Olivier Clément: French Thinker and Theologian of the Eastern Orthodox Church in Dialogue with Western Catholic Thought on Ecclesiology, Theology and the Identity of Europe

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Abstract

Lay theologian Olivier Clément (1921-2009), achieved acclaim as a pioneer of Orthodox theological renewal and became one of the significant contemporary Christian intellectuals in France. The Russian diaspora brought a fresh encounter of Eastern Orthodoxy with the West, enabling the atheist Clément to discover Christ. Clément found in Christianity the answer to the destructive culture of death evinced by atheism and secular nihilism, and was baptised as an Orthodox Christian in 1951, aged thirty. He nevertheless remained both French and Western European; his theological, political and philosophical views were shaped by his diverse experience of European culture and history. Brought up in a dechristianised area of France, Clément had little familiarity with Catholic culture and faith; this at first affected his openness to Catholicism. As a Christian he sought a new paradigm for ecumenism through eucharistic ecclesiology, an ecclesiology of communion and a synthesis of culture and Christian values. This thesis sets out the historical, biographical and geographical background to the trajectory of Clément’s life, taking note of particular influences and markers on that journey. He was born into a socialist and atheistic milieu, but sensed an absence in his life, which propelled him on a quest for the truth. He identified with Mediterranean countries and responded especially to the natural beauty around him, however he was haunted by questions about death and ‘nothingness’, to which atheism pointed. After his baptism into the Orthodox Church, he grew in stature as a Christian thinker whose theology was profoundly spiritual, and his sphere of influence international. His conviction that Churches of East and West must unite in a unity that respected diversity, led him to discern the Greek Catholic Church had a role in expressing Christian unity; that laïcité could provide a dialogical and open space that enabled a Christian voice to impact on the identity of contemporary Europe. Ecumenism became a goal for which he worked throughout his Christian life. Clément’s important theological understanding of the ‘person’, not as an individual, but as a unique ‘presence’ reflecting an image of trinitarian diversity and unity, led him to engage in the Christian encounter with Islam. His corpus covers great themes of Christian spirituality, ecclesiology and theology, with a deep interest in the identity of Europe. From a rich legacy of thought and action throughout his life, his profound contribution to a theology of the ‘person’ may become his greatest legacy to the twenty-first century.
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**THESIS CONCLUSION**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**
INTRODUCTION

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

T S Eliot

Opening Remarks

The conversion of Olivier Clément to Christianity propelled him on a life journey, which in the insight of T S Eliot’s poem, brought him back to where he started to ‘know the place for the first time’; he returns to his origins more open to debating with new perception what had previously been closed, issues both old and new: the need for Christian unity and spirituality to enable a Christian voice to impact on the identity of contemporary Europe; papal primacy as a service to unity; the role of the Greek Catholic Church as an expression of Eastern and Western unity; a laïcité which provides a dialogical and open space; and his important theological understanding of the ‘person’, not as an individual, but as a unique ‘presence’, and a communion of persons, that finds its source in the unity and diversity of the Trinity, ‘L’Uni-Trinité’.

This thesis is the first sustained theological reflection of Olivier Clément as a French Orthodox thinker and theologian in conversation with the ecclesial identity of Europe and modern Catholic thought. The thesis is not a comprehensive biography, but a study in theology and ecclesiology, as Clément develops an understanding of a contemporary opportunity for the Church of today, at a moment in the evolution of the world when all values are being put to the test: ‘united, it must provide a Christian direction to the new world which is being born.’ It presents a unique and original study of Clément as an important figure in the Orthodox theological renewal that flowed from a creative movement in the

1 T. S. Eliot, Little Gidding, in Collected Poems 1909-1962 (London, Faber, 1963), pp. 214-223, p. 222. Eliot, English critic, dramatist and poet, 1888-1965, wrote Little Gidding during World War II air-raids on Great Britain, the last poem in Four Quartets, a series of meditations on the theme of man’s relationship with time, the universe, and God. Eliot draws from his own Anglo-Catholic tradition as well as from mystical, philosophical and poetic works from Eastern and Western religious and cultural traditions.

2 For discussion on ‘positive laïcité’, see Nicolas Sarkozy, La République, les religions, l’espérance (Paris: Cerf, 2004).


evolution of modern Russian religious and Orthodox thought in France. Clément became one of a group of French Christian intellectuals, both Catholic and Orthodox, that arose in France in the first half of the twentieth century whose theology and praxis shaped and contributed to an ecclesiological Renewal within the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. Of particular interest is the genesis of Clément’s Christian thought, which was influenced by the presence of the Russian émigré Orthodox community in Paris after 1922, and his election for baptism in the Russian Orthodox Church, in a country whose republican identity is expressed as laïcité and the national religion is Catholicism. France’s self identification as a ‘secular’ country is discussed in this thesis in Part 3, ‘Laïcité and Religion’.

While remaining deeply rooted and loyal to Orthodoxy and to French citizenship, Clément’s thought developed into a mature ecumenical and dialogical vocation for Christian unity, which was also of vital importance in dialogue within modern European culture, its way of life, ethical understanding and political position for the future of Europe.

Clément’s historical and ‘constructive theology’ is a creative hermeneutical synthesis of Christian Tradition and modernity, which attempts to answer important questions that arose in the modern era on philosophical, political and cultural issues. The thesis examines Clément’s rich contribution to the discipline of constructive theology within historical and socio-political contexts of a post-industrial and rapidly changing society; these include ecclesiology, anthropology – which Clément wants to show as a spiritual anthropology capable of becoming a

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8 The term ‘secular’ was used in the French law of 1905 that separated Church and State. France is officially a secular nation, but it has a Catholic culture; this is demonstrated by its use of saints’ names for villages and towns, while public holidays and memorials retain the titles of Catholic feast days, for example Pentecost and All Saints.

'theo-anthropology' – ecumenical dialogue, interreligious dialogue, and the modern history of religious thought in Europe. This thesis is the first scholarly work to date in English that provides an in-depth study of Clément’s work and Christian witness; it draws inspiration from his generous faith and spirituality, from his abiding love for the ‘Other’, whom he names l’autre soleil, and from love for his neighbour. Two scholars of Eastern Christianity have recognised Clément’s importance as a thinker in their recent publications; Aidan Nichols includes a chapter on Clément in Engaging Theologians, and Andrew Louth divides a chapter shared between Elisabeth Behr-Sigel and Olivier Clément in Modern Orthodox Thinkers. Nichols offers a collection of essays on writers from whom he has ‘learned a great deal’ and with whom engagement ‘is definitely worthwhile’. The authors have set their own limits on their discussion of Clément; this thesis goes beyond these limits. Louth cites Nicholas Lossky’s opinion that Clément was ‘probably the greatest French theologian’ of the twentieth century; he states that while Clément was immensely widely read he ‘did not become a scholar.’ In my judgement Clément purposely removed himself from being labelled or characterised; his work has a poetical and organic quality that contrasts with the writing of a systematic theologian, with the discipline of Louth. Clément wishes to write from within the experience of faith rather than from observation of the external. Gerald Vann OP, draws on Jacques Maritain’s Degree of Knowledge to describe Teilhard de Chardin’s corpus; in so doing he gives, I believe, a fine definition of Clément’s œuvre - a remarkable combination of the mystic and the theologian:

12 Clément, L’autre soleil.
13 Nichols, Engaging Theologians, p.10.
Maritain defined this difference with clarity and exactitude in terms of contrast between the (poetical) language of the mystic and the (scientific) language of the theologian, and pointed out the disastrous results of reading the former as though it were the latter. The aim of scientific language is to provide exactly defined and unambiguous statements about reality; that of poetic language is to communicate reality itself, as experienced, by means of imagery, evocation, tone, and the ambiguity - or rather ambivalence - of paradox, of symbol. That is not to say that poetic language is nebulous, vague, uncertain: on the contrary, the cutting edge of great poetry is sharper and digs deeper than that of any prose. But we shall never hear what the mystic (or the poet or the musician) has to tell us if we are listening on the wrong wave-length.\textsuperscript{16}

Clément speaks tirelessly it would seem, to everyone and for everyone, as a man for all seasons who expresses in written and spoken eloquence, his perception of what characterises ‘the pearl of great price’: the true meaning of human life. In the secularised society of France, Europe and the West, Clément finds dialogical ‘space’\textsuperscript{17} in which to listen to the ‘other’ and to proclaim the truth of the Christian message. Williams notes Clément has perceived ‘the dialectical necessity of European atheism as a step to recovering the vision of a living God.’\textsuperscript{18} Clément profoundly appreciated that it was through his own meeting with Christianity represented by the Russian Orthodox tradition that he had experienced a decisive awakening of conscience.\textsuperscript{19} A fundamental theme for Clément is the splendour of God in the human face;\textsuperscript{20} in the matter of conscience the human face for Clément

\textsuperscript{18} Williams, ‘Eastern Orthodox Theology’, p. 511.
conveys something unique; the unique relationship with God. His discovery of the ‘other’ as face was a realisation of unity, in which all humanity advanced towards a more just society building on relationships of love and reciprocal respect, in an authentic discovery of the other.\(^{21}\) Olivier Clément is ‘an ecclesial man’,\(^{22}\) who worked to break down barriers between Orthodoxy and Catholicism and between Orthodox groups in France. Robert Murray SJ, in the light of Vatican II and its Declaration on Religious Freedom,\(^{23}\) elaborates on the Christian ideal of being ‘a man of the Church’, which includes not only being a faithful, loyal and active Christian, but also ‘one who comes before the world as a good human person, exemplifying the best ideals the world knows, in maturity and balance of character’;\(^ {24}\) one who is ‘a mature responsible, warm, truly human person, a “man for others”’.\(^ {25}\) According to this analysis Clément, through word and action, has shown himself to be a man of the Church.

Reflecting on modern European society, Clément observes that ‘freedom today is disquieted and self-questioning. Our first task is to commit ourselves to its inner movement in order to humbly give it a meaning, which will liberate it from emptiness […] by giving science and technology a direction; by deepening our common solidarity.’\(^ {26}\) Rowan Williams noted in 1997, that Orthodoxy in France is overwhelmingly Francophone, and ‘its leading constructive theologian’, Olivier Clément, ‘has succeeded in constructing an Orthodox theology very deeply engaged with the mainstream of Western European culture,’\(^ {27}\) confronting European intellectual life on scientific, political and philosophical arenas from a perspective ‘formed, but not restricted by the Greek patristic vision.’\(^ {28}\)

\(^{21}\) Michel Solléogoûb, ‘L’engagement d’Olivier Clément dans la culture’, (p. 440).
\(^{24}\) Murray, p. 311.
\(^{25}\) Murray, p. 312.
\(^{26}\) Olivier Clément, \textit{You are Peter}, p. 68.
\(^{27}\) Williams, ‘Eastern Orthodox Theology’, p. 511.
\(^{28}\) Ibid., p. 512.
The creative synthesis of Patristic tradition with modern European thought and culture achieved by the theologians of the Russian Orthodox Diaspora in Paris, influenced the thought of Olivier Clément, as an atheist, and impacted significantly on French Catholic intellectuals and their thought prior to the Second Vatican Council, 1962-1965. The contribution of these Russian Orthodox religious philosophers and theologians in France and their understanding of the continuing presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the world, acted as a catalyst that contributed to the remarkable renewal of the Catholic Church in the twentieth century and marked the beginning of a fruitful dialogical encounter between Eastern and Western Christianity. These events could be judged as a providential and sovereign movement of the Holy Spirit within the Christian Churches, the wider society of twentieth-century Europe and globally. Amidst a contemporary religious discourse in Orthodoxy about nationhood and universality, the Paris School understood Orthodoxy to be universal: Sergius Bulgakov puts it succinctly: ‘The Church is not an institution but a new life in Christ, moved by the Holy Spirit.’

The relevance of the Patristic wisdom of the early Fathers of the Church for contemporary life was also recognised by Catholic theologians in Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. Henri de Lubac SJ, Karl Rahner SJ, Marie-

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33 See Clément, Mémoires, p. 25: Clément recalls Berdiaev’s association with the great French theologians, de Lubac, Chenu, Congar and Daniélou to develop ecumenism, and with Emmanuel Mounier to found the journal Esprit.
Dominique Chenu OP,\textsuperscript{34} Yves Congar OP, Jean Daniélou SJ were amongst theologians who became involved in the \textit{ressourcement} movement which arose between 1930-1950, called \textit{Nouvelle Théologie}\textsuperscript{35} by its detractors because it sought renewal of neo-Scholastic influence on Catholic teaching. This was a transition period during which France became a centre of theological renewal through a return to the sources. These theologians endured criticism from the Church as they courageously attempted to seek renewal, but each was reinstated at the request of Pope John XXIII, to take on the role of \textit{peritus}, theological advisor, at the Second Vatican Council. They became key collaborators in the renewing and ecumenical purpose of Vatican II, and the \textit{aggiornamento} called for by Pope John XXIII.

During the religious intellectual ferment that arose in mid-twentieth century\textsuperscript{36} de-christianised France, Clément rejected atheism, the matrix of thought from his childhood into adult life, and chose to be a baptised Christian. This thesis thus focuses on the Christian endeavour of Olivier Clément whose life trajectory could be described as a quest for Truth that journeyed from the opaque\textsuperscript{37} to the luminous, from anxiety to peace, from polemics to irenic dialogical discourse; a Christian life and witness that matured over his remaining 57 years to become itself a living synthesis of Eastern and Western Christianity. A theological literary legacy flowed from this synthesis, an ‘intelligent, profound and interiorly renewed Christianity’\textsuperscript{38} that made a distinct and important contribution to Christian thought.

\textsuperscript{34} Marie-Dominique Chenu OP, one of the founders of the reformist journal \textit{Concilium} in 1964. For a study of the thought of Chenu see, Christophe F Potworowski, \textit{Contemplation and Incarnation: The Theology of Marie-Dominique Chenu} (Montreal/London: McGill-Queens University Press, 2001).


in Europe and the world, which continues to be important for the twenty-first century.

**Context and central themes**

Clément’s long life spanned eighty-seven years, 1921-2009, and his wide-ranging corpus includes numerous books, articles and writings on the history, theology and the spirituality of Eastern Orthodoxy, ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. Born in a dechristianised area of southern France into a family who embraced an atheist and socialist philosophy, he never experienced any religious education or context; he carried this as a marker in his personal formation all his life that for him sharpened his own perspective on the nature of belief. A deep unease and sense of ‘Absence’ in his life led him to seek an answer to feelings of near despair that flowed from the prevailing atheistic view that ‘nothingness’ followed death.

Working in Paris as a teacher, Clément met the Russian émigré theologians and philosophers who had settled in Paris, and was particularly influenced by the thought of Nicolas Berdiaev, Vladimir Lossky and Paul Evdokimov. Their ability to meaningfully and creatively present the Gospel message within the context of contemporary modernity aroused his interest. A new understanding and experience of Christianity led to Clément’s baptism into the Russian Orthodox Church in the francophone parish of the Patriarch of Moscow in Paris in 1951. He remained rooted in the tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church, but became increasingly motivated by the desire for Christian unity. A wish to evangelise and to pass on the Christian tradition to his contemporaries, especially to younger generations being formed within the intellectual milieu of twentieth-century modernity and secularism, motivated his working life.

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Clément continued to live and work in the West where for many years he was a Professor at the Orthodox Theological Institute of Saint Sergius in Paris. Clément’s experience of both the East and the West gave him the perspective of a ‘passeur’,\textsuperscript{41} one who could open up dialogue between Eastern and Western cultures and traditions. He was also a passeur between the different families of Orthodox in the West and between atheism and Christianity,\textsuperscript{42} inviting others to make an ecumenical and interreligious journey with him. On the one hand Clément sought to establish unity among Christians and strove especially for understanding and collaborative sharing between the Eastern and Western Churches, ‘a man of dialogue and unity’;\textsuperscript{43} on the other he presented a powerful Christian message to contemporary Western ‘secular’\textsuperscript{44} society, which was becoming largely disengaged from the Church, and a compelling answer to atheistic nihilism, a significant contemporary context in Europe and for the Orthodox Church in communist Russia. France officially separated religion and education in its law of 1905, thus inscribing the notion of secularism into the mind and memory of its people. Clément sees secularism as a daughter of Christianity, a dialogical space in which the atheist, the agnostic or the non-believer is at home in his or her search for truth, a search which itself can be seen as profoundly religious in character; secularism can provide a space in which diversity is accepted and different religions are accommodated. The subject of secularism and \textit{laïcité} so important to French experience and identity is discussed in Part 3 of this thesis as an important context of Clément’s thought.

\textsuperscript{41} Olivier Clément, \textit{Orient-Occident: Deux Passeurs} (Paris: Labor et Fides, 1985); Clément chooses the term \textit{passeurs} to describe Vladimir Lossky and Paul Evdokimov, who he considered to be his ‘masters’. The influence of Lossky and Evdokimov on Clément’s thought is discussed in Part 1.


\textsuperscript{44} The meaning of ‘secularization’, derived from the Latin word \textit{saeculum} (world), has changed throughout the centuries diversifying particularly during the twentieth century when it was used to denote the marginalization of religion in modern western societies, especially in those major public spheres where it previously exerted influence, such as politics, family and social life. For a wider discussion see Hugh McLeod on ‘Secularization’, \textit{The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought: Intellectual, Spiritual and Moral Horizons of Christianity}, ed. by Adrian Hastings, Alistair Mason and Hugh Pyper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 653-654, in which McLeod traces the history from 1690 to the present day. He cites Bryan R Wilson who defined secularization in \textit{Religion in Secular Society: A Sociological Comment} (London: C A Watts, 1966) as ‘the process whereby religious thinking, practice and institutions lose social significance.’
Clément became an Eastern Orthodox Christian yet remained rooted in his French and European identity and this formed an important point of orientation for his life and work. His theological, political and philosophical views were shaped by his diverse experience of European culture and history. Brought up in a region of France with a significantly Protestant presence, Clément had little familiarity with Catholic culture and faith, and this initially affected his openness to Catholicism. As an Orthodox Christian he sought a new paradigm for ecumenism through eucharistic ecclesiology, an ecclesiology of communion and a synthesis of culture and Christian values. Clément’s profound and sympathetic understanding of Western Catholic tradition and Western secular society and politics, is a defining context for his emergence as an Eastern Orthodox thinker in dialogue with Western thought. His gift of forging trusting friendships built on mutual respect with people from diverse backgrounds was enhanced by his ability to express profound truths with humility and poetic creativity. His engagement with eminent religious leaders of the twentieth century on contemporary spiritual, ecclesial and cultural problems have included dialogues with Patriarch Athenagoras I, Pope John Paul II, Patriarch Bartholomew I, Dumitru Staniloae and Brother Roger of Taizé. Clément’s book, Rome Autrement, an

48 Patriarch Athénagoras I of Constantinople (1886-1972) was born in the Province of Ioannina in the Ottoman Empire, son of the village doctor. He entered the Halki Academy near Istanbul in 1903; in 1910 he became a monk and deacon. In 1922 he was elected Metropolitan of Corfu, and in 1930 became Greek Orthodox Archbishop of North and South America until 1948 when he was elected Patriarch of Constantinople. He actively sought ecumenical dialogue and better relations between Christians. His meeting with Pope Paul VI in Jerusalem, 1964, was a landmark that resulted in the lifting of anathemas which had separated East and West since 1054, thus opening up dialogue between Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches; see Olivier Clément Dialogues avec le Patriarche Athénagoras (Paris: Fayard, 1969).
49 John Paul II’s papacy: 16 October 1978 - 2 April 2005. He was born in Poland 15 May 1920 and named Karol Josef Wojtyła. Clément first met John Paul II during the pope’s visit to Paris, later when living in Rome he formed friendly relationship with the pope: Clément, Mémoires, p. 133.
50 Patriarch Bartholomew I was born 1940, on the island of Imbros. He has Turkish nationality. While belonging to the small remnant of Greek community remaining in Turkey, he is spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide. He attended Halki seminary and ordained a priest by Athenagoras I in 1969. He was elected Ecumenical Patriarch in 1991. He is fluent in Greek, Turkish, Italian, German, French, English, Classical Greek and Latin. See Olivier Clément, La Verité vous rendre libre: Entretiens avec le Patriarche œcuménique Bartholomée I (Paris: Lattès-Desclée et Bouwer, 1977), trans. by Paul Meyendorff, Conversations With Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1997).
51 Dumitru Staniloae, 1903-1993, was an Eastern Orthodox priest and theologian who worked for 45 years on a Romanian translation of the Philokalia, 1947-1982. Author of many theological
Orthodox reflection on the papal primacy, was written in 1997 in response to John Paul II’s request in 1995 for ecumenical discussion with regard to the ministry of the Petrine office. The pope invited Christian leaders to enter into fraternal dialogue to seek the possibilities of redefining the papal ministry.\textsuperscript{54} It would seem that Clément met with a level of Magisterial approval;\textsuperscript{55} in 1994 the \textit{Via Crucis} written by Clément was read by Pope John Paul II in Rome.\textsuperscript{56} In 1998 Clément was invited by John Paul II to write a new \textit{Via Crucis} text for the Good Friday meditation and procession from Rome’s Coliseum to the Roman Forum.\textsuperscript{57} Clément recalls he accepted the task of writing this \textit{Via Crucis} with emotion and gratitude: it is no longer possible to think of separation on the way to Golgotha, the death of Christ makes all other attitudes than penitence and reconciliation derisory.\textsuperscript{58} It is significant that the Pope requested a theologian of the Eastern Orthodox Church to compose this profoundly Western Catholic meditation, a fact, it would seem, that reflected the papal desire to recognise and bring unity and healing to historical wounds and divisions, a course which Pope John Paul II
further pursued through words of apology and reconciliation.\textsuperscript{59} John Paul II actively sought opportunities for reconciliation with other Christian Churches, declaring in his encyclical on the role of the papacy, ‘When Christians pray together, the goal of unity seems closer’,\textsuperscript{60} and, ‘the Catholic Church desires nothing less than full communion between East and West’.\textsuperscript{61}

Clément, in 2003, judged that \textit{Taizé} and similar groups that bring Christians of different denominations together in prayer, help to remove the misconceptions that impede us from truly seeing other Christians as brothers and sisters in Christ; he identifies this as resulting from an historical wound that Orthodoxy must overcome. He points to the tension in relations between Moscow and Rome and Moscow and Constantinople as stumbling blocks to unity; he predicted that the division of the Orthodox in Ukraine will result in an autocephalous Church in Ukraine that could in future be realigned with the Patriarchate of Constantinople.\textsuperscript{62} Clément suggests it would be appropriate for the patriarchal seat of Constantinople to be moved and re-established as a larger patriarchate at Patmos.\textsuperscript{63} The Churches need an internal and external voice, to face modernity with a freedom, which does not aim to vilify modernity, but rather to be an influence that tames and enriches it. Clément points out that after the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001, the West failed to react with a \textit{metanoic} turn

\textsuperscript{59} John Paul II took courageous decisions to open up ecumenical \textit{rapprochement} between Eastern Orthodoxy and the Catholic Church. In May 2001 he travelled to Greece on pilgrimage, the first visit by a Pope since the Great Schism of 1054, when excommunication of the Patriarch of Constantinople by papal legates was responded to by the Patriarch’s excommunication of the legates: Christianity was divided on doctrinal, theological, linguistic, political and geographical lines, into Western (Latin) and Eastern (Greek) branches. In an address before Greece’s Orthodox leader, Archbishop Christodoulos, John Paul II asked God to forgive Catholics for sins against Orthodox Christians, specifically mentioning the pillage of Constantinople by Crusaders in 1204. In 2004 John Paul II returned a precious icon to the Russian Orthodox Church as a personal gift from himself; delivered by Cardinal Walter Kaspar. The icon, an eighteenth century copy of the Virgin of Kazan, had hung above his desk in the Vatican. The relics of two saints that had been kept in St Peter’s, Rome, for approximately eight hundred years, were returned to Bartholomew I, Patriarch of Constantinople. Bartholomew I responded with the words: ‘There are no problems which are insurmountable, when love, justice and peace meet’.

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Ut unum sint}, 1995, p. 22.


\textsuperscript{63} Clément, \textit{Mémoires}, pp. 187-188. Clément sees it appropriate to be linked with St John the Evangelist and his Apocalypse, as the twenty-first century begins with ‘a sort of little intra-historical Apocalypse’, p. 188.
towards unity. Clément believed that the phenomenon of globalisation requires
Christians to join together as leaven in the history of the world.\textsuperscript{64} This resonates
with the thought of the great French Jesuit and scholar Teilhard de Chardin,
whose theological view of the ‘whole Christ’, the ‘cosmic Christ’, operates within
an evolutionary perspective of the universe and the forces of globalisation.\textsuperscript{65} Pope
Benedict XVI, reflecting on the needs of contemporary society stated in 2009 that
‘The task of ecumenical commitment is even more urgent today, to give our
society, which is marked by tragic conflicts and lacerating divisions, a sign and an
impulse towards reconciliation and peace’.\textsuperscript{66} Benedict XVI was ‘conscious that
the future of Christianity in the new emerging Europe will depend upon a
\textit{rapprochement} between Eastern and Western Churches, as the political and
economic union of the continent spreads eastwards’.\textsuperscript{67}

The following thesis is divided into three main Parts. Part 1, entitled ‘Olivier
Clément 1921-2009: \textit{La Courbe de Vie};\textsuperscript{68} Chapter 1.1 examines the importance of
Clément’s familial roots, his spiritual journey and the traditions he both inherited
and elected. The geographical, historical, political and religious contexts of
Clément’s childhood form a hermeneutical key to understanding his spiritual and
intellectual journey towards adulthood and the origins of his election to
Orthodoxy. Clément’s early thought, set against the landscape of the religious and
ecclesial context of twentieth-century France, flows from his own early
experience of atheism, socialism and nihilism that marked the society and culture
of twentieth-century Europe following the dislocation caused by two World Wars.
The religious history and dechristianised area of his birth and upbringing, the
Languedoc region, continued to impact on his family and local twentieth-century
culture, thus influencing Clément's subsequent choices; this is an important and

\textsuperscript{64} Clément, \textit{Mémoires}, p. 188.
\textsuperscript{67} O’Mahony, ‘Between Rome and Constantinople’, p. 247.
\textsuperscript{68} Louis Massignon coined the term \textit{‘la courbe de vie}’ to speak of ‘the curve of life’ of individuals he regarded as special intercessors for their fellow people; see Anthony O’Mahony, ‘Louis Massignon as Priest: Eastern Christianity and Islam’, \textit{Sobornost}, 29 (2007), 6-41 (p. 6)
original contribution of my research in considering Clément as an Orthodox thinker of the twentieth century. Although Olivier Clément was baptised in the Russian Orthodox Church in Paris in 1951, he remained French by culture and election, and it can be suggested that he became a living synthesis of Western and Eastern Christianity. Clément’s early search for the meaning of life drew him to value the poetry of Charles Baudelaire, Czeslaw Milosz, T S Eliot, Rainer Maria Rilke, and also the journals of the Catholic philosopher, Jean Guitton, which introduced him to the writing of Cardinal Newman, whose thought he greatly appreciated.69 His choice of baptism in the Russian Orthodox Church, stemmed from his encounter with the thought and presence of religious philosophers and theologians of the exiled émigré Russian community in Paris. Although Clément never met Nicolas Berdiaev, who died in 1948, he read Berdiaev’s book, Ésprit et Liberté, during the war, and this opened his mind and heart to believe in Christ. Clément read Vladimir Lossky’s Essai sur la théologie mystique de l’église d’Orient, in 1944, and it astonished Clément to read Lossky’s apophatic approach to Christian mystery, which nevertheless was able to speak of alterity, and of God as personal and a communion of persons.70 This trinitarian understanding of God as a communion of persons became a major theme of Clément’s work, which he often referred to as l’Uni-Trinité. Lossky71 later introduced Clément personally to the Orthodox milieu in Paris. The ecclesiology, theology and ecumenical thought of Paul Evdokimov72 also acted as a principal influence in leading Clément to conversion to Christianity, and resulted in a lifelong friendship and fruitful theological and literary collaboration. Clément acknowledged his indebtedness to the Russian Orthodox thinkers of St Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris and to the Ecumenical Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras I.

