-açúcar têm substituído a floresta. Onde ela ainda existe, a derrubada desenfreada de madeiras preciosas continua, em grande parte de forma ilegal, pois as autoridades ambientalistas fazem vistas grossas à exploração madeireira ou se absterem de fiscalizar os transportes de madeira que muitas vezes ocorrem na calada da noite. Territórios indígenas são invadidos e madeiras de lei roubadas, aparentemente sem nenhum impedimento. Tombaram as florestas outrora rotuladas de "eternas". A Amazônia é despojada, tem as veias abertas, as vísceras expostas, é sangrada até a inanição. Nos programas do governo é considerada "última fronteira agrícola", "província mineral", "província madeireira", tudo na perspectiva de aproveitamento econômico. Agora por último descobriu-se a Amazônia como "província energética". Iniciou-se a ofensiva contra as águas também até agora consideradas "eternas". Os grandes rios da Amazônia são condenados a morrer. São represados e transformados em reservatórios de água parada.

A Ecologia e as Conferências Mundiais das Nações Unidas

Estou convicto de que todas as tentativas oficiais, as inúmeras conferências, maiores e menores, promovidas pelas Nações Unidas resultaram apenas em constatações, cada vez mais exatas e atualizadas de conferência em conferência. Novas abordagens técnicas, novas estatísticas, nova terminologia, novos propósitos! O que falta são compromissos concretos, assumidos para valer. O cerne da questão não está sendo focalizado ou então, como se fala no Brasil, empurrado com a barriga. Todo mundo dá-se conta de que as consequências da mudança climática são bem mais sérias do que se imaginava ainda alguns anos atrás. Mas quando climatólogos falam da necessidade urgentíssima de diminuir a emissão de gases de efeito estufa, quando algum instituto de pesquisas vem com dados alarmantes, quando o desperdício de matérias primas e esbanjamento de recursos não renováveis são indicados como responsáveis pela deterioração de nosso planeta, quando os tremendos exageros de consumo e as montanhas de lixo são identificados como causa do descalabro, quando alguém levanta a voz e prega moderação e sobriedade, as conferências empacam, pois os grandes negam sua assinatura. As decisões são adiadas para uma próxima conferência e os prazos prorrogados até o dia de São Nunca. Tem-se a impressão de que na medida em que um país “desenvolve”, aumenta sua insensibilidade em relação ao meio ambiente. A história das conferências mundiais é prova disso.

Vejamos essa história de um interminável puxa-encolhe que já começou nos anos 60 do século passado. O termo “Ecologia” foi criado pelo cientista alemão Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) e designou inicialmente o ramo da Biologia que estuda “as relações entre os seres vivos e o meio ambiente em que vivem”. Nos anos 60 o conceito *ecologia* transpôs a esfera acadêmica das ciências biológicas e caiu na linguagem comum, passando a denominar todo um conjunto de inquietações e preocupações em torno do meio ambiente deteriorado em consequência da expansão industrial. De repente soam sirenes de alarme: o clima planetário mostra perturbações graves e exige medidas de emergência, a atmosfera está aquecendo, a concentração de gases de efeito estufa aumentou e o nível do mar está subindo.

O livro *Silent Spring* (Primavera silenciosa) de Rachel Carson foi sem dúvida uma das obras mais importantes do século XX. É um primeiro alerta mundial sobre os efeitos nocivos de pesticidas e agroquímicos e um contundente questionamento da relação mantida pelo homem com a natureza. Urge uma legislação mais rígida em defesa do meio ambiente ameaçado.

Nos anos 70 movimentos ambientalistas estreiam as primeiras passeatas e manifestações¹ em praça pública. Em diversos países europeus cria-se o assim chamado Partido Verde. Nos parlamentos e congressos nacionais começam a travar-se debates sobre medidas de proteção ambiental. Surgem reivindicações cada vez mais enérgicas de uma ampla mudança de hábitos em relação à natureza.

A preocupação com o meio ambiente, inicialmente assunto deste ou daquele país, estende-se para a esfera internacional. Assim em 1972, de 5 a 16 de junho, realizou-se em Estocolmo, Suécia, a Primeira Conferência Mundial sobre o Homem e o Meio Ambiente com a participação de 113 países. Naquela conferência os Estados Unidos da América até se dispõem em reduzir as atividades industriais poluentes. Recomenda-se o “desenvolvimento zero” por algum tempo. Mas já nesta primeira conferência mundial os percalços que caracterizariam também as conferências subsequentes são mais fortes do que as boas intenções. Os países com a industrialização incipiente não aceitam a proposta de uma moratória, interpretando o “desenvolvimento zero” como condenação dos países em vias de desenvolvimento à estagnação econômica. Assim o Brasil da época da Ditadura Militar assumiu a liderança de 77 países que não queriam saber da existência de uma problemática ambiental e passaram a defender um “desenvolvimento a qualquer custo”. Hoje ficamos até chocados pensando na faixa que um representante do governo brasileiro exibiu: “Bem vindos à poluição, estamos abertos a ela. O Brasil é um país que não tem restrições, temos várias cidades que receberiam de braços abertos a sua poluição, porque nós queremos empregos, dólares para o nosso desenvolvimento”².

Já nesta primeira conferência percebe-se nitidamente o racha entre países industrializados e países com incipiente industrialização, entre países chamados de desenvolvidos e países em vias de desenvolvimento. O aparentemente impossível consenso em relação a medidas urgentes no combate à deterioração do meio ambiente será a sina de todas as conferências subsequentes. Estocolmo pelo menos lembrou à humanidade de que grande parte dos recursos naturais não são renováveis e sendo explorados de maneira descontrolada, as consequências comprometerão a vida das futuras gerações. Mas, já que não se consegue chegar a um denominador comum de como enfrentar um apocalipse que se anuncia cada vez mais assombroso, acha-se melhor desativar “por enquanto” as

¹ Um exemplo impressionante desta consciência ecológica foi o plebiscito realizado na Áustria contra a Usina Nuclear de Zwentendorf, a 37 km da capital Viena. Em 5 de novembro de 1978 o povo se manifestou por 51% a 49% contra o seu funcionamento e a decisão vale até hoje.

² <http://scienceblogs.com.br/geofagos/2008/12/o-desenvolvimento-sustentavel-realmente-existe/>

sirenes de alarme e adiar soluções para um futuro indefinido. O que ficou bem claro é: se todos os países quiserem alcançar o mesmo padrão de vida da maioria dos países do hemisfério norte, o planeta Terra entra irremediavelmente em colapso.

Em 1983, após avaliar os 10 anos da Conferência de Estocolmo, as Nações Unidas criaram a Comissão Mundial do Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento³. O *Relatório Brundtland* publicado em 1987 é fruto dessa comissão. Cunhou-se o conceito de desenvolvimento *sustentável*⁴. Com esse adjetivo queria-se acentuar que o desenvolvimento que procura satisfazer as necessidades da atual geração não pode com isso prejudicar as futuras gerações. O relatório fala de “opções dolorosas” a serem necessárias e insiste na “vontade política”⁵ como base do tal desenvolvimento sustentável.

A convite do chanceler da Áustria, Franz Vranitzky, participei da Conferência das Nações Unidas sobre o Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento (Rio-92 ou Eco-92), realizada de 3 e 14 de junho de 1992 no Rio de Janeiro, 20 anos depois da Conferência de Estocolmo. O *Desenvolvimento Sustentável* do *Relatório Brundtland* torna-se o princípio básico da Agenda 21. Mais uma vez se fala em alto e bom som que o progresso almejado tem que ser realizado em harmonia com o meio ambiente. As reivindicações da geração atual não podem colocar em risco a qualidade de vida das gerações futuras. Nesta Eco-92 aconteceu um fato inédito para eventos deste tipo. Uma criança falou aos congressistas e os meios de comunicação divulgaram o episódio com manchetes em letras garrafais: “Uma garota calou o mundo por seis minutos”. De fato, Severn Cullis Suzuki, uma menina canadense de 12 anos falou em nome de uma organização de crianças de seu país em defesa do meio ambiente. “Somos um grupo de crianças canadenses, de 12 a 13 anos”, dizia ela. “Tentamos fazer a nossa parte. Estou lutando pelo meu futuro (...). Estou aqui para falar em nome das gerações que estão por vir. Estou aqui para defender as crianças com fome, cujos apelos não são ouvidos. Estou aqui para falar em nome dos incontáveis animais morrendo em todo o planeta (...) Todas essas coisas acontecem bem diante dos nossos olhos e, mesmo assim, continuamos agindo como se tivéssemos todo o tempo do mundo e todas as soluções. Sou apenas uma criança e não tenho as soluções, mas quero que saibam que vocês também não as têm. Vocês não sabem como

³ World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). A comissão foi chefiada pela então Primeira-Ministra da Noruega, a Sra. Gro Harlem Brundtland.

⁴ “Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (n. 27).

⁵ “Painful choices have to been made. Thus (...) sustainable development must rest in political will” (n. 30).

reparar os buracos da camada de ozônio. Vocês não sabem como salvar os salmões das águas poluídas. Vocês não sabem ressuscitar os animais extintos. Vocês não podem recuperar as florestas que um dia existiram, onde hoje é deserto. Se vocês não podem recuperar nada disso, então, por favor, parem de destruir!" Vinte anos depois Severn Cullis Suzuki volta ao Brasil, já mãe de dois filhos, e em tom melancólico comenta: "Vi que muitas pessoas choraram após o meu discurso. Desde então, milhões de pessoas assistiram o vídeo⁶. Ainda recebo correspondências sobre isso, mas 20 anos depois, o que mudou? Ainda procuro provas de que minhas palavras fizeram a diferença".

E os anos passam. Mais e mais rios e lagos morrem. Em muitas regiões o ar poluído causa problemas respiratórios à população. As calotas polares e as geleiras nos Alpes e nos Andes estão derretendo. As secas afetam áreas cada vez maiores e se estendem por períodos mais longos. Tempestades pesadas, ciclones, furacões, tsunamis estão cada vez mais frequentes. O nível do mar sobe bem mais que o IPCC ⁷ previu ainda em 2007. Em 1997, foi assinado o Protocolo de Kyoto. Os países industrializados firmaram acordo para estabelecer metas de redução na emissão de gases-estufa na atmosfera. No entanto países em vias de desenvolvimento como Brasil, México, Argentina, Índia e principalmente China foram dispensados das metas de redução. E aí acontece o imprevisível: o maior emissor de gases do mundo, os Estados Unidos, desliga-se em 2001 do protocolo alegando que a redução iria comprometer a economia do país.

Uma conferência segue a outra. Mas quando se trata de metas concretas, os grandes caem fora. Em 2011, a Conferência das Nações Unidas sobre as Mudanças Climáticas em Durban, África do Sul, (28 de novembro a 11 de dezembro) prolonga o Protocolo de Kyoto para 2017. Iria expirar em dezembro de 2012. Nem metas compulsórias de corte de emissões foram estabelecidas, nem prazos foram estipulados. Já que os EUA não são mais signatários do Protocolo de Kyoto, nada terão a cumprir nem emissões a cortar.

E o que trouxe a Conferência das Nações Unidas sobre Desenvolvimento Sustentável, a "Rio + 20" (20 – 22 de junho de 2012)? No encerramento da conferência os participantes trocaram amabilidades e se desdobraram em elogios mútuos. Eufóricos falam do "sucesso" da conferência. A pergunta é: sucesso para quem e em que? Na realidade, o resultado é frustrante. A declaração final "O Futuro que Queremos" é apenas mais um documento que fala daquilo que já estamos careca de saber: da necessária proteção do meio ambiente e da luta contra a pobre-

⁶ www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJJGuIZvFLM (já teve mais de 23 milhões de acessos).

⁷ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Painel Intergovernamental sobre Mudanças Climáticas)

za. Mas não estabelece nem metas nem prazos e por isso não deixa de ser um documento chocho e insosso, sem consequências concretas. A Severn Cullis Suzuki mais uma vez pode dizer e com toda razão: “Ainda procuro provas de que minhas palavras fizeram a diferença”.

O Processo Conciliar das Igrejas Cristãs

As Igrejas Cristãs sem dúvida fizeram grandes esforços, mas não se chegou a uma ação ecumênica que abrange todas as Igrejas, muito menos se conseguiu uma estratégia conjunta com outras religiões.

Edificante é a história do *processo conciliar* ecumênico que tem por pai e inspirador o pastor luterano Dietrich Bonhoeffer⁸ que sonhou com um “Concílio de paz de todas as Igrejas Cristãs”. Se bem que um concílio que reunisse todas as Igrejas Cristãs até hoje não foi possível, creio que o nosso santo papa João XXIII compartilhou do sonho de Bonhoeffer quando em 25 de janeiro de 1995 anunciou na Basílica de São Paulo Fuori le Mura o Concílio *Ecumênico* Vaticano II.

A ideia de Dietrich Bonhoeffer de convocar um Concílio de Paz que em nível de todas as Igrejas Cristãs foi mais uma vez ventilada em 1983 na Assembleia Geral do Conselho Mundial de Igrejas Cristãs em Vancouver, Canadá. Mesmo assim esse tipo de concílio nunca chegou a ser realizado. O Vaticano II, embora chamado concílio *ecumênico* foi um evento exclusivo da Igreja Católica e representantes convidados de outras Igrejas tiveram apenas status de observadores. A assembleia de Vancouver concordou em promover um "*processo conciliar* de compromisso mútuo pela *justiça, paz e preservação da criação*". Neste compromisso a *Preservação da Criação* pela primeira vez é relacionada com *Justiça e Paz*.

O Concílio Vaticano II não chegou a tanto. Aliás, em todos os Decretos, Constituições e Declarações não existe uma única referência à ecologia ou ao meio ambiente. Na Constituição Pastoral *Gaudium et Spes* fala-se apenas que o “homem foi criado ‘à imagem de Deus’ capaz de conhecer e amar seu Criador, que o constituiu senhor de todas as coisas terrestres, para que as dominasse e usasse, glorificando a Deus” (GS 12). Predomina a visão de *dominar* e *usar* sem nenhuma restrição ou advertência quanto aos limites desta dominação ou uso. Mais adiante a *Gaudium et Spes* diz que o homem “deve amar as próprias coisas criadas por Deus” (GS 37) e ponto final.

Vancouver repercutiu 1989 na Primeira Assembleia Ecumênica Europeia em Basileia, Suíça (15 a 21 de maio), com uma declaração final denominada “Paz na Justiça” em que se exige uma “ordem mundial ecoló-

⁸ Bonhoeffer foi uma das últimas vítimas do regime nazista. Foi condenado à força e executado por ordem expressa de Hitler no campo de concentração Flossenbürg ao alvorecer o dia 9 de abril de 1945, pouco antes do final da Segunda Guerra Mundial.

gica”. A partir de uma reflexão teológica sobre a criação essa assembleia confessa, usando um estilo de autocrítica:

- *“Falhamos porque não temos dado testemunho do carinho de Deus por todas e cada uma das criaturas e não adotamos um estilo de vida correspondente à nossa auto-compreensão de nós sermos também parte da criação de Deus.*

- *Falhamos porque não questionamos de modo mais categórico os sistemas políticos e econômicos que exploram os recursos naturais do mundo em seu próprio proveito e perpetuam a pobreza e marginalização”.*

Nesta assembleia o meio ambiente é considerado como “sujeito legal” que põe balizas ao individualismo das pessoas quando os “direitos de todas as criaturas” são desrespeitados.

Um ano depois, 1990, realizou-se em Seul, Coréia do Sul, a Assembleia Ecumênica Mundial (5 a 12 de março). O Vaticano enviou uma delegação de observadores. Seul adota o esquema do Ver – Julgar – Agir⁹ e em analogia aos Dez Mandamentos apresenta dez “afirmações básicas”. Entre elas chamam-nos especial atenção as afirmações VII e VIII relacionadas com o meio ambiente e a questão ecológica:

- *Afirmção VII: “Afirmamos que Deus ama a criação. Deus, o Criador, é a origem e o sustentáculo de todo o cosmos. (...) Já que a criação é de Deus e sua bondade permeia toda a criação, somos chamados a respeitar a vida como sagrada (...) Afirmamos ainda que o mundo como obra de Deus possui a própria integridade e que terra, água, ar, florestas, montanhas e todas as criaturas incluindo os seres humanos, são “bons” aos olhos de Deus”*

- *Afirmção VIII: “Afirmamos que a Terra pertence a Deus. Terra e águas significam vida para os seres humanos (...). É por isso que afirmamos que a terra pertence a Deus. O homem deve usar a terra e a água de uma maneira que ela possa recuperar sempre de novo o seu poder vivificante e sua integridade seja protegida e que os animais e criaturas*

⁹ O método Ver-Julgar-Agir foi criado por Joseph Cardijn (1882-1967), fundador da Juventude Operária Católica (JOC), para ser usado nas reuniões de militantes. Cardijn, sacerdote belga, oriundo de uma família pobre, ordenado bispo em 21 de novembro 1965 e um dia depois nomeado Cardeal por Paulo VI, iniciou no Concílio Vaticano II o debate sobre a Constituição Pastoral Gaudium et Spes em que seguiu este método Ver-Julgar-Agir. Na América Latina e especialmente no Brasil a maioria dos documentos episcopais adotaram este mesmo esquema. A uma aprimorada análise da realidade (Como é o mundo em que vivemos? Quais as causas da situação em que vivemos?) segue uma reflexão bíblico-teológica (O que Deus nos fala? Qual é o projeto de Deus para nós neste mundo?). Baseado nestes dois pilares chega-se a propostas de compromissos a serem assumidos como ações e iniciativas concretas (O que Deus quer que façamos? Quais as obrigações dos governos e congressos nacionais? Qual é a missão de cada uma, cada um e de todos nós neste mundo?).

têm seu espaço de vida de que precisam. Resistiremos a qualquer política que trata a terra como mera mercadoria (...). Em solidariedade nos comprometemos com os povos indígenas que lutam por sua cultura, sua espiritualidade e por seus direitos à terra e às águas. Comprometemo-nos também em solidariedade para com os trabalhadores rurais e camponeses pobres que lutam por uma reforma agrária como também pelos trabalhadores rurais sazonais. Ademais nos comprometemos a respeitar o habitat ecologicamente necessário para outros seres vivos".

A questão ecológica na Igreja Católica

Mesmo que o Concílio Vaticano II não tratou da questão do meio ambiente, isso não significa que a Igreja Católica se omitiu. É bem verdade que nossa Igreja pegou o bonde já andando.

O primeiro Papa que se referiu explicitamente ao meio ambiente foi Paulo VI quando em 16 de novembro de 1970 dirigiu uma mensagem à FAO¹⁰ por ocasião de seu XXV aniversário:

- *“O homem gastou milênios para aprender a submeter a natureza, a dominar a terra (...). Agora soou a hora de ele dominar o seu próprio domínio”.*

Por ocasião da Conferência de Estocolmo, Paulo VI enviou no dia 1º de junho de 1972 uma mensagem ao Secretário Geral das Nações Unidas Kurt Waldheim para manifestar sua preocupação com o meio ambiente:

- *“Como podemos ignorar os desequilíbrios provocados na biosfera pela exploração desordenada das reservas físicas do planeta, até com o objetivo de produzir coisas úteis, como também o desperdício dos recursos naturais não renováveis, a contaminação do solo, da água, do ar e do espaço, com seus atentados contra a vida vegetal e animal?”*

João Paulo II e Bento XVI insistiram em suas encíclicas ou alocuções sempre de novo na responsabilidade dos homens em relação ao meio ambiente. Cito o Papa João Paulo II em sua encíclica *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*:

- *“Usá-los (os recursos naturais) como se fossem inesgotáveis, com domínio absoluto, põe seriamente em perigo sua disponibilidade não só para a geração presente, mas, sobretudo, para as gerações futuras” (n. 34).*

O Papa Bento XVI cunhou a expressão “ecologia humana” que será muito cara ao Papa Francisco. Em sua Encíclica *Caritas in Veritate*, Bento XVI insiste:

- *“quando a ‘ecologia humana’ é respeitada dentro da sociedade, também a ecologia ambiental é favorecida” (n. 51).*

¹⁰ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Organização das Nações Unidas para Alimentação e Agricultura)

A Igreja na América Latina e a Ecologia

A Igreja na América Latina abordou a questão do meio ambiente nas Conferências Episcopais de Puebla (1979)¹¹ e de modo especial em Santo Domingo (1992)¹² e por último em Aparecida (2007)¹³. Participei como delegado da CNBB das duas últimas.

Em Puebla assinala o documento final entre “Objetivos, Opções e Estratégias”¹⁴ como linha de ação pastoral:

- *“Preservar os recursos naturais criados por Deus para todos os homens, a fim de transmiti-los como herança às gerações vindouras” (DPb 1236).*

A IV Conferência Episcopal da América Latina e do Caribe¹⁵ celebrada em Santo Domingo coloca a Ecologia entre os “novos sinais dos tempos” (nn. 169 – 170) e lembra a Eco-92 do Rio de Janeiro, apropriando-se inclusive do termo “sustentável” (DSD 169):

- *“os cristãos, como integrantes da sociedade, não estão isentos de responsabilidade em relação aos modelos de desenvolvimento que provocaram os atuais desastres ambientais e sociais”*

Recomenda ainda como linha de ação pastoral:

- *“valorizar a nova plataforma de diálogo que a crise ecológica criou e questionar a riqueza e o desperdício” e ainda “aprender dos pobres a viver com sobriedade e a partilhar e valorizar a sabedoria dos povos indígenas no tocante à preservação da natureza como ambiente de vida para todos” (DSD 169).*

Entendo que “para todos” não se restringe apenas aos seres humanos, mas a todos os seres vivos que Deus criou.

Também o documento de Aparecida dedica à Ecologia um capítulo especial: “O cuidado com o meio ambiente” (nn. 470 – 475), mas já nas primeiras páginas o documento afirma:

¹¹ A Terceira Conferência Geral do Episcopado Latino-Americano realizou-se em Puebla de los Angeles, México, de 27 de janeiro a 13 de fevereiro de 1979.

¹² A Quarta Conferência Geral do Episcopado Latino-Americano e do Caribe realizou-se em Santo Domingo, República Dominicana, de 12 a 28 de outubro de 1992.

¹³ A Quinta Conferência Geral do Episcopado Latino-americano e do Caribe realizou-se no Santuário Nacional de Nossa Senhora Aparecida em Aparecida, São Paulo, Brasil, de a 31 de maio de 2007.

¹⁴ “Conclusões de Puebla: A Evangelização no presente e no futuro da América Latina”: quarta parte, capítulo III: Ação da Igreja junto aos construtores da sociedade pluralista na América Latina

¹⁵ “Conclusões de Santo Domingo: Nova Evangelização. Promoção Humana e Cultura Cristã”.

• “Junto com os povos originários da América, louvamos ao Senhor que criou o universo como espaço para a vida e a convivência de todos seus filhos e filhas e no-los deixou como sinal de sua bondade e de sua beleza. A criação também é manifestação do amor providente de Deus; foi-nos entregue para que cuidemos dela e a transformemos em fonte de vida digna para todos. Ainda que hoje se tenha generalizado uma maior valorização da natureza, percebemos claramente de quantas maneiras o homem ameaça e inclusive destrói seu ‘habitat’. “Nossa irmã a mãe terra”¹⁶ é nossa casa comum e o lugar da aliança de Deus com os seres humanos e com toda a criação. Desatender as mútuas relações e o equilíbrio que o próprio Deus estabeleceu entre as realidades criadas, é uma ofensa ao Criador, um atentado contra a biodiversidade e, definitivamente, contra a vida. O discípulo missionário, a quem Deus encarregou a criação, deve contemplá-la, cuidar dela e utiliza-la, respeitando sempre a ordem dada pelo Criador” (DAp 125).

Em seguida observa:

• *“O Senhor entregou o mundo para todos, para os das gerações presentes e futuras. O destino universal dos bens exige a solidariedade com a geração presente e as futuras. Visto que os recursos são cada vez mais limitados, seu uso deve estar regulado segundo um princípio de justiça distributiva, respeitando o desenvolvimento sustentável” (DAp 126).*

No capítulo específico dedicado à Ecologia o documento dá ênfase a seguinte proposta:

• *“Procurar um modelo de desenvolvimento alternativo¹⁷, integral e solidário, baseado em uma ética que inclua a responsabilidade por uma autêntica ecologia natural e humana, que se fundamente no evangelho da justiça, da solidariedade e do destino universal dos bens, e que supere a lógica utilitarista e individualista, que não submete os poderes econômicos e tecnológicos a critérios éticos” (DAp 474c)*

e acrescenta um parágrafo precioso sobre a Amazônia:

• *“Criar nas Américas consciência sobre a importância da Amazônia para toda a humanidade. Estabelecer entre as Igrejas locais de diversos países sul-americanos que estão na bacia amazônica uma pastoral de conjunto com prioridades diferenciadas para criar um modelo de desenvolvimento que privilegie os pobres e sirva ao bem comum” (DAp 475).*

As Campanhas da Fraternidade no Brasil

Desde o ano 1964 a Igreja do Brasil realiza na quaresma as

¹⁶ São Francisco de Assis (1182 – 1244), Cântico das Criaturas, 9

¹⁷ Paulo VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 20: O verdadeiro desenvolvimento “é a passagem, para todos e cada um, das condições de vida menos humanas a condições de vida mais humanas”.

Campanhas da Fraternidade para acentuar a dimensão social da nossa fé e da vivência cristã. As campanhas atingem todas as paróquias e comunidades do território nacional. São momentos fortes de reflexão e tomada de consciência que ultrapassam inclusive o âmbito eclesial e repercutem até no Congresso Nacional. Em 1979 a Ecologia foi pela primeira vez tema de uma campanha: “Por um mundo mais humano”. O lema foi: “Preserve o que é de todos”. Cinco anos depois, a Igreja retomou o assunto do meio ambiente através da campanha “Deus, fonte de vida” e o lema “Para que todos tenham vida”. Grande repercussão em nível nacional e internacional teve a Campanha da Fraternidade de 2002 dedicada aos Povos Indígenas. A questão do meio ambiente está intimamente relacionada com a causa indígena e as terras habitadas pelos índios desde tempos imemoriais. O tema desta campanha foi “Fraternidade e Povos Indígenas” e o lema “Por uma terra sem males”. Em 2004 o tema foi “Fraternidade e água” e o lema “Água, fonte de vida”. A campanha de 2007 foi dedicada à Amazônia com o tema “Fraternidade e Amazônia” e o lema “Vida e missão neste chão”.

O Sínodo da América (16 de novembro a 12 de dezembro de 1997)

Em 1997 fui delegado da Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil (CNBB) no Sínodo da América. Para minha intervenção de oito minutos no dia 27 de novembro de 1997 escolhi como título a expressão do Papa Paulo VI “Cristo aponta para a Amazônia”.

Aproveitei este momento propício para descrever nossa realidade na Amazônia:

“A cada ano que passa, milhares de quilômetros quadrados de selvas milenares são destruídos pelo fogo. A floresta sucumbe aos interesses de grandes latifundiários. A hileia amazônica, pátria secular dos indígenas e ribeirinhos, é violentada para ceder lugar a imensas pastagens. Madeiros exploram as selvas restantes e não descansam até que a última árvore de madeira de lei tenha sido derrubada, serrada e exportada. Garimpeiros penetram as selvas. Intentam o ouro a qualquer preço e deixam atrás de si crateras lunares e rios poluídos, além de contagiar, com todo tipo de enfermidade, os índios indefesos e sem anticorpos.

Apesar de declarações oficiais de preservar a Amazônia e de implementar um “desenvolvimento sustentável”, a realidade que vivemos está bem distante das belas cartas de intenção. Se a depredação, a destruição e os saques às riquezas naturais do solo e subsolo da Amazônia continuarem no ritmo atual, não passarão mais duas décadas até o dia fatal em que, compungidos, iremos oficiar o ‘Réquiem’ para a Amazônia:

“Lacrimosa dies illa, dum ressurget ex favilla judicandus homo reus”¹⁸.

¹⁸ “Lacrimoso aquele dia no qual, das cinzas, ressurgirá, para ser julgado, o homem réu” do hino *Dies Irae* do século XIII que tem provavelmente como autor Tomás de Celano. O hino fez parte da liturgia do *Requiem*, a missa pelos defuntos segundo o rito tridentino.

Fiz várias propostas em relação à Amazônia. Entre elas cito aqui as que se referem ao meio ambiente:

- *Que denunciemos o histórico e atual despojo das terras dos povos indígenas e a destruição de suas culturas e acompanhem as lutas indígenas pela recuperação e demarcação de suas terras e pelo reconhecimento legal de sua propriedade comunitária.*

- *As reivindicações indígenas representam a causa mais ampla da defesa da vida sociocultural e da biosfera. As futuras gerações nos questionarão sobre a justa distribuição dos bens deste planeta e igualmente sobre a qualidade da terra, da água e do ar que herdaram de nós. Importa uma nova ascese no uso dos bens e uma nova bioética que ultrapassa as reivindicações ecológicas setorializadas.*

- *Na América, um dos ecossistemas mais cobçados por causa de sua biodiversidade, mas também dos mais ameaçados pela exploração de empresas madeireiras e mineradoras, é a Amazônia. Esta região é o habitat natural de muitos povos indígenas não só no Brasil, mas também nas Guianas, na Venezuela, Colômbia, no Equador, Peru e na Bolívia. A defesa dos povos indígenas, de suas terras e culturas, faz parte da defesa mais ampla deste patrimônio único da humanidade.*

Parte do meu aporte foi inserida na Exortação Apostólica pós-sinodal “Ecclesia in America” (n. 25).

O Papa Francisco

Em 4 de abril de 2014 o Papa Francisco recebeu-me em audiência particular. Já no meu quarto mandato de presidente do Conselho Indigenista Missionário (Cimi), organismo vinculado à Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil (CNBB), e secretário da Comissão Episcopal para a Amazônia, solicitei por recomendação do Cardeal Dom Claudio Hummes OFM, presidente desta comissão, uma audiência para tratar de assuntos relacionados à Igreja na Amazônia, às Comunidades Eclesiais de Base daquela macroregião, à Causa Indígena e, relacionada com essa, a questão ecológica.

Entreguei ao papa um documento em que apresentei os problemas que os indígenas enfrentam apesar de o Brasil dispor de uma Constituição Federal bem favorável a eles quanto aos direitos às suas terras ancestrais, à sua cultura, a seu idioma e a seu modo de viver¹⁹. Revelei ao papa que há uma campanha anti-indígena em curso que quer modificar os parâmetros constitucionais para possibilitar o acesso às terras indígenas a fim de ocupá-las e explorá-las.

¹⁹ Constituição da República Federal do Brasil, promulgada em 5 de outubro de 1988: Capítulo VIII, Dos Índios: Artigos 231 e 232: Título X, Ato das Disposições Constitucionais Transitórias: Artigo 67.

O Papa Francisco me falou então que estava preparando uma Encíclica sobre Ecologia. Insisti que num documento de tamanha envergadura como é uma encíclica, a Amazônia ameaçada e a luta pela sobrevivência física e cultural dos Povos Indígenas merecem um especial destaque. Já na véspera da audiência eu havia falado a esse respeito com o Cardeal Peter Turkson, presidente do Pontifício Conselho Iustitia et Pax, encarregado de preparar um anteprojeto para a encíclica. O Cardeal Turkson solicitou minha colaboração. Aceitei o pedido com alegria.

Lembro-me da ênfase especial que o Papa Francisco deu quando começamos a falar de ecologia. Ele me disse: “Não trataremos da ecologia de modo apenas genérico, está na hora de falarmos em ecologia ‘humana’ “. Entendi perfeitamente e senti-me confirmado nas teses que há anos defendo. Desde que vejo de perto a destruição da Amazônia preocupo-me com a ecologia não apenas como uma ciência que estuda o meio ambiente como objeto de pesquisas científicas, mas como dimensão vital para toda a humanidade e de todos os seres criados. Não existe vida humana desligada do meio ambiente. O ser humano só sobrevive no seu meio ambiente. Assim sempre considere absurdo pensar no meio ambiente como algo fora de nós, separado de nós, subjugado e dominado por nós.

O termo “ecologia humana” já foi usado pelo Papa João Paulo II em sua encíclica *Centesimus Annus* de 1991(n. 38) e pelo Papa Bento XVI na encíclica *Caritas in Veritate* (n. 51). O Papa Francisco insiste nesta terminologia desde o início de seu pontificado. No discurso por ocasião de seu primeiro encontro com o Corpo Diplomático acreditado junto à Santa Sé em 22 de março de 2013 o Papa fala do “respeito profundo por toda a criação” e explica o seu nome Francisco que “nos ensina a guardar este nosso meio ambiente, que muitas vezes não usamos para o bem, mas desfrutamos com avidez e prejudicando um ao outro”.

A preocupação com a ecologia, a preservação e defesa da criação são baseadas em nossa fé. Deus não concedeu aos homens poder absoluto sobre a criação, a licença irrestrita de agredir sem escrúpulos e explorar a natureza. A palavra da Bíblia "dominar a terra" (Gn 1,28) foi muitas vezes mal interpretada. O texto original em hebraico significa "colocar o pé sobre a terra" o que quer dizer: Deus confia à responsabilidade humana toda a criação para ser cuidada, zelada, protegida. Exatamente neste sentido vai o discurso do Papa Francisco na Praça de São Pedro em 5 de junho de 2013 por ocasião do Dia Mundial do Meio Ambiente. Aí ele deu uma verdadeira catequese ecológica:

• *Quando falamos de meio ambiente, da criação, vêm ao meu pensamento as primeiras páginas da Bíblia, o Livro do Génesis, onde se afirma que Deus colocou o homem e a mulher na terra, para que a cultivassem e conservassem (cf. Gn 2,15). E em mim surgem estas perguntas: O que*

quer dizer cultivar e conservar a terra? Estamos verdadeiramente cultivando e conservando a criação? Ou estamos explorando-a e descuidando dela? O verbo cultivar faz vir à minha mente o cuidado que o agricultor tem pela sua terra, a fim de que produza fruto e este seja compartilhado: quanta atenção, paixão e dedicação! Cultivar e conservar a criação é uma indicação de Deus, dada não só no início da história, mas a cada um de nós; faz parte do seu desígnio; significa fazer com que o mundo se desenvolva com responsabilidade, transformá-lo para que seja um jardim, um lugar habitável para todos. (...) Somos frequentemente levados pela soberba do domínio, da posse, da manipulação e da exploração; não a conservamos, não a respeitamos e não a consideramos como um dom gratuito a ser cuidado. Estamos perdendo a atitude do encanto, da contemplação, da escuta da criação; (...) Por que acontece isto? Porque pensamos e vivemos de modo horizontal; afastamo-nos de Deus e não lemos os seus sinais. Mas o cultivar e conservar não abrange apenas a relação entre nós e o meio ambiente, entre o homem e a criação, mas refere-se inclusive aos relacionamentos humanos. Os Papas falaram de ecologia humana, estreitamente ligada à ecologia ambiental.

Em seu discurso aos bispos brasileiros em 27 de julho de 2013 no Rio de Janeiro por ocasião da Jornada Mundial da Juventude o Papa Francisco considerou a Amazônia como “teste decisivo, banco de prova para a Igreja e a sociedade brasileiras” e disse:

- *Querida convidar a todos a refletirem sobre o que Aparecida disse a propósito da Amazônia²⁰, incluindo o forte apelo ao respeito e à salvaguarda de toda a criação que Deus confiou ao homem, não para que a explorasse sem escrúpulos, mas para que a tornasse um jardim.*

O documento de Aparecida se queixa que a população indígena do continente está praticamente excluída das decisões sobre o uso das riquezas naturais.

- *A natureza foi e continua sendo agredida. A terra foi depredada. As águas estão sendo tratadas como se fossem uma mercadoria negociável pelas empresas, além de haver sido transformadas em um bem disputado pelas grandes potências. Um exemplo muito importante nesta situação é a Amazônia²¹ (Dap 84).*

Além disso Aparecida enfatiza “a importância da Amazônia para toda a humanidade” e exige “um modelo de desenvolvimento que privilegie os pobres e sirva ao bem comum” (Dap 475).

²⁰ DAp nn. 83-87 e 475.

²¹ A Amazônia pan-americana ocupa uma área de 7,01 milhões de quilômetros quadrados e corresponde a 5% da superfície da terra, 40% da América do Sul. Contém 20% da disponibilidade mundial de água doce não congelada. Abriga 34% das reservas mundiais de florestas e uma gigantesca reserva de minerais. Sua diversidade biológica de ecossistemas é a mais rica do planeta. Nessa região se encontram cerca de 30% de todas as espécies da fauna e flora do mundo.

Conclusão – Sumak Kawsay ²²

Há apenas cinco décadas o meio ambiente é discutido em conferências, simpósios, seminários e encontros e motiva declarações no âmbito das Nações Unidas e protestos e manifestações pelo mundo afora. Hoje, conforme assegura nosso Papa Francisco, é “o maior desafio da humanidade”²³

Os povos indígenas andinos devem estar estranhando que o mundo que se autodenomina de “civilizado” descobre somente agora o que a sabedoria indígena já sabia desde sempre e chama de *Sumak Kawsay* (Bem Viver): Existe um ser supremo que criou todas as coisas e por isso deve ser amado e respeitado. Esta consciência faz o homem e a mulher viver em paz consigo mesmo e em harmonia com os irmãos e irmãs e ao mesmo tempo com todos os seres criados, com o mundo que nos rodeia.

Não seria este *Sumak Kawsay* – o Bem Viver – uma alternativa ao modelo vigente de desenvolvimento? Não poderia esta sabedoria antiga dos povos indígenas suscitar hábitos e comportamentos opostos ao consumismo e ao individualismo e posturas que descartam todo e qualquer mecanismo de exclusão? Não seria o estilo de vida simples, sóbria, frugal e modesta vivido pelos indígenas um vigoroso apelo à sociedade de hoje?

Está na hora de defendermos em nível de Igreja e pessoalmente a criação de Deus e denunciarmos os mecanismos mortais que causam a morte do planeta. Mas a denúncia por si só não basta! Temos que nos perguntar, todos e cada uma, cada um de nós, até que ponto somos corresponsáveis pela morte lenta do nosso planeta. Precisamos de mais coragem para não nos deixar vencer pelas ininterruptas propagandas que alimentam o consumismo, além de produzir montanhas de lixo cada vez mais altas.

Está na hora de nos lembrarmos que os filhos e netos desta geração também querem viver!

Altamira, 18 de agosto de 2014



²² “Sumak Kawsay” é uma expressão quechua, língua indígena dos Andes, traduzida geralmente por “Bom Viver”. *Sumak* quer dizer “plenitude” e *Kawsay* significa “viver”. Interessante é que a expressão foi levada em consideração na Constitución de la República del Ecuador de 2008: Art. 14. - Se reconoce el derecho de la población a vivir en un ambiente sano y ecológicamente equilibrado, que garantiza la sostenibilidad y el buen vivir, *sumak kawsay*. Se declara de interés público la preservación del ambiente, la conservación de los ecosistemas, la biodiversidad y la integridad del patrimonio genético del país, la prevención del daño ambiental y la recuperación de los espacios naturales degradados.

²³ Entrevista publicada em Buenos Aires, 27 de julho de 2014 (AFP), na revista argentina *Viva*.





La Virgen del Cerro de Potosí

Ecoteología profunda desde los Andes

Dietmar Müssig

La Paz, BOLIVIA / Hildesheim, ALEMANIA

“La Madre Tierra es el sistema viviente dinámico conformado por la comunidad indivisible de todos los sistemas de vida y los seres vivos, interrelacionados, interdependientes y complementarios, que comparten un destino común.” Estas palabras del artículo 3 de la Ley de derechos de la Madre Tierra¹, con el cual el presidente Evo Morales intenta “reconocer los derechos de la Madre Tierra”² en Bolivia y a nivel mundial³, se parecen mucho a lo que encontré en la página web de la Sociedad de Ecología profunda aplicada. También allí se habla de la condicionalidad mutua de toda la vida y se entiende a la tierra como organismo vivo donde todo está interrelacionado y a cada ser vivo le corresponde un valor propio⁴. Una comparación de los dos textos muestra, por un lado, la influencia del pensamiento esotérico occidental en el concepto del Vivir Bien y, por otro lado, las semejanzas entre la ecología profunda y la cosmovisión andina, que es la segunda fuente de la ideología del gobierno boliviano actual. La posición de los obispos católicos, sin embargo, parece totalmente contraria cuando señalan textualmente: “la tierra no es sujeto de derechos que sólo es la persona humana, culmen de la creación, la que tiene derechos”⁵. La capacidad de reconciliar la ecología profunda y la cosmovisión

¹ Ley No. 071, promulgada el 21 de diciembre de 2010 por Evo Morales Aima, presidente del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia.

² Ibid. art. 2.

³ Se debe a la iniciativa de Evo Morales que las Naciones Unidas declararon al 22 de abril como día internacional de la Madre Tierra en el año 2009. Que su política económica es totalmente contraria es un tema lamentable pero que no puedo profundizar aquí.

⁴ <http://www.tiefenoekologie.de/de/tiefe-oekologie.html>; muy parecido la página castellana <http://www.tierramor.org/EcologiaProfunda/EcoProfunda.html>.

⁵ Conferencia Episcopal Boliviana, *El universo, don de Dios para la vida. Carta Pastoral sobre Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo Humano en Bolivia*. La Paz 2012, No. 38.

andina con la tradición cristiana encontramos en las teologías indias. Aunque ese término es bastante nuevo⁶, el fenómeno en sí ya se puede visualizar en la iconografía de la época colonial. Trataré entonces de presentar una interpretación ecocentrada de la Virgen del Cerro, un cuadro que se encuentra en el Museo de la Moneda en Potosí. Uso este recurso pictográfico como testimonio impresionante de la capacidad de los pueblos andinos de mantener su identidad en una época de gran sufrimiento y opresión colonial y, en este sentido, encuentro en él un testimonio de la teología andina⁷.

María como cerro sagrado: Criando la vida para las futuras generaciones

El cuadro de estilo barroco fue pintado antes del año 1720⁸. El artista ha sido probablemente un indígena y además es bien posible que el cacique que está retratado detrás del emperador Carlos V abajo a la derecha, es el donante de la obra⁹. Su iconografía parte del motivo clásico de la coronación de la Virgen María - un escenario donde la reina de los cielos está coronada por Jesús y Dios Padre en presencia del Espíritu Santo. El cuadro presenta una agrupación simétrica de la Trinidad donde María está posicionada de manera que parece participar en la esfera divina, formando parte del círculo al cual se unen las personas trinitarias. Esa pertenencia al grupo de la Trinidad ocurre porque están envueltos María y el Espíritu Santo en un mismo tipo de rayos - símbolo infalible de lo divino - que van desde la cabeza de la Virgen hasta la paloma, que está más arriba. Pero el cambio iconográfico más llamativo en el cuadro es la aparición de la Virgen dentro de un cerro. Y no es cualquier montaña sino el famoso Cerro Rico de Potosí, caracterizado por sus dos puntas de forma parecida pero de tamaño diferente, por su color rojizo y por las personas claramente involucradas en actividades mineras en sus laderas.

⁶ Un buen resumen de las teologías indígenas presenta Roberto Tomichá, *Teologías de la Liberación Indígenas. Balance y tareas pendientes*, en: EATWOT's Latin American Theological Commission (ed.), *Voices New Series*, Volume XXXVII, Number 2013-4, 113-130.

⁷ Como teólogo alemán no me atrevo a escribir una teología andina pero, como coordinador de una hermandad entre mi diócesis de Hildesheim y la Iglesia Católica de Bolivia y como docente del Instituto Superior Ecuménico Andino de Teología entre 2011 y 2013, tuve la oportunidad de andar entre los dos mundos y aprender de la sabiduría de los pueblos andinos y veo ese artículo como fruto de este aprendizaje interreligioso. En esta publicación no puedo profundizar muchas cosas pero pienso hacerlo en mi tesis doctoral, empezada hace poco.

⁸ Teresa Gisbert, *Iconografía y Mitos Indígenas en el arte*, La Paz 2004, 17.

⁹ Francisco Javier Pizarro Gomez, *Identidad y mestizaje en el arte barroco andino. La iconografía*, en: *Barroco. Acta del II Congreso internacional*. Porto 2001, 197-213, comprueba para la Escuela Cusceña la existencia de agrupaciones de artistas indígenas y para Potosí caciques como mecenas.



Las líneas claras que atraviesan todo el cerro pueden representar senderos pero también las vetas de plata.

Existen textos de teólogos de la Antigüedad, pero en tanto fueron consultados por los misioneros durante la colonia, ellos asocian a María con una montaña y también con piedras preciosas¹⁰. Pero, la identificación del cerro con María, por lo menos por parte de las y los indígenas, habrá que buscar más bien en su carácter sagrado. Como muestra Teresa Gisbert, durante la época incaica el cerro Potosino fue considerado como huaca, es decir un lugar sagrado para rendir culto al dios *Pachacámac*¹¹. Con la llegada de los misioneros españoles, la población andina indentificó a María con el cerro que llamaron *coya* en quechua, que significa reina¹². Pero en este caso no se trata de un simple remplazo de una *huaca* de la religión andina por un santuario católico como pasó, por ejemplo, en Copacabana. Tampoco se sustituye solamente el cerro por una santa católica como lo vemos en las representaciones de la Virgen en las cuales su vestido parece un triángulo que simboliza las montañas

¹⁰ Cf. Andrés Eichmann, *La Virgen-Cerro de Potosí: ¿Arte mestizo o expresión emblemática?*, en: *Revista de Historia Americana y Argentina* 42-43 (2007-2008), 37-59.

¹¹ Teresa Gisbert, *El cerro de Potosí y el dios Pachcámac*, en: *Chungara. Revista de Antropología Chilena* 42 (2010), 169-180.

