Reading / Viewing Packet for:

*Introducing Religion II:*

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A Painted Box Containing Relics from Palestine (late 6th–early 7th century)

Città del Vaticano, Musei della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Museo Sacro, Inv. no. 1883 a/b
Pedagogy for Being Human in Global Comparison
Dwight N. Hopkins

For one year, I taught theology to graduate and undergraduate students in Seoul, Korea. In addition to my Black Theology: 1st Generation, Black Theology: 2nd Generation, and Theology and Cultural Studies classes, perhaps the most globally comparative pedagogical challenge evolved in my Being Human course. The students hailed from Korea, Ghana, Thailand, Pakistan, China, and the USA. After a long semester of my lectures and classroom conversations, I posed to the students a simple question. In your home context, what does it mean to be human? The Korean students mentioned “food”; the Thai students indicated knowing which of the three hand positions one uses when greeting another person; the Chinese student pointed to “family”; the Ghanaian student embraced “the ancestors”; the Pakistani student asserted “no daily violence”; and the two USA students (both black Americans) affirmed “individual rights”. During this same period, I was one of the initiators and an international coordinator of a fourteen country network (defined by South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Hawaii, Fiji, Japan, Australia, India, England, Cuba, Brazil, Jamaica, and the USA). The network identified the creation of new knowledge by way of transnational pedagogy as one of its stated goals.

Presuppositions to Pedagogy

These two effervescent undertakings of intellectual engagement raise the query: how does an educator teach the idea of being human among different nations situated in the same classroom? My pedagogical fluidity presupposes that (a) all knowledge first arises from specific cultures, (b) human communities in those cultures define the theological anthropology, and (c) consequently, theological anthropology (being human) lacks a universal essence or global applicability from the top down. Such a valuing of particularity, respect for local cultures, and accenting the human role in theological anthropology nurtures a universal spirituality of invitation, graciousness, humility, and listening in the classroom setting. When it comes to global transcendent experiences represented among the students, all stand on equal ground. So the professor engenders a double encouragement. Each student recognizes the facticity and truth of his/her own being human or theological anthropology from his/her home country. And each student recognizes the surface validity of other foreign students’ claims to authentic human being. It is a pedagogy of self in conversational engagement with many foreign neighbors bringing to the market of idea exchanges the fruit of their own cultures.

Culture

Indeed, culture cultivates resurfacing and enactment of memory. Such a capacious definition can teach the educator how to peel back the layers in the dynamic of collective culture. Memory circumscribes collective recollection – i.e., of family, neighborhood, region, country, and/or hemisphere – of all that human being has produced and reproduced. One obvious memory is the theological which entails the dialectic or harmony and balance among multiple experiences between the penultimate and the ultimate, respectively the next to last and last telos established by human being. In the effort to go beyond the boundaries of penultimate and ultimate in the human past of production and reproduction, human being confronts an inability to decipher all things outside of itself. Consequently, the reasoning about or intuition of lack in self-storied history can open being human to a possibility of a larger narrative in being human’s resurfacing of and enactment of memory. In other words, human existence contains an impulse to supersede its own past recollections. In the impulse, one can discern an overflow out of bygone eras. Yes, that which human being can touch, see, feel, taste, and smell points to culture.
But, concomitantly, a larger, overarching and invisible energy (i.e., opened up by the inability and the lack) agitating the life of the cosmos, ecology, plants, animals, and the laws of nature breathes vigor into the material sensory operations evident in all of creation. This energy is synonymous with the larger narrative.

Moreover, remembering of human production and reproduction of all that being human entails differentiates among student legacies sitting in the classroom setting. A variety of international students originate from intergenerational, interconnected resurfacing. For instance, some students from around the world can literally trace blood ties for one thousand years. More specifically, one can find this manifestation in family written recordings passed down to subsequent offspring. On a more limited time, micro level, an individual can resurface the direct memory of his/her personal experiences from family and broader communal relations. In a classroom of global students, one can surmise personal historical memory beginning roughly between ages five and eight. However, if bad or good trauma impact a child at a much younger age, that polyvalent trauma, due to the severity of its indelible consequences, has the potential to brand the spirituality and physicality of the adult human in such a way that he/she can resurface memory from age two. To resurface culture points to the conscious (i.e., specific goal setting turn) and unconscious (i.e., inevitable force of habit reflex) dynamic of historical regurgitation of the intentional and unexpected dimensions of being human.

But culture is more than resurfacing. It is enactment as well. Thus it is the agential spontaneity and pioneering subjectivity of future production and reproduction derived from human being’s visioning. In this sense, therefore, culture brings together the fuel of resurfacing of the past with enacting the already done into the present for realizing the new of the future. To a large degree, parts of culture as human resurfacing and enactment flow out of the flexible impact of nature, time, and space. Such three dimensional realities delimit and unbound the human being’s culture. Culture resurfaces how being human crawls out of longitudinal exigencies. And culture is pregnant with the possibilities of human being’s enactments.

Theological Anthropology

Regarding theological anthropology, my pedagogical approach leans toward the following explication. Theological carries with it a connotation of some transcendence beyond one individual human being. Theological by definition lives an international resonance. It entails Greek words at its root – theos and logos. Then Jewish Christians (Paul being part of this meaning expansion) adopted and thought together the Greek and the Jewish traditions of concepts and belief about Gods. Theological migrated from North East Africa or West Asia to Europe where theological (a Greek and Jewish fashioning) became absorbed in disparate, European tribal and city wisdoms. Now theological drifted into various streams of local humanistic and spiritual currents. As European missionaries spread an already multinational layered definition of theological to parts of the globe, theological recruited and mobilized and was recruited and mobilized by local primordial transcendent orientations toward the world. Theological is traditionally and historically multinational (and multicultural) and it forged further multinationality when it went out to recruit others into its own meaning making transcendence argumentation.

The anthropology aspect of theological anthropology connects anthropos with logos and, likewise, embodies multinationality along a similar traditional and historical trajectory. Furthermore, if theological points to the transcendence beyond one individual human being, then anthropology delimits the fact of human beings creating stories about transcendence beyond the individual self. Stories of intergenerational family journeys, specifically how they collectively
came to terms with maintaining the relation between wealth (i.e., earth, air, and water) and family structures (i.e., the intra-duties of production and reproduction of the family), vii make up the basis for narrative traditions about spiritualities, self-cultivation practices, and religions through times and spaces.

Comparative Method

Moreover, a pedagogical technique of cultures-specificity-human agency encourages students to identify their own realities by consistently and consciously utilizing a comparative method. For instance, whatever particular claim a student makes, he/she has to give his/her viewpoint in relation to a different culture in the class. And each student is asked to pursue this comparative method by examining the comparisons on different levels of being human – that is, on the family level, spirituality or religion level, indigenous tradition [space and time] level, and economic level. At the end of the class, each student is asked what “being human” means in his/her particular country in the present dynamics.

Such a comparative approach applies directly to my own pedagogical definition of theological anthropology. In the classroom, I begin the conversational journey deploying theological anthropology and being human as synonymous instructional realities. And students from different nations are invited to challenge this stance from their own literate textual references and common sense wisdom experiences. As professor, I maintain my position of corresponding relationality between theological anthropology and being human. Students have to struggle for and defend their own denotations and connotations. That is to say, do they agree with my pedagogy equating the two or not. To study being human, in a multinational classroom, calls on the professor and students to act out the definition of being human in the actual pedagogy. Restated, students and professor embody a fundamental trajectory in theological anthropology – to debate and defend one’s view of theological anthropology with compelling evidence in a public arena saturated with the instructive excess of multi-cultures.

Pedagogy’s Content

Within the comparative transnational classroom, pedagogy consists of conversation viii, questioning ix, and opening up traditions to new perspectives. x

Conversation

Lectures and assigned texts initiate and are the bases of the conversation. Through these two media, professors assume certain traditions are important for the discussion. These legacies – history of ideas, transcendent transferred human experiences – serve as launching pad and loose framework for the ensuing conversations. Thus, on the one hand, conversation is not circumscribed by the dogmatic display of the professor’s ego. On the other, neither is it simply students telling their personal stories. It is, again, the conscious and meticulous assertion of certain crucial traditions relative to the class subject matter. In this regard, conversation hovers around and breathes in traditions as intellectual legacies yielding provocative insight for today. The lectures and assigned texts speak to this.

In global pedagogy, the professor’s lectures need to be comparative. A deep grasp of his/her cultural foundation and some appreciation of other cultural contours enable the lectures to be imbued with a sense of comparative legacy engagement. To have a life-giving enriched and truly enjoyable international conversation within the pedagogical moment and process mandates the professor to be cognizant of and an authority on his/her own cultural gifts to the present. International pedagogy, by definition, does not presuppose, at the beginning, that students grasp or nuance cultured conversations different from their family of origins. At the end of the class conversational journey, we can expect this way of being in the world. The professor, to produce
effective lectures welcoming the challenges from global conversation partners (which, indeed, signify the roles of students from different countries), must surface openly the historical instantiations of the cultural proclivities he/she brings to the table. Only with self-cultural legacy awareness, can the lectures provide a basis for comparative conversation. Thus, the professor’s lectures act as one plumb line to engender critical interlocutory discovery and disagreement. It models for the students to offer their own family of origin insights. It is a gracious invitation for us to talk. In addition to self-asserted culture, the professor’s presentations need to include comparative dialogue. For example, it enhances the lectures if the professor can compare his/her own culture with the cultural tradition of another people. One need not be an absolute authority on another culture to facilitate the give-and-take of classroom energy. However, it does help immensely to comprehend dimensions of one or two diverse cultural legacies as comparative paradigms.

