



THE HAUNTING AND HEALING POWER OF HISTORY

by

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In Socialism there exists no officially recognized religious, cultural and ethnic differences. Within the Marxist Empire the different countries were regarded as brother countries and their leaders greeted each other with an obligatory brotherly kiss on the cheeks. In the Soviet Union many different ethnic groups coexisted side by side, documented by the officially recognized languages within that Union. Yet again all ethnic tribes and nations belonged together as one big brotherhood. Once socialism collapsed, not only did the Eastern block quickly dissolve, but the Soviet Union could no longer be maintained. Old ethnic and religious rivalries reignited and minorities were no longer treated as brothers but as unwelcome intruders. Even in present-day Russia, there are very noticeable religious and ethnic tensions.

If we direct our attention to the West, the United States of America has always advocated a melting-point ideology according to which all ethnic, religious, and cultural differences are to be overcome. The USA is officially a nation of equals, documented by the fact that most people claim to belong to the middle class. Yet this official ideology stands in contrast to overt ethnic tensions, for instance between Asian Americans and African Americans. There are also religious tensions between newly emerging religions (such as the Baghwans and the Unification Church), and mainline churches, and strong cultural differences between those African Americans who live in the inner city and those in the suburbs. Virtually everyone in the USA lives in a ghetto more or less obviously isolated from others who do not share the same skin color or income bracket.

Historically conditioned differences can neither be ignored nor overcome by forced brotherhood as in the former Marxist block or by egalitarian ideology as in the USA. It also makes no sense, as occasionally has been done, to scold religions for their divisive spirit. The break-up of the former Soviet Union did not occur along exclusively religious or denominational lines. It is equally unfounded to blame capitalism for its divisiveness, for creating an increasing gap between poor and rich and therefore fostering tensions between the haves and the have-nots. There are slums not just in capitalist USA, but also in India. Furthermore a sizeable number of African American slum dwellers have succeeded in escaping their plight and have moved to suburbia. Yet the success of some African Americans brought with it alienation from those less fortunate with the result that there is hardly any communication between the two groups. Differences cannot be ignored with the hope that sooner or later they will become irrelevant. As the ecumenical movement has shown, the initial attempt to leave all differences aside and concentrate on getting along with each other can only lead to failure. When things got difficult in the discussions one remembered the past grievances against each other and old issues long thought to be forgotten flared up again. In order to approach potentially or actually divisive issues successfully, they must first of all be carefully explored to understand what the actual differences are and whether there is a possibility for remedy. Since I am a Lutheran, I would first like to focus on the tension between Roman Catholics and Protestants in Europe. It will not come as a surprise that dialogue and rapprochement between Roman Catholics and Lutherans has been much easier and much more advanced in the USA than, for instance, in Germany.

1. The Tension between Roman Catholics and Protestants

The relationship between Roman Catholics and Protestants in Europe is burdened by atrocities of the past as exemplified by the forceful re-catholicization of large areas in Germany and Austria. The Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg presided over the princely representatives at the Perpetual Diet of Regensburg. This Diet made up by area representatives had been instituted at the Peace of Westphalia (1648) and was in session until Napoleon made an end to the Holy Roman Empire in 1808. At the Peace of Westphalia it was also agreed upon that each territory would have religious independence. Each prince and each free city of Germany was authorized to enforce conformity to one of the three faiths, Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, or Calvinism. Dissidents who did not want to conform could be expelled. But the governments were to allow at least private worship, liberty of conscience and right to emigration. At least on paper there was no conversion by force. The reality was different, since if a prince changed his faith, he could demand the same from his subjects or ask them to leave.

In 1685 the Prince-Archbishop Max Gandolph von Kuenburg (1668-1687), educated by the Jesuits, ordered all non-Catholics in a valley bordering on the Tyrols to leave the bishopric.¹ Depending on the circumstances they had fourteen days to eight weeks to leave. Children under 15 were not allowed to leave "in order that their souls might be saved through Catholic indoctrination". Most people did not have enough time to sell their property. If they attempted to take their children with them, they were thrown into the underground dungeon in the Salzburg fortress. Their property was confiscated and their children were committed to monasteries. Many of the emigrants fled to Regensburg where they filed protests with the Protestant princes. But this was to no avail. The Lutheran minister Samuel Urlsperger in particular from the city of Augsburg looked after the needs of the Salzburg refugees and helped them in many other ways. Later on he was appointed a trustee of the British colony of Georgia and helped the Salzburgers settle in that colony.

