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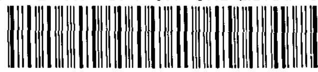
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Community Adaptation in the Judeo-Christian Tradition

By

John K. Overton

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For

Professor Frank E. Eakin, Jr.
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The Cycle of Assimilation, Dissent, and Altered Expression in the Jewish Festival of Pesach

Pesach represents **the** pivotal event in Jewish history to many, but its historical development bristles even more intensely and significantly than is often acknowledged. Its origins reach behind the Exodus event into pastoral cultures, behind the values of modern Jewry, behind the sensibilities of ancient Yahwism. Its understanding has been creatively synthesized, assimilated, digested and shaped within the culture of the Hebrews and then within the culture of the Jews, but this is all based on a historical victory. Cultural assimilation, military rebellion, and a consolidating expression after rebellion are all present.

The context, setting, and development of Pesach are essential elements to be understood before the richness of the Passover accomplishments can be appreciated. But the festival's history is unclearly defined. No extra-biblical evidence exists to demythologize definitively or to confirm its earliest roots but nonetheless several theories are illuminating. In the eighteenth century B.C., Indo-Aryan peoples swept across Asia Minor and Syria. Constellations of people fled moving through Canaan towards the Nile; among these peoples perhaps were an Asiatic people, the Hyksos, in addition to the Hebrews.[1] The Hyksos ("rulers of foreign

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[1]Theodor Herzl Gaster, Passover: Its History and Traditions (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1949), p. 31.

countries") indeed seem to have surged through Syria and Canaan into Egypt, however the motives for this eisodus may be different, suggests Harry Orlinsky. Palestinian rains were not reliable, and a late thirteenth-century document discusses how inhabitants of Edom travelled to Egypt where water was abundant ". . . to keep themselves alive and to keep their cattle alive." This possibly could be linked biblically to the famine in the Joseph story (Gen. 42).[2]

Most striking are the similarities between the Hyksos and the Hebrews. Both the Hyksos and the Hebrews were of southern Mesopotamia origin. Both were nomadic, shepherding peoples, and in fact the first-century historian, Josephus, quotes an Egyptian writer to have interpreted "Hyksos" to mean "King-shepherds."[3]

Interesting also are the blatant similarities of names: evidence reveals that one Hyksos king was named Jacob-el ("may El [the mountain god] give protection"), while another was named Jacob-baal ("may Baal protect"). The story of Joseph's rising in the court stands out distinctly and, historically, fits the time frame of the Hyksos' reign.[4] Furthermore, biblically the Hebrews are to have settled in Goshen; in near proximity the Hyksos built

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[2]Harry M. Orlinsky, "The Bondage and Exodus of Israel," in The Passover Anthology, ed. Philip Goodman (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961), pp. 4-5.

[3]Mordell Klein, ed., Passover (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973), p. 4.

[4]Orlinsky, p. 4.

their capitol at Avaris (i.e. Tannis).[5] Lastly, the Hyksos are believed to have been expelled by the Egyptians in roughly 1550 b.c.. Joseph's fall from power in Exodus 1:8-11 fits this model effortlessly; Seti I (1305-1290) and Rameses II (1290-1224) would unlikely deal well with those who previously enjoyed the luxuries of the Hyksos rule.[6] Simply, it is probable that the Hyksos and Hebrews are linked in some fashion, and with the return of Egyptian control losses of favored positions were inevitable. It is within this vista that Pesach seems to earn its authenticating characteristics.

Etymologically "Pesach" has traditionally been understood to reflect either the Exodus 12:13 translation (to save or spare) or the Exodus 12:23 understanding (to skip or to passover), but both are later interpretations.[7]2 Scholars have derived Pesach from a word meaning "to limp," as limping ceremonies and dances were well established in early times.[8] Furthermore, this understanding was so

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[5]Orlinsky, p. 5.

[6]Bernhard Anderson, Understanding The Old Testament (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), p. 42. For alternate theories see: Gaster, pp. 26-27; J. B. Segal, The Hebrew Passover: From the Earliest Times To A.D. 70 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 78-113.

[7]Hayyim Schauss, Guide to Jewish Holy Days: History and Observance, trans. Samuel Jaffe (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), p. 40.

[8]Gaster offers as one ancillary example the Elijah event on Mount Carmel writing: "Thus, when Elijah challenged the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel, the latter, we are told, limped beside the altar--the Hebrew word is pasach--as part of their statutory procedure (I Kings 18: 26)." See Passover: Its History and Traditions, p. 23.

normative among Arab and Syrian peasants that the word "limp" became synonymous with "mourn." A Babylonian document lists the term "hopper" as a term for a professional mourner, and even a Canaanite poem of the fourteenth century B.C. uses the expression "hoppings" (perhaps "skippings") in like manner.[9] This appears to fit smoothly within plausibility as ancient peoples understood their fertility God's to die in the winter and resurrect in the spring. The dancing appears to have been a form of sympathetic magic to inspire or revitalize fertility.[10] Pesach could have arisen from these traditions, but most scholars concede that as inclusive theories these are remote possibilities.[11] It is more probable that the etymology of Pesach rose out of the observance of sacrificing a firstborn animal of the flock for protection from disease and misfortune and to insure the blessings of a healthy season.[12]

The month when kids and lambs were born was a time of celebration for the shepherds, and it was most fitting to sacrifice the prime of a flock at the first full moon, usually the fourteenth or fifteenth day of the month. Tents would be erected, families and perhaps small groups would be

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[9]Gaster, p. 24.

[10]Gaster, p. 24. See also Segal, pp. 96-97.

[11]J. B. Segal, The Hebrew Passover: From the Earliest Times To A.D. 70, London: Oxford University Press, 1963, p. 103.

[12]Schauss, Guide to Jewish Holy Days: History and Observance, p. 40.

brought together, an animal roasted whole, and all would partake of the celebration.[13] Several important ramifications are worthy of attention.

For an ancient people this rite was an efficacious way to secure safety, welfare, and fertility of the flocks; it was an inoculation from plagues and other possible misfortune.[14] The demand or caution to break no bones of the offering seems tied to this assimilating sensibility. The sacrifice was a symbol of the flock, and an offering to a god represented the herd. To maim or offer a maimed animal was risking displeasure of the god and hence the health of the flock. Bitter herbs were likely used with the feast as they would neutralize any impurities eaten, but perhaps most importantly they would prevent evil spirits from possessing a person; evil spirits were especially abundant early in the year.[15]

A feast of this nature is a characteristic kinship rite of many cultures in primitive states. The Kumis of Southeast India, for example, kill a goat; and the "blood of life" is smeared onto all the members (i.e. shared). In

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[13]Schauss, Guide to Jewish Holy Days: History and Observance, p. 39. While in Bernhard Anderson, Understanding The Old Testament, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1975), p. 62, the author suggests that the Feast of Unleavened Bread was originally fused with Pesach, most scholars maintain, however, that these were originally separate festivals which were later consolidated.

[14]Hayyim Schauss, The Jewish Festivals: From Their Beginnings To Our Own Day, trans. Samuel Jaffe (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1938), p. 40.

[15]Gaster, pp. 22, 19.

Madagascar, brotherhood is achieved by drinking from the same container. Inhabitants of Timorlant kill a slave and jointly consume him, and similar examples are abundant.[16]

The early rites were also believed to bring man into communion with God; this is decisive. A Canaanite document of the fourteenth century B.C. ". . . prescribes the placing of 'seats' for the gods at a sacrificial ceremony."[17] Hence, to smear the blood on tents was a physical sign of devotion, commitment, and loyalty, men to men and men to God.[18] Abraham's offering of animals to make a covenant with YHWH (Gen. 15:10-12) may reflect an adaptation of this idea.

In summation, the development of Pesach thus far illustrates the first stage of religious responsiveness, assimilation from external culture. Pesach seems to be an early family kinship rite in a nomadic, itinerant, shepherding people; the Hebrews appear to be a small part in this great mass of early people. Around a primitive cosmology various practices were naturally assimilated, providing the unrefined material for the later development of the festival. Smearing the blood of a sacrifice on tent posts, eating bitter herbs during the "Passover feast," and the distinct demand to offer in sacrifice only a prime animal illustrative of the healthy herd appear to have been

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[16]Gaster, p. 17.
[17]Gaster, p. 19.
[18]Gaster, p. 20.

cultural imperatives which were consolidated.

