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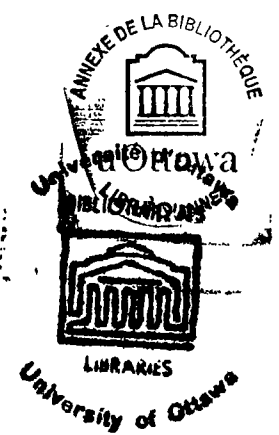
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A DETERMINATION OF THE VALUE OF THE CONCEPTS OF THE COVENANT AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD DERIVED FROM REPRESENTATIVE CONTEMPORARY JEWISH, PROTESTANT, AND CATHOLIC THEOLOGIANS AS A BASIS FOR ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE AND AGREEMENT

by William Doane Kelly

Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts Department of Religion of the University of Ottawa as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

*Degree conferred
May 1964
Ech. v. i. e. f.
Search. Grad. Division*



Montreal, Quebec, 1964

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis was prepared under the supervision of
Rev. Walter Bedard, O.F.M., of the Faculty of Arts,
Department of Religion, of the University of Ottawa.

CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

William Doane Kelly was born August 12, 1931, in New York City, New York. He received the Bachelor of Arts degree in English from St. Peter's College, Jersey City, New Jersey, in 1954. He received the Master of Arts degree in Theology from St. John's University, New York City, New York, in 1960.

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1. ABSTRACT OF A Determination of the Value of
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INTRODUCTION

The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council has begun the task of renewing the life of the Church. The Theological Commission has decided to include a Chapter on the Church as the People of God in the Schema De Ecclesia. It has been decided to place this Chapter after the first which is on the Mystery of the Church, and before a third on the hierarchical ministry. In this age of ecumenical thought within the Church there is great need for finding common agreement not only among Christians, but among Christians and Jews. Since the three faiths have a basic idea of the people of God, and since the people are made into a people by the biblical notion of a covenant, it is the purpose of this study to determine the value of both ideas, the covenant, and the people of God, for this agreement.

Christianity Divided, Protestant and Roman Catholic Theological Issues, was published in June 1961. In the English-speaking world this established rather an original category of ecumenical writing. Here five theological topics were treated briefly but well by Protestant and Catholic

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authors. The book suggests a furthering of such writings in depth on the other subjects. The most extensive work on the covenant has been, Theology of the Old Testament, by Walter Eichrodt, Professor of Old Testament and History of Religions at the University of Basel. In his position the entire Old Testament must be seen in relation to the covenant which lies at the heart of the people of God. His development is quite extensive.

The purpose of the thesis is to determine the value of the concepts of the covenant and the people of God derived from representative contemporary Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic theologians as a basis for ecumenical dialogue and possible agreement. Ecumenical studies stress the Bible as a starting point. The authors were selected because of such stress given to the Bible as a source in their works, and are therefore representative of a biblical viewpoint, and because they have given particular attention to the subject. They are selected simply as representative, but influential in the dynamics of theological thought today.

There are three chapters divided into sections for

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each author. Each author is introduced by a brief insight into his theological perspective which is needed to gain his viewpoint and synthesis. This is followed by an exposition of his ideas on the covenant and the people of God.

CHAPTER ONE

JUDAISM

The Jewish religion is heavily immersed in the historical experiences of the Jewish people themselves. These experiences have had a great impact in the past twenty years alone, without going further back into history. There are major currents of theological thought active today and these are crystallized in key theological personalities. But, some have passed from the scene already; others have not. The following four categories are selected because they are the most representative and the most dynamic in creating the theological mentality of contemporary Judaism. The individuals chosen have contributed greatly in their writings and lives to this mentality.

Kaufman Kohler: Reform Judaism

Kaufman Kohler (1843-1926) was a leading figure of Reform Judaism in the United States. As a Reform Jew he criticized Moses Mendelssohn for being a deist rather than a theist, and for his view that "Judaism is not a revealed religion but a revealed law solely for the

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Jewish people as the vanguard of universal monotheism".¹

As a Reform Jew, Kohler sees religion in terms of moral progress. The Jewish religion is morally ahead of other religions. Its purpose is to set the example for other forms of religion in the various cultures. In Biblical days Judaism was the most advanced faith which then existed. But, in the Reform concept it must still be so. It must reform and purify itself, casting aside the wornout and outdated, moving to ever higher ideals and presenting these to the world.² For him the broken tablets of the covenant were placed beside the new in the ark. Consequently, the truths which were valued in the past as sacred but became weak in expression for a present generation, must be put beside the clearer truths of a more progressive age, so they may be seen as the one divine reality.³

It must be remembered that his Biblical concepts are not quite as highly developed as other Jewish theologians of today, since he wrote chiefly between 1910

1 Kaufman Kohler, Jewish Theology, New York, The Macmillan Co. 1938, p. viii.

2 Arthur Hertzberg, Judaism, New York, Washington Square Press, 1963, p. 19.

3 Kohler, loc. cit.

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and 1926. But they are unquestionably Biblical. Berith, covenant, he sees as the specific term for religion. It was a covenant concluded by God with the Patriarchs and with Israel by means of sacrificial blood. He sees three covenants. First, the Noahitic between God and Noah who is the representative of mankind. This covenant was intended chiefly to assure all the generations of the perpetual maintenance of the natural order and to establish commandments as unwritten laws of humanity. All men are bound by this covenant.⁴

The second covenant with Abraham, Kohler does not see as superseding the universal covenant with Noah, nor is it limited to Jewish people. Its purpose is to reclaim all members of the human family from the covenant from which they have elapsed. God chose Abraham because he was faithful to his moral law. But the covenant with Abraham is only a preparation for the covenant concluded with Israel through Moses.⁵

The third covenant at Sinai, Kohler sees as stressing the free moral relationship of man to God. This differs from paganism because there the Deity formed an

4 Kohler, op. cit., p. 48f.

5 Ibid., p. 49.

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inseparable part of the nation itself. In the covenant God becomes a free moral power, calling man to fidelity to Him. This covenant is permanent, everlasting: it can be repeated or renewed, but never replaced. Upon this eternal renewal of the covenant is the unique historical fact of Israel. It is her explanation.⁶

The "sign of the covenant"⁷ inherited from Abraham is the rite of circumcision. During the prophetic period Kohler sees this altered because of the loathing of sacrificial blood. The Sabbath then becomes the sign between God and Israel. Israel in one covenant with God, spreads the Noahitic or humanitarian laws for the whole human race. It is Israel's function.⁸

Judaism today is still in this position.

Progressive Judaism must reclaim her world mission, and her place as the priesthood of humanity according to Kohler

It is to proclaim anew the prophetic idea of God's covenant with humanity, whose force has not been lost, owing to inner and outer obstacles.

6 Kohler, Jewish Theology, p. 52.

7 Loc. cit.

8 Kohler, op. cit., p. 51.

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Israel as the people of the covenant, aims to unite all nations and classes of man in the divine covenant. It must outlast all other religions in its certainty that ultimately there can be but one religion, uniting God and man by a single bond.⁹

The purpose of Judaism is to be a priestpeople among the nations. This means an especial degree of holiness. They must make the cultivation, development, and promotion of the highest religious truths their life-task. This is to be the people of God. The most significant part of the mission of the priesthood of the people of God concentrated "in one single focus, the hallowing of the name of God."⁴ The people of God must be a "witness", "martyrs" in the greek version, to God; this task she has fulfilled through the centuries.¹⁰

For Kohler, the Aaronite priesthood is transformed to the people at the time of the Maccabean wars. Here the Aaronite priesthood were faithless. The little band of pious offered their lives as sacrifice for the preservation of the true faith in God. At this point the Scriptural word receives a new meaning, a higher meaning.

9 Loc. cit.

10 Kohler, op. cit., p. 348f.

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At this point it is the obligation of the entire priest-people to consecrate the name of God by the sacrifice of their lives, and to guard against its profanation by any offensive act.¹¹

From that period it became a duty and even a law of Judaism, as Maimonides shows in his Code, for each person in life and in death to bear witness to his God. 'Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and I am God' (Isa. 43:12) and witnesses being in the greek version martyrs, the word afterward received the meaning of 'blood witness', (...) that is to say, it is the martyrdom of the pious which glorifies God's name before all mankind.¹²

The accumulation of law upon law, became injurious: formalism developed through the centuries. Kohler believes that the Orthodox tendency to worship the letter is not the end of the priest-people mediation, it is not true piety.

Only the fundamental idea, that Israel as the 'first born among the nations' has been elected as a priestpeople, must remain our imperishable truth, (...) Only because it has kept itself distinct as a priest-people among the nations could it carry out its task in history; and only if it remains conscious of its priestly

11 Kohler, Jewish Theology, p. 348f.

12 Loc. cit.

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calling and therefore maintains itself as the people of God, can it fulfill its mission. Not until the end of time, when all of God's children will have entered the kingdom of God, may Israel, the highpriest among the nations, renounce his priesthood.¹³

Thus these very important concepts of a leading Reform theologian can be listed. These will assist in helping to focus attention on major points in the theologies of the other major traditions within Judaism.

- 1) The Noahitic covenant is for the entire human race, given to Noah, its representative.
- 2) The covenant with Abraham recalls members of humanity to the covenant from which they have fallen. It is a preparation for the covenant with Moses.
- 3) The third covenant, with its inherited "sign of circumcision" inherited from Abraham, changed to the Sabbath as the sign, is permanent.
- 4) The Mosaic covenant gives Israel the duty to spread laws for all men.
- 5) The Jews are a priest-people. The priesthood is not limited to individuals or a special group.
- 6) Their mediation is to be by witnessing to the name of God as a priest-people, the people of God: they must "hallow the name of God."

Mordecai Kaplan: Trans-Naturalism

The Conservative Jewish theologians generally refuse to commit themselves to a definite platform of principles and dogmas, and consequently great breadth is

¹³ Ibid., p. 352.

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allowed in matters of belief and practice. Conservatives can be anywhere between Reform and Orthodox and may at times not be very different. But at the center of Conservative Judaism today there has developed a very strong movement called the Reconstructionist Movement. Dr. Mordecai Kaplan (1881-) is the intellectual leader of this movement. He uses the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation as the main disseminator of his views. He has lately classified his concept of Judaism as, Judaism Without Supernaturalism.¹⁴

This concept is one of a non-revealed type of religion, and therefore is a religion without revelation.

Formerly the adherents of all the traditional religions of the Western world maintained that religion was supernaturally revealed truth. That such truth was transmitted only by one's own people was sufficient evidence that only one's own people had been chosen. (...) If religious truth is independent of any historic self-revelation of God to a particular people, then it is no different from scientific truth in being accessible to and attainable by all mankind. Indeed one of the main criteria of truth is its universal applicability to and conformity

¹⁴ Mordecai Kaplan, Judaism Without Supernaturalism New York, The Reconstructionist Press, 1958.

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with universal reason.¹⁵

His position has developed as being, as he puts it, the only alternative to Orthodoxy and Secularism.

In perhaps his most important work, he sees the idea of God developing.¹⁶ First man thinks of the most distinctive part of himself as "soul". That upon which he depends is "God". As we change our concept of human personality, our conception of God changes. The ability of man to generalize led him to conceive of God as a universal God. This is the "correlative of man's will to live in its most generalized form, in the same way as the individual deities or divine beings are the correlatives of his specific hungers or wants."¹⁷

Man becomes progressively aware of his goal, and of having to choose between more and less desirable objectives and between right and wrong methods of attainment. Thus emerges gradually an awareness of a generalized will not merely to live, but to live abundantly, that is with a maximum fulness. The philosophers designate such an objective as

15 Mordecai Kaplan, The Future of the American Jew, New York, The Macmillan Press, 1948. p. 170f.

16 Ibid., p. 171f.

17 Kaplan, Ibid., p. 171f.

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the ultimate good, or happiness. The theologians call it salvation.¹⁸

There are many conclusions about the nature of God to be drawn from such an approach.

But he goes on to state, "Belief in God is belief in the existence of a Power conducive to salvation which is the fulfillment of human destiny."¹⁹ The grounds for belief, he says come not from speculative reason, but directly from man's actual strivings for maximum life or salvation. Humanity is not a monolith. There are diverse cultures. "Religion is that aspect of a civilization which aims to render it worthwhile, both for the group as whole and for each individual in it."²⁰ The differentiation of religions exists only in their "existential otherness, i.e. their organic relation to particular civilizations."

But all religions are similar insofar as that aspect of civilization which accentuates the values inherent in that civilization and attempts

18 Ibid., p. 172.

19 Loc. cit.

20 Ibid., p. 173.

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to embody them in human conduct.²¹

The God of Judaism is not really different than other concepts of God. Each culture has its own "sancta", institutions, laws and tendencies which help to free men. The Jewish sancta are worthwhile and should be developed and expanded. But God in conceptual form should definitely be changed according to Kaplan, and this is the problem. God, he suggests, should

be thought of as cosmic process that makes for man's life abundance or salvation. As cosmic process, God is more than a physical, chemical, biological, psychological, or even social process. God includes them all, (...) it would be correct to say that the God-process is 'trans-natural.'²²

With such a concept of God, can a concept of covenant still exist? Most affirmatively in his mind. In 1947, he called "The Chosen People Idea an Anachronism."

But it can no longer help us to understand relations, or to orient ourselves to conditions, as they exist today. The very notion that a people can for all time be the elect of God implies an epic or dramatic conception of history; history predetermined in form and aim. Nowadays

21 Kaplan, The Future of the American Jew, p. 174

22 Ibid., p. 183.

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for any people to call itself chosen is to be guilty of self-infatuation.²³

Here he seems to reject the traditional concept as being irrelevant for application today on the grounds that it involves an erroneous concept of history, and as a type of egotism. He says that the notion of being God's chosen people was merely a way of expressing Israel's self-awareness as a distinct and unique people. Also, the idea of election merely implies that Yahweh was so much greater than the gods of other nations that the Jews should consider themselves fortunate in being his people.²⁴

He rejects Jewish attempts to reinterpret this idea of divine election:

- 1) The Jews do not possess unusual hereditary traits.
These are unproven generalizations and scientifically unwarranted.
- 2) For Jews to claim sole credit for having given mankind those religious and ethical concepts which hold out the promise of a better world smacks of arrogance.

²³ Ibid., p. 211.

²⁴ Kaplan, The Future of the American Jew, p. 212.

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- 3) It is not realistic for Jews to maintain that they possess the purest form of truth because they do not believe they are immutable and infallible. Moreover, Jewish spiritually lag behind non-Jews.
- 4) On interpreting the Bible there has been confusion between the doctrine of election with the doctrine of the mission. There is no implication in the multitude of references to Israel as a Chosen People that it is expected to fulfill the mission of making God known to the nations.²⁵

He also states that the idea is source of maladjustment. To wish to get back to the thought world

in which all human suffering, even the fact of death, was attributed to sin, (...) in which a whole people could be conceived as subjected to unceasing torment of body and mind for centuries, because of a failure to atone for some anonymous ancestral sin. To get back to that pre-modern universe of discourse is possible for the modern minded only in the same sense as it is possible to revisit the scene of one's childhood.²⁶

25 Ibid., p. 215f.

26 Kaplan, Ibid., p. 225.

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He wishes to remove the idea of political unity and religious uniformity from the essence of Jewish peoplehood. The function of religion in the life of a people is to inspire and direct the energies of a people to attain their human destiny. Election should be replaced by vocation which is crystallized in three objectives. First, to enable the present generation of Jews to feel its oneness with the past, socially and culturally. Secondly, to re-interpret the tradition to be compatible with a reasonable conception of naturalism and an ethical conception of nationalism. Thirdly, to make room in Judaism for diversity of world outlook and religious practice, and to have as the test of Jewish loyalty, mainly the sincere desire to have Jewish life service, grow and exert a salutary influence on human life in general.²⁷

This he has expressed in another way, perhaps more simply. "Covenantship becomes the sense of the creative possibilities of Jewish life."²⁸ He adds to this:

27 Ibid., p. 36f.

28 Mordecai Kaplan, The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion, New York, The Reconstructionist Foundation, Inc., 1947, p. 101.

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If we regard God as the life of the universe, the power that evokes personality in men and nations, then the sense of the nation's responsibility for contributing creatively to human welfare and progress in the light of its own best experience becomes the modern equivalent of the covenant idea.²⁹

In 1948 his idea of covenant was expressed as the organized quest of a people for salvation, to achieve their destiny as human beings. Each group has its own sancta of saints, heroes, sacred literature, holy places, common symbols, which make up its quest for salvation. "There is no more reason for having the people adopt the sancta of one people or church than for all people to wear an identical garment."³⁰ However, this is not the final word on the covenant for the Jews.

There is still a covenant concept operating and motivating his thought even though it may appear to be far from the Reform and Orthodox positions in content. In 1958 he wrote that he thought a Jewish world conference ought to be held to decide what constitutes a worthwhile purpose for

29 Ibid., p. 102.

30 Kaplan, The Future of the American Jew, New York The Macmillan Co. 1948, pp. 219-220.

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Judaism, and the means to attain it. The most able Jews will be there, those obsessed with the purpose of securing for the Jewish people a place in the world of tomorrow. The participants should call upon all Jews who accept Jewish affiliation to acceptance by a declaration of allegiance.

"That would constitute the renewal of our historic covenant."³¹

We must begin at once to agitate for a great demonstrative reaffirmation of Jewry throughout the world, in order to keep alive the prophetic vision of the role to be played by our own people in the salvation of mankind. Such a reaffirmation should take the form of a solemn covenant to be enacted in Jerusalem.³²

Samson Raphael Hirsh and Abraham Isaac Kook: Orthodoxy

Samson Raphael Hirsh (1808-1888) was a vigorous defender of the traditional type of Judaism as found in Germany in the nineteenth century. As the reform leaders of Judaism in this century denied the authority of the Bible and the Talmud, opposition stiffened and hardened. The

³¹ Mordecai Kaplan, Judaism Without Supernaturalism, New York, The Reconstructionist Press, 1958, p. 229.

³² Ibid., p. 241.

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extreme early position of attempting to get the Lutheran Church to admit David Friedlander (1756-1834) and his followers into the Church was denied (however, they requested to be excused from the belief in the divinity of Jesus). But the successors Samuel Holdheim (1806-1860) and Abraham Geiger (1830-1874) remained still radical however. They espoused the position that Judaism was wholly religious and had nothing national about it, and hence wished to abolish ceremonies which differentiated the Jews from the gentiles such as the Sabbath (changing it to Sunday), segregation of the sexes, and Hebrew in the services.³³

Another development was the "positive-historical" school of Judaism founded by Zechariah Frankel (1801-1875). This school was willing to keep the Hebrew language but separated belief and practice. The emphasis was placed on freedom of belief and freedom of inquiry. Laws and traditions are merely the product of the collective experience of the Jewish people. It was to both of these movements that Hirsh reacted.³⁴

³³ Isidore Epstein, Judaism, A Historical Presentation, Baltimore, Penguin Books, 1959. p. 252f.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 294-295.

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Hirsh was a rabbi in Germany with a very great awareness of tradition. He opposed both the reform and positive-historical movements. He founded a school of thought which he conceived to be a continuation of the essence of Judaism. It is this school of thought, called then Neo-Orthodoxy, which is the present Orthodoxy of today in the west. His Orthodoxy was not really new but a revival of the Judaism of the Arabic-Spanish period. Here there was strict adherence to traditional beliefs and observances, a blending of the old with the new. Tradition, beliefs and observances were held, but full participation in the science and culture of the age was fostered.³⁵

The principle of Austritt or Separation was proclaimed. The major point was that observant Jews had to leave the communities where the reform practices were dominant. Those leaving must form communities of their own. Strength rather than numbers was the result and Hirsh's community in Frankfurt became a strong organization with modern schools which became models for many others

35 Epstein,op.cit., p. 295.

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throughout many countries. The important emphasis in Judaism from Hirsh was the consolidating of the modern Orthodox theology. This is a theology which to a great extent still stands at the heart of the Orthodox theology.³⁶

In his major work, Hirsh describes it as being a spiritual presentation of the principles of Judaism. The work was written in the form of correspondence between a young Rabbi, Naphtali, and his youthful friend Benjamin. Benjamin had been originally religious and in his contact with the world and non-Jewish writings lost his early convictions. The Theology which he developed is Denkglaubigkeit or "Intellectual or Enlightened Orthodoxy." The form is rhetorical but the Theology is traditional in the Orthodox sense.³⁷

He wrote that mankind in the course of history was to be educated. This was the purpose of the variety of things upon the earth.

36 Loc. cit.

37 Samson Raphael Hirsh, The Nineteen Letters of Ben Uziel, New York, Bloch Publishing Co., 1942. Introduction.

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This diversity of the earth was, by the Divine plan, intended to profoundly influence man, vainly fancying himself master of the earth, and to affect, even to their innermost characteristics, his body, his opinions, his habits, his passions, and his language. Thus should a broad and variegated experience become possible. This experience should make him worthy of God and of himself; should teach him to recognize the supreme dominion over nature and human life; should cause him to realize that the task of man is higher than merely to possess and enjoy.³⁸

This is the beginning. As history unfolds each nation enters history and gives a new contribution to it. It may be a new sense of power or a new capacity for the intellect. It can use these powers to fight each other, or nature, for wealth or enjoyment. But the divine hand brings all nations down from the summit of material greatness. When the nations realize the vanity of these rivals for God, and turn to the

All-One, and comprehends again true human greatness, to which wealth and lust are but means; when this knowledge, this sentiment, pervades reunited humanity; when men are ripe for the question, not 'what should we do in order to be happy and blessed, but when we are happy and blessed, when we bear the fulness of good in our hands, what shall we do with this blessing?'³⁹

38 Hirsch, Ibid., Sixth Letter, pp. 54-55.

39 Ibid., pp. 56-57.

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then history will have achieved its purpose. He then goes on to quote the second chapter of Isaiah when the mount of the Lord will be firmly established upon the peaks of the mountains. It is important to understand this notion of the nations and their role in history to see how he develops the concept of the Jewish nation and the covenant.

Hirsh sees that the education by experience was not successful for the human race. Here is where the purpose and function of Israel commences.

Because men had eliminated God from life, nay even from nature, and found the basis of life in possessions and its aim in enjoyment, deeming life the product of the multitude of human desires, just as they looked upon nature as the product of a multitude of gods, therefore it became necessary that a people be introduced into the ranks of the nations which through its history and life should declare God, the only creative cause of existence, fulfillment of His will the only aim of life; and which should bear the revelation of His will, rejuvenated and renewed for its sake, unto all parts of the world as the motive and incentive of its coherence.⁴⁰

Nephtali is told that the Jewish people enter history to proclaim God and his supremacy. A mission such as this demands a nation poor in everything that the rest of the

⁴⁰ Ibid., Seventh Letter, pp. 66-67.

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world deems great. This nation is subordinate to the nations who rely on themselves. But it has God to rely on. God works through this nation to reveal himself as the only creator, judge and master of nature and history.⁴¹

This people, even though politically subordinate, was to receive from the creator all the means of individual human and national prosperity to dedicate to the fulfillment of the Divine Will. Then the nation could pronounce that there is,

One God, Creator, Lawgiver, Judge Guide, Preserver, and Father of all beings; all beings His Servants, His children (...) The proclaiming of these great truths was to be the chief, if not the sole, life-task of this people.⁴²

A mission such as this requires separation, ethical and spiritual isolation. The people must separate from the others so as not to sink to their level and perish. They must be alone and aloof until all of humanity is purified by their teachings and example, and turns to God and acknowledges him as the only creator and ruler. This is the mission of Israel. This why the people of God exist

41 Hirsh, Ibid., Seventh Letter, p. 67.

42 Ibid., p. 68.

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according to Hirsh.⁴³

He tells Benjamin that Abraham was chosen as progenitor of this people because in his individual life he already realized the ideal of the people to be created. Abraham left all for God so he would receive safety and blessing from his hands. Abraham had the necessary love, faith, and trust:

That true fear of God which is ready at any moment to surrender uncomplainingly the dearest to the Most High, because it realizes that all man possesses is but the free-will gift of God.

These qualities are handed on to Isaac and Jacob. But the people required training to reach the capacity needed for the task.⁴⁴

The Jews become the complete nation in the wilderness.

In the wilderness it received the Torah, and thus in the wilderness, without hand or soil, it became a nation. It became a body, whose soul was the Torah, and, therefore, could be truthfully called, 'a kingdom of priests,' for the priest in the midst of a single people was this nation to be

43 Ibid., p. 68f.

44 Hirsh, op. cit., Eighth Letter, pp. 71-73.

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in the midst of universal mankind, preserving the law of God, and practicing and fulfilling its holy precepts. 'Holy nation,' was also to be its appellation, for through the fulfillment of the divine law, it was to become holy, not participating in the worldly doings of other nations, but preaching sacredness of humanity by the example of its life.⁴⁵

These are to be a people then in the middle of other peoples to show that God is the source of all blessings.

Symbolic words and actions are needed to stamp ideas upon the mind. Thus a truth in order to give results must be impressed upon the mind and heart repeatedly and emphatically. This is the concept of Edoth. The symbols are chiefly those of actions, of practices which serve as signs of an idea. Thus,

The doctrine that God is the Redeemer and Saviour of Israel, and also that He that revealed His Holy Law to His chosen nation, is symbolized by the Passover festival,

and others. The celebration of the passover feast is a reminder of a past event, but of a condition that still exists according to Hirsh.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 76-77.

⁴⁶ Hirsh, Ibid., Thirteenth Letter, pp. 118-119.

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Hirsh's concept of Israel's mission is perhaps best summed up in the Fifteenth Letter. Here he states that Israel has the main task to teach all the races of man to recognize and worship the One God. Israel must proclaim God as Lord through its life and history.

The Bible terms Israel Segulah, 'a peculiar treasure' but this does not imply, as some have falsely interpreted, that Israel has a monopoly of the divine love and favor, but on the contrary, that God has the sole and exclusive claim to Israel's devotion and service; that Israel may not render Divine homage to any other being. (Segulah means a property belonging exclusively to one owner, to which no other has any right or claim.)⁴⁷

Abraham Isaac Kook

Classical Orthodoxy is represented best in later years by Abraham Isaac Kook (1865-1935). He is better represented in his life than in his writings: in 1921 he became the chief rabbi of Palestine. He was mystical, perhaps more so, than many of his predecessors in the Orthodox tradition, Conservative or Reform traditions. His life in Palestine was a testimony to the Jewish liturgy, people and faith, and was closely related dynamically to

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 142.

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the meaning he held for Judaism.

He conceived one people in mystical language, in words that seem to come alive with hope and meaning. They are words which seem to be close to the spirit of Jewish Messianism.

The world and all that it contains is waiting for the Light of Israel, for the Exalted Light radiating from Him whose Name is to be praised.⁴⁸

This is the reason for God's selecting this people and making them into a nation.

This people was fashioned by God to speak of glory; it was granted the heritage of the blessing of Abraham so that it might disseminate the knowledge of God and it was commanded to live its life apart from the nations of the world.⁴⁹

The essential characteristic of the people was determined by the divine mind. Its primary mission is to teach the knowledge which she possesses about God to the rest of the world. The notion of separation is not far from other expressions of witnessing such as found in Kaufman Kohler's concept of witness, "martyrs" as he puts it. The source

48 Arthur Hertzberg, The Zionist Idea, Garden City, Doubleday, 1959, pp. 481-485.

49 Loc. cit.

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of instruction for teaching the nations is the Torah: "this people is endowed with a hidden treasure, (...) the means by which Heaven and the Earth were created."⁵⁰

"Redemption" he says, "is continuous. The Redemption from Egypt and the final Redemption are part of the same process which began in Egypt and is evident in all of History."⁵¹ Here his notion appears to be very close to the Heilsgeschichte, or Salvation History concept emphasized in much of contemporary Biblical Theology. "The spirit of Israel is attuned to the hum of the redemptive process, to the sound of the waves of its labors which will end only with the coming of the days of the Messiah."⁵²

His thinking is quite different from the thinking of the Reconstructionist Foundation leader Mordecai Kaplan.