69 Clément, Mémoires, p. 17.
70 Clément, Mémoires, pp. 27-28.
72 See Peter C Phan’s studies of Evdokimov: Culture and Eschatology (New York, Peter Lang, 1985); ‘Evdokimov and the Monk Within’, Sobornost, 3 (1981), 53-61. See also Aidan Nichols, Light from the East (London: Sheed and Ward, 1995), pp. 194-204; from which the following information is taken: Paul Evdokimov (1900-1970). His father, an army officer, was assassinated in 1907. Paul and his twelve-year-old brother made their way into central Russia to rejoin their mother and pay their last respects to their father. Clément judges that this experience gave Evdokimov two theological themes, the sacrificial love of the Father and the ‘smile of the Father’, which we have eternity to contemplate. He became a lay theologian of the Orthodox Church in France and a professor of Moral Theology at St Sergius Institute.
His theology, as theirs was, is characterized by openness to dialogue and the quest for unity with the West. His French Orthodox ecclesial understanding matured, and from this theological stance he actively sought to promote unity between Christians and dialogue with members of other religions, seeking to provide a Christian response to the challenges and problems of contemporary secularized society and culture. Marko Rupnik SJ,\textsuperscript{73} Slovenian Catholic priest and Director of the Aletti Centre in Rome,\textsuperscript{74} reminds us that in 1999 the Synod of Catholic Bishops for Europe judged it necessary to evangelise baptised Catholics, because there has been an absence of true theology and experiential knowledge of the Holy Spirit in the Church.\textsuperscript{75} The Aletti Centre awarded Clément the Logos-Eikon prize for his outstanding work for ecumenism in 2001, an event that also marked his eightieth birthday. The principal reasons for this award were three-fold: in recognition of the richness of Clément’s Christian witness, the originality of his research and the current relevance of his thought.\textsuperscript{76}

Through numerous books and articles Clément gave an inspired account of the history that led to the schism between Eastern and Western Christianity and the presence of the Orthodox Church in France, but throughout he is speaking of the salvation of Christ. As he insists explicitly in \textit{L’autre soleil}, he does not wish to speak of himself but of Him: ‘How He seeks for us. How, He who sought for me, found me’.\textsuperscript{77} Key themes of Clément’s concern, which are always viewed from a theological perspective that finds its relevance within the context of salvation in Christ and ‘which places Christ at the centre of all life’\textsuperscript{78}, are modernity, history\textsuperscript{79}, ecclesiology, Trinitarian anthropology, ecumenism, papal primacy, Christian-

\textsuperscript{73} Marko Ivan Rupnik SJ, artist and theologian, was born in Slovenia in 1954. He specialises in sacred art in mosaics and has created many outstanding works including those at the Vatican, Lourdes, Fatima and San Giovanni Rotonda in southern Italy.

\textsuperscript{74} The Pontifical Oriental Institute Ezio Aletti Study and Research Centre is run by a team of Jesuits and consecrated women who are all specialists in Eastern Theology and other subjects, which are relevant in order to carry out the mission of the Centre, as well as all its cultural and theological work.


\textsuperscript{76} Rupnik, ‘Introduction’, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{77} Clément, \textit{L’autre soleil}, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{78} Rupnik, ‘Introduction’, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{79} History had always fascinated Clément; at first he found it raised feelings of ‘fear and fervour’, but also a desire to know these people who were now dead; he found ‘traces of eternity inscribed in the passing centuries’. He says simply of himself, ‘l’histoire, c’est moi!’ See Clément, \textit{Mémoires}, p. 17.
Muslim dialogue, spirituality, mysticism, atheism, totalitarianism, martyrdom, monasticism, liberation theology and politics. His theology flows from his belief in the Resurrection that brings light and meaning to life, death, beauty, the body and the world.

Chapter 1.2 brings the thought of Clément into dialogue with two important contemporary thinkers, Simone Weil and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, on themes of truth and beauty. A theology of beauty marks a distinctive change of emphasis from the ethical and philosophical reflection on anthropology, which dominated theology of the twentieth century in the West. Chapters 1.3 and 1.4 mark the influence of the thought of Paul Evdokimov and other great thinkers of the Russian emigration. The emergence of Catholic thought that arose within Russian society as an indigenous movement prior to the Revolution is considered and its influence as an opening towards ecumenism, which was to further develop with the émigré presence in Paris, together with reflections on monasticism and neo-Patristic influences that contributed to an ecclesiology of communion as a force for unity between the Churches.

Part 2 explores Clément’s dialogues and encounters with Churches of the East and West. Clément’s positive response to the invitation made by John Paul II to other branches of Christianity for theological discussion on the exercise of papal primacy is examined in chapter 2.2. Clément, who lived and worked mainly in Paris, speaks eloquently to both East and West on unity. His irenic attitude encourages conversation between Catholic, Greek Catholic and Orthodox Churches, with sensitivity to implications this might have on European Christianity, and political implications worldwide, with reference to the role of Eastern Catholic Churches, and a possible paradigm from Antioch. The existence of the Eastern Catholic Churches can become a shared ecclesial and liturgical

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witness as East and West respond to the ecumenical movement for unity with diversity. Chapter 2.4 opens discussion on Eastern Orthodoxy and Muslim-Christian relations between Europe and the Middle East. Clément warns against the totalitarian tendencies of religious fundamentalism.

Part 3 considers the thought of Clément as a European Christian thinker who stands at a pivotal point in European religious and political history; the impact of two World Wars on modernity; and ecclesiology in the future identity of modern Europe. Clément witnessed the Second World War and the way it impacted on contemporary culture; he developed a conversation between Orthodoxy and Catholicism around the future identity of Europe. He raises questions concerning the role of ecclesiology for modern Europe and how Eastern and Western thought and experience can be brought together in a contemporary conversation to create a theology of native enculturation for Europe around categories of contemporary interest while remaining built upon tradition. Importantly, Clément’s gift as a theologian and writer enables him to write of the spirituality of Eastern Orthodoxy and engage with questions of modernity in the contemporary language of the West; he addresses the problems of contemporary society and the world by raising a Christian voice in Europe, thus renewing Europe’s ‘global’ civilisational voice worldwide.

He sought ways of contributing and strengthening a Christian voice in the changing values in Europe, founded originally on Christian ethics, now dramatically moving towards a ‘rights’ based value system. He wanted to define the role of ecclesiology for modern Europe in a confluence of ideas and thought arising from Orthodox and Catholic traditions, seeking ‘to unite the best of the West,’ its sense of liberty, ‘with the best of the East,’ its sense of communion; ‘not by sociological programmes, but by a creative inspiration, in communicating a fire which is that of the Trinity.’

Part 3 examines first the relation of laïcité and religion within France, and the wider implications for French and European politics and identity, and continues with a discussion on the religious face of ‘totalitarianism’ that brings Clément into

conversation with Solzhenitsyn on themes of conscience and freedom. The final chapter considers issues of authenticity in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue as a way towards a theology of hope. Clément underscores the importance of authentic monasticism, a ‘monachisme intérieurisé’, for the Church today, perhaps exemplified by the ‘parable’ of the monastic community at Taizé that embraces both religious and lay people. He enjoyed close links with several spiritual leaders and thinkers including Archimandrite Sophrony86 of the Monastery of St John the Baptist in Britain, disciple of St Silouan the Athonite; Romanian Orthodox theologian Dmitru Staniloae; Brother Roger of Taizé and Andrea Riccardi,87 founder of the Sant’Egidio community in Rome, now a world-wide movement, and a particular friendship with John Paul II. Chapter 3.4 discusses the thought of Clément, Thomas Merton, Louis Massignon and Christian de Chergé on monasticism, Eastern Christianity and Christian-Muslim dialogue, drawing on the thought of Paul Evdokimov and Rowan Williams, who has stressed the ‘lay character’ of monasticism.88 Two key themes are proposed: biographical context is essential to understanding and assessing the significance of their contribution; experiential spirituality is foundational in their committed response to Christ, and living a theology of dialogical encounter.

Clément’s skill as a literary critic, his profound awareness of Orthodoxy and his earlier understanding of atheism enabled him to decipher with spiritual perception, political situations and ideologies inhabited by a ‘secular’ non-believing public that he himself had once inhabited. This is demonstrated in his reflections on liberation theology; the student riots in Paris; and the writing of Solzhenitsyn: if Christians accept Marxism they make themselves accomplices to totalitarianism, thus making class struggle the prime mover of history, while reducing the image

86 Archimandrite Sophrony, 1896-1993, was the disciple and biographer of St Silouan the Athonite, compiled St Silouan’s works, and founded the Monastery of St. John the Baptist in Tolleshunt Knights England. See The Undistorted Image: Staretz Silouan, 1866-1938 (Leighton Buzzard, Faith Press, 1948, 1952, 1958) and Saint Silouan, the Athonite (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press; 1999).
87 Andrea Riccardi, founder of the Sant’Egidio Community in Rome in 1968, a lay association dedicated to evangelisation and charity; see Sant'Egidio: Rome and the World: Andrea Riccardi in Conversations with J D Durand and R Ladous (Rome: St Paulus, 1999).
of the Resurrection to a type of political liberation.\textsuperscript{89} Clément speaks directly about the spiritual needs of the human person, judging the students' revolt revealed a spiritual crisis; while in his elucidation of Solzhenitsyn's writings he points to the unique and irreducible flame of the human spirit, which can be seen as an icon of the living God that survives all attempts of totalitarianism and despotism to annihilate it.\textsuperscript{90}

Clément dedicated his life as a lay theologian to bringing about greater understanding between Eastern and Western Christianity. As a mature Christian, Clément articulated a paradigm for ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue as expressed by the Christian presence in Antioch and Lebanon, which encourages Mediterranean conviviality and \textit{convivencia}. He entered into dialogue with Muslim thinker Mohamed Talbi\textsuperscript{91} on Muslim-Christian encounter, and reflected on contemporary areas of dialogue between Orthodoxy and the role of the Greek Catholic Churches.

The Holy See’s relations with the Ecumenical Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople is a key relationship in the religious leadership of Europe; deepening this relationship was one aim of Benedict XVI’s visit to Turkey in 2006,\textsuperscript{92} which in turn built upon Paul VI’s opening to the Orthodox Church, especially the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, at the Second Vatican Council. Pope Francis I took these themes forward in his commemorative visit and meeting with Patriarch Bartholomew in Jerusalem and his Apostolic visit to Turkey in November 2014 when he spent time in ‘silent adoration’ in the Blue Mosque.\textsuperscript{93} Clément’s thought is close to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, (see Clément, \textit{Dialogues avec le patriarche Athènagoras I}, 1969.

\textsuperscript{89} Aidan Nichols, ‘A View from the East’, \textit{The Tablet}, 11 January 1986, p. 6: Nichols, who describes Clément as the leading Orthodox lay theologian in the West, writes, ‘Clément argues, Ratzinger-like, that any acceptance of the “totalising” conception of Marxism will turn Christians into “accomplices of totalitarianism”… the Resurrection becomes an image of political and social liberation, rather than the other way round. A mythic “revolution”, rather than the Church and its eucharistic assembly, becomes the means to the future unity of mankind.’


\textsuperscript{91} Olivier Clément and Mohammed Talbi, \textit{Un respect têtu, islam et christianisme} (Paris: Nouvelle Cité, 1989).


\textsuperscript{93} Apostolic visit of Pope Francis to Turkey: <https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2014/outside/documents/papa-francesco-turchia-2014.html> [Accessed 27.7.15].
and *Conversations with the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I*, 1997). Europe has been losing its political voice; it will be essential for world peace that the Churches raise again a strong Christian voice in Europe, a voice that points to Christian values and turns the tide on contemporary nihilism and consumerism that lead to a dismantling of ecological and social structures.
PART 1

OLIVIER CLÉMENT 1921-2009: LA COURBE DE VIE

PART 1.1 Introduction

This section sets out the historical, biographical and geographical foundation from which the trajectory of Clément’s life proceeded, taking into account the early influences on Clément’s formative years in a dechristianised area of France, the socialist atheist milieu of his family, and his sensitivity to the natural beauty of his surroundings. Clément’s conversion to Christianity, and the importance of the Russian émigré philosophers and theologians in Paris that led to his baptism in the Russian Orthodox Church forms part of this reflection. Chapter 2 compares and contrasts Clément’s thought with two important thinkers, Simone Weil and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, while Chapters 3 and 4 consider the influence of Paul Evdokimov through his theology, and Clément’s maturing understanding of ecclesiology in the West.
CHAPTER 1.1
A Spiritual Journey

1.1.i Introduction

Olivier-Maurice Clément was born on 17 November 1921 at Aniane in the Languedoc region of southern France. He observes that he was born into ‘atheism’ the way others are born into a Church.\textsuperscript{94} The socialist and atheist beliefs of his father and grandfather shaped the ethos of his family life, while the Mediterranean terrain, climate and culture of village life formed a secure matrix for his earliest memories and fostered in him a deep love of southern France and the Mediterranean Sea.

His spiritual journey began with a sense of awe and wonder at the beauty of the world around him; this moved him from a pagan concept of human existence and culture into a deeper search for truth that led to the transforming discovery of the theology of the Transfiguration and the belief that human beings are rooted in the ‘supra-rational’; the religious; and the artistic. Clément judges that intellectual knowledge, consumerism and politics are expressions of a deeper nature and longing; ‘mysticism is an existential attitude, a way of living at a greater depth’.\textsuperscript{95} It cannot be possessed by any one religion or Church, ‘even atheists can be mystics’. For Clément, ‘Christianity with its fresh vitality was able to reconcile negation and affirmation in a new way, uniting the divine with the human’.\textsuperscript{96} After an arduous search among religions of the East, Clément found fullness of life and spiritual depth in the mysticism, liturgy and theology of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Theologians of the Russian Diaspora who had settled in Paris assisted him in this quest. Clément’s spiritual journey is one of the great affirmations of Christianity in recent times that witnesses to the reality of the Christian tradition. Through his writings he offers a message of hope to a secular society that has become disoriented, and a ‘spiritual compass’\textsuperscript{97} to many searching for spiritual orientation.

\textsuperscript{94} Clément, Dialogues, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{97} Olivier Clément, Petite boussole spirituelle pour notre temps (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2008). See also Clément, Mémoires, in which he speaks of the hope that he experienced at his conversion, and the love of the resurrected Christ for each person.
1.1.ii  Russian Orthodox Renaissance and Diaspora

During the renaissance that flourished in the Russian Orthodox Church between 1900 and 1914 many Russian intellectuals turned to Christianity; later many of these fled the turmoil of the Revolution in 1917, travelling to Serbia, Germany and France, establishing an Orthodox presence in Paris and the West. The Orthodox Theological Institute of Saint Sergius (Sainte-Serge) in Paris, founded by Russian émigré Christians in 1925, has remained an outstanding centre of Orthodox theology and spirituality up to present times. The Russian Diaspora brought about by the 1917 Revolution had consequences for Clément, which were pivotal in opening a way for dramatic and life-changing choices. His quest for the truth led him to discover Christianity in a new light through the influence and writings of two important Russian thinkers, Vladimir Lossky and Nicholas Berdiaev. Regarding Christ through the lens of faith held up by

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98 Data from Nichols, Light from the East, p. 15.
101 Johnston, New Mecca, New Babylon.
102 See Clément, ‘Vladimir Lossky, théologien orthodoxe’. Vladimir Lossky, 1903-1958, went into exile in 1922 with his father, philosopher Nicolas Lossky, and family. V Lossky chose to live and study in France. While remaining very close to the Russian Church, his entire theological work was written in French. His patristic theology is inseparable from spirituality. Firmly against nationalism, anti-ecumenism, anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism, he had close links with many Catholic theologians, Congar, de Lubac, Daniélou and others, who were influential in preparing for the Second Vatican Council, which Lossky did not live to see. See Nicholas Lossky, ‘Theology and Spirituality in the Work of Vladimir Lossky’, given at the ecumenical conference on ‘The Autumn of Holy Rus: Holiness and Spirituality in Russia during a Time of Crisis and Persecution (1917-45)’, at the monastic community of Bose, Italy, in September 1998, and translated from French by the World Council of Churches Language Services; published in Ecumenical Review, 51 (July 1999), 288-293. Aidan Nichols judges that V Lossky’s theology sees the individual as the concentration or typical manifestation of the community, and the community is the inter-relation of individuals; this schema is represented by nineteenth century Russian Slavophile writer, Alexei Khomiakov: ‘For Slavophiles the community of individuals the sobornost is the essential guide to faith.’ Nichols, Light from the East, p. 31. See also German Jesuit Catholic expert on Nicholas Berdiaev’s theology Bernhardt Schultz, ‘Chomjakows Lehre über die Eucharistie’, Orientalia Christiana Periodica, XIV, 1-11 (1948), 138-161. Schulz had additional articles published in the Eastern Churches Quarterly, an ecumenical Catholic review (1936-1964), renamed One in Christ in 1965-present day.
103 Nicolas Berdiaev (1874-1948), Russian religious and political philosopher was born into an aristocratic military family in Kiev, he became a Marxist and was expelled from University and exiled for three years to central Russia. He was exiled during the expulsion of intellectuals by Lenin on the so-called ‘philosopher’s ship’ and settled in Paris. He formed collaborative contacts with Catholic theologians and scholars and became one of the Russian theologians of the Diaspora who contributed to the Orthodox revival in Paris. He famously wrote the ‘Preface’ for Aldous Huxley’s novel ‘Brave New World’, 1932. On Berdiaev: see the classic studies by Bernhard Schultze SJ, ‘Die Schau der Kirche bei Nikolai Berdiajew’ (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Studiorum Orientalium) (1938) Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 116; B Schultze, ‘Nicholas Alexandrovich Berdayaev and his work’, in: Eastern Churches Quarterly, 8 (1949), pp. 41-53.
Lossky and Berdiaev, Clément entered on a pilgrimage to the ‘interior’ of Eastern mysticism and experienced *metanoia*, ‘the great “turning round” of the mind and the heart, and of our whole grasp of reality.’ Jean-Claude Barreau judges that an additional factor influencing Clément’s choice of the Orthodox Church was that he had no inherited family ties to any other Western Christian confessions.

Orthodoxy is a mystically and contemplatively oriented, liturgical Church; Lossky, with Krivochéine had in a remarkable way, with other religious philosophers of the Russian Diaspora, retrieved and updated the great Patristic and Byzantine tradition. Clément later judged in 1985, that Lossky’s *Essai sur la théologie mystique de l’Église d’Orient* constituted the first Orthodox dogmatic writing of the twentieth century, which combined theological originality and creativity with a faithfulness and deep respect for tradition. The creative teaching, intellectual and spiritual inspiration of the theologians of the Russian Orthodox Diaspora, some of whom he counted as personal friends and considered to be his ‘masters’, was a formative theological influence on Clément. Another Russian whose ecclesiology, theology and ecumenical thought was a major influence in leading Clément to Christianity was Paul Evdokimov; their relationship matured into a lifelong friendship and fruitful theological and literary collaboration. Evdokimov was one of a creative group of thinkers amongst whom Berdiaev, Bulgakov, Gillet, Afanasiev, and later Schmemann and

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107 Archbishop Basil Krivochéine (1900–1985), a noted patristic scholar and theologian of the Russian Orthodox Church.
110 Paul Evdokimov (1900-1970). His father, an army officer, was assassinated in 1907; Paul with his twelve year old brother made their way into central Russia to rejoin their mother and pay last respects to his father. Clément judges that this scene gave Evdokimov two theological themes, the sacrificial love of the Father and the ‘smile of the Father’, which we have eternity to contemplate. He became a lay theologian of the Orthodox Church in France and a professor of Moral Theology at St Sergius Institute. The above data from: Aidan Nichols OP, ‘Paul Evdokimov and Eschatology’, in *Light from the East*, pp. 194-204.
111 Sergei Bulgakov, 1871-1944, a Marxist professor of economics, who converted to Orthodoxy and fled with anti-Bolshevik Russians to the West (approximately one million left Russia). Aidan Nichols gives a Catholic response to Bulgakov in, *Wisdom from Above: A Primer in the Theology of Fr Sergei Bulgakov* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2005). See also Nichols, *Light from the East*, p. 14. Bulgakov’s new dogmatics focussed on divine Wisdom, introduced into Russian religious thought by pre-Revolution philosopher Vladimir Soloviev. Nichols, p. 16. Bulgakov considered by many to be the most creative and important theologian of the renewal, brought the Church’s tradition into dialogue with modernity; see Michael Plekon, ‘The Russian religious revival and its
Meyendorff\textsuperscript{115} are considered to be outstanding. The ‘liturgical, Patristic and iconographic richness of Evdokimov’s theology’,\textsuperscript{116} always faithful to Church Tradition, resonated deeply and authentically with Clément, who characterizes him as ‘a “witness to beauty”, a perceptive interpreter of the liturgy’s poetry, choreography and music, of the icons’ shimmering light and colour, a riveting narrator of the Church’s teaching’.\textsuperscript{117} There are interesting similarities shared by Evdokimov and Clément, which would have enhanced the empathy between them: Evdokimov like Clément became a well-known writer, lay theologian of the Orthodox Church in France and a professor (of Moral Theology) at St Sergius Institute, yet he had also worked in car factories, rail yards and restaurants, as many did during this inter-war period, later managing an ecumenical hostel for poor immigrants and students. While remaining rooted in his Russian heritage he was fully part of Western culture and life, his concerns were about faith and culture, the spiritual life, liturgy, eschatology, freedom and authority, and like Clément, they brought into focus the struggle of living the faith in contemporary

\textsuperscript{112} Fr Lev Gillet, known as The Monk of the Eastern Church, was originally a Benedictine monk. His great insight was ‘the recognition of God as Limitless Love … precisely the kenotic God which Bulgakov and Evdokimov recognised, the “Lover of mankind”’, Plekon, ‘The Russian religious revival’, p. 212.

\textsuperscript{113} Nicolas Afanasiev (1893-1966). Afanasiev was the only Orthodox theologian cited in the preconciliar acta of Vatican II. His theological focus was the rediscovery of the eucharistic ecclesiology of the early Church. His major work The Church and the Holy Spirit portrays the early Church’s charismatic characteristics; see Plekon, ‘The Russian religious revival’, pp. 206-207. Aidan Nichols, ‘Nikolai Afanas’ev and Ecclesiology’, in Light from the East, pp. 114-128, in which Nichols pp. 127-128, cites Catholic liturgical historian, Hans-Joachim Schulz: ‘the celebration of the Eucharist […] provides the clearest possible manifestation of […] the Church as a community of faith’, H-J Schulz, The Byzantine Liturgy (New York: Pueblo Press, 1986), pp. xix-xx.


\textsuperscript{115} John Meyendorff left Paris for St Vladimir’s Seminary, New York, and became a prominent theologian of America and the Russian emigration’, Michael Plekon, ‘John Meyendorff: Defender of Living Tradition’, in Living Icons, pp. 203-233; and Nichols, Light from the East, p. 128, cites Meyendorff: ‘This centrality of the Eucharist is actually the real key to the Byzantine understanding of the Church, both hierarchical and corporate; the Church is universal, but truly realised only in the local eucharistic assembly, at which a group of sinful men and women becomes fully the “people of God”’. See, J Meyendorff, Byzantine Theology (New York: Fordham University Press, 1974).

\textsuperscript{116} Plekon, Living Icons, p. 104.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p. 105.
society in a time of totalitarian ideologies. Evdokimov’s dialectical position challenged the meaning of past and contemporary historical events.

1.1.iii Clément: A Synthesis of East and West

‘Spiritual renaissances, precisely because they respect individual freedom, take time’, observes Clément. The Russian Diaspora brought Eastern Orthodoxy into a fresh encounter with the West, enabling Clément, a young atheist, to discover Christ. His own conversion came at the age of twenty-seven; three years later, aged thirty, he became a baptised Christian in the Russian Orthodox Church in Paris in 1951. Before conversion however, his story is the quest of a man drawn into spiritual warfare, caught between anguish and wonder: on the one hand, the angst and suffering of the culture of death that he found in the desert of the city led him to wrestle with the temptation of suicide, and on the other, a sense of awe and wonder before the faces, the beauty and the life he also witnessed around him. Nearly twenty-five years later in 1976, and a year after writing his own spiritual autobiography, L’autre soleil, Clément writes regarding Solzhenitsyn, he ‘became in prison, a visionary of the human face, capable of identifying the righteous instantly from their faces’, bringing them before his readers with ‘a truly iconographic literary technique’. Clément’s admiration of Solzhenitsyn, his own understanding of the mystery of the human face, and the face par excellence that is Christ’s, together with his gifted literary skills suggest a sense of self-identification with the Russian writer, it could be said that Clément became the voice of Solzhenitsyn in the West. A charism of discernment of the

119 It would seem that any person driven near to suicide and despair, as Clément himself had experienced, is in the battleground of spiritual warfare spoken of by St Paul in Ephesians 6:24. Ignatius of Loyola, 1491-1556, founder of the Society of Jesus was conscious of this conflict between good and evil in the world, which Clément’s case would appear to represent. With reference to St Ignatius and Oriental Christianity see, Tomás Spidlik, Ignace de Loyola et la spiritualité orientale, (Brussels: Éditions Lessius, 2006); Felix Körner SJ, ‘Salvific Community’, Gregorianum, 94 (2013), 593-609.
121 Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, 1918-2008, Russian novelist and historian, was arrested in 1945 for criticising Stalin in a private letter, he was sentenced to eight years hard labour. During his imprisonment he changed from Marxism to the philosophical and religious position of Orthodoxy. There are parallels here with Dostoevsky who, a century before him, served eight years in hard labour in a camp in Siberia. Solzhenitsyn judged that the problems of East and West were rooted in atheism and the decline of Christian faith and practice. His books alerted the West to the existence of Soviet forced labour camps, and he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, 1970. He was exiled from Russia in 1974, but returned to Russia in 1994.
signs of the times, enabled Clément to express his reflections on ‘art, war, sexuality, death and love’ with a profound intellectual understanding of his subject combined with spiritual compassion and warmth. This is evidenced in the transparency, integrity and authenticity of the beautiful reflection: *L’autre soleil*.