¹² *Ibid.* 177.

de los Andes. Lo interesante es la identificación de María con el cerro de manera que las dos entidades sagradas permanecen. La *huaca* sigue presente en forma de montaña – ¡y sigue venerada! Tanto el Papa Pablo III y su entorno como el emperador se presentan en actitud orante, mirando hacia arriba. ¿Pero a dónde? No me atrevo a decir que veneran al cerro. Pero desde una perspectiva no-cristiana sería por lo menos una interpretación legítima. De las personas más pequeñas que se ven de rodillas en la ladera derecha e izquierda del Cerro Rico casi a la altura del sol y la luna se puede aún menos decir a quién están adorando. Puede ser a la Trinidad cristiana, a la Virgen o al cerro. En ese mismo sentido tampoco queda claro, a quién están coronando Jesús y Dios Padre. Desde una perspectiva cristiana es obviamente María la que recibe la corona celestial. Pero, un/a observador/a indígena podría interpretar que a quien se corona es a la montaña o, quizás, a los mismos *apus*, simbolizados por las cimas. Tenemos entonces aquí una posibilidad doble de interpretación que permite que los diferentes grupos de la sociedad colonial vean lo suyo. Para la población indígena esta doble identificación brindaba la ventaja de seguir venerando a la *huaca*, de manera individual, al encender velas delante del cuadro de la Virgen María – y, así, se protegían de los doctrineros que no encontraban ningún argumento para acusarles de idolatría¹³.

En la religiosidad andina los *apus* representan a los ancestros de las comunidades que viven después de su muerte en las cimas de los cerros y acompañan desde allí a sus descendientes. En la fiesta de Todos Santos, las almas de las y los difuntos vuelven a visitar a sus familias de origen. En esta ritualidad andina destaca un elemento, que también juega un rol importante en la ecología política del occidente: la relacionalidad y sobre todo la responsabilidad intergeneracional. El cambio climático que cada vez se vuelve más intenso, causado por la quema de combustibles fósiles que se practicó a partir de los años 70 del siglo pasado, es un ejemplo claro de la falta de justicia intergeneracional. Pues mientras nuestra generación no encuentra soluciones para reducir las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero, serán nuestras hijas e hijos los que sufrirán las graves consecuencias de esta crisis ecológica. Incluso la Biblia conoce esta responsabilidad de una generación por la otra cuando habla de un Dios que castiga “la maldad de los padres en los hijos hasta la tercera y cuarta generación” (Dt 5,9).

¹³ Una posición parecida a la mía en cuanto al tipo de inculturación que tenemos con la Virgen del Cerro presenta Julia Prochazka, *Mother of the Mountains: the Virgin Mary as a Bridge from Inka Past to Post-Colonial Christian-Andean Religiosity*, una tesis presentada en 2013 con la Universidad de Emory y accesible en el internet (<https://etd.library.emory.edu/view/record/pid/emory:d7qr3>).

María como Madre Tierra: Revelación del rostro materno de Dios

Volviendo a nuestro cuadro y mirando las laderas del cerro vamos a descubrir diferentes especies de animales domésticos como llamas y mulas pero también silvestres como ciervos, aves y muchas viscachas¹⁴. Mientras que en la actualidad no se encuentran más que escombros y residuos mineros en las pendientes del Cerro Rico, en el cuadro se visualiza una buena cantidad de árboles. Tomando en cuenta la altura del cerro de Potosí, que llega hasta casi 5,000 msnm, esta es una biodiversidad sorprendente¹⁵. Pero probablemente la intención iconográfica no pretendió reflejar tal biodiversidad sino posibilitar una segunda identificación de María: esta vez con la *Pachamama*. Es la Madre Tierra que, de acuerdo con la cosmovisión andina, da los frutos de la tierra y todo sustento para el ser humano. En la fertilidad del suelo y de los animales domésticos se manifiesta su cuidado y cariño maternal. En esta la lógica andina es obvio que además de su rostro femenino se muestran solamente las manos de María, que protegen y regalan los dones de la vida. “En la cosmovisión andina y amazónica” dicen los obispos bolivianos, “lo creado es sagrado; es vida y fuente de vida. La Pachamama, considerada en las culturas del occidente del país como madre generosa y sustento de la vida, expresa la idea de cuidar todo el universo, espacio y tiempo (pacha), donde todo está relacionado, en correspondencia y complementación”¹⁶. La percepción de la fertilidad de la naturaleza como algo divino es una experiencia muy antigua de la mayor parte de la humanidad. Sabemos de investigaciones arqueológicas que en Palestina se veneró por mucho tiempo una diosa asociada con ramas; huellas y reminiscencias de esta divinidad de los árboles encontramos también en la Biblia cuando por ejemplo Jesús Ben Sira presenta a la Sabiduría con muchas cifras vegetales (Ecl 24: 12-19). Y Gaia, la tierra divinizada de la mitología griega, nuevamente juega un papel importante para la ecología profunda, donde se defiende la idea del planeta tierra como un ser vivo hasta con métodos científicos¹⁷. En este sentido mucho se habla hoy del entrelazamiento de toda la realidad. Las líneas finas que atraviesan las laderas del cerro María como ya habíamos mencionado, casi se parecen a una red o un tejido, símbolo andino para la totalidad diversa de la vida. ¿O serán arroyos que en la cosmología andina se entienden como la sangre de la Madre Tierra, fuente última de la vida? En todo caso podemos ver que el pensamiento

¹⁴ Un roedor de la familia de las chinchillas.

¹⁵ Aunque especies endémicas como la Q'eq'ua o la Qishuara aguantan el clima extremo de los altos Andes.

¹⁶ Conferencia Episcopal Boliviana, *op. cit.* No. 37.

¹⁷ Cf. la así llamada “hipótesis Gaia”, elaborada en los años 60 por la bióloga Lynn Margulis y el químico y físico James Lovelock.

sistémico o cibernético de la ecología moderna para los pueblos indígenas siempre ha sido una evidencia. Para el mundo andino todo tiene vida y todo lo vivo está interrelacionado y se influye mutuamente. Por eso, el actuar humano tiene consecuencias e impacta en la naturaleza¹⁸ y la Madre Tierra lo retribuye, castigando a alguien con una enfermedad o una granizada por ejemplo o gratificando con salud o una buena cosecha. Sin embargo, la valoración de estos fenómenos en el mundo andino no es tanto de carácter moral sino describe una interdependencia objetiva, una armonía en todo el universo que sistemáticamente corre el riesgo de ser interrumpida¹⁹. De ahí resulta que el objetivo principal de la espiritualidad andina consiste en mantener el equilibrio y la armonía en el cosmos. Sabiendo que le debe su existencia, el campesino aymara o quechua le pide permiso a la tierra antes de trabajarla y su esposa hará otro rito de agradecimiento en la cosecha. Y mientras esta espiritualidad respetuosa se está perdiendo cada vez más con los procesos migratorios desde el campo hacia las ciudades en América Latina, las y los seguidores de la ecología profunda occidental buscan justamente este tipo de práctica religiosa para transformar su propia vida y la del planeta y, de esta manera, dan testimonio de que la ecología profunda es también una espiritualidad.

María chachawarmi: Recordando la polaridad de la vida

Hemos visto entonces que el cuadro le concede una clara dimensión divina a la tierra y al mismo tiempo una dimensión femenina a lo divino. Esta última ha sido eliminada de la Biblia Hebrea de manera sistemática por los profetas promoviendo el monoteísmo (cf. p. ej. Dt 7,1-5; Is 1,29; Jr 2,20; 3,6) de tal manera, que la imagen bíblica de la divinidad está caracterizada casi de manera exclusiva con lo masculino. La cosmovisión andina en cambio siempre ha guardado la memoria de la polaridad de la vida, tomando en cuenta – sobre todo en la ritualidad - tanto el aspecto masculino como la dimensión femenina. El principio del *chachawarmi*, es decir, la integración de ambas dimensiones de género, se puede observar hasta en la etimología de palabras fundamentales para la cosmovisión andina como es el caso del pacha. Según Josef Estermann²⁰, esta expresión está compuesta por *pa* que significa ‘dos’ y *cha* que se refiere a la

¹⁸ Os 4,1-3 muestra que la Biblia conoce experiencias religiosas parecidas.

¹⁹ Cf. los principios de la “filosofía andina” que según Josef Estermann además de la relationalidad consisten en correspondencia, complementaridad y reciprocidad. Idem, *Filosofía andina. Sabiduría indígena para un mundo nuevo*, La Paz, segunda edición 2006.

²⁰ En este caso me refiero a una clase dictada por él en el Instituto Superior Ecuaménico Andino de Teología (ISEAT) el año 2012.

energía cósmica y tiene hasta en lo etimológico semejanzas con el *chi* de la cultura china. Esta concepción asiática de una energía bipolar – el *yin* y *yang* – forma nuevamente una de las bases de la ecología profunda, así como también lo hace el enfoque de la dimensión femenina.

Volviendo a la iconografía del cuadro que nos ocupa, y observando la ubicación céntrica de la imagen de la paloma, ella parece aún más importante que Dios Padre y el Hijo. Al igual que en la cosmovisión incaica el *inti*, la deidad masculina del sol, fertiliza a la tierra, que es imaginada como femenina²¹, así también se puede observar que en el cuadro el Espíritu Santo fecunda a María mediante sus rayos. Es decir, que la vida en la tierra y sobre todo su fertilidad son el resultado de la cooperación de dos principios cósmicos, del masculino y del femenino. En la tradición cristiana, el sexo del Espíritu Santo queda algo indeterminado al igual que su ser en general. En nuestro cuadro, sin embargo, recibe algo de la femineidad de María debido a su cercanía iconográfica con la Virgen Cerro y los rayos divinos que rodean a las dos. Y finalmente no le es ajena a la Biblia la idea de que el Espíritu de Dios tenga características de una fuerza femenina. Pues la palabra hebrea *ruah* es de género femenino. Y a pesar de su eliminación, la dimensión femenina en la imagen bíblica de Dios vuelve a partir del siglo II aC con la figura de la Señora Sabiduría, introducida por autores judíos de formación helenística que trataron de adaptar el mensaje bíblico a las filosofías y cosmovisiones contemporáneas. Es así que en Prov 8 la sabiduría habla con autoridad divina y se presenta como mujer que participó en la obra divina de la creación. Como creadora, la sabiduría aparece también en Sab 7,21 y 8, 6. En el Nuevo Testamento, donde por una parte la sabiduría preexistente se encarna en Jesús (Jn 1,1-3) y por otra el Nazareno se identifica con las antiguas características de la diosa del árbol hablando de sí mismo como la vid (Jn 15), encontramos otra vez una integración del aspecto femenino en la figura del salvador.

María como mediadora-reveladora: Viviendo la sacralidad de la creación

A nivel horizontal, el cuadro de la Virgen del Cerro está dividido en dos partes: la esfera celestial, donde reina Dios Padre con su cetro, acompañado por su hijo Jesús, el Espíritu Santo y dos arcángeles arriba y el área terrenal abajo, gobernado por el emperador y el papa como representante del poder espiritual. Esta separación entre cielo y tierra – claramente marcada por una faja de nubes y los rostros de angelitos – corresponde con la visión teológica de aquel tiempo: un Dios trascendente que gobierna el mundo desde el cielo pero sin establecer un

²¹ Josef Estermann, Ecosofía andina. La 'Naturaleza' en Occidente y en los Andes, en: Fe y Pueblo 11 (2007), 68-76, 73.

nexo verdadero entre las dos dimensiones, es decir, entre lo celestial y lo terrenal. Esta concepción dualista tiene raíces muy profundas en el pensamiento europeo. Ya para la filosofía griega lo verdadero y lo real son las ideas mientras lo material no tiene tanto valor como vemos por ejemplo en la parábola de la cueva de Platón. Ese desprecio de lo natural continúa en la filosofía moderna del occidente, que se basa en el dualismo de René Descartes y su método racionalista. La teología mantiene la línea griega, diferenciando ya a partir de la época escolástica lo natural de lo sobrenatural. Por eso, tenía por siglos una concepción extrínseca de la revelación y de la gracia divina. Ambas se imaginaban como cosas que tienen que venir desde afuera, facilitadas por instancias especiales como los sacramentos o las y los santos. Aún cuando esta separación se mantiene en la iconográfica del cuadro, dada la influencia del clásico barroco de la coronación de María, es notable cómo la Virgen del Cerro está presente en las dos dimensiones. El cerro, arraigado en la tierra, se eleva hacia el cielo. Adopta, entonces, la función de los apus o achachilas como mediadores entre el mundo de arriba (*hanaq/alaxa pacha*) y el de abajo (*ukhu/manqha pacha*)²². Para los creyentes en los Andes, la Virgen del Cerro cumpliría entonces un rol muy importante de mediación y también de revelación porque en la espiritualidad andina la divinidad se muestra de manera continua en la tierra, en los altos cerros o revelándose en fenómenos climáticos, es decir, sobre todo en lo que los occidentales llamamos ‘naturaleza’ y por eso, en los Andes no se puede separar ‘lo natural’ de ‘lo divino’. Para la gente andina es sólo cuestión de ser suficientemente sensible para percibir el carácter sagrado de su entorno, mientras nosotros como hijos del pensamiento que irónicamente se cree moderno, tenemos que aprender nuevamente a redescubrir “a Dios presente en cada criatura”²³.

Para la teología cristiana, en su forma occidental, la interconexión entre estas dos dimensiones es complicada porque, en general, es incapaz de imaginar esta relación inseparable entre Dios y el mundo. Por eso quiero abrir algunos senderos bíblicos que muestran que esta sabiduría milenaria indígena en cierta forma ya se encuentra en la Biblia. Para los autores de Gn 1 por ejemplo, todo lo creado es encarnación de la palabra divina²⁴ y en Proverbios, la sabiduría de Dios, entidad preexistente

²² En otros contextos también Cristo, crucificado entre cielo y tierra, puede funcionar como puente cósmico (chakana).

²³ Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, CELAM. Departamento de Justicia y Solidaridad, *Espiritualidad cristiana de la ecología*. (Declaración final del Simposio latinoamericano y caribeño, realizado los días 21 – 24 de agosto de 2010 en Buenos Aires), No. 12. Ese documento presta ideas muy valiosas para una espiritualidad renovada de la creación.

²⁴ Cf. la fórmula “Dijo Dios: [...] y así sucedió” que se repite con pequeñas variaciones pero un sentido idéntico unas nueve veces en Gn 1.

(Prov 8,22s) que participó en la obra divina de la creación, permanece en el universo. Esta concepción de un principio divino que penetra toda la creación y es causa de la dimensión sagrada de la realidad se ve reflejada en el Nuevo Testamento con la figura del Cristo Cósmico quien “es la imagen de Dios invisible, el primogénito de toda la creación; pues en Él fue creado todo, en el cielo y en la tierra, lo visible y lo invisible, todo fue creado por medio de Él y con vistas a Él. Y Él es antes que todo y todo encuentra en Él su subsistencia” (Col 1,15-17)²⁵.

Para evitar el panteísmo que tanto temen los teólogos tradicionales, muchas veces practican el otro extremo de una separación total de cielo y tierra. Pero la teología clásica siempre conservó la concepción de la *creatio continua*, es decir que Dios – mediante su espíritu – está presente durante cada momento en su creación. Lo mismo expresa el concepto de la Trinidad que sirve exactamente para evitar el dilema mencionado, brindando un modelo que permite pensar la presencia de Dios en su creación sin identificar a los dos como unidad. El Concilio Ecu­ménico de Calcedonia usaba el paradigma de la *perichoresis*, es decir, la penetración mutua, para explicar la unión de lo humano y lo divino en la persona de Jesús diciendo “que se ha de reconocer a uno solo [...] en dos naturalezas, sin confusión, sin cambio, sin división, sin separación, en modo alguno borrada la diferencia de naturalezas por causa de la unión, sino conservando, más bien, cada naturaleza su propiedad”²⁶. Este modelo cristológico se puede usar, según mi parecer, para pensar la relación entre Dios y el mundo. No se puede mezclar a los dos, pero tampoco se los puede separar. El modelo *perijorético* de la Trinidad facilita, así, imaginar a Dios en una relación íntima con todo lo creado por él – de la misma manera como lo hace la teología andina expresada en nuestro cuadro de la Virgen del Cerro. Así como el ser humano, después de la encarnación, ya no puede ser visto sin su dimensión divina, con el dogma de la Trinidad la naturaleza y el mundo tampoco pueden ser mirados sin percibir la presencia continua de Dios en ellos. En ese sentido coinciden la teología renovada de la creación²⁷, la cosmovisión andina y la ecología profunda. Las tres nos ayudan a redescubrir el carácter pericorético o, lo que es lo mismo, el sentido sagrado de la realidad y, el reto actual y urgente consiste en generar prácticas individuales, económicas y políticas acordes con esta visión de sacralidad de la vida.

²⁵ Una concepción parecida tenemos en Heb 1,2s. Este tema fue trabajado de manera sistemática por Leonardo Boff, *Evangelio del Cristo cósmico. Hacia una nueva conciencia planetaria*, Madrid 2009.

²⁶ Henricus Denzinger (ed.), *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, Friburgo Brisg.-Roma, 1957, No 148, traducido por el autor.

²⁷ De manera más detallada he desarrollado una eco-teología en mi libro *Hacia un cristianismo ecológico. Fuentes espirituales para el cuidado de la Creación*, La Paz 2012.

Maria Assunta: Modelo de una salvación holística

El motivo de la coronación de la virgen está ligado con la fiesta de la Asunción de María que a partir del siglo V se celebró en la iglesia oriental. En el año 1950, el papa Pio XII proclamó como dogma que “María, terminado el curso de su vida terrenal, fue asunta en cuerpo y alma a la gloria del cielo”²⁸. El contenido de ese acto corresponde de una manera sorprendente con nuestro cuadro, destacando la corporalidad como un elemento importante para la salvación. Sobrepassa el enfoque de la teología tradicional en lo meramente espiritual que muchas veces resultó en la idea que lo más importante sería salvar el alma para asegurar su llegada al cielo. El dogma de la Assunta, que nos propone a María como modelo de toda la humanidad redimida dice, sin embargo, que toda la corporalidad humana está acogida por Dios. Es la razón por la cual ya no debemos menospreciar nuestro cuerpo como nos han enseñado durante muchos siglos en las diferentes iglesias cristianas. Tanto el dogma como nuestro cuadro tienen una profunda base bíblica que yo quiero llamar antropología tierra-céntrica, refiriéndome a Gn 2. Ese relato de la creación, más antiguo que el de Gn 1, define al ser humano como *adán*, es decir el rojo o la roja, tipo hecho por un pedazo de tierra colorada y guarda así una verdad comprobada por la ciencia de la evolución: que somos formados por la misma materia como los animales (Gn 2,19) y todos los demás elementos del universo. Ni siquiera el aliento de vida (Gn 2,7) sirve para diferenciar el ser humano de los animales porque según el salmo 104: 29 también esas criaturas poseen el aliento divino. El gran descubrimiento de Charles Darwin, profundizado por los últimos análisis de la biología molecular, que demuestran que su genoma del chimpancé discrepa solamente por 1.37 % del humano, no hubiera sorprendido a Qohelet quien estaba convencido de que Dios mismo “les demuestra [a los seres humanos] que no son más que animales” (Eclo 3: 18). Y tampoco sorprende a los pueblos originarios de los Andes, entre los cuales el ser humano obviamente es co-criatura, con los demás seres en el universo, y que todas ellas tienen vida y *ajayu*, es decir, un espíritu divino²⁹.

Aceptando esa sabiduría, el ser humano occidental podría sobrepasar también su narcisismo gnoseológico que le obliga a creerse un dioscito. La base de este antropocentrismo, de lo cual Lynn White Jr. dijo – con mucha razón - ya en los años 60 que sería una de las causas de la crisis ecológica actual³⁰, encontramos en el salmo 8, que - después

²⁸ Cf. la Constitución *Munificentissimus Deus* del 1 de noviembre de 1950.

²⁹ Cf. sobre ese asunto el interesante artículo del jesuita Jojo M. Fung, *Hermenéutica poscolonial y posmisional. Hacia una Pneumatología Chamánica de la Liberación*, en: EATWOT's International Theological Commission (ed.), *Voices New Series*, Volume XXXVI, Number 2013/2-3, 123-147.

³⁰ Lynn White Jr., *The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis*, en: *Science* 155 (1967), 1203-1207.

de caracterizar al ser humano como “poco inferior a los ángeles” (Sal 8: 6) - le concede el dominio sobre la tierra, repitiendo Gn 1: 28. Este nuevamente se justifica, según la teología tradicional, por la semejanza con Dios que presuntamente sólo poseen los y las humanos/as. Pero en Gn 2,18 se lee claramente que Dios creó también a los animales “a semejanza” de Adán.

Esta mirada holística que todas y todos seres humanos/as formamos parte de una red de la vida que va mucho más allá de lo humano y que esta especie del *homo sapiens*, debido a su capacidad ética, tenga la responsabilidad por la diversidad de vida en ese planeta que llamamos tierra, forma un aspecto muy importante de la ecología profunda. Pero también forma parte de la cosmovisión andina y de la tradición católica según nuestro cuadro – si bien hay que decifrarla de una manera crítica y ecocentrada. El dogma de la Asunta nos habla que somos una unidad inseparable, compuestos por lo material-corporal y lo espiritual-racional. La corporalidad humana incluye todas nuestras relaciones con nuestro entorno que se realizan mediante nuestro cuerpo y por eso finalmente incluye toda nuestra historia como humanidad. Eso nos lleva al último punto, el aspecto político y social.

Volviendo la mirada al cuadro podría llamar la atención el predominio del color rojo. Si bien el macizo del cerro Potosino es de origen volcánico y de allí puede resultar su color natural rojizo, no excluye esta explicación geológica que existan asociaciones simbólicas en la representación artificial. En la iconografía, el rojo significa por un lado autoridad y correspondería en este caso con el poder económico y político de la Villa Imperial. Por otro lado el rojo sirve en la liturgia católica para simbolizar a los mártires. El hecho de que Jesús está vestido con una casulla roja y agarra el caliz con la sangre eucarística en la mano derecha nos permite entender el color rojo también como memoria de los millones de víctimas del trabajo forzado de la mita al que los indios del Collasuyu estaban sometidos que, como se sabe, fue un sistema sofisticado de esclavitud durante la época del virrey Francisco de Toledo. De manera parecida, las bocaminas en las dos laderas del cerro, de las cuales salen gotas de plata fundida, pueden evocar las llagas del Jesús crucificado y especialmente su costado abierto, dándole así una dimensión mística al cuerpo de la *Pachamama*-María. De acuerdo con nuestra tesis de la doble posibilidad de interpretación -los españoles y mestizos ven en el cerro a la riqueza de la Villa Imperial y los indígenas ven la muerte de sus compatriotas – podemos constatar una conciencia crítica y mirada sumamente política del artista pintor. Y si tomamos en serio la idea de la Asunción, todo este sufrimiento corporal está redimido por Dios. La explotación atropelladora de la población indígena le afecta a Dios, porque le afecta la historia humana y la suerte de los pobres. De igual manera, le afecta hoy en día

el extractivismo desatado que agota los últimos recursos naturales sin que importen los altos costos sociales y ecológicos. La tierra, así dice la eco-teóloga Sallie McFague³¹ y lo afirma nuestro cuadro, es el cuerpo de Dios, y por eso cada herida que se inflige al ecosistema tierra, insulta a Dios. Podemos aprender mucho de la sabiduría milenaria que guardaron los pueblos en los Andes y que realmente es una ecología profunda. Y la teología andina que ellos desarrollaron hace siglos atrás es capaz de empujar la renovación de nuestra espiritualidad cristiana de la creación que tanto hace falta en un mundo de crisis ecológica global.

³¹ Sallie McFague, *The Body of God. An Ecological Theology*, Minneapolis 1993; idem, *Modelos de Dios. Teología para una era ecológica y nuclear*, Santander 1994. □





The Virgin of the Potosi Mountain

Deep Eco-theology from the Andes

Dietmar Müssig

La Paz, BOLIVIA / Hildesheim, ALEMANIA

Traduction from the Spanish version: Lydia Müssig

“Mother Earth is the dynamic vivid system confirmed by the indivisible community of all systems of life and the living beings, who linked together, dependent from each other and completing one another share a common destiny.” These words from the 3rd article of the Bill of rights of mother Earth¹, with the one President Evo Morales tries to “recognize the rights of mother Earth”² in Bolivia and at worldwide level³, are very similar to what I found on the website of the Society of applied Deep Ecology. Here too is dealt with the mutual conditionality of all life and the Earth is understood as a vivid organism where everything is coherent and every living being has its own value⁴. A comparison of both texts shows on the one hand the influence of western esoteric thinking in the concept of Vivir Bien and on the other hand the similarities between Deep Ecology and Andean worldview, second source of the ideology of Bolivia’s current government. The position of the Catholic bishops is, without doubt, the very reverse stating that “the Earth is no subject of rights because only the human person, pride of creation, has rights”⁵. We can find the capacity to reconcile the Deep Ecology and Andean worldview with the Christian tradition in the Indian theologies. Even though this expression is a rather

¹ Law Nr. 071, passed December 21st 2010 by Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

² Ibid. art. 2.

³ It is owed to the initiative of Evo Morales that the United Nations declared April 22nd the International day of Mother Earth in 2009. His economic policy being absolutely controversial is a distressing topic which is not to be deepened in this context.

⁴ <http://www.tiefenoekologie.de/de/tiefe-oekologie.html>

⁵ Bolivian Episcopal Conference, *The universe, gift of God for life. Pastoral Letter about Environment and Human Development in Bolivia*, La Paz 2012, Nr. 38.

new one⁶, the phenomenon itself is already to be seen in the iconography of colonial times. So, I will try to present an eco-centered interpretation of the “Virgen del Cerro”, a painting that resides in the “Museo de la Moneda” in Potosí. I use this pictographic resource as an impressive testimony of the capacity of Andean peoples to keep up their identity in times of great sufferings and colonial oppression and in this sense I’ll take it as testimony of an Andean theology⁷.

Mary as sacred mountain: Creating life for future generations

The baroque styled picture was painted before 1720⁸. The artist was probably a Native and besides it is quite possible that the chief who is pictured behind the emperor Charles V at the bottom on the right side is the donor of the work⁹. Its iconography parts with the classic form of the coronation of the Virgin Mary – a scene where the Queen of Heavens is crowned by Jesus and God Father in presence of the Holy Spirit. This painting however shows a symmetric arrangement of the Trinity with Mary situated in a way that she seems to participate in the divine sphere, being part of the circle that the Trinitarians form. This affiliation to the Trinitarian group occurs through the lightning that both Mary and the Holy Spirit are surrounded by and that is infallible symbol of the divine – that goes from the Virgin’s head to the dove which is above her. But the more noticeable change of iconography in the picture is the appearance of the Virgin inside of a mountain. And it is not just any mountain – it is the famous “Cerro Rico of Potosí”, characterized by its two peaks of similar shape and different heights, by its reddish color and by the people at the fold sides obviously engaged in mining activity. The bright lines crossing the whole mountain might represent small paths on the slopes or even silver veins.

⁶ A good resume of the Indian theologies presents Roberto Tomichá, *Teologías de la Liberación Indígenas. Balance y tareas pendientes*, en: EATWOT’s Latin American Theological Commission (ed.), *Voices New Series*, Volume XXXVII, Number 2013-4, 113-130.

⁷ As a German theologian I do not dare to write an Andean theology but, as coordinator of a partnership between my dioceses of Hildesheim and the Catholic Church of Bolivia and as tutor of the Instituto Superior Ecueménico Andino de Teología between 2011 and 2013 I had the chance to get to know these two worlds and learn from the wisdom of the Native peoples and I see this article as an gain of this interreligious learning. In this publication I cannot deepen many aspects but I intend to do so in my doctoral thesis, started recently.

⁸ Teresa Gisbert, *Iconografía y Mitos Indígenas en el arte*, La Paz 2004, 17

⁹ Francisco Javier Pizarro Gomez, *Identidad y mestizaje en el arte barroco andino. La iconografía*, en: *Barroco. Acta del II Congreso internacional*. Porto 2001, 197-213, proofs for the Cusco School the existence of arrangements of Native artists and for Potosí chiefs as donors.



Theological texts from the Antique, which were consulted by missionaries during the colonial era, associate Mary with a mountain and with precious stones¹⁰. The identification of the mountain with Mary, at least from the Natives' point of view, is to be searched in its sacred character. As shown by Teresa Gisbert, during the Inca period the Cerro of Potosí was considered *huaca*, that means a sacred place to worship the god *Pachacámac*¹¹. With the arrival of the Spanish missionaries the Andean population identified Mary with the Cerro that they called *coya*, meaning 'queen'¹² in Quechua. But this case is not about a simple substitution of a *huaca* of the Andean religion by a Catholic sanctuary as it happened for example in Copacabana. Neither is the mountain just exchanged by a Catholic saint as we can see in some presentations of the Virgin in which her dress is shaped like a triangle symbolizing the Andean mountains. The interesting part is the identification of Mary with the mountain in a way that both entities reside. The *huaca* remains with

¹⁰ Cf. Andrés Eichmann, *La Virgen-Cerro de Potosí: Arte mestizo o expresión emblemática?* In: *Revista de Historia Americana y Argentina* 42-43 (2007-2008), 37-59

¹¹ Teresa Gisbert, *El cerro de Potosí y el dios Pachacámac*, in: Chungara. *Revista de Antropología Chilena* 42 (2010), 169-180.

¹² *Ibid.* 177.

the mountain – and it is still worshiped! The painting shows Pope Paul the Third and his environment like the emperor Charles V with a praying attitude looking upwards. But where do they look? I do not dare to state that they worship the mountain. Though from a non-Christian perspective it would be at least a legit interpretation. From the smaller persons kneeling at the fold sides of “Cerro Rico”, almost at the same heights like sun and moon, it is even less possible to distinguish what they adore. It could be the Holy Trinity, the Virgin or the mountain. In the same sense it stays unclarified who Jesus and God the Father are crowning. From a Christian point of view it is obviously Mary who receives the celestial crown. But a Native observer could interpret that it is the Cerro or maybe even the *apus* represented by the two peaks of the mountain. Now we have the doubled possibility of interpretation that allows different groups of the colonial society to see “theirs”. For the Native people this double identification brought the advantage of being able to go on worshipping to *huaca* in their individual way by setting candles in front of the painting of Virgin Mary – and to protect themselves against the *doctrineros*, the missionaries who were not able to find an argument to accuse them of idolatrousness¹³.

In the Andean religiousness the *apus* represent the ancestors of the communities that after their death live in the peaks of the mountains. From up there they accompany their descendants. For the feast of All Saints the souls of the dead go back to visit their original family. This Andean ritualty brings out an aspect that is quite important for western ecological politics: the connectivity and above all the responsibility between generations. Climate change gets more intense every time, caused by the burning of fossil fuels which since the 1970es is a clear example of absent justice between generations. As our generation does not find solutions to reduce the exhaust of greenhouse gases it is going to be our sons and daughters who will suffer from serious consequences of this ecological crisis. Even the Bible knows this responsibility of one generation for the other when it states that God penalizes “the parents’ misbehave up to their descendants in the 3rd and 4th generation. (Dt 5,9).

Mary as Mother Earth: Revelation of the God’s motherly side

Coming back to our painting and taking a closer look at the fold side of the mountain, we will discover different species of domestic animals like llamas and mules but also wild ones like deer, birds and many

¹³ A position similar to mine concerning the type of enculturation that we have with the Virgin Mary is presented by Julia Prochazka, *Mother of the Mountains: The Virgin Mary as a Bridge from Inka Past to Post-Colonial Christian-Andean Religiosity*, a thesis presented in 2013 with Emory University and accessible online (<https://etd.library.emory.edu/view/record/pid/emory:d7qr3>).

*viscachas*¹⁴. While nowadays there is only hard dirt and rock waste to be found on the slopes of Cerro Rico, the picture shows it with a good amount of trees. Considering the height of the mountain in Potosí - reaching almost 5,000 m above sea level - this biodiversity is surprising¹⁵. It is probably not the iconographic intention to reflect this biodiversity but to allow a second identification of Mary, this time with *Pachamama*. According to the Andean worldview it is mother Earth who gives the fruits of earth and all sustenance for humanity. The fertility of the grounds and of the domestic animals remark her care and motherly love. In this Andean logic it is obvious that besides her feminine face only Mary's hands, protecting and giving the gifts of life, are visible. "In the Andean and Amazonian worldview", so the Bolivian bishops, "creation is sacred, it is life and source of life. *Pachamama*, by the cultures in the western parts of the country considered to be generous and a sustenance of life, expresses the idea of taking care of all the universe, space and time (pacha), where everything is linked in correspondence and complementation"¹⁶. The perception of the fertility of nature as something divine is a very old experience made by a major part of humanity. We know from archeological investigations that in Palestine a goddess associated with branches was worshiped for a long time - traces and reminiscence of this divinity are to be found in the Bible, for example when Jesus Ben Sirach explains the Wisdom with many herbals motifs (Sir 24,12-19). And Gaia, Greek divinity of earth, has an important role in Deep Ecology today where the idea of the Earth as a living being is defended even with scientific means¹⁷. In this sense today there is a lot of talk about the connectedness of all reality. The fine lines crossing the fold sides of the mountain Mary that we had mentioned almost seem to be a net or textile which is Andean symbol for the diverse totality of life. Or might they be streams, in the Andeans understood as mother Earths' blood, ultimate source of life? In every case we can see how the systemic or cybernetic thinking of modern ecology has always been evidence for the Native peoples. For the Andean world everything has life and all living is linked and influenced mutually. So comes that human acting has impact and consequences on nature¹⁸ and mother Earth reciprocates, punishing somebody with illness

¹⁴ A rodent from the family of chinchillas.

¹⁵ Even though some local species like Q'efua or Qishuara stand the extreme climate in the high Andeans.

¹⁶ Bolivian Episcopal Conference, *op. cit.* Nr. 37.

¹⁷ Cf. the so called "Hypothesis Gaia", elaborated in the 60ies by the biologist Lynn Margulis and the physician James Lovelock.

¹⁸ Hos 4:1-3 shows us that in the Bible similar religious experiences are described.

or a hail for example or rewarding with health or a good harvest. Without doubt, valuating those phenomena in the Andean world is not of a moral character but describes a harmony in all the universe that is constantly at the risk of being disrupted¹⁹. From there comes the main objective in Andean spirituality which is to keep up balance and harmony in our cosmos. Knowing that they owe her their existence, Aymara or Quechua farmers will ask Earth's permission before they start working on it and their wives will hold a ritual of thanksgiving after the harvest. And while this respective spirituality is getting lost more and more because the Latin American migration from country to city, the followers of western Deep Ecology search for exactly this kind of religious practice to transform their own lives and the life of the planet. In this way they give testimony that the Deep Ecology is a spirituality, too.

Mary *chachawarmi*: Remembering the polarity of life

We have now seen that the painting clearly concedes Earth a divine dimension and at the same time a feminine dimension to the divine. Last has been systematically eliminated by the Hebrew Bible's prophets promoting monotheism. (cf. f. ex. Deut 7:1-5, Isa 1:29, Jer 2:20; 3:6) in a way that the biblical image of divinity is almost exclusively characterized with the masculine. The Andean philosophy of life though has always kept remembering the polarity of life accepting – especially in rituals – both the masculine aspect and the feminine dimension. The principle of *chachawarmi*, meaning the integration of both genders, can be observed even in the etymology of fundamental words such as *pacha*. According to Josef Estermann²⁰ this expression consists of *pa* meaning 'two' and *cha* which refers to cosmic energy and resembles even in etymological terms the Chinese *chi*. The Asian conception of a bipolar energy – the *yin* and *yang* – also forms one of Deep Ecology's bases just so the approach of the feminine dimension.

Coming back to the iconography of the painting we are dealing with and taking a closer look at the central position of the dove, it seems that the dove is even more important than God the Father and the Son. Just as in the Incan worldview *inti*, masculine divinity of the sun, fertilizes the earth, which is pictured as feminine²¹, in the painting the Holy

¹⁹ Cf. the principles of "Andean philosophy" which according to Josef Estermann consist besides connectedness in complementarity and reciprocity. Idem, *Filosofía andina. Sabiduría indígena para un mundo Nuevo*, La Paz, second edition 2006.

²⁰ Here I am referring to a class taught by him at the Andean Ecumenical Institute of Theology (ISEAT) in 2012.

²¹ Josef Estermann, *Ecosofía andina. La 'Naturaleza' en Occidente y en los Andes*, in: Fe y Pueblo 11 (2007), 68-76, 73.

Spirit fecundates Mary through the lightning. Which means life in the earth and, above all, its fertility are results of the two cosmic principles – masculine and feminine – cooperating. In Christian traditions sex and general being of the Holy Spirit stay undetermined. Still, in our picture it receives some of Mary's femininity due to its iconographic closeness to the Virgin Cerro and divine lightning around both of them. Finally the idea of God's Spirit featuring feminine characteristics is not far from the Bible: The Hebrew word *ruah* is female. And even though it has been eliminated, the feminine dimension of the God's biblical image reappears in form of "Misses Wisdom" in the 2nd century b.C., introduced by Jewish authors who were familiar with the Hellenistic tradition and tried to adapt the biblical message to the philosophies and worldviews of their era. So comes that in Prov 8 the Wisdom speaks with divine authority and presents herself as woman having participated in the divine opus of creation. In Wis 7,21 and 8,6 the Wisdom also appears as female creator. In the New Testament where the preexisting wisdom incarnates in Jesus (Jn 1,1-3) and the man from Nazareth identifies with the ancient characteristics of the goddess of trees talking about himself as grapevine (Jn 15), we can find an integration of the feminine aspect in figure of the Savior again.

Mary as mediator-revelator: Living the holiness of creation

At a horizontal level the painting of the *Virgen del Cerro* is divided into two: The celestial sphere, where God the Father reigns with his scepter accompanied by his son Jesus, the Holy Spirit and two archangels above. And the terrestrial area below, governed by the emperor and the Pope as representative of spiritual power. This separation of sky and earth – clearly remarked by a stripe of clouds and the faces of smaller angels – corresponds to the theological vision of the era: a transcendent God reigning over the world from above without establishing a real connection between the two dimensions, alluding to the celestial and the terrestrial. This conception has very deep roots in the European thinking. Already for the Greeks the true and real were the ideas and thoughts while material things did not have as much value. We can see this for example in Platos' parabola of the cave. The defiance of all natural continues in the modern western philosophy that is based on the dualism of René Descartes and his rationalist method. Theology follows the Greek line, differentiating the natural from the supernatural since the scholastic epoch. That is why for centuries it had a extrinsic conception of revelation and divine grace. Both were pictured as devices that have to come from outside, obtained by specific instances like the Sacraments or Saints. Even though this painting holds on to the separation, given by the baroque influence of Mary's coronation, it is noticeable that the Virgin of the mountain is present in both dimensions. The mountain, ingrained

in the earth, rises up to the sky and adopts the function of the *apus* or *achachilas* as mediators between the upper world and the lower world²². For believers in the Andeans the *Virgen del Cerro* would so accomplish an important role mediating and even revealing because in the Andean spirituality the divinity shows itself constantly in the earth, the high mountains or in climatic phenomena or - generally speaking - in what we call 'nature'. So in the Andeans the 'natural' and the 'divine' is inseparable. For the Andean people it is only a question of being sufficiently sensible to percept the sacred character of their surroundings while we, as children of a thinking that ironically considers itself to be modern, have to learn to rediscover "God in every creature."²³

For the Christian theology in its western form a connection between those two dimensions is complicated because it is generally not able to imagine an inseparable relation between God and the world. Therefore I want to open some biblical paths that show how this ancient Native wisdom is in a certain way to be found in the Bible. For the authors of Gn 1 for example every creation is incarnation of the divine word²⁴ and in Proverbs, the preexisting entity which participated in the divine opus of creation, wisdom of God, remains in the universe. This conception of a divine principle penetrating all creation and being cause of the sacred dimension of all reality is reflected in the New Testament by the motif of the Cosmic Christ - "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn Son, superior to all creation. Everything was created by him, everything in heaven and on earth, everything seen and unseen [...], all things were created by God's Son and everything was made for him. God's Son was before all else, and by him everything is held together" (Col 1,15-17)²⁵.

To avoid the much dreaded pantheism, traditional theologians often practice the other extreme: a complete separation of heaven and earth. But classic theology always kept the conception of the *creatio continua*, meaning God is by means of his spirit present in all his creation at every moment. The concept of Holy Trinity serves exactly to avoid mentioned dilemma providing a model which permits to think God's presence in its

²² In other contexts Christ, crucified between earth and sky, can function as cosmic bridge, too.

²³ Latinamerican Bishops' Council, CELAM. Department of Justice and Solidarity, *Espiritualidad cristiana de la ecología*. (Final Declaration of the Latin-American and Caribbean Symposium, realized from August 22nd to 24th 2010 in Buenos Aires), Nr. 12. This document gives very valuable ideas for a renewed spirituality of creation.

²⁴ Cf. the formula "Said God: (...) and it happened." which is repeated with small variations but with an identic meaning nine times in Gn 1.

²⁵ A similar conception is to be observed in Heb:1:2s. This topic has been systematically worked by *Leonardo Boff*, *Evangelio del Cristo cósmico*. Hacia una nueva conciencia planetaria, Madrid 2009.

creation without identifying them as one unit. The Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon used the paradigm of *perichoresis*, meaning the mutual penetration, to explain the union of human and divine in the person of Jesus saying that he has “to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved”²⁶. From my point of view this Christological model can be used to think of the connection of God and the world. The two are not to be blended but neither to be separated. This perichoretic model facilitates imagining God in an intimate relation with everything created by him – in the same way as it does the Andean theology in our painting of the *Virgen del Cerro*. Just as the human being cannot be seen without its divine dimension, with the dogma of the Trinity, nature and the world cannot be looked at without perceiving the constant presence of God in them either. In this sense the renewed theology of creation²⁷, Andean worldview and Deep Ecology coincide. The three of them help us to rediscover the perichoretic character or, being the same, the sacred character of reality and the urgent current challenge consists in generating individuals, economies and politics in agreement with this vision of the sacredness of life.

Mary ascends: Model of a holistic salvation

The motif of the “coronation of the Virgin” is bound to the feast of the Assumption of Mary which since the 5th century has been celebrated in the western Church. In the year 1950 Pope Pius XII announced as dogma that “that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory”²⁸. The content of this act corresponds in a surprising way with our painting, remarking the physical as important element for salvation. It surpasses the mere spiritual approach of traditional theology which often leads to the idea that salvation of the soul is most important to enter heaven. The dogma of Assumption, proposing with Mary a model of redeemed humanity, certainly states that all human physical is received by God. It is for this reason that we must not despise our body as taught through centuries by different Christian churches. Both the dogma and our painting have a deep biblical origin which I want to call earth-centered anthropology, referring myself to Gn 2. Being much older than Gn 1, it defines the human being as ‘*Adam*’ which stands for

²⁶ Henricus Denzinger (ed.), *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, Freiburg Brisg. - Rome, 1957, Nr. 148, translated by the author.

²⁷ In a more specific way I developed an eco-theology in my book *Hacia un cristianismo ecológico. Fuentes espirituales para el cuidado de la Creación*, La Paz 2012.

²⁸ Cf. the constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, November 1st, 1950.

‘red one’, being made of a piece of colored earth. A truth approved by evolutionary science is revealed here: That we consist of the same material as animals (Gn 2:19) and all other elements of the universe. Not even the breath of life (Gn 2,7) can distinguish human from animal because according to psalm 104,29 those creatures too possess the divine breath. Charles Darwin’s great discoveries, deepened by the latest analyses of molecular biology, vouch that a chimpanzees’ genomes depart by only 1.37% from the human ones which would not have surprised Qoheleth: He was convinced that God himself “shows (the human beings) that they are no more than animals” (Eccl 3:18). Neither it surprises Andean Natives, who obviously consider the human being a co-creature along the others of the universe who all own life and *ajayu* – divine spirit²⁹.

Accepting this wisdom, the western human being could outreach his epistemological narcissism that makes him feel like his own little god. We can find the base of such anthropocentrism, which Lynn White Jr. calls one of the causes for the current ecological crisis³⁰ already in the 60es, in psalm 8: After characterizing the human being as “little lower than the heavenly beings” (Ps 8:5) it concedes him dominion over the Earth, repeating Gn 1:28. Justification is, for traditional theologians, again the likeness with God owned supposedly only by humans. But Gn 2:18 clearly states that God created the animals “in likeness” of Adam, too.

This holistic view that all human beings are part of a net of life which goes a lot further than all human and that this specie homo sapiens due to its ethic capacities holds responsibility for the diversity of life on this planet is basic in Deep Ecology. But it is also important in the Andean worldview and in accordance with our painting so it is in Catholic traditions if they are decrypted critically and eco-centered. The dogma of Assumption teaches that we are an inseparable unity of the material-physical and the spiritual-rational. The human physical includes all relation with our environment realized by means of our body and finally includes our entire story as humanity which takes us to the last point – the social and political aspect.

Taking our eyes back to the painting the dominating color red could catch our attention. Even though the massif of the Potosí Mountain is of volcanic origin granting the naturally reddish color, this geological explanation does not exclude the existence of symbolic associations in the

²⁹ Cf. about this issue an interesting article by Jesuit Jojo M. Fung, *Hermenéutica poscolonial y posmisional. Hacia una Pneumatología Chamánica de la Liberación*, in: EATWOT’s International Theological Commission (ed.), *Voices New Series*, Volume XXXVI, Number 2013/2-3, 123-147.