It is a grave error to be insensitive to the distinctive unity of the Jewish Spirit, to imagine that the Divine stuff which uniquely characterizes Israel is comparable to the spiritual content of all the other national civilizations. This error is the source of the attempt to sever the national from the religious

50 Hertzberg, The Zionist Idea. pp. 481-485.

51 Loc. cit.

52 Loc. cit.

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element of Judaism. Such a division would falsify both our nationalism and our religion, for every element of thought, emotion, and idealism that is present in the Jewish people belongs to an indivisible entity, and all together make up its specific character.⁵³

Martin Buber: Cultural Zionism or Cultural Existentialism

Asher Ginzberg (1886-1927) was the originator of "Cultural Zionism." He saw the Jewish problem as cultural and spiritual and not so much economic and political. This was caused he thought, by the disintegration of Jewish spiritual life through the pressure of the non-Jewish social and cultural environment. He saw the establishment in Palestine as an autonomous Jewish community composed of an intellectual elite of Jews, rich in knowledge of the Jewish culture. They could then, with the Jewish genius for ethics, lead humanity spiritually and be a spiritual center for the Jews of the world.⁵⁴

53 Loc. cit.

54 Isidore Epstein, Judaism, A Historical Presentation, Baltimore, Penguin Books, 1959. p. 313.

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Martin Buber (1878-) is an advocate of Cultural Zionism today. Buber's approach differs considerably from Ginzberg's however. While Ginzberg tended to be secular and rationalistic, Buber is mystical and religious. His ideas develop from Hasidism, an eighteenth century European movement, which developed from the Talmudic principle that "the Holy one, blessed be He, requires the heart."⁵⁵ It appealed more to the feelings and emotions rather than the intellect, and in it the people perceived the growth of Messianism in their suffering they were experiencing. There was an emphasis on the joy of life, grounded on a doctrine of divine omnipresence in which all material things are filled with sparks of the Divine. Man in this concept must enjoy the pleasures of life in sanctity as manifestations of the divine. Thus, he will transform the material into the spiritual, or, "cause the sparks to ascend." But great stress was laid on the lives of men.⁵⁶

Buber ignores Talmudic teaching and does not consider Jewish practices and observances as being essential

55 Epstein, op. cit., p. 270.

56 Ibid., pp. 270-280.

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to the ideal of society, and he does not have a program for his ideas. Because of this, and his Hasidism, he has a limited influence on Jewish practical life today. But his influence on the intellectual is not insignificant. His concept of Zionism is developed from a Biblical approach. He sees the Jews as a people who had originally the obligation to build a universal Kingdom of God through their own righteousness and justice. In fact, he sees the Commandments being spoken as first to a collective group rather than a group of individuals.

The Ten Commandments are not addressed to the collective 'You', but to a single 'Thou'; this 'Thou' means every individual, and as every individual is yet thoroughly embedded in the nation he is thus addressed as a part of it. It is only in the degree to which the individual, in the course of historic reality, discovers himself and becomes aware of himself that God speaks to him as such.⁵⁷

This is important because he wishes to make clear that God speaks to individuals according to their real existence. In the pre-exilic period for the Jews, it was as members of a people into which they are incorporated and from

⁵⁷ Martin Buber, At The Turning, New York, Farrer Straus and Young, 1952. p. 37f.

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which they are undetachable.

Israel, for Buber, came into existence at the time of the Exodus. Even as a people "Israel" existed before this: it is only at this point, at the Exodus, not in Egypt itself, that the people come into actual existence. It is only at this point that "Israel" comes into existence as God's chosen people: God acts now historically, but it is the same guardian God who accompanied their fathers. Moses realizes this and accepts the situation. He sees it not as the change from one type of God to another but it is a path from the "God who hides Himself (Is. 45,15) to the One who reveals Himself."⁵⁸

There is here a "superhistorical election." It is peculiar only to Israel alone among all the peoples.

"YHVH has not revealed Himself to any other family of the 'families of the earth' save only to this Israel."⁵⁹ YHVH is a divine Melekh for Israel, a word which developed from

⁵⁸ Martin Buber, The Prophetic Faith, New York, Harper Torchbook, 1949, p. 44.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 45.

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the name of the Semitic peoples for their deities.

The divine Melekh leads the Qahal, the assembly of the men, by means of the one favored and called by Him, the bearer of the 'charismatic' power, the power of grace. This power, however, is not based, as with oriental kings, upon the myth of divine birth of adoption, but upon the utterly unmythical secret of the personal election and vocation, and is not hereditary.⁶⁰

Moses is a Nabi, an announcer, a man who bears the words from above downwards and from below up. The covenant is established through Moses.

If Israel listens to His voice, they will be "a peculiar treasure" among all peoples. They will be "a holy (i.e., hallowed, set apart for him) goy (i.e., body of people)."⁶¹ The nature of this relationship in the Old Testament here was based on a Berith, a covenant. This was a covenant between YHVH and Israel which represented perceptibly that the Deity leads and they follow after Him. The covenant is an everlasting bond and all embracing. It is not a legal agreement, "but a surrender to the divine power and grace."⁶²

60 Ibid., pp. 57-58.

61 Ibid., p. 48.

62 Buber, The Prophetic Faith, p. 51.

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The decisive act of establishing the covenant is performed by Moses who is not a priest but the intermediary between community and Godhead.

The blood of the animals offered is divided into two halves. He scatters the blood from the one on the altar and thereby devotes it to YHVH. He binds the people to the covenant. (Originally, as it seems to me, the reference here was not to the reading of a 'book', of a document, but to the proclamation of the message.) And he scatters the remains of the blood, which has been kept in basins, over the people, while repeating the sacramental formula 'this is the blood of the covenant which YHVH establishes with you.'⁶³

Buber considers this to be unique in character. Here therefore YHVH unites himself with Israel into a political, theo-political unity, a wandering community with its Melekh. For Buber this rite is unique although it is in continuity with the Semitic tradition of the blood covenant. There were other similar contracts, limited legal type agreements, as early as the first half of the third millenium B.C.

And the people unite themselves to YHVH. The people pledge themselves with the words, "all that YHVH

⁶³ Martin Buber, Moses, Oxford, East and West Library, 1946, pp. 114-115.

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has said we will do and hear" to establish the covenant.⁶⁴

Buber considers the climb of Moses, Aaron and seventy of the elders up Sinai.

On its summit they have to accomplish the final action, the holy meal of the covenant, and to consume, as guests of YHVH, that portion of the flesh of the offering which has not ascended in smoke.⁶⁵

Here they completed the covenant with the Divine Melekh. They have a covenant with the King. Thus the bodily' function of eating the covenant meal is linked with "the continuous consciousness of the Divine Presence. But this consciousness itself has now become less bodily than it was." The hiding and revealing God will be there with this people.⁶⁶

Buber sees the next important item "the proclamation of the Melekh YHVH." This is what is preserved in the Decalogue.

Here YHVH tells the tribes united in 'Israel' what has to be done and what left undone by them as Israel, and by each individual person in Israel (an induction into such a new and exclusive

⁶⁴ Buber, *Moses*, p. 115. The Prophetic Faith, p. 20.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 115.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 118.

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relationship will consist, naturally, for the greater part, in a prohibition of that which must henceforth be left undone); in order that a people, the people of YHVH which has come into being, should come into being.⁶⁷

The point here is that to become His people, they must become a true people. The Ten Commandments are an instruction to bring about this reality, a cause of it. The tables remain as "tables of making present"; their function is to

make present unto the generations of Israel forever what had once become word; that is to set it before them as spoken to them in this very hour.

The commandments speak to each generation. They make YHVH's word present to each generation of the Jewish people.⁶⁸

Buber sees the kingdom in terms of a true theological idea. It is not merely a cult which aims toward an embracing of the society. "You shall become unto me a Kingdom of priests and a holy people" has definite connotations. The words Mamleketh kohanim mean the direct

67 Buber, Moses, p. 137f.

68 Ibid., pp. 139-142.

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sphere of rule of the Lord. This is composed of those companions who are at this immediate disposal. All of Israel stand in this direct and immediate relationship to the Melekh. Holiness is regarded as the direct power of YHVH to dispense good and evil.⁶⁹

Therefore goy qadosh, as compliment of that mamleketh kohanim which means the charging and appointment by God, thus requires and implies a spontaneous and ever-renewed act on the part of the people. They have to dedicate themselves to YHVH and remain dedicated to him, and further they must do this as goy, that is, with their corporeal national existence.⁷⁰

Later he sees the emphasis being put on the behaviour of the members of the people. This he sees as a mistake. The true emphasis must be put on the national body as such. Only when the nation with its institutions, legal forms and functions, with its whole organization, external and internal, dedicates itself to YHVH as its Lord, can Israel become His Holy People.⁷¹

69 Moses, pp. 105-106.

70 Ibid., p. 106.

71 Ibid., p. 107.

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Buber does not drift into Humanism. A people of God does not mean a mere common belief and common service to His name.

Becoming a people of God means rather that the attributes of God revealed to it, justice and love, are to be made effective in its own life, in the lives of its members with one another: justice materialized in the indirect mutual relationships of these individuals; love in their direct mutual relationship rooted in their personal existence.⁷²

But of the two of these, love is the greater because man cannot be just to God. But he can love God.

There is one covenant for Buber which binds Israel. There are "covenant making" events such as that made by King Josias (2 Kings 23). Here he sees the people which had transgressed or broken the covenant, agree again to establish and perform it. Moreover, the deity has kept the covenant faithfully and has no need to enter upon it anew. "He needs only to renew it by the agency of His representative-it is the king in this case." He does not think there is any sacramental covenant between God and people as at Sinai (Exodus 24.8).⁷³

⁷² Martin Buber, At The Turning, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

⁷³ Buber, The Prophetic Faith, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

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We do not feel here that we are in the atmosphere of a sacred event, manifesting itself as objective action between above and below, creating a reciprocal relation between God and people; what we find here is the spirit of collective human faith decision which does not require a special sacramental act, but only regular testimony.⁷⁴

Buber has been a Zionist since his early twenties. Though he gave up active leadership, he continues to exert a strong influence through his social, philosophical and religious ideas. For him there has always been "a nucleus of Israel, preserved through the generations, that does not betray the election, that belongs to God and remains His." Through this nucleus the connection between Sinai and the covenant has been maintained. God has not lost his people.⁷⁵

Buber relates the goal of Zionism to his well known I-Thou philosophy. Consequently, reality is fundamentally social based on the personal relations between one man and another. Conversely, other men must be recognized as persons: this leads to moral actions. The result of the I-Thou relation among men leads to an I-Thou relation

⁷⁴ Loc. cit.

⁷⁵ Buber, The Prophetic Faith, pp. 232-234.

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with God. The goal of Zionism is therefore a cultural and social life related to God directly.⁷⁶

Israel will begin the kingdom of God by becoming a Holy people. The covenant idea should fuse with the Deutero-Isianic concept of the "servant" to make real the kingdom of God through partnership with the land. But it is not to him another nationalism. The state for Buber is at best only a means to the goal of Zionism, which must include an awareness of a decision made long ago, a decision for the true God against Baal. "Nowhere else was the destiny of a people so bound up with its original choice and the attempts at realization of that choice."⁷⁷

Thus in these four categories the major positions of Judaism on the covenant and the People of God are presented. In Kaufman Kohler the Reform tradition with its intended modernization can be seen. Mordecai Kaplan with his trans-naturalism is summarized. Samson Raphael

⁷⁶ Buber, Israel and the World, New York, Schocken Books, 1948, p. 245.

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 158-159.

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Hirsh's and Abraham Isaac Kook's theology which led to and strengthened the contemporary thrust of Zionism is put forward. Martin Buber's Cultural Zionism or Existentialism is presented. These represent a crystallization of the contemporary covenant concept.

CHAPTER TWO

PROTESTANTISM

Protestant theology has been undergoing the effects of a re-examination of the source material contained in the Bible in recent years. The authors included in this chapter on Protestantism were selected because their writings reflect this change. And this change has effected both biblical theology and theology in contemporary Protestantism. A study of the individual writers and their works will reveal the effects in understanding the covenant and people of God in Protestantism.

Walter Eichrodt: *A Classical Theology of the Old Covenant.*

Walter Eichrodt is presently professor of Old Testament and History of Religion at the University of Basel, Switzerland. He is without question one of the leading Old Testament scholars in the contemporary world. Indeed his work is considered by some as the classical work of Old Testament Theology.¹ He has been at the University of Basel since 1922.

¹ George Glanzman, S.J. and Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, S.J., An Introductory Bibliography for the Study of Scripture, Westminster, The Newman Press, 1961, pp. 80-81.

He has been concerned with the proper approach to the Old Testament for many years. His present approach was adopted in 1933 and it has generally been the standard ever since, although there are very different approaches since then—some radically quite different. His work is titled, Theology of the Old Testament.² Since 1933 there have been constant revisions periodically up to 1960.

Although a member of the Reform tradition he has attempted in his methodology to view the subject from the perspective he thinks proper. He does not adopt the categories of dogmatic theology as often found in many authors. Nor does he stress the mere accumulation of historical data. He begins by comparing the religions of Israel with the other religions that surrounded it and existed with it in the Middle East, examining the essential differences and similarities to determine the exact content of her religion. Another important starting point is his view of the relation between the Old Testament and the New. For him, the Old is essential to the New; they are complementary, both are needed for a full understanding of either.³

2 Walter Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1960.

3 Ibid., pp. 25-35.

These become starting points for his methodology.

For Eichrodt an understanding of the Old Testament is not possible without constant reference to the connections that exist between Israel and the whole world of Near Eastern religion. Also, in encountering the Christ of the Gospels, there is a mighty reality bound up with the Old Testament. The reality, which binds them together in the eruption of the Kingdom of God into this world. But the movement of knowledge flows backward and not only forward. The Old Testament can never be understood except when seen in relation to Christ.⁴

To understand the Old Testament one must be familiar with the realities of the life of the Israelite. The Israelite learned from the realities of his own life. He learns about the nature of God by reasoning a posteriori from the standards and usages of law and cult which rule his personal life with divine authority, from the events of history, and by their interpretation by his

4 Ibid., pp. 26-27. Cf. Pierre Benoit. "La Plénitude de sens des livres saints." Revue biblique 67 (1960), pp. 161-196. Eichrodt and Benoit are quite similar in thought. Benoit's purpose is to find deeper meanings beyond the literal going to the sensus plenior. He suggests comparing the typical of the Old Testament with the fulfillment in Christ. The richer meaning is the sensus plenior. The typical centers on concrete realities when the fuller is conceived with the meanings of words and ideas.

spiritual leaders. Thus he learns not by abstract concepts about the divine essence, but from the rule of God in his daily life. His conclusion is that the Old Testament has its own dialectic: God and the People, God and the World, God and Man.⁵

The basis of the relationship of the Jews with God is embodied in the covenant. The covenant-union between Yahweh and Israel is in all sources, even when not expressly stated it is implied. The covenant through Moses is not a speculative conclusion. It breaks in on the life of the people and has practical repercussions. It is the hub of the wheel, the core of the Old Testament. The covenant God has a demand and a promise and gives life and history a goal in contrast to the pagan capricious gods. An atmosphere of trust and security is created.⁶

For Eichrodt it is significant that the tribes unite in the covenant similar to the Greek amphictyony. The union of the tribes in this way has a sacral-religious connotation. The existence of the nation is not an end in itself; the religious destiny is a higher purpose. Expediency does not develop from the covenant but rather the

5 Eichrodt, Ibid., pp. 32-35.

6 Ibid., pp. 36-38.

will of a jealous God who demanded obedience.⁷

Another important factor is that faith in the covenant God takes on a remarkably interior attitude toward history. Israel experiences the divine will in her social life and the fortunes of the nation.

In this way history acquired a value which it does not possess in the religions of the ancient civilizations. It is true that the Ancient East recognized the action of the deity in isolated events and experienced these as judgment or succor; but it never occurred to them to identify the nerve of the historical process as the purposeful activity of God or to integrate the whole by subordinating it to a single great religious conception. Their view of the divine activity was too firmly imprisoned in the thought -- forms of their Nature mythology.

In Israel the knowledge of the covenant God and his act of redemption arouse the capacity to understand the historical process as the effect of the divine will. Even more, her thought pressed the Nature myth itself into a working out of this conception linking creation and History as in Genesis.⁹

Another important notion that Eichrodt sees in the general meaning of the covenant concept is the rejection of any involvement of Yahweh with his people in terms of

7 Ibid., pp. 39-41.

8 Eichrodt, Ibid., p. 41.

9 Ibid., pp. 41-42.

popular nature-religion. The covenant agreement excluded any idea of a bond inherent in nature which created an indissoluble association between himself and its inhabitants. Divinity for Israel is not national self-consciousness. It is a religion of divine election.¹⁰

Even though ideas from primitive religion had some influence on the covenant ritual (sprinkling of blood on altar and people in Ex. 24. 6 and 8 is classified as a mystery rite for renewing the life of the community), it is distinctive. They are repeated constantly to be effective. But the Israelite covenant sacrifice cannot be repeated. The covenant relationship is for all time from its first performance. Also, primitive rituals are automatic and lack a moral basis and orientation. These are the essence of the Israelite covenant ritual. Moreover, primitive rituals are fulfilled in the totally impersonal transference of power. They do not establish a relationship between person and person. The covenant is not concluded by the performance of a wordless action having a value in itself. It is accompanied by the word as the expression of the divine will.¹¹

10 Ibid., pp. 42-43.

11 Eichrodt, Ibid., pp. 43-44.

But the general meaning of the covenant has two other important ideas for Eichrodt, "this is something in which God has entered freely and which he on his side may dissolve at any time." He existed before the nation and is independent of them, and in fact can abandon them. It is not an agreement for mutual service. God can dispose as he wills, he is sovereign. The covenant is no safe wall to hide behind; it calls the whole man.¹²

Historically the Yahweh covenant was jeopardized in three ways. First, the acquaintance with the nature benefactor deities of Canaan influenced the popular picture of Yahweh by perverting the connection between the God and the individual into the communication of divine vitality. This led to an emphasis on ecstatic exaltation, a loss of the meaning of the divine transcendence and a misuse of the covenant for using God to fulfil human desires.¹³

Secondly, the cultic development came dangerously close to an opus operatum.

Political consolidation was accompanied by a growth in the importance of the great sanctuaries and their priesthoods which favored an enhancing and entrenching of the outward apparatus of religion that had the strongest influence on religious thought and behaviour. The natural momentum of a

12 Ibid., pp. 44-45.

13 Ibid., pp. 45-46.

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richly developed cultic practice concentrated all the reality of religion into the sphere of outward performance, the meritorious works of sacrifices, festivals, pilgrimages, fasting and so on. As a result the social and moral aspects of the divine demands were allowed to recede from men's attention. As far as the covenant was concerned this meant the externalization of man's relation to God. (...) In this way the religious values originally mediated by the covenant were falsified and the covenant concept itself became nothing more than¹⁴ a protective cover for irreligious self-seeking.

This led the king toward a hereditary tyranny and away from the charismatic kingship. The covenant was then looked upon as an agreement between two dependent partners.

Because of the changing meanings of the word berith throughout the Old Testament sources, he believes that using covenant for Berith is only a makeshift because it tends to cover two lines of thought and becomes inaccurate. The first would be covenant, covenant relationship, covenant precept, legal system, cultus, covenant people. The second is different and sees covenant through the divine act of establishment, the relationship of grace, the order of redemption and the final consummation of all things. These became two divergent understandings but yet complete the whole content of the covenant idea. It is in the conjunction of opposites that is the unique character of the Old

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 47.

Testament relationship with God: the present legal order between God and man, and, the progressive development and eschatological fulfillment of the kingdom.¹⁵

The inauguration of the divine covenant caused a reordering of the legal side of the nation's life under Yahweh. In all centuries after Moses the Jews believed that the laws of the community came from the covenant God. All laws, cultic and secular, come from a direct command of Yahweh himself and it is hence not humanly arbitrary and relative as in the pagan religions. It differs from the Code of Hammurabi in that the offense is against God and not the King. Thus all of life is related to God and not only the nation. The decalogue remarkably connects all the moral precepts with the worship of God. Examples of humanitarian developments superior to the Code of Hammurabi are the higher values placed on human life over materialistic values (the death penalty is abolished for offenses against property, even slaves are treated as human) and gross brutalities such as mutilations are also eliminated. Also in the administration of justice, class-distinctions are rejected and the treatment of women improved after the

¹⁵ Eichrodt. Theology of the Old Testament,
op. cit. pp. 49-69.

covenant.¹⁶

Behind the Mosaic law there was an understanding of the total ordering of the people's life as a revelation of the saving will of God. But there is not to be an external compliance in the nation. The primary commandment is that of love of God. This should not lead to legalism and casuistry, but to a view that the law is the application and practice in particular situations of the primary command of love. God called the people in love: they must respond in love. The secular laws are based on this notion of the covenant.¹⁷

Eichrodt defines cultus as:

the expression of religious experience in concrete external actions performed within the congregation or community, preferably by officially appointed exponents and in its set forms. This assumes that, in contrast to the immediate human experience¹⁸ in which it is rooted, the cultus is secondary.

For the man of the ancient world, intercourse with the God was carried on through symbolic activity, totally different from modern western man. Kneeling, dancing, singing and all of like were permeated with meaning. Israel's

16 Ibid., pp. 74-82.

17 Ibid., pp. 90-97.

18 Ibid., p. 98.

cultus was not handed down as a direct revelation: it developed from its environment. But some aspects were rejected and some changed and modified from the pagan elements it came from.¹⁹

Worship in Israel can only be offered at certain sacred sites. For Yahweh these sites are not so much his localizations but places where he becomes manifest.

It is in a special and quite inconceivable manifestation that Yahweh makes himself visible to Moses in the Mount of God. He comes down to Sinai in order to conclude the covenant with his people.²⁰

Also the ark bears testimony to the invisibility of the God. He is present by faith only. The Israelite use of the Canaanite Bamot was a limiting of the covenant God. But it was resisted and God remained transcendent.

Sacred objects and their significance are listed by Eichrodt as follows:

- 1) The Ark is the unoccupied throne of God who is invisible. It is later than the Mosaic period. It represents God's nearness.
- 2) The Tent is of the Mosaic period. It is a place where Yahweh can meet with Moses. The transcendent God manifest himself here.
- 3) The Rod of God is a tool of the invisible God and not a fetishism.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 101-102.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 103.

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- 4) The Urim and Thummin is a tool to determine the divine will.
- 5) The Mossebah and the Ashera, adopted from Canaanite practice became stones used to memorialize Yahweh's self-manifestation. But its use was often corrupted.
- 6) The bull image as a representation of Yahweh was regarded by the spiritual leaders as a corruption.²¹

The settlement of the Jews in Canaan probably resulted in Canaanite nature festivals being placed side by side with those of pre-Mosaic origin. But

- The unique character of Yahweh worship is demonstrated, however, not only by what it rejected, but by the new elements which it incorporated into the cycle of Nature festivals. The old agricultural feasts were given a series of new motivations, deriving their content from the historical revelation of the covenant God. This was achieved either by the amalgamation of these feasts with other Yahweh feasts observed at about the same time of year, or by a more external association with the memory of some historical event.²²

As an example, the Passover attracted to itself the Massot festival and associated both with the escape from Egypt, connecting them with the basic act of redemption of the national God. The vintage festival was associated with the feast of Tabernacles.

Of greater importance is the commemoration of the wilderness wanderings with the climax in the conclusion of the Sinai covenant.

21 Ibid., pp. 102-118.

22 Ibid., pp. 121-122.

Form-critical examination of the Sinai pericope (Ex. 19-24), of the narrative of the Joshua covenant (Josh. 24) and the Book of Deuteronomy has revealed as the underlying pattern of all three the schema of a festival of covenant renewal. The constants in this schema are a historical presentation of the events at Sinai, followed by a recital of the law, a promise of blessing and the conclusion of a covenant; and the purpose was to renew the source and basis of the life of the federation of the Twelve Tribes by means of a regular cultic representation of its origin. This festival, repeated at intervals (originally perhaps only every seven years; cf. Deut. 31.9.13) manifestly constituted the central celebration in the cultus of the Israelite amphictyony. It kept alive the realization that the covenant was rooted in history and bound up with a new ordering of life, and resisted any attempt to dissolve the covenant concept in the timelessness of myth. (...) and in process linked the Nature festival firmly to salvation history.²³

The sacred actions related to purity and rites of purification develop from many sources. The pig which was an ancient Canaanite domestic and sacrificial animal, and the close association of the Canaanite duties with generation and birth and the Egyptian with the cult of the dead helped to intensify such actions. But in Israel, all concepts of purity are motivated chiefly by their common relation to Yahweh and the establishment of a holy people and consequently have a deeper significance than in isolation.

23 Ibid., p. 123.

The goal is to set up a personal relationship with God which is a unifying, controlling factor.²⁴

Eichrodt sees in both the Deuteronomic and Priestly law ritual an idea of purity which is a symbol and expression of inward moral perfection. In using the word qados the meaning of the division between sacred and profane becomes clearer. The important factor is not separation: it is belonging to God that is holiness.²⁵

He sees the act of circumcision as possibly connected with the abolition of child sacrifice. It had religious significance, "an act of dedication witnessing to the fact that the person belonged to the people of Yahweh." Priestly legislation made it an official symbol of the covenant.²⁶ The custom of the ban in war worked in reverse. This was the annihilation of the enemy and all possessions: the enemy was holy and no longer fit for human possession. Thus Yahweh executes his sentence on his enemies by the ban. Eventually however the custom modified and became

24 Eichrodt. Theology of the Old Testament, Philadelphia, the Westminster Press, 1960, pp. 133-136.

25 Ibid., pp. 136-137.

26 Ibid., p. 138.

humane in time.²⁷

Eichrodt sees the practice of sacrificial worship in Israel related directly to the central concept of the covenant. The sacrificial cultus of feeding Yahweh must be judged on the comparative study of Religions, but must be seen that

The central concept of the covenant asserts not less than that Yahweh already existed and had proved his power, before ever Israel sacrificed to him.²⁸

The value of sacrifice as a gift to the deity is perhaps best understood in terms of Genesis. 22 when human sacrifice is rejected.

The significance of the story is that, without surrendering the affirmation that God is entitled to the most drastic sacrifice on the part of his worshippers, it yet teaches that the divine will is kindly and life-giving, and elevates the substitution of an animal for a human victim to the status of an invariable rule.²⁹

A gift or tribute regularly paid to the deity such as an offering of the firstfruits is an acknowledgment of God as true owner, or a desire for blessing.

But he sees the sacrifice as a gift of God to man, a sacral communion. The deity and worshipper enter the

27 Ibid., pp. 139-140.

28 Ibid., pp. 141-144.

29 Ibid., pp. 144-150.

same system of living power, indicated by the victim or his blood and hence are united. By eating what was given to God they share in his life.

The special character which the communion with the deity mediated in this way acquired in Israel can only be rightly defined by reference to the nations unique conception of God. This sacred meal is certainly concerned with the real presence of the deity and that personal union with him from which all life and strength derive. But right from the start, with the making of the covenant on Sinai, which had been prepared for by the redemption from Egypt and which was given its specific content in the stipulations of the decalogue, the confirmation of this union in the covenant sacrifice led not to a physical and magical conception of the divine presence, but to a personal and moral fellowship with a divine Lord whose will shaped and regulated afresh the life of people.³⁰

God will enter into a special relationship with his people and give them a share in his own life. Consequently the sacrifice becomes a sacrament.

He sees that "making atonement," kippur, which originally meant, "to wipe away" emphasizes the personal character of the act of atonement.³¹ The slaying of the Passover lamb and the sacrifices of the great Day of Atonement bear witness also to a primitive concept of purification. But its importance for Israel is related to the covenant

³⁰ Ibid., p. 157.

³¹ Ibid., p. 162.

For us the atoning sacrifice and also in the other sacrifices to which the idea of atonement has been transferred, the essential theme is that the gulf between the angry God and the human sinner can only be bridged by the interposition of an act of reparation; and in that it is God himself who establishes the way in which an atoning substitute can be offered, he shows himself by this very act the covenant God who is concerned for the maintenance of the covenant despite all the sins of man.³²

Sacrifice is essentially God's way of preserving the covenant.

Eichrodt sees in the Old Testament a growing tendency to be rid of sacrifice. After the exile the Pharisees emphasized man's ability to atone by human efforts. Even after the destruction of the Temple sacrifice occupied the devout.³³ But

Complete liberation from the institution of sacrifice, without at the same time losing its proper and indispensable effects, could only be attained in that relationship with God which was based on Christ. Moreover it was achieved not by the construction of a new theory of sacrifice, but by the faith of the primitive congregation in Christ's intercession. In the laying down of his life God's action for the reconciliation of humanity was triumphantly revealed in the provision of the supreme reparatory act of atonement. Christ as the substitute for all those threatened by the wrath of God accomplished once for all his priestly service

32 Ibid., p. 170.

33 Ibid., pp. 170-171.

and brought to an end the sacrificial worship of the Old Testament.³⁴

He sees two Old Testament motifs fusing in Christ, this atoning substitute and the messianic King.

The reality of the divine Lordship revealed in history and the consummation of the world to come found their common centre in the person of him who as the Risen Christ would always be present among men and as the Exalted Christ would one day return as their redeemer.³⁵

Thus Eichrodt sees a figurative application of the Old Testament theology of sacrifice to the death of the mediator between God and man in the New Testament.

