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# History and the Idea of Mankind

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follow and fulfill, the leaders of the new movement foresee a special destiny for Japan. From Japan the light of the one true faith will illuminate the whole world. Soka Gakkai missions have already made some progress in Southeast Asia, and centers exist in Latin America, the United States, and Europe. In the end, there will be one world. All men will be saved, happy, and prosperous, and the Soka Gakkai will then disband itself, its world-mission completed. One is reminded of the withering away of the state in Marxism.<sup>26</sup>

Communism is also, for that matter, an imperial faith. Among the ideologies, as opposed to the religions, it is still the most formidable, although the only significant fields for communist evangelism today lie in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The original expectations of Lenin, Trotsky, and Zinoviev that the world revolution would spread from Russia to the West have been refuted by history. While the present leadership of the Soviet Union shrinks from active imperialism on behalf of the one true faith, except in limited support of "wars of national liberation," the Asian Marxism formulated by Mao Tse-tung calls for communist revolution throughout the world, vigorously assisted by the parties and peoples of countries already safely in the socialist fold. Maoism is, again, a faith for all men and all seasons. It has a sharply defined idea of mankind, a vision of the future, and a project for world mastery. With increasing prosperity in Asia and the passing of the older generation of Maoists, Asian communism may in time "soften" after the Soviet example, but the problems of economic growth are so much greater in Asia and Africa than they were in Russia that no one should take such a development for granted.

Here, then, we have one conceivable spiritual prospect for twenty-first-century man—the triumph of a single faith, essentially hostile to its rivals, although it might in practice allow them to flourish in a limited way under its wing, as Christianity survives in Soviet Russia. I do not think that this kind of solution is more than a remote possibility. Nothing short of supernatural intervention or irresistible military force could bring the whole world, including the West, under the domination of a single imperial faith, whether religion or ideology, no matter how universal its appeal.

One other class of organized faiths should be noted in passing, those which freely recognize the value and truth of the various historical religions and then insist on the distinctive power of their own historical faith to effect an integration of all the others. The Baha'i Faith is the classical example. From its origins in nineteenth-century Persian Islam to the present day, Baha'i has represented itself as a fresh revelation from God, fulfilling all past revelations, Eastern and Western, and bringing

them into new unity and harmony. Instead of extirpating its rivals, Baha'i proposes to absorb and encompass them. The ultimate end in view is a Baha'i world order, but the way of the Baha'i true-believer is compassionate and unfanatical.<sup>27</sup>

The Indian equivalent of the Baha'i movement, also founded in the nineteenth century, is the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society, a missionary order well known in Europe and America, which looks benevolently on all religious faiths, sees truth in all of them, and then encloses them all in the higher truth of Hindu monism and the traditional doctrine of *neti neti*: the truth is not this, not that.<sup>28</sup> From the point of view of the Western confessional faiths, Ramakrishna's formula is no less imperialistic in its own subtle way than Christianity, Islam, or Baha'i. Both Baha'i and Ramakrishna Vedanta offer a unity achieved from the perspective of a single tradition, Islamic or Hindu, very much as the efforts of some Unitarian-Universalists in the United States to suggest a world religion have their origins in the fundamental insights of nineteenth-century liberal Protestantism.<sup>29</sup>

Among secular faiths, the clearest parallel is the international Humanist movement, centered in the English-speaking countries and in the Netherlands. Its spiritual roots lie in the Enlightenment and in Victorian agnosticism and positivism. Although Humanism offers itself as a unifying world faith, it is unmistakably the expression of a particular kind of post-Christian, liberal, rationalist, sceptical, progressivist Western mentality.<sup>30</sup> It may be as well qualified to unite the ideologies as Baha'i or Ramakrishna Vedanta to unite the religions, but it does so from an historically limited and local perspective. Again, however, it does meet one crucial test for a possible world faith: it ministers to all mankind.

Many individual prophets, not attached at least in their prophetic capacity to an organized movement, have devoted their attention since 1945 to the question of religious and ideological commitment in the coming world civilization. They divide, roughly, into two camps—those who foresee a unitary world culture, developing through a process of synthesis and coalescence from compatible elements in the existing local cultures, and those who foresee a pluralistic culture-pattern, marked by dialogue and communication among the several surviving traditions, but without integration. Their work provides us with a framework of ideas for discussing the possibilities that remain. The shape of things to come, I suspect, lies somewhere within the range of their speculations.

The thinking of one such prophet, F. S. C. Northrop, in a sense joins the two positions, although ultimately coming down on the side of a

more important primary sources include John Robinson, *Honest to God* (Philadelphia, 1963); Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (New York, 1964); Thomas J. J. Altizer and William Hamilton, *Radical Theology and the Death of God* (Indianapolis, 1966); and Jürgen Moltmann, *The Theology of Hope* (New York, 1967).

19. Consult, e.g., Malcolm X with Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York, 1965); Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power* (New York, 1967); Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau, *The New Radicals* (New York, 1966); Phillip Abbott Luce, *The New Left* (New York, 1966); Carl Oglesby and Richard Shaull, *Containment and Change* (New York, 1967); Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1964) and *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston, 1969); and Kenneth Keniston, *Young Radicals: Notes on Committed Youth* (New York, 1968). Cf. Keniston's earlier book, *The Uncommitted: Alienated Youth in American Society* (New York, 1965). For Castro, Guevara, and revolutionary socialism in Latin America, see Régis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution?* (New York, 1967). The new "humanistic" tendencies in Marxism in the West and in Eastern Europe are discussed in Erich Fromm, ed., *Socialist Humanism: An International Symposium* (Garden City, N.Y., 1965). For neo-feminism and the sexual revolution, see Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York, 1963); Albert Ellis, *Sex Without Guilt* (New York, 1958); and Lars Ullerstam, *The Erotic Minorities* (New York, 1966).

