

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE MARK OF TRUTH.

In Defence of the Faith

(John: 6-8.) *For I have revealed you to those you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.*

(John 17:17) *Sanctify them with the truth; Your word is truth. (John 17:20) I pray also for those who will believe in their message that all of them may be one.*

The mark of those who have been given to Christ by the Father from the world is their obedience to the Word. This Word is truth.

There is nothing more compelling than this statement by Jesus about the veracity, authority and inspiration of Scripture. This is the ground of all our orthodoxy and orthopraxis. He and not any expositor or theologian or interpreter says this.

All of the benefits, explanations, assumptions and truths about Christ in the knowledge of Him that the disciples have arrived at, are originated in God. That knowledge has displaced confusion and doubt about the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It has provided and produced an absolute certainty of the origination of Jesus and who He is.

This is more than mental assent; it is much more than emotional concord or popular agreement or a doctrinal guideline. It implies volitional adherence to and a life of submission to what God has said. It compels us to a life lived under the authority of the Word. The mission of God is lived with the mark of truth.

In this prayer Jesus powerfully associates God's Word with the assumption of truth. Not as a **truth** but **the truth**. There almost seems to be no truth outside of what God has given in and to His Son and the disciples. Truth is universal in God. This is the reverse of universalism that says that truth is a collection of disparate truths which can be merged and placed into agglomerations that are all acceptable and where no single truth may be absolutized. This does not deny the idea of Logos in which all things that are true beyond the biblical writings are illumined by and cohere in Christ.

It is the truth that sets the believer apart for service and it builds him up into the likeness of Christ. Surely the person who does not believe could not serve nor could they attain to the prospect of a growth toward perfectibility.

The message commuted to the disciples is a truth about Christ which enables and produces a belief, in those that hear it. This precipitates the recipients and respondents, who adhere to it, into the community of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Those who do not believe cannot be included. Non belief excludes itself.

7.1. SACRAMENTALISM AND EVANGELICAL BELIEF.

Cassidy had always been resistant to the ideas of labels. He has sought independence in arriving at his own assumptions. He has laboured to take and hold his own appreciation of what is true without uncritically, or slavishly following the teaching of others.

He was attracted to the position taken by Bishop Stephen Neill who owed no man anything and refused to be owned. This inclination followed by Cassidy was not born of arrogance but rather a means of making truth his own and not something borrowed from another. So, for decades he retained the openness to search for truth from any quarter and had the freedom to meet anyone he thought might prosper and help his search for truth even if it meant the stigmas of guilt by association.

It is only in later years that he has aligned himself more strongly with the evangelical wing of the church. This occurred as he found himself more and more troubled by what he saw as ecumenical compromises on biblical truth, biblical sexuality, the nature of marriage, the necessity of conversion and new birth and even sometimes on Christology and Missiology with Universalism and interfaith replacing orthodox understandings of evangelisation and Christian Mission. Most of Cassidy's experience of church had been in the Anglican Communion. In his schooling and at university this was his spiritual home. So living in a theologically varied, polarised or nuanced context had become a way of life. But this was not without its difficulties.

The history of persecution of Catholics in England in post reformation England had a strong effect. Remnants of Catholicism were transferred with the redistribution of catholic tradition, culture and belief into the Anglican Church. Some still yearn for the pre-reformation connectivity with Rome.

The homesickness and longing for a former allegiance produced in the end a very broad church with often accentuated differences on the wings between a sacramentalism and love of the authority of the episcopacy on one hand and an Anglicanism which was evangelical and missionary on the other hand and was rooted in proclamation and biblical exposition which honoured its authority.

In order to manage this divergence inclusiveness was achieved through negotiation, compromise and tolerance. To be ecclesiological flexible became politically necessary but sometimes at the expense of suppressing or withholding conviction to avoid damaging the church through dissent. Indeed it soon became true that the stronger your hold to "orthodoxy" the more contentious and threatening to the consensual politics of the church you became.

The Society for the Propagation of Gospel established the Anglican Communion in South Africa. This is now called the Church of the Province in South Africa. Its bias or theological inclination was in the direction of a "Catholic" orientation. This has meant that reservation against evangelicalism has historically been latent and at times quite overt and strong.

In an interesting account in the book *Rabble Rouser for Peace*. John Allen records how the election of Desmond Tutu to be the 6th Bishop of Johannesburg unfolded with an initial ascendancy of Peter Lee (a socially caring evangelical) in the preliminary electoral results.

This was later reversed due to a number of factors. Allen makes this statement.

“One participant believed that a speaker who warned the largely Anglo-Catholic Diocese that it was about to elect an evangelical bishop played a particularly persuasive role.”(Allen: 2006:217,218.)

However Lee was, later, elected to be the bishop of another diocese in the southern part of Johannesburg.

Cassidy has himself often felt relegated to the fringe quite possibly because in the ecclesial structures found him a square peg with only the option of round holes. But also because his theological stance, his ministry of evangelism and its call to conversion and new birth ran somewhat counter to the theology and praxis of the church except in pockets and with ministers, and sometimes bishops, who stood in the evangelical tradition or had a favourable bias. The development of some distance between him and some ecumenical leaders or bodies became a painful but sometimes unavoidable consequence. A trauma and dilemma and sense of betrayal was created for Michael when the SACC in 2006 came out in favour of same sex marriage.

Evangelists cohere quite easily to biblical and traditional understandings of faith. To preach the Gospel presupposes a prior conviction as to who Jesus was and is. It also defines the message you preach. No evangelist can preach without a commitment to basics, the calling requires it. In the same way a carpenter needs a saw or a shepherd his sheep, the preacher preaches the word. Hand and head and heart and voice are all filled with a message enshrined in scripture. Jesus declared in the prayer in John 17 “Thy word is truth”

Cassidy makes this comment about the word “Evangelical”.

This comes from *evangel* which in turn comes from the Greek word *euangelion* which describes what the early church preached. He quotes John Stott as saying “We dare to claim that evangelical Christianity is original, Apostolic, New Testament Christianity.”

He further makes the point that such honoured figures of faith as Martin Luther, John Jewel Bishop of Salisbury, John Wesley, Bishop Latimer stand to assert that what an evangelical believes is what Wesley says “ Is the plain old Christianity which I preach”. (Cassidy 2004.180)

Dr James Packer an Anglican Scholar at Regent College in Vancouver lists 6 tenets of what evangelical faith embrace.

1. The supremacy of Holy Scripture (Because of its unique inspiration).
2. The Majesty of Jesus Christ (The God-man who died as a sacrifice for sin).
3. The Lordship of the Holy Spirit (Who exercise a variety of vital ministries).
4. The necessity of conversion (A direct encounter with God effected by God alone).
5. The priority of Evangelism (Witness being an expression of worship).
6. The importance of Fellowship (The church being essentially a living community of believers.).

Stott condenses this down to “The revealing initiative of God the Father; the redeeming work of God the Son; and the transforming ministry of God the Holy Spirit.”

Mark Noll and Davis Wells in the compendium on *Christian Faith and practice in the Modern World* have difficulty in defining the word. They give 4 insights into the nomenclature.

1. It may designate the protestant Reformation generally or more particularly Lutheran churches that emerged from the sixteenth-century upheavals. This draws attention to the discovery or renewal of “Grace”.
2. In English speaking lands it is often linked to revival movements of the 18th century. Wesley and Edwards being examples.
3. More recently it has been regarded as a catchall for theologically conservative Protestants of whatever heritage. So there is a mosaic of participation. The word would even include Pentecostals and Catholics who had common beliefs.
4. George Marsden suggests the idea of an evangelical denomination in the sense that persons describe themselves in this way despite their denominational affiliations.

In North America the word “evangelical” is often linked to a common network of theological seminaries. (Fuller, Gordon Conwell, Regent College, Asbury etc.) Some associations are also part of this family of likeminded people. (World Vision, The Billy Graham Association and others.) (Noll/Wells:2-4)

The word “evangelical” has fallen on hard times because of negative associations with some on lunatic fringes or those who attach narrow and limiting attitudes in their political philosophy to their theological positions. Michael Cassidy calls, in his own spirit of fair enquiry and scholarship and social witness, for a re-evaluation what this really means.

Cassidy himself, as we have shown, has had multitudes of influences from within the camp and he could probably connect to all of these as Chapter One demonstrates. Nevertheless, the writer believes that the influence of Carnell and Neill have been very strong. Cassidy would probably define himself as ‘Orthodox’ in the light of his independent stance that seeks to come to an authentic and inner illumination from the available data. We will come to this later. This independence however has a dependency on the authority and inspiration of the Bible that he regards as biblical. In this John Stott’s witness has been significant in his deep scholarly example of faithfulness to exposition. So for him the Bible is the author of biblical faith and it affirmed thereby.