The nature of the covenant God, according to Eichrodt, is unique. It is not only the taking over of gods of the Semite systems of name structure and refashioning them: nor the new understanding of the divine nature which came with Moses called Yahweh which was a promise of his protective and guiding presence.³⁶ He also sees the nature of the covenant God as personal, that they encountered him in worship.³⁷ Also he is spiritual and the One God who they experience as a living reality.³⁸ He is a divine power

34 Ibid., p. 171.

35 Loc. Cit.

36 Ibid., pp. 178-187.

37 Ibid., pp. 206-210.

38 Ibid., pp. 210-226.

without limitation yet in the Berith there is a divine act of self-limitation.³⁹

The conception of God's power is given its special character by its association with first the idea of the divine holiness, that which is annihilating and inaccessible and utterly distinct from every created thing, and secondly the divine wrath, God being, in his sovereign freedom, inscrutable to men.⁴⁰

In contrast to this is God's free engagement of his sovereignty to the covenant fellowship with Israel. This reveals in the covenant the loving kindness of God (hesed Yahweh): he is Father and Shepherd who demonstrates his righteousness (Sedeq) by defending them from their enemies.⁴¹

Every detail of life is seen in terms of the divine presence. The wrath of God was associated with the idea of offense against the covenant or its creator. It was a punitive righteousness with individual retribution.⁴² The covenant God is holy: in the priestly conception it means "him who is unapproachable because of his complete 'otherness' and perfection when compared with all created things."⁴³ This holiness is reflected in the Law as the pattern of life

39 Ibid., pp. 228-231.

40 Ibid., p. 287.

41 Loc. Cit.

42 Ibid., 259, 287.

43 Ibid., p. 273.

for the holy people.

Thus the ultimate secret of the divine personhood is manifested as love concealed in wrath, redeeming righteousness, the loving kindness that remains constant despite the instability of the covenant.⁴⁴

The Covenant God operates through certain selected instruments. Eichrodt calls these the Instruments of the Covenant. They are the Charismatic leaders, and, the Official Leaders. The first group, the Charismatic begins with Moses strictly speaking.

But Moses is difficult to classify. He is neither king, priest, tribal chieftain or commander of an army. But he is more than a prophet. Rather at the beginning of the Israelite religion we find the man with the charisma, the special endowment of a person who is a mediator between God and man, a God inspired personality. The redemption from Egypt received its interpretation at the covenant making. The mediator emphasizes the distance between God and man. Moses mediated the personal will of God and the will of God here was to be normative for all human relations permanently.⁴⁵ But the revelation to Moses was not a fixed law. There must be:

44 Ibid., p. 288.

45 Ibid., pp. 289-294.

an incessant process of expanding and adopting the law to meet the demands of changing situations was perfectly compatible with loyalty to the religious and social spirit of the Mosaic legislation.⁴⁶

The seers of Israel are also God inspired personalities such as Deborah and God strengthened the relationship of the people to the God revealed to Moses. They help to preserve the already existing covenant relationship to Yahweh.⁴⁷ The Nazarites with streaming locks, a symbol of complete dedication to the deity, had a special charisma to war against the peoples' enemies and to help fuse Israel into a nation.⁴⁸ The judges as charismatic leaders show that the covenant is related to the whole of life, the political life is not a purely human preserve.⁴⁹

Nabism was a form of ecstatic experience that developed from group activity that was also an instrument of the covenant. The nabi was a proclaimer par excellence of God's hidden will. It was an overpowering human experience which took over the faculties of an individual. There might be a song or dance which would be a preparation to receive

46 Ibid., p. 295.

47 Ibid., pp. 296-303.

48 Ibid., pp. 303-306.

49 Ibid., pp. 306-309.

Yahweh's spirit. God's spirit worked in the midst of his people as a pledge and preparation for the new age in which God will dwell in the midst of his people and give them his power to use it.⁵⁰

Nabism can be seen to be a powerful reaction of the religion of Yahweh against the whole process of Canaanization of the Israelite spirit.⁵¹

It assisted in the attempt to weld the people into a new religious unity in resistance to nature religion and its culture.

Nabism for Eichrodt is important during the monarchy because it rejects the conception of religion diametrically opposed to prophetism. That is, a conception which sought to confine the faith of Yahweh within the rigid limits of the official religious and cultic system, and so prevent its effect from reaching the whole life of the nation. This is particularly true for Eichrodt in Nabism's resisting of the alliance between King and Priest.⁵²

Eichrodt sees a change in approach to the covenant during the time of the classical prophets. He describes the spiritual pattern of classical prophecy "as that of a

50 Ibid., pp. 309-328.

51 Ibid., p. 328.

52 Ibid., pp. 328-338.

dynamic power released by a new sense of the reality of God." Here prophecy saw "a new clarity in the countenance of the God of Israel."⁵³

In face of this there was no room for the presumptuous confidence that would enlist the covenant God in the service of human ends, and couple him with worldly factors with which he had absolutely nothing in common.⁵⁴

He sees a transforming reality clearly from Isaiah onwards. The idea of the people of God is to live in accordance with God's will in the ruah, a effect of the divine life, in contrast to basar, the transient and creaturely. "The realization of Yahweh's sovereignty is not something empirical and rational, but numinous and pneumatic."⁵⁵

The prophet is concerned with God himself and his impending visitation of his people. But the prophetic preaching created a split within the nation which separated membership of the true people of God from the mere fact of belonging to Israel. One must make a personal decision for the covenant God and the covenant community. This was a

53 Ibid., pp. 387-388.

54 Ibid., p. 388.

55 Ibid., pp. 388-389.

development that resulted from the prophetic preaching.⁵⁶

Eichrodt sees the prophet viewing the covenant relationship "as a spiritual communication, personal in character, becoming effectual in faith, love and obedience."⁵⁷

But the real divine presence guaranteed by the covenant is removed from man's direct possession."

Israel could not presume on Yahweh's succoring presence.

- By allowing men to see clearly the personal pre-conditions of any experience of God's self-communication it frees the covenant relationship from the character of an automatic mechanism of divine self-commitment, which could be relied upon in any and every circumstance.⁵⁸

The ultimate purpose of the covenant is submission to God's sovereignty. In order for the covenant to continue, man must be ready to submit to this sovereignty.

Where this readiness is lacking, the inevitable consequence is the abrogation of the doctrine of election in judgment. The ultimate horror of this conclusion, which is necessary to protect God's freedom from being antropocentrically distorted on the basis of a perverted notion of the covenant, becomes bearable in practice, however, in the contemplation of God's all-surpassing greatness.⁵⁹

56 Ibid., pp. 256-257.

57 Ibid., p. 372.

58 Ibid., p. 373.

59 Loc. cit.

Eichrodt explains why the prophets have so little to say about Yahweh's covenant with Israel and its statutes. They wished to emphasize it as "the vital personal quality of the divine human relationship." This is what mattered for the prophets. Election was only the beginning of intercourse which was to continue by fresh decisions.⁶⁰ For priest and people election was firmly established ordinances which might on occasion support man against God.

An appeal to the character of the covenant, therefore, offered no protection against a complete misunderstanding of Yahweh. It is precisely those who are most zealous in familiarity with the Law who have no knowledge of Yahweh (Jer.28)..Man has learned how to get his own way by skillful manipulation of the Law; and if the prophets had upheld the value of the covenant statutes, then a quibbling legalistic spirit would have made use of just these statutes to contest the demands, made by these 'men of the spirit'.⁶¹

He sees all passages that conceive of the coming salvation in the form of a covenant, placing emphasis on the fact that outward regulation will prepare for inward readiness to accept God's will. External legalism will be dead in favour of a full living intercourse with God.⁶²

60 Ibid., p. 374.

61 Ibid., p. 374.

62 Loc. cit.

As the charismatic leaders were the instruments of the Covenant, so also were the official leaders, the priests and the king. The priesthood becomes a ministry in charge of the sacrificial cultus at the covenant sanctuary, which included the manipulation of the oracle of the sacred lot, and all the ritual connected with the Tent and the Ark. These become sacred norms that guaranteed that the bond tied by Moses could not easily be severed.⁶³ The covenant relationship gave to the priesthood the work of counselling and teaching, particularly

The priest acquired a growing influence as the advisor on the subject of the ritual and ethical requirements for a right worship of Yahweh, on the means of obtaining his favour, and on the method of propitiating an angry God for offenses against the law.⁶⁴

Originally this meant putting the right question to the sacred lot, but later it developed into the rational investigation of complex questions, and rational instruction on the basis of a knowledge of Yahweh's commands became the principal work. Thus counseling the laity became the most important channel of priestly influence.

63 Ibid., pp. 392-394.

64 Ibid., p. 396.

This institution developed as the state grew into a kingdom.⁶⁵

The priest becomes the indispensable mediator of access to the divine realm. The original charismatic character of the priest recedes into the background and he becomes an official administrator of given regulations.

The properly creative element recedes, and the conservation of the tradition becomes the overriding principle. Priestly authority is no longer based so much on the endowment and spiritual power of the individual, as on his legitimation by the tradition of which he is the loyal servant, and by the religious community which invests him with his official character.⁶⁶

The assumption behind this is the conviction that outward form is not a matter of indifference to the interior concerns of religion. Eichrodt believes that such power can become an obstacle to the development of healthy religious life in Israel or any religion.

In developing the concept of tabu, the priesthood developed the idea of the divine reality as a spatially restricted entity. God's otherness is, not like the prophets saw it,

but as the strict separation of the uniquely, Holy and his people from all other supernatural

65 Ibid., pp. 397-402.

66 Ibid., p. 404.

beings and their domain (...). It was the priestly law that most vigorously developed the ideal of the holy people, that is to say, one set apart from all others. The more thoroughly this idea of the sharp separation of the divine nature from all, that was not God was worked out, the more surely, of course was it bound to lead to the conception of God's absolute transcendence.⁶⁷

Eichrodt sees the theophanies of angels played down by the priesthood. Only in the consecrated area of Sinai, or Tabernacle or Temple, does God become perceptible in the Kabod. Israel is the principle sphere of the Law's dominion. The covenant confronts her with the unconditional character of the divine claims. In Israel all belongs to Yahweh alone, space and time, property and life. The sacrifice, feast, purification and cultic ceremonies remind the Israelite that his whole life is dedicated to God, and he is brought to realize that life must show outwardly "the character proper to the people of Yahweh's own possession."⁶⁸

The order of the world is permanent. God's ordering of the universe is an Olam, eternity. Therefore the berit is an olam berith.⁶⁹

67 Ibid., pp. 407-408.

68 Ibid., pp. 409-412.

69 Ibid., pp. 414-415.

Eichrodt criticizes the priestly approach to human conduct because piety stresses obedience to the covenant statute with too little emphasis on the heart and the free decision.

The Law becomes for him the outward way of life by which the people of God as a whole acquires a perceptible character through the steady obedience of each individual.⁷⁰

The prophets emphasized the response of personality while the priests described the status of morality within the limits imposed by an earthly community, in a form of law. This led to an ethics of nationalism and ignored the numinous and pneumatic in the divine-human relationship of the people of God.⁷¹

He sees that within the priestly cultic practices there is a tendency to degrade God's ordinances of grace into a mechanical system of priestly techniques. This leads to a desire to activate the resources of divine power to one's advantage and an overconfidence in salvation. Cultic forms fail to educate the people of God in the moral conduct of life. The daily burnt offering forms the basic element in worship and its value lies in mere performance.⁷²

70 Ibid., p. 417.

71 Ibid., pp. 449, 434.

72 Ibid., pp. 419-424.

Thus sacrificial worship, becomes predominantly an institution regulated by statute, effecting atonement independently of any spontaneous feeling on the part of the individual; and by so doing it guarantees the presence of God.⁷³

The cult for Eichrodt was not satisfied with the role of an outward means of expression: it desired to be valued for its own sake. Consequently, it became the playground for all the demonic forces of a nature religion, in which the frontier between God and man was displaced, and the sovereignty of God jeopardized.⁷⁴

Eichrodt saw a danger in the priestly subordination of history to the Law. Thinking tended to be enclosed in an artificial reality, cut off from new and revolutionary insights, and lost the sense of mastering history. This rejection of eschatology

all too easily glosses over the unbridgeable gaps and agonizing inconsistencies in the life of Nature and man, and leads to a false optimism,(...) In these circumstances the feeling for the ultimate and decisive questions may be lost; and by ignoring the doubtful quality of even the best human institutions an arrogance is excited toward the whole non-Israelite world which tends to see the basis of Israel's favoured position not in God's immerited grace but in its own superiority.⁷⁵

73 Ibid., pp. 421-422.

74 Ibid., p. 434.

75 Ibid., p. 435.

The value of the priestly view was that it emphasized the divine sovereignty of God over creation. But more, his purpose in giving concrete form to the sacred ordinances of the covenant for his people in a unity of worship and ethics which is to secure the subjection of the world.⁷⁶

For Eichrodt the monarchy was an institution already existing around Israel. In Israel because of her religious character it would be changed not only by her concept of history, but because it must be incorporated into the constitution of the people of God. The king must be a servant of the covenant God and be entrusted with upholding divine decrees, ignoring men's personal or national self interest. The problem was to establish a non-charismatic leadership.⁷⁷

Saul failed to follow his charismatic impulses. The success of David was due to the fact that he could unite mutually antagonistic forces, the charismatic and the institutional, and reconcile them to the monarchy. Solomon caused deterioration because he linked too closely with the sacramental and cultic wing.⁷⁸

76 Ibid., p. 436.

77 Ibid., pp. 436-441.

78 Ibid., pp. 442-447.

The building of the Temple was an act characteristic of this attitude; and by joining the royal palace to the sanctuary within a single containing wall he provided for all to see a symbol of the unique position which the King now enjoyed by virtue of a holiness inherent in his office and independent of the holder.⁷⁹

But there was no charismatic influence. Later the classical prophets criticism shows the primary sin of the king as self-sufficiency.

There was one powerful trend to reconstruct the concept of the kingdom from the closing days of the monarchy. It is contained in the Book of Deuteronomy, the supplements to Ezechiel and the Priestly Code. This was an attempt to resurrect the concept of a covenant people, a holy nation, in which politics would have to be completely subordinated to the religious program. Eichrodt sees

The principle duty of the King was visualized as the superintendence and promotion of the sacred ordinances of the divine covenant, while strict laws were to restrain him from any striving after purely political power.⁸⁰

Here the ancient title nabi is substituted for melek, an attempt to reinterpret in terms of older forms. Although unsuccessful to postpone the fall of the kingdom, it

79 Ibid., p. 448.

80 Ibid., p. 452.

indicated the lines for Israel to form the people of God after the catastrophe.⁸¹

But for Eichrodt the king incarnated the judicial majesty of God. The kingdom's goal is to be justice and righteousness, and not only in the individual but in the very structure and ordinance of the state. Yahweh's part is to build a kingdom not by destruction of the enemy but by building a kingdom by the inward conversion of man, and the creating of conditions of justice.⁸²

Eichrodt says that because the idea of a covenant relationship is based on a single free act of divine grace, bound up with conditions, implies the possibility of annulment.

In fact the terrifying possibility that God might himself annul the covenant was explicitly included in the tradition of the Mosaic period.⁸³

But when the intentions of the nation were sound, Yahweh's covenant good faith, his hesed, would see to it that the continuance of the covenant would not be imperilled, whatever the offences of individuals. Consequently, Israel tended to look on the whole for individual divine acts of

81 Loc. cit.

82 Ibid., pp. 452-456.

83 Ibid., p. 457.

judgment.⁸⁴

Gradually however, a new evaluation of God's covenant as indissoluble developed. Because God was establishing his kingdom in history, he would not allow his plans to be vitiated. The political success under David enforced this concept of the covenant. This may have been the starting point for that sense of election displayed in patriarchal history.⁸⁵ Also

The emergence of the dogma of the eternal divine covenant in the Deuteronomic and priestly literature is the result of adopting and working out to a logical conclusion just this line of thought, (...) Consequently all Yahweh's acts of judgment cannot but be regarded purely and simply as passing interventions, conditioned by the needs of the moment, and incapable of endangering the eternal destiny of the people of God.⁸⁶

Also the hope of the overthrow and punishing of all Israel's enemies strengthened this idea. His judgment on his enemies will renew the assurance of his covenant fellowship with his people. The victory over the enemies will consummate the divine sovereignty established in the setting up of the covenant.⁸⁷

84 Ibid., p. 458.

85 Loc. cit.

86 Ibid., p. 459.

87 Ibid., pp. 461-462.

He sees the whole Elohistic history as containing a constant feeling for the terror of divine judgment. The nebiim had a sense of disquiet arising from the dissolubility of the covenant, and there grew up a sense of Israel's corporate national guilt for having adopted Canaanite culture and the marks of decadence in cultic and social life that went with it.⁸⁸ The expectation of doom comes out in the prophets more fully, a threat of destruction for the covenant people. And it will be worse for Israel because of her divine election. For Eichrodt this judgment of God is the abrogation of the covenant.

This leads to that inner alienation, which makes itself known in contempt for his moral purpose of fellowship, and is for preference characterized as akin to the destruction of those personal relationships based on loyalty, to wit, marriage and betrayal, sonship and duty to a leige Lord: in addition Hosea, Jeremiah and Ezechiel see it in terms of covenant-breaking.⁸⁹

It is confirmed in the exile.

Because Israel died at the exile, the return was a revival after doing full penance for its guilt. The understanding of the covenant as an eternal and unalterable relationship of grace could now be revived in all its force.

88 Ibid., pp. 462-463.

89 Ibid., p. 466.

The restoration of the temple was a sign of Yahweh's increasing covenant favour. But post-exilic prophecy took care that God as judge within the covenant people should remain a present reality to each individual.⁹⁰ In the Syrian religious persecution, Apocalyptic rejected a static reliance on God's eternal kingdom and its establishment in Israel. Here there was an expectation of a complete upheaval in which Yahweh's kingdom would finally break through.

Eichrodt sees in the prophets important and purer elements of the kingdom. In Hosea he sees the idea of a people who should, depend on God in pure love. In Isaiah there is a picture of rule of justice and righteousness in a moral community.

Again, the same spirit which we find in the other sayings of Jeremiah breathes through his oracle of the new covenant, which in the face of the nation's breach of the old covenant he fashions a means whereby the divine law⁹¹ is to be implanted in the hearts and minds of men.

Ezekiel sees the transformation of a stony heart to a heart of flesh by the indwelling of the spirit. Deutero-Isaiah gives a picture of the kingdom of peace.⁹²

90 Ibid., pp. 467-468.

91 Ibid., pp. 472-482.

92 Loc. cit.

But for Eichrodt there is no single statement of prediction and fulfillment. Prediction ought "to be reduced to a general readiness to hope." Therefore all the individual features of prediction have to be dissociated from the question of its fulfillment. The real value of prediction lies in the psychological disposition which they evoke.

It can hardly be denied that on this conception there is no further point in talking about a 'fulfillment' of O.T. prediction, for all the internal links between the O.T. hope and N.T. reality of salvation have been severed.⁹³

For Eichrodt there should not be concentration on individual prediction: Eschatological thought concentrates on one important thing, "the consummation of God's sovereignty, however this may be described in individual instances." The hoped for salvation is to be in God's hands.

The prophets for Eichrodt spoke to their contemporaries and prediction makes the divine action visible and comprehensible to that world. The whole of revelation is historical in form.

Any mechanical transference of O.T. statements about the coming age of salvation to the Person and work of Christ is thus shown to be a contradiction of the special character of biblical revelation, which proclaims not a self-contained dogmatic totality, but a real God becoming manifest in history.

93 Ibid., pp. 503-504.

94 Ibid., pp. 502-503.

In the covenant relationship the word of God had a decisive place as establishing communion between God and man. Herein lies the essential element of the covenant hope.

An Examination Of The Meaning Of Covenant In The Bible.

Alan Richardson edited A Theological Word Book of the Bible, which is a valuable study of two hundred and thirty articles on key words in the Bible. The editor selected the words from both Testaments. "Christ" he says, "is the proper subject both of the Old and of the New Testaments."¹ Christ is in the New Testament as a fulfillment of the Old.

It is because of the continuity of the Old Israel with the New, and because of the fulfillment of the Old Covenant in the New Covenant of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that it was understood from the outset by those who planned this volume that it must be a word book of the whole Bible and not merely of the New Testament.²

For Richardson the words of the Bible have more than academic interest. They are words of eternal life. This is because revelation culminates in the incarnate Word of God. This Word is encountered in the Bible and it has a

1 Alan Richardson, A Theological Word Book of the Bible, New York, The MacMillan Company, 1962. Preface

2 Loc. cit.

seriousness and urgency which a mere secular study of words does not have. The study and writing of the word covenant was done by J.O. Cobham, M.A., Principle of the Queen's College, Birmingham. His study of Covenant is lengthy and very thorough, dividing it quite naturally into its presence first in the Old and then the New, and based upon the studies of well known Protestant Philologists, and is therefore quite representative.

He begins by explaining that the idea of covenant is fundamental to both Testaments.

The religion of Israel has its origin in the covenant under Moses, while Jesus came to initiate a New Covenant sealed by the sacrifice of his death.³

The usage of two parts of scripture derives at least from the second century. But its usage is found in 2 Cor. 3:14 and is implicit in Exodus 24:7, "Taking the book of the covenant," he read it aloud to the people."

The Hebrew word berith is translated diatheke in the Septuagint and testamentum in the vulgate, particularly in Psalms and New Testament (though in other books foedus, pactum and amicitia);⁴

3 Ibid., p. 54.

4 Ibid., p. 55.

1) Etymology. Cobham states that the attempt to expound the nature of berith from the etymology of the word has not led to unanimous agreement. One explanation offered is that it is the Hebrew equivalent of the Assyrian beritu, bond or fetter.⁵

2) Berith between men or tribes. A covenant stands for an artificial brotherhood and has no place where the natural brotherhood, of which it is an imitation, already exists. A covenant may be between: (1) individuals as in Gen. 21:27, Abraham and Abimelech; (2) husband and wife as in Mal. 2:14; (3) tribes as in Exodus 23:32, (the Israelites must not make a pact with other tribes); monarchs as in 1 Kings 20:34 by Ahab; a king and his people as in 1 Kings II:4, Joash made by Jehoiada. As in 2 Sam. 9, it creates rights and duties but does not necessarily place the parties on an equal footing. It may be forced on the vanquished, sealed by gifts, a handshake, a kiss, a common meal, Gen. 26: 27-31, by eating salt, by a sacrificial meal, Gen. 31:44f, and in a sacred place, 2 Sam. 5:3.⁶

3) Yahweh's Berith with Israel. The history and religion of Israel presumes an historic covenant between Yahweh and

5 Loc. cit.

6 Ibid., p. 55.

Israel. Yet the origin of the idea of the covenant is obscure. But the dominant tradition implies that the Horeb-Sinai covenant is the original covenant between Yahweh and Israel. The prophets look back to this covenant, Amos 3:1 and 2.

In the Exodus narratives Yahweh calls Moses, reveals his name to him (according to E), sends him to deliver Israel from Egypt (Exodus 3:12-14), and then, the deliverance accomplished, makes a covenant with the Israelite confederation (Exodus 19:4-5) at the Mount of God (Horeb in E followed by D); Sinai in J followed by P), which is the foundation of the religion of Israel. A covenant is sealed with sacrifice (Ps. 50.5). Yahweh's covenant with Israel is sealed in E by blood on the altar and on the people (Exodus 24:3-8) and in J by a sacrificial meal (Exodus 24:1,2,9-11).⁷

In Gen. 4:26, J carries the knowledge of the name of Yahweh back to Seth. Here the covenant between Abram and Yahweh was sealed by passing between divided animals (Gen. 15:17-18). However, in P the covenant goes back to Noah (Gen. 9:8-17). Here C.H. Dodd's position is followed. That is, though the covenant was made with Israel historically, it is applicable to the whole human race. Also in Eccles. 17:12, the covenant is carried back to Adam.⁸

7 Loc. cit. (J are sources which name God as Yahweh, and E, God as EL; P means Priestly authorship, and D compiled by the Deuteronomist.)

8 Loc. cit.

Here the conclusion is drawn that the Horeb-Sinai covenant was the original: in the minds of the prophets it was the fundamental covenant. Here **was the** element which developed into the Torah or Law. The primitive decalogue expanded into the Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20:22-23:33). This was developed and revised in the Deuteronomic Code and the Holiness Code (Lev. 17-26). However, the entire source is Mosaic.⁹

Yahweh is a God who initiates Covenants which are his ordinances. Covenant making is an attribute of Yahweh expressed as hesed, mercy.

So within the covenant with Israel we find further covenants. The promise to David (2 Sam. 7:11-13,16) is reinterpreted as a Covenant (2 Sam. 23:5). The later covenants were reaffirmations in new situations of the original covenant (2 Kings 2:7, 23:3, Neh.10:28f).¹⁰

The prophets attempt to bring Israel back to the covenant. Yahweh is seen by the prophets as a God who will forgive Israel and will restore them to faithfulness. Yahweh remains faithful to the covenant which is a marriage covenant. He restores Israel to the original relationship (Hos. 2:14-23, Jer. 3:1, 14, Ezek. 16:60-3, Isa. 54:1-8,61).

9 Alan Richardson, A Theological Word Book of the Bible, New York, The MacMillan Company, 1963, p.55.

10 Ibid., p. 56.

He sees the covenant continued and not broken or abrogated in these texts of the prophets.

But the prophets saw the danger of legalism implicit in the covenant conception (...) and looked for a New Covenant with the law written in the heart (...) (Jer. 31:31-4). (...) It was to initiate this New Covenant foretold by Jeremiah that Jesus came, as his word over the cup at the Last Supper shows.¹¹

Concerning the conception of the covenant in the mind of Jesus in Luke 22:29f, Cobham favors the position of R. Otto. That is, the covenant "seems to be present in the mind of Jesus." It is only at the Last Supper that Jesus speaks explicitly of the New Covenant. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." (1 Cor. 11:25).

J. Behm in Theologisches Wörterbuch, I, p. 136, contends that the Pauline form is the original one. Mark has changed the word over the cup to conform to the word over the bread (Epd. 24:8). 'The word in the Pauline form declares that the blood, i.e. the death, of Jesus seals the new diatheke.'¹²

The important element becomes therefore the circumstances in which the unique word was spoken. The key to understanding it is in the circumstances. "The New Covenant is a correlative conception of the 'Kingdom of God'. The New Testament interpretation of the cross as sacrifice arises

¹¹ Loc. cit.

¹² Ibid., p. 56.

from this word over the cup.¹³

Jesus' purpose to initiate the New Covenant through his sacrificial death finds its fulfillment in the pouring forth of the Spirit (Acts 1:4-5, 2:14-8, 38, 39, 4:31, 19:1-6, Gal. 3:3,5, 4:6, 5:16-18, 25).¹⁴

Here is a definite linking between the covenant and Jesus' death: the New Covenant is the New Kingdom; one can determine from the texts quoted in Acts the working of the spirit, the essential mark of the kingdom. This is the sense in which 1 Cor. 12-14 is seen.

He sees Paul using the New Covenant as an ordinance of salvation from God. Paul sees the covenants of old Israel as privileges (Romans 9:4), to whom he is united in the flesh. He sees the New Covenant (Romans 11:27 citing Isa. 59:21) as bringing forgiveness. Paul is a minister of the New Covenant and it is in it that he has confidence. This New Covenant is spirit and not letter (2 Cor. 3:7-14).¹⁵ The Old Covenant signified for Paul the law of Moses, which has been done away with in Christ. (2 Cor. 3:7-14).

13 Loc. cit.

14 Loc. cit.

15 Loc. cit.

For Paul there are two covenants, but one will of God, who is the end of the Law, the fulfillment of all promise. Gal. 3:15ff. is typically Rabbinic exegesis, stressing covenant with Abraham before the giving of the Law.¹⁶

For Paul the first covenant and its ordinances dedicated with blood by Moses (Heb. 9:18-22) and renewed annually (Heb. 9:25, 10:3) were yet ineffective to take away sins (Heb. 10:4). Paul sees the Old Covenant as abolished when the new one was established (Heb. 8:7, 13).

The New Covenant fulfills Jer. 31 (Heb. 8:8-12, 10:16) and puts away sins (9:14,15,26, 10:17-18). Where in 9:16 the author uses the illustration of a testator, it is ad hominem and moves away from his real thought.¹⁷

In another work, edited by Alan Richardson and G. Henton Davies, The Teachers' Commentary, there is a somewhat different approach to the concept of covenant. There is a strict relationship between covenant and righteousness. Righteousness in the O T means that God is unchangingly faithful to the covenant. God's righteousness is looked at in two complementary ways. First, he watches over the life of covenant people by punishing, acquitting and helping those who have no one to help them. Secondly

16 Alan Richardson, A Theological Word Book of the Bible, New York, The MacMillan Company, 1962, p. 56.

17 Loc. cit.

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he maintains his people in relation to other peoples. His is salvation whereby he brings about his divine purpose in history through the covenant people.¹⁸

The question then arises: What is demanded of man's side of a relationship with this righteous God? The world of St. Paul's day gave two answers to the question. Judaism said that man can have a right standing with God by keeping the law of the covenant people, if they are good. Greek religion claimed that man can have right standing with the gods if they are religiously adept. These can be considered as goodness or achievement.