This expulsion of 1685, limited to one valley was just the beginning. Prince-Archbishop Leopold Anton von Firmian (1727-1741) ordered that on November 11, 1731 the entire population of each community in the Salzburg territory was to assemble and listen to the reading of the Emigrationspatent.² First the generosity of the prince-archbishop was stated in all details. Then the Protestants were condemned as criminal and rebellious creatures. Finally the decree of expulsion was declared. Every professed Lutheran or Calvinist who owned no real estate was ordered to leave within one week of the publication of the decree. This included all self-employed workers, all day-labourers and all servants more than twelve years of age. Those who failed to obey were subject to severe punishment. Exceptions would only be made for those who agreed to return to the true Catholic faith and who gave proof of their sincerity within two weeks. All employees of the archbishop in his mining and salt industries or in other capacities were immediately dismissed and their wages ceased. Those who held real estate were allowed from one to three months, depending on the assessed value, to dispose of their property.

In the fall of that year the prince-archbishop had already asked that the imperial army help him subdue alleged rebellions of the Protestants and confiscate their weapons. When some of the detachments showed sympathy with the Lutherans, Firmian requested their withdrawal on account that they were no longer necessary. Children of non-Catholic couples who had lived

together because they were denied the right of marriage were declared illegitimate and were taken from their parents by order of the archbishop to be reared in Catholic monasteries. When the first contingent was herded together and officially expelled winter had already set in. Between November 24, 1731 and September 1732 approximately 20,000 Lutherans were exiled.³ Fewer than 7,000 were still to be accounted for. When the Protestant princes tried to intervene, Firmian claimed that the peasants who had been exiled were actually disturbers of the peace. He also asserted that most of them did not subscribe to doctrines which were held by either Luther or Calvin and therefore they could not lay claim to the consideration granted in the Peace of Westphalia. Furthermore, Salzburg had no part in the Thirty Years War and had not signed the peace treaty and consequently was not bound by it. Altogether more than 1,800 farmsteads were abandoned with more than 16,000 owners or helpers on these farmsteads.⁴

Firmian had not expected that in the valleys of the Salzburg region that there would be so many Protestants and he was also surprised that the salt miners on whose labor he depended in his flourishing salt mine industry did not convert to Catholicism. Yet economic reasons were secondary, he wanted to make clear that this was purely Catholic territory. Some of the Salzburg exiles stayed in Regensburg and a few of them even made it onto city council of that city. The Emperor Charles VI tried to persuade the Prussian king Frederick William I to accept these refugees assuring him that they would be a valuable asset to Prussia. In April 1732, the king expressed a willingness to accept one thousand of them, in June 10,000, and in July as many as would want to come.⁵ They were scattered through the south-eastern districts of East Prussia and north into Lithuania.⁶ Though the plight of the Salzburg exiles is unique in the sheer numbers that were involved the fact of expulsions was just too frequent in the German territories to be forgotten over the centuries. Even today one can occasionally hear of Protestant college students who in their high school days were told by Catholics that they are unbelievers. This is reciprocated by Protestants with the occasional bias that one cannot trust Catholics. This bias is reinforced when, for instance, a bishop emeritus of the Regensburg diocese says in a newspaper interview that the best solution to ecumenical relations is that the Protestants return to Rome.

As we have seen Germany had its problems in Roman Catholic-Lutheran relations. But during the last two hundred years there has been a peaceful coexistence, which is documented by the fact that fifty per cent of the marriages in Germany are mixed marriages, meaning that one partner is Roman Catholic and the other Protestant. This ratio nearly equals the denominational affiliation of the populace. In Ireland, however, the situation is quite different. Almost until today, especially in Northern Ireland, there has been widespread violence between Protestants and Roman Catholics. As one commentator writes:

To be a Nationalist in Ireland practically means to be a catholic or former catholic and to be a loyalist means to be a Ulster protestant. These identities are rooted in two opposing cultures for which religious belonging has great significance and into which religious belief and attitude are incorporated. Churches too are important, though religion plays a role far beyond its church identity.⁷