In addition to the lectures, assigned books serve as a second plumb line nurturing and nudging the global comparative conversation in the class. If we announce the necessity of worldwide discourse connection, the assigned bibliography can motor us toward that proclamation. In actuality, mandatory readings act as one easy way of honoring the pedagogy of comparative transnational exigencies. Specifically, as the larger subject matter unfolds within its constituent parts, each sub-set of the syllabus indicates perspectives from books emerging from different regions of the world (specifically, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe [inclusive of all cultures in Europe], Latin America, North America [inclusive of all North American cultures], and the Pacific Islands. The comparative bibliography, if properly handled, can avoid the missionary pedagogue; that is to say, the West (i.e., the USA and western Europe) designates other world peoples on the syllabus in order to sublimate them ultimately into a western European way of being and thinking – the dominant episteme of the USA academy loving and embodying this (conscious or unconscious) subterranean missionary pedagogy.\textsuperscript{x1}

Assigned and recommended books, truly regionally representative, moreover, can avoid the proclivity and the pressure for the (in particular, the USA and western European) professor to self-proclaim authority over and authenticity about the Rest – the non-West. If patiently done well, the syllabus bibliography can serve as preparation, as tools, as living testimony to collaborative pedagogy framed within the overall syllabus, inclusive of assigned readings, and energized by the professor’s lectures. In addition, the assigned and recommended readings on the syllabus need to facilitate comparative and interdisciplinary approaches to pedagogy. Because teaching being human globally, by definition, denotes multi-nation investigation of the subject matter, the syllabus, then, has to reveal texts from different countries. But just as important is an interdisciplinary representation of texts in the syllabus. Theologically Christian doctrines of being human will be present. However, one must be intentional in one’s definition of being human. A global pedagogy, even if biased toward Christianity, needs to realize that Christians are not the majority of the 7 billion 200 million world population. Thus being human in the world presents multiple ways of being human; inclusive of Christian dogma as discipline as well as a variety of human theories as disciplines. We realize, therefore in teaching method, human being denotes world diversity across spiritualities, self-cultivation practices, and religions.

We recognize, moreover in teaching method (that is to say in lectures and syllabi), human being fluctuates and differentiates even among self-professing Christian adherents as Christianity is believed and practiced in different nations located in the classroom. For most western professors, the idea that there is one Christianity in the world underscores, at least, two possible myopia. Either that American or western European professor has never had classes packed with
students from the majority of the world or he, as purported academic seeking new knowledge, has never travelled around the world. In short, the notion of a pedagogy of the one Christian thought, belief, or practice regarding being human is a phantasm.

And so, one realizes, in pedagogical conversations, that Christian expressions of being human globally include syncretistic expressions of indigeneity and missionized Christianity. This should not be a startling fact. Indeed, even within the USA, the different Christianities manifest a syncretism between missionized Christianity, originally from western Europe, and the indigenous spiritualities and cultures of those who were missionized in the USA. Similarly, as Christianity spread from the early church to different parts of Europe, this missionary Christianity, itself, took on and incorporated local indigenous European cultures into the Christian missionary arrivals.

The New Testament Paul serves as exhibit A. The Christianity that Paul mixes together is his creation of, at least, two ingredients. The first part juxtaposes his interpretation of Jesus’ stories with Greek culture, the second aspect. The result of this two dimensional recipe is Paul’s faith in and experience of Christianity. In particular, witness the prologue of John: John 1:1 – “In the beginning was the word [Christian culture]” who is the logos [Greek culture]. For Paul the word is Jesus, the highest principle of the reality in the world he knew around the Mediterranean Sea. In order to convert or recruit part of the Greek world, he had to find the Greek idea for the highest principle in Greek culture. For the Greeks, the highest principle was “logos = reason”. So Paul equated – intentionally syncretized – Jesus the Christian with Reason from Greek culture. Paul’s Christianity is the ultimate syncretism for people who call themselves Christian. Paul is a syncretism of his interpretation of Jesus’ narratives [we have to remember that Paul never met Jesus] and a compromise to include non-Christian sources.

In other words, even before Europe sent missionaries to other parts of the world to recruit other people, European Christianities were themselves paradigmatic expressions of syncretism termed orthodoxy. Hence, when teaching being human, with a heavy or implied Christian intent or affect, internationally, the teaching effectiveness increases when the professor foregrounds the reality of disparate (religious, spiritual, and self-cultivation) means of being human. In a word, state up front that Christianity, itself, is a syncretism way of being in the world; and in the world there are many, many ways of being human. This theoretical analysis, at the beginning of the class, can free up the recesses of critical thinking deep within the students’ brains. They can, if facilitated properly, claim the polyvalent voices of their local religious, spiritual, and self-cultivation stories (derived from their own familial and communal traditions) without pausing to self-edit themselves in class for fear of being positively orthodox or negatively syncretic on the being human question.

Questioning

Indeed, in addition to a complex dimensional conversation, global classroom pedagogy entails perpetual and unencumbered questioning relative to lectures, assigned texts, and scholarly concepts broached during discussion periods. Though one has to be sensitive to avoid personal ad hominem attacks (especially with students from around the world where language nuance, body rhythm, and ritual themselves can define what it means to be human), good pedagogy fosters, even at times, very intense pointed questioning. Fundamentally questioning realizes at least three purposes: (1) to teach students (i.e., give them permission) to not accept anything as given, (2) to challenge the student to defend the fundamentals and presuppositions of his/her argument, and (3) to remind both questioner/challenger and responder/defender to always make clear the local cultural context of the challenge and the defense. Questioning surfaces from and
situates itself in the local cultural realities of students debating their argumentative claims among the whole class as the professor makes sure to broaden the open-ended process of queries.

Fostering a sense of the communal value of not accepting anything as is requires patience on the part of the professor due to the transnational make-up of the classroom. Naturally and understandably so, students from diverse nations assume that each pedagogical participant acts as a unique authority and lives his/her own knowledge and location of wisdom as an expert. As a corollary, it might, at first, appear rude to not embrace the opinions of classroom colleagues from another international region. However, the professor encourages probing beyond the given as profound compassion for the ideas of different global students. The professor constructs a pedagogical and theological atmosphere where students can deconstruct their own initial shields of false politeness. Students eventually learn that one loves the wisdom, theories, and thought systems of others to such a degree that they are willing to take them so seriously and listen so carefully that they will not automatically agree with all initial arguments. All nations are just the same brilliant and fallible human beings. And seeing the human being in each classroom neighbor suggests a visual perspective valuing recognition of the weight of another human being’s verbal contribution to dialogue and debate. Therefore perspectival recognition is a multicultural philosophy, a groomed daily habit of existing open to challenges from and deploying challenges toward foreigners seated next to each other.

Such compassion and worldview couple with the notion of interrogating presuppositions and fundamentals. To show sympathy for and recognition of the other human’s individual creativity to think aloud as a way to vivify communal processing demands a teaching atmosphere of dissecting fundamentals and presuppositions all the way around. What are the assumed common sense wisdom and taken-for-granted reflexes breathed like natural air in the home countries of the students? Each student has to learn that epistemologies emerge from materialities embedded deep within each nation’s personality. Fruitful scholarly class adventures begin when student speakers confront one another’s fundamentals (that is to say, the tangible substructure of ideas). For instance, a speaker student might assume an immense amount of human diversity and opposite thinking and practice when he/she is arguing among other citizens at home in his/her own country. However, in a transnational classroom, other international students can see how what might appear as opposite views of citizens in one country are, in fact, a manifestation of what truly defines the national common character of all the citizens in that same country.

Citizens of the United States of America, as an example, domestically pride themselves for fighting over racial uniqueness and asymmetrical power relations domestically. But in a class of nations, even black American students can be very, very American, especially in the revelation of that religious-like USA presupposition with the fundamental American God of individual rights. It can be a sacred preoccupation particularly when USA citizens can become insensitive to hosts countries granting these Americans, of all colors, the kind privilege of a visa for entrance. Though at home, many Americans dispute race and variegated power positioning, yet, all Americans have a tendency to fight for their individual rights even though a host country has done them a favor by granting them a visa, which calls for Americans to abide by the local laws and customs of the host country. Hence, in this classroom of multi-national comparison, American students can discover the basic value of what it means to be a USA human being when probed by other foreign students’ foundational insights. In particular, other global classroom neighbors can aid the clarification of an American being human by assisting the USA students to distinguish between a deleterious mode of thought and life defined as individual rights from
another American gift designated as individuality – the inherent sacredness of individuality serving the collective.

In a word, querying presuppositions inevitably shines the pedagogical spotlight on the cultural contexts of both the student challenger and the student defender of arguments. Students in divergent nations might relish a certain type of claim about wealth, structure, time, body space, or family duties. Culture determines decisively these notions. Take Christianity. In a multinational classroom, pedagogy, even pedagogy about purported universal Christian dogmatics and ritual, hinges on the culture surrounding dogma and doing. If students could learn about each other’s supposedly universal Christian talk and walk by visiting each other’s nations, one would, for the most part, witness unique human productions and reproductions from long cultural traditions determining the acceptance and practice of Christian orthodoxy and orthopractice. Human culture, therefore, vivifies thought, duty, and feeling. It classifies and colors the Christian deity. And it manages and filters being human.