Cassidy had capacities in articulating theology. He turned his attention to writing. First this was by way of a form of popular theology by dealing with theological issues in an addendum to the African Enterprise Newsletter called. *Theologically speaking*. This produced so much interest that he added to and rewrote these into two books. One on Theology and the other on Ethics. This was theology arising from the practice of evangelism.

7.2. FAITH PRECEDENTS AND CONTINUITIES AND THEOLOGICAL LIBERALISM.

7.2.1. The book *Reflections on Christian Basics*.

In His book *Reflections on Christian Basics*, Cassidy opens his discussion with the Pauline instructions to Timothy to “Guard the truth” and “Guard what has been entrusted to you” (2Tim.1:14 and 1 Tim 6:20). He also quotes Karl Barth’s observation: “We cannot be in the Church without taking as much responsibility for the theology of the past as for the theology of the present.” (Cassidy.2004:2)

A summary of the first Chapter of this work and a discussion on Liberalism from the book by Bishop David Jenkins *The Calling of a Cuckoo* can be found as APPENDIX 8 and 9.

In relation to the importance of truth given in the past Cassidy demonstrated in the first chapter of this book that biblical Christian faith has precedents and continuities.

In the New Testament itself and in the early church holding to what was believed, taught and preached as fundamental was obviously central at that time. Jesus made many corrections to erroneous thought. For example in Matthew 22:29 he declares “*You are wrong because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God.*”

Then there is the whole corpus of Pauline letters, with their omnipresent concern for understanding the Gospel and correctly guarding its truth and keeping it intact. Next came the Patristic period, the period of the early church fathers (AD 100-451) the key defining and formative time for the development of Christian fundamentals in doctrine thought and practice. In this period the fundamentals of the faith were enshrined in creedal formula (CASSIDY: Ibid.:3)

Helmut Thieliecke, one of Cassidy’s favourite theologians, says about this matter of traditional faith is quoted in *Getting to the Heart of Things*.

Again and again the package of divine truth has been opened and everything which did not suit was laid aside. Over and over, the figure of Jesus has been horribly amputated until He fit what one particular age held to be ‘modern’ concept. Through the whole history of the Church Jesus Christ has suffered a process of repeated crucifixion. He has been scourged and bruised and locked up in the prison of countless philosophies. Treated as a body of thought He has, literally been lowered into conceptual grave and covered with stone slabs so that he might not arise and trouble us anymore. Has not this process rendered him harmless by enrolling Him in the club of human thought? Is not the history of the Church to the present day one vast experiment gone awry, a dreadful victory of the current ‘modern’ over the Nazarene who must bear it all helplessly and silently?”(Cassidy:2005:79.)

7.3. CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHICAL CHALLENGES.

7.3.1. Modernism and Post Modernism.

With the onset of a modern technological age and the secularisation of authority it became increasingly considered that Christian faith, in its basic and original variety, could not be sustained in the body politic (Perhaps only in suburbs or where society hurts.)

The combination of the banker, the engineer, the manager, the mine owner, the factory manager, the IT specialist, the politician and the scientist would produce a lever that would turn the world. The power of the atom was given into human hands and massive advances in medicine meant that man was indeed a god. Human sciences dismissed spirituality and found its own “ologies” to heal and actualise man. Cassidy shares his reflections on the current development.

Modernism’s primary feature was that it was a flight from authority and particularly the authority of the church. It wanted liberation from authority and especially the authority of the church. Modernism wanted liberation from everything to do with the past and the way it had historically laid down the law as to how people should think and behave. With reason as king mankind could now take full control and do as they saw fit.

James Hunter writes that Modernity posits an understanding and ordering of the world through an autonomous and human rationality. This plays out at two levels. At a philosophical level, rationality assumes the only reality to be that which can be appropriated empirically by the senses. This reality can be explained logically and scientifically in an ordered system of rationally-derived propositions. Such an assumption slams the door on the very idea of transcendence/supernatural. The world of nature, of which humanity is a part, is all there is.

Explanation however is not enough. It is essential to achieve mastery over the world through the practical application of rational controls on all aspects of everyday life, in our solving of the great human dilemmas in our ordering of social relationships in organisations, in our rational management of everything from the day’s activities to the next ten years of career (Ibid. pg 172 ,173)

This high optimism and triumphalistic view of man and his nature and potential has given place to deep uncertainties that are issuing in postmodernism.

Cassidy describes this

For example we seem to be **post-moral** because the current notion of behaviour seems to be that anything goes: You do your thing I will do mine. Let him do his and she hers and let’s not judge one another or anyone.

Then in a funny paradoxical way we are **post-God and pro-spiritual** at one and the same time. The fact is that our culture at one level is thoroughly pagan, totally atheistic, secular, God-rejecting, immoral, amoral, proud, arrogant, autonomous, non-spiritual and individualistic. We say along with the poet W.E. Henry “I am the master of my fate I am captain of my soul.”

But then, no sooner have we affirmed that we are post God and able to run our lives as full-blown secularists, then suddenly we find we are not only **pagan but post-pagan** because paradoxically, deep down, and in

apparent inner contradiction, our world now finds itself hankering after some species of spirituality, almost any spirituality, and searching for some sort of god or any god of all gods.

We act individualistically but we long for community and connectedness. We build our loves around materialism but we are **post-materialist** because we are sick of materialism and realise it can do nothing for the inner man. We are **post-sin**, but in reality we find that doing all those things that were previously called sinful, actually does deep level damage to our inner beings and robs us of what we used to call happiness. On the sexual front we are **post-marriage** and yet deep down we are almost post-post-marriage, because people everywhere long to have steady male/female relationships with family life and care and security for it to work properly and satisfactorily.

Likewise we are **post-functionalism**, because as an age we behave in a way which is endlessly dysfunctional. But the consequences of that make us want **post-dysfunctionalism** because we discover that we are longing for things to function properly and we will go to endless seminars and read countless books on how to make our homes, work experience or inner psychological mechanisms more functional and congenial.

We worship and bow at the shrine of technology but part of us is post-technology too, because we realise that technology has got out of hand and has the potential to lead us profoundly astray. So paradoxically there is a yearning to get back to the simple life where there are no cell phones, e-mails or computers in sight. We never have enough but we are impoverished in a different way. We are to quote Peter Rowan, “Thirsty in the rain” (Ibid; 161-163.)

Cassidy quotes Oxford Theologian Alistair McGrath and Christian cultural analyst Os Guinness.

One of the key causes in the rise of post-modernism is the collapse of the confidence in reason and a more general disillusionment with the so-called ‘modern’ world. Post Modernism is the intellectual movement which proclaims that the enlightenment rested on fraudulent intellectual foundations (such as the belief in the omni-competence of human reason.) (Alistair McGrath)

Where Modernism was a manifesto of human self-confidence and self congratulation post modernism is a confession of modesty, if not despair. There is no truth; only truths, There is no grand reason; only reasons. There is no privileged civilisation (or culture, belief, norm and style); only a multiplicities of cultures, beliefs, norms and styles. There is no universal justice, only interests and the competition of interest groups. There is no grand narrative of human progress; only countless stories of where people and their cultures are now. There is no simple reality or grand of universal, detached knowledge; only a ceaseless representation of everything in terms of everything else. (Os Guinness.) (Cassidy: Ibid:176.)

Postmodernism plays its part as we have seen in the case of the Bishop of Durham of weakening, dividing and emptying the church of capacities to blow trumpets with a certain sound. The place of scripture is so relativised and emptied of supernatural content and squeezed in a rational dimensionalism that the Christian flock is scattered and without guidance.

Two books by Brian McLaren has interest. The first is, *A New Kind of Christian*. In this the reader is taken into a provocative dialogue between a pastor who is rooted in a congregation and a science teacher who is a post-modernist. What emerges from this is a perspective of the apparent redundancy and irrelevance of the present church ethos and institution in its present traditional forms.

Neo (who is the advocate of a new paradigm and who generates a critique of the old paradigm) says this;

Actually if there is one thing I wish I could tell every Christian about evangelism in the post modern world, it would be about that word (conversation).I would say to stop counting conversions, because our whole approach to conversion is so, I don't know, mechanistic and consumerist and individualistic and controlling. Instead, I would encourage us to count conversations because conversation implies a real relationship, and if we make our goal to establish relationships and engage in authentic conversations, I know that conversions will happen. But if we keep trying to convert people, we'll simply drive them away. (McLaren 2001:108-109)

Post-Modernism suggests that the Word has to be made flesh and that the cognitive and conceptual highway is presently a diversion. Words now need to be inclusive and our message less abstract and more real. Story and narration are a better means of communication. There is a hunger for truth with grace as its verification. In a striking metaphor the writer says this;

I believe that the modern version of Christianity that you learned from your parents, your Sunday school teachers, and even your campus ministries is destined to be a medieval cathedral.(Ibid:38)

There is in Post-Modernism that which is subversive to the 'business as usual' approach found in denominations and congregations which present a continuing method and tradition. It was the reading of this book by one of my three sons that brought him to a realisation that he should withdraw from conventional Sunday worship and opt for relational options which drew on the truth of the experience of others and not prescriptive preaching and traditional worship.

