GLOBAL HUMANITIES

Year 6, Vol. 9, 2021 – ISSN 2199-3939

Editors Frank Jacob and Francesco Mangiapane

Religion and Politics

edizioni
Museo
Pasqualino

direttore Rosario Perricone

GLOBAL HUMANITIES

9

Biannual Journal

ISSN 2199-3939

GLOBAL HUMANITIES

Year 6, Vol. 9, 2021 – ISSN 2199-3939
Editors Frank Jacob and Francesco Mangiapane

Religion and Politics

Editorial by
Frank Jacob and Francesco Mangiapane

Texts by
Arvi Sepp and Anneleen Van Hertbruggen
Michael Holm
Francesco Galofaro and Chiara Petrini
James Okolie-Osemene

edizioni
Museo
Pasqualino

Museo internazionale delle marionette Antonio Pasqualino
Piazza Antonio Pasqualino, 5 – 90133 Palermo PA, Italy
www.edizionimuseopasqualino.it – info@edizionimuseopasqualino.it

Regione siciliana
Assessorato dei beni culturali
e dell'identità siciliana
Dipartimento dei beni culturali
e dell'identità siciliana

ISBN 979-12-80664-16-7
EAN 9772199393003 60009
DOI 10.53123/GH_9

Design and Typesetting
Francesco Mangiapane

Printing House
Fotograph S.r.l., Palermo, Italy

Cover
© Jon Tyson, *In God We Trust, @ Unsplash*

The articles in this volume were peer reviewed.

The publisher is available for any claimants who could not be contacted.

The paper used for printing is made with a fibrous mixture made of 100% recycled fibers and is guaranteed by Blauer Engel certification. Its fibers are bleached with Chlorine Free processes. It is therefore 100% ecological.

Table of Contents

Editorial

Frank Jacob and Francesco Mangiapane

"Fear prophets ... and those
prepared to die for the truth,
for as a rule they make
many others die with them,
often before them,
at times instead of them."
Umberto Eco, The Name of the Rose

"Religions are the cradles of despotism."
Marquis de Sade

Religion has often been abused for political aims, especially by religious organizations that did not care about their respective believers but rather power, influence, and domination. It is therefore not surprising that the history of and the symbolisms related to religion are often political in nature or that religious aspects have played an important role in the historical course of many national and international contexts. The history of expansion, colonial and imperial exploitation, wars, and conflicts is often determined by religious aspects, and the "holy war" is nothing exclusively related to our past. The interrelationship between religion and politics seems to be omnipresent and can be debated in many different ways and according to many different scientific approaches.

The present issue of *Global Humanities*, which is considered an interdisciplinary journal for the study of questions and aspects of human life that determined past centuries and still determine life in the globalized context of the 21st century, will consequently debate the interrelationship between religion and politics. It thereby offers a truly global geographical perspective and spans different chronological contexts as well.

The present issue therefore intends to stimulate further discourses about the political aspects of religion as well as the religious aspects of politics. All in all, it offers some glimpses into a broad field of study but hopes to provide a certain degree of interdisciplinarity that will stimulate further interesting ideas and approaches for new angles and perspectives related to these two important aspects of human life and history. The experience of the current pandemic in particular might strengthen the role of religion in the future again, and therefore it seems to be more than timely to focus on its interrelationship with national and international politics.

https://doi.org/10.53123/GH_9_2

The Language of Political Messianism
Religion in National Socialist Propaganda Poetry

Arvi Sepp
Vrije Universiteit Brussel / University of Antwerp
arvi.sepp@vub.be

Anneleen Van Hertbruggen
Independent scholar
anneleenvh@gmail.com

Abstract. Although National Socialism profoundly distrusted Christianity (and Catholicism in particular), its main thinkers did not think it wise to reject it altogether, precisely because the two thousand year old Christian myths, images, and symbols are an integral part of Western world view. Völkisch ideology rejected Jesus Christ as a historical figure, but instead tried to associate him with the vitalistic concept of Aryan life force. In propaganda literature, such as Heinrich Anacker's, Christ was fitted into the Germanic foundations of National Socialism, which cleared the way for the representation of Adolf Hitler as a secularized Messiah in the Third Reich.

Keywords: National socialism, Political religion, Propaganda, Heinrich Anacker, Adolf Hitler.

1. Introduction

Nazi distrust of Christianity led ideologues such as Eugen Diederichs and Julius Langbehn to reject Jesus Christ as a historical figure and instead try to associate him with the vitalistic concept of Aryan life force. In this way, Christ was fitted into the Germanic and mystical foundations of Nazi ideology, which cleared the way for the representation of Adolf Hitler as the secularized Messiah in Nazi Germany. Under National Socialist rule, the opportunities for literary expression were systematically eliminated by the Nazi regime that attempted to impose an uncompromising unity upon all cultural spheres, seeking to replace the textual subtleties and polysemic creativity with a style of writing that exemplified the coming of a new era. Poetry – often written to be sung and thus to be collectively performed in a liturgical manner – had an

Nazi Party propaganda postcard showing an illustration by Hubert Lanzinger *Der Bannerträger,* ca 1934-36, © US Army Center of Military History.

important ideological role as part of the propaganda apparatus. In this paper, we will focus on the religious structures in Heinrich Anacker's party poetry.

Heinrich Anacker (1901–1971) was a prominent Swiss-German Nazi poet, whose poetry was characterized by its emphatic ideological praise of National Socialism and clearly informed by Christian faith. His propagandistic poems in *Die Fanfare. Gedichte der deutschen Erhebung* (1936) are characterized by a confessional bias and an almost liturgical type of verse. What emerges in these verses is a form of secular chiliastic mysticism, whose ultimate source lies in the poet's devout adoration of Adolf Hitler, who is represented in metaphorical chains ranging from "high priest" and "Redeemer" over "Christ" and "martyr" to "angel" and "God's Son." The theme of his stereotypical Nazi poetry is the eradication of anxiety and personal loss through eschatological absorption into the national-racial collective thanks to the guiding leadership of a political "Messiah." Through the devices of politicized religious language, Nazi poets sought to idealize and sacralize the ideology and policy of the new state, providing them with an aura and mystique that would camouflage the political pragmatism and violence upon which they were based. The political messianism of Nazi totalitarianism in the selected poems will be analyzed by linking the theories of political religious discourse to theories of the language of the "Third Reich."

Although modern historians rarely refrain from describing Hitler as the National Socialist "Messiah," he never actually referred to himself either as a "Messiah," "Savior," or indeed "Redeemer." Rather, it was his admirers and followers who ascribed this role to him (Schreiner 2003: 38). As early as the 1920s, during the years of strife following the First World War, Julius Streicher, later the editor of the *Stürmer*, wrote: "A man has arisen, who will succeed in saving our people – Adolf Hitler. Blessed by God, he will shield the people from the worst" (Streicher, cited in ibid., 29). Otto Bangert also saw Hitler as the "people's savior and hero [...] driven by that unrelenting determination that we call fate" and aware of his "universal historical mission" (Bangert 1930: 144). Even after seizing power, the upper echelons of Nazi officials used religious discourse to legitimize Hitler's leadership. Joseph Goebbels, for example, wrote that Hitler "fulfilled the law that was bestowed on him as a servant of God" (Goebbels 1943: 14). Hermann Göring saw Hitler as "the savior," whom "the Lord God has given to the German people" (Göring 1934: 31). "The people love Adolf Hitler," he asserted, "because we believe, deeply and steadfastly, that he has been sent by God to save Germany" (ibid., 52). In his autobiography published after the Second World War, Gerhard Schumann also admitted that for him and his circle of acquaintances at the time, Hitler was "the God-sent leader and savior of the Reich" (Schumann 1974: 144). Nevertheless, in spite of this adulation, the extent to which the terms "Messiah" and "messianism," both rooted in religion and recognized primarily in the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), are applicable or relevant to a political ideology such as National Socialism raises an important question.[1]

Even though the outcome may have proved very different, the secularization of Europe that began with the European Enlightenment did not signal the end of messianism. The modern age in Europe was characterized by figures and movements that "certainly deserve to be called messianic, although at first glance they cannot or can only to a limited extent be associated with the conventional image of the Messiah" (Hillerbrand 2016: 5). It was only in the early 19th century that "messianism" began to be coined as a term and then transposed to the field of politics and political theory. According to Schreiner,

1 For further historical literature on Nazi messianism and apocalypticism, see e.g. Bärsch (1998), Brokoff (2001), Herbst (2010), Hesemann and Meiser (2004), Redles (2005), and Rissmann (2001).

the term "messianism" can be traced back to the Polish mathematician and philosopher Joseph Marie Höené Wronski (1776–1853), who lived in Paris. Wronski used messianism as "a term for a system of innovative, avant-garde ideas and expectations from which, if these were realized and fulfilled, an ideal social and political order could emerge" (Schreiner 2003: 7). This led to the inclusion of the term "messiah" in the prevailing political vocabulary "to express hopes and expectations for the arrival of a political savior and a redeemer." It is precisely this expression of "hope for a savior" that underlines the constitutive conditions for messianic movements (ibid.). The *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* describes three conditions that have proved to be contributing factors in the emergence of messianic movements – at least politically:

1. The emergence of a crisis situation that serves as a catalyst or starting point and which is perceived by members of a particular society as a threat to its social, political, ethical, and religious survival;
2. The emergence of a charismatic leader who is able to consolidate an awareness of this crisis and demonstrate solidarity with the fate of the community;
3. An experience of a visionary or vocational calling as well as a mission to assemble and save – often with an analogy to biblical prophets or savior figures such as Moses and especially to the messianic mission of Jesus, whose work, suffering, and resurrection are then transferred or transposed to the "present-day Messiah." (Kasper 1998: 164)

As in Max Weber's theory of charismatic rule, a crisis situation – whether political, social, ethical, and/or religious – seems to be a fundamental condition for the emergence of a messianic figure of authority. The crisis situation experienced during the 1920s in post-war Germany also seems to fulfill this social condition, as set out above. According to Schreiner, the most important reasons for "the impatient waiting for a charismatic bearer of hope" were "the defeat in [the] war, the collapse of the Kaiserreich, Imperial Germany, and last but not least, the doubts over the ability of parliamentary democracy to be able to act" (Schreiner 2003: 26). This third factor, however, also stipulates that the charismatic figure of power should fulfill a further condition. To be perceived as a Messiah figure, this long-awaited leader should feel a sense of calling, a vocation, to this "messianic mission." According to Hans J. Hillerbrand, this is why messianism always includes a message that promises "salvation from the present evil" (2016: 9). "Salvation" is not necessarily to be interpreted as the freeing from sin, but also as freedom "from the hardships of daily life," namely "from earthly suffering, disease and famine, envy, war and violence" (ibid., 8). Whether these statements were taken seriously is a matter of debate, but Hitler had already presented himself several times as a new Christ figure. Volker Ullrich, for example, asserts that one reason for this was Hitler's refusal to subject the NSDAP's 25-point program to revision, on the grounds that "[t]he New Testament is also full of contradictions, but in no way did this hinder the spread of Christianity" (Ullrich 2013: 232). Alfred Läpple also pointed out that Hitler increasingly attributed the word "Providence" to himself: "Hitler always referred to "Providence" or to the "Almighty" when there was an assassination attempt on him that had failed or when there had been a particularly bloody victory" (Läpple 1980: 28). Also in *Mein Kampf*, he seems to have seen or projected himself as both "the instrument and the executor of divine providence" (ibid.): "I believe that in resisting the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord and taking action, in the spirit of the Almighty Creator" (Hitler 1943: 70).

Ullrich also draws on Max Weber's charismatic theory of domination to emphasize the social relationship between the charismatic leader figure and the movement. To be effective, according to Weber, "the charismatic politician

needs a community of followers who are convinced of his 'extraordinary' abilities, which enable him to believe firmly in his calling" (Ullrich 2013: 148). However, it was not only a question of someone like Hitler believing in himself as a leader, or indeed as a savior or messiah; it was also important, an essential ingredient even, that the movement recognized him as such. The quotes from Streicher, Goebbels and Göring above illustrate the extent to which Hitler was seen, or at least was portrayed, as the "Savior of the Nation" by Nazi officials. Ordinary people seem to have believed in Hitler's mission as well. Victor Klemperer, for example, reports how he witnessed an admission or a profession of faith in Hitler three times by three different people: "I believe in him" (Klemperer 1970: 131), "I believe in Hitler" (ibid., 134), and "I believe in the Führer" (ibid., 135). It was precisely this professed "faith" in the "Führer" that produced countless poems of praise for him as the "Führer," of which the poem by Heinrich Anacker, which will later be subjected to literary analysis, is considered exemplary. Hans Jörg Schmidt describes Hitler's emergence as *the chosen one* as a topical reference point for occasional lyricists, a phenomenon that was particularly widespread in celebratory or "occasional" Nazi poetry, as a form of adoration (Schmidt 2007: 102–103). In this context, in *Lingua Tertii Imperii*, Klemperer also emphasizes the religious rhetoric of Nazi discourse: "Nazism was accepted by millions as gospel because it appropriated the language of the gospel" (Klemperer 1970: 117).

2. Political Messianism

In his collection of poems *Die Fanfare. Gedichte der deutschen Erhebung* (1936) ("The Fanfare: Poems on the Rise of Germany"),[2] Heinrich Anacker mentions Hitler's name in twenty-three different poems and ten times in combination with his first name Adolf. He uses the title "Führer" in twenty-two poems, and the National Socialist "Heil" formula appears twice, once in combination with his name ("Heil Hitler": HA107, v.14), and once in combination with his denomination "der Führer" ("Heil dem Führer": HA39, v.13). In Anacker's anthology, which is considered exemplary of this type of affirmative, declarative Nazi poetry, Hitler appears not only as a purely political leader, the "Führer," but almost as a figure sent by God to be the savior of the fatherland and a redeemer of the people. The attribution of redemptive qualities to the political "Führer" led to a quasi-messianic portrayal of the National Socialist "Führer," who transcends the purely human dimension and thus appears as a pseudo-deity.

Although the title of the poem "Adolf Hitler als Mensch" ("Adolf Hitler as a Human Being") (HA108), which is presented as an introductory poem, suggests otherwise, the content of Anacker's poem refers precisely to this superhuman quality of the "Führer."

Adolf Hitler as a Human Being (HA108)
This is how the world sees him: dressed in a suit of metal armour,
His hand on his sharpened sword –
But we know him in his heart to be kind
Beneath his cloak of hard steel.

As children proclaim it with radiant happiness
That meet with him somewhere,
Animals with their mute look
Bless his calm benevolence.

For the deepest root of all his actions
Is an all-embracing love –
He is the last and the poorest among us
As our Comrade Leader-in-Arms, he remains.

This is how the world sees him: dressed in a suit of metal armour,
His hand on his sharpened sword –
But we know him in his heart to be kind
Beneath his cloak of hard steel!

The fact that Hitler is praised in this poem for his love for the people, the fatherland, and his mission or policy of

2 All references to poems from *Die Fanfare* will be abbreviated as 'HA' followed by the corresponding page number and verse line.

peace, but meanwhile simultaneously appearing as the greatest warlord of all time, presents a strange paradox for Walter Knoche (1969: 21). This double-sided portrait of the "Führer" is further emphasized by the notable juxtaposition of "we" and "they." In the first and last verses in particular, Anacker clearly distinguishes between the impression he makes, with a striking use of the opening word, the "world" (v.1, 13) to describe Adolf Hitler, and the contrast that is drawn with the "we" (v.3, 15) that follows. The "Welt" (World) primarily represents and throws light on only an outer perception of his appearance, showing him as a strong, vigorous person ready to fight. With his "sharpened sword" (v.2, 14) and dressed in armor made of "metal" (v.1, 13), Anacker describes Hitler as a medieval knight rather than a modern soldier. However, through the collective and collectivizing "we," we can see through this outward appearance. Beneath his "cloak of steely hardness" (v.4, 16), there is apparently a "kind heart" (v.3, 15), hidden from view, which only "we" (v.3, 15) know about. In the following sections, the meaning of this collectivizing "we," with which "the German people" – i.e., the Aryan successors, perhaps even the National Socialist "believers" are associated – throws further light on the rise and success of Hitler as both a charismatic leader and the long-awaited savior of the fatherland. In the second verse, the introduction of "children" (v.5) and "animals" (v.7) serve to "proclaim" and announce his alleged good-heartedness (v.5).

As a literary symbol, the child generally represents innocence and in this sense is able to speak the truth without any prejudice (see "Kind" in Butzer and Jacob 2008: 180). After the children "meet with him" (v.6), they are filled with a "radiant happiness" (v.5) as they spontaneously announce or "proclaim" (v.5) "it" (v.5), i.e., Hitler's "kind heart." Animals also "bless" (v.8) the work of Hitler,[3] not with words but with their "dumb [or mute] look" (v.7). This unusual connection or even wordless communication with children and animals serves to underline the extraordinary – even supernatural – qualities of the "Führer," which will be described later in relation to the messianic portrayal of the "Führer" as a Messiah. The reason – described as the "root" (v.9) – of Hitler's goodness is finally exposed in the third verse. His motivating force is projected as "his all-embracing love" (v.10), literally his "people-embracing love." Everything Hitler does, he does out of his evident love for the people. In doing so, he is not above the people but among the people. This love also appears to be boundless and unconditional, as in the description "left to the last and is the poorest of us / as our fellow-comrade leader" ("Kam'rad") (v.11–12). Both the second verse as well as the last two verses spontaneously evoke associations with the life of Jesus Christ, as revealed in Christian scripture. Hitler's positive relationship with children, for example, presented in the second verse, reminds us of Jesus's invitation to let the little children come to Him.[4] In the third verse, Anacker implies that Hitler, like Jesus, did not feel himself to be above the people, but simply as standing in their midst and even actively seeking contact with those on the fringes of society. Luke and Matthew repeatedly depict Jesus as a friend of the poor, publicans, tax collectors, the sick, etc.,[5] while Anacker describes the "Führer" briefly and concisely as the "Kam'rad," comrade (v.12), who is the "last and the poorest of us" (v.11). Finally, the last verse literally echoes the first verse, as if to emphasize

3 Although Knoche notes that the adjective "mute" is already correctly used in connection with the "animals," it seems difficult for him to imagine that the animals actually "blessed" Hitler's work (see Knoche 1969: 22). But it seems inappropriate – as with any interpretation of poetry – to question the text's sense of reality in terms of content. With the animal as a literary symbol, Anacker is simply enhancing the representation of the "Führer" by having him apparently communicate with the voiceless animals.

4 See Mt. 19:13–15; Mk. 10:13–16; Lk. 18:15–17.

5 See Lk. 7:34, 14:13; Mt. 11:5, 19.

both the outer strength as well as the inner goodness of the "Führer."

Despite these implicit and explicit references to the life of Christ, as well as the poet's attribution of superhuman qualities to the "Führer," Anacker does not represent the "Führer" as merely "human." The following analysis of Anacker's anthology *Die Fanfare* will focus more distinctly on the allegedly superhuman characteristics of Hitler – or at least his portrayal as superhuman – by highlighting several characteristics of the figure of the (political) Messiah.

Three aspects or viewpoints are essential when considering messianic individuals and movements, namely that of the messenger, the message, and the movement that he engenders or which carries him: "An ambassador proclaims a message that is considered 'new,' and around which a movement is formed" (Hillerbrand 2016: 2). It is precisely these three factors that play a central role in the messianic stylization of the "Führer" in propaganda poetry. It is for this reason that Hans Otto Seitschek distinguishes three phases in messianic movements, the first two of which are also addressed in Anacker's poetry: firstly, the waiting and hoping for the Messiah, who comes into the world to bring salvation; secondly, the unconditional following the Messiah receives when he appears and when, as it were, he is in the world; and thirdly, the expectation of the return of the Messiah when he is taken from the world for a certain period (Seitschek 2005: 31–32).

The first phase – waiting and hoping – is related directly to the social precondition of a messianic movement, namely the crisis at the time. More precisely, propaganda authors such as Anacker describe the period between the defeat of the First World War and the success of National Socialism in the 1930s as a time of destruction, hopelessness, and bondage. The analysis of his poetry that follows also demonstrates how Anacker links this period of crisis in his poetry with a longing for a strong, quasi-divine leader and, beyond that, with a message of salvation that promises hope.

With references to unstinting loyalty, the blind obedience of the people, and the Hitler salute, Anacker goes on to introduce the second messianic phase: the unconditional acceptation by the movement of Adolf Hitler and his accession to the figure of the Messiah. This also draws a parallel with Max Weber's theory of charisma. Here, not only does the charismatic leader claim himself as the highest authority, but his followers also accept absolute obedience as their duty (Lepsius 2006: 175). Nonetheless, Anacker did not only write about the people's subservience to their leader; he also addressed an alleged belief in the divine power of the "Führer," an aspect which is of primary importance in a religious (and political) personality cult. A deity is substantiated "firstly by the attribution to him on the part of the believers, secondly by his supposed superhuman activity, and thirdly by the belief in his omnipresence" (Schmidt 2007: 99). Here, the analysis focuses on the one hand on the religious connotations that are denotated to a leader – such as "savior" and "redeemer" – and on the other on descriptions of what are believed to be his superhuman qualities.

Since the third phase in Messianism, in the National Socialist sense, takes place only after the disappearance of the Messiah – that is, after the collapse of National Socialism – it should come as no surprise that this phase was not actually addressed in the poetry written during the early years of the Nazi regime. Nonetheless, in stylizing the "Führer," propaganda authors were certainly inspired by the life of the Christian Messiah. Propaganda authors such as Anacker and Otto Bangert explicitly compared Adolf Hitler with Jesus Christ several times in their poetry. As early as the late 1920s, Bangert, for example, wrote:

> It is only out of this apocalyptic mood that the appearance of Hitler can really be grasped; and it is completely irrational and almost mystical in its effect. His unique power lies in the overwhelming certainty of his mission and his power, which is sure to take place during a declining age, just as Jesus once walked over the dying ancient world. So too Hitler's followers

> are not self-interested egoists, like the spiritualized heaps of the old parties, but instead are believers, disciples and idealists, because an ever-lasting Germany is at stake. (1930: 147)

Anacker was also no stranger to drawing parallels in his poetry with the life and work of Christ. As some of the features of the life of Jesus's life – e.g., his teachings and his suffering – are considered messianic in the New Testament but are not associated with the image of the Messiah in the Old Testament, we will also examine symbolic language drawn from the Christian tradition as well as from the biblical world of images.

3. Salvation in Crisis

The first phase of the messianic process, namely the waiting and hoping for a messiah figure, is used as a theme in four of Anacker's poems. Three of these poems – "Dem Führer" ("To the Führer") (HA11/12), "Durchhalten, zum Endkampf bereit" ("Persevere and Prepare for the Final Battle!") (HA38), and "Wir warten!" ("We are Waiting!") (HA50) – describe a period of several years of waiting, while "Am Abend des 5. März" ("On the Evening of March 5") (HA76) represents a period of only several hours' waiting. This last poem belongs to the fourth theme of "The Rise of Germany" that Anacker explored in his anthology. All thirty-four poems on this theme deal to a greater or lesser extent with the conditions in which power was seized in the Germany of 1933. In "Am Abend des 5. März," Anacker describes the evening of the federal elections on March 5, 1933, only six days after the Reichstag fire. Until after the end of the Second World War, these were the last elections in which more than one party took part. It was at this election that the National Socialists (NSDAP) and the Conservatives (DNVP) won by a narrow majority, after which the National Socialist dictatorship finally began. In this poem, Anacker describes how "The feverish waiting begins / For the numbers that mean victory" (HA76, v.2–3). This period of waiting is only short, however, because in the last verse, a rallying cry sounds:

> And 'ere the morning dawns
> Hurry around from country to country,
> That Germany, hammered awake,
> Is committed to the work of Adolf Hitler! (HA76, v.13–16)

Although the NSDAP emerged as the victor at the elections in 1933, the final verse of the poem already bears witness to the personality cult around Adolf Hitler. "Germany" (HA76, v.15) did not vote for the NSDAP, it reminds us, but "declared its support for the work of Adolf Hitler!" (HA76, v.16). By combining the verb "sich bekennen" (to acknowledge, recognize in oneself, profess) and the prepositional object "zum Werk Adolf Hitlers" (the work of Adolf Hitler), Anacker uses a predicative strategy that emphasizes the people's devotion to the "Führer." The use of the reflexive verb "to profess" also implies more than just "electing a party"; it also means "to bear witness to one's faith." This reflexive form of the verb "to profess" is used here as elsewhere to declare support openly for a particular religion, e.g., in the phrase "to profess one's faith, i.e., Christianity. In this sense, the fact that Germany, according to Anacker, has professed its faith in the work of Hitler clearly invokes the sense of a religious confession. This feeling is reinforced by the use of a second predicative strategy in the noun "Werk" ("Work") (HA76, v.16). Germany has not simply professed its faith in the principles, ideology, and convictions of Hitler's party manifesto but rather in his "work" on Earth. In Otto Bangert's poem "Adolf Hitler," which dates from 1926, he talks of his "holy work," which prompts an association with the works of God or indeed with the works of mercy, as described in the Gospel of Saint Matthew (Mt. 25:34–46).

While Anacker's "Am Abend des 5. März" was written only a few hours before the election results were announced, three of his other poems allude to a much longer and more difficult period of waiting. In the opening poem of the anthol-

ogy, "Dem Führer" ("To the Führer") (HA11/12), the length of the period of waiting is stated very precisely:

> We fought bitterly for twelve years;
> We learned to wait in silence... (HA11/12, v.1–2)

As the date of the constitution – January 31, 1933 – was added to the poem, along with the date of the first edition of the anthology (1933), we can deduce that the period of waiting began in 1921, when Hitler was first elected party leader of the NSDAP. This "wait" (HA11/12, v.2) was, according to the first verse, marked by a period of struggle and bitterness. The anaphoric "we" at the beginning of the verse draws attention to the fact that it was the people who were waiting for a savior or redeemer. With the parallel construction at the end of the poem, the circle closes, and the devotion to Hitler becomes apparent:

> We swear it to you this day:
> Adolf Hitler, we remain loyal to you! (HA11/12, v.29–30)

With the word "Sehnsucht" (longing, yearning) (HA11/12, v.21), a term which also seems to have met with Hitler's approval, Anacker increases the emotional attachment of the people: "The longing of the German people, you have made it come true" (HA11/12, v.21). The use of substantives such as "Werk" (HA76, v.16) and "Sehnsucht" (HA11/12, v.21), in connection with the name of the "Führer," enables them to be presented as extremely positive and even quasi-religious qualities attributed to Hitler.