Again, the root causes of these problems extend back to the sixteenth century. When King Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I significantly extended their royal power into Ireland, developed a

church hierarchy of reformed bishops and planted Protestant settlers throughout Ireland, the original inhabitants remained uninterested. They were used to a state of warring between their semi-feudal lords and the arrival of the Elizabethan troops to join the struggle was just another chapter of the same.⁸

The situation changed, however, during the Counter Reformation when young native Irish frequented theological seminaries on the continent. They returned to Ireland with principles and doctrines of the Counter Reformation which they spread among a largely illiterate native Irish population. If theological argument did not suffice, Protestants were followers of sodomites, meaning Luther and Calvin, and the horrors of Luther's sexual engagement with his wife, a former nun, were described in broad details. This consolidated the laity. Yet on the other hand James I (1604-23), who set up loyal Protestants from Britain on land confiscated from the previous land-owning élite in the counties west of the river Bann in the Ulster province and Cromwell's plantations throughout Ireland (1651-58) established a powerful Protestant presence. The Protestant planters were largely convinced of the inferiority of the Irish on both religious and racial grounds and believed themselves to be agents of civilization and the only true Christians. While the Anglican or Church of Ireland laity was becoming the principal land-owning élite in the southern and eastern provinces of Munster and Leinster, in the northern province of Ulster there were predominantly small land-holdings and the income from these had to be supplemented, principally by weaving. So there was already a visible economic differentiation that began to separate North and South.

When King James II had lost the fight for the English throne and his Protestant daughter Mary was proclaimed successor this also had drastic consequences for Ireland. By 1707 the Catholic landownership in Ireland had been reduced from one fifth to one seventh and the Catholic landowning class was destroyed.⁹ By the end of the seventh century most of the land in Ireland was owned by Protestants, predominantly in the form of estates and large holdings. But clustered in Ulster there was a significant number of small holdings and Protestant dissenters (i.e., people who did not belong to the Church of England) who had colonized Belfast and Derry. In 1869 the Anglican Church of Ireland was de-established and through a series of landacts between 1870 and 1909 the landownership was gradually transferred to Catholic and/or Protestant tenants. This means that in the provinces of Munster and Leinster the Protestants gradually realized that they were on the losing end, their economic power was on the decline. In the Ulster province, however, things went differently because of a growing industrial and financial bourgeoisie among the Protestants and their numerical superiority in half of the province.¹⁰ At the same time the number of priests and of male and female religious rose substantially among Roman Catholics. Together with a growing indigenous Catholic commercial group, a teaching profession and a number of Catholic civil servants and lawyers there was enough force for an emerging Catholic nationalist group so that in 1921 twenty-six of thirty-two counties were turned into the Catholic nationalist state, the Irish Free State. Two Irish entities emerged: the southern Irish Free State and northern region aligned with England.

The southern state became more Catholic and nationalist in character, while its Protestant groups declined in numbers, wealth, power and cultural importance.¹¹ The northern state, aligned with England, became wholly dominated by Protestant loyalists and also extremely coercive in its dealings with the substantial Catholic nationalist remnant within its borders. Small surprise that

there was sporadic violence on the Protestant side that wanted to consolidate their power completely and an insurgent guerilla warfare on the Roman Catholic side to rid themselves from the oppressors. In the southern Free State less than one tenth of the population comprise the Protestant minority, whereas in Northern Ireland one third of the population belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, a sizeable minority. In contrast to the North, the Irish Free State administration increasingly relied upon the political participation and financial support of the minority. Even in the constitution there was an avoidance of mentioning of the Catholic Church and its moral code. Also in a second chamber there was representation of the minority.¹² This means it was not just the difference in size of the minorities which led to a different approach to the Protestants or Catholics respectively, but there was also a different understanding of the other as members of the larger community. The South, so to speak, was determined that history should not repeat itself, whereas in the North they conceived of history as an unfinished agenda, which Protestants wanted to close once and for all, as far as their dealings with the Roman Catholics were concerned.