For Paul it is based on God's goodness and achievement. This is a revolution in the nature of communion with God: not our rising to God's level, but God's descending to our level (Rom. 5:6-8)¹⁹

Man must renounce all claim on God, regardless of religious or moral achievement and throw himself on God's mercy. "This self-renunciation is the meaning of faith."²⁰

Man becomes justified by God's grace (Rom. 3.24), removing uneasy conscience about past actions and the sense

18 G. Davis, Alan Richardson, The Teachers' Commentary London, SCM Press, 1959.

19 Ibid., p. 475.

20 Loc. cit.

of helplessness to achieve present good. This means acting simply because man loves God and his fellow man, and not doing good or being religious for any credit it may bring.

In other words human righteousness mirrors the divine righteousness in its generosity - and indeed in its purposefulness. For the man who is 'justified' stands upright before God with God's people, and so is drawn into the service of God's ongoing purpose in the world.²¹

There is therefore the concept that by faith God's righteousness enters into man and he is justified by God's grace. This is the way by which the 'justified' who compose God's people accomplish his work in the world. They are loyal to the new covenant, as God is loyal, by having faith in him. This justification by faith which results in the entering into man of divine righteousness is an essential and binding element in the life of the people of God which is necessary to fulfil the service of God's people. God's righteousness is performed by the covenant people.

21 Loc. cit.

Alan Richardson : Jesus, Re-interpreter of the Old Covenant.

Alan Richardson is presently Professor of Christian Theology in the University of Nottingham. He begins his formulation of New Testament theology with the idea that what facts are seen will depend upon the principle of interpretation from which we start. Consequently, New Testament theology, when written by Christians, will necessarily begin with apostolic faith. It is an historical faith, but there can never be a final Theology of the New Testament. New Testament theology must be written over and over, because of the accumulation of new knowledge and the changed spirit of each period of historical period.

From the point of view of the committed Christian New Testament theology involves the unrelenting effort at restatement of the faith of the Church of Jesus Christ in the light of changing attitudes and new knowledge.¹

It does not prove that one hypothesis of interpretation is true but that one is better than another.

Richardson's hypothesis of interpretation is that

Jesus himself is the author of the brilliant re-interpretation of the Old Testament scheme of salvation ('Old Testament theology') which is found

¹ Alan Richardson, An Introduction of the Theology of the New Testament, London, SCM Press, 1958. pp. 9-12.

in the New Testament, and the events of the life, 'signs', passion and resurrection of Jesus, as attested by the apostolic witness, can account for the 'data' of the New Testament better than any other hypothesis current today.²

This principle he sees as historic Christian faith. He believes that it enables us to present "a more coherently and satisfying 'history' than do the liberal-humanist or existentialist principle of interpretations."³ There is no pretense of remaining within the limits of a purely descriptive science.

Richardson sees his position as being based on St. Augustine's famous formula, Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis. A proper understanding of Christian origins is possible only through the insight of Christian faith. He believes that the acceptance of the apostolic witness to Christ's Lordship and to his resurrection makes better sense of the historical evidence than any other hypothesis. The New Testament theology cannot be built upon objective historical fact alone, but upon the witness of the apostles which is the only evidence the Church possesses.⁴

2 Ibid., p. 12.

3 Ibid., p. 13.

4 Ibid., p. 14.

It is important to see Richardson's underlying hypothesis. That is, Jesus is the re-interpreter of the Old Testament message of salvation. This work of re-interpretation is continued in the New Testament documents themselves and is an important understanding in the minds of the New Testament authors.

Jesus, for Richardson, is the Mediator of the New Covenant. He is the new Moses because he fulfilled the promise contained in Moses' work as a mediator. He says that Christ is nowhere called mediator in the ten Paulines. The only places in the New Testament (besides 1 Tim. 2:5) he is called a mediator are Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24.

In each of these places he is called the mediator of a new (or 'better'. 8:6) covenant. As God through Moses had established the covenant of Sinai, so now through Christ he has established the new covenant which Jeremiah had prophesied.⁵

Jer. 31:31-34 is expressly mentioned in Heb. 8:8-12. Here the author agrees that the covenant of Sinai has been replaced by a "better covenant" in the blood of Jesus Messiah. He says that the idea of Christ as mediator fits into Hebrews because in the Jewish mind after Moses, the only mediator was the high priest, "and Hebrews is the only NT book which explicitly calls Christ 'priest' or

⁵ Ibid., p. 229.

'high priest'." The importance of the passage is indicated by the fact that the title "New Testament" comes from this text.

St. Paul's description of the laity in 2 Cor. 3:6, ministers of the New Covenant, is suggestive of the NT conception of the priesthood of the laity, the minister of the Old Covenant being the Jewish priesthood.

But the synoptic accounts (like the Pauline) bear clear witness to the fact that Jesus thought of his death as being the sacrificial act by which a covenant was ratified between God and a new Israel, just as the old covenant was ratified in the blood of the sacrificial animals on Sinai.⁶

At Sinai Moses sprinkled the blood on the people saying "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you." (Ex. 24:8). The words of Jesus at the Last Supper, as recorded by St. Mark are a clear reference to Ex. 24:8.

Jesus took the cup of wine and declared it to be, the blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you and many(...)the meaning of Jesus is perfectly clear, and it has nothing to do with the question which so preoccupied the reformation, theologians. He was not talking about any kind of mystical or metaphysical statement about the esse of the wine in the cup; he was saying, in the typically allusive biblical fashion, that his death, now imminent, was the sacrificial act by which God was making a

6 Ibid., p. 230.

covenant with a new people replacing the old, broken covenant of Sinai.

Richardson supports the position of J. Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, on Mark 14:22 and 1 Cor. 11:24. These are the words spoken over the bread, this is My Body. Probably, instead of soma he would have used the Aramaic bisri, flesh, connected with the Hebrew basar, and comparing himself with the paschal lamb. Jesus made his death redemptive and related it to the lambs killed at the time of the Exodus. Their blood had a redemptive effect because of the passover blood and God revoked the death sentence passed on Israel.

In the same way will the people of God of the last days be redeemed by the merits of the passover blood. Jesus, therefore, describes his death as the eschatological passover sacrifice: his vicarious⁸ death brings the final deliverance into operation.

The death of Jesus is therefore a passover sacrifice by which God made a covenant with a new people of God.

Richardson sees Jesus as understanding his mission in terms of the prophecy of Isaiah and therefore his death would be necessary as an expiatory sacrifice. "He had come to think of himself as the Messianic Son of Man of OT

7 Ibid., pp. 230-231.

8 Ibid., p. 231.

prophecy."⁹ This he interpreted by means of the Isaian conception of the Servant of Yahweh. Jesus thought of his self-oblation as the pouring out of his life in redemptive sacrifice on behalf of the many. Mark 10:45 is Jesus' re-interpretation of Isaiah 53:10f. Here Deutero-Isaiah interprets the redemption of the Servant of Yahweh as a second deliverance and exodus from Egypt, in which a new Moses is given to establish a new covenant with the people of God (Isa. 42:6; 49:8; 59:20f). Jesus seeing his death in this way, sees it as "establishing a new covenant between God and a new people, which would include 'enlightened' Gentiles."¹⁰

Richardson sees modern biblical scholarships as holding this interpretation, as sweeping aside the misunderstandings of medieval unbiblical speculation, and recent liberal theories such as a reading back into Jesus' words a sacramental gnosticism of Hellenic Catholicism.

Jesus steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:5) with the deliberate intention of giving his body and pouring out his blood on behalf of the 'covenant of the people'. For more than nineteen hundred centuries the 'people of God', which his death did in actual fact bring into being, has made solemn remembrance of his atoning self-sacrifice.¹¹

9 Loc. cit.

10 Ibid., p. 231.

11 Ibid., p. 232.

Consequently, he sees the name, the people of God, which was the distinctive name of the ancient covenant-people of Israel, appropriated to the Church of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:10).

The Apostolic Church regards Christ's death, as he himself had regarded it, as the means whereby a new people of God is 'redeemed' or delivered from bondage to sin, just as in ancient times Israel had been 'ransomed' from Egyptian bondage.¹²

Thus a new people of God's own possession are created, the people of the New Covenant.

Richardson sees the people of God taken in a collective sense as the Bride of Christ. The metaphor of Christ as Bridegroom and the Church as his bride, is based upon the OT prophetic image of Israel as the spouse of Yahweh (Isaiah 54:5-7; 62:4f; Hos. 2:7). Israel's lapses into idolatry are spoken of as whoredom or adultery with strangers (Ezek. 16:15-43; Hos. 4:10-15).

Moreover, the days of covenant making in the wilderness of Sinai are spoken of as the time of Israel's 'espousals' (Jer. 2:2; Ezek. 16:8, 43, 60); and it is promised that, despite her sins, God would make with Israel, forgiven and restored, a new and everlasting marriage-covenant (Ezek. 16:60-63),¹³

12 Loc. cit.

13 Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament, London, SCM Press, 1958. p. 257.

The NT writers think of this prophecy as having been fulfilled in the marriage-covenant between Christ and his Church. "The Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples was the solemnization of the marriage in a sacramental rite."¹⁴

The metaphor involves an affirmation of the closest possible unification of Christ with the Church as his body in view of the biblical doctrine of marriage (Gen. 2:24. quoted by Paul in Eph. 5:31). The people of God are married to Christ, are one flesh and one Spirit with him. Although treated by Paul and in non-Pauline sections of the NT, (Rev. 19:7-9; 21:2,9), Richardson thinks it may perhaps have been suggested by Jesus himself in sayings and parables which represent his parousia as the coming of the Bridegroom (Matt. 25:6; Luke 12:35-40) and the blessedness of the redeemed as a marriage feast in the Age to Come (Matt. 22:1-14).¹⁵ Consequently the new or better covenant becomes ratified at the Last Supper, and ratified as a marriage-covenant, implying a structure of personal relationships in which the christian people remain completely themselves, but united permanently to the Bridegroom.

14 Loc. cit.

15 Ibid., p. 257.

Following his specific point of viewing the New Testament, Richardson writes of the People of God:

The NT re-interpretation of the OT theology is nowhere more strikingly displayed than in its claim that the mixed Christian community of Jews and Gentiles is become the new 'people of God'.¹⁶

In the Septuagint, laos, people, is used over 1,500 times in the sense of an ethnic group of the same stock and language, particularly Israel herself.

And the expression laos theou becomes a technical term for Israel as the chosen people of God (cf. Heb. 11:25). In the NT this use is taken over as a title for the Christian community, though the word, laos is often employed quite untechnically (e.g. Luke 1:21; 3:15; 7:1, 29) in the sense of the population in general or the assembled company.¹⁷

But the specific technical sense most used is as the people of God.

He sees one of the dominant themes of the OT as God's purpose for Israel vis-a-vis the other nations. The first twelve chapters of Genesis God's purpose is narrowed down to the election and call of Abraham. The prophetic interpretation of history is represented here for it teaches that all the families of the earth are to be blessed, and this is why God chose Abraham (Gen. 12:3). "But even

16 Ibid., p. 268.

17 Loc. cit.

within the covenant-group of Abraham's descendants through Isaac" the divine election continues. For the whole purpose of the biblical-prophetic view is the ultimate salvation of all the nations of mankind. "Hated" stands for rejection, those who are not to be God's special instrument.¹⁸

The OT is strong in this concept of God's people being helped by him in order to be the instrument of his universal purposes. The deliverance from Egypt through the Red Sea "is the supreme manifestation alike of Yahweh's power and of his favor (grace)." God did not choose the Israelites for their virtues (Deut. 9:4f). The reason is in God's mind, "God's act of redemption was for 'his name's sake'." "This is the mystery of election, the miracle of grace." Throughout the Bible God's love is *agape* and not *eros*. The Septuagint translators adopted agane to take the place of the Hebrew, love, whose root is 'ahabh. In the NT agape takes on the quality of an eschatological reality, a quality of life in the age to come, but now in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). But chiefly in the NT the value of agape is in loving where there is no return.

¹⁸ Loc. cit.

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It is thus a word which exactly describes God's attitude of free and utter grace in his dealings with Israel, old and new. The words 'eran and 'eros do not occur in NT.¹⁹

God does not choose the Jews because of their lovableness.

God makes a covenant with Israel through Moses at Sinai, mindful of the covenant with Abraham. This is how the prophets saw it, his purpose "being still that of the salvation of 'all the earth'." Exodus 19:4-6 for Richardson is explicit that it is an election for service, and not privilege, to further God's purpose for the nations. This passage embodies the prophetic understanding of the nature of God's covenant with Israel and which is crucial for the whole biblical doctrine of the Church.

God has elected Israel, not because he has no interest in the rest of the nations, but because he has a concern for 'all the earth'. Israel is therefore appointed to be a 'kingdom or priests', i.e. a kingdom of those set apart to represent God to the world and the needs of the world to God; Israel is to be a dedicated nation, the light of the Gentiles (cf. Isa. 42:6, 'for a covenant of the laos, for a light of the Gentiles').²⁰

The Levites were set apart as a priesthood within Israel, "Israel as a nation is set apart as a priesthood to the world."

19 Ibid., p. 269.

20 Loc. cit.

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We are reminded of the vision of Zech. 8:23, which looks forward to the day when this covenant-promise shall be realized:(...)The Biblical doctrine of the 'priesthood of the laity' (laos) is written into the covenant of Sinai, to which the people of Israel had bound themselves and which Moses had ratified in sacrificial blood (Ex. 24:3, 8.).²¹

The covenant united a priestly people to God, the covenant is a sign of the agreement of the entire group as a priestly group to influence the non-covenanted nations.

Israel failed to be the light of the Gentiles (Joel 4:1-11) broke the covenant with God (Jer. 31:32). For Richardson, Jeremiah saw the old covenant as a dead letter by reason of Israel's disobedience. A new covenant was needed: Jeremiah prophesied that God would make a new covenant by which a new people of God would be created (Septuagint 38:33).²²

The NT claims that by the making of this new covenant through the pouring out of the blood of Jesus Christ the new laos theou has in fact been created ...The long expected Shepherd 'of my people Israel' has come forth from Bethlehem of Judaea (Matt. 2:6; Micah 5:2).²³

Luke 1:68 states that the God of Israel has wrought redemption for his laos. Also Luke 7:16 after Jesus had raised a

21 Ibid., p. 270.

22 Loc. cit.

23 Loc. cit.

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young man from the dead, says that "God has visited his laos."²⁴

Acts 15:14 "God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name." This for Richardson becomes the even more obvious re-interpretation in the NT of the OT theme, first through Jesus, now through his followers understanding of his meaning. This idea is further clarified in Acts 18:10; Heb. 4:9; Rev. 18:4.

St. Paul reflecting deeply upon the election of the Gentiles to salvation, recalls the prophecy of Hosea, which he now perceives to have been fulfilled; even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles, as he saith also in Hosea, I will call that my people which was not my people, and her beloved which was not beloved. And it shall be, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the sons of the living God (Romans 9:24-26; Hosea. 2:23; cf. 1 Pet. 2:10; Hosea 1:10).²⁵

God raised up a new Israel and made a new covenant with her. This was done because the old Israel failed to keep the solemnly ratified promise to be obedient to all that Yahweh commanded (Ex. 24:3).

Jesus Christ the saviour purified a people for his own possession according to Titus 2:14 which should be compared to Exodus 19:5 which carries the same notion of God's

24 Loc. cit.

25 Loc. cit.

own possession.²⁶

He does not see the election of Israel in the OT as improper as in some modern objections to the notion. The election of Israel does not involve the rejection of any other nation because Israel's election is for the world's salvation. Moreover, election in the OT was for service to God in this world and has nothing to do with the world to come. In the time of Christ the concept in rabbinic teaching was that the world was created for the sake of Israel. The Jews of Christ's day believed that their covenant with God implied that they alone were the center and object of God's activity in creation and redemption and that they had no responsibility for the sinners of the Gentiles.²⁷

For Richardson this was the milieu in which Jesus and Paul worked.

Against this religion of pride and merit, the teaching of Jesus and his disciples, notably St. Paul, represents a vigorous 'protestant' reformation, a reformation based upon a return to the solo gratia of Israel's prophets and to their parallel doctrine of election for service. (...) God has rejected the elect, Israel herself, and chosen a new covenant-people out of all the nations of the earth.²⁸

26 Loc. cit.

27 Ibid., pp. 271-272.

28 Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament, London, SCM Press, 1958 pp. 272-273.

He sees in Romans 9-11 the continual principle operating in salvation History, rejection and election, Israel rejected, and others are chosen from many nations. Indeed this is the heart of the mystery hidden and now revealed (Rom. 9:11; 16:26; Eph. 3:1-12).

For Richardson, the Eucharist in the early Church was interpreted in terms of the OT passover-theology. Jesus died at passover-time. St. Paul understands Jesus to be instituting a new passover-memorial which commemorates the deliverance of the new Israel from sin and death. The Eucharist is not a re-enactment of his dying, but a parable of the significance of his death. But he believes that the Eucharist should not be interpreted exclusively in paschal notions.

The Eucharist in the Church took the place of all the Jewish sacrifices and feasts, and not only the place of the Passover and Unleavened Bread. The Eucharist was in fact the celebration of the New Year of creation and harvest, of the Day of Atonement and of every sacred occasion(...) In the Eucharist every partial insight of the OT into the character of the worship that is due to the God of our creation, preservation, redemption and ultimate triumph, is perfected and fulfilled.²⁹

This is important when Richardson's hypothesis about the NT as essentially a re-interpretation of the Old Testament scheme of salvation by Jesus. The passover lamb is identi-

²⁹ Ibid., p. 371.

fied with the expiatory sacrifices, and the cup is interpreted in terms of the blood of sprinkling of Ex. 24:8 by which Moses ratified the covenant of Sinai, and also in terms of the new covenant of Jer. 31:31.

Jesus regarded his death as the sacrifice by which a new and better covenant was ratified between God and new Israel, and this is the truth he taught to his disciples when on the night on which he was betrayed he took bread and wine.³⁰

Christ is the mediator of the new covenant. But a covenant to be remembered and repeated as he instructed. For in the Eucharistic celebration through the centuries the whole Gospel is re-present, made present, in all its saving power. The biblical mind for him is "that when we remember the past, we make it present." This included the entirety of Christ's activity at the Last Supper.³¹

For Richardson the Eucharist is a Christian sacrifice. The oblations of the royal priesthood are offered in it; Christ himself is the high priest of our offerings. He sees these points clearly in St. Clement of Rome, St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Justin Martyr, the Didache, St. Irenaeus, Tertullian, St. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St. Athanasius and others. This must be because the Holy

³⁰ Loc. cit.

³¹ Ibid., p. 368.

Spirit guides the Church in all truth and it is unlikely that the post-apostolic Church has misrepresented the teaching of the Apostles. He sees the reformers as too extreme in their rejection of Eucharist sacrifice, but they were right in rejecting a notion of the Mass as a re-enactment or even a repetition of the sacrifice of Calvary, in which the priest offers a-fresh the body and blood of Christ as a sacrifice on behalf of the living and the dead.³²

He believes that the Christian sacrifice is spiritual and not carnal.

Christians must necessarily offer oblations to God, because they are a priesthood, and a priest is by definition one who offers sacrifice. The Christian priesthood is derived from the priesthood of Christ: because Christ is priest, therefore Christians are a priesthood. Because he has offered the one true sacrifice once for all, therefore the Church in the Eucharist makes memorial of the self-oblation of Christ, offering bread and wine sacramentally or symbolically as a sacrificial memorial of his saving death.³³

Memorial here means in the biblical sense as mentioned previously and not in the modern sense. It is the means by which the Church on earth takes part in Christ's offering in heaven where he even now appears before the face of God for us. The oblation of the Church on earth is made one with

32 Ibid., pp. 381-382.

33 Ibid., p. 382.

Christ's self-offering in heaven.

Already the Church is eschatologically present in heaven, and her eucharistic worship is a participation even now in the worship of heaven; even now we are present at the marriage feast of the lamb.³⁴

Under the old covenant when the high priest entered into the holy of holies he entered alone, and the people stood outside the veil. Under the new covenant the worshippers no longer stand outside.

for the veil has been done away, and Christ has brought us into the presence of God; he has taken us with him into heaven, for we are his manhood, his person, his ascended body.³⁵

Thus, the way into the holy place, not manifested under the old covenant, is manifested under the new covenant, and offered by the covenant people of God. For Richardson Jesus has reinterpreted the sacrifices of the old covenant into the new, where he offers himself before the father now.

Karl Barth: The Covenant, Man, God and the Word.

There are certain key concepts in Barth's theology around which his biblical notions develop. These are essential, for if they are not kept in the foreground of the mind when considering his theology, he will not be understood

34 Ibid., p. 383.

35 Loc. cit.

properly. Barth must be seen against the background of Protestant liberal theology which he wished to reverse. Liberal theology emphasized man; Barth emphasizes God. He is attempting to reverse what Schleiermacher started. The start for Barth is not with religion or piety, but with the Word which God speaks to man, which man cannot possess and control.¹

In the nineteenth century the center of Religion was faith in man and his inner life. God became a projection of human experience and desires, which perhaps reached a high point in Ludwig Feuerbach. Here there was no evil power over man. Barth in all his works seems to have behind him this notion which he wished to counter.

His theology is essentially Incarnational. This is the starting point of his treatment of the Bible. God appropriates human nature. Perhaps, "the word became flesh" ought to be, "the word assumed flesh." What the incarnation means is that, God is a being whom man has no knowledge of: he reveals himself to man. Man receives knowledge of God from Christ.² Christ's humanity mirrors the divine.

¹ Karl Barth, Church Dogmatic I (1927). Edinburgh, T & T Clark, p. 440 ff.

² Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, I:2 (1938) Edinburgh T & T Clark, p. 222 f, p. 231 f.

This is Barth's frame of reference: God, man, Revelation.³

But Barth has not really reversed the liberal position, for the question of man's knowledge of God makes his theology center on anthropology. Man lacks knowledge of God and he receives this knowledge through the revelation in Christ. Simply, man lacks any knowledge of God aside from Christ. This makes his starting point center on the problem of natural theology.

We cannot, however refuse to consider the problem itself. If God can be known, it is necessary to inquire in how far he is perceptible to man.⁴

This means that man is provided in scripture with a knowledge of God which he does not have; the knowledge of God which man lacks comes from Christ through scriptures. The Word in scripture fills an empty space in man. This is revelation and Barth's concept of the word is dependent upon this anthropological point.

"The Word of God" is the hub of the wheel for understanding Scripture. The Incarnation is the major event of the Bible for Barth. God's appearance in human form becomes the center of the gospel. Faith's purpose is

³ Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, III:2 (1948) Edinburgh T & T Clark, p. 222 f, p. 231 f.

⁴ Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, II:1, (1940) Edinburgh T & T Clark, p. 142.

to apprehend this appearance of God in human form and give knowledge of God which man did not possess before it.⁵

The question arises: is the man without contact with God the man of the Bible or modern atheistic man? Is Barth reflecting here the attitude which is coming forth from the contemporary secular society concerning the non-existence of God? It appears that the man without knowledge of God is the man for whom God does not exist at all. In fact, for Barth objective evil does not exist at all in his attempted denial of the scriptural difference between the old and the new man. A struggle between God and man cannot take place objectively since God and man are so far apart.⁶

Barth stresses most the Incarnation as the center of theology. He speaks of the Trinity, the Incarnation and the work of the Spirit, but it is always under the Incarnation and Christmas.⁷

5 Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, I:2, op.cit., pp. 209-215.

6 Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, III:2, op.cit., pp. 240-250.

7 Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, I:2, op.cit., pp. 180-190.

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He does not see the death and Resurrection as the core of the kerygma, even though he considers them often, and the word tends to be a force that has acted in the past.

The word of God for Barth exists in three forms: in preaching, in the Bible, and revealed in Christ Himself. This last is really the divine word. The spoken and the written are signs of this revealed word. The activity in the first, revelation in Christ, does not seem to continue through the written and spoken word. The revelation in Christ is really the divine word. The spoken and the written words are signs. In order to meet the divine Word itself, one must go back by way of the spoken and written word to the point where the Word became flesh, in the birth of Jesus.⁸ The activity in the first revelation, in Christ, does not continue through the written and the spoken word. The gospel reveals what God is like.

The heart of Barth's theology depends upon his vision of man's lack of any natural knowledge of God, in which the Word, the Gospel, fills this void. where God disclosed himself in the Incarnation. With this perspective one can enter Barth's world of Scripture.

⁸ Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, I:1. op.cit., p. 124ff and I:2, op.cit. p. 538 f.

The concept of a covenant runs through Barth's writings, particularly his late Church Dogmatics. In the Doctrine of Reconciliation, Chapter 15 (Church Dogmatics, Volume 4, part 2) which is titled Jesus Christ, The Servant as Lord, the idea of a covenant permeates his thinking. In fact he states that the man reconciled with God in Jesus Christ is really his main concern in the word:

the covenant man who faces the covenant God in the reconstitution and renewal of the covenant; the second element in that gracious saying of the Old Testament: 'Ye shall be my people'; the human answer to this divine pronouncement.⁹

To understand the work of the atonement properly, it must be seen in relation to the man for whom it took place. "The covenant God is not alone, but with him there is also the covenant people, and therefore the covenant man."¹⁰ The complete reconciliation is a group activity.

But the reconciliation is chiefly in the Incarnation. The act of God, "the assumption of the human being to the divine," is an act of divine humiliation.

For the reconciliation of the estranged world with Himself, He, the Creator, willed to exist also as a creature Himself. He, the Lord of the covenant, willed to be also its human partner and therefore

⁹ Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV:2 Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1958, p. 5.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

the keeper of the covenant on this side too.¹¹

As the Son of God he goes into a far country and as the Son Man he returns home. God could not be known to men aside from Christ.

For He is not God to us, nor can He be known or glorified or loved or worshipped by us as God, except in and with the human flesh assumed by His Son as Mediator of the covenant.¹²

Christ's position here as mediator of the covenant takes on intellectual overtones. He mediates knowledge of God and hence reconciles the world to Himself.

For the reconciliation of the world with God as it has taken place in Him, the restitution and fulfillment of the covenant between God and man, consists in the fact that there took place in Him the existence of a new and true man, and that human essence, as God lent it His own existence and made it His own, was exalted, and is once for all exalted.¹³

The reconciliation with God is a restitution and fulfillment of the covenant. For Barth then, the change in human existence which results from the Incarnation in human form is the fulfillment and completion of the covenant. It is to be regretted that he does not explain this exegetically here at any length.

11 Ibid., p. 42.

12 Ibid., p. 101.

13 Ibid., p. 69.

For Barth, Jesus is the "Royal Man." The true God became, and was, and is, a true man. The New Testament tells us he is Lord, as man he sits at the right hand of the Father and rules.¹⁴ The covenant is a covenant of peace, of fellowship of God with His people, and the fellowship of His people with him. It is a sign that God preserves and rules the creaturely world.

The covenant broken by Israel and the whole of humanity but never repudiated or destroyed by God, is maintained in the life-act of this one man. He does that which is demanded and expected in the covenant as the act of human faithfulness corresponding to the faithfulness of God.¹⁵

By the Incarnation and as the Royal Man he performs the true humanly act of faith and unites the human and divine and binds the two, the purpose of the covenant.

Because of the activities of the Royal Man, the existence of Jesus in slothful human form, his death, Resurrection, man cannot break the covenant. God is the maker and keeper of the covenant and man cannot change it.

"As he has not instituted the covenant, he cannot destroy it or even contract out of it as though it were a free contract."¹⁶ The covenant remains in force in spite of what

14 Ibid., pp. 154-155.

15 Ibid., p. 167.

16 Ibid., p. 484.

sinful man does because of the Royal Man. Men are covenant partners with Christ and he has introduced humanity into a new form of existence of "a faithful covenant-partner who is well-pleasing to Him and blessed by Him."

He sees the covenant of the Old Testament as an example of the love of God. The gods of the ancient world were bound to their people in a reciprocal relationship of solidarity and control. But Yahweh is not a mere national God. He is "the sovereign Lord of all peoples and their history." He instituted the covenant because of the "free act of the love of Yahweh."

There is an obvious continuity between the witness of New Testament to the love of God and that of the Old Testament. In the New Testament this love has not ceased to be the love which elects Israel.¹⁷

The love of God represented in the covenant of the Old Testament reveals in the New Testament a greater degree of love of the covenant-God.

But in the Incarnation of Jesus the being of Jesus "is perfect and complete in itself in His history as the true Son of God and Man." The Resurrection and Ascension do not represent the completed form of His being.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 768-769.