The last two poems do not allude to a precise period of waiting. Rather, a reference is made to a period of "feverish waiting" (HA76, v.2), while in "Durchhalten, zum Endkampf bereit!" ("Persevere and Prepare for the Final Battle!") (HA38), the waiting is described as a difficult and nerve-racking period:

> I know, comrades, how hard it is,
> This waiting, this idle waiting;
> I know how the heart devours,
> This waiting, this waiting, this waiting ... (HA38, v.1–4)

The lyrical I here addresses the "comrades" (HA38, v.1) and seems to share their feelings of frustration. Their waiting seems to be pointless, "tatlos" (HA38, v.2). The gemination of "Dies Warten" (HA38, v.4) in the fourth verse also underlines the passivity and the frustration that arises from waiting. In the second verse, this is accentuated: the comrades are not only waiting "idly" but are also "full of burning impatience" (HA38, v.8). The lyrical I, however, asks them three times to obey "the Führer's commandment" (HA38, v.6, 13, 20). Using quotation marks, Anacker employs a strategy of perspective and allows the "Führer" to repeat his "commandment" himself: "Persevere and prepare for the final battle!" (HA38, v.7, 14, 21).

In "Wir warten!" ("We are Waiting!") (HA50), the comrades are not asked to follow the commandment of the "Führer" while they are waiting but to wait for a precise "sign" or "signal" (HA50, v.1) from the "Führer":

> We all wait for the signal!
> We wait, we wait. (HA50, v.1–2)

Here, too, the anaphoric use of the personal pronoun "we" catches the attention; in the second verse, the gemination of the phrase "we wait" again emphasizes a passivity, the indication of which is a "sign" being awaited, which is explained further in the second verse:

> We await our Führer's call!
> We wait, we wait,
> Like horses, faithful to their task
> With impatiently beating hooves
> On clinking stones, pawing the ground. (HA50, v.6–10)

With this parallel construction, the frustration of waiting is accentuated a second time. Just as in the maxim "Persevere and Prepare for the Final Battle!" (HA38), the word "impatient" (HA50, v.9) illustrates this eager waiting. However, this impatience is not directly related

to those in this poem who are waiting but is illustrated in the allegory of the horse, waiting "with impatiently beating hooves" (HA50, v.9), to complete its task.

Adolf Hitler was expected not only to lead the people out of the political crisis that the Weimar Republic was experiencing but also to embody a symbol of freedom and so assume the role of savior and liberator after the long period of struggle and suffering. The rise of the NSDAP – during the period from the end of the First World War until the Nazi party came to power in 1933 – was referred to in Nazi rhetoric as the "period of strife," the "Kampfzeit," which, from a Nazi perspective, was characterized as a period of terror and oppression (Schmitz-Berning 2000: 347). In his poems, Anacker also describes the recent past, of what was then a united Germany, as a difficult and unfortunate period. In his opening poem, Anacker considered the "Kampfzeit" to have begun in 1921, when Hitler was elected party leader of the NSDAP. The first verse of the opening poem "Dem Führer!" makes reference to this period in no uncertain terms: "We fought bitterly for twelve years" (HA11/12, v.1), where the "path" of events is described as "a single sacrificial course" (HA11/12, v.3). In the poem "Preußens Erhebung" ("The Rise of Prussia") (HA67/68), Anacker explores the theme of "bondage" or "servitude" (HA67/68, v.26) with explicit reference to "the bloody chains / The devilish pact of Versailles" (HA67/68, v.27–28). In numerous poems, Anacker adopts the literary symbol of "chains" to symbolize bondage and oppression,[6] often alluding to a future of freedom and liberation. In "Die Fahnen verboten" ("The Forbidden Flags") (HA14), he uses the chain symbol to call for protest, with: "Break the chains!" (HA14, v.21). In "Gegen Versailles!" ("Against Versailles!") (HA18), freedom is portrayed as a form of encouragement or hope, with: "We have carried the yoke for fourteen years – / Yet our chains are still to be shed…" (HA18, v.17–18).

The end of this period of bondage and the prophecy of freedom is invariably understood in connection with the rise of the NSDAP in general and the "Führer" in particular. Thus Anacker writes in "The Rise of Prussia," "Only with swastikas can salvation come near" (HA67/68, v.29), seeing in the symbol of the swastika the hope of salvation. The last verse of this poem finally explains very explicitly that "with Hitler" (HA67/68, v.34), there is hope in a "Germany of freedom and honor" (HA67/68, v.35):

> The flag is waving that shows us the way;
> From the ground the armies already grow.
> The long gagged eagle circles –
> With Hitler in the old Prussian spirit
> For a Germany of freedom and honor!
> (HA67/68, v.31–35)

By explicitly associating Hitler with an idea of freedom in his poems, Anacker clearly portrays him as the long-awaited savior of the fatherland; hence, the last verse of "Wir alle tragen im Herzen dein Bild" ("We All Carry your Image in our Hearts") (HA107), declares: "Heil Hitler, with the Führer will come freedom and bread!" (HA107, v.14). The poem "München grüßt Adolf Hitler" ("Munich Greets Adolf Hitler") (HA85) repeats this formula and also explicitly designates Hitler as the savior of the fatherland: "Adolf Hitler, die Führer zu Freiheit und Brot!" (Adolf Hitler, the savior of the fatherland!) (HA85, v.17–18). Earlier, in the second poem in the anthology, "Die Fahnen verboten" ("The Forbidden Flags") (HA14), Anacker explicitly proclaims the "Führer" to be the savior. In the first verse, Anacker describes the Weimar period as a communist and Jewish regime: "The hatred of the Reds rules, / envy of the Jews rules" (HA14, v.3–4). In the following verses, a hope for a better future can already be foreseen when Germany "rises from shame and ruins" (HA14, v.19) as "The holy Third Reich" (HA14,

6 See "Kette" ("Chain") in Butzer and Jacob 2008: 180.

v.20). In the last verse, Hitler is at last named as the savior of the fatherland:

> Only Hitler will save us!
> Only Hitler will set us free! (HA14, v.23–24)

The anaphoric use of "Only Hitler" (HA14, v.23–24) emphasizes that "only" the "Führer" can bring salvation and freedom to the people and the fatherland. The sacralization of the "Führer" figure as savior is further enhanced by the fact that the allusion to "freedom" (HA14, v.8) is presented in the second verse as a "salvation" (HA14, v.8). Moreover, the people do not appear to have the founding of a new German Reich in mind, but rather want to fight "for Germany's resurrection" (HA14, v.12) by Hitler's side. Germany would then resurrect under the leadership of the new Messiah as "the holy Third Reich" (HA14, v.20).

The alleged trust in the "Führer," as the savior of the people and founder of the new German Reich, underlies the numerous expressions of loyalty to the "Führer" in Anacker's poems, in which the people are also implicated as its successors. The motif of loyalty to the "Führer" is reflected both in oaths of loyalty and in a description of the physical and sentimental expressions of this loyalty. Thus, the opening poem "Dem Führer!" ("To the Führer!") (HA11/12) ends with an oath:

> We swear it to you this day:
> Adolf Hitler, we remain loyal to you! (HA11/12, v.29–30)

In "Potsdam I" (HA93), Anacker combines this literal oath of allegiance with a description of the raising of the hand, which is understood as a physical representation of loyalty to the "Führer":

> There he twitches hot through every German heart –
> Up goes the hand that takes the oath of allegiance:
> "Sunward with Hindenburg and Hitler,
> In Potsdam's timeless young heroic spirit!" (HA93, v.9–12)

Raising the hand or arm in the "German salute" or "Hitler salute" had already appeared during the 1920s before it was later introduced in Nazi Germany as an official greeting ritual, mostly in combination with the words "Heil Hitler." Indeed, not raising one's hand could arouse suspicion of being hostile to the NSDAP and its leader.[7] In his biography of Adolf Hitler, however, Volker Ullrich claims that the use of this greeting was by no means dictated by a mere compulsion to participate but was often an expression of inner conviction (Ullrich 2013: 572). Even the literal "Heil Hitler" greeting could be interpreted in a certain sense as embodying an oath of allegiance, as the use of alternative greetings was regarded as a deviation and a provocation.[8] Anacker introduces these forms of greeting in various poems: "Wir alle tragen im Herzen dein Bild" ("We All Carry your Image in our Hearts") (HA107), for example, ends with "Heil Hitler, the Führer to freedom and bread!" (HA107, v.14). In "Kameraden, Tritt gefaßt!" ("As comrades, step firmly!") (HA39), Hitler is not mentioned by name, but the "Heil" formula is closely combined with his title of "Führer":

> Comrades, raise your hands!
> Let our voices roar like a thunderous choir:
> Hail to the Führer! Hail to the flags! (HA39, v.11–13)

Not only is the literal salvation formula connected with the physical expression of loyalty of the Hitler salute, the meaning of the oath of allegiance is also intensified with a hyperbole in "thunder [...] like a thunderous choir" (HA39, v.12). The fact that the oath of allegiance became a quasi-religious act is illustrated in the poem "Aufsteigen, du Jahr der deutschen Schicksalswende!" ("Arise, You the Year in which Germany's Fate shall Change!") (HA24), with: "We raise our hands to the

7 See "Deutscher Gruss" ("German Greeting") in Schmitz-Berning 2000: 141–142.
8 See "Heil Hitler" in ibid., 301.

holy oath" (HA24, v.4). By using the adjective "holy," Anacker characterizes the oath of allegiance by likening it to something superhuman.

In "Durchs Brandenburger Tor!" ("Through the Brandenburg Gate!") (HA69), the "oath" (HA69, v.12) is also accompanied by a salute, raising the hand. Furthermore, Anacker adds quotation marks here – as he did in "Potsdam I" (HA93) – as a way of substantiating the loyalty of the people to the "Führer" as an allegedly verbatim quote:

> Again, call and song swell to the elemental choir:
> To the guide we raise our hand in hot luck.
> Oh, how it burns eye to eye, transfigured by holy light!
> And every look is like an oath: "We stand in loyalty and duty!
> We know only one vow and one will:
> We follow you, Adolf Hitler, until Germany is free and great!" (HA69, v.9–14)

With a hyperbole, Anacker emphasizes that the people "know only one vow and one will" (HA69, v.13) and that "Adolf Hitler" will be "followed" "until Germany is free and great" (HA69, v.14) again. The "Führer" is thus again explicitly connected with the idea of freedom and, in this sense, implicitly characterized as the savior of the people. This oath of allegiance – besides the raising of the hand – is also emphasized by mentioning other physical signs. Not only can loyalty to the "Führer" be recognized in words, but it can also be perceived in a "look" (HA69, v.12). Loyalty to the leader is therefore not only presented in precise terms, but it also finds expression in sentimental formulations. As Anacker writes in "Heraus zu neuem Kampf" ("Off to a New Struggle") (HA31), "Der Führer kann auf uns verlassen" ("The Führer can count on us") (HA31, v.13), and in "Am Abend des 5. März" ("On the Evening of March 5") (HA76), a religious feeling is awakened with the expression "sich bekennen zu" (to confess, profess). The "Führer" is not only followed for rational reasons, but he also occupies a special place "in the heart" (HA107, v.1) of his followers, as is also expressed in the poem "Wir alle tragen im Herzen dein Bild" ("We All Carry your Image in our Hearts") (HA107). In this poem, emphasis is especially placed on the unconditional nature of discipleship, as demonstrated in "We followed you blindly and with a stormy urge" (HA107, v.11). The fact that "dir" (you) (HA107, v.11) undoubtedly refers to the "Führer" is explained again in the last verse of this poem in "Heil Hitler" (HA107, v.14). In "Treue!" (HA27), the symbol of the heart appears again as a technique to intensify the meaning:

> The heart always beats the same for
> The Führer, for the Reich. (HA27, v.7–8)

Since the Middle Ages, the heart has become more and more a symbol of love, both in the profane and religious sense, in that it has been considered to represent the connection, the covenant, through which man or man and the divine are tied.[9]

4. The Divine Nature of the "Führer"

Besides Anacker's explicit portrayal of Hitler as the "savior" or "liberator" of the people, which appears several times in his poems, the "Führer" also seems to possess superhuman, even possibly God-like qualities. The children and the animals in the poem "Adolf Hitler als Mensch" ("Adolf Hitler as a Human Being") (HA108), which is the opening poem of the anthology, symbolize, even typify, the belief in the superhuman work of the "Führer." Since time immemorial, children and animals have been considered "irreplaceable in their unbiased judgment" and have been "regarded as indicators of supernatural forces in their behavior (Schmidt 2007: 109).

> As children proclaim it with radiant happiness
> That meet with him somewhere,

9 See "Herz" ("Heart") in Butzer and Jacob 2008: 153.

Animals with their mute look
Bless his calm benevolence. (HA108, v.5–8)

The fact that the "calm benevolence" (HA108, v.8) of the leader is "proclaimed" by the children and even "bless[ed]" by the animals once again explicitly highlights the religious or superhuman qualities of the "Führer."

Highlighted to special effect, Schmidt has also interpreted the voice of the "Führer" as part of his superhuman work (2007: 109). Not only does Hitler convey his ideological conviction in an appropriate and rational manner, he suggests, but his message is also conveyed in "Und ihr habt doch gesiegt!" (HA86) as a "wonderful word" (HA86, v.1), whereby the alliteration of the letter 'W' accentuates the essence of wonder and wonderful and places it in the foreground. With this focus on his voice, Anacker also addresses the belief in the omnipresence of the "Führer" as an essential messianic characteristic. As in the opening poem "Dem Führer" ("To the Führer") (HA11/12), Anacker describes how Hitler's "voice" "sounds in the eternal choir" (HA11/12, v.9). By presenting the voice in "Adolf Hitler im Rundfunk" ("Adolf Hitler on the Radio") (HA83) as "penetrating everywhere" (HA83, v.3) and as an "invocation" (HA83, v.4), Anacker uses a predicative strategy to emphasize the omnipresence and superhuman aspect of his voice.

Adolf Hitler on the Radio (HA83)
Once we had to travel far through the Gaue,
To hear the Führer only once.
Now his voice penetrates everywhere,
Stirring in hot conjuring.

He speaks of Germany, of Germany alone,
Of targets that seemed distant;
He admonishes us to complete his work
In Frederick's service.

Millions hear him, serious and silent
In their deeper listening –
Rushing through the people who seek freedom,
Like the flow of a holy spring!

The first verse pinpoints the description of the alleged omnipresence of the voice of the "Führer." Whereas in the past – expressed in "Once" (HA83, v.1, line 1) – the people had to make a special effort to hear the "Führer" and his voice, "Now" (HA83, v.1, line 3), by contrast, his voice penetrates everywhere. In the second verse, the three aspects of National Socialism as a messianic movement come together. Thus, it is not only the notion of the messenger, whose voice expresses quasi-magical qualities with words such as "stirring" and "invoking" (HA83, v.4), but also the message and the idea of movement that are stressed. Here, the "Führer" speaks "of Germany alone" (HA83, l.5), where the meaning and importance of collective identity in the image of "Germany" are accentuated by means of repetition. Furthermore, the "Führer" calls his followers to be "the completion of the work" (HA83, l.7), which implies and indeed requires their active participation in its foundation, as we are reminded in the poem "Die Fahnen verboten" (HA14), which was also evoked by National Socialism in its concept of "resurrection." The third verse intensifies the omnipresence of the voice by using a hyperbole to accentuate the effect intended: that it is not only the people in the immediate vicinity who hear it but "millions" (HA83, v.9). In "Steig' auf, du Jahr der deutschen Schicksalswende!" ("Rise, You Year of the German Turn of Fate!") (HA24), Anacker uses a similar intensifying strategy by using a hyperbole in his claim that the entire "world listens to our Führer's words" (HA24, v.14). The voice here also seems to create a certain effect on the listeners, as they seem to be "more deeply moved" (HA83, v.10) by his message. As seen in the first verse, the voice in the last line is also assigned quasi-supernatural properties when represented as "Rushing [...] like the flow of a holy spring" (HA83, v.12).

In "Sieg der Treue" ("Victory of Loyalty") (HA89), Anacker describes Hitler's message neither as "wonderful" nor as a fresh breeze, but instead makes an explicit comparison with a "flash of lightning," literally, an "ignited beam of weather" (HA89, v.4):

Thirteen years ago, in this very hall,
The great Genesis began:
Here for the first time the Führer threw
Like a flash of lightning
His iron ideas to the people. (HA89, v.3–5)

In many cultures, lightning (and thunder) is understood as a symbol of the presence and power of a god. Thus, in ancient mythology, a flash of lightning is attributed to the god or "father" of the gods, Zeus or Jupiter.[10] In Luke's Gospel, the return of Jesus Christ is also associated with lightning: "For as the lightning, flashing from one part of heaven, lights up the other, so it shall be with the Son of Man when his Day comes" (Lk. 17:24). In this poem, Hitler is presented as having exposed or "thrown" his ideas or "thesis" to the people "thirteen years ago" (HA89, v.1) in the same way as Zeus: in a flash of lightning.

5. The "Führer" as Savior and Redeemer

The end of the period of struggle of the 1920s, and with it the prophecy of freedom, is invariably connected with the rise of the NSDAP in general and with the "Führer" in particular. As indicated earlier, in the poem "Preußens Erhebung" ("The Rise of Prussia") (HA67/68), Anacker uses the swastika as a symbol of hope for salvation or indeed as a symbol of salvation itself. In a majority of the poems, however, the "Führer" himself functions as a symbol of hope through the poet's depiction of him as a savior or liberator. The verb "to redeem," placed in connection with the word "Führer," also confers a quasi-messianic aura to the poem in "flags [...] adorned with Pentecostal wreathes" (HA115):

Now finally after a time of darkness, we can
Rejoice in the future again,
And the flags, dedicated to the dead,
Redeemed by the Führer, liberated by the Führer,
Are adorned with Pentecostal wreathes. (HA115, v.11–15)

Besides the verb "liberate," Anacker also makes use of the highly religious connotation of the verb "redeem" and relates this to the symbol of the flag. The annual consecration of national flags, with Hitler touching the so-called "bloody flag," interpreted as a quasi-religious act in the form of a "consecration" of the flags, was examined in greater detail by Herybert Menzel in his analysis of "people" in the anthology. In "Die erwachte Nation" ("The Awakened Nation") (HA79), Anacker takes up the verb "redeem" again, although in this poem it remains unclear what exactly was intended by "the Führer's act of redemption" (HA79, v.10). Even though Anacker did not use the word "redeemer" as a noun in his poetry, Knoche believes that the word "redeemer" is implied or at least indirectly referred to, without being specifically named. In his opinion, the adjective "redeemed" (or "saved") retains an undeniably religious connotation (Knoche 1969: 20–21).

The references to salvation and "Heil" ("Hail") that Anacker employs in poems such as "Wir alle tragen im Herzen dein Bild" ("We All Carry your Image in our Hearts") (HA107) and "Kameraden, Tritt gefaßt" ("Comrades, Tread Firmly!") (HA39) can also be characterized as messianic. However, while the first association that the word "salvation" triggers, in the minds of most Germans today, is the so-called German salute, the notion of salvation did not make its entry into German history only through the Nazis. Rather, it underwent a profound transformation. Sabine Behrenbeck, in her contribution to the concept of "salvation" in the German collective memory, describes how the NSDAP did not reinvent this greeting – as with many other aspects in its propaganda. Rather, the greeting had been used for much longer in sports associations (like the 'Gut Heil' in the Turner Movement of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn) and as a toast among students. Many national or patriotic movements

10 See "Gewitter/Blitz und Donner" ("Thunderstorm/Lightning and Thunder") in Butzer and Jacob 2008: 129.

also adopted the salute, and in Austria it even became a form of patriotic greeting among those who identified themselves collectively as "all Germans." Behrenbeck claims that in the early days of the party, the Sturmabteilung (SA) assemblies of the NSDAP did not have a specific salute of its own, but rather followers often responded with salutations of approval after speeches. From late 1922 onwards, Hitler often concluded his speeches with formulas such as "Heil euch!" or "Heil Deutschland." The party is therefore seen as having followed in the tradition of other national or patriotic circles. From this, the Hitler salute gradually developed, on the one hand carrying the meaning of "Save us, Hitler!" and, on the other, expressing a desire for a healthy and strong leader. In any case, the salute is seen as having adopted a characteristic close to a profession of faith (Behrenbeck 2005: 310–314). Nonetheless, the idea of salvation still reflects Christian tradition.

In the New Testament, the realization of salvation is exclusively bound to Jesus Christ and refers to all forms of physical, psychological, social, and spiritual need. Jesus Christ is understood to be at the center of a universal history that runs from the creation of the world to its completion in the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God means liberation from sickness and suffering, salvation from immediate dangers in life, reconciliation with God, and resurrection and eternal life (ibid., 316).

With the Hitler salute, however, "salvation" is connected not so much with Jesus as with the "Führer," a stance that again confers and reinforces this messianic quality attributed to the "Führer."

> You taught us to kneel
> Before the high altar of the Fatherland, (HA11/12, v.22–23)

In Anacker's opening poem, Hitler is characterized as a "teacher," as Jesus Christ was. The kneeling posture, adopted in prayer, is primarily recognized in religious contexts as a means of inculcating an attitude of prayer and a symbolic expression of surrender and devotion. Hitler, by extension, also appears to have taught this very precise, physical expression of prayer. In doing so, he followed the example of Christ, just as, according to the evangelists Matthew and Luke, Jesus taught his disciples to pray (see Mt. 6:9–13; Lk. 11:1–4). Indeed, the Lord's Prayer is still recited today as the central prayer belonging to all the various Christian denominations.

In the same poem, the suffering aspect of messianism is also addressed. In the first verse, the time before Hitler's rise is described as "a single sacrificial course" (HA11/12, v.3), a time when people fought and waited in silence for him (HA11/12, v.1–2). Also, in "We All Carry your Image in our Hearts" (HA107), the period is presented as an unfortunate era, with the poet's reference to "You preceded us in years of suffering" (HA107, v.3). The analogy with the suffering Christ, however, is explained further in "Dem Führer" ("To the Führer") (HA11/12):

> But you lived the most painful thing for us;
> You were the one who waited most of all:
> You tore up the orders grown weary. (HA11/12, v.6–8)

The description of the "Führer" here is reminiscent of the New Testament story of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. This story is related by three of the four evangelists: Mark, Matthew, and Luke. They recount how Jesus goes to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray with his disciples after the Last Supper. Jesus knows that pain and death await him over the next few days – his last 'sacrificial walk,' so to speak – and he becomes afraid. He asks his disciples to stay awake and pray with him, but they all fall asleep. In Mark and Matthew, Jesus turns no less than three times to find his disciples sleeping, asking them again to watch and pray with him (Mk. 14:32–42; Mt. 26:36–46; Lk. 22:40–46). With the words "der Wachste" ("the one who is the most awake of all") (HA11/12, v.7) and "die Müdegewordnen" (the people who have "grown weary") (HA11/12, v.8), Anacker seems to refer indirectly to this story, again using the substantive as

a strategy of allusion to the expectations of the people, their waiting and having grown tired of the current situation. The triple repetition, as well as the use of anaphora in the personal pronoun "you," also seems to support this hypothesis.

In the Old Testament prophecies, the Messiah is characterized as the (re-) builder of the temple. In the second book of the prophet Samuel, we are told: "He will build a house for my name and I will give eternal existence to his royal throne" (2 Sam. 7:13). The prophet Zechariah also writes, "and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Here is a man whose name is Branch; for where he is, there will be a branching out, and he will rebuild the temple of the Lord'" (Zech 6: 12). Although Anacker did not portray Hitler as the temple builder, he plays on this theme in "Dem Führer!" (HA11/12), in which he alludes to this. Here, not only does Hitler establish "the foundation of the Third Reich" (HA11/12, v.16), but he also taught the people to kneel "before the High Altar of the Fatherland" HA11/12, v.23), where the metaphor of the "high altar" invokes and emphasizes the association with the building of the temple. In "The People Have Spoken" (HA77), the association with the temple is absent, but Anacker nonetheless characterizes the "Führer" as the "builder of the empire" by adding the reference in apposition (HA77, v.15) after his name:

> But then begins the mighty construction,
> And he finds no equal on earth ...
> Let the towers rise into the eternal blue,
> As it proclaims in a show of glory
> Adolf Hitler – the builder of the Reich! (HA77, v.11–15)

This "kingdom," which is explicitly described as "holy" (HA14, v.20) in the poem "The Flags Forbidden" (HA14), for example, is also raised to the realms of sacred, where the reader can find "nothing like it on earth" (HA77, v.12). Thus, not only does the "kingdom" appear metaphorically as a "kingdom of God," but the "Führer" himself, as the "builder-owner," also appears as superhuman.

Another similarity with the biblical Messiah is found in the allegory of bread. In both "Munich Greets Adolf Hitler" (HA85) and "We All Carry your Image in our Hearts" (HA107), Hitler is characterized as a liberator by the poet in his use of a predicate, "to the Führer, to freedom and to bread" (HA85, v.17; HA107, v.14), where the apposition connects the title of "Führer" with the literary symbol of "bread." The *Metzler Lexikon literarischer Symbole* describes bread as a symbol of (1) what is essential, the essence, (2) agriculture, (3) community, and (4) the bodily presence of Christ.[11] In the context of Christian religious discourse, the explanations given for the first and fourth symbols are of particular importance. The evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell of how Jesus broke bread at the Last Supper and gave it to His disciples, saying: "This is my body" (Mk. 14:22; Mt. 26:26; Lk. 22:19). The fourth evangelist, John, characterizes Jesus as "the bread of life" (Jn. 6:48) and "the living bread which came down from heaven" (Jn. 6:51). The *Metzler Lexikon literarischer Symbole* notes that the line "Give us this day our daily bread" in the Lord's Prayer (Mt. 6:11) still belongs to both the core and general stock of quotations, even in post-religious times and across different fields.[12] Bread as a collective symbol thus characterizes the "Führer" as the provider of bread, which is essential in life, and forms the basis of the connection with Christ and the Christian representation of this relationship.