2. The Tension between the Orthodox and the Latin Churches

The Orthodox Church is largely a martyr church on account of repeated Moslem invasions since the seventh century and of Communist oppression from 1917 to the most recent time. The Western church, in contrast, by and large has enjoyed relative freedom not just because it never faced that kind of oppression, but also because the emperor never resided in such close proximity to the Roman metropolitan as the Byzantine emperor did to the metropolitan of Constantinople did until the demise of the Eastern Empire in 1453. But the Western Latin church, instead of coming to assist its oppressed brothers and sisters, furthered their demise through forced proselytization and the establishment of Uniat churches. Again this will be illustrated by two examples, one from India and the other from Greece.

Since the second century A.D. there have been Christians in India. They trace their ancestry back to the apostle Thomas. Christianity came to India either across the sea, this means from Alexandria in Egypt through the Red Sea, or from Persia and Mesopotamia over the land route. In both cases the Indian Northwest and later Southern India were the strongholds of Christianity.¹³ The church there was closely related to the Eastern Syriac Church. The Christians were part of the Indian caste system and in their own way enjoyed certain privileges. When the Portuguese arrived in India a thousand years later, except for some pejorative remarks about the Indian Thomas Christians, the first significant incident we hear of is that in 1540 the remains of the apostle Thomas were taken by a Franciscan priest to Goa, a Portuguese stronghold.

With the Portuguese came the Jesuits, the Franciscans and the Dominicans, whose idea it was to bring these poor Christians back to the true Latin faith. To that end a printing shop was started in Cochin in 1577 and also the Syriac Eucharistic liturgy was streamlined according to Roman principles. All the important Roman Catholic dogmas were accepted and the Nestorian faith, which was held by the Thomas Christians, was condemned. But this new faith could not replace the old venerated tradition and therefore the Thomas Christians were basically uprooted. Things got worse when a Syriac bishop arrived secretly in 1652 and, after being recognized, was burnt at the stake in 1654 by the Inquisition. The native Christians then chose their own bishop and

of the roughly 200,000 faithful only 4,000 continued their ties with Rome.¹⁴ But even these rejected the Jesuits and turned to the Carmelites as their spiritual guides.

The situation got even more complicated when in 1663 the Dutch took over in Cochin. The Roman religious orders had to leave the country with the exception of the Carmelites. When the Dutch occupation ended in 1795 and the British assumed control over Cochin, of the two million Indians along the Malabar Coast there were approximately 50,000 Orthodox Thomas Christians, 90,000 who belonged to the Uniat Church and another 100,000 who had been Latinized. The Church of England first attempted a union with the Thomas Christians. When this did not work out, they devoted themselves purely to missionary work. That resulted in 1889 in the creation of the Mar Thoma Church, a Protestant church with ancient traditions. Then in the nineteenth century a new Nestorian church emerged from the Uniat church and constituted itself in 1907 as the New Nestorian Church of India. It comes as no surprise that the West is always seen as a threatening imperialistic power trying to win indigenous Christians over to its own rites and, especially in case of Rome, to the jurisdiction of the Pope. This latter tendency is most clearly noticeable in the long history of tension between the Latin church and the Greek-speaking Orthodox Church.

The relationship between the Greek-speaking Eastern church and Rome has almost always been marred by rivalry and tension. For instance in the ninth century the brothers Cyril and Methodius from Thessalonica evangelized in Pannonia among the Slavic tribes. They created the Cyrillic alphabet and with it a language which could be used in an indigenous liturgy. The reception of the two brothers in the West initially looked like an exception. Pope Hadrian had approved of their work and received the two brothers cordially in Rome. Unfortunately Cyril got sick during their stay in Rome and died within a few weeks. Their wide acceptance is documented by the fact that both Greeks and Romans participated in Cyril's funeral.¹⁵ The Pope consecrated Methodius into the priesthood and approved of the Slavic liturgy with the stipulation that the epistle and the gospel must first be read in Latin before they can be read in the Slavic language. The Pope also elevated Methodius to archbishop of Pannonia. Yet the Bavarian bishops did not like this infringement on a territory which they regarded as their own. They had Methodius imprisoned and tried him at a bishops' synod in Regensburg in 870. For three years he was confined to a Swabian monastery until Pope John VIII (872-882) succeeded in Methodius' release. The two brothers, Methodius and Cyril enjoyed a high esteem in both Rome and Constantinople.