³⁰ Lynn White Jr., *The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis*, in: *Science* 155 (1967), 1203-1207.

artistic illustration. In iconographic terms red stands for authority, corresponding on one hand with economic and political power in the Imperial Village. On the other hand red symbolizes the martyrs in Catholic liturgy. The fact that Jesus is dressed with a red chasuble holding a chalice with the eucharistical blood in his right hand permits us to understand the color red as a memorial to the thousands of victims of forced labor that the Indians of Andean Highlands were committed to fulfill – called mita. As known, this was a sophisticated system of slavery during the times of vice King Francisco de Toledo. In a similar way the mine's entries in the fold sides of the mountain, where silver drops come out of the earth can remind of Jesus' wounds after crucifixion especially his open side giving the body of Pachamama-Mary a mystique dimension. According to our thesis of double possibility of interpretation – the Spanish and Mestizos see the mountain as a source of fortune and the Natives see the death of their fellows – we can confirm a critical conscience and highly political view of the painter. If we take the idea of Assumption seriously, all the physical suffering is redeemed by God. All the ruthless exploitation of the Native population effects God because human history and the fate of the poor affect him. In the same way nowadays the untamed extractivism that utilizes the last natural resources no matter how high social and ecological costs might be effects God. The Earth, states eco-theologian Sallie McFague³¹ and our painting confirms it, is the body of God so that every injury inflicted to the ecosystem Earth insults God. We can learn a lot from the ancient wisdom the Native peoples of the Andes saved and which really is a deep ecology. And the Andean theology they developed centuries ago is capable of pushing the renewal of our Christian spirituality of creation which is so required in a world of global ecological crisis.

³¹ Sallie McFague, *The Body of God. An Ecological Theology*, Minneapolis 1993; idem, *Models of God. Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age*. Philadelphia 1987.



Hacia un cristianismo ecológico

Fuentes espirituales para el
cuidado de la Creación

Dietmar Müßig



Deep Ecology: for an Ecology of the Proletariat ¹

Kabuhanan, Kalusugan, Kalikasan

Nancy Cardoso PEREIRA

Comissão Pastoral da Terra, Rio de Janeiro, BRAZIL

& Fábio Py Murta de ALMEIDA

École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHSS-CNRS),

Paris, FRANCE.

Translation by André Musskopf

When the Thracian slave laughed at Thales of Miletus² – who closely watched the sky and the stars and, inadvertently, fell into a well – what did she laugh at? Might it have been a depreciation laugh at the cosmic investigation of the philosopher? No. She laughed the laugh of the female workers tied to the world of the needs and all the relations with the whole inhabited world. “She said, that he was so eager to know what was going on in heaven, that he could not see what was before his feet”³. We wish to take the opportunity of the slave’s laugh as a possible place for a reflection from under our Latin-American feet and the whole inhabited world.

Three neighboring words rub against each other here: economy, ecology, ecumenism. The three share the *oikos*: social basic unit (house, but also world). The widened and extensive use of *oikos* in order to make the “house” and the “world” fit has been neglected. The word, which intends to say the two things (house and world), says it this way to make one fit into the other, that is, the measures of the whole world are shown in a place of life *habitat*. The metabolism of the living spaces – without ignoring the scale and the variations – brings closer “the world of the house” and “the house of the world” revealing the relations of relations that make life work. In this sense the look at the *oikos* cannot be so high

¹ “This is the working class/proletariat today: those that are part of... the class-who-lives-of-work... those who are dependent on the sale of their work force to survive”: ANTUNES, Ricardo, *Quem é a classe trabalhadora de hoje?*, in: <http://www.sasp.org.br/noticias/38-notas-rapidas/83-entrevista-com-ricardo-antunes.html> (access 22/7/2014)

² PLATÃO, *Teeteto/Crátilo* (172d – 176 a), translation: Carlos Alberto Nunes / Coordination Benedito Nunes. Belém: EDUFPA, 2001

as to depart the daily life of the living ones from its understanding. Living ones here are *a pile of holy things mixed with human things like I tell you... worldly things* – from Mercedes Sosa’s song.

In the image of the Thracian slave, her world of the need for water and the world of the philosopher – the sky above the head, condensation of stars – there are simultaneous and interwoven happenings of a same life. What creates the friction is not the slave’s laugh but the many forms of hierarchy that rise between “her” and “him”, the hierarchy between the care of the domestic life and the care for the life of the cosmos: the real dimension that structures the “oikos” – house and world: sexism, racism, social inequalities.

Life is then: economy > *oikos* + *nomos* (law, norm of the house); ecology > *oikos* + *logos* (understanding, study of the house); ecumenism > *oikos* + *mene* (to inhabit/inhabitants of the house). Those three dimensions deal with the same reality – *oikos* from distinct sensibilities, instruments of analysis and interpretative places: the economy, the ecology and the ecumenism. The need that science and politics have to specialize its approaches, cannot be shared by a theology that expresses through the lexicon of ecumenism the pretension of the totalities, the impossibility of segmenting life and the humidity of continuing saying life as a pile of holy things mixed with human things, like I tell you... worldly things.

Human things: living in society. Worldly things: living in the life of the world. All-in-all a “pile” of holy things, the simultaneity of the living the body-self in the social body, body of the world. Exhausted the scientific and philosophical speeches that segment and hierarchize the knowledge of the *oikos*, and tired of the neo-colonial trends that wanted to prohibit the *grand narratives* the Latin-American theologies have before them the challenge to ascertain all its liberating passion articulating the worldly – human – holy things as vital mixture: economy – ecology – ecumenism.

In Ivone Gebara’s words:

*“The immediate social problems, the ones our eyes can see and our bodies feel, are forgotten or turned into something commonplace. For many, this is not ecology! The social ecology no longer has a meaningful public space. Indeed, social injustice is not perceived as an ecological problem, that is, as a problem that is related to the “oikia”, our common house, origin of the ecological word and Science”.*⁴

³ Ibid.

⁴ GEBARA, Ivone, *Justiça ecológica: limites e desafios*, in: *Tempo e Presença Digital*, ano 5, n° 21, 2010, in: www.koinonia.org.br/tpdigital/detalhes.asp?cod_artigo=400&cod_boletim=22&tipo=Cr%F4nica (acesso em 22/6/2014). On the issues of feminist ecosocialism, cf. PEREIRA, Nancy Cardoso, *Remover pedras, plantar roseiras, fazer doces - por um ecossocialismo feminista*. São Leopoldo: CEBI, 2009.

Thus these are three ways of being in the world and organizing life in the world. While economy disposes, standardizes the forms of production of life in relation to the world, ecology deals with understanding those relations, their logic and implications and ecumenism asks for the ways (objective and subjective) of occupation/living in the world. We propose three old and new challenges for ourselves in Latin American theology: the confrontation of the fundamentalisms - economic (capitalism), social (racism and sexism) and religious - as expressions of a liberating spirituality.

1. On the ways of ecology

There are fields of dispute in relation to ecology which express themselves in economic, political-pedagogical, epistemological and ideological distinct strands. The options are many and present themselves in conflictive ways in the spaces of debate and political disputes in the global scene that admits the crisis - or not! - the crisis of the systems of life. Among those ways stand:

1) **Preservationism** - This stream of ecological thinking sponsors a vision of nature as an intrinsic value that ought to be radically preserved without responding and serving the interests of humanity; presents methods, procedures and actions that seek to guarantee the protection and integrity of the species, habitats, ecosystems and ecological processes barring any form of exploration *exception made to the cases prescribed by law such as research, leisure and environmental education practices*.⁵

2) **Conservationism** - perceives nature as useful to the use of human beings and because of that proposes a rational use of the natural resources. In this understanding the economic handling implies drawing from nature the most benefit concentrating in technological arrangements for that. Those ideas preceded the concept of sustainable development.

3) **Deep ecology** - raising in the 70's defends that nature as a whole has an intrinsic value independently of its usefulness for human life; follows an extreme preservationist line, in a deep ecological awareness, that understands that human beings should use nature only for its vital processes, and that does not waive the right to use it with an end, or as a way of gaining profit or benefits. For deep ecology human beings are an inseparable part, physical, psychological and spiritually, of the environment in which they live⁶. This ethical and mystical perspective enables the approximation of deep ecology with other ecological approaches:

⁵ DIAS, Bárbara, *As diferentes correntes do pensamento ecológico*, in: <http://eacritica.wordpress.com/2010/06/> (acesso em 19/6/2014)

⁶ AVELINE, Carlos Cardoso, *O Que é Ecologia Profunda*, in: www.cedap.assis.unesp.br/cantolibertario/textos/0103.html (acesso em 20/6/2014)

“There is no, thus, real opposition between conventional or short term ecology and deep or mystical ecology. They are two different levels of consciousness. Both are indispensable, and are mutually inspiring”.⁷

4) **Social ecology** – This strand of ecological thinking follows an ecocentric preservationist line, understands that the degradation of nature is directly connected to the system of capitalist exploitation. Social ecologists propose a wider concept of nature and of the human relation basing it in the field of society as a broad concept. Propose a democratic, decentralized and a society based on communal production property, and are considered anarchists and utopians.

“Humanity is part of nature, although it differs deeply from non-human life for its ability to think conceptually and communicate symbolically”.⁸

5) **Eco-socialism** – analyses the environmental issue, not the “fact” but the “way” of organization and production of the relations of human beings in the exploitation of nature. The eco-socialist critique turns in a direct way to the explicitation of the capitalist system and the reduction of nature to merchandise, object of consumption or means for production. Eco-socialism separates itself from reductionist views of culturalism (the person remains the reference value) and naturalism (nature idealized as reference value) because they are based on artificial reductions of life.

“It is about destroying the State apparatus and create another kind of power. This logic has to be applied also to the productive apparatus: it has to, if not destroyed, at least radically transformed. It cannot just be appropriated by the workers, the proletariat and put to work at its service, but it needs to be structurally transformed...”.⁹

2. Ecology and economy: between contemplation and confrontation

It is not possible to detach the discussion on ecology from burgo-capitalist modernity. The word “ecology” comes from the Western Civilization⁹ though, enabled between the technical-scientific thinking of modernity distinguishing man/universal male and nature. When speaking of Western Civilization, capitalism has a prominent role grounded in a social group. The one who is formed with the ones who lived in the

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ BOOKCHIN, Murray, *Ecologia Social*, in: www.cedap.assis.unesp.br/cantolibertario/textos/0072.html (acesso em 19/6/2014)

⁹ LOWY, Michael, *Ecosocialismo. Por uma ecologia socialista*. Entrevista, in: www.ihu.unisinos.br/entrevistas/40841-ecosocialismo-por-uma-ecologia-socialista-entrevista-especial-com-michael-loewy (acesso em 17/6/2014)

burgos, called “bourgeoisie”. For Jacques Le Goff¹⁰, the bourgeoisie are the sons of the fairs and of the ones inhabiting the outside of the feuds. They are the ones who invent modernity, promoting the transformations of the medieval.

So one can ask: how was a social group that organizes itself from fairs and commerce between the feuds able to distort the conscience between men and nature? This is a social construct of centuries. To explain it, one must remember that the bourgeoisie first joins forces with the monarchy to be able to destabilize the power of the aristocratic body. It offers the space for the circulation of products, the use of currency and the free commerce intra-national states. As Noam Chomsky points, the bourgeoisie was the social class “in the formation of the national States that hold the dirt of the currencies, thus bringing upon itself the condition to dirt the World”¹¹. Their relations were turned completely to “the currency” and, especially, “the surplus value”¹² – as indicated Karl Marx. Because it was the moving engine of the Modern transformations, it starts “dirtying” the World, grounding the relations in benefit of the cold calculation centered in the capital, property and surplus value.

Its dirt is more widely spread between the XVII-XVIII centuries. It supports the decline of the absolutist system participating of the revolutions in the national States. It promotes revolutions such as the English Revolution and the French Revolution widening its capitalism. In this new moment it disseminates its philosophy with ideas: of free commerce, personal freedom, religious and civil rights. With the growing of commerce and a wider network of class relations the economy expanded deepening its domain in the English Industrial Revolution of the XVIII century.¹³

So, the burgo-industrial capitalism states itself as a European economic system, forcing societies to show their development at the same

¹⁰ CHESNAIS, François e SERFATI, Claude. “Ecologia’ e as condições físicas da reprodução social: alguns fios condutores marxistas”, *Crítica Marxista*, acessado em 22.07.2014 em www.unicamp.br/ce marx/criticamarxista/16chesnais.pdf, disponível em 22.07.2014.

¹¹ We use the word “man” as an expression of “masculine” allowing the explicative limitation and pretentiousness of the careless technical-scientific modernity to be seen: we have here a problem of two natures with the notion of subject: first the critique to the masculine subject as universal, revealing the hierarchical operations of sexual differences; then the critique to the essentialization of the subject (sex or social class), postulating the decentering of the constitution of the subjects and identities. In both cases, the rejection to the masculine/feminine binary opposition is present. cf. MARIANO, Silvana Aparecida. *O sujeito do feminismo e o pós-estruturalismo*. Rev. Estud. Fem., Florianópolis, v. 13, n. 3, Dec. 2005. in: www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0104026X200500300002&lng=en&nrm=iso (acesso em 14/7/2014)

¹² GOFF, Jacques Le. *O Apogeu da Cidade Medieval*, São Paulo: Martins Fontes: 1992, p.7-38.

¹³ CHOMSKY, Noam. *A luta de classes*, Porto Alegre: ArtMed., 1999, p.25-26.

time massacring the proletariat class exploited by the modern progress. Thus, Walter Benjamin's writings dealing with history and the realization of the economic and technical development state:

*“History knows nothing of the bad infinity in the image of the two fighters eternally fighting. The true politician only calculates in terms of deadlines. And if the elimination of the bourgeoisie is not accomplished up to an almost calculable moment of the economic and technical development, all is lost. Before the spark reaches the dynamite, it is necessary that the wick that burns is cut”.*¹⁴

If Noam Chomsky¹⁵ is correct the bourgeoisie is dirty, since, it doesn't just live with the hands stained with the money bills and currencies, but, because its spirit was taken over by the mechanization of profit and surplus value. So much so that it defiles the soil and the air. For Benjamin, the only way out to get rid of its problems, is to take it away from the wick. That is, to dismantle it, there is only one way: fight to disarticulate all the parts inherent to the capitalist roller of living.¹⁶ The bad news is that its dirt impregnates even since the beginning of the environmentalist movement that took place in the times of the XVIII century English liberal revolution. It stained and corrupted the movement that sprouts with two strands/theses: the first one that assumes the environment in a contemplative way criticizing the duality of the modern thinking of the Galileo-Cartesian vision; and, the second one, understanding humanity as part of nature. Both matrixes are remembered in the debates on ecology¹⁷, although, their representatives became contaminated by the modernity currency bills.

The concept of “ecology” was coined in the XIX century, as Daniel Bensaid¹⁸ highlights, in the period of Marx's first book, “The Capital”. The philosopher of the praxis sketches in it an understanding about men's appropriation of nature, although there is not direct position on ecology:

*“All the progress in agriculture (...) is a progress not only of the art of preying on the worker, but also, at the same time, the art of preying the soil; all the progress in the increase of its fertility for a specific period of time is at the same time a progress in the ruin of the sustainable sources of this fertility... That's why the capitalist production does not develop the technique and the combination of the social process of production more than mining at the same time the sources from which emanate all richness: the land and the worker”.*¹⁸

¹⁴ Op. cit., p.26.

¹⁵ HOBBSAWN, Eric. *A Era das Revoluções*, Lisboa: Editorial Presença, 1981, p.52-59.

¹⁶ BENJAMIN, Walter. *Eduard Fuchs, collectionneur et historien*. Em: Oeuvres. v. 3. Paris: Gallimard, 2000. p. 174.

¹⁷ CHOMSKY, Noam. *A luta de classes*, Porto Alegre: ArtMed., 1999.

¹⁸ LOWY, Michael. *Ecologia e socialismo*, São Paulo: Cortez, 2005, p.56-91.

In Marx there is no formulation of the critique to the use of nature, even, because his concerns were others. From the deepening of the ecological debates in face of the bourgeoisie capitalism, in the 1950's, sciences such as biology and chemistry become more solid and contribute to the concept of "ecosystem". The word is connected to the technological advance of the worldwide wars and the fabrication in large scale of portable electronic devices. More and more the worldwide bourgeoisie widens its power investing in the individuation of men by technology. The more man has access to technology the more there is the need to rebuild the relation man/nature. So, the idea of "ecosystem" is intuited as a basic general structure for the analysis of the ecological systems even because ambientalism was concerned with the degrading samples and effects the biosphere was suffering.¹⁹

In 1987, in the World Commission on Environment and Development of the United Nations (WCED), a report was presented incorporating the ethical content to international politics, which consolidated the basis of the burgo-capitalist paradigm of answers to the problems of global warming and destruction of fauna and flora: a brake on the exploitation of the environment. Capitalism proposes to hit the brakes, but the wagon continues speeding towards the abyss! The breaks are a palliative to continue exploiting the natural reserves. So, the concept of "sustainable development", or, "sustainability" was proposed at the Conference.²⁰ These data was openly incorporated to the industrial-capitalism seeking the balance of three vectors: environmental, social and economic.

In the naming "sustainability" it does not seek to review the method and the way of dealing with the submission of nature by men/human being. But, only, finding ways to maintain the cold burgo-capitalist logic, of benefitting some in face of the social whole.²¹ That's why, Michael Lowy denounces these new forms of industrial ecologies (of the large international agreements) warning about the need to review the burgo-capitalist agenda that conducts ecology:

"The ecological question is the question about capitalism.

Paraphrasing an observation of the Frankfurt School' philosopher Max Horkheimer – "if you don't want to talk about capitalism, it's better not to talk about fascism" –, I would also say: if you don't want to talk about capitalism, there is no use in talking about the environment, since the destruction, the devastation, the environmental poisoning are products of the process of accumulation of capital. Ergo, the question is one about

¹⁹ BENSARD, Daniel, *Marx intempestivo. Grandezas e miséria de uma aventura crítica*. São Paulo: Civilização Brasileira. 1999, p. 454.

²⁰ MARX, Karl. *O Capital*.

²¹ LÖWY, Michael. *Ecologia e socialismo*, São Paulo: Cortez, 2005, p.56-91.

*an alternative, but of an alternative that is radical. The attempts through moderate solutions reveal to be unable to confront this catastrophic process”.*²²

In this sense, the search for a “deep ecology” needs to be the denial of the “low-ecologies”²³ subservient to the capitalist-bourgeoisie or it won’t be the partner of a new world risen in the struggle of the poor. It is in the struggle against the history of the concept of ecology and sustainability itself that ecology becomes deep, taking on the agendas of the social and classist movements in search of a new communist/of the common well-being/of the well-living ecology. A center line for political action and spirituality that contributes to the implosion of the basis of Modern Civilization grounded on the rottenness of the “bourgeoisie thought”. It means taking on values of the pre-modern past of women, indigenous, black, tribal and Amerindian peoples conforming nowadays in community forms of action and a political project of life on earth and territory.

May this ecology be so deep that it helps to dissolve the bourgeoisie/capitalist columns of the demagogical discourse of the preservation of nature that loves the rottenness of global monetary bills. So, an ecological thinking that helps to collapse the basis of the old world is needed, establishing other ways anchored in the proletariat, in the slaves that laugh at the rulers, in the social movements of the non-conforming with the current logic of life.

3. On the laugh and struggles in Latin America:

In the work of the social movements for land and territory in Latin America all those possibilities cross moments and proposals making evident the growing centrality of the ecological issue and the concrete difficulties of articulating this issue with other vital issues of the plural life of the peasantry, traditional and indigenous Latin-American populations. In a special way the complex issues organized around the agenda of the agrarian reform must be considered. This place “of the people of the land” is very much alike the laugh of the Thracian slave/woman: she does not despise the academic scientific debate, but states the ground of life of the poor people with/in nature as a place of reflection and mystique that creates the criteria of approximation or not of the ecological modes available already presented.

“This is why thousands of peasants, fisher folks, indigenous people, women, pastoralists, landless agricultural workers and other civil society

²² Op. cit.

²³ LÖWY, Michael. *A Dialética Marxista do Progresso*. In: BENSÂID, Daniel e LÖWY, Michael. *Marxismo, modernidade e utopia*. São Paulo: Xamã, 2000, p.77-83.

*organizations mobilized massively during the conference. We demand a new vision of agrarian reform. The international peasants movement La Via Campesina believes that a genuine, integrated agrarian reform offers an important alternative model of development. It includes wresting control over land, water, maritime resources, seeds and other natural resources from the clutches of those who use these assets to enhance their own profits and giving it to the people of the land. Public policies must be reoriented to ensure that social, ecological and cultural values are integrated into rural development. The market place must be reorganized to give priority to local ecologically and culturally appropriate food production for local consumption, i.e. food sovereignty”.*²⁴

The peoples of the land and territory confront each other with claws sharper than the ones of the exploitative and degrading capitalism, and it is in the lands and territories of those populations in a global perspective that the systems of life, forests and water continue intact or in resistance preservation. Not to consider the claims of these social groups in their concrete relations with the body of the earth in any given ecological approach renders ecology paraphernalia of the instituted powers and their institutional violences maintenance policies.

For the peoples of the land and territories the issue of the agrarian reform points out a fundamental and indispensable question: the confrontation and dismantling of the structures of private property of the land, in the form of the agrarian model as well as of the agricultural. For the Latin-American social movements this issue is central to all and every conversation about ecology.

*“The single most important change imposed by the modern world-system is that it established a systematic legal basis for what is called title to the land. That is to say, rules were created by which an individual or a corporate entity could “own” land outright. Owning land - that is, property rights - meant that one could use the land in any way one wanted, subject only to specific limitations established by the laws of the sovereign state within which this unit of land was located. Land to which one had title was land that one could bequeath to heirs or sell to other persons or corporate entities”.*²⁵

Any format, formulation, concept or whatever it may be about ecology in Latin America (Africa? Asia?) need to put the question of pro-

²⁴ LÖWY, Michael. Entrevista. E, ainda num texto anterior se tem aproximações disso: PEREIRA, Nancy Cardoso. “Meu povo será como árvore. Florestas, trabalho e ídolos em Isaías 44”, em José Ademar Kaefer e Haidi Jarschel (org.), *Dimensões sociais da fé do Antigo Israel. Uma homenagem a Milton Schwantes*, São Paulo, Paulinas, 2007, p.101-120.

²⁵ The “low-ecology” concept was used in ALMEIDA, Fábio Py Murta. *Crítica a baixa ecologia*. São Leopoldo e São Paulo: Cebi e Fonte Editorial, 2014, p. 102-114.

perty and its orderings as structuring mechanisms of all inequality and all voraciousness that destroys lives. Human. Lives of all living beings. Destruction of Life.

Taking this perspective as evaluation place for the ecological politics and spiritualities, the systems of thought and its politics need to know the Latin-American people's ways of saying, living, struggling for land and territory. Lexical and philosophical framework's problems need to be subordinated to the organizational processes of those communities remembering and insisting that they are, especially in the resistance of peasant and indigenous women and traditional communities, the ones who still keep standing alive and living territories, coveted by the agribusiness capitalism, by the mining companies and by the bio piracy of the cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries.

In a superficial evaluation, the “eco” stances of the movements of the land and territory in Latin America are confuse and vulnerable not fitting any conceptual line of approach. That's how it is! It is precisely this refusal and impossibility to be made to fit the epistemological formats available in the universities and “development” agencies that make the positioning of those social movements important and irreducible. For example, when they insist in calling their proposal “agroecology” they do not falsify the relations with the land in the maintenance of the life of human groups, but do it clearly as a confrontation with the “agribusiness” and the “agri-culture” stating what they do, what they know and what they live: agro-ecology. As in the “Surin Declaration”: Glocal Meeting of the Via Campesina on Agroecology and Peasant Seeds²⁶, in November 2012.

“We understood that agroecology is an intrinsic part of the global answer to the main challenges and crises we face as humanity.

On the first place, small scale farming can feed, and is feeding humanity and can tackle the food crisis through agroecology and diversity. Despite the common misconception that agribusiness systems are more productive, we now know that agroecological systems can produce much more food per hectare than any monoculture, all the while making food healthier, more nutritious, and available directly to the consumers.

Secondly, agroecology helps confront the environmental crisis. Peasant agriculture, coupled with agroecology and diversity, cools down the earth; keeping carbon in the soil and providing peasants and family farmers with the resources for resilience to climate change and the increasing natural disasters. Agroecology changes the oil dependant energy and agriculture matrix, a main part of the systemic changes needed to stop emissions.

²⁶ VIA CAMPESINA, *Time for Agrarian Reform*, in: <http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/main-issues-mainmenu-27/agrarian-reform-mainmenu-36/101-time-for-agrarian-reform> (acesso 24/7/2014)

Third, agroecology supports the common good and the collective. While it creates the conditions for better livelihoods for rural and urban people, agroecology, as a pillar of Food and Popular Sovereignty, establishes that land, water, seeds and knowledge are reclaimed and remain as a patrimony of the peoples at the service of humanity.

Through agroecology we will transform the hegemonic food production model; permitting the recovery of the agricultural ecosystem, reestablishing the functioning of the nature-society metabolism, and harvesting products to feed humanity. As the Philippine farmers say “Kabubanan, Kalusugan, Kalikasan” (for economy, for health, and for Nature).²⁷

The laugh of the Thracian woman/slave insists in being a place for discernment and critique of the consecrated and legitimated ways of knowledge, politics, spirituality. It is no longer about the abstract “civil society”. It is about a social class, gender and ethnicities perspective that affirm and empower themselves refusing at the same time the minority and subordination of the land and its beings and of women, poor people and ethnic groups. The peoples of the land and territory laugh their laughter in the halls and sidewalks of the debate forums about the environmental, climate, food crises... all crises. And, laugh: “*Kabubanan, Kalusugan, Kalikasan*”.

4. Ecology, spirituality and ecumenism

Religion is one of the languages available about the social forms of organization of life. So, it all depends on how we understand religion itself, especially, how we understand religion in a market driven economy and its relations with the world/planet. While understanding economy as a basic form of organization of society and its arrangements of the material life, it would be important to ask for the correlations between beliefs and social mobilities/immobilities. Generally speaking, religion – especially the new religious forms inside Christianity – fulfills its role of “giving soul” to the capitalist logic, liberating the private accumulation of goods. In the form of “blessing”, “prosperity”. In this sense, capitalism finds in religion a justification and legitimation grounding of the unequal forms of usufruct of the world. Through the internal articulation of the religious phenomenon we have total identity and homogeneity; dissention takes place through social group’s fidelization.

The volatility of the belief is apparent and does not compromise the function that the market designates to religion and the circulation

²⁷ WALLERSTEIN, Immanuel, 2010. “Ecologia versus Direitos de Propriedade. A terra na economia-mundo capitalista”. JANUS.NET e-journalofInternationalRelations, N.º 1, Outono 2010 janus.ual.pt/janus.net/pt/arquivo_pt/pt_vol1_n1/pt_vol1_n1_art1.html (acesso em 18/6/2014)

of religious goods. In this sense, the belief systems can be more or less pressured by the economic and political conflicts, enabling narratives of pretension of the norm, the knowledge and the belonging. Being ecumenical implies asking the question about the place of the belief systems in the whole of the social relations... access one's/a/some belief system being able to notice the whole of the social relations of power involved.

Those who are not ecumenical are not able of being critical of religion! Those who are ecumenical do not abandon their interpretative and political capacity: the oikos matters more than the norm. Those who are ecumenical ask for the living ones, all the inhabitants, and, from there, are able to question and challenge the norms (economic) and the arrangements/values (ecology). That's why ecumenism is more than the unity of Christians or the dialogue with Jews and Muslims! Ecumenism is the question for another possible world. Ecumenism is attitude, political standing before the world, in all inhabited. That's why ecumenism is rejected and undesirable in Christian churches that do not accept to give up their place of power in the hegemonic civilizatory formulation.

Back to the Thracian slave:

"If this woman was to be considered in conjunction with the wheel (one with her) a heart of the land, she would operate on the soil, through the streams of water (veins and arteries of the body/field) a regenerative, therapeutic and prophylactic action: it would teach the breathing and the re-circulation of air and water, fertilizing blow and liquid, blood and mood of an earthly body that desires to be aired, enlivened, healthy". ²⁸

Going back to this moment of the Thracian woman's laugh is to seek to overcome the exact moment in which the so called "western though" preferred to tear from the search for an organic humid knowledge when refused or was indifferent to the mediation of the woman's laugh. She is there as wisdom organized by the efforts of continuing alive, as management of the effort that in the relation with water, well, land creates the regenerative, therapeutic and prophylactic possibilities of living. She is the body – time and place – and is also the need and freedom in the management of the body – work, thirst, tiredness... and the ability to laugh.

Teeteto's text presents this refusal pointing:

This is a jest which is equally applicable to all philosophers. For the philosopher is wholly unacquainted with his next-door neighbour; he is ignorant, not only of what he is doing, but he hardly knows whether he is a man or an animal; he is searching into the essence of man, and busy


²⁸ VIA CAMPESINA, in: www.pjr.org.br/teste/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=271:declaracao-de-surin-encontro-global-da-via-campesina-sobre-agroecologia-e-sementes-camponesas&catid=1:latest-news (acesso em 18/6/2014)

in enquiring what belongs to such a nature to do or suffer different from any other;—I think that you understand me, Theodorus? ²⁹

The woman's laugh will not be sustained for long in the arguments of the philosopher, that, at last, concludes that the knowledge does not respond to the laugh -

... not by Thracian handmaidens or any other uneducated persons, for they have no eye for the situation.³⁰ The praise of the knowledge that does not know either relatives or neighbors nor even creatures of other species and that is dedicated to study the “man”/masculine distinct from the other beings points to in a same reflection the separation and the subordination of the philosophical man/masculine over all other beings and also over women/slaves.

“... the one of the freeman, who has been trained in liberty and leisure, whom you call the philosopher,—him we cannot blame because he appears simple and of no account when he has to perform some menial task, such as packing up bed-clothes, or flavouring a sauce or fawning speech; the other character is that of the man who is able to do all this kind of service smartly and neatly, but knows not how to wear his cloak like a gentleman; still less with the music of discourse can he hymn the true life aright which is lived by immortals or men blessed of heaven”. ³¹

Through the Thracian woman's laugh we recover the suspicion and critique of a western thought that thinks of itself as universal and self-sufficient in the disruption with the body of the needs, the social body and the body of the work and its “other beings”. Ecology will be deep if submerged from the popular struggles. Theology will listen the laugh of the female workers in search for water and their last and penultimate reasons: pack up the bag, season the food... conquer the mantle of the liberated folks, understand the harmony of the whole inhabited world and sing the happiness. 

²⁹ VIA CAMPESINA, *Surin Declaration: First Global Encounter on Agroecology and Peasant Seeds*, in: <http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/main-issues-mainmenu-27/sustainable-peasants-agriculture-mainmenu-42/1334-surin-declaration-first-global-encounter-on-agroecology-and-peasant-seeds> (access 24/7/2014)

³⁰ GUIMARÃES, Ana Paula, *Revista da Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas*, n° 9, Lisboa, Edições Colibri, 1996, in: run.unl.pt/bitstream/10362/6931/1/RFCSH9_355_366.pdf (acesso 12/4/2014)

³¹ PLATO, *The Theaetetus*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1726/1726-h/1726-h.htm> (access 24/7/2014)

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TEOLOGÍA CUÁNTICA

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Ecologia profunda: por uma ecologia do proletariado Kabuhanan, Kalusugan, Kalikasan

Nancy Cardoso PEREIRA
Comissão Pastoral da Terra, Rio de Janeiro, BRASIL
e Fábio Py Murta de ALMEIDA
École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHSS-CNRS),
Paris, FRANCIA.

Quando a escrava trácia riu de Tales de Mileto¹ – que observava atentamente o céu e as estrelas e, descuidado, caiu num poço de água – riu de que? Seria um riso de depreciação da investigação cósmica do filósofo? Não. Ela riu o riso das trabalhadoras vinculadas ao mundo da necessidade e todas as relações com todo o mundo habitado. “*Ele queria saber o que se passava no céu, mas ele não queria ver o que estava adiante de seus próprios pés.*”² Queremos aproveitar o riso da escrava como um lugar possível para uma reflexão sob os nossos pés latinoamericanos e todo o mundo habitado.

Três palavras vizinhas se atritam aqui: economia, ecologia, ecumenismo. As três compartilham o *oikos*: unidade básica social (casa, mas também mundo). O uso ampliado e extensivo de *oikos* de modo a fazer caber a “casa” e o “mundo” tem sido negligenciado. A palavra, que quer dizer as duas coisas (casa e mundo), o diz assim por fazer caber uma na outra, isto é, as medidas do mundo todo se mostram num lugar de vida *habitat*. O metabolismo dos espaços de viver - sem desconhecer a escala e as variações - aproxima “o mundo da casa” e “a casa do mundo” revelando as relações de relações que fazem a vida funcionar. Neste sentido o olhar sobre o *oikos* não pode ser tão grande que afaste a vida cotidiana dos viventes de sua compreensão. Viventes aqui são um *montón de cosas santas mezcladas con cosas humanas como te explico . . . cosas mundanas*– da música de Mercedes Sosa.

¹ PLATÃO, *Teeteto/Crátilo* (172d – 176 a), tradução: Carlos Alberto Nunes / coordenação de Benedito Nunes. Belém: EDUFPA, 2001.

² *Ibid.*

Na imagem da escrava trácia, o mundo seu da necessidade d'água e o mundo do filósofo – o céu sobre a cabeça, condensação de estrelas – são acontecimentos simultâneos e entretecidos de uma mesma vida. O que cria ruído não é a risada da escrava, mas as tantas formas de hierarquia que se levantam entre “ela” e “ele”, a hierarquia entre o trato da vida doméstica e o trato da vida do cosmos: esta sim a dimensão política que estrutura o “oikos” – casa e mundo: sexismo, racismo, desigualdade social.

A vida então: economia > *oikos* + *nomos* (lei/norma da casa); ecologia > *oikos* + *logos* (compreensão/estudo da casa); ecumenismo > *oikos* + *mene* (habitar/habitantes da casa). Estas três dimensões se ocupam de uma mesma realidade – *oikos* – a partir de sensibilidades, instrumentos de análise e lugares interpretativos distintos: a economia, a ecologia e o ecumenismo. A necessidade que a ciência e a política têm de especializar suas abordagens, não pode ser compartilhada pela teologia que expressa no léxico do ecumenismo a pretensão das totalidades, a impossibilidade de segmentar a vida e a umidade de continuar dizendo a vida como *montón de cosas santas mezcladas con cosas humanas, como te explico... cosas mundanas*.

Coisas humanas: de viver em sociedade. Coisas mundanas: de viver na vida do mundo. Tudo-tudo um “amontoado” de coisas santas, a simultaneidade de viver o corpo-meu no corpo social, corpo do mundo. Esgotadas das falas científicas e filosóficas que segmentam e hierarquizam o conhecimento do *oikos*, e cansadas dos modismos neo-coloniais que queriam proibir as “grandes narrativas” as teologias latino-americanas têm diante de si o desafio de apurar toda a sua paixão libertadora articulando as coisas mundanas – humanas – santas como mescla vital: economia – ecologia – ecumenismo.

Nas palavras de Ivone Gebara:

*“Os problemas sociais imediatos, aqueles que nossos olhos podem ver e nossos corpos sentir, são esquecidos ou tornados coisa banal. Para muitos, isso não é ecologia! A ecologia social não tem mais espaço público significativo. Aliás, não se percebe a injustiça social como um problema ecológico, ou seja, como um problema que tem a ver com a “oikia”, a nossa casa comum, origem da palavra e da ciência ecológica”*³

São assim três formas de estar no mundo e organizar a vida no mundo. Enquanto a economia dispõe, normatiza sobre o modo de produção da vida na relação com o mundo, a ecologia se ocupa de entender

³ GEBARA, Ivone, *Justiça ecológica: limites e desafios*, in: Tempo e Presença Digital, ano 5, n° 21, 2010, in: www.koinonia.org.br/tpdigital/detalhes.asp?cod_artigo=400&cod_boletim=22&tipo=Cr%F4nica (acesso em 22/6/2014). Para a questão do ecossocialismo feminista, cf. PEREIRA, Nancy Cardoso. *Remover pedras, plantar roseiras, fazer doces - por um ecossocialismo feminista*. São Leopoldo: CEBI, 2009.

essas relações suas lógicas e implicações e o ecumenismo se pergunta pelas formas (objetivas e subjetivas) de ocupação/vivência do mundo. Propomos três desafios antigos e novos para nós mesmos/as na teologia latino-americana: o enfrentamento dos fundamentalismos econômico (capitalismo), social (racismo e sexismo) e religioso como expressão de uma espiritualidade libertadora.

1. Dos modos de ecologia

Existem campos de disputa no âmbito da ecologia que se expressam em vertentes econômicas, político-pedagógicas, epistemológicas e ideológicas distintas. As opções são várias e se expressam de modo conflituoso nos cenários dos debates e das disputas políticas de um cenário global que admite a crise – ou não! – a crise dos sistemas de vida. Entre estes modos se destacam:

1) **Preservacionismo** - Esta corrente de pensamento ecológico tem uma visão de natureza como um valor intrínseco devendo ser radicalmente preservada sem responder e servir aos interesses da humanidade; apresenta de métodos, procedimentos e ações que buscam garantir a proteção e integridade de espécies, habitats, ecossistemas e dos processos ecológicos vetando qualquer forma de exploração *com exceção dos casos previstos pela lei como a pesquisa, lazer e ações educação ambiental*.⁴

2) **Conservacionismo** – percebe a natureza como útil para uso do ser humano e por isso mesmo propõem um uso racional dos recursos naturais. Nesta concepção o manejo econômico trata de tirar da natureza o máximo de benefício concentrando-se nos arranjos tecnológicos para isso. Essas idéias foram precursoras do conceito de desenvolvimento sustentável.

3) **Ecologia profunda** - (*deep ecology*) surgido nos anos 70 defende que toda a natureza tem valor intrínseco independente da utilidade para a vida humana; segue uma linha preservacionista extrema, numa tomada de consciência ecológica profunda, que entende que o ser humano deve utilizar a natureza apenas para seus processos vitais, e isso não dá o direito de utilizá-la com uma finalidade, ou como forma de obtenção de lucro ou vantagens. Para a ecologia profunda o ser humano é parte inseparável, física, psicológica e espiritualmente, do ambiente em que vive⁵. Esta perspectiva ética e mística viabiliza a aproximação da ecologia profunda de outras abordagens ecológicas:

⁴ DIAS, Bárbara, *As diferentes correntes do pensamento ecológico*, in: <http://eacritica.wordpress.com/2010/06/> (acesso em 19/6/2014)

⁵ AVELINE, Carlos Cardoso, *O Que é Ecologia Profunda*, in: <http://www.cedap.assis.unesp.br/cantoliberalario/textos/0103.html> (acesso em 20/6/2014)

*“Não há, pois, oposição real entre a ecologia convencional ou de curto prazo e a ecologia profunda ou mística. São dois níveis diferentes de consciência. Ambos são indispensáveis, e são mutuamente inspiradores”.*⁶

4) **Ecologia social** – Esta corrente do pensamento ecológico segue uma linha preservacionista ecocêntrica, entende que a degradação da natureza está diretamente ligada ao sistema de exploração capitalista. Os ecologistas sociais propõem uma concepção mais ampla da natureza e da relação da humanidade pautando-a no campo da sociedade como conceito ampliado. Propõem uma sociedade democrática, descentralizada e baseada na propriedade comunal de produção, são considerados anarquistas e utópicos.

*“A humanidade faz parte da natureza, embora difira profundamente da vida não humana pela sua capacidade de pensar conceitualmente e de comunicar simbolicamente”.*⁷

5) **Eco-Socialismo** – analisa a questão ambiental, não no “fato” mas no “modo” de organização e produção das relações dos seres humanos na exploração da natureza. A crítica eco-socialista se volta de modo direto para a explicitação do sistema capitalista e a redução da natureza como mercadoria, objeto de consumo ou meio de produção. O eco-socialismo se distancia das visões redutoras do culturalismo (pessoa permanece o valor de referência) e do naturalismo (natureza idealizada como valor de referência) por se sustentarem em reduções artificiais da vida.

*“Trata-se de destruir esse aparelho de Estado e criar um outro tipo de poder. Essa lógica tem que ser aplicada também ao aparelho produtivo: ele tem que ser, senão destruído, ao menos radicalmente transformado. Ele não pode ser simplesmente apropriado pelos trabalhadores, pelo proletariado e posto a trabalhar a seu serviço, mas precisa ser estruturalmente transformado...”.*⁸

2. Ecologia e economia: entre a contemplação e o combate

Não se pode desvencilhar a discussão da ecologia da modernidade burgo-capitalista. O termo “ecologia” advém do raciocínio da Civilização Ocidental⁹, habilitado entre o pensamento técnico-científico da moderni-

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ BOOKCHIN, Murray, *Ecologia Social*, in: <http://www.cedap.assis.unesp.br/cantoliberalario/textos/0072.html> (acesso em 19/6/2014)

⁸ LOWY, Michael, *Ecosocialismo. Por uma ecologia socialista*. Entrevista, in: <http://www.ihu.unisinos.br/entrevistas/40841-ecossocialismo-por-uma-ecologia-socialista-entrevista-especial-com-michael-loewy> (acesso em 17/6/2014)

⁹ CHESNAIS, François e SERFATI, Claude. *“Ecologia’ e as condições físicas da reprodução social: alguns fios condutores marxistas”*, Crítica Marxista, acessado em 22.07.2014 em <http://www.unicamp.br/cemarx/criticamarxista/16chesnais.pdf>, disponível em 22.07.2014.

dade distinguindo homem e natureza. Considera-se que quando se fala da Civilização Ocidental o capitalismo tem papel destacado alicerçado em um grupo social. Ele que se forma naqueles que viviam nos burgos, chamados de “burguesia”. Para Jacques Le Goff¹⁰, a burguesia são os filhos das feiras e do habitar fora dos feudos. São eles que inventam a modernidade, promovendo as transformações do medievo.

Assim se pergunta: como um grupamento social que se organiza a partir das feiras e do comércio entre os feudos poderia deformar a consciência entre homem e natureza? Esse é um construto histórico de séculos. Para explicá-lo, lembra-se que a burguesia, primeiro se alia com a monarquia para poder desestabilizar o poder do corpo aristocrático. Fornecendo-lhe espaço da circulação de produtos, à utilização das moedas e o livre comércio intra-estados nacionais. Como Noam Chomsky indica, a burguesia era a classe social “na formação dos estados nacionais que segurava a sujeira das moedas, logo trazendo para si a condição de sujar o Mundo”¹¹. Suas relações eram voltadas por completo “a moeda” e, sobretudo, “a mais-valia”¹² – como indicou Karl Marx. Por ser a classe motor das transformações modernas, passa a “sujar” o Mundo, fundamentando as relações em prol do cálculo frio centrado no capital, da propriedade e da mais valia.

Sua sujeira é mais espalhada entre os séculos XVII-XVIII. Ajuda no declínio do sistema absolutista participando das revoluções nos estados nacionais. Promove as revoluções como a Revolução Inglesa e a Revolução Francesa ampliando seu capitalismo. Nesse novo momento propaga sua filosofia com idéias: do livre comércio, da liberdade pessoal, dos direitos religiosos e civis. Com o crescimento do comércio e a maior rede de relações de classe a economia se expandiu aprofundando seu domínio na Revolução Industrial inglesa do século XVIII. ¹³

Assim, o capitalismo burgo-industrial se afirma como sistema econômico europeu, obrigando as sociedades a evidenciar seu desenvolvimento ao mesmo tempo massacrando o proletariado, classe explorada pelo progresso moderno. Assim, lembra-se do escrito de Walter Benjamin tratando da história e da efetivação do desenvolvimento econômico e técnico:

“A história nada sabe da má infinitude na imagem dos dois combatentes eternamente lutando. O verdadeiro político só calcula em termos de prazos. E se a eliminação da burguesia não estiver efetivada até um

¹⁰ GOFF, Jacques Le. *O Apogeu da Cidade Medieval*, São Paulo: Martins Fontes: 1992, p.7-38.

¹¹ CHOMSKY, Noam. *A luta de classes*, Porto Alegre: ArtMed., 1999, p.25-26.

¹² Op. cit., p.26.

¹³ HOBBSAWN, Eric. *A Era das Revoluções*, Lisboa: Editorial Presença, 1981, p.52-59.

momento quase calculável do desenvolvimento econômico e técnico, tudo está perdido. Antes que a centelha chegue à dinamite, é preciso que o pavio que queima seja cortado”¹⁴

Se Noam Chomsky¹⁵ está correto á burguesia é suja, pois, não só vive com as mãos borradas das cédulas e moedas, mas, por que, seu espírito foi tomado pela mecanização do lucro e a mais valia. Tanto é que suja o solo e o ar. Para Benjamin, a única saída para livrar dos seus problemas, é retirá-la de perto do pavio. Isto é, para desarmá-la, só tem uma saída: lutar para desarticular todas as partes inerentes rolo capitalista de viver.¹⁶ A má notícia é de que sua sujeira impregna desde até o início do movimento ambientalista ocorrido nos tempos da revolução liberal inglesa do século XVIII. Sujou e corrompeu o movimento que brota com duas correntes/teses: a primeira que assume o meio ambiente de forma contemplativa criticando a dualidade da visão Galileu-Cartesiana do pensamento moderno; e, a segunda, de entendimento da espécie humana como parte da natureza. Ambas as matrizes são lembradas nos debates de ecologia¹⁷, contudo, seus representantes se contaminaram pelas cédulas da modernidade.

No século XIX funda-se o conceito de “ecologia”, como Daniel Bensaid¹⁸ destaca, na época do primeiro livro de Marx, “O Capital”. O filósofo da práxis esboça nele um entendimento sobre a apropriação do homem da natureza, embora diretamente não tenha posicionamento sobre a ecologia:

“Todo o progresso da agricultura (...) é um progresso não apenas da arte de depredar o trabalhador, mas também, ao mesmo tempo, da arte de depredar o solo; todo o progresso no aumento de sua fecundidade por um determinado prazo é ao mesmo tempo um progresso na ruína das fontes duradouras dessa fecundidade... Por isso a produção capitalista não desenvolve a técnica e a combinação do processo social de produção mais do que minando ao mesmo tempo as fontes das quais emana toda riqueza: a terra e o trabalhador”.¹⁹

¹⁴ BENJAMIN, Walter. Eduard Fuchs, collectionneur et historien. Em: *Oeuvres*. v. 3. Paris: Gallimard, 2000. p. 174.