It does not need to be transcended or augmented by new qualities or further developments. The humiliation of God and the exaltation of man as they took place in Him are the completed fulfillment of the covenant, the complete reconciliation of the world with God.¹⁸

The event that took place in history that occurred in Christ, is that the covenant between God and man was maintained and restored on the side of God and the side of man—and perfectly. Apart from the one Son of Man whose existence is the act of the Son of God, "there is no other man who keeps the covenant." Apart from Christ no man can know himself. The fulfilled covenant restores to man knowledge of what he is, which he sees in Christ. "Only in Him can we be revealed." Man can know himself only indirectly, in relation to he who keeps the covenant and reveals to man himself. Only in Christ can man see himself as a keeper of the covenant.¹⁹

Even sinful man is seen together with the man Jesus (...) in whom there is already resolved and accomplished his deliverance from sin, his elevation, his restoration as a true covenant-partner of God.²⁰

18 Ibid., p. 132.

19 Ibid., pp. 270-271.

20 Ibid., p. 281.

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God's love is the underlying force of the covenant. God loves man as He established and maintains the covenant with man and as he causes His kingdom to come to man. "The covenant is the promise of the kingdom. The kingdom is the fulfillment of the covenant." The covenant is the encounter of God with man with a view to being man's salvation in His person in Christ. The kingdom is man's salvation and the goal of the encounter.

The covenant is the divinely inaugurated and directed history of a nation in which His will is at work to unite with all nations and all men, and to unite all nations and all men with Himself.²¹

The kingdom is the history of a man of this nation as the representative of the nation. This is God's self-giving love.

The revelation of God in the work of His Holy Spirit means the revelation of the covenant and the kingdom, the promise and the fulfillment, the will and the accomplishment of God, in their necessary and indissoluble connexion.²²

However, he does not see the covenant as a completely God-dominated relationship. It is not a relationship in which God alone is really at work and man is only an instrument or channel of the divine action.

In the covenant relationship-the true relationship between God and man according to the witness

²¹ Ibid., p. 761.

²² Loc. cit.

of scripture—the initiative is wholly and exclusively on the side of God. But this initiative aims at a correspondingly free act, at genuine obedience as opposed to that of a puppet, on the part of the man with whom the covenant is made.²³

The value for man is that he enters into the covenant freely, as a being with the capacity to unite with God freely.

As man receive a new form of existence as the covenant-partner of God, he becomes pleasing and blessed by God. "I will be your God" is the justification of man. "Ye shall be my people" is his sanctification. Since God creates a covenant-people he creates a holy people. "The holiness of God demands and enforces the holiness of His people."²⁴

This holy people are to represent God which means they must be holy.

It requires that His own divine confrontation of the world and all men should find a human (and as such very inadequate, but for all its inadequacy very real) correspondence and copy in the mode and existence of this people.²⁵

The imperative to be holy means, I am holy and act among you as such, and therefore I make you holy, and this is to be your life. By this holiness the people witness to God.

23 Ibid., p. 800.

24 Ibid., p. 500.

25 Ibid., p. 501.

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Barth believes that God reconciles the world to Him by the holy people whom He sanctifies, and who serve Him in the world, these are the men awakened by faith and sanctified, "Only God Himself knows the extent of this people, and its members."²⁶ The invitation to belong is extended to all men but the people of God does not include the whole human race.

Certainly it is a special people of special men who are marked off from all others because they are set aside from all others. Yet, its special existence is not an end in itself.²⁷

The people witness to the love of God for the whole world and make a "provisional offering of the thankfulness" of all men. The people are a witness of the love with which God loved the world.

Barth sees the Old Testament worshipping community in its convening and worshipping which are the holy people, and not the people as such. The emphasis is on the sanctification of the people and not on their sanctity. It is on the "One who as the Holy One is the active subject who sovereignly confronts the holy people and the men who belong to it."²⁸

26 Ibid., p. 511.

27 Loc. cit.

28 Ibid., p. 512.

The New Testament texts which speak of a sancta ecclesia are fewer than those which speak of a holy people in the Old Testament. There are two texts which should be considered. The first is I Pet.2:9, "Ye are(...)an holy nation."

The meaning obviously seems to be that those who are addressed (in contrast to the rejected of the preceding verse) are elected and called to execute as a holy people the ~~g~~ commission which is described immediately afterwards.²⁹

That is, they are holy because they proclaim the perfections of Christ.

The second passage is Eph. 5:24f. He does not think that this passage directly states that the Church is holy, but that the holiness of the community is the goal and intended result of the sanctifying action of Jesus Christ. This is not an inherent quality but "the character which He will give it in the fulfillment of this action." But he says, perhaps it refers "to the form the community will have in the future, when this action is completed, and the last time in which it now lives is over." Sanctity now comes to the covenanted people as a community and in the common life and not as individuals and because of Christ and His perfections.³⁰

29 Loc. cit.

30 Ibid., p. 514.

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This leads to the individual man of the holy people and his sanctification. Which man is the loyal covenant-partner of God among the holy people? It is he who creates a copy of Christ's holiness, marked off from the world, living as a man and in freedom living differently from others.

At the very least we have to say of sanctification that its aim is the man who does not break but keeps the covenant which God has made with him from all eternity,³¹

These men are difficult to find in the community. But all the people must be seen in relation to Christ's holiness.

"It is with a view to Him that the people Israel exists as the people of God, and from Him that the community of the last time derives as the community of God."³² It is the sanctity of Christ which makes the covenant people a holy people.

The people of God in the world are those "who still stand in daily need of forgiveness." Upon their hearts has been written "the divine contradiction of their sinning."

The people of God in the world are those to whom it is revealed, and who may live in and by the knowledge, that their being as sinners is one which is assailed by God.³³

31 Loc. cit.

32 Ibid., p. 515.

33 Ibid., p. 526.

They are still sinners but the ground on which they are sinners has been taken away from them. They are called. "In their totality they are the ecclesia," the gathering of those who have heard His voice. They have been set at the side of Christ, to be the witness to Him, in a world which is not yet aware of its reconciliation with God. They are really disturbed sinners.³⁴

The Church should be seen as God's people, as representing to the world the sanctification which has already come upon them in Christ. It must represent the sanctification of humanity as it has taken place in Christ:

that divine work is done within it truly and effectively, genuinely and invincibly, and in all its totality, so that even though it is concealed in many different ways it continually emerges and shines out from this concealment in the form of God's people.³⁵

This is the movement the people of God represent, the sanctification by Christ, now in the last time, until the final work of Christ is completed.

The Church, the people of God, becomes false when it tries to represent itself rather than the sanctification which has taken place in Jesus Christ. Its existence must always point beyond itself. "No, this people is never fitted of itself to make the representation which is the

34 Loc. cit.

35 Loc. cit.

meaning and purpose of its existence." It never takes place because of the qualities of the people itself. "He gives to this people the necessary qualities. He thus makes possible the impossible" that this race of men has the freedom to serve Him. This is, to speak of the Lord and His activity with His people.

As He acts to and with His people, this people fills with His activity the time given to itself and the world. As a witness of that which has taken place in Him and for all men, it looks and moves forward to the direct³⁶ and universal and definitive revelation of this event.

Moreover, the people of God must be seen in their relation to Salvation History. It is a history between God and man, and man and man. The second because it is the first. It is first a history between God and a people, Yahweh and Israel in the Old Testament and Jesus Christ and His Community in the New.

And only then a history between God and the world, between God and all men, the life of this people, the common life of its members, becomes part of the event and itself the history of salvation.³⁷

The history of salvation takes place vertically between God and men, and horizontally when men reach out in love. This is loving the neighbour. The individual who is a member of

36 Ibid., pp. 623-624.

37 Ibid., p. 809.

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God's people, must proclaim the love of God which is the very constitution of Israel.³⁸

The community lives of the people are intertwined and mutually helpful.

We can call it the law of the common life of the people of God that none must be alone, and that none can leave the other alone; that each is set there as a witness to the other(...)a witness of the divine covenant which upholds and embraces them both, of the election from which they both derive as members of the people of God.(...)³⁹

The law the members of the people of God have mutually to bear witness to, is that God loves them, and that they love Him, and they do this, "typically and representatively for all men, as those who bear the message throughout the world." The members of the people of God charged with the ministry of witness to the world must be thankful to be a witness, and be a reminder of the vertical relationship, in this witnessing to the divine love.⁴⁰

Barth sees the community call by Christ as His body. The enlightening power of the living Lord who confesses the community is the Holy Spirit. The community is:

38 Ibid., p. 813.

39 Ibid., p. 814.

40 Ibid., pp. 815-816.

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His own earthly-historical form of existence, by entrusting to it the ministry of His prophetic Word and therefore the provisional representation of the calling of all humanity and indeed of all creatures as it has taken place in Him.⁴¹

This is accomplished by sending the Holy Spirit, "among the peoples as His own people." The people of God must confess Him before all men and call them to Him,

to call them to Him and thus to make known to the whole world that the covenant between God and man concluded in Him is the first and final meaning of its history, and that His future manifestation is already here and now its great, effective and living hope.⁴²

Christ is the fulfillment of the covenant and the covenant people represent the consummation of this covenant. The people of God are a sign to the world that the history of things takes its meaning only in relation to Christ and is accomplished already; it is a realized eschatology. The theme of the Gospel narrative is the birth of the Christian community as the people of God. This was a development of,

corresponding to and consummating the unification of the twelve tribes of Israel in the exodus from Egypt, of the people of God of the last time which has been inaugurated with the coming of Jesus Christ.⁴³

41 Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV,3,2, Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1962, p. 681.

42 Loc. cit.

43 Ibid., p. 683.

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Many single texts could be selected individually to indicate the beginning of the People of God. The most obvious are Mark 3:14; Matthew 10:5f; Luke 10:f; the Sermon on the Mount, the institution of the Lord's Supper, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Acts 2:1f. But Barth does not wish to rely on individual texts as being a classical one:

all of them in different ways speak of the origin of the Christian community as the people of God of the last time, and indeed of its origin in the will of Jesus and his act of vocation.⁴⁴

Indeed the whole Gospel record from the Baptism of Jesus to Pentecost is "implicitly also an account of the origin of this people, of its beginnings in the words of Jesus," of its gathering, maintaining, upbuilding, ordering and sending by Him. For Barth, Jesus founded the community.

What do the people of God see in world occurrence around it, today and in each generation? It sees God above and sinful man below but cannot itself see a synthesis. It accepts a division, a twofold view. But it does see the world in the grace of God and

This new thing—and this is what makes the community what it is as the people of God created in world history—has revealed and made itself known to it as the work of God for the world and His Word to it.⁴⁵

44 Ibid., p. 684.

45 Ibid., pp. 708-709.

The community must attest this to the world. And the people of God must perceive in History the grace of God in Jesus Christ, even though the world does not know. The people of God act in the sphere of world history.⁴⁶

He believes that the People of God must be a visible Church. "There is an ecclesiological as well as a christological Docetism which we must carefully avoid at this point." The community, "the people of Jesus Christ, also exist in the flesh ad extra, within world occurrence."⁴⁷

The difference is that the people of God exist in total dependence on their environment and yet in total freedom in relation to it. And in this sense it is invisible.⁴⁸ The community of the People of God exists for the world. The primary task of the community is to confess Jesus to the world, the revelation of God in Him, His Word.⁴⁹

Rudolph Bultmann: The Covenant of the Eschatological Congregation

Rudolph Bultmann as a Protestant theologian is considered a very influential man not only in his field of

46 Ibid., p. 721.

47 Ibid., p. 723.

48 Loc. cit.

49 Ibid., pp. 762-901.

Biblical theology, but also in Christian Theology and Ethics. His views have influenced many continental and new world Christian thinkers.. Father David Stanley, S.J. although disagreeing with many of his suppositions, writes of Bultmann,

He has restored to its proper position the theme of revelation and God's Word and its insertion into history. He has reminded the modern theologian that God has penetrated man's isolation, has spoken to him in the profoundest part of his dasein, his being(...). Moreover, Bultmann is to be praised for his effort to represent God's message to modern man.¹

The importance of Bultmann is not to be underestimated. His writings are not conventional and it is required to understand fully several of his basic notions in order to see the meaning of his Biblical conclusions.

Bultmann has started with some supposition about the nature of man himself, but particularly as understood by modern man. First he attached the kerygma to modern man and his understanding of existence. Bultmann is convinced that modern man knows that he is lost and he makes modern man the norm for interpretation. The kerygma offers true life to the hearer because he, as modern man, lacks what the New Testament offers. But he can receive it from the Word.²

¹ David Stanley, "A Contemporary Challenge to the Catholic Theologian," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 19, 1957.
² Rudolph Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth, ed. by Hans Bar Koch, trans. R.Fuller, New York. The Macmillan Co. 1954. p. 6,8,29.

And this is precisely the point. This is the existentialist interpretation, and it brings out the essential meaning of the text, it will be misunderstood if interpreted any other way. This is an acceptable scientific approach for him, and in fact, to interpret the kerygma another way will not give it its full meanings.³

But the kerygma must stand in the present. It is not merely a question of modern man apprehending the understanding of existence as expressed in primitive Christianity; it must engage modern man in his own existence. Moreover, the New Testament sees existence in the way Heidegger does.

Above all, Heidegger's existentialist analysis of the ontological structure of being would seem to be more than a secularized philosophical version of the New Testament view of human life(...) Some critics have objected that I am borrowing Heidegger's categories and forcing them on the New Testament(...) the philosophers are saying the same thing as the New Testament and saying it quite independently.⁴

Man lives in his decisions and he can attain his possibilities, his "authentic existence" by opening up the future. This is his understanding of "faith". And this movement for the future is New Testament eschatology.⁵

3 Ibid., p. 29.

4 Ibid., p. 24.

5 Ibid., pp. 22-23.

For Bultmann, the New Testament does not give doctrine but a notion of an invisible act of God brought about in Christ. The stress for man is on the present decision he is to make in hearing the kerygma. Scripture is a proclaimed word, an address, a call, "Jesus Christ meets us in the word of preaching and nowhere else." Man stands in the present where he must make a decision.⁶ All is in the present. The Resurrection is not a visible event. It is an act that restores man to his authentic being. Man must realize his own death and this act is his authentic being. This is the beginning of demythologizing: revealing the invisible acts of man's and God's decision which lay beneath the gospel message.⁷ Behind his thinking, there seems to be Kant's structure of reality as noumenon and phenomenon.

Bultmann is against conceiving of the world in three layers, heaven, hell and earth in between. Modern man naturally rejects this cosmology. Also, the New Testament's description of God's saving activity is the mythology derived from apocalyptic and gnostic sources. The mythology is imagery which expresses the other-worldly in terms of world. This leads to a need to demythologize.

6 Ibid., pp. 38-44.

7 Ibid., p. 177 f.

The crucifixion was an historic event. But the crucifixion as a sacrifice and death of God's son is myth: it is really a sign of the crucifixion of our passions, sin's power over us is broken. The Resurrection is to be seen as belief in the cross as salvific, or God's freeing us from judgment and not in terms of an act in history.⁸ This is perhaps the best example to use in order to see the heart of Bultmann's understanding of the demythologizing of the kerygma.

Although Bultmann's ideas of form criticism on the Gospels has resulted in skepticism about the validity of the contents, he suggests a dynamic, though unorthodox concept of Christianity. He believes that the interpretation of Jesus' death as an expiatory sacrifice for sins was a general Christian idea, and is scattered throughout the New Testament.

From the same tradition come the interpretations of Jesus' death as a covenant-sacrifice or pass-over-sacrifice. In the latter, it is still clearer than in the other cases that Jesus' death is regarded as primarily significant not for the individual, but for the congregation, the 'People' of God—a view characteristic of the Old Testament-Jewish tradition which is here determinative.⁹

⁸ Ibid., p.3.

⁹ Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol 1, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951. p. 84.

Paul, he believes follows a tradition in the earliest Church in 1 Cor. 11:25 in which the covenant-sacrifice idea is woven into the eucharistic liturgy. In 11 Cor. 3:6 ff the New covenant predicted by Jeremiah has taken the place of the Old Covenant.¹⁰ He recognizes that the idea of the new covenant was seen therefore in NT times as begun by the death of Christ which was an instituting sacrifice. "This idea, which testifies that the idea of eschatological occurrence is oriented around the Congregation as the People of God", is important to Paul and the author of Hebrews.¹¹

Indeed, the Lord's Supper is the only other sacrament besides Baptism known to the Hellenistic Christians. Paul calls this meal the "Lord's Supper" but the name most given to it is "Eucharist." But for Bultmann, the true, original form, of the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, is simply, "This is my Body. this is my Blood."¹² He therefore has removed the notion of a new covenant institution from Jesus' mind. The act originally meant a communion with the Kyrios.

10 Ibid., pp. 296, 278.

11 Ibid., p. 98.

12 Ibid., p. 146.

That is just what the sacramental idea is: that the killed body of the cult-divinity is simultaneously the body filled with power and mighty in effect.¹³

The interpretation of Jesus' death as covenant sacrifice and expiatory sacrifice are derived from Jewish-Christian tradition through the additions "or the covenant" and "poured out."

The sentences 1 Cor. 11:24f., which are without parallel in Mark, had their origin in the Gentile-Christian sphere--namely, the repeated instruction: "Do this in memory of me." They are apparently to be attributed to the fact that the Lord's Supper was conceived in analogy to Hellenistic memorial ceremonies.¹⁴

This exegesis removes from Jesus' intention the institution of the Last Supper as a covenant renewing act and attributes it to a later addition.

The concept of a new covenant in the New Testament derives from Paul. In speaking of Christ's death and resurrection as salvation-occurrence, Bultmann sees it as the decisive thing about Jesus for Paul. It is a deed of the prevenient grace of God, pure gift. Man can understand it when the challenge to accept it as salvation-occurrence

13 Ibid., pp. 146-147.

14 Ibid., p. 149.

thrusts him into genuine decision.¹⁵ Paul uses a series of terms in order to describe the significance of salvation-occurrence. These originate in a number of different thought-complexes. One of these is 1 Cor. 11:25 which includes the notion of a covenant-sacrifice idea that is woven into the eucharistic liturgy. In doing so, Bultmann concludes,

Paul is in part quoting or paraphrasing the crystallized formulations of this tradition. At any rate, the above passages do not contain Paul's characteristic view.¹⁶

Paul has used the notion of covenant-sacrifice but does not give it any specific meaning in itself.

Bultmann sees Paul as designating the eschatological character of the Church in keeping with the general Christian view in terms of the Old Testament history of salvation. (Eschatology for Bultmann is an openness to future possibilities.)¹⁷

He does so when he connects it with the "new covenant" (2 Cor. 3:6ff., 1 Cor. (Gal. 6:16), or speaks of Abraham as the Father of those who have faith. Such designations characterize the Church as the end and goal of the history of salvation; in the Church all promises find their fulfillment.¹⁸

15 Ibid., pp. 294-295.

16 Ibid., p. 296.

17 R. Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth, op. cit., pp. 22-23.
p. 310. 18 R. Bultmann, New Testament Theology, op. cit.,

The idea of new covenant which he proposes here, emphasizes the Church as a cultic organization, charismatic in character, whose purpose is to preach the Word. He sees more creativity, in Paul's meaning of the word, and not a continuous tradition in keeping with a meaning given essentially by Jesus. The covenant concept in Bultmann must be seen in relation to the way the Church, the People of God, are seen.

Bultmann believes that the dominant message of Jesus is the reign of God. "Jesus proclaims its immediately impending irruption, now already making itself felt. Reign of God is an eschatological concept." This means that God's regime which destroyed the present course of the world, wiped out all powers against the divine, terminates pain and sorrow, "and brings in salvation for the People of God which awaits the fulfillment of the prophet's promises.¹⁹" Jesus is in the tradition of Jewish expectations about the end of the world and God's new future. The people of God, the people of the covenant must be seen in relation to this idea of eschatological occurrence.

The Congregation regarded itself as the Congregation of the end of days. This is in Paul and the synoptics.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

Matthew 16:18f, the words placed on Jesus' lips by the Church, means that the Church "is the vestibule, of God's Reign which is shortly to appear(...)for they are 'the Twelve' not as apostles but as eschatological regents." Furthermore, after the Easter experiences in Galilee the disciples went to Jerusalem as the focus of the Reign of God, where the congregation awaited the fulfillment of promises.²⁰ The Church sees itself in this way as Paul states.

In understanding themselves as Congregation or Church the disciples appropriate to themselves the title of the Old Testament Congregation of God(...)On the one hand, this title designates Israel as the People of God. and on the other²¹ hand this has become an eschatological term.

The Congregation sees itself as the true Israel which is the goal of salvation history, and for which the promises of the Old Testament are now being fulfilled.²²

The way in which the Old Testament is read and understood by the Eschatological Congregation is important for Bultmann. Abraham becomes the father of believers from the gentile world too (Rom 4:1: 12; 9:7f; Gal. 3:7). The Christian congregations dispersed in the world are the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), the "chosen generation" and the

20 Ibid., p. 37.

21 Loc. cit.

22 Ibid., pp. 53-54.

"peculiar people" (1 Pet. 2:9). The Old Testament witnessing of the faithful congregation becomes a model for them.²³ The Church makes the history of the Old Testament its own history.

Two conventional forms of preaching soon appear in the earliest Church which were already present in Judaism: 1. Summaries of the history of God's People which point out the divine theology of that history. Examples of this in the New Testament are the speech of Stephen, Acts 7: 2-47, and that of Paul in Pisidian Antioch, Acts 13:17-25. 2. Series of examples collected from history according to a catchword.²⁴

But there is a difference. The Eschatological Congregation is not simply the historical successor of empirical Israel but "the heir of the ideal Israel, so to say, the people of God," which Israel was called to be but never was. "For it was indeed the elect People of God;" but the election never came to realization. Individuals like Abraham, David, and the prophets can serve as models for the new Church. Israel was rejected on the whole because of its disobedience.

"The Christian Church is the true People of God."²⁵

For Bultmann this means a continuity in the history of salvation.

23 Ibid., p. 96.

24 Loc. cit.

25 Ibid., p. 96.

The election of the People of God, which, so to say, had been awaiting its fulfillment, is now being realized in the Christian Congregation, which in contrast to 'Israel after the flesh' is the 'Israel of God'(...) with whom God has concluded the new covenant. (11 Cor. 3:6ff, Heb. 8:16ff).²⁶

The paradoxical relation of the Christian Congregation to historical Israel is expressed in the concept of the new covenant. The new covenant becomes therefore the way in which the early Church sees itself as the continuation of Israel in the Eschatological Congregation.

The word laos as used in the Septuagint is important. It becomes "the distinctive designation for Israel in contrast to 'the nations'." "The People" had meant Israel in a still undifferentiated double sense of the Hebrew people of history and the Chosen People of God. "The Christian Congregation appropriates this designation to itself, retaining only the second meaning."²⁷

He sees the peculiarities of the Septuagint usage recurring in Christian usage. Prominent examples of this are: the people, (Heb. 2:17; 13:12;) the People of God, or my, thy, His, (Heb. 4:9; 10:30; Rev. 18:14;) the holy people, as patterned after Deut. 7:6, holy nation (1 Pet. 2:9;) a

26 Loc. cit.

27 Ibid., pp. 97-98.

chosen People, patterned after Exodus 19:5 (Tit. 2:14;)

The prophecy of 'not-my-people' which shall become 'my people' (Hos. 1:10; 2:23 - 2:1, 25 Heb.) is applied to the Gentile Christians in Rom. 9:25; 1 Pet. 2:10; so is the promise of Ex. 19:5f. (1 Pet. 2:9).²⁸

This concept of the People of God is related directly to the way Bultmann understands covenant and its development in the New Testament. As was stated earlier, he does not see the idea of a covenant in Jesus' teaching. The covenant idea used by Paul stands for the eschatological occurrence oriented around the congregation as the People of God. This is to be seen by Paul (2 Cor: 36ff., (Gal. 4:24) and by the author of Hebrews (8:8; 9:15; 12:24) who in 8:10ff, quotes at length from Jer. 38:31ff., the promise of the new covenant made to the People of God.²⁹

Bultmann believes that the way in which the Church understands itself today is important for its self realization. He believes that the Old Testament is important for the Church in all ages. He believes that a consciousness must be kept alive that the Church is the "eschatological congregation, the goal of a history guided by God."³⁰

28 Ibid., p:98.

29 Loc. cit.

30 Ibid., p. 308.

The Church, he believes, can see itself in two ways: Will it be as,

an organization constituted by the joining together of individuals on the basis of their common understanding of general truths and of common practical goals? Or will it understand itself as the 'People of God' which is 'called' by God's deed in Christ?³¹

God, he explains has acted in history and this notion must be preserved. The Church must stand in the present and proclaim the event of Christ, the effects of which are realized already in the Church, and lead others to authentic being.

It is the preached word which calls and gathers men into the Church. Only in the Congregation is there authorized preaching. "Apostolic preaching stands from the outset within the frame of the salvation-history of the People of God." The Apostles who founded the separate congregations are "nevertheless, themselves within the Congregation (1 Cor. 12:28)." If Paul could not be assured that his work had the approval of the Jerusalem Church, the original Congregation, "he would have to believe he 'had run in vain'." (Gal. 2:2).³²

31 Ibid., p. 122.

32 Ibid., p. 308.

In fact, the revelation of God in Jesus was not an event in the history of the People, to which one could look back as to Moses' history, the exodus, or the history of the judges and kings.

The 'new covenant', unlike the old, is not the founding event of a people's history, but, however much it arises from a historical event, the death of Jesus, it is nonetheless an eschatological event, and the 'People of God' with which the covenant is made is an entity not of world history but of eschatology.³³

Here he clearly ties the covenant to eschatology. The people of God transcended history in their essential reality.

Participation in the Lord's Supper makes the participant a member not of a national commonwealth but of the eschatological Congregation which sojourns in this world as in a foreign land.³⁴

Christ is the end of history and the fulfillment of the history of salvation. The Christian Church can therefore take over the Old Testament history of salvation, giving it a new sense and seeing itself in continuity with Israel as the divine plan of salvation, which has reached its fulfillment. The story of Jesus and the call of the eschatological Congregation appeared as the fulfillment of the Old Testament's predictions, especially in Matthew.³⁵ But the Church

33 Ibid., p. 122.

34 Loc. cit.

35 Loc. cit.

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can understand itself completely only in grasping the total meaning in the complete New Testament which, he believes, the Church is the Eschatological Congregation.

Walter Eichrodt developed a classical Biblical Theology of the Old Covenant. He established a close tie between Israel and the entire Semitic culture. In this setting the old covenant becomes the unifying element in the culture itself and between God and the people. All is related to the covenant. The relationship in the biblical culture between Berith and diatheke was investigated thoroughly in the Theological Word Book of the Bible. For Alan Richardson, Jesus is the re-interpreter of the old covenant, in which he makes a new covenant and a new people of the covenant, renewable in the Eucharistic act of the Church. Karl Barth's incarnational theology considers the Word of God in creating a holy people, holy because they claim the perfections of Christ, and become His covenant-partner. For Rudolph Bultmann the Church is the eschatological congregation. But Jesus' death and resurrection is the act of salvation occurrence and the covenant is Paul's idea and not Jesus'.

CHAPTER THREE

CATHOLICISM

Both biblical theology and theology in general in Catholicism have undergone a major revitalization in recent years. This has reached its culmination in the Second Vatican Council. The individuals and works selected in this category represent a crystallization of this force. They are not necessarily the major figures, but they represent it well concerning the ideas of the covenant and God's people. They must be considered as incomplete due to the enormous ecumenical and pastoral task begun by the Council which is not yet finished.

Peter Ellis: God Created A Covenanted People.

Peter Ellis, C.S.S.R. is Professor of Biblical Theology at Mount Saint Alphonsus Seminary, Esopus, New York. He states in the Introduction that the kingdom of God on earth is the basic theme of the entire Bible. This kingdom is built upon the rock which is the Catholic Church. The Bible begins to indicate this in Genesis and ends in

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the Gospel where the Church is formed.

If the reader is observant in reading these books of the Old Testament, he will notice the gradual information and development down through the centuries of what he knows now in its mature and perfect form as the Catholic Church-the kingdom of God on earth.¹

It is promised in the victory over Satan by mankind (Gen.3:15); extended to all mankind through the descendents of Abraham (Gen.12:3); it begins in embryonic form in the Israelite nation at Sinai (19:6). It is developed doctrinally by experimental human kings, and by the preaching of the inspired prophets. In the Old Testament one can "see the seeds planted and the roots taking hold. In the New Testament, he will see the blossoming."²

He first analyzes the Pentateuch as a whole, fused and revised in final form by a priestly editor in the fourth or fifth century, B.C.