Traditions

Both conversation and questioning inspire the multinational classroom to a pedagogy of opening up traditions to new perspectives.¹⁴ New knowledge for the world’s common good can burst forth from interrogating in a global comparative sense legacies handed down through centuries and millennia. It is this comparative inter nation dialogue facilitating a student foreign to another student’s reality to see something new in an ancient memory. On the one hand, a student upholds a sense of insight of his/her own tradition. On the other hand, the student foreign to this intergenerational path can bring fresh eyes to bear. Hopefully mutual queries about divergent histories will lead each student to appreciate more profoundly traditional aspects making sense out of times gone by, the instructions of the moment, and the potential of journeying into the future. It can, likewise, instruct each student to walk some critical distance away from less meaningful moments in the genealogy of ideas of his/her tradition.

For instance, various countries accent the family structure and familial duties as premier to being a civilized human gathering. In contrast, other nations accentuate each family member’s highest allegiance to his/her own individual voice to pursue his/her own individual preconceptions of being human. In a similar fashion, different nations concoct notions of wealth ownership; some privilege private accumulation, others prioritize collective participation. Both perspectives flow from and are implicated in enduring subterranean forces of habit where human cultures craft the contours of human being. Both think something good lives in his/her own country’s tradition. Classroom pedagogy then teaches these students to be gracious enough to accept the warm invitation from other foreign students to compare and contrast, thereby deriving new interpretations out of the past. Basically opening up ancient periods emerges from teaching students to speak about and hear each other’s traditions into new collective life enhancing ways of being in the world.

Moreover, opening up traditions can foster the potential of world peace and material and spiritual collaboration. As foreign students unravel on a conscious level the long histories of divergent traditions, understanding can ensue as an ultimate pedagogical revelation. In my classroom experiment referenced at the start of this chapter, a recurring query pressed for clarity about why so much of the West clings to Christianity. Actually, Christianity served, at points especially during the Middle Ages, as glue and transmission of Western civilization when forms of state power and attendant structures weakened. Likewise, western Christian thinkers have been one medium of preserving western culture.¹⁵ In addition, many people of color in the USA reappropriated certain styles of imperialistic introductions of Christianity in their communities to
create their own syncretized Christianity so that these communities of color then could make meaning out of materiality and self-apply their new forged Christianity as a balm for psychological wholeness. Thus, the passed-down stories of Christianity in the West (among the so-called normative narrative line in the dominant’s eyes and among many people of color too often the underside collateral damage of these “mainstream” narratives) enabled various sectors of the West to maintain civilization and life in the face of death.

Likewise, the comparative pedagogy of digging into the taken-for-granted inheritance in other global regions sitting in the classroom can compare and contrast their historical journeys that lead directly to who they are and their family structures and manipulations of wealth, two components, among others, of being human in the micro one-to-one dimension and in the macro political economy dimension. The increased understanding of where neighbors come from hopefully can engender peace and prosperity for all countries. This pedagogy has a profound spiritual valence. Legacy denotes the transcendent transference of things greater than the individual self, thus it is spiritual because it lives on inter-generationally for years into the future. Perhaps this long view of history relative to family and wealth constitute a major potential for mutual comprehension among the multi-nation classroom of foreign neighbors. I would argue family-wealth perspectives undergird divergent local spiritualities, self-cultivation practices, and religions.

For example, even in the Christian narrative, a disproportionate number of Jesus’ stories (in the memory of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) refer to wealth and, one could add, to the notion of the family’s relation or lack of relation to wealth. Relatedly, from the Christian appropriation of the Hebrew legacy, the Old Testament unfolds as Yahweh promises, molds, and struggles with family relations of the ancient Hebrew people (from Abraham to the 13 tribes) while they deliberate over wealth accumulation. Yahweh promises Abraham an abundant family offspring gifted with prosperity. Later Yahweh removes the ancient Jewish families as material wealth from Egyptian material slavery. Then Yahweh promises the accumulated remnant of families hovering at the edge of the wilderness a land of wealth, flowing with material milk and honey (refer to the book of Numbers in the Old Testament). By unwrapping this memory of human imaginations, one can better appreciate why today’s adherents of these past creative narratives do what they do now.

So too, by divulging each foreign student’s passed down written and oral talk intergenerationally, other students have the possibility of grasping why students (representative of their diverse countries) and their respective nations think, believe, and do “as they are” – that is to say, the intertwined necessity of legacy and being human. Opening up traditions to new perspectives can circulate exchanges of knowledge toward understanding toward friendship toward peace.

Music and Language in Pedagogy of Being Human

In addition to the formal lectures, syllabi, and crucial debate among students, discussions about music and language among foreign neighbors in the classroom present an invigorating challenge of eventual mutual trust and understanding. Furthermore, oftentimes music and language concerns are linked to ultimate meaning matters such as spiritualities, self-cultivation practices, and religions.

Teaching the community building effects of music offers several approaches. A professor can decide or solicit one song known across the world and have the students construe the substance and impact of the chosen piece in their local context. Here too music differentiates between explicit religious lyrics and “so-called” secular tunes, though in the porous and
malleable walls of division there hardly stands an impenetrable partition. In either case, a common tune provides the basis for exploring being human. With the shared song, each country representative can disclose what the lyrics mean in his/her interpretive perspective. Specifically, each elaborates on the implications for being human. On the one hand, everyone is familiar with and knows the words to one global song. Hence, the class has a provision for collective knowledge. On the other, the sparkles and fusion of new knowledge emerges in the mix of multiple, oftentimes competing, claims to significance from particularity. Even with a given transnational song, each country not only nuances its implications for being human differently. At the same time, each context brands the global song with each local cultural personality when local artists sing the song with their own cultural presuppositions. The being human of the local morphs the globalness of the song into a hybrid local-global humanity. What import for human being is found in the transnational and the particularity when a Korean student from a Confucian background enjoys black American soul or gangster rap music? How do the Negro Spirituals facilitate the new understanding of being human when embraced and sung by citizens of the former communist Union of Soviet Socialist Republics?

Additional collaborative pedagogical awareness appears when students present songs from their native nations. The sheer novelty and strangeness of each song to other classroom neighbors can yield a rewarding result. The student describing his/her artistic piece usually resorts to the human or family or spiritual heritage undergirding the song. The student often describes the ritual setting in which the song is sung or even performed. This varies from the mundane (i.e., song for walking) to the intimacies of nurturing (i.e., song for a mother to her baby) to the more micro regularized event (i.e., song for family singing traditions) to the obligatory (i.e., song for the dead ancestors) to the more advanced complexity (i.e., song for national festivals). To share with depth, each student will respond further to the question: what is at stake in the theological anthropology of the song in the present? How have the orthodoxy (i.e., correct beliefs) and orthopraxis (i.e., correct practices) of the song mutated and how has the mutation (comprised both of things held on to and things newly introduced) impacted previous and emerging constructions of being human? At some point the student attends to both the material tangible and the spiritual transcendent. The very unfamiliarity of the tune allows for other foreign students to raise questions for clarification that the student describing his/her song had never thought to think about due to the force of habit brought on by routinization of the familiar. The growing collective energy in the room snakes throughout the class. Some students try to situate the song within their own local musicology. Others try to map, and thus control, the song by framing it within superficial stereotypes of the nation from which the song hailed. Whatever the case, students can begin to ask questions about what type of people would produce such a song; what existential and theoretical purposes does it serve; how does it relate to building communities; what spiritual endurance does it portend? And what does all of this collective cacophony and communal consensus say about my own limited notion of being human or theological anthropology in a world of foreign neighbors?

Like music, language can open up new vistas for teaching being human in a multicultural and transnational classroom situation. The professor can commence the process by choosing one word, in this case, a word in English since all foreign students have often assimilated English in order to operate at a worldwide academic level. Students are challenged by the professor to contemplate both the meaning of the word for them and their particular accented way of pronouncing the English word. For instance, in USA English, most give a hard accent on the last letter or syllable in a word. In Putonghua (i.e., Mandarin), one can pronounce lightly the ending
of a phrase or a word.\textsuperscript{xx} One could speculate that two distinct students articulate the same English word differently because the diverse method of pronouncing the common term signifies two unique ways of being human on the spiritual, intergenerational, transcendent plane. Pu tonghua is linked to a long Confucian and Taoist legacy of what constitutes a good person. The Confucius person is modest and learned. The Taoist master might appear as a beggar or homeless individual. A distinction divides and unites appearance and essence, surface and depth. A crouching tiger and hidden dragon warns us that behind the outward ordinary shines the hidden heroic. In usual contrast, the USA human being can at first seem pushy, loud, aggressive, and demanding in a global conversation. Both law and faith undergird this apparent individualism. The first very amendment of the US Constitution grants the right to shout out each person’s personal voice. And the second amendment next gives each citizen the right to kill someone who infringes on this individual speech. One might add to the USA personality a proclivity for Christianity, a major USA religion inextricably woven into the politics and economics of the USA society. Linked to the law, one, in addition, feels one has to boldly proclaim the Christian Word and then aggressively travel the world recruiting people based on this Word.\textsuperscript{xxi}

Akin to the pedagogical exercise of music, the professor can move from articulating and interpreting a commonly known English word to positing an idea and having each foreign student speak the term in his/her own native tongue. For example, what does the word “greetings” denote for being human in disparate global classroom tongues? In USA English, one usually states “how are you?” or “good to meet you”. Yet, in certain African countries, citizens recognize one another in a communal fashion. Instead of “how are you”, they embrace each other with the sayings “I see your family” or “health to your family”. The usual USA greeting speaks to the spiritual definition of being human. An individual, especially the Christian USA person, stands before his/her maker alone, without one’s father or mother. And each singular individual is accountable to this deity based on the individual’s faith and witness. Certain African paradigms postulate a spirituality of collectivity with a family recognition inclusive of the unborn, dead family ancestors, and living family kin. To be human is to embody and recognize family ancestors and living family relations in each person. Or rather, one sees the individual not as an individual acting on his/her own. The communal family lives in that one individual. Actually it is not one individual but someone part of a collective chain, a collective family, spiritual personality.