The norm of the relation between the West and the East is illustrated by the history of the Balkan peninsula. In what is present-day Bulgaria Rome tried to renew its former jurisdictional supremacy attempting to christianize the Slavic tribes that had settled there. Naturally Constantinople did not want Roman influence to extend to its very gates and thwarted these attempts. Another jurisdictional conflict of much greater magnitude led to the Schism of 1054. Emperor Leo VI (886-912) had already lost by death three former wives. Now he wanted to marry a fourth time and the Patriarch Nikolaos I Mystikos opposed this new marriage which would have legitimized his successor, since he already had a son from that bride to be. The emperor then turned to Pope Sergius III (904-911) who allowed him to enter another marriage. The emperor deposed the dissenting patriarch, but after the death of the emperor in 912 Nikolaos regained his patriarchal seat. Immediately he demanded that Rome revoke its approval of the

fourth marriage. Yet Rome did not comply with the patriarch's desires since it was convinced of its jurisdictional supremacy.

The actual schism occurred under the ambitious Patriarch Michael Caerularios (1043-1058). The Normans had invaded southern Italy and threatened the existence of the Orthodox Church there. The patriarch did not want to join with the Western forces in spite of the pleading of the pope and the Byzantine governor. When the separate armies of the pope and of the Byzantine governor of southern Italy were defeated in 1053 and Pope Leo IX was in captivity, Caerularios finally suggested a treaty between East and West.¹⁶ Unfortunately the pope became ill and entrusted the negotiations with Constantinople to Cardinal Humbert. This cardinal disliked the Greeks and journeying to Constantinople demanded acknowledgement by the Constantinopolitan patriarchate of the Roman primacy. He even denounced the Constantinopolitan patriarchate questioning whether the patriarch could call himself an ecumenical patriarch as well as rejecting any criticism of Latin customs. Small wonder that the patriarch saw no basis for negotiations. Finally Humbert together with his entourage entered the Hagia Sophia on July 16, 1054 and placed on the altar the papal bull in which all kinds of accusations were advanced against the East. The patriarch in turn answered with anathema (a condemnation) which was ratified by the synod against the originator of the bull. While Humbert's bull was not directed against the Church of Constantinople, Michael Caerularios also did not pronounce the anathema against the pope or the Roman church. Moreover, Humbert's procedure was not even legal, since in the meantime the pope had died and Humbert was no longer a bona fide representative of Rome. Regardless the damage was done and July 16, 1054 has been considered as the beginning of the schism that lasted until December 7, 1965 when Pope Paul VI and the Patriarch Athenagoras solemnly declared the mutual excommunications null and void.

In spite of the schism there have always been contacts between Rome and Constantinople. Both the patriarch and the emperor asked the West for help against the threatening Moslems. Yet the Crusades were not an attempt to liberate Orthodoxy. To the contrary, they were the beginning of the attempt to incorporate the Eastern churches completely into the Latin church. The Crusader states facilitated the appointment of Latin patriarchs in Antiochia (1099-1268) and Jerusalem (1099-1187). The Maronites, a monotheistic church, meaning that they acknowledged only the one, divine will in Jesus Christ, had suffered extensively from the Moslems and welcomed the Crusaders as liberators. Yet the Crusaders in turn incorporated the whole Maronite Church into the Roman church. Most devastating for Orthodoxy was the fourth Crusade during which the Crusaders invaded Constantinople in 1204 and for three days ravaged the city.¹⁷ Until 1261 Constantinople was a Latin imperial seat with a Latin patriarchate. Pope Innocent III approved of these events since for him they seemed to allow the achievement of ecclesial unity. But the result was not a union between East and West, it was rather the incorporation of the Byzantine church into the Latin church. The pope declared: "The Greek church is supposed to be transformed ... in piety and in purity of faith according to the institution of the most Holy Roman Church." As one can see in many other places too, this attitude was undergirded by a feeling of ecclesial superiority. But the attempt of incorporation failed. The Byzantine empire was re-established and even a more normal relationship developed as for instance that which was expressed in the Union of 1439 at the Council of Florence when the pope conceded that the patriarch of the East should retain all his rights and privileges. But when the Turks conquered Constantinople in 1453 the Union of Florence came to an end.