Besides the literal oaths of allegiance and the description of the physical aspects of the Hitler salute, the trust or belief in the "Führer" is also expressed in other contexts, as in connection with the symbol of light or the sun. In "Wintersonnwend" ("Winter Solstice," 1931) (HA21), the "Führer" and the National Socialist swastika symbol are associated with this

11 See "Brot" ("Bread") in Butzer and Jacob 2008: 55.
12 See ibid.

traditional sign of the sun by the anaphoric use of the word "upwards":

> Upwards with Hitler and the swastika!
> Upwards in the sign of the sun! (HA21, v.14–15)

This upward movement is also physically represented by the raising of the hand in the Hitler salute. In "Potsdam I" (HA93), the Hitler salute is not associated with the usual formula of salvation but with an exclamation, in which the upward movement, in the direction of the sun, is expressed in the simple expression "sunward":

> There he twitches hot through every German heart –
> Up goes the hand as it takes the oath of allegiance:
> "Sunward with Hindenburg and Hitler,
> In Potsdam's timeless young heroic spirit!" (HA93, v.9–12)

Klaus Vondung claims that the National Socialists adopted the symbolism of the sun from cosmological sun myths. In mythology, the sun is traditionally presented as a symbol of goodness, life, and power, in contrast to darkness, which represents the world of evil and death. It follows that National Socialism adopted solar symbolism as part of this good-evil polarization by identifying itself with the world of light and assigning its opponents to the world of darkness (Vondung 1971: 186).

The symbol of light has been used in opposition to darkness since ancient times and is interpreted as an attribute of the divine.[13] Similarly, Jesus Christ declared himself: "I am the light of the world" (Jn. 8:12). In the Christian tradition, the feast of light par excellence is Christmas, which commemorates the birth of Jesus.[14] The National Socialists tried to include Christmas in their own annual calendar, as shown, for example, in the Sonnet "Frontweihnacht" ("Christmas at the Front," 1931) (HA23):

> Thus, we enter the silent Christmas night celebration ...
> Lift up your eyes, people! On the horizon
> Ascends your star: the liberator approaches you, too! (HA23, v.11–13)

Although Hitler's name is not specifically mentioned in this poem, it can be assumed, with reference to the anthology as a whole, that here the "liberator" (HA23, v.13) is the "Führer." Anacker intensifies the religious connotation of the liberator in this poem by alluding twice to the feast of Christmas. The "Christnachtfeier" (HA23, v.11) is first mentioned to establish the temporal frame of this poem. Then, he takes the star symbol from the Christmas story, with which the birth of the new king, Jesus, is announced. As the evangelist Matthew writes:

> When Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea in the time of King Herod, astrologers came to Jerusalem from the East and asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We have seen his star rise and have come to pay homage to him." (Mt. 2:1–2)

In Anacker's poem, a guiding "star" (HA23, v.13) also rises. Here, however, it is not the birth of Christ that is announced but the coming of the new Messiah, Adolf Hitler. The symbolism of light is thus indirectly present throughout the collective symbolism of Christmas.

6. Conclusion

The myths and symbols of National Socialism were superimposed upon those of Christian thought. The appeal to solemn ceremonies, public rituals, and apocalyptic and chiliastic thought can be found in Nazi language, which is, after all, a language of faith, piety, and devotion (Mosse 1993: 10–11). One of the major functions, as George Orwell in *1984* has it, of totalitarian language is its ideological use: "The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits of the devotees [...], but to make all other

13 See "Licht" ("Light") in ibid., 205; "Sonne" ("Sun") in ibid., 354.
14 See "Weihnachten" ("Christmas") in ibid., 418.

modes of thought impossible" (Orwell 1954: 257).

The fact that Anacker so pointedly describes the "Führer" as "Mensch" in the title of his poem, chosen by Anacker as an introduction to his anthology, raises the question of how the "Führer" was perceived by his contemporaries. Volker Ullrich also gives the title "Der Mensch Hitler" to one of the twenty-one chapters of his extensive biography of Hitler.[15] For Ullrich, the question of who Hitler was, the man who moved into the German Reichstag, the Chancellery, on January 30, 1933 at the age of only 43, is difficult to answer. He pinpoints one explanation for the difficulty encountered in the deliberate staging of Hitler in his own presentation of himself "as a politician who, completely identical with his role as leader, had renounced all private ties and pursued his historical mission alone" (Ullrich 2013: 422).

Firstly, the numerous instances of the word "Führer" and the name "(Adolf) Hitler" in Anacker's anthology, *Die Fanfare*, bear witness to the great importance of this theme in his poetry. Moreover, literary analysis has highlighted the extensive sacralization of this theme through his frequent identification of the "Führer" as a messianic figure. This messianic characterization has been substantiated through a comparison with a list of characteristics of a messiah that has been compiled. The first two phases in messianism as described by Seitschek – the waiting and hoping for the Messiah and the unconditional following of followers – were particularly accentuated, largely through a range of literal and physical oaths of allegiance. Nonetheless, that believers ascribed the role of Messiah to the "Führer" was primarily exposed through the poet's own perspective. As a National Socialist poet, Heinrich Anacker was considered a believer, at least to a certain degree. In this respect, then, his messianic characterization of the "Führer" can largely be perceived as a projection or image as conveyed by a believer. This belief in the superhuman work of the "Führer" as a Messiah and in his omnipresence has been demonstrated, principally through this sacralized voice. Finally, parallels have also been drawn with Jesus Christ as the Messiah. In Anacker's poetry, therefore, the "Führer" is perceived as having taken on a role where his teachings and his suffering were paramount, to the extent that, at times, he is explicitly described as the builder of the kingdom. Moreover, as a leader or guide, he often appears in connection with the symbols of light and bread. Like Jesus Christ, the "Führer" is characterized as a bringer of salvation.

Although this official party literature was supposed to be one propaganda device among many others and was thus meant to convince readers of the truthfulness and almightiness of the new regime, it is difficult to gauge the reception of these texts. However, in his essay "What National Socialism Has Done to the Arts," Theodor W. Adorno emphasizes the rather limited influence of Nazi art on the whole of German society. Artistic expressions such as Nazi music or Nazi poetry never really caught the attention of the majority of the German population. Nazi art, as he has it, was "limited to the most fanatic groups of the Nazi movement and never got hold of any responsible artist, nor of the bulk of the population, just as official Nazi poetry never became really popular" (Adorno 2002: 383).

Works Cited

Adorno, T. W. (2002). *Essays on Music*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Anacker, H. [1933] 1936. *Die Fanfare. Gedichte der deutschen Erhebung*. Munich: Eher.

Bärsch, C.-E. (1998). *Die politische Religion des Nationalsozialismus. Die religiösen Dimensionen der NS-Ideologie in den Schriften von Dietrich Eckart, Joseph Goebbels, Alfred Rosenberg und Adolf Hitler*. Munich: Wilhelm Fink.

Bangert, O. (1930). *Gold oder Blut. Der Weg aus dem Chaos*. Munich: Eher.

15 Religious interpretative approaches to the figure of Adolf Hitler can also be found in other biographies than that of Volker Ullrich. See for example Fest (1989: 354), Schirrmacher (2007), and Telesko (2004: 14).

Behrenbeck, S. (2005). "Heil." In *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, Vol. 3, eds. François, É. and Schulze, H., 291–308. Munich: Beck.
Brokoff, J. (2001). *Die Apokalypse in der Weimarer Republik*. Munich: Wilhelm Fink.
Butzer, G. and Jacob, J., eds. (2008). *Metzler Lexikon literarischer Symbole*. Stuttgart: Verlag J.B. Metzler.
Fest, J. (1989). *Hitler: Eine Biographie*. Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein.
Goebbels, J. (1943). *Vom Kaiserhof zur Reichskanzlei*. Munich: Eher.
Göring, H. (1934). *Aufbau einer Nation*. Berlin: E. S. Mittler & Sohn.
Herbst, L. (2010). *Hitlers Charisma: die Erfindung eines deutschen Messias*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.
Hesemann, M. and Meiser, H. C. (2004). *Hitlers Religion: die fatale Heilslehre des Nationalsozialismus*. Munich: Pattloch.
Hillerbrand, H. J. (2016). "'Es werden viele kommen, und sagen: Ich bin der Messias.' Eine Meditation über den Messianismus in der Religionsgeschichte." *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 68, 1: 1–16.
Hitler, A. (1943). *Mein Kampf*. Munich: Eher.
Kasper, W., ed. (1998). *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, Vol. 7. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.
Klemperer, V. (1970). *LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen*. Leipzig: Reclam.
Knoche, W. (1969). *The Political Poetry of the Third Reich: Themes and Metaphors*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press.
Läpple, A. (1980). *Kirche und Nationalsozialismus in Deutschland und Österreich: Fakten, Dokumente, Analysen*. Aschaffenburg: Paul Pattloch.
Lepsius, M. R. (2006). "The Model of Charismatic Leadership and Its Applicability to the Rule of Adolf Hitler." *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 7, 2: 175–190.
Mosse, G. L. (1993). *Der nationalsozialistische Alltag*. Meisenheim: Hain.
Orwell, G. (1954). *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. London: Penguin.
Redles, D. (2005). *Hitler's Millennial Reich: Apocalyptic Belief and the Search for Salvation*. New York: New York University Press.
Rissmann, M. (2001). *Hitlers Gott: Vorsehungsglaube und Sendungsbewußtsein des deutschen Diktators*. Zürich: Pendo.
Schirrmacher, T. (2007). *Hitlers Kriegsreligion*. 2 Vols. Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft.
Schmidt, H. J. (2007). "Herrscherkult und Politische Religion als Erklärungsmodell gelegenheitslyrischen 'Schaffens'/'Schrifttums' im Rahmen der 'sozialistischen deutschen Nationalliteratur' und der 'nationalsozialistischen deutschen Literatur.'" In *Totalitarismus und Literatur*, eds. Schmidt, H. J. and Tallafluss, P., 91–117. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
Schmitz-Berning, C. (2000). *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
Schreiner, K. (2003). "Messianismus. Bedeutungs- und Funktionswandel eines heilsgeschichtlichen Denk- und Handlungsmusters." In *Zwischen Politik und Religion. Studien zur Entstehung, Existenz und Wirkung des Totalitarismus*, ed. Hildebrand, K., 1–44. Munich: Oldenbourg.
Schumann, G. (1974). *Besinnung: von Kunst und Leben*. Bodmann: Hohenstaufen.
Seitschek, H. O. (2005). *Politischer Messianismus: Totalitarismuskritik und philosophische Geschichtsschreibung im Anschluss an Jacob Leib Talmon*. Paderborn: Schöningh.
Telesko, W. (2004). *Erlösermythen in Kunst und Politik: zwischen christlicher Tradition und Moderne*. Vienna: Böhlau.
Ullrich, V. (2013). *Adolf Hitler: Die Jahre des Aufstiegs, 1889–1939*. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer.
Vondung, K. (1971). *Magie und Manipulation. Ideologischer Kult und politische Religion des Nationalsozialismus*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

https://doi.org/10.53123/GH_9_3

The Fifth Horseman[1]

Religion and the Bomb in the Early Atomic Age

Michael Holm

Boston University
mholm@bu.edu

Abstract. Over the past twenty years, it has become fashionable for scholars of U.S. foreign policy to interpret the United States' role in the Cold War world through the prism of religion. In contrast, this article argues that ideology not religion is the key force influencing American national self-perception. Based on extensive primary source research, it examines the impact of the atomic age on U.S. foreign policy after 1945. The central argument is that after Hiroshima, religion waned in strength as it became obvious that man and science had wrestled from God the power to determine the timing of the Day of Judgment.

Keywords: Religion, Atomic Bomb, Hiroshima, Cold War, Ideology.

1. Early Thoughts on the Bomb's Impact

The scientific or industrial revolutions that began in the early modern era were not really "revolutions." The processes that brought navigational skills, the telegraph, electricity, assembly-line production, trains, motor vehicles, aircrafts, penicillin, and more were tortuous and slow. Revolutions do not last centuries.

1 I am grateful to my Boston University colleague Jay Corrin for pointing me in the direction of this topic and for his support. Above all, I am deeply thankful to Julianna Joy Hellerman who provided research assistance during the research and writing stages of this article. Throughout numerous conversations, Julianna challenged and helped crystalize many of my thoughts and conclusions. This article would not have seen the light of day without her constructive feedback and engaging suggestions.

They are rapid and overwhelming shocks to the system. Revolutions irreversibly remove the world of yesteryear and replace it with something new. August 6, 1945 was such a revolution. As the "second sun" rose above the Japanese city of Hiroshima, everything changed technologically, morally, and spiritually. "It is an atomic bomb," President Harry Truman's official statement announced. "It is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. The force from which the sun draws its power has been loosed against those who brought war to the Far East" (The White House 1945). Humanity had entered a new era.

In the Book of Revelation, the Lamb of God unseals parts of the Book of God and summons four beings. Each rides out on a white, red, black, and ashen pale horse, respectively. In most accounts, these horses and their riders symbolize Conquest, War, Famine, and Death. They are the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, the harbingers of the Day of Judgment. The first four and a half decades of the twentieth century brought devastation to mankind on a befitting scale. In the Second World War alone, around sixty-five million died. Roughly one death every three seconds, for six straight years. Conquest, War, Famine, and Death dominated to such an extent that Verdun, the Somme, Okinawa, and the entire Eastern Front became monikers for unparalleled human-made calamity. Coventry, Hamburg, Dresden, Nanjing, and Tokyo became shorthand for the indiscriminate killing of civilians in the name of righteousness. At first pass, the death tolls caused by the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki numbered fewer than in many of the locations listed above; yet, in terms of cataclysm, the names of those two Japanese cities outshone anything that had occurred previously. Before long, the estimated 25,000 dead Dresdners, the 42,000 who perished in Hamburg, even the death of over 100,000 firebombed in Tokyo appeared almost quaint compared to the new atomic world. Only the Holocaust compared.

Contemporaries felt this deeply and quickly. Even before pictures or first-hand accounts from Hiroshima were available, secular and religious thinkers bemoaned the consequences. Echoing the sentiments of Florentine chroniclers after the arrival of the Black Death in the mid-fourteenth century, the minister John Holmes reflected upon the news of the bomb as follows: "Everything else seemed suddenly to become insignificant. I seemed to grow cold, as though I had been transported to the waste spaces of the moon. The summer beauty seemed to vanish, and the waves of the sea to be pounding upon the shores of an empty world.... For I knew that the final crisis in human history had come" (Boyer 1985: 3). Many journalists concurred. Anne O'Hare McCormick considered the bomb an "explosion in men's minds as shattering as the obliteration of Hiroshima and the U.S. another Prometheus" (McCormick 1945). Hanson Baldwin foreshadowed the philosophical consequences. The atomic bomb unleashed "forces ... outside human experience." It won the war, but it also opened a new chapter in human history "in which the weird, the strange, the horrible becomes the trite and the obvious. Yesterday we clinched victory in the Pacific, but we sowed the whirlwind," he concluded (Baldwin 1945).

Biblical metaphors consistently surfaced to describe the bomb, but they often had an eerily human component for a companion. Brigadier General Thomas Farrell, Deputy to Major General Leslie Groves' Manhattan Project, who witnessed the July 1945 Trinity Test in New Mexico, relayed it as follows:

> No man-made phenomenon of such tremendous power had ever occurred before.... Thirty seconds after the explosion came first, the air blast pressing hard against the people and things, to be followed almost immediately by the strong, sustained, awesome roar which warned of doomsday and made us feel that we puny things were blasphemous to dare tamper with the forces heretofore reserved to The Almighty. (War Department 1945)

Power "heretofore reserved to The Almighty" was on cue. Reporting to the Senate Special Committee on Atomic Energy, following a fact-finding mission to Japan, Farrell dismissed any comparison between the bomb and traditional warfare. Explaining that it would take 2,000 B-29s to carry a TNT load comparable to the Nagasaki bomb, he noted that such an operation "would require 112,000 men." On August 9, a single aircraft had destroyed a city of 350,000, killing approximately 58,000 outright – and nuclear technology was still in its infancy. "This isn't a bomb at all," Farrell thundered. "The use of the word bomb carries with it a completely inaccurate picture of what this thing does" (de Vore 1946; Chairman's Office 1946). The "atomic bomb was the turn of the screw," Robert Oppenheimer concluded (Federation of American Scientists 1946: 59–69). It made the prospect of future wars "unendurable. It has led us up those last few steps to the mountain pass; and beyond there is a different country" (Broad 1987).

The editors of the journal *The Christian Century* believed that after the bomb, man moved "in an unmapped wilderness, poignantly aware that we are spiritually and intellectually unprepared for the decisions we now must make … [the] new weapon has destroyed at one blow the familiar conception of national security, changed the scale of destructive conflict among peoples and opened before us all the prospect of swift ruin for civilization and even the possibility of a speedy end to man's life on earth" (*Christian Century* 1946: 455–456). Truman never regretted the use of the bombs against Japan, but he understood that their force was "too revolutionary to consider in the framework of old ideas" (Truman 1945a). The United States may, to paraphrase the nineteenth-century intellectual and preacher Orestes Brownson, still have been a nation with the soul of a church, but in Oppenheimer's new atomic age country, except perhaps to the most cynical, charity, forgiveness, and kindness appeared as nothing more than fig leaves of the new reality. Before Hiroshima, man merely desired to play God. In August, the inescapable conclusion was that he had acquired the capability. The war's apocalyptic scale of death permanently replaced God with science, ideology, and the nation state. Hiroshima was the most powerful embodiment of the fact that Americans no longer stood in reverence of God but in fact possessed the power to design and modernize the world.

2. Religion and Politics: Thoughts on Scholarship

This article's argument that Christianity lost a considerable amount of its potency and power as a unifying force after Hiroshima goes against the grain of much recent scholarship. If anything, since the late 1990s, many historians focusing on religion and the Cold War have come to see Christianity as a master key and religion as a sort of "conscience of American foreign relations" (Preston 2006, 2012; Inboden 2008; Herzog 2011). This argument commonly rests on cultural-political initiatives, polls confirming Americans' Christianity, the rise of Billy Graham's evangelism, and policymakers' statements about godless communists and god-fearing Americans. In that sense, religion becomes the companion to the traditional story of the American postwar consensus.

The theory is understandably compelling but is easily overstated. Boastful speeches by statesmen with frequent one-line references to God make for seemingly uncomplicated assertions about the importance of the personal faith of presidents and their advisers and, by extension, the nation. This is especially so when those ideas are lifted from speeches while leaving other content behind. Add to this the academic's yearning for sweeping reinterpretations, and what emerges are exclusionary suppositions insisting that "only by summoning the American people to a religious crusade could US leaders maintain domestic support for the extraordinary measures needed to fight the Cold War" (Inboden 2008: 4).

While the religious emphasis has resulted in some excellent scholarship and raised valuable questions about American identity, its exclusionary nature also creates an intellectual bunker mentality dismissive of alternatives. Aiming to abandon such singular prisms, this article returns religion to a more moderate place in the American postwar narrative. Based on accounts since Hiroshima, including media coverage and personal reflections, it explores the atomic bomb's impact on faith, ideology, politics, and national identity. In recent decades, scholarship on ideology has been among the most important contributions to the study of America's role in the world. Rather than recoil from the unpopular connotations associated with American exceptionalism, many historians now see that ideology as central to any past or present understanding of the United States (Stephanson 2000; Westad 2005, 2017; Hunt 2009; Holm 2016). As the colonial historian Gordon Wood argues, since the nation's founding, the "idea of America" has been draped in ideology. In the absence of a shared ethnicity, a national language, naturally defined boundaries, or a unifying religion, cohesion emerges from ideas of democracy and freedom. The belief in America as a perfect society may be more imagined than real, but it has remained a cornerstone of national identity. Like other ideologies, the idea of an exceptional America embodies a certain religiosity because at its core is a vision to remake the world in its own image. If "we Americans were not leading the world towards liberty and free government, then what was our history all about?" (Wood 2011: 319–320). Although far more critical of the answer than is Wood, the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr would have understood the point. As Niebuhr acerbically noted in 1944, the American belief in democracy is merely "a less vicious version of the Nazi creed." He cautioned, "no society, not even a democratic one ... is great enough or good enough to consider itself the end of human existence" (Niebuhr 1944: 133). Emphasis on ideology neither neglects nor rejects the role of religion or Judeo-Christian values in the American experience after 1945. It reminds us that religion infused ideology, not the other way around. Christianity may be an important accompanying feature for the study of U.S. foreign policy, but it is not the engine of national ideology, nor is it equal to its identity.

3. Reacting to the Bomb

August 1945 witnessed the end of the Second World War, but as the astute *New York Times* reporter James Reston noted, the atomic bombs left Americans "wondering about old ideas and old prejudices and even about what they had assumed to be old truths." Accompanying his article was a cartoon with the arm of science holding the future of civilization in the palm of its hand (Reston 1945).

Like Oppenheimer, Reston principally spoke from a secular background, but the emphasis on the bomb's revolutionary qualities rang true to many churchmen as well. The bomb struck such a chord with Christians because in an instance, it overturned virtues of humanity, justice, charity, and even Augustinian just war theory. Institutionalized Christianity replicated this struggle for purpose and meaning, though these debates were neither unanimous nor simple. If anything, they reflected a faith deeply torn. Christians might readily accept that God tests humans on an individual level, but Hiroshima and Nagasaki were entirely new crosses to bear.

"If Dachau was a crime," insisted the clergyman Abraham Johannes Muste, "Hiroshima is a crime" (Danielson 2006: 645). *Catholic World* simply declared the bomb a break from Christian ethics (Boyer 1985: 203). The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America (FCC) lamentingly called for a halt to air attacks. Alongside the influential Presbyterian and later Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, FCC President G. Bromley Oxnam insisted that if "a professedly Christian nation" felt morally free to use atomic weapons, "men elsewhere will accept

that verdict ... [and] the stage will be set for the sudden and final destruction of mankind" (Rosendorf 1999: 65). In that dilemma lay the rub, and because of its exclusionary nature, it was not surprising that some facets of institutionalized Christianity would find ways to reconcile faith in country and faith in God with the war's end. Consequently, in an almost desperate search for purpose, Dulles and Oxnam eventually concluded, "the way of Christian statesmanship was to use our newly discovered and awesome power as a potential for peace rather than an actuality of war. To the extent that our nation followed that way, it showed a capacity of self-restraint which greatly increases our moral authority in the world" (Giangreco and Moore 2019: 296).

But for many others, humanity had crossed a moral Rubicon. Hiroshima was "a catastrophic conclusion ... to the war's apocalyptic surprises," declared the Vatican's *L'Osservatore Romano*. "Da Vinci wanted to defeat death by thought," the paper concluded, but unfortunately, "the road of men who have not his Christian charity must defeat death with death." The "discovery of this weapon" cast a sinister shadow "on the future of humanity." Old certainties were now irrelevant. The British Christianity Calling Council considered the bomb "unparalleled terrorism" (*Chicago Daily Tribune* 1945a, 1945b). The Dean of Salisbury captured a sentiment echoed "in churches and chapels across" England. "If mankind will turn to God the Creator and seek his help to find his will, which is peace, there is hope.... If not, despair. The choice is inescapable." At Westminster Abbey, R. L. Donaldson told his congregation: "we can no longer call ourselves a Christian people. We are a nation pagan at last" (Willis 1997: 424, 429).

Writing in the *Christian Century*, Wesner Fallow hoped for a Christian solution to humanity's new predicament, but his words would have calmed few. "August 6, 1945," he insisted, "brought back normality, however much believers may lose themselves in the engulfing fear of unbelievers. The normality ... consists of the rightness, the correctness, of not only contemplating but also expecting [the] world's end." The problem was that the world's end was in the hands of man who before "possessed no means for holding a knife to every person's throat. Today he not only holds that knife but he also has the diabolical power to derange the human mind, so ghastly is the scope of threat and fear." (Fallow 1946: 1147–1148). Christians had always considered man fallible, but as one writer asserted in response to Fallow, in the past, "when the expectation of the end of the world has arisen, it has been believed that God himself would destroy it; hence there was nothing for men to do but to get themselves ready for the day. But today it is not believed that God is threatening the world; it is man in his sin" (Gallagher 1946: 1309). *Life* photo journalist Bernard Hoffman recounted that sin in a note to his editor after visiting Japan a year earlier:

> We saw Hiroshima today – or what little is left of it. We were so shocked with what we saw that most of us felt like weeping; not out of sympathy for the Japs but because we were shocked and revolted by this new and terrible form of destruction. Compared to Hiroshima, Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne, are practically untouched.... The sickly-sweet smell of death is everywhere. (*Washington Post* 2015)

The caption accompanying Hoffman's "Photo of the Week" reads: "A stone head of Christ, dislodged by the atomic blast at Nagasaki, lies before the ruins of a Roman Catholic Cathedral." The brief article attached saw in the image "the stony symbol of the moral problem facing a people who profess to follow His teachings" (Hoffman 1945).

A year later, a public FCC report captured with raw emotion the mood now common. The authors – Niebuhr among them – insisted: "We would begin with an act of contrition. As American Christians, we are deeply penitent for the irresponsible use already made of the atomic bomb.... We have sinned grievously against the laws of God and against the people of Japan" (FCC 1946). Yet, this

was more than a matter of man's sinfulness. "Our latest epochal triumph of science and technology may prove to be our last," commented *Christian Century*. The "new weapon has destroyed at one blow the familiar conception of national security, changed the scale of destructive conflict among peoples and opened before us all the prospect of swift ruin for civilization and even the possibility of a speedy end to man's life on earth" (*Christian Century* 1946: 455–456).