Here we selected music and language. For pedagogical purposes, the professor could choose food, smells, architecture, the purpose of furniture, or a broad array of the quotidian and the extraordinary. For indeed, the being human from all countries hold this in common. All people are people who soar high and low in living out their transcendent and intergenerational connections to meaning making in communities.

Conclusion

We began this investigation with a plumb line marker: how does an educator teach the idea of being human among different nations situated in the same classroom? Theoretical curiosity can, rightfully so, prompt such a fundamental direction. Yet, such a theoretical study, indeed any such study, will be immensely elevated when grounded in the realities of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century practical implications of technological, microwave like instantaneity. Specifically, contemporary invisible, communication media allow a human being to never sleep and to be present in any place in the world without physically being there. Today is what many fantasized about with Dick Tracy\textsuperscript{xxii} and his “magical” wrist watch which was a combination of television and telephone, and beyond. In a sense now the world is Dick Tracy. My class of students from
China, Korea, Pakistan, West Africa, Thailand, and the USA, cited at the top of this chapter, could have participated in my global pedagogy simultaneously on Skype or ooVoo. With coordination of time differentials among the various global regions present, we would all have been present in the “same” classroom at the same time without being present together at the same time in the same classroom. This is a form of transcendence of time and space. The materiality of accumulated human scientific risk taking, thinking differently, and replication of experimentation, in information technology, resulted in the nature of human being transcending the physicality of one’s own individual self, transcending the exact limitations of the tangible and touchable place of the one individual. Some might cross-pollinate philosophies of being human or theological anthropology in relation to Christianity and the prohibitions of religions. Others might express a taste for the more freewheeling open-endedness of spiritualities. Still others might sample the millennial of self-cultivation practices. Whatever the gardening process, we might all agree that the pedagogy of being human will probably sprout the most rewarding intellectual and existential buds of hope in a global and transnational horticulture of cultural plurality. And that ripe pedagogy could be one healthy fruit for world peace and friendship.

This eight year global network engaged in international youth-student exchanges and women’s advocacy. It published one book: Dwight N. Hopkins (USA) and Marjorie Lewis (Jamaica), co-editors, Another World Is Possible: Spiritualities and Religions of Global Darker Peoples, in the Cross Cultural Theologies Series of Equinox Publishing (London, England, 2009).


At least one East Asian student shared this insight and then produced his family’s millennial documentation. African students have represented similar memory through orality.


In his Dialogue With The Other: The Inter-Religious Dialogue (Louvain, Belgium: Peeters Press, 1990, p. xi), my University of Chicago Divinity School colleague David Tracy writes: “Indeed, I believe we are fast approaching the day when it will not be possible to attempt a Christian systematic theology except in serious conversation with the other great ways.”


Western European creation of new knowledge is emblematic of how one episteme gave way to another; that is to say, the prism of thought of feudalism dialectically sprouting into new bodies of knowledge under capitalism. See Marimba Ani Yuru: An African-Centered Critics of European Cultural Thought and Behavior (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc., 1994); and Ian F. McNeely and Lisa Wolverton, Reinventing Knowledge: From Alexandria to the Internet (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009). To entertain one’s curiosity about the formation of knowledge, in a contrasting approach, see Christian Jennings and Toyn Falola, ed., Africanizing Knowledge: African Studies Across the Disciplines (Piscataway, N.J.: Transactions Publishers, 2002); and Colina Mason and Felicity Rawlings-Sanaei, eds., Academic Migration, Discipline Knowledge and Pedagogical Practice: Voices from the Asia-Pacific (Berlin, Germany: Springer, 2013).


In my talks on being human in South Korea and Cuba, I introduced the African American religious song “This Little Light of Mine”. To my amazement and delight both audiences immediately joined in the English lyrics and sang with much gusto, though they added their own flavor which would have been fascinating to black Americans but somewhat culturally particularized by the South Korean and Cuban realities. Similarly, the African American freedom song “We Shall Overcome” has been sung all over the world by people bearing the brunt of asymmetrical power relations. And, furthermore, perhaps one of the most global classics is Bob Marley’s reggae music.

The United Kingdom and USA universities remain influential on the world stage. Harvard University’s endowment is about $33 billion.

See Jia Xue Rui, A Comparative Study of Chinese and American Communication Styles (Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, China: Harbin Institute of Technology Press, 2008).

Check out Matthew 28:16-20 and Mark 6:7-13 on what people think Jesus said about going to foreign neighbors.

A comic strip character who first appeared in 1931 in the Detroit Mirror, Tracy was a smart futuristic detective. Actually, Samsung company has, indeed, produced the first commercial wrist watch (the Samsung Galaxy Gear) that is basically a smart phone.
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The Importance of Understanding the World’s Worldviews

Understanding the world’s religions and ideologies is important in three ways. First, they are a vital ingredient in the varied story of humankind’s various experiments in living. The religions and ideas of ancient Greece or of the Maya are worth our recapturing, so far as we can, as part of the great heritage of human civilization. Second, and of more immediate importance, is the fact that in order to grasp the meanings and values of the plural cultures of today’s world, we need to know something of the worldviews which underlie them. To understand the Middle East you need to know something about Islam, not to mention Christianity and Judaism; and to understand Japan you need some insight into Buddhism, Shinto, and the Confucian heritage. Third, we may as individuals be trying to form our own coherent and emotionally satisfying picture of reality, and it is always relevant to see the great ideas and practices of various important cultures and civilizations. To make judgments about philosophies and ways of life we need a comparative perspective—to know something of the quest of the Christian mystic and the Hindu yogin, and of the spirituality of the Hasidic Jew and the Mahāyāna Buddhist. In a number of ways, the individual cultures of the world contribute to human civilization, and the religions and ideologies permeating those cultures are not to be neglected.

In undertaking a voyage into the world’s religions we should not define religion too narrowly. It is important for us to recognize secular ideologies as part of the story of human worldviews. It is artificial to divide them too sharply from religions, partly because they sometimes function in society like religions, and partly because the distinction between religious and secular beliefs and practices is a modern Western one and does not represent the way in which other cultures categorize human values. Essentially, this book is a history of ideas and practices which have moved human beings.
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To understand religious and secular worldviews and their practical meaning we have to use imagination. We have to enter into the lives of those for whom such ideas and actions are important. As the Native American proverb says, "Never judge a person until you have walked a mile in his moccasins." Much of this book will be in a broad way informative; but it will also, I hope, convey something of the spirit of the human quest for crosscultural communication.

Once a Christian theologian complained to me in a public discussion because I had dealt among other themes with Buddhist attitudes to creation: "What need do we have to consider Buddhism, since it is incompatible with the Gospel, and the Christian Gospel is all the truth we need?" It seems to me inappropriate to be so defensive, and a limitation on this man’s knowledge of the forces animating different parts of humanity. Anyway, I craftily replied: "You must indeed have read a lot, to know that Buddhism is incompatible with the Christian Gospel.”

The voyage into other folks’ beliefs and practices may turn out to be a journey into your neighborhood. It is common today for varieties of people to live together in the great cities. In London, New York, Los Angeles, Sydney, Singapore, Frankfurt, and Paris, most of the great religions and ideologies are present. This pluralism is the richer because each of the traditions includes many forms: Catholics, Orthodox, Lutherans, Baptists; Shi’a and Sunni Muslims, and Muslims from Morocco, Indonesia, and Egypt; Buddhists from Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and Korea, as well as Anglo converts; and so on. It often happens, then, that cities are microcosms of the whole world. This is an added reason why it is important to know something of others, so that mutual understanding, though maybe not agreement, may animate community relations.

Inevitably the Vietnamese migrant to Corpus Christi, Texas, and the Indian villager listening to a radio are affected to some degree by modernity and in a measure by Western values. The tremendous impact of the West has helped to shape the old religions in their voyage into the contemporary world. They have cherished their roots, but they have also adapted. The Hinduism of today bears deeply the imprint of its struggle against the imperial mentality, and the same is true, much more clearly, of the way smaller-scale cultures have bent to the winds of Western-dictated change. Consequently in this book the period of Western navigation, exploration, exploitation, and imperial rule marks a watershed in the story. Before, there is the narrative of the rise and fall of religious cultures in differing parts of the globe; afterwards, we see patterns of interaction, and eventually the emergence of a global civilization, in which inevitably religious and secular worldviews have to learn to adapt to one another.

The Nature of a Religion

In thinking about religion, it is easy to be confused about what it is. Is there some essence which is common to all religions? And cannot a person be
religious without belonging to any of the religions? The search for an essence ends up in vagueness—for instance in the statement that a religion is some system of worship or other practice recognizing a transcendent Being or goal. Our problems break out again in trying to define the key term “transcendent.” And in answer to the second question, why yes: there are plenty of people with deep spiritual concerns who do not ally themselves to any formal religious movement, and who may not themselves recognize anything as transcendent. They may see ultimate spiritual meaning in unity with nature or in relationships to other persons.