### 1.1.iv Family origins: geographical, cultural and religious milieux

Clément opens his spiritual autobiography by expressing a dislike of speaking about himself, while he finds positive pleasure in other peoples’ stories; he prefers to speak and write of ‘Him’, who seeks us out, the One who Clément believes sought and found him. At the beginning of his reflections, Clément is concerned with what he calls the ‘lost centre’. He recalls the narrative in Dostoevsky’s, *L’Adolescent*, of the man who has lost everything, his wife, his family, his possessions, but who walks towards the ‘place of the heart’, the lost centre; this man awakens to the sun, *l’autre soleil*, and suddenly a sacred dread overwhelms him, that nevertheless somehow cheers his heart, in a way which reminds Clément of his feelings as a child on a deserted beach in winter as the sun sets; for the first time the man awakens, perceives and receives everything that is in this mystery. Dostoevsky’s pilgrim understands that prayer is the essence of things and a prayer rises to his lips, ‘Everything is in you, Lord, I myself am in you, receive me!’ Clément’s own experience of mystery resonates with that of Dostoevsky’s Macarius, who purified his heart in search of the lost centre, a man who finally found *l’autre soleil* shining as for a day that never fades, when prayer, which is the essence of things, rises from the heart, a mystery both terrible and marvellous that brings joy, and with it, the discovery that everything is in God, the pilgrim is himself in God, longing to be received by God. The apparent absence of God opens a space for this longing and understanding of God as our freedom; his very silence renders us free. A contemporary Orthodox thinker reflects: ‘Theology proper transcends the realm of the discursive reason, and can in the end only be apophatic, that is, can only express its fundamental truths in paradox and

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125 Ibid.
126 Ibid., p. 10.
127 Ibid.
Clément knew that the space of atheism led inexorably towards nothingness; his received experience brought a *metanoia* of the heart that makes the future possible, he knew the words of Jesus for each of us are, ‘Go and sin no more’, that there is no longer death, that He searches for us, and as Clément himself experienced, he was sought and found. The sense of fruitful ‘space’ and ‘absence’ that Clément found in the mystery of Orthodoxy allowed conversion to flow into him; the ecclesiological space was an Absence. Clément realised that the apparent absence of God opens a space that enables man, woman and child to comprehend God as our freedom and the transferring of this knowledge to people in the West through his writing and witness lay at the heart of his life’s work.

Writing about Dostoevsky, Rowan Williams affirms the Russian author’s insight on how the mystery of religion and holy presence operates in the individual person. Dostoevsky, Williams and Clément all point to the importance of individual religious experience, which can turn the person around and bring about *metanoia* of heart and reconciliation with God.

Clément grew up in a wine growing area with his grandfather’s family, in a house surrounded by a vineyard; the cultural and communal aspects of village life were reassuring and supportive to the young boy. As a child, no one spoke to Clément of God. Even if he asked questions concerning life and death, no one ever mentioned or spoke of a living God. Nevertheless ‘god’ was a topic of conversation among his family, yet even in this conversation there was a sense of absence; conversation itself signalled the awareness of absence. Every second Sunday his mother’s sisters, primary school teachers, and an uncle came to dine with them in the town where they lived; Clément was impressed with the independence and intellectual character of the women in his family and he would wait with delighted anticipation for the dessert and discussion on the existence of god. His schoolteacher parents were atheists while his aunts were deists; their god appeared to resemble a phantom that could not heal the tuberculosis of a wife or

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do miracles as reputedly occurred at Lourdes. This phantom ‘Being’ did not stay with Clément long, but the conversations left him recognizing some sort of mystery, which he identified as the ‘sound of an absence’; importantly he became aware of silences.\textsuperscript{132} It seemed to him that on Sunday and Thursday afternoons at the school where his mother was a teacher, and where one of his aunts lived, in some mysterious way a place of gigantic silence had been sculpted by the cries and gesticulations of the now absent children. In the silence of warm spring evenings when the first star appeared, he waited for millions of sparrows living in the acacia trees to start chirping; he connected this sense of mystery to a story he learnt later, that in the early Christian era it was thought that at a certain time of day the animals would pray.

Clément reflects that as he grew to adulthood, his whole life was structured by atheism, not only in his thoughts, but also in his whole being.\textsuperscript{133} Clément’s generation had inherited the nineteenth century’s growing indifference about God, a disinterest that increasingly characterised Western thought, and led to ‘atheism in one shape or other’.\textsuperscript{134} Paul Ricoeur\textsuperscript{135} and Alisdair MacIntyre\textsuperscript{136} maintained that the ‘characteristic of the contemporary debate between the atheists and the theists is the decline of its cultural urgency.’\textsuperscript{137} Friedrich Nietzsche\textsuperscript{138} had proclaimed that ‘God is dead’, in a prophetic sense he recognised that the god portrayed by moralistic religion had become ‘unbelievable’ and therefore

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\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., p. 12.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., p. 79.
\textsuperscript{135} Paul Ricouer, 1913-2005, was born into Protestant family in South-Eastern France. During World War II he was a prisoner of war in a German Prison Camp for five years from 1940. Phenomenologist, humanist and philosopher, he specialised in biblical exegesis. He taught at the Sorbonne, Paris, and at the University of Chicago for fifteen years.
\textsuperscript{136} Alisdair MacIntyre was born 1929 in Glasgow, Scotland. A philosopher of moral and political philosophy. He converted to Roman Catholicism in the early 1980s and reflects on how one is chosen by a Tradition: see Alisdair MacIntyre, \textit{Whose Justice, Which Rationality} (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), pp. 393-395. His early Marxist writings were succeeded by his work as a Christian theologian.
irrelevant; while John Henry Newman\textsuperscript{139} foresaw that atheism was spreading throughout Europe and in those civilisations that were influenced by European thought. Clément reflects that he grew up in a worldview of atheism and indifference, which turned God into ‘the great secret of our era’.\textsuperscript{140} Today Pope Francis refers to a ‘globalization of indifference’ that closes ‘the door through which God comes into the world and the world comes to him’\textsuperscript{141}

The historical and geographical context of the person is deeply important in the formation, discernment and future vision of a theologian. This is particularly true of Clément in his passage from childhood to become a mature Christian thinker. Traversing from his grandfather’s era, which had moved away from a religious worldview to embrace what were deemed to be true values of justice and socialism within a local community, albeit they were rooted in Christian ethics. After the First World War, communities were held in communion and amity through a shared enjoyment of their local village culture and heritage, but were drawn towards an atheistic, secular view that saw no purpose in speaking of God or death. It was an era in which many searched for a meaning to life but in which increasingly the answer of nihilism was accepted, that after death came ‘nothingness’.

Clément was born between the Cévennes and the Mediterranean Sea in an area of France strongly influenced by Protestantism. His mother’s forebears were Protestant and his father had Catholic ancestors; from childhood to adulthood he had no family experience of an ecclesial matrix and no opportunity to observe, or reject, the person of Christ of the Gospels. He had little familiarity with Catholic culture and faith, and this affected his outlook and inhibited his openness to Catholicism. While Clément’s family was atheist, and their atheism held out no hope to the sensitive child who was disturbed by the ‘nothingness’ his parents believed followed life, their goodness, loyalty and integrity manifested in Clément a palpable experience of ‘Absence’. The question of Absence became a pre-

\textsuperscript{139} John Henry Newman, 1801-1890. His studies in history persuaded him to leave Anglicanism to become a Roman Catholic priest; he was later elevated to a cardinal. Newman wrote his \textit{Apologia Pro Vita Sua} between 1865-66.

\textsuperscript{140} Clément, \textit{L’autre soleil}, p. 29.

occupation, which led Clément finally to find recognition of the person of Christ and an ecclesial home. Clément came to believe that the apparent absence of God opens the space for an interior longing, a space which enables each person to comprehend that God is our freedom; that His silence renders us free.\textsuperscript{142} All those people known to him, who seemed to be passing by like faces on a train to nowhere, did in fact have a destiny: the communion of saints in communion with Christ, was a reality. Each person is called to become aware of the paradox that Absence can resonate with an affirming sense of presence and mystery. Clément found the opposite to be true of the self-alienating void of atheism, \textit{le néant}, which leads to nothing.

1.1.v The Languedoc Region: historical and religious influences

His awareness of mystery in ‘space and silence’ developed from an early age, enriched by a profound affinity to the topography and nature of the Languedoc region of the southern France of his birth and a deep interest in the local history. He describes the sense of ‘being’ he experienced as a young child and adolescent, ‘things quite simply \textit{are}’: the wind rises the plane tree starts to sing, I know the plane tree \textit{is.}\textsuperscript{143} His inherited atheism did not quite resonate with his life as ‘a Mediterranean pagan’ who loved the natural world around him, the wind, water, sea and scrubland, all spoke to him of the mystery of things and of \textit{being}. Stretching out on the ground he somehow felt carried aloft in the wind and sky, and would feel a thrill of ecstasy.\textsuperscript{144} He learnt the local history from stories remembered by his grandfather, of passions, sufferings and strife passed down through the generations; the women especially carried within themselves the tragic history of the Cévennes.\textsuperscript{145}

Historically southern French Christianity was tragically fragmented and the area around Aniane had become largely anti-Catholic. Protestantism had strongly penetrated the mountain populations, and everywhere in that region had experienced repression through the Reform. Harsh treatment cries out for justice.

\textsuperscript{142} Clément, \textit{L’autre soleil}, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., p. 36.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid.
Bitterness welled up as members of different Christian confessions developed a self-understanding and identity over against the claims of the ‘heretical other’. The earlier crushing of the Cathars by the Catholic Church lives on in the generational memory. Catharism, which preached poverty, pacifism and a form of Manichaeism, found a following among the theologically literate, and was supported by both the nobility and the common people; it became established in the Languedoc area during the eleventh century and by the thirteenth century Cathari were in the majority. When St Dominic’s attempts over ten years (1205-1215) failed to bring Cathars back to the Catholic Church, Innocent III called on the princes of Christendom to wage a crusade, a call to which the French responded vigorously. The cruel massacre of men, women and children to eradicate the Cathars during the anti-Cathar Albigensian Crusade and the Inquisition that followed are not forgotten in the area of Languedoc. The once cultured and educated Languedoc region was taxed and deprived of education while reading the Bible by laity became a capital punishment. The Bible has never been translated into the language of the area, the language d’Oc, as it had been in all the dialects of the Grisons; in an attempt at suppressing heresy the Council of Toulouse forbade lay use of the Bible in 1229. The language of the Occitan, considered one of the foremost literary languages in France, slipped into a decline, becoming a regional dialect that was disparaged by the French as patois.

These events influenced Clément’s own cultural background and inherited milieu, they also had bearing on the working out of his vocation. Innocent III was responsible not only for setting into motion the Occitan distress in Western France, which may have paved the way for Protestantism three centuries later, and led to the subsequent development of Socialist atheism, the cultural setting into which Clément was born; the Pope also launched the Fourth Crusade in response to the Muslim capture of Jerusalem by Saladin in 1187. The crusaders instead of retaking Jerusalem, infamously sacked Constantinople and the Eastern Churches, causing a rupture between Eastern and Western Christianity, a rupture of communities to which Clément during much of his life had sought to bring healing and restoration of communion. However, at this time he was not aware that his future conversion would become the hinge around which his adult life and vocation would turn.
1.1.vi Socialist Influences at Aniane – Three Religions?

Olivier’s grandfather always spoke and thought of socialism in French, rather than Occitan, just as his Cévenol ancestors had sung prayers and the songs of the Revolution in French. The family village of Olivier’s father, where the two children and parents visited the grandparents each fortnight and during holidays, was of key importance to Clément; the ethos of his family life was shaped by the socialist and atheist beliefs of his father and grandfather, while the Mediterranean terrain, climate and culture of village life formed the matrix for the earliest memories.

Three ‘religions’, according to local people existed in juxtaposition: Catholicism, Protestantism and ‘Socialism’. A socialist, as understood in that region of France, never entered a church, did not have his children baptised and was married at the town hall; although they did not have religious burials they held the dead in great respect. In this region there are no crosses in the cemeteries; Protestants, who were in the majority and socially dominated the region for a long time, fiercely rejected the Cross, later they were ousted by the socialists. Clément remembers digging in his grandfather’s vineyard between the rows of vines, one would come across human bones, the remains of Protestants who, before the Edict of 1787, were banned from burial in cemeteries. The wars of religion continued into the nineteenth century when the Revolution permitted ‘simple’ changes, for example, the rue de l’église became the rue Karl-Marx.

Not far from his grandfather’s village between the lagoon of ponds, young Clément loved to climb up inside a huge tower from which he could see the whole countryside, the mountains to the sea, the Aigoual mountain to the northwest, and the Ventoux to the northeast. A story told by his grandfather held deep significance for Clément. In the eighteenth century many Protestant women, often Cévenoles like his mother, had been imprisoned in that tower. One who had been incarcerated at the age of eighteen was released at the age of sixty; she only had to say one word to be freed, but resisted, a word she had scratched into the surface of a wall, and which the boy Olivier traced with his finger, ‘resister’.

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146 For description of Cévenol terrain see, Cabanel, *Histoire des Cévennes*.
147 Clément, *L’autre soleil*, p. 15. The word Clément saw inscribed was spelt with a ‘g’ according to local dialect, *register.*
1.1.vii The ‘fundamentals’ of Christianity still hold

Clément knew only his father’s family, which had become third generation socialists, albeit from a past Catholic or Protestant Christian heritage. His grandfather, who had two children, Clément’s father, and a daughter who became a couturier in the village, was a just man in an almost biblical sense. He had broken with Catholicism as a child, embraced socialism and married a Protestant; he was an agricultural worker and she worked in a hat shop. Gradually he acquired some land, helped by land reforms introduced by the Republic, and became an independent proprietor of a small vineyard while his children benefited from education in a school provided by the Republic.\(^{148}\) He was a militant socialist, but without resentment or class distinction, who endeavoured to build a civilised community life and enjoyed good relations with descendants of the aristocracy in the area; the people of this community had their land, their language, their culture, and the solidarity of friendship when the whole village assembled to enjoy social events and festivals such as the bull races, when everyone came together: the right, the left, Catholics, Protestants, Socialists.

As villagers gathered together in the evenings after a festival, the native language lent itself to storytelling and the local \textit{vin rosé} circulated: stories were told of the solitary, the taciturn, of the secrets that surrounded the area of the ponds where bulls and horses roamed freely, and in sharing these ‘rites of communication’, there was the sense of a liturgical faith gathering. When night fell in the village all the household would gather in the dark round the fire, without lighting the petrol lamps or electricity; all were silent before the flames. It was there that he experienced his first meeting with mystery: the silence, the night, the flame, the solemnity. Then suddenly the light was turned on and family life resumed with busy preparations for the evening meal. It was a protected life that has been lost, friendship between humans and things, modesty without prudery, faithfulness within the family, the clan, the village. It was a culture shared by all, but without realising it, the momentum of history had eaten up their ‘spiritual capital’.\(^{149}\) Now everyone is a nihilist, Clément writes in 1975,\(^{150}\) people take tranquilisers, in the

\(^{148}\) On education in France after the evacuation of the Church see Olivier Roy, \textit{La Sainte Ignorance: Le Temps de religion sans culture} (Paris: Seuil, 2008).
\(^{149}\) Clément, \textit{L’autre soleil}, p. 21.
\(^{150}\) Ibid.
village just as much as those in the towns; this loss, according to Clément, is why we must retrieve the fundamentals.

He is certain that all people, religious or anti-religious, Catholics, Protestants or Socialists, live on the ‘fundamentals’ of Christianity, an ancient rich mixture of the earth and the fire of the Gospel; but the original stock root was split up and contact with the root became increasingly indirect. One of these latter developments was the socialism of his grandfather and father, who like the early French Socialists were marked by a social evangelism that was not only pledged for justice, but communion amongst the people that was founded on St Paul’s teaching: we are all members of the one body. But, and here Christians may be at fault, the ressourcements became diverted or high-jacked; socialism had taken the social, communal dimension of the Gospel, which somehow had been neglected by Christians of the previous century and this paved the way for socialists to become atheists. The evangelistic socialism of 1848, admired by Dostoevsky because it had not rejected Jesus and was not a system,¹⁵¹ gave way to Marxist dialectical materialism and the communist system. Creative Christianity and prophets such as Berdiaev and Bulgakov were submerged, but Clément judges, in the long term not vanquished: as one cannot build on ‘nothing’, and because Christ is risen, Christianity will again gain the upper hand.

Clément identifies ‘une crise spirituelle’ ‘in the events of social upheaval during the riots in Paris of 1968.’¹⁵² He judges that the myth of revolution was expressing a spiritual need, that the ‘combat is not political or social, but spiritual’.¹⁵³ This struggle was less a question of revolution but more a ‘quasi-liturgical production of a passionate scene of revolution’, where the revolutionary myth serves as an expression of a far greater need. Inside the barricades, the young people experienced a sense of sacred space, of meeting and sharing that seemed to them like a call to life. There are echoes of the ‘rites of communication’, shared during the village festivals of Clément’s youth, when there was the sense of a liturgical faith gathering. Political propositions are most often unrealistic signs, an expectation of something else.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 22.
¹⁵³ D’Amour, ibid.
This tenet of Clément’s that all people are rooted, either knowingly or unknowingly, in the fundamentals of Christianity appears in Paul Evdokimov’s vision for humanity, that culture, under the influence of grace becomes liturgy: ‘Culture, in its essence, is a search in history for what is outside its limits. It becomes the expression of the Kingdom through the things of this world. Every judgement on culture is made by referring to the presence of God within it, a presence which is simultaneously a sign and an expectation.’

Evdokimov writes in *L’Art de l’Icône*, ‘earthly culture is the icon of the heavenly Kingdom’, and man is in the image of God. Aiden Nichols judges: ‘There is a principle of theological anthropology at work in Evdokimov’s eschatological vision: man is in God’s image but because of the Fall, is reduced to an “ontological silence”. Salvation liberates the dynamic quality of the image in its tendency to become the full likeness of God. For Evdokimov, the human being’s aim in history is to achieve the eschatological likeness.’

Clément recognises in his dying grandfather, one who wished to bless his family but who did not know how to; he recognises also in his father, a contemplative to whom no-one had spoken about God. Both men were just and had chosen and witnessed to socialism without any element of fanaticism. They had refused to become communists; his grandfather was shocked by a certain ethical relativism he had seen among the cadre in his own village, for him nothing could justify a lie or perjury. The move from the village to town life, meant for Olivier’s family the loss of land, language, village life and community; then the whole culture collapsed under the weight of two wars, politics and endless new technology. Some people are killed by the collective life in a town because they carry within them a silence, a nostalgia and emptiness that society cannot fulfil. Clément recognised this in his father. Facing death during the war he had experienced friendship, after the war he felt suffocated by the small worries of family life experienced in the closed family life in a town, rather than the lively shared community life of the village. In Paris with his parents, Clément visited some

156 Aiden Nichols, *Light From the East*, p. 201.
churches, it was part of French culture, but he was bored, ‘The God of Gothic art was exiled to the sky’, and he ‘knew’ the sky was empty.\textsuperscript{157}

His father never spoke to anybody of what Clément believed to be the essential experiences of life, except once to his adolescent son. His father remembered that as a child he loved to read the Apocalypse in a Bible left in the house by a Protestant ancestor, and he then recounted what happened during the war in the trenches of Verdun. After fifteen days under a barrage of gunfire and deafening explosions, when one could neither sleep nor speak, silence came and he finally dozed. When he awoke it was a spring morning, he went out into a forest walking till he came to a clearing with flowers; the silence was intense. Suddenly the bells in an invisible bell tower rang out. The solitude, the flowers, the clearing, the silence, the song of the bells, brought an overwhelming burst of emotion that brought tears and he entered into a wordless adoration: he had found Jerusalem in the forest when the bells rang out proclaiming the Resurrection. After his father’s death Clément finds these words meaningful for his father: death, hell, the Resurrection; death and love that is stronger than death, not a moral or pseudo-transcendence but life much stronger than death, the Resurrection. This is the only time they truly communicated with each other; otherwise the father remained silent and read his books. Clément later discovered links between his own personal pilgrimage and his father’s thoughts; on his father’s bookshelves he found Dostoevsky’s \textit{Les Frères Karamazov}, Tolstoy’s \textit{Le Père Serge}, and \textit{La Vie de Saint Serge} by Boris Zaïtsev, strangely the grandfather of Clément’s friend, Michel Sollogoub.\textsuperscript{158} Clément discovered a similar secret when his father’s sister died. She was an atheist like her father, but tucked away in a little drawer with the things she treasured, Clément found a copy of St John’s Gospel.

Clément wants to point out that he and his family assisted in the act of burying all language about God, thus simultaneously burying the culture and way of being which gave meaning to their lives, and not only their culture, the same contemporary collapse occurred in many areas of France, especially among Christian communities. ‘God became the great secret of our era.’\textsuperscript{159} Prophetic

\textsuperscript{157} Clément, \textit{L’autre soleil}, p. 33.  
\textsuperscript{158} See Sollogoub, ‘L’engagement d’Olivier Clément dans la culture’.  
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., p. 29.
Russian writers predicted all this the century before. Dostoyevsky recalls that after the hell of the imminent gallows and house of the dead he suddenly heard the carillon of Easter and knew with certitude that the Crucified lives: *Il existe!* Since then Russia has known the descent into hell, but hope witnesses that the testimony of the Resurrection comes after that: for Clément this is the paradoxical advantage of our era, history itself drives us towards the ultimate.

It has been necessary to speak in detail of Clément’s memories and perceptions of his own childhood and of old age because in the mystery of these two phases of our lives he sees that a circle is completed that opens up a recognition and meeting with transcendence. Memories of the wonder and astonishment of this mystery that he had already experienced in his childhood opened up a way through the anguish of the nihilism that he encountered at home and in the city, the unreality that filled the void created by the demise of a culture, and the near despair of the atheistic legacy that pointed only to nothingness. The meaninglessness of death haunted and disturbed him yet the beauty he encountered, even in the desert of the city, and the faces that spoke of the Cross, were to gradually draw him to an awakening through inner revelation, an awakening and experience in which at first he did not recognise nor place Christ.

The death of Clément’s grandfather and aunt, two wise *viellards*, still had the dignity of being embedded in the culture of their village and land, but for his father, also a *juste*, already the anchors of culture had slipped into a post-war emptiness and his father’s own descent into a silence was layered with sadness: a ‘contemplative’, Clément reflects, who did not know how to pray.

1.1.viii Post-war Europe: denial of death

People attempted to fill the post-war emptiness by living in denial of mortality and by intellectualising erotic love, which gave a sense of power that, acting for a moment as opium, helped them forget ‘nothingness’. Ways of prolonging a life were sought in Eastern alternatives, theories and even monkey glands, all leading to preoccupation with self and self-gratification. Clément asked a young Hungarian soldier to describe what he felt about each of his amorous adventures:
‘It was like shooting a bird.’ The quest for the absolute was transferred to the quest of pleasure itself, the quest of the sacred in the profane.

The civilisation with ‘nothingness’ at its centre had broken the circle by placing sexual love as the sole expression of eros, which is also legitimately found with the young and the old. In its denial of death, the West became forgetful of the value of elderly people within a family, increasingly people died away from their families and homes in hospitals; increasingly no thought was given to contemplate death. Nietzsche deciphered the death of God and the reign of nothingness, a legacy of nothingness that haunted Clément’s childhood and young adult years. He accepts that with his generation, he took part in the removal of language about God, and that the ‘death’ of God ran concurrently with the death of local cultures that gave meaning to the community and individual.

1. 1.ix University of Montpellier: Homo Religiosus

In 1941 Clément became a pupil of historian Adolphe Dupront at the University of Montpellier. For Dupront, history is rooted in the sacred, all that is deep in existence and life is religious, and man is above all Homo religiosus. Clément responded positively to Dupront’s views on human anthropology and the sacred, he had always loved the portrayal of life in the great classics, and the idea developed in him that human history had flourished from a religious foundation which formed a sacred link of human persons with each other and with being, l’Etre. For the first time Clément entered into intelligent discussion on the mystery of ‘being’ and the transparency of things. Dupront showed that it was possible to think beyond the reality of just matter, he proposed a history that put under pressure all the ideas of existence and not one of them was seen as being decisive; history was a succession of languages, of structures, of ‘archaeologies of the mind’. Dupront’s approach took into consideration dialectic materialism and definitive freedom, not by getting round history, but through a more scientific

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160 Alphonse Dupront, 1905-1990, a French historian who specialised on the eras of the Middle Ages and Modernity. His doctorate, 1956, Le Myth de Croisade, was published under the same title by Gallimard, 1996. He was the first President and founder of University Paris IV-Sorbonne in 1970, and founder of the Centre of Religious European Anthropology.
161 Clément, l’autre soleil, p. 56.
162 Ibid.
163 Ibid.
approach that Clément found stimulating. Dupront was a pioneer on a grand scale; Clément helped him to organise meetings with researchers of different cultures and disciplines. There was a relationship above and beyond material evolution that Clément sought in poetry and cosmogenie,¹⁶⁴ ‘Pour l’un comme pour l’autre’, it was a matter of mankind living a global approach in the quest for a hidden unity, without neglecting any one of its dimensions. In a sense Clément believed Dupront freed him and enabled him to find his real way ahead. Dupront taught that acquisition of knowledge is a road to all being, an honest amazement mixed with marvel at the discovery of what is authentic and real. The act of knowing is stripped of pride, desire and possession of modern rationality, a detachment which Clément himself acquired. ‘This asceticism was attained during a “night of reason” and kenosis […] to find again the creative, biological, cosmic, astral, anxieties and hopes, freedoms […] flowing towards unity in God or in short, all the fullness of human genre.’¹⁶⁵

Clément, always suspicious of ideological contamination, expanded these ideas thirty years later in dialogue with Stan Rougier.¹⁶⁶ With Rougier he reflects on the need for a multi-dimensional approach to an understanding of history, a true dialectic, enquiring into metaphysical contradictions and their solutions without having the right to speak like Marxists, of systems, infrastructures and superstructures. All human complexity has anchorages both in earth and in heaven; it is positioned at the interior of personal existence like close knots of relationships, more or less in communication and more or less separate, more or less rooted in the earth, more or less transparent to heaven; like a gigantic symphony crammed with dissonances that makes up a structure in each era and in each civilisation. This structure gives colour and savour to all the rest, to institutions, to economic and social life, to culture in the narrow sense of the word. It is the transition of a structure from one to another that constitutes true history of humankind. But we can only observe, mark out, not explain; everything depends on the visible and the invisible, in these intrusions of eternity.¹⁶⁷ Clément endorses John Henry Newman’s comparison of the early history of the Church

¹⁶⁵ D’Amour, Olivier Clément, p. 39.
¹⁶⁷ D’Amour, p. 34, citation from Clément, La Révolte de l’Esprit.
with the opening chords of a symphony, when the subjects which will later be brought out are introduced all together in a concentrated burst of creativity; after all he writes it was in 553 that the Fifth Ecumenical Council reaffirmed that God ‘suffered death in the flesh’.

1.1.x The Human Face

Clément wondered what it is that illuminates some faces with a light that is not that of the sun? As a child Clément loved the faces of old peasants, patient and sad, faces seen in the town seemed worn by triviality and nervous exhaustion, and haste that made time into an enemy rather than an ally. The women look beautiful but it was often an impersonal mask from which the voice rang false. Yet the faces of children, when they sleep or are attentive, and sometimes the face of a dead person have an aura of mystery. But finally the face, if devastated by individual or collective destiny through the scars of so many failures, so much sadness becomes a cross and like a flint where sparks can fly out. Sparks that are capable of lighting fire that sheds spiritual light. If the face is just matter, how can it touch the heart, make the eyes shine, open for an instant the absence; what is this secret space where we speak and think, this depth which for us is communion, this centre where we are joined. Why are there faces at all if everything comes from nothing and returns to nothing? Clément throughout his life returns to important insights of Emmanuel Levinas on the ‘face-à-face’ encounter, which calls forth an ethical responsibility, that prioritises the other over the self. For Clément his understanding that God himself is present in the other intensifies the imperative of this insight.