The next material meshed into the fabric of the developing Pesach ritual is the "Feast of Unleavened Bread," or Massoth. It commemorated the season of harvest and, in similar fashion to Pesach, it sought to earn favor from God(s). Perhaps the most important portion of the rite is the celebration of Omer, where the first sheaf of Barley was given to the priest as a representative sample of the new harvest. In turn, the priest sacrificed this sample to God(s) in the hope of earning divine favor.[19] Unlike Pesach, which was a family celebration, the Festival of Unleavened bread became a local ceremony, usually performed at the "High Places." The priest would chant prayers and blessings, symbolically waving the sacrificial sheaf over the altar to prevent drought or other misfortune.[20] It was a great bonding celebration in the community.

As time passed the festival of Unleavened Bread and the Pesach rite became fused--assimilated--and together they created a new festival, more uniting and significant to the Hebrew people than the soon to be forgotten original parts. Pesach gave identity and stability to the family and the feast of the Unleavened Bread gave identity and stability to the community. Hence, a synthesizing sensibility is

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[19]Schauss, Guide to Jewish Holy Days: History and Observance, p. 41.

[20]Schauss, Guide to Jewish Holy Days: History and Observance, p. 43.

operating and productive even before the Exodus event, though important to note at this stage, the festival is still not clearly solidified. With the stifling of the assimilation process during the pre-Exodus period, however, the process shifts; it becomes aggressive dissent.

Jewish tradition holds that the departure from Egypt occurred on the fifteenth of Nisan, but the year of departure is open to question. One view accepts the year to be 2248 after creation, or 1313 B.C.. Other suggested dates have ranged from 1308, 1306 to 1280, however scholars lack consensus.[21] Most appropriate and widely accepted, however, is B. W. Anderson's dating of the Exodus event, early in the reign of Rameses II, roughly, 1290 B.C., or soon after.[22]

As the pharaohs persecuted the slaves with extensive, rigorous building projects, and unhostile creative adaptation was stymied, revolt became inevitable. Jews rallied around a leader and an escape was executed. The chase recorded in Exodus illustrates two important dimensions. On the first level, a military rebellion is substantiated. An actual historical figure is undeniable, an actual historical event irrefutable. Religious and social oppression became severe and assimilation became dissent. But on the other

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[21]Klein, p. 2. For alternate theories see: Gaster, pp. 38-39 and, Joseph K. Hertz, "Israel in Egypt: The Historical Problems," in The Passover Anthology, ed. Philip Goodman (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Scoiety of America, 1961), p. 8.

[22]Anderson, pp. 42-43.

level, an quick shift into the third stage of religious responsiveness occurs. Oral tradition immediately begins to authenticate and codify the event. Involved in the cycle is a fusion of assimilation and dissent before the third stage reaches full operating capacity.

According to a literal reading of the text, Moses was saved by arranged good fortune, found in the river in a pitched basket by Pharaoh's daughter. His staff was a magical weapon, a serpent that devoured all other serpents. He caused water to become as blood. Acting for God he delivered plague after plague, piling one disaster onto another. There were ten plagues, forty years of wandering, 600,000 Hebrews within a "mixed multitude" fled Egypt (Ex. 12:37), and Moses parted the Yam Suph. The story continues until the once powerful "historical" structure collapses. A nationalistic construct simply can no longer be denied; the unaggressive assimilation process can no longer be refuted.

Even more, Moses' life parallels a common mythical hero, Sargon I.[23] Sargon I is purported to have been saved by a basket in similar manner to Moses. The staff, the leprous hand, and the water changing into blood were all

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[23]The Oxford Study Edition of the Bible (R.S.V.) reports this myth to be circulating roughly 2600 B.C.. This is earlier than the Moses account and hence it is probable that Sargon I provided the model from which Moses was interpreted and not visa versa.

familiar folklore of the day.[24] Even the plagues might better be seen as defeats of common Gods of the day, or simply statements of YHWH's ultimate sovereignty. Hapi was the Nile god, Hekt, a frog-headed goddess, Re, the sun god, for example.[25]

The dramatic separation of the "Red Sea" is broken down equally.[26] The Egyptians, Babylonians, Hittites, and Canaanites all had legends separating waters. Examples are found in the Enuma Elish or the Gilgamish epic. A legend of an African tribe in Watipas recounts how an ancient king was escaping from enemies when he became backed against a body of water. He sacrificed a sheep, dipped a stick into its blood, and struck the water to separate it. Josephus relates that when Alexander the Great marched against Persian forces a body of water "miraculously" separated, allowing passage. Examples are abundant.[27] In pressurizing assimilation, dissent bursts out, and rapidly these first two stages are consolidated. These two modes of religious

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[24]Gaster, pp. 40-41. Also discussed are the cross-cultural similarities of Moses's staff.

[25]Klein, p. 11.

[26]Historically, scholars agree that "Red Sea" is a greek mis-translation of Yam Suph, or "Reed Sea." It is likely that the scholars recording the event understood the descrepencies between the hebrew documents and the oral tradition. However, as modern interpretretations carry this misunderstanding despite "better" knowledge, so apparently did the greek scholars simply record a well established oral tradition. The cultural creative dissent from history is here crucial. Such dissent illustrates a culture attempting not simply to alter history, but a sensibility seeking to energize a historical event.

[27]Gaster, pp. 42-44.

adaptation provide the material from which the third stage of altered expression emerges.

Pesach has roots in several documentary traditions within the Pentateuch. Some scholars have embraced the Graf-Wellhausen documentary hypothesis and made appropriate claims and generalizations regarding different author's intentions and styles.[28] However, critical perusal of the various Pentateuchal traditions ineluctably points to a conclusion quite different than one would originally anticipate. There is **at best** minor evidence reflective of traditional narrative strains; dividing Pentateuchal Pesach traditions do not reproduce cohesive narratives.[29] There is a workable and supported theory, however.

Segal delineates and compares the "narrative accounts" of the J, E, JE, D, H, and P sources within the categories of Pre-Exodus, Exodus, and Post-Exodus material. Some consistent uses of words do present themselves within certain "narrative traditions," but these are nominal in light of more serious conflicts contained in the sources. In both Ex. 12:3 ff. (P source) and Ex. 12:21 ff. (E source), for one example, the heads of households are given authority to handle the blood of the sacrifice.[30] However, this was a strictly enforced **priestly** perogative--why would

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[28]See William E. Elder, "The Passover," Review and Expoitor, 74, No. 4 (1977), 511-521, and Segal, pp. 72-77.
[29]Segal, p. 72.
[30]See Segal, pp. 74-77, for further development and illustration of this position.

a priestly editor not suppress a tradition contrary to his purpose? Segal asserts that a separate compiler gathered the available Passover sources and then drew from each source those aspects fitting to his understanding of the evolution and practice of Pesach.[31] This decisively supports the thesis. The religious traditions once assimilated from other cultures, the traditions resultant from dissent, which were consolidated, are now made uniquely Jewish. The compiler does not draw from other cultures in this endeavor, nor does he revolt against a cultural setting. Rather, he interprets, codifies and legitimizes those traditions now solidly within his religious heritage. The completion of the Pesach compiler's work probably corresponds to the time of the approximate consolidation of the Pentateuch, that is, approximately 450 B.C..[32]

In summation, a family-sized, purely nomadic rite and a community-sized, locally observed agricultural celebration are consolidated into a new tradition, in some ways reminiscent of both. But the catalyst of this union is activated only **after** creative expression is arrested by oppression. The developmental machinery of this is complex and intricate, but the creative dissent demanded in the present by the exigency of a richer, superseding future is now easily seen. The Exodus becomes a pivotal event within

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[31]Segal, pp. 74-77.
[32]Segal, p. 77.

history for the Hebrews, but its importance transcends the refusal to accept bondage. At each point the present becomes sharp-focused, the past less bright, and the traditions are interpreted with respect to the new pressure and demands at hand.