¹⁵ CHOMSKY, Noam. *A luta de classes*, Porto Alegre: ArtMed., 1999.

¹⁶ BENJAMIN, Walter. Eduard Fuchs, collectionneur et historien. Em: *Oeuvres*. v. 3. Paris: Gallimard, 2000. p. 161-185.

¹⁷ LOWY, Michael. *Ecologia e socialismo*, São Paulo: Cortez, 2005, p.56-91.

¹⁸ BENSARD, Daniel. *Marx intempestivo. Grandezas e miséria de uma aventura crítica*. São Paulo: Civilização Brasileira. 1999, p.454.

¹⁹ MARX, Karl. *O Capital*.

Em Marx não se tem a formulação da crítica a utilização da natureza, até, por que, suas preocupações são outras. A partir do aprofundamento dos debates ecológicos ante o capitalismo burguês, na década de 1950, há a solidificação de ciências como a biologia e a química se contribuem para o conceito de “ecossistema”. Termo ligado ao avanço tecnológico das guerras mundiais e á fabricação em larga escala de aparelhos eletrônicos portáteis. Cada vez mais a burguesia mundial amplia seu poder investindo na individualização do homem pela tecnologia. Percebe-se que quando mais o homem tem acesso á tecnologia, mas há necessidade de reconstruir a relação de homem/natureza. Assim, se intui a idéia de “ecossistema” com uma estrutura geral básica para análise dos sistemas ecológicos, até, por que o ambientalismo se preocupava com as amostras e os efeitos degradantes que a biosfera vinha sofrendo.²⁰

Em 1987, na Comissão Mundial do Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento das Nações Unidas (CMMAD), se apresentou um relatório incorporando o conteúdo ético à política internacional, que consolidava as bases do paradigma burgo-capitalista de respostas aos problemas de aquecimento e destruição da flora e da fauna: um freio na exploração do ambiente. O capitalismo propõe acionar o freio, mas a locomotiva segue em velocidade rumo ao abismo! O freio é um paliativo para seguir explorando as reservas naturais. Assim, se propôs na conferência o conceito de “desenvolvimento sustentável”, ou, “sustentabilidade”.²¹ Dados abertamente incorporados ao capitalismo-industrial visando o equilíbrio de três vetores: o ambiental, o social e o econômico.

Na nomenclatura “sustentabilidade” não se busca rever o método e a forma de abordar a submissão da natureza pelo homem/ser humano. Mas, apenas, encontrar caminhos para a manutenção da lógica fria burgo-capitalista, de beneficiar apenas uns ante todo o todo social.²² Por isso, Michael Lowy denuncia essas novas formas de ecologias industriais (dos grandes acordos internacionais) alertando a necessidade de se rever a agenda burgo-capitalista que conduz a ecologia:

“A questão ecológica é a questão do capitalismo. Para parafrasear uma observação do filósofo da Escola de Frankfurt Max Horkheimer – “se você não quiser falar do capitalismo, é melhor não falar do fascismo” –, eu diria também: se você não quer falar do capitalismo, não adianta falar do meio ambiente, porque a destruição, a devastação, o envenenamento ambiental são produtos do processo de acumulação do capital. Logo, a questão que se coloca é a de uma alternativa, mas de uma alternativa que

²⁰ LÖWY, Michael. *Ecologia e socialismo*, São Paulo: Cortez, 2005, p. 56-91.

²¹ *Op. cit.*

²² LÖWY, Michael. *A Dialética Marxista do Progresso*. In: BENSÁID, Daniel e LÖWY, Michael. *Marxismo, modernidade e utopia*. São Paulo: Xamã, 2000, p.77-83.

seja radical. As tentativas de soluções moderadas se revelam completamente incapazes de enfrentar esse processo catastrófico”²³

Nesse sentido, a busca de uma “ecologia profunda” precisa ser a negação das “baixas-ecologias”²⁴ subservientes a burguesia-capitalista ou não será parceira do mundo novo da luta dos pobres. É na luta contra a própria história do conceito de ecologia e sustentabilidade que a ecologia se faz profunda, com assumindo as agendas dos movimentos sociais e classistas na busca de uma nova ecologia comunista/do bem comum/do bem viver. Um eixo de ação política e de espiritualidade que contribua na implosão das bases da Civilização Moderna alicerçada na podridão do “pensamento burguês”²⁵. Assumindo valores do passado pré-moderno das mulheres, dos indígenas, dos negros, tribais e dos ameríndios conformando-se hoje nas formas comunitárias de ação e um projeto político de vida na terra e no território.

Que essa ecologia seja tão profunda que ajude a dissolver os pilares burgueses/capitalistas do discurso demagógico da preservação da natureza que ama a podridão das cédulas monetárias mundiais. Assim, precisa-se de um raciocínio ecológico, no qual, ajude desmorrionar as bases do velho mundo, estabelecendo outras formas ancoradas no proletariado, nas escravas que riem dos dominadores, dos movimentos sociais dos in-conformados com a lógica de vida atual.

3. Do riso e das lutas na América Latina

Nas lidas dos movimentos sociais por terra e território na América Latina todas estas possibilidades atravessam momentos e propostas evidenciando a centralidade crescente da questão ecológica e as dificuldades concretas de articular esta questão com outras pautas vitais da vida plural do campesinato, populações tradicionais e indígenas latino-americanos. De modo especial as complexas questões que se organizam em torno da pauta da reforma agrária precisam ser consideradas. Este lugar “do povo da terra” se parece ao riso da escrava/mulher trácia: não despreza o debate acadêmico e científico, mas afirma o chão da vida do povo pobre com/na natureza como lugar de reflexão e mística que cria os critérios de aproximação ou não dos modos ecológicos disponíveis já apresentados.

²³ LÖWY, Michael. Entrevista. E, ainda num texto anterior se tem aproximações disso: PEREIRA, Nancy Cardoso. “*Meu povo será como árvore. Florestas, trabalho e ídolos em Isaías 44*”, em José Ademar Kaefer e Haidi Jarschel (org.), *Dimensões sociais da fé do Antigo Israel*. Uma homenagem a Milton Schwantes, São Paulo, Paulinas, 2007, p. 101-120.

²⁴ Usou-se o conceito de “baixa ecologia” em ALMEIDA, Fábio Py Murta. *Crítica a baixa ecologia*. São Leopoldo e São Paulo: Cebi e Fonte Editorial, 2014, p. 102-114.

²⁵ A ecologia comunista se relaciona com o ecossocialismo assumido por LÖWY, Michael. *Ecologia e socialismo*, São Paulo: Cortez, 2005, p.56-91.

“É por isso que milhares de camponeses, pescadores, povos nativos, mulheres, pastores, trabalhadores rurais sem terra e outras organizações da sociedade civil mobilizaram-se em massa durante a conferência. Exigimos uma nova visão de reforma agrária.

O movimento internacional de camponeses La Via Campesina acredita que uma reforma agrária genuína oferece um modelo alternativo importante de desenvolvimento. Isto inclui arrancar o controle sobre a terra, a água, os recursos marítimos, as sementes e outros recursos naturais das garras dos que utilizam essas vantagens para aumentar seus próprio lucros, e dá-lo ao povo da terra.

As políticas públicas devem ser reorientadas a fim de re-assegurar que os valores sociais, ecológicos e culturais estejam integrados ao desenvolvimento rural. O mercado deve ser reorganizado para dar prioridade à produção local de alimentos apropriados ecologicamente e culturalmente, ou seja, à soberania alimentar. Existem questões fundamentais em jogo, questões de justiça, sustentação ambiental e de paz, no debate sobre a reforma agrária”.²⁶

Os povos da terra e território se enfrentam com as garras mais afiadas do capitalismo explorador e depredador, e é nas terras e territórios dessas populações a nível mundial que sistemas de vida, florestas e águas continuam intactas ou em preservação de resistência. Não considerar a demanda desses segmentos sociais em suas relações concretas com o corpo do mundo a partir de qualquer abordagem ecológica, torna a ecologia um apetrecho das políticas de manutenção dos poderes constituídos e suas violências institucionais.

Para os povos da terra e territórios a questão da reforma agrária pontua uma questão fundamental e imprescindível: o enfrentamento e desmontagem das estruturas de propriedade privada da terra, tanto na forma do modelo agrário como do modelo agrícola. Para os movimentos sociais latino-americanos esta é a questão central de toda e qualquer conversa sobre ecologia.

A alteração mais importante imposta pelo sistema-mundo moderno foi o estabelecimento de uma base legal sistemática para o chamado direito de propriedade da terra. Por outras palavras, criaram-se regras que determinavam que uma pessoa ou entidade empresarial podia “possuir” terra diretamente. A posse de terra – ou seja, os direitos de propriedade – significava que se podia utilizar a terra da forma que se quisesse, e que só se estava obrigado às limitações específicas impostas pelas leis do Estado soberano dentro do qual esta unidade de terra se situava. A terra sobre a

²⁶ VIA CAMPESINA, *Tempo para Reforma Agrária*, Minga/Mutirão Informativa, in: http://movimientos.org/es/cloc/fororeformagraria/show_text.php3%3Fkey%3D6594 (acesso em 18/6/2014)

qual uma pessoa tinha direito de propriedade, era terra que podia legar aos seus herdeiros ou vender a terceiros ou entidades empresariais”²⁷

Qualquer formatação, formulação, conceito ou o que for sobre ecologia na América Latina (África? Àsia?) precisa se colocar a questão da propriedade e suas ordenações como mecanismo estruturante de toda a desigualdade e toda a voracidade que destrói vidas. Humanas. Vidas de todos os seres vivos. Destruição da Vida.

Tomando esta perspectiva como lugar de avaliação das políticas e espiritualidades ecológicas os sistemas de pensamento e suas políticas precisam conhecer as formas do dizer, do viver e do lutar do povo latino-americano por terra e território. Problemas de léxico e contornos filosóficos precisam ser subordinados aos processos organizativos destas comunidades lembrando e insistindo que são estas, em especial na persistência das mulheres camponesas, indígenas e de comunidades tradicionais, que mantêm ainda de pé territórios vivos e vivos, cobijados pelo capitalismo do agronegócio, das mineradoras, madeireiras e das biopiratarías das indústrias de cosméticos e farmacêutica.

Numa avaliação superficial, as posturas “eco” dos movimentos de terra e território na América Latina são confusas e vulneráveis não se adequando a nenhuma linha de abordagem conceitual. Pois! É justamente esta recusa e impossibilidade de ser encaixada nos formatos epistemológicos disponíveis nas universidades e nas agências de “desenvolvimento” que tornam as tomadas de posição desses movimentos sociais, importante e irredutível. Por exemplo, quando insistem em continuar chamando sua proposta de “agroecologia” não falsificam as relações com a terra na manutenção da vida dos grupos humanos, mas o fazem claramente como confronto com o “agro-negócio” e a “agri-cultura” afirmando o que fazem, o que sabem e o que vivem: agro-ecologia. Como na “Declaração de Surin”: Encontro Global da Via Campesina sobre Agroecologia e Sementes Camponesas²⁸, em novembro de 2012.

“Também entendemos que a agroecologia é uma parte inerente à resposta global aos principais desafios que enfrentamos como humanidade. Em primeiro lugar, a agricultura em pequena escala pode alimentar e está alimentando à humanidade e pode solucionar a crise alimentar através da agroecologia e da diversidade.

²⁷ WALLERSTEIN, Immanuel, 2010. “*Ecologia versus Direitos de Propriedade. A terra na economia-mundo capitalista*”. JANUS.NET *e-journalofInternationalRelations*, nº 1, Outono 2010 janus.ual.pt/janus.net/pt/arquivo_pt/pt_vol1_n1/pt_vol1_n1_art1.html (acesso em 18/6/2014)

²⁸ VIA CAMPESINA, in: http://www.pjr.org.br/teste/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=271:declaracao-de-surin-encontro-global-da-via-campesina-sobre-agroecologia-e-sementes-camponesas&catid=1:latest-news (acesso em 18/6/2014)

Em segundo lugar, a agroecologia contribui para lutar contra a crise ambiental. Com a agroecologia e a diversidade, a agricultura camponesa esfria o planeta, mantendo o carbono no solo e proporcionando aos camponeses e à agricultura familiar os recursos necessários para ser resilientes (com capacidade de adaptar-se) às mudanças climáticas e ao aumento das catástrofes naturais. A agroecologia transforma a matriz energética e agrícola dependente do petróleo, uma parte fundamental das mudanças sistêmicas necessárias para frear as emissões.

Em terceiro lugar, a agroecologia reforça o bem comum e o coletivo. Ao mesmo tempo em que cria as condições para uma melhor qualidade de vida para as pessoas das zonas rurais e urbanas, a agroecologia, como pilar da soberania alimentar e popular, estabelece que a terra, a água, as sementes e os conhecimentos devem continuar sendo patrimônio dos povos a serviço da humanidade.

Através da agroecologia, transformaremos o modelo hegemônico de produção alimentar, permitindo a recuperação do ecossistema agrícola, restabelecendo o funcionamento do metabolismo natureza-sociedade e colhendo os produtos que alimentarão a humanidade. Como dizem os camponeses filipinos "Kabuhanan, Kalusugan, Kalikasan" (pela economia, pela saúde e pela natureza)"

O riso da mulher/escrava trácia insiste em ser lugar de discernimento e crítica das formas consagradas e legitimadas de saber, de política, de espiritualidade. Não se trata mais da abstrata "sociedade civil". Trata-se de uma perspectiva de classe social, de gênero e de etnias que se afirmam e se empoderam recusando ao mesmo tempo a minoridade e subordinação da terra e seus seres e das mulheres, pobres e etnias. Os povos da terra e do território riem sua gargalhada pelos corredores e calçadas dos fóruns de debate sobre crise ambiental, climática, alimentar... todas as crises. E, riem: Kabuhanan, Kalusugan, Kalikasan"

4. Ecologia, espiritualidade e ecumenismo

A religião é uma das linguagens disponíveis das formas sociais de organização da vida. Então, tudo depende de como entendemos a religião mesmo, de modo especial, como entendemos a religião numa economia de mercado e suas relações com o mundo/planeta. Entendendo a economia como a forma básica de organização da sociedade e seus arranjos da vida material, seria importante perguntar pelas correlações entre crenças e as mobilidades/imobilidades sociais. De um modo geral, a religião – de modo especial as novas formas religiosas dentro do cristianismo – cumpre seu papel hoje de “dar alma” para a lógica capitalista, liberando a acumulação privada de bens. Na forma da “benção”, da “prosperidade”. Nesse sentido, o capitalismo encontra na religião um fundamento de justificação e legitimação das formas desiguais de usufruto do mundo. Na articulação

interna do fenômeno religioso temos total identidade e homogeneidade; o dissenso se dá na forma da fidelização dos grupos sociais.

A volatilidade da crença é aparente e não compromete a função que o mercado designa para a religião e a circulação dos bens religiosos.

Nesse sentido, os sistemas de crença podem ser mais ou menos pressionados pelos conflitos econômicos e políticos, viabilizando narrativas de pretensão da norma, do conhecimento e da pertença. Ser ecumênico é fazer a pergunta sobre o lugar dos sistemas de crença no conjunto das relações sociais... acessar seu/um/algum sistema de crença sendo capaz de perceber o conjunto das relações sociais de poder implicadas.

Quem não é ecumênico não consegue fazer a crítica da religião! Quem é ecumênico não abandona sua capacidade interpretativa e política: interessa mais o oikos que a norma. Quem é ecumênico pergunta pelos viventes, o conjunto dos habitantes, e, a partir daí, pode questionar e desafiar as normas (econômicas) e os arranjos/valores (ecologia). É por essas e outras que o ecumenismo é muito mais que unidade dos cristãos ou diálogo com judeus e muçulmanos! O ecumenismo é a pergunta por outro mundo possível. O ecumenismo é atitude, postura política diante do mundo, todo habitado. Por isso, o ecumenismo é rechaçado e indesejado nas igrejas cristãs que não aceitam abrir mão de seu lugar de poder na formulação civilizatória hegemônica.

Voltamos à escrava trácia:

“Se se considerasse esta mulher em conjunção com a roda (una com ela) um coração da terra, ela operaria sobre o solo, pela via dos regos da água (veias e artérias do corpo/campo) uma ação regeneradora, terapêutica e profiláctica: ensinar-lhe-ia a respiração e a re-circulação de ar e água, sopro e líquido fertilizador, sangue e ânimo de um corpo terrestre que se deseja arejado, vivificado, saudável!”

Voltar para este momento do riso da mulher da Trácia é procurar superar o exato momento em que o chamado “pensamento ocidental” preferiu romper a busca de um conhecimento orgânico e úmido quando recusou a mediação do riso da mulher. O texto do Teeteto apresenta esta recusa apontando:

“A mesma coisa se pode dizer a todos os que passam a vida a filosofar. É certo que estes não conhecem parentes nem vizinhos, nem sabem o que eles fazem; sabem apenas se são homens ou criaturas de outra espécie; e põem toda a sua atenção a estudar e a descobrir o que é o homem, o que convém à sua natureza fazer ou suportar, o que o distingue dos outros seres. Compreendes, Teodoro, o que quero dizer?”²⁹

²⁹ PLATÃO, *Teeteto*.

O riso da mulher não vai se sustentar por muito tempo nos argumentos do filósofo, que, por fim, conclui que o conhecimento não responde ao riso - ...não das escravas da Trácia, ou dos ignorantes, porque estes não se apercebem de nada...³⁰ O elogio do conhecimento que não conhece nem parentes nem vizinhos nem muito menos criaturas de outras espécies e que se dedica a estudar “o homem” distinto dos outros seres aponta numa mesma reflexão a separação e a subordinação do homem filosófico sobre todos os outros seres e também sobre as mulheres/escravas.

...(o) filósofo, educado no seio da liberdade e da ociosidade, não deve ser censurado por parecer ingénuo e inútil em presença de trabalhos servis, porque não sabe, por exemplo, arrumar uma mala de viagem, temperar comida, ou dizer lisonjas. O outro é capaz de fazer tudo isso com habilidade e rapidez, mas não sabe usar o manto como um homem livre, compreender a harmonia do discurso, nem cantar a vida dos deuses e dos homens felizes.³¹

No riso da mulher trácia recuperamos um lugar de suspeita e crítica de um pensamento ocidental que se pensa universal e auto-suficiente na ruptura com o corpo das necessidades, o corpo social e o corpo do mundo e seus “outros seres”. A ecologia será profunda se submergida nas lutas populares. A teologia escutará no riso das trabalhadoras na busca por água seus motivos últimos e penúltimos: arrumar uma mala, temperar comida... conquistar o manto das gentes libertadas, compreender a harmonia de todo o mundo habitado e cantar a felicidade.



³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

POR QUÉ EL CRISTIANISMO TIENE QUE CAMBIAR O MORIR

La nueva Reforma
de la fe y de la práctica de la Iglesia



JOHN SHELBY SPONG

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Matter and Spirit in Teilhard de Chardin

Leandro SEQUEIROS sj
Córdoba, SPAIN

Translation by Antonio Maldonado sj

In many cultural traditions dualist positions do appear. It seems that the way of conceiving the world and the reality are set against each other (when they do not reject one another, like the water and the oil), the natural and the supernatural, what is above (heaven), and what is below (the earthly), the eternal and the corruptible, the matter and the spirit, soul and body, the active and the passive, love and hate. In some eastern traditions there is a holistic tendency, in which they have succeeded in uniting the extremes of the apparent dualism. (In Taoism, yin and yang which are united in the Tao).

But there are as well, in other cultural traditions, attempts at harmonizing and uniting things which seem to be exclusive. This happens with what is usually called “Matter” and “Spirit”. Of course here we do not speak of the Spirit in a religious meaning, but in a purely rational and philosophical sense, which may be dealt with by all the cultural traditions.

In the greatest part of the cultures, the “Matter” is always a reality which is seen and touched. Which is altered and degraded, with the passing of time. What is material seems all the time to be corruptible. However, the word “Spirit” refers us to another reality. There are religions that make it “personal”, but here we deal with it in a much wider sense. The Spirit is what escapes our senses. The persons holding a more closed materialistic mentality, do not believe that there may exist a spiritual reality. They consider it a flight of the weak minds, which do not put up with the “unbearable levity of being”, which was spoken about by Milan Kundera in his novel.

For many people in the western societies, the only thing that exists is what is material, which is identified as riches, to own, the possession, that which enters through the eyes and is perceived by the senses. And all the rest is pure fantasy, if not evasion from the material problems of the world.

Evidently, there is here a very wide field for discussion. Is there a reality to which we may call “Spirit” or “spiritual”, even if we do not see it, nor could be detected by the most potent microscopes? And if Matter and Spirit do exist, can there be any relation between them? Do they repel each other, like the water and the oil? Or, as well, to believe in the Spirit is typical of weak persons?

But we have reached to this point not to philosophize but to offer some reflection material, based in the texts of the geologist and philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955). For him, “Spirit” and “Matter” are attributes of the framework of the Universe. Moreover: they are not two opposed realities, but one reality which unfolds from the other. Exists only the “Matter”, but this is in process of “Spiritualization.”

This text is very meaningful: it is taken from his book, *The Human Energy*, and says thus: “There is not in the World neither Spirit nor Matter: the “Framework or Link of the Universe” is the Spirit-Matter. No other substance, apart from this, could produce the human molecule.” Matter and Spirit in “The Heart of the Matter.”

Matter and Spirit in “El Corazón de la Materia”

In 1950, five years before his death, Teilhard de Chardin enjoys a rest during Summer in the countryside, in a villa belonging to his brothers. There he writes a reflection on his thought, to which he called “The Heart of the Matter.”

He affirms that “he has needed over sixty years of passionate endeavor so as to discover (what) only were but approaches, or successive approximations to a unique basic question...” He literally writes a bit lower down: “as I have experienced in contact with the Earth, the Transparency of the Divine in the heart of an ardent Universe: The Divine shining from the depths of a burning Matter.”¹

Teilhard writes that, through his mother’s influence, he very much loved the Child Jesus. His mother spoke to him of the religious, of the spiritual. But in the field he gathered stones and pieces of iron. He felt fascination for Matter. How to unite both things? How to joint, without forcing them, the fascination for the material and the attraction for the spiritual?

In front of the spiritual, writes Teilhard, I felt that “my true “I” dwelt in another part. I felt “that instinctive gesture which made me “adore” a fragment of metal.” He maintains that “all my spiritual life has consisted

¹ Pierre TEILHARD DE CHARDIN. *El Corazón de la Materia* (1950), Editorial Sal Terrae, Santander, 2002, p. 16. Ver también L.SEQUEIROS, *Teilhard en mi corazón*. Bubok publicaciones, 2010, www.metanexus.bubok.com

in no other thing but in developing”² those intimate experiences of childhood. He knows by intuition that the consistency of those matters (iron, rests of shrapnel...) were his “initial apprehension of the Absolute under the shape of the Tangible.” (With initial capital letters in the text).

How to interpret this text? For Teilhard, when we impregnate ourselves of the Material, what we touch, the tangible, we may access from the interior of the heart to intuit the absolute, the spiritual. It is God (or the divine) what becomes transparent through the material. Because of that, for Teilhard, as a good scientist, the science is a form of adoration. The science, knowledge of the natural processes, can help to perceive the spiritual which throbs underneath and at the interior of the material reality.

Teilhard, confronts, as a good dialectic, scientist and metaphysic, born in the rigor of the Scholastic, the Necessary starting off from the Contingent, the General starting on from the particular, and the Natural starting off from the Artificial.

And he concludes: “I began, without being aware of it, to truly access to the World...”³ That was when he was approximately nine or ten years old. And he goes on: “Further on, when I would study Geology (...) what irresistibly has brought me (even at the expenses of Paleontology) to the study of the great eruptive masses and of the continental platforms, it is not but a need of maintaining contact (a contact of communion), with a kind of root, or of matrix, a universal matrix of the beings.”

He continues: “During about twenty years of my life, I clearly find out in my remembrances the uninterrupted clues of this profound transformation.” He goes on with excellent paragraphs, even poetic, in ample sense, of his intimate life, but with a twist very professional, or vocational: the science as a vocation which can never be given up.

And his reflection is summarized in this text: “I had always, until then, admired in a docile way (...) a fundamental heterogeneity between Matter and Spirit, Body and Soul, Unconscious and Conscious: two ‘substances’ of distinct nature, two ‘species’ of being incomprehensibly associated in the living Compound, regarding which it was required to maintain up to any price, it was assured to me, that the first (my divine Matter), was not but the humble maid (not to say the adversary) of the second, finding this one itself (that is to say, the Spirit) reduced to my eyes, by this same fact, to be no more than a Shade which I had to venerate by principle, but toward which (emotively and intellectually speaking) I did

² P. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN. *ibid.*, p. 20.

³ P. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN. *ibid.* p. 21.

not really hold any living interest. Consequently be it judged, my inner impression of liberation and jubilation, when, with my own steps, still hesitating, for an 'evolutive' Universe, I was verifying that the dualism in which I had rested until then was vanishing like the mist in front of the rising sun. Matter and Spirit, not two entities, but only two states, two faces of a very same cosmic Framework, according to the way it may be seen, or it may elongated...⁴

It is suitable to read this text of Teilhard slowly, to internally feel it, and to try to understand the universal meaning, beyond a concrete religion, of the experience of feeling the beat of the Spirit under the apparently rude shell of the Matter.

⁴ P. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN. *ibid.*, p. 28.





Materia y Espíritu en Teilhard de Chardin

Leandro SEQUEIROS sj
Córdoba, ESPAÑA

En muchas tradiciones culturales aparecen posturas dualistas. Parece que en el modo de concebir el mundo y la realidad se contraponen (cuando no se repelen una a la otra, como el agua y el aceite) lo natural y lo sobrenatural, lo que esta arriba (el cielo) y lo que está abajo (lo terreno), lo eterno y lo corruptible, la materia y el espíritu, el alma y el cuerpo, lo activo y lo pasivo, el amor y el odio. En algunas tradiciones orientales hay una tendencia holista en la que han logrado unir los extremos del aparente dualismo. (En el taoísmo, yin y en yang que se unen en el Tao).

Pero también hay en otras tradiciones culturales intentos de armonizar y unir cosas que parecen ser excluyentes. Esto sucede con lo que suele llamarse “Materia” y “Espíritu”. Por supuesto que aquí no hablamos del Espíritu en un sentido religioso sino en un sentido puramente racional y filosófico que puede ser tratado por todas las tradiciones culturales.

En la mayor parte de las culturas, la “Materia” es siempre una realidad que se ve y se toca. Que se altera y se degrada con el tiempo. Lo material parece siempre corruptible. Sin embargo, la palabra “Espíritu” nos remite a otra realidad. Hay religiones que lo hacen “personal”, pero aquí lo tratamos en un sentido mucho más amplio. El Espíritu es lo que escapa a nuestros sentidos. Los que tienen una mentalidad materialista cerrada no creen que exista la realidad espiritual. La consideran una escapatoria de las mentes débiles que no aguantan la “insoportable levedad del ser” que decía Milan Kundera en su novela.

Para mucha gente en las sociedades occidentales, lo único que existe es lo material, que se identifica con las riquezas, el tener, la posesión, lo que entra por los ojos y perciben los sentidos. Y todo lo demás es pura fantasía cuando no evasión de los problemas materiales del mundo.

Evidentemente, aquí hay un amplísimo campo de discusión. ¿Existe una realidad a la que podemos llamar “Espíritu” o “espiritual” aunque no la veamos ni la detecten los más potentes microscopios? Y si existen la Materia y el Espíritu, ¿puede haber alguna relación entre ellos? ¿Se repelen como el agua y el aceite? O también: ¿creer en el Espíritu es propio de personas débiles?

Pero aquí no hemos venido a filosofar sino a ofrecer un material de reflexión basado en textos del geólogo y filósofo Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955). Para él, “Espíritu” y “Materia” son propiedades de la trama del Universo. Es más: no son dos realidades opuestas sino que una es desarrollo de la otra. Sólo existe la “Materia”, pero ésta está en proceso de “Espiritualización”.

Este texto es muy significativo: está tomado de su libro *La Energía Humana* y dice así:

“No hay en el Mundo ni Espíritu ni Materia: la “Trama del Universo” es el Espíritu-Materia. Ninguna sustancia, aparte de ésta, podría producir la molécula humana”.

Materia y Espíritu en “El Corazón de la Materia”

En 1950, cinco años antes de su muerte, Teilhard de Chardin descansa en verano el campo en casa de sus hermanos. Allí escribe una reflexión sobre su pensamiento a la que llamó “El Corazón de la Materia”.

Dice que ha “necesitado más de sesenta años de esfuerzo apasionado para descubrir (lo) que no eran sino enfoques o aproximaciones sucesivas a una misma realidad de fondo...”. Escribe literalmente más abajo: “como yo he experimentado en contacto con la Tierra, la Diafanía de lo Divino en el corazón de un Universo ardiente: lo Divino resplandeciendo desde las profundidades de una Materia ardiente”¹.

Escribe Teilhard que, por influencia de su madre, quería mucho al Niño Jesús. Su madre le hablaba de lo religioso, de lo espiritual. Pero en el campo recogía piedras y trozos de hierro. Sentía la fascinación por la Materia. ¿Cómo unir las dos cosas? ¿Cómo unir sin forzarlas la fascinación por lo material y la atracción por lo espiritual?

Frente a lo espiritual, escribe Teilhard, sentía que “mi verdadero “yo” estaba en otra parte”. Sentía “aquel gesto instintivo que me hacía ‘adorar’ un fragmento de metal”. Mantiene que “toda mi vida espiritual no ha consistido sino en desarrollar”² aquellas íntimas experiencias de niño. Intuye que la consistencia de aquellas materias (hierro, restos de metralla...) fueron su “aprehensión inicial de lo Absoluto bajo la forma de lo Tangible”. (Con mayúscula inicial en el texto).

¿Cómo interpretar este texto? Para Teilhard, cuando nos impregnamos de lo Material, lo que se toca, lo tangible, podemos acceder desde dentro del corazón a intuir lo absoluto, lo espiritual. Es Dios (o lo divino) lo que se transparenta a través de lo material. Por eso, para Teilhard,

¹ Pierre TEILHARD DE CHARDIN. *El Corazón de la Materia* (1950), Editorial Sal Terrae, Santander, 2002, pág. 16. Ver también L.SEQUEIROS, *Teilhard en mi corazón*. Bubok publicaciones, 2010, www.metanexus.bubok.com

² P. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN. *ibid*, pág. 20.

como buen científico, la ciencia es una forma de adoración. La ciencia, el conocimiento de los procesos naturales, pueden ayudar a percibir lo espiritual que late por debajo y en el interior de la realidad material.

Teilhard, enfrenta, como buen dialéctico, científico y metafísico, nacido en el rigor de la escolástica, lo Necesario a partir de lo Contingente, lo General a partir de lo particular y lo Natural a partir de lo Artificial.

Y concluye: “comencé, sin darme cuenta, a acceder verdaderamente al Mundo...³. Aquello fue cuando él contaba aproximadamente con 9 ó 10 años de edad. Y sigue: “Más adelante, cuando estudiara Geología (...) lo que me ha llevado irresistiblemente (aún a expensas de la Paleontología) al estudio de las grandes masas eruptivas y de los zócalos continentales, no es sino una necesidad de mantener contacto (un contacto de comunión) con una especie de raíz, o de matriz, universal de los seres”.

Continúa: “Durante cerca de 20 años de mi vida encuentro claramente en mis recuerdos las huellas ininterrumpidas de esta transformación profunda”. Sigue con excelentes párrafos, incluso poéticos, en un sentido amplio, de su vida íntima, pero con un sesgo muy profesional o vocacional: la ciencia como vocación irrenunciable.

Y su reflexión se resume en este texto: “yo siempre había admirado dócilmente hasta entonces (...) una heterogeneidad de fondo entre Materia y Espíritu, Cuerpo y Alma, Inconsciente y Consciente: dos ‘sustancias’ de naturaleza distinta, dos ‘especies’ de Ser incomprensiblemente asociadas en el Compuesto vivo, respecto de las cuales era preciso mantener a cualquier precio, se me aseguraba, que la primera (mi divina Materia) no era sino la humilde sierva (por no decir la adversaria) de la segunda, encontrándose ésta (es decir, el Espíritu) reducida a mis ojos, por este mismo hecho, a no ser más que una Sombra que había que venerar por principio, pero por la cual (emotiva e intelectualmente hablando) yo no experimentaba en realidad ningún interés vivo. Júzguese en consecuencia, mi impresión interior de liberación y júbilo cuando, con mis primeros pasos, aún vacilantes, por un Universo ‘evolutivo’ constataba que el dualismo en el que se me había mantenido hasta entonces se disipaba como la niebla ante el sol naciente. Materia y Espíritu, no dos cosas, sino dos estados, dos rostros de una misma Trama cósmica, según se la vea, o se la prolongue...”⁴.

Este texto de Teilhard conviene leerlo despacio, sentirlo dentro e intentar comprender el sentido universal, más allá de una religión concreta, de la experiencia de sentir el latido del Espíritu bajo la aparentemente ruda coraza de la Materia.

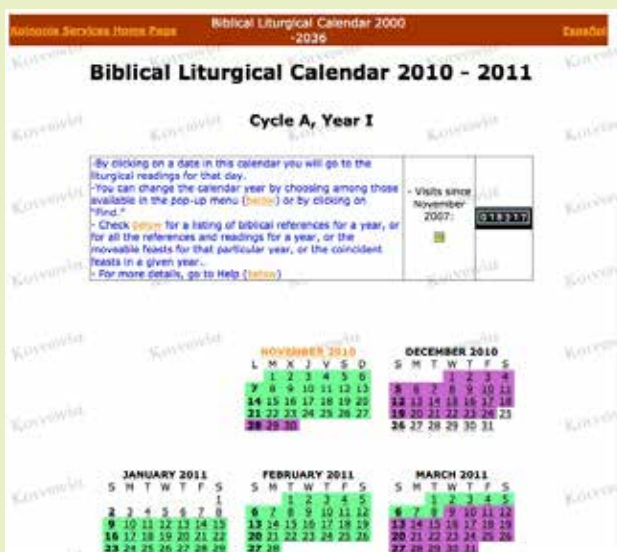


³ P. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN. *ibid.* pág. 21.

⁴ P. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN. *ibid.*, pág. 28.

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Eco-Spirituality

A path to integration

Helena T. RECH, sts**

Rio de Janeiro, RJ, BRAZIL

Translation by William Reinhard

Eco-Spirituality is a way of integration which leads us to an ecological consciousness. Such a consciousness is more than an intellectual knowledge; it is an understanding of the heart, a wisdom which arises from within; an awareness that we are part of the planet; that we are part of one another and that together with all living beings we form *the great Community of Life*.

An ecological spirituality is the beginning of a very long journey. Just a huge tree is born from a tiny seed, the seminal experience of contemplating my interior world and the exterior world begins to diminish to the degree that we plunge deeper into Eco-spirituality, using the path of contemplation, recognizing ourselves, in as much as living beings, as *humus*, part of a whole. In other words, the duality “contemplator” and “contemplated” disappears in the unity of an integrating flux of the awareness of “being a part” of a greater reality. The themes of Ecology and Eco-spirituality are already known and there are well elaborated studies on the subject. I do not intend to bring anything new in this article but simply share what I have reflected and worked on in the area of Spirituality.

* Sister Helena Teresinha RECH, sts, is a member of the Congregation of the Servants of the Blessed Trinity. She served as General Councilor for two terms and as General Coordinator, also for two terms, and in formation for ten years. She is a theologian with a Doctorate in Spirituality. She was coordinator of the USGCB and delegate to the UISG; she was invited to two International Theological Congresses (one in Germany and the other in Argentina). She participated in the creation of PROFOLIDER, was part of the coordination of the same group and is also a member of their advisory committee to this date. She is a member of the National Directory of the CRB as well as the State Directory of the CRB in São Paulo. Over the past thirty years she has dedicated herself to directing retreats, being a resource person for courses, chapters of various Religious Congregations and in continuing formation. She is the author of several books, articles and CDs and is presently a member of the Editorial Board of the National CRB. At the present time she lives in a hermitage.

1) In the beginning everything was good and beautiful

The creation narrative in the book of Genesis describes how God concludes each phase of the process with the words, “and everything was good” (Gn. 1,10.12.18.21.25). The text describes the beauty of the creative act. Today we understand that we are dealing here with a wondrous hymn of praise of God’s grandeur. We perceive a creating God who abandons his silence and pours out his very existence, his beauty and goodness as a gift. Various psalms chant the deep meaning of the goodness of God which began with creation and which is prolonged throughout the history of the universe. For example, Psalm 136 (135) proclaims this marvelous beauty and goodness: “He made the heavens with wisdom because his love is eternal”.

Are we “in the beginning” where everything is good and beautiful, or “at the end” with nostalgia for everything that was good and beautiful? Or maybe in a “crisis” where we have to recreate the beautiful, the love, the ethics, new relationships of belonging, the capacity to be captivated, to contemplate, to share, to be humanized, to belong and to be a “community of life”.

Some symptoms of the ecological crisis which affect all living beings are: air pollution, poisoning of the oceans, all the problems resulting from various types of waste, poisoning of the soil and various challenges arising from the “green revolution”, such as transgenic plants, deforestation and desertification. And what shall we say of the degradation of human life? Is this not a responsibility of Christians? And of other religions?

The debate cannot be purely political, technological or scientific. It must also be religious and Christian involving people in consecrated Religious Life and also those of other spiritualities that give meaning to existence and to all things. We must understand and give new meaning to the “created”, to nature, to the universe, as well as how to conduct our lives and commit ourselves to LIFE in all its diversity.

So Eco-spirituality demands an ethical, prophetic, social, political commitment which comes not only from indignation but also from a profound experience of the God of Life, with all that “lives and breathes”² on the face of the earth.

2) Eco-spirituality

The prefix *eco* (greek: *oikos*) means *house*, the place where one lives. *Ecology* is the science of the interrelationships in the “house”. *Spirituality* is a gift of the Spirit who plants in our innermost being the thirst for God, stimulates deep desires for the fullness of life for all

² Psalm 150, 5b

creatures, provokes us to live ethically and sensibly, plunges us into the fountain of Trinitarian love and transforms us into ecological beings.

Roberto Crema thus defines Spirituality, without basing himself on any religion:

*Spirituality is a unified awareness, one of participating in something greater, one which in essence is love and in practice solidarity*³.

According to Crema a person who has become awakened to Spirituality is a person who does not see himself/herself as separated from the other, from the community, from the universe.

Therefore, if I feel *not-separated*, would that light a fire in my body? Would it prevent me from urinating on a homeless person who is sleeping under a marquise? Would it prevent me from welcoming, listening to and sharing food with someone who asks for help? If I feel *not-separated* from nature, would I invade and destroy eco-systems because of a compulsive desire for progress? Would I contaminate the waters, pollute the air, devastate rivers, destroy entire species of living creatures along with our Common House? Therefore, Eco-spirituality is the interior pathway to give new meaning to the *house*.

In this light we might cite from the Earth Charter: “all things are inter-related and each form of life has value, independently of its human use”.⁴ We have to recognize that we are dependent on one another as the threads of a giant spider-web. If one thread breaks, the entire web suffers the impact. In the web all the threads are important and none can exist without the others. They are all inter-related and are all tied together. The multiplicity of threads forms the unique and beautiful pattern of the web.

In the vocabulary of ecology the term *holism*, which comes from the Greek, means totality. So everything acquires new meaning, respect and care from the moment I become aware that I am a part of a totality and that the totality is part of me.

Eco-spirituality is a way to give new meaning to spirituality, taking into consideration the challenges through which LIFE and Mother Earth passes. It is a way of living in an integrated manner, in harmony with the totality of the relationships in the house. This comes about through the *caring* of and *respect* for the entire *Community of Life*,⁵ recognizing our original source from which everything comes into being, our Trinitarian God from whom we try to learn how to live relationships.

A *holistic* vision implies, in the perspective of Eco-spirituality, a new sensitivity and a new comprehension of earth and of everything that lives on earth.⁵

³ Writer, at the Universidade Holística da Paz (<http://gaian.zip.net>).

⁴ *Earth Charter*, Principles, p. 17, item a.

⁵ Expression of the *Earth Charter*.

The theologian, J. B. Libanio writes in this perspective: “the capacity to cultivate an inclusive attitude, which contemplates the whole and invites us to have an integrating vision, is similar to the capacity to see the unique beauty of a particular star while at the same time become fascinated by the beauty of a star-studded night.

*We substitute a detailed view which dissects the reality, in order to perceive the whole in its splendid harmony. Each being sounds a note in an immense symphony. We unite two paradoxical perspectives which converge to form one comprehension. Each being is contemplated in its individual singularity so it appears we would see an infinity of disparate points. But, in a second moment, we are united in a vision, a marvelous design of spectacular unity. It appears like a star-studded night in which we contemplate each star with its own beauty and the entire heavens in a fantastic sidereal orchestra”.*⁶

When we understand that we belong to Earth, that we are sons and daughters of the Earth and that we ARE *humus*, then our perspective of Mother Earth, confronted with our brothers and sisters, with hunger, with social and economic exclusion, all this will be very different! We will come to understand that everything has the same fundamental DNA and that each species of living beings has its own specific alphabet. We are all earth (humus), that is, we all come from the earth and will return to the earth. Earth is not in front of us as something distinct from us. It is in us. We are earth which in its evolution has arrived at the stage of feeling, comprehension, choice, responsibility and consciousness. This “earth” was worked on by Trinitarian love, “fiber by fiber” (Psalm 139). With special care He made us in “his own image”, projecting something of himself in us. The Trinity gave a great blessing to the created world: “Increase and multiply...I formed you and consecrated you...Before your birth I already knew you”.

The path of Eco-spirituality takes into account *biodiversity* and seeks to integrate human beings with nature, from which it comes and is a part. Life and self-consciousness of life are intertwined. Spirituality is a becoming aware of the importance and the more profound significance of the life of the planet, as well as of the meaning of the Common House. With this I want to emphasize the importance of Eco-spirituality for integral “Life”. It is to leave behind the “center”, leave anthropocentrism and anthropo-exclusivism in favor of an awareness of belonging.

Almost everything in the universe was made without depending on us. So what right do we have to dominate the earth, calling ourselves “owners” and “lords”, destroying it and appropriating it for ourselves, or transforming everything into chaos? We are simply *humus* for new forms

⁶ Libanio, J.B., *Ecologia, vida ou morte?* Paulus, Sao Paulo, 2010

of life. But a common future, ours and that of our Common House - Earth, depends on us.

“Feeling ourselves as sons and daughters of Earth, being the thinking and loving Earth, we experience it as Mother. She is the generative beginning. She represents the Feminine which conceives, nurtures and gives birth. She thus emerges as the archetype, the Great Mother, Pacha Mama and Nana. Just as everything generates and delivers life, she also welcomes and receives everything in her womb. Dying we return to Mother Earth. We go back to her generous and fruitful womb.”⁷

3) Eco-spirituality – an integrating experience

When I woke up to the ecological reality and there sprang up in me the awareness that *Eco-spirituality* could be a way of integrating human ecology; and if the various spiritualities were united, there would be a possibility to save our Common House and live in brotherhood as one great Community of Life. At that point I began to think, reflect and dare something new in my work as a resource person. I began including an ecological dimension to my work until I finally began to give *Ecological Retreats*.

Five years have now gone by since I began directing such *ecological retreats*, in which the goal is to offer an experience of God using the practice of contemplation and the application of Eco-spirituality to day-to-day life. The dynamic of the retreat is one of silence in profound contact with God, with ones' self, and with nature in a contemplative way. In other words, contemplate nature, one's personal life and one's mission as human beings illuminated by the Word of God. This implies letting everything pass from the *eyes* to the *heart*, from *seeing* to *feeling*, from *experiencing* each thing to being a *part* of each thing, from *touching* to *being touched*.

An *ecological retreat* is a special invitation to contemplation as a pathway of the heart and of wisdom which leads us to admire, taste, and be captivated by the wonders of creation. It is to experience one's self as a part of creation and sense how the Lord is good.

Contemplation is a pathway which internally opens us to the beautiful, to caring, to welcoming the good, to dialogue, to relationships, to a new perspective on life, to the feeling of belonging, to reverence before the mystery of life, of otherness, of the Great Other – God, the Trinity.

The invitation is :

*“Remove your sandals because you are standing on sacred land.
Remove your sandals because the other is sacred space inhabited by God.
Remove your sandals because biodiversity is sacred, inhabited by God. It is part of your life and you are part of its life.*

⁷ Leonardo Boff, *Eco-spiritualidade: que significa ser e sentir-se Terra?*

Contemplation is the space of integration with all of creation and with the Creator, in the Son, Jesus, the firstborn of all creation. In his letter to the Colossians Paul writes: “He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, for it is in Him that all things were created in heaven and on earth...for God desired that the plenitude of life should dwell in him, and that through him God would reconcile with Himself everything on earth and in heaven (Cl 1, 15-20).

All creatures and the universe are *sacred*, inhabited by the Trinitarian Word. In him dwells the plenitude of Life and He, by the Incarnation, dwells in our world as Firstborn. The world is saturated and penetrated by the Creator, “Logos”, the link which binds and unites everything in heaven and on earth. In this Trinitarian communion of the Father, and of the Son, in the Vivifying Spirit, we are called to communion in plurality and our differences. Creation has its place in God and he dwells in it, his ecological Sanctuary.

Within this contemplation there emerge deep desires and calls which lead to ethical postures and attitudes – indignation confronted with injustice, inequality, the destruction of nature, the disrespect for human life, with human trafficking, with misery and all the evils which assail the Community of Life.