It is more practical to come to terms first of all not with what religion is in general but with what a religion is. Can we find some scheme of ideas which will help us to think about and to appreciate the nature of the religions?

Before I describe such a scheme, let me first point to something which we need to bear in mind in looking at religious traditions such as Christianity, Buddhism, or Islam. Though we use the singular label “Christianity,” in fact there are a great many varieties of Christianity, and there are some movements about which we may have doubts as to whether they count as Christian. The same is true of all traditions: they manifest themselves as a loosely held-together family of subtraditions. Consider: a Baptist chapel in Georgia is a very different structure from an Eastern Orthodox church in Romania, with its blazing candles and rich ikons; and the two house very diverse services—the one plain, with hymns and Bible-reading, prayers and impassioned preaching; the other much more ritually anchored, with processions and chanting, and
mysterious ceremonies in the light behind the screen where the ikons hang, concealing most of the priestly activities. Ask either of the religious specialists, the Baptist preacher or the Orthodox priest, and he will tell you that his own form of faith corresponds to original Christianity. To list some of the denominations of Christianity is to show something of its diverse practice—Orthodox, Catholic, Coptic, Nestorian, Armenian, Mar Thoma, Lutheran, Calvinist, Methodist, Baptist, Unitarian, Mennonite, Congregationalist, Disciples of Christ—and we have not reached some of the newer, more problematic forms: Latter-Day Saints, Christian Scientists, Unificationists, Zulu Zionists, and so forth.

Moreover, each faith is found in many countries, and takes color from each region. German Lutheranism differs from American; Ukrainian Catholicism from Irish; Greek Orthodoxy from Russian. Every religion has permeated and been permeated by a variety of diverse cultures. This adds to the richness of human experience, but it makes our tasks of thinking and feeling about the variety of faiths more complicated than we might at first suppose. We are dealing with not just traditions but many subtraditions.

It may happen, by the way, that a person within one family of subtraditions is drawn closer to some subtradition of another family than to one or two subtraditions in his or her own family (as with human families; this is how marriage occurs). I happen to have had a lot to do with Buddhists in Sri Lanka and in some ways feel much closer to them than I do to some groups within my own family of Christianity.

The fact of pluralism inside religious traditions is enhanced by what goes on between them. The meeting of different cultures and traditions often produces new religious movements, such as the many black independent churches in Africa, combining classical African motifs and Christianities. All around us in Western countries are to be seen new movements and combinations.

Despite all this, it is possible to make sense of the variety and to discern some patterns in the luxurious vegetation of the world’s religions and subtraditions. One approach is to look at the different aspects or dimensions of religion.

*The Practical and Ritual Dimension* 

Every tradition has some practices to which it adheres—for instance regular worship, preaching, prayers, and so on. They are often known as rituals (though they may well be more informal than this word implies). This *practical* and *ritual* dimension is especially important with faiths of a strongly sacramental kind, such as Eastern Orthodox Christianity with its long and elaborate service known as the Liturgy. The ancient Jewish tradition of the Temple, before it was destroyed in 70 C.E., was preoccupied with the rituals of sacrifice, and thereafter with the study of such rites seen as equivalent to their performance, so that study itself becomes almost a ritual activity. Again, sacrificial rituals are important among Brahmin forms of the Hindu tradition.

Also important are other patterns of behavior which, while they may not strictly count as rituals, fulfill a function in developing spiritual awareness or
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ethical insight: practices such as yoga in the Buddhist and Hindu traditions, methods of stilling the self in Eastern Orthodox mysticism, meditations which can help to increase compassion and love, and so on. Such practices can be combined with rituals of worship, where meditation is directed toward union with God. They can count as a form of prayer. In such ways they overlap with the more formal or explicit rites of religion.

The Experiential and Emotional Dimension

We only have to glance at religious history to see the enormous vitality and significance of experience in the formation and development of religious traditions. Consider the visions of the Prophet Muhammad, the conversion of Paul, the enlightenment of the Buddha. These were seminal events in human history. And it is obvious that the emotions and experiences of men and women are the food on which the other dimensions of religion feed: ritual without feeling is cold, doctrines without awe or compassion are dry, and myths which do not move hearers are feeble. So it is important in understanding a tradition to try to enter into the feelings which it generates—to feel the sacred awe, the calm peace, the rousing inner dynamism, the perception of a brilliant emptiness within, the outpouring of love, the sensations of hope, the gratitude for favors which have been received. One of the main reasons why music is so potent in religion is that it has mysterious powers to express and engender emotions.

Writers on religion have singled out differing experiences as being central. For instance, Rudolf Otto (1869–1937) coined the word “numinous.” For the ancient Romans there were numina or spirits all around them, present in brooks and streams, and in mysterious copse6s, in mountains and in dwelling-places; they were to be treated with awe and a kind of fear. From the word, Otto built up his adjective, to refer to the feeling aroused by a mysterium tremendum et fascinans, a mysterious something which draws you to it but at the same time brings an awe-permeated fear. It is a good characterization of many religious experiences and visions of God as Other. It captures the impact of the prophetic experiences of Isaiah and Jeremiah, the theophany through which God appeared to Job, the conversion of Paul, the overwhelming vision given to Arjuna in the Hindu Song of the Lord (Bhagavadgītā). At a gentler level it delineates too the spirit of loving devotion, in that the devotee sees God as merciful and loving, yet Other, and to be worshiped and adored.

But the numinous is rather different in character from those other experiences which are often called “mystical.” Mysticism is the inner or contemplative quest for what lies within—variously thought of as the Divine Being within, or the eternal soul, or the Cloud of Unknowing, emptiness, a dazzling darkness. There are those, such as Aldous Huxley (1894–1963), who have thought that the imageless, insight-giving inner mystical experience lies at the heart of all the major religions.

There are other related experiences, such as the dramas of conversion, being “born again,” turning around from worldly to otherworldly existence. There is
also the shamanistic type of experience, where a person goes upon a vision quest and acquires powers to heal, often through suffering himself and vividly traveling to the netherworld to rescue the dying and bring them to life again. Shamans are common to many small-scale societies and peoples that make their living by hunting, but many of the marks of the shamanistic quest have been left upon larger religions.

The Narrative or Mythic Dimension

Often experience is channeled and expressed not only by ritual but also by sacred narrative or myth. This is the third dimension—the mythic or narrative. It is the story side of religion. It is typical of all faiths to hand down vital stories: some historical; some about that mysterious primordial time when the world was in its timeless dawn; some about things to come at the end of time; some about great heroes and saints; some about great founders, such as Moses, the Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad; some about assaults by the Evil One; some parables and edifying tales; some about the adventures of the gods; and so on. These stories often are called myths. The term may be a bit misleading, for in the modern study of religion there is no implication that a myth is false.

The seminal stories of a religion may be rooted in history or they may not. Stories of creation are before history, as are myths which indicate how death and suffering came into the world. Others are about historical events—for
instance the life of the Prophet Muhammad, or the execution of Jesus, and the enlightenment of the Buddha. Historians have sometimes cast doubt on some aspects of these historical stories, but from the standpoint of the student of religion this question is secondary to the meaning and function of the myth; and to the believer, very often, these narratives are history.

This belief is strengthened by the fact that many faiths look upon certain documents, originally maybe based upon long oral traditions, as true scriptures. They are canonical or recognized by the relevant body of the faithful (the Church, the community, Brahmins and others in India, the Buddhist Sangha or Order). They are often treated as inspired directly by God or as records of the very words of the Founder. They have authority, and they contain many stories and myths which are taken to be divinely or otherwise guaranteed. But other documents and oral traditions may also be important—
the lives of the saints, the chronicles of Ceylon as a Buddhist nation, the stories of famous holy men of Eastern Europe in the Hasidic tradition, traditions concerning the life of the Prophet (hadith), and so forth. These stories may have lesser authority but they can still be inspiring to the followers.

Stories in religion are often tightly integrated into the ritual dimension. The Christian Mass or communion service, for instance, commemorates and presents the story of the Last Supper, when Jesus celebrated with his disciples his forthcoming fate, by which (according to Christians) he saved humankind and brought us back into harmony with the Divine Being. The Jewish Passover ceremonies commemorate and make real to us the events of the Exodus from Egypt, the sufferings of the people, and their relationship to the Lord who led them out of servitude in ancient Egypt. As Jews share the meal, so they retrace the story. Ritual and story are bound together.

The Doctrinal and Philosophical Dimension
Underpinning the narrative dimension is the doctrinal dimension. Thus, in the Christian tradition, the story of Jesus’ life and the ritual of the communion service led to attempts to provide an analysis of the nature of the Divine Being which would preserve both the idea of the Incarnation (Jesus as God) and the belief in one God. The result was the doctrine of the Trinity, which sees God as three persons in one substance. Similarly, with the meeting between early Christianity and the great Graeco-Roman philosophical and intellectual heritage it became necessary to face questions about the ultimate meaning of creation, the inner nature of God, the notion of grace, the analysis of how Christ could be both God and human being, and so on. These concerns led to the elaboration of Christian doctrine. In the case of Buddhism, to take another example, doctrinal ideas were more crucial right from the start, for the Buddha presented a philosophical vision of the world which itself was an aid to salvation.