1.1.xi Total Humanity: Divine, Human and Cosmic

Clément points out that some intellectuals think the structure of matter comes under the domain of a consciousness that is part of a fundamental Source; they compare this Source to a collection of ‘theme-programmes’, this makes Clément think of the logoi of Logos, of word essences evocative of the Greek Fathers; or even of a mother tongue that all the others attempt to speak each in his own fashion; it leads him to reflect on the Word ‘through all things’, dear to theology

168 Clément, Sources, p. 12.
169 Clément, L’autre soleil, p. 78.
of the first centuries, which was strongly cosmic. St Maximus the Confessor\textsuperscript{171} held that even the simplest perception constitutes a Trinitarian experience: being as a thing returns to the source of being, the Father; intellect to the Word-Wisdom, a movement towards fullness, to the Breath that gives life.\textsuperscript{172}

In his article ‘Feather on the breath of God’,\textsuperscript{173} Rowan Williams refers to the interest in ‘the sophianic’ during the 1960s; the sophianic, he explains, is ‘that level of the world where divine wisdom in its receptive femininity is at work. That depth of silent receptivity, represented in scripture and tradition by the language of holy wisdom’. Williams’ points out the meaning of ‘sophianic’ for Thomas Merton, referred to by Merton in \textit{Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander},\textsuperscript{174} is linked to the ‘divine child’ in each of us ‘that belongs to this apprehension of divine Sophia, the wisdom of the heart of things’,\textsuperscript{175} which Clément sees as à l’intérieur. In his \textit{Conjectures}, Merton refers to Karl Barth’s account of his dream in which he attempts to persuade Mozart to explain why he was ‘an unreconstructed and not terribly devout Catholic; Mozart had no answer to give him. Mozart, said Barth, is the ‘divine child’ in all of us’.\textsuperscript{176} Merton, who died in 1968, writes in his Journal of 1963 as a baptised Christian of twenty-five years,\textsuperscript{177} ‘I think I will have to become a Christian’. Williams judges that Merton is challenged by Barth to see that ‘a proper theology of the death of Christ tells me I am not serious; God is

\textsuperscript{171} Maximus the Confessor, c. 580-662, also known as Maximus of Constantinople and Maximus the Theologian, a Christian monk, theologian and scholar. A number of his writings appear in the Greek \textit{Philocalia}. He supported the Chalcedonian position that Jesus had both human and divine will. ‘Humanity, the personal image of the Logos, has to discover and present the \emph{logoi} of objects, their spiritual essences. Human rationality is thus offered boundless fertility in unifying and transfiguring the universe […] The Christian West was to lay emphasis on our moral communion with Christ […] The Christian East for its part was to insist on humanity’s ontological participation in the divine energies. Maximus’ theology is an admirable synthesis of these two approaches. And therein lies its relevance.’ Olivier Clément, \textit{The Roots of Christian Mysticism} (London: New City, 1994), pp. 359-361; see also Olivier Clément, ‘Chalcedonians and Non-Chalcedonians: A Few Clarifications’, trans. by Constantin Simon, from \textit{Contacts}, 187, (1999) 193-205. See also Aidan Nichols, \textit{Maximus the Confessor}.

\textsuperscript{172} Clément, \textit{L’autre soleil}, p. 64.


\textsuperscript{175} Williams, ‘Feather’ p. 14.

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{177} Thomas Merton, 1915-1968, was baptized in Corpus Christi Church, New York on 16 November 1938.
serious, my condition is serious, sin is serious, the Cross is serious. But somehow out of all this comes the miracle, the recognition that my reality rests like a feather on the breath of God. It is because God speaks, because God loves and it is for no other reason… I am because of the love of God.\footnote{178} An echo of Merton’s recognition that Christians are in a process of ‘becoming’; is expressed by Clément, ‘I became Christian’ he writes in 1979, ‘I try without cease to become.’\footnote{179}

In his desire to satisfy the thirst for the absolute Clément explored the hidden mystery he found interpreted in art and poetry, and in science, especially cosmology, searching for a link in history between humanity and the cosmos. He had been struck when reading Einstein’s theories of relativity in his adolescence, by the idea of an absolute beginning of matter. In considering evolution he could see a design and continuity in the appearance of living forms, but he could also see in the perfection and infinite complexity of each one their radical discontinuity.\footnote{180}

One evening, before his conversion, Clément heard a woman declare that the spiritual life could be summed up as destruction and nothingness. Later alone at his desk he felt reduced to nothing; everything was lost in a void. Yet ‘Someone’ was looking at him, the One in the icon. Everything was silence, words of silence; the silence was from him, he was no longer alone.\footnote{181} Clément remembers, He told me that I existed, that He wanted me to exist. He told me that I needed to be pardoned, healed and recreated and He pardoned, healed and made renewed me. ‘Behold I stand at the door and knock’, Clément opened.\footnote{182} Clément observes that in Christ, under the breath of the Paraclete,\footnote{183} the crown of thorns of human existence in death is transformed into a crown of flames, man rediscovers his divine dimension, his total humanity, and his cosmic immensity.\footnote{184} Eliot describes this encounter of human frailty with the fire of the Spirit:

\footnote{178}{Williams, ‘Feather’, p. 14.}
\footnote{179}{Clément, \textit{La Révolte de l’Esprit}, p. 11.}
\footnote{180}{Clément, \textit{L’autre soleil}, p. 62.}
\footnote{181}{Ibid., p. 137.}
\footnote{182}{Ibid., pp. 137-138}
\footnote{183}{\textit{Paraclete} published in 1936, is the second of a trilogy by Sergius Bulgakov; republished (Menn Orthodox Open University Press, 2003).}
\footnote{184}{Clément, \textit{L’autre soleil}, pp. 139-140.}
All shall be well and
All manner of things shall be well
When the tongues of flames are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.\(^{185}\)

Christ came also at an unexpected moment to Simone Weil. In two of her letters she overcame her natural reserve and wrote, “Christ himself came down and took possession of me” and that she experienced “a real contact, person to person, here below” with God.\(^{186}\) It is striking that similar concerns and experiences link Weil and Clément’s thought: silence, the absence of God that gives freedom to recognise his presence, the quest for truth, the value of purity, beauty, justice, the communion of humanity and care, concern and responsibility for our neighbour; issues discussed in Chapter 1.2.

Reading Berdiaev, curiously, did not alert Clément to the existence of the Orthodox Church; he had thought being a Christian meant being either Catholic or Protestant; Lossky and Evdokimov were to assist in bringing about a fuller understanding. These Russian theologians totally rejected the Soviet dialectical materialism of the Marxist Lenin theory of history, and wrote creatively of their own Russian Orthodox tradition in a way that was accessible to French readers. They both held a theology, inseparable from the liturgy of the Church, of active love, of deepening asceticism and spirituality. Their theology was a celebration of the intellect and of an ecclesial communion that is profoundly personal. Both men belonged to a Christianity of a post-Christian and post-totalitarian era, that took its emphasis from God crucified, the irreducibility of the human being, the salvation of love and the spirituality of the Transfiguration. Both were deeply rooted in the Church, which Clément discovered was neither a moral code, an ideology, nor a social or political influence, but a Church that was deeply eucharistic, where the person was nourished and transformed: the Church Clément realised, was nothing


other than Eucharist, the sacramental body of Christ where the Spirit is superabundantly present. Clément accepted that all Orthodox thought, all Christian thought, culminates in apophatic antimony, *l’antinomie apophatique*,\(^{187}\) a faith that relates to that which is beyond expression in speech, relating to the method of negative theology which stresses the transcendence of God over all human language and categories, and prefers forms of reference which say what God is not.\(^{188}\)

1.1.xii    **An Answer to Secular Nihilism**

Clément found in Orthodoxy answers to his questions about the meaning of life, and an answer to the culture of death that he had experienced in atheism and secular society; he recognised for what it was the temptation of mystical atheism both in false gods and in identifying oneself as God, from which the Lord’s Prayer asks deliverance in its last two requests.\(^{189}\) Michael Meerson points out that Nietzsche, rather than being regarded as an enemy by the creative theologians of the Diaspora, was ‘recognised as an authentic brother, a critic of desiccated religion, a lover of freedom and a prophet of the confrontation of Christian tradition and modern consciousness.’\(^{190}\) The questions raised by atheism helped Clément towards a perception and experience of the freedom offered by the Resurrected Christ who calls all persons to experience transfigured life to the full. While he found Catholicism to have an ‘admirable eucharistic piety’ he also found, in a way that paralysed him, it compartmentalised belief into theology, liturgy, mystery, and the sacrament of love of neighbour that had been taken by atheist Marxism.\(^{191}\) He judged, at that time, there was a great difficulty in rendering a theological account of the Eucharist; transubstantiation seemed to him a poor metaphysical ‘coup d’état.’ Clément could not understand why the Catholic Church emphasized the crucified figure of Jesus rather than the glorified risen Christ. Neither could he see continuity from the theology of the Fathers, to the Middle Ages and contemporary theology, which he found in Orthodox praxis.

\(^{189}\) Clément, *L’autre soleil*, p. 133.
\(^{191}\) Ibid., 132.
and tradition; he judged that liturgical life, personal ascetism and social action were inseparable: the sacrament of the altar must extend to the need of the ‘other’. Orthodox affirms, he writes, that Christianity opens men and women in the Holy Spirit, to an infinite experience, that the true masters of history are men and women of prayer, that the Church is a mystery of the Transfiguration: only the light and the life that radiates from the Resurrected One can give sense to the modern exploration of the cosmos and of man himself. Later Clément recognised that the Catholic Church had assumed responsibility for the many issues raised by the Reformation and socialism; the next step, he observes in 1975, is to rediscover Orthodoxy, not as a separate confession but as its own ecclesial roots.

1.1.xiii Clément’s major concerns and themes

In the fifties the first of a series of books by Clément on Eastern Orthodox theology was published, including Vladimir Lossky, un theologian de la personne et du Saint-Esprit in 1959; he continued to produce a number of successful books in the sixties on the history of religion and Eastern Christian Orthodoxy, enriched by his deep interest and engagement with the Greek Fathers and theologians of the Russian Diaspora in France. His dialogues with Patriarchs Athenagoras and Bartholomew I were significant milestones in his spiritual interpretation of the political and cultural changes taking place in Europe. The dialogue with Athenagoras in 1968 was important in his reflections on the student revolt in Paris, and with Bartholomew in 1997 after the fall of Communism in Russia, in an era of life-changing technological revolution in the West, and the global rise of radical ‘fundamental’ movements, particularly in the nexus of the Arab-Israel conflict, for Judaism and Islam. At the invitation of Clément, Bartholomew I makes an address to the contemporary world in which Bartholomew and Clément

192 Ibid.
193 Ibid., p. 133.
194 As Patriarch of Constantinople Athenagoras jointly with Pope Paul VI in 1964 lifted the anathemas which had been in existence since the schism between East and West. Clément cites Yves Congar in expressing the process of estrangement that led to a tragic separation between the years 1014-1204; see Clément, Dialogues, p. 18.
seek to share with the West knowledge that the Eastern Church, although crushed by history, has nevertheless retained the absolute and central truth of the resurrection; they want all Christians to recover this understanding of the resurrection: God has become man so that man can become God. Issues of significant importance to Clément are discussed with Bartholomew: ecumenism, interfaith dialogue, the need for sacramental ecology, personhood, Islam, Judaism, youth, nation, love, sexuality, new age, fanaticism and especially freedom.

1972  Questions sur l'Homme\textsuperscript{197}

In the seventies Clément explores the spiritual aspects of the revolt in Paris and produces his spiritual anthropology of the human being, Questions sur l’Homme, translated into English in 2000 as, On Human Being. Clément is a prophet of his time and for the twenty-first century. He explores what it is to be human and brings fresh understanding to issues of sexuality, politics, the role of humanity in the cosmos, trinitarian anthropology, the power of beauty, as well as society’s taboo: death. Clément, as a Professor of Eastern Christian Spirituality in Paris, knew that most Western Christians are unaware of the heritage of the early Church preserved in the spirituality and liturgy of the Eastern Christian Churches. Clément wanted to open up the existential dynamism of Eastern Christianity and the study of Patristic theology to the West – especially the theological anthropology of the Eastern Fathers – but recognises that Western theology can also contribute to the East, a social consciousness which could lead to a global and universal compassion for people in need.\textsuperscript{198}

1974  L’Esprit de Soljenitsyne\textsuperscript{199}

Clément’s profound understanding of atheism and Russian Orthodoxy and his great gifts as a literary critic produced a profoundly intellectual critique of


\textsuperscript{198}  George A Maloney, ‘Foreword’, in Clément, On Human Being, p. 7. G A Maloney, 1925-2005, an American Jesuit whose origins were Irish, Polish-Ukrainian, was ordained a priest of the Byzantine-Slavonic rite as a member of the Society of Jesus in 1957. He founded the Pope John XXIII Ecumenical Centre in New York and the ecumenical journal Diakonia. He became a priest of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople and assistant priest at the Eastern Orthodox Church in California where he died: see Constantin Simon, Pro Russia: The Russicum and Catholic Work for Russia, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 283 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2009), pp. 668-669.

Solzhenitsyn in a richly spiritual rather than political assessment, which illuminates the greatness of this Russian author. He draws from his own deep knowledge and experience of atheism and Christianity to explore the heart of the matter, that death is always present in the midst of life, that existence is nevertheless a state to be regarded with the deepest respect and awe, and that every human face is a way to joy, truth and the Divine. ‘Solzhenitsyn speaks for every man; he speaks for us’ and the struggle he is involved in is not strictly political: it is prophetic;²⁰⁰ It is the struggle for justice and truth: not ideological truth, but the truth proper to living beings, and the justice that respects all life in order that it may flourish. ‘Marxism has nothing to say about death.’²⁰¹ Clément discusses the leitmotif of death and resurrection in Solzhenitsyn’s work in a final chapter added in 1976, these are profound themes which have engaged Clément during his entire life.

 Literary tributes by Clément to Evdokimov, for his understanding of the wonder of the Eucharist, and to Alexandre Boukarev,²⁰² followed in the seventies, then theological essays, and his own testimony, *L’autre soleil*. More works appear on spirituality and one on the theme of dialogue of the Russian Orthodox Church with the modern world,²⁰³ in collaboration with Elizabeth Behr-Sigel.

1979  

*La Révolte de l’Esprit*²⁰⁴

Clément’s major concerns from the time of his baptism in 1951 in the years leading up to 1979 are expressed in his book *La Révolte de l’Esprit*, these include the position of contemporary Christianity, the meeting of Eastern and Western Christians, history, socialism, dialogue between religions, *l’eros* and *le visage*. It is true he says that the Gospels demand that we love God, with all our intelligence, yet man today has got into the habit of being intelligent about everything except the things of God!²⁰⁵ *The Revolt of the Spirit* expresses the spirit of a time when technologies, sociologies and psychologies would have liked to explain everything in the world and to heal everything, ‘à l’intérieur’, at the

²⁰² Alexandre Boukarev, nineteenth-century theologian of the Russian Orthodox Church.
heart of the world, that is, all except death; the Spirit reminds us violently that nobody is of the world, but we are called to live in a communion of persons, and here the Trinity is our example, source and ground.206

In the 1980s Clément edited and contributed to the Theophanie series of books, he produced testimonies to Lossky and Evdokimov, a stirring commentary on Liberation Theology and entered into dialogue with Islamic thinker Mohammed Talbi.

1982 Sources: English translation The Roots of Christian Mysticism207
Sources followed in the eighties. Clément’s strength in producing this masterpiece springs from his desire to love God with all his mind, and the result is a collection of literary observations, essays and spiritual reflections which arise from within the mystery of which he writes, rather than from reflections on it. Sources is an anthology of the writings of the first Christian mystics and Fathers, many of which would have been lost without the research undertaken by Clément who desired to gather this storehouse together and make it available to the contemporary world in an accessible form. His great accomplishment in collating the wisdom from the Eastern and Western Christian Traditions, leaps across space and time to impress readers today of the contemporaneous nature of these messages, which many are hungry to hear. He wants to reveal that there is a way of living at a greater depth which has been forgotten or ignored by modernity, that the theandric reality, the divine human reality, which is not fusion or confusion or separation, but intermingling of the human and divine. These writings resonate to the reader the divine energy of God, which in every generation continues to reach out to humankind.

He believes the prayer of contemplation is an act of creative love, and this he actualises in the commentaries he provides between the texts. Clément wants to alert secular society, which regards Christianity at best as a moral code to enable a good life or a boring exercise involving pointless prayers, or at worst the cause of war and power struggles. While the thirst for mysticism has been lost by our

206 Ibid., p 11.
consumer society, there are still those who genuinely thirst for the truth yet seek in the wrong place. Sensing their lost heritage, they search among the latest fads or, like Clément himself in his twenties, seek out Eastern gurus of Indian, Chinese and Tibetan cultures; while mysticism is essential for the human being to flourish, it is Christianity ‘that will lead us to the secret of life,’\textsuperscript{208} and is the most complete religion of the East. He wants to alert the intellectual, the consumer, the person caught up in activity and politics, that these ‘are merely the avatars of a much deeper human need.’\textsuperscript{209} Jean-Claude Barreau\textsuperscript{210} judges with Clément, that our roots are religious and artistic; no sooner are our material needs satisfied than we become aware of our ‘supra-natural’ needs; there is not a superman or revolutionary who is not beset by unappeased desires. The Fathers of the Christian Church understood the human need for prayer: ‘Birds fly, fishes swim and man prays.’\textsuperscript{211}

The living God is no longer the Emperor of the World, but crucified Love; we live in the aftermath of Auschwitz, Hiroshima and the Gulag, after the era when Christianity was the dominant ideology, ‘to the great detriment of freedom’. Witnesses and prophets arise in times of persecutions, when society vacillates between a sceptism and \textit{gnosis} that develops into a deep sense of dis-ease within. But there remain those who are ‘drunk with God’, who will with irreducible nonconformity ‘after God, regard his brother as God’.\textsuperscript{212} Clément has been guided by tradition in his selection of writings from the Fathers of the Early Church up to the twentieth century; for Clément tradition is of great importance in understanding history and the truth of the Church. He regards the twentieth century as a time of great darkness, even a ‘dark night’ in the mystical sense of St John of the Cross,\textsuperscript{213} ‘but teeming with expectations and intuitions, while seeds of fire multiply in the earth beneath.’\textsuperscript{214} The ‘light and the fire’ declared by the witnesses of the Church is meant for all and is offered through the Bible and the

\textsuperscript{209} Barreau, ‘Preface’, p. 7. The comments in this paragraph reflect the views of Jean-Claude Barreau.
\textsuperscript{210} Jean-Claude Barreau, born 1933 into an atheist family, he converted to Catholicism and became a priest. He could not accept the teaching of Paul VI on marriage and left the priesthood. He married and became an editor, journalist, author and politician.
\textsuperscript{211} Barreau, ‘Preface’, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{212} Clément, \textit{Sources}, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{213} Clément, \textit{Dialogues}, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{214} Clément, \textit{Sources}, p. 12.
Church. The key to understanding all significant processes of change, writes Clément, is the interpretation of the whole of life and the universe in the light of Christ’s death and resurrection, and the witness of the Church, the ‘mystery’ of Him who restores us to life and brings about the transfiguration of the cosmos.\(^{215}\) Debates about the Church as an institution fail to see that the real state of ‘ecclesial being’ is the experience of a person in communion, for whom humanity and the cosmos are by nature ‘resurrectional’ and paschal.\(^{216}\)

1985 *Orient-Occident: Deux Passeurs*\(^{217}\) was written as an act of homage and gratitude by Clément for two men he considered his masters and friends: Vladimir Lossky and Paul Evdokimov. Both men were born in Russia but became lay Orthodox theologians in France. Evdokimov departed Russia after the defeat of the White Army and Lossky left Russia with his parents as part of the expulsion by Lenin of intellectuals, writers and artists in 1922. Nicolas Berdiaev, Léon Chestov\(^{218}\) and Sergei Bulgakov, great intellectual religious émigré Russian philosophers and theologians born between 1870–1880, shared a vocation to decipher culture, society and history from the perspective of the transfiguration of Jesus. These Russians settled in France but continued to write in Russian with the hope of returning to Russia. Lossky’s and Evdokimov’s theology developed differently, they arrived in France in their twenties, continued their studies, the former at the Sorbonne and the latter at Aix-en-Provence, and wrote on the tradition of the Church in French. They had a profound love of France, its literature, art, thought, Christian and humanist traditions; they were both Russian and European but anti-Soviet. Clément believes Orthodoxy did not enclose them but gave them the freedom to explore everything that was essential, and they witnessed to their faith where God had led them. Others of their age continued to write in Russian but because of their historic circumstances these two became ‘les grands passeurs’. Clément judged that Lossky came to see a contemporary role of

\(^{215}\) Ibid.

\(^{216}\) Ibid.


\(^{218}\) Leon Chestov, 1844-1936, born in Kiev is the eldest son of a Jewish family. He married a Christian Orthodox in Italy and published the first of many literary works book under the pseudonym, Lev Shestov. He returned to Russia and met many philosophers and writers, among whom were Bulgakov and Berdiaev. He settled in Paris in 1921, where he lectured at the Sorbonne and established contacts and friends within French literary circles.
Orthodoxy was to help western confessions to retrieve their own specific spiritual and cultural roots in an undivided Church; Evdokimov’s theology is both intellectual and a celebration of joyful ecclesial praise.

1990-2009

During the nineties Clément reflected on the Russian French connection of theologian Berdiaev and published many texts on repentance, prayer and mysticism, the eucharist and liturgical worship, as well as editions 1 and 2 of the Philocalia and an Orthodox Catechism; he has always been interested in the place of art and iconography in prayer as expressions of spiritual reality. His focus was on the Holy Spirit and human formation, and a spiritual vision of the cosmos. Towards the end of the twentieth century he responded to Pope John Paul II’s call to find a way for unity among the Churches and published Rome Autrement, Le Chemin de Croix à Rome, and a series of reflections on his visits to Taizé. He links his own personal search for meaning in life to the experiences of the young people who converge on Taizé by the bus-load on a similar quest, his talks with the brothers there and the young people themselves. He wants to help others move from the sense of nothingness he once experienced towards joy, trust and an inner life that combines a deep spirituality with an everyday solidarity with others.

In the twenty-first century he continued to produce texts and books on the Church and spirituality, and a book of poems; an important contribution is Mémoires d’espérance: Entretiens avec Jean-Claude Noyer, published during illness and physical decline, yet speaking as a theologian of great stature to the world of the new millennium, he calls Christians to be rooted in a spirituality beyond history, to become witnesses of a prophetic and creative spirituality that is capable of throwing light on history. His last book published in 2008, Petite boussole spirituelle pour notre temps, is offered as a spiritual compass for those who journey into the twenty-first century. He invites us to find again meaning in prayer, to see the liturgy as a living incandescence but above all to seek a conversion of the heart.

Clément chose to end *L’Esprit de Soljenitsyne* with a verse from Solzhenitsyn’s poem, *Candle in the Wind*, an offering in harmony with the reality of Clément’s own endeavour:

> What I should like to do is make sure the flickering candle of our soul stays alight till it reaches one more witness. The essential thing is that it should not be snuffed out in our century, in this century of steel and the atom, this cosmic, energetic, cybernetic century of ours … And then, in the twenty-first century, let men do what they will with it.

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CHAPTER 1.2

Truth and Beauty in the Life and Thought of
Olivier Clément, Simone Weil and Alexander Solzhenitsyn

‘Beauty will save the world’
Fyodor Dostoevsky

1.2.i Introduction

Olivier Clément, Simone Weil and Alexander Solzhenitsyn were witnesses to the great ideological tensions of the twentieth century. The following chapter examines the important significance of their life and thought revealed in their reflections around the themes of truth and beauty and the rejection of materialistic idols. An interpretation of the meaning of Dostoevsky’s enigmatic phrase, ‘Beauty will save the world’, cited by Clément, is discussed, and beauty as an essential complement to truth and goodness, that contributes to Clément’s testimony and theological corpus, is affirmed. Clément’s thought marks a distinctive change of emphasis from the ethical and philosophical reflection on theo-anthropology, which dominated theology of the twentieth century in the West. Echoing the sentiment of Eliot’s poem, there was a need to see afresh the words relating to beauty and the divine; a need to link spirituality and prayer more closely in the study of theology. These three thinkers discern that human creativity expressed in art has a salvific contribution, this conclusion is more remarkable perhaps in the light of the suffering and darkness experienced personally by the three writers, during an era of totalitarianism dominance in Russia and Western Europe. This understanding of art carries an Eastern Christian understanding of the vocational call to men and women to become co-creators with God. Nicholas Zernov regards icons as ‘the dynamic manifestation of man’s spiritual power to redeem creation through beauty and art’. In following this vocation the artist chooses to use creative powers, gratuitously given by the Spirit, but which nevertheless require self-sacrifice from the artist to bring the work of art alive. Allchin notes that the

important theological notion of co-creativity was developed by Nicholas Berdiaev.\textsuperscript{224} Beauty portrayed in art is exemplified in the serenity and joy shining from André Rouleuv’s icon of the Trinity, which was painted at a time of ‘war, famine, violence and cruelty’;\textsuperscript{225} it reveals divine compassion, unity and diversity, that speak across the divides of Christianity.

Clément chose Christianity during a time of near despair at the nothingness of atheistic nihilism, Solzhenitsyn engulfed by Communist totalitarian atheism and the horror of the Gulag returned to Christianity, Simone Weil in the milieu of nihilism that swept through Europe after the First World War explored Christianity but for altruistic reasons, may not, it would seem, have completely embraced it. A quest for truth in the first half of the twentieth century forges links between the thought of Clément, Weil and Solzhenitsyn in which themes of resistance, truth and beauty are strongly represented.

The strong sense of social justice inherited from his grandfather exerted a formative influence on Clément’s early years. As a young adult the socialist views of Simone Weil and her quest for truth resonated with Clément’s own experience of the Languedoc region, where socialism was regarded as the ‘third religion’. Clément at the age of twenty-seven was drawn towards Christianity and as a mature Christian twenty-five years later, he wrote his great literary critique of Solzhenitsyn’s life and work, \textit{The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn},\textsuperscript{226} identifying with the Orthodox Christian spirituality of Solzhenitsyn in his interpretation of the meaning of life, death and resurrection. Solzhenitsyn’s witness, thought and artistic writing were important to Clément; both were writers for whom the only created being to reflect the absolute is the individual person in the image of God.\textsuperscript{227} They had travelled arduous journeys to discover ‘existence finds meaning in the communion of persons’, in ‘the wonderful coincidence of unity and separateness’;\textsuperscript{228} which for Clément reflects the paradigm of Trinitarian unity and diversity. It could be said, he sought to be a ‘voice’ for Solzhenitsyn in the West.