As it stands now, the Pentateuch is an elaborate account of the founding of God's covenant made with Israel at Sinai sometime in the thirteenth

1 Peter Ellis, The Men and The Message of The Old Testament, Colledgeville, The Liturgical Press, 1963. 9.xiii.

2 Ibid., p. xiii.

century before Christ.³

It was conceived as a single book and the five parts must be seen in relation to the whole. Genesis explains the origin of the people who become the first citizens of God's theocratic kingdom of Israel. Exodus recounts the actual birth at Sinai. Leviticus reveals the holy nature of the kingdom. Numbers describes its communal organization with a need for a hierarchy. Finally Deuteronomy inculcates the spirit of love by which the citizens of the kingdom are to be animated in relation to God and to each other. It is clear then that he sees the Old Testament in terms of the kingdom of God.

The main theme of the book of Genesis is the origins of the Israelite people, the chosen people.

God providentially prepared this special people to be the first citizens of His kingdom and the repository and vehicle of His revelation. That this is the general purpose of the author can be shown from the format he follows. Beginning with a universal history in ch.1-11 he rapidly narrows it down to the one chosen people.⁴

With the major theme of the origins of the Chosen People

3 Ibid., p. 5.

4 Ibid., p. 8.

he sees several minor themes. One is that the saving power of God would extend to mankind through one family.

With Abraham, therefore a new and eternal covenant is made (Gen.15-17). This covenant, however, is made only with those whom God freely and independently chooses, not by inheritance or primogeniture, (ch.25-36).⁵

There are therefore three dominant motifs: promises of salvation (Gen.3 15; 12:3); the free choice of those through whom the promises would be fulfilled (25-26 , passim); the promises will be brought to realization by way of covenants between God and man. For Ellis the covenants are seen in terms of a binding force between God and the people with whom He will use to achieve His salvation.⁶

Genesis explains how Abraham was called from Mesopotamia to be a forefather of a great people, and how these promises were repeated to Isaac and Jacob. The parts of Genesis tell how the sons of Jacob (Israel) happened to go down to live in Egypt. Genesis and Exodus are linked in Joseph's last words. (Gen.50:24).

⁵ Loc., cit.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

The book of Exodus is concerned with the central part of the Pentateuch, the foundation of the nation as a theocratic kingdom, and the events that led to it. "Around this fact the other parts of the Pentateuch are grouped as spokes around a wheel." Although the book derives its name from the escape or going out, it is only one event which leads to the central event, the foundation of God's kingdom on earth among the Israelites (Ex.19-25).⁷ These chapters are really the central event of the entire Old Testament:

the election of this people by God at Sinai to be His own divinely instituted kingdom on earth; and the covenant according to which this people is bound to God and God to them.⁸

Ellis sees four elements in the birth of Israel that are in the birth of any nation except that God operates so much here. The first is a group consciousness, relation by blood to the same common ancestors, and brought up on the same historical and religious traditions. Secondly, there was a unifying experience, the oppression,

7 Ibid., p. 16.

8 Ibid., p. 17.

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revolt, the Exodus, particularly the plagues and the passage through the Red Sea. Thirdly, the System of Government was theocratic, operating through vicars. Fourthly, Israel wanted a homeland, Palestine, a strip of land between Egypt and Syria.⁹

The nation is born at Sinai. Three events are preparatory to the institution of the Sinai covenant (Ex.19:3ff):

(a) the promise by God that He will enter into a covenant with Israel which will be conditional (19:3-8); (b) a retreat commanded as preparation for the covenant; (c) the great Sinai theophany, in which God appears or manifests Himself as master of nature, and to whose presence wind, clouds, thunder, lightning, smoke and earthquake all give eloquent testimony.¹⁰

The ten commandments are given which are the basic law of the new kingdom, along with the Code of the Covenant given to the Israelites as a charter (Ex.21-23). The Covenant is ratified.

The covenant is sealed with a sacrifice and the pouring out of blood upon an altar. At the Last Supper when our Lord sealed the new covenant

9 Loc. cit.

10 Ibid., p. 20.

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with the symbolic sacrifice of Himself, He spoke of the "blood which shall be poured out for the remission of many" (Matthew 26:28).¹¹

It is at this point that Ellis develops biblical Theology with an explanation of "covenant theology."

He holds that the institution of the Sinai covenant between God and the Israelite horde is not only a landmark in history of Israel, but in the history of religion.

At Sinai a revealed religion with laws, rites, and a hierarchy becomes historical fact. It is communicated to Moses, transmitted by him to the Israelites, and eventually committed to writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.¹²

Religion ceases to be a matter of individual choice. God makes known His will and man must ordain his life to God according to the manner revealed by God. It is the beginning of a revealed religion in which God communicates His will directly to certain chosen men such as Abraham and Moses. "This initial revelation remains always the personal mystical experience of the men to whom it was

11 Loc. cit.

12 Ibid., pp. 20-21.

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originally given." For the rest of mankind, revelation is indirect, made through inspired men.¹³

He explains that God can only speak to man in a way which is proportionate to man's way of being. For God to communicate, "divine truth must of necessity become incarnate in some way." This means that it must be adapted to man's way of thinking and living if man is to grasp it. "It must go from the natural which is known by man to the supernatural which is unknown." God must use the human institutions and customs and transform them by His living truth. "A study of covenant theology will show that this is precisely what God had done." For him, it will also show that the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, is the result of a steady unfolding and developing by the Holy Spirit, from the embryo of the semen mulieris of Gen. 3:15 to the fructus ventris Mariae of the Gospels. His concept of covenant theology is related and intimately intertwined with the notion of revelation and the Catholic Church.¹⁴

13 Ibid., p. 21.

14 Loc. cit.

He sees that God's way of dealing with men, was through men such as Abraham, Moses, David and Christ the Man-God, by means of covenants, also called pacts, treaties or testaments.

God took man's way of dealing with man and adapted it to the supernatural. The covenants between Abraham and Abimelech (Gen. 21:22-32), between Jacob and Laban (Gen. 21:43-54), (...) were no less covenants with regard to outward form and formalities than the divine covenants made by God with Adam, Abraham and Moses.¹⁵

God was raising up to a higher plane something already old and purely human. When God told Abraham to cut certain birds and animals and caused a flaming torch to pass between the pieces, He was "adapting the ancient ceremony that had long before given rise to the popular expression "to cut a covenant" (Gen. 15:9-20; Jer. 34:18)." Covenants between men or nations in ancient times were pacts or treaties whereby "rights were recognized or obligations established in a public and ceremonial manner."

One may define a divine covenant, therefore, as a concession on the part of God whereby He binds man to Himself by laws and promises. (...) Israel

15 Ibid., pp. 21-22.

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and God by means of these covenants do not in any real sense meet on equal terms. God is 'bound' by His promises only because He makes them. He is bound to Himself because He cannot be false to His promises. (...) Man on the other hand is strictly bound to observe his part of the covenant. When he does, God fulfills freely the promises He has made.¹⁶

He holds that the principal purpose of divine covenants "is to ordinate man to God effectively, and ultimately to establish the kingdom of God on earth." They are usually bilateral, with sanctions for breaking (death in Adam's case), sometimes a sign is given, such as circumcision in the Old Testament and baptism in the New Testament. The most important element in a covenant is that it is initiated by God and is always for man's good. The kingdom of God in the Bible, the Catholic Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, is prepared for, elaborated and perfected by the four great covenants.¹⁷

Ellis sees a covenant made by God with Adam at the beginning of time. The covenant was bilateral, God promised paradise and immortality, and man must obey God's

16 Ibid., p. 22.

17 Ibid., pp. 22-23.

precept. This was a conditional and not an absolute covenant, which carried a sanction of death for man. It was characterized by familiarity between God and Adam (Gen. 2:18-23). Adam breaks the covenant and this ends the initial economy of salvation. "The promise of redemption in Gen. 3:15 initiates a new economy of salvation - the Mystical Body of Christ (...)." But the initial relation between God and man lost by Adam is restored and completed in the future covenants.¹⁸

The Abrahamic covenant which partially restores God's relations with man was made sometime in the nineteenth or eighteenth century B.C., and is renewed with Isaac and Jacob. It was bilateral, God promising great posterity (Gen. 12:2; 15:5), possession of Palestine (Gen. 12:7; 15:7; 18), and extraordinary blessings on the patriarchs and through them on all mankind. For the patriarchs it meant the obligation of serving God (Gen. 17:7), moral integrity (Gen. 17:1; 18:9), and faith in God's promises (Gen. 15:6). This covenant is not conditional but absolute,

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 23.

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and its sign is circumcision (Gen. 17:10), and there is a greater familiarity of God and man.¹⁹

It should be noted that the Abrahamitic covenant (...) is absolute, unconditional and eternal-perfected and fulfilled in the New Testament (cf. Luke 1:55-72 where the coming of Christ is recognized in the Magnificat and the Benedictus as the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham).²⁰

But he says that this pact which is given to a family, is extended to a nation at Sinai, and finally to all mankind through Christ and the New Testament.

Ellis puts great stress on the biblical theology of the Sinaitic covenant. He sees the descendants of the patriarchs enslaved and when in:

God's providential design they have been oppressed and enslaved to the point where they typify as a people the enslaved condition of all mankind oppressed by Satan, God raises up Moses and commands him to bring His people out of bondage and lead them to Sinai.²¹

On Sinai God fulfills the promise to Abraham, extending the covenant to the Israelite people, making them a

19 Ibid., pp. 23-24.

20 Ibid., p. 24.

21 Loc. cit.

covenanted nation. There is a promise of great familiarity, ending with, "I will be to you God, and you will be to me My people."²²

He summarizes the Sinaitic covenant into four points. First, it is bilateral, the promises made to Abraham are extended to the nation, and what was required of Abraham now is required of the nation, plus obedience to the Mosaic law (Ex. 20-23). Secondly, it is conditional and was de facto broken by the Israelites and repudiated by God (Ex. 19:5; Jer. 30:31; Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24). Thirdly, Circumcision is continued as the external sign of those who enter into it. Fourthly, God Himself dwells in the midst of the nation in the Tabernacle above the Ark of the Covenant.²³ He also considers the ratification of the covenant by the people as a group (Ex. 24:1-8) as a notable circumstance of the covenant. Also of note are, the vocation of Moses as mediator and prophet, the liberation of Exodus 14, the inauguration of the covenant by a great theophany (Ex. 19:16ff), and the "Book of the

²² Loc. cit.

²³ Loc. cit.

Covenant" (Ex. 21-23:19; 24:7).²⁴

Agreeing with recent investigations, he holds that the Sinaitic covenant was based on a covenant made between a king and his vassals. This form of covenant, called a suzerainty pact, is best illustrated by the Hittite suzerainty pacts from the fifteenth to the thirteenth centuries B.C. He does not believe that it is modelled after a specific Hittite Pact, but it seems reasonable that the Sinaitic covenant and the one described in Jos. 24 are. The conclusion is that Moses adapted this treaty form to express the relations that were to exist between God and His chosen people.²⁵

The following six points show the relationships that exist in the similarities.

- 1) Hittite. A preamble giving the name of the covenanting king along with a list of titles and attributes.
Sinaitic. "I, Yahweh, am your God..." (Ex. 20:2).
- 2) Hittite. An historical prologue describing the king's benevolence in favor of his vassals. An I-thou,

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 25.

relationship.

Sinaitic. "Who brought you out of Egypt, that place of slavery" (Ex. 20:2).

- 3) Hittite. The list of stipulations detailing the obligations imposed on the vassals, and demands to appear before the king and pay tribute, and submit to him controversies for judgment. This implies unlimited trust in the king.

Sinaitic. The ten commandments (Ex. 20:3-17) list the obligations to God and each other. The vassal-Israelites are called upon to pay tribute annually before God (Ex. 23:17), and to submit cases at God's shrine (Deut. 17:8-13).

- 4) Hittite. A provision for deposit of the pact in the temple and for periodic public readings of the pact.

Sinaitic. According to Deut. 10:5 the tablets of the commandments are deposited in the Ark of the Covenant.

And according to Deut. 31:9-13 the priests are required to read the law aloud to the people at the feast of Booths.

- 5) Hittite. A list of witness gods. Included are deified

mountains, rivers, sea, heaven and earth as witnesses.

Sinaitic. This list is missing. It is significant that in Deut. 23:1 and Isaiah 1:2 the heavens are called upon to witness Israel's infidelity to the covenant.

6) Hittite. Formulas of blessings and curses which will follow upon the observance or non-observance of the covenant.

Sinaitic. In Deut. 27-28 long lists of blessings and curses are given which will follow as sanction upon observance or non-observance of the covenant.

Also in the Hittite there was some form of oath sworn by the vassals and a solemn ceremony for the ratification of the covenant. The Israelites do not take formal oaths to observe the Sinaitic covenant, but in Exodus 24:3 they publicly declare their willingness to observe it. The covenant is solemnly ratified with the ceremonies of sprinkling blood on the altar, (Ex. 24:4-8) and probably also by a sacred banquet (Ex. 24:11b).²⁶

He thinks also that the renewal of the covenant at Shechem is based on the same structure (Jos. 24. cf. Deut

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 25-27.

4-8; 9-11; 26:16-28:69; 29-30 plus 31:9-13 and 31:24-29).

The longer historical prologue in Josue (24:26-13), summing up the divine deeds of benevolence toward the Israelites from the time of the patriarchs down to the time of Josue, indicates that the covenant form itself may have furnished the nucleus around which Israel's historical traditions crystallized. Thus Israel's unique feeling for history, and indeed religious history primarily, is seen to be intimately bound up with the covenant form.²⁷

This can also be said for Israel's legal and cultic traditions, since the stipulations followed upon the historical prologue, which laid the foundation for the obligation of gratitude at the basis of the stipulations. The cultic traditions were bound up both with the basic stipulation - no alliance with strange gods - and with the solemn ceremonies for the ratification of the covenant.²⁸

Ellis believes that the idea that Moses could use an existing covenant form to define God's relations with His Chosen People is important for an understanding of revealed religion in both the Old and New Testaments. This means the adaptation and use of existing customs, laws

27 Ibid., p. 27.

28 Loc. cit.

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and institutions, even from a pagan background, for the organization and development for the kingdom of God on earth. But what Israel became is really important.

As a result of the Sinai covenant the Israelite People become God's immediate subjects and constitute a unique theocratic nation. In the theocratic kingdom of Israel, God Himself becomes both religious and civil ruler of His people. He makes Himself King, Lawmaker and Judge.²⁹

And God remains King of Israel until it passes from the hands of human vicar-kings to the hands of Christ the King, King of Israelites and all men and nations.

He holds that the Church nation instituted on Mt. Sinai is meant to grow into the Catholic Church, but that the alliance between Church and nation will have to be dissolved. This occurred between 50-70 A.D. due principally to St. Paul's persistence in dissociating the "true Israel of God from the outmoded forms and laws of the dispossessed Sinaitic covenant." The Old Testament Church-nation breaks its nationalistic bonds and becomes the universal Christian Church.³⁰

29 Ibid., pp. 28-29.

30 Ibid., p. 29.

It was the priestly tradition which preserved the covenant concept along with the Temple, the Ark, the Tabernacle and the ritual. The proudest boast of the priestly mind was that of Exodus 19:5-6, "If you hearken to my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my special possession, dearer to me than all other people, though all the earth is mine. You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." And, it was the priestly editor who places the first chapter of Genesis as a prologue.³¹ The priestly editor's intention here was to establish Israel as a worshipping community, that postexilic Israel will be faithful to her mission as the chosen people. The six days of creation is a liturgical note based on the Israelite work week. Genesis leads up to the Sinai covenant which is edited by P into a liturgical framework.³²

In each of the covenants in Genesis and Exodus, the author emphasizes God's goodness to man and establishes some kind of sign of the covenant. In the first covenant

31 Ibid., p. 73.

32 Ibid., p. 80.

of Genesis the sign of the covenant is either the "lights in the firmament" which serve as 'signs', or the sabbath observance. Also, seed-bearing plants are given for food but nothing is said about the flesh as food, another liturgical note leading to sacrifice. Noah is not to eat flesh with its blood; blood is the seat of life and sacred. This is a clearer liturgical note. The sign of the second covenant is a rainbow. Thus the lights in the heavens and the rainbow can be seen by all men.³³

The covenant with Abraham is circumcision, a sign emphasized by the priestly author because of its liturgical significance (Gen. 17:9-14).

In the last covenant at Sinai, God's great gift to His kingdom of priests is twofold; the law and the land. The sign again is circumcision. It is at this point that the priestly editor inserts the liturgical law of the worshipping community, beginning at Exod. 25 and continuing down to Num. 10, with additions throughout the remaining chapters of Numbers.³⁴

The point Ellis makes is clear. The Israelite people are a priestly people. The covenant is located at the core of

³³ Ibid., p. 81.

³⁴ Loc. cit.

the worshipping community.

He agrees that the D tradition was not fused with JEP. The Deuteronomy tradition made explicit what was only implicit in the others - the love of God behind the history of Israel and the covenant. The spirit of the new nation must be love. He further agrees with the opinion that D comes from liturgical circles in the northern kingdom and "that it took its origin from the covenant-renewal ceremonies celebrated at such northern sanctuaries as Shechem, Dan, Shilah and Bethel."³⁵ A tentative reconstruction of the covenant-renewal ceremonies can be seen in Jos. 24: 8:30-36; Deut 11:26-32; 27-28; 29-30.

According to these accounts it seems certain that the fourth element of the Hittite suzerainty pacts upon which the Sinai covenant was modelled, (...) the periodic public reading of the covenant to the covenanting vassals, was regularly carried out at the northern sanctuaries. Thus every year, or perhaps only every seven years at the feast of booths (cf. Deut. 31:10-13), the Israelites gathered to hear a reading of the covenant.³⁶

The reading had three parts. The past benevolent deeds of God, the statutes Israel must keep, and the blessings

35 Ibid., p. 96.

36 Ibid., p. 97.

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or curses. Three covenant-renewal recitations are Deut. 1-4, 5-26 and 28; and 29-30.³⁷

He sees besides these covenant renewal ceremonies, an attempt to bring Israel back to God by Josias (640-609 B.C.). Josias began a reform when twenty years old. He instituted this reform, purging Judah and Jerusalem of the idols and idolatrous practices which took root during Manasseh and Amon.

In 621, the reform is aided by the finding in the Temple of an old book of the law (probably Deuteronomy or a part of that book). The covenant is solemnly renewed, and the Passover is celebrated with memorable pomp and ceremony (4 Kings 22-23; 2 Chr. 34-35).³⁸

But the reform is not successful for long, which leads to the preaching of Jeremias.

Father Ellis believes that the "New Covenant" theology begins in the Old Testament. In fact the new covenant theology of Jeremias is already implicit in Osee 2:21-25. In Jeremias it is one of his dominant ideas. He is similar to the other prophets but he differs in his

37 Loc. cit.

38 Ibid., p. 298.

emphasis on the practice of religion in spirit and truth, and on the "making of a future new covenant between God and Israel to replace the broken Sinai covenant (30:18-24; 31:31ff; 32-40)."³⁹ But the new covenant will be written on men's hearts, Jer. 32:40-44.

Ezechiel continues in the thought of Jeremias concerning a new covenant. This is contained in Ezechiel 11:14-21; 16:59-63; 34:23-25. In Ezech. 34:25 he calls it "a covenant of peace." But as he stated in 15:1ff, it was the gratuitous love of God "manifested in the Sinai covenant" which made the Jews different. "Since they have rejected the covenant, they are fit, like other wood of the forest, for the fire."⁴⁰ Ezechiel concentrates on the principle of individual responsibility and stresses personal sins to the exiles. He interprets Ezech. 37:1ff in terms of the new covenant.

He then continues in the allegory of the two sticks (...) to describe the reunion of the two kingdoms under the Messiah, and the everlasting new covenant that God will make with His people.⁴¹

39 Ibid., p. 299.

40 Ibid., pp. 347, 348, 351.

41 Ibid., p. 355.

But he does not go far in interpreting a meaning for the new covenant. This remains to be done by the New Testament itself.

However, he does see the covenant as an expression of God's love for His people. "The covenant between God and His people and His love for His chosen people" is expressed in terms of human marriage. This is an idea also taken over into the New Testament.

As a covenanted nation brought into existence by God and kept in existence by His love, Israel must put her faith and confidence in God first and last.⁴²

An Examination of the Meaning of Covenant in the Bible.

Dr. van den Born's, Bijbels Woordenboek, the great Dutch Biblical dictionary, has recently been translated and freely adapted into English.¹ The original article in Dutch on the covenant was written by P. van Imschoot. The translation and adaptation in English was done by Fr. Bruce Vawter, C.M., It is not possible to say precisely

⁴² Ibid., p. 275.

¹ Louis Hartman, Encyclopaedic Dictionary of the Bible, New York, McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Inc., 1963.

which author is responsible for what.

For the Israelites, a berith, signifies a communal relation between two parties with resultant rights and duties. The result is peace, salom, wellbeing. In the tribal way of life people relied on blood or on a berith. It regulated private life (1 Sam. 18:1-4), public life (2 Sam. 5:1f), and even relations with foreign tribes (3 Kings 5:15-32). It was not an acknowledgement of equality. It was considered a holy thing since it was done under the deity, Baal-Berith, El-Berith (Jgs. 9:4:46) who punished the violators. It was fulfilled with an oath and the pronouncement of a curse. It was concluded with the performance of prescribed rites, related to blood, originally perhaps mixing blood.

Since the blood is the seat of life, (Lv. 17:14; Dt. 12:23), by mingling their blood the members of a covenant would then become one soul, and blood relationship would be effected symbolically.²

Another rite was to cut the sacrificial victims in pieces so those entering into the covenant could pass between them. This indicated a willingness to undergo this fate if they

² Ibid., p. 433.

broke the covenant. This is probably the origin of, "to cut a covenant." (Gen. 15:9-20; Jer. 34:18f).³

The deity can also be one of the parties of the covenant. The covenant of Yahweh with Israel is always due to God's gracious initiative (Gen. 15:9-18; Ex. 19:4-6). If the people take the initiative it is always to renew former obligations neglected or forgotten. "The covenant obliges Israel to honour Yahweh alone, (...) and to keep all His moral laws and commands as the condition of divine protection (Ex. 19:5; 34:15)." Here the article stresses a pertinent fact: the content of the covenant is summed up in the "formula" of election. You Israel are my people and I am your God (Os. 2:23; Jer. 7:23; Ez. 11:20). Israel is Yahweh's people and His special possession (1 Sam. 10:1; Ex. 19:6 Dt. 7:6).⁴

Historically, the article describes seven covenants which are recorded in the Old Testament. These are as follows:

3 Loc. cit.

4 Ibid., pp. 433-434.

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1) A covenant with Abraham which guarantees possession of Chanaan and whose sign is circumcision, (Gn. 17:10f).

2) The covenant of Sinai where Yahweh gave His words (Ex. 24:3-7f) which was ratified by the blood of victims and with a communal meal (Ex. 24:1f; 24:9-11). This covenant means according to Ex. 19:3-6:

Yahweh, who had proved His mighty protection of Israel by liberating it from Egypt now wills to receive this people as His special possession, on the condition that it will obey Him and keep His covenant.⁵

Yahweh becomes the King of the Israelite tribes (Dt. 33:5).

3) According to Dt. 28:69, a second covenant is made by Moses (Dt. 29:9-14) in the plains of Moab, east of the Jordan (Dt. 4:45f).

4) The covenant of Jos. 24:1-28 tells of a solemn covenant at Sichem. The article favors the opinion that it is a covenant extending it to tribes which formerly did not belong to the amphictyony.

5) King Josia assembled the people in Jerusalem in 622 B.C., read a rediscovered book of the law, and made a covenant

⁵ Ibid., p. 435.

to serve Yahweh and keep the laws (4 Kings 22:8; 23:2f).

6) After the exile Nehemiah read the book of the law of Moses to the people which they bound in writing.

7) Gn. 9:8-17 tells of a covenant after the deluge, the sign of which was a rainbow in the clouds. This required faith from Noe and descendents, and a prohibition against drinking blood.⁶

The article draws the following conclusion:

Thus the entire history of mankind and especially that of the chosen people is represented as the working out of a plan of salvation carried out by God through a series of covenants that demonstrates His constant grace and protection (Ps. 105:8ff).⁷

The article believes that there was a time in Israelite history when the covenant was minimized. Exegetes of the past century held that the covenant idea was introduced by Jeremia and the so-called Deuteronomic school, afterwards extended to all mankind by the priestly school. The prophets before Jeremiah minimized the covenant as well as the cult because it was "thought of by the people as a

6 Ibid., pp. 435-436.

7 Ibid., p. 436.

strict contract, and thus pertained to those falsely conceived notions which the prophets so vehemently opposed." But afterwards a correct view of the covenant became common and it was seen as a free gift of God (Dt. 7:8-12; 10:15). Then the covenant became a central theme in the preaching and writing of the prophets and later writers.⁸

The prophets express the covenant as the basis for restoration, a new marriage (Os.), or a new covenant. (Jer. Ex. Deutero-Is.). The new covenant will be a true regeneration of the people (Jer. 31:31-34) and individuals (Ez. 36:25-29). The prophets do not see the covenant as a legal, bilateral contract.

The new covenant is more a unilateral disposition of God's will according to which the future relations between God and man will be determined (to this extent the ancient concept of berith is taken in a refined sense) and the divine plan of salvation will be completed.⁹

The article says that probably diatheke was selected in the septuagint because it signified a last will and testament in the popular usage, and a contract or

⁸ Loc. cit.

⁹ Ibid., p. 437.

disposition of the will in more classical usage. This would be used in preference to sundeke, treaty, because in the "OT berith was also used for a unilateral disposition of the will." Thus diatheke means in the septuagint a bilateral treaty (Gn. 21:27 & 32;), a covenant in the metaphorical sense (Is. 28:18), the covenant between Yahweh and Israel (Ex. 24:8; 34:10), or the conditions of the covenant (Ps. 103:18; 132:12). In the deuterocanonical books the same practice is followed. In Sir., "diatheke is used commonly to signify the existing relation between Yahweh and His people." The word here practically means the same as the religion of Israel (Jdt. 9:13; 1 Mc. 1:15; 2:50; 2 Mc. 7:36) - even the divine promises to Israel (Sir. 44:20 & 22; 45:24f).¹⁰

The New Testament uses diatheke "26 times; 7 times in citing the OT, 16 times in alluding to it, and 3 times independent of the OT." Consequently the New Testament writers kept to OT concepts and being Jews would have a covenant and not a testament in mind. The Gospels and Acts

¹⁰ Loc. cit.

keep to the concepts of the OT. Luke 1:72 alludes to the patriarchal promises, the covenant with Abraham. In Matthew 26:28 Jesus explains that the blood in the cup is the blood of the covenant. This "allusion to Ex. 24:8 proves that the blood of Christ sets up or (better) renews the communal relations between God and men."¹¹ Luke 22:20 and 1 Cor. 11:25 show what is new: this cup is the new covenant "in my blood"; what is in this cup, "my blood," brings the covenant into being:

Just as the old covenant was brought into being through the blood of victims (Ex. 24:8), so also the new covenant (cfr. Jer. 31:31), 'in my own blood' (cfr. Heb. 9:11-20; 10:1-18).¹²

The new covenant here is a new dispensation ratified by Jesus' blood.

The article describes Paul as seeing the covenant ratified by Christ's blood (1 Cor. 11:25) bringing freedom, while the old covenant could only make slaves (Gal. 4:22-31). The basis for the distinction between the old and new covenants is the granting of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:6;

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 437-438.

¹² Ibid., p. 438.

Rom. 7:6), which frees from the slavery of the flesh (Rom. 8:1-4). This means that the redeeming death of Christ has set up a new communal relation. That is, a new covenant which surpasses the old as the life-giving spirit surpasses the letter which kills (2 Cor. 3:6-13; cfr. Jer. 31:34; Ez. 36:25-28). "Thus it can hardly be doubted that Paul understands diatheke in the OT sense (cfr. also Rom. 9:4; 11:27; Eph. 2:12; 2 Cor. 3:14, where 'the old covenant' equals the Book of Moses)." The exception to this usage is in Gal. 3:15ff where diatheke is used in the Hellenistic sense of testament, the last will, valid at the death of the testator. But his usage does not refer to the covenant.¹³

The article describes the account in Hebrews as seeing a superiority of the new covenant over the old as ratified in Christ's blood (8:8-12; 9:15-20; 10:29; cfr. 12:24):

This opposition, and the expressions 'the blood of the covenant' or 'of the eternal covenant' (10:29; 13:29; 13:20; cfr. Ex. 24:8; Za. 9-11), prove that the writer understood diatheke in the

¹³ Ibid., p. 439.

OT sense. The covenant surpasses the old even as the priesthood of Christ, who is the surety and mediator of the covenant (7:22; 9:15; 12:24), surpasses the old priesthood (7:22; 8:6), even as the truly redeeming and purifying blood of Christ is superior to the blood of former victims (9:13-20).¹⁴

In Heb. 9:13-20 the author makes a transition from the type of covenant with the berith meaning to that of the Greek (Heb. 9:16f), diatheke as testament. But in the context the difference is clear. The new covenant is valid at Christ's death, and the notion of testament is more or less connected with it.¹⁵

Joseph Bonsirven: The New Covenant of the Qahal

Father Bonsirven's work of theology has been well known since its first publication in 1951. He agrees with St. Thomas that Doctrina sacra is based on the principle of a higher science, the science of God and his saints, "and that it accepts the principles revealed to it by God" in beginning his methodology.¹ Theology conforms to the

¹⁴ Loc. cit.