This internal moral conflict reflected deeper historical questions because it challenged whether Christian values and human progress could continue to jointly direct and inspire U.S. foreign policy in an atomic world. The separation of church and state notwithstanding, America had always been religious at heart. Phillip Freneau captured this in his eighteenth-century poem "The Rising Glory of America," in which America ideologically replaced Greece and Rome but did so ordained with the mandate of "a New Jerusalem sent down from heaven" (Freneau and Pattee 1902). This morphed with a national identity that Alexis de Tocqueville observed during his nineteenth-century travels in America (Preston 2012: 9, 14). Before and after the Civil War, this found a voice in millennialism and westward expansion. The link intensified, and the logic only grew louder as President William McKinley, backed by fervent supporters like Senator Albert Beveridge and Henry Cabot Lodge, called for an overseas American Empire. In this era, there was no contradiction between God's plan, the expansion of an American role in the world, and the idea of progress (Thomas 2010). As Walter McDougall points out, it was not surprising that the quest to make the "world safe for democracy" was right around the corner (1997: 101–121). Nor was it surprising that Woodrow Wilson merged his quest to save the world with ideas anchored in the Social Gospel (Hankins 2016; Burnidge 2016).

Even if the Great War in the end scarred Americans, the vision of a foreign policy tied to Christianity easily resurfaced after 1940. Vice President Henry Wallace insisted that while the Bible preached social justice, the idea only gained "complete and powerful political expression until our nation was formed as a Federal Union" (Wallace 1942). Sounding very similar, Wallace's replacement on the 1944 ticket, Harry Truman, asked, do we "not owe it to our children, to all mankind ... to be sure these catastrophes do not engulf the world a third time? This is America's destiny." Convinced that the responsibility to save the world from itself rested with America, he argued that if "some good can come out of this war, it is that we are willing to assume the obligations God intended for us to take" (Truman 1944; *Washington Post* 1944). It was a common theme among intellectuals as well. Helen Hill and Francis Miller called for American global leadership. Hill argued that "the American method of industry and commerce and the universal acceptance of the English language is creating a situation in which it will be possible once again to build a concept of Christendom" (Hill 2000 cited in Edwards 2009: 75–77).

For all Wallace's hyperbole, his narrative effortlessly connected Christian ideals with American exceptionalism and repudiated the kind of Christian pacifism that had won favor during the interwar period. It also linked seamlessly with modernist Protestantism that now became "part of the liberal-moderate cultural mainstream" and which saw "God's continuing to be revealed through the best developments of modern times." On matters of both domestic and foreign policy matters, its "leading spokespersons were respected participants in the national conversation" (Marsden 2014: 100–104). Many of them called on Americans to build a new world order. The FCC shared this view. In a series of collected essays entitled *A Religious Faith for a Just and Durable Peace*, contributors heralded a collaborative and moral universe anchored in Christian values. The Presbyterian minister Everett Clinchy insisted that in the final analysis, "it is only upon

recognition of a more than natural religion that the natural virtues demanded by pacific world relations are possible. This is a conviction of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews." Another contributor, pastor Harry Emerson Fosdick, concurred. "The lag of our political setup behind our vital needs is too obvious and too disastrous to be left unchanged." Christian Realists understood well enough that the Book of Revelation condemned the coward along with murderers and idolaters. Victory against the Axis would instill in Americans, and indeed the world, new Christian norms and values. In March 1943, Dulles and the FCC's Committee on a Just and Durable Peace published *Six Pillars of Peace*, a small book that similarly pointed toward a harmonious postwar American-led international society (FCC 1942, 1943; Preston 2012: 394–395).

The greatest national advocate of these ideals did not come from the cloth. At least, not directly. The son of Presbyterian missionaries, Henry Luce became the most influential public voice in faith-based foreign policy during the 1940s and 1950s. The owner of *Life*, *Time*, and *Fortune* magazine, Luce reached more homes than any media prior to the Digital Age. He is most famous for his 1941 call for an American Century, but beneath his ambitious and cultural arrogance lay a powerful Christian spirituality. "Morally speaking," Luce insisted, "the devil does not usually attack when you are in the pink of moral perfection. So also historically speaking, nations may choose their own time for highway robbery; they can never choose the time of their own testing." The test of humanity was now, he believed, and it was up to America to "be the elder brother of the nations in the brotherhood of man" (Luce 1942: 91). The world needed American values; values that Luce intimately connected to the Christian faith. As the heirs to Western civilization, "above all Justice, the love of Truth, [and] the ideal of Charity," he considered it a uniquely American responsibility to lift "the life of mankind from the level of the beasts to what the Psalmist called a little lower than the angels" (Luce 1941: 65).

This vision of a harmonious American-inspired world order appeared to come to fruition in the early summer of 1945. At the closing of the San Francisco Conference that created the United Nations Organization, President Truman delivered a stirring speech inaugurating the kind of organization American Christians called for. Dulles' "sixth pillar" emphasized "that the right of spiritual and intellectual liberty must be both recognized and made a matter of international concern. Only if the peoples of the world move toward common standards of knowledge and morality can international organization achieve the broad popular support needed for its effective development" (FCC 1943). In its core principles, the U.N. merged human rights, compassion, peace, and American leadership. Invoking the Almighty, Truman summed up the mission in a most Christian-Realist fashion: "Let us not fail to grasp this supreme chance to establish a worldwide rule of reason—to create an enduring peace under the guidance of God" (Truman 1945b). Endorsing the U.N., Senator Arthur Vandenberg echoed an ideal that eighty years before had forcefully married religious and democratic morals. Extolling the virtues of Christianity, Vandenberg considered the new U.N. Charter nothing less than "an emancipation proclamation for the world" (*Washington Post* 1945). Overwhelmingly popular among religious leaders, politicians, intellectuals, and scientists, Americans embraced the idea of leading the world into the light. American church leaders in particular played a part in rallying this support (Preston 2012: 408–409).

3. Toward the End

Six weeks after the San Francisco Conference, Hiroshima charred the U.N. dream. How, Reston distressingly asked, can people "full of prejudice and fear and selfish national desires" be expected "to live together in a world that has atomic bombs but that has no generally accepted

rule of law?" (Reston 1945). Answers to questions of that sort particularly preoccupied scientists, intellectuals, and religious community leaders. In meetings, conferences, and publications, scientists united to push for world government and global unity. By 1946, several of them, including Oppenheimer, University of Chicago professor Harold C. Urey, and journalist Walter Lippmann, contributed essays to the small but immensely powerful book *One World or None*. The collective message was that the very existence of the bomb demanded cooperation. "Another war," insisted Urey, would guarantee "that little of the physical and human bases of our civilization would be left" (Federation of American Scientists 1946: 149–163).

Niebuhr briefly clung to the World Federalist Movement and even attended the inaugural meeting of the Committee to Frame a World Constitution. In the end, hope rather than belief in world government inspired his support. Niebuhr's faith in God did not translate into a faith in man, whom he did not believe possessed the required "universal moral sense." He was no more confident, however, that the problem of the day could be solved by some simple "return to religion, as the traditional religionists would have it" (Niebuhr 1945). As early as 1940, he declared to a friend that war effectively represented the "end of a Christianity which tries to find a vantage point of guiltlessness from which to judge a guilty world" (Edwards 2009: 77). In his dejected philosophy of man, Niebuhr understood that history makes a mockery of man's illusions. He did not abandon God, but he rejected the idea of America as humanity's savior (Bacevich 2008: 23–25). Inevitably, many of faith refused this Niehburian logic and clung to increasingly hollow-sounding just war theories. Among the most aggressive were Arthur H. Compton, a deacon turned nuclear physicist, and the Presbyterian minister Wilbur Moorehead Smith. Exhibiting all the characteristics of guiltlessness and the will to judge sinners, Compton saw no contradictions between faith and science. "Atomic power is ours, and who can deny that it was God's will that we should have it," he insisted (Compton 1946). In a similarly defiant tone, Smith sought to reclaim for Christianity a relevance many had felt had vanished in the ashes of Hiroshima: "If the Scriptures actually foresee such an hour as that in which we live, and that toward which we are moving, then they prove themselves once again the inexhaustible, ever-contemporaneous, divinely-inspired word of God, that abideth forever." What remained unshaken, he insisted, was "the fact that sins can be washed away in the blood of the Lamb of God." For those who possessed faith, the course of humanity remained steady. "If one does not, then the dawn of such an age as the atomic age means the very dissolution of the foundations of life" (Smith 1945). Mostly recovered from his initial shock to Hiroshima, Reverend Holmes, on the "unhappy birthday" of August 6, 1946, now viewed science as the "servant of government ... war ... [that] made inevitable the supreme calamity and atrocity of the atomic bomb." Now, humankind must rediscover "those basic values of the spirit which science has so consistently ignored and restores them to their old position of authority. The atomic age must be a religious age or it will destroy us all" (Holmes 1946).

Even in these hopes for a Christian world, gloom is evident. Their attempt to marry God's plan with a victory culture held up poorly against reality. The bomb made the very idea of victory immaterial. Science, not religion, had made sure of that. In 1946, the Los Alamos scientist Phillip Morrison detailed a hypothetical atomic attack on New York City:

> From the river west to Seventh Avenue, and from south of Union Square to the middle thirties, the streets were filled with the dead and dying. The old men sitting on the park benches in the square never knew what had happened. They were chiefly charred black on the side toward the bomb. Everywhere in this whole district were men with burning clothing, women with terrible red and blackened burns, and dead children caught while hurry-

> ing home to lunch.... The statistics were never very accurate. About three hundred thousand were killed, all agree. At least two hundred thousand had been buried and cremated by the crews of volunteer police and of the Army division sent in. The others were still in the ruins, or burned to vapor and ash. As many again were seriously injured.

Morrison finished, "New York had thus suffered under one bomb.... The bombs will never again, as in Japan, come in ones or twos. They will come in hundreds even thousands.... The cities of men on earth will perish" (Federation of Scientists 1946: 1–15). *Life* captured this new man-made reality with even more fervor. In an imagined story of a 36-hour conflict, the U.S. wins the war, but over 40 million people are dead. All cities of more than 50,000 inhabitants resemble Nagasaki. In New York City, only the grand lions outside the Public Library still stand. From their perch, they look over a destroyed city (*Life* 1945). What all these images captured was that God would not matter in the next war because there would be nothing left to worship.

Always a skeptic, Niebuhr grew increasingly pessimistic as the 1940s wore on. In 1947, he declared the age in which he lived "secular, either non-Christian or anti-Christian.... It has disavowed the historical religious faiths ... chiefly because modern men find the tragic view of life implicit in religion unacceptable and old theories of redemption irrelevant." History, he argued, "is neither a God nor a redeemer" (Niebuhr 1947).

4. Cold War Faith and Ideology

As the Cold War set in, it became necessary to separate the ideological from the theological. Few in the United States doubted their nation's greatness or even invincibility, but linking that to the kind of Christian certainty of earlier generations proved increasingly impossible. Christianity lingered, but in foreign policy it was largely symbolic, remembered as an afterthought rather than as part of a unifying convention. Tradition instead was sanctified in political values and ideology.

It was not without irony that during the Cold War, technology enabled Christianity's revitalization as it gave birth to the celebrity preacher. None filled that role better or more impressively than Billy Graham. As he explained to a California audience in 1949, "I have been in Europe six times since the war and have seen devastated cities in Germany and the wreckage of war. I believe the only reason that America escaped the ravages and destruction of war was because God's people prayed." Having no time for inconvenient facts like geography – that realists like Niebuhr understood – Graham saw the wars against Nazism and communism as a causeway connecting national faith to humanity's salvation. In his view, God could "still use America to evangelize the world." "I think," he insisted, "that we are living at a time in world history when God is giving us a desperate choice, a choice of either revival or judgment." The news of the Soviet Union's acquisition of the atomic bomb in 1949 only further opened the door for those who, like Graham, sought to use the threat of atomic war as a battle cry. "The world is divided into two sides. On the one side we see Communism; on the other side we see ... Western culture [with] ... its foundation in the Bible, the Word of God, and in the revivals of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries." Like evangelicals in the present day, Graham turned the history of Christianity into a product of the American experience. Gone was its European legacy. Christianity was now made in America. "Communism, on the other hand, has decided against God, against Christ, against the Bible, and against all religion." Still, that was not enough. Graham identified communism as "a religion that is inspired, directed, and motivated by the Devil himself who has declared war against the Almighty God" (Graham 1950: 51–59).

Combined with some creative cherry-picking, it is often Graham's public speaking powers, his revival meetings, and his connections to politicians that tempt some scholars to make Social

Christianity and U.S. foreign policy conjoined Cold War twins. They highlight Eisenhower's rhetorical references to faith, his choice of Dulles as Secretary of State, the addition of "one nation under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance, and the adoption of "in God we trust" as the national motto (Preston 2012: 441, 468–480; Herzog 2011: 87, 104–105) as bows to piety. All of these examples highlight that faith still mattered, but they ignore the fact that it was never the same again after 1945. Americans may not have slipped into the debauchery of mid-fourteenth-century bubonic plague-ridden Europe, but, much like the Black Death, the bombs questioned what faith could accomplish. References to God became rhetorical and, rather than reflect a national cause, were instead part of a smorgasbord of tactics used by officials depending on the audience they addressed. This is evident from the fact that none of the major Cold War initiatives or conflicts were driven by religion: the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan and NATO in Europe, Korea, Vietnam, U.S. Aid, and beyond. Religion carried none of them. Instead, all were laced with ideology and references to the Cold War as a battle between ways of life and the *secular* American mission to modernize the world. This was unsurprising because whereas Hitler had easily become the devil reincarnate, the threat the Soviet Union posed was principally as an alternative to the American-designed modernity. At times, officials played up Moscow's atheism, but this was a sideshow. Just as importantly, the United States' allies, politicians, and citizens from London to Paris and from West Berlin to South East Asia and Latin America would have been shocked to discover that they were part of the kind of Christian war against Moscow that several scholars now identify. If the Cold War had been a religious war, the Allies would have faced pressure to live up to religious ideals. That never occurred, nor did the U.S. find it difficult to associate with regimes that were inherently un-Christian in act and deed.

To single out statements lauding God's role in the Cold War is to underplay the more pervasive emphasis on ideology that dominated politics and policymaking behind closed doors as well as in public pronouncements. Ideology, the secular ideal that America stood for, may have possessed its own religiosity, but it pitted western civilization in all its facets – not Christian values – against the anti-democratic forces in the Kremlin. Simply put, the Cold War message of an exceptional United States did not require God. If anything, in contrast to religion, ideology made the American way of life comprehensive. It unified people regardless of whether they subscribed to any religious faith. It was not coincidental that it would be modernization theory, the most atheistic of vehicles for the reform of the world, that came to characterize U.S. foreign policy in the early Cold War (Ekbladh 2009).

6. Concluding Thoughts

Plenty of religious thinkers lamentingly acknowledged the new reality. Not all linked it explicitly to the bomb, but few would have denied that the consequences of Hiroshima had changed society. The secular and the material increasingly replaced the spiritual in the American mind. As the Jewish sociologist Will Herberg noted, Christians may have been rallying to the Church out of norm, but they were "forgetting all about Christ when it comes to naming the most significant events in history; men and women valuing the Bible as revelation, purchasing and distributing it by the millions, yet apparently seldom reading it themselves." Regardless of denomination, American faith had become "empty and contentless, so conformist, so utilitarian, so sentimental, so individualistic, and so self-righteous" (Herberg 1955: 2, 15). Others were no less forgiving. Daniel Bell, among the era's leading thinkers on American identity, insisted that while utopia remained a virtuous goal for humanity, the path "to the City of Heaven can no longer be a 'faith ladder,' but an empirical one.... [A] utopia has to specify

where one wants to go, how to get there, the costs of the enterprise, and some realization of, and justification for the determination of who is to pay" (Bell 1960: 405). It hardly got more secular than that.

The spike in divorce rates after the war as well as the plethora of material goods all of a sudden available to consumers further revealed the spiritual decline. So, ironically, did Billy Graham. Because for all his bombastic rhetoric and in spite of his sincere beliefs, he also helped make Christianity a commodity. In the 1950s, Niebuhr still spoke with the greatest clarity: "Our gadget-filled paradise suspended in a hell of international insecurity [fails to offer] even the happiness of which the former century dreamed." He continued, "Only when we realize these disappointed hopes can we have a truly religious culture. It will probably disappoint the traditionally pious as much as the present paradise disappoints the children of the Enlightenment" (Niebuhr 1958: 1–13). Niebuhr's frustration targeted every aspect of American exceptionalism but it was rooted in the realism of the age he now lived in. A decade earlier, Reverend Benjamin B. Hersey of the Church of the Divine Paternity in New York, perhaps inadvertently, came close to capturing the meaning of it all. As he told his congregation, the gate had closed on the past. There was no return to the world before August 6. "O no, things have gone too far for that.... That possibility vaporized with the steel tower on the New Mexican desert and in the explosions over Hiroshima" (Preston 2012: 381–382).

As the American atomic monopoly vanished, causing a full-scale nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union after 1949, the two competing Cold War powers embraced their own myths of innocence and beliefs in the permanent corruption of the enemy. Each maintained its faith in science and rationality to solve humanity's problems, but both also embraced mutually exclusive ideologies.

In this context, religion in America slipped into the background. It could still be dusted off for rhetorical use, but its light at best flickered. Except for the symbolism it continued to sustain, faith had performed its final act. In the end, the "cultural upheaval" of the 1960s put the final nail in the coffin of mainstream Protestantism (Marsden 2014: 123). Because America was no longer the country it had once been, by the time social conservatives revived religion as a political force in the late 1970s, Christianity had ceased to be a unifying force and now instead emerged as a divisive one. For all its humanitarian values and principles, Christianity had always been combative, deterministic, and in many ways exclusive as well. Like Graham, Pat Roberson, Jerry Falwell, and others made commercial brands out of this. The bond between democracy, America, and Christianity that Wallace, Luce, and even Dulles advanced during the Second World War had been broken. Unity was gone for good. Hersey anchored his sermon in the unveiling of the four horsemen, but it was the fifth horseman that made the perversity of humanity's accomplishments clear. Its color was immaterial, but he who sat on it had the name of Man, and total annihilation followed with him. God as previously embraced was effectively dead. How could it be otherwise? In the atomic age, the Day of Judgement was no longer in God's hands.

Works Cited

Bacevich, A. J. (2008). "Illusions of Managing History: The Enduring Relevance of Reinhold Niebuhr." *Historically Speaking* 9, 3: 23–25.

Baldwin, H. (1945). "The Atomic Weapon: End of War against Japan Hastened but Destruction Sows Seeds of Hate." *New York Times*, August 7, 1945.

Bartel, F. (2015). "Surviving the Years of Grace: The Atomic Bomb and the Specter of World Government, 1945–1950." *Diplomatic History* 39, 5: 275–302.

Bell, D. (1960). *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the fifties*. Glencoe: Free Press.

Boyer, P. S. (1985). *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*. New York: Pantheon.

Boyer, P. S. (2009). "Sixty Years and Counting: Nuclear Themes in American Culture, 1945 to the Present." In *The Atomic Bomb*

and American Society: New Perspectives, eds. Mariner, R. B. and Piehler, G. K., 3–20. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press.

Broad, W. (1987). "The Men Who Made the Sun Rise." *New York Times*, February 8, 1987.

Burnidge, C. L. (2016). *A Peaceful Conquest: Woodrow Wilson, Religion, and the New World Order*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Chairman's Office. (1946). "U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey: The Effects of the Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki." June 19, 1946. Harry S. Truman Papers, President's Secretary's Files, National Security Council File, Box 174.

Chicago Daily Tribune. (1945a). "New Bomb Draws Protest from Christian Group." *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 8, 1945.

Chicago Daily Tribune. (1945b). "Vatican Views Atomic Bomb 'Unfavorably." *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 8, 1945.

Christian Century (1946). "Theology and the Bomb." *Christian Century* 63, 15: 455–457.

Compton, A. H. (1946). "The Moral Meaning of the Atomic Bomb." In *Christianity Takes a Stand: An Approach to the Issues of Today*, ed. Scarlett, W., 57–71. New York: Penguin.

Danielson, L. (2006). "Christianity, Dissent, and the Cold War: A. J. Muste's Challenge to Realism and U.S. Empire." *Diplomatic History* 30, 4: 645–669.

De Vore, R. "What the Atomic Bomb Really Did." *Colliers*, March 2, 1946.

Edwards, M. (2009). "'God Has Chosen Us': Re-Membering Christian Realism, Rescuing Christendom, and the Contest of Responsibilities during the Cold War." *Diplomatic History* 33, 1: 67–94.

Ekbladh, D. (2009). *The Great American Mission: Modernization & the Construction of an American World Order*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Fallow, W. (1946). "Atomic Apocalypse." *Christian Century* 63, 39: 1146–1148.

Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (FCC) (1942). *A Religious Faith for a Just and Durable Peace*. New York.

Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (FCC) (1943). *Six Pillars of Peace, a Study Guide Based on Political Propositions*. New York.

Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (FCC) (1946). *Federal Council's Official Report: Atomic Warfare and the Christian Faith*. New York.

Federation of American Scientists (1946). *One World or None: A Report to the Public on the Full Meaning of the Atomic Bomb*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Fain, W. T. 2011. "Onward Christian Soldiers." *Reviews in American History* 39, 3: 529–534.

Freneau, P. and Pattee F., eds. (1902). *The Poems of Philip Freneau: Poet of the American Revolution*. Sagwan Press.

Gallagher, B. G. (1946). "Annihilation is Inevitable!" *Christian Century* 63, 44: 1308–1310.

Giangreco, D. M. and Moore, K. (2019). *Dear Harry: Letters to President Truman*. Lanham, MD: Stackpole Books.

Graham, B. (1950). *Revival in Our Time: The Story of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Campaigns*. Wheaton, IL: Van Kampten Press.

Haberski, R. (2012). *God and War: American Civil Religion Since 1945*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Hankins, B. (2016). *Woodrow Wilson: Ruling Elder, Spiritual President*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Herberg, W. (1955). *Protestant – Catholic – Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology*. New York: Doubleday.

Herzog, J. P. (2011). *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America's Religious Battle against Communism in the Early Cold War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hill, P. R. (2000). "Commentary: Religion as a Category of Diplomatic Analysis." *Diplomatic History* 24, 4: 633–640.

Hoffman, B. (1945). *Life*, October 15, 1945.

Holm, M. (2016). *The Marshall Plan: A New Deal for Europe*. New York: Routledge.

Holmes, Rev. J. (1946). "Statement Release by the National Committee on Atomic Information." August 6, 1946. University of Chicago Library, Special Collections, Atomic Scientists of Chicago Records, Box 18.

Howlett, C. F. (2002). "A. J. Muste: Portrait of a Twentieth-Century Pacifist." In *The Human Tradition in American Between the Wars, 1920–1945*, ed. Whisenhunt, D. W., 1–19. Wilmington, DE: SR Books.

Hunt, M. H. (2009). *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*. 2nd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Inboden, W. (2008). *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945–1960: The Soul of Containment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kirby, D., ed. (2003). *Religion and the Cold War*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Life. "36-Hour War." *Life*, November 19, 1945, 27–35.

Lowin, R. (2000). "Christian Realism: A Legacy and its Future." *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 20: 3–18.

Luce, H. R. (1941). "The American Century." *Life*, February 17, 1941, 61–65.

Luce, H. R. (1942). "America's War and America's Peace." *Life*, February 16, 1942, 82–91.

McCormick, A. O. (1945). "The Promethean Role of the United States." *The New York Times*, August 8, 1945.

McCarraher, E. (2000). *Christian Critics: Religion and the Impasse in Modern American Social Thought*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

McDougall, W. (1997). *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

McDougall, W. (2016). *The Tragedy of U.S. Foreign Policy: How America's Civil Religion Betrayed the National Interest*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Marsden, G. M. (2014). *The Twilight of the American Enlightenment: The 1950s and the Crisis of Liberal Belief*. New York: Basic Books.

Mayley III, L. (1997). "Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Memory (and Forgetting) in the Religious Press." In *The Writing on the Cloud: American Culture Confronts the Atomic Bomb*, eds. Scott, A. M. and Geist, C. D., 183–201. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Morrison, C. C. (1946). "The Atomic Bomb and the Christian Faith." *Christian Century* 63, 11: 330–333.

Niebuhr, R. (1944). *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness: A Vindication of Democracy and a Critique of its Traditional Defense*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Niebuhr, R. (1945). "The Crisis of the Individual: Will Civilization Survive Technics?" *Commentary*. https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/reinhold-niebuhr/the-crisis-of-the-individual-will-civilization-survive-technics/.

Niebuhr, R. (1947). "The Dilemma of Modern Man." *The Nation*, February 27, 1947.

Niebuhr, R. (1958). *Pious and Secular America*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Preston, A. (2006). "Bridging the Gap between the Sacred and the Secular in the History of American Foreign Relations." *Diplomatic History* 30, 5: 783–812.

Preston, A. (2012). *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy*. New York: Knopf.

Reston, J. (1945). "Dawn of the Atomic Era Perplexes Washington." *New York Times*, August, 12, 1945.

Rosendorf, N. (1999). "John Foster Dulles' Nuclear Schizophrenia." In *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb: Nuclear Diplomacy since 1945*, eds. Gaddis, J. L; Gordon, P. H.; May, E. R. and Rosenberg, J., 62–86. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Smith, W. M. (1945). *The Atomic Bomb and the World of God*. Chicago: Moody Press.

Stephanson, A. (2000). "Liberty or Death: The Cold War as US Ideology." In *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory*, ed. Westad, O. A., 81–100. London: Frank Cass.

The White House. (1945). "Press release by the White House, August 6, 1945." *Harry S. Truman Library & Museum*. Accessed July 6, 2020. https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/research-files/press-release-white-house.

Thomas, E. (2010). *War Lovers: Roosevelt, Lodge, Hearst, and the Rush to Empire, 1898*. New York: Little, Brown, and Company.

Truman, H. S. (1944). "Flag Day Speech in Toledo, OH, June 14, 1944." Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Senator and Vice President Collection, Box 285.

Truman, H. S. (1945a). "Special Message to Congress on Atomic Energy, October 3, 1945." *The American Presidency Project*. Accessed June 3, 2020. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/special-message-the-congress-atomic-energy.

Truman, H. S. (1945b). "Address in San Francisco at the Closing Session of the United Nations Conference." *Public Papers of the President, Harry S. Truman*, Document 66. Washington, DC.

Wallace, H. A. (1942). *The Price of Free World Victory*. New York: L. B. Fischer.

War Department. (1945). "Memorandum for the Secretary of War. Subject: The Test." *National Security Archive*. Accessed July 8, 2020, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEBB/NSAEBB162/36.pdf.

Washington Post. (1944). "Peace Needs Roosevelt, Says Truman." *Washington Post*, October 25, 1944.