\textsuperscript{224} Ibid., p. 156.
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid., p. 120.
\textsuperscript{227} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{228} Clément, \textit{Solzhenitsyn}, p. 111.
Their profound understanding of the human need for justice, truth and beauty, reflects a justice that respects all life in order that it may flourish; they write of truth identified through the lens of the Gospel, lived in the spirituality of Eastern Orthodox Christianity. The Gospel demands love of neighbour and Solzhenitsyn perceives the experience of nationhood as a stage in this process. We need these simple roots, in a people, in a country, in a language, especially in this technological age notes Clément. Faces are a recurring theme of Clément’s writing; Solzhenitsyn portrays the beauty of faces, the beauty of the indomitable human spirit, and the beauty of Russia itself as he writes of the sunlight transforming a simple tablecloth into dazzling blue and a girl’s hair to gold; of the sun on the Caucasus mountains, ‘flooding every inch to the very horizon’, and of the true heartland of Russia, ‘the forest country’. Nicolas Zernov, in 1945, gives us a moving insight into the connection between Russian landscape and thought; each spring, after six months of immobility and seeming death, life returns to the land. With great power and noise the rivers and lakes burst free from the imprisoning ice; grass and flowers appear overnight in fields which had been deeply mantled with snow for six months, birds sing again. Men and animals feel exhilarated, reborn: the power of the resurrection of nature and history receives full meaning for Russians in Christ’s victory over death. Zernov judges the four cornerstones of Russian culture to be universalism, interdependence, humility and belief in the resurrection.

1.2.ii Simone Weil
Clément could well have seen a connection between the story recounted by his grandfather of the determined resistance against oppression by the incarcerated young Cévenole woman, and the contemporary twentieth century French thinker, Simone Weil. Clément admired the integrity and courage required to resist the oppressor demonstrated by the Cévenole girl locked in the tower. Weil’s whole life could be said to have been one of resistance. According to John Lukacs, ‘one of the great principles she incarnated was that of resistance. This was not only political resistance, but also an intellectual resistance to the fads,

\[229\] Ibid., p. 211.
\[231\] See p. 43, n. 148 above.
accepted ideas and idols of the modern world. In the spirit of their French Cévenole ancestor, Clément and Weil worked for the French Resistance during the Second World War; while Clément remained in France, Weil worked with the Free French in wartime London from 1942; it would appear that her spirit of resistance and sense of communion with suffering people of France, particularly her belief in the obligation to help those suffering from hunger, ultimately resulted in her death in a hospital in England, because of her refusal to eat more than the ration allocated to a French person in occupied France.

Simone Weil was born in Paris on 3 February 1909, thirteen years before Clément, and died 24 August 1943 in Ashford, England. She records her experience of an unexpected encounter with the living Christ in 1938 while she was reading George Herbert’s poem entitled Love, it became a prayer in her heart. She was later able to write ‘In all that awakens within us the pure and authentic sentiment of beauty, there truly is the presence of God.’ Weil’s words are quoted by Pope Benedict XVI in his address to artists in 2009; he adds, ‘Authentic beauty […] unlocks the yearning of the human heart, the profound desire to know, to love, to go towards the Other, to reach for the Beyond. If we acknowledge that beauty touches us intimately, that it wounds us, that it opens our eyes, then we rediscover the joy of seeing, of being able to grasp the profound meaning of our existence.’

During and after the Second World War, Clément judged the thought of Simone Weil to be of great significance and, in agreement with other contemporary intellectuals, had considered her ideas to be of more importance than those of Jean-Paul Sartre. Some thinkers deem her to be not only a gifted philosopher,
but also a saint; T S Eliot writes in the preface to Simone Weil’s *The Need for Roots*, which like all her work was published posthumously, that she had a ‘kind of genius akin to that of saints.’ Clément recalls Berdiaev’s words “that each Christian receives a special genius from the Spirit” and Simone Weil has called for a “sanctity which has genius”, something she had already shown she possessed; he further reflects that ‘the Spirit still has his prophets among us’. *The Need for Roots* was initially written as a report for the Free French Resistance movement concerning a regeneration of a post-war France, in which Weil expresses her important themes ‘spirituality at work’ and ‘the needs of the soul’, ‘obligations and rights’ and the spiritual nature of physical work. Weil argues that the dominance of the concept of human rights so prevalent in French politics should be preceded by the principal of obligations which correspond to the needs of the human soul. Weil lists fourteen needs of the soul that include liberty, obedience, responsibility, equality, and truth. T S Eliot praised Weil’s balanced judgement, shrewdness and good sense.

*The Need for Roots* explores the causes for social, cultural and spiritual breakdown that she witnessed in twentieth century Europe, but also globally, which she judged resulted from an up-rootedness caused by a diminished sense of connectedness and responsibility towards family and community, breaks with the past and failure of religious and national institutions to engender a shared hope for the future that flowed from a spiritual and cultural rootedness to the past. Clément also writes of the breakdown of village life and the movement of the rural population into urban environments in his spiritual autobiography, he too addresses ‘the needs of the soul’ and the whole person through his discernment as a Christian theologian and writer.

Interesting strands link Weil’s lifelong quest for truth with that of Clément: they both appear to be ‘outsiders’ seeking an ecclesial home, who in a certain sense are without religious roots yet in seeking after truth, are on a quest to become rooted.

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241 See Clément’s *Questions sur l’homme*. 
They both rejected ‘false’ man-made idols erected by modernity in the name of politics and religion. They shared alike the ideals of early Socialism rooted in Christian ethics and built on justice and respect for the other; the attraction of Christianity; the mystery of beauty; the role of martyrdom and witness; and a need to know a meaning beyond death.

Simone Weil’s pursuit of truth and purity led her to empathise with the Cathars, Greek for the ‘Pure Ones’, who resisted to the point of suffering martyrdom in Languedoc, centuries before a young Protestant girl scratched her word of conscience on her prison wall in that same region. The Cathars’ desire to live a life of poverty and pacifism, simplicity and abstinence were also driving forces for Weil, who wrote, ‘The essence of the Languedocian inspiration is identical with that of the Greek inspiration [...] Liberty was loved. Obedience was loved no less. The unity of these two contraries is the Pythagorean harmony in society. But harmony is only possible between things that are pure.’ She spent some time visiting the Cathar region near Carcassonne publishing under a pseudonym two articles in Cahiers du Sud, identifying in Joe Bousquet, a local atheist, the spiritual essence of Occitan. She sought in Catharism a way of understanding the evil she saw in the world; like the Cathars she found the God of the Old Testament pitilessly cruel and incompatible with the God of the New Testament. The Languedoc region and history imprinted its mark on both Weil and Clément.

Weil’s empathy with the poor and desire for justice led her to work for several periods as an agricultural labourer, and also like Paul Evdokimov, to work in a car factory as a manual labourer. A similar initiative had been undertaken by Catholic Dominican, Fr Jacques Loew, who worked at the docks in Marseilles from 242 Simone Weil, ‘The Romanesque Renaissance’ in Selected Essays (Oxford: OUP, 1962), pp. 48, 51. Fr Jacques Loew, born 1908, was the only child of a non-believing family of Protestant origin. He converted to Catholicism at the age of twenty, trained as a lawyer, joined the Dominican Order and was ordained a priest in 1939. In 1941 he worked in the Marseilles docks, effectively this was the start of the Worker-Priest movement. Fr Karol Wojtyla visited him in Marseilles in 1947 and admired Leow’s pastoral ministry. The Vatican however became concerned at possible Worker-Priest involvement in left-wing politics. Leow wrote a defence of the movement to the Cardinal Secretary of State, Giovanni Montini, later Pope Paul VI, but the movement was closed by Pope Pius XII. Leow in obedience resigned from his job. He visited Africa and worked for three years in the shantytowns of Brazil 1964-1969. He wrote several books, and was invited by Pope Paul VI to preach a Lenten Retreat in the Vatican. In his last years he retired to a life of prayer and silence. Information retrieved from the obituary for Fr Leow, The Times, 27 February 1999.
1941. His action became the spearhead for the Worker-Priest movement within
the French Catholic Church when, with permission from their bishops, priests
took industrial jobs in car factories in order to empathise and experience the
everyday life of secularised working class people.²⁴⁴ Worker-Priests shared their
experiences of engagement with the modern world with their bishops and with the
papal nuncio in France, Archbishop Angelo Roncalli, later to become Pope John
XXIII.²⁴⁵

Like Clément, Weil was drawn towards Christianity but could not, at first,²⁴⁶
bring herself to become a baptised Christian as she felt unable to accept the
doctrine of the Resurrection, ‘The Cross by itself suffices me’,²⁴⁷ she wrote. For
Clément the Resurrection and transfiguration of Christ is the answer and victory
over death. He argues that some modern art, mostly in paintings, is a
‘disintegrative experimentation’, a descent into hell with no resurrection to follow.
However, he concedes that some truly creative artists succeed in using this
approach as a means of contemplation, but these are exceptions.²⁴⁸ Simone Weil
would seem to be such a person. For Weil, justice was inseparable from faith and
love, which she saw in the life and death of Jesus. She was deeply connected to
God, Christ and the Cross and believed every human being can rise above the self,
and obtain the impersonal, the transcendent realm of the world beyond. She
arrived at a belief in a divine order beyond space and time, ‘the just man loves’,
she writes; ‘He who is capable not only of listening but also of loving, hears this
silence as a word of God. The speech of created beings is with sounds. The word
of God is silence. Christ is the silence of God. Just as there is no tree like the
Cross, there is no harmony like the silence of God.’²⁴⁹ Clément was not a stranger
to this silence and Weil would appear to describe the ‘silence’ recognised by
Clément from his childhood that he recorded in his spiritual autobiography.

²⁴⁴ See Oscar L. Arnal, Priests in Working Class Blue: The History of Worker-Priests 1943-1954,
²⁴⁵ It could be argued that Pope John XXIII had convened the Second Vatican Council partly as a
result of the findings revealed by Worker-Priests. The young Polish priest, Karol Wojtyla, admired
the ‘apostolic work’ of Fr Jacques Leow, and had himself undertaken hard labour as a seminarian.
²⁴⁶ There is reason to believe that Simone Weil did receive Baptism. See, Diogenes Allen and Eric
²⁴⁷ David McLellan quotes Weil in Utopian Pessimist: The Life and Thought of Simone Weil (New
Yet Weil asks, ‘Why is Creation good, seeing that it is inseparably bound up with evil?’ She writes, ‘Relentless necessity, misery, distress, the crushing burden of poverty and of exhausting labour, cruelty, torture, violent death, constraint, terror, disease – all this is but divine love’, who could believe in such a God and call him good? Weil struggles to equate this level of negation with the love and hope of the Christian message and the power of the Resurrected Christ. She describes necessity as ‘the obedience of matter to God’, and perceives, ‘Necessity is the screen placed between God and us so that we can be. It is for us to pierce through the screen so that we cease to be.’ God, she judges, ‘can only be present in creation under the form of absence – this is a relinquishing of divine control.’ Her negative assessment would appear to miss the divine call of love to union with the Divine made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

However, she writes in *Waiting for God* how God is the one who searches for us: ‘We do not walk vertically. We can only turn our eyes toward God. We do not have to search for God we only have to change the direction in which we are looking. It is for him to search for us,’ as Clément had discovered when he wrote ‘He found me.’

Like Clément, Weil faced depression and contemplated suicide. Her prayer, ‘Oh God, grant that I may become nothing’, could have disturbed Clément who believed that God became man so that man could become god; yet it is the thought of many saints. Willox in his assessment points to Weil’s hope for ‘divinisation’ through surrender to the divine will, and judges that she ‘understood the problem of spiritual emptiness, affliction, and the soul’s yearning for God, perhaps better than any other writer of the twentieth century’, pointing to beyond time and space.

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250 Simone Weil, *Notebook 1*, p. 191. This view of the created world is similar to the teaching of the Cathar religion; Cathars believed all matter to be evil. From the Catholic view Catharism was heretical. The religion was founded on the opposition of light and darkness: God and Satan, the spiritual and temporal world; God did not create the world, Christ did not take human form nor suffered the cross, Baptism would not bring salvation. The Cathars believed in a Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the *consolamentum*, received at ordination, or for lay people before death. They wanted to return to values of simplicity and abstinence, poverty and pacifism, values they thought the Roman Catholic Church had forsaken. Information from Emily McCaffrey, ‘Memory and Collective Identity in Occitania: The Cathars in History and Popular Culture’, *History and Memory*, 13 (2001). See also, McCaffrey, ‘Imagining the Cathars in late-twentieth-century Languedoc’, *Contemporary European History* (2002), pp. 409-427.


253 Simone Weil, *Waiting for God*. 
to ‘an eternal order that houses the absent God – a God that is waiting for humanity to surrender, to consent to his will and his way so that he may fill their souls with divine love.’\textsuperscript{254} This forms a correlation with Clément’s mature theological project, which was to provide a ‘compass’\textsuperscript{255} both for Christians and for those who experience spiritual emptiness and quest after the truth; he was able to point towards the transforming life offered to each person, and to the cosmic ramifications for the world that this transformation of persons would bring, achieved by and through the love and resurrection of Christ. An atheistic ‘nothingness’ after death that caused the seven-year-old Olivier to feel anguish, had given way to knowledge in his heart that ‘the silence of God is in reality the silence of His respect, of His suffering, of His love’;\textsuperscript{256} like Dostoevsky’s pilgrim he understood the prayer, ‘Everything is in you, Lord, I myself am in you, receive me!’\textsuperscript{257} Olivier Clément is the witness to a faith that does not separate itself from life as it is lived today.\textsuperscript{258} He recognises that the self must decrease in a kenotic self-emptying, so that Christ may increase; that the apophatic ‘way of knowing God that is most worthy of him is to know him through unknowing, in a union that rises above the intellect.’\textsuperscript{259} He writes in \textit{Sources}, ‘The ultimate knowledge, the love-knowledge of the Trinity, takes hold of us by grace alone and we prepare for it by a stripping away of our being until we become nothing but expectation.’\textsuperscript{260} Weil also knew personal kenosis. Clément accepts ‘Simone Weil’s admittedly approximate expression, we must “de-create” ourselves, and descend even below the level of plants and stones […] to the waters of baptism, to the waters of creation. Then the Spirit comes as he came upon Mary and the person is created afresh in “an ineffable peace and silence”.’\textsuperscript{261}

For Simone Weil truth and beauty are synonymous, ‘Under the name of truth I also included beauty, virtue and every kind of goodness,’ she proclaims in

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  \item \textsuperscript{254} Willox, p. 74.
  \item \textsuperscript{255} Clément, \textit{Petite Boussole}.
  \item \textsuperscript{256} Stan Rougier sums up the witness of Clément in \textit{La Révolte de l’Esprit} (Paris: Stock, 1979), written in collaboration with Olivier Clément, p. 15.
  \item \textsuperscript{257} Clément, \textit{L’Autre Soleil}, p. 10.
  \item \textsuperscript{258} Stan Rougier, p. 15.
  \item \textsuperscript{259} Clément, \textit{Sources}, p. 275.
  \item \textsuperscript{260} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{261} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
Waiting for God. A contemporary Catholic view of beauty that echoes Dostoevsky is expressed by O’Leary, ‘It is only beauty that will save the world. Beauty is a sacrament: it is Christ’s tender smile coming through the world.’

The Russian novelist and philosopher, Fyodor Dostoevsky, writing in the nineteenth century, allows the enigmatic statement, ‘beauty will save the world’ to be spoken by Prince Myskin, who is represented in the title of Dostoevsky’s novel, The Idiot.

1.2.iii Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the Russian novelist, historian and critic of Soviet totalitarianism, takes up Dostoevsky’s phrase in his Nobel Prize Lecture in 1970. He admits that he had dismissed this notion on beauty for years, wondering when such a thing had ever happened in the bloodthirsty history of humankind, but acknowledged ‘there is a special quality in the essence of beauty’. Simone Weil saw a synthesis between truth and beauty, and Solzhenitsyn also intertwines the two: he opens his lecture with Dostoevsky’s phrase, ‘Beauty will save the world’, and concludes it with a Russian proverb: ‘One word of truth shall outweigh the whole world’. His mature discernment is that Dostoevsky words are a prophecy. He points out that secular materialistic society had long since discarded the trilogy of Truth, Good and Beauty as an outworn formula, but art continues to give us part of that trilogy’s ‘secret inner light’, which we sometimes receive, albeit dimly and briefly, as insights which logical processes of thought cannot attain. Clément and Solzhenitsyn believe the true artist who has a sense of

264 Fyodor Dostoevsky, 11 November 1821 - 9 February 1881. For discussion on Russian spirituality, philosophy and literature see Rowan Williams, Dostoevsky: Language, faith and fiction (London: Continuum, 2010).
266 Alexander Solzhenitsyn was born three years before Olivier Clément on 11 Dec 1919 and died one year before him on 3 August 2008. Solzhenitsyn helped to raise global awareness of the Gulag and Soviet Union’s forced labour camp system; the Gulag was the Central Administration of the Corrective Labour Camps. Solzhenitsyn was expelled from Russia to the West in 1974, but returned in 1994 after the fall of the Soviet Union.
267 Solzhenitsyn was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature ‘for the ethical force with which he had pursued the indispensable tradition of Russian literature’. His lecture was delivered only to the Swedish Academy. See, Nobel Lectures: Literature 1968-1980, ed. by Tore Frängsmyr and Sture Allén (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 1993). Also see: www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1970/solzhenitsyn-lecture.html, [Accessed 2 July 2015].
the spiritual harmony of the world with all the beauty and savagery of man’s contribution to it, attempts to communicate this poignantly to others. Even in poverty, prison or illness, Solzhenitsyn reflects, the sensation of stable harmony will never leave the artist; the true artist ‘realises that there is a supreme force above him and works gladly away as a small apprentice under God’s heaven.’

Solzhenitsyn’s own writing is a beautiful and artistic expression with which Clément empathises in its call to draw the whole of humankind towards unity, ‘a one indivisible humanity’. Solzhenitsyn appeals for ‘an irreversible march of the nations of the whole world towards unity.’ Only dypsichia, the divided heart destroys unity by untruth – the contradiction between what is said and what is done. It is a march that must be given a spiritual character, reflects Clément, because humanity is becoming materially but not spiritually united. The understanding of both these writers is expressed through the recurring leitmotif of ‘death and resurrection’. Clément, who found the ‘fathers’ of atheistic nihilism had no answer to the question of death – it was not a topic of discourse for Marx, observes that Solzhenitsyn, through his descent into hell during the initiations of the Gulag reached a Christian depth where men are no longer separate, where there is only a single humanity in the ‘Homo Maximus’: ‘one man’.

Solzhenitsyn evoked a concept of the Fatherland as a communion of people that includes all persons living and dead, stretching back over centuries, ‘woven together by a thread of memory, hope and sacrifice’. This memory is carried in the language of a people that shapes and enriches the soul of a nation; Clément uses a phrase of Charles Péguy that describes this shared memory as a ‘trial run’ or the beginning of the communion of saints. Allchin endorses this perception in his recognition of the importance of Welsh poetry, and sees an analogy between the person and the nation expressed by Jacques Maritain and the Welsh poet: ‘the nation like the person needs to respect the rights of others, but it has its own rights

269 Ibid., p. 12.
270 Clément, Ibid., p. 11; ‘Homo Maximus’ is the phrase of Nicholas of Cusa.
272 Charles Péguy (1873-1914), French poet, essayist and editor. His two main philosophies were socialism and nationalism. He became a devout but non-practising Roman Catholic by 1906. He died in battle in the First World War.
which also need to be respected.’ To threaten to destroy the language of a people is to threaten their ‘identity as a people and as people’. Allchin judges that the gift of tongues at Pentecost that enabled all to hear in their own language, is theologically an ‘affirmation of the importance and worth of human diversity against all tendencies to monolithic or imposed uniformity,’ a belief declared by both Clément and Solzhenitsyn, who writes as editor of a book of dissident writing, *From under the Rubble*, a person is of vital importance, ‘The person is not a part of the whole, he comprehends the whole within itself.’ Solzhenitsyn judges the vocation of great literature is to be ‘the living memory of a nation. It maintains and reactivates its forgotten history [...] preserves the language and soul of a nation.’ In this sense he believes that twentieth century literature of Russia lost continuity through the intervention of power.

In an attempt to touch modern secular man Solzhenitsyn makes an appeal to artists, especially writers, believing only beauty can help humankind to enter more deeply into the experience of being which renews the sense of wonder at the gift of life and compassion for the other. Speaking of the world’s different value systems which seem to render us incapable of compassion for distant suffering he sees art and literature have a role in overcoming man’s detrimental peculiarity of hearing only from his own personal experience. Nearing the end of the twentieth century, John Paul II makes a similar call to artists, stating ‘every genuine art form in its own way is a path to the inmost reality of man and of the world’, artists by their nature ‘are alert to every “epiphany” of the inner beauty of things;’ the Pope goes on to write, ‘Beauty is a key to the mystery and call to transcendence.’

Solzhenitsyn’s vision for the future of Russia is both Slavophile and Orthodox with an emphasis based on social conviviality and communitarian life – ‘an

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274 Ibid., pp. 130-131. The Soviet Union attempted to force ‘Russianisation’ of culture and language on its satellite nations.
ecclesiology of communion’.

Solzhenitsyn rises above Russian polemics between a universality, which can be seen by Russian critics as the West, and the Slavophilism of the nineteenth century, that continues today as nationalism. Clément judges that Solzhenitsyn is in line with other great Russian writers, ‘who have never been more universal than when they are being most Russian.’

It would seem this is true also of Clément who deeply appreciates the French language and France, yet his message is of universal and global importance.

1.2.iv Olivier Clément

Olivier Clément writes poetically of beauty in the landscape of the Languedoc that filled him with awe in his youth when as he describes himself, he was a Mediterranean pagan. This beauty he later identified as Christ himself. He marvels at the splendour of the almond tree springing to life under a free azure sky after winter, when the first spring vine leaves flame gold, and the earth beneath them is the colour of ochre. He sees it as an original world in which the transforming light gently condenses on the beauty of the almond blossom, symbol of the secret mystery in the superabundance of an illuminated world.

In the still air on certain days at the end of winter the first almond trees blossoming against the peaceful blue heaven, expressed for him an absolute and fragile beauty. Flowers, without leaves, emerging directly from seemingly hard, dry, dead, wood resembling black skeletons, come to life at the first breath, like the dry bones in the prophecy of Ezekiel.

Clément reflects that in Hebrew the almond tree is called the watchman: his description of it as both the watchman of spring and the awakener evokes Teilhard de Chardin’s view that ‘the deliberate fusion of Christian life with the natural sap of the world’ discloses God’s presence.

In Eastern Christian tradition the philocalic vision is to discover all is beautiful in Christ; the inaccessible God transcends his own transcendence and has many names for the person of Christ: the most loved is the divine name of Beauty.

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281 Clément, L’autre soleil, p. 35.
282 Ibid.
God is himself the fullness of beauty in a sense that is inseparably ontological and personal; his being streams from the depth of love, the reciprocal love of the Persons in unity, so beautifully portrayed in the icon of the Trinity by André Roublev symbolizing a ‘motionless movement of love’. This is the beauty that produces all communion, since it is itself born of communion. Icons allow us to know God through beauty; ‘beauty becomes a way to know God’. Roublev’s icon portrays the three angels with the cup of sacrifice at their centre; the rhythm of lines portraying their wings and shoulders suggest to Clément, who compares it to ‘a musical silence’, a mystery in which one cannot go without the other.

Glory streams like a river of beauty from the Father to the Word, in the Holy Spirit which is silence at the heart of this Trinity. The light of an icon is always from the interior, everything is as if bathed interiorly with sunlight; for the iconographer light is the symbol of God. Clément is in concordance with Maximus the Confessor’s thought: the world is called to be set alight by divine fire to become the burning bush in space and time. Genesis, writes Clément, records that God found all created things ‘bon et beau’, good and beautiful, therefore all created things resonate with an interior word, the logos of the Logos which is a way of all created things participating in the light and divine beauty by their very existence. Bulgakov captures this concept: ‘Sophia is revealed to the world as beauty, and this beauty is the sacramentality of the world.’

Clément defines a first beauty as that of paradise, reflected again in the face of a child or the vitality of youth, but humankind interrupted this first beauty and the light of glory became external rather than shining out from the interior of beings. He compares the second beauty to a mauve nostalgia, as depicted by the deposed angel at the left of Christ on a mosaic at Ravenna. Clément’s third beauty is ‘the cross of light, the glory of Christ, it is the beauty we need, that of Emmanuel: God with us; and the Holy Spirit: us with God.’

Clément sounds a note of warning concerning certain contemporary Western concepts of beauty; only a renewed

285 Clément, Sillons, p. 103.
286 Clément, Questions, p. 191.
287 Clément, Sillons, p. 104.
289 Clément, Sillons, p. 104.
Christianity could open up the way of beauty again. Some contemporary artists portray images that spread a culture of death, unlike the iconographer whose work is an art of the Transfiguration. Clément notes ‘the most striking general characteristic of contemporary art is its rejection of the face.’ Dostoevsky again refers to the mystery of beauty in The Brothers Karamazov: ‘The awful thing is that beauty is mysterious as well as terrible. God and the devil are fighting there and the battlefield is the heart of man.’ In this paradox what appears to be beauty can be a deceit; yet what appears ‘terrible’ in the death of Christ indicates the true beauty of self-kenosis and love.

Clément argues that Christian witness today must not only be through service, but through art, an art that unifies the heart and spirit, that detects in all people the chance of the third beauty, that discovers that all is sacred; an art that is filled with wonder that the inaccessible comes to us to fulfil us, through all the faces and beauty of the world. These are the blessed, because they ‘inherit the earth’, those who feel the secret of beings and things revealing the light of Christ. The beauty of saints and art are prophetic signs always present in the Church in the world. Roublev in depicting God has painted youth and beauty in the sacrificial unity of the Trinity; Dostoevsky and Bernanos, Clément wrote, showed that hell could not satisfy the heart of man; Solzhenitsyn discovered beyond the hell of the camps the tenderness and the unshakable strength of conscience. Suffering runs through the lives of Weil, Clément and Solzhenitsyn; the kenosis of Christ is united with a kenosis of self, where the transforming encounter with Christ is life changing revealing ‘Christ’s steadfast love for us, a love capable of embracing death to bring us salvation’; this is the beauty and love of God shining out. The crucifixion of Christ becomes the Cross of light for Clément and Solzhenitsyn. Clément explains that Dostoevsky’s meaning in ‘Beauty will save the world’ is revealed in one of his letters in which Dostoevsky defines his own creed: ‘There is

293 Georges Bernanos, 1988-1948, a school friend of Charles de Gaulle, was a French Catholic author and soldier during World War I. His masterpiece, The Diary of a Country Priest, brought him recognition as one of the most original and independent Roman Catholic writers of his time. Bernanos also wrote polemical novels against the materialism of the middle classes. He became disillusioned in 1945 with what he perceived as France’s lack of spiritual renewal. Vladimir Lossky introduced Clément to Bernanos’ writing.
not, and there cannot be, anything more beautiful than Christ.’ This beauty frees our freedom Clément declares.\textsuperscript{296}

1.2.\textit{v} Conclusions

Faced with social, cultural and spiritual displacement during the twentieth century and increased dependency on technology, Weil, Clément and Solzhenitsyn seek a spiritual renewal which is perceived through the individual experience of beauty and truth that leads to compassion for the other. Christ was the central discovery of their quest: it is Christ himself who is truth and beauty. In Eastern Christianity the spiritual tradition is \textit{philocalia}, love of beauty, where beauty and holiness are inseparable; and the true beauty is Christ.