In respect of theology Neo suggests:

Theology isn't just about God. It's about the universe. In some ways theology is about generating models of the universe that flow from our understanding of God and the story we find ourselves in..... I wonder if theology in the new millennium would be more like scenario creation. If God like that, what would the universe be like. (McLaren 2001:161.)

Postmodernism is eager to understand culture in terms of its relationships more than its truths. Modernism produced a disillusion with its promethean promise. Post Modernism returns the hope to humanness and the power of the individual and the collective.

In the book *Everything must change*, McClaran takes up the idea of the frame of reference and the agenda for relevance being established in historical reality or models of the universe that are different. The church has to find a framing story A new way of seeing the world and hearing the message of Jesus. The framing story gives people direction, value, vision and inspiration by providing a framework for their lives.

McClaren picks up on the idea of a restoration of the radical message of the Kingdom as part of this. It is this that strips away the notions and attitudes and traditions that are accretions that prevent the church from acting in transformation. What we have is not what Jesus intended.

He defines 4 deep dysfunctions which are the nodes for response. He calls these the **prosperity crisis**, the **equity crisis**, the **security crisis**, the **spirituality crisis**. In the face of this everything in the church must change. This change is precipitate by a new perspective.

- The church has to move away from legal solutions to a capital infraction against God and rather see God as solution.
- God is a transformer of our world and society rather than the author of its destruction.
- God is integral and uniting rather than dualistic which keeps faith in a privatised realm.
- God cares for all and calls the church and its people into communal relationships rather than individualised faith.
- God wants to save our world from the suicidal machinery of society and not let it drift to a well earned destruction
- Conventional views of God's judgement have the effect of a self-fulfilling prophecy that diverts the church from active hope. (McClaren.2007:80)

The author has come to these realisations through a sensitive and listening dialogue with persons who find traditional structures and assumptions untenable in today's world.

It has also arisen as he admits, through investigating in different parts of the church and world, the anguish and disintegration of the world and how the veracity of the Kingdom of God can meet this. The alternative is the destruction of the Suicide machine which is the nature of our world order. This surely has importance..

McClaren has seen the need for renewal and change in a dramatic way to how the church meets the world or the gospel of the kingdom relates to the zeitgeists of this world in the perils and error he defines. He is talking mission.

There are interesting points of discussion about McLaren's view of the Kingdom with its strong hope, like Calvin, of shaping the Kingdom in the here and now and representing it more concretely in history. This can be diverted into ideological hope and humanistic endeavour as we know from our own history, but he is crossing a barrier and sounding a trumpet. This calls for a new frontier or interface or departure or revision for what we believe and how we act. The writer of these two books is a proponent of a new perspective largely on the basis of his observations and socio/philosophical analysis of contexts. His concerns are true and urgent. I see in this writer an expression of a universal cry that is rising everywhere that we need what Elton Trueblood called for "A new man for our times." (Generically this means women too obviously).

This idea does throw up to us the example as an independent agent able to act and respond in the transformation of the world requiring new thinking and strategy.

McLaren is bound to view post-modernism as a pastor seeking to lead a congregation to renewal and response. Perhaps this underscores the perspective of this thesis that Cassidy demonstrates that the independent and well informed layman have better capacities to relate directly, in contextual transformation and indeed this epoch surely, puts the ball in their court as the world hesitates about slipping into congregational pews. It is as those who run churches listen to those who run the world that transformation begins. It is as those who run the world will hopefully and generously engage the Church that the church's capacity to be in the world with significance is enhanced

7.4. RELIGIOUS PLURALISM.

Today's world seems on one hand to be moving to greater tolerance toward faith in intellectual communities but greater intolerance for those who see faith as the arbiter of all reality. We have to find our way between fanaticism and the abandonment of that which is true. Increasingly the attention is turning toward dialogical models of interfaith contact.

David Bosch in his monumental work *Transforming Mission* gives us a useful summary theological reflection on other faiths and religions and gives suggestions how a dialogical model of mission may work. This is recorded in short below.

Ernest Troelch held to the idea that there was a close and intimate bond between a given religion and its own culture. Christianity was valid for Westerners, but only for them. For other peoples and cultures their traditional religions hold equally unconditional validity.

John Hick advances the notion that religions are different human answers to the one divine reality and says that they embody different perceptions that have been formed in different historical and cultural circumstances. He along with R.Pannikar and Stanley Samartha question the finality and the definitive normativity of Christ and of Christianity.

Knitter suggests the idea of “unitive pluralism” which differs from the idea of seeking consensus in “one world religion”. He suggests that all religions are equally valid and other revealers and saviours may be equally as important as Jesus Christ. What is needed is the notion of a wider ecumenism. He opts for pluralism without mutually exclusive claims or indifference. “Each must assimilate the other and yet preserve its individuality and grow according to its own laws of growth”.

Bosch presents options in facilitating a missiological principle of dialogue where hearts as well as minds can meet.

1. Firstly, there needs a decision of the heart to accept the co-existence of different faiths and to do so willingly and not grudgingly. We cannot dialogue with people if we resent their presence or the views they hold.
2. True dialogue presupposes commitment. It does not imply sacrificing one’s own position as it would then be superfluous. An “unprejudiced approach” is not merely impossible but it would subvert dialogue.
3. Dialogue is only possible if we if we proceed from the belief that we are nor moving into a void , but that we go expecting to meet the God who has preceded us and who has been preparing people within their context of their own cultures convictions. This requires humility. (BOSCH:Op Cit:482-484)

Cassidy’s perspective appears in chapter 13 of his book *Reflection on Christian Basics*. He affirms that the Bible itself and the moral law require a clear unequivocal affirmation of biblical truth and an unapologetic embrace of biblical ethic. The moral and intellectual climate of the times however views intellectual truth and moral principle in highly relativistic terms. There are proper challenges relating to Christian tolerance but the belief that all truths are relative is not one of them.

This view says: You have your opinion I have mine. You like Jesus, I like Buddha, he likes crystal balls, and she is into Eastern Mysticism. So what? Surely sincerity is all that matters and all roads lead to God anyway. And are we not all worshipping the same God? Are not all ways to God equally valid?

7.4.1. Attitude.

In answer to this posture Cassidy acknowledges that the world is in a new place in the development of self-conscious religious pluralism everywhere in the world today. This is right and inevitable. It is also quite appropriate that the playing field be levelled by the absence of any special privileges for Christians.

Our response to people of other faiths who live among us should be marked by repentance **and contrition** for the arrogant and dismissive manner in past interaction. Our approach should be **humble and sensitive** so that other people’s convictions are respected. Contact should be in a climate of **open-mindedness and a willingness to learn** and understand.

Nevertheless Christians should not surrender the obligation to call people whoever they are and whatever they believe, to faith in Christ. Our Lord told us to go into the world and proclaim the Gospel *to every person* calling each one to come in repentance and faith to the Living Christ who is Saviour, Lord and God. Christianity began in the context of another living faith, namely Judaism, and the Apostle Paul found no problem in saying that the Gospel was *“For the Jew first and then for the Greek”* (Romans 1:16) (CASSIDY: 152)

7.4.2. Tolerance.

Cassidy further discusses the nature of tolerance. This can be **legal** where everyone’s rights to belief are protected. There is **social tolerance** that requires respect for all people and upholds community life. There is also **intellectual tolerance** which adopts such breadth that every opinion even if it is false or evil without detecting anything to reject or question. This is not virtuous it is feeble-minded. Christians cannot afford this. Strong conviction is part of historical Christianity. The passage above from the Prayer of Jesus says this. *“For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you.”*

Tolerance does not make all religions equally correct or above criticism. We can be tolerant of other people’s beliefs without agreeing with them.

7.4.3. Revelation.

In addressing whether there is discontinuity between Christianity and other religions Cassidy asserts that Christianity does not contain all truth. Cassidy believes that there is a commonality to be found in General Revelation in nature, in the universe and in ourselves.

All human beings are able to understand volumes of truth. Paul writing in Romans 1 and 2 say that from creation of both the world and human beings, we can discern the invisible nature of God and His eternal power and deity, these things being clearly perceived in the things that have been made. (Romans 1:20.) General revelation is also found in our human conscience.

However in Christian belief, such truths about the nature of God and reality as have in other religions been correctly deduced from general revelation should produce a readiness to receive God’s special revelation in Christ and in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures.

Everything in other religions could be viewed as a preparation for the Gospel. There is not indifference to truth even though there is toleration of different beliefs. He goes on to quote William Temple who declared in the Gifford Lectures that:

Natural revelation leaves all the world on tiptoe and in hunger waiting for the special revelation of God in Christ. (:Ibid.156)

The hope of a resolution to the diversity of religions in some form of consensus or amalgam is unlikely Only a few would be willing to opt for that and it would most likely produce even

more divergence and division. Major choices about truth about what is true have in the long to be made. These need not violate anywhere the laws of love tolerance and mutual respect.