Washington Post. (1945). "Text of Vandenberg's Senate Report." *Washington Post*, June 29, 1945.

Washington Post. (2015). "After the A-bomb: What Photographers encountered in Hiroshima." *Washington Post*, August 6, 2015.

Westad, O. A. (2005). *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Time*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Westad, O. A. (2017). *The Cold War: A World History*. New York: Basic Books.

Willis, J. (1997). "God and the Atom: British Churchmen and the Challenge of Nuclear Power, 1945–1950." *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 29, 3: 422–457.

Wood, G. S. (2011). *The Idea of America: Reflections on the Birth of the United States*. New York: Penguin.

https://doi.org/10.53123/GH_9_4

The Day after the Pandemic
A Semiotic Analysis of Four Homilies

Francesco Galofaro
University of Turin
francesco.galofaro@unito.it

Chiara Petrini
CUBE, University of Bologna
chiarapetrini18@hotmail.it

Abstract. In Italy, after the COVID lockdown, began "phase two," allowing worshippers to celebrate live masses. Churches reopened, but many masses were still transmitted live through social media, having a large mediatic resonance. Our research inquires the relation of Church and politics in the costruction of governance: we investigate how the leaders of the religious community took a stand on political and medical ordinances in relation to public opinion. In order to do it, we will compare four homilies given on May 31, 2020 (Mass of Pentecost), and we will analyze them using semiotic and ethnolinguistic categories.

Keywords: Coronavirus, Catholic church, Religion, Politics.

1. Introduction

On May 4, 2020, after the COVID lockdown, the Italian government began "phase two": some economic activities were able to resume, and citizens were allowed to move, albeit within the restricted perimeter of their Region. This decision started a diplomatic accident: the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI) criticized the action, since worshippers were still not allowed to celebrate live masses. Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte asked for the mediation of the Pope. The Italian government and the Bishops

1 This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement no. 757314).

reached an agreement on a medical protocol by making changes to the liturgy. A maximum capacity for churches was established, and masses were often celebrated outdoors, in courtyards, or on football pitches to allow the attendance of every worshipper. Many masses are still transmitted live via social media, as they were during the lockdown.

In particular, as we will see in the first section, the adoption of the protocol governing the resumption of religious celebrations had an impact on their meaning. In particular, the awareness of being part of the Church disappears, since this effect is mainly achieved by relations between bodies: singing together, exchanging a sign of peace – cases of the *contagion of meaning* (Landowski 2004). Catechesis, group meetings, and formation were postponed.[2] The agreement between the Church and the State was a sensitive matter, given the bi-millennial struggle of the Catholic Church to escape the control of secular institutions.[3] In this context, a research question arises about the relation between the Church and politics and the construction of governance in this critical period. For this reason, in addition to the ethnographical observation of the ceremony, we studied four homilies to investigate how the leaders of the religious community took a stand on political and medical ordinances in relation to public opinion.[4]

2. The Mass at the Time of Coronavirus[5]

With the beginning of phase two, the government, in collaboration with the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI) and a technical scientific committee, drew up a protocol governing the resumption of religious celebrations. This protocol represented an important tool for the religious community to equip itself with know-how so that the celebration of masses could take place while minimizing the risk of contagion and thus protecting the health of the faithful.

Obviously, the implementation of these new rules has changed religious practice in its discursive manifestation, introducing and magnifying new values linked above all to the safety and danger of the virus. So, starting from May 18, 2020, through ethnosemiotic observations[6] undertaken during masses, it was possible to see how the containment measures caused a transformation of the discursive configuration of the liturgy compared to the traditional one. The changes are visible from the moment you enter the church: access is regulated by people who manage the number of believers entering according to the number established to avoid crowds.

Some volunteers, continuing this practice of inclusion/exclusion, regulate the access of the faithful to the sacred place: those who do not wear masks, those who show flu and respiratory symptoms, and those who have a body temperature above 37.5 degrees Celsius are excluded.

In some cases, these collaborators accompany the faithful into the space of the church, indicating the place where they are to sit and informing them about new ways of attending mass.

---

2 In our corpus, this is a subject of constant complaint in homilies 1 and 2. In particular, in homily 1, the priest says: "Today we were supposed to celebrate the sacrament of the catechumenate. Some kids and their families are here, we are happy that you are here with us. We will do it as much as we can, as for everyone else."

3 As we will see, homily 4 alludes to this problem.

4 Though the authors discussed and designed the structure of the paper together, the section two is authored by Chiara Petrini (CUBE, University of Bologna), while sections 1, 3 and 4 were written by Francesco Galofaro (DFE, University of Turin). The conclusions were written by both authors.

5 The study contained in the following paragraph is addressed in more detail in Petrini (2020).

6 According to Greimas and Courtés (1982: 109), "Given that general semiotics authorizes the treatment of non-linguistic (gestural, somatic, etc.) syntagmatic concatenations as discourses or texts, the field of ethnolinguistics can be enlarged to become an ethnosemiotics; analyses, still rare, of rituals and ceremonies lead us to suppose that ethnology can become (...) the privileged locus for the construction of general models of signifying behavior." In recent years, ethnosemiotics has been developed by Francesco Marsciani (2007).

In the narrative program dictated by the protocol, these people, during the celebration of phase two, identify themselves not only in the thematic role of the faithful but also as collaborators and volunteers and perform the function of helpers, leading the faithful through already established paths and providing information of which the faithful do not have the knowledge; this preparatory activity for the mass refers, according to the construction of figurativeness, to the relationship that the tourist guide establishes with the visitor inside a museum that is indispensable for the tourist to be able to orient themselves and to obtain the information they need. In addition, the arrangement of the seats is linked to the need to maintain a safe distance of 1.5 meters between members of the faithful; in this way, the capacity of the church is significantly reduced. In some cases, there is no volunteer to indicate the place to sit, and instead pieces of tape are put in the right place.

In the church of phase two, the spatiality of the faithful undergoes a transformation: their own personal space and that of others is perceived in a new way. Moreover, the believer cannot sit next to an acquaintance and cannot communicate silently with their lips because their mouth is covered by their mask: the social dimension of the community is lost. In addition to the precautionary measures taken at the entrance for the sanitation of the sacred places, some fundamental elements that are part of the expression of the rite have been completely eliminated: hymnbooks and aids to the liturgy cannot be used, the stoups have been emptied, and the exchange of the sign of peace among the faithful must be omitted, as the passing of the basket at the time of the offertory.

The elimination of booklets and liturgical aids has brought about a new change: the use of the smartphone, through which the faithful can follow the liturgy or chants, considerably upsets traditional religious practice. In fact, the smartphone has always been considered as not belonging to the religious semiosphere.[7]

In phase two, the smartphone is included in a re-semanticization process that, in phase one, made it a necessary technological support to follow masses online; in this case, it performs the function of a liturgical aid, without which it would not be possible to actively participate in the mass. The presence of the smartphone in a religious context could be inappropriate and alien, and in fact the smartphone is often associated with the idea of necessity, but above all it also conveys fun, entertainment, levity and boredom: these values are in contrast with the solemnity and seriousness of the liturgy.

A large part of the traditional religious rite is characterized by the closeness and physical contact both between the bodies of the faithful and between the faithful and the objects present in the church. A significant example is the presence at the entrance of a church of an empty stoup containing a pack of hand sanitizing gel. During the liturgy, the possibility of touching should be reduced as much as possible, because it is through contact that the coronavirus spreads. The practice of making the sign of the cross with blessed water recalls the sacramental reality of Catholic baptism and, therefore, this gesture means remembering being part of the Church and the community of God.

As Costantino Marmo (2011, par. 1.1) states, "sacramental signs are associated with other sensitive signs in their social function of aggregation of a community, which is both union and distinction from other communities," and thus "it is what allows a group of individuals to recognize themselves as members of the same community, thanks to the convention adopted by them; that is, it fulfils an identity function, and it is necessary that this

7 According to Juri Lotman (2005: 208), "all semiotic space may be regarded as a unified mechanism (if not organism). In this case, primacy does not lie in one or another sign, but in the 'greater system,' namely the semiosphere. The semiosphere is that same semiotic space, outside of which semiosis itself cannot exist."

aggregative function is realized through a sensitive sign."[8]

Thus, it is possible to affirm that the identity and social function and the community dimension that reside in the awareness of being part of the Church disappear. Thus, once they have entered the church, the faithful will not find blessed water but sanitizing gel and have to apply it on their hands to prevent the spread of bacteria. This new gesture replaces, at the level of the expression of the liturgy, the practice through which baptism is remembered. The attestation of being a Christian in this way is not expressed concretely in the discursiveness of the practice but is eliminated as a possible helper of the narrative program of spreading the virus to make room for an opponent who, by sanitizing his hands, hinders the contagion. The placement of sanitizing gel inside the holy water stoup without water and the same temporal placement in the liturgy allow the creation of an association of the two gestures that convey the idea of purification: of the soul through baptism and of the body through sanitation.

The offertory is another example of the change in the expression of religious practice. The gesture of passing the offertory basket represents, for Christians, a way to add a material contribution to the spiritual one. The presentation of gifts and the passing of the basket carry the seed of sharing represented mainly by the *hic et nunc* of both religious actions. To eliminate the possibility of contagion, the passing of the basket has been eliminated. The spacing rule has also resulted in the suspension of the choir's activity. In the church, the act of singing conveys the idea of joy and communion among the faithful; each chorister must concentrate on their own voice and on its relationship with the other voices present, and listening is essential so that each voice can coordinate with the others reciprocally.

The choristers live an aesthetic experience that comes from the competence of a reciprocal feeling, created by their physical proximity that allows the listening and tuning of voices. In phase two, the faithful cannot identify with the thematic role of the chorister because the closeness required would not allow them to keep at a safe distance. The faithful can sing during the liturgy but without *adjusting*[9] to the other singers. Also, in this case, the lack of contact and closeness among the faithful tends to overshadow and narcotize the value of community sharing.

Another element that changes the plan of expression of the practice is the exchange of the sign of peace. According to liturgical tradition, through the gesture of shaking hands, Christians remember and share the peace of the risen Christ. The handshake, which would create an increased risk of contagion, has been replaced by the faithful with a nod of the head or a gesture with the hand; believers thus manifest the need to fill that lack with a different movement on the level of expression but which, in the same way, refers to the need for communication and sharing among the faithful.

In addition to the elements outlined above, the Eucharist, the most important part of the Catholic rite, has undergone a major change of meaning due to the security measures. In fact, when the priest prepares to give the consecrated host to the community, some elements that refer to the sanitary semiosphere are visible on the scene. The celebrants are obliged to carry out hygienic-sanitary measures: sanitizing gel placed on the altar is applied to the hands, disposable gloves are put on, and a mask is placed over the nose and mouth. The physical presence of objects such as the container of sanitizing gel, latex gloves and masks, the positions taken up behind the altar by the priest in the center and the concelebrants helping him on the side, the set of gestures that make up the practice of sani-

8 In this passage, Marmo refers to the reflections of William of Auvergne in his treatise *De sacramentis*.
9 We will return to the definition of *adjustment* in the third section.

tation, and the use of the altar on which items rest in order that the procedure can be carried out, contribute to a particular creation of figurativeness that refers to a semiosphere of medical health in which doctors are preparing to perform surgery.

Another substantial difference is the way communion is distributed: the faithful must remain in their place and signal through the position of their body (standing or sitting) whether or not they want to receive communion. If, in the traditional procession to the altar, a *reciprocal coming together* is seen that highlights the durability of the process and magnifies the sense of community, in this way there emerges the singularity of the faithful as opposed to the collective actor of the community that moves in procession.

In conclusion, using ethnosemiotic methodology, it has been possible to see how the changes in the liturgical rite have also caused a change in the significance of religious practice. In fact, as Landowski (2005: 42–43) argues: "This also explains why not even one detail of a ritual, a custom, a habit should be changed: if they draw their value and necessity only from being what they are because that is how it has always been, then by construction one cannot change a single element, however tiny, without destroying them completely."

Thus the key to its interpretation lies in the double meaning of the word "contagion": denying the possibility of closeness and contact between the faithful has prevented not only the contagion of the virus, understood as an infectious disease that passes from one body to another, but also that passionate contagion that allows the faithful to exchange the sign of peace with their neighbor to communicate the peace of the risen Christ, that contagion that arises from the closeness of bodies in procession to receive the Body of Christ or allows the faithful to renew with holy water the baptism that has made them part of the community and the Church.

3. The Homilies

The most important legal document on the content of the homilies is represented by the *Homiletic Directory* published by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, which implements both Pope Benedict XVI's and Pope Francis' instructions on this subject (CONG 2015) and includes a definition of the homily: "In the broadest sense, the homily is a discourse about the mysteries of faith and the standards of Christian life in a way suited to the particular needs of the listeners" (par. 11).

While exposing some aspects of the readings, the homily should be tailored to the needs of the particular community and indeed draw inspiration from it (see par. 8). This feature is present in all the homilies of the corpus, as they make reference to the pandemic and to its effects on community life. Biblical exegesis, doctrinal instruction, and personal witness should be functional to this goal and not substitute it (see par. 7). These elements are also represented, in varying degrees, in our corpus.

Coming to the homily during mass on Pentecost, it should express its link with the Eucharist, correlating Acts 2 to John 20:22: 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (CONG 2015: par. 56). However, even if Easter and Pentecost connect all the homilies of the corpus, the main focus is always on one of the two readings: Acts 2 (homilies 1–3, whose interpretation is more ecclesiological) or John 14:23–31 (homily 4, whose reading is rather Christological). The *Homiletic Directory* also indicates the relevant paragraphs of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1993) that should be consulted by the priest. The connection of the four-part structure of the Catechism should provide a key reading to the celebrant. However, once again, each homily utilizes a narrow se-

lection of the passages suggested by the *Homiletic Directory*.[10] Some passages are unselected: for example, the relation between the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary (CCC 1993: 726) is not represented in our corpus.

From a methodological point of view, when collecting the homilies, we considered three axes (Table 1):

Homily	Attitude toward the Future	Location	Attitude toward Innovation
1	worry	center	not hostile ("we should forget criticism")
2	hope	center	friendly
3	hope	periphery	friendly
4	worry	center	hostile (open criticism)

Tab. 1. The three axes of the corpus.

- Euphoric/dysphoric attitudes toward the future. This point is very important since, according to CONG (2015: par. 54), Pentecost should be the climax of 50 days of joyful celebration following the Paschal Triduum. This positive outlook on the future is present only in the 2nd homily and, to a lesser degree, in the 3rd.
- Location with regard to the pandemic. Piedmont ranks second in Italy for the number of victims per Region. The center/periphery opposition is considered relevant because Italy was shaken daily by conflicts between the central government and the governors of the Regions, whose interests often diverged since only the northern ones were heavily affected by the pandemic in the considered period.
- Positive attitudes toward Pope Francis' innovative reforms often led to conservative reactions.

These preliminary judgments on each homily (e.g., worry, not hostile) are not based on the analysis. We picked up these homilies as a *signifying set*, "grasped intuitively and upon which the analytic procedures will be applied" (Greimas and Courtés 1982: 171). Our purpose is only the constitution of the smallest corpus featuring the utmost possible variety of meanings. The analysis will allow us to substitute these judgments with structural categories, more relevant to distinguish the different 'political styles' of the homilies.

The considered homilies are similar in length (10 minutes) and present a plain, simple rhetorical structure. As we will see, some elements are always present, though not necessarily in the same order:

1. A general discussion of the abstract theme of the homily.
2. A reference to the readings of the day that represent a case of figurative rationality.
3. A reference to the present situation.

These elements, combined and projected on the syntagmatic axe, link the readings to worshippers' world of experience, while the abstract theme provides a clue to justify the relation. This structure is sometimes recursive when different themes are present and ordered hierarchically, as in the case of homily 2.

3.1 First Homily: Unity and not Division

The first homily was recorded in a parish of the Lingotto neighborhood in Turin. The theme of the homily is "unity." The Holy Spirit is seen as an operator capable of bringing unity to the community. The unity of the Christian commu-

10 We will point out these references in the analysis of each homily.

nity is opposed to "social distancing" (*distanziamento sociale*), the unfortunate watchword adopted by the Italian government in the first phase of the pandemic to make citizens pay attention to keeping precautions when meeting other people. The priest carefully clarifies that the object of his criticism is not the safety measure but the meaning of the expression. The opposition between unity and division is reconducted to a privative modal opposition between wanting and not wanting to see the Other: it would be nicer if we said 'physical distance' when staying at a distance. 'Social distancing' sounds very bad: I don't want to see you, to have anything to do with you. Physical distancing means only prudence; we stay distant. Social distancing is the exact opposite of the Holy Spirit.

The figurative trajectory of the readings allows a transformation: thanks to the Holy Spirit, the different nations present on the day of Pentecost are able to understand each other. The tale is opposed to the interesting trajectory in the biblical account of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1–9). The different figurative relations between Acts and the Old Testament, in the form of tongues "as of fire," are mentioned in agreement with the CCC (1993: par. 696).

Finally, unity is linked to the pandemic and to "phase two." The priest recalls that, though lockdown is over, the emergency is still serious. The risk is division (between citizens and different Italian Regions and inside the Catholic Church) and violence – the priest makes reference to the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement in the US. Unity is needed to rebuild Italy. And this unity is precisely the gift of the Holy Spirit during Pentecost. In semiotic terms, the Holy Spirit is a *sender*: often posited as belonging to the transcendent universe, the sender is the one who communicates to the subject-receiver (belonging to the immanent universe) not only the elements of modal competence but also the set of values at stake (Greimas and Courtés 1979: 294).

In our case, the Spirit transfers to the community the value of unity. In conclusion, the priest invites worshippers to pray to overcome divisions and to illuminate the hearts and minds of the decision-makers.

3.2 Second Homily: Diversity and not Unity

The second homily was recorded in Cavoretto, a village in the suburbs of Turin, and broadcast by the priest on Facebook (Parrocchia San Pietro in Vincoli Cavoretto 2020). The homily starts with the difficulty in understanding the Holy Spirit, which is indeed important, being the third member of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is represented in the readings as an abstract operator capable of transforming *fear* into *courage*: "Here this Holy Spirit arrives in this Cenacle, where he finds a community, where he finds believers, where he finds the Church closed, frightened, on the defensive. And the coming Holy Spirit breaks the bank."

Thanks to the Holy Spirit, the community of the Apostles finds the courage to quit the Cenacle and preach to the nations. The same courage led the Church to the Second Vatican Council. During Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descends upon different nations, consecrating diversity. This difference is richness: "The Holy Spirit wants us to be brilliant, he doesn't want us to be trivial." As we can see, the opposition between fear and courage introduces and regulates a second opposition, between *diversity* and *unity*, where unity is interpreted as 'uniformity,' 'boredom.' On the contrary, diversity is a resource to rebuild a different, improved society: "[the Spirit] suggests to us a new, different perspective: perhaps we can bring back to the center what we experienced in the days, in the months in which we were locked up in our homes. We can't pretend nothing has happened."

As the Spirit represents the empowerment of the subject, it plays the narrative role of the helper.

3.3. Third Homily: Both Unity and Diversity

The third homily was pronounced by the Pope during the Pentecost mass (Vat-

ican News 2020). The Pope's innovative style of communication attracted the attention of the semiotic community from the beginning (Lorusso and Peverini 2017; see also Viganò 2018). During the lockdown phase, Pope Francis played an important role in orienting the Catholic world, given the impossibility of attending mass. A collection of homilies and prayers was published for free on the official Vatican website and regularly updated (Bergoglio 2020).

Coming to the homily, the abstract theme is once again the relationship between unity and diversity. They are both values instituted by the Creator: the solution to their conflict is the construction of a complex term (unity + diversity) operated by the Holy Spirit, identified with harmony. The Pope refers clearly to the CCC (1993: par. 738), as suggested by the *Homiletic Directory* (CONG 2015: Appendix I).

Where the world sees conflicts (e.g., between progressives and conservatives), the Holy Spirit sees a collective actor capable of embodying the difference (e.g., Children of the Father). As in the second homily, the figurative trajectory operates a transformation allowing the Apostles to leave and preach to the people, but the Pope underlines the value of the *gift* represented by preaching. The Holy Spirit invites us to give ourselves. The Holy Spirit is a healer that allows us to overcome paralysis: "Holy Spirit, memory of God, revive in us the memory of the gift received; free us from the paralysis of selfishness and kindle in us the desire to serve, to do good, since worse than this crisis there is only the drama of wasting it, by turning inwards."

We can see how the moral opposition of selfishness/generosity regulates the opposition between unity and diversity. The pandemic is not euphorically seen as an opportunity, as in the second homily, but the future could be even worse if worshippers do not seize the Spirit's gifts.

3.4. Fourth Homily: Participation as Unity

The fourth homily was pronounced in the traditionalist parish of Vocogno and uploaded to YouTube (radicatinellafede 2020a). This homily is particular because it appears as a lesson of theology.[11] An important difference between this homily and the others is its focus, which is on the Gospel (Jn. 14:23–31), not on the narration of the Pentecost (Acts 2:1–11). John's passage is less figurative than the Acts of the Apostles: Jesus teaches the Apostles directly. In this passage of the Gospel, Jesus declares that the Holy Spirit's function is to remind the disciples of his teachings when he leaves them. This point is consistent with the CCC (1993: par. 2623; see also CONG 2015: Appendix I). He invites them to fulfill the Father's will. According to the priest, this fulfillment is the spirit of Pentecost; the interpretation according to which Jesus disappears and something else, i.e., the Holy Spirit, substitutes him is to be considered heresy. The abstract value in this case is still unity, seen as the *participation* of the Christian community in the Holy Trinity through the second person (Jesus), who adopted us. This participation implies fulfilling the Father's will, as Jesus did. This is the only way to be saved.[12] Participation in the Trinity is assimilated to *participation* in the sacraments, which is consistent with the CCC (1993: par. 1076), a crucial passage referenced by the CONG (2015: Appendix I), which is pointed out only by this homily. This key passage allows a link with the pandemic. The Church is implicitly accused of having diffused the heretical, protestant

11 Given the poor quality of the broadcast, the priest recorded a different, less passionate version of the homily, which deepens the theological notions of the live recording. In our analysis, we refer to the homily pronounced during the mass, but we also checked the second version (radicatinellafede 2020b), which slightly differs regarding values.

12 Jesus came into the world to do the will of the heavenly Father and demonstrated his love toward the Father, not toward us. At the same time, the Father takes pleasures in His son, not in us. The participative relation with the Person of the Son is the only way to enter in a soteriological relation with the Trinity.

opinion according to which a spiritual unity with Jesus is sufficient to be saved: "All it took was to say for two months that it is sufficient to be spiritually united with Jesus, that people have already forgotten the importance of the sacraments."

The priest criticizes worshippers who are ready to obey the State and are afraid to return to take part in the mass again: "You would have cursed the Church. The State asked you and you did it. Today the Church asks you: come to the sacraments with abundance, with courage, because it is the Lord's Pentecost." Ironically, the moral opposition between *courage* and *fear* appears as central here, in the traditionalist homily,[13] as in the second, the progressive one. In the present case, however, the conflict of *courage/fear* is homologated to the opposition between *participation in* and *absence from* the sacraments and unity with Christ.

4. Findings

Eric Landowski (2005) proposed a typology consisting of four regimes of social interaction: programming, manipulation,[14] adjustment, and accident. Each regime of interaction features its own regime of meaning and risk (see Figure 1). Landowski also suggests a trajectory linking the different regimes, defining their syntagmatic relation. We propose to interpret our homilies in this light as an attempt at *adjustment* involving three different actors: government, clergy, and worshippers. In this perspective:

1. *Accident* is represented by the beginning of phase two and the conflict between Italian bishops and the government. The regime of meaning is *absurdity*. The risk of such non-regulated interactions is *pure*.
2. *Manipulation:* after Pope Francis' mediation between the government and the bishops, an agreement was reached on the changes to be made in the liturgy; the bishops and the government embody the role of the *sender,* while priests and worshippers can be considered the manipulated subjects. The risk of such interactions is *limited*.
3. *Programming:* the success of the manipulation led to the modified liturgy, which regulates the interactions between clergy and worshippers during masses. While the risk of programmed interactions is *limited,* their meaning is *insignificant*. As we saw in the first section, this is true *a fortiori*, since the new liturgy prevents individuals from forming a collective actor, the *ecclesia*.
4. *Adjustment:* each of the four homilies proposes a way to react to the *insignificant* situation to recover a spiritual meaning located in the near future. Though the regime of risk is *insecure*, the regime of meaning is *making sense*.

The four different tactics of adjustment can be considered as the *metric of a political space*.

4.1 Semantics of the Political Space

According to Umberto Eco (1976: 293), semantic space has a nonlinear, contradictory format. The attribution of a certain property to a semantic complex is always a choice. For example, in homily 2, 'diversity' is opposed to 'unity' as 'positive' is axiologically opposed to 'negative,' while in homily 3, 'unity' and 'diversity' are positively reconciled – Greimas and Courtés (1982: 47) would consider it a *complex term* in reference to the coexistence of contraries featured by the logical relation 'both… and…'.

13 The second version of the homily presents a different homologation: courage/fear = participation/absence. Courage/fear is the same variable opposition we found in homily 2.

14 "Manipulation" is a technical term in semiotics without negative connotations. According to Greimas and Courtés (1982: 184), "manipulation is characterized as an action of humans upon other humans with the goal of having them carry out a given program."