Atheism and nihilism are recognised as a malaise, a sickness, in Western society, that has also been profoundly, albeit differently, experienced in Communist Soviet Russia. With the extinguishing of the light of faith, following Nietzsche’s prophetic warning of the death of God, other lights also fade and dim. This malaise should be combated by a return to the roots of true personhood and community and to an ecclesiology of communion. Jesus ‘becomes the central point of reference for an understanding of the enigma of human existence, the created world and God himself,’\textsuperscript{297} John Paul II proclaims in his Letter to artists, in which he also cites Dostoevsky’s phrase, ‘beauty will save the world’. Artists have an important role in a spiritual and cultural renewal globally, and literary art has a vocation far beyond itself, acting as the memory of a nation it is also endowed with the capability of arousing a sense of awe and wonder at the gift of life. Beauty itself in any form can break through the mundane of the everyday, then ‘the desire for power and security of technology and science is suspended’ and in that moment we no longer ‘possess’ but are ‘possessed’ with a joy that glimpses the ‘whole of paradise’\textsuperscript{298} Beauty has the power to surprise us unexpectedly, enabling us to see the presence of the divine in faces, in people and in creation.

\textsuperscript{297} Pope John Paul II, \textit{Letter to Artists}.
For many today, especially in Europe, Christianity appears to be reduced to a moralising ideology, split by *dypsichia*, the contradiction between what is said and what is done. Weil described the type of person she believed the world needed in the present and in the future: ‘an academic, a teacher, a worker, a revolutionary, a genius and a saint’; 299 a unique person called to act as a compass pointing towards the truth in and for the present time, and for the future: these attributes are shared among Clément, Solzhenitsyn and Weil. Clément believes that beauty that excludes God leads to a dead end that turns to absence and destruction, the beauty we need is that of Emmanuel, ‘God with us’, and that of the Holy Spirit, ‘us with God’. With the failure of the Enlightenment to find truth through reason and Western culture looking towards a horizon of ‘nothingness’, the power of beauty as understood by Simone Weil, Olivier Clément, and Alexander Solzhenitsyn is a rediscovery for our time, a profound gift which would seem to be a *kairos* for people of the twenty-first century. They show a different way of looking at the world and at history, to glimpse, if fleetingly, a better way, a rootedness that is profoundly holy.

Pope Francis calls for ‘an ecclesial renewal that cannot be deferred.’ 300 He points to a way of beauty, joy and hope for the twenty-first century: ‘When all seems to be dead, signs of the Resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force [...] In the midst of darkness something new always springs to life and sooner or later produces fruit. On razed land, life breaks through, stubbornly yet invincibly [...] Each day in our world beauty is born anew. Such is the power of the resurrection.’ 301

301 *Evangelii Gaudium*, 276, p. 131.
CHAPTER 1.3
Ecclesial thought of Olivier Clément and Paul Evdokimov:
Deux Passeurs

1.3.i Introduction
Clément characterizes lay theologian Paul Evdokimov as a “witness to beauty”, a perceptive interpreter of the liturgy’s poetry, choreography and music, of the icon’s shimmering light and colour, a riveting narrator of the Church’s teaching’. Evdokimov’s ecclesiology, theology and ecumenical thought was a major influence in leading Clément to baptism in the Orthodox Church, which resulted in a lifelong friendship and fruitful theological and literary collaboration.

Unlike Evdokimov, Clément experienced no familial or ecclesial encounter with Christ in his early years. As a young man he struggled with the philosophies of contemporary nihilism that characterised an atheism that was, as Evdokimov wrote, ‘no longer the privilege of an enlightened minority’ but a norm that had permeated all classes of society. His Christian formation developed under the guidance and friendship of Paul Evdokimov, who regarded the historical events of the diaspora and the founding of the Theological Institute of Saint Sergius in 1924 in Paris as providential, a view that Clément shared. In the tragedy of the Russian Revolution they saw the resurrection that follows the Cross: an opportunity for Orthodoxy to come out of isolation and stand together with the Western Churches. Clément’s profound understanding of both the East and the West enabled him to become a passeur, a term he chose affectionately for two men he considered to be his ‘masters and friends’: Vladimir Lossky and Paul Evdokimov. Jean Claude Noyer describes Clément as a ‘a man of dialogue and unity’, someone who placed Christ at the centre of his life – his writing, his

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302 Plekon, Living Icons, p. 105.
303 Evdokimov, The Struggle with God, p. 9.
305 Michael Plekon, Living Icons, p. 105.
307 See Clément, Orient-Occident.
meetings, his struggles, and of his hope. He sought to establish unity among Christians of Eastern and Western cultures and traditions, engaging particularly with contemporary patriarchs and leaders of the Churches of East and West, while presenting a Christian message to a contemporary society, and an answer to atheistic nihilism, a culture to which Western Christian Churches have found it difficult to respond, and which was also the significant contemporary context for the Orthodox Church in Russia and in its Diaspora.

Clément’s book *Orient-Occident: Deux Passeurs* was written in homage and gratitude to Vladimir Lossky and Paul Evdokimov. Lossky and Evdokimov, arriving in their twenties, engaged fully with the French education system, politics and society, its literature, art, thought, Christian and humanist traditions; they continued their studies and wrote in French, a fact which enabled Clément’s rapprochement with them. These two men, key influences in Clément’s life at that time, were Russian, European and anti-Soviet. Clément believes Orthodoxy gave them the inner freedom to explore everything essential to enable them to become witnesses to their faith where God had led them.

Evdokimov’s concerns included faith and culture, the spiritual life, liturgy, eschatology, freedom and authority. Like Clément, he was deeply aware of the struggle for faith in contemporary society in a time of totalitarian ideologies and contemporary atheism. Evdokimov’s dialectical position challenged the meaning of past and contemporary events. In his essay on sanctity, he argues that struggle, not resignation, lies at the heart of the spiritual life; a characteristic of Clément’s own life narrative.309 He soon belonged to a creative group of Russian Orthodox thinkers who are considered outstanding: Berdiaev, Bulgakov, Gillet and Afanasiev.310 With them, Evdokimov believed that by sharing and living its tradition in the West, the renewal of Orthodoxy could bring new life to all the Churches, while the Eastern Churches would benefit from a new recognition of the diversity and unity that this renewal embodied, bringing them out of a long

309 Plekon records Clément judged *Les âges de la vie spirituelle* was Evdokimov’s masterpiece : Plekon, *Living Icons*, p. 103.
310 Nicolas Afanasiev (1893-1966) was the only Orthodox theologian cited in the preconciliar *acta* of Vatican II. His theological focus was the rediscovery of the Eucharistic ecclesiology of the early Church. His major work *The Church and the Holy Spirit* portrays the early Church’s charismatic character. See H-J Schulz, *The Byzantine Liturgy* (New York: Et, 1986), pp. xix-xx.
isolation resulting from historical events and nationalism.\textsuperscript{311} His reference to the Fathers was not simply to quote them but to ‘incarnate their spirit in our time and for our future’, enriching it from the perspective of Russian religious philosophy of the early twentieth century, its ‘prophetic intuitions, its Pentecostal understanding of the modern world, and its vital eschatology.’\textsuperscript{312} Both Clément and Evdokimov were scholars and poets, and the ‘liturgical, patristic and iconographic richness’ of Evdokimov’s theology\textsuperscript{313} resonated deeply and authentically with Clément.

1.3.ii Theological Contribution
Evdokimov’s theology is both intellectual and a celebration of joyful ecclesial praise. He saw himself as a Russian in exile who had become a witness for the universal church: he remained rooted in the Patristic and Byzantine Russian tradition, but provided a universal service to the Church from the perspective of an ecumenical renewal. Interpreting Orthodoxy within a contemporary context, Paul Evdokimov was a theologian both of the Church and the world. The Church, he writes, ‘\textit{ecclesia}, translated from the Hebrew \textit{qahal}, emphasizes the organic unity of the people of God [...] from the beginning the Church was a communal church and its unity was a “Christophany”, a revelation, a visible manifestation of Christ.’\textsuperscript{314} A Professor at the St Sergius Orthodox Institute in Paris, he also taught at \textit{L’Institut Catholique} in Paris and the Ecumenical Institute in Geneva. He was invited to be an official observer representing the Orthodox Church at the Second Vatican Council and worked to achieve unity and communion between the Eastern Churches and those of the West.

Born in St Petersbourg, the Russian city most oriented towards European culture, into an aristocratic family, Evdokimov had been formed by dramatic early experiences and by the faith of his mother. He was caught up in the traumas that followed the revolution of 1905, when his father, a colonel in the army, was assassinated. Paul Evdokimov, aged seven, and his twelve-year-old brother

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{311} See Kallistos Ware, ‘Catholicity and Nationalism: A Recent Debate at Athens’, \textit{Eastern Churches Review}, 10/1-2 (1978), pp. 10-16.
\item \textsuperscript{313} Plekon, \textit{Living Icons}, p. 104.
\end{itemize}
travelled alone to central Russia to rejoin their mother. The glimpse of the face of his dead father, whom he knew to be a man of duty, goodness and sacrifice, remained with him. Evdokimov, much influenced by the writings of Dostoevsky on the sombre and sometimes tragic outcomes of human freewill, chose to ponder freewill in his first philosophical work, *Dostoevsky and the problems of evil*.

Clément judges that psychoanalysis does not reduce mystery, but rather shows that through our destiny, mystery attracts us to Him. It would seem it introduced Evdokimov to the great theological recurring themes of the last years of his life, years which Clément perceives to have been his most fruitful: that of the sacrificial love of the Father, and ‘the smile on the face’ of the Father which we would have all eternity to contemplate.

Clément recalls that in his later years Evdokimov radiated an interior freedom, serenity and optimism; he observed that ‘after having announced the death of God, it seemed the world entered into the silence of the great Sabbath,’ of silence and hope, Clément notes, ‘in which the thought of Moltmann was for Evdokimov a sign.’

Evdokimov believed the roots of the student riots in Europe and America and Third World revolutions had spiritual origins, a view which Clément shared in his commentaries on the student uprisings in Paris. Evdokimov came to understand that in its roots the Russian Revolution was a spiritual phenomenon that could only be overcome by a spiritual renewal. The vocation of the Russian émigré thinkers was precisely what Louis Massignon referred to as the ‘vow’, Orthodoxy was suddenly out of its isolation and manifested in all countries of the world.

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318 Clément, *Orient-Occident*, p. 123. Jurgen Moltmann, as a young German conscript aged 18, became a prisoner of war in British camps 1944-1948, during which time he discovered Christianity, later declaring, as Clément also had, ‘I did not find Christ, he found me’. He returned to Germany aged 22 and hoped to see the model of the ‘Confessing Church’ that had opposed Nazism reinstated. He became a pastor of the Evangelical Church and leading theologian; see Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and Implications of a Christian Eschatology* (London: SCM Press, 1967).
1.3.iii  Atheism

‘The atheist considers religions and the sacred to be a useless object […] fit only to be stored in the attic of history.’ Evdokimov judged an atheism that claims autonomy for the individual in its denial of all dependency, is typical of the West, while the militant atheism of the Communist Soviets is more consistent and radical: ‘it is centred on only one historic negation: Christ is not risen.’ Evdokimov cites the seventh-century St Isaac the Syrian who wrote a phenomenology of sin defining the ‘great’ sin as, ‘to be insensible to the resurrection’; prophetic words perhaps concerning Soviet atheism. According to Evdokimov this lies at the very heart of atheism and is the source from which arises the Freudian complex of universal guilt: the death of the Father, and the inclination of a human being towards death, Todestrieb and Heidegger’s formula, Sein zum Tode. Nietzsche, who was recognised as a friend by Russian religious philosophers, identified himself as ‘crucified’ in his last moments; he put this question: ‘Where is God? I am going to tell you. We have killed him.’ To have no concept of sin and of its opposite holiness, Evdokimov discerns, is a functional disorder, a form of spiritual madness. Evdokimov believed God calls Christian thinkers to creatively interpret the precious heritage of the past into a harmony that speaks to contemporary humanity, which has lost the rhythm of a past organic life to urbanised modernity.

He reflects on Psalm 13: 1, ‘The fool is free to say in his heart: There is no God’, but the meaning of negation changes according to the ‘depth of suffering in the one who denies, because “Perfect atheism (perfect here means lived even to suffering) is at the top of the ladder, on the second last step before perfect faith,” as Dostoevsky affirms in the Confession of Stavrogin, in The Possessed. This atheism is intensely different from rejection caused by the indifference of the ‘lukewarm’. Atheism and faith ‘can meet together above senseless talk in the silent combat of the angel with Jacob, and of grace with despair.’ An atheism

320 Evdokimov, The Struggle, p. 4.
321 Ibid., p. 65.
322 Ibid., p. 66.
323 Evdokimov, The Struggle, p. 44.
324 Ibid., p. 69.
325 Revelation 3:16.
326 Evdokimov, The Struggle, p. 69.
that deeply experiences suffering ‘knows its own paradoxical cross’; an experience shared by Clément and Bulgakov, I believe, but not by Evdokimov whose early formation combined the disciplines of soldier and monk through the teaching of his parents. Atheists too can criticise materialism but attain stature through a concern for human dignity and rights. According to Jules Lagneau there exists a purifying atheism: ‘That salt which hinders belief in God from corrupting itself,’ and in this way the atheist becomes a true brother of the Christian, acting as a safeguard co-operating with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Evdokimov judges, that is why the Christ in Dostoevsky’s “Legend” is silent, and kisses the face of the Grand Inquisitor contracted with suffering.  

1.3.iv Landmarks on the way

In 1918 Evdokimov studied theology in Kiev, but was soon mobilised into the White Army, surviving the death and tumult of cavalry attacks, a time of which he rarely spoke. Arriving in Paris in 1923 Evdokimov enrolled at the Sorbonne, and the Institute of Saint Sergius where Sergius Bulgakov and Nicolas Berdiaev were decisive influences, which Evdokimov notes in Quelques jalons sur un chemin de vie. They confirmed for him the prophetic mission of Orthodoxy in the West and the importance of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the world. Clément recounts that as priest and professor Bulgakov inspired in Evdokimov ‘the “Orthodox instinct”; the need to dive into the thought of the Fathers to live the liturgy; “to consume the eucharistic fire”; to discover the icon.’ Berdiaev, however, appeared also to ‘unveil’ deep intuitions: ‘the weakness of God before the tragic freedom of man’, ‘the antinomy of the abyss and the cross’, ‘a renewed understanding of the Trinitarian mystery’, ‘an apophatic anthropology of man as microcosm and microtheus’. Evdokimov recalls the eschatological character of

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327 Ibid.
328 Ibid.
329 See Aidan Nichols, *Wisdom from Above*; also Nichols, *Light*, p. 1. Bulgakov was considered by many to be the most creative and important theologian of the renewal, and brought the Church’s tradition into dialogue with modernity, see Michael Plekon, ‘The Russian religious revival and its theological legacy’, p. 204. See also Rowan Williams’ study: Sergii Bulgakov: Towards a Russian Political Theology (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999).
330 See also Rowan Williams’ study: Sergii Bulgakov: Towards a Russian Political Theology (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999).
332 Evdokimov, ‘Quelques jalons’, p. 15.
Berdiaev’s theology, and that the face of Berdiaev was unforgettable, bestowing dignity on whomever he looked. Clément judges Evdokimov’s position to be closer to Berdiaev’s, but that his writing and thought was more ecclesial, in the manner of Bulgakov; and herein, for Clément, lies Evdokimov’s genius: an ability to synthesize and in so doing to go beyond his masters.333

Evdokimov commenced writing around the time of the deaths of Bulgakov (1944) and Berdiaev (1948). Choosing not to enter into the criticism levelled by some contemporaries, including Vladimir Lossky, at the older generation of Russian philosophers, he attempted to reply in the spirit of the Fathers to the ‘Fathers of modern thought’ such as Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, and to speak creatively to the very heart of contemporary cultural crisis, from the perspective of transfiguration in the Holy Spirit and an active eschatology.334 Gabriel Matzneff exclaimed in a television discussion, that a book such as Evdokimov’s Les âges de la vie spirituelle, can turn the destiny of a young person around as much as a meeting with Nietzsche. As noted above, Clément considered this book to be Evdokimov’s masterpiece; Evdokimov sought to open up a sense of the transcendent for people caught in contemporary modern materialistic society, speaking of the value of silence, prayer and contemplation. He describes the spiritual route of ascesis, that Clément experienced and wrote of in his spiritual autobiography L’autre soleil, dividing Les âges de la vie spirituelle into three stages, ‘Encounter with God’, ‘The Obstacle and The Struggle’ and ‘Charisms of the Spiritual Life’, interpreting the sayings of the Desert Fathers and the founders of monasticism in a synthesis with astonishing insights into the characters created by Dostoevsky. He astutely remarks: ‘If Freud and Jung professed their admiration for the psychological insight of Dostoevsky, it was because he had been nourished on the works of the great spiritual writers.’335 In the war-torn world of the twentieth century, ascesis reflects the needs of the era, it is symptomatic that St Thérèse of Lisieux, loved by Clément and Evdokimov,

333 Ibid., p. 110.
334 Ibid., p. 117.
335 Evdokimov, The Struggle, p. 48.
speaks of spiritual childhood; and teaches her ‘little way’, inviting us to sit down ‘at the table with sinners’. 336

While studying at the Sorbonne Evdokimov worked at night in the Citroen factory, cleaned rail wagons and served in restaurants, as many did during this inter-war period. Evdokimov remained a lay theologian, firmly believing in ‘the universal priesthood of the laity’, 337 and the value of their service. He married Natacha in 1927 and they had a daughter Nina and son Michel in 1928 and 1930. They were joined by Evdokimov’s mother and lived at Menton; sadly in 1936 Natacha was diagnosed with cancer. In 1940 Italian troops occupied Menton, Evdokimov again became a refugee and after a brief sojourn at Prades, 338 they passed the remainder of the war at Valence. Clément recounts that during this time, while Evdokimov cared for his ailing wife the children and their home, he prepared a philosophical thesis which viewed Dostoevsky through the prism of Russian religious philosophy. He understood him as announcer of a Christianity renewed by the experience of atheism, as a ‘pneumatophore’, carrier of the spirit, 339 who explores all the dissociations of the contemporary person to flash the loving and silent light of Christ in these ‘underground passages’. 340 Evdokimov wrestled with the question posed by the apocalyptic events of the twentieth century: if the world is a theophany (as he knew it to be since childhood and from the sophiology of Bulgakov) what explanation is there for evil throughout history? His response lies in the kenosis of God that preserves the freewill and choice of humankind. In this work Clément believes Evdokimov identified the driving force of his own destiny: that of Aloicha Karamazov sent into the world by his staretz to witness to a monachisme intérieurisé, 341 which did not negate life but transfigured it, that did not reject woman, but found a meeting place there beyond all moralist notions, in ‘the sacrament of love’, 342 a phrase taken from St John Chrysostom, and used in the title of Evdokimov’s next book, Le Mariage, sacrament de l’amour (1944). His mother died in 1942, Germans occupied the

336 Ibid.
337 Ibid., p. 113.
338 Thomas Merton’s birthplace, 1915.
339 Clément, Orient-Occident, p. 201.
340 Ibid., p. 111.
341 Ibid., p. 201.
‘free zone’, and in 1945 his wife died of cancer. Evdokimov worked in the Resistance and with protestant friends in CIMADE, an organisation which helped young displaced refugees from Europe and the Third World. Resistance for him was non-violent and had the aim of saving lives. Clément sees Evdokimov’s true calling was as an exile himself, living out the text of Leviticus 19: 33-34, that calls us to care for the stranger and commands that ‘you will love him as yourself, because you were strangers yourselves in the land of Egypt.’ In a certain sense we are all ‘displaced persons’, refugees, and exiles from paradise: homo viator. The poor have been given a ‘privilege’: to show the face of Christ and the figure of the Poor One, who had nowhere to lay his head, walking through our world; He has given to refugees a special destiny, the astonishing grace to trace the image of God coming on earth.

Caring for refugees, displaced people and students after the Second World War, increased Evdokimov’s conviction that ‘the broken condition of the world and society demanded a “social ecclesiology”. He called for a unified Christian witness to an “ecumenical epiclesis”,’ together calling down the Holy Spirit. Evdokimov followed the teaching of Bulgakov, by living the principles of social ecclesiology. He and his close collaborator Maria Skobtsova, who died in a concentration camp and was recently canonised by the Orthodox Church, worked with the poor and persecuted: their lives were ‘celebrations of the liturgy after the liturgy, the service of God in the service of the neighbour outside the church building.’

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343 Comité Inter-Mouvements Auprès des Evacués.
344 Clément, Orient-Occident, p. 112.
347 Maria Skobtsova (1891-1945) took monastic vows and rented a house in Paris, her ‘convent’, where she sheltered refugees and helped Jews during the German occupation. Her spiritual director was Fr Sergius Bulgakov. She was sent to Ravensbruck and died in 1945, when she took the place of a Jewish woman. She was canonised in 2004.
1.3.v  Ecclesial ‘knowledge’ and monasticism

In notes for a joint paper in 1970, which was not completed before Evdokimov’s death, Clément and Evdokimov discussed the possibility of an Orthodox call to the Church for an ecumenical council. They jointly proclaim the Church is the Church of the Trinity; in its deepest ecclesial existence it is a real participant in the Trinitarian existence, source of a love at the same time ontological and personal. The Church is the Church of Christ in the Holy Spirit and identifies herself in the Eucharist; one and holy as a eucharistic community. At the celebration of the Eucharist the laity as the universal priesthood prays with the ordained priest at the level of imploration, while the relation of the priest to Christ can be seen in the theology of the icon: the priest is not identical with Christ, he is his typos, his icon. The Church is the Church of the Holy Spirit in Christ.

Evdokimov describes the progression of martyrdom and monasticism during the early Christian era; once the Church was recognised by Emperor Constantine the witness of Christian martyrdom was no longer necessary, but the witness of the monk became profoundly necessary in a Church which had allowed its identity to be defined by history, the state and society. Evdokimov and Clément were deeply interested in the great Russian authors; Dostoyevsky expresses his ideal liaison for Christianity with power: ‘It is not the Church that ought to be turned into a State, as from a lower to a higher form, but, on the contrary, the State ought to end by being worthy to become only the Church and nothing else.’ There is a need for ‘the universal priesthood of the laity’ to be open in the modern world to ‘the universal vocation of ‘interiorised monasticism’. They see the role of the monk in the world is to be a visionary witness, that can be the vocation of all believers, ‘that allows the Spirit to illuminate life and make it fruitful.’ Christ came in order that all could be drawn in him towards the Father and could become ‘porteurs de l’Esprit’, ‘pneumatophores’. Freed of all totalitarian temptation, reinvented for the man of the ‘technopolis’, in an asceticism of healing and integration, the monastic vocation today is, more than ever before, vitally

349 Clément, Orient-Occident, p. 201.
351 Evdokimov, Les âges, p. 113.
352 Clément, Orient-Occident, p. 201.
353 Ibid. p. 200.
essential; the prayer of the reunified heart and intellect, ‘columns’ of prayer which support and bring peace to the universe, lifting fallen humankind that has forfeited its rights, witnessing directly to the meaning of all being. The Church must not be a separated society, cut off from the world, but bring to life the dialectic of unity and diversity, as the source of light and life for all life.\textsuperscript{354} ‘Since its advent, monasticism has been an integral part of the Church, because it expresses a spiritual norm that is \textit{universal}, a normative value for \textit{every} believer.’\textsuperscript{355} Monks ‘take seriously the call to the “one thing needful” of which the Gospel speaks […].’\textsuperscript{356} In his Rules,\textsuperscript{357} St Basil compares the monks to the “violent ones” of the Gospel, who “lay hold of the Kingdom,” and thereby give expression to the maximalism of the Christian life.\textsuperscript{358}

\textbf{1.3.vi \quad Ecclesial Art}

Clément’s choice of a mystically and contemplatively oriented, liturgical Church with a deep respect for tradition, would seem to be a natural progression from his study of the history of Eastern religions and the early Christian Church. The poetry and beauty which Clément found in Orthodox liturgy and art met with a deep response; he found the ‘liturgical, patristic and iconographic richness of Evdokimov’s theology’\textsuperscript{359} that was always faithful to Church Tradition, resonated deeply with him. Clément, editor of \textit{Contacts}, the French theological journal, published a special edition commemorating Paul Evdokimov’s theology.\textsuperscript{360}

The veneration of holy images or icons was formulated as a dogma of faith by the seventh Ecumenical Council: the whole church, its architecture, frescoes and mosaics represent in space what the spoken liturgy represents in time: the reflection and the anticipation of the Kingdom.\textsuperscript{361} The icon par excellence is Christ himself. For the Orthodox Church the first and fundamental icon is the face

\textsuperscript{354} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{356} Ibid., \textit{Sermo de renunciatione saeculi}, PG 31:632.
\textsuperscript{357} Evdokimov, \textit{The Sacrament}, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{358} Plek, \textit{Living Icons}, p. 164.
of Christ: Christ is not only the Word of God but his image. The mysterious movement of love and unity of the Trinity is symbolised in Roublev’s great icon showing the hospitality of Abraham receiving three angels. According to the seventh Council, the one who honours the image also honours the one who is represented by it. In an eschatological perspective the icon suggests the true face of man or woman, an eternal face, a secret face that God contemplates and which it is the vocation of man to realise. The church building constitutes an icon of the kingdom, with the Christ Pantocrator in the centre of the cupula. For Evdokimov the ‘earthly culture is the icon of the heavenly Kingdom.’ Clément believed that all people and cultures are rooted, either knowingly or unknowingly, in the fundamentals of Christianity.

The Ascension is the liturgical feast Clément loved most: ‘the Ascension completes the work of the Son begun at the Annunciation’; it is also Christ’s glorification and the glorification of our own nature which Christ came to save from death – knowing all this, he asks, how could a disciple not be filled with ‘great joy’?

In two volumes, Clément has integrated scripture, theology, iconography, hymnology, feasts and liturgy into an unusual and beautifully written catechism for the Christian faith. Unlike more formal and scholastic works this catechism takes the form of a conversation with questions posed by a Seeker who is answered by a Sage; a method of apologetics reminiscent of Christians who conversed in Syriac and Arabic and lived under Muslim dominance from the time of Muhammad, 570-632. Timothy 1, of the Church of the East, in his encounter with Islam is increasingly seen as an archetype in world Christianity for Muslim-Christian relations.

361 Clément, L’Eglise orthodoxe, p. 98. (Roublev: 1360-1430.)
363 Clément, L’autre soleil, p. 22.
1.3.vi Tradition and Ecumenism

Evdokimov’s understanding of his role as a witness for the universal Church brought Clément into contact with ecumenical endeavour and the evolving thought of the Catholic Church expressed at Vatican II, where both Evdokimov and Georges Florovsky represented the Orthodox Church as observers. Evdokimov and Clément’s ecclesiology stems from their acceptance of the self-identification of the Eastern Orthodox Church with the Early Christian Church, that in spite of errors which have occurred within its ecclesial ministry and portrayal of identity during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, it yet holds on to the true apostolic faith. The two theologians became part of the re-articulation of the Patristic renewal and *ressourcement*,367 which enriched Christian Churches during the twentieth century and fostered a real and new spirit of ecumenism between Christian Churches. Paul Evdokimov was committed to working especially at first with Reformed Christians,368 but after being invited to attend Vatican II as an observer, his contacts and collaboration with the Catholic Church increased, especially with the monastic contemplative orders. Evdokimov sees that modern man needs rest, ‘the discipline of regular periods of calm and silence’, rather than severe fasts and mortifications; the fast could then be his renunciation of the superfluous, his sharing with the poor and his smiling equilibrium.