Expression need not be written, however. One practice introduced in antiquity but modified, ultimately illustrating the third stage of creative innovation and responsiveness has been the opening of the door during the Seder meal.[33] Some have suggested that the original reason for the introduction of this activity was related to the anticipation of Elijah's return. In a different vein, some Passover observances involve the head of the household opening the door and inviting others to join the family's feast, proclaiming "he that is hungary, come and eat; he that is needy come and join our Pesach." Other theories have been considered, but most scholars will concede that the original roots of this observance have simply been

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[33]There are numerous dramatic representations reflecting the fear, confusion and consternation of the Jews on this issue. In Schauss, The Jewish Festivals: From Their Beginnings To Our Own Day, p. 65, a dramatic skit practiced during the Seder meal by various Jewish sects is discussed. When the door is opened a traveller asks to share Passover but is first questioned and refused fearfully and harshly before he is finally admitted. This certainly reflects an unfortunate cultural mistrust of those outside the Jewish faith structure by at least some of practicing Judaism. See also the unfinished fictional short story, The Rabbi of Bacharach by Heinrich Heine, which captures the tremendous chaos and fear felt by a Jewish Rabbi during an attempted Blood Libel. This too is highly illustrative.

lost.[34] Doubtless, there are some truths in all of these accounts, but this is all the more supportive. The Jews have creatively assimilated a religious activity from their past cultural experience, but in a way to answer uniquely present pressures. Opening the door during the festival dispels myths such as the blood libel, and in addition projects the actual convivial atmosphere truly reflective of the celebration. There are numerous more examples available.[35]

In times of cultural acceptance, the tools of religious responsiveness are creative, unaggressive dissent, adaptation, and assimilation of past cultural traditions. Jewish freedom does not persevere by threatening or over-

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[34]Hayyim Schauss, Guide to Jewish Holy Days: History and Observance, trans. Samuel Jaffe (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), p. 81. See also Michael Asheri, Living Jewish (New York: Everest House, 1978), p. 168, where he sees its origin perhaps in the Elijah account, but the observance's continuation related to the Blood Libel accusations. This is the most appropriate interpretation in light of the Blood Libel impact.

[35]The Marranos separated from other Jewish sects in the Middle Ages are one example. The dates in their calender varied from traditional dates, they dropped the ceremony of burning Chomets, observed the Seder secretly, in addition most discontinued the smearing of blood on door posts. Interesting, however, is the introduction of beating a willow branch on the water of streams, symbolic of the Reed Sea triumph and victory over oppression. They may have been stiffled from traditional customs and observance, but they were not stopped from creatively drawing from the past to enrich and heighten the value of their present religious expression. In contrast, the Samaritans of Nablus in Palestine have not been oppressed and religiously contained. They still today observe ritual sacrifice, still today follow the rites of Passover in an uncorrupted manner similar if not identical to Pesach of antiquity. They are not an anomaly; they simply have not been pressed to dissent.

coming its opponents with violence when it has the opportunity to avoid this. Only when it becomes necessary, and the paths of peaceable adaptation and assimilation are unavailable, is the aggressive and assertive nature of religious adaptation used as a tool. When freedom is earned, however, then these modes show their preliminary characteristics; the machinery of these are riveted together. Religious expression next fastens these advances into place; religious expression can be observed in written form or even in the minutia of ritual observance. Pesach stands in the glory of this tradition.

The Cycle of Assimilation, Dissent, and Altered Expression in the Festival of Hanukkah

Similar to Pesach, Hanukkah commemorates deliverance and follows a very similar paradigm. While perhaps it might have originated as a second Sukkoth, it quickly outgrew this association and earned its own meaning and distinct form within the Jewish tradition. Historically the festival is tied to the victories of the Maccabees over Selucid control: assimilation is present pre-rebellion, and a solidifying, legitimizing expression post-rebellion. "Let my people go" was again intensified as a national affirmation. Theodor Gaster encapsulates this significance:

> Though inspired . . . by the particular situation of their own people, their struggle was instinct with universal implications. For what was really

> being defended was the principle that in a diversified society the function of the state is to embrace, not subordinate, the various constituent cultures, and that the complexion and character of the state must be determined by a cultural process of fusion on the one hand and selection on the other, and not by the arbitrary imposition of a single pattern on all elements.[36]

Even before the nascence of the formal Hanukkah celebration, the assimilatory process characteristic of mode one responsiveness is evident. The use of lights is most illustrative. Scholars agree that the use of lights in Hanukkah is probably a later addition appended to the festival. It appears that before the birth of Hanukkah, lights were commonly used as sympathetic magic to lengthen the days. This was common to cultures around Mesopotamia and Egypt. Egyptians, for example, lined-up oil lamps on the outside of their houses and burned them all night. As characteristic of early times and primitive peoples, the Jews held inveterate respect for the sun and feared its not rising. Thus, what appears to have happened is a very natural conjoining of separate observances, an assimilation of customs characteristic of the times. This is supported within the available literature regarding the use of lights in the festival.

The earliest recorded mention of the lights is made by Josephus, and here he is unsure whether the proper way to

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[36]Theodor Hertzl Gaster, "The Meaning of Hanukkah," in The Hanukkah Anthology, ed. Soloman Grayzel (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1976), p. 97.

light the candles was to begin with eight and work down each day or begin with one and work up, adding a candle each day.[37] Furthermore, some have asserted that the choice to date Hanukkah in the height of winter reflects a fusion commemorating the Maccabees and celebrating the coming longer days.[38] Phase one, assimilation from external culture, here provides the raw material which becomes integral to the later form of the festival.

Phase two of the process is evinced by the historical setting. The land of Israel was an important link between the Mesopotamian Valley and Egypt. Furthermore, Egyptian ambition frequently collided with Mesopotamian power. Expansion from either power was always threatening, however, and the land of Israel was an important buffer zone to possess. With Alexander the Great, Hellenization was effectively spread (Ammon, Moab, Edom for example), except for the Jews of Judea who were consistently resistive to external pressures. With Alexander's death in 323 B.C., the conquered, largely Hellenized "world," was divided. Ultimately, this division resulted in five controlling factions. As regards Judea, the powers of continuing interest revolve around Ptolemy and his descendants, who possessed Egypt

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[37]Schauss, p. 223. See also: Grazyel, p. 24.

[38]Jack Spong and Jack Daniel Spiro, Dialogue: In Search of Jewish Christian Understanding (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), p. 105. See also: Leo Trepp, The Complete Book of Jewish Observance (New York: Summit Books, 1980), p. 144.

and Judea, and Seleucus and his descendants, who controlled Syria and the Mesopotamia Valley. During the time surrounding the Maccabean revolt (initiated, 168 B.C.), Israel was then under the auspices of Selucid control. Antiochus IV, the ruler of the day, had some evidence that the Jews now desired Hellenization. This, combined with his ferocious ambition to unite his kingdom under one culture and several military defeats to Egypt, provided the impetus for the introduction of his sharp Hellenizing policies towards Judea.[39]

Because he was unsupportive of Antiochus' Hellenizing aims, the high Priest of Judea, Onias III, was therefore threatening, dangerous, and expendable. Moreover, Antiochus interpreted those Jews desiring Hellenization as supportive to a change in the Priesthood power. Consequently, Onias was replaced by Joshua, his brother, a moderate Hellenizer. As a well-paid pawn of Antiochus, he was to move Judea towards Antiochus' vision of cultural homogeny. Joshua soon changed his name to the more fitting Greek "Jason," and he expended Temple funds towards the introduction of Greek customs. Judea was divided: the Hellenizing Jews accepted the change and the traditional Jews were incensed.[40] But as

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[39]Allen Podget, "Secular Studies And Religious Uniqueness: A View of Hanukkah," Religious Education, 71, No. 6 (1976), pp. 598-600. See also: Soloman Grayzel, "Hanukkah and Its History," in The Hanukkah Anthology, ed. Philip Goodman (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1976), pp. 6-10.

[40]Hayyim Schauss, Guide To Jewish Holy Days, pp. 211-212.

it became increasingly apparent that Jason was a pawn of Antiochus, the more ardent Hellenizers of little religious loyalty rallied for an even more Hellenistic puppet Priest. With this, tension tightened and civil war embroiled Judea. Supported by Antiochus, however, Menelaus won, and a reign of terror was introduced. Important to note, however, Menelaus was unaffiliated with any priestly line.[41] The second phase of active, assertive dissent begins to emerge.

Antiochus was interested in Menelaus primarily for the riches offered him pending inevitable victory, however. Menelaus paid, but to the horror of the conservative factions of the Jews, he paid with the sacred articles of the Temple. Hence, when Antiochus was reported dead in battle, Jason reappeared well armed and now even better supported. Resultingly, Menelaus was forced out. It was only a rumor that Antiochus was dead, however, and when he learned of Jason's rebellion he returned outraged. Menelaus was reinstated and the final policies of Hellenization were implemented. All Jewish customs and practices were banned, but most importantly, the Temple was defiled--a statue of Zeus was placed on the altar.[42] This action is crucial as it precipitated direct political dissent. The adapting, less aggressive assimilation becomes penetrating military

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[41]Grazyel, p. 12.