In any event, doctrines come to play a significant part in all the major religions, partly because sooner or later a faith has to adapt to social reality and so to the fact that much of the leadership is well educated and seeks some kind of intellectual statement of the basis of the faith.

It happens that histories of religion have tended to exaggerate the importance of scriptures and doctrines; and this is not too surprising since so much of our knowledge of past religions must come from the documents which have been passed on by the scholarly elite. Also, and especially in the case of Christianity, doctrinal disputes have often been the overt expression of splits within the fabric of the community at large, so that frequently histories of a faith concentrate upon these hot issues. This is clearly unbalanced; but I would not want us to go to the other extreme. There are scholars today who have been much impressed with the symbolic and psychological force of myth, and have tended to neglect the essential intellectual component of religion.
The ethical dimension: Zen monks exhibit discipline and the desire for orderly work as they set out to tidy the grounds of their monastery.

The Ethical and Legal Dimension

Both narrative and doctrine affect the values of a tradition by laying out the shape of a worldview and addressing the question of ultimate liberation or salvation. The law which a tradition or subtradition incorporates into its fabric can be called the ethical dimension of religion. In Buddhism, for instance, there are certain universally binding precepts, known as the five precepts or virtues, together with a set of further regulations controlling the lives of monks and nuns and monastic communities. In Judaism we have not merely the Ten Commandments but a complex of over six hundred rules imposed upon the community by the Divine Being. All this Law or Torah is a framework for living for the Orthodox Jew. It also is part of the ritual dimension, because, for instance, the injunction to keep the Sabbath as a day of rest is also the injunction to perform certain sacred practices and rituals, such as attending the synagogue and maintaining purity.
Similarly, Islamic life has traditionally been controlled by the Law or *shar’a*, which shapes society as both a religious and a political society, as well as shaping the moral life of the individual—prescribing that he should pray daily, give alms to the poor, and so on, and that society should have various institutions, such as marriage, modes of banking, etc.

Other traditions can be less tied to a system of law, but still display an ethic which is influenced and indeed controlled by the myth and doctrine of the faith. For instance, the central ethical attitude in the Christian faith is love. This springs not just from Jesus’ injunction to his followers to love God and their neighbors; it flows too from the story of Christ himself who gave his life out of love for his fellow human beings. It also is rooted in the very idea of the Trinity, for God from all eternity is a society of three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, kept together by the bond of love. The Christian joins a community which reflects, it is hoped at any rate, the life of the Divine Being, both as Trinity and as suffering servant of the human race and indeed of all creation.

*The Social and Institutional Dimension*

The dimensions outlined so far—the experiential, the ritual, the mythic, the doctrinal, and the ethical—can be considered in abstract terms, without being embodied in external form. The last two dimensions have to do with the incarnation of religion. First, every religious movement is embodied in a group of people, and that is very often rather formally organized—as Church,
or Sangha, or umma. The sixth dimension therefore is what may be called the social or institutional aspect of religion. To understand a faith we need to see how it works among people. This is one reason why such an important tool of the investigator of religion is that subdiscipline which is known as the sociology of religion. Sometimes the social aspect of a worldview is simply identical with society itself, as in small-scale groups such as tribes. But there is a variety of relations between organized religions and society at large: a faith may be the official religion, or it may be just one denomination among many, or it may be somewhat cut off from social life, as a sect. Within the organization of one religion, moreover, there are many models—from the relative democratic governance of a radical Protestant congregation to the hierarchical and monarchical system of the Church of Rome.

It is not, however, the formal officials of a religion who may in the long run turn out to be the most important persons in a tradition. For there are charismatic or sacred personages, whose spiritual power glows through their demeanor and actions, and who vivify the faith of more ordinary folk—saintly people, gurus, mystics, and prophets, whose words and example stir up the spiritual enthusiasm of the masses, and who lend depth and meaning to the

The material dimension: the holy city of Benares on the banks of the river Ganges. The Hindu temples are overshadowed by the mosque, which was built by the Mogul emperor Aurangzeb (1618–1707) as a sign of the ultimate triumph of Islam.
rituals and values of a tradition. They can also be revolutionaries and set religion on new courses. They can, like John Wesley, become leaders of a new denomination, almost against their will; or they can be founders of new groups which may in due course emerge as separate religions—an example is Joseph Smith II, Prophet of the new faith of Mormonism. In short, the social dimension of religion includes not only the mass of persons but also the outstanding individuals through whose features glimmer old and new thoughts of the heaven toward which they aspire.

The Material Dimension
This social or institutional dimension of religion almost inevitably becomes incarnate in a different way, in material form, as buildings, works of art, and other creations. Some movements—such as Calvinist Christianity, especially in the time before the present century—eschew external symbols as being potentially idolatrous; their buildings are often beautiful in their simplicity, but their intention is to be without artistic or other images which might seduce people from the thought that God is a spirit who transcends all representations. However, the material expressions of religion are more often elaborate, moving, and highly important for believers in their approach to the divine. How indeed could we understand Eastern Orthodox Christianity without seeing what ikons are like and knowing that they are regarded as windows onto heaven? How could we get inside the feel of Hinduism without attending to the varied statues of God and the gods?

Also important material expressions of a religion are those natural features of the world which are singled out as being of special sacredness and meaning—the river Ganges, the Jordan, the sacred mountains of China, Mount Fuji in Japan, Ayers Rock in Australia, the Mount of Olives, Mount Sinai, and so forth. Sometimes of course these sacred landmarks combine with more direct human creations, such as the holy city of Jerusalem, the sacred shrines of Banaras, or the temple at Bodh Gaya which commemorates the Buddha’s Enlightenment.

Uses of the Seven Dimensions
To sum up: we have surveyed briefly the seven dimensions of religion which help to characterize religions as they exist in the world. The point of the list is so that we can give a balanced description of the movements which have animated the human spirit and taken a place in the shaping of society, without neglecting either ideas or practices.

Naturally, there are religious movements or manifestations where one or other of the dimensions is so weak as to be virtually absent: illiterate small-scale societies do not have much means of expressing the doctrinal dimension; Buddhist modernists, concentrating on meditation, ethics, and philosophy, pay scant regard to the narrative dimension of Buddhism; some newly formed groups may not have evolved anything much in the way of the material dimension. Also there are so many people who are not formally part of any
social religious grouping, but have their own particular worldviews and practices, that we can observe in society atoms of religion which do not possess any well-formed social dimension. But of course in forming a phenomenon within society they reflect certain trends which in a sense form a shadow of the social dimension (just as those who have not yet got themselves a material dimension are nevertheless implicitly storing one up, for with success come buildings and with rituals ikons, most likely).

If our seven-dimensional portrait of religions is adequate, then we do not need to worry greatly about further definition of religion. In any case, I shall now turn to a most vital question in understanding the way the world works, namely to the relation between more or less overtly religious systems and those which are commonly called secular; ideologies or worldviews such as scientific humanism, Marxism, Existentialism, nationalism, and so on. In examining these worldviews we shall take on some of the discussion about what count as religious questions and themes. It is useful to begin by thinking out whether our seven-dimensional analysis can apply successfully to such secular worldviews.

The Nature of Secular Worldviews

_Nationalism_

Although nationalism is not strictly speaking a single worldview or even in itself a complete worldview, it is convenient to begin with it. One reason is that it has been such a powerful force in human affairs. Virtually all the land surface of the globe, together with parts of the world's water surface, is now carved up between sovereign states. Nationalism has given shape decisively to the modern world, because its popularity in part stems from the way in which assembling peoples into states has helped with the processes of industrialization and modern bureaucratic organization. Countries such as Britain, France, the United States, Germany, and Italy pioneered the industrial revolution, and the system of national governments spread from Western to Eastern Europe after World War I and from Europe to Asia, Africa, and elsewhere after World War II. Ethnic identity was sometimes demarcated by language and therefore cultural heritage, sometimes by religion, sometimes by both, and sometimes simply by shared history. Examples of each of these categories can be seen in the cases of Germany (shared language), the two parts of Ireland (distinctive religion), Poland (both distinctive language and religion), and Singapore (shared history of Chinese, Malay, and other linguistic groups). Colonialism often helped to spread nationalism by reaction: the British conquest of India fostered an Indian nationalism, and there are signs of national awakening in parts of the former Soviet Union, once colonized by Tsarist Russia, and in Tibet, conquered by China.

The nation-state has many of the appurtenances of a religion. First of all (to use the order in which we expounded the dimensions of religion in the previous section), there are the _rituals_ of nationhood: speaking the language
itself; the national anthem; the flying and perhaps saluting of the flag; republic and memorial days, and other such festivals and holidays; the appearance of the Head of State at solemn occasions; military march-pasts; and so on. It is usual for citizens to make secular pilgrimages to the nation’s capital and other significant spots—Washington (the Lincoln Memorial, the Vietnam Memorial, the White House, and so on); Plymouth Rock; Mount Rushmore; natural beauties exhibiting “America the Beautiful.” Memorials to the nation’s dead are of special significance, and often religious language is used about the sacrifices of the young on the altar of national duty.

The experiential or emotional side of nationalism is indeed powerful—for the sentiments of patriotism, pride in the nation, love of its beauties and powers, and dedication to national goals, can be very strong. Especially in times of national crisis, such as war, such sentiments rise to the surface. But they are reinforced all the time by such practices as singing the national anthem and other patriotic songs.