Contemplation makes people sensitive to injustices, depredation and to the destruction of nature. Eco-spirituality is integrating and opens us up to *solidarity* with people and with the planet. It makes us aware, makes us persons of communion, constructors of Peace and Justice.

To contemplate is to view with the heart that which the eyes do not see. It is to perceive beyond that which one sees. It is to penetrate reality with the eyes of God and with his tenderness.

Contemplation, as the pathway of the heart and of wisdom, allows us to continue striving with respect, humility, a sense of caring and peace. Where there is wisdom born of contemplation and not waste nor exclusion, there are beings in relation. When we live our essence as relational beings we become listeners of the Word, which comes to us from all beings as well as from the social networks, which are made up of a vast multiplicity of links. In this way we become *humus*, beings of communion and integration, ecological beings.

My evaluation of this experience has been positive, as I feel that its objective has been achieved. By means of contemplation an ecological awareness is created; a spirituality of caring for the Planet, the ecosystems, nature and the totality of life, feeling a part of the whole, creating a relationship of respect and sensitivity, openness and love of God-Trinity, fountain of Life. According to L. Boff ⁸

⁸ L. Boff, *A voz do Arco Iris*, p. 133.

“the mission of human beings resides in being able the thousand echoes which arrive from the great Voice and which resounds from one end of the universe to the other vibrating in every being. It remains for us to unite our voice to that universal echo. We are called to be part of a symphony and to venerate the Maestro of this immense cosmic orchestra...God, the Giver of Life and the one who attracts all things to his paternal/maternal breast.”

4) Eco-spirituality: process of humanization/interiorization

Another dimension of Eco-spirituality is one that puts us in our true interior *home* – that of human beings. It humanizes us, drawing us back to our interior house, our real habitat. It seems that post-modern woman and man have lost the direction to their own *interior life*, to their interior house, to intimacy. Who knows, they may have “lost the keys”, forgotten the “secret”, the password which opens the heart and have become lost on the enchanting and seductive path which the post-modern world offers to them. Many people no longer know how to respond to existential questions such as: who am I? what am I seeking? Where am I going? What do I really want in life?

Never before has the human species been so “connected” and at the same time so isolated. Many people do not succeed in finding the gravitational axis of their lives. Others live in an “age of emptiness” or an “ice age”, in a “liquid” culture in which relationships, values, love, ethics...are reduced to narcissism or consumerism, to superficiality and to a society of “discardability”. It is becoming difficult or almost impossible to enter into contact even with one’s self, with the other or with God, in a profound, simple, humanizing and spiritual way.

With respect to our Religious Institutions, how are we living as House (*oikos*)? And with respect to ourselves, our life community, our people? Are we part of the *exteriority syndrome*, that of emptiness, noise, efficient administration, the “stock market”? Do we, like the *Prudent Virgins* still bring with us the precious oil of silence, togetherness, belonging, joy, prayer, pardon, compassion, solidarity, simplicity and detachment?

A while ago, as a consulter to the VRC, a certain Provincial said, “we have excellent professionals, administrators, pedagogues, nurses... but few religious. Another young sister shared this with me: “I didn’t enter Religious Life to be an administrator...I don’t find the time to pray, rest, be by myself, share with others...”. It’s true, we reflect, pray, evaluate ourselves, do courses about *levity*; we discuss mystical experiences, spirituality, relationships; we go on retreats. But in what sense do we *interiorize* and *humanize* ourselves? Do we enter and leave these retreats with a lightness of spirit, with joy in our hearts, our community, our prayer, our

mission, our *House*? How can Eco-spirituality be a path to interiorization and humanization?

Eco-spirituality puts us on the pathway to the House: in the *intimacy* of our *interior house*; by enabling us to create *togetherness* and humanizing *relationships* in our *house community*; in the love of our house/country; by capacitating us to feel that we are *sister/brother* in the great *Community of Life*; by feeling that we are a part of the whole, that we are ethical links and that we have the capacity to love inside the *Common House* – the *Planet*; by plunging ourselves into the warm and welcoming intimacy of the Trinity, the *House* from which we have come and to which we shall return. Where life is fullness, love is infinite, contemplation is eternal, relationships are circular, joy is contagious and “pericorese” is eternally ended.

To live Eco-spirituality is to allow one’s self to become pregnant with Divine Breath, to entwine oneself in his love and embrace which gives energy to all, for everything that *lives and breathes* on earth has but one Father-Mother, who sustains and gives life to all.

5) Challenges which confront Eco-spirituality

1) to remove human beings from the center (anthropocentrism and anthropo-exclusivism), human beings being ethical links and not the center; part and not the owner; eco-relation and not unique;

2) give value to the gift of cooperation and not to the law of competition, caring for the most fragile, integrating that which is disintegrated and that which is lost;

3) grow in generosity, welcome the different, open spaces for the new as well as for living the mystique of *care* giving, creating networks of solidarity, for spirituality is the most *profound dimension of the human*, the link which unites and reunites;

4) integrate everything; a human being is a *microcosm*, part of a whole, of a *macrocosm*;

5) re-sacralize the “houses”, the planet, Gaia, nature, the House, the body as dwelling place of the Trinity, the heart as home of the soul;

6) assume a more simple and detached life style as nature does: *sobriety cuts evil by its roots.*⁹

The cry of Ecology and Eco-spirituality is the possibility of a new awareness of belonging to the Universe and that the Universe is part of us. The awareness of the communion of a human being with the totality of Creation places us once again before an ancient challenge, the one that Moses placed before the people of Israel: “Behold, today I propose to

⁹ Libânio, J.B., o.c., p 67

you life and happiness on the one hand, death and disgrace on the other; today I choose the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you; I place before you life and death, blessing and condemnation” (Dt. 30, 15, 18).

Today we find ourselves confronted with two alternatives: life or chaos. Contemplating the reality of our world today the sentiment which deeply touches our hearts is that the choice of chaos predominates, even though our reason tells us the opposite. The dominant system may not intend to create chaos, but only short term profit. But the result of this choice is chaos, for an immediatist culture has no interest in the future. Profit is now; chaos is the future. Only a clear option of life and for Life will triumph over chaos. An option which situates us within a wider horizon, within the horizon desired by Jesus: “that *all* may have life in abundance”. This is the horizon of hope that allows us to triumph over chaos and envisage a new future.

6) A final invitation

As I indicated in the beginning of this article, I have no pretention to present a new thesis or the latest studies on Eco-spirituality or Ecology, but simply to share what I believe, have reflected on and put into practice. We are, you and I, standing before a choice – Life or chaos. Life is a movement which spring up from within. Jesus Christ is the Alfa and the Omega, that is, the Beginning and the End, the center of all creation. To bet on Life is to believe in Jesus and choose to care for the world which one day will be transformed by the power of the Spirit. To awaken in us an awareness of the question of sustentability is a new relation with nature. It is a vital question for humanity. A new mentality is urgent if we do not want to contemplate “chaos” and pay the tremendous price of a death-dealing process.

It is possible to change this chaotic reality beginning with the organization of men and women in the construction of a more just and sustainable society. Sustentability and solidarity go beyond the economic. It is a process which envisions a transformation of social, cultural, political and productive relations, in harmony with nature and with the active participation of society. It will demand our commitment to LIFE.

It consists in rediscovering the *mystique of caring*, cultivating an *Eco-spirituality*, creating new *relationships*, feeling oneself a *part of the whole*, being an ethical link, a link of love which unites and reunites beginning from within, from a profound experience of Trinity, from a contemplative listening and a sensitivity rooted in solidarity.

The Planet is constantly alerting us with heat waves, draughts, giant storms and floods. But we have to educate ourselves in order to grasp the message that He transmits to us and then learn to live in communion with everything which surrounds us. We must walk with eyes

wide open and not half asleep. The entire cosmos is like a great book which has to be read.

This is my final invitation to you:

be always one with God and one with the universe and be always welcome in the House. Your home is the universe and my heart and your heart as well. The universe is my home. We are all that is, all that was and all that will be.

Questions to help an individual reading and a community sharing

- 1) How can Eco-spirituality contribute to a new ecological awareness?
- 2) What challenges must Eco-spirituality confront?
- 3) How do you understand: “the mystique of caring”, “sustainability” and “being part of the whole”?
- 4) Concretely, in day to day living, what can you and your community do in the area of Ecology and Eco-spirituality?





Eco-espiritualidade

Um caminho de integração

Helena T. RECH, sts*
Rio de Janeiro, RJ, BRASIL

Introdução

A Ecoespiritualidade é um caminho de integração que nos leva a uma consciência Ecológica. Consciência esta, que não é apenas saber intelectual, mas saber e sabor do coração. Sabedoria que nasce de dentro. Conscientizar-se de que somos *parte* do planeta, do universo, uns dos outros e que com todos os seres vivos formamos a grande *Comunidade de Vida*. A consciência Ecológica nascida da Espiritualidade é início de uma jornada muito longa. Assim como a árvore gigante nasce de uma semente minúscula, a experiência seminal da contemplação na natureza, gradativamente nos torna seres ecológicos. A linha divisória entre meu mundo interior e o mundo exterior começa a diminuir à medida que nos aprofundamos na Ecoespiritualidade, através do caminho da contemplação, reconhecendo-nos, enquanto seres viventes, *búmus*, parte do todo. Em outras palavras, a dualidade “contemplador e contemplado” desaparece na unidade de um fluxo integrador da consciência de “ser parte”. O tema da Ecologia e da Ecoespiritualidade já são conhecidos e há muitos estudos bem elaborados. Não pretendo trazer novidades, mas compartilhar com simplicidade o que tenho refletido e trabalhado na área da Espiritualidade.

* Ir. Helena Teresinha RECH, Religiosa da Congregação das Servas da SSma. Trindade, foi dois períodos Conselheira geral e mais dois Coordenadora Geral e durante 10 anos Formadora; é Teóloga, com doutorado em Espiritualidade. Foi Coordenadora da USGCB e delegada da UISG; convidada, participou e trabalhou em dois Congressos internacionais de Teólogas (Alemanha e Argentina). Fez parte da Equipe que criou o PROFOLIDER esteve na coordenação e assessoria do mesmo até o presente. Fez parte da Diretoria da CRB Nacional e Regional/SP. Dedicou-se há mais de 30 anos como assessora de retiros, cursos, capítulos de Congregações, formação continuada e outros. Autora de livros, vários artigos e CDs de relaxamento. Membro do Conselho Editorial da CRB Nacional. Atualmente mora num Eremitério. E-mail: helenarech@ig.com.br

1. No princípio tudo era bom e belo

A narrativa da criação no livro do Gênesis, descreve que à medida que Deus criava, concluía que *tudo era bom* (Gn 1,10.12.18.21.25). O texto descreve a beleza do ato criador. Sabemos hoje, que se trata de um lindo hino de louvor à grandeza de Deus. Um Deus criador que sai do seu silêncio e se derrama, dá tudo de si, de sua beleza e bondade como presente. Vários salmos cantam o significado da bondade de Deus que começou na criação e se prolonga ao longo da história. Por exemplo, o Salmo 136(135) canta esta maravilhosa beleza e bondade: *Fez os céus com sabedoria, porque eterno é seu amor!*

Estamos “no princípio”, onde tudo é bom e belo, ou “no fim”, com nostalgia de tudo o que era bom e belo? Talvez numa “crise” onde precisamos recriar o belo, o amor, a ética, as novas relações de pertença, a capacidade de encantar-se, de contemplar, de compartilhar, de humanizar-se, de “pertencer” e ser uma *comunidade de vida*.

Alguns sintomas da crise ecológica que afeta todos os seres vivos: poluição do ar, poluição da água e todos os efeitos dos agrotóxicos; poluição dos mares, envenenamento da água e os problemas dos diversos lixos; envenenamento da terra, a “revolução verde” e seus impasses: plantas transgênicas, destruição das florestas e desertificação. E o que dizer da degradação da vida humana? Seria o ser humano responsável pelas catástrofes? O cristianismo ou as religiões?

O debate não pode ser só político, nem só tecnológico ou científico. Deve ser também religioso, cristão, da Vida Religiosa Consagrada e das Espiritualidades que dão sentido à existência e às coisas. Precisamos compreender e ressignificar o “criado”, a natureza, o universo e como comportar-nos e comprometer-nos com a VIDA em toda sua diversidade.

A Ecoespiritualidade exige um compromisso ético, profético, social, político, nascido não somente da indignação, mas de uma profunda experiência do Deus da Vida, com tudo o que *vive e respira*² sobre a face da terra.

2. Eco-espiritualidade

O prefixo *eco* (grego: *oikos*), significa casa, o lugar onde se vive. *Ecologia* é a ciência das inter-relações da casa.

A *Espiritualidade* é dom do Espírito. Ele cava em nosso interior a sede de Deus, suscita desejos profundos de vida plena para todos, provoca-nos a viver com ética e sensibilidade, mergulha-nos na fonte do amor Trinitário, torna-nos seres ecológicos.

² Salmo 150, 5b

Roberto Crema³ define assim a Espiritualidade sem reportar-se a nenhuma religião:

“Espiritualidade é uma consciência não dual, uma consciência de uma participação da parte no todo que na essência é o amor e na prática é a solidariedade”.

Segundo Roberto Crema, uma pessoa que despertou para a Espiritualidade é uma pessoa que não se vê separada do outro, da comunidade e do universo.

Logo, se eu me sinto *não-separada(o)*, colocaria fogo no seu corpo?

- faria xixi no morador de rua que dorme debaixo de uma marquise?

- negaria acolher, escutar, alimentar alguém que me pede ajuda?

- se me sinto *não-separada(o)* da natureza, iria empestear e destruir os ecossistemas por uma neurose de progresso compulsivo? Iria contaminar as águas, poluir o ar, acabar com os rios, com as espécies, com a nossa “Casa Comum”?

A Ecoespiritualidade, portanto, é o caminho interior de ressignificação da casa. Da Carta da Terra podemos extrair e aplicar à Ecoespiritualidade este texto: *Reconhecer que todos os seres são interligados e cada forma de vida tem valor, independentemente do uso humano*⁴. Sim, reconhecer que somos seres dependentes uns dos outros como os fios de uma grande teia de aranha. Se um fio se rompe toda a teia sofre o impacto. Na teia todos os fios são importantes e nenhum pode ser sem o outro, estão interligados e transligados. A multiplicidade de fios forma uma única e linda engenharia da teia. No vocabulário da ecologia o termo *holismo*, que vem do grego, significa totalidade. Tudo adquire um novo sentido, respeito e cuidado a partir do momento que tomamos consciência de ser parte da totalidade e que o todo é parte de mim.

A *Ecoespiritualidade* é um jeito de ressignificar a Espiritualidade tendo em vista os desafios pelos quais passa a VIDA e a MÃE-TERRA. É um modo de viver de forma integrada e harmoniosa com a totalidade das relações da *casa*, através do *cuidado* e do *respeito* com toda a *Comunidade de Vida*⁵, reconhecendo nossa fonte originária de onde tudo provém, Deus Trindade, da qual buscamos aprender a vivência das relações.

A visão *holística* implica, na perspectiva da ecoespiritualidade, uma nova sensibilidade e nova compreensão da terra e de tudo o que vive sobre a terra.

³ Escritor, da Universidade Holística da Paz (<http://gaian.zip.net>).

⁴ *Carta da Terra*, Princípios, p.17, item a.

⁵ Expressão da *Carta da Terra*.

O teólogo J.B. Libânio escreve, nesta perspectiva, de cultivarmos uma atitude icludente, que contemple o todo e nos convida à um olhar integrador, capaz de ver a beleza de uma estrela e ao mesmo tempo encantar-nos pela beleza de uma noite estrelada:

Substituímos um olhar detalhista, que disseca a realidade, para ver tudo em bela harmonia. Cada ser soa uma nota em imensa sinfonia. Conjugamos dois olhares paradoxais que convergem para uma única compreensão. Contempla-se cada ser na sua indivisível singularidade. Então parece veríamos uma infinidade de pontos díspares. Mas, num segundo momento, unimo-nos com o olhar num maravilhoso desenho em belíssima unidade. Assemelha-se a uma noite estrelada e clara em que contemplamos cada estrela em sua beleza e o céu todo numa fantástica orquestra sinderal⁶.

Quando compreendermos que pertencemos à Terra, somos filhos e filhas da Terra e que somos *húmus*, nosso olhar diante da Mãe Terra, diante dos irmãos e irmãs, diante da fome, da exclusão social e econômica, será muito diferente! Compreenderemos que todos temos o mesmo DNA de base, depois cada espécie de ser vivo é constituída do alfabeto próprio de sua espécie. Todos somos húmus, isto é, viemos da Terra e a ela votaremos. A Terra não está à nossa frente como algo distinto de nós mesmos, ela *É* em nós. Somos a própria Terra que na sua evolução chegou ao estágio de sentimento, de compreensão, de vontade, de responsabilidade e consciência. Esse “húmus” foi trabalhado pelo amor Trinitário *fibra por fibra* (SI 139), com um cuidado especial fez-nos à “sua imagem”, projetando algo de si em nós. A Trindade deu uma grande bênção ao mundo criado: *cresça e multiplique-se... eu te formei e consagrei... antes do teu nascimento eu já te conhecia*.

O caminho da Ecoespiritualidade leva em conta a *biodiversidade* e busca integrar o ser humano à natureza da qual ele procede e é parte. A vida e a autoconsciência da vida são interligadas. A Espiritualidade é a tomada de consciência da importância e do significado mais profundo da vida do planeta, do sentido da Casa Comum. Quero dizer da importância da Ecoespiritualidade para a “VIDA” integral. Sair do “centro”, do antropocentrismo e do antrope-exclusivismo para uma consciência de pertença.

Quase tudo no universo se fez sem precisar de nós. Como queremos o senhorio da terra, dizendo-nos “proprietárias(os)”, “senhoras(es)”, destruindo, nos apropriando ou transformando tudo em caos? Somos apenas “húmus” para novas formas de vida. Depende de nós o futuro comum, nosso e de nossa querida Casa Comum: a Terra.

⁶ Libânio, J.B., *Ecologia, vida ou morte?*, Paulus, São Paulo 2010

Por sentirmo-nos filhos e filhas da Terra, por sermos a própria Terra pensante e amante, vivemo-la como Mãe. Ela é um princípio generativo. Representa o Feminino que concebe, gesta, e dá a luz. Emerge assim o arquétipo da Terra como Grande Mãe, Pachá Mama e Nana. Da mesma forma que tudo gera e entrega à vida, ela também tudo acolhe e tudo recolhe em seu seio. Ao morrer, voltamos à Mãe Terra. Regressamos ao seu útero generoso e fecundo.⁷

3. Ecoespiritualidade – uma experiência integradora

Quando despertei para a realidade ecológica e cresceu em mim a compreensão de que a *Eco-espiritualidade* poderia ser um caminho de integração humano ecológica, como também se as diferentes espiritualidades se unissem, seria a possibilidade de salvar nossa Casa Comum e vivermos irmanados como uma grande comunidade de vida. A partir daí comecei a pensar, refletir e ousar algo novo em minhas assessorias. Sempre havia um toque ecológico, até iniciar os *Retiros Ecológicos*.

Há cinco anos estou orientando *Retiros Ecológicos*. O objetivo é oportunizar uma experiência de Deus através da prática da contemplação e da vivência da ecoespiritualidade. A dinâmica do retiro é em silêncio, em contato profundo com Deus, consigo, com a natureza e feita de forma contemplativa: contemplar a natureza, a vida pessoal, a missionariedade, as pessoas, com a iluminação da Palavra de Deus. Deixar que tudo passe dos *olhos* para o *coração*, do ver para o *sentir*, do *experenciar* cada coisa para *ser parte*, do *tocar* para o *ser tocada(o)*...

O Retiro Ecológico é um grande convite à contemplação como caminho do coração e da sabedoria que nos leva a admirar, saborear, encantar pelas maravilhas da criação, experienciar-se parte e provar como o Senhor é bom. A contemplação é um caminho que nos abre internamente para o belo, o cuidado, a acolhida, o bem, o diálogo, às relações, o novo olhar, o sentido de pertença, reverência diante do mistério da vida, da alteridade, do Grande Outro - Deus Trindade. O convite é: *Tira tuas sandálias, pois a terra onde pisas é santa. Tira tuas sandálias pois o outro é espaço sagrado habitado por Deus. Tira tuas sandálias pois, a biodiversidade é sagrada, habitada, parte de sua vida e você da vida dela.*

A contemplação é o espaço da integração com toda a criação e com o Criador, no Filho Jesus, o Primogênito de tudo. Na carta aos Colossenses, Paulo escreve: “Ele é a imagem do Deus invisível, o promogênito de *toda criação*, pois é *nele que foram criadas todas as coisas, no céu e na terra*... pois Deus quis fazer habitar nele toda a plenitude e, por

⁷ Leonardo Boff, *Eco-espiritualidade: que significa ser e sentir-se Terra?*

ele, reconciliar consigo todos os seres, tanto na terra como no céu” (1,15-20). Todas as criaturas e o universo são sagrados, habitados pelo Verbo Trinitário. Nele habita a plenitude da Vida e Ele habita, pela encarnação, a nosso mundo como Primogênito. O mundo é transpassado, penetrado pelo “Logos” Criador, élo que une e reúne todos os seres do céu e da terra. Nesta comunhão trinitária do Pai e do Filho, no Espírito Vivificador, somos chamados/as à comunhão na pluralidade e na diferença. A criação tem seu espaço em Deus e Ele a habita - seu santuário ecológico.

Dentro da contemplação emergem apelos e desejos profundos que levam a posturas e atitudes éticas, de indignação diante da injustiça, da desigualdade, da destruição da natureza, do desrepeito à vida humana, do tráfico humano, da miséria e todos os males que assolam a “Comunidade de Vida”.

A contemplação nos faz pessoas sensíveis às injustiças, à depreciação e destruição da natureza. A Ecoespiritualidade é integradora, nos abre à *solidariedade* com as pessoas e com o planeta. Torna-nos conscientes, pessoas de comunhão, construtoras da Paz e da justiça.

Contemplar é olhar com o coração aquilo os olhos não enxergam. É ver além daquilo que se vê. É penetrar a realidade com o olhar de Deus e com sua ternura.

Contemplação como caminho do coração e da sabedoria, nos faz seguir tentando, com respeito, humildade, cuidado e paz. Onde há sabedoria nascida da contemplação, não há lixo nem exclusão, há seres em relação. Quando vivemos nossa essência de seres relacionais, fazemo-nos ouvintes da Palavra que vem de todos os seres e das redes de comunicação que se estabelece com o todo e nos tornamos *humus*, seres de comunhão e integração, seres ecológicos.

Posso avaliar como positiva essa experiência e sinto que seu objetivo tem sido atingido. Através da contemplação cria-se uma consciência ecológica, uma mística do cuidado para com o Planeta, os ecossistemas, a natureza e toda a Vida, sentindo-se parte, relacionando-se com respeito e sensibilidade, abertura e amor. Deus Trindade - Fonte da vida e das relações, nos possibilite sermos pessoas ecológicas comprometidas com a Comunidade de Vida, pois segundo L. Boff⁸:

A missão do ser humano reside em poder captar os mil ecos que vêm dessa grande Voz que reboia de ponta a ponta do universo e que vibra em cada ser. Cabe-nos unir nossa voz a esse eco universal; somos chamados a ser sinfônicos e a venerar o Maestro dessa imensa orquestra cósmica... Deus, vivificador e atrator de todas as coisas para seu seio paternal e maternal.

⁸ L. Boff, *A voz do Arco Íris*, p. 133.

4. Ecoespiritualidade - processo de humanização/interiorização

Outra dimensão da Ecoespiritualidade é recolocar-nos em nosso verdadeiro lugar – sermos humanos, humanizar-nos, trazer-nos para nossa *casa interior*, nos habitar.

Parece que a mulher e o homem pós modernos perderam a direção da própria interioridade, da *casa interior*, da intimidade. Quem sabe perderam “as chaves”, esqueceram o “segredo” ou a “senha” que abre o coração, perderam-se no caminho encantador e sedutor que a pós modernidade lhes oferece. Muitas pessoas já não sabem responder perguntas existenciais como, quem sou eu? O que busco? Para onde vou? O que desejo?

Nunca o ser humano esteve tão “conectado” e tão solitário. Muitos não conseguem mais encontrar o eixo gravitacional de sua vida. Outros vivem e “era do vazio” ou a “era do gelo”, da cultura “líquida”, onde relações, valores, amor, ética... se reduzem ao narcísico, ao consumismo, à superficialidade e descartabilidade. Torna-se difícil ou quase impossível o contato consigo mesmo/a, com o outro/a, com Deus, de forma profunda, simples humanizadora, integradora e espiritual.

Contemplando nossas Instituições Religiosas, como estamos e somos *oikos*, para nós mesmas/os, para a comunidade, para o povo? Ou somos eco da *síndrome da exterioridade*, do vazio, do barulho, da administração eficiente, da “bolsa de valores”?

Qual *Virgens Prudentes* trazemos ainda em nós o óleo precioso do silêncio, da convivência, da pertença, da alegria, da oração, do perdão, da compaixão, da solidariedade, da simplicidade e despojamento?

Numa assessoria à VRC, uma Provincial se aproximou e me disse: “temos excelestes profissionais, administradoras, pedagogas, enfermeiras... mas, poucas religiosas”. Outra jovem religiosa partilhou: “não vim para VR para ser administradora... não encontro mais tempo para rezar, descansar, estar comigo, conviver...”. É verdade. Refletimos, rezamos, nos assessoramos e fazemos cursos sobre “leveza”, discutimos sobre mística, espiritualidade, relações, fazemos retiros... Em que isso nos *interioriza e humaniza*? Entrarmos e sairmos com leveza e alegria do nosso coração, da comunidade, da oração, de nossa “CASA”? Como Ecoespiritualidade pode ser um caminho de interiorização e humanização?

A Ecoespiritualidade vem recolocar-nos no caminho da *CASA*:

- na *intimidade da casa interior*,
- no convívio e nas *relações* humanizantes na *casa comunidade*,
- no *amor* à nossa *casa País*,
- sentir-nos *irmã, irmão* na *Grande Comunidade de Vida*,
- sentir-nos *parte* de tudo e ser élo ético e capacidade de amar na *Casa Comum – o Planeta*,

- mergulhar-nos no aconchego e intimidade da Trindade, *CASA* de onde viemos e para onde voltaremos. Onde a vida é plenitude, o amor é infinito, a contemplação é eterna, as relações circulares, a alegria contagiante, e a *pericorese* se faz eternamente.

Viver a Espiritualidade Ecológica é deixar-nos fecundar pela *Ruah* Divina, entelaçar no seu amor e a todos irmanar e animar, pois tudo o que *vive e respira* sobre a terra tem um Pai-Mãe comum que a tudo sustenta e dá a vida.

5. Desafios que se apresentam à Ecoespiritualidade

1. Tirar o ser humano do centro, antropocêntrismo e antropo-exclusivismo. O humano é elo ético e não centro; é parte e não dono, é eco-relação e não único.

2. Valorizar o dom da cooperação e não a lei da competição. Cuidar dos mais fracos, integrar o que está desintegrado e o que está perdido.

3. Crescer em generosidade, acolher o diferente, abrir espaços para o novo e para a vivência da mística do *cuidado*, criar redes de solidariedade, pois a Espiritualidade é o *profundo do humano*, é elo que une e reúne.

4. Integrar todas as coisas. O ser humano é *microcosmo*, parte do todo, do *macrocosmo*.

5. Ressacralizar as “casas”: o planeta, Gaya, a natureza, a casa, o corpo como morada da Trindade, o coração como morada da alma.

6. Assumir um estilo de vida mais simples e despojado, como a natureza. *A sobriedade corta o mal pela raiz.*⁹

O grito Ecológico e da Ecoespiritualidade é possibilidade de uma nova consciência de pertença ao universo e de que ele faz parte de nós. A consciência de comunhão do ser humano com a totalidade da Criação, recoloca-nos diante de um antigo desafio, que Moisés colocava ao povo de Israel: *Vê que hoje te proponho a vida e felicidade, a morte e a desgraça. Hoje tomo como testemunhas contra vós o céu e a terra: foi a vida e a morte que pus diante de ti, a bênção e a maldição* (Dt 30,15.18). Encontramo-nos hoje diante de duas alternativas: escolher a vida ou o caos.

Contemplando nossa realidade atual perpassa em nosso coração o sentimento de que predomina a escolha do caos. Embora nossa razão não explique assim. Ao sistema vigente não interessa o caos, mas o lucro a curto prazo. É daí que vem o caos. À uma cultura imediatista, não interessa o futuro. O lucro é agora, o caos é futuro. Só uma clara opção de vida e pela Vida vencerá o caos. Opção que nos coloca num horizonte maior, no horizonte da vida querida por Jesus: “para que *todos* tenham

⁹ Libânio, J.B., o.c., p.67

vida em abundância"... Este horizonte de esperança nos faz vencer o caos e vislumbrar um futuro novo.

6. Um convite final

Como acenei no início deste artigo, não tive nenhuma pretensão de apresentar uma nova tese ou os últimos estudos sobre a Ecoespiritualidade ou a Ecologia, mas compatilhar o que acredito, tenho refletido e realizado.

Estamos, você e eu, diante de uma escolha: a Vida ou o Caos. A vida é um movimento que brota de dentro e Jesus Cristo é o Alfa e o Ômega, quer dizer o Princípio, o Fim, o Centro de toda a criação. Apostar na Vida é acreditar em Jesus e escolher e cuidar do mundo que um dia se transformará pela força do Espírito. Acordar em nós a consciência para a questão da sustentabilidade e uma nova relação com a natureza. É uma questão vital para a humanidade. É urgente uma nova mentalidade se não quisermos contemplar o "caos" e pagarmos o preço caríssimo de um processo mortal. É possível mudar essa realidade caótica a partir da organização de homens e mulheres na construção de uma sociedade mais justa e sustentável. Sustentabilidade e solidariedade vão além do econômico. É um processo que visa a transformação das relações sociais, culturais, políticas e produtivas, em harmonia com o meio ambiente e com a participação ativa da sociedade. Vai exigir nosso compromisso com a VIDA.

Redescobrir a mística do cuidado, cultivar a Ecoespiritualidade, recriar novas relações, sentir-se parte do todo, ser élo ético e élo de amor que une e reúne a partir de dentro, da experiência profunda da Trindade, da escuta contemplativa e da sensibilidade solidária.

O Planeta nos alerta constantemente com ondas de calor, secas, tempestades e inundações. É necessário que nos eduquemos para captar a mensagem que ele nos transmite e aprender a viver a comunhão com tudo o que nos rodeia. Caminhar a vigília e não adormecida/o. Todo o Cosmos é como um grande livro que precisa ser lido. Este é meu convite final para você: "Sempre és um com Deus e um com o universo, e bem vindo à CASA. Teu lar é o universo e o meu coração e o teu coração e o universo é meu Lar. Somos tudo o que é, tudo o que foi e tudo o que será".

QUESTÕES PARA LEITURA INDIVIDUAL/PARTILHA NA COMUNIDADE

1. Em que a Ecoespiritualidade pode contribuir para uma nova consciência ecológica?
2. Quais os desafios que a Ecoespiritualidade deve enfrentar?
3. O que você entende por mística do cuidado, sustentabilidade e ser parte do todo?
4. Concretamente, na prática do dia a dia, o que você e sua comunidade pode fazer no nível Ecológico e da Ecoespiritualidade?

Colección «Tiempo axial»

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3. **ASETT**, *Por los muchos caminos de Dios, II*, 239 pp, 5,5 US\$
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17. O. **MURCHU**, *Teología cuántica*
18. J.S.**SPONG**, *Por qué el cristianismo tiene que cambiar o morir*
19. J-S-**SPONG**, *Vida Eterna. Más allá del teísmo, más allá de cielo e infierno*

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Ecoespiritualidad

Un camino de integración

Helena T. RECH, sts*

Rio de Janeiro, RJ, BRASIL

Translation: José Miguel Paz

Introducción

La ecoespiritualidad es un camino de integración que nos lleva a una conciencia ecológica. Esta conciencia no es solamente un saber intelectual, sino un saber con un sabor en el corazón. Una sabiduría que nace de dentro. Un concientizarse de que somos parte del planeta, del Universo, unos de los otros, y de que, con todos los seres vivos, formamos la gran *Comunidad de la vida*. La conciencia ecológica nacida de la espiritualidad es inicio de un viaje muy largo. Así como el árbol gigante nace de una minúscula semilla, la experiencia seminal de la contemplación de la naturaleza gradualmente nos transforma en seres ecológicos. La línea divisoria entre mi mundo interior y el mundo exterior comienza a disminuir, en la medida que profundizamos la ecoespiritualidad a través del camino de la contemplación, reconociéndonos, en cuanto seres vivientes, *humus*, parte del todo. En otras palabras, la dualidad de “contemplador y contemplado” desaparece en la unidad de un flujo integrador de la conciencia de “ser parte”. Los temas de la ecología y de la ecoespiritualidad ya son conocidos y hay muchos estudios bien elaborados. No pretendo presentar novedades sino compartir con simplicidad lo que he reflexionado y trabajado en esta área de la espiritualidad.

* Helena Teresinha RECH, religiosa de la Congregación de las Siervas de la Sma. Trinidad, fue Consejera general y Coordinadora general, y durante 10 años formadora. Teóloga, con doctorado en espiritualidad, fue Coordinadora de la USGCB y delegada de UISG. Invitada, participó y trabajó en dos Congresos internacionales de teólogas (Alemania y Argentina). Forma parte del equipo que creó PROFOLIDER. Está actualmente en la coordinación y asesoría del mismo. Forma parte del Directorio de la CRB Nacional y Regional/SP; se dedica hace más de 30 años a asesorar retiros, cursos, capítulos de congregaciones, formación continuada y otros. Autora de libros, artículos varios y CDs de relajamiento. Miembro del Consejo Editorial de la CRB Nacional. Actualmente vive en un eremitorio. Correo-e: helenarech@ig.com.br

1. En el principio todo era bueno y bello

La narración de la creación en el libro del Génesis describe que, a medida que Dios creaba, concluía que “todo era bueno” (Gn 1,10.12.18.21.25). El texto describe la belleza del acto creador. Sabemos hoy que se trata de un lindo himno de alabanza a la grandeza de Dios. Un Dios creador que sale de su silencio y se derrama, da todo de sí, de su belleza y bondad, como un don. Varios salmos cantan el significado de la bondad de Dios, que comenzó con la creación y se prolonga a lo largo de la historia. Por ejemplo, el salmo 136(135) canta esta maravillosa belleza y bondad: “Hizo los cielos con sabiduría, porque eterno es su amor”.

¿Estamos “en el principio”, donde todo es bueno y bello, o “en el fin”, con nostalgia de todo lo que era bueno y bello? Tal vez estamos en una crisis, en la que necesitamos recrear la belleza, el amor, la ética, unas nuevas relaciones de pertenencia, la capacidad de encantarnos, de contemplar, de compartir, de humanizarnos, de pertenecer y ser una *Comunidad de Vida*.

Algunos síntomas de la crisis ecológica que afecta a todos los seres vivos: polución del aire, polución del agua y todos los efectos de los agrotóxicos, polución de los mares, envenenamiento del agua y problemas de las diversas basuras; envenenamiento de la tierra; la “revolución verde” y sus impases: plantas transgénicas, destrucción de las florestas, desertificación. ¿Y qué decir de la degradación de la vida humana? ¿Será el ser humano responsable de estas catástrofes? ¿Las religiones o el cristianismo?

El debate no puede ser sólo político, ni sólo tecnológico o científico. Debe ser también religioso, cristiano, y de todas las espiritualidades que dan sentido a la existencia de las cosas. Necesitamos comprender y resignificar lo creado, la naturaleza, el universo y nuestro comportamiento, y comprometernos con la VIDA en toda su diversidad. La ecoespiritualidad exige un compromiso ético, profético, social, político, nacido no solamente de la indignación, sino de una profunda experiencia del Dios de la vida, con todo lo que “vive y respira”² sobre la faz de la Tierra.

2. Eco-espiritualidad

El prefijo *eco* (en griego: *oikos*), significa casa, el hogar en el que se mora. Ecología es la ciencia de las interrelaciones de la casa.

La espiritualidad es don del Espíritu. Él suscita en nuestro interior la sed de Dios, alienta deseos profundos de la vida plena para todos, incitándonos a vivir con ética y sensibilidad, nos sumerge en la fuente del amor trinitario, nos hace seres ecológicos.

² Salmo 150, 5b.

Roberto Crema³ define la espiritualidad sin referencia a la religión:

Espiritualidad es una conciencia no dual, una conciencia de participación de la parte en el todo, que en esencia es el amor y en la práctica es la solidaridad.

Según este autor, una persona que ha despertado a la espiritualidad es una persona que se ve *no-separada* del otro, de la comunidad y del universo.

Entonces, si yo me siento *no separada(o)*, ¿sería capaz de prender fuego en tu cuerpo?

- ¿orinaría sobre una persona que vive en la calle durmiendo debajo de una marquesina?

- ¿me negaría acoger, escuchar, alimentar a alguien que me pide ayuda?

- si me siento no separado de la naturaleza, ¿podría infestarla y destruir los ecosistemas por una neurosis de progreso compulsivo? ¿Podría contaminar las aguas, polucionar el mar, acabar con los ríos, con las especies, con nuestra Casa común?

La ecoespiritualidad, por tanto, es el camino interior de resignificación de la casa. De la *Carta de la Tierra* podemos extraer y aplicar a la ecoespiritualidad este texto: “Reconocer que todos los seres están interligados y que cada forma de vida tiene valor, independientemente del uso humano”⁴. Sí, reconocer que somos seres dependientes unos de los otros como los hilos de una gran tela de araña. Si un hilo se rompe toda la tela sufre el impacto. En la tela todos los hilos son importantes y ninguno puede existir sin el otro, están interligados y transligados. La multiplicidad de los hilos forma una única y linda ingeniería de la tela. En el vocabulario de la ecología el término *holismo*, que viene del griego, significa totalidad. Todo adquiere un nuevo sentido de respeto y de cuidado a partir del momento en que tomamos conciencia de ser parte de la totalidad y que el todo es parte de mí.

La ecoespiritualidad es una manera de resignificar la espiritualidad en vista a los desafíos por los que pasa la Vida y la Madre Tierra. Es un modo de vivir de forma integrada y armoniosa con la totalidad de las relaciones de la casa, a través del cuidado y del respeto con toda la “Comunidad de Vida”⁵, reconociendo nuestra fuente originaria de la que todo proviene, Dios Trinidad, de la cual buscamos aprender la vivencia de las relaciones.

³ Escritor, de la Universidad Holística de la Paz (<http://gaian.zip.net>)

⁴ *Carta de la Tierra*, Principios, p. 17, ítem a.

⁵ Expresión de la *Carta de la Tierra*.

La visión holística implica, en la perspectiva de la espiritualidad, una nueva sensibilidad y una nueva comprensión de la tierra y de todo lo que vive sobre ella.

El teólogo J.B. Libânio, desde esta perspectiva, escribe que debemos cultivar una actitud incluyente que contemple el todo, y nos invita a un mirar integrador, capaz de ver la belleza de una estrella y al mismo tiempo encantarnos por la belleza de una noche estrellada.

*Sustituimos un mirar detallista, que disecciona la realidad, para ver todo en bella armonía. Cada ser es una nota dentro de una inmensa sinfonía. Conjugamos dos miradas paradójicas que convergen en una única comprensión. Se contempla cada ser en su indivisible singularidad. Entonces parece que veríamos una infinidad de puntos dispares, pero en un segundo momento, los unimos, y vemos un maravilloso dibujo, en bellísima unidad. Se asemeja a una noche estrellada y clara en la que contemplamos cada estrella en su belleza, y todo el cielo en una fantástica orquesta sideral.*⁶

Cuando comprendemos que pertenecemos a la Tierra, somos hijos e hijas de la Tierra, y que somos *humus*, nuestro mirar a la Madre Tierra, a los hermanos y hermanas, al hambre, a la exclusión social y económica... será muy diferente. Comprenderemos que todos tenemos el mismo ADN de base, alfabeto con el que está escrito el código cada especie de ser vivo. Todos somos *humus*, esto es, venimos de la tierra y a ella volveremos. La tierra no está frente a nosotros como algo distinto de nosotros mismos, ella es en nosotros. Somos la propia Tierra, que en su evolución, llegó al estadio del sentimiento, de la comprensión, de la voluntad, de la responsabilidad y conciencia... Ese *humus* fue trabajado por el amor Trinitario “fibra por fibra” (Sl 139). Con un cuidado especial nos hizo a su imagen, proyectando algo de sí en nosotros. La Trinidad dio una gran bendición al mundo creado: “crezcan y multiplíquense... yo te formé y consagré... antes de tu nacimiento yo ya te conocía”...

El camino de la ecoespiritualidad toma en cuenta la biodiversidad y busca integrar al ser humano a la naturaleza de la que procede y es parte. La vida y la autoconciencia de la vida están interligadas. La espiritualidad es la toma de conciencia de la importancia del significado más profundo de la vida del planeta, del sentido de la Casa Común. Quiero destacar la importancia de la ecoespiritualidad para la VIDA integral. Salir del centro, del antropocentrismo y del antro-po-exclusivismo, hacia una conciencia de pertenencia.

Casi todo en el universo se hace sin necesidad de nosotros. Como queremos el señorío de la tierra, nos llamamos propietarios, señoras/es; destruyendo, apropiándonos, lo transformamos todo en caos. Somos ape-

⁶ Libânio, J.B., *Ecologia, vida ou morte?*, Paulinas, São Paulo 2010.

nas *humus* para nuevas formas de vida. Depende de nosotros el futuro común, nuestro y de nuestra querida Casa Común: la Tierra.

*Por sentirnos hijos e hijas de la Tierra, por ser la propia Tierra pensante y amante, la vivimos como Madre. Ella es un principio generativo. Representa lo femenino que concibe, gesta y da a luz. Emerge así el arquetipo de la Tierra como Gran Madre, Pacha Mama y Nana. De la misma forma que todo genera y entrega a la vida, ella también todo acoge y todo recoge en su seno. Al morir, volvemos a la Madre Tierra. Regresamos a su útero generoso y fecundo.*⁷

3. Ecoespiritualidad: una experiencia integradora

Cuando desperté a la realidad ecológica, creció en mí la comprensión de que la ecoespiritualidad podría ser un camino de integración humano ecológica; pensé también que si las diferentes espiritualidades se uniesen, se abriría la posibilidad de salvar nuestra Casa Común y vivir hermanados como una gran Comunidad de Vida. A partir de entonces, comencé a pensar, reflexionar y echar mano de algo nuevo en mis trabajos pastorales de animación: siempre incluí un toque ecológico, hasta que comencé los *retiros ecológicos*.

Llevo cinco años animando *retiros ecológicos*. Su objetivo es propiciar la oportunidad de una experiencia de Dios a través de la práctica de la contemplación y de la vivencia de la ecoespiritualidad. La dinámica del retiro es en silencio, en contacto profundo con Dios, consigo, con la naturaleza y hecha de forma contemplativa: contemplar la naturaleza, la vida personal, la misión, las personas, con la iluminación de la Palabra de Dios. Dejar que todo pase de los *ojos* para el *corazón*, del *ver* al *sentir*, del *experimentar* cada cosa... a *ser parte*, de *tocar*... a *ser tocada/o*...

Un retiro ecológico es una gran invitación a la contemplación como camino del corazón y de la sabiduría que nos lleva a admirar, saborear, y encantarnos por las maravillas de la creación, a experimentar y probar qué bueno es el Señor. La contemplación es un camino que nos abre internamente a la belleza, al cuidado, a la acogida, al bien, al diálogo, a las relaciones, a un nuevo ver, al sentido de pertenencia, a la reverencia ante el misterio de la vida, de la alteridad, del Gran Otro, Dios Trinidad. La invitación es: “quítate las sandalias, pues la tierra que pisas es santa. Quítate tus sandalias, porque el otro es espacio sagrado habitado por Dios. Quítate las, pues la biodiversidad es sagrada, habitada, parte de tu vida, y tú de la vida de ella”.

La contemplación es el espacio de integración con toda la creación y con el Creador, en el Hijo Jesús, el primogénito de todo. En la Carta a los Colosenses, Pablo escribe: “Él es la imagen del Dios invisible, el

⁷ Leonardo Boff. *Eco-espiritualidade: que significa ser e sentir-se Terra?*

primogénito de toda creación, pues en Él fueron creadas todas las cosas, en el cielo y en la tierra... pues Dios quiso hacer habitar en él toda la plenitud y por Él, reconciliar consigo todos los seres, tanto en la tierra como en el cielo” (1,15-20). Todas las criaturas y el universo son sagrados, habitados por el Verbo trinitario. En Él habita la plenitud de la vida y Él habita, por la encarnación, en nuestro mundo como Primogénito. El mundo es traspasado, penetrado por el Logos creador, el que une y reúne todos los seres del cielo y de la tierra. En esta comunión trinitaria del Padre y del Hijo, en el Espíritu vivificador, somos llamados/as a la comunión en la pluralidad y en la diferencia. La creación tiene su espacio en Dios y Él la habita: es su santuario ecológico.

Dentro de la contemplación emergen llamamientos y deseos profundos que llevan a posturas y actitudes éticas, de indignación ante la injusticia, la desigualdad, la destrucción de la naturaleza, la falta de respeto a la vida humana, el tráfico humano, la miseria y todos los males que asolan la Comunidad de Vida.

La contemplación nos hace personas sensibles a las injusticias, a la depredación y destrucción de la naturaleza. La ecoespiritualidad es integradora, nos abre a la solidaridad con las personas y con el planeta. Nos vuelve conscientes, personas de comunión, constructoras de la paz y de la justicia.

Contemplar y ver con el corazón lo que los ojos no divisan. Es ver más allá de lo que se ve. Es penetrar la realidad con el ver de Dios y su ternura.