[42]Grayzel, p. 13. See also: Schauss, Guide To Jewish Holy Days, p. 215.

dissent. Mattathias and his sons initiated the Maccabean revolt.

As the Syrian army marched through the countryside, groups of Jews gathered to form pockets of resistance: tension mounted and resistance became powerful. Judas, Mattathias' son, was well organized and strategically nimble, and soon his forces grew to be the strongest of the countryside resistance. In his first victory Judas Maccabeus crushed the Syrian forces led by Apollonius. A second force, somewhat larger, was then dispatched, under Seron, but Seron was also defeated. Realizing the band of resistance to be more significant in leadership, arms and support than first anticipated, the large battalions of generals Nicanor and Gorgias were dispatched. But they, too, were deftly handled by some brilliant strategy of Judas; they were divided, then conquered separately. These were important battles unifying the Jews. Next was the triumphant march on Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was protected by token guards and was easily overwhelmed. But once in the city, rather than searching out the heretics, immediate concentration was given to the refurbishment of the Temple, now defiled three years. The religious responsiveness in phase two, sharply illustrates itself here. For eight days there was a feast celebrating the victory-the military victory and the religious victory. The Temple was rededicated and the seeds of Judaism

replanted. But Lysias, a regent of Antiochus came to Jerusalem with overpowering forces; defeat was inevitable. Before the siege was complete, however, Antiochus died in a battle in the north. Moreover, he had appointed another general tutelage of his heir, Antiochus V. Lysias consequently ceased the siege and offered peace to a hopeless though determined band. Freedom of faith, practice, and worship was returned in addition to the agreement to stop imposed Hellenization and oppression. While the Syrian government reserved the right to appoint the high priest, the terms, especially in the dire position of Judea, could not be and were not refused. With prescribed limits, religious freedom had been secured and the spirit of the faith structure resecured.[43] Hence, as the religious impulse was suppressed, direct, aggressive action, phase two, became manifest.

Based on the victory of the Maccabees _Hanukkah_ has survived, but the way it has survived is perhaps related more to the third phase of religious responsiveness than to military victory. In the exigency of 168 B.C., revolt was necessary, but in the freedom of other eras, continued adaptation and innovation continue the festival. _Hanukkah_ is remembered as a day when religious and cultural freedom was earned, a day when the Temple was purified, but most

[43]Grayzel, p. 18. Susequent battles ensued, but for the purposes at hand are unnecessary to be delineated. Judah the Maccabee died in battle 167 B.C.

importantly, a day when the people's spirit of freedom triumphed in an universal way. For the third phase of religious adaptation, the development of the _Dreidel_ game is most illuminating.

The spirit of the festival is captured by the game. The _Dreidel_ game revolves around remembrance of the legend of one undefiled cruse of oil (one day's supply) which was found and burned in the Temple lamps for eight days. The rules are such that each of the children in a household are given money which with to gamble, and a spinning top called the _Dreidel_ is whirled. The _Dreidel_ is a four sided top inscribed with four Hebrew letters, one on each side. Together, these letters form an acrostic which is commonly understood as, "A Great Miracle Happened Here." If the gimmel, ג, representing _Gosdol_, i.e. "Great," lands up, then the child takes the whole kitty. If the nun rises, נ, representing _Nes_, i.e. "Miracle," then the child takes nothing from the kitty. The letter He, ה, stands for _Hayah_ and means "took place." Here the participant takes half of the pot. Shin, ש, represents _Sham_ and translates "over there." If this is spun then the child antes a predetermined amount.

The _Dreidel_ game is an example of normative third stage creative responsiveness operating in times not demanding intensive immediate dissent. Stale, dry legends which are no longer vivid in the cultural memory of the Jews are

renovated into a new form so as to remain functioning within the sensibility of the Jewish heritage. A jovial game, trivial in itself, transmits and perpetuates in children and adults a Jewish heritage.

Creative assimilation does not burn in the blood of a people when it can pulse; but when it is stymied, it can burn. When, in 168 B.C., a ruler became stifling and fatally destructive to Judaism, the prowess of dormant dissent revitalized. What the Maccabees refused, like the Hebrews of earlier times in Egypt, was not so much a particular government, although they did this too, but that government's rejection of the Jewish right of religious assimilation. Normative, rudimentary assimilation was arrested when Antiochus IV defiled the Temple, and immediately Judas Maccabeus became the catalyst for rebellion, the proponent for freedom. Spiritual freedom, however, asserts itself not in active aggression. In times no longer demanding political dissent, creative expression and assimilation within the culture continue to vitalize the faith structure. In Hanukkah, the Dreidel becomes a way to teach children and to remind adults that Judaism will survive.

The Function of Assimilation, Dissent, and Altered Expression Witnessed in Christianity: Romans 13

Aside from the process of assimilation, dissent, and altered expression witnessed in a particular festival, the arm of this process is far more extensive than might generally be assumed, reaching into the broadest depths of religious principle, the widest expanses of time. Assimilation, dissent, and altered expression actively function in Christianity, but they can function on a significantly larger scale than thus far presented. This broad, wider movement of religious responsiveness can be evidenced with Paul's perception of Church-State relations. Romans 13 begins phase one of this larger process.

Romans 13 echoes Paul's favorable evaluation of the Roman government from a practical posture. On several occasions citizenship benefits had been used, had provided Paul with vital protection.[44] In addition, Paul realized only too clearly the effects that proper citizenship could bring to the developing, striving Church. Solid, obedient and responsible behavior would inculcate respect from the community and favor from the State. In fact, others in his time sought similar favor from governing rulers.[45] The

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[44]See the accounts reported in Acts 21: 27- 40 and 23: 34-35.

[45]Karl Barth, The Epistle To The Romans, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 487. See also Pliny's letter to Trajan in the same period for an illustration of one similarly seeking a ruler's favor. In Documents Of The Christian Church,

fruits of proper obedience were especially appealing for alternate reasons, however. Violence or rebellion would have aroused retaliation which could not have been withstood by Christianity at this early stage.[46] Romans 13 has a practical dimension which must be considered.

In addition, Paul was affected by the traditions of his day and assimilated these into his theology.[47] God was to sweep away history and re-establish his throne. Despite form, structure, and the inevitable inadequacy of the State, during these times government was understood as divinely authorized and supported. It was considered an "order of creation" to be unreservedly accepted.[48] This was a widely held belief, and it was encouraged within the mystical religions of the day. Paul understood that Christians were to obey the State not because it was pure, but because it was a vessel of God's activity in the world. The churchman was not to feel tormented between Church and State; he was to serve both reverently and devotedly.[49] The kernel

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ed. Henry Bettenson (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 3-5.

[46]Barth, p. 486.

[47]For a discussion of the influence of the Hellenistic Mystery religions and Greek philosophy on Paul generally understood, see Irwin Edman, _The Mind of Paul_ (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1935), pp. 120-51 and H. J. Schoeps, _Paul_, trans. H. Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), pp. 15-34.

[48]Griffith, p. 156. See also John Knox, "Introduction And Exegesis of the Epistle to the Romans," _The Interpreter's Bible_, ed. George Arthur Buttrick et al. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), v. 9, pp. 600-602.

[49]Griffith, p. 156.

of this belief is borrowed. Here lies Paul's message.

In Romans 13:1-7, strict adherence to State is admonished, as Paul believed the hour of Christ's return pressing. Gunther Bornkamm asserts that, in fulfilling State obligation, it is likely that Paul hoped the Christians would be furnished with enriched opportunity to serve Christ and to prepare for his impending return.[50] 13:1-7 reinforce Paul's inveterate respect for the Roman government.

In addition to the possible relationship of Paul to the Mystery religions, scholars commonly link Romans 13:1-7 with Wisdom Literature, especially the Wisdom of Solomon 6:1-5.[51] Man is to offer unreserved and blunt commitment to existing State order, without hesitation. Rebellion is denied decisively; all power rises from God's ultimate sovereignty.[52] Karl Barth interprets these initial verses as illustrative of Paul's sound practical perception. To stand opposed with force belies genuine spiritual truth and simply fertilizes evil, increasing turbulence. Even at best, violent aggression merely exchanged one form of oppression for another.[53] 13:1-2 admonish careful, diligent, and responsible citizenship for the good of the Church and by the demand of God.

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[50]Gunther Bornkamm, Paul (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 210-12.