The problems caused by the Uniat churches, however, did not end. In the wake of the 1922-24 Greek exodus from Turkey, the Uniat congregation of Constantinople also fled to Greece, establishing one parish in Athens and another one in Northern Greece which comprise approximately 2,500 Greek-rite Catholics. "In the 1920s and '30s the Greek Uniats were, by their own admission, engaged in active proselytism. Since the war proselytism has in fact stopped, but Orthodox find it hard to believe especially when they see the Uniats' social work: a modern hospital, an orphanage, student hostels, etc."¹⁸ In addition, there are about 4,000 Latin-rite Catholics. In 1912 the Greek-rite Catholics in Greece became an organized ecclesiastical body with a bishop appointed by the Vatican. The Uniat churches which exist as minorities in all orthodox "regions" are still a big handicap for the relationship between Roman Catholicism and the Orthodox church in general. The official statements of the Roman Catholic Church also leave some doubt to what extent the relationship between Rome and the Orthodox is a relationship between equals. For instance Vatican II issued a special "Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches" (1964), meaning on the Uniat churches, in which it expressed their task "of fostering the unity of all Christians, in particular of Eastern Christians."¹⁹ But then in the next paragraph it talks about individual conversion to Catholicism declaring: "Nothing more should be demanded of separated Eastern Christians who come to Catholic unity under the influence and grace of the Holy Spirit than what the simple profession of the Catholic faith requires. And since a valid priesthood has been preserved among them, Eastern clerics who came to Catholic unity may exercise their own Orders, in accordance with the regulations laid down by competent authority."²⁰ Does this mean that the Uniat churches are a means of proselyting or the right Roman substitute for the Orthodox Church? Perhaps not quite so, since in conclusion the decree states: "All these legal arrangements are made in view of present conditions, until such time as the Catholic Church and the separated Eastern Churches unite together in the fulness of communion."²¹ This would indicate that the Uniat Churches serve as temporary bridges between East and West and not as a means to replace Orthodoxy. Yet the term "legal arrangements" shows that this is a Latin text full of legal considerations, proclaiming equality of the Eastern tradition while protecting its own jurisdictional supremacy.

One wonders whether such a mindset does allow for an actual partnership. The problematic nature of this kind of thinking became clear the day after the pope met the ecumenical patriarch in Jerusalem. On January 6, 1964, in a sermon preached in Bethlehem, Pope Paul VI urged the "separated brethren" to return to "the fold of the Catholic Church."²² For the Greek Orthodox this reminded them of the thirteenth century when the Crusaders divided Greece among each other, suspended the Orthodox hierarchy and replaced it with Latin bishops. When we read in the "Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches" the strong recommendations "to religious orders and associations of the Latin rite, which are working in Eastern countries or among the Eastern faithful, that they should set up, so far as is possible, houses or even provinces of the Eastern rite to make their apostolic work more effective," suspicion again arises. First of all, why is such work necessary, since there are already Orthodox churches in place?²³ And secondly, why come in the disguise of the Eastern rite if one is from the West? Is this some camouflage so the ordinary faithful could not distinguish between East and West? We see that a long way still has to be travelled until such questions need no longer be raised.

3. Desirable Consequences

What can we learn from our long excursions into history? It would certainly be too simple-minded to accuse religion of fostering discord, since similar controversy causing phenomena can also be pointed out in the context of ethnicity. Moreover, in many of the "religious tensions" religion is used only as a pretext or as an excuse for not getting along with each other. If we want to resolve these tensions it would be insufficient just to assess the present situation. We are not only products of our environment, but are also deeply rooted in and significantly shaped by the past. For instance, when teenagers revolt against their parents and try to define for themselves their own standards, they do this over against those norms that they have inherited. Nobody can ever start completely from scratch. Every revolution will realize sooner or later that it cannot wipe the slate completely clean and start with a genuinely new beginning.