7.4.4. Cooperation.

Finally in relation to co-operation Cassidy concludes.

There remains great opportunity for cooperation between people of differing faiths in all matters of common humanity, issues of justice, environmental protection, hunger and poverty. In other words everything related to our doctrine of creation, humankind and personhood. If cooperation concerns missiology, soteriology or other related matters I would find very serious difficulties (Ibid:158,159.)

Cassidy's friend and mentor Stephen Neill comments:

Simply as history the event of Jesus Christ is unique. Christian faith goes a great deal further in its interpretation of that event. It maintains that in Jesus the one thing that needed to happen has happened in such a way that it need never happen again in the same way. The universe has been reconciled to its God. Through the perfect obedience of one man a new permanent relationship has been established between God and the whole human race. The bridge has been built. There is room on it for all the needed traffic in both directions, from God to man and from man to God. Why look for any other? (Neill.1970:17)

7.5. A VIEW ON LIBERATION THEOLOGY.

We have mentioned in the chapter on reconciliation the way in which the Kairos document appeared as a repudiation of state and church theology. In his own search for justice Cassidy was bound to reflect on its content and the concomitant Liberation Theology it espoused. In an appendix to his book *The Passing Summer* (pg. 500.) He seeks to interact with this important attempt to relate faith to contexts of oppression. He admits that this is a very inadequate and incomplete inquiry into this document and it is given simply to underline certain highlights. There would be interest in his discussion on this for some and to that end An abridged view of Cassidy's analysis is found at APPENDIX 10.

7.6. THE BIBLE AS THE SOURCE OF TRUTH

In Cassidy's discussion believes that up to about 200 years ago, a high view of the **Authority and inspiration of the Bible** was the historical Christian view. This and the evangelical view is essentially a view of faith - a theological construct - based on the scripture's view of itself. The Bible's view of itself must take priority in any attempt to formulate a doctrine of scripture. Its self-witness precedes difficulties and problems that we might have. Jesus view of scripture is also important in discerning this matter despite difficulties and apparent contradictions that may challenge this perspective.

In the same way that difficulties surrounding the humanity and deity of Jesus or the trinity might be resolved by faith and in trust of what He said so also with scripture with its divine and human elements. Cassidy sets out steps to a right view to the Authority and Inspiration; these are given with a rather abridged version in APPENDIX 11.

Some critics might feel he has not adequately tested the question of the historical/cultural perspectives in hermeneutic reflection. The question of progressive revelation for example suggests that in marital relations or the use of violence and coercion that moral behaviour and questions about this were in different stages of illumination and that this absolutising of New Testament norms need moderation in relation to the status of ethics in varieties of culture. Or, biblical interpretation has been linked to imperialism and that colonial assumptions or power relations place interpretation that gave nuances to theology in the support of oppression and so revision is needed. Some of this is picked up in the next chapter.

Some may feel he has overlooked key areas of current concern namely the issue of poverty or the question of the environment or the place of gender and economicst. Many current issues were on the table at SACLAll and these were taken even further in NIRSA.

The writers own view is not so much that Cassidy is a champion for orthodoxy, although he strongly affirms it. Rather he has developed and enriched his understanding of truth in ways that foster an extensive and wide orthopraxis. This might be his special contribution.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE MARK OF HOLINESS.

Witness *in* but not *of* the World

(John 17: 13) *But now I come to you and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them your Word; and the world has hated because they are not of this world just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one.*

Vs 16. *They are not of the world just as I am not of this world.*

Jesus the maker of the world was also part of its material. He as maker became Servant in it. He has redeemed it even though he is its judge. Salvation is directed to this orb. This world though emanating from God is also in rebellion against Him.. The world is the stage for redemption and the parchment on which salvation story is written. World History and Salvation history intertwine.

While the Christian is an agent to bring the world to faith in his journey and venture into the world as a disciple and transformer has also an antipathetic relationship with the world systems or alternative principalities and powers. But this is not as its judge or enemy but, quite often, as its victim or as an opponent or even as a pawn for the colonising powers that dominates the world he seeks to serve. He is a stranger and wanderer in this world. He has another home now located in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The prayer implies that the world is not a place of triumph and that this proximity to the world will not be easy. It will be difficult in its tension but also with the presence of a spiritual antagonism that will seek to destroy and devour. Indeed the prayer implies the need for rescue and protection from “The Evil One” who is acknowledged as its prince. There is expected to be a malign supernatural attack and opposition that Christ himself anticipates is virulent enough to require His intercession to preserve and guard the Christian.

Nevertheless time and space is uniquely an aspect of our world and it is within its geography and history that salvation comes. Salvation history adheres to world history. World history is the staging ground for Salvation history.

But there is also anticipation from the words spoken by Christ that there be a distance and separation and non collusion with the world and that demands a set apartness and distance. This contrast or contradistinction is a mark for which Jesus prayed. Being in the world but not of it.

The church is in but not of the world. This is a holy stance which presses the Christian away from cooption by the world to a vital and distinctive service. The Christian is sanctified in his separation toward allegiance, obedience and the following of God in truth.

This is an active distance that is a preface to mission and not a call to retreat or disengagement. The Christian marches to the beat of another drum. Values emanate from sacrificial serving and dying for others which is an ethic the world does not understand. How is the Christian to maintain this posture, and what is the ‘world’ he has to be different from?

The Cassidy understanding of ministry has much to do with the idea of World. Cassidy understood with great definiteness the distinction between 3 worlds. These are:

The Created World of God that includes the idea of createdness extending to the material world in all of its inconceivable size and complexity as well angelic beings which inhabit His presence or may be in rebellion. (*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* Gen 1:1.)

The world as a system inimical to God which seeks to divert men and pervert his affections toward his(or her) neighbour. The world can be understood as an alternative system, that influences and guides human creatures. This leads to sin, self absorption and dominion by principalities and powers which subvert the Love of God. It is seen as part of an alliance with the flesh and the devil. (*I have overcome the world:* John:16:33)

The Oppressed Human World that needs Redemption and Salvation. This is the World for which Christ died constituting the human race. (God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.)

We have already had the opportunity to explore aspects of liberation and redemption in our discussion on Mission and Evangelism. In this chapter we will be exploring aspects of the world in cultural, philosophical and ethical perspective. We will begin with a most basic aspect of human life.

8.1. CULTURE

Culture arises from the **cultural world of indigenous human communities** who have set up from time immemorial economies of preservation that enable humans to adapt and live in community and in relation to the natural world.

Culture, says Luzbetak is essentially a design for living. (Luzbetak.139.)

Kraft quoting definitions by Kroeber and Gluckman, describes it with greater complexity

as consisting of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted through symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may on one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action. (Kraft 1979: 46)

Cultures are the fount of religion and they arise from man's vital and dependant relationship with Nature. As **earlier rural and tribal cultures** regarded and related to the natural world this had the effect of defining the religious aspect which was the product of these cultures. Religion arose not as a direct revelation from God but rather from an echo of the Created word that God spoke in His making of the cosmos. The natural world gave definition to the religious system.

Cassidy is not a trained anthropologist who has carefully analysed and observed culture. While cross-cultural missionaries planting churches take due regard to traditional cultures

urban centres are often reached by a more uni-cultural approach of evangelistic preaching. Urban evangelists are itinerant and Cassidy might have preached on 30 different African countries. Evangelism relates to commonalities in all men everywhere that are addressed by preaching to city populations.

At a recent conference arranged at the African Enterprise Leadership Training Centre in Monday May 7th 2007 he delivered a paper to a consultation on Gospel and culture. This is a record of some of his comments.

The Bible stands as a divine authority. It speaks into culture, it participates within culture, but it is an authority above cultures so sometimes it will affirm cultures, like let us say the Ubuntu that is so strong within African cultures with its sense of community and togetherness. Or it will critique culture, like let us say the Indian culture or one of those that pushes women to one side. Or it may judge culture, as for example it judged the presupposition in Afrikaans apartheid culture that discrimination was OK.

So it will affirm culture, critique or judge it, depending on whether the cultural practice or behaviour can line up with scripture or not. And it will do this whether this is western culture based on a watered down version of Judeo-Christian faith or whether it is an Indian culture based on a Hindu worldview, or a Chinese culture based on Confucianist assumptions, or an Arab culture based on Islamic teaching, or an African culture based on African Traditional Religions.

This has similarities to the book by Richard Niebuhr on “Christ and Culture” which has become a classic. The postures identified by in his book are well known and have been suggested as;

Christ against Culture

The most radical answer is "Christ against Culture." This suggests that cultures have elements that might be anti-human or questionable such as killing of a twin or including prostitution in a religious ceremony or cult-killing. Fostering the use of witches and neglecting the old are also examples.