[51]Knox, p. 602.

[52]Archibald M. Hunter, The Epistle To The Romans (London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1955), p. 112.

[53]Barth, p. 481.

While not explicit in 13:3, "do what is good" certainly expresses a concern for abstention from evil and adherence to moral practice.[54] 13:4 indicates again God's sovereignty, and that the State is a manifestation of God's wrath.[55] 13:5 demands responsible citizenship to be inspired by more than fear. It is to be an extension of conviction and respect for God, from the "sake of conscience."[56] Barrett asserts that 13:6-7 represent the Christian's responsibility to "maintain the machinery" of the State not because of the State's power but because of its election by God.[57] Despite forms of "payment," the Christian is to pay fully all that he is able, to be debtless in all manners possible.[58]

Romans 13:8a introduces the next section of thought while adhering 13:1-7 to 13:8-14. Most significantly agape is employed in this pivotal verse. Bornkamm suggests that the thrust of one through seven encourages a debtlessness seminal to an attuned focus towards the fulfillment of love.[59] Agape is to be positive-focused and non-vindictive.[60] It is to be constant disclosure between persons; it is to be reciprocal, mutual love with such reaching,

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[54]C. K. Barrett, A Commentary On The Epistle To The Romans (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), p. 246.
[55]Barrett, p. 247.
[56]Knox, p. 603.
[57]Barrett, p. 248.
[58]Knox, p. 604.
[59]Bornkamm, p. 215.
[60]Griffith, p. 161.

yearning and striving commitment that it extends beyond the individual; it "expects nothing, because it has reached the goal already."[61] Agape is in itself fulfillment and completion of the law of love never attained, yet always possible and endlessly sought.[62] In Paul's mind, agape may never be reached by an individual, save Christ, but it is always to be sought and its principles maintained as possible by the Christian.

Romans 13:9 (cp. Gal. 5:14) expresses the possibilities and rigors of agape. Agape demands more than empty fulfilment of the law but to love with heart, intensity and vigor.[63] 13:10 expounds that completion of an aggregate of laws does not fulfill the law, as devotion to God and to man cannot be circumscribed by legalisms.[64] Simply, 13:9-10 indicate Paul's insistence that the laws cannot be fulfilled in themselves but must be by-product coincidence of the law of love.

Romans 13:11 uses eschatological language and vision. While Paul's vision lies in the future, this passage indicates his conviction that its fulfilment may indeed be in the indefinite but nonetheless impending future. "Hour" and "time" are characteristic Pauline terms referring to the time directly preceding judgment.[65] "Wake out of sleep" is

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[61]Barth, pp. 495-6.
[62]Barth, p. 493.
[63]Barrett, pp. 250-51.
[64]Knox, p. 607.
[65]Barrett, p. 251.

evocative of the expediency of the moment, the urgency of salvation and the expectation of the great event. The time is not metaphorical in nature, but demonstrates Paul's great faith and hope in a future now at hand.[66] 13:12 continues the image where day represents the new order and night the present unfulfilled moment.[67]

13:13 provides a balance to the previous positive command of _agape_. Not simply are the Christians to defy the false pleasure of carousing, licentiousness, and debauchery, feigning and pretentious as it is, but this verse illustrates Paul's understanding of the expediency of the moment, the necessity of salvation in a rapidly unraveling time.[68]

Romans 13:14 fits smoothly within a Pauline framework (cp. Rom. 6:1-4; 8:4-13; Gal. 3:27), and in addition it provides for a climactic conclusion to chapter thirteen.[69] Despite man's short-falling nature saturated in his temporal concerns, God's grace can be ultimately redeeming, fulfilling, and cleansing.[70] The Christian is not doomed hopelessly but must accept the salvation of Christ. As _agape_ is necessary in interaction between Christians, and essential in the Christian function in the State, so Christ's promise of salvation grounds man to humility and responsibility, enriches man's potential to serve God and

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[66]Barrett, p. 251.
[67]Knox, p. 609.
[68]Barrett, p. 254.
[69]Knox, p. 610. See also: Barret, p. 254.
[70]Barth, p. 502.

man, and to strive to become more Christ-like.

Romans 13 represents one small vision of Paul's very loud voice regarding the Church-State relationship. Admittedly, he understood his task as authenticating, substantiating, as a codifying enterprise. But history shows his work not to provide a completion but an incompletion. In chapter thirteen Paul consolidates traditions common to the Mystery Religions with traditions of the Jewish heritage. Within the typology, this is a statement, but a precursory statement within Christianity of the larger cycle of the developing understanding of the Church-State relationship. The pressure needed to vitalize dissent was introduced with Domitan, but inspired is a different sort of dissent.

As early as A.D. 64 the tradition asserts that Paul and Peter were executed by Nero in the earliest persecution of Christianity by Roman authorities. The reasons for this persecution remain fogged, as Peter and Paul both advocated strong policies supporting the government. Some have asserted, however, that in an attempt to dispel assertions that Nero had arranged for the destruction of Rome, he blamed the early Christians for the attempted larceny. Following Nero, a calm presided under the governments of Vespasian and Titus, only to be superseded with bitter, raging persecution under Domitian (A.D. 81-96), during the first post-apostolic era. While some writing remained

faithful to the Romans 13 posture, such work as seen in Revelation (A.D. 96) illustrates more direct rejection of the Roman government.[71] Within the typology, no direct rebellion is illustrated, as with Pesach and Hanukkah for example. This does not block the movement of the structure at hand, but it represents a new mode of phase two responsiveness. Political dissent is but one means of rallying a people into unity and conviction; written expression can become a powerful tool of revolt in addition to its stage three codifying and legitimizing characteristics.

Phase Three, Altered Expression, as Seen In Reinhold Niebuhr

In Pesach and Hanukkah, before stage three expression fully operated an amalgamation of the previous religious activity consolidated. From the larger scope, the work of Reinhold Niebuhr illustrates such a unification of earlier theology, and the supersession of that synthesis. His work grapples with the necessity of religious responsiveness and the necessity of its practical application. His view authenticates mature stage three expression; the Christian becomes a fully integrated, fully responding individual.

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[71]Bo Reicke, "Introduction to The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude," in The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude, ed. Bo Reicke (New York: Doublday & Company, Inc., 1964), pp. XXII-XXIX.

In The Nature And Destiny Of Man, Niebuhr identifies two common, but divergent "biblical" views of rulers and State. On the one hand the Pauline position is supported; government is an ordained vessel and given purpose by God. Alternatively, government and its rulers are under stricter scrutiny than ordinary persons and become increasingly accountable to God. Significantly, both conceptions find ample biblical support and defense, beginning even with the earliest accounts of government, I Samuel 3:22 and I Samuel 10:19.[72]

Niebuhr maintains that Romans 13 proves disconcerting as it expounds a non-dialectical, univocal conception of the Christian and his role in the State. Unqualified endorsement of the State is mistaken, for believing "that government is no peril to virtue but only to vice" can be frightfully dangerous. History demonstrates "that the power of government is morally ambiguous."[73] Consequently, Niebuhr embraces John Knox's interpretation of Romans 13, namely that material is not truly pertinent to unfit, arbitrary rulers and corrupt despotic government. Rather, it speaks of God's ordaining and sanctioning power for rulers to maintain order, preside over sin, and provide condign

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[72]Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature And Destiny Of Man (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), vol. II, p. 269.

[73]Niebuhr, The Nature And Destiny Of Man, vol. II, p. 270.

punishment.[74] To provide for stage three expression ultimately pertinent questions of responsibility in the State face Christianity. What policies fit the exigency of the day, what stature is best maintained in regards to atomic technology, machinery, and weaponry? What of Russia? If the Church is to exist in modern times, its purpose, maintains Niebuhr, must become that of a moral provider in the community. The individual must become responsible and comprehensive in understanding, and devotedly active in the world.[75]

While understanding can be seminal to increased social intelligence and in this sense beneficial, education is not a conclusive solution. Its persuasive and coercive nature easily disintegrates into shrewd manipulation and propaganda--contriving mental, emotional, and political usury.[76] Even the most well-intentioned education may be a weak-seamed fabric of cultural standards; the cruelty and centuries of accepted slavery pointingly confirm this. Furthermore, ideas move in waves, and in and out of vogue.[77] Education may be an important tool, an effective tool, to social intelligence, but it is only a beginning. Niebuhr

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[74] Niebuhr, The Nature And Destiny Of Man, vol. II, p. 283.