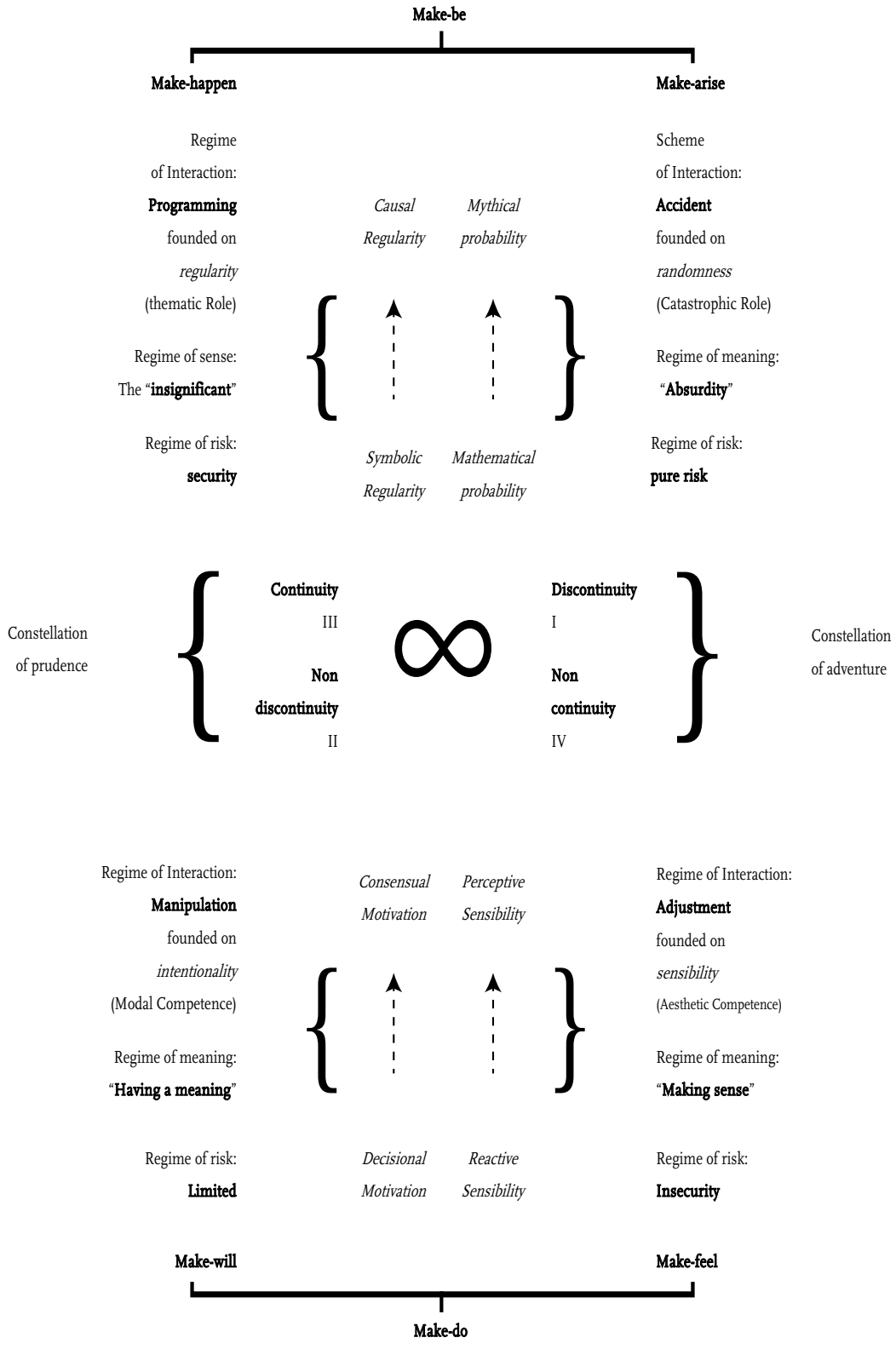

Fig. 2. Eric Landowski's square of the regimes of interaction and meaning (Demuru 2020: 88).

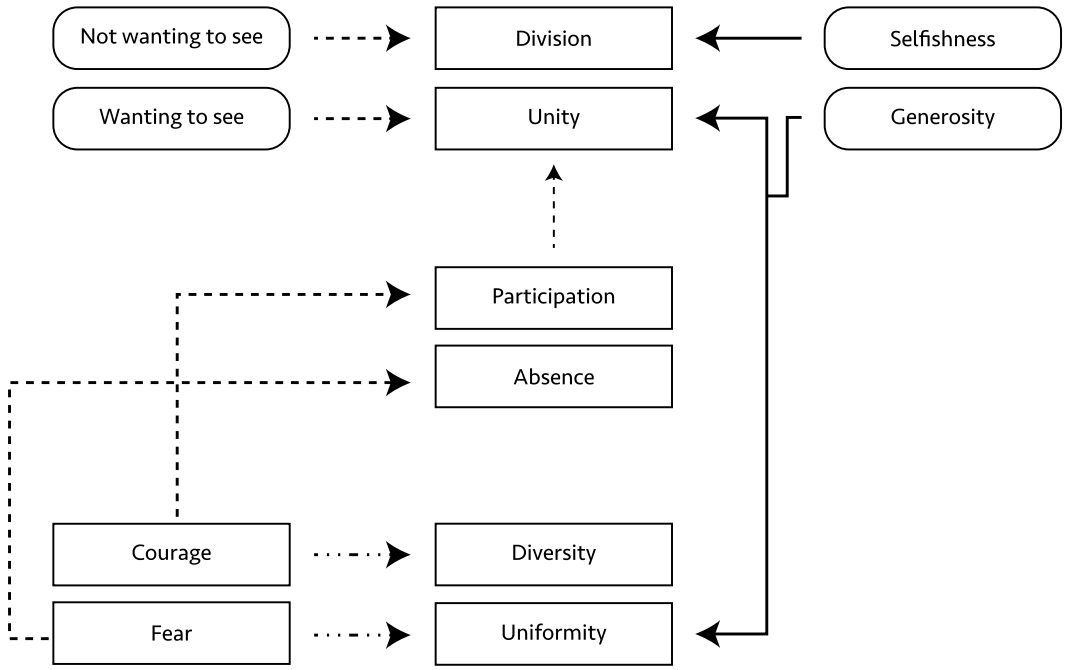

Fig. 3. A partial reconstruction of the semantic universe implied by the four homilies. In particular, the figure displays how different moral oppositions regulate different variants of the abstract opposition 'one/manifold.'

As the analysis pointed out, each homily homologates a 'moral' opposition to an *invariant*, abstract opposition, e.g., *fear/courage = diversity/uniformity* (Greimas and Courtés 1982: 144). The different abstract oppositions we meet in the homilies (such as participation/absence of participation or uniformity/diversity) seem to be simple variants of the same deep opposition *one/manifold*. The different 'moral' oppositions are variables: "A term is labelled invariant if its presence is the necessary condition for the presence of another term in relation with which it stands, and which itself is said to be variable. This involves a reformulation of the concept of presupposition: the invariant is the presupposed term in the relation of presupposition" (Greimas and Courtés 1982: 162).

The variables 'regulate' the meaning of the homily, adding a peculiar nuance to the abstract invariant and endowing it with an axiological orientation (positive-negative). The presence of willingness in the first homily and of the generosity/selfishness opposition let us suspect that a modal component is always present in this *regulatory function*. At the same time, as is normal in a Catholic perspective, willingness is not sufficient without Grace – and this is the value transferred by the Holy Spirit, considered as a sender. The contradictory nature of the semantic space also emerges from the comparison of homilies 2, 3, and 4: both the Pope and the traditionalist priest found their argument on the moral opposition between generosity and selfishness. As we saw, the Pope uses it to reconcile the opposition between unity and diversity; the traditionalist priest underlines the value of unity against the defection from the sacraments; and finally, based on a different moral opposition, the 'modernist' priest underlines diversity, considered as creativity against a boring conformity (homily 2). From our point of view, the important structural feature that the analysis let emerge consists of this syntagmatic link between a moral opposition and an abstract one, capable of being projected on the worshipper's world of experience to provide it with a new meaning, previously jeopardized by the pandemic.

4.2 Political Orientation

Once the meaning of the world is restored, worshippers can act again, directly or indirectly. In the first homily, the role of worshippers is to pray for the decision-makers, whereas in the second homily, they are invited to innovate society. In the first homily, the pandemic is considered a threat and the goal of the prayer is to reunite the community and to rebuild Italy, while in the second homily, the pandemic is considered an opportunity that let us rediscover the pleasure of being part of the community and collective engagement. The attitude toward politics emerging from the third homily should not be confused with the second. In fact, the Pope asks worshippers never to lose hope and to give themselves: this is the necessary condition for both indirect and direct engagement. Finally, in the fourth homily, worshippers are warned about subsuming their faith to the requests of the decision-makers through convenient justifications.

The relations between worshippers and decision-makers emerging from the homilies mainly depend on the actantial function attributed to worshippers and decision-makers in the narrative structure.[15] If we distinguish between the subject of the action (to do) and the sender (to let the subject do), we obtain the typology reported in Table 2.

As a consequence of this, the real difference between the fourth homily and the others regards the opposition between /to let the subject do/ and /to not let the subject do/. This implies different judgments on the pandemic and forces us to articulate our first impression of our vision of the future (Table 3).

Relation	Worshippers	Decision-makers	Relation between thematic roles	Homily
Destination	sender	subject	worshippers let decision-makers do	1, 3
Identification	both sender and subject	both sender and subject	worshippers are decision-makers	2, 3
Opposition	sender	anti-subject	worshippers do not let decision-makers do	4

Tab. 2. The relation between worshippers and decision-makers from the point of view of the respective thematic roles assigned to them by the homilies. From this point of view, ***identification*** is only a particular case of *destination*, in which worshippers take the role of both sender and subject – a self-addressing instance.

Homily	Attitude toward the pandemic	Attitude toward the future
1	non-euphoric: future is full of hazards	conservative (restoration)
2	euphoric: the pandemic is an opportunity to improve	progressive (renovation)
3	non-dysphoric: the future could be even worse	unitarian (both restoration and renovation)
4	dysphoric: worshippers have lost their salvation	counteractive (opposition)

Tab. 3. Attitudes toward the future (Tab. 1) reconsidered in light of the analysis

15 According to Greimas and Courtés (1982), "An actant can be thought of as that which accomplishes or undergoes an act, independently of all other determinations ... The term "actant" is linked with a particular conception of the syntax which interrelates the functions of the elementary utterance ..." In this perspective, the actants of narrative syntax (or of the utterance) are subject/object, sender/receiver. According to Bruno Latour (1998), political and religious discourse share a similar enunciation regime, which produces "quasi-subjects" (e.g., people, assemblies, groupings, processions) and their mutual relations, making their absence become present.

4.3 Policy Directions

According to the present analysis, the celebrant plays a fundamental role in relation to a *veridiction contract* (Greimas and Courtés 1982: 60), a fiduciary convention between the sender and the receiver involving the veridictory status (the truth) of the message. The veridictory contract is preceded by a persuasive doing (causing to believe) of the enunciator, to which the receiver responds by way of an interpretive doing (a believing). Specifically, worshippers already believe in the scriptures. The structure that links their everyday life to the figurative rationality of the Gospel with the mediation of abstract themes ensures the transmission of truth. Without this structure, the transmission of truth would not be assured: worshippers would perceive the political indications of the priest as mere off-contract opinions.

As we saw, religious leaders' arguments cover a wide range of political sensitivities, mirroring the major sub-genres of political discourse. Considered as a whole, they orient public opinion, avoiding the deterioration of the debate and keeping the community united.

An evaluation of the different political styles emerging from the analysis of our corpus is outside the scope of the present work. When contrasting the pandemic, decision-makers should avoid directing their political communication at blaming one or more groups because of their attitude toward the future. For example, from a conservative point of view, it could be a mistake to attack progressives' expectations of a world of greater solidarity after the pandemic, since this element can be useful to let the public opinion cope with the worst consequences of the lockdown. In a similar way, from a progressive point of view, it would be an error to identify the counteractive political style with reaction and the far-right, since the aim of this peculiar discursive sub-genre is to guarantee the autonomy of the community: this can be useful to partially preserve the identity of citizens during the lockdown or the subsequent economic crisis. Each kind of religious leader (conservative, progressive, unitarian, counteractive) can be considered by decision-makers as an interesting mediator, playing a fundamental role to guarantee and safeguard unity, diversity, as well as integration. The important point is to integrate into the political discourse the peculiar syntagmatic structure that links values and togetherness and is capable of providing a collective identity to individuals and reactivating them.

5. Conclusion

This paper has examined the critical situation experienced by the Catholic world during the so-called "phase two," following the restart of religious activities in Italian churches after the lockdown. This section summarizes the main arguments. The Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI), in agreement with the government, drew up a protocol containing rules for managing the presence of people in churches during religious celebrations. Much of the traditional religious ritual, however, involves proximity and contact between the bodies of the worshippers or between their bodies and the objects used during the ritual. Ethnosemiotics has been used to analytically describe both the changes in the manifested religious practice and their effects on its meaning. By preventing the contagion of the virus, the passional contagion that allows the faithful to feel part of the community and the Church is also omitted.

This problem was enunciated in the four homilies delivered during the Mass of Pentecost, analyzed in the second part of the paper. The analysis let emerge the position of religious leaders in relation to the political ordinances. In general, the homily, in addition to referring to the liturgical readings and the norms of Christian life, recalls the needs and situations that the community is experiencing at that time; in fact, in all the homilies analyzed, references are made to the pandemic and its effects on the lives of the worshippers.

Three structural elements, present in all homilies, connect the readings to the faithful's world of experience: a general discussion of the abstract theme of the homily, references to the readings of the day, and references to the current situation. Furthermore, each of the four homilies presents a different way to reshape the semantic universe starting from the intraceptive antonymy between unity and diversity, linking it to a moral opposition: in this way, social and political values are projected into the concrete experience of the worshipper to give it a new meaning, previously endangered by the pandemic. Thence, each homily assigns a different role to worshippers, clergy, and decision-makers, regulating their social interactions and constructing different political attitudes toward the future and pandemics.

Our analysis brings to light the important role of the religious leader as a point of contact between the community and policy-makers. Their influence on public (political) opinion leads us to assert that it might be a mistake to construct discourses by antagonizing one or more of these religious and political positions. Regardless of the political views involved, this could further destabilize communities from a social standpoint as well.

Works Cited

Bergoglio, J. M. (2020). *Strong in the Face of Tribulation*. Vatican City: Vatican Publishing House.

CCC (1993). *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Citta del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Accessed September 7, 2020. http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM.

CONG (2015). *Homiletic Directory*. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Accessed September 7, 2020. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20140629_direttorio-omiletico_en.html.

Demuru, P. (2020). "Between Accidents and Explosions: Indeterminacy and Aesthesia in the Becoming of History." *Bakhtiniana* 15, 1: 83–109.

Eco, U. (1976). *A Theory of Semiotics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Greimas, A. J. and Courtés, J. (1982). *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Landowski, E. (2004). *Passions sans nom*. Paris: PUF.

Landowski, E. (2005). *Les interactions risquées*. Limoges: Pulim.

Latour, B. (1998). "Petite philosophie de l'énonciation." In *Eloquio del senso: Dialoghi semiotici per Paolo Fabbri*, eds. Basso, P. and Corrain, L., 71–94. Milano: Costa & Nolan.

Lorusso, A. M. and Peverini, P., eds. (2017). *Il racconto di Francesco: la comunicazione del Papa nell'era della connessione globale*. Roma: Luiss University Press.

Lotman, J. (2005). "On the Semiosphere." *Sign Systems Studies* 33, 1: 205–229.

Marmo, C. (2011). *La semiotica del XIII secolo: tra arti liberali e teologia*. Milano: Bompiani.

Marsciani, F. (2007). *Tracciati di etnosemiotica*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

Parrocchia San Pietro in Vincoli Cavoretto. (2020). "Solennità di Pentecoste." Facebook, May 31, 2020. Accessed 2 September 2020. https://www.facebook.com/102567254740436/videos/776210909450209.

Petrini, C. (2020). *La pratica religiosa cattolica ai tempi del Coronavirus: tra lo spazio sacro e lo spazio virtuale*. Bologna: Esculapio.

Radicatinellafede. (2020a). "Diretta S. Messa Pentecoste Vocogno 2020." YouTube, May 31, 2020. Accessed 2 September 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axpiRv-tDfY.

Radicatinellafede. (2020b). "Resi contemporanei di Cristo." YouTube, May 31, 2020. Accessed 2 September 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qlbFTLmToc.

Vatican News. (2020). "Santa Messa di Pentecoste – Omelia, Papa Francesco." YouTube, May 31, 2020. Accessed 2 September 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RA6oL_Qxhfw.

Viganò, D. E. (2018). *The Voice of Pope Francis: Communicating to Understand and Embrace the Other*. Trans. Hopcke, R. H. New York: Crossroad.

Appendix I

Links to the internet addresses of homilies 2–4 are provided in the list of works cited. Homily 1 has been collected by participant observation. Here we report the original text:

[00:00:01] C'è un'espressione che oramai siamo abituati ad usare perché di questi tempi è diventata una legge, una legge di comportamento: distanziamento sociale. Che non è una bella espressione. Sarebbe più bello se si fosse detto "distanziamento fisico": stare a distanza.

[00:00:30] "Distanziamento sociale" suona molto male: non ti voglio vedere, avere a

che fare con te. Distanziamento fisico vuol dire solo "prudenza, stiamo distanti."

[00:00:47] "Distanziamento sociale" è esattamente l'opposto dello spirito santo. Va tutto benissimo, bisogna mettere le mascherine, facciamo vedere l'igienizzazione delle mani... Tutto quello che dobbiamo fare lo facciamo, perché ci mancherebbe altro. Nessuno vuole fare del male a nessuno. Ma il "distanziamento sociale" è proprio il contrario dello spirito santo.

[00:01:10] Perché se c'è un dono che lo spirito santo porta con sé, nel cuore di ogni cristiano, è l'unità. È tutto ciò che è contrario a ciò che divide. Allora, se il "distanziamento sociale" divide, lo spirito santo unisce. E non è soltanto una questione materiale, spirituale.

[00:01:48] Idealmente siamo tutti uniti. Abbiamo in comune il fatto che con lo spirito santo, che Gesù ha promesso, che è stato mandato, che si è riversato sulla Chiesa, con quella bella immagine delle lingue di fuoco, nel cenacolo, il vento che soffia... lo abbiamo ricevuto tutti.

[00:02:15] e siamo qui perché siamo battezzati. Il battesimo ci è donato, ci ha reso parte di quello spirito di Dio che Gesù è venuto a portare.

[00:02:36] C'è nella prima storia che abbiamo sentito, questo bellissimo racconto di questi apostoli, tutti inorgogliti e pieni di voglia di fare

[00:02:48] e di dire che parlano il loro dialetto – sono della Galilea, "si sente l'accento, neh" – e tutti quanti li capiscono. C'è poi pervenuto un elenco di popoli e di nazioni: questo lungo elenco non è a caso,

[00:03:12] È l'elenco di tutte le nazioni che erano conosciute e con cui Israele aveva dei rapporti, commerciali o meno. Non sono tutte le nazioni del mondo: la Cina non è citata; esisteva già, anzi.

[00:03:28] Però, tutti quelli che erano conosciuti nel bacino del mediterraneo, tutti quelli con cui Israele aveva dei rapporti... Per cui quell'idea che è già presente in tante pagine dell'antico testamento dell'universalità di Dio, cioè il fatto che riguarda tutti, si riprende, si rinnova, e tutti capiscono. E' il contrario di Babele. Babele è il modello in cui gli uomini vogliono raggiungere Dio e prendere il suo posto, e costruiscono una torre.

[00:04:08] Ma nel momento in cui lo Spirito agisce, tutti capiscono la stessa cosa. Tutti intendono lo stesso linguaggio.

[00:04:18] Il Vangelo parla di questa apparizione di Gesù, del soffio di Gesù sugli apostoli, che era il primo dono dello spirito santo, che arriva con le lingue di fuoco, certo, e che si conclude con questa frase, per certi versi facilmente interpretabile, per altri molto meno, "a coloro cui perdonerete i peccati saranno perdonati, a coloro cui non perdonerete non saranno perdonati." E spesso la si interpreta come un "potere" dato ai preti di confessare, che ne so... L'interpretazione più corretta secondo me è di nuovo che è lo Spirito che è stato sugli apostoli che dà la possibilità di ricostruire se stessi. Che il perdono è la "riformazione" del proprio cuore.

[00:05:06] Di quello che si spezza che viene rimesso insieme. Allora c'è l'unità dei popoli e c'è l'unità del cuore. C'è l'unità della vita. Questo è il dono dello spirito. A cosa serve lo spirito santo? A questo.

[00:05:28] Perché diciamo che Dio è Padre, Figlio e Spirito Santo? Per questo. Perché di questa unità abbiamo bisogno. Viviamo un tempo della nostra storia che nessuno di noi avrebbe immaginato di vivere – ma neanche... magari guardando qualche film... "L'epidemia" non fa parte del nostro immaginario.

[00:05:51] Viviamo in un tempo in cui siamo chiamati al "distanziamento fisico," e viviamo un tempo in cui abbiamo sempre di più e ancora più bisogno di quell'unità che ci dona lo Spirito Santo. Le questioni sanitarie continuano ad esserci, siamo tutti più tranquilli, ci vediamo... oggi dovevamo celebrare il sacramento del catecumenato. Alcuni ragazzi e le loro famiglie sono qui, siamo contenti che siate qui con noi. Lo faremo, quanto potremo, come per tutti gli altri.

[00:06:34] Eppure, oggi abbiamo bisogno ancora di più di questo. Dicevo che le questioni sanitarie si risolveranno,

[00:06:51] ma è un tempo in cui abbiamo bisogno di rifare l'Italia.

[00:07:03] Perché tutti quanti abbiamo vissuto questo periodo... mi permetto di dire con rabbia. Colpa di quello, colpa di quell'altro, è un complotto, destra, sinistra, su e giù... Un clima che pre-esisteva, la pandemia l'ha semplicemente tirato fuori ancora di più. Andiamo incontro ad un tempo – adesso; non fra un po' – in cui le divisioni sociali saranno ancora più forti.

[00:08:06] Non mi compete... non sono un pessimista di natura. Ma certamente le prospettive non sono... rosee. Quello che sta succedendo in America non è colpa della pandemia. È molto più antico, il problema. Però questo l'ha scatenato. In Italia queste cose quando succederanno? Non voglio fare il profeta del malaugurio, scusate l'espressione che non è da predica, "portare sfiga."

[00:08:32] ma se c'è un momento della storia, della nostra storia personale e della storia

dell'umanità, e anche del nostro Paese in cui abbiamo bisogno di migliorare il dono dell'unità, cioè di restaurare coesione – l'immagine che abbiamo tutti in mente è quella di Francesco che passeggia da solo in Piazza San Pietro, sotto la pioggia, con le sirene che passano, e... dice una parola:

[00:08:55] "Siamo tutti sulla stessa barca." Se c'è un'immagine che noi dobbiamo portarci dietro è proprio questa. E se c'è qualcosa di cui, ogni tanto, Francesco, si trovava [sembra una critica, ma la registrazione è cattiva]... non conta più: siamo tutti sulla stessa barca.

[00:09:09] E solo se ricordiamo questo e solo se lavoriamo su questo, andiamo avanti. Il dono dello Spirito santo è prima di tutto questo: il fatto di sentirsi uniti dentro più che fuori. Insieme agli altri, essere sulla stessa barca, e condividere tutto. Che il Signore, che lo Spirito santo illumini i nostri cuori, le nostre menti, illumini i cuori e le menti di chi deve prendere decisioni anche difficili, perché il cammino sia un cammino di pace. Ripeto: non voglio essere né portatore di sfortuna né buonista; non mi compete e non ne sono capace. Ma di questo noi abbiamo bisogno: che il dono dello spirito riempia le nostre vite, i nostri cuori, la vita dei nostri figli.

https://doi.org/10.53123/GH_9_5

Political Abuse of Religion
Groupism, Elite Rascality, and Religious Tensions in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

James Okolie-Osemene

Wellspring University, Benin City, Nigeria
okolieosemenej@gmail.com

Abstract. The politics of religion permeates Nigeria's political landscape to the detriment of social relations. Since the establishment of the Fourth Republic in 1999, religion has remained an integral part of political actions, with political parties/leaders and their supporters engaging in political abuse of religion (PAR). This paper examined the pattern of PAR by politicians and adherents of religious movements who often use religious platforms to achieve their political ambitions, thereby promoting groupism. Combining power, resource mobilization and manipulation of religion theories, the study utilized primary and secondary sources. Elite rascality and PAR generate religious conflicts which undermine intergroup relations.

Keywords: Elite rascality, Groupism, Nigeria's Fourth Republic, Political abuse of religion.

1. Introduction

"A great man can come forth to unify and weld Nigeria into a strong and solid whole."
H. H. Smythe, 1958

"We must challenge people that use religion to oppress women."
Femi Falana (SAN) at the International Law Conference, Lagos, 2012

"Of all causes of war in the world, religion remains unresolved."
Anonymous

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic West African nation state that has more than 374 ethnic groups, dominated by only three major ethnic groups, namely Hausa/Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba (Olusakin 2006). As a multi-ethnic nation, this means the nation state also has numerous languages and cultures manifesting in greetings, foods,

© Photo by Daniel Omolewa, Makoko, Lagos, Nigeria.

clothes, and arts. One unique attribute of the Nigerian ethnic groups is that they have different traditions of origin.

Religious practices are a significant aspect of human endeavor, and this explains why people from all walks of life usually devote time to honor and worship the deities they recognize as supernatural and determiners of their existence. On the other hand, politics has become a major issue that determines various aspects of daily life in Nigeria. In the history of politics in Nigeria, the country has witnessed the reprehensible use of religious movements by politicians to achieve their personal objectives. Consequently, this has led to the political abuse of religion, dragging its adherents into political issues they are not supposed to be involved in.

Nigeria was believed to lack a national party and national leadership during preparations for independence due to the division of the country along ethnic lines (Smythe 1958; Kastfelt 1994). And these problems have extended to the post-colonial Nigerian state. It was after independence that the religious division of the nation state became more obvious to the extent that religion gradually became a tool in the political landscape of Nigerian society, especially amongst the adherents of the foreign religions of Christianity and Islam. Since independence in 1960, politics in Nigeria has been characterized by conflicts arising from the electoral process and the struggle for power. According to Thom-Otuya (2016: 62), "our election into leadership or political offices is beclouded by cheating, fraud and violence. Any contestant who is rigged out of election is always frustrated and can easily rebel against the society due to injustice." This situation or upsurge could be worsened if both rivals belong to different religious movements, as observed in the northern part of the country in 2011 when a Christian defeated a Muslim opponent. Most of the problems arising from such developments can be attributed to the failure of individuals to manage their differences and adhere to the rule of law, including electoral acts, poor orientation, and the perception of winner-takes-all. Examples of religious movements in Nigeria are Mataisine, the Tijaniyya Aetherius Society, the Hare Krishna Movement (ISKCON), Raelism, Baha'ism, Christian Science, Brahma Kumaris, Eckankar, AMORC, the Sa'i Baba Mission, the Higher Consciousness Society, Shia Islam, Sufism, Ahmadiyya, Quraniyoon, Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Pentecostalism, among others, each with different approaches to the achievement of their goals and daily life.