Christ of Culture. Christ himself became a Jew and was wrapped in swaddling bands. Old Testament passages demonstrate a huge revealed religious content to the Jewish culture after at Sinai.

Christ above Culture .Cultures cannot match to the true ascendancy and transcendence of Jesus Christ and the kingdom. These stand as supra-cultural and beyond the understanding and reach of any culture although this might be symbolized through a cultures art or music.

Christ and Culture in Paradox. The paradox view differs from the preceding one by maintaining that while both Christ and culture claim our loyalty, the tension between them cannot be reconciled by any lasting synthesis

Christ the Transformer of Culture. This important stance suggests that Christ came to press culture to a higher purpose and goal. He frequently said to the leaders of the

culture. “You say But I say”. He presses cultures to become more human and more exalted. Cultural functions can be transformed in its forms.

The church has to guard against 2 dangers. The first is that it does not become an extension of state or other ideologies. The ideological world view can trump the Christian worldview in that can offer participation in the economic spoils and power that ideology mobilises. The spectacle of a Christian church recently ordaining the then former deputy president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, as one of its pastors is a blatant example of this kind of capitulation.

The other danger is that the church begins to understand its own institutional life and organisational goals and agendas as the centre and not God’s kingdom. Diplomacy replaces prophesy. She struggles for justice only when threatened. It serves its own interests and builds its own introverted focus of ministry with a self sufficiency garnered from success.

The church that rises in thousands of cultures can profoundly represent culture. All cultures can be vehicles for the glory of God. The church though must decide to be distinct and separate from the power interests in communities.

Socio economic and political theory and philosophical assumptions can be co-opted by groups to mobilise power in the formation of ideologies. These often replace the cultural world views and become alternative means of the progression of political control and economic development.

In his book *Message and Mission* Eugene Nida does an extensive discussion on the communication of the Gospel in cross-cultural contexts. He advocates the application of the principles of equity and love in relation to cultural change which the communication of the Gospel may imply in respect of any institution.

- i. Let it remain as a valid institution.
- ii. Alter its form as may be required to eliminate error and give it Christian significance.
- iii. Employ a functional substitute in the case of institutions which are irreparably evil, though functionally relevant. (Nida:218)

This principle of respect and affirmation for culture commends itself. There is no higher culture though some may have patinas and histories of Christian transformations of the past that remain like cut flowers. Bright blooms for a while but severed from its roots.

8.1.1. Natural Religions.

Nature, unaided by revelation produces reflection about its origins and the place of man in it. The world begs the question that seeks a religious answer.

The world itself is a factory for assumptions about its origin and sustaining power. The Cosmos is awe-inspiring and providential. It is easy to be so overpowered by its majesty, beauty, fruit and nurturing capacities that we attach to it the idea of a mother god or a fertility god.

Some thinkers believe that religions are devolved from the original Adamic understanding of the monotheistic creator God. With the alienation of man through the breach of sin man

became separated from God. This absence of intimacy and fellowship corrupted the understanding and pure perceptions stimulated in Eden and devolved eventually to polytheism. The truth about God became perverted and mostly forgotten. In some cultures the memory remained of a One God but He was largely displaced by other intercessory and hierarchical demi-gods.

Another view suggests that all of religion began as polytheism and developed or evolved toward monotheism. This view emerges from the ideas of Darwinism.

God's relationship with the world is formulated and reconstructed and explained in an amazing range of religious response which emanates from human observation and interaction with material reality. Some of these are listed below by way of example.

In Pantheism God and the world are indistinguishable. The created order and the creator are merged. So God is diffuse and impersonal. Moral conduct is consummated by a destination in an absorption into God. Eastern Mysticism will even dissolve the idea of creation as substantial in the suggestion that we are all part of a dream of God.

In Syntheism an aspect of creation is regarded as God. This gives rise to animism in which idols and natural spirits, trees, rivers, mountains or celestial objects are conceived to be a deity for the role they play in the provision of life. Idols and shrines become the habitation of household of familiar gods. Totemism links humans to the influence of animal spirits in symbiotic coherence.

In Deism God is recognised as the originator of the universe but he has abrogated his responsibilities and gone away and set the world running in an autonomous way.

Totemism powerfully links tribal communities to natural powers in which animal spirit power is harnessed for the good of the collective. Tribal groups also opted for henotheism in which there was the worship of one god as the deity of a family or clan.

There are also religions that derive from community which extend the capacity of families and tribes to survive in a larger community idea despite death. The rise of Spiritism is extremely ancient and it surely coincides with the beginning of community and its struggle with death.

The ancestor cult often believes that God is distant and largely unapproachable and that into the vacuum of alienation the spirits of the departed come to ameliorate and bless. The belief in ancestors places the community at the heart of society. The tribe or clan which is a societal construct in community become the source of power or the expression of God. In this the departed are venerated and aspects of deity and supernatural power are accorded them as spirits of the departed still influencing the now. It is precedent and time past that dictates to the present.

Cassidy insists that for the Christian, creation is not the origin or cause of true belief. It can demonstrate the existence of a God but it can only partially reveal Him. The proclamation of Good News is the starting place for illumination and revelation for all. It is the birth of the new man that initiates the restoration of true faith. For the Christian, creation is now a celebration of the divinity and power of Christ who made the Cosmos and sustains it and holds it all together by His power.

Cassidy conversely sees creation as leading in a different direction. He took his cue from E. Stanley Jones who sought to share his faith with Hindus in the Ashram movement in India

Cassidy believed that the Agent of Creation was Christ. This being said, **Creation illuminates truth and ethics.**

Cassidy used this principle in his critique of Apartheid. He saw a 5 fold implication to this.

1. It means that the universe is His and His stamp is upon it at every level.
2. It means that His laws - scientific, social, personal psychological and moral – are operative throughout.
3. It means that if we want life and the universe to cooperate with us we must play the game His way. If we do life and the universe will cooperate with us. Things work.
4. It means that if we do not go the Jesus way at every level of life – whether personal, moral, marital and political – then life and the universe do not cooperate with us. We lose their backing and instead of producing that which is integrative we produce that which is disintegrative. Thus a teenager violating the law of sex is not breaking the laws but illustrating them when he or she becomes fragmented. Likewise a politician who violates Jesus' corporate or social laws (e.g. "Do unto others as you would have them do to you" or "Love your neighbour as yourself") will find, not that they are breaking laws, but the laws are breaking them and the society around them. Nor will anyone persuade me that Apartheid laws are not violating these two principles. Not one white member of the Cabinet would want to be on the receiving end of the apartheid legislation.
5. It does not mean that a thing is wrong simply because the Bible says so, (as if it were something arbitrary) but rather that a thing is wrong because it does not work. It is not in accord with the moral fabric of the universe. In other words biblical morality (whether personal, social or political) is not an *imposed* morality but rather an *exposed* morality. The Bible simply exposes the morality which is there and says "If you want life to work, than do it this way". It is like finding the direction of a grain on a piece of wood so one may plane it correctly. The plane works when it follows the grain that is there. Likewise it is by faulty policy we go against the moral grain of the universe. The political plane just will not work. This is very close to Plato's definition of the good as that which is there. (Cassidy.1983.199.)

Cassidy believed that Creation was designed with a pattern of rightness and order that originated in the Creator and that set a creation precedent as to the function and behaviour of creatures in a pre-ordained norm. We shall explore this later in this chapter.

8.2. WORLDVIEW.

Cultures have at their heart a construct that produces consonance in the culture and binds aspects of the culture together. This we call worldview. Luzbetak, the Catholic anthropologist and missiologist defines this.

A world view represents the deepest questions one might ask about the world and life and about the corresponding orientation that one should take toward them. More concretely the worldview provides answers to such questions as “Who or what am I, Why am I in the World? What is reality? How do humans differ from non-humans (animals, objects, invisible beings)? Who belongs to the invisible world and what are the invisible forces in the world? What is the proper orientation to time and space? What about life after death? What in life is or the world is desirable or undesirable.(Luzbetak:1988.252.)

Kraft, who also pioneers the place of Anthropology in mission points out that worldview lies at the heart of culture

World views pattern conceptualisations of what reality can or should be. The worldview is the central systematisation of conceptions of reality to which the members of the culture give assent (largely unconsciously) and from which stems their value system (Kraft:53.)

Kraft suggests that the world view shapes the aspects of the culture not the other way around. The world view shapes the reality in different nuances. World views have 5 major functions.