[75] Reinhold Niebuhr, Essays In Applied Christianity (New York: Meriden Books, 1959), pp. 87-88.

[76] Reinhold Niebuhr, Moral Man And Immoral Society (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), p. 245. See also: The Nature And Destiny Of Man, pp. 260-61.

[77] Niebuhr, Moral Man And Immoral Society, p. 209.

writes, fitting of stage two conflict, that social conflict is inevitable and education not a solution:

> Whatever social intelligence is created in the total body of any privileged class, can be used to mitigate the conflict between the classes, but it will not be powerful enough to obviate the necessity of such a conflict.[78]

The solution to conflict lies in man's capacity to care. Man's responsibility is to join together love that can see beyond itself, i.e. "disinterested love," with temporal necessity; this is very similar to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology, to be discussed in a moment. Here only can richer moral and spiritual living become genuine and not trite sentimentality, moralism, and emotionalism.[79] Assimilating and adapting the love ideal and secular necessity gives nascence to a practical, moral ideal, standing:

> . . .both inside and beyond history: inside in so far as love may elicit a reciprocal response and change the character of human relations; and beyond history in so far as love cannot require a mutual response without losing its character of disinterestedness. The love commandment is therefore no simple historical possibility. The full implications of the commandment illustrate the dialectical relation between history and the eternal.[80]

Niebuhr develops these ideas further. Sacrificial love (disinterested love) and mutual love (temporal love) show a delicate tension which must be faced. They are espoused and

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[78]Niebuhr, Moral Man And Immoral Society, p. 215.

[79]James C. Livingston, Modern Christian Thought (New York: Macmillan Co., Inc., 1971) p. 472.

[80]Niebuhr, The Nature And Destiny of Man, vol. II, p. 247.

yet have separate purposes:

> Sacrificial love transcends history. It does not transcend history as a thought transcends an act. It is an act in history; but it cannot justify itself in history. From the standpoint of history mutual love is the highest goal. Only in mutual love, in which the concerns of one person for the interests of another prompts and elicits a reciprocal affection, are the social demands of historical existence satisfied.[81]

Christ represents the supreme example of a man acting within and yet beyond historical incidence. In accepting the call of Christ the love ethic becomes realized: "Loyalty to him means realization, but does not actually mean the full realization of the measure of Christ."[82] Hope is rendered ultimately, but the apparent relativity of justice remains problematic.

The way to fuse culture and ideal, to overcome impending conflict, is self-sacrifice. Anything less, writes Niebuhr, "than self-sacrifice is not really justice. Justice without love is merely the balance of power."[83] Even at best, justice becomes a relative approximation of the law of love, and often is ethnically and culturally instilled.[84] Furthermore, the very concept of justice presupposes the sinfulness of man. Justice can easily degenerate into narcissistic extensions of power, but

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[81]Niebuhr, <u>The Nature And Destiny of Man</u>, vol. II, p. 68.

[82]Reinhold Niebuhr, <u>Christianity And Power Politics</u> (New York: Archon Books, 1969), p. 3.

[83]Neibuhr, <u>Essays In Applied Christianity</u>, p. 83.

[84]Niebuhr, <u>The Nature And Destiny Of Man</u>, vol. II, p. 256.

it also can provide a very positive function in society:

> All structures of justice do indeed presuppose the sinfulness of man, and are all partly systems of restraint which prevent conflict of wills and interests from resulting in a consistent anarchy. But they are also all mechanisms by which men fulfill their obligations to their fellow men, beyond the possibilitiesoffered in direct voluntary and personal relationships.[85]

The difficulty of establishing loving justice is complicated as those most capable and influential characteristically choose not to affect social groups, but benefit themselves. The deprived black who becomes educated chooses assimilation into white culture. The poor laborer who becomes successful chooses prestige and luxury rather than helping the underprivileged class of his previous membership. Even the assiduous champion of a cause may abandon his battle for the benefits of little victory.[86] Temporal convenience easily swoops and preys on the healthy, adapting tension between justice and love.

Sweeping conclusions, admits Niebuhr, offer little solace, and even less hope, but the toiling demands of the law of love remain. Social intelligence espoused with spiritual vigor working creatively in the world are the hope and purpose in the world; they are the lessons learned from history. To move towards a historical synthesis, towards cultural phase three achievement, sacrificial love must become an ideal cherished by the individual before all else.

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[85] Reinhold Niebuhr on Politics, p. 110.
[86] Niebuhr, Moral Man And Immoral Society, p. 274.

One group, who embraced the importance of sacrificial love, has been the Christian pacifists. They, however, hope too much in too little. The pacifist ideal is remiss to the importance of historical necessity:

> The pacifists draw a conclusion from the fact that justice is never free from vindictiveness, that we ought not for this reason ever contend against a foe. This argument leaves out of account that capitulation to the foe might well subject us to a worse vindictiveness. It is as foolish to imagine that the foe is free of the sin which we deplore in ourselves as it is to regard ourselves as free of the sin which we deplore in the foe.[87]

In addition, Niebuhr poignantly remembers Hitler.[88]

Scripturally, pacifism is also remiss, although it is supported. Niebuhr maintains that, "nothing is clearer than a pure religious idealism must issue in a policy of non-resistance . . . It submits to any claims, however inordinate, rather than assert self-interest against another."[89] Some, Niebuhr admits, have wrongly defended non-pacifist postures maintaining that Christ advocated non-violent resistance, not non-resistance. But nothing is biblically plainer than that the two are conjoined. The practical necessity, however, simply requires realistic appraisal; man's sinful nature can be corrosive, reckless, malicious, and cruel. Mutual love represents manifest sacrificial love, but homostasized within the arena of plausibility and

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[87]Niebuhr, Christianity and Power Politics, pp. 23-24.
[88]Niebuhr, Christianity and Power Politics, pp. 6-7.
[89]Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, p. 264.

human responsibility. Pacifism does not recognize or accept fully enough the rift separating the "law of love" and man's sinful nature.[90]

Justice is founded on the delicate balance of power; unequal power inevitably incubates conflict. If conflict is avoided, the always lurking tyranny conquers. Non-resisted tyranny feeds its fire of persecution, again for example, Hitler and Nazi Germany.[91] Political strategy resting on religious idealism violates political certainty and in this sense prohibits a "kingdom of peace" and necessitates oppression. Acquiescence within certain confines, however, does harbor merit.

As individual martyrdom, self-sacrifice can be religiously penetrating and efficacious. Such pacific sacrifice is individual in action, responsibility, and faith, "but if interests other than those of the self are sacrificed, this nobility becomes ignoble 'appeasement'."[92] Within the limits of the Church, similarly, pacifism may prove important grounding to a war effort, a redress to the war myopia.[93] Regardless of its inspiring character, Christian pacifism nonetheless must rightfully play only an ancillary

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[90]Niebuhr, Christianity and Power Politics, pp. 10, 14.

[91]Niebuhr, Christianity and Power Politics, pp. 26, 15-16. See also: Reinhold Niebuhr on Politics, p. 140.

[92]Harry Davis and Robert Good, eds., Reinhold Niebuhr On Politics (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960, p. 138.

[93]Niebuhr, Christianity and Power Politics, p. 31.

role in the political milieu. In political stratification, coercion is decisive.

Niebuhr distinguishes between violent, non-violent coercion, and power as necessary tools of society. Violent rebellion typically indicates ill-will, whereas non-violent resistance is characteristically an expression of good-will.[94] Furthermore, non-violent resistance (non-cooperation) differs from non-resistance. Non-violent resistance can be intensely coercive, frightfully destructive and in fact often "results in social consequences not totally dissimilar from those of violence."[95] It is not pure and untarnished resistance, but on occasion it is necessary resistance.

The most readily noticed advantage of non-violent active resistance is that it eschews violent reciprocation, and hence it is very favorable for oppressed groups, minorities for example. Gandhi and the Indian movement and Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Civil Rights movement are most appropriate examples in recent years.[96]

Rationally and ethically, non-violent resistance is also beneficial. Non-cooperation, writes Niebuhr:

> . . . is a type of coercion which offers the largest opportunities for a harmonious relationship with the moral and rational factors in social life. It does not destroy the process of a moral and rational adjustment of interest to interest

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[94]Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, pp. 71-72.
[95]Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, p. 63.
[96]Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, pp. 247-252.