La contemplación, como camino del corazón y de la sabiduría, nos da fuerza para seguir luchando, con respeto, humildad, cuidado y paz. Donde hay sabiduría nacida de la contemplación, no hay exclusión, hay seres en relación. Cuando vivimos nuestra esencia de seres racionales nos hacemos “oyentes de la Palabra” que viene de todos los seres y de las redes de comunicación que se establecen con el Todo, y nos volvemos humus, seres de comunión e integración, seres ecológicos.

Evalúo como positiva esta experiencia, y siento que su objetivo ha sido alcanzado. A través de la contemplación se crea una conciencia ecológica, una mística del cuidado del planeta, los ecosistemas, la naturaleza y toda la Vida, sintiéndonos parte, relacionándonos con respeto y sensibilidad, con apertura al amor. Que Dios Trinidad, fuente de vida y de las relaciones nos posibilite ser personas ecológicas comprometidas con la Comunidad de Vida, pues según Leonardo Boff⁸:

La misión del ser humano reside en poder captar los mil ecos que vienen de esa gran Voz que resuena de punta a punta del universo y que vibra en cada ser. Nos cabe unir nuestra voz a ese eco universal; somos

⁸ L. Boff, *La Voz del Arco Iris*, p. 133.

llamados a ser sinfónicos y a venerar al Maestro de esa inmensa orquesta cósmica... Dios, vivifica y atrae a todas las cosas hacia su sello paternal y maternal.

4. Ecoespiritualidad: proceso de humanización/interiorización

Otra dimensión de la ecoespiritualidad es recolocarnos en nuestro verdadero lugar: ser humanos, humanizarnos, volvernos a nuestra casa interior, nuestro hábitat.

Parece que la mujer y el hombre posmodernos perdieron la dirección de la propia interioridad de la *casa interior*, de la intimidad. Quién sabe. Quizás perdieron las llaves, olvidaron el secreto o la llave que abre el corazón, se perdieron en el camino encantador y seductor que la posmodernidad les ofrece. Muchas personas ya no saben responder preguntas existenciales como: ¿quién soy yo?, ¿qué busco?, ¿para dónde voy?, ¿qué deseo?

Nunca el ser humano estuvo tan conectado... y tan solitario. Muchos ya no consiguen encontrar el eje gravitacional de su vida. Otros viven la “era del vacío” o la “era del hielo”, de la “cultura líquida”, donde relaciones, valores, amor, ética... se reducen al narcisismo, al consumismo, a la superficialidad y la descartabilidad. Se vuelve difícil o casi imposible el contacto consigo mismo, con el otro/a, con Dios, de forma profunda, simplemente humanizadora, integradora y espiritual.

Contemplando nuestras instituciones religiosas, ¿cómo estamos y somos *oikos*, para nosotros mismas/os, para la comunidad, para el pueblo? ¿O somos eco del *síndrome de la exterioridad*, del vacío, del barullo, de la administración eficiente, de la bolsa de valores?

Cual *vírgenes prudentes*, ¿somos portadoras, todavía, del óleo precioso del silencio, de la convivencia, de la pertenencia, de la alegría, de la oración, del perdón, de la compasión, de la solidaridad, de la simplicidad y despojamiento?

En un cursillo para la VRC, una superiora provincial se me acercó y me dijo: tenemos excelentes profesionales, administradoras, pedagogas, enfermeras... pero pocas religiosas. Otra joven religiosa dijo: no vine a la VR para ser administradora... ya no encuentro tiempo para rezar, descansar, estar conmigo, convivir... Es verdad: reflexionamos, rezamos, nos formamos, y hacemos cursos sobre *levedad*, discutimos sobre mística, espiritualidad, relaciones, hacemos retiros... ¿Cómo esto nos humaniza e interioriza? ¿Entramos y salimos con ligereza y alegría de nuestro corazón, de la comunidad, de la oración, de la misión, de nuestra Casa? ¿Cómo la ecoespiritualidad puede ser un camino de interiorización y humanización? La ecoespiritualidad viene a recolocarnos en el camino de la CASA.

- en la *intimidad* de la *casa interior*,
- en el *convivio* y en las *relaciones* humanizantes en la casa comu-
nidad,
- en el *amor* a nuestra *casa País*,
- sentirnos *hermana, hermano* en la *Gran Comunidad de Vida*,
- sentirnos *parte* del Todo, ser eslabón ético y capacidad de amar
en la *Casa común* o *Planeta*,
- sumergirnos en la acogida e intimidad de la Trinidad, *nuestra Casa*, de la que hemos venido y a la que regresaremos. Donde la vida es plenitud, el amor es infinito, la contemplación es eterna, las relaciones circulares, la alegría es contagiosa, y la presencia se hace eternamente.

Vivir la espiritualidad ecológica es dejarnos fecundar por el Espíritu divino, entrelazar en su amor y a todos, hermanar y animar, pues todo lo que vive y respira sobre la Tierra tiene un padre-madre común que a todo sustenta y da la vida.

5. Desafíos que se presentan a la ecoespiritualidad

1. Sacar al ser humano del centro, del antropocentrismo y antropo-exclusivismo. Lo humano es eslabón y no centro; es parte, no dueño; es eco-relación, no un ser aislado.

2. Valorar el don de la cooperación y no la ley de la competencia. Cuidar de los más desprotegidos, integrar lo que está desintegrado y lo que está perdido.

3. Crecer en generosidad, acoger al diferente, abrir espacios para lo nuevo y para la vivencia de la mística del *cuidado*, crear redes de solidaridad, pues la espiritualidad es la *profundidad de lo humano*, y lo que une y reúne.

4. Integrar todas las cosas. El ser humano es *microcosmos*, parte del todo, del *macrocosmos*.

5. Resacralizar las “casas”: el planeta, la naturaleza, la casa, el cuerpo como morada de la Trinidad, el corazón como morada del alma.

6. Asumir un estilo de vida más sencillo y despojado, como la naturaleza. “La sobriedad corta el mal por la raíz”⁹.

El grito ecológico y de la ecoespiritualidad es la posibilidad de una nueva conciencia de pertenencia al universo y de que él haga parte de nosotros. La conciencia de comunión del ser humano como la totalidad de la creación, nos recoloca ante un antiguo desafío que Moisés presentaba al pueblo de Israel. “Date cuenta que pongo hoy ante ti el bien y la vida por una parte, y por otra el mal y la muerte... Pongo hoy por testigo

⁹ Libânio, J.B., o.c., p. 67.

frente a ustedes al cielo y la tierra: te pongo delante la vida o la muerte, la bendición o la maldición.” (Dt 30,15.19). Nos encontramos hoy ante dos alternativas: escoger la vida o el caos.

Contemplando nuestra realidad actual, nuestro corazón tiene el sentimiento de que predomina el escoger el caos. Aún cuando nuestra razón no lo acepte así. Al sistema vigente no le interesa el caos, sino el lucro a corto plazo. Es de ahí que viene el caos. A una cultura inmediatesta no le interesa el futuro. El lucro es ahora, el caos es futuro. Sólo una clara opción de vida y por la vida vencerá al caos. Opción que nos coloca en un horizonte mayor, en el horizonte de la vida querida por Jesús: “para que todos tengan vida en abundancia”... Este horizonte de esperanza nos hace vencer al caos y vislumbrar un futuro nuevo.

6. Invitación final

Como señalé al inicio de este artículo, no tuve ninguna pretensión de mostrar una nueva tesis o los últimos estudios sobre ecoespiritualidad o ecología, sino compartir lo que pienso, lo que he reflexionado y realizado.

Estamos, tú y yo, teniendo que escoger: la vida o el caos. La vida es un movimiento que brota de dentro. Jesucristo es el Alfa y Omega, que quiere decir, el principio y el fin, el centro de toda la creación. Apostar a la vida es acreditar a Jesús y escoger y cuidar del mundo que un día se transformará por la fuerza del Espíritu. Asentar en nuestra conciencia la cuestión de la sustentabilidad y una nueva relación con la naturaleza. Es una cuestión vital para la humanidad. Es urgente una nueva mentalidad, si no queremos llegar a ver el caos y pagar el precio carísimo de un proceso mortal. Es posible cambiar esa realidad caótica a partir de la organización de mujeres y hombres en la construcción de una sociedad más justa y sostenible. Sustentabilidad y solidaridad van más allá de lo económico. Es un proceso que mira a la transformación de las relaciones sociales, culturales, políticas y productivas, en armonía con el medio ambiente y con la participación activa de la sociedad. Va a exigir nuestro compromiso con la Vida.

Redescubrir la mística del cuidado, cultivar la ecoespiritualidad, recrear nuevas relaciones, sentirse parte del Todo, ser eslabón ético y eslabón de amor que une y reúne a partir de dentro, de la experiencia profunda de la Trinidad, de la escucha contemplativa y de la sensibilidad solidaria.

El Planeta nos alerta constantemente con ondas de calor, sequías, tempestades e inundaciones. Es necesario que nos eduquemos para captar el mensaje que nos transmite y aprender a vivir en comunión con todo lo que nos rodea. Caminar la vigilia, no adormecerse. Todo el cosmos

es como un gran libro que necesita ser leído. Esta es mi invitación final para usted.

Siempre eres uno con Dios y uno con el universo, y bienvenido a Casa.

Tu hogar es el universo, y mi corazón y tu corazón es el universo y mi hogar.

Somos todo lo que es, todo lo que fue y todo lo que será.

Preguntas para ayudar a la lectura individual y el diálogo comunitario

1. ¿En qué puede la ecoespiritualidad contribuir a una nueva conciencia ecológica?
2. ¿Cuáles son los desafíos que la ecoespiritualidad debe afrontar?
3. ¿Qué entiende usted por mística del cuidado, sostenibilidad y por “ser parte del Todo”?
4. Concretamente, en la práctica del día a día, usted y su comunidad, ¿qué pueden hacer a nivel ambiental y a nivel de la ecoespiritualidad?



Errores sobre el mundo que redundan en errores sobre Dios

Desafíos de la nueva cosmología como tareas para la teología y la espiritualidad

José María VIGIL*

Belo Horizonte, BRASIL // Panamá/PANAMÁ

Una famosa frase de Santo Tomás, que él repite varias veces a lo largo de su obra como un principio al que siente la necesidad de recurrir, dice que «un error sobre el mundo redundan en un error sobre Dios»¹... Es decir, si pienso que el mundo es eterno, increado, divino, profano... cualquiera de esas afirmaciones que yo haga sobre el mundo afecta por implicación a lo que habré de pensar sobre Dios. Si acertada o erróneamente pienso, por ejemplo, que una realidad de este mundo es voluntad de Dios, en ese pensamiento estoy implicando, de una manera u otra, mi propia imagen de Dios, cuya voluntad estaría yo vinculando a esa realidad.

No tiene que parecernos algo extraño, pues, en la realidad global, tan compleja como es, todo está implicado, todo hace relación a todo, no se puede «tocar» algo sin dejar de implicar partes vinculadas de la realidad, implicando incluso al conjunto de la realidad. Todas las piezas del mosaico entretrejado de la realidad forman parte de y afectan al conjunto, y por tanto, de una manera u otra, afectan Dios, la dimensión más profunda de la complejidad de la realidad. Por eso, contrariamente, podemos decir, con Tomás de Aquino, que, cada vez que descubrimos un error en lo que pensábamos sobre el mundo, de alguna manera nos libramos de un error que empañaba la imagen que teníamos de Dios.

La historia de las religiones es pródiga en ejemplos de la implicación de estas dos dimensiones, Dios y mundo. Podríase decir que la historia de las religiones es la historia de un conocimiento humano en

* Pós-doutorando na PUC-MINAS de Belo Horizonte, Brasil. Apoio: CAPES.

¹ *Summa contra gentiles*, 1,2, c.3. También: «Una concepción equivocada acerca de las criaturas las criaturas lleva a un falso conocimiento de Dios», *ibid.*, II, 10.

continuo crecimiento, y de una religión cuyas afirmaciones sobre Dios van retrocediendo paralelamente a aquel avance. En los tiempos ancestrales, el *homo sapiens*, recién hominizado, hizo lo que pudo: sabía lo poco que sabía, y todo lo demás que necesitó saber para tener una comprensión inteligible y con sentido de la realidad, lo confió a su imaginación y a su intuición religiosa. Echó mano del comodín «Dios», apelando a sus «arcanos designios», para explicar satisfactoriamente lo inexplicable, o incluso lo ininteligible. Con el avance del tiempo los descubrimientos científicos han ido conquistando, una a una, nuevas zonas de la realidad, chocando una y otra vez con todas aquellas creencias de la antigua imagen del mundo. Cada error que se descubría en aquella visión del mundo, permitía o exigía cambiar algo de la imagen de Dios sobre cuya base se había creado y justificado aquella cosmovisión. Santo Tomás lo notó y expresó claramente, a pesar de vivir en una época todavía «pre-científica», el siglo XIII.

Pues bien, en los últimos tres siglos, el avance científico ha sido espectacular, y la antigua cosmovisión religiosa, a base de retroceder y retroceder, ha acabado saltando hecha pedazos. Muchas Iglesias y muchos creyentes han tratado de obviar el problema de una forma tanto «esquizofrénica»: dividiendo la mente, es decir, poniendo a un lado vida religiosa, y poniendo al otro los nuevos saberes que continuamente ha ido aportando la ciencia. En la calle y en la universidad comulgan con la ciencia, sin vacilar; pero en la vida religiosa y espiritual prefieren seguir instalados en las cosmovisiones míticas heredadas, elaboradas hace milenios, salvaguardando así su poder religioso ritual, simbólico, sacramental... mientras cada día, con velocidad acelerada, se agranda el abismo que separa la ciencia y la fe, la cultura y la religión, la cosmovisión ancestral religiosa, doctrinal y moral por una parte, y las convicciones científicas modernas de sus miembros por otra.

Obviamente, este continuo descubrir «errores sobre el mundo» por parte de las ciencias, detecta «errores sobre Dios» en la religión, en cualquiera de sus dimensiones: la teología, la espiritualidad, el dogma, la moral, las tradiciones, las creencias... En este estudio sólo queremos abordar los «errores sobre Dios» (en el sentido amplio de errores religiosos, teológicos, espirituales, morales...) destapados por los avances de la que solemos llamar «nueva cosmología», o también «nuevo paradigma ecológico».

El primero, el geocentrismo

El conflicto con Galileo Galilei fue un conflicto emblemático entre la ciencia y la fe. Galileo, con el telescopio que él perfeccionó, observó un «error sobre el mundo» en la conciencia religiosa habitual hasta entonces: no estábamos en el centro de la realidad, sino que era el Sol el que

estaba en el centro. Nosotros, sobre la Tierra, estaríamos dando vueltas alrededor del Sol. La Tierra dejaba de ser el centro de la realidad. El ser humano, la niña de los ojos de Dios, la razón de la creación y de la historia, no estaba en el centro del mundo, sino montado sobre una roca errante vagando por el espacio...

Hoy nos parece tan natural, pero entonces no pudieron aceptarlo muchos compañeros científicos de Galileo, ni tampoco las Iglesias (el conflicto con su Iglesia Católica fue el más sonado, pero Lutero y otros Reformadores dijeron sobre Galileo iguales o peores cosas que las que dijeron la Inquisición y los jesuitas del tiempo). Las Iglesias no se oponían propiamente a una verdad meramente científica, sino a un cambio de perspectiva que ponía gravemente en tela de juicio lo que desde siempre se había pensado sobre Dios. Se oponían también, desde su punto de vista, a «un error sobre el mundo, que implicaría un error sobre Dios». Hasta entonces era tenido por evidente que el ser humano era la razón por la que Dios creó el mundo, y que todo el cosmos giraba en torno a este ser humano, y por tanto en torno a su hogar, la Tierra. Decir que ésta no era el centro de la realidad, sino que era un planeta *errante*² en torno a otro centro... venía a decir que los planes de Dios no eran como los pensábamos, o que el ser humano no era la razón central del cosmos, o que la Palabra de Dios, que hasta entonces había parecido que lo declaraba paladinamente en el libro del Génesis, en los Salmos y hasta en la boca misma de Jesús, estaba equivocada. Lo cual, más que un «error sobre Dios», venía a ser un «error del mismo Dios», un error de su Palabra. Aquel «error sobre el mundo» que la ciencia acababa de descubrir, el geocentrismo, evidenciaba un «error acerca de Dios» que las Iglesias no estaban en condiciones de reconocer.

La Católica necesitó casi tres siglos para aceptarlo. Los cristianos acabaron pensando que, efectivamente, la Tierra gira alrededor del Sol, y que no es el centro geométrico del sistema solar pero... que sigue siendo el centro en otro sentido: el centro salvífico de la realidad cósmica, porque allí, en ese planeta pequeño y marginal, tuvo lugar el misterio realmente central de los tiempos, cuando Jesucristo murió por los seres humanos y salvó a toda la humanidad y al cosmos, a todas las criaturas, que gimen en dolores de parto. Ésa sería una centralidad nueva, más profunda. Con el tiempo, toda la teología se desprendió de aquellas afirmaciones teóricas y representaciones plásticas de Dios como creador del ser humano en el centro del mundo.

Pues bien, la superación del «error» del geocentrismo puede hacerse sin demasiadas reelaboraciones teológicas y espirituales, pero la supe-

² *Planetés* en griego significa *errante*, precisamente, aunque ese nombre se les dio a los planetas por otra razón.

ración de otros muchos «errores sobre el mundo» que la ciencia ha ido incansablemente denunciando, sí exige reelaboraciones radicales, desde la raíz, que son lo que llamamos «cambios de paradigma», en el sentido más fuerte de la expresión.

Y a partir de aquí esto es lo que quisiéramos hacer: un elenco de los principales conflictos que el continuo avance de la ciencia (la «nueva cosmología», en sentido amplio) ha provocado al denunciar «errores sobre el mundo». No pretendemos más que evocarlos y plantearlos. No queremos ahora resolver nada, teológicamente hablando. Nos situamos más bien –metodológicamente– fuera de la teología, tomando la palabra como observadores neutrales del conflicto entre la ciencia y la fe. Estos desafíos aquí elencados son, precisamente, nuestra respuesta a la pregunta por las tareas que la teología y la espiritualidad deben acometer en el inmediato futuro.

Otro gran error sobre el mundo: el antropocentrismo

Más difícil que la del geocentrismo iba a ser la superación del antropocentrismo, superación que, en realidad, todavía no se ha dado. Desde hace tiempo, es un descubrimiento claro de la nueva cosmología: el ser humano (no ya la Tierra) no es el centro del cosmos, como casi todas las religiones han pensado –o como han creído escucharlo en sus respectivas revelaciones divinas–. Eso ha sido –nos dice la nueva cosmología– un «error sobre el mundo». El mundo no es antropocéntrico. Nosotros no somos su centro. Ni ha sido «creado para nosotros». Y esto, la nueva visión cosmológica lo puede desglosar en varias perspectivas, aplicadas, más detalladas:

- La nueva cosmología nos dice que no somos, por naturaleza de origen, una realidad **totalmente diferente y superior** a los demás seres vivos que nos rodean. No tenemos un origen diferente o superior. Somos más bien una rama más del enormemente diverso árbol de la vida. Somos una rama de primates en la que, gracias a un salto cualitativo de la vida, se ha dado una mutación en el «eje de acumulación evolutivo», que ha pasado, de ser genético y físico, a cultural y espiritual. Es un paso más de la evolución de la vida. Hasta ahora hemos cambiado de especie por mutación genética (*hardware*); ahora lo hacemos por recreación interna, cultural y/o espiritual (*software*).

No es verdad que fuimos creados «a imagen y semejanza de Dios», a diferencia de los demás seres vivos, que habrían sido creados sin esa pretensión de ser «hijos de Dios» (algo más que simples creaturas). No fuimos creados aparte, en un «sexto día»; no hubo un tal sexto día, sólo para nosotros. Porque en realidad no fuimos creados. Somos una especie que, como todas, proviene de otras, que a su vez provienen de otras más

antiguas... que empalman con los primeros seres vivos en esta Tierra, las bacterias, hace unos 3.500 millones de años. La nueva cosmología piensa que todas las formas de vida de este planeta, en realidad, forman una unidad: son la misma Vida, una única realidad biótica, enormemente diversificada y crecientemente compleja, eso sí. La nuestra es la forma de vida que más ha avanzado. Aunque es verdad que, hoy por hoy, ocupamos el último/primer puesto en el árbol de la vida –pues somos unos recién venidos, los últimos en llegar–, no somos sino una forma más de vida. En ese sentido, no somos «otra cosa».

Pensar lo contrario fue un error sobre el mundo que implicó a Dios: fue un error también sobre Dios. A la luz de la ciencia actual, no parece que podamos continuar atribuyendo a Dios hoy lo que le hemos venido atribuyendo durante milenios, a este respecto: Dios no pudo decir lo que nosotros hemos dicho que dijo. Lo dijimos nosotros, y se lo atribuimos a Dios.

Tradicionalmente, la teología se apoyó en esos errores –a la vez sobre el mundo y sobre Dios–. Los computó como verdades indubitables, por reveladas. Más de una vez justificó castigos y penas mayores sobre quienes se atrevieran a ponerlas en duda. Pues bien, hoy día, si quiere vivir en la sociedad actual, tan marcada por la ciencia, debe reedificarse sobre otras bases, desde esta nueva visión.

- La nueva cosmología cree ya saber que no somos descendientes de una primera pareja, de los llamados **nuestros primeros padres**. No hubo tal pareja. La idea de una pareja primordial es una imagen mítica muy sugerente para vehicular por ella la idea de la creación divina del ser humano, pero no se corresponde en absoluto con las evidencias de la ciencia actual. Aunque desde siempre nos ha parecido un dato esencial de la fe judeocristiana (todavía Pío XII advertía a los científicos que no podían poner en duda el monogenismo, porque, por la fe, el judeocristianismo «sabía» que procedemos de una única primera pareja), la ciencia sabe que la evolución biológica de la que somos resultado todos los seres vivos de este planeta no procede de ese modo. La ciencia actual habla, simbólicamente, de otra Eva, «Lucy», y de otro Adán, «Toumai», *australopithecus afarensis* ambos, cuyos fósiles ha descubierto apenas hace 40 años, que serían, hoy por hoy, los especímenes más antiguos del género homo que marcan para nosotros un estado de hominización suficientemente avanzado.

No son históricas las figuras de nuestros «primeros padres». No hubo Adán ni hubo Eva. Fue «un error sobre el mundo». Y también lo fue sobre Dios, en cuanto que nos hizo atribuirle algo que hoy nos parece saber que no hizo. También carece de la más mínima verosimilitud histórica toda aquella descripción –que ha llegado hasta ayer mismo, y que ha

desaparecido prácticamente sin resistencia, literalmente evaporada— del estado de nuestros primeros padres en el Paraíso terrenal: los llamados «dones preternaturales» de que gozaban, su equilibrio moral, sus pláticas tú a tú con Yavé, su inmortalidad incluso...

Mención especial merece el llamado «pecado original» que habrían cometido esos primeros padres nuestros que no existieron, y que, por tanto, difícilmente ha podido contaminarnos tan gravemente como se pensó, ni expulsarnos del supuesto Paraíso, ni condenarnos al trabajo y a la muerte, entre otros castigos.

También aquí, fue un error sobre el mundo que implicó también a Dios en el error. Desde hace ya bastante tiempo la ciencia no tiene dudas a este respecto. Una teología responsable debiera asumir esta situación y dejar de una vez de contar con ese relato mítico, erróneamente considerado histórico durante milenios, y sobre el que se construyó un imponente fardo que ha gravado sobre la humanidad una sobredosis enorme de sufrimiento y culpabilidad.

Este punto es especialmente importante, tal vez uno de los desafíos más graves que la teología tiene que abordar. Si no hubo primeros padres, si consecuentemente no hubo un pecado primordial contaminante de toda la humanidad, si no fuimos nunca esa *massa damnata*, esa «humanidad caída» que a san Agustín le pareció vislumbrar, si tampoco hizo falta expiar un pecado original que no existió, si hay que pronunciarse sobre una redención divina que tal vez tampoco se dio más que en la imaginación religiosa, una teología responsable no puede mirar para otro lado, sino que ha de agarrar el toro por los cuernos, pronunciarse, y rehacerse a sí misma.

- La nueva cosmología y las ciencias de la vida en general denuncian el llamado **especismo**, el abuso de poder perpetrado por la especie *homo sapiens*, sobre la base de una ideología construida por el mismo *homo sapiens*, según la cual esa especie se autoproclama la dueña del mundo, el «fin de la creación», con derecho a utilizar todo el cosmos como «recursos» a su servicio. El movimiento de la «ecología profunda» ha dado expresión a la intuición que cobra fuerza incontestable ante la observación de los datos científicos: el *homo sapiens* no tiene derecho a someter cruelmente a las otras especies, a intervenir y degradar ambientes que son el nicho ecológico de infinidad de otras especies, simplemente por su afán minero extractivista, por ejemplo. Lynn White, en un texto que se hizo célebre para perpetua memoria, denunció muy razonadamente que «el judeocristianismo es la religión más antropocéntrica del mundo»³.

³ *Raíces históricas de nuestra crisis ecológica*, en <http://latinoamericana.org/2010/info> ; original en la revista «Science» 155 (1967) 1203-1207.

Esto, que hoy a la ciencia le parece, claramente, un error sobre el mundo, el homo sapiens lo ha racionalizado en la mayor parte de las culturas mediante una ideología religiosa: serían los dioses mismos quienes habrían creado la naturaleza para servicio del ser humano, confiándosela bajo su autoridad absoluta. El ser humano sería el rey de la creación, dueño del mundo, por ser lugarteniente de Dios y haber recibido el mandato de dominarlo. Todavía, el actual Compendio de la Doctrina Social de la Iglesia (jde 2004!⁴) afirma que el ser humano es el Rey de la creación. Sin duda, se da en todo ello un «error sobre Dios», por implicación, por su desequilibrada parcialidad en favor de esa especie; y también sin duda, es el error de un Dios claramente antropomórfico.

La teología tradicional ha sido ingenuamente connivente con este antropocentrismo y este especismo ciego. Ha tenido ojos solamente para mirar la realidad desde los intereses de la especie humana. Los temas relevantes para la teología han sido sólo los temas humanos, sus intereses, enaltecidos como si fueran los intereses mismos de Dios. Una teología responsable, que quiera estar a la altura de la ciencia actual, debe apearse de una vez de ese antropocentrismo, y entrar por los nuevos caminos del biocentrismo –centrado todo en la vida–, y abogar por una democracia verdaderamente universal, es decir por una biocracia planetaria, como correspondería al Dios de la Vida, de todas las formas de vida.

- La nueva cosmología subraya nuestro carácter radicalmente telúrico: **somos Tierra**. No somos espíritus, o dioses, o almas, venidos a este mundo desde fuera. No hemos sido puestos en él por una mano ajena. Hemos surgido de él. Somos la flor (tal vez) del proceso evolutivo de la vida que se ha dado en este mundo. Somos Tierra, pero tierra que ha llegado a tener conciencia, a reflexionar, a amar, a contemplar...

Desde esta nueva visión cosmológica, la religión y la espiritualidad pueden descubrir un «error sobre el mundo» que ellas compartieron con muchas otras filosofías y cosmovisiones: interpretaron nuestra «superioridad» de recién venidos en el proceso evolutivo, como si se debiera a una superioridad de origen. Los seres humanos no seríamos en realidad de este mundo, sino de otro, del mundo superior, del de los dioses. Seríamos «hijos del cielo» y no de la Tierra, caídos accidentalmente en este mundo, pero sintiéndonos siempre ciudadanos del cielo, peregrinando en patria extraña, siempre ansiando liberarnos de las ataduras de este mundo para llegar un día a un nuestro destino celestial. Este error sobre el mundo repercutió en un error sobre Dios: se lo percibió como llamándonos siempre a la renuncia respecto a todo lo material, a la superación de los afanes mundanos (fuga mundi, contemptus mundi), a una espiritua-

⁴ Número 460.

lización y una divinización entendidas como huida de la materia, del mundo, de la carne, de las preocupaciones humanas...

Una espiritualidad y una teología a la altura de los tiempos deben romper con ese error sobre el mundo y sobre Dios, para elaborar una nueva visión, y abrirse a una experiencia espiritual reconciliada con la Tierra y con el Mundo. Somos Tierra, orgullosamente telúricos, y con la Tierra, vibrando en éxtasis con su propio cuerpo, hacemos nuestra experiencia espiritual. Podemos aceptar con gozo esta buena noticia de la ciencia que nos libra de viejos errores: no venimos de arriba, no descendemos del cielo, sino que surgimos de la Tierra. No hemos sido puestos aquí por alguien, desde fuera, como si fuéramos extraterrestres, o paracaidistas, sino que hemos nacido en este hogar, estamos en nuestro propio nido y éste es nuestro hábitat natural. Después de varios milenios pretendiendo pasar de puntillas sobre la tierra camino del cielo, necesitamos un lavado mental para reconciliarnos con ella. Debemos volver a nuestro hogar, del que nunca debimos habernos marchado. Nada nos podría ayudar tanto en este deseo cuanto una nueva teología y una espiritualidad oiko-centradas, liberadas de aquellos errores sobre el mundo y sobre Dios.

El espejismo de la unicidad

- Durante milenios, los humanos, en la mayor parte de nuestras culturas y religiones, hemos pensado no sólo que éramos el centro, sino que éramos únicos. Este mundo, nuestro mundo, era «la» creación de Dios, la niña de sus ojos, la obra de sus manos, y no había más. Por suponer que había otros mundos, y tal vez otros universos, la Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe (entonces llamada Sagrada Inquisición) quemó vivo a Giordano Bruno, en la Piazza dei Fiori de Roma, y arrojó sus cenizas al Tíber. La unicidad del mundo, del ser humano, de ese plan de Dios que nos creó y nos redimió, fue un supuesto básico, aparentemente evidente, e impuesto a sangre y fuego.

La nueva cosmología ha roto para siempre la unicidad del mundo humano. Ha descubierto que fue un error sobre el mundo. El mundo no es así. Nuestra Tierra no es sino un planeta más del sistema solar, y el Sol no es más que una de tantos millones de millones de estrellas. El uni-verso quizá no es tal, sino que más bien es un multi-verso. Apenas hace veinte años, la ciencia ha comenzado a descubrir los «exoplanetas». En estos pocos años hemos podido todos ir llevando la cuenta de los exoplanetas que iban siendo paulatinamente catalogados. Poco a poco, conforme hemos pulido las técnicas de detección y hemos podido poner en órbita algunos satélites dedicados sólo a ello, hemos visto incrementarse el número de exoplanetas: en 2014 ya estamos llegando a los 1500. Sabemos que serán tal vez trillones. Muchos de ellos capaces

de albergar la vida. ¿Será una vida como la de este planeta? ¿Habrá en ellos vida animal, vida humana, vida inteligente, vida espiritual...? Aun antes de tener las pruebas en la mano, la ciencia está convencida: este planeta nuestro no es «el plan de Dios» concreto que siempre estuvimos pensando que era. Eso ha sido un «error sobre Dios», basado en el «error sobre el mundo» de que fuimos víctimas por nuestra falta de medios de observación.

Hoy nos damos cuenta de ambos errores, y la resistencia de la religión a reconocerlo no puede negarnos el derecho a aceptar la verdad y a poner entre paréntesis todas aquellas verdades religiosas, espirituales y teológicas que creímos durante milenios. Una teología responsable debe reelaborarse a sí misma desde este nuevo punto de vista más amplio, no tanto universal cuanto «multi-versal», supra terrestre, desprendido de esa creencia provinciana de que lo que aconteció aquí en este planeta en los 3500 años últimos es el centro del mundo, de la historia, del cosmos y de la eternidad. Ésa es sólo una referencia pequeñita, una de las muchas con las que una teología nueva deberá contar.

El dualismo de los dos pisos

- La nueva cosmología denuncia el «error sobre el mundo» en el que tantas culturas y religiones han caído, de pensar que la realidad estaba radicalmente escindida en dos, toda ella, de arriba a abajo, hasta la profundidad de su misma sustancia óptica. Un dualismo que se hacía presente en todos los planos: el cósmico (tierra/cielo), físico (materia/espíritu), humano (cuerpo/alma), hilemórfico (materia/forma), religioso (natural/sobrenatural)... Dos mundos radicalmente diferentes, axiológicamente antagonicos. Un mundo en dos pisos, dividido, esquizo-frénico.

La nueva cosmología –incluyendo en ella la nueva física– nos descubre que estábamos equivocados en la comprensión misma de este mundo. La materia no es esa realidad sin valor, mera potencialidad, informe, estéril, incapaz... que pensábamos⁵. La materia, en realidad no existe⁶, porque no es más que uno de los estados de la energía, en la que todo consiste. La materia es energía, y sólo necesita las condiciones adecuadas para auto-organizarse (*autopoiesis*). Todo está relacionado con todo, en un juego de sinergias e inextricables influencias mutuas. Y todo no es sino una misma realidad que bulle en una efervescencia incesante de cambio de formas, una «sopa cuántica» en el nivel más profundo, que reviste formas continuamente mutantes en los planos superiores de una realidad multinivel.

⁵ «La Santa Materia», decía Teilhard de Chardin...

⁶ L. BOFF, *La materia no existe*, en <http://servicioskoinonia.org/boff> número 402.

Ya desde los inicios del pensamiento filosófico de la humanidad, en el mundo griego del milenio anterior a nuestra era, aparecieron enseguida los dualismos, que el cristianismo, por ejemplo, rápidamente asimiló. Materia y forma, cuerpo y alma, este mundo y el otro mundo, el mundo de la materia y el mundo de las ideas platónicas... constituyeron las coordinadas filosóficas en las que quedó apresada la vivencia espiritual. Fue un error filosófico sobre la realidad, error sobre el mundo en definitiva, que redundó igualmente en un error sobre Dios, al marcar tan profundamente nuestras relaciones con el Misterio sobre la base de esos dualismos.

La nueva cosmología –incluyendo en ella la biología y la física cuántica– es quien ha tenido uno de los méritos mayores en el recuperar una visión integrada, unida, «holística», sin dualismos. La religión, la teología, la espiritualidad misma, deben confrontarse con esta nueva visión no dualista, holística. Los tradicionales planteamientos de cuerpo y alma, natural/sobrenatural, naturaleza/gracia, tierra/cielo... que son como el único alfabeto que la teología clásica ha sabido utilizar hasta el presente, deberá sencillamente ser abandonado, siendo sustituido por una teología de nuevo diseño. La reelaboración ha de ser tan profunda que no caben arreglos, correcciones laterales: es todo un gran error sobre la realidad y sobre Dios lo que ha de ser superado.

Concluyendo

Hasta aquí hemos elencado unos cuantos «errores sobre el mundo», mayores, detectados por la nueva cosmología, que han implicado históricamente otros tantos «errores sobre Dios», y que, hoy, en un mundo marcado tan profundamente por la ciencia, ya no hacen sino lastrar a la religión y la espiritualidad que no tengan la ayuda de una nueva teología crítica que las saque de esos errores y les ayude a replantearlo todo. Son las tareas pendientes de la teología que quiera seguir haciendo camino en la sociedad actual. Destacar esas tareas era el objeto de este artículo. Vamos a concluir con unas consideraciones finales.

- Una primera es la del daño que la epistemología fixista hace a la religión. Las instituciones religiosas parecen incapaces de modificar sus creencias, a pesar de que está tan claro que esa inamovilidad no existe más que en su imaginación, pues la historia demuestra la constante evolución-ebullición de las religiones, su sincretismo, sus cambios, sus acomodaciones a los cambios filosóficos e históricos... En el corto plazo las religiones se resisten a los cambios, tienen pánico a reelaborar el patrimonio simbólico que heredaron. Están cautivas de una epistemología fixista, agravada por la convicción de ser «depositarias de la Revelación»... El nuevo paradigma ecológico les está desafiando mucho, pero el gran cambio que tienen que afrontar, el único que les permitirá

transformarse, es el epistemológico. Mientras sigan siendo deudoras de su epistemología tradicional fixista, dogmática, parmenídea... no podrán cambiar. Una curación imposible, simplemente por no cambiar de lentes (epistemológicas).

- Otra consideración importante es la del reconocimiento del «valor revelatorio» de la ciencia, y en concreto de la nueva cosmología. Es un tema que ha planteado muy bien Thomas Berry ⁷, y que merece la atención de la teología. Esta perspectiva complementa la intuición ya citada de Tomás de Aquino, expresada en ese principio negativo que denuncia los «errores sobre el mundo que redundan en errores sobre Dios»; Thomas Berry complementa con el lado positivo: la nueva cosmología nos capacita también para percibir la manifestación del misterio sagrado que late en el seno mismo de la realidad... la ciencia tiene un valor «revelatorio», epifánico. No es algo enteramente nuevo: ya san Agustín dijo aquello de que Dios escribió dos libros, y el primero de ellos era el de la realidad, el mundo, la creación. La ciencia, al acercarnos al misterio de la realidad, le facilita el que sea reveladora, la capacita para fungir para nosotros como otra Palabra de Dios... (No entramos ahora en el tema de la jerarquía de valor de esas dos palabras de Dios... pero no sería errado pensar que el primer libro es también la principal ⁸ revelación de Dios, porque el segundo no es palabra de Dios, sino «palabra humana sobre Dios» ⁹, un «comentario» al primer libro...).

- En la cosmovisión que la nueva cosmología está extendiendo irreversiblemente sobre la sociedad humana –conocida ya hasta por los niños en edad escolar, y por la población más alejada de los medios académicos, por obra de los medios de comunicación divulgadores de la ciencia– el viejo relato de las religiones –y del judeocristianismo en concreto– ya no resulta aceptable para la sociedad culta de hoy. Sólo puede pervivir en creyentes atrasados en su formación, o creyentes cultos que aceptan vivir escindidos esquizofrénicamente en su espiritualidad. Es urgente hacer algo. Pero, tal vez no se trata sin más de traducir el viejo relato al nuevo contexto, ni de crear un relato nuevo... sino, simplemente, de asumir el relato que tenemos hoy a disposición en la ciencia, el

⁷ Thomas BERRY, *Lo divino y nuestro actual momento revelador*, en la RELaT, <http://servicioskoinonia.org/relat/390.htm> (acceso permanente).

⁸ Bryan SWIMME, *El Cosmos como Revelación primordial*, <http://servicioskoinonia.org/relat/389.htm>

⁹ Edward SCHILLEBEECKX, *Soy un teólogo feliz*, Sociedad de Educación Atenas, Madrid 1994, p. 72.

de la nueva cosmología (sin idolatrarlo ahora, sin atribuírselo a Dios, sin convertirlo en dogma, sin dejar de reconocer su provisionalidad permanente...), y dejar fluir ante él nuestro sentimiento religioso, nuestra experiencia espiritual... Sin duda –son muchos los que lo constatan– el nuevo relato cosmológico es lo que más está transformando actualmente la conciencia de la humanidad¹⁰. Yo creo que va a ser también así en lo religioso y lo teológico, pero en los ámbitos teológicos y espirituales, hoy por hoy, no se percibe el potencial revolucionario de este nuevo paradigma; como un resabio de la vieja mentalidad, se piensa que este tema «no es religioso ni espiritual, sino científico».

• Uno de los temas pendientes que más asustan es el de recolocar a Jesús en el nuevo relato cosmológico... La cristología clásica de la redención no tiene mucho futuro en una situación cultural marcada por la nueva cosmología. Ni Teilhard de Chardin logró hacerlo, aunque hizo propuestas bien importantes. Tal vez estaba demasiado condicionado por su condición de hijo fiel de la Iglesia, ante la Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe (entonces llamada Santo Oficio), por su condición de jesuita... y no podía ni siquiera pensar en planteamientos que hoy apenas nos parecen plausibles. Fue muy moderno, se adelantó a su tiempo en muchos campos, se abrazó a la ciencia... pero continuó deudor de la epistemología mítica bíblica y de la dogmática clásica. Ni por un momento sugirió una profundización-replanteamiento de Calcedonia, ni como buen jesuita dejó de ver la devoción al Corazón de Jesús como la forma suprema espiritual para los tiempos modernos... Hace ya 60 años que falleció Teilhard. No se puede dejar de lado sus aportaciones en este campo de los desafíos de la nueva cosmología, pero el gran grueso de la relectura de Jesús desde el nuevo relato cosmológico actual, está sin hacer. Será una de las más importantes tareas críticas de la teología de las que ha querido tratar este estudio.



¹⁰ Diarmuid O'MURCHU, *Consecrated Religious Life*, Claretian Publications, Manila 2006, p. 81.



Mistakes about the world that lead to mistakes about God

The challenges of the new cosmology as tasks for theology and spirituality

José María VIGIL*

Belo Horizonte, BRAZIL // Panama, PANAMA

Translation: Alice Mendez

A famous phrase from Saint Thomas, which he repeats many times throughout his work, as a principle he needs to recur, says “a mistake about the world leads to a mistake about God”¹... That is, if I think the world is eternal, uncreated, divine, profane... any of those statements I make about the world will implicitly affect what I will think about God. If, for example correctly or not, I think that an event in this world is the will of God, that thought makes implicit, in some way or another, my own image of God, whose will I would be linking to that event.

This should not appear strange since in a global reality, complex as it is, everything is linked, all things are related, one cannot “touch” something without affecting parts related to that reality, involving even the whole reality. All the pieces of the interwoven mosaic of reality form part of and affect the whole, and then, in one way or another, affect God, the most profound dimension of the complex reality. Therefore, on the other hand, we may say, with Thomas Aquinas, that each time we discover an error in what we thought about the world, in some way we free ourselves from an error that was blurring the image we had made of God.

The history of religions is full of examples of the implication of these two dimensions, God and the world. It could be said that the history of religions is the history of human knowledge in permanent growth and of a religion whose statements about God are regressing at the same time of that growth. In ancient times, the *homo sapiens*, just humanized, did what he could: knew what little he knew, and everything else he needed

* *Pós-doutorando na PUC-MINAS de Belo Horizonte, Brasil. Apoio: CAPES.*

¹ *Summa contra gentiles*, 1,2, c.3. También: «A mistaken concept about the creatures leads to a mistaken concept about God», *ibid.*, II, 10.

to know to have an intelligible and sensible understanding of reality, he left it to his imagination and religious intuition. He grabbed the wild symbol of “God”, calling his “arcane designs”, to explain in a satisfactory way the inexplicable, or even the unintelligible. As time passed, scientific discoveries have conquered one by one new areas of reality, clashing with all those old beliefs about the world. Each mistake discovered in that view of the world allowed or demanded a change in the image of God that had been the foundation on which the view of the cosmos had been created and justified. Saint Thomas noted it and expressed it clearly, despite living in a still “pre-scientific” age, the XIII Century.

Well then, in the last three centuries, the scientific development has been spectacular, and the old religious view of the cosmos, having to regress and regress, ended up broken into pieces. Many Churches and believers have tried to circumvent the problem in a somehow “schizophrenic” way: dividing the mind, that is, putting on one side religious life, and on the other end the new knowledge that science has permanently been producing. In the street and in university they partake with science forthrightly; but in the religious and spiritual life they prefer to stay within the mythic views of the cosmos inherited and produced ages before, safeguarding hence their ritual, symbolic, sacramental religious power ... while every day and at greater speeds, the abyss separating science and faith, culture and religion, the religious, doctrinal and moral ancestral view of the cosmos on one hand, and the modern scientific convictions of its members on the other hand, is growing bigger.

Obviously, this permanent discovery of “mistakes about the world” made by science, detects “mistakes about God” in religion, in all of its dimensions: theology, spirituality, dogma, moral, traditions, beliefs ... In this work we want to cover the “mistakes about God” (in the broad sense of religious, theological, spiritual, moral mistakes) uncovered by the development of what we usually call “the new cosmology”, or also “the new ecological paradigm”.

The first mistake: Earth as centre of the universe.

The conflict with Galileo Galilei was an emblematic conflict between science and faith. Galileo, with a telescope that he perfected, observed a “mistake about the world” in the up to then habitual religious conscience: we were not at the centre of reality; the Sun was at the centre. We, on the Earth, would be circling around the Sun. The Earth stopped being at the centre of reality. The human being, the apple of the eye of God, the reason for creation and history, was not at the centre of the world, but upon a rock wandering through space...

Today this seems so natural to us, but then, many of Galilei’s scientific mates could not accept it, and neither could the Churches (the

conflict with his Catholic Church was the most famous case, but Luther and other Reformists said about Galileo the same or worse things than the Inquisition and the Jesuits of the time). The Churches did not oppose merely a scientific truth, but a change in perspective that would seriously call into question what it was thought of God up to then. They also opposed, from their standpoint, a “mistake about the world that would imply a mistake about God”. Up to then, the fact that the human being was the reason why God created the world was self-evident, and all the cosmos revolved around this human being, and hence around his home, the Earth. Saying that this was not the centre of reality, but a wandering planet ² around another centre... was the same as to say that God’s plans were not as we thought, or that the human being was not the central reason for the cosmos, or that the Word of God, which until then had evidently declared that in the book of Genesis, the Psalms and even by word of Jesus, had been wrong. Therefore, more than a “mistake about God”, it came to be “a mistake of God himself”, a mistake of his Word. The “mistake about the world” that science had just discovered, Earth as centre, made evident a “mistake about God” that Churches were not able to accept.

The Catholic Church needed almost three centuries to accept it. Christians ended up thinking that the Earth rotates around the Sun, and that it is not the geometrical centre of the solar system but... it is still the centre in another sense: the centre of salvation of the cosmic reality, because there, in that small and marginal planet, the really central mystery of all times took place, when Jesus Christ died for human beings and saved all humanity and the cosmos, all creatures, who suffer the pangs of birth. That would be a new and deeper centrality. With time, all the theology became detached from those theoretical statements and plastic representations of God as the creator of the human being in the centre of the world.