- The first is explanation of how and why things got the way they are and why they continue or change. Worldview embodies for people whether explicitly or implicitly, the basic assumptions concerning ultimate things on which they base their lives.
- The second serves an evaluational – a judging and validating function. The basic institutions values and goals of a society are ethnocentrically assessed.
- Thirdly worldview provides psychological reinforcement for the group. At points of anxiety or crisis it is to one’s conceptual system that one returns to continue or find a means of coping. Rituals play a great role in this reinforcement.
- Fourthly worldview provides congruence integrating all of the aspects together into an overall design that fits all dimensions of living into a neat whole with different parts.
- .Fifthly the system adapts and is subject to adjustment and change. The perceptions of reality can shift and change by innovation and advocacy. A very dramatic radical change imposed on culture can distort the culture and collapse the worldview. Thus aspects of colonisation by the west or urbanisation where rural cultures begin to be abandoned or the evident failure of beliefs to endure can have the effect of undermining and subverting worldview and its cultural interstices.(Ibid:54-57.)

8.3. IDEOLOGIES.

The relationship between the world and our assumptions about religions has in more recent times increasingly cohered around the centrality of man. Creation, in this perspective, does not define reality, man does. The world is anthropocentric and nor Theo-centric. Without man creation has no meaning. He is the lens that sees it and the mind interprets its and gives it function and purpose not vice versa.

With the rise of cities and state power the focus began to turn away from religions to beliefs that had their basis in human communities themselves. In Genesis in the city of Babel we see the first primitive emergence of **humanism** which fosters the dream that men can be as gods. In more modern times religion began, with the loss of the numinous sense of proximity to the supernatural, to be focussed around a world emptied of deity and amplified by the centrality of man and his power to co-opt natural, social and cognitive power to enhance his progress toward a self sufficiency and independence from God.

In all this creatures become the arbiter and essence of deity. The development of secularism is a natural corollary. The world needs to be emptied of God consciousness and the power of gods assumed by man. This new modern power to shape reality is chiefly expressed through ideologies.

The rise of humanism was initiated over decades. It grew from the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the powerful mastery of science over nature, modernism and technological triumphs. Humanism quite naturally began to cohere with materialism to produce political ideology. The break with the rule of kings and the democratisation of political power further demonstrated the power of ideology as a contemporary force. Ideologies assume power to remake the world.

Andre Dumas quoted by Verkuyl writes:

Ideologies are blue prints of the future made by a certain ideologue or group of elites within the community to move the masses. Dumas believed that all the causes for human trouble and grief are found in the contemporary moment. They go hand in hand with a collective stamp which seeks to channel the fervent hope of dispossessed people to employ it for certain purposes. (Verkuyl:374)

Verkuyl suggests that the analysis and evaluation of ideologies is one of the missiologist's most basic tasks. (Ibid:391). He goes on to say that the promises and demands of the gospel of the all-embracing as it has come and still comes to us in Jesus Christ constitute the criteria for evaluating the ideologies.

Ideology had a very central place in the rise of Apartheid. Nurnberger examines Ideology in his exhaustive work on *Contending ideologies in South Africa*. He synthesises the many attempts to define ideology

At the level of Epistemology or the theory of knowledge he asserts that it interprets reality from one specific perspective. A focus on the nation might produce nationalism. Someone who is wealthy will vouch for capitalism. The poor might opt for revolutionary theories. Workers will be focussed toward socialism.

Ideology is an action related system of ideas and institutions operating at the level of politics and economics. It is intended to change or defend an existing socio-economic order. Our class origin and position in society express a vested interest in maintaining or changing the status quo. It is quite natural for the black elite in South Africa to commit to black consciousness and black economic empowerment. It is also part of group interest for the Gay lobby to seek to

reorient the common understanding of sexual mores and to seek to redefine marriage. Ideologies are not just systems of ideas they are embodied in institutions.

Ideologies often function as a false consciousness as they distort the truth, consciously or unconsciously. They are a deformed and inverted reflection of what is real. They function to provide justification before itself and before others of its privileges, political power, social prestige and financial benefits. As a mechanism for self-justification it can create the illusion of ironclad legitimacy and acceptability. Groups that are oppressed might have individuals who pretend to struggle for the interests of others but in fact seek only power for them.

True consciousness, in this framework, is an ideology that really represents the interest of justice and liberation for the total community.

Certain ideologies can become total ideologies and assume a totalitarian character. These present an all-embracing answer to man's ultimate questions. Total ideologies take part of reality and make it the whole of reality as did certain forms of Marxist-Leninism. It encloses the world, the real totality, in a narrow prison. When this happens ideology degenerates from being a symbol into an idol. (Kniefel & Numberger.1986:281-284.)

Cassidy wrote in 1983 with warnings about the wrong assumptions of Apartheid Ideology.

But of this I am sure. Anything that breaks with Christian Principle will not work. It will only produce the mounting fury which is now threatening to engulf our whole society - if not right now, then within a few years. It is reflex, as it were, in the machine to what happens when the rules are broken. It is the cogs in a watch grinding because of sand which should not be there. Put differently, it is life and the universe in REACTION.... So my challenge is to encourage subordination of policy to principle, bearing in mind it is better in the eyes of both time and eternity to lose in the short term with what must ultimately win rather than win in the short term with that which will ultimately lose.

Cassidy in this same reference, goes on to quote Dr Paul Schmidt, Hitler's official interpreter to a friend.

The basically Christian ethics which activated most European statesmen in the 20s and early 30s, however vigorously they represented the interests of their countries, resulted in progress which I saw achieved year by year at successive conferences, in those days.

Thereafter I witnessed the mighty struggle between the eternal principles of Christianity and the exponents of new attitude to human rights contrary to all accepted ideas. I saw the apparent triumph of this new attitude. But, by being closely linked with events, I perceived with increasing clarity on which side strength essentially lay. The outbreak of war in 1939 was the beginning of the end for this new force, at first victorious, but whose

accelerated decline, culminating in the greatest catastrophe of all times. I also followed closely in all its phases, year by year. (Ibid:202.)

So Cassidy holds to creation ordinance or the architecture of the universe as a basis for criticism against the political and ideological content and assumptions about power and policy. Creation design and intent, if frustrated, will lead to disorder and dysfunction in the individual and the community.

He includes in this “ground” for human understanding and structure a belief in the dignity and value of man. This doctrine on the value of the human soul had profound implications for social change. Cassidy cites the work of the Clapham sect which was a group of Christian social reformers including Hannah More and William Wilberforce who played a great role in advancing human freedom and social justice. Man is made in the Image of God and this accords him value and worth and dignity. He goes on to say :

All this underlines that no Christian who has grasped principles of the moral nature of the universe, as I believe all need to do in our time, can stand aside and let governments and societies and even so-called liberation movements try to do their own thing without reference to Jesus and His guidebook.

The idea of the collapse of ideology through the application of a false ideal is further developed in *Puritans in Africa*.

Scratch an Ideology and you will find a collective. Scratch a collective and you will find a band of intellectuals with a vision of the kingdom of man, being ersatz for the Kingdom of Heaven. With their eyes on Utopia, let these intellectuals then scratch each other. Soon they will uncover all the articles of faith constituting their idea, their particular gospel..... Intellectual elite, emerging from a new middle class, then articulates the repressiveness, slackness, mediocrity of the old order. Painstakingly, they also explore the present, past and future, and rationalize the shape of the new kingdom, which would utterly reverse the old. Preparing to challenge it, they centre all their thinking on the re-establishment of total social justice. Justice as a formulation of an abstraction of freedom becomes their justification of power. The ideal is of a completely new society. The band of brothers also demands for themselves the most rigorous discipline and unswerving faith. Sacrifices are called for; and should it mean martyrdom, so be it. Persecution could only serve to strengthen the spirit of those who have accepted their destiny.

In the transition to power de Klerk suggests that the old order changes very often by decay. When the transfer of power has been attained nevertheless the ideal has been attained. Or has it?

The new society is still an infant. When the complete design has at last been realized and the new order established, man will have arrived at his true home. As a temporary measure it is proposed, the new order will need authority; uncompromising and even drastic, where the need arises. This however is not oppression, for its true intent is to serve the high ideals of

the revolution. It is merely a passing discomfort which will disappear as the vision is translated into reality.

What now happens is that the total nature of the revolution in turn will also require an increasing number of functionaries to make it work. Surreptitiously, no mysteriously, the new authority then gradually adopts the attitudes and methods of the old, in spite of its finest intention to avoid the bureaucratic morass. This is unavoidable as all 'human engineering' as Popper calls it, like the mythical Tower, will require a myriad of operators, who precisely because they are labouring at an abstraction of fulfilment, will increasingly fail to communicate with each other. It becomes a confusion of tongues. (DeKlerk.1975:188,189)

Ideologies are also world views. Ideologies have strong overtones of interest in political power and of economic theoretical philosophy. Ideologies are more intentional in being imperialistic and will sometimes mask the true nature of political and economic relations.

So all of this means that all of mankind has around him and through the enculturation of his family, community and peers, a particular culture that comes with his language and the caregivers who imprint his or her life.