Clément discerns there is no longer a place today for a Church that dominates. The Christian presence must essentially be a witness to the life that is lived in Christ; it is the face of the person that radiates this truth and light. In Clément’s judgement John Paul II had such a presence.369 The Church must remind people that Christian tradition formed our sense of personhood; the person in communion is the fundamental Christian theme, a theme of hope. Clément devoted his Christian life and corpus of work to a ‘renewed understanding of the human person in the light of our relationship to God’,370 and a life-long endeavour not only to further and encourage dialogue between Eastern and Western Christians, but with all cultures and peoples. Like Clément’s contemporary and compatriot

367 Clément, *Sources*.
368 Jillions, ‘Orthodox Christianity in the West’, p. 287.
Simone Weil, Evdokimov calls for a saintliness that is both ‘kenotic and creative, humble but capable of radiating life into all the complexity of history.’ Evdokimov discerns, humility does not consist of becoming this or that, but of being, in the exact measure proposed by God. In Clément’s view, Evdokimov expresses the fruitful creativeness of the Russian Diaspora in its meeting with a both Christian and atheistic West. He concludes his Preface to *Orthodoxie* with this assessment: Evdokimov ‘appeals to the ecumenism of the contemplatives, of people of prayer, of all who desire not accommodation between churches, whether diplomatic or whatever people are willing to settle for, but “the centre where the lines converge”. Today this appeal still shows us the way.’

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CHAPTER 1.4
Olivier Clément: Orthodox Theological Thought
and Ecclesiology in the West

My son, I give you this commandment:
let mercy always prevail in your balance, till
the moment when you feel within yourself the mercy
that God shows towards the world.

St Isaac the Syrian

1.4.i Introduction

As a French European, Clément wrote from a unique historical and geographical position on matters of contemporary relevance and interest to thinkers and theologians of Western European cultures. He added significantly to the great corpus of creative œuvres that flowed from Russian pioneers of the Orthodox renewal in France. His understanding of Christianity broadened and matured throughout his life and his thought continues to make its mark in the twenty-first century; he is now recognised as a Contemporary Church Father, between East and West. Clément’s French roots and geographical locus uniquely equip him as an Orthodox Christian thinker to make his distinctive and significant contribution as author, poet, compassionate literary critic and observer of humankind and culture. He loved Mediterranean France and the Orthodox world of the Mediterranean countries, especially Greece, the Lebanon, and also Italy which he regarded as his second home. He believed that the future unity of Orthodoxy and Catholicism was possible without the loss of identity of either. To situate Clément’s contribution to Orthodox theological and ecclesiological thought in the West, it is necessary to consider the historical legacy of Orthodoxy before and during the Russian diaspora.

374 Arjakovsky, Olivier Clément, Un maître pour l’Église du XXI siècle.
375 See Anthony O’Mahony on the important Eastern Christian presence in the Southern Italian Peninsula and Sicily, in ‘“Between Rome and Constantinople”: the Italian-Albanian Church: a study in Eastern Catholic history and ecclesiology’, International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church, 8 (2008), 232-251: ‘Benedict XVI, conscious that the future of Christianity in the new emerging Europe will depend upon rapprochement between Eastern and Western Churches [...] would be open to a new Eastern Catholic structure in Italy which might help to build bridges with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople, a key relationship in the religious leadership of Europe.’ P. 247.
376 This new encounter between Orthodoxy and the West raised awareness of the need ‘to possess what is “one’s own” in order to benefit from what is “the other’s”’; see Basil Ženkovsky, quoted by H Bos, ‘Orthodox youth and Orthodox culture: the genesis of Syndesmos, 1923-1953, in Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology, p. 18.
1.4.ii   Russian Orthodoxy under the Tsars

Prior to the Revolution the Church in Russia had been weakened by the changes imposed by Tsar Peter the Great; the Patriarchate had been abolished and the Church became virtually a department of state governed by a synod whose head was appointed by the Tsar.\(^{377}\) The Church thus lost its ‘horizontal cohesiveness and local dynamism in her bureaucratized, pyramidal subordination to a Synod consisting of powerless bishop-figureheads and a secular bureaucratic overseer, an outsider.’\(^{378}\) While the pre-Revolutionary Church, as the official State Church, appeared powerful, its wealth had been drastically reduced through nationalisation of monastic estates by Catherine II in 1763-64.\(^{379}\) By 1914 a large segment of the intelligentsia were either atheists or indifferent to faith, a condition reflected in society as a whole. Many of these, however, became disaffected with Marxism and a spiritual revival began to flourish that became part of the reform movement that culminated in the Moscow Council of 1917-18 which sought to re-establish a canonical and conciliar structure in the Church. A request was made to Tsar Nicolas II seeking permission to convvoke a *sobor*, a ‘national council made up of all diocesan bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church [...] which should deliberate on all ecclesiastical questions and should elect the patriarch.’\(^{380}\) It was the 1917 Revolution however that brought the *sobor* into being.\(^{381}\) With the end of the monarchic system and no elected patriarch or local conciliar system to undertake ecclesial administration, the Church was divided and weak. The date for the *sobor* was set for 15/28 August 1917; a crucial speech made by the ‘Christian Socialist’ Professor Bulgakov,\(^{382}\) a former Marxist, argued for the election of a patriarch at this ‘turning point, before an unknown future and the frightful present’.\(^{383}\) Tikhon Belavin, Metropolitan of Moscow, became Patriarch Tikhon, the first patriarch in over two hundred years. On 5 November, Lenin nationalised all Church land, later decrees deprived the Church of the right to own property, confiscated church and monastic buildings, nationalised all bank accounts belonging to religious


\(^{378}\) Pospielovsky, p. 24.

\(^{379}\) Pospielovsky, p. 20.

\(^{380}\) Pospielovsky, p. 22.

\(^{381}\) Pospielovsky, p. 22.

\(^{382}\) See Plekon, *Living Icons*, pp. 29-58. Plekon describes Sergius Bulgakov as ‘Political Economist and Priest, Marxist and Mystic’. Bulgakov, the son of a priest, lost his faith, became a Marxist professor of political economy but later became a priest and theologian.

\(^{383}\) Plekon, *Living Icons*, p. 31, cites Bulgakov’s words to the council.
associations, and banned the teaching of religion in schools. The sobor continued
its sessions but was unable to complete its legislative and liturgical reform plans
before it was closed;\textsuperscript{384} it did however succeed in re-establishing the canonical
conciliar ecclesiastical structure from the local parish to the patriarch, with the
election of bishops by diocesan councils of clergy and laity. Dimitry Pospielovsky
notes that the reintroduction of the ancient institution of deaconesses was
 favourably discussed at the sobor and would probably have been approved if the
council had not been forced to cease meeting.\textsuperscript{385}

After the Revolution waves of emigrants to the West, brought into France an élite
group of Russian Orthodox theologians who were alive with a personal,
intellectual and spiritual renewal of faith that contrasted dramatically against the
background of the Bolshevik Revolution and the censorship of Tsarist Russia;
Sergius Bulgakov, who arrived in 1923, collaborated with Nicolas Lossky and
Nicolas Berdiaeff among many others, and became the first Dean of St Sergius
Institute in Paris in 1925. The ‘Russian Paris’ experienced the challenging
encounter between tradition and modernity, and soon also faced divisions
stemming from political and cultural positions, that led to separations between the
Moscow patriarchate and the Diaspora Russians.\textsuperscript{386}

1.4.iii Russian Eastern Catholics: a movement arising from within Russia
– historical implications for unity of East and West

It is remarkable that the genesis of the Eastern Catholic Church in Russia during
the nineteenth century developed at a time when Russian imperial and national
self-identity, and therefore politics, was deeply influenced by the prevailing anti-
Catholic stance of the Russian Orthodox Church. The dominant Russian ideology
of Slavophilism,\textsuperscript{387} active in Russia from 1830, stated that all Slavs must profess

\textsuperscript{384} Pospielovsky, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{385} Pospielovsky, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{386} Michael Plekon, ‘Relativism and Fundamentalism: An Eastern Church Perspective from the
‘Paris School and Living Tradition’, Between Relativism and Fundamentalism: Religious
Resources for a Middle Position, ed Peter L. Berger (Grand Rapids MI: W B Eerdmans, 2009), pp
180-209.
\textsuperscript{387} Slavophilism: movement in Russia from 1830s idealising the supremacy of Slavic culture,
especially over western European influences. The role of the Orthodox Church judged more
important than the state and that all Slavs must profess Orthodoxy. Alexander III (1881-1894), a
committed Slavophile, disliked democratic freedom and freedom of speech, wanted to close
Russia against Western Europe.
Orthodoxy. This shaped all foreign and domestic policy and legislation, and remained at the heart of Russian identity during the nineteenth century and beyond. A small minority of Russians converted to Latin-rite Catholicism during the nineteenth century, although this meant exile, loss of all Russian inheritance and life in Diaspora in the West. The discovery of Roman Catholicism was usually only possible for wealthy and aristocratic Russians travelling in Western Europe. Constantin Simon in his great work, *Pro Russia*, records the history and personalities of many Russians who were drawn to the Russian Catholic movement.

Prince Ivan Gagarin, became a Catholic in 1842; he entered the Society of Jesus and formed a team of Russian Jesuits living in Paris. Feodor Dostoevsky, a fervent nationalist, regarded Prince Ivan’s conversion to Catholicism and entry into the Society of Jesus as treachery! In Dostoevsky’s view Catholicism was linked with ‘socialism, atheism and world revolution’. In 1887 Princess Elizaveta Volkonskaya (1838-1897) converted to Catholicism in Rome; like others of her generation she chose to become a Catholic of the Latin rite; but later four of her children became Russian Catholics of the Byzantine-Slavonic rite. Her son Sergej, who was closely connected to Ukrainian Greek Catholic Archbishop Andrej Szeptycki, was ordained a Russian Catholic priest in Rome in 1930, served at the Russicum and taught in the Pontifical Oriental Institute. His life provides a link that connects Russians who became Catholics of the Latin tradition and those of the Eastern Catholic tradition, and with the Russicum College in Rome itself.

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388 Constantin Simon, *Pro Russia*, p. 147.
390 Simon, *Pro Russia*, p. 111: Ivan Gagarin compiled a list (incomplete) of 29 converts from Russian aristocracy to Catholicism during the first half of the nineteenth century. Paris was a central point of Catholic life for these émigrés. Gagarin became the editor of *La Civiltà Cattolica*.
393 For history of Princess Elizaveta and family, see Simon, *Pro Russia*, pp. 121-126; Aleksandr, whose only income was derived from teaching Russian language and literature at the Pontifical
These Russians were encouraged by the Russian religious philosopher Vladimir Soloviev, who was judged by the Jesuit scholar Michel d’Herbigny to be a ‘Russian Newman’. Soloviev influenced a small minority of Russians towards the end of the nineteenth century to be optimistic that the Catholic West and Orthodox Russia would be united. The presence in Rome and Paris of a small number of Russians converted to Latin Catholicism during the nineteenth century, and the subsequent change of legislation in Russia in 1905, that guaranteed every citizen freedom of conscience and religion, opened a space for a Russian Eastern Catholic movement to emerge within Russia. 1905 is therefore a turning point in which the possibility arose for a Russian to become a Catholic and remain culturally united with Russia. A minority of Russians, who desired unity between Catholicism and Orthodoxy chose to express loyalty to Rome while celebrating the liturgy in the tradition of the Orthodox Church, by using a Byzantine liturgical rite, sometimes referred to as the synodal rite, which was thought by the Holy See at that time to create a non-nationalistic liturgy. Robert F Taft SJ defines ‘Rite’ as Catholicism as it developed according to the culture and spirit of a particular community. The Eastern Catholic movement is one aspect of the ferment that arose among Russian thinkers concerning Christian thought and ecclesiology and is therefore an indigenous part of that ferment to which many dedicated Jesuits responded and committed their lives. A Russian lay Dominican foundation was established in Moscow in 1911, and the formation of an Eastern Catholic exarchate in Russia in 1917, when Archbishop Szeptycki named Fr Leonid Federov as ‘Exarch by the Greek Catholic Church in Russia’. The


Nicholas II, following the 1905 Russian Revolution, issued the October manifesto which promised civil liberties.


Taft, Eastern Rite Catholicism.

Exarch: normally Head of an autocephalus Orthodox Church, a bishop ranking between patriarch and metropolitan, see Simon, Pro Russia: a ‘nominal head of the small group with jurisdictional powers of a bishop’, p. 175.

Andrej Szeptycki became Metropolitan of the Greek-Catholic Church in Ukraine from 1901-1944, the year of his death. He was descended from an aristocratic Ruthenian family which became Roman Catholic in the nineteenth century.
exarchate however was only destined to survive five years; what had seemed a promising beginning was destroyed.\textsuperscript{400}

The pontificate of Pius XI (1922-1939) coincided with the early years of Communism, the rise of Stalin and terrible religious persecution in the Soviet Union. Pius XI’s deeply felt concern for the Christian East, especially Russia, was rooted in his experiences as apostolic visitor and nuncio for Poland, the Baltic States and Russia. The failure of collective farms and other ideological economic measures in Russia led to widespread famine. Pius responded by providing food for 160,000 people daily by 1924. Nevertheless the Soviet press and the Russian Orthodox Church reacted strongly when Pius condemned religious persecution in 1923. The acting patriarch, under pressure from Soviet authorities, denied religious persecution in Russia at a press conference of foreign journalists. Documents recently released from the Vatican archives in 2011 confirm continued persecution; they reveal that Stalin himself orchestrated the Holodomor which brought death by starvation to nearly seven million people in the great famine of 1932-33.\textsuperscript{401}

Lenin died in 1924 leaving political chaos. In 1925 Pius XI founded Pro-Russia, the Apostolic Commission responsible for affairs inside and outside Russia for Latin and Byzantine-Slavonic rites.\textsuperscript{402} The French Jesuit Michel d’Herbigny, chosen by the pope to be president of the commission, was optimistic about Catholic and Jesuit work inside Russia. However, he underestimated the rejection felt by the Russian Church and state against Catholicism, ‘uniatism’\textsuperscript{403} and any Catholic presence within Russian territories.

\textsuperscript{402} Simon, \textit{Pro Russia}, p. 289.
In 1925 d’Herbigny drew up an ambitious plan for the Society of Jesus in which he suggested there should be Jesuit action within Russia and around the Soviet borders, as well as action in the Russian apostolate in the West and outside Europe in the Americas and China. He reasoned that work in the borderland areas of the Soviet Union with Slav peoples would prepare Jesuits for future missionary work inside Russia, and chose Albertyn (Poland) and Vyburg in Finland near St Petersburg, Estonia, Latvia and Bulgaria. Rome would remain the centre of the Jesuit Russian apostolate as well as the centre of the Jesuit Order.

In 1926 two young Jesuits aged 28 and 32, Austrian Joseph Schweigl and Frenchman Joseph Ledit, were sent to Odessa and into the Soviet milieu of Communism and atheism. Their mission was to found a Catholic seminary in Odessa, Moscow or Leningrad, as all Catholic seminaries had been closed by the state in 1918. They discovered an underground Roman Catholic Seminary operating in Leningrad, where five students lived while working in a Soviet art school. The two Jesuit pioneers requested the authorities for permission to set up a seminary in Leningrad. Within days they were given 24 hours to leave. The Soviet Union was not going to tolerate any Catholic intrusion.

A new urgency was felt in Rome and two pontifical institutes for the training of men for the Russian apostolate were devised: The Russicum in Rome and the Catholic Seminary at Dubno, a town soon to become part of Soviet Ukraine, to train missionaries in the Eastern rite. The Dubno seminary was entrusted to Jesuit management in 1931 and seen as a sister institute to the Russicum. Eleven Jesuits worked at Dubno as professors and two as rectors, most of whom were frequent visitors to the Russicum giving lectures and retreats. Subsequently Dubno was closed during the Second World War and Soviet occupation of the area.

1.4.iv The Emigration: Neo-Patristic Synthesis
The Russian Diaspora of the 1920s brought waves of emigrants to the West, bringing especially into France an élite group of Russian Orthodox theologians who were alive with a personal, intellectual and spiritual renewal of faith that

404 Simon, Pro Russia, p. 312.
405 Ibid., p. 314.
406 Simon, Pro Russia, p. 330.
contrasts dramatically against the historical landscape of the Bolshevik Revolution and the censorship of Tsarist Russia.

Between 1917 and 1922 the principal Orthodox Churches, separated from their mother Church in the wake of the emigration worldwide, established their own jurisdictions, thus creating ‘jurisdictional divisions contrary to Orthodox ecclesiology’, and as a result Russian émigrés, mostly in Paris, ‘divided into three jurisdictions which were not in communion with one another.’ To displaced Russians, the Revolution must have appeared as a personal and national disaster. What appears to be calamitous, may unfold under the direction of the Holy Spirit as a creative Pentecostal flourishing. Yet the movement of the religious philosophers and theologians during the Russian Diaspora of the 1920s was seen by Elizabeth Behr-Sigel and others as providential; it opened a way for a fruitful encounter between Orthodox Christian tradition and contemporary Western culture. Like Clément, she was a convert to Orthodoxy, although from a different background; her father was a German Protestant from Alsace and her mother from an Eastern European Jewish family. An accomplished Orthodox theologian, who Rowan Williams describes as having an unconventional, intensely contemporary and deeply traditional Orthodoxy that shaped several generations of Orthodox thinkers, she became recognised as the ‘Matriarch of the Orthodox Church in Western Europe’. In Olga Lossky’s view, Behr-Sigel did not see her conversion to Orthodoxy, as ‘a rejection of the West but rather as the establishment of a bridge between the sundered Christians of East and West.’ She passionately supported ecumenical dialogue. Clément looks back in

409 Elizabeth Behr-Sigel, 1907–2005, born in Alsace of Protestant mother and Jewish father, became Orthodox and helped Fr Lev Gillet found the first French-language Orthodox Church. As an Orthodox theologian she is well remembered for her reflections on the role of women in the Orthodox Church. See also Olga Lossky’s biography, Vers le jour sans déclin: Une vie d’Élisabeth Behr-Sigel (1907-2005) (Paris: Cerf, 2007); Towards an Endless Day, trans. Jerry Ryan, ed. by Michael Plekon, Foreword, Olivier Clément (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).
412 Plested, p. 614.
2007 and pays tribute to Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, whose Christian witness was important to him at a time when he was considering entry into the Orthodox Church. He acknowledges both her holiness and the spirit of openness and dialogue that characterised her vision for the Church, and her significant contribution to the development of ecumenical friendships between Christians of the East and West.\textsuperscript{413} She became a co-editor of the journal \textit{Contacts} with Clément, taught at the St Sergius Institute and after the Second World War attended courses in theology taught by Lev Zander, Olivier Clément and Paul Evdokimov at St Sergius.\textsuperscript{414} She recalls her first meeting with Olivier Clément, the new director of the editorial committee, and was struck by his charismatic and radiant personality. His friendly and welcoming openness created a climate of camaraderie at the heart of the \textit{Contacts} enterprise.\textsuperscript{415}

Many of the émigré Russian theologians would engage well with French culture and language; they did not interpret ‘their presence abroad as a simple accident of history’,\textsuperscript{416} rather they discovered their very ‘Russianness’ was a wealth and richness called to encounter other cultures; this brought the understanding that their Orthodoxy depended neither on nationality nor culture. Serge Bulgakov expressed this important ecclesial theological truth in the 1930s, a truth ratified three decades later at Vatican II with reference to the Catholic Church: ‘Orthodoxy is the Church of Christ on earth. The Church of Christ is not an institution but the new life with Christ and in Christ, moved by the Holy Spirit.’\textsuperscript{417}

A particular aspect of the paradigm evident in these Russian theologians of the Diaspora, whether writing or teaching in Russian or integrating with French culture by writing in French, they retained their Russianness. They expressed the genius of their country, a genius that had illuminated the thinkers of the Russian religious renaissance in the nineteenth century, and flourished in the light of holiness, suffering, and the revelation of the true person in the great classics of Russian literature, culture, music and art. Other gifted Russians arrived, artists and musicians: Chagall, Kandinsky, Prokofiev, Rachmaninov, Stravinsky among

\textsuperscript{415} Olga Lossky, p. 203.
\textsuperscript{416} Nicolas Lossky, ‘The Fruitfulness and Contradictions of the Russian Emigration’, p. 68.
others, who contributed to a context that has been called the ‘Russian Silver Age’. Maxime Kovalevsky, 1903-1988, who is recognised as the most brilliant composer of liturgical music in the emigration, while ‘remaining very Russian, has devoted his life to a French expression of Orthodoxy,’ thus creating with his life work a true ecclesial synthesis of East and West. The second generation of Orthodox theologians wrote and thought in French; they completed their studies in France, often at the Sorbonne, but held firmly to their Russian, Patristic and Byzantine heritage.

Rather than calamity, the geographical and cultural division that occurred in Orthodox ecclesiology following the Revolution had, and continues to have, the potential of emerging as a developing enrichment of Orthodoxy through the expression of individual and national diversity in the genius of each host nation. The Holy Trinity is a paradigm of maximum unity in diversity, the Church is the Church of the Holy Trinity; it can only be strengthened by an openness to diversity. In a particular way Olivier Clément by remaining both French and European follows this (theo)anthropological paradigm, characteristic of the lives of the Russians for whom he considered himself to be a disciple: he brings the genius of France, its literature, poetry, music and suffering, the intellectual genius of the Enlightenment (which he considers rather than a disaster to be the ‘daughter’ of Christianity) and his own particular gift of genius, time and place, into a creative synthesis of Christian faith, compassion, heart and intellect, with French culture and the West. He too discerns the signs of the times, and in his particular case, with humility, patience and deep insight. For the Russians of the Diaspora, ‘uprooting has been an occasion for discovering that their Russianness could be a source of wealth called to a fertile encounter with other cultures, and that their Orthodoxy came before their Russianness,’ in conclusion, Orthodoxy therefore was not to be found in any particular culture but could be expressed in any culture, including even that of the West.

Michael Plekon, Living Icons, p. 32.
Nicolas Lossky, p. 71.
Facing probing questions concerning tradition and modernity from within the Russian Paris community and building on the reforms of the 1917 Council, an astonishing renewal within the Orthodox Church in the West flowed from the presence of these gifted theologians. Russian Orthodox theologians born in France during the twenties and thirties formed an outstanding group of neo-Patristic scholars who brought a renewed approach to Orthodox Church dogmatic theology. Catholic theologians of the twentieth century, some of whom were significant contributors to the Second Vatican Council, Henri de Lubac, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Yves Congar, Louis Boyer and Jean Leclercq, formed a movement, which also recaptured the theological vision of the early Patristic period before the division between East and West and the rise of scholasticism in the West. John Henry Newman in 1830 launched the forerunner of this movement of ressourcement which arose in France a hundred years later. In Ian Ker’s view, ‘It was the deep study of the Greek [...] Fathers that formed the basis of Newman’s theology, which was fundamentally Eastern rather than Western in its orientation.’ It was the return to Patristic and scriptural sources that made the Second Vatican Council possible. Greek Orthodox scholar, John Zizioulas, judges that, ‘The first important factor for new, positive and creative developments in Orthodox theology in our century is, rather curiously, the work of “Western” theologians …[The] return to the ancient Patristic sources, which has characterised Western theology in our century, is largely responsible for the Orthodox theological renaissance.’ It has been recognised that the best of Russian Orthodox theology in the twentieth century has been produced outside

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422 Henri de Lubac, was one of the pioneers of twentieth century’s Patristic revival in the West.


425 John Zizioulas, born 1931, is Eastern Orthodox Metropolitan of Pergamon. He is a noted theologian and key figure in major ecumenical dialogues between the Orthodox Church and other Christian traditions.

Russia after 1918 and has been the product of diversity, the meeting of Orthodox theologians with Western theology, Churches, culture and societies.  

As a student and professor of history Clément would have been well aware of the ecclesial “fault line” that runs through Europe, which dates from the division of the Roman Empire by Diocletian into Eastern and Western halves. During the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Orthodox theology had entered a time of barrenness, referred to by Georges Florovsky as a ‘pseudomorphosis’, when the Orthodox Church followed the theological development of the Western Latin Church, influenced as it was by Protestant and Catholic polemics. ‘For centuries Orthodox ecclesial identity in its external aspect was formed in the context of Christian divisions, through emulation and contradiction.’ By the 1930s Orthodox theology had returned to its roots, inspired by Georges Florovsky (1893-1979) and his proposal of a ‘neo-Patristic synthesis’, a return to the sources, which was also supported by Vladimir Lossky, recognised by Clément as a ‘theological master’. ‘Patristic theology is deeply rooted in Church life.’ It means to theologise as the Fathers did in their time, witnessing for their contemporaries.

Both Florovsky and Lossky shared the conviction that the Eastern Church had in essence maintained the faith and practice of the Early Church of the Apostles. Florovsky believed that the neo-Patristic synthesis and return to the tradition of the Fathers was ‘a more accurate representation of the divine revelation than that

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431 Lossky, ‘Orthodoxy…a memoir’, p. 91.
being transmitted by the Western Churches.\textsuperscript{432} There is no place for triumphalism because as Florovsky states, the Church is \textit{in via}.\textsuperscript{433} These theologians saw the identity of the Orthodox Church as grounded in her sacramental structure yet a ‘living tradition’, maintained by the abiding presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Florovsky states:

The Orthodox Church claims to be the Church [...] The Orthodox Church is conscious and aware of her identity through the ages, in spite of perplexities and changes. She has kept intact and immaculate the sacred heritage of the Early Church, of the Apostles and the Fathers. She is aware of the identity of her teaching with the apostolic message and the tradition of the Ancient Church, even though she might have failed occasionally to convey this message to particular generations in its full splendour and in a way that carries conviction.\textsuperscript{434}

The return to Patristic sources was championed particularly by Georges Florovsky and Vladimir Lossky, whose \textit{Essai sur la theologie mystique de l’Eglise d’Orient},\textsuperscript{435} touched Olivier so deeply that he sought Lossky out and became his disciple; ‘it is he who taught me theology,’ he writes in \textit{L’autre soleil}.\textsuperscript{436} Curiously, like Clément, Lossky had been haunted by thoughts of death in his childhood. As a child he asked if God who was all powerful could make a stone which was too heavy for Him to lift, he told Clément, now he knew the reply: that stone is man.\textsuperscript{437} Lossky, also like Clément, had played a courageous part in the French resistance 1940-1944 during the German occupation of France; the Second World War increased his loyalty to France, a commitment recorded in his private journal, which was in the possession of Olivier Clément until he died.\textsuperscript{438}

Vladimir Lossky was born in 1903 in Göttingen, in the German Empire, but was brought up in St Petersburg. The son of a great philosopher of the ‘Russian

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{432} Osborne, ‘Orthodoxy in a United Europe’, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{433} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{434} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{435} Andrew Louth, ‘The Patristic Revival and its Protagonists’, in \textit{Cambridge Companion}, pp. 188-202 (p. 194); Louth refers to Lossky’s \textit{Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church}, published in 1944 when Lossky was thirty years old, it became a handbook on the idea of Neo-patristic synthesis.
\textsuperscript{436} Clément, \textit{L’autre soleil}, p. 145.
\textsuperscript{437} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{438} Nichols, \textit{Light}, p. 24.
\end{footnotes}
Renaissance’, he went into exile with his father in the famous evacuation of thinkers who were expelled by the Soviet government from Russia in 1922. He moved first to Prague where there was a Russian Academy in exile, and then in 1924 to Paris and the Sorbonne where he resumed the study of Western mediaeval history that he had begun in 1920 at the University of St Petersburg. Lossky began research in 1927 on Meister Eckhart, the Dominican mystical theologian, this in turn led to study of St Thomas Aquinas and Denys the Areopagite. The Areopagite’s ideas on negative or mystical theology became foundational to Lossky’s theology; the leitmotif of apophatic thought or negative theology runs through his whole theological project.