A Japanese naval officer indicates his nationalist dedication by wrapping his country’s flag around his head as he prepares for combat in World War II.
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The *narrative* dimension of nationalism is easily seen, for it lies in the history of the nation, which is taught in the schools of the country, and which in some degree celebrates the values of the great men and women of the nation—such great forebears as Julius Caesar (Giulio Cesare), Dante, Galileo, Leonardo, Garibaldi, Cavour, Verdi, Leopardi, Alcide de Gasperi, and others. History is the narrative that helps to create in the young and in citizens at large a sense of identity, of belonging, of group solidarity.

Of *doctrines* nationalism is somewhat bereft, unless you count the doctrine of self-determination. But often, too, nations appeal to principles animating the modern state, such as the need for democracy and the rights of the individual in a freedom-loving nation, etc.; or a nation may appeal to the doctrine of a full-blown secular ideology, such as Marxism. Or it may hark back to the teachings of its ancestral religion, and so represent itself as guarding the truths and values of Christianity, or of Buddhism, or of a revived and revolutionary Islam.

The *ethical* dimension of nationalism consists in those values which are inculcated into citizens. Young people are expected to be loyal people, taxpayers, willing to fight if necessary for the country, law-abiding, and hopefully good family people (supplying thus the nation with its population).

There is of course a blend between ethical values in general and the particular obligations to one's own kith and kin, one's fellow-nationals.

The *social and institutional* aspect of the nation-state is of course easily discerned. It culminates in a head of state who has extensive ceremonial functions—especially with monarchy, as in Britain, where the Queen is an important ritual object—and on whom sentiments of patriotism also focus.

The state has its military services which also perform ceremonial as well as fighting tasks. There are the public schools, with the teachers imparting the treasured knowledge and rules of the nation. Even games come to play an institutional role; loyalty is expressed through the Olympics and various other contests, and the ethos of the athlete comes to be blended with that of the ideal citizen. In some countries loyalty to religion or to a secular ideology blends with loyalty to one's nation, and those who do not subscribe to it are treated as disloyal. State occasions are shown on television, which itself comes to have a role in transmitting and focusing the values of the nation.

Finally, there is of course much *material* embodiment of the nation in its great buildings and memorials, its flag, its great art, its sacred land, its powerful military hardware.

In all these ways, then, the nation today is like a religion. If you have a relative who has died for a cause, it is not like the old days when he might have died for his religion, maybe at the stake; now he is most likely to have died for his country.

It is, then, reasonable to treat modern nationalism in the same terms as religion. It represents a set of values often allied with a kind of modernism, which is natural to the thinking of many of our contemporaries, and which stresses certain essentially modern concerns: the importance of economic
development; the merits of technology; the wonders of science; the importance of either socialism or capitalism, or some mixture, in the process of modernization; the need for the state to look after the welfare of its citizens; the importance of universal education; and so on.

There are some growing limitations on nationalism: the fact that in many countries which were once reasonably homogeneous there are now increasing ethnic mixes, the growth of transnational corporations, the developing economic interdependence of nations, the impossibility of older ways of conceiving sovereignty in the context of modern warfare, and so on. Nevertheless, nationalism remains a very strong and alluring ingredient in the world, and many of the trouble spots are so because of unfilled ethnic expectations and ethnic rivalries—in Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Kurdistan, Afghanistan, and elsewhere.

The Dimensions of Marxism

It is because Marxism has itself become more than a movement of ideas but has become embodied in many states that its analysis too needs to follow the general outlines I have sketched. It has a coherent set of doctrines, modified variously by leaders such as Stalin, Mao, Hoxha, and Ceaușescu; it has a mythic dimension in the analysis of historical events in accordance with the principles of the dialectic (so that then the history of the Russian Revolution or the German Democratic Republic gets fitted into a more general salvation-history of the human race). Its rituals combine with those of nationalism but have their own symbolisms, such as the widespread use of the color red, the adoption of festivals such as May Day and the anniversary of the October Revolution, the adulation of the Party leader, etc. The emotions it encourages are those of patriotism, internationalism, and revolutionary commitment; its ethos those of solidarity; its institutions those of the Party; and its artistic style is that of socialist realism, which glorifies the ideals of the Party, state, and country, with more than a hint of that Pietism which can characterize religious painting. Its music is heroic and rousing. State Marxism, then, has a distinctly religious-type function, and moves men by theory, symbols, rituals, and Party energy. Like many religions it may not ultimately prove to be successful, for the people may not be inwardly and deeply moved by the embodied values of Marxism as an ideology; indeed the collapse of the Soviet system shows the hollowness of Marxism in a number of Eastern European countries, and in the Soviet Union. It was always faced with the struggle against local patriotism, against religions, against the humanist desire for freedom of inquiry, and so on.

Some other secular worldviews are less clearly like traditional religions insofar as they tend not to wield the symbols of power: for instance, scientific humanism, which is influential in one form or another among many intellectuals in the West, and which in rather inarticulate form expresses something of the worldview of ordinary folk in secularized circumstances. It holds to human and democratic values, and it stresses science as the source of
knowledge. It repudiates the doctrines of religion, especially of Jewish and
Christian theism. It sees human individuals as of ultimate value. But it does
not, as I have said, embody itself in a rich way as a religious-type system. Its
rituals are slight, beyond those which reinforce other aspects of modernity.
Perhaps the modern passion for games and sports is one sign of a kind of
persistence of interest in activities pursued according to ritual rules. Its myths
are not extensive, beyond a feel for the clash between science and religion
during the modern period from Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) onward. Its
doctrines can be complex, especially in the formulations of contemporary
humanistic (analytical and linguistic) philosophy. Its profoundest experiences are
maybe those of culture, such as music and the arts. Its ethics are generally
speaking those of utilitarianism, which sees morality as maximizing happiness
and minimizing suffering. Its institutions are found in secular education. Its
material symbols are perhaps the skyscraper and the stadium. But it is hard to
disentangle its manifestations from many other aspects of modern living.

Though to a greater or lesser extent our seven-dimensional model may
apply to secular worldviews, it is not really appropriate to try to call them
religions, or even “quasi-religions” (which by implication demotes them
below the status of “real” religions). The adherents of Marxism and humanism
wish to be demarcated strictly from those who espouse religions—they
conceive of themselves, on the whole, as antireligious. However, we have seen
enough of the seven-dimensional character of the secular worldviews
(especially nationalism and state Marxism) to emphasize that the various
systems of ideas and practices, whether religious or not, are competitors and
mutual blenders, and can thus be said to play in the same league. They all help
to express the various ways in which human beings conceive of themselves,
and act in the world.

Roots, Formation, and Reformation

We are here concerned with the history of the worldviews of the world. It has
been conventional to look at the founders and first scriptures as being the
points of origin of the faiths: as though Judaism had sprung in all its
complexity from the mouth of Moses; as if Hinduism were all there in the
Vedas; and as if Christianity had been fully sketched out, so to speak, in the
mind of Christ. While it remains most important to evaluate founders and
early scriptures, we also need to be sensitive to the ways in which religious
traditions evolve and form. It does not take long to reflect that some vital
features of Hinduism, for instance, are absent from the early Vedic writings,
even from the great texts known as the Upanishads: for instance, the whole
complex of temple religion, the cult of images, pilgrimages, and so on. It may
be that materials for the construction of the Trinity doctrine or the Eastern
Orthodox liturgy are to be found in the New Testament, but formally
speaking that doctrine and that liturgy are not there. In short, religions may be
rooted in their early texts, but they do not form and develop simply on a
scriptural basis. There may indeed be a later development—such as the Reformation in Christianity—that demands a return to absolute origins and seeks to base everything on scripture; but even here modern elements, undreamed of by Jesus’ disciples or by Paul, are blended into the new and reformed patterns of religion.

We may be the more aware of this because of the way in which contemporary traditions, whether East or West or North or South, reflect attempts to deal with the revolutionary changes which have overcome the world—the rise of science, the emergence of nationalism, Western-style imperialism and colonialism, the interplay of cultures. These events have led necessarily to changes in worldviews. To some extent nearly all of the religions of the world, except in the remotest spots, have undergone Western and modern influences. And so, even if the modern Western-educated Hindu, for instance, may draw upon ancient motifs and old philosophies, and quote texts of three thousand years ago, she will cast her exposition of the faith in forms which owe much to the seminal period of nineteenth- and twentieth-century thought and struggle. She will be influenced by Vivekananda (1862-1902) and Radhakrishnan (1888-1975), not to mention Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) (see Chapter 16).

Because of the evolving and changing character of the traditions and subtraditions of the world, I shall not oversimplify by treating religions as if there were a neat origin for each. Of course, there are some, such as Islam or Mormonism, where the founding Prophet and his period are of immense, even overwhelming, importance. But generally we may distinguish between the period or periods of roots and those of formation. Thus early classical Christianity of course had its roots in the New Testament and the theology of Paul. But it is not until the fourth century C.E. that its formation is (roughly speaking) completed, with the formulation of crucial doctrines, such as that of the Trinity, the full elaboration of the communion or liturgy, the creation of a complex priestly hierarchy, the beginnings of mysticism and the monastic impulse, the new ethos of being both a good Christian and a good citizen, the emergence of Eastern and Western forms based on linguistic and political differences.