So man's world is a cultural world. The world has already absorbed the person from birth into an inseparable influence and way of perceiving and behaving. At the core of culture is a world view that is subject to change. A too radical change in the worldview can distort the cultural coherence of the individual and produce a trauma that becomes destructive. The effect for example of colonisation seriously damaged the Khoisan culture so that it was brought to the point of extinction.

It is at the point of world view that the Christian Gospel can bring a change. Christian allegiance or conversion can lead to a process of culture change that can be transformational and positive within the culture.

8.4. THE ETHICAL REFLECTIONS.

Evolutionism, materialism, naturalism and humanism all combine to create a world view rooted in ideologies which compete with or seek to displace the reign and rule of God and resist the Judeo Christian worldview of values. Morality is primarily represented in cultural mores or in oughts and laws that are in the common interest. There is in Cassidy a profound willingness to engage around the issues of holiness as represented by Christian ethics in a contemporary world.

In Cassidy's book *What on earth are you thinking for heaven's sake* he tackles many of the relevant issues and questions in our present time. This is the nub in the writer's view of Cassidy's moral/ethical perspective. It informs his anthropology and even is the ground for his understanding of Apologetics. So I would like his understanding of this matter to be expressed below.

In his introduction to this book he makes this point.

In a nutshell, my thesis is that the biblical ethic is one which is built on the moral fabric of the universe by Jesus Himself as the agent of Creation. "all things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made" (John 1:3). As people are led to understand this and as they see the Christian ethic as a friend and not the enemy of their joy and fulfilment they can arrive at a sure stable moral foundation for their lives. To start with, let's recognize that many different and intriguing views are propounded in the area of ethics. Some say "What is moral is what I feel good after". Others see morals as a blind obedience to someone's arbitrary words or commands. The religious prude might put it this way, "If it's fun, it must be wrong". Postmodernism makes all ethics relative – there are no absolutes. Broadmindedness toward everything is the order of the day, and tolerance the final virtue. Some feel that what the majority in a political party, or the majority in society decree becomes right as the ethical norm. Precarious indeed. (Cassidy 2006.13, 14)

In discussing Christian Morality in the first chapter he affirms in his writing the following belief.

The great tradition of Christian theology which runs from Augustine to Thomas Aquinas has always affirmed that there is a moral law bearing its own evidence and authority and that humans can apprehend the reality and existence of a moral inheritance. The apostle Paul said, "That the law requires is written on their hearts." (Rom 2:15a) Naturally therefore Christians do not believe that human life, love and moral experience can be understood or even described adequately except in relation to that which transcends them, and that transcendent factor is what Christians call God. This leads us to the threefold basis of Christian morality which shows that Christian morality is not freedom from rules, but freedom with rules - or freedom within rules. This requires us to look at:

- The nature of human beings
- The Nature of the universe
- The Nature of God revealed in Jesus Christ. (Ibid:15)

Cassidy suggests that the biblical ethic is built into the moral fabric of the universe by Jesus Himself who is the agent of creation. So the Christian ethic is a friend which leads to the completion and consummation of life and not to the curbing of joy and freedom. It is the ethic of the world systems that is intrinsically destructive

This reinforces the dominant place that Cassidy has in all of his thinking almost about anything of Jesus as the Logos. The focus here is not so much about the coming of Jesus as Lord at the end of time but as the everpresent powerful reality that is deeply committed to the now in which the Creator Lord immanent not only in Spirit and Word and in His people but in the Cosmos.

As I understand it truth is the properly construed meaning of all experience. It is a judgement or proposition which, when followed out into the total witness of all the facts in our experience does not disappoint

our expectations. Or truth is a judgement which corresponds to things as they are. It is a statement that accords with reality. (Ibid.:14.)

This reality is not historical or outdated. It is relevant.

I believe that traditional Christian morality is in accordance with the facts and realities of modern experience. Such morality is in contrast to the secular (Ibid:15.)

There is in Cassidy's ethic a threefold basis which suggests a freedom with rules which surpasses the ideas of freedom without rules which is anarchic, or rules without freedom which is bondage. This basis is discussed by Cassidy in his chapter on ethics

This is based on the following.

8.4.1. The nature of human beings.

We are beings with tendencies to see relationships and care as primary values. Morality is more than social conditioning. Cassidy quotes C.S. Lewis as saying;

First that human beings all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot get rid of it. Secondly that they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of Nature; they break it. These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in. (Ibid:16.)

Behind the law in scripture and in the human heart lies the reality of the self-expression of God as the Logos that brings the explanation as to origins and life, morality and destiny.

8.4.2. The nature of the universe.

Our reality either knits together in a universe which is orchestrated by a unifying principle that gives internal cohesion. This means that all becomes explicable not just in the physical and material sense but humans within it along with the moral sense that humans manifest. Thus there are God given laws that refer and speak to every area of life namely the laws of scripture and the law of nature which have the same law-giver. Professor Barry a British ethicist notes that;

“Morality is an aspect of the whole cosmic ‘movement’ or process rooted in the structure of the universe, and is, indeed, conformity with that movement - the nature of things – on the part of man.

This understanding of the immanence of ethics in creation has stood in other philosophies and traditions as well including the Greek philosophers, the Roman writers and the stoics.

8.4.3. The nature of God as revealed in Jesus Christ

Divine Reason which rules the Cosmos and gives it coherence, unity and order is the basis for inherent morality does have a name and it is called the *Logos*. This is the “Word” or “self-expression” of God whom John identifies as the Word made flesh. So in Christ the true way

of life has been personified - this *is* life according to nature. The natural law doctrine can be seen as a declaration of the Lordship of Christ over all human life. Christians believe that what Jesus was, as seen in His earthly life and ministry God is always and that the life of Jesus was in accord with the natural and divine order of the Cosmos which He had Himself made. The game of life has to be played the Jesus way.

Jesus therefore exposed rather than imposed more fully and intrinsically morality that was already there and which He had stamped on the universe. As the way things were meant to function. A moral action, therefore, will not only have scripture behind it, but the universe and the Cosmos. Christian ethics are, therefore always on the side of fullness, happiness, true fun, completeness, peace health, sexual and romantic fullness, plus psychological wholeness, mental health and spiritual joy and indeed social stability.

As Christians we should not abandon Christian faith and commitment or biblical values, ethics and absolutes as we see them in the Christian Scriptures, namely the Bible. Because for me what we see in the Bible, and most specifically in Jesus and His words, is not just one in a pantheon of religious options. Rather we do see here a description and explanation of the way things are in the universe and life. This being so, there is only one way to play the game of life if it is really to work, and that is the Jesus way, because this is Jesus universe and He is the author of it and the One behind it says the writer of to the Hebrews: “*He upholds the universe by His word and power*” (Hebrews 1:3). That is why He could also say, “*I am the way*” (John 14:6) this was not just the way to the Father – but the way for everything in terms of life and behaviour. If a person can find Christ as Saviour, Lord and friend, then he or she has truly the path to peace, the highway to happiness, the secret of service and the personal key to Christian ethics. And can any experience be more magnificent that that? (Ibid: 13-29)

Cassidy applies this principle in his examination of the following issues which this thesis will not examine as a full argument of each of these issues is merited to do justice to the author.

Morals, Ethics and Principles of Christian Marriage.

Divorce.

Homosexuality.

Abortion.

Euthanasia.

Capital punishment.

Prosperity, Poverty and Shalom.

The Sabbath.

The Environment and Creation.

We perceive in Cassidy a Holism and view of the world that engages him in an activism in an applied faith that is astonishing. His Christology is the driving force whether it touch social relations, Politics, Theology, Missiology, and the preservation of our world.

8.5. THE GAY MARRIAGE ISSUE.

This chapter cannot be concluded without a brief discussion on the issue of Gay Marriage. It is interesting to make a comparison between the stance taken by Bishop Desmond Tutu and Michel Cassidy. For Desmond Tutu his life has been suffused with the struggle for justice and the principle of freedom. Many Christians followed Tutu's line that the struggle against Apartheid should be extended to the construction of a constitution that extended human rights to all.

The gay marriage issue was seen as an extension of this struggle and the consummation of the human rights promise. So there was a political correctness attached to this issue and a logic rooted in the constitution and ethic of liberation struggle that begged for the principle of universalising the right to marry to people of the same sex as a completion of or as an expression constitutional right and a fruit of liberation in community and society.

The fact is that the liberation ethos is not an absolute. Nor can it be universally applied. Indeed one of the reasons for the moral decay in South Africa is rooted in the unravelling of this moral base. It could only be temporary and fleeting because it did not understand the nature of sin as more pervasive than political discipline. The constitution has become the primary moral map for society. But this dream is not sufficient to provide an enduring and transforming compass. Liberationists often betray the dream by becoming dictators and oppressors themselves. Constitutions are imperfect and can be overturned.