It is of prime importance that we study our own history and the history of the one with whom we want to dialogue. This also means that a knowledge of history in general is insufficient, since each case is shaped by its peculiar history, which is different from any other history. It is inadequate to talk about the history of the Roman Catholic Counter Reformation or the history of Orthodoxy. In order to understand a peculiar nationality, for instance, the Greeks or the Northern Irish, we must study their respective piece of history. In uncovering history we will notice very soon that history is a liability. There are many points in history at which the integrity of people or nations has been violated, where violence was exerted and individual freedom was infringed upon. There is no reason to gloss over these points, tragic and unfortunate as they may be. Even if it is difficult, we must arrive at an unbiased recognition of the points at which we have hurt each other. Studying history should not be misunderstood as an attempt to heap blame at the doorstep of the other person or nation. It simply means to be as honest as possible to uncover what actually has happened. The study of history cannot be equated with a whitewash or with an ideological reconstruction, but must be carried out in a fashion as neutral as possible.

History, however, is not only a liability. It is also a new opportunity, since as truly historical beings who are still alive, we are not confined to one particular piece of history. We can ask ourselves where we want to go from here. History provides new opportunities. In assessing whether the divisive issues of the past still stand we may perhaps also find out to our surprise that the respective views of each other have in part been shaped by "inherited caricatures initially caused by misunderstanding or polemical zeal."²⁴ Historical distancing will make some issues which initially caused considerable dissension much less divisive. For instance the Bavarian bishops would hardly object today against the missionary activity of Methodius. Since the boundaries of the Bavarian bishoprics coincide now with the national boundaries they no longer extend into Czechia. Therefore to commemorate the missionary endeavors of Methodius and Cyril, a plaque was unveiled in Regensburg as part of a reconciliatory gesture. In a similar vein the Crusades are seen differently in the West and relics that were once robbed from the East are now returned with a note of regret. For instance, once the remains of St. Luke from the monastery Hosios Loukas in Greece were discovered in Venice they were immediately returned to the Greek monastery.

Though one cannot rewrite history without perverting it, one can officially declare that invectives once uttered are no longer held. For instance the condemnations against the Roman Catholics as

expressed in the confessional statement of the Lutheran church were declared by a joint Roman Catholic-Lutheran commission to be no longer applicable for today. It stated in its conclusion: "The Joint Ecumenical Commission therefore asks the leading bodies of the churches involved to express in binding form that the sixteenth-century condemnations no longer apply to today's partner as its doctrine is not determined by the error which the condemnations wished to avert."²⁵ This means that one can remove tension-causing factors, such as mutual condemnations, which were uttered quite frequently in the past and thereby remove continuous irritants. Similarly, when Cardinal Bea knelt down at the same altar of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, on which another cardinal more than 900 years ago placed the papal bull, this was also a symbolic gesture and an attempt to remove something that continuously reminded the Greeks of Latin "arrogance."

Geography also plays an important role. The fact that Cardinal Bea did this in the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople and not at St. Peter's in Rome or in Jerusalem showed, that he wanted to go to the exact place that epitomized the misery inflicted upon the Orthodox. In other instances such a move to return to the seed bed of problems may not always be wise. For instance the Roman Catholic-Lutheran dialogue in the USA has advanced much farther than any other geographic area, since the history there is much less tarnished by Reformation or Counter Reformation memories. The haunting presence of history is felt less there than it would be in Europe. At the same time this dialogue in the USA was setting a direction and a pace for the dialogue in other places and even on a global scale. History can always be seen as an opportunity, a possibility to move to new shores and to turn over a new leaf.

In all our endeavors we must also show sensitivity to tension-causing issues and potentially suspicious-looking moves that we might make without much thought. For instance, for a long time there was a debate among Lutherans whether their intended ordination of women church posed an additional hinderance for the ecumenical dialogue with the Roman Catholics. Yet gradually they discovered, that there were many women in the Roman Catholic tradition that were just as unhappy about an exclusively male dominated hierarchy as there were among the Protestants. Moreover, it was felt that the truthfulness of the evangelical witness concerning the ordination of women should not be withheld on account of a possible backlash in ecumenical relations. As it turned out, the Roman Catholic hierarchy predictably regretted the ordination of women in the Lutheran church as that ordination became a fact. Yet in the long run the relationships have not soured; they have been virtually unaffected by the ordination issue. This shows, that on the one hand one can no longer make decisions in isolation. We live in a global context and the decisions must be seen in that context. One must always ask how one's decision will affect the wider community and our relations to it. But on the other hand one's truthfulness requires that one does not bend the truth simply to avoid potential offensiveness.