Judaism had a similar period of formation, which culminated in the period of the Diaspora or dispersion of the people after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. The classical features of rabbinic scholarship, synagogue worship, conception of the oral Torah, the study of the Temple rituals as a substitute for conducting them, dispersal of the community, belief in an afterlife, and so forth, had their antecedents before this period; but it was really not until the emergence of Christianity and the perceived need to regroup after the disaster of 70 C.E. and persecutions in the Empire that Judaism finally pulled together in a form recognizable still to us today. Then there was a second great period of formation, that of modern Judaism in its disjunct modes, as Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative (with other variations too), during the nineteenth century after the thrill and trauma of emancipation.
Of course, religions reflect on their own history, and it is natural to project supposed origins back onto roots. The oral Torah is ascribed to the time of Moses; the doctrines and rites of classical Christianity are seen in the New Testament. By contrast, modern scholarship tends to tug at these projections and cause them to disintegrate, and this is a potent source of tension between piety and scholarship. Insofar as this book is a modern history, it has to be somewhat skeptical of some pious beliefs; but in thinking of a tradition as having a "root" period and a period of classical formation, as well as other times of major reformation, we may seek to avoid unnecessary conflicts.

In some degree traditions have to change in order to stay the same. This is paradoxical; but if you stay frozen in the customs and interpretations of a given period, then changed circumstances will make you look old-fashioned, when that was not your original intention. Riding in buggies, like the Amish of Pennsylvania, means something quite different in an age before there are cars from what it means when there are actually automobiles to reject. So it is natural enough that, although some aspects of a tradition may indeed be traditional (like the mitres worn by Catholic bishops), not all of them can be ancient, for the tradition will have had to adapt in some degree in order to continue to be intelligible and meaningful.

There is also some variation in the time of the "watershed" which has altered the face of religious history. For the West it was the period of the Reformation and its scientific and artistic aftermath. For Judaism it was the period of emancipation, namely the first part of the nineteenth century. For the Hindu and Buddhist traditions it was the nineteenth century, with European penetration into the relevant cultures of Asia. For African religions it was likewise the nineteenth century, but a bit later. For the Native American religions of North and South America, it was essentially earlier, with the vast shock, especially, of the Spanish and Portuguese conquests in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Basically, the countries of the world (and I have not here listed all regions or religions) came to be deeply affected by the expansion of Europe, and the subsequent spread of various political and scientific ideas, jointly with the spread of missionary Christianity. Obviously there had been other shocks and watersheds: the Muslim conquest of much of India had, of course, affected Islam before the British Raj. Islamic forces also transformed parts of Africa before the European "scramble for Africa." The Mongol conquests of Genghis Khan and his successors had been a shock, from China to Europe. But nothing ultimately has matched the effects of European conquest, for it introduced a whole variety of challenges across the world and spread ideas as heady as democracy, liberation, modernity, and the need for higher education in the Western mode. It was impossible that religious and other worldviews could be unaffected. It is out of the turbulences born of these conquests and of the two great wars of the twentieth century that the contemporary world has been created.
THE LETTER OF PAUL TO PHILEMON

1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, a
To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, b to Apphia our sister, b to Ar-
chippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house;
3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
4 When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because
I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. c I pray
that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the
good that we d may do for Christ. e I have indeed received much joy and encour-
gagement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed
through you, my brother.
5 For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do
your duty, f yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do
this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. g 10 I am appeal-
ing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my impris-
sonment. h Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. i I am sending
him, that is, my own heart, back to you.
13 I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place
during my imprisonment for the gospel; j but I preferred to do nothing without
your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not some-
thing forced. k Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while,
so that you might have him back forever.
16 no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to
me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.
17 So if you consider me your part-
er, welcome him as you would wel-
come me. l If he has wronged you in any
way, or owes you anything, charge that
to my account. m Paul, am writing this
with my own hand: I will repay it. I say
nothing about your owning me even your
own self. n Yes, brother, let me have this
benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my
heart in Christ. o Confident of your obe-
dience, I am writing to you, knowing
that you will do even more than I say.
22 One thing more—prepare a guest
room for me, for I am hoping through
your prayers to be restored to you.
23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in
Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you,
and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas,
25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
be with your spirit. h

a Gk the brother    b Gk the sister    c From verse 4 through verse 21, you is singular
  d Other ancient authorities read you (plural)
  e Or as an ambassador of Christ Jesus, and now also his prisoner
  f The name Onesimus means
  useful or (compare verse 20) beneficial
  g Here you is singular      h Other ancient
  authorities add Amen
سحابة نورانية
شهداء الإيمان والوطن
مديح شهداء ليبيا

لنا أبناء شفعة شهداء مصر بلبيا
مع أفراغ سماوية
شهداء مصر بلبيا
شرفوا المسماة
شهداء مصر بلبيا
مарьمنا الرسول
شهداء مصر بلبيا
في قوة الاستشهاد
شهداء مصر بلبيا
العمل وحن الأحوال
شهداء مصر بلبيا
ظام واضطهاد
شهداء مصر بلبيا
جبناء ملهمون
شهداء مصر بلبيا
لينكروا الإنسان
شهداء مصر بلبيا

في صفوف الشهداء
عند رب الفداء
باملال نوعانية
في أحضان المسماة
في الأراضي الليبية
ولاد ديمارنا المصرية
تولد فيها زمام
ميشرونا بالإيمان
في الاحيان، الملال.
لقد حلت في البلاد
من بعض الأوضاع
خطفواهم مجرمون،
وعيهم منهم
اعتقلهم عدة أطرام
فرضا وقيموا الآلام.
تم اعطَّطنا تصريح كنيسة لشهداء المسيح كئيسة وتهم هاكون مزار هاتسكل سيرة الأيار نفتخر نحن المسلمين الذين صاروا قدسّين يا من حؤلهم المياء اذكروا أمام عرش الإله وصلوا لأجل المسلمين ولا تنسبوا بابانا الأمين تفسير اسمك في أنواه الكل يقولون أعنا أجمعين

(أكسبيوس) 3 تي آجيا ماريا تي بارثينوس
(أكسبيوس) 3 أفا ماركوس بي أبسطولوس
(أكسبيوس) 3 أوني مارتيروس إنتي كيكي إنتخين ليبيا
Clouds of Light: Martyrs of the Faith and the Nation
Published 2015, Archdiocese of Samalut (Minya), Coptic Orthodox Church
Translation, Angie Heo

Praise to the Libya Martyrs (Translation)

In the ranks of the martyrs
We have sons of intercession
Next to the Lord of Salvation
Martyrs of Egypt in Libya

With crowns of light
With heavenly joy
In the embrace of evening
Martyrs of Egypt in Libya

On Libyan lands
They honored Christianity
Children of our Egyptian lands
Martyrs of Egypt in Libya

From where [Egyptian lands] was brought forth a long time ago
St. Mark the Apostle
Our Evangelist of Faith
Martyrs of Egypt in Libya

And they became to him [St. Mark the Apostle] extensions
In the power of martyrdom
And Host of the nations
Martyrs of Egypt in Libya

They traveled and they had hope
In work and virtue and might
And they gained from all that is lawful
Martyrs of Egypt in Libya

And yet it so happened in countries
Oppression and persecution
From some of the wretched
Martyrs of Egypt in Libya

The criminals kidnapped them
They took them covered up
They slaughtered them with joy
Martyrs of Egypt in Libya
They seized them for many days  
So that they would renounce their faith  
And they refused and received pains  
*Martyrs of Egypt in Libya*

Their number is twenty-one  
They went to death in joy  
And on the sand they went walking  
*Martyrs of Egypt in Libya*

And they were kneeling still  
The proud black ones  
And the Lord of glory watching  
*Martyrs of Egypt in Libya*

They cried out with an audible voice  
Before the world and communities  
Uttering the name of Jesus  
*Martyrs of Egypt in Libya*

And upon the coast of the sea  
Their blood was split like a river  
After the torture and killing  
*Martyrs of Egypt in Libya*

At the spectacle of the humble ones  
Hearts and eyes wept  
They slaughtered them with knives  
*Martyrs of Egypt in Libya*

Simple as doves  
Their spirits rose in peace  
After the suffering and pain  
*Martyrs of Egypt in Libya*

They affirmed their faith  
There was no one who feared and no coward  
They endured like the martyrs of old  
*Martyrs of Egypt in Libya*

As the martyrs of salvation did  
St. George and St. Menas  
St. Dimyana and St. Marina  
*Martyrs of Egypt in Libya*
Their everlasting [faith] before oppression
Moved every person
From every place

*Martyrs of Egypt in Libya*

Martyrs of the New Covenant
Their blood became renewed
And their remembrance became a feast day

*Martyrs of Egypt in Libya*

Then the permit was given
By the decision of the agreeable judge
[To build] a church to the Martyrs of Christ

*Martyrs of Egypt in Libya*

Their church will be a shrine
And in the Synaxarium (Book of Holy Lives)
We will record the lives of the Innocent

*Martyrs of Egypt in Libya*

We Christians are proud
Of our Egyptian martyrs
Who became saints

*Martyrs of Egypt in Libya*

You who transformed the waters
By your blood into life
Remember us before the throne of God

*Martyrs of Egypt in Libya*

And pray on behalf of the evil ones
Before God our witness
And don’t forget our sons of faith

*Martyrs of Egypt in Libya*

Your names interpreted
On all mouths
All believers
And all who say
O God, [by the intercession of] the Martyrs of Libya
21 Martyrs of Libya
κα Ιμαρτυρος ντη Λιβια