> completely during the course of resistance. Resistance to self-assertion easily makes self-assertion more stubborn and conflict arouses dormant passions which completely obscure the real issues of a conflict. Non-violence reduces these dangers to a minimum. It preserves moral, rational and cooperative attitudes within an area of conflict and thus augments the moral forces without destroying them.[97]

Non-violent resistance offers sound, creative political dissent minimizing the superfluity of enraged emotion and confusion, minimizing the mental rattle often concomitant to emotional conviction.

In the modern era, Niebuhr understood Christian responsibility to require moral suasion in addition to active political involvement; acquiescence takes the shape of irresponsibility. Not simply does Christianity offer a vision of richer moral living, and identify evil and injustice, it must contour itself to demand ethical responsibility. It must extend its influence from the individual into the spheres of politics. Here one synthesis of earlier traditions emerge. Harsh decisions ineluctably will present themselves. Niebuhr writes:

> We must, as Christians, constantly make significant moral and political decisions amidst and upon perplexing issues and hazardous ventures. We must even make them 'with might' and not halfheartedly. But the Christian faith gives us no warrant to lift ourselves above the world's perplexities and to seek or to claim absolute validity for the stand we take.[98]

Christianity becomes a vessel in the world, but one not so

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[97]Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, pp. 250-251.
[98]Niebuhr, Essays in Applied Christianity, p. 92.

holy as to be beyond the world. It works within man's goodness and within man's shamefulness, and it often requires difficult, discriminating decisions. Niebuhr's work attempts to solidify the traditions within the Christian heritage; this is one version, Dietrich Bonhoeffer offers another.

Phase Three, Altered Expression, as Seen In Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's thought, like Niebuhr's, represents mature stage three expression within the larger cycle of religious responsiveness. Regarding Church-State relations, Bonhoeffer assimilates much of his beginnings from a largely Pauline base, but in the end his thought was shaped by a larger floating Judeo-Christian tradition: the natural tension between the ideal found in Christ and the practical Christianity found in his experience. His life and his work evince the tightly related nature of phases two and three both in the smaller and larger cycles of religious activity. On the smaller scale, his life shows political dissent, but under the larger rubric of religious responsiveness, and the one which will be most extensively explored, his work has provided a codifying influence in Christianity. His alternative for a modern Christianity significantly differs from Niebuhr's, but his work simil-

arly gathers together past perceptions of Christian understanding. Bonhoeffer assembles a statement of Christian purpose in the world.

Biblically, Bonhoeffer embraces a Romans 13 posture of Church-State relations. "To resist the power is to resist the ordinance of God . . . ," and resistance will bring God's judgment, hence an acceptance of Romans 13:2.[99] Government is God's tool for justice in the world (13:4). Obedience to the State is due for conscience sake (13:5), and to honor the State it is necessary in addition to honor God (13:7).[100] In sum, the purpose of government "consists in serving the dominion of Christ on earth by the exercise of the worldly power of the sword and of justice. Government serves Christ by establishing and maintaining an outward justice by means of the sword which is given to it, and to it alone, in deputyship for God."[101] And even when the State "incurs guilt," it is to be respected and dutifully obeyed until, however, "government openly denies its divine commission and thereby forfeits its claim."[102]

The individual, however, lies in the forefront of

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[99]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship (New York: Macmillan Co., 1963), p. 293.

[100]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Ethics (London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1955), pp. 303-307. See also for alternate interpretation: Robin W. Lovin, "The Christian and the Authority of the State: Bonhoeffer's Reluctant Revisions," in Ethical Responsibility: Bonhoeffer's Legacy to the Churches, ed. John godsey and Geoffry Kelly (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1981), p. 112.

[101]Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 305.

[102]Bonhoeffer, Ethics, pp. 303-304, 307.

importance in Bonhoeffer's theology. Man functions in the different dimensions of the temporal and divine, the profane and holy; these are in creative tension, each complementing the other. Each is delicately defined with respect to the other, and each is ultimately grounded in Christ. Likewise, man's place is secured <u>in</u> the world and not out of it:

> Just as in Christ the reality of God entered into the reality of the world, so, too, is that which is Christian to be found only in that which is of the world, the 'supernatural' only in the natural, the holy only in the profane, and the revelational only in the rational. The unity of the reality of God and of the world, which has been accomplished in Christ, is repeated, or, more exactly, is realized, ever afresh in the life of men. And yet what is Christian is not identical with what is of the world. The natural is not identical with the supernatural or the revelational with the rational. But between the two there is in each case a unity which derives faith in this ultimate reality.[103]

Life is bound, in tension, with the responsibility to men and to God and to one's own freedom.[104] As similarly concluded by Niebuhr, however, isolated responsibility of action is not truly possible. Ethically, man's actions inevitably weave him into the community of the world in deputyship for others. Christ is again the supreme example, responsible to himself and to mankind, within history and yet beyond history.[105]

Within the community, the individual is uniquely compelled fully to participate. Civil courage is not

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[103]Bonhoeffer, <u>Ethics</u>, p. 65.
[104]Bonhoeffer, <u>Ethics</u>, p. 194.
[105]Bonhoeffer, <u>Ethics</u>, pp. 194-195.

courage but duty, and unravels from man's recognition of the entwined nature of the world, and his responsibility in that world. Civil duty is the individual's action in the State and demanded by both pulls in man, secular and divine. But Bonhoeffer is quick to descry that for the individual who is actively implementing his civil duty God will be forgiving. "Responsible action in a bold venture of faith" is demanded by God, but for the person who grapples with justice, God promises "forgiveness and consolation to the man who becomes a sinner in that venture."[106]

Bonhoeffer develops his understanding of the State in similar fashion to the individual. Government is ordained, but the State's function is confined to worldly order. Government and State, though distinctly separate, are both tools of Christ. "Government serves Christ," writes Bonhoeffer, "whether it is conscious or unconscious of this mission or even whether it is true or untrue to it . . . It cannot in either case evade its task of serving Christ. It serves Him by its very existence."[107] Government is an ideal coming from above, but State is "reconstructed from below, even when this is not at all intended. Whenever the State becomes executor of all the vital and cultural activities of man, it forfeits its own proper dignity, its specific

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[106]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: Macmillan Co., 1967), p. 29.

[107]Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 306.

authority as government."[108] Despite the tension existing between government and State, between ideal and actuality, the State is nonetheless a divine vessel wielding the secular sword of justice.

While all government is under the auspices of Christ, the form of State as an actuality not providentially determined should represent the nearest approximation of government being from above.[109] State is to be "regulative and not constitutive." It is to maintain "created things in their proper order, but it cannot itself engender life; it is not creative."[110] The government is to insure stability and peace within a community and must adhere to its own means, incomplete and feeble as they may be. It must fulfill its unique divine sanction within secular spheres and is not to purport religious authority.[111] The Church operates in a similar fashion to the individual and State and has divine commission in its own right.

The Church is to be a conscientious servant, not a brutalizing agent branding its parishioners with their sin. It has a two-fold purpose. On the one hand, it inculcates attitudes conducive to the establishment of order, and on the other hand, it complements existing establishments and their relationships to Christ.[112] Hence, as in the indivi-

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[108]Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 299.
[109]Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 79.
[110]Bonhoeffer, Ethics, pp. 309, 308.
[111]Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 313.
[112]Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 325.

dual and the State, a creative tension can exist in the Church between divine and temporal purposes.

The distinction of purpose between Church and State must be maintained. Each serves a divine commission, though a different commission, and the Church "has to recognize the State's ordinances, good or bad as they appear from a humanitarian point of view, and to understand that they are based on the sustaining will of God amidst the chaotic godlessness of the world."[113] The Church must recognize the necessity of the use of force in the world and must be accepting of the ineluctable rise of "moral injustice" concomitant to the State's use of coercion.[114] The only direct political influence that the Church may exert is ancillary at best. "The first political word of the church," maintains Bonhoeffer, "is the call to recognize the proper limit, the call of common sense. The church calls this limit sin, the State calls it reality . . ."[115] Ideally, the Church is to recognize the inherent limitations of the State's provisions, and is to prepare for the State a fertilized moral and spiritual soil. The State, ideally in return, is to cultivate richer moral living. Temporal exigency must be reconciled.

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[113]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, No Rusty Swords: Letters, Lectures and Notes 1928-1936 (New York: Harper & Row, 1947), p. 222.

[114]Bonhoeffer, No Rusty Swords: Letters, Lectures and Notes 1928-1936, p. 223.

[115]Bonhoeffer, No Rusty Swords: Letters, Lectures, and Notes 1928-1936, p. 163.