On the other hand Cassidy, in a consistency of principle, applied the same basis for his opposition to Apartheid to this matter namely the biblical purview and its socio/moral principle. Marriage was given to accommodate natural law that Cassidy considered to be rooted in Christ. It was not consistent with the Jesus Way as expressed in the ethical demand of the Logos.

The reason for the opposition to the legislation permitting gay marriage was for Cassidy and others founded on several factors

- It goes against the historic heterosexual understanding of marriage recognised from Creation and time immemorial
- It is a pre-existing creation ordinance rooted in biological, physiological and social realities. This is a foundational institution of human societies recognised by all religions. Governments may put laws in place around it but they cannot cut the main threads from which our social fabric is woven.
- The law did not give or make marriage so it cannot now change or redefine marriage. The attempt for example of the state to limit racial diversity in marriage did not hold in law. The state and its organs have proper limits. One cannot change marriage as it has always been to marriage as it has never been known.
- In a democratic state a handful of unelected legal officials should not be given the whole say in this matter. Marriage is not just a private affair it is a public one. Common law should reflect the core values of the society.

Cassidy also mentions the radical nature of this change, the place of belief in this social institution, the secularist nature of the notion and evidences that point to marriage damage.

This legislation could also lead to continuing attacks and even the imperilling of religious freedom.

It seems that it was Cassidy that set in motion the Christian critique of this legislation. It was his energy and his calling to believers to confront this matter that raised up the Marriage Alliance. He became the Patron of this movement and sought to canvas wisdom from believers around the world and gather national and international support. Cassidy did not stand against the exclusion of Gays on grounds of homophobia. As in his stand against Apartheid he turned for a reference point to his understanding of the will and purposes of the Logos and the pattern He set in Creation and scripture.

Responses were received from church leaders canvassed by Cassidy prior to the legislation. At that time there was a powerful consensus from SACC members toward this matter. These views and perspectives were ignored and obscured in the SACC submission on this matter.

(See the copies of letters to SACC and responses from member churches in APPENDIX 12)

The decision of the Constitutional Court underlined an issue that affects and influences the way Christians present their convictions about law making. This is part of their judgement.

It is one thing for the Court to acknowledge the important role that religion plays in our public life. It is quite another to use religious doctrine as a source for interpreting the Constitution. It would be out of order to employ the religious sentiments of some as a guide to the constitutional rights of others. Between and within religions there are very different and at times, highly disputed views on how to respond to the fact that members of their congregations and clergy are themselves homosexual. Judges would be placed in an intolerable situation if they were called upon to construe religious texts and take sides on issues which have caused deep schisms within religious bodies. Decided 1 Dec 2005.

Given a constitution that accords no place to God this ruling exemplifies the divorce between a secular state and Christians who stand on the authority and inspiration of scripture. The repudiation of this line of appeal faces the church with a Post Christian reality in which convictions have to be mobilised in other ways. Scripture carries no weight in secular institutions although it is the rule of life for the believer.

In setting out a precedent for marriage to be regarded as a secular institution one of the judges makes the point that Roman government allowed unions of several kinds to be registered. This was a practise that was secularised. He suggests that the rise of Christian influence in the 3rd century secured rights for this to be controlled by the Church. For some reason he overlooks the precedent set in other places and cultures (and especially the Jewish tradition) that presented marriage as a religious rite between people of opposite sex.

The anguishes between the demands of truth and love are wracking the Christian church around this issue. To declare a truth in our world seems to deny a constitutional right and casts persons affected by that truth into judgement and doom. The scheme of things now turns the judgement against the person with convictions that are rooted in sincerities of faith and belief. They are declared to be haters and fearers and bigots and not principled guardians

of the creation institution that is biblically defined. This matter is still being played out also in respect of access to Episcopal office in the Anglican Church.

8.6. CONCLUSION.

Christian holiness relates to the dream of the Kingdom of God which is alternative to and in tension with the world. This calls believers to the prospect of an change in worldview in which the re-orientation is to the rule of God and the pursuit of good and grace for others.

The Gospel is the doorway for the coming of the Kingdom. The Kingdom does not destroy culture but it transforms it so that those aspects of culture which are oppressive, unjust and evil can be seen for what they are. The Church is not the Kingdom it is only its symbol, it points to the Kingdom and makes its values present. The Church must remain ideologically free or it colludes with the world and becomes imbedded in it and wholly of it.

The prayer of Jesus is profoundly relevant to all of this. The tension of being in and not of the world is resolved in a posture of holiness. This holiness is found essentially in a search for truth for we are sanctified (or set apart) by truth. The church seeks in all human thought and philosophy to find and affirm truths that resonate with the Kingdom of God or struggle to produce them Nurnberger writes;

Though not independent of human efforts it is ultimately a gift of God is a future beyond this history. The freedom, peace, justice of this Kingdom can never be fully realised within this history, they can only be anticipated or approximated. The hope for this kingdom therefore relativises any ideology centred on this value, cuts it down to human size and prevents it from becoming an absolute that can demand any sacrifice. The expectation of God's Kingdom therefore determines a Christian's attitude to ideologies in a double way. On one hand it make him critical of any absolutising ideologies that use their power to dominate and oppress the poor, and, on the other hand it makes him engage with, collaborate with and commit himself to those ideologies which at a given time and place incorporate more fully the values of God's Kingdom and the hopes of the poor. This requires constant spiritual discernment and practical judgment. (Nurnberger:301)

All of this reflects on the idea of the passage of the church through the world. The world lays a powerful claim to its own and it will seek to divert humans to worldly ways and allegiances. But the Christian is in journey. He is between worlds. He is no longer at home in this one and is yet to resolve his homesickness in the next.

There is in our world both recognition of and a yearning for incorruptible and objective leaders who are sources of righteousness and give leadership that is uncompromising.

This tension between Christian belief motivated by its source in scriptures and behaviour issuing from religions, culture, ideology and permissive laws (or those that seem to contradict scriptural truth) is difficult.

Moral opposition linked to power or group interests makes matters more confusing. The Moral Majority in the USA began as a movement based on biblical truth which sought to

stand for God's will in society. It soon became overly connected to political advocates who were identified with the political right. Its position became subverted from a real attempt to be prophetic and represent the kingdom of God to becoming an often negative conservative force. Conservatism can become the hall mark of Christian Witness.

Discussions with Cassidy and in his explanations of his self –understanding have revealed that his mother Dee Cassidy was a powerful moral influence in his life. While his father imbedded in him a powerful example of integrity and being true in the little things his mother, as mothers should, pulled no punches in instilling in him the most acute sense of discipline and purity of behaviour in life and especially her insistence that sex belonged in marriage. Cassidy developed a deep value for the formative value of a good family life.

This influence powerfully pervades especially his understanding of the family and the ordered and correct context for sex and also marriage as hetero-sexual and not same sex marriage. The Marriage Alliance initiative had its early beginning here.

Cassidy was guided by a strong moral compass that exemplified the prayer of Jesus that the 12 and those that follow should be in but not of the world. He was prepared to engage the world and retain his strong sense of distance from it yet in Christ he has hope for it.

We conclude with this quote from his book on *The Passing Summer*.

We are citizens of two cities. Our earthly citizenship is temporary, for here indeed we are only 'aliens and strangers' (Heb 11:13) who are obliged to live making it clear that we are seeking and desiring a better country- a heavenly one, whose builder and maker is God. (Heb 11:14-15) Indeed without a vision of eternity we cannot get a true hold on time and without seeing the heavenly country we miss even the earthly one. So we have no right to accustom ourselves to this world. We are in two cities and we are not permitted to abandon either. Though involved in the material history of this world and caring for it we do so as representatives of another order.

We become an outcrop of the Kingdom of God on earth and we only serve notice on the world that there is more to reality than meets the eye but we the truth as expressed by Emilio Nunez that 'because we love something else more than this world we love this world even better than those who know no other. Secondly, having our centre of gravity in eternity, we must know that as Christians that in those proper though precarious labours related to the political all professed solutions to the woes of the world will be but temporary they will also be spoiled by sin and short-sightedness which affects both the world and us. ... Even so, we will take joy in knowing that to seek on earth the greatest happiness and fullest freedom of the greatest number, and to urge Caesar to do the same is good and right in the sight of God.

Thirdly our heavenly centre of gravity and our knowing that here is no continuing city will alert us to the fact that man is meant to be the great link between nature and supernature. We move between these two worlds, and we serve them both under the Lordship of the One who is the Lord over both. Indeed he places us at the point of contact between two currents- the will of the world and the will of the Lord. And while the will of the world is always a will



toward death and destruction because it pursues life in the wrong way, the will of the Lord, coming to the believer to the world, is God's current from on high empowering true connection to the source of life. This is why preaching is so important, because here the Christian stands at the most suicidal impulse (which is to reject his eternal Lord) and calls out ' No don't settle down! Don't make the penultimate ultimate. Come this way – the way to the One who is the way the truth and the life. (Cassidy: 472-473)