¹⁵ Loc. cit.

¹ Joseph Bonsirven, Theology of the New Testament, Westminster, The Newman Press, 1963, p. xi.

requirements of all scientific scholarship and is an application of rational and discursive knowledge to revealed truth.

It applies itself first to the task of acquiring some understanding of these truths by looking at each one in the light of the others and also in the light of our natural and everyday knowledge and mental categories; in this way it elicits analogies which throw light on the divine mystery.²

This is in accordance with the First Vatican Council.

Positive Theology is a collection of revealed truths. Speculative theology is a systematic synthesis which relates revealed truths to other knowledge and draws deductions and inferences. Biblical Theology's object for Bonsirven, is "to bring together the revealed truths contained in the New Testament, to define their meaning as the authors understood it (...)" and provide a basis for dogma.³ Revelation is that which gives "instruction about God and the worship to be paid to him," and to obtain for man a share in the things of God "which are completely beyond human understanding."⁴

² Loc. cit.

³ Ibid., pp. xii-xiii.

⁴ Ibid., p. xiii.

In studying primitive Christianity he believes it is necessary not to attach meanings or attitudes we are accustomed to giving from training. "We must not think the men of old shared our theological conceptions." Ideas must not be found where they are not expressed.

Admittedly we maintain that there is a vital continuity between the dogmas defined or professed by the Church and the Revelation contained in Scripture; though we cannot ignore the development in expression which dogma has undergone. But ought we to read into authors we are studying our own hylomorphic categories or the metaphysical distinctions that have been laboriously elaborated over the centuries?⁵

Nor, he holds, should the NT be seen as a collection of theological proof-passages to fit into a preconceived framework. This falls short of the historical method, discovering events in the order in which they occurred.

The historian of primitive Christianity wishes to reconstruct the personal achievement of Jesus in its entirety and in its originality. And this for Bonsirven means not merely his message, "but the sense he possessed communicated to others of the mystery of his person and

⁵ Ibid., p. xv.

his mission (...)." This means the impression of his powerful personality. This is true for Paul also who provided Christianity in its infancy with the vocabulary, imagery and doctrines she still lives by. But his basic methodology is to follow the events of the NT in the order of "chronology of history, not of the documents we are drawing on." This means taking the Gospels first, even though of a later date.⁶ And it means a limitation to the sacred books, because of the Vatican Council, "revelation, which constitutes the subject matter of the Catholic faith, received its definitive form during the course of the apostolic age."⁷

He stresses the need for understanding the environment of the New Testament, Jesus and the writers, their mental and verbal categories.

The foremost influence on the Jewish mind is the Bible. Jesus declares (John 10:35) that the words of scripture have binding force; (...) the sacred books of any religion (...) are enveloped in the tradition that gave them birth and that is

6 Ibid., pp. xv-xvi.

7 Loc. cit.

continually drawn on for purposes of interpretation.⁸

The Christian people knowing themselves to be the Israel of God, claimed the Bible. Christ began this for them when he interpreted the scriptures for his disciples, continuing in the tradition of the men of the OT who meditated on the scriptural prophecies. Jesus shows how "all things bear witness to him, by applying some of the scriptural figures to himself," and by advising the study of Moses and the prophets and finding prophecies of his Passion and Resurrection therein.⁹

Bonsirven holds that Jesus created a Church, a body with permanent members and hierarchy. But Jesus, he holds, seldom made use of any existing term to designate this society. There is the fold or flock (John 10:16; Luke 12:32; Matthew 26:31) or vineyard (Matthew 21:28) but these are vague.

Indeed, Jesus himself used as the name for this society a special word which is translated by the Greek word 'EKKLESIA' which has since passed into

8 Ibid., p. xxii.

9 Ibid., p. xxiii.

the languages of the world. Probably what he wanted to make clear in using this word was that he intended it as a continuation of the people of God.¹⁰

This concept is important in getting at Jesus' image of the Church. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word, Qahal, meant an assembly called together by a divine summons. Israel herself took on this name and was considered as the Lord's assembly. Therefore there was no place for certain unworthy elements or for the defilements set out in the 23rd chapter of the book of Deuteronomy. "EKKLESIA is the Greek word that corresponds most exactly with the Aramaic Qehilla which the Master used."¹¹

He sees the word used in Matthew 18:17-18; if the culprit will not listen when reprimanded, "speak of it to the Church; and if he will not even listen to the Church (...)." These things refer to the state of things after the departure of Christ, who in his lifetime was the only Master and Judge.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 69.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 69-70.

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The Church means a local body, invested by its members with a real judicial authority similar to that which the synagogues exercised.¹²

The power to do this came from the power conferred on Peter to bind and loose. "The words suggest that the hierarchy must use their authority in the service of the community (...)," though it was not from the community they received it, and were not its delegates.¹³

St. Paul too speaks of the Church, using the same language. Sixty three times he used the word EKKLESIA to denote a society. The new apostle was conforming to the usage in the Church which uses it to take the place of the Qahal as in the Septuagint. Therefore for Paul, Church denotes the community founded by Christ.

When applied to particular communities it stamped them as a manifestation of the universal Church—the Church of God, which is at Corinth (...)
(1 Cor. 1:2).¹⁴

Paul thinks of the Church as a mystical and social entity. And he speaks of it in this sense as the Israel of God.

12 Ibid., p. 70.

13 Loc. cit.

14 Ibid., pp. 322-323.

Furthermore the words of Jesus were aimed at the future: the Church would have no real life of its own until after the Passion and Resurrection. The creative words which completed the process of bringing the society of salvation to birth were pronounced then.¹⁵ These creative words were first, the words about the New Covenant, spoken at the time of the institution of the Eucharist. They defined in biblical terms "the whole effect of the unique and final sacrifice."

'Covenant' is the word which had been used to describe the relationship between God and his people. Throughout their history, the chosen people had been disloyal to the duties of the covenant. The New and eternal covenant was reserved for the messianic era and provided for all kinds of supernatural blessing.¹⁶

This he derives from Is. 54:10; 55:3; 59:21; Ezech. 16:60-63; 34:25; 37:21-28; and Jeremiah 31:31-34. The words of Jesus are in Mark 14:24; Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25. Here he holds that the force of Jesus' words indicates the fulfillment of the promises in the Old Testament. They are fulfilled in the Church

15 Loc. cit.

16 Loc. cit.

superabundantly; from his sacrifice "which released the stream of the sacraments to flow down from his wounded side."¹⁷ The fulfillment of the texts from the Old Testament is seen in Jesus as the fulfillment of the covenant.

Bonsirven sees the Eucharist as the type of all sacraments, the one that best characterizes the infant Church. For it was by this sacrament that the community began to take a distinct form and to differentiate herself from Judaism, but whose liturgies she still shared. The Eucharist was celebrated by the Christian communities as something which Christ has instituted.¹⁸ The institution as recorded in the Gospels is as "dry as the proceedings in a court of law." He must have prepared the Apostles for the meaning during the course of his life as in John 6:32-63. It must be remembered that John drew up his account at a time when the Churches were taking part in

17 Loc. cit.

18 Ibid., pp. 79-80

the Eucharist and could grasp the depth of meaning.¹⁹

Bonsirven is of the opinion that the phrase "This bread (...) It is my flesh" should be understood in its biblical and Semitic sense.

The flesh is the human person in its entirety. 'Flesh and blood' is often just another way of saying a human being. The flesh and blood of Jesus - that is Jesus himself in his entirety - Jesus turning himself into food and drink, first by faith, then sacramentally in an outward and visible sign, the bread and wine of the Eucharist.²⁰

He holds that whoever consumes either the bread or the wine obtains the divine life, by union with Christ. He holds that what Jesus said, in the catechesis and at the institution, was "my flesh-bisri." This form had a very different meaning in Greek. Therefore it was replaced, in accordance with the somewhat frequent practice in the Septuagint by soma. "(...) the heart of the Christian mystery, is certainly (...) the luminous and enlightening idea of the assimilation of the faithful to Christ."²¹

19 Ibid., pp. 80-81.

20 Ibid., p. 81.

21 Loc. cit.

But he believes that the words of institution include another aspect of the Eucharist. This is included in the four accounts, Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20; Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:23-25. In these texts it is obvious that the passion is imminent. The mention of wine indicates this.²²

We know that in the Messianic era God was to enter into a new and eternal covenant with his people, and also that the shedding of blood was necessary for the inauguration of a covenant.²³

This is true because it was the way the covenant was entered into on Mount Sinai according to Hebrews.²⁴

He believes that the text adopted by Luke and Paul is "more anciently attested." "This cup (...) is the New Testament, in my blood." The covenant which was foretold must be founded on the sacrifice of the mediator of the New Testament, to be sealed by his blood. The "shed for you" is a reminder that the essential element in a sacrifice, the shedding of blood, is for mankind, represented in the

22 Ibid., pp. 81-82.

23 Ibid., p. 82.

24 Ibid., p. 83.

apostles. And one of the results of the sacrifice and of the covenant is the remission of sins as stated by Matthew. Jesus is therefore the "mediator of the New Testament."²⁵

But Bonsirven holds that in Jesus' role as mediator of the New Testament he is "the covenant itself."

Further, that covenant, a wholly spiritual one, is inaugurated by the voluntary sacrifice of him 'who offered himself, through the Holy Spirit, as a victim unblemished in God's sight' (Hebrews 9:14), an oblation offered for the first time at the Last Supper, which was properly the act of a priest. All this is implied by the statement "This cup (...)." From that moment the sacrifice has been decided on, almost completed.²⁶

The present participle in Greek, "to be shed", gives it this meaning. Also "is (...) in my blood" is also explained by this. He sees a sacramental identity in the words "it is." This corresponds to the simple demonstrative in Aramaic and affirms the identity of "this", the bread and then the wine, and the flesh and blood, the body of Jesus.²⁷ The precept to renew the act also in

²⁵ Loc. cit.

²⁶ Loc. cit.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 84.

Paul and Luke, led to the institution of the "Lord's Supper." This was the centre of the Church's liturgy. The sacrament of the Eucharist gives the individual his spiritual food and "becomes one of the most effective means of binding the community together."²⁸

The covenant in the Eucharist "was the form which it pleased God to give to the relations he maintained with his people." Bonsirven describes it not as a contract between two parties, "it was a provision that God granted to his people." In the covenants with Abraham (Gen.15:8-17), and then with the people (Exodus 24:5-8), God was ready to renew the rite that marked the conclusion of a contract between individuals. In the covenant with Jesus as mediator there are many graces given. These were foretold by Jeremias and are: loyalty to the divine law; heartfelt loyalty passed down from father to son; intimate knowledge of God; final pardon for sin.²⁹

28 Loc. cit.

29 Ibid., p. 95.

The granting of these graces depends entirely on the good pleasure of God, and they are realized in Jesus Christ whom we have called the covenant itself.³⁰

Bonsirven believes that the words are pregnant with meaning and teach a number of truths:

That Christ is sacramentally present in the cup; that, in certain respects, it is the new covenant just because it finds its fulfillment in him; that his blood sealed this covenant which God granted to those who believed in him and which was the means by which he communicated himself to them.³¹

The words of the new covenant carry these many meanings and should not be limited to any one. But the meanings are specific and can be traced.

He says that Jesus himself defined his death as a covenant-sacrifice. St. Paul records it (1 Cor. 11:25), "This cup (...) is the new covenant, in my blood." The essence of the old covenant was the promises of God to those who believed in him and not the part that blood played in them. In the new covenant as Jeremias sees it, it will be

³⁰ Loc. cit.

³¹ J. Bonsirven, Theology of the New Testament, Westminster, The Newman Press, 1963. p. 225.

a time of close communion between God and his people. "And it was Jesus who was the guarantee of this communion and made it effective."³² Bonsirven suggests that Jesus is the communion.

The hallowed phrase affirms the identity between 'this cup' and the 'new covenant': is it not still Christ who is in one by his sacramental presence and in the other by his activity as mediator? 'In my blood' qualifies the nature of this sacrifice: it is entirely voluntary, the material elements being simply the sacramental sign of the loving gift of self which is true sacrifice according to St. Augustine's conception.³³

The Epistle to the Hebrews (Chapter 8) demonstrates that Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant. Further it compares Jesus' sacrifice to the sacrifice of Kippur (Hebrews 9-10:25).

The liturgy of the Kippur did not bring about true justification, true remission of sin. Jesus did obtain justification. The real difference is that Jesus' offering is "the free offering of an infinitely pure human will." Bonsirven believes that the writer of Hebrews is inviting

32 Ibid., p. 280.

33 Loc. cit.

the reader to interpret the sacrifices of both testaments as types, and "in a spiritual and completely sublimated sense."³⁴ The sacrifice of the new covenant was not only the sacrifice of the cross, although this had a predominant place and was the sacrifice par excellence. This is why there is so much emphasis in Christian dogma and piety on the bloody event itself, "the dogma of the sacrificial death of Christ, with which we associate the Eucharist." It was a moment which stood out. But, "it was not the only sacrifice."³⁵

J. Giblet: God's Word in the History of Salvation

J. Giblet considers the themes of the covenant and the covenant people. For him these are major themes that run through both Testaments. He believes that since "the days of Abraham and Moses the omnipotent God has intervened in human history." Men have learned to know Him by "answering His calls and corresponding with His plans." God

34 Ibid., p. 281.

35 Ibid., pp. 282-283.

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corrected His people so an ardent hope would develop and fix on His promises. Fulfillment exceeded all expectations. "God Himself became flesh and all who believe wholly in Jesus Christ enter upon a new life that is divine."¹

The function of explaining the meaning of the interventions was done by God's envoys.

This was the task of the prophets and above all of Jesus Christ. God's Word and perfect prophet. Every part of the Law points to Jesus Christ and to His body, the Church, which is the extension and communication of Jesus Christ.²

The law was fulfilled and transcended but the New Testament itself uses the language of preparation, and it can be understood more fully only by understanding its meaning in this sense.

In the religion of God's people there are the fundamental notions of election of vocation. Israel was chosen by God. "The primary motive for His choice was love and love alone: no human reasoning can account for this choice (...)" Nothing on Israel's part could entitle

1 J. Giblet, The God of Israel, The God of Christians New York, Desdee Company, 1961, p. v.

2 Ibid., p. vi.

them to this choice. They were called to perform a service and fulfill a mission, "the service was to offer an increasingly spiritual worship and to teach this worship to the nations."³ Israel was the nation God chose to reach all mankind, all nations, to eventually make all people one. This idea reaches a high point in second Isaias. He realized that there was only one divine plan that "dominates and orientates the history of mankind." Creation itself is linked to election. Creation is a vocation (Isa. 51:16). There is one mighty divine plan and "God wished to realize it with us because His ultimate desire is a great communion in love." There is really for Giblest one election which involves the universe and particularly mankind.⁴

The Old Testament clarified the meaning of the election of individuals, "they have no significance apart from the vocation of the people." But one election is central, the vocation of the Messiah:

3 Ibid., pp. 3-8.

4 Ibid., pp. 8-9.

The Second Isaias foretold the arrival of a divine envoy who would be one with His people and would eventually bring them pardon and salvation (Isa. 42:1).⁵

The election of the people is connected with His own and depends upon it. Jesus fulfills these prophecies. In Luke 9:35, the Apostle sees this: Jesus is the Son and the elect of the Father. In the strict sense therefore Jesus is the elect of God and the source of salvation. St. Paul (Eph. 1:3-6) sees the divine work in the Church, influenced by the Holy Spirit. "Everything has meaning in relation to Jesus Christ, the Son of God who became man (...)." and is the elect of the Father.⁶

Giblet believes that Jesus calls men, they are chosen and sanctified by Him. His mission was to call sinners to salvation, to call them from solitude. This is the message.

Those who have begun to respond to this call, who have believed in the message of salvation, who have received the Church's baptism - all

5 Ibid., p. 11.

6 Ibid., pp. 12-15.

these form the Messianic community, the chosen race (1 Pet. 2:9).⁷

The people of God must respond to the election, they must respond to the revelation and the love of the Father offer to them.

Giblet is of the opinion that to understand the covenant it is necessary to see what it meant to the Hebrews. In ancient times there were many covenants made between man and man or clan and clan. The goal was to establish peace and to create bonds of friendship, to treat other men as brothers (Gen. 21:22f:26:28; 3 Kings 5:26). "This will to peace was expressed in a solemn act which bound the contracting parties to mutual friendship and help."⁸ A sign may have been added to express the agreement. Abraham planted a tree as a testimony of his covenant with Abimelech (Gen. 21:23). God, he holds, based his covenant with Abraham on the traditional rites and words. The covenant was God's work above all, and a gift, a grace.

7 Ibid., pp. 16-17.

8 Ibid., p. 24.

Yahweh in the form of a flaming torch, according to an old custom of the land, moves down the path between the severed pieces of the immolated animals (Gen. 15:17; cf. Jer. 34:8).⁹

The sign of this covenant was circumcision. This meant a pledge inscribed in the flesh of every descendent gave him the opportunity to share in the blessings promised, if faithful.¹⁰

He interprets Exodus 19:4-6 as a promise to the people He had freed from Egypt. He wished to make the small people of Israel His own special possession. "This was God's plan, this was His will, to establish a people (...)" . The covenant is a favor and is "in no sense a bilateral contract." There must be no reservations and there must be faith in the divine promise and vocation. Men are to open themselves to the immense power that comes from God, so that men could carry out the divine will.

God's powerful presence would transform those who would allow Him to act in them by conforming themselves to the Law and to the message transmitted by the prophets.¹¹

9 Ibid., p. 26.

10 Loc. cit.

11 Ibid., pp. 26-27.

The covenant is a mutual presence and a communion in love; it is a field of action in which both exercising their power, know they are one.

Moses was the mediator who performed the rite of the covenant. He had sacrifices offered; "the blood of the victim was sprinkled on the altar and on the people; this was a symbol of the bond eternally established." Moreover, he sees the Temple as a sign and pledge of the covenant.¹²

Giblet is of the opinion that the covenant was not a contract concluded at one moment. It required vigilance. Sin was a betrayal of Him who gives His holiness to men in the covenant. The people sin but God was faithful to the covenant. The mystical symbol develops as an expression of the reality of the covenant and shows God's love. But the prophets saw the limitations of the Sinai covenant and "they began to look on it as a preliminary phase or a promise that was only beginning to be fulfilled."¹³ Jeremias announces a new covenant that will surpass the

¹² Ibid., p. 28.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 30-31.

Sinai covenant. This one "would allow an inner, unreserved adhesion, and henceforth an ineffable and loving knowledge of Yahweh." (Jer. 31:31-34). Ezechiel is more precise and shows that Yahweh will be merciful (Ez. 34:23-25,30; Ez. 36:25-28).¹⁴

For Giblet this new epoch is connected with the mission of the Messiah promised to David. Deutero-Isaias sees the messianic servant at the center of a new covenant to which all nations will be invited (Isa. 54:1,;0; 55:3-5). This enlarges the concept of the covenant.

But now it was clear that every nation would be asked to join the people of Israel and live according to the terms of the Mosaic covenant (Isa. 42:1-4; 49:6; 56:1-8).¹⁵

But Judaism did not prove faithful.

He believes that in the Incarnation, Jesus in "in Himself, the covenant." All the acts of His life were a preparation for the act of Calvary which He presented "as the sacrifice instituting the new covenant promised by the

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 31-32.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 32-34.

prophets."¹⁶ He selects Luke to explain this notion (Lk. 22:15-16, 19-20). This was the Paschal meal where the events of the Exodus and Sinai were recalled and faith in God reaffirmed. This was the last festival of the old rite:

The moment had come for the true Pasch of which the incidents of the Exodus and their annual liturgical celebrations were but the image and the anticipation. Jesus was going to give Himself to the Father for men, and the Father was about to accept this most perfect gift: this would be the seal of the new covenant.¹⁷

The sacrifice of Jesus will seal the peace and inaugurates an eternal covenant. The idea is developed in Hebrews 8-10. "The Greek word diatheke is used to express the idea of covenant." And, it may also denote Testament, the act by which a man disposes of his goods after death (Gal. 3:15-17; Heb. 9:16-17).¹⁸

Giblet holds that the gift of the Spirit characterizes the new covenant. This means that Christ died and rose from the dead.

16 Ibid., p. 35.

17 Ibid., p. 36.

18 Ibid., p. 37.

By baptism (Rom. 6:1-11) men die according to the flesh, united to Christ, and live with Him according to the Spirit. This was told by the prophets (Ez. 36:23-28) and realized by Christ (2 Cor. 3:3f; Heb. 8:9-12). This makes them part of the new people, the people of the covenant; they are sure of God's love and fidelity because they now share this love (Rom. 5-5). "Hope does not disappoint."¹⁹

God creates a people and wishes them to receive His gifts and correspond with them.

The history of salvation is nothing more than the history of the formation and sanctification of this people: begun with the vocation of Abraham and the events of the Exodus, this history will continue until the days of Christ and the Church (...).²⁰

The people of God will attain this goal at the Parousia.

Each man will be prepared to meet the Lord through the people.

Giblet sees the people of God born with Abraham's call by God. But on Sinai He invited it to form a covenant, asking it freely to become the people of God—a covenanted

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 37-38.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 43.

people. If they keep the covenant, they will be a "special possession, dearer to me than all other people." In fact they will be "a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." (Ex. 19:5-6).²¹ It was the God of Sinai who assembled and united the clans descended from Abraham. "It did not become a people as the result of racial consciousness but as a result of true correspondence with God." They are to be holy as God is holy, made holy by Him (Lev. 22:23; Ez. 20:12; 37:28).²²

He believes that the people were sharing in God's strength and purity, and hence a sign among the nations, a witness, a mediator. "To see this people is to learn something about the True God." It is a kingdom of priests, but not limited to liturgical ceremonies. They are "a cultic community, the Qahal, or in its Greek form, EKKLESIA. "This meant a people assembled with its civil and religious leaders in the Temple (Num. 15:15; 16:3; Deut. 23:2f). This people of God existed only in relation to Him, and it was treason to live by mere human standards."²³

21 J. Giblet, The God of Israel, The God of Christians, New York, Desclee Company, 1961. pp. 45-46.

22 Ibid., p. 46.

23 Ibid., pp. 47-48.

The people of God were a people who struggled with the pagan nations (Jos. 1:2-6). David's reign was an apogee for the people. Under succeeding kings they lost their mission. But a core would persevere, a remnant.

The notion of the people of God is qualitative: to be a member of the true people of God one must be actively and humbly faithful. Thus was found, within Israel, the people of the poor whom alone Yahweh recognizes as His own (Soph. 3:11-13; Isa. 55).²⁴

For Giblet, the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile destroyed the signs of the covenant, the Temple. After the exiles returned there was an attempt to "reform the desert Qahal." "This he believes is in the sacerdotal literature, especially Chronicles. But the notion of a new people begins to develop. The new people will celebrate a heavenly liturgy, and "All nations will be invited to take part and the people of God will extend to the ends of the earth (Isa. 56: ps. 87; Jon.)²⁵

Father Giblet is of the opinion that Jesus came to establish the new people. The disciples attempted to express

²⁴ Ibid., p. 50.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 51-52.

the meaning and significance of this event. Jesus begins a new Kingdom of God (Mk. 1:15). He told His disciples;

They must go through the world to gather together the elect in the new people of God that He called the Church. (...) they were to be charged with assembling the people of God and this mission would take them to the ends of the earth (Mt. 28: 19-20: Acts 1:8).²⁶

Jesus called this the Church and it must be holy for worship (Mt. 16:17-19). This Church was to be Jesus' possession, just as the "people of the desert were chosen by Yahweh to be His people." The Church of God is therefore the heir and fulfillment of the desert community.²⁷

He holds further that as the Jewish Pentecost was a commemoration of the birth of the people on Sinai, so on the new Pentecost that completed and fulfilled the Passover, the Church, the new people of God was born.

The Spirit sanctified and constituted the holy people, the people of Jesus Christ. He became the law of charity which normally guided its conduct, inspired its prayer and its worship.²⁸

26 Ibid., pp. 53-54.

27 Ibid., p. 54.

28 Ibid., p. 55.

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St. Paul continues this idea of the Christian Church as the people of God and the Temple of the living God. In 2 Cor. 6:16-18, Paul cites Lev. 26:12; Jer. 32:38; Isa. 52:11; Jer. 51:45; 2 Sam. 7:14; Jer. 31:9; Isa. 4:6. The people are to make life an act of adoration, love, fidelity and thanksgiving (Rom. 12:1-3; Jer. 4:2-24).

These people are heir to all the promises and privileges of Israel. "It is the Church of the new covenant" (Acts 3:25; Gal. 4:24-27; Heb. 8:6-13 citing Jer. 31:31f). They are the true Israel (Gal 6:16), the chosen people (1 Pet. 2:9), the holy people (Dan. 7:27 cited by Apoc. 13:7). These themes are all summed up in 1 Pet. 2:4-6; Os. 1:9; 2:1; 25. "You, however, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people (...) You who in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God." (1 Pet. 9-10).

Louis Bouyer: The Covenant, the Word of the New Qahal YAHWEH

Father Louis Bouyer writes of the nature of prayer life which he believes is centered in the Mass itself. He strives to disengage the essential nature of the liturgy from the forms it took when misunderstood or neglected. Also, he is critical of some of the forms it took in attempts at restoration. He was attempting the study in what he believed was the spirit of Pius XII's Mystici Corporis, and Mediator Dei. He believes this is important because as he says: "It is through the liturgy that the authentic Christian life is produced and maintained."¹ And in doing so he says some very pertinent things about the covenant and the people of God.

For Bouyer, the error of liturgists of the last few centuries was that they fixed the ideal liturgical setting in an earlier historical period. For example, Dom Gueranger in his, Les Institutions Liturgiques, stresses a return to the medieval period. Dom Odo Casel, while properly

¹ Louis Bouyer, Liturgical Piety, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1955.

establishing the Kult Mysterium as the heart of Christian worship, fixes on the Patristic period as the idea. Bouyer accepts Casel's concept of the mystery, that the liturgy is the re-enactment, in and by the Church of Our Lord who accomplished our salvation: it is the Passion and Death in the fulness of their effects. That is, the Resurrection and the communication of saving grace to mankind and to eschatology. The heart of the mystery is the way Christ's act is renewed and partaken.²

Bouyer believes that no historical period should be mimicked, not even the Patristic.

What we should do rather is to take an all inclusive view of the development of the people of God, from the first beginning of this development to its final achievement in those lasting institutions and living ideas which constitute the Fathers' legacy to us as to all ages.³

When it is seen how the people of God are formed, then he considers the Church's teaching about the liturgy in Mediator Dei. But this is beyond the scope of this paper.

2 Ibid., pp. 10-18.

3 Ibid., p. 21.

Bouyer is of the opinion that one of the most important developments in ecclesiology in recent years, is an understanding of the Church as presented in Revelation. All of God's interventions in history, His Word being heard and understood by men focus on one objective. This is, "the formation (...) of a people which should eventually be God's Own People."⁴ The Church becomes then the final actualization of the people God prepared through the centuries. More precisely,

The results of recent research show with great unanimity that the Church (EKKLESIA) of the New Testament is (...) to be understood as the final perfection of what the Hebrew Bible from the first had called Qahal Yahweh, 'the Assembly of Yahweh.'⁵

In Athens the EKKLESIA was a secular assembly called together, a convocation of the people. It was called by a herald to hear official information and respond to it.

He sees a similarity in the Holy City. The Qahal was called to convocation and heard the words of the King and had to respond. In the New Testament, the Apostles are the heralds of Israel's king. Their task "is to call

⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

⁵ Loc. cit.

together by the Word of Jesus the new elect of God throughout the whole world," and to hear what the Word has to teach them. The word KERYGMA is the preaching of the Apostles. It is a proclamation associated with the idea of congregation or Church (EKKLESIA).⁶

He selects three examples of the Qahal in the Old Testament which reveal its nature. The first is the Qahal of Exodus. 19. Here the multitude which has escaped from Egypt is called to Sinai to hear the words of God. God's Word calls the convocation and God's Word is the purpose of it.⁷ He sees several distinctive features.