As we can learn from the events leading up to the Schism of 1054 between Eastern and Western Christendom and also from today's ecumenical climate between Roman Catholics and Protestants, human and all too human factors play an important role. Similar to the events leading to divorce, it is not the big issues that drive two people to go their separate ways, but many trifling and sometimes incidental accidents become more and more burdensome for a relationship until it finally ruptures completely. But history is not just the result of human frailty. Since history is ongoing, it also contains the potential for new opportunities. Through the study of history we become aware of our limitations, our trials, and our errors. Therefore there is no reason for any

human being or any nation to assume the vain role of a superhuman power. As finite entities, our actions always betray finitude and therefore are in need of correction and mutual forgiveness. Only in the spirit of humility, can we leave the haunting power of history behind us as something that will be influential, but not determinative of our future together. We can open ourselves for the healing power of history's ongoing process in joining hands with others on our way to live on this planet in peace and mutual respect.

Surveying human history we note that humanity's great religions have much in common. On the negative side they are often used as a pretense for dissent and as a means to dominate other ethnic groups and nations. On the positive side, however, all religions share a vision of salvation, a point when all strife will be overcome and either a primeval harmony will be regained or a new harmony will be established. As the neo-Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch argued persuasively in his three-volume opus *Principle of Hope* every human being is yearning for that hidden goal which we so much desire and which nobody has yet seen. It may be called happiness, freedom, non-estrangement, the golden age, or the land where milk and honey are flowing.

If it is indeed true that all of humankind are living and yearning toward eternal peace, nirvana, or heaven, such a goal of ultimate peace and harmony cannot remain just a wishful thought or a pie-in-the-sky escape valve. If this goal contains any credibility, it must be already proleptically anticipated in the present in whatever broken form. Something of that toward which we hope and strive must cast its shadow onto the present, thereby plotting out history's stark reminders of human strife and sinfulness and beckoning us to new shores. With Martin Heidegger the question must be posed whether we want to continue acting out of the past or whether we venture toward a new future. Admittedly the haunting aspect of history will be with us as long as we live on this earth. But it is up to us whether we allow ourselves to become victims of the past or whether we are open for a healing process which lives by the vision of a newly created order.

FOOTNOTES

1. For the following, including the quote, see Carl Mauelshagen, *Salzburg Lutheran Expulsion and Its Impact* (New York: Vantage, 1962), 72.
2. For the following see *ibid.*, 96.
3. For the following see *ibid.*, 111.
4. According to Mack Walker, *The Salzburg Transaction: Expulsion and Redemption in Eighteenth Century Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1992), 150.
5. Carl Mauelshagen, *op. cit.*, 113.
6. Mack Walker, *op. cit.*, 171.
7. So John Fulton, *The Tragedy of Belief. Division, Politics and Religion in Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 2.
8. For the following *ibid.*, 26ff.
9. Cf. *ibid.*, 32.
10. Cf. *ibid.*, 54.
11. Cf. *ibid.*, 88f., for the following.
12. Cf. David Fitzpatrick, "Ireland Since 1870", in: *The Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland*, ed. R.F. Foster (Oxford: Oxford University, 1991), 257, who gives a good account of the difference in dealing with the minorities.
13. C. Detlef G. Müller, *Geschichte der orientalischen Nationalkirchen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), 312f.
14. *Ibid.*, 317.
15. See for the following Hans-Dieter Döpmann, *Die orthodoxen Kirchen* (Berlin: Union, 1991), 38f.
16. See for the following *ibid.*, 52f.
17. For the following including the quote see *ibid.*, 313.
18. Mario Rinvoluceri, *Anatomy of A Church: The Greek Orthodoxy Today* (London: Burns & Oates, 1966), 113 n. 4.
19. "Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches" (24), in *Documents of Vatican II. The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), 449.
20. *Ibid.* (25), 449.
21. *Ibid.* (30), 451.
22. As quoted in Mario Rinvoluceri, *op. cit.*, 169.
23. "Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches" (6), 444.
24. So the Preface to *Marburg Revisited. A Reexamination of Lutheran and Reformed Traditions*, ed. Paul C. Empie and James I. McLord (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1966).
25. Karl Lehmann-Wolfhart Pannenberg, eds., *The Condemnations of the Reformation Era: Do They Still Divide?*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 1986.