As a result of the dominant perception of politics and governance in Nigeria, the processes of socialization have been seen as means of self-settlement rather than calls to national service (Oladipo 2000). This explains why people could go to the extent of unnecessarily using religious groups to achieve their political agenda.

Before, during, and after campaigns and electioneering, the elite are given adequate security provisions with police and military escorts, even when many communities are not well policed and some lack any presence of security agencies. Security agencies in Nigeria are elite-driven and provide security for the elite class. This is one of the features of security governance dilemmas in Nigeria (Okolie-Osemene 2021).

Nigeria's Fourth Republic refers to the period in which the nation state witnessed a peaceful transition from a military regime to a civilian administration. The emergence of a democratically elected president in 1999 paved the way for more elections from 2003 to 2019, and this republic exists to date. It is characterized by democratization without any form of interference by the Armed Forces.

Nigeria is a secular nation state where citizens are not discriminated against in any manner on the basis of their religion, and individuals are seen as citizens and not as members of a particular religious group, as contained in Chapter 1 and Article 10 of the 1999 Constitution, which states that the Government of the Federation or of a state shall not adopt any religion as a state religion (Ogoloma

2012; Kitause and Achunike 2013). Unfortunately, religion is a source of identity in the polity. This is because religious identity plays a more significant role than national identity in the country (Opeyemi 2016), and many politicians are quick to consider religious movements whenever it is time for electioneering and during national events to the extent that members of two recognized religions, Christianity and Islam, always have an opportunity to start events with prayers and sometimes to end them with prayers. It is also significant to note that political office holders at the national and state levels also go as far as funding pilgrimages by sponsoring those shortlisted to visit the holy sites of Mecca for Muslims and Jerusalem for Christians. This exercise is implemented through government ministries and pilgrim boards recognized in various Nigerian states.

With the complicated nature of politics in Nigeria, it is difficult for political parties to nominate presidential candidates and their running mates for an election if they are adherents of one religious movement. They always have to find a way of striking a balance in different geopolitical zones. Also, the customary nature of organizing public events shows how leaders begin and end programs with prayer. This reveals the significance of religion in the country.

This paper examines the pattern of the political abuse of religion by politicians and adherents of religious movements who often use religious platforms in the state to achieve their political ambitions, thereby promoting groupism, which motivates elite rascality, and religious tensions, which undermine nation-building. It also explores how the political abuse of religion creates a negative perception and generates tensions in the polity. The objectives of this exploratory study include examining how the political abuse of religion creates a negative perception that generates tensions in the polity; investigating the Nigerian elite and their relationship with religious movements for political reasons; exploring why politicians prefer to involve religious movements (both leaders and adherents) in political matters/their ambitions; and determining whether religion should be separated from politics in Nigeria or not. This study is divided into six sections. The first section is the introduction, the second provides conceptual clarifications, the third is an overview of the literature, the fourth is the theoretical framework, the fifth examines the elite and their relationship with religious movements for political reasons, while the sixth provides a conclusion.

The paper utilizes qualitative data, including 200 interviews with scholars and students of politics, religion, and conflict studies, speeches by political and religious leaders, and a review of political party activities. Trend analysis was adopted as the method of data analysis with thematic and tabular presentations of data.

2. Conceptual Clarifications

There are definitions of politics and religion that need to be considered in this study. Politics is about how individuals are involved in the leadership of a state, from the electoral process to the activities of government. Kukah (2001) sees politics as the capture of power, particularly in Africa. Politics "refer to the collective decision making process to the benefit of a large group of people (mostly a nation) that reside in a particular environment" (Moyser 1991: 4, cited in Beyers 2015: 145). Politics, according to Ndubisi (1991: 146), is "the management of the affairs of the people by the people through some form of leadership in order to maximize their welfare and well-being." From this definition, it is obvious that problems emanating from politics stem from the struggle for leadership positions by individuals or groups whose supporters usually take different strategies to undermine their opponents.

Just like conflict, religion is a universal human experience that brings different groups together. According to Ejituwu (1995: 97), "Religion is the worship of the supernatural; and it derives its force

from man's observation that nature, or the unseen, appears so powerful, harsh and unfriendly. He therefore seeks harmony with it through prayers, worship and adulation." According to Dzurgba (2008: 10), religion is a "spiritual and social phenomenon which consists of sovereign power, with a spiritual component consisting of non-physical, immaterial, incorporeal, intangible or invisible entities such as God, Satan, angels, demons, heaven and hell." This, as Durkheim puts it, shows the role of the sacred in all societies where "elementary forms of religious life pervade collective life to the extent that there is basic division of the world into the sacred and the profane, the former being the shared sacrosanct ideals that unite a group, the symbols that represent it, and the collective rites that strengthen group allegiance, and generate the capacity to act in unison" (Jacobsson and Lindblom 2016: 78).

Man is "seeking to reach God by supplication, submission, offerings and faith, all in the attempt to respond effectively to his physical environment" (Horton 1984: 2, cited in Ejituwu 1995). The fact that religion is humanity explains why Islam and Christianity teach humility (Noibi 2001). Spirituality in religion explains why there are different classifications of people in society, such as believers, sinners, infidels, and those born again, among others (Kitause and Achunike 2013; Danjibo and Okolie-Osemene 2018). With such classifications, adherents and new converts are told to embrace deliverance, evangelism, and salvation for spiritual fulfillment with assurances of a better life and a life after death. This explains why Lenshie and Inalegwu (2014: 49) maintain that "the religious elites keep harping on certain areas within the 'holy book' that speaks much about the unbeliever and the treatment to be mated on them if they refused to accept the new faith." A notable difference between religion and politics is the superiority of religion that is associated with the belief in the existence of a deity.

3. Overview of the Literature

The issues related to religious movements, the state, and politics can be approached from many perspectives. This shows why there is a corpus of literature on the subject. While religions are classified as spiritual activities, the earthly and material existences of humanity are found within the domain of politics (Beyers 2015). This means that religion is supernatural but politics is relegated to carnality and ends within the human environment. Just like culture, religion gives meaning to life, based on the relationship between the human being and his creator (Kukah 2007). It is noteworthy that such a relationship permeates every aspect of life, establishing a common bond between the believer (worshipper) and his creator throughout his lifetime.

Oshewolo and Borok (2015) argue that a lack of religion in any nation could make its society lack conscience, compassion, and progress. Nevertheless, it is instructive that this view is based on the spiritual value of religion, which Nwolise (2012) sees as the superiority and relevance of spiritual security. According to him, "when national political leaders belong to antagonistic and belligerent secret cult groups, the foundation of the nation is not Godly, and there will be fighting against powers and principalities in high places" (Nwolise 2012: 40). Given the emotional nature of religion, it is easily transformed from an instrument of peacebuilding to one of violence, especially when people are provoked (Ejituwu 1995; Kitause and Achunike 2013; Lenshie and Inalegwu 2014). Despite the ambivalent relationship between religion and politics across the world, different people often use religion as a political instrument, especially whenever they are desperate to achieve individual or group interests (Beyers 2015). In spite of the millions of adherents who belong to varieties of Indigenous African religion that have a pervasive force (Chidester 2018), most physical manifestations of religious conflicts involve more of the worshippers of foreign religions.

In dissecting the relationship between religion and politics, Beyers (2015: 159) highlights the reasons for utilizing religion as a political instrument, namely: religion and politics are emotional in nature and identity markers of human existence; politicians use it to prove their active religious engagement through religious gatherings and utilize religious platforms for political meetings; there are different contexts of histories of religious tolerance to the influence of political decisions; religious communities are effective partners in the implementation of political policies; and religious considerations could be part of political decisions. Martin (2019) also notes that politicians are fond of desperately offering electorates benefits of government, especially material gifts such as cash and alcohol, with the aim of influencing their choice of candidates to vote for as such patronage could motivate their cooperation. What this means is that one of the perceptions of politicians is that displaying generosity through gifts determines voting behavior on polling day and opens doors of understanding and cooperation with the populace. But this could be counterproductive and disappointing as some voters reserve the right to vote for whomever they wish, not considering the resources they may have received from a candidate they do not like. In addition, on getting into office after elections, the elite may only pretend to rule when the essence of their governance is focused on the embezzlement of state resources (Kukah 2001).

The fact that Nigeria is very religious is not disputable. Campbell (2011: xv) offers an illuminating analysis of the place of religion in Nigeria with the assertion that "popular alienation and a fragmented establishment has contributed to Nigeria becoming one of the most religious and, at the same time, one of the most violent countries in the world." Recent reports of the Terrorism Index and Global Peace Index indicate that Nigeria is one of the ten most troubled states in the world as a result of religious-related violence. This ugly trend causes religion to lose its relevance in the area of sustaining religious and social ideals if it is not reconciling peoples and communities as desired (Ogwu 2001; Bariledum and Vurasi 2013; Kitause and Achunike 2013).

It is believed that government undertakes religious instruction and blends secular and sectarian education without considering sanctioning religious ceremonies and observances in public schools across the country (Osetien and Gamaliel 2002). The violence that is often associated with religious issues has to do with attacks and reprisals by the adherents of the major religious groups – Christians and Muslims. In the words of Danjibo (2012: 236), "interreligious competition shows how Christians and Muslims act fundamentally as if the religions originated from the country rather than from an alien land." Because of this fundamentalism, religious movements are now perceived with hostility in intergroup relations (Danjibo and Okolie-Osemene 2018; Suleiman 2019).

Despite the provisions of Section 10 of the 1979 and 1999 Constitutions and Section 11 of the 1989 Draft Constitution on the secularity of the country, which restrict the Federal Government or states from adopting any religion as a state religion, there were controversies over whether some northern states violated Section 10 of the 1999 Constitution by implementing sharia law (Goshit 2002; Osetien and Gamaliel 2002). The religionization of politics since Nigeria's independence is well documented with the entrenchment of religion as a potent force in political party mobilization, regime legitimacy, and the formation of identity (Kastfelt 1994; Fox and Sandler 2003; Onapajo 2012, 2016; Vaughan 2016). Thus, the regime's legitimacy is gained through members of religious movements being elected into leadership positions. Such a result is based on the majority of voters being drawn from religious groups.

Nigeria is a product of the theory of strange bedfellows, meaning fundamental diversity, which explains the coming together of several ethnic groups that did

not have things in common like religious belief, ideological orientation, language(s), and culture under one umbrella called the Nigerian state for political and administrative purposes; this was perfected by the British principle of indirect rule that ended up estranging the groups (Achebe 2012; Ajayi 2017; Adesina 2020; Odunlami and Oyeranmi 2020). These were independent states in the pre-colonial era until the colonial administrators brought them together through amalgamation in 1914. The explanation of Achebe (2012) reveals that in a country that has Animists, Muslims, and Christians, northern Nigeria was the seat of several ancient kingdoms, such as the Kanem-Bornu, which Shehu Usman dan Fodio and his jihadists absorbed into the Muslim Fulani Empire. The fact that these ethnic groups were different in the area of their religious practices shows their fundamental diversity, which has remained a source of difference and contestations in the polity to date. This is because, since they recognize different deities, practicing politics with religious mindsets further divides the different groups.

The role of religion in Nigeria's political landscape has raised a question of whether it is a resource for peace or a source of conflict (Rotimi and Olatomide 2018). According to Falola and Heaton (2008: 8),

> [r]egional, ethnic, and religious identities have become heavily politicized. Christians from the south fear domination by the slightly more populous northern Muslims at the federal level. At the state level, ethnic minorities fear domination by larger ethnic groups: the Hausa–Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the southwest, and the Igbo in the southeast. These ethnic and religious tensions have resulted in one civil war in Nigeria, from 1967 to 1970, as well as countless episodes of both organized attacks and spontaneous riots in which ethnic and religious minorities have been targeted. Religious and ethnic violence continues to be a regular occurrence today and shows no signs of abating.

The fear by both Christians and Muslims is based on a perceived agenda by both of the religious movements that the other will take advantage of political offices to implement policies that could dominate the other and undermine the religious freedom stipulated in the country's constitution.

Writing on the role and politicization of religion, Vaughan (2016) offers insightful views with the assertion that the divisiveness of religion manifests in its politicization, becoming a tool of struggle for the control of the Nigerian state across religious boundaries, and this is rooted in the people's stronger allegiance to religious affiliations than political parties. This is why Opeyemi (2016) argues that the marriage between politicians and religious leaders is intact in Nigeria. That is why it is becoming easier for politicians to use religion for political purposes.

Some studies have identified the role of political parties in giving room to the influence of religion in party politics. Despite Nigeria having both religious and non-religious parties, Singh (2011: 18) notes that "political parties have been the main institutions that have transmitted and processed religious demands into political systems," and achieving success means investing in relationships outside their fold and seeking the cooperation of other religious movements. With the studies reviewed here, it is conspicuous that there are linkages between politics, religion, and the state in Nigeria despite it being a secular state. This is the origin of the political abuse of religion that generates tensions and religious conflicts in the country.

4. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the power theory, resource mobilization theory, and the manipulation of religion theory. The power theory covers the blind spot of pluralism by insisting on and supplying the element of compulsion and coercion for an environment of order in which all groups are able to thrive and pursue their different interests without (human) society being returned to the state of nature, where life was solitary, poor, and brutish (Ekwonna 2015). According to Oladipo (2000: 126), "In the absence of democracy and social justice which are the ingredients of genuine human community, people are bound

to resort to whatever weapons are available to them, including those of ethnicity, religion, etc., to fight for power and influence, or even to secure their survival as individuals or [a] group."

Nigerian elites are individuals who are stakeholders in government or close to the corridors of power and have significant influence in the polity, particularly in the areas of policy formulation, appointments, and the award of contracts, to the extent that they tend to dominate society (Albert 2012). They are Nigeria's upper and ruling class who focus their interest on political governance and seek to influence governance processes as they position themselves to determine the destinies of the less privileged masses (Odubajo and Alabi 2014). As political elites, they have a decision-making capability due to their status in government at various levels of leadership (Bariledum and Vurasi 2013). They are capable of using all the resources within their reach to struggle for power or influence the decisions of those in power. Graf (1983: 119) reveals that

> The Nigerian dominant classes have evolved from a fractious, ethno-centred and self-seeking series of groupings into a relatively cohesive, autonomous and self-confident stratum capable of regulating its internecine conflicts while pursuing its collective interests as against the interests of other social strata.

The manipulation of religion theory explains how elites use religion in a bid to influence state matters. Usman Bala sees it as an act of controlling the action of a person or group of people without their knowledge of the goals, method of such control, and without a form of control that is being exercised on them at all (Bala 1987, cited in Ayantayo 2009: 103). The power theory and manipulation of religion theory also have a relationship with the resource mobilization phenomenon, which explains "the activities of control agents to resist the demands for change, even when there are conflicts, differences and protests in a modern plural setting," manifesting in the fear of the domination and marginalization of one group by another. This fear manifests in the relationship between Christians, Muslims, and indigenous religions, which are categorized as African Traditional Religions. The fear of domination and struggle for control hinder interreligious harmony and encourage desperation, particularly the abuse of religion to gain power, mobilize groups/sympathizers, and adopt the platform of religion to shape public perception for personal gains.

Nigeria has suffered from group-oriented threats to intergroup relations. Groupism is also the factor that motivates the manipulation of religion in Nigeria, especially due to the religious division of the country. With the lopsided clamor for presidential power, groupism has become more pronounced in the Fourth Republic. According to Stewart, Brown, and Mancini, "group inequality provides powerful grievances which leaders can use to mobilize people for political action, by calling on cultural markers (a common history, language or religion) and pointing to group exploitation" (2010: 8, cited in Ibaba 2011: 201). This also links to the position of Brubaker (2002) that groupism motivates social conflicts that are traceable to ethnicity, nationalism, and race, to the extent that such a perception of the "other" makes it difficult for stakeholders to achieve the goal of peacebuilding.

The foregoing is consonant with the statement by Ekekwe that there are problems with the fractionalization of the ruling elites in the country based on ethnic lines and the use of state power to promote the interests of one group at the expense of others (1966, cited in Ibaba 2011: 201). In other words, high levels of ethno-religious tensions and elite fractionalization combine with high levels of group grievance that promote violent contestations for power aimed at facilitating sectional interests in Nigeria (Kastfelt 1994; Bariledum and Vurasi 2013; Vaughan 2016; Oyefusi 2018; Odunlami and Oyeranmi 2020). It is remarkable that inter-elite conflict brought down Nigeria's First Republic, and this paved the way for intra-elite collaboration that has charac-

terized subsequent democratic administrations in Nigeria (Graf 1983). Oraegbunam (2011) maintains that some setbacks associated with religious activities are due to the unhealthy mixture of religion with politics, which is characterized by acrimonious relationships and agitations by victimized and excluded groups.

Consequently, power mongers and exploiters have emerged to the extent that they usually misrepresent their motives and easily take undue advantage of the oppressed class of citizens found across all geopolitical zones, with some individuals/groups having more power/influence than they deserve (Oladipo 2000). As far as the issue of group exploitation is concerned, Nigeria is at risk considering how religion is used as a platform to exploit people for political purposes and not for the advancement of religious objectives. This problem is more pronounced in states that have a history of religious-related conflicts and competition between minorities and their counterparts who have dominated leadership positions for decades. Unlike Kano, Zamfara, Kaduna, Sokoto, Plateau, Kogi, Bauchi, and other states, southeastern and southsouthern states may not have recorded many inter-religious conflicts arising from the political abuse of religion, but politicians in these two regions usually identify with worshippers in many churches to enhance their political success.

5. The Elite and their Relationship with Religious Movements for Political Reasons

The social control value of religion has been established. This is based on how religious practices discourage crimes and victimization and promote peaceful living and good neighborliness. As Kinanee (2018) puts it, religious involvement results in fewer life stressors because engaging in spiritual activities is associated with forgiveness, less substance abuse, crime reduction, social support, generosity, marital fidelity, and other lifestyle practices, thereby enhancing well-being, hope, and satisfaction, which reduce the possibility of depression. Despite these qualities and social control values of religion, individuals sometimes abuse religion with impunity. This is more common in politics, where materialism is given more preference than spirituality. This is the bane of social relations in considering how such abuse promotes endemic corruption.

Elite rascality shows how the privileged few use ordinary people who belong to different religious movements to achieve their selfish political interests. Groupism and elite rascality encourage the political abuse of religion, which creates religious tensions. Securitized elite form cabals consisting of shadowy groups of people bound together by certain sinister political interests (Albert 2012). Elite rascality is usually rooted in the activities of cabals and privileged individuals who may have economic or political power and wield much influence in the polity. Campbell (2011: xxi) describes the elite problem in the country as follows:

> Many of the elite are still convinced that Nigeria is "too big to fail." Such a view encourages the elites' unwillingness to address the issues that so trouble the country and may even promote their irresponsible behavior, such as the manipulation of ethnic or religious conflict for their own narrow political ends, over which they soon lose control. Successfully addressing issues potentially fatal to the state will require a political process that has the confidence of the Nigerian people.

Writing on how the elite, especially the political class, advance religion as a cause because of their legitimacy problem, Kukah (2001: 21) states that "the failure of the Nigeria state or political class, whether in uniform or out of uniform, largely accounts for the contradiction we now find within the whole question of religion in Africa."

The advantage behind elite collegiality usually cracks during transition periods when the winner-takes-all political culture of the country becomes more intense and politicians engage in the struggle for power (Campbell 2011). It is assumed that losers of elections will be condemned and investigated by an in-

coming government for their previous activities in office. For such politicians, elite rascality is a way of facilitating their victory without taking cognizance of the social implications in society.

Elite rascality and the politics of religion occur at different levels and areas of national life, from policy formulation to implementation, political appointments, and the electoral process. The government in Nigeria has always established relationships with religious movements both at the federal and state levels. Kukah (2007: 37) identifies the exclusive relationship between Kano state governments and Muslims as follows:

> When a state like Kano decides to set up a law enforcement organ like the *Hisbah* to enforce public morality, the idea may be noble, but it is exclusive and it punishes. To be an indigene of Kano and be a Christian denies you the right to join the Hisbah no matter your qualification. If the Hisbah are only Muslims, normally, you are placing non-Muslims in a vulnerable situation and dividing the society. Those Muslims who have jobs through the Hisbah would naturally rejoice that religion has given a privilege to them, but thus us an abuse of religion and it undermines our common humanity and citizenship. Why would I be a citizen of Kano and feel inferior because I am not a Muslim? Why should any door be shut against me because of my faith? These are the dangers that we must guard against and the earlier we attack this cancer, the better it will be for everyone.

No wonder one of the respondents interviewed noted that, "in fact, the political abuse of religion has become a clog in the wheel of progress of the 'one Nigeria' project." This is because, rather than create an enabling environment for all groups, religion has become a hindrance to intergroup relations with the involvement of government officials who adopt religion in state matters. Such a development undermines humanity and citizenship because religious leaders have allowed politicians to use religion as a medium of law enforcement. It is noteworthy that Kano, like many states in the northern part of Nigeria, recognizes the sharia legal system. This is against the Constitution of Nigeria, which only upholds the secularity of the state.

It is worth mentioning that after the 2015 presidential election, which was won by the All Progressives Congress, post-election appointments were designed to widen the chasm of ethnic, regional, partisan, and religious lines in Nigeria (Mbah et al. 2019). The keenly contested election showed the level of divisiveness that has beclouded the country. Since then, the narrative of political appointments has centered on this situation with allegations of nepotism and religious domination in public life to the extent that people in the southern part of the country have accused the president of neglecting the federal character principle when appointing government officials.

The politicization of religious identities in electoral competition has taken an intra-party form, though national parties appeal to religious constituencies for electoral support (Nolte et al. 2009, cited in Singh 2011). From the interviews conducted while conducting this study, 62% of respondents agreed that politicians have abused religion since 1999, while 30.77% were undecided. About 7.69% disagreed with the position. About 91.67% agreed that the political abuse of religion generates tensions in the polity, while 46.15% rated the involvement of religious leaders not so desirable, 38.46% rated it somewhat desirable, while 15.38% rated their involvement as very desirable. What this means is that there is agreement that religious leaders have been involved in political issues in one way or another, even as shadow parties or as critics of the government.

A reflection on the views expressed by respondents indicates that despite being involved in political issues, religious leaders leave much to be desired, especially in the area of setting a boundary to prevent politicians from taking undue advantage of religion so as not to undermine the essence of their spirituality. Because the difference between religion and politics has been neglected, it is now easy for people to assume that religion is a platform for the business of politics or to disregard the piety and respect religious groups

are supposed to have (interviews, 2020), thereby creating a negative perception of religious leaders and religion itself due to its use as a tool for political gains.

Such a boundary between religion, politics, and state matters is imperative to prevent some scandals often associated with the relationship between religious leaders, political office holders, and their followers. This is needful because, according to Opeyemi (2016), "after the 2015 elections, many religious groups and individuals were alleged in corruption cases, receiving election bribes to campaign for a particular candidate. In the $2.1billion arms probe, as published in Premium Times (Nigerian online news platform), Bafarawa confessed that he received N4.6bn from Col. Dasuki for 'spiritual purposes.' Christian leaders in the country and Islamic clerics were alleged to have received money to campaign for President Jonathan during the last election." From this, one question that demands an answer is from what sources did they generate such funds? This also leads to another question on whether it is necessary to pay people for prayers for electoral success since God is the giver of power. Such a move would not have been seen as a necessity if politicians themselves built spirituality through faith based on the divine mandate that one who is ordained by God to lead should emerge as the winner of the elections.

Some electorates often vote for the candidates of their choice for religious reasons to avoid what they regard as religious imposition, and those who vote beyond religious considerations do so based on the economic empowerment aspect of manifestoes (Babalola 2020).

It is not surprising that the majority of the respondents who were asked whether religion should be separated from politics in Nigeria said yes, with only three responding no. So, the fact that very few people are in support of religion being involved in the political affairs of the country means that religious leaders and their followers need to keep to the boundary between politics and religious matters. This will also enable them to make a point to discourage politicians from running to religious groups during elections for personal gain. This is apt because, as noted by one of the respondents on why politicians like using religious movements during elections in the Fourth Republic, "This is simply because the religious sects are the most populated and bonded unions in the society." This is obvious, considering how desperate they are to gain the support of the masses, especially the electorate. All the respondents agreed that people are emotional and sentimental when it comes to issues of religion, and politicians' attachment to any group gives them an advantage in the build-up to elections. Since people's support could enhance their chances of emerging victorious, they desperately use any religious movement of their choice. According to one of the oral sources, "religious movements are very effective in changing the voting behaviors of the electorate." In fact, such support is usually sought after due to the fact that the outcome of elections is determined by the number of votes cast by the electorate, whose voting behavior remains a critical factor for the candidates.

It is at the point of desperation to influence votes that party candidates abuse religion by engaging in acts that do not represent the principles of religious practice. This is where elite rascality undermines the electoral process by creating groupism and perceptions of hostility, which often escalates tensions in the polity. A respondent identified "the sentiments Nigerians attach to religious dogma and fanaticism," which is why they easily embrace any faithful as part of them when they come campaigning for political offices. Such acts could lead to electoral and post-election violence. Another respondent also said that this is "because religion is the easiest tool to get their results, knowing that our people love religion so much, and once used, the person or people involved gets results easily." This study disagrees with the argument of Noibi (2001) that

religion should be integrated into every fabric of our national life. One question worth asking in this regard is which religious movement would be projected as a state religion? This is difficult, considering the existence of different religious groups in Nigerian society. Besides, it would be difficult for religious leaders to prevent politicians and their supporters from perpetrating violence when they have already anticipated victory with the massive support of religious movements, and their supporters would hardly accept the outcome if they perceive the process as not being credible, free, and fair. Thus, amassing votes from populated religious movements is an added advantage.