20. See Erich Kahler, *The Tower and the Abyss* (New York, 1957); C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York, 1947); Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York, 1964); and Lewis Mumford, *The Transformations of Man* (New York, 1956) and *The City in History* (New York, 1961).

21. Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*, p. 96.

22. See my *The City of Man*, pp. 112-125, for a fuller discussion of the established world faiths in relation to the problem of world order.

23. Jacques Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (New York, 1952), chs. 14-15; see also *True Humanism* (New York, 1938) and *Man and the State* (Chicago, 1951). Maritain's prophetic thought is conveniently anthologized by Joseph W. Evans and Leo R. Ward in their *Social and Political Philosophy of Jacques Maritain: Selected Readings* (New York, 1955). See in particular chs. 18-19 and 21-22.

24. Christopher Dawson, *The Historic Reality of Christian Culture: A Way to the Renewal of Human Life* (New York, 1960), p. 117. See also Dawson, *The Dynamics of World History*, ed. John J. Mulloy (New York, 1956); and Martin C. D'Arcy, "Is There a Nascent World Culture?" in A. William Loos, ed., *Religious Faith and World Culture* (New York, 1951), pp. 259-277.

25. Hendrik Kraemer, *World Cultures and World Religions: The Coming Dialogue* (Philadelphia, 1960). For an example of "imperialism," see John Baillie, *The Belief in Progress* (London, 1950), ch. 5.

26. For an introduction to the Soka Gakkai, see Offner and Van Straelen, *Modern Japanese Religions*, pp. 98-109.

27. See Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* (New York, 1938) and John Ferraby, *All Things Made New* (London, 1957).

28. See Swami Nikhilananda, *Hinduism: Its Meaning for the Liberation of the Spirit* (New York, 1958). See also Sri Aurobindo, *The Ideal of Human Unity* (New York, 1950); and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society* (London, 1947), *Recovery of Faith* (New York, 1955), *East and West* (New York, 1956), and "The Religion of the Spirit and the World's Need" in Paul Arthur Schilpp, ed., *The Phil-*

osophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (New York, 1952), pp. 5-82. An able study of "Hindu relativism" is available in R. L. Slater, *World Religions and World Community* (New York, 1963), ch. 3.

29. See Kenneth L. Patton, *A Religion for One World* (Boston, 1964).

30. For an introduction to the Humanist movement, see the article by the British Humanist, H. J. Blackham, "Modern Humanism," *The Journal of World History*, 8 (1964), pp. 100-122; reprinted in Guy S. Métraux and François Crouzet, eds., *Religions and the Promise of the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1965), pp. 156-182. See also Corliss Lamont, *Humanism as a Philosophy* (New York, 1949); Sir Julian Huxley, ed., *The Humanist Frame* (New York, 1961); and A. J. Ayer, ed., *The Humanist Outlook* (London, 1968).

31. F. S. C. Northrop, *The Logic of the Sciences and the Humanities* (New York, 1948), p. 364. The chief sources for Northrop's philosophy of world order are his books, *The Meeting of East and West* (New York, 1946) and *The Taming of the Nations* (New York, 1952). His thinking is summarized in Waggar, *The City of Man*, pp. 136-138, 142-145, 167, and 231-233.

32. Oliver L. Reiser, *The Promise of Scientific Humanism* (New York, 1940); *The Integration of Human Knowledge* (Boston, 1958); and *Cosmic Humanism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965). Lancelot Law Whyte, *Accent on Form* (New York, 1954) and *The Next Development in Man* (New York, 1950).

33. Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (New York, 1955), p. 352.

34. Charles Morris, *Paths of Life: Preface to a World Religion* (New York, 1942); Gerald Heard, *The Human Venture* (New York, 1955).

35. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York, 1959).

36. See Waggar, *The City of Man*, pp. 155-172.

37. William Ernest Hocking, *Living Religions and a World Faith* (New York, 1940). See also Hocking's *The Coming World Civilization* (New York, 1956), from which the quotation is taken, p. 170.

38. Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*, p. 97. This idea of an ultimate oneness in the "depths" is discussed insightfully by R. L. Slater in his chapter on "Depth Religion" in *World Religions and World Community*. Slater also foresees a continuing pluralism, accompanied by serious and open-minded dialogue.

39. Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (New York, 1934-61), VII, pp. 716-736.

40. *Ibid.*, VII, p. 374.

41. Arnold J. Toynbee, *Christianity among the Religions of the World* (New York, 1957), p. 110.

42. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, XII, pp. 216-217.

43. Gerhard Hirschfeld, "Foreword: On the History of the Council for the Study of Mankind" in Bert F. Hoselitz, ed., *Economics and the Idea of Mankind* (New York, 1965), p. x. But see also W. Warren Waggar, *Building the City of Man* (New York, 1971), where cultural pluralism comes under severe criticism.