Overcoming the “mistake” of considering the Earth as the centre can be accomplished without many theological and spiritual re-elaborations, but overcoming other many “mistakes about the world” that science has tirelessly denounced, does require radical re-elaborations, from the root, which are what we call “changes of paradigm”, in the strongest sense of the expression.

And from here this is what we would like to do: a range of the main conflicts which the permanent development of science (the “new cosmology”, in an ample sense) has given birth by denouncing “mistakes about the world”. We just pretend to name them and explain them. We

² *Planetés* in greek means *wandering*, precisely, although this name was given to planets for a different reason.

do not wish to give solutions, theologically speaking. We place ourselves outside theology –methodologically-, speaking as neutral observers of the conflict between science and faith. These challenges listed here are, precisely, our answer to the question about the tasks theology and spirituality must take in the immediate future.

Another big mistake about the world: anthropocentrism.

Overcoming anthropocentrism will be more difficult than the other centrism, Earth as centre, which really has not been achieved yet. For a long time, it has been a clear discovery of the new cosmology: the human being (not the Earth) is not the centre of the cosmos, as most religions have thought –or as they have thought they heard from their own divine revelations-. This has been a “mistake about the world”, says the new cosmology. The world is not anthropocentric. We are not its centre. Neither has it been “created for us”. And this can be broken down into many perspectives, applied, more detailed, by the new cosmological vision:

- The new cosmology says that we are not, by nature of origin, a totally different and superior reality than the other living beings around us. We do not have a different or superior origin. We really are another branch of the enormously varied tree of life. We are a branch of primates in which, thanks to a qualitative leap in life, a mutation appeared in the “axis of evolutionary accumulation”, which has gone from genetic to physical, to cultural and spiritual. It is one step more of the evolution of life. Until now we have changed species by genetic mutation (*hardware*); now we change by internal recreation, cultural and/or spiritual (*software*).

It is not true that we were created “in the image of God”, contrary to the rest of the living beings, which would have been created without that pretense of being “children of God” (something beyond plain creatures). We were not created apart, on the “sixth Day”; there was no sixth day, just for us. Because we were just not created. We are a species which, as all others, evolved from other species, which in turn come from others that were older... which are connected to the first living beings on Earth, bacteria, around 3.500 million years ago. The new cosmology thinks all forms of life in this planet, really form a unity: they are the same Life, a unique biotic reality, greatly diversified and growing in complexity. Ours is the form of life that has developed the most. Although it is true that today we occupy the last/first position in the tree of life –because we are the newly arrived, the last to arrive-, we are just another form of life. In that sense, we are not “another thing”.

To think the contrary was a mistake about the world that implied God: it was a mistake as well about God. Under the light of present science, it seems we cannot continue attributing to God today what we have

attributed to him for millennia: God could not have said what we have said he said. We said it, and we attributed it to God.

Traditionally theology found support in these errors –at the same time about the world and about God-. It computed them as indubitable truths because they were revealed. More than once it justified punishment and major sentences over those who dared question them. Well, today, if it wants to live in present society, so marked by science, it must rebuild itself on other foundations, from this new vision.

- The new cosmology believes it already knows we are not descendants from the first couple, from the so called our first parents. There was no such couple. The idea of a primordial couple is a mythical image, very suggestive to imply through it the idea of the divine creation of the human being, but it does not correspond at all to the evidence of present science. Although it has always appeared to us as a basic fact of Judeo-Christian faith (even Pius XII warned scientists that they should not doubt the appearance of a first man, because, by faith, Judeo-Christianity “knew” we come from a unique first couple), science knows that biological evolution of which all living beings in this planet are the result, does not work in this way. Present science talks, symbolically, of another Eve, “Lucy”, and another Adam, “Toumai”, *Australopithecus aphaerensis* both of them, whose fossils have been discovered only 40 years ago, which would be, today, the most antique specimens of the homo genre that mark for us a state of humanization sufficiently developed.

The pictures of our “first parents” are not historical. There was no Adam and no Eve. It was “a mistake about the world”. And it was also a mistake about God, since it made us attribute him something we know today he did not do. As well all that description of the state of our first parents in earthly Paradise lacks the most minimum historical credibility –which has come up to yesterday, and has disappeared almost without resistance, literally evaporated- : the so-called “preternatural gifts” which they enjoyed, their moral balance, their you and I conversations with Yave, even their immortality...

A special mention deserves the so-called “original sin” which those non-existent first parents would have committed, and hence, it is hardly possible it could have contaminated us so strongly as it was thought, nor driven us from the supposed Paradise, nor condemn us to work and death, among other punishments.

This too was a mistake about the world which implied a mistake about God. For a long time already science has no doubts about this. A responsible theology should assume this situation and stop telling this mythical story, mistakenly considered historical for millennia, and from

which a heavy burden was constructed which has fallen on humanity like a great overdose of suffering and guilt.

This point is especially important, maybe one of the greatest challenges theology must address. If there were no first parents, consequently there was no primordial sin contaminating all humanity, if we were never that *massa damnata*, that “fallen humanity” saint Augustine thought to envision, if not even a sin that did not exist needed atonement, if we have to talk about a divine redemption that maybe never existed beyond the religious imagination, a responsible theology cannot look to the other side, but should take the bull by the horns, speak up, y be reborn.

- The new cosmology and life sciences in general denounce the so-called **speciesism**, the abuse of power made by the *homo sapiens* species, on the base of an ideology built by the homo sapiens himself, according to which this species is self-proclaimed the owner of the world, the “end of creation”, with a right to use all the cosmos as “resources” at his service. The movement of “deep ecology” has given expression to the intuition that is becoming an unstoppable force in the face of scientific data: the *homo sapiens* has no right to cruelly subject other species, to intervene and degrade environments which are the ecological niche of infinite other species, simply in its extractive mining thirst, for example. Lynn White, in a text that became famous for perpetual memory, denounced very reasonably that “the Judeo-Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion in the world” ³

This, which seems for science clearly a mistake about the world, the homo sapiens has reasoned it in most of the cultures through a religious ideology: the gods themselves would have created nature at the service of the human being, entrusting it to his absolute authority. The human being would be the king of creation, owner of the world, being lieutenant of God and having received the order to dominate it. Still, the present Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (ide 2004! ⁴) states the human being is King of creation. No doubt in all this there is a “mistake about God”, implied due to its unbalanced partiality in favour of that species; and no doubt it is the mistake of a God clearly anthropomorphic.

Traditional theology has been naively complicit with this anthropocentrism and blind speciesism. It has had eyes only to look at reality from the interests of the human species. Relevant topics for theology have been only the human topics, his interests, exalted as if they were

³ *Raíces históricas de nuestra crisis ecológica*, en <http://latinoamericana.org/2010/info> ; original: *Historical roots of our ecological crisis*, in «Science» 155 (1967) 1203-1207.

⁴ Number 460.

the interests of God himself. A responsible theology, that wishes to be up to present science, must be brought down from anthropocentrism once and for all, and enter the new roads of bio-centrism –centred on life-, and advocate a truly universal democracy, that is a planetary biocracy, which would correspond to the God of Life, to all forms of life.

- The new cosmology underlines our radically telluric character: **we are Earth**. We are not spirits, or gods, or alms, coming to this world from outside. We were not placed here by a foreign hand. We have been born from it. We are the flower (maybe) of the evolutionary process of life that has occurred in this world. We are Earth, but earth that has come to have conscience, to reflect, love, contemplate,

From this new cosmological vision, religion and spirituality may discover a “mistake about the world” which they shared with many other philosophies and cosmovisions: they interpreted our “superiority” as late arrivals in the evolutionary process, as if it was caused by a superiority of origin. The human beings would not really be from this world, but from another, a superior world, that of the gods. We would be “children of heavens” and not of Earth, accidentally fallen in this world, but feeling always as citizens of heaven, as pilgrims in a foreign country, always willing to come free from ties to this world and some day reach our celestial destiny. This mistake about the world had an impact in a mistake about God: he was perceived as calling us always to renounce all material things, to overcome worldly toils (fuga mundi, contemptus mundi), to a spiritualization and divinization understood as an escape from matter, from the world, the flesh, human preoccupations...

A spirituality and a theology at the cutting edge must break with this mistake about the world and God, to elaborate a new vision, and open up to a spiritual experience reconciled with the Earth and with the World. We are Earth, proudly telluric, and with the Earth, vibrating ecstatically with its own body, we make our spiritual experience. We may happily accept this good news that science brings to us and frees us from old mistakes: we do not come from above, we do not come from heaven, and we were born from the Earth. We were not place here by someone, from outside, as if we were extraterrestrial, or parachutists, but we have been born in this home, we are in our own nest and this is our natural habitat. After many millennia pretending to tiptoe the earth on our way to heaven, we need a brainwash to come to terms with it. We must go back to our home, from which we should never have left. Nothing could help us more in this job than a new theology and spirituality oiko-centred, free from those mistakes about the world and about God.

The mirage of uniqueness

- For millennia, humans, in most of our cultures and religions, have thought not only that we were the centre but also that we were unique. This world, our world, was “the” creation of God, the apple of his eye, the work of his hands, and there was nothing else. The Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (then called Sacred Inquisition) burnt Giordano Bruno at the stake, in Rome’s Piazza dei Fiori because he supposed there were other worlds, and maybe other universes, and threw his ashes into the Tiber. The uniqueness of the world, of the human being, of that plan of God who created us and redeemed us, was a basic supposition, apparently evident, and imposed by fire and sword.

The new cosmology has forever broken the uniqueness of the human world. It has discovered that it was a mistake about the world. The world is not like this. Our Earth is just one more planet in the solar system, and the Sun is but one of so many millions and millions of stars. The uni-verse may not be such, but more like a multi-verse. Just twenty years ago, science has started to discover the “exo-planets”. In these few years we have all been able to count the exoplanets that have been gradually catalogued. Bit by bit, as we have polished detecting techniques and have been putting some satellites in orbit just for this purpose, we have seen the number of exoplanets grow: in 2014 we have arrived to 1500. We know there may be trillions. Many of them able to host life. Would that be a life similar to that on our planet? Will there be animals, humans, intelligent life, spiritual life...? Even before having proof science is convinced: this, our planet, is not “God’s concrete plan” we always thought it was. That has been a “mistake about God”, based on the “mistake about the world” of which we fell victims because of our lack of observation methods.

Today we are aware of both mistakes, and the resistance on the part of religion to recognise it cannot deprive us of the right to accept truth and place between parentheses all those religious truths, spiritual and theological truths, we believed in for millennia. A responsible theology must redesign itself from this new broad point of view, not so much universal as “multi-versal”, super terrestrial, detached from that provincial belief that what happened here on this planet in the last 3500 years is the centre of the world, of history, of the cosmos and of eternity. That is just one little reference, one of many with which a new theology must deal.

Dualism of the two floors

- The new cosmology denounces the “mistake about the world” in which so many cultures and religions have fallen, to think that reality was radically separate in two, all of it, from top to bottom, up to the depths of its ontological substance. A dualism present at all levels: cosmic (earth/heaven), physical (matter/spirit), human (body/soul), hylomorphic

(matter/form), and religious (natural/supernatural)... Two radically different worlds, axiologically antagonistic. A world in two separate floors, divided, schizophrenic.

The new cosmology –including in it the new physics- discovers our mistake in understanding this world. Matter is not that reality without value, just potentiality, formless, sterile, incompetent... we thought it was⁵. Matter does not really exist⁶, because it is just one of the states of energy, of which all is a part. Matter is energy, and needs only the adequate conditions to organise itself (*autopoiesis*). Everything is related with everything, in a game of synergies and inextricable mutual influences. And all is just one same reality and boils in a permanent effervescence of changing forms, a “quantum soup” at its deepest level, within which forms are always changing in the superior levels of a multi-level reality.

Already from the beginning of humanity's philosophical thinking, in the Greek world of the millennium previous to our era, dualisms appeared soon, which Christianity, for example, quickly assumed. Matter and form, body and soul, this world and the other world, the world of matter and the world of platonic ideas... were the philosophical coordinates where the spiritual experience remained locked. It was a philosophical mistake about reality, a mistake ultimately about the world, resulting at the same time in a mistake about God, by marking so deeply our relationship to the Mystery based on those dualisms.

The new cosmology –including in it biology and quantum physics- has had a great merit in recovering an integrated vision, unified, “holistic”, without dualisms. Religion, theology, even spirituality, must be confronted with this new non-dualistic and holistic vision. The traditional approaches of body and soul, natural/supernatural, nature/grace, earth/heaven... which are like the only alphabet classic theology has used up to now, need to be abandoned, and substituted by a theology of a new design. The re-elaboration has to be so profound that amendments do not fit, nor lateral corrections: what has to be overcome is a great error about reality and about God.

In conclusion

Up to this point we have listed many “mistakes about the world”, the major ones, detected by the new cosmology, that have historically implied as many “mistakes about God”, and that, today, in a world heavily marked by science, are nothing but a handicap to religion and spirituality that lack the help of a new critical theology which would save them from those mistakes and help them revise everything. These are the pending

⁵ «The Sainly Matter», said Teilhard de Chardin...

⁶ L. BOFF, *La materia no existe*, (*Matter does not exist*), en <http://servicioskoinonia.org/boff> número 402.

tasks of a theology that wants to continue walking in the present society. To highlight these tasks was the purpose of this article. We will finish with some final considerations.

A first one is that of the damage a fixed epistemology does to religion. Religious institutions seem incapable of modifying their beliefs, despite it being so clear that this immobility does not exist outside their imagination, because history shows the constant evolution-turmoil of religions, their syncretism, their changes, and their adaptation to philosophical and historical changes... In the short term religions resist change, have panic to re-elaborate the symbolic patrimony they inherited. They are captive in a fixed epistemology, aggravated by the conviction of being “recipients of the Revelation” ... The new ecological paradigm is challenging them greatly, but the great change they must face, the only one that will allow them a transformation, is the epistemological one. While they continue being indebted to their fixed traditional epistemology, dogmatic and heirs to Parmenides... they will not be able to change. That will be an impossible cure, simply due to the fact that they do not want to change the lens (epistemological).

Another important consideration is that of the recognition of the “revelatory value” of science, and mainly of the new cosmology. This is a topic Thomas Berry⁷ has very well raised and merits the attention of theology. This perspective complements the already mentioned intuition of Thomas Aquinas, expressed in the negative principle that denounces the “mistakes about the world result in mistakes about God”; Thomas Berry complements this with a positive side to it: the new cosmology also enables us to perceive the manifestation of the sacred mystery that pulsates in the midst of reality... science has a “revealing” value, which is epiphanic. This is not something entirely new: already Saint Augustine said that God wrote two books, and the first was that of reality, the world, creation. Science, while bringing us near to the mystery of reality, makes it possible to be revelatory, enables it to serve for us as the other Word of God... (We will not dwell here over the hierarchical value of those two words of God... but it would not be wrong to think that the first book is also the main⁸ revelation of God, because the second one is not word of God, but “human word about God”⁹, a commentary to the first book...).

⁷ Thomas BERRY, *Lo divino y nuestro actual momento revelador (The divine and our present revealing moment)*, en la RELaT, <http://servicioskoinonia.org/relat/390.htm> (acceso permanente).

⁸ Bryan SWIMME, *El Cosmos como Revelación primordial (The Cosmos as Main Revelation)* <http://servicioskoinonia.org/relat/389.htm>

⁹ Edward SCHILLEBEECKX, *Soy un teólogo feliz (I'm a happy theologian)*, Sociedad de Educación Atenas, Madrid 1994, p. 72.

In the cosmology that the new cosmology is spreading irreversibly over human society –known even by school children, and by the population far removed from the academic circles, through the means of communication of science- the old story of religions –and specifically of Judeo-Christianity – is now unacceptable for the cultured society of today. It can only survive in believers who are far behind in their education, or cultured believers who accept to live divided schizophrenically in their spirituality. Something must be done urgently. But, maybe it is not a question of translating the old story to the new context, or of creating a new story... but, simply, of assuming the story we are given by science, that of the new cosmology (not idolising it now, not attributing it to God, not converting it into a dogma, acknowledging its permanent provisional nature...) and let our religious feeling flow before it, our spiritual experience as well... No doubt –many are experiencing it- the new cosmological story is what is now mostly transforming the conscience of humanity¹⁰. I believe the same will happen in the religious and theological fields, but in the theological and spiritual fields, today, the revolutionary potential of this new paradigm is not perceived; like a residue of the old mentality, it is thought that this topic is not religious or spiritual but scientific”.

One of the pending topics that mostly frighten is that of re-collocating Jesus in the new cosmological story... The classic Christology of redemption has not much future in a cultural situation marked by the new cosmology. Not even Teilhard de Chardin could do it, although he made very important proposals. Maybe he was too conditioned by his condition of faithful son of the Church, facing the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (then called Saint Office), by his Jesuit condition... and he could not even think in concepts that today we feel just plausible. He was very modern, in many fields ahead of times, embraced science... but was still a debtor of the biblical mythical epistemology and classic dogmas. Not for a second did he suggest a deepening –remaking of Calcedonia, and as a good Jesuit he did not stop considering the devotion to the Heart of Jesus as a supreme spiritual form for modern times... Teilhard died 60 years ago. His contributions to this field of the challenges of the new cosmology cannot be left aside, but most of the re-reading of Jesus from the new cosmological present story is still not done. It will be one of the most important critical tasks of theology which this study has tried to deal with.

¹⁰ Diarmuid O’MURCHU, *Consecrated Religious Life*, Claretian Publications, Manila 2006, p. 81.

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Walking the Path of Transformation

Birgit WEILER mms

Lima, PERU

I have been asked to share in this article my reflections on the process of Medical Mission Sisters to assume the commitment to live with ecological awareness and to care for the Earth, highlighting what has motivated us to take on this commitment, what inspires and nourishes us on the way, what are the resistances and challenges which we have to face ...

According to my perception the charism of our Congregation to promote the integral health of peoples, especially the impoverished and excluded, has been a strong motivation to assume this commitment. It has made us increasingly aware of people's life as well as of the life on our planet Earth which is damaged and threatened. We have become more conscious of the ecological crisis and its multiple negative effects on the health of the people (increasing contamination of their sources of life, of water, air and land) as well as on nature (total landscapes ecologically devastated, massive extinction of species etc.) and of the suffering caused by all of this. Hence we began to question radically the neoliberal economic system which utilizes all, nature and people, especially the impoverished, in order to achieve a maximum growth of capital and production. In the present economic system the poor and nature are only of interest as resources which are easily available: the poor as a resource of cheap labor and nature only as a source of raw material for industrialization and commerce. Against this we protest strongly, motivated by our faith commitment.

Since our General Chapter in 1985 the Congregation has assumed collectively the ecological commitment as an integral part of our spirituality and healing mission. At the same time some heated debates arose among us because of the deep concern of sisters that ecological commitment is at the expense of the preferential option for the poor, giving priority to the Earth and not to the persons who are most excluded and vulnerable and to their struggle for greater justice.

With time there was a growing awareness among us that this dualistic way of looking at reality and interpreting it was not adequate and that violence against peoples life and the Earth have the same root. We realized that the ecological crisis is mainly a spiritual crisis. It has its roots in a very erroneous and distorted conception of our place on the Earth and of our relationship with the Earth. With industrialization the vision of the dominant culture in the western world, namely the vision of the Earth as a huge warehouse at disposition of the human beings („owners” with the full right to subdue and dominate the Earth) not only to satisfy their needs but also their desire of an uncontrolled use of Earth resources for superfluous consumption, imposed itself. Mainly the most impoverished and vulnerable suffer the consequences of the increasing predation of the Earth. That is why the strong conviction grew in us that solidarity with these people and the preferential option for the poor require the ecological commitment and care for the Earth.

A necessary paradigm shift

The reflections of Thomas Berry (*The Great Work* and other readings), of Brian Swimme (*The Cosmos Is A Green Dragon*), of Leonardo Boff (*Cry Of The Earth, Cry Of The Poor*) and of many authors of ecofeminism in the different continents gave us a strong thrust to open up to the paradigm shift. It consists in a different view of the Earth no longer being perceived as an object but as a huge living organism with a long history of complex processes of evolution, in which during thousands of millions of years all the different geological layers of the Earth with their minerals were formed and the enormous biodiversity on our planet developed. From the movement of “Deep Ecology” we took up the questions: what is the place of the human beings on the Earth? What does it mean and imply to become fully human? The contributions of “Deep Ecology” made us grow in the awareness that we, human beings, are a part of a very rich and complex web of relationships which makes possible and maintains the biodiversity on Earth. We have a particular place within this web because of our capacity (though we don’t use it always) to reflect on the impacts of our actions on other living beings, to foresee to a certain degree the consequences of our actions for this complex web of life and to act responsibly.

A healthy and meaningful life for us will only be possible, if we also appreciate the rich diversity of the other living beings on the Earth and if we care for the Earth being aware that it is a huge living organism. We are called to live in the awareness that we are life that wants to live in the midst of life (other living beings) that also wants to live (Albert Schweitzer). In our Congregation we have become increasingly conscious of the significance of each species and its contribution to the web of life

of the Earth; each one is needed and has its role. As Thomas Berry and other authors have emphasized, the Earth is a large „community of life“. Therefore we believe that today we need to affirm in our faith that an authentic love for God is not only intimately linked with a true love for our neighbor but also with a deep love for the Earth, this great work of life which is our home. We are called to share it with the other living beings.

We appreciate that in this large living organism the ecological relationships are characterized by diversity, interaction and interdependence for the good of the whole. Considering that an etymological explanation of the Word “religion” derives it from *religare* in latin, we are reminded that our bonds with the Earth and our concern for the community of life on our planet (the life of the persons, of the other living beings and of the whole Earth) is not something optional to Religious Life but it is at the core of a Religious Life committed to reading attentively the signs of the time and asking how God manifests himself/herself in these signs.

Necessary changes in our conceptions of God

Soon we noticed that the paradigm shift urges us to review our images and metaphors as well as our religious language in general when talking about God as creator and about his/her relationship with the cosmos. Here I can offer only a few ideas which need to be explored further. There are images and inappropriate conceptions of God which do not correspond with the insights offered by modern cosmology and natural sciences, insights about the origin of the cosmos and the development of life on our planet Earth, for example: God as a great designer who imposes on all what he creates a predetermined and prefixed design without any possibilities of further development, God as a great controller who manipulates all process in the universe as a puppet master moves and controls his puppets, a patriarchal God who exercises an overwhelming power over his creatures. All of these erroneous images reflect our human ideas which we project into God; they don't communicate who God really is. Acknowledging the limitations of our human language when we try to say something about God, there are metaphors and expressions which are much more adequate like for example a God who desires and enables the unfolding of a cosmic process in all its complexity, a God who wants freedom so that all what has been created may have its own evolutionary dynamic and its relative autonomy (no determinism) within a permanent interaction. The elaboration of a new theology which is in process, deserves particular mention here. It parts from a theology of the Trinity (God as love and therefore communication, dynamism, unity in diversity, relationship in reciprocity, permanent interaction in God himself /herself) and from there enters into dialogue with the insights of modern cosmology.

At the same time with Rosemary Radford Ruether we believe that the biblical traditions contain valuable resources for an ecological spirituality and ethics which need to be recovered (many times they have not been acknowledged because of androcentric and biased interpretations of those texts). In the Hebrew worldview for example nature is not an object or dead matter but „alive, filled with soul or spirit“ (Rosemary Radford Ruether); it is also a much more integral view of the human being (without dualism between body and soul, matter and spirit).

The paradigm shift motivates us also to explore further the mystery of incarnation, of the redemption of the whole cosmos through Christ and how to read these affirmations in the light of the new paradigm.

Contributions of Deep Ecology

A significant contribution of deep ecology to our process within the Congregation is the importance for us to cultivate the capacity of contemplation as an integral part of our ecological commitment. Contemplation helps us to appreciate the long Earth history, to experience awe in view of the beauty and great biodiversity of the Earth and in view of Earth's whole evolution process since its beginnings until now. A sense of wonder and awe leads us to appreciate, love and care for the Earth with much gratitude. In the contemplation of the other living beings and of this marvelous work which is our planet, we experience liberation from a merely utilitarian way of looking at the Earth which only defines whether something is useful for the human beings, liberation from a way of looking at the other living beings that cannot perceive their own intrinsic value independent from their usefulness for the human beings.

Already the book of Job reminds us that the other creatures have the right to exist because God wants them to be and enjoys their presence on Earth. In contemplation we allow nature to talk to us (in form of a tree, a flower, a mountain, a landscape, an animal) from its own being.

The appreciation and love for the Earth motivate us to know more about its mysteries and the richness of life on Earth. Love awakens curiosity and genuine interest; this does not only hold true for human relationships but also for the relationships with other living beings. Our foundress Anna Dengel expressed in one of her meditative texts: "If you have real love, you are inventive, if you love you try to find out, you are interested, you are perseverant." Love evokes creativity in us for our ecological commitment. At the same time it impels us to contribute with perseverance to generate the change of heart and mind so much needed for achieving greater eco-justice and for safeguarding life on Earth.

The new paradigm has made us fully aware that the human beings don't have the right to extinguish more and more species and to ruin the great biodiversity on Earth by their selfish consumer behavior, exploiting the Earth and its resources limitlessly.

Overcoming dualism

The contributions of deep ecology and ecofeminism lead us to deepen our awareness of the significance of our body for feeling and living the bond with the Earth and our ecological commitment which arises from a deep experience. We contemplate how Jesus in many encounters with sick people reestablished their senses as channels of communication with the outer world (eyes, ears, hands etc.) by opening them up and reestablishing their capacity of communication with others and with nature. Therefore in our spiritual life we make continuous efforts to overcome the dualism between matter and spirit, between body and soul and to pray consciously with our bodies, This helps to feel the bond with other people and with Earth. The ecological spirituality motivates us to practice our faith in an integral way; to live our ecological commitment with joy together with like-minded people and groups, to celebrate the gift of life in all its diversity and to use a more lively, metaphoric and poetic language (adequate metaphors have a transforming power; they touch mind and heart), corporal expressions and rites in our liturgies, to strive for a more healthy rhythm of work and rest, to assure time and space for experiences of gratuity.

Towards more eco-justice

In many places of our mission in different parts of the world we are in contact with indigenous peoples. Their cosmovision and wisdom inspire us to live in a relationship of interdependence and reciprocity with the Earth and to maintain a bond of affection with the Earth. For the quechua and Aymara people (Bolivia and Peru) e.g. the Earth is *Pachamama*, Mother Earth. The ecological spirituality based on the new paradigm drives us to work for justice in all its dimensions, justice in the relationships between human beings, individuals and peoples, and justice in our relationship with Earth and many living beings on her, the so called eco-justice. This spirituality leads us to ask ourselves how to live so that the Earth as *oikos*, as our common home, won't be ever more preyed on and harmed and many species of flora and fauna won't find the necessary living conditions. It motivates us to practice more eco-justice and therefore to seriously strive for a simple lifestyle. We realize that we are living "in consumer societies whose values affect us in various degrees, at times leading to our wants becoming needs, and to some extent determining our degree of happiness and satisfaction" (General Chapter Report 2009). This challenges us to become aware when the desire to possess and to accumulate is present in our heart and we act from there.

Experience has taught us that discernment, personal and in community, is an essential spiritual practice in order to distinguish what we really need and what are superfluous goods. We are conscious that the

way of living in our consumer societies with its patterns of uncontrolled consumption of all kind of goods has contributed very much to the ecological crisis. Motivated by our option for a lifestyle which is in accordance with caring for the Earth and the large community of life, we are making continuous efforts to renounce to the patterns of our consumer societies and to grow in coherence. Therefore we strive for reducing our footprint on the Earth, the impact which we generate on the other living beings on our planet. „The Earth shows us that there is enough for all if each one uses only what is needed“ (General Chapter 2009) since the Earth has its own potential to organize itself and to re-establish the necessary ecological balance within and between the ecosystems, if we do not continue to exploit and deplete it.

Together with many other like-minded groups and movements we try to generate a different understanding of economy and its purpose in society as well as an alternative way of organizing and implementing economy in accordance with the care of the Earth and its resources, an economy practiced with *oikosofia* (ecological wisdom). Hence we opt for using our financial resources to contribute to strengthening local and international initiatives in this direction, to buy eco-friendly products, to generate as less waste as possible, to support campaigns of reducing the use of plastic bags (very common in many countries of Latin America), to practice recycling, to use carefully water and energy, preferentially using energy generated from renewable resources (e.g. solar energy, wind energy), to practice ethical investment of our financial resources, informing us about the practices of the respective Banks and enterprises (if they fulfill the ethical criteria of social justice, respect of human rights, eco-justice, gender justice, respect for the different cultures, for the rights of indigenous peoples etc.). In our daily living we experience that practicing eco-justice is a permanent challenge. “For example, in choosing eco-friendly products, we are at times faced with the tension between what is for the best interest of the Earth and high financial cost” (General Chapter 2009).

In the process of living the eco-spirituality we have come to the awareness that the ecological dimension has to be present in all our missions. Therefore in the different contexts where we are, we engage ourselves together with other Congregations, groups and organizations in creating more ecological awareness and sensitivity, appreciation of the Earth and a strong motivation to care for it. According to the contexts this is done in manifold ways like for example in workshops, seminars and retreats with youth, students, teachers, *campesinos*, in the collaboration with indigenous peoples in the defense of their rights and of the rain forest as their source of life, in public campaigns, together with representatives of other Religious Congregations at the United Nations and in ecological centers like HEAL, an ecological center of our Congregation in

the Philippines for creating greater ecological awareness and for learning how to live with respect for the Earth as a community of life.

Eco-justice and religious vows

We have experienced that exploring the meaning of our religious vows from the perspective of an ecological spirituality has enriched very much our understanding and living of the vows. The General Chapter of our Congregation in 2009 affirmed that our vow of poverty expresses our commitment to live a simple life, being aware of the interdependence in the web of life of the Earth and of the existing bond between our personal life and well-being and the well-being of the others and the whole of creation.

We desire to deepen further our awareness that the resources which we have (financial resources, properties as well as our talents, knowledge, skills and our time) are not “ours” but that we have them to put them at the service of the community, of all our sisters in the Congregation and of the people with whom we share our life in mission, specially the marginalized and excluded, and that the decisions we take in one area, affect the whole Congregation as one single body and our commitment to care for the Earth.

In living the vow of chastity we want to give testimony of the great unconditional and inclusive love of our God which has the power to transform us and impel us to live in solidarity with others, especially with those made poor and with the Earth.

The vow of obedience implies for us that we live and work in a spirit of dialogue, discernment and shared decisions. It entails the commitment to put our personal gifts and talents at the service of mission and the care for the Earth and to live attentive to the signs of the time, to the „cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor“.

At the light of our vowed life, we evaluate periodically our lifestyle asking ourselves in which aspects we are called to grow in order “to be a counter witness to life-hindering attitudes and values” (General Chapter 2009). In this process we are inspired by the witness of the indigenous peoples who from their conception of “living well” question the western concepts of “development” and “progress” (to get more money and goods in less time; uncontrolled consumption of all kind of goods, growing contamination and depletion of the Earth, social gaps are widening etc.). Our vows impel us to deepen our commitment for greater justice with equity in the distribution of the resources and goods of the Earth and for the so called climate justice (commitment of the highly industrialized countries who have contributed most to the climate change with the countries who are affected most by its negative effects).

The new paradigm developed by deep ecology demands radical changes in our way of thinking, of relating with the Earth, among oursel-

ves and with other living. It questions us deeply and through this helps us to open further our eyes in the midst of a serious ecological crisis and of climate change already taking place as well as to perceive the Earth, our place on it and our relationship with it in a different way and to live the necessary metanoia.

As Congregation we perceive ourselves as being on a path of transformation discovering step by step what the paradigm shift means and demands from us. Hence in our last General Chapter (2009) the participants expressed that we see ourselves reflected in the blind man of Betsaida who only gradually gains a new vision (“I see people but they look like trees walking” Mc 8,24). It is a process which we are living in different rhythms according to the context of each place of mission but from a basic commitment shared by all. In the present reality of a serious ecological crisis and of a climate change taking place in less time than it was expected, with its strong impact on the life of people, especially on the most vulnerable ones, and on so many other living beings on Earth, we hear again with an open heart the words of God: „I have set before you life and death. So choose life“ (Dt 30,19).





Nuestro camino de transformación

Birgit WEILER mms

Lima, PERÚ

Translation by the Author

Se me ha pedido compartir en esta reflexión algo sobre el camino de nuestra Congregación, las Hermanas Misioneras Médicas, en el asumir y vivir un compromiso ecológico, sobre lo que nos ha motivado a dar este paso y lo que nos alienta en el caminar, cómo nos ha ido en el camino, cuáles han sido resistencias, desafíos, retos ...

Para mí el carisma de nuestra Congregación de promover la salud integral de las personas, sobre todo de los más empobrecidos y excluidos, ha sido una motivación clave para asumir este compromiso. Pues nos ha sensibilizado cada vez más a la vida maltratada y dañada no sólo en las personas sino en nuestra Tierra en su conjunto. Tomamos mayor conciencia de la crisis ecológica; nos impactaron sus múltiples efectos negativos en la salud de las personas (creciente contaminación de sus fuentes de vida, del agua, del aire y de la tierra), en la naturaleza (paisajes enteros ecológicamente devastados, extinción masiva de especies, etc.), y el sufrimiento que todo ello causa. Empezamos a cuestionar a fondo el sistema económico neoliberal que instrumentaliza todo, la naturaleza y las personas, particularmente los empobrecidos, para lograr el máximo aumento de capital y producción. En este sistema económico los pobres y la naturaleza únicamente son de interés como recursos disponibles, los pobres como recursos de mano de obra barata y la naturaleza como fuente de materia prima. Contra ello protestamos enérgicamente motivadas por nuestra fe.

En el Capítulo General en 1985 nuestra Congregación asumió colectivamente el compromiso ecológico como parte integral de nuestra espiritualidad y nuestra misión sanadora. Al mismo tiempo surgieron entre

nosotras debates arduos a raíz de la preocupación profunda de Hermanas sobre si el compromiso ecológico iba a realizarse a costa de la opción preferencial por los pobres, dando prioridad a una preocupación por la Tierra y no por las personas más excluidas o vulnerables y la lucha por una mayor justicia para ellas.

Con el tiempo hubo una conciencia cada vez mayor de que esa manera dualista de ver e interpretar la realidad no era adecuada y que el maltrato de la vida en las personas y en la Tierra tiene una misma raíz. Nos dimos cuenta que la crisis ecológica es principalmente una crisis espiritual. Tiene su raíz en una concepción muy errónea y tergiversada de lo que es nuestro lugar en la Tierra y nuestra relación con ella. Con la industrialización se impuso la visión de la cultura dominante en el mundo occidental, es decir la visión de la Tierra como un gran almacén a la libre disposición de los seres humanos (“dueños”, con pleno derecho a sujetar y dominar la Tierra), no sólo para satisfacer sus necesidades, sino también sus deseos, en un consumo descontrolado de tantos productos superfluos. Las consecuencias de la creciente depredación de la Tierra y del consiguiente cambio climático las sufren sobre todo las personas más empobrecidas y vulnerables. Por eso se forjó en nosotras la convicción de que la solidaridad con estas personas y una opción preferencial por los pobres exigen hoy el compromiso ecológico, el cuidado de la Tierra.

Cambio de paradigma

Recibimos impulsos importantes para abrirnos a otra visión de la Tierra y al cambio de paradigma que ello implica, a partir de las reflexiones de Thomas Berry (“The great work” / “La gran obra”, y otras lecturas), de Brian Swimme (“El Universo es un dragón verde”), Leonardo Boff (“Grito de la Tierra, grito de los pobres”) y de muchas autoras representantes del ecofeminismo en los diferentes continentes. En el centro de este cambio está una percepción muy diferente de la Tierra. No se la percibe ya como un objeto, sino como un gran organismo vivo, con una larga historia de complejos procesos de evolución, en los cuales a lo largo de miles de millones de años se forjaron las diferentes capas geológicas de la Tierra, con sus minerales, y se generó la enorme diversidad de vida en nuestro planeta. Desde la ecología profunda acogimos preguntas como: ¿cuál es el lugar del ser humano en la Tierra, qué significa e implica “crecer en humanidad”, desarrollar nuestro potencial de ser verdaderamente humanos/as...? Las contribuciones de la ecología profunda nos han hecho crecer en la conciencia de que los seres humanos, nosotros/as, somos parte de esta compleja y rica red de relaciones que hacen posible y mantienen la diversidad de vida en la Tierra. Tenemos un lugar particular en medio de esa red por nuestra capacidad (aunque no siempre la hacemos valer) de reflexionar sobre los impactos de nuestra actuación sobre otros

seres vivos, o de prever –por lo menos hasta un cierto punto– las consecuencias de nuestras acciones para este gran tejido de vida en la Tierra, y de actuar con responsabilidad.

Una vida saludable, llena de sentido y felicidad para nosotros y nosotras, los seres humanos, solamente se puede lograr apreciando también la gran diversidad de los otros seres vivientes en la Tierra y cuidando a la Tierra como un gran organismo vivo. Estamos llamados a vivir con la conciencia de que somos vida que quiere vivir, y existimos en medio de vida que también quiere vivir (Albert Schweitzer). Hemos ahondado nuestra conciencia de la importancia que cumple cada especie en el conjunto del tejido de vida en la Tierra; aquí nada sobra ni está demás. Pues ya lo han recalcado Thomas Berry y otros autores y autoras de lengua inglesa, al decir que la Tierra es a *community of life*, una comunidad de vida. Creemos que hoy en día hay que afirmar en nuestra fe que un auténtico amor a Dios no solamente está íntimamente vinculado con el amor al “prójimo”, sino también, a la vez, con el amor a la Tierra, esta maravillosa obra de vida que es nuestro hogar, que compartimos con todas las criaturas.

Apreciamos que en este gran organismo vivo las relaciones ecológicas se caracterizan por la diversidad, la interacción y la interdependencia para el bien del conjunto. Teniendo presente que una explicación etimológica de la palabra religión, en castellano, la hace derivar de la palabra religare en latín, nos acordamos del vínculo con la Tierra y la preocupación por la comunidad de vida en la Tierra (la vida de las personas, de las otras criaturas y de la Tierra en su conjunto con sus respectivas interdependencias) no es algo accidental para la Vida Religiosa; más bien está en el núcleo mismo de una Vida Religiosa que se empeña en leer atentamente los signos de los tiempos, preguntándose cómo se nos manifiesta Dios en ellos.

Cambios necesarios en las imágenes de Dios

Notamos pronto que el cambio de paradigma nos urge a revisar nuestras imágenes y metáforas, y nuestro lenguaje religioso en general, al hablar de Dios como creador y de su relación con el cosmos. Expreso aquí sólo algunas pistas, que pueden ser ampliadas. Hay concepciones e imágenes de Dios inadecuadas, que no corresponden ya a los conocimientos de la cosmología moderna y de los conocimientos científicos actuales sobre el origen del cosmos y el desarrollo de la vida en el planeta Tierra, por ejemplo: Dios como un gran diseñador que da a todo lo creado un diseño predeterminado y acabado. O Dios como un gran controlador que maneja todos los procesos del universo como un titiriteo maneja a sus títeres. O también: el Dios patriarca que ejerce un poder abrumador sobre sus criaturas.

Todas esas imágenes son erróneas, reflejan nuestras propias ideas, proyectadas sobre Dios, y no dejan traslucir la riqueza enorme de vida, amor, relación y comunicación que Dios es en verdad. Aun reconociendo los límites de todo lenguaje, al hablar de Dios, hay imágenes y expresiones mucho más adecuadas, como por ejemplo, un Dios que desea y posibilita el desarrollo del proceso cósmico en toda su complejidad, un Dios que quiere la libertad para que todo lo creado tenga su propia dinámica evolutiva y su autonomía relativa (no determinismo), en una interacción permanente. Cabe mencionar aquí la elaboración de una nueva teología que está en proceso: parte de una teología de la Trinidad (Dios–amor en comunicación, dinamismo, unidad en la diversidad, reciprocidad, permanente interacción en Dios mismo) y desde allí entra en diálogo con los conocimientos de la cosmología moderna.

A la vez, con Rosemary Radford Ruether, creemos que las tradiciones bíblicas contienen recursos valiosos para una espiritualidad y ética ecológica que hay que recuperar (muchas veces se han perdido a causa de lecturas muy androcéntricas y sesgadas de ciertos textos). En la cosmovisión hebrea por ejemplo la naturaleza no es un objeto o materia muerta, sino que está llena de aliento, de vida, de “alma”...; se tiene una visión mucho más integral del ser humano (sin el dualismo entre cuerpo y alma, materia y espíritu). El cambio de paradigma nos impulsa también a explorar más el misterio de la encarnación, de la redención de todo el cosmos por Cristo y de cómo leer estas afirmaciones en la clave del nuevo paradigma.

Aportes de la «ecología profunda»

Un aporte significativo de la ecología profunda para nuestro propio proceso en la Congregación es la importancia para nosotras de cultivar la capacidad de contemplación como parte integral de ese compromiso. Nos ayuda a apreciar la larga historia de la Tierra, a sentir un asombro profundo por la belleza de la gran diversidad de vida en la Tierra, de sus paisajes, de todo el proceso de evolución de la Tierra, desde su inicio en el cosmos hasta hoy. Es un asombro que lleva a apreciar, amar y cuidar con profunda gratitud la Tierra como un don precioso. En la contemplación de otros seres vivos, de la gran diversidad de vida en la Tierra y de esta maravillosa obra que es nuestro planeta Tierra, podemos experimentar una liberación respecto de una mirada meramente instrumental que sólo define si algo es útil para el ser humano, una mirada que no es capaz de percibir el valor propio de los otros seres vivos. Ya el libro de Job nos recuerda que las otras criaturas tienen el derecho de existir porque Dios tiene su gozo en que estén presentes en la Tierra. En la contemplación dejamos que la naturaleza nos hable a nosotras (en la forma de un árbol, una flor, una montaña, un paisaje, un animal...) desde su

propio ser. El aprecio y el amor a la Tierra nos motivan a saber más sobre sus misterios y la vida en ella. Pues el amor despierta curiosidad e interés genuino y gratuito en lo que uno ama; eso no vale únicamente para las relaciones humanas sino también para las relaciones con las otras criaturas. Nuestra fundadora Anna Dengel afirmó en uno de sus textos meditativos: “Si amas, eres creativa, tratas de entender, te interesas. Si de veras amas, eres perseverante”. El amor despierta creatividad en nosotras para nuestro compromiso ecológico. A la vez nos impulsa a contribuir con perseverancia a generar el cambio de mente y corazón tan necesario para lograr una mayor eco-justicia y para salvaguardar la vida en la Tierra.

Desde el nuevo paradigma hemos crecido en la conciencia de que el ser humano no tiene derecho a extinguir cada vez más especies, echando así a perder la gran biodiversidad en la Tierra, por su comportamiento egoísta, explotando sin límites la Tierra y sus recursos.

Superar dualismos

Las contribuciones de la ecología profunda y del ecofemenismo nos llevaron a tomar mayor conciencia del significado de nuestro cuerpo para sentir y vivir el vínculo con la Tierra y el compromiso ecológico que surge desde una vivencia profunda. Contemplamos cómo Jesús en muchos encuentros con personas enfermas restablece sus sentidos de contacto con el mundo (ojos, oídos, manos, etc.), abriéndolos y restaurando su capacidad de comunicación con los demás y con la naturaleza. De ahí buscamos superar en la vivencia de nuestra espiritualidad el dualismo entre materia y espíritu, entre cuerpo y alma, y rezar con nuestro cuerpo, sentir el vínculo con las otras personas y con la Tierra. La espiritualidad ecológica nos impulsa una y otra vez a practicar nuestra fe de manera integral: vivir el compromiso ecológico con gozo junto con otras personas y grupos; celebrar el don de la vida en su rica diversidad y usar en nuestras liturgias un lenguaje más vivencial, metafórico y poético (las metáforas adecuadas tienen un poder transformador, tocan razón y corazón), con gestos y ritos expresados también con el cuerpo; buscar un ritmo saludable de trabajo y descanso; cuidar espacios de gratitud...

Hacia una mayor eco-justicia

En muchos lugares de nuestra misión en diferentes partes del mundo estamos en contacto con pueblos indígenas. Su cosmovisión y sabiduría nos inspiran para vivir en relaciones de interdependencia y reciprocidad con la Tierra y mantener un vínculo afectivo con ella. Para los pueblos quechua y aymara por ejemplo la Tierra es Pachamama, Madre Tierra.

La espiritualidad ecológica basada en el nuevo paradigma nos motiva a buscar la justicia en todas sus dimensiones, la justicia en las relaciones entre los seres humanos, entre los pueblos y en relación con la

Tierra y la gran diversidad de seres vivientes en ella, la así llamada eco-justicia. Nos mueve a preguntarnos a fondo cómo vivir para que la Tierra, como “oikos”, “casa común”, no siga siendo cada vez más degradada y muchas especies de flora y fauna ya no encuentren las condiciones necesarias para sobrevivir. A la vez nos impulsa a vivir con mayor eco-justicia y, por ello, a empeñarnos en adoptar un estilo de vida sencillo. El hecho de que vivimos en sociedades de consumo, cuya manera de valorar las cosas nos afecta de múltiples formas, nos reta a reconocer cuándo en nuestro propio corazón anida el deseo de poseer y acumular, la codicia. La experiencia nos enseña que el discernimiento personal y comunitario es una práctica espiritual indispensable para distinguir entre lo que realmente necesitamos y lo que son cosas superfluas, pues somos conscientes de que el consumo desenfrenado está en la raíz de la crisis ecológica.