The interviews also revealed that some religious leaders have been partisan, and that explains why politicians easily use religious platforms to campaign for votes. According to the respondents, "religious leaders often campaign for politicians and get rewards from politicians, and the ones who are involved in political issues take sides with parties and persons as against standing for truth, human rights, and justice irrespective of religious affiliation." There are also views that some religious leaders get involved in political issues by commenting on the issues arising from the polity and also by supporting one group or person against the others. Only one respondent stated that the "Christian Association of Nigeria decided to sacrifice its platform for politicians to promote religious intolerance." However, notable religious leaders have actively engaged in rebuking politicians for their perceived insensitivity to the plights of the people and the lack of political will to promote human rights.

In response to how religious movements and their leaders have been involved in political issues in the Fourth Republic, one respondent argued that:

> They served as third-party campaigners for politicians. These politicians belong to a particular denomination which, of course, contributes financially towards the growth of faith-based organizations. Thus voting and campaigning for such politicians would place the church in a strategic position. By so doing, religious leaders do everything possible to maintain their status.

It is necessary to mention the fact that involvement in political matters is not only born out of the need to give members who are in politics a platform for success but also based on the desire to ensure "Godly" people are in power, especially when some groups believe that righteousness exalts a nation and that ungodliness could subject citizens to danger. This explains why many respondents agreed that religious leaders are involved by casting their votes during elections and encouraging their members to register to get their voters cards ahead of elections.

The fact that some respondents identified religion as a spiritual commitment that regulates the physical world shows that politicians know the strategic significance of being identified with religious leaders for prayers, spiritual backing, and support. It is desired that this attachment translates to electoral success and spiritual security in office.

The political abuse of religion also reveals how politicians often visit places of worship to either worship with the faithful or seek the prayers and endorsement of religious leaders and their members with the intention of soliciting votes with promises of a better life when elected, even when such promises are supposed to be constitutional responsibilities of the would-be leaders.

There are also instances when politicians visit shrines to take an oath of allegiance to a deity or godfather to facilitate their electoral victory. According to Ajayi (2011), some political leaders have been alleged to have visited shrines and local cult associations that host different deities in the indigenous religion mainly for oath-taking and to pay allegiance either for secrecy or to sustain themselves in power. A notable instance is the Okija Shrine incident in the southeastern region during Olusegun Obasanjo's administration. It is noteworthy that indigenous religion is known for accepting rituals and sacrifices of different types depending on the context and need. A study by Olumati (2015)

reveals that no natural phenomenon exerts so much influence or is as pervasive among the Ikwerre in Rivers State as Ali, the earth deity. This is spiritual security. The abuse of African Traditional Religion also shows how politicians are supplied with human parts for sacrifices and the preparation of charms ahead of elections, like a politician and his boys did in Niger State in 2011 before they were arrested by the police (Nwolise 2012).

The political abuse of religion occurs both at the central level and in the 36 states of Nigeria, especially as politicians go from one place to another in search of supporters. The clash of civilizations and confrontations arising from the multiplicity of religious movements explains why Mahdi (2001) makes a case for inter-religious coexistence with the assertion that the mutual acceptance of religious plurality, protection of religious freedom, religious tolerance, and peaceful cooperation between the faiths remains critical. It is not disputable that the perception of hostility between religious movements is occasioned by the neglect of religious tolerance and increasing competition, which sometimes has a connection with the struggle for power and resource accumulation.

This paper argues that the political abuse of religion became more prevalent in Nigeria's Fourth Republic due to the successful handover of power to the civilian administration, which created an enabling environment for the formation of more than 50 political parties and their politicking activities. The transitions in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019 tested the country's democratization significantl

6. Pictures of Religious Celebrations of National Events

Fig. 1. Interdenominational service at the International Christian Centre

Fig. 2. Nigeria's 60th independence day special Juma'at prayers, September 25, 2020 (Source: author via NTA News)

Both pictures show the connection between religion and the state and how national events are also marked by Christians and Muslims. During the Independence Day service at the International Christian Centre, the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) used the opportunity to preach against bitterness, secessionist threat and hatred in Nigeria, and the need for equality as a matter of principle in the country.

S/No	Year	Candidates	Political Party	Religion
1	1999	Olusegun Obasanjo (President) and Atiku Abubakar (Vice President)	People's Democratic Party	Christian and Muslim
2	2003	Olusegun Obasanjo (President) and Atiku Abubakar (Vice President)	People's Democratic Party	Christian and Muslim
3	2007	Umaru Ya'Adua and Goodluck Jonathan (President and Vice President)	People's Democratic Party	Muslim and Christian
4	2011	Goodluck Jonathan and Nemandi Sambo (President and Vice President)	People's Democratic Party	Christian and Muslim
5	2015	Muhammadu Buhari and Yemi Osinbajo (President and Vice President)	All Progressives Congress	Muslim and Christian
6	2019	Muhammadu Buhari and Yemi Osinbajo (President and Vice President)	All Progressives Congress	Muslim and Christian

Tab. 1. Winners of Presidential Elections in the Fourth Republic (Source: Author's compilation).

S/no	Perception	Consequence
1	People see religion as a tool for political benefit	Endorsement of wrong candidates/ vote-buying
2	It makes people think politicians are more important than religious groups	Motivates people to go beyond the boundary between politics and religion
3	It portrays religion as a business	Vote-buying
4	Politicians think it is possible to hijack religion to create division in society	Religious intolerance and disunity in the country
5	People think that electioneering is an opportunity for religious groups to capture power for the benefit of their adherents and to demonstrate superiority	Threat to other religious groups
6	It portrays religion as a platform for unhealthy rivalry	Perception of hostility
7	The involvement of politicians with different religious affiliations means mutual suspicion	Electoral violence and hate speech
8	Political power determines the destinies of people rather than the supernatural, and God is indifferent to the political mismanagement of national wealth	Struggle for power, vote–buying, and endemic corruption
9	Politicians know that religion is the easiest tool to use to get sympathy from their followers	Religious conflicts during elections
10	It makes followers think that a person of the same faith as them can govern better than others, thereby causing conflicts among different groups	Religious intolerance

Tab. 2. How the political abuse of religion creates negative perceptions in Nigeria (Source: Author's compilation).

Table 1 shows the winners who have ruled Nigeria within the period under study. The issue of the zoning of the presidency also played a significant role in determining the choice of candidates by political parties, especially the ruling parties.

Table 2 shows how the political abuse of religion explains why elections in the country are also periods of religious politics, with elites creating different perceptions through their activities and promises. It was alleged that during the 2003 presidential elections, Major General Muhammadu Buhari cautioned Muslims to vote only for Muslim candidates, thereby generating cold blood between Christians and Muslims (Ayantayo 2009). The politics of religion and associated debilitating costs caused General Buhari, the presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress, to respond to criticisms over alleged fanatism, saying that he does not encourage extremism. He swore that he had no disdain for adherents of Christianity, and the negative perception held in some quarters that he is an Islamic fanatic was rebutted when a group of pastors under the aegis of the Northern Christian Leaders Eagle Eyes Forum endorsed his bid for the presidency in Abuja (Abuh 2015: 3).

This paper is significant considering that Nigeria celebrated its diamond jubilee on October 1, 2020. Nigeria has gone through years of interethnic and religious crises, some of which have a political coloration. The People's Democratic Party has produced more presidents, while the strong opposition presented by the All Progressives Congress contributed to the victory of the party in 2019. The year 2011 was more violent due to the fiercely contested presidential election that saw the Congress for Progressive Change lose to the People's Democratic Party; many people were killed, especially Christians, while some were raped during the post-election violence.

It is not disputable that religion has social control values, but they need to be channeled into making society more peaceful by preaching tolerance and forgiveness instead of giving politicians the opportunity to abuse religious principles through the politics of exclusion, unhealthy rivalry, and struggle for power. This is in tandem with Marsilio's secular state thesis, which suggests that religion should remain where it belongs in the state and that the state should not be at the mercy of religious groups. Nigeria stands to gain from this with reduced controversies generated by politicians and religious movements during electioneering. The avoidance of politics remains crucial if all religions are to speak with one voice to address a common problem that affects the national development, corruption, which requires an "ethical revolution," which Ndubisi (1991) sees as a solution to the country's predicament rather than indulging in the politics of religion. The desperation to attempt overshadowing religion with politics or using religion to advance the goals of politicians would downplay sincerity. This could undermine the people's consciences and national integration.

7. Conclusion

This paper has examined the abuse of religion by politicians. Religion preaches the force of faith and the belief in the capacity of omnipotent God to transform human society with his power to save people from danger and give them dominion in their environment. In religion, spirituality is expected to make people have the vision to see beyond the present, and this is why adherents are not supposed to allow political issues to make religion an instrument of violence. Unfortunately, groupism promotes the activities of anti-democratic forces and creates a platform for the political abuse of religion.

The competition between religious movements in Nigeria is more pronounced within the foreign religions of Christianity and Islam than the indigenous religions. The latter have not taken center stage as far as politics is concerned. Even those who identify with indigenous beliefs rarely practice their activities openly but instead carry out the demands of their faith, like sacrifices for political success or influence, secretly. However, there are times when candidates visit communities of some groups to meet either their traditional rulers or leaders of religious groups for the purpose of soliciting votes.

From this study, it is obvious that the country does not need the religionization of politics for good governance and the consolidation of democracy. Although it is not disputable that religious movements are attractive to politicians because of their size and loyalty to their spiritual leaders, their inability to check elite rascality sustains the political abuse of religion, which hinders the actualization of a united country. This is why all groups should draw inspiration from the holy books to be properly guided by the commandments in their actions in the polity to discourage the violation of the value of religion to humanity. Such actions would be within the principles of socioeconomic justice, peacebuilding, and conflict transformation.

It is possible to reduce religious tensions usually associated with political activities in the country, but this can only be achieved when all stakeholders put an end to dragging religious leaders and their followers into matters that are outside the spiritual responsibilities of the movements. Instead of being platforms of political tensions, religious movements should promote inter-religious peacebuilding involving all political parties, advocating for peaceful intergroup relations in the electoral process.

Works Cited

Abuh, A. (2015). "I'm not a Religious Fanatic, Buhari insists." *The Guardian*, February 13, 2015.

Achebe, C. (2012). *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*. New York: Penguin.

Adesina, O. C. (2020). "'A Terrain ... Angels Would Fear to Tread': Biographies and History in Nigeria." *Southern Journal for Contemporary History* 45, 1: 6–29.

Ajayi, S. A. (2011). "The Place of Ogboso in Baptist Missionary Enterprise in Nigeria." *Ogirisi: A Journal of African Studies* 8: 16–38.

Ajayi, S. A. (2017). "From amalgamation to the quest for national integration in Nigeria: Issues, challenges and prospects." *Ilorin Journal of History and International Studies* 7, 1: 1–33.

Albert, O. I. (2012). "The Securitized Elite: A Deconstruction of the 'Cabals' in Nigerian Political Economy." *NISER RSS* 8: 1–26. Accessed July 5, 2020. http://www.niseronline.org/downloads/Albert_Cabals%20and%20Nigerians%20Final2.pdf.

Ayantayo, J. K. (2009). "Religious Factors in the Nigerian Public Sphere: Burdens and Prospects." *Africa Development* XXXIV, 3 & 4: 93–10.

Babalola, D. (2020). "Ethno-religious voting in Nigeria: interrogating voting patterns in the 2019 presidential election." *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 109, 4: 377–385.

Bala, Y. U. (1987). *The Manipulation of Religion in Nigeria 1977–1987*. Kaduna: Vanguard Printers and Publishers Ltd.

Bariledum, K. and Vurasi, S. S. (2013). "Political Elites and the Challenges of National Development: The Nigeria Experience." *European Scientific Journal* 9, 31: 161–172.

Beyers, J. (2015). "Religion as Political Instrument: The Case of Japan and South Africa." *Journal for the Study of Religion* 28, 1: 142–164.

Brubaker, R. (2002). "Ethnicity without groups." *European Journal of Sociology* 43, 2: 163–189.

Campbell, J. (2011). *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Chidester, D. (2018). "World Religions in the World." *Journal for the Study of Religion* 31, 1: 41–53.

Danjibo, N. D. (2012). "The Impact of Sharia' on Intergroup Relations in Post-Colonial Nigeria." In *The Dynamics of Inter-Group Relations in Nigeria Since 1960. Essays in Honour of Obaro Ikime @ 70*, eds. Ogbogbo, C. B. N.; Olaniyi, R. O. and Muojama, O. G., 231–249. Ibadan: BWright Integrated Publishers.

Danjibo, N. D. and Okolie-Osemene, J. (2018). "Religious Movements and Lethal Violence in Nigeria: Patterns and Evolution." *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies* 11, 4: 177–185.

Dzurgba, A. (2008). *Case Studies of Conflict and Democracy in Nigeria*. Ibadan: John Archers Publishers.

Ejituwu, N. C. (1995). "Yok-Òbòlò: The Influence of a Traditional Religion on the Socio-Cultural Life of the Andoni People." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 65, 1: 97–113.

Ekekwe, E. (1966). *Class and State in Nigeria*. Lagos: Longman.

Ekwonna, S. I. (2015). "Capacity Gap in Elitism, Group, and Power Frameworks: The Phenomenon of Envy as Framework of Analysis." *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* 4, 6: 23–31.

Falola, T. and Heaton, M. (2008). *A History of Nigeria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fox, J. and Sandler, S. (2003). "Quantifying religion: Toward building more effective ways of measuring religious influence on state-level behaviour." *Journal of Church and State* 45, 2: 559–588.

Goshit, Z. D. (2002). "The influence of religion on the reform movements in the 19th century U.S.A.: Lessons for Nigeria." In *Religion in the United States of America*, eds. Amali, S. O. O.; Owens-Ibie, N.; Ogunleye, F.; Adesina, O. and Uji, C., 33–45. Ibadan: Hope Publications.

Graf, W. D. (1983). "Nigerian Elite Consolidation and African Elite Theories: Toward an Explanation of African Liberal Democracy." *Verfassung und Recht in Übersee / Law and Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America* 16, 2: 119–138.

Horton, R. (1984). "The Contemporary Relevance of Kalahari Religion." Paper presented at Buguma Centenary, Port Harcourt.

Ibaba, S. I. (2011). "Harnessing the peace-development nexus: Overcoming cultural barriers to peace in Nigeria." *Journal of Intra-African Studies* 5: 190–213.

Jacobsson, K. and Lindblom, J. (2016). *Animal Rights Activism*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Kastfelt, N. (1994). *Religion and Politics in Nigeria: A Study in Middle Belt Christianity*. London: British Academic Press.

Kinanee, J. B. (2018). "The trauma of frustration and depression: A dilemma for mental health professionals in Nigeria." Inaugural lecture, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, April 26, 2018, Port Harcourt.

Kitause, R. H. and Achunike, H. C. (2013). "Religion in Nigeria from 1900–2013." *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 3, 18: 45–56.

Kukah, M. H. (2001). "Role of religion and nation's density." *Nigeria Institute of International Affairs Lecture Series* 79: 20–23.

Kukah, M. H. (2007). *Religion, Culture and the Politics of Development*. Lagos: Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilisation.

Lenshie, N. E. and Inalegwu, S. A. (2014). "Clash of Religious Civilisations in Nigeria: Understanding Dynamics of Religious Violence." *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 4, 17: 47–60.

Mahdi, A. S. E. (2001). "Religion and national integration." *Nigeria Institute of International Affairs Lecture Series* 79: 7–19.

Martin, N. (2019). "Enforcing political loyalties in local elections: An ethnographic account from Punjab." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 58, 1: 63–81.

Mbah, P. O.; Nwangwu, C. and Ugwu, S. C. (2019). "Contentious elections, political exclusion, and challenges of national integration in Nigeria." *Cogent Social Sciences* 5, 1: 1–21.

Moyser, G. (1991). *Politics and Religion in the Modern World*. London: Routledge.

Ndubisi, A. F. (1991). *Nigeria What Hope?* Enugu: CECTA (Nig.) Limited.

Noibi, S. D. (2001). "Religion as necessity for human existence." *Nigeria Institute of International Affairs Lecture Series* 79: 24–25.

Nwolise, O. B. C. (2012). *Spiritual Dimensions of Human and National Security*. Ibadan: Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ibadan.

Odubajo, T. and Alabi, B. (2014). "The Elite Factor in Nigeria's Political-Power Dynamics." *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences* 8, 1: 121–139.

Odunlami, B. A. and Oyeranmi, O. S. (2020). "Ethnic-Politics, Class Identity and the Crisis of Nation-Building in Nigeria, 1914–1970." *Kampala International University Journal of Humanities* 5, 2: 55–65.

Ogoloma, F. I. (2012). "Secularism in Nigeria: An Assessment." *AFRREV IJAH: An International Journal of Arts and Humanities* 1, 3: 63–74. Accessed August 25, 2019. http://www.ajol.info/index.php/ijah/article/view/106671/96580

Ogwu, J. (2001). "Introduction." *Nigeria Institute of International Affairs Lecture Series* 79: 1–4.

Okolie-Osemene, J. (2021). "Nigeria's Security Governance Dilemmas During the Covid-19 Crisis." *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies* 48, 2: 260–277.

Oladipo, O. (2000). "Nigeria in Twenty-First Century: Challenges of freedom and development." *Recall: A Chronicle of Nigerian Events* 1: 120–130.

Olumati, R. (2015). "The Impact of Christianity and Modernity on Ali – Earth Goddess of the Traditional Religion of the Ikwerre People, Rivers State, Nigeria." *African Research Review* 9, 1: 95–108. Accessed May 25, 2020. http://www.ajol.info/index.php/afrrev/article/view/113878/103593.

Olusakin, A. M. (2006). "Peace in the Niger Delta: Economic development and the politics of dependence on oil." *International Journal on World Peace* 23, 2: 3–34.

Onapajo, H. (2012). "Politics for God: Religion, Politics and Conflict in Democratic Nigeria." *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 4, 9: 42–66.

Onapajo, H. (2016). "Politics and the Pulpit: The Rise and Decline of Religion in Nigeria's 2015 Presidential Elections." *Journal of African Elections* 15, 2: 112–135.

Opeyemi, O. R. (2016). "Opinion: Religion and corruption in Nigeria-an interplay." *YNaija News*, November 13, 2016. Accessed August 25, 2020. https://ynaija.com/opinion-religion-corruption-nigeria-interplay/.

Oraegbunam, I. K. E. (2011). "Sharia Criminal Law, Islam and Democracy in Nigeria Today." *Ogirisi: A Journal of African Studies* 8: 181–209.

Osetien, P. and Gamaliel, J. D. (2002). "The law of separation of religion and state in the United States: A model for Nigeria?" In *Religion in the United States of America*, eds. Amali, S. O. O.; Owens-Ibie, N.; Ogunleye, F.; Adesina, O. and Uji, C., 14–32. Ibadan: Hope Publications.

Oshewolo, R. M. and Borok, A. M. (2015). "Religion and politics in Nigeria." *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance* 6, 3: 1–12.

Oyefusi, A. (2018). "Comparing socioeconomic and human development in Nigeria and other oil-producing countries." In *The Unfinished Revolution in Nigeria's Niger Delta: Prospects for Socio-economic and Environmental Justice and Peace*, eds. Obi, C. and Oriola, T, 76–102. London: Routledge.

Rotimi, O. and Olatomide, B. (2018). "Religion: Source of Conflict or Resource for Peace in Face of Security Challenges in Nigeria." In *Security Challenges and Management in Modern Nigeria*, eds. Olukoju, A.; Adesina, O.; Adesoji, A. and Amusa, S., 527–538. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Singh, G. (2011). "Religion, Politics and Governance in India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania: An Overview." Working Paper 55, Religions and Development Research Programme, International Development Department, University of Birmingham.

Smythe, H. H. (1958). "The problem of national leadership in Nigeria." *Social Research* 25, 2: 215–227.

Stewart, F.; Brown, C. and Mancini, L. (2010). *Monitoring and Measuring Horizontal Inequalities*. CRISE Overview No. 4. Oxford: CRISE.

Thom-Otuya, B. E. N. (2016). *National Security in Nigeria*, vol. 1. Owerri: Priscillia Omama Publishers.

Suleiman, S. (2019). "The 'Middle Belt' Historiography of Resistance in Nigeria." *Afrika Zamani* 27: 15–44.

Vaughan, O. (2016). *Religion and the Making of Nigeria*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

CONTRIBUTORS

Contributors

Francesco Galofaro, Ph.D. in semiotics, is a research fellow at the University of Turin. He is part of the NeMoSanctI ERC research project, focused on the semiotic study of the process of canonization and the hagiographic texts issued by the Catholic Church. He is currently focusing on Saint Pio of Pietrelcina. He single-authored the books *Eluana Englaro*, Meltemi, 2009, and *Dopo Gerico. I nuovispazi della psichiatria*, Esculapio, 2015.

Michael Holm is a historian at Boston University specializing in U.S. foreign policy and international relations. He is the author of *The Marshall Plan: A New Deal for Europe* (Routledge, 2016); "The Patient is Sinking; Marshall and the European Recovery Program" *Center of the Storm: George Marshall's Influence after World War II*, ed. William Taylor (University of Oklahoma Press, 2020): 134-159; "All Paine: The American Mind, The League of Nations, and the U.N.," *The Legacy of Thomas Paine in the Transatlantic World* eds. Sam Edwards & Marcus Morris (Routledge, 2017): 51-67; "The Kennedy Administration and the Battle over Foreign Aid: The Untold Story of the Clay Committee," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 27, 1 (March 2016): 65-92. Co-authored with Andrew David; "Also Present at the Creation: Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. and the Coming of the Cold War," *The Journal of the Historical Society*, 10, 2 (June, 2010): 203-229.

Frank Jacob is Professor of Global History at Nord Universitet, Norway. His research interests include Modern Japanese History, Modern German History, the history of Transatlantic Radicalism as well as Revolution Theory and Comparative Revolutionary History. Jacob is author or editor of more than 90 books, including Emma Goldman: Identitäten einer Anarchistin (Hentrich&Hentrich, 2022), East Asia and the First World War (De Gruyter, 2022) and The Orientalist Semiotics of Dune: Religious and Historical References within Frank Herbert's Universe (Büchner, 2022).

Francesco Mangiapane is a researcher in Semiotics at the University of Palermo, Italy. In his research activity, he has deepened the issues related to the semiotic forms of political construction in various areas such as food and nutrition, visual identity and branding, media representations in cinema, in cartoons and in the social media. Latest published volumes include *Images of Europe: The Union between Federation and Separation* (edited with Tiziana Migliore, Springer, 2021), *Cuccioli. Critica dei cartoni animati* (Meltemi 2020), a special issue of the International Journal for the Semiotics of Law – Revue internationale de Sémiotique juridique (Volume 31, issue 3) entitled *Animals in Law* (edited with Alice Giannitrapani, Springer 2018), *Peppa Pig* (Doppiozero 2014).

James Okolie-Osemene, received his PhD and Masters degrees in Peace and Conflict Studies from University of Ibadan, Nigeria, and B.A degree (Hons) in History and International Studies from Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria. He is alumnus of the Pan African Doctoral Academy, University of Ghana and Research Fellow at the French Institute for Research in Africa. His main research interests are among others Global Security, Urban/Rural Crimes, Pan-Africanism, Cross-Border Security, Violence Research, Post-Conflict Peacebuilding, Insurgency/Counterinsurgency, Terrorism and how state actors and traditional institutions engage with non-state armed groups. His work counts more than 50 publications (local and international peer reviewed scholarly journals and book chapters). Recent publications include "Nigeria's Security Governance Dilemmas during the Covid-19 Crisis," Politikon Journal (2021) https://doi.org/10.1080/02589346.2021.1913802 and "New Transnational Pan-Africanism and Its Nationalist Limitations,"

in Nationalism in a Transnational Age (2021). https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110729290. He is a Lecturer in International Relations Department at Wellspring University, Nigeria.

Chiara Petrini holds a M.D. in semiotics. She single-authored the book *La pratica religiosa cattolica ai tempi del Coronavirus. Tra lo spazio sacro e lo spazio virtuale,* Esculapio, 2021.

Arvi Sepp studied German and English Philology, Sociology, and Literary Theory in Leuven, Louvain-la-Neuve, Berlin and Gießen. He is Professor of German Studies at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and Research Fellow at the Institute of Jewish Studies of the University of Antwerp and. He was granted the Fritz Halbers Fellowship Award (Leo Baeck Institute), the Tauber Institute Research Award (Brandeis University), the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture Award, the Prix de la Fondation Auschwitz, the Prize for Research Communication of the Royal Flemish Society of Belgium for the Arts and Sciences, and the Theodor Frings Prize of the Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften. His research interests center on comparative literature, twentieth-century German (Jewish) literature, literary translation, migration and exile, multilingual literature. He published widely on Translation Studies, Autobiography Studies, German-Jewish literature, and literary theory. He has published the book-length study Topographie des Alltags. Eine kulturwissenschaftliche Lektüre von Victor Klemperers Tagebüchern 1933-1945 (2016).

With an interest in both Literary and Religious Studies, Anneleen Van Hertbruggen obtained a Master's degree in German Literature at the University of Antwerp in 2010, and a Master's degree in Interreligious Studies (Christianity – Judaism – Islam) at the Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg in Germany (2012). In her PhD thesis, which she defended in the spring of 2019 at the University of Antwerp, with the financial aid of the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO), she researched the sacralization of "Führer", "Reich" and "People" in the Nazi-biased poetry of the literary group Junge Mannschaft. She focused specifically on the poetry of the Nazi authors Heinrich Anacker (1901-1976), Gerhard Schumann (1911-1995) and Herybert Menzel (1906-1945). Within this project, she investigated the messianic stylization of Adolf Hitler as "Führer", the theological origins of the concept of a "Third Reich" and the adaptation of the Christian martyr symbol. Currently, she is a teacher at Xaverius College in Antwerp.

Religious beliefs often determine the life within communities. Therefore, religion often also has political implications and the interrelationship between politics and religiously motivated considerations play an important role for the daily life of many people around the globe. Very often, political leaders also tie their own measures and their respective interpretation to some kind of religious mission or interpretation of the past as well as the future. It is therefore more than important to take a closer look at the intertwined relationship between religion and politics. This issue of Global Humanities intends to do that and therefore spans different geographical and chronological contexts to offer a variety of insights related to this overall topic.

€ 16

60009 >

9 772199 393003