The assembly which the Word had summoned heard the solemn proclamation of that very Word, brought to them as the climax, following a well-defined series of actions of praise, adoration and collective supplication, after a common preparation by fast and purification.⁸

Then the Word was accepted and agreed to by the people, "and this acceptance constituted precisely the covenant or alliance between God and His people." The covenant was

6 Ibid., p. 24.

7 Loc. cit.

8 Loc. cit.

ratified by a sacrificial offering. In the sacrifice the people pledged themselves to that Word, "and, at the same time, the Word was sealed by God Himself."⁹

Thenceforth the covenant stood, founded on God's authority alone, but founded with the free response and obedient agreement of the people. And by this whole process, the people itself was created, formed as a people, and no longer a mere crowd, and more definitely, was made God's people by, through and for the Word of God.¹⁰

The second example is in 2 Kings 23. Here King Josias attempted to make a new beginning of the history of the people by dedicating it to Yahweh. The "covenant inaugurated on Mt. Sinai was renewed. We find once more the Qahal Yahweh." Bouyer sees the same elements. The people called together to a convocation by God's Word as rediscovered by the High Priest in the Sanctuary. Next a solemn reading of Deuteronomy, as they heard the ten commandments at Sinai. Then the people agree to the Word newly expressed.¹¹

And, finally, the renewal of the covenant of alliance and of the people's own agreement to this covenant was expressed and embodied in a

9 Ibid., pp. 24-25.

10 Ibid., p. 25.

11 Loc. cit.

solemn celebration of the fundamental sacrifice, that is the Paschal celebration.¹²

The third example he selects is found in Nehemias (2 Edras 8:17; 13:1). The exiles return to devastation. Bouyer says that they see one thing standing: "God's Word" as in the Bible of the Scribes. The scribe Esdras "called the Qahal to a convocation, and had this newly made Bible read to the people." But when the reading of the Word was finished, there was no sacrificial celebration "as had concluded both the previous covenant meetings." Instead, representatives promised to carry out proper sacrifices when the Sanctuary was rebuilt. Esdras offered a "solemn Eucharistic prayer."¹³

After this, he is of the opinion that the primitive covenant was looked upon as a preliminary thing. The true worship of the eternal sacrifice were in the future with the "new and everlasting covenant promised by Jeremias and Ezechiel." God's deeds now became a foreshadowing of future accomplishments the creating Word would bring about.

12 Loc. cit.

13 Ibid., pp. 25-26.

Therefore the new "eucharistic (thanksgiving)" prayer develops and temple worship becomes less important. Now the eschatological expectation expresses itself in the ritual of small pious communities and not in the ritual of the "old community, the Israel 'of the flesh' which could not accept this expectation."¹⁴ By the time of Christ, families and pious communities (habouroth) were meeting for a community meal. Here there was the breaking of bread, the meal, and the "most important feature, - the solemn eucharist, or thanksgiving prayer over the 'cup of blessing.'" Here all God's gifts of the past are commemorated but as a token and pledge of the gifts to come.¹⁵

Bouyer believes that the nucleus of the primitive Christian community is in Acts 2:42. "And they were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostle and in the communication of the breaking of bread in prayers." Here are in brief, all the elements of new Qahal, they are the same as the old but brought to "an enduring perfection."

14 Ibid., pp. 26-27.

15 Ibid., p. 27.

The teaching of the Apostles is the Kerygma "by which the Word, incarnate in Jesus, calls into convocation the people of God in its definite form, and enlightens it by the definitive revelation itself." God's Word will not be heard as in the past, Hebrews 1:1.¹⁶ But,

God Himself is now speaking to His whole people, since in Jesus, His great APOSTOLOS (the one sent) or SCHALIACH (in Hebrew). He realizes literally the Jewish saying that 'the Schaliach or Apostle of a man is like another Himself.'¹⁷

Thus for Bouyer, God speaks in Christ whom He has sent, and Christ continues to speak in those whom He sent.

Through having been 'sent' therefore, the Church which is the Qahal of the true people of God, always possesses the Word itself in its entirety (...) this being sent, this apostolate, assuring as it does the permanent presence of God Himself in His people, constitutes the distinctive characteristic of the people of God under the New Covenant.¹⁸

Bouyer goes further. The apostolic community pledges itself to the Word by the great Eucharistic prayer of the breaking of bread. This acquires a new

16 Loc. cit.

17 Loc. cit.

18 Ibid., p. 28.

meaning. Christ seals the new covenant in His blood, the covenant which he has just proclaimed.¹⁹ He gives this explanation to get a definition of the liturgy. The liturgy is,

The meeting of God's people called together in convocation by God's Word through the apostolic ministry, in order that the people, consciously united together, may hear God's Word itself in Christ, may adhere to that Word by means of the prayer and praise amid which the Word is proclaimed, and so seal by the Eucharistic sacrifice the covenant which is accomplished by that same Word.²⁰

The convocation of the Church is not being called together to merely commemorate or to hear ideas and notions about God. The Qahal is precisely as he sees it, a call. The people of God are called upon to do and to become what the Word proclaims, by the power of the Word itself. The celebration of the liturgy should engage the people, especially "in the final sacrifice which seals the covenant between God and man." And, there should be a response.²¹

19 Loc. cit.

20 Ibid., p. 29.

21 Ibid., p. 30.

Yves Congar: The Covenanted People, A Temple of Living
Stones

Pere Yves Congar's views on the covenant and the people of God are contained in two works, Lay People in the Church,¹ completed in 1951, and, The Mystery of the Temple, completed in 1954.² In both works he is considering the Church with one unifying theme. This is the idea:

that the essential point of God's plan and the place of the faithful within it could be well formulated in terms of a temple built of living stones, for God's whole purpose is to make the human race, created in His image, a living spiritual temple in which He not only dwells but to which He communicates Himself and in turn receives from it the worship of a wholly filial obedience.³

This is a consideration of God's activity with men in terms of His presence, and His dwelling with men. This is the development of God's presence with men from the time of Abraham to its anticipated conclusion expressed

1 Yves Congar, Lay People in the Church, Westminster, Newman Press, 1956.

2 Yves Congar, The Mystery of the Temple, Westminster, The Newman Press, 1958,

3 Ibid., p. ix.

in Apocalypse 21:22, "Its temple is the Lord God Almighty," or 1 Corinthians 15:18; "God all in all." It is the idea of His presence as an increasing inwardness in man. This is the story of a presence which runs for only fleeting moments, to a presence that is lasting, "from the simple presence of His action to a vital gift, inward communication and the joy and peace of communion."⁴

Lay People in the Church is not a few theories on the subject to be added to an ecclesiological exposition already quite clear. It is an attempt to re-examine the nature of the mystery of the Church in one of its key dimensions, the Church as the people of God. This work, he holds, should then be presented to the Bishops, whose judgment is the guardian of tradition. And, it is an attempt to get at the original concepts of the Church as seen in scripture and tradition and then construct a theology of the laity.

The Church, he believes, in her ultimate reality, is men's fellowship with God and one another in Christ.

⁴ Ibid., pp. x-xi.

She contains all the means to this fellowship. The Church is the aggregate of all of those who are in Christ Jesus.

This aggregate is quite a different thing from a simple juxtaposition of individuals in a group; it is a people, the people of God. Better still, it is the body of Christ, and people of God precisely because body of Christ.⁵

This is what is expressed in the word EKKLESIA, which means convocation or assembly. In the Septuagint it means the "community of chosen people gathered together to give worship to God or to listen to His word." In Greek this meant any assembly or gathering. In Acts and Paul, the word remains dependent on the "ideas of the people of God" and in the Hellenic culture adopted to the usual Greek sense. Often it means the actual local congregation of the faithful.⁶ But more important, it means the "messianic community or people, raised up by God, a meaning derived from certain characteristic usages of the Septuagint." This goes beyond the local congregation. And, it is an assembly called together, called together by an act of God,

5 Yves Congar, Lay People in the Church, op. cit. p. 22.

6 Ibid., pp. 22-23.

but made up of its members.⁷

He believes that this semantic concept of the EKKLESIA was understood by the Fathers, the early Scholasticism, both mystical and monastic, and by the later Scholasticism, and in the analysis and rational ideas of the schools which continues on till today. Here they went beyond mere translation and defined the Church as, Congregatio fidelium, Societas fidelium, Populus fidelium and other variants. But Congar believes that the idea they represent is more complex than the words would lead us to suspect. The idea must be included in a "corporative" theology of which the middle ages was conscious. Fidelis carries also a Christian realism and ecclesial realism equally profound. The traditional definition continues the word EKKLESIA which "expresses that aspect of the Church in which she is made up of her members and represents the aggregate of them."⁸

For Congar the Church existed before the faithful and the community which they form. The Church exists in

7 Ibid., p. 23.

8 Loc. cit.

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God in two ways without yet existing in herself. These are:

(1) in divine predestination, whence the Church exists in a free and eternal idea and decree, whose actualization must be unfolded in created time: (2) in Christ, who in becoming man virtually takes on the whole of human nature and contains the whole Church; who as the anointed of God and in His threefold capacity of king, priest and prophet had in Himself all the properties and energies by which the Church was to exist and live; who throughout His life on this earth kept the Church in His thoughts and in His heart, enabling her to exist and live in Him.⁹

Then, little by little, Jesus actualized his purpose and the Church began to exist, not only in God or in Christ, but in herself. Congar believes it is very important to see how Jesus actualized His purpose of founding a Church. This was done by "giving God's people a new dispensation and thus forming a new Israel, the messianic community."¹⁰

He sees three essential elements in her institution. There are (1) the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity and the kingdom by which Jesus established the messianic people in respect of its faith; (2) by His baptism, celebration of the Supper and other priestly acts, and by

⁹ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 25.

His death followed by the outpouring of water and blood, He instituted the sacraments by which His people enter into the fellowship of communal life; (3) by the calling of His disciples, the promises made to Peter before (Matt. 16) and after the Passion (Jn. 21), the different actions establishing the Twelve in their apostolic powers, and the solemn sending forth, He gave the messianic community the structure of the apostolic ministry and of its hierarchical powers. These he summarizes as the (1) deposit of faith (2) the deposit of the sacraments (3) the deposit of ministries or apostolic powers. These are the means of grace, in co-operation with the action of the Holy Spirit. God raises up the faithful individuals who constitute the Church as Societas fidelium.¹¹

Congar holds that tradition has developed from the days of persecution that she is an institution, a collegium, a corpus, a universitas. The corporative idea in the Fathers was different from the Roman juridical idea, even though at times the latter prevailed in the Church. This meant a

¹¹ Loc. cit.

sovereign power exercising dominion over a given territory, imposing a uniform system and ruling the life of the body.

But the corporative idea:

the principle of unity is not so much rule by a territorial authority as the relation of many diverse parts with a spiritual principle of order, idea or purpose. (...) Where the Church is concerned the spiritual principle of unity is faith, the total giving up and adhering of the human person to God.¹²

The Church is the body organized on this principle from the tenth century somewhat, but definitely from the twelfth on.

The Church becomes organized on the principle of collegiality, although canonists at the close of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries envisaged society as a given domain with central authority and not as a people organizing itself. De Ecclesia becomes fixed and the hierarchical principle emphasized (this is not questioned), but the principle of collective life at the heart of collegiality and tradition is forgotten or put in the background.¹³

12 Ibid., p. 28.

13 Ibid., p. 29.

He holds that the idea of the community of the faithful made by its members was alive from the Fathers to the Counter-Reformation. And in the Church, a believer was one sacramentally incorporated into the ecclesial reality. It was not only the faith he professed in the trinitarium symbol, it was the reality in him of baptism and his being part of the Church, and which consecrated and united every moment of his existence to Christ. But:

during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, then at the Reformation and in certain currents of thought, there was an exclusive and seriously aberrant development of the aspect whereby the Church is made by her members.¹⁴

Consequently the theology of de Ecclesia developed as a theology only of her institution and hierarchical power of mediation.

Behind this analysis he reaches two conclusions. First, the "idea that the faithful are the pleroma of the hierarchy." This means that the hierarchical continuance of Christ's priestly, prophetic and kingly powers which they possess are shared in by the people in a subordinate sense. Second, "the idea of an association of communal

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 32.

principle with the hierarchical principle." God's people are a hierarchically ordained community.¹⁵

It could be said that Pere Congar's re-evaluation of the Church in Lay People in the Church is chiefly a re-examination of the concept of tradition on the matter. The Mystery of the Temple examines the Church in biblical concepts, focusing attention on God's presence in the Church. Here he concludes that the Church is the people of God whose beginnings are made known to us in the Old Testament, "but she is God's people under absolutely new conditions." The revelation of what God's people is, begins with the Old Testament, "and St. Paul is intent on pointing out the continuity of the Church with Israel, but this revelation is only complete in the New Testament." From the New Testament:

We learn that Israel can only be God's people and obtain the fulfillment of the promises by becoming the body of Christ, (...) We can only become truly God's people by being, through faith and baptism, one single living son with and in Christ.¹⁶

15 Ibid., p. 432.

16 Yves Congar, The Mystery of the Temple, The Newman Press, Westminster, 1958, pp. 295-296.

God's people exists in the Church under conditions which surpass the achievements of the former dispensation. Greater achievements are now possible because "the heavenly reality came down by faith (Heb. 11) and was given to men in Jesus Christ." Now God acts in the sacraments and the hierarchy as the Holy Spirit.

The specific character of the new covenant, the character which makes it definitive, is the fact that the reality of grace and eternal life is given with the signs, even though in its earthly phase, this reality is only present 'in mysterio', as 'a pledge'.¹⁷

The new covenant to which the people adhere contains promises, which are already fulfilled in them.

In the new covenant, God is not separated from His gifts. This means that "the spiritual reality of grace accompanies the sacraments and the institution of the Church. The Church is holy, not only because of her liturgy or because God acts through her. But chiefly because God has achieved His plan which is "the communication by God of His own inner life and holiness." Sanctity means inner

17 Ibid., p. 298.

communion and conformity with Jesus Christ.¹⁸ The people are the temple in which He dwells and this is the fulfillment of the covenant.

Congar believes that Christ during His Pasch, passed through death. The body which came out of the tomb is a temple not made by human hands. It is a new creation: a new man. The "whole theology of the new covenant, made as it was in the blood of Christ and in His Pasch," is relevant here. "This new covenant is the very act by which the new Jerusalem is founded." The people are an eschatological Temple. The Apocalypse proclaims the Easter of the Church and the world. The Church shares in the Easter of Jesus, but not completely.¹⁹

Under the new covenant human nature shares the Spirit which belongs to Christ. Man once more becomes soul, body and spirit, and recovers its full image which had been disfigured by sin. This comes into each man by the sacraments and the ascetic life. This is the indwelling of God under the new covenant, of His dwelling

18 Ibid., p. 202.

19 Ibid., p. 223.

with His people.²⁰

During the pilgrimage and the warfare of God's people, Jesus is the means whereby all who are His come to the Father, (John 14:6; Heb. 10:20). (...) Jesus in His sacred humanity itself shares to the full the glory and power of Him whose perfect equal He is in His divine nature.²¹

His human nature is our temple in that heaven where our temple is God alone. "Such then is the nature of the new and eternal covenant."²²

For Congar, Israel was consecrated (Ex. 19:5-6) and holy. But she was not holy intrinsically as is the Body of Christ in which God dwells. He sees this body as the only sacred reality in the world transformed ontologically. This sacred reality has three forms: the body born of Mary now glorified; the body made present in the Eucharist; the Church, "the Christian community as Christ's body."²³

This community is made up of human beings, the faithful and their pastors. (...) But mystically these men and women are the members of Jesus

20 Ibid., p. 265.

21 Ibid., p. 235.

22 Loc. cit.

23 Ibid., p. 298.

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Christ, they have in them His Spirit as the source of their life.²⁴

The real history of the Church is not external. It is supernatural, the history of the "invisible Missions through which God makes His Presence ever deeper in the members." Thus building the body into an "everlasting spiritual temple."

The faithful are truly living stones in this temple. God has entered their life down to its very roots. They are truly 'holy', because since the Incarnation and Easter, God has personally entered our world and is really one with men.²⁵

The new covenant gave this life promised in the Old Testament to God's new people, the Church. The people are a living temple awaiting complete fulfillment in the world to come in which God will fulfill completely and permanently all the promises of the covenant.

Peter Ellis holds that the kingdom of God on earth is the theme of the Bible. In the Old Testament God created a people and bound them to Himself by means of

24 Loc. cit.

25 Ibid., pp. 298-299.

covenants. God reveals His will through Moses who sealed a covenant between God and His people. A comparison between berith and diatheke was made using Peter Hartman's Encyclopaedic Dictionary of the Bible. Joseph Bonsirven believes that primitive Christianity must be seen without the attitudes and ideas of later centuries, and in its own environment. In doing so, he holds that Jesus created an EKKLESIA, a new Qahal, a new covenanted people, created by the covenant inaugurated at the Last Supper which was the fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament prophets. J. Giblet believes that God's Word created a people united by a covenant. Jesus is the fulfillment of the covenant and God's Word Himself and created a new people. For Louis Bouyer, the Word of God creates a new Qahal Yahweh. The new covenant is renewed each time the priest renews the covenant in the Mass. Yves Congar holds that the new covenant creates a people into a Temple of living stones, who are the Body of Christ, whose life is the Holy Spirit.

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Summary of the Catholic Position

The Catholic position is that the entire Bible contains one major theme, the kingdom of God on earth moving toward heaven. The Old Testament is the account of how God intervened in history and created a people of God bound to Him by a covenant. In the Pentateuch we find the history of how God created and formed the people of God. The Sinai covenant is the most important step in revealed religion as God communicates to men through Moses. God takes the human form of the covenant and raises it to a divine covenant whereby he binds man to Himself by laws and promises. The covenants with Adam and Abraham were preparations for the Sinai covenant.

This covenant was bilateral, conditional (broken by Israel and repudiated by God); circumcision became its sign, and the covenant was ratified by the people as a group. It was developed by Moses from the Hittite Suzerainty pact of which it has identical conditions and promises. The old covenant created a priestly people, the covenant being located at the core of a worshipping community. Covenant renewal ceremonies were regularly carried out at the northern sanctuaries every seven years.

The people of God, Israel, were called from Egypt to hear the word of God to which they agreed. They

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accepted this word and this acceptance was sealed in blood, which was considered the seat of life, and belonged to God. The fundamental duty of the covenant was to be faithful to God who would be faithful to His people by His graces and protection. The people were unfaithful to the covenant and a major reform which consisted of a solemn covenant renewal with a Passover celebration was attempted by King Josias but was not successful. The new covenant theology begins in the Old Testament in Jeremias and Ezechiel, both of which contain the notion that the old covenant was repudiated by God, who promises a new covenant in the future.

Jesus is the fulfillment of these prophecies. At the Last Supper Jesus describes Himself as the fulfillment of the covenant. At the Paschal meal where the events of the Exodus and Sinai were recalled, Jesus instituted a new covenant. The shedding of blood is the beginning of the new covenant and Jesus is its mediator. The sacrifice of Jesus inaugurates a new, eternal covenant and a new people of God.

This new covenant is characterized by the gift of Jesus' Spirit. Through Baptism men rise according to this Spirit and become the people of the new covenant, a cultic community born at Pentecost. These people are the heir to all the promises to Israel, a royal priesthood, the people of God. These people gather to hear the Kerygma,

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the WORD spoken through the Apostles whom Jesus sent, Who was sent by the Father.

The liturgy is God's people called together by God's Word through the Apostolic ministry, to hear the Word, adhere to it, and seal by the eucharistic sacrifice the covenant between God and His people: Jesus seals the covenant and is sacramentally present in the sign of the covenant, the appearances of wine which remain after transubstantiation.

The Catholic tradition has always understood itself in terms of the messianic people of God. The history of salvation is the record of God's desire to be present with men. The temple in the Old Testament begins this presence. In the new covenant Jesus is present to His people in the Spirit, in grace, whereby He communicates His own inner life to them. This Spirit and life makes the people into a temple of living stones where God dwells. It makes them into a holy temple awaiting complete fulfillment as the Mystical Body of Christ.

Comparison of the Jewish and Protestant with the Catholic.

In the four Jewish categories surveyed above there is no new covenant. According to Kaufman Kohler, the Mosaic covenant at Sinai created a priest-people nation

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who was to mediate God's name to the nations. This is very similar to the Catholic approach to the Old Covenant, except that he sees the Sabbath and not circumcision as the sign of the old covenant. Although he sees the old covenant as permanent he does see in the Old Testament renewals of the covenant by the Jews. This point, and a reconsideration of Jeremias and Ezechiel, are where ecumenical dialogue could commence.

Mordecai Kaplan on the other hand, differs greatly from the Catholic and the other Jews concerning the old covenant because he does not see a transcendent God intervening in the affairs of men. The Jews are one people among others. However, he does believe that a world Jewish conference should renew the Jewish covenant as a sign of leadership for true humanism. But ecumenical dialogue would be extremely difficult without a concept of a transcendent God.

There are very close similarities between the Catholic and Orthodox Jewish positions. In the Orthodox view, the Jews are a kingdom of priests, called to be holy - God's Segulah. They must witness to God's glory and the redemption of His people from Egypt. To do this requires ethical and spiritual separation. The liturgical consideration of the Passover feast as an event that still occurs today has a distinct similarity to the Catholic liturgy.

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But neither Hirsh nor Kook emphasizes the covenant renewals in the Old Testament itself. The primary place for dialogue would be on the Old Testament concept of a kingdom of priests formed by the old covenant.

Buber's theology of the founding of the people of God at Sinai is remarkably similar to Catholic old covenant theology. In both, God reveals Himself and creates a people through the Nabi Moses. The source of the covenant in Exodus and his description is almost the same as the Catholic. The sharp difference is that he sees one permanent covenant still in effect. Also, Buber does not see the other covenant renewal events in the Bible as true covenant ceremonies; they are mere sacred events for the benefit of the people. There is much agreement on the old covenant theology and further union is suggested also by a reconsideration of the major prophets.

Eichrodt's concept of the covenant as a personal union between God and Israel is identical with the Catholic. The covenant in both was at the center of the culture and involved a total ordering of the people to God. There is no difference in his view that the covenant was an act repeated in order to renew the source and life of the tribes and the union with God, and the Catholic. He has developed the old covenant concept more extensively than Old Testament Catholic theologians. He agrees with

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Catholic theology that the Old Testament predictions are not specific and not to be mechanically fulfilled. Also he sees the old covenant terminated: this was confirmed in the Exile, and a new covenant promised particularly by Jeremiah and Ezechiel. This covenant, as with the Catholic, is fulfilled in Jesus. There are two major differences between Eichrodt's position and the Catholic position. The first is that he tends to see the charismatic as opposed to the priestly elements. Secondly, he sees the presence of God over the tent and the ark as transitory. In the Catholic interpretation God's presence is permanent up to the Exile. These points are important in seeing how God acts in communicating with His people and in understanding the new covenant.

Richardson's view that Jesus re-interpreted the old covenant is identical with the Catholic. Jesus is the new Moses and a new mediator. The death of Jesus is the sacrificial act by which a new covenant is ratified between God and a new Israel, a new people of God. The Church is the new people of God as were the Jews the people of God under the old covenant. Jesus at the Last Supper instituted a new Passover-memorial which commemorated the deliverance of the new Israel from sin and death, a liturgical act. When performed by the people of God today, Christ is the high priest of their offering. Each time it is performed

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today the whole gospel in its saving power is made present. There seems to be a difference however, when he says that it is not a re-enactment or repetition of Calvary in which the priest offers again the body and blood of Christ as sacrifice." Ecumenical dialogue on this point is indicated for clarification. He says that it is the means, in the biblical sense, by which the Church can take part in Christ's offering in Heaven. Under the new covenant the worshippers are present already in Heaven as Jesus is there and offers our worship for us. This is the fulfilled new covenant. There is an excellent point for ecumenical dialogue here on the notion of priesthood in the Church although there is a difference between his position and the sense in which sacrifice is expressed in Pope Pius XII's encyclical Mediator Dei.

Barth's idea is that Christ in the Incarnation creates a new covenant, mediates knowledge of God, and creates a new man. There is a great similarity with the Catholic with the difference that in Barth man has no knowledge of God at all except as revealed by Christ. This is a different biblical anthropology from the Catholic. His concept of a holy people witnessing to God's act in Christ also differs from the Catholic. The people are holy because of Christ's sanctity, but Barth does not see a participation by the people of God in Christ's grace. Witnessing seems

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to be pointing to a past event only, and not to God's action in His people who are assimilated to Christ, as in Catholic Theology, by the sacraments. Barth does not speak of a liturgical participation in Christ's act but only of bearing witness to the revealed word. In this sense he deviates from the Catholic position. But there is much room for discussion on the Incarnation and the covenant and the holy people of the covenant.

Bultmann holds that Jesus did not intend a liturgical covenant-renewing act at the Last Supper. The idea of the covenant was added by Paul and not Jesus. Paul and the Apostles wished to make the Church the people of God and appropriated to themselves the Old Testament title. The Catholic position through the Gospels and Paul attributes the covenant and the people of God directly to Jesus' intention and differs fundamentally with Bultmann on this point. Nevertheless, his view of the Church as the Eschatological Congregation is very similar to the Catholic. That is, that Christ is the purpose of history and the fulfillment of the history of salvation, and that this eschatological reality awaits complete fulfillment in the people of God. There is room for dialogue with Bultmannian thought on this concept. The radical differences seem to be in biblical anthropology, philosophy and exegesis.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The investigation reveals that these concepts are an excellent starting point for ecumenical dialogue. Each author lays great stress on the concepts and the investigation shows very definite fundamental similarities. Mordecai Kaplan is the single theological deviant but he does not abandon the concepts for Judaism completely. For all of the others the concepts are centrally located in their theological syntheses, and derived their ideas from a common source, the Bible. In all the covenant is seen as a principle of unity. A principle which unites men to God and to each other as the people of God. The research also reveals the liturgical dimension of the covenant and uses the Bible as a common source for this perspective. But there are incomplete ideas revealed in this area by all the authors selected.

Since the concepts of the covenant and the people of God are common to all three faiths, further ecumenical activity is suggested in two ways.

1. There could be a complete re-investigation and re-evaluation of the common source, the Bible, by exegetes, biblical theologians and theologians of the three groups. This investigation would be most effective if done in common on a step systematic basis.
2. Theologians who stress the concepts of the covenant and the people of God could be encouraged to re-evaluate

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these concepts in relation to their individual systems and theologies.

If such work were to be done at this time during the Vatican Council it may well influence the formation and contents of the De Ecclesia schema and the future unity of all men in Christ.

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APPENDIX 1

ABSTRACT OF

A Determination of the Value of the Concepts of the Covenant and the People of God Derived from Representative Contemporary Jewish, Protestant and Catholic Theologians as a Basis for Ecumenical Dialogue and Agreement

The Theological Commission of the Second Vatican Council has decided to include a Chapter on the People of God in the Schema De Ecclesia. This Chapter will be after the first on the Mystery of the Church, and before a third on the hierarchical ministry. The three faiths, Judaism, Protestantism and Catholicism have in common a basic idea of a people of God made into a people by the biblical notion of a covenant, which binds the people to God and to each other. The purpose of the thesis is to determine the value of these concepts as a basis for dialogue and agreement, as found in representative theologians who stress the Bible as a source in their theologies.

Chapter One on Judaism contains the views on the covenant and people of God from: 1) Kaufman Kohler, Reform Theology; 2) Mordecai Kaplan, Transnaturalism; 3) Samson Raphael Hirsh and Abraham Isaac Kook, Orthodoxy; 4) Martin

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Buber, Cultural Zionism. Chapter Two on Protestantism has five selections: 1) Walter Eichrodt's work on the old covenant is the most extensive; 2) Next there is an examination of the meaning of the word covenant in the Bible; 3) Alan Richardson's insight of Jesus as re-interpret-er of the old covenant is next presented. This is followed by 4) Karl Barth's view on the Word as covenant and 5) Rudolph Bultmann's idea of the covenant of the eschato-logical congregation.

Chapter Three on Catholicism is parallel to the second to some extent, containing sections on the old and new covenants, and an examination of the word covenant in the Bible. 1) Peter Ellis sees the Old Testament as God creating a covenanted people; 2) Joseph Bonsirven's insight is that the new covenant creates a new Qahal; 3) J. Giblet sees God's Word as acting in the people, creating the history of salvation; 4) Louis Bouyer's interpretation is that the covenant is a Word creating a new Qahal Yahweh; 5) Yves Congar views the covenanted people as a temple of living stones.

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The conclusion states that the concepts of the covenant and the people of God are an excellent source for ecumenical dialogue because of the great similarities revealed in the authors selected. In each the covenant is seen as a principle of unity which unites men to God and to each other as the people of God. It is suggested further that a re-investigation and re-evaluation be made of the source, the Bible. This would be done most effectively if exegetes, biblical theologians, and theologians of different faiths did this systematically in common. Also, theologians who stress the concepts of the covenant and the people of God should be encouraged to re-evaluate these concepts within their individual theologies. This work would have great value if done during the interim period of the Second Vatican Council as it could influence the formation and contents of the De Ecclesia Schema and the future unity of all men in Christ.