Nos empeñamos en vivir la renuncia al consumismo desde una opción decidida por un estilo de vida que cuida la Tierra y la gran comunidad de vida, y que fortalece nuestro vínculo con la Tierra como nuestra casa común. Buscamos evaluar y reducir significativamente nuestro impacto negativo sobre los demás seres vivientes en la Tierra. Ésta nos manifiesta que hay suficientes recursos para todos, si cada uno usa sólo lo que realmente necesita. La Tierra tiene su potencial propio para auto-organizarse y restablecer los equilibrios ecológicos necesarios, si no seguimos depredándola. Junto con muchos otros grupos y movimientos, buscamos generar otra comprensión de lo que es el sentido de la economía como actividad humana, y otra forma de practicar la economía, en armonía con la Tierra y sus recursos, una economía con oiko-sofía. Por eso, optamos por usar nuestros recursos económicos para apoyar iniciativas a nivel local e internacional en esa dirección: comprar productos bio-degradables, reducir al máximo la producción de basura y practicar el reciclaje, ser cuidadosas en el uso del agua y de la energía, usar preferencialmente energía generada con recursos renovables (energía solar, energía eólica), practicar la inversión ética de nuestras finanzas informándonos sobre las prácticas de los bancos y empresas correspondientes (si cumplen con las exigencias de la inversión ética como práctica de justicia social, eco-justicia, justicia de género respeto de los derechos humanos, de las diferentes culturas, etc.). Experimentamos que la práctica de la eco-justicia es un reto permanente y a veces nos pone frente a dilemas, por ejemplo, a la hora de realizar compras y constatar que varios productos bio-degradables cuestan mucho; en estos casos sentimos el dilema al tener que decidir entre lo que es lo mejor para la Tierra y lo que son nuestras posibilidades económicas.

En todo este proceso hemos tomado conciencia de que la dimensión ecológica debe ser un eje transversal en todas nuestras misiones. Por ello, en los contextos tan diversos en los que estamos, nos empeñamos

en crear una mayor conciencia y sensibilidad ecológica, el aprecio por la Tierra y el deseo y la voluntad firme de cuidarla. Según los contextos, este trabajo se realiza de múltiples formas como por ejemplo en talleres, seminarios, trabajo con jóvenes, estudiantes, profesores, campesinos, en la defensa de los derechos de los pueblos indígenas y de la Amazonía, en campañas públicas, junto con otros grupos en Naciones Unidas y en centros ecológicos como HEAL en Filipinas, un centro de nuestra Congregación para la sensibilización ecológica y para generar una mayor conciencia ecológica y motivar en la práctica a una vida coherente con esta conciencia.

Eco-justicia y votos religiosos

Una lectura del sentido de nuestros votos religiosos desde la espiritualidad ecológica ha enriquecido su comprensión y vivencia. En el último Capítulo General hemos afirmado que nuestro voto de pobreza, por ejemplo, expresa nuestro compromiso de vivir de manera sencilla, inter-dependiente y responsable, con la conciencia del vínculo existente entre nuestra vida, nuestro bienestar individual y el bienestar de las demás personas y de toda la creación. Deseamos crecer más todavía en la conciencia de que los recursos que tenemos (recursos económicos, nuestros talentos, conocimientos, habilidades y nuestro tiempo) no son “nuestros”, más bien los tenemos para el uso de todas las Hermanas y de las personas con quienes compartimos la vida en nuestra misión, sobre todo con los más marginados y excluidos, y que las decisiones que tomamos en un área, afectan a toda la Congregación (cuerpo), así como a nuestro compromiso con el cuidado de la Tierra.

En la vivencia de nuestro voto de castidad deseamos dar testimonio del amor gratuito y liberador de Dios, el cual es incondicional e incluso y nos llama a vivir en solidaridad, particularmente con las personas empobrecidas y con las otras criaturas.

Nuestro voto de obediencia implica que vivamos y trabajemos en espíritu de diálogo, discernimiento y decisiones compartidas. Conlleva el compromiso de poner nuestros dones personales al servicio de la misión y del cuidado de la creación, viviendo atentas a los signos de los tiempos, al “grito de la tierra y al grito de los pobres”.

Evaluamos periódicamente nuestro estilo de vida desde nuestro votos, preguntándonos en qué aspectos estamos llamadas a crecer para dar testimonio de otra manera de vivir, oponiéndonos a maneras de pensar y actuar que dañan la vida, tanto en las personas como en la Tierra, y ensayando alternativas. Nos inspira e interpela el ejemplo de los pueblos indígenas que desde su concepción del “buen vivir” cuestionan el concepto occidental de “desarrollo” y “progreso” (tener cada vez más en cada vez menos tiempo, consumo desenfrenado, creciente contaminación

y empobrecimiento de la Tierra, grandes brechas sociales, etc.). Nuestros votos nos impulsan a comprometernos por una mayor justicia con equidad en la distribución de los bienes de la Tierra, y en la así llamada “justicia climática” (compromiso de los países más industrializados, que más han contribuido a provocar el cambio climático, con respecto a los países más afectados por el cambio climático).

El nuevo paradigma desarrollado por la ecología profunda implica cambios radicales en nuestra manera de pensar, de vivir y de relacionarnos con la Tierra y entre nosotras. Ese nuevo paradigma nos interpela mucho, nos abre los ojos en medio de la aguda crisis ecológica y del cambio climático, y de esta manera nos ayuda a percibir la Tierra, nuestro lugar en ella y nuestra relación con ella, de una manera distinta. Es una metanoia necesaria, que no podemos dejar de experimentar. Como Congregación nos percibimos en un camino que nos lleva a profundizar cada vez más lo que este cambio de paradigma significa e implica. De ahí que, en el último Capítulo General (2009), las Hermanas participantes dijeron que nos sentimos como el ciego de Betsaida, que sólo gradualmente obtiene una nueva visión (“Veo personas... pero como si fueran árboles”, Mc 8,24). Es todo un proceso lo que vivimos en nuestra Congregación, en diferentes ritmos e intensidades, pero desde un compromiso compartido por todas. En la realidad actual, en medio de una crisis ecológica aguda y un cambio climático vertiginoso con sus efectos dramáticos en muchas partes de la Tierra –efectos no sólo sobre las vidas humanas, especialmente las personas más vulnerables, sino también sobre tantos otros seres vivientes que viven con nosotros en la Tierra– escuchamos de nuevo con un corazón abierto la palabra de Dios: “He puesto ante ti la vida y la muerte, la bendición y la maldición. Escoge, pues, la vida (Dt 30,19).”



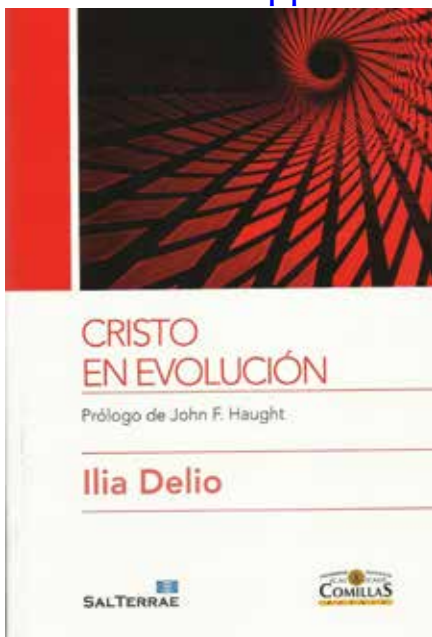




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DELIO, Iliá, *Cristo en evolución*, Sal Terrae, Santander, España, 2014, 304pp. Original: *Cosmic Christology*, Concept Publishing Company, 2010, www.conceptpub.com



Many will be shocked by the daring title of this work: it is due, the authoress tells us, to the fact that we continue to project upon Christ obsolete categories of a static conception of the reality.

The contemporary science uncovers for us a dynamic and inter-related universe, generator of novelty. To jointly think Christ and the evolution, requires not only to discover the presence of Christ in the evolutionary processes, but also to consider up to what point his reality may be subjected to change and transformation.

This idea is not so problematic as it seems, if one consider the intimate relation between Christ and the universe, which derives from his creating mediation and from his incarnation. That is already reflected, even if it is in a non evolutionary frame, in the neo-testamentarian notion of “cosmic Christ”, and likewise in the works of some of the Church Fathers and of the mediaeval Franciscans, such a Bonaventure

and Duns Scotus. Later on, already in an evolutionary frame, Fr. Teilhard de Chardin reflected upon it with a stirring depth: if Christ and nature are united in such a close way, and the universe is still in evolution, the reality of Christ will not be completed until creation reaches its consummation in Him. Hence that Christ, without ceasing to be one and the same, evolves in a certain sense. Besides being far too much static, the categories with which we think Christ, suffer from intellectualism, thinks Iliá Delio. Hence that she considers it to be necessary to deepen in the Christology through the path of the spiritual and mystic experience.

The main part of the book is devoted to point out paths to that task. Besides Teilhard, who offers the basic intuition of the work, the authoress resorts to three magnificent guides: R. Pannikar, for whom Christ is the central symbol of all reality and beats in the core of each person; Th. Merton, whose reflection focus in the trans-cultural nature of Christ, who is incarnated in all human beings and, through his resurrection, he beco-

mes a truly integrated person; and B. Griffiths, an English monk, inculturated in India, and who experienced Christ as the ego of a redeemed humanity. From these Christological proposals are deduced implications both anthropological and practical (for example: exhortation to the dialogue of religions and culture). The picture displayed when each one of these authors is analyzed in detail, is very rich, so much so that, at times, the reader may lose sight of the book's main purpose.

Particularly original happens to be the last chapter, when approaching two subjects to which current theology scarcely lends any attention, but which pose a serious intellectual challenge: the growing interlacing of human life and technology, cause of a supposedly new evolutionary stage (ciborg or techno sapiens); and the possibility of the existence of extraterrestrial life in the cosmos. Both perspectives have great relevancy for the idea of Christ in evolution. To the authoress are helpful as a reservoir of proofs of the reflections that she has previously introduced, specially of two ideas: the one that the "incarnation" is much more wide than "humanization" and the other one, that the incarnation of the Logos does not obey so much to the redemption of sin, but to the divine love which wishes that the whole created world arrives to its fullness. Here comes into play the overcoming of the narrow anthropocentric vision of the reality.

Ilia Delio is a Franciscan sister from the United States, Professor of Theology at Georgetown University, specialized in the theology-science dialogue, and an excellent expert in the mediaeval Franciscan theology and spirituality. This combination lends a special throb to her writings, and makes of her one of the most interesting voices of the present day theology of North America. It is to be desired that translations of her works keep coming to us.



A muchos les chocará el atrevido título de esta obra; ello se debe, nos dice la autora, a que seguimos proyectando sobre Cristo categorías de una trasnochada concepción estática de la realidad.

La ciencia contemporánea nos descubre un universo dinámico e interrelacionado, generador de novedad. Pensar conjuntamente a Cristo y la evolución exige no solo descubrir la presencia de Cristo en los procesos evolutivos, sino considerar en qué medida su realidad pueda estar sujeta a cambio y transformación.

Esta idea no resulta tan problemática como parece si se considera la íntima relación entre Cristo y el universo que deriva de su mediación creadora y de su encarnación. Ello se refleja ya, si bien en un marco no evolucionista, en la noción neotestamentaria de "Cristo cósmico", así como en las obras de algunos Padres de la Iglesia y de franciscanos medievales como Buenaventura y Duns Escoto.

Más tarde, ya en un marco evolucionista, P. Teilhard de Chardin reflexionó sobre ello con una profundidad vertiginosa: si Cristo y el universo están unidos de forma tan estrecha y el universo se encuentra aún en evolución, la realidad de Cristo no estará completa hasta que la creación alcance su consumación en Él. De ahí que Cristo, sin dejar de ser uno y el mismo, evolucione en cierto sentido. Además de ser demasiado estáticas, las categorías con las que pensamos a Cristo adolecen de intelectualismo, opina Ilia Delio. De ahí que considere necesario ahondar en la cristología por la vía de la experiencia espiritual y mística.

El grueso del libro se dedica a apuntar caminos para esa tarea. Aparte de Teilhard, que proporciona la intuición fundamental de la obra, la autora recurre a tres magníficos guías: R. Pannikar, para quien Cristo es el símbolo central de toda realidad y late en el hondón de cada persona; Th. Merton, cuya reflexión se centra en la naturaleza transcultural de Cristo, que se encarna en todo hombre y, por su resurrección, se convierte en la persona verdaderamente integrada; y B. Griffiths, trapense inglés inculturado en la India que experimentó a Cristo como el yo de una humanidad redimida.

De estas propuestas cristológicas se desprenden implicaciones tanto antropológicas como prácticas (p. ej., exhortación al diálogo de religiones y cultura). El cuadro que se despliega al analizar en detalle a cada uno de estos autores es muy rico, tanto que, a veces, puede el lector perder de vista el propósito fundamental del libro.

Especialmente original resulta el último capítulo, al abordar dos temas a los que apenas presta atención la teología al uso, pero que plantean un serio reto intelectual: el creciente entrelazamiento de vida humana y tecnología, causa de un supuesto nuevo estadio evolutivo (ciborg o techno sapiens); y la posibilidad de existencia de vida extraterrestre en el cosmos.

Ambas perspectivas tienen gran relevancia para la idea de Cristo en evolución. A la autora le sirven como banco de pruebas de las reflexiones que ha presentado antes, en especial de dos ideas: la de que “encarnación” es más amplio que “humanización” y la de que la encarnación del LOGOS no obedece tanto a la necesidad de redención del pecado cuanto al amor divino que desea que todo lo creado llegue a su plenitud. Aquí está en juego la superación de la estrecha visión antropocéntrica de la realidad.

Ilia Delio es una franciscana estadounidense, catedrática de teología en Georgetown, especializada en el diálogo teología-ciencia y excelente conocedora de la teología y espiritualidad franciscana medieval.





RENOVAR EL DIÁLOGO ENTRE CIENCIA Y FE En torno al concepto de «Evolución Consciente»

Por Ilia Delio (8 de mayo, 2014)

Nota del editor: El 30 de abril, con ocasión de su viaje anual a Roma, la presidencia de la Conferencia de Superioras Religiosas [LCWR, por sus siglas en inglés] de Estados Unidos, se reunió con el Cardenal Gerhard Müller, y con miembros de la Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe.

Durante sus observaciones iniciales, que fueron publicadas en la red del Vaticano, el Cardenal Müller criticó a la LCWR, por “centrar la atención” alrededor del “concepto de Evolución Consciente”, mientras afirmaba que “las tesis fundamentales de «Evolución Consciente» se oponen a la Revelación Cristiana”.

El pasado mes de agosto, 2013, Ilia Delio, una Hermana de San Francisco de Washington, D.C. pronunció el discurso de apertura de curso, en la Asamblea de 2013, del LCWR, con el título La Vida Religiosa en el Borde del Universo. Informe Global de las Hermanas pidió a la H^a Delio que respondiera a las observaciones del Cardenal Müller sobre la evolución consciente.

En su reciente encuentro con las líderes de las Superioras de la Conferencia de Mujeres Religiosas (LCWR, por sus siglas en inglés), el cardenal Gerhard Müller, cardenal Prefecto de la Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe (CDF), expresó su preocupación acerca del hecho de que la LCRW enfocara su atención al concepto de evolución consciente, un concepto fundamental en el trabajo de Bárbara Marx Hubbard, quien habló a la Asamblea de LCRW, en 2012. El cardenal Müller afirmó que “un enfoque tan intenso sobre un concepto como éste, ha despojado a las religiosas de la habilidad de verdaderamente *Sentire cum Ecclesia* (pensar con la Iglesia, y abrazar sus enseñanzas)”.

Él añadió: “Las tesis fundamentales de la evolución consciente, se oponen a la Revelación cristiana, y cuando se aceptan sin reflexionar, llevan casi necesariamente a errores fundamentales, en lo que respecta a la omnipotencia divina, la encarnación de Cristo, la realidad del Pecado Original, la necesidad de la salvación, y la naturaleza definitiva de la acción salvífica de Cristo”.

Aunque es probable que estas palabras del cardenal se tomaran de una conversación más amplia, su preocupación ofrece una oportunidad para decir unas pocas palabras sobre la evolución consciente y, más extensamente, sobre el mutuo compromiso entre ciencia y religión.

El término evolución consciente no fue acuñado por Bárbara Marx Hubbard, aunque ella ha hecho importantes aportaciones a la comprensión de las implicaciones de la evolución consciente para nuestro tiempo. El término en sí surge de las ciencias de biología evolutiva, de la física cuántica y de la neurociencia cognoscitiva, entre otras. El término no pertenece a la ciencia per se, pero describe nuestra especie: homo sapiens sapiens, evolución llevada a la conciencia auto-reflexiva. Para usar las palabras del famoso jesuita Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, “Somos el Universo llegado a ser consciente de sí mismo”. Somos los únicos que “sabemos que sabemos” (homo sapiens sapiens); de aquí que sea importante reflexionar sobre nuestras opciones y decisiones de cara al futuro. La evolución consciente se refiere a la idea, expresada por Teilhard, de que nosotros, los humanos, somos la flecha de la evolución, la cresta de la continuada evolución del Universo. Somos co-creadores de un inacabado proceso evolutivo en marcha hacia más Ser.

Comprender la evolución consciente significa colocarla dentro del proceso de la evolución misma. Teilhard describió la evolución como un movimiento hacia una mayor convergencia, complejidad y consciencia. La vida avanza desde simples y aisladas existencias, hacia formas más complejas. Él describió el proceso general de la vida por medio de tres tendencias mayores: convergencia, complejidad y consciencia. Cuando los elementos se juntan, se forman nuevos grados de interrelación, y surge la consciencia. Teilhard describió el proceso de la evolución como fundamentalmente un ascenso de la consciencia. Recibió el influjo del filósofo Henri Bergson que habló de un élan vital en la naturaleza, y también del físico francés Louis de Broglie (del famoso experimento de la doble hendidura?). Escribiendo independientemente de Teilhard, el filósofo alemán Karl Jaspers, en su libro de 1949, Origen y Meta de la Historia, describió la emergencia de las religiones del mundo, en términos de un avance en consciencia. Usó el término “período axial” para referirse a un nuevo tipo de pensamiento, incluyendo las religiones monoteístas, que surgieron en las regiones mayores del mundo, y “dieron origen a todo lo que, desde entonces, la persona humana ha sido capaz de ser”. El teólogo William Thompson escribió que “lo que hace a este periodo ser el ‘axis’ de la historia humana, incluso nuestra propia historia hoy día, es el hecho de que el ser humano surgió como ‘individuo’ en el sentido propio”.

La cuestión de qué es lo que define la consciencia se debate hoy acaloradamente entre los filósofos, los neurocientíficos, los científicos del conocimiento, y los científicos de la cibernética. Todavía no está claro QUÉ es la consciencia, pero QUE ella está surgiendo en mayor complejidad, especialmente por medio de la tecnología y las comunicaciones de masa (lo que Teilhard llamó la “noosfera”, o nuevo nivel de la mente), no puede negarse. El término consciencia global refleja este nuevo nivel de consciencia.

Ya no estamos viviendo en el mundo de Tomás de Aquino o Anselmo; es el mundo de Darwin, Einstein, Lazlo, Damasio y Chalmers. Lo mismo que el de Aquino tuvo que vérselas con la nueva filosofía aristotélica de su tiempo, hoy día la fe trata de comprender en un mundo profundamente informado por la ciencia moderna.

En 1988, S. Juan Pablo II escribió una apasionada carta al padre jesuita, George Coyne, entonces director del Observatorio Vaticano, subrayando la urgente necesidad de reconciliar ciencia y religión. En sus palabras:

Mientras el diálogo y la búsqueda común continúen, habrá crecimiento hacia una mutua comprensión y un gradual descubrimiento de preocupaciones comunes, que proveerán la base de ulteriores investigaciones y diálogo. Lo que es importante es que el diálogo continúe y crezca en profundidad y envergadura. En el proceso, debemos vencer toda tendencia regresiva hacia el reduccionismo unilateral, el miedo o el aislamiento autoimpuesto [énfasis añadido]. Lo que es críticamente importante es que cada disciplina debería continuar enriqueciendo, alimentando y desafiando a la otra, a ser más plenamente lo que ella puede ser, y a contribuir a nuestra visión de quién somos y qué estamos deviniendo».

Juan Pablo reconoció que una Iglesia desconectada de la ciencia moderna, podría conducir a la idolatría, de la misma manera que una ciencia sin la profundidad de la religión, podría llevar a falsos absolutos: “Debemos preguntarnos si tanto la ciencia como la religión van a contribuir a la integración de la cultura humana, o a su fragmentación... las gentes no pueden seguir viviendo en compartimentos separados, persiguiendo intereses totalmente diferentes, desde los cuales valoran y juzgan su mundo. Una comunidad dividida fomenta una visión del mundo fragmentada; una comunidad de intercambio, anima a sus miembros a extender sus perspectivas parciales y formar una nueva visión unificada”.

En opinión de Juan Pablo, una relación mutuamente enriquecedora entre ciencia y religión puede contribuir a un mundo unificado. Llegó a decir:

“¿Qué es, pues, lo que la Iglesia fomenta en esta unidad relacional entre ciencia y religión? Lo primero y principal es que ellas deben llegar a entenderse la una a la otra. Durante un tiempo demasiado largo han permanecido muy distanciadas. Se ha definido a la Teología como un esfuerzo de la fe por alcanzar comprensión, como fides quaerens intellectum, la fe que trata de entender. En ese contexto, ella debe permanecer hoy día en un vital intercambio con la ciencia, exactamente igual que siempre lo ha estado con la filosofía y otras formas de aprendizaje. La Teología tendría que acudir, en un grado u otro, a los descubrimientos de la ciencia, mientras continúa su preocupación primordial por la persona humana, los alcances de la libertad, las posibilidades de la comunidad cristiana, la naturaleza de la fe, y la inteligibilidad de la naturaleza y de la historia.

Sin embargo, mientras esos descubrimientos se hacen parte de la cultura intelectual de la época, los teólogos deben entenderlos y probar su valor deduciendo de la fe cristiana algunas de las posibilidades que todavía no han se han realizado. El bitemorfismo de la filosofía natural Aristotélica, por ejemplo, fue adoptado por los teólogos medievales para que les ayudara a ellos a explorar la naturaleza de los sacramentos y la unión hipostática. Esto no significó que la Iglesia pasara juicio sobre la verdad o falsedad de la intuición aristotélica, ya que esto no era lo que les preocupaba. Significó que ésta era una de las ricas intuiciones de la cultura griega, que era necesario que se comprendiese y se tomara en serio, y se probara por su valor para iluminar varias áreas de la teología.

Los teólogos podrían muy bien preguntarse, respecto a la ciencia contemporánea, la filosofía y otras áreas del conocimiento humano, si han llevado a cabo este extraordinariamente difícil proceso, tan bien como lo hicieron aquellos maestros medievales.

Si las cosmologías del antiguo mundo de Oriente Próximo pudieron ser purificadas y asimiladas en el primer capítulo del Génesis, ¿no podría la cosmología contemporánea tener algo que ofrecer a nuestras reflexiones sobre la creación? ¿Arroja alguna luz una perspectiva evolutiva que tenga que ver con la antropología teológica, el significado de la persona humana como *imago Dei* [imagen de Dios], el problema de la Cristología, e incluso sobre el desarrollo de la doctrina misma? ¿Cuáles son las implicaciones escatológicas -si es que hay alguna- de la cosmología contemporánea, especialmente a la luz del inmenso futuro de nuestro universo? ¿Puede el método teológico apropiarse fructuosamente intuiciones de la metodología científica y de la filosofía de la ciencia?

Juan Pablo concluía su carta a Coyne afirmando que, “los cristianos inevitablemente asimilarán las ideas predominantes sobre el mundo, y hoy día éstas están profundamente determinadas por la ciencia. La única cuestión es si harán esto de una manera crítica, o sin reflexionar, con profundidad y matices, o con una superficialidad que degrada al Evangelio y nos deja avergonzados ante la historia”.

A la luz de los esfuerzos de Juan Pablo II y la preocupación del Cardenal Müller, es oportuno que la evolución consciente atraiga nuestra atención sobre la necesidad de un entendimiento mutuo entre ciencia y religión. El Vaticano ha estado intensamente atento a los descubrimientos de la ciencia moderna, por medio de la Academia Pontificia de Ciencias (iniciada en 1936) y el programa de Ciencia y Religión, dentro del Departamento vaticano de Cultura, apoyando numerosos y excelentes congresos sobre la evolución biológica, la física cuántica, el caos y la complejidad, y la cosmología del big bang. Aunque el Vaticano ha estado atento a las nuevas percepciones de la ciencia moderna durante las pocas

últimas décadas, todavía no ha comprobado el valor de las mismas para aportar por parte de la fe cristiana algunas de las posibilidades que todavía no han sido llevadas a cabo (para usar las palabras de Juan Pablo II).

¿Cuándo el diálogo se transforma en nueva comprensión? ¿Cuándo cambia el relato cristiano de su esquema metafísico medieval, a un nuevo relato, influenciado por la ciencia moderna? Me pregunto si la Iglesia reconoce su propia voz en las palabras de S. Juan Pablo II: “La ciencia puede purificar la religión del error y de la superstición, la religión puede purificar a la ciencia de la idolatría y los falsos absolutos. Cada uno puede atraer al otro a un mundo mucho más amplio, un mundo en el que ambos puedan florecer”.

La meta de ciencia y religión, atrayéndose la una a la otra hacia un mundo mucho más amplio, en el que ambas puedan florecer, estuvo en el corazón de las enseñanzas de Teilhard de Chardin sobre la evolución consciente. Esto es precisamente lo que él esperaba, que ciencia y religión pudieran compartir las respectivas intuiciones para la profundización de la vida hacia delante, el surgir de la Persona cósmica, la plenitud de Cristo.

Teilhard fue jesuita hasta los tuétanos, imbuido en el espíritu ignaciano de buscar a Cristo en todas las cosas. Su amor a Dios, su pasión por el Evangelio y su devoción a la Iglesia, le llevó a buscar un entendimiento creíble de la fe a la luz de la ciencia moderna. Sin entender al Dios vivo en un mundo dinámico de energía y consciencia, un mundo en evolución, el Cristianismo, señaló él, devendría vacío de todo contenido real.

Religiosas y religiosos alrededor del mundo se están contagiando del fuego de Teilhard; ello está propagando una nueva pasión por el Evangelio, un nuevo sentido de la vida cristiana en un mundo en cambio. Es bueno que el Vaticano haya expresado preocupación por la evolución consciente. Todos nosotros necesitamos estar preocupados, porque somos co-creadores; nuestras decisiones son decisivas para cómo toda vida y, en particular, la vida cristiana va a continuar en el futuro. Espero que las palabras del Cardenal Müller suscitarán nuevas conversaciones sobre fe y ciencia de una manera que la comprensión se hará más profunda, se ampliarán las intuiciones, van a surgir nuevos horizontes de fe, y el Evangelio asumirá un nuevo significado a la luz de la evolución consciente. Como S. Juan Pablo II exclamó: “No tengáis miedo, abrid, abrid ampliamente a Cristo las puertas de los inmensos campos de la cultura, la civilización y el progreso”.



RENEWING THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN FAITH AND SCIENCE On the concept of «Conscious Evolution»



By Ilia Delio

Editor's note: On April 30, as part of their annual trip to Rome, the presidency of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (Carol Zinn, Sisters of St. Joseph of Philadelphia; Florence Deacon, Sisters of St. Francis of St. Francis, Wisconsin; Sharon Holland, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Monroe, Michigan and Janet Mock, Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden, Pennsylvania), met with Cardinal Gerhard Müller and officials of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

During his opening remarks, which were posted on the Vatican website, Cardinal Müller criticized LCWR for a "focalizing of attention" around the "concept of Conscious Evolution," stating that "the fundamental theses of Conscious Evolution are opposed to Christian Revelation."

Last August, Ilia Delio, a Sister of St. Francis of Washington, D.C., gave the keynote address "Religious Life at the Edge of the Universe," at the 2013 LCWR Assembly. GLOBAL SISTERS REPORT asked Sr. Delio to respond to Cardinal Müller's remarks about conscious evolution.

In his recent conversation with leaders of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Cardinal Gerhard Müller, Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), expressed a concern about the LCWR focusing attention on the concept of conscious evolution, a concept fundamental to the work of Barbara Marx Hubbard who addressed the LCWR assembly in 2012. Cardinal Müller said that "such an intense focus on new ideas such as conscious evolution has robbed religious of the ability truly to *Sentire cum Ecclesia* (to think with the Church and embrace its teachings)."

He continued: "The fundamental theses of conscious evolution are opposed to Christian Revelation and, when taken unreflectively, lead almost necessarily to fundamental errors regarding the omnipotence of God, the incarnation of Christ, the reality of Original Sin, the necessity of salvation and the definitive nature of the salvific action of Christ."

While it is possible that the Cardinal's words were extracted from a broader conversation, his concern offers an opportunity to say a few words about conscious evolution and, more broadly, the mutual engagement of science and religion.

The term "conscious evolution" was not coined by Barbara Marx Hubbard, although she has made significant contributions in understand-

ding the implications of conscious evolution for our age. The term itself emerges from the sciences of evolutionary biology, quantum physics and cognitive neuroscience, among others. The term does not belong to science PER SE but is descriptive of our species, *homo sapiens sapiens*: evolution brought to self-reflective awareness. To use the words of the renowned Jesuit Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, “We are the universe become conscious of itself.” We are the ones “who know that we know” (*homo sapiens saiens*); hence it is important to reflect on our choices and decisions for the future. Conscious evolution refers to the idea, expressed by Teilhard, that we humans are the arrow of evolution, the crest of the ongoing evolution of the universe. We are co-creators of an unfinished evolutionary process toward more being.

To understand conscious evolution is to place it within the process of evolution itself. Teilhard described evolution as a movement toward greater convergence, complexity and consciousness. Life moves from simple isolated existences to more complex forms. He described the overall process of life by three major trends: convergence, complexity and consciousness. As elements come together, new degrees of relatedness form and consciousness rises. Teilhard described the process of evolution as fundamentally a rise in consciousness. He was influenced by the philosopher Henri Bergson who spoke of an *élan vital* in nature, as well as by the French physicist Louis de Broglie (of the famous double-slit experiment). Writing independently of Teilhard, the German philosopher Karl Jaspers in his 1949 book *The Origin and Goal of History* described the emergence of world religions in terms of a breakthrough in consciousness. He used the term “axial period” to refer to a new kind of thinking, including the monotheistic religions, which arose in the major areas of the world and “gave birth to everything which since then, the human person has been able to be.” Theologian William Thompson wrote that “what makes this period the 'axis' of human history, even our own history today, is the fact that the human emerged as 'individual' in the proper sense.”

The question of what defines consciousness is hotly debated today among philosophers, neuroscientists, cognitive scientists and computer scientists. It is still not yet clear WHAT consciousness is, but THAT it is emerging in greater complexity, especially through technology and mass communication (what Teilhard called the “noosphere” or new level of mind), cannot be denied. The term “global consciousness” reflects this new level of awareness.

We are no longer living in the world of Thomas Aquinas or Anselm; it is the world of Darwin, Einstein, Lazlo, Damasio and Chalmers. Just as Aquinas grappled with the new Aristotelian philosophy of his time, today faith is seeking understanding in a world deeply informed by modern science.

In 1988 Saint John Paul II wrote an impassioned letter to Jesuit Fr. George Coyne, then head of the Vatican Observatory, underscoring the urgent need to reconcile science and religion.

In his words:

As dialogue and common searching continue, there will be growth towards mutual understanding and a gradual uncovering of common concerns which will provide the basis for further research and discussion. *What is important is that the dialogue should continue and grow in depth and scope. In the process we must overcome every regressive tendency to a unilateral reductionism, to fear, and to self-imposed isolation* [emphasis added]. What is critically important is that each discipline should continue to enrich, nourish and challenge the other to be more fully what it can be and to contribute to our vision of who we are and who we are becoming.

John Paul recognized that a church out of touch with modern science could lead to idolatry in the same way that science without the depth of religion could lead to false absolutes: “We must ask ourselves whether both science and religion will contribute to the integration of human culture or to its fragmentation... peoples cannot continue to live in separate compartments, pursuing totally divergent interests from which they evaluate and judge their world. A divided community fosters a fragmented vision of the world; a community of interchange encourages its members to expand their partial perspectives and form a new unified vision.”

In John Paul’s view, a mutually enriching relationship between science and religion can contribute to a unified world. He went on to say:

What, then, does the Church encourage in this relational unity between science and religion? First and foremost that they should come to understand one another. For too long a time they have been at arm’s length. Theology has been defined as an effort of faith to achieve understanding, as *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*. As such, it must be in vital interchange today with science just as it always has been with philosophy and other forms of learning. Theology will have to call on the findings of science to one degree or another as it pursues its primary concern for the human person, the reaches of freedom, the possibilities of Christian community, the nature of belief and the intelligibility of nature and history.

As these findings become part of the intellectual culture of the time, however, theologians must understand them and test their value in bringing out from Christian belief some of the possibilities which have not yet been realized. The hyломorphism of Aristotelian natural philosophy, for example, was adopted by the medieval theologians to help them explore the nature of the sacraments and the hypostatic union. This did not mean that the Church adjudicated the truth or falsity of the

Aristotelian insight, since that is not her concern. It did mean that this was one of the rich insights offered by Greek culture, that it needed to be understood and taken seriously and tested for its value in illuminating various areas of theology. *Theologians might well ask, with respect to contemporary science, philosophy and the other areas of human knowing, if they have accomplished this extraordinarily difficult process as well as did these medieval masters* [emphasis added].

If the cosmologies of the ancient Near Eastern world could be purified and assimilated into the first chapter of Genesis, might not contemporary cosmology have something to offer to our reflections upon creation? Does an evolutionary perspective bring any light to bear upon theological anthropology, the meaning of the human person as the IMAGO DEI, the problem of Christology – and even upon the development of doctrine itself? What, if any, are the eschatological implications of contemporary cosmology, especially in light of the vast future of our universe? Can theological method fruitfully appropriate insights from scientific methodology and the philosophy of science?

John Paul concluded his letter to Coyne by saying that, “Christians will inevitably assimilate the prevailing ideas about the world, and today these are deeply shaped by science. The only question is whether they will do this critically or unreflectively, with depth and nuance or with a shallowness that debases the Gospel and leaves us ashamed before history.”

In light of John Paul’s efforts and the concern of Cardinal Müller, it is timely that “conscious evolution” draw our attention to the need for mutual enrichment between science and religion. The Vatican has been keenly attentive to the discoveries of modern science, with the Pontifical Academy of Science (begun in 1936) and the Science and Religion program within the Vatican’s Department of Culture, sponsoring numerous and excellent conferences on biological evolution, quantum physics, chaos and complexity and big bang cosmology. Although the Vatican has been listening to the insights from modern science over the last few decades, it has not “tested their value in bringing out from Christian belief some of the possibilities which have not yet been realized” (to use John Paul II’s words).

When does dialogue transform into new understanding? When does the Christian narrative change from its medieval metaphysical framework into a new narrative informed by modern science? I wonder if the church recognizes its own voice in the words of St. John Paul II: “Science can purify religion from error and superstition; religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes. Each can draw the other into a wider world, a world in which both can flourish.”

The goal of science and religion, drawing each other into a wider world in which both can flourish, was at the heart of Teilhard de Chardin’s

teachings on conscious evolution. This is precisely what he hoped for, that science and religion could share their respective insights for the deepening of life ahead, the rise of the cosmic Person, the fullness of Christ.

Teilhard was Jesuit to the core, steeped in the Ignatian spirit of finding Christ in all things. His love of God, passion for the Gospel and devotion to the church led him to seek a credible understanding of faith in light of modern science. Without understanding the living God in a dynamic world of energy and consciousness, a world in evolution, Christianity, he indicated, would become empty of any real content.

Religious women and men around the world are catching Teilhard's fire; it is igniting a new passion for the Gospel, new meaning of Christian life in a world of change. It is good that the Vatican has expressed concern about conscious evolution. We all need to be concerned because we are co-creators; our decisions do make a difference as to how all life and, in particular, Christian life will proceed in the future. I hope that Cardinal Muller's words will evoke new conversations on faith and science in a way that understanding will deepen, insights will broaden, new horizons of faith will emerge and the Gospel will take on new meaning in light of conscious evolution. As St. John Paul II exclaimed: "Be not afraid, open, open wide to Christ the doors of the immense domains of culture, civilization and progress."

[Ilia Delio, OSF, a Sister of St. Francis of Washington, D.C., is Haub Director of Catholic Studies and Visiting Professor at Georgetown University. Her recent publications include *From Teilhard To Omega: Cocreating an Unfinished Universe* and *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being: God, Evolution and the Power of Love*]

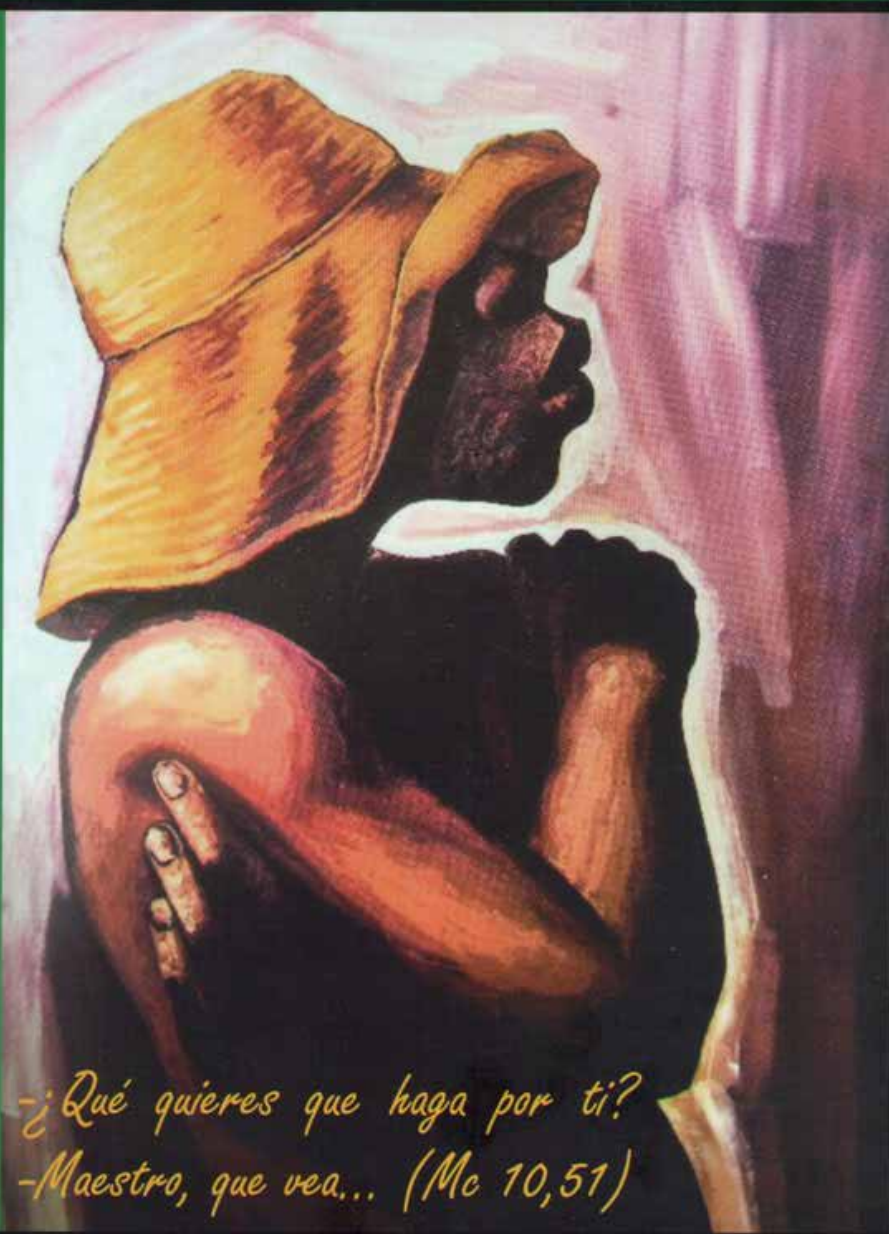


DE LA TORRE, Gonzalo M., *Los Milagros de Jesús y sus relatos, según los Evangelios Sinópticos*. Medellín (Colombia): Ediciones Fundación Universitaria Claretiana, 2014, 284 pgs.

Este libro está destinado a recorrer con paciencia el largo camino de los relatos de milagros de los Evangelios Sinópticos. Aquí examinamos treinta y cinco relatos de milagros que nos demuestran en qué sentido es Jesús un verdadero taumaturgo, no del cuño de los taumaturgos que hoy llenan nuestros recintos sagrados, pero sí un taumaturgo que cura las enfermedades del cuerpo, porque sabe sanar primero las del espíritu.

Los Milagros de Jesús y sus relatos

Según los Evangelios Sinópticos



*-¿Qué quieres que haga por ti?
-Maestro, que vea... (Mc 10,51)*

Gonzalo M. de la Torre Guerrero CMF.


La originalidad de esta obra está principalmente en la aplicación a los relatos de milagros del método que el autor llama “Hermenéutica de la Matriz Social triádica”, a la cual le dedica un capítulo.

En cada uno de los relatos de milagro de los Evangelios Sinópticos podemos palpar a los maestros que los redactaron: su brevedad, su precisión, su profundidad y su capacidad de conducir al lector hasta la profundidad de las conciencias, a donde asombrosamente supo llegar Jesús.

Por eso, podemos decir, sin temor a equivocarnos, que cada relato es una verdadera obra maestra de simbolismo. Los sustantivos necesarios, los verbos suficientes, las frases precisas que los ligan unos a otros, llevan al lector a que se sumerja en la hondura del símbolo a partir de la exterioridad de las palabras. No es lo maravilloso lo que convence en los relatos de milagros de Jesús, pues la mayoría de las veces la ciencia moderna le encuentra explicación natural a cada una de esas maravillas. Lo que seduce en esos relatos es el arte de saber llevar al lector a vivir la misma experiencia de Jesús o de los testigos de sus obras, a sentir, después de dos mil años, eso mismo que él sentía frente a los sujetos cuya vida no valía nada para los poderosos que espiritualmente manejaban la conciencia del pueblo oprimido de su tiempo.

Detrás de esos “signos” ciertamente poderosos, aunque no siempre “maravillosos”, vuelve el lector a sentir lo mismo que sintió Jesús: compasión por los niños y niñas víctimas de herencias humanas pesadas; solidaridad por las mujeres, objetivos del machismo excluyente de su tiempo; compromiso con los enfermos sin atención, con los leprosos excluidos, con los enfermos mentales de una sociedad acosada por el hambre y la opresión de los invasores, con los poseídos por espíritus inmundos, frente a los cuales no se podía hacer nada, porque eran posesión de energías sobrenaturales, para el pueblo tan poderosas como el mismo Dios.

Jesús, desde la sencillez genial de muchos relatos de milagros, logra posesionarse de nuestras conciencias modernas, tan ajenas ya al sobrenatural que hay que recuperar no desde la exterioridad milagrera, siempre peligrosa por lo seductora, sino desde la posibilidad de incluir a los excluidos que tiene la conciencia humana, poder que todavía muchos cristianos tenemos casi sin estrenar.

Ojalá cada uno de los posibles lectores de esta obra lleguen a sentir y superar lo que en momentos de identificación con el relato el autor pudo sentir, y que ha tratado de expresar, sin duda con muchas limitaciones. Esta obra es solo un puente, un apoyo, un despertar, para que cada uno se atreva a confrontarse directamente con la palabra de Dios, que ciertamente tiene un poder taumaturgo, entendido éste no desde la exterioridad maravillosa que obnubila, sino desde la interioridad que sana y cura, porque es capaz de hacer que el amor incluyente se despierte en lo más hondo de las conciencias. 

**OUR NEXT ISSUE:
NUESTRO PRÓXIMO NÚMERO:**

LIBERATION THEOLOGY AND NEW PARADIGMS

TEOLOGÍA DE LA LIBERACIÓN Y NUEVOS PARADIGMAS

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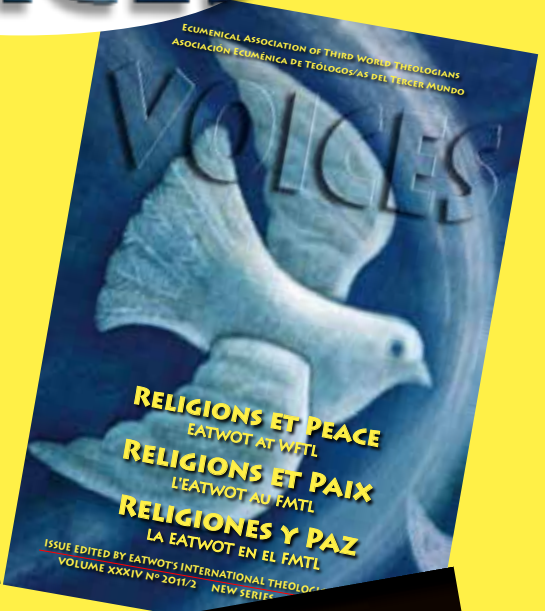
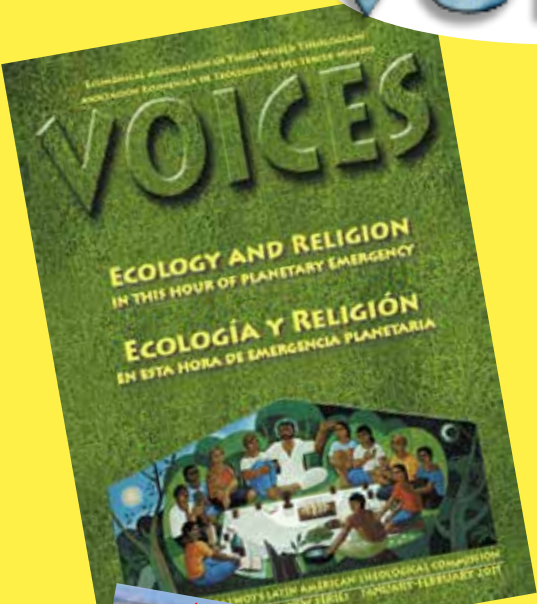
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