Specifically, Bonhoeffer outlines three ways that the Church can interact with the State. It may question the State and request the State examine itself to determine whether its actions correspond to its character. Secondly, the Church can aid victims of State action while remaining acquiescent to State policies. The last possibility is direct political resistance; that is, the Church is not to "bandage the victims under the wheel, but to put a spoke in the wheel itself."[116] The third perogative becomes necessary only when the State clearly and sharply belies its divine commission.

As Niebuhr, Bonhoeffer admits that there is no scriptural evidence supporting revolution or even rebellion, but in scripture there is a distinct sense of Christian responsibility and duty. In a very real sense, writes Bonhoeffer:

> Every individual serves government with his responsibility. No one, not even government itself, can deprive him of this responsibility or forbid him to discharge it, for it is an integral part of his life in sanctification, and it arises from obedience to the Lord of both Church and government.[117]

But responsibly directed disobedience can never be launched from anything but concrete decision within the arena of particular historical incidence. Resistance buds only from the kernel of Christ's command and promise of fulfill-

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[116]Bonhoeffer, No Rusty Swords: Letters, Lectures, and Notes 1928-1936, p. 225.

[117]Bonhoeffer, Ethics, pp. 314-315.

ment.[118] "If God's commandment is not clear, definite and concrete to the last," Bonhoeffer writes, then simply ". . . it is not God's commandment."[119]

The decision of the individual responsibly not to cooperate cannot represent merely one individual's cognition, however. Bonhoeffer maintains that action is not justified only through conscience or scripture, but it must be brooded over with care and with advice, support, and criticism of others. The choice is to be meticulously developed and not hasty. The conclusion is to be concrete, definite, and unequivocal.[120] Despite the interdependent nature of arriving at the individual conclusion, the responsibility of resistance resides only in the individual.[121]

In assimilating theological and religious notions, the inter-related, integrated roles of the individual, State and Church solidify under the rubric of "Religionless Christianity." While in prison the Church's degeneration appeared boldly. The Church was to be integrated into the world, giving hope and refuge and determination to the world; it was to be a this-worldly manifestation.[122] But

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[118]Bonhoeffer, No Rusty Swords: Letters, Lectures and Notes 1928-1936, p. 166.

[119]Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 245.

[120]Rene De Visme Williamson, Politics and Protestant Theology (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), pp. 70-71.

[121]Bonhoeffer, Ethics, pp. 307-308.

[122]Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, p. 201.

its language had become ineffectual and its strength had declined:

> Our church, which has been fighting in these years only for its self-preservation, as though that were an end in itself, is incapable of taking the word of reconciliation and redemption to mankind and the world. Our earlier words are therefore bound to lose their force and cease, and our being Christians today will be limited by two things: prayer and righteous action among men.[123]

Man has "come of age," and religion understood as it was once must be transformed and adapted for the modern era. Man has come of age, where he is dependent on other men and himself to solve the disruptions of secular existence. To Bonhoeffer our coming of age "leads us to a true recognition of our situation before God. God would have us know that we must live as men who manage our lives without him."[124]

Not simply are we to be dutiful citizens and religiously motivated, but we are to immerse ourselves into the richness and fullness of experience. We are to love God <u>in</u> our lives:

> I believe that we ought so to love and trust God in our <u>lives</u>, and in all the good things that he sends us, that when the time comes (but not before!) we may go to him with love, trust, and joy. But, to put it plainly, for a man in his wife's arms to be hankering after the other world is, in mild terms, a piece of bad taste and not God's will. . . we mustn't try to be more pious than God himself and allow our happiness to be corrupted by presumption and arrogance, and by umbridled religious fantasy which is never satisfied with what God gives.[125]

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[123]Bonhoeffer, <u>Letters and Papers From Prison</u>, p. 172.
[124]Bonhoeffer, <u>Letters and Papers From Prison</u>, p. 196.
[125]Bonhoeffer, <u>Letters and Papers From Prison</u>, p. 168.

From this posture the Christian seeks not to become a saint but earnestly works to become a man, as Christ did. To be a Christian in the era come of age, writes Bonhoeffer:

> . . . does not mean to be religious in any particular way, to make something of oneself (a sinner, a penitant, or a saint) on the basis of some method or other, but to be a man-not a type of man, but the man that Christ creates in us. It is not the religious act that makes the Christian, but participation in the sufferings of God in the secular life.[126]

In similar fashion, the Church in religionless Christianity seeks to become a "form of Christ among men." It develops from those who join together in their humanity to become more comprehensive persons.[127] To Bonhoeffer, the Church must seek to encompass man in his entirety and complexity. "What matters in the Church," writes Bonhoeffer, "is not religion but the form of Christ, and its taking form from amidst a band of men."[128] The Church in the time come of age deadens its flavor as a "religious society" and embraces the living, surging vitality of life with all its intricacies and complexities, and it is energized by the living Christ and not the faded Christ of principle and system. In this lies hope. A religionless Christianity will unify the tension between the religious and temporal pulls, creating a

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[126]Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers From Prison, p. 198.

[127]James W. Woelfel, Bonhoeffer's Theology: Classical and Revolutionary (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 256.

[128]Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 21.

fabric of religious life--richer in moral character and more comprehensive in spiritual nature.

Conclusion

Religious adaptation as delineated, cultural assimilation, dissent, and altered expression, vitalizes the Judeo-Christian tradition in all its dimensions. Within the particularities of ritual this most easily evinces itself. Both Pesach and Hanukkah follow this paradigm effortlessly and punctiliously. Pesach draws from vast cultural diversity; legends, myths, and magic were originally assimilated in various ways, in ways largely unassociated with the festival. But oppression bludgeoned a gently forming principle into a ferociously dissenting animal. Around the Exodus event the great complex of unsolidified ritual gathered, unified and transformed itself. The Pentateuch incorporated the achievements secured by the Exodus. Traditions became the tradition. In Hanukkah, the early use of lights provide phase one development. Phase two, the Maccabean war, shows the refusal of religious responsiveness to be contained. But the third stage, altered expression, is demonstrated to permeate the nature of the festival beyond written expression, beyond language. Ritual expression, as exemplified in the Dreidel game, can equally illus-

trate the synthesizing principle maintaining the energy of a tradition.

The religious impulse reaches into dimensions far more encompassing, however. While the cycle of active responsiveness acts within particularities of the Judeo-Christian tradition, it in addition reaches into the broadest dimensions of the heritage. Romans 13 has evinced cultural assimilation, phase one expression, but its assimilation differs from that found in Pesach or Hanukkah. The influence of the festivals is as lasting as the influence of Romans 13, but lasting within a concrete ritual expression, rather than a broader theological understanding. The demand for absolute obedience to the State, couched at the heart of Romans 13, provides much of the raw material from which recent phase three expression emerges. The oppression of the first century Church is only one illustration among an assortment of possible oppressions. But it is representative of stage two oppression which forces legitimization of a tradition, which promotes active understanding. Within the larger historical vista, it is oppression, such as the first century oppression, which gives vigor to the statements of Christian understanding.

Reinhold Niebuhr is one twentieth century voice substantiating and consolidating Christian traditions. His posture recognizes the temporal strains on man, but it emphasizes ultimately that man must overcome those strains.

Mutual love, propelled by the vision of sacrificial love, must begin at the roots of society, at the existence of ordinary man. From this foundation, man earns and is given, the right and the responsibility, to live in the world, and to face the world. Justice and harmony between the Church and State is achieved not by subservience to government, as with Paul, but with active, discriminating participation in the body politic.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer offers an alternate phase three statement of Christianity. Romans 13 begins his structure, but it is further polished in Bonhoeffer's process of formulating his understanding of Christianity. The individual is most important to Bonhoeffer, as with Niebuhr, and the temporal and divine pressures are also embraced as important. The Church and the State are divinely sanctioned, but each are bound significantly to secular purposes, though, admittedly, the Church far less so than the State. For the body of Christ to again become active in the world, "Religionless Christianity" must be born. To do this will be to initiate active responsibility to and within the State. His voice, as Niebuhr's, speaks to assemble unassembled tradition, to express a theology around which a unified religious identity emerges.

Religious responsiveness works from the ritual compounds, to the furthest reaches of the Judeo-Christian heritage. Left to its own device, the religious impulse

vastly assimilates resources from the diversity of surrounding culture. But when pressured by persecution, these resources are consolidated into expression to legitimize a religious tradition. This process of religious adaptation, assimilation, dissent, and altered expression, has and will continue to change Western culture.

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