In 1931 a distance developed between Lossky and the main body of the Russian Orthodox community in France; Lossky refused to withdraw canonical allegiance to the Moscow patriarchate, while the majority of Orthodox in France placed themselves under an exarch of the patriarch of Constantinople on the grounds that the Church in Russia had become the tool of the Soviet state. Lossky decided the patriarchate in Moscow needed their support and sympathetic solidarity as it struggled to survive the Soviet regime. Lossky also became involved in the Orthodox doctrinal debate on sophiology that arose from the writings of Sergius Bulgakov, regarding it as a bonding of Christianity with pantheism. Lossky published *Spor o Sofu, The Question about Wisdom*, in 1936. Rowan Williams makes this judgement:

> In Lossky’s eyes, Bulgakov, in common with most Russian intelligentsia, does not experience ecclesiastical tradition as a living reality, but has a merely antiquarian interest in it as ‘a monument to ecclesiastical culture’.

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440 Denys was a sixth-century author who wrote under the pseudonym of a pupil of St Paul. His most important work, *De divinis nominibus*, was referred to by St Thomas: see Nichols, *Light*, p. 22.
441 Nichols, *Light*, p. 22.
In contrast to the older generation of Russian religious thinkers, Lossky reveals his commitment to the ‘visible, concrete ecclesiastical institution and his suspicion of any hints of gnostic mystagogy.’

Clément describes Lossky as being rooted in the Church as a tree in nourishing soil. It was through Lossky and his life in the Church, that Clément discovered the Church was not just a set of morals, an ideology, or a social and political influence, but a rich liturgical and eucharistic ‘humus’, where the interior heart and the whole person can be nourished and transformed; he understood the Church to be the Eucharist and the sacramental body of Christ where the Spirit dwells superabundantly. Clément cites Nicolas Cabasilas: ‘In the Eucharist “we find life at its highest degree of intensity.”’ Clément was in agreement with Lossky that the agonies and sufferings of the Russian Church in the twentieth century, which had seen more martyrs than in previous Christian history, had a providential goal: the meeting of Western and Eastern Christians.

In spite of his polemical stance on sophiology, Lossky recognised Bulgakov’s question to be vital: ‘How should the God-world relationship be understood in the light of Christian revelation?’ An anonymous writer brings some synthesis and tribute to both Lossky and Bulgakov’s work:

The whole theology of Vladimir Lossky, centred as that is on uncreated Grace, on Palamite conception of the divine Energy, will try to express Father Bulgakov’s fundamental intuition in a traditional and rigorously orthodox manner.

In 1947 Lossky attended conferences at High Leigh, Hertfordshire, of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius fostering ecumenical engagement between Orthodox and Anglicans, and a second conference in Oxford that included Catholics. Nichols notes that according to Olivier Clément, Lossky at the time of

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445 Clément, L’autre soleil, p.148. Cabasilas, also spelt Kabasilas, see Nichols, Light, p. 170: ‘a fourteenth century Byzantine theologian Nikolas Kabasilas, recently canonised by the Church of Greece.’
his death was planning a comparative study of Palamism and the Rhineland mystics.\textsuperscript{447} He aimed to show ‘the fundamental intuitions of Western mystical theology were in fact Orthodox […]’. Western mystics saw the vision of God as an existential communion but were unable to found this insight in either theology or ecclesiology. Hence in Lossky’s eyes their path led ineluctably to Martin Luther.\textsuperscript{448}

Sergius Bulgakov also argued for the dynamic character of tradition under the influence of the Holy Spirit; however, the early Fathers were not infallible and were under the influence of the philosophy and historical circumstances of their era. ‘Theology needs to be contemporary or more precisely, to express religious thought about eternity in time;\textsuperscript{449} therefore tradition needed to be in dialogue with modernity. Rather than condemn the West and modernity Bulgakov saw an opportunity for the Church to be a transforming agent of the Holy Spirit. He and other like-minded émigré intellectuals shared an ‘openness to the modern world, a willingness to dialogue with the cultures, societies and churches of the West.’\textsuperscript{450}

Bulgakov, dean of St Sergius Institute, profoundly influenced Olivier Clément and his contemporaries: Afanasiev, Berdiaev, Maria Skobtsova, Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, Paul Evdokimov, Alexander Men and many others.\textsuperscript{451} Clément, like Bulgakov, had made the spiritual journey towards conversion to Orthodoxy through the ideologies of socialism and atheism. Other contemporaries outside Orthodoxy were also influenced by Bulgakov’s thought: Congar, Le Guillou, Bouyer, von Balthasar and Rowan Williams.\textsuperscript{452} Bulgakov, in similar vein to Clément can also be called a passeur, he was able to cross the frontiers between tradition, modernity and post-modernity to share the treasure of Orthodox thought, while engaging with contemporary Western concerns.\textsuperscript{453}

\textsuperscript{451} Ibid., p. 95.
\textsuperscript{452} Ibid., p. 96.
\textsuperscript{453} Cf Kallistos Ware, ‘Introduction’ to Nichols, \textit{Wisdom from Above}, pp. ix-x.
Berdiaev critiqued Florovsky’s theology for its abstraction from spiritual life and lack of a human dimension; this appears to be supported by the view of Kallistos Ware who assesses Florovsky to be ‘more a guide for intellectuals than a father of spiritual children’.\(^{454}\) In spite of Florovsky’s focus on the words of the Patristic Fathers, it would seem to the exclusion of their ‘works’, he was able to achieve a reorientation of Orthodox theology in the twentieth century to its Patristic sources. Nicolas Lossky identifies the perspective of his father (Vladimir) and Florovsky: ‘it is not enough to cite the Fathers; one has to have the same ecclesial experience of God as the Fathers.’ There must be a recognition that ‘one is called to be the Fathers of the church for one’s own time, that is to proclaim for today, in today’s categories the essential of what has been received from the witnesses of all times: “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever” (Heb 12: 3:8).’\(^{455}\)

These theologians saw the identity of the Orthodox Church as that of a ‘living tradition’, maintained by the abiding presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The ultimate identity of the Church is grounded in her sacramental structure, in the organic continuity of her Body.

1.4.v     An Ecclesiology of Communion: the Influences

Clément’s choice of the Orthodox Church points us to the origins, ecclesiology and fruitful creativity of the theologians of the Russian Diaspora to which he was introduced as a young teacher in Paris. For Bulgakov ‘the inspiration of the Eucharist ought to accompany us in all our creative activity in life, and the Liturgy […] must be transformed into a liturgy celebrated outside the temple.’\(^{456}\) Paul Evdokomov, Maria Skobtsova and Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, spiritual children of Bulgakov who lived out this ‘social ecclesiology’, were active in the French Resistance, as was Clément, and in work with the poor and displaced persons of the Second World War. A characteristic of émigré theology was the notion of sobornost, defined as freedom, unity and conciliarity; it carries the meaning that church life is ‘collaborative and yet hierarchical’ building up the Body of

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\(^{455}\) Nicolas Lossky, p. 69-70.

Christ. Nicolas Afanasiev had set out his theological thesis on eucharistic theology, that the gathering of the faithful around the Scriptures and eucharistic table forms the Church’s ecclesial identity; this forms the starting point of the ecclesiology of communion recognised by most Christian Churches and Confessions today, and is a significant contribution to ecumenical dialogue. Afanasiev’s radical vision, expressed in his words, ‘the Eucharist makes the Church’, was shared by many contemporary Catholic theologians, including Louis Bouyer, Henri de Lubac and Yves Congar. Significantly Afanasiev’s studies in eucharistic ecclesiology were mentioned in Vatican II’s working sessions and drafts for the Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. Clément notes that for Christians of the first centuries there was no ecclesiology per se, but affirms the Church was above all the Body of Christ, ‘the sacrament, or “mystery” as the East says, of the Risen One who raises us.’ ‘It is the Eucharist that makes the Church the Body of Christ;’ the Eucharist is the ‘mystery of mysteries’.

In 1968 Clément visited Athenagoras I, Patriarch of Constantinople, at Istanbul where as a service to unity he aimed to publish the dialogues they shared. He considers this to be one of his most important books. His two chief aims were to underline the universality of Orthodoxy, committed at the same time to love and respect for other expressions of faith, and to introduce Orthodoxy to Christians and non-Christians of the West. The patriarch, Clément affirms, delivered him from a fear: in spite of the fact that the Orthodox Church had been an immense light for him and remained so, he became aware how often the Orthodox defined themselves against the other, and pronounced others with differing views as heretics. This Clément found quite ‘suffocating’ as it did not correspond with his own experience of those who were labelled heretics. Perhaps

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457 See Mary B Cunningham and Elizabeth Theokritoff, *Cambridge Companion*, p. 11; and Jillions, ‘Orthodox Christianity in the West’, p. 281.
458 Afanasiev’s eucharistic theology returns to the early Patristic sources to understand the Church in relationship with the world, its engagement with the world and the culture within which it lived. Athenagoras I recommended Afanasiev’s appointment as observer at Vatican II where his ecclesiological work influenced the writing of *Lumen Gentium*. See Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora*. See also, Michael Kaszowski, ‘Sources de l’ecclesiologie eucharistique du P. Nicolaus Afanassief’, *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 52 (1976), 331-343.
459 Plekon, *Living Icons*, pp. 149-150.
461 Ibid.
this was redolent of childhood memories of a fractured Christianity and society in the Languedoc region, the bitterness this engendered and his father’s rejection of Catholicism. Athenagoras did not ignore the problems but recognised what was positive in difference and looked at others with the eyes of Christ. The patriarch also taught a profound and simple rule for spirituality for everyday life. He was keen to explain that Christianity was not made up of prohibitions but is about ‘fire, creation and illumination’. Athenagoras did not ignore the problems but recognised what was positive in difference and looked at others with the eyes of Christ. The patriarch also taught a profound and simple rule for spirituality for everyday life. He was keen to explain that Christianity was not made up of prohibitions but is about ‘fire, creation and illumination’.464 Clément may have always seen Catholicism as being too juridical especially concerning ethical and sexual problems, but nevertheless Clément considered, this was better than saying nothing.465 As he listened to the patriarch he entered into the rhythms of silence, of respect and of opening so important in the East; Athenagoras’ face appeared as an icon of age and wisdom as he spoke of his belief that the depth of things is not ‘nothing’, but love.466 This was a message that Clément knew contemporary society, caught in the nihilism that followed the carnage of two world wars, needed to hear; he judged that the West was experiencing a night of the soul, ‘perhaps in the sense of St John of the Cross, a mystical night’,467 or the powerless pagan idols referred to by Jeremiah, which he labels ‘Nothings’,468 all too redolent of the Nothings turned to by a society disenchanted with religion while fearing annihilation and death.

Olivier Clément loved Russian religious thought, but without isolating it from other forms of Orthodox thought, Byzantine or Syriac for example, or from the great Christian theologians and writers of the West. He believed that Orthodoxy had allowed him to become a Christian; it had also given him some keys to understand and love other confessions. He was well aware of the quarrels and divisions that erupted in the Russian community in Paris between exponents of religious philosophy, sophiology, neo-Patristic synthesis and neo-Palamite systems of theology, for himself he resisted taking ‘the inquisitorial party line’; rather he wished to recognise the debt he owed to Vladimir Lossky, Paul Evdokimov and the ‘astonishing intuitions’ of other religious philosophers of the emigration. He discerned that opposition leads to caricature, but those who love

464 Ibid.
465 Ibid., p. 410.
466 Clément, Dialogues’, p. 9.
467 Ibid.
468 Jeremiah 14:20.
Christ can find precious sparks of life and truth beyond the systems.\textsuperscript{469} Orthodoxy had spoken to Clément of the meaning of kenosis, the Transfiguration, the Trinity as source of all communion, and of the way of the \textit{Philologia}. Speaking of the joy of repentance, he finds it is not possible to separate joy from repentance; his experience of \textit{metanoia}, the turning of the heart and mind to God, to discover there was no longer death, only separation, was the experience of joy.\textsuperscript{470}

\section*{1.4.vi An Answer to Secular Nihilism revisited}

Clément found in Orthodoxy a sense of mystery and a sense of freedom that held the answer he sought to the culture of death he had experienced in atheism and secular society. Michael J Buckley observes that Nietzsche interpreted the metaphor of the Madman in the marketplace: ‘The greatest recent event – that “God is dead”, that the belief in the Christian god has become unbelievable – is already beginning to cast its first shadows over Europe.’\textsuperscript{471} John Henry Newman in the \textit{Apologia Pro Vita Sua}, saw that ‘things are tending [...] to atheism in one shape or other. What a scene, what a prospect does the whole of Europe present at this day [...] and every civilisation through the world, which is under the influence of the European mind.’\textsuperscript{472} The prophetic nature of Nietzsche and Newman’s assessment pointed to a rise of atheism and the enormity of twentieth-century events in which religious indifference contributed to the possibility of power-hungry ideologues being able to impose totalitarianisms. Clément knew from his own conversion the importance of a personal religious experience that leads to a relationship with Christ in prayer,\textsuperscript{473} as opposed to the nationalist ‘projection’ that often exists as a moralistic religion ending in indifference to a God who seemed irrelevant. Buckley insists that apophatic theology ‘is primarily an experiential process, a process of entering into the infinite mystery that is God, so that

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\item \textsuperscript{469} Clément, ‘Notes autobiographiques’, p. 409.
\item \textsuperscript{470} Ibid., pp. 410-11.
\item \textsuperscript{473} Pope Francis I invites all Christians ‘to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them.’ \textit{Evangelii Gaudium: Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World} (London: CTS, 2013), p. 7.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
gradually one is transformed by grace and this grace moves through the intense experience of darkness into the vision of the incomprehensible God.\textsuperscript{474}

What is important also here for Clément is that ‘apophatic theology involves both interpretation and criticism, conceptualisation and theological argument.’\textsuperscript{475} However praxis is essential to understanding: John of the Cross, in \textit{The Ascent of Mount Carmel}, is not speculatively considering God and man, but affirming theology is essentially an experiential process by which God “takes His abode in a human being by making him (her) live the life of God.”\textsuperscript{476} A transformation of the person by grace occurs, the gradual process of becoming God by participation in the divine nature. It is the Spirit of Christ who brings about this passive transformation of the person through a process of purification, that John of the Cross calls ‘the fire that penetrates a log of wood [...] until it is so disposed that it can be penetrated and transformed into fire.’\textsuperscript{477} Thérèse of Lisieux, another saint whose journey into darkness transformed her – she trusted in God and resolved to keep faith during the dark night of the soul: the apparent absence of God was part of the spiritual journey. At the beginning she prayed for the murderer Pranzini and experienced joy at his conversion, towards the end of her life she saw herself sitting at table with sinners, praying for universal salvation. Clément compares Thérèse with \textit{staretz} Silouane of Mount Athos who experienced hell and heard Christ’s words ‘Keep your spirit in hell, but do not despair.’\textsuperscript{479} French Orthodox intellectual Antoine Arjakovsky\textsuperscript{480} argues for ecumenism as a living definition of the Church: ‘We all know saints are together. It is impossible to think that little Thérèse does not communicate with Seraphim of Sarov.’\textsuperscript{481} The communion of saints reveals unity and diversity: the Christian ‘we’, Clément discerns, is not a fusion, but like the Trinity ‘a \textit{unity of unique persons}’.\textsuperscript{482}

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\item[474] Buckley, ‘Atheism’, p. 690.
\item[475] Ibid.
\item[476] Ibid., p. 691
\item[479] Ibid., pp. 125-6
\item[480] Antoine Arjakovsky with Fr Borys Gudziak, Eparch of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church Eparchy of Paris, established the Institute for Ecumenical Studies at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, 2004.
\item[482] Clément, \textit{On Human Being}, p. 44. (Italics in original.)
\end{footnotes}
Clément sees the dialectics of radical thinkers in the Enlightenment and through modernity as the Holy Spirit’s work, blowing where he will. ‘But today people who are cut off from the Holy Spirit are in danger of death. Modern humanism needs to be openly acknowledged as belonging within divine humanism, thus revealing Marx, Nietzsche and Freud to be also forerunners of this movement.’

Clément speaks of the place of Christianity in today’s urban secular society, where there is no prevailing authority or ideology. We are in a pluralist heterogeneous culture with no longer any hierarchy of wisdom or unified system. Modernity is the daughter of Christianity and its tendency to critique itself ironically can lead to a new understanding of the human person in relationship to God: a ‘spiritual anthropology’ seeks to identify what it means to be human, that is, humans in communion with God and with each other. ‘Christians must strive for a creative secularism,’ Clément argues, ‘We must hope to attract the post-industrial society of today by a rich, complex, open anthropology, which by its very openness respects the “fathomlessness” of the person and is capable of growing into a “theo-anthropology.”’

Jesus’ words, ‘Render to Caesar what is of Caesar and to God that which is God’s’, free the secular world and open a space of liberty of the spirit. The culture that we call Western is an open culture, which Clément believes holds an implicit philosophy of the ‘other’; Christendom, he argues, had a philosophy of the ‘same’, where what was not the same as oneself was excluded, burnt or fought. Clément rejects the position of temporal authority and ecclesial power that he identifies with past Latin Catholic Christendom, a view that is reinforced by the historical religious landscape of his native Languedoc and the suppression of Cathars and Protestants by the Catholic Church. He evokes the historic day of prayer called by John Paul II at Assisi when leaders of all religions were invited to pray for peace; this is what the message of Christianity and the Gospels of peace bring to the ‘other’. Christians can no longer impose force, they must replace the logic of domination with the logic of generosity.

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483 Ibid., p.106.
484 Clément, Petite boussole, p. 110.
486 Clément, Petite boussole, p 111.
487 Ibid., p. 112.
488 Ibid., pp. 116-17.
Clément’s Views on Contemporary Orthodoxy

During the early years following his conversion Clément wrote many studies on the history of the Orthodox Church and its spirituality. An understanding of the need for ecumenical links between all the ‘sister churches’ of Christianity developed into the great commitment of his Christian life; the promotion of dialogue between Eastern and Western Christians motivated him to liaise at the highest ecclesial level, while through his teaching and writing he reached out to people of all faiths and none. Two important publications are his conversations with Patriarchs Athenagoras I and Bartholomew I, which make Orthodox teaching and thought accessible to Western readers. His contribution to *Que sais-je?* series, *L’Eglise orthodoxe*, published first in 1961 and later in a revised seventh edition (2006), opens with this ecclesial understanding of identity: ‘“Apostolic”, the Orthodox Church is situated in the uninterrupted continuity with the Early Church.’ Although having been present in the West since the great economic and political emigrations, Orthodoxy has largely remained unknown to Western people and culture. Typically, in *L’Eglise orthodoxe*, Clément aims to speak from *l’intérieur* of the spiritual domain. *La voie négative* (apophatic) characterises the dogmatic theology of Eastern Christianity but above all receiving understanding of the intellect by the gift of grace.\(^489\)

Clément became part of the re-articulation of the Patristic renewal and *ressourcement*,\(^490\) which enriched Christian Churches during the twentieth century. Paul Evdokimov, committed to ecumenism, worked at first especially with Protestants.\(^491\) He directed and worked in a hostel for refugees, displaced people and students after the Second World War, believing the broken condition of the world and society cried out for a ‘social ecclesiology’,\(^492\) which was ‘communal and ecclesial’.\(^493\) Evdokimov, and Mother Maria Skobtsova followed the teaching of

\(^{489}\) Olivier Clément, *L’Eglise orthodoxe*, p. 32.


\(^{491}\) Jillions, ‘Orthodox Christianity in the West’, p. 287.


\(^{493}\) Jillions, ‘Orthodox Christianity in the West’, p. 287.
Sergius Bulgakov. Plekon describes Bulgakov’s influence as immense, and lists the long line of students and colleagues Bulgakov worked with and profoundly influenced, in which Clément and Evdokimov feature: ‘from Kartashev, Afanasiev, Berdiaev, Fedotov and Zander […] to Sts Maria Skobtsova and Dimitri Klepinine, theologians Paul Evdokimov, Olivier Clement, Elisabeth Behr Sigel […] Nicolas and Militza Zernov, iconographer Sister Joanna Reitlinger, Bishop Cassian, Frs. Lev Gillet, Alexis Kniazeff and Alexander Schmemann, Bishop Walter Frere, Evgeny Lampert, and later John Meyendorff and Alexander Men.’ Antoine Arjakovsky adds to this theologians outside the Eastern Church, such as Congar, Le Guillou, Bouyer, von Balthasar and Rowan Williams. This group posits Clément within a strong group of Russian thinkers who have an outreach to Western theological thought.

Bulgakov wrote in 1932:

Yet it is only the Church that possesses the principle of true social order, in which the personal and the collective, freedom and social service can be given equal weight and unified harmoniously. It is itself this very principle—living sobornost. That is also the dogmatic foundation of an ecclesial polity. But to this end there must be an upsurge of fresh inspiration in the members of the Church themselves, a spring of living water which satisfies the thirst of contemporary humanity, for the sake of a new relationship among nations, a new mission to the darkness of social paganism, for the awakening of a new spirit. This is not the misplaced utopianism of a “rose-tinted” Christianity that consigns the tragic


495 Plekon, ‘Living Tradition – Social Theory’, p. 4; Plekon adds, Bulgakov has been a principal focus of Antoine Arjakovsky’s work, and his own, along with Paul Gavrilyuk, Myroslaw Tataryn, Brandon Gallaher, Bryn Geffert and Sergei Nikolaev, among others.
character of history, with its necessary schism between good and evil, to oblivion, believing that before the ultimate separation the forces of good are bound to become fully manifest.

Bulgakov saw the Church not just as political and cultural, but as ‘an eschatological presence, as an agent of the Kingdom of God.’ His theology, while recognising certain failings of modernity, expressed ‘openness to the modern world, a willingness to dialogue with the cultures, societies and churches of the West,’ while using the language of the modern world to express the Gospel, as citizens of it. This was a gift of Olivier Clément, which he used dialogically and well.

During the Nazi occupation of France, Mother Maria, Paul Evdokimov and Olivier Clément had been active in the Resistance. Patriarch Athenagoras I had developed his philosophy of encounter and dialogue during the Balkan Wars and the First World War: ‘to love communication with men as I loved men, as individuals, because in man I see God, and behind the miracle of human existence is God Himself.’ In dialogue with Clément, Athenagoras judged that all people and countries are good; the Christian Church must be the leaven in the world that brings about unity.

In Clément’s view an aspect of Orthodox ecclesiology of major importance for Christian unity is its theology of communion, which contributes specifically to a theology of ecumenism. Clément judges it to be of particular importance for a rapprochement between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and contributed to the ecclesiology elaborated by the Second Vatican Council in its ‘ecclesiology of communion’; it is also important as a response to a type of sadness experienced by many in contemporary society. Similar views are expressed twelve years later.

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498 Ibid., p. 2.
in 2013, by Cardinal Quellet who recalls that after the tragedies of the twentieth century, the Council Fathers undertook a fundamental reflection on ecclesiology, in which ‘ecclesiology of communion’ became ‘the central and fundamental idea of the documents of the Council’.  

The cardinal affirms the valuable theological insights of Orthodox thinkers who introduced the idea of *koinonia-communio* and the ecumenical encounters and dialogue during the council, contributed to an ecclesiology of communion.

Clément, in his theological reflection ‘on the human being’, wants to show that ‘communion’, as a fundamental structure of the Christian mystery, is ‘an anthropological becoming’ a trinitarian becoming, which Clément defines as ‘a trinitarian uni-diversity of humanity reborn in the sacramental matrix of the Church’. The Church is the historic and spiritual space where the renewed person opens his eyes to the reality of his being and vocation, to discover we are all members of the Body of Christ, a renewed humanity, a double consubstantiality of Christ to the Father and to us, which makes us consubstantial with each other. Clément points to Sergius Bulgakov’s theology which emphasised the ‘complete humanity of each person’, and that of Paul Florensky who insists on the ontological character of human identity. Florensky points out the difference between truly Christian social action and well-intentioned social morality; for the latter group people are merely alike, for the Christian there is some sense of ‘consubstantiality’. Clément reminds us that the Christian ‘we’, like the Trinity, is not a fusion, but a ‘unity of unique persons’; he cites Gregory of Nyssa, ‘Genuine Christian life is an “imitation of the Trinity”.’ It would seem the contemporary sadness noted by Clément stems from a realisation that contemporary modern values and cultures are insufficient to satisfy the fundamental longings of humankind. Clément likens the fullness of God to an ocean ‘alive with the movement of infinite love’ that is expressed in an interchange of the three persons of the Trinity. If God is love, Clément argues, the person immersed in this love is opened to communion with his or her neighbour.

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501 Cardinal Quellet, note 2.
504 Ibid., p. 93.
505 Clément, *On Human Being*, p. 44.
The essential unity of God is reflected in the reality of personal love, and ‘we’ human beings are called to realise our essential unity with all humanity.⁵⁰⁶ Clément wants to inform people influenced by Western culture that the theological understanding of communion in the tradition of Orthodoxy acts as a kairos in the history of each generation. Trinitarian anthropology founds the reality of a divine-human ecclesiology of communion; the true idea of Russian sobornost, a spiritual catholicity of the Church.⁵⁰⁷

In Clément’s judgement there is no longer a place today for a Church that dominates; Christians can no longer impose, only propose humbly and with generosity. In a world that is saturated with media, words and consumerism the person of prayer offers something which cannot be bought and sold: a joy and compassion that radiates out to others. The Christian presence must essentially be a witness to the life that is lived in Christ; it is the face of the person that radiates this truth and light. The Church must remind people that Christian tradition formed our sense of personhood; the person in communion is the fundamental Christian theme, a theme of hope. Clément had devoted his Christian life and work to a ‘renewed understanding of the human person in the light of our relationship to God’⁵⁰⁸ and a life-long quest not only to further and encourage dialogue between Eastern and Western Christians but with all cultures and peoples. Rowan Williams conceives a view complementary to Clément’s, that the religious establishment’s relationship to a contemporary secular governmental power can be one of friendly opposition, with the Church acting as the ‘compensating counterforce’.⁵⁰⁹

The Orthodox Church in Russia rejected that spirit of dialogue and renewal on 5 May 1998, when a number of books written by important contemporary Orthodox theologians were burnt at Ekaterinburg under the sanction of Bishop Nikon. The rejected theologians were priests, Nicolas Afanasiev, Alexander Schmemann, John Meyendorff and Alexander Men. The books, considered to be contaminated

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⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.
⁵⁰⁷ Clément, Sillons, p. 96.
by Western ideas and possibly heretical, were banned from all strata of Orthodox readership. Strong critiques against this action were lodged by the Orthodox Church in France and America.\footnote{Olivier Clément, ‘Difficulties and Indispositions of the Russian Church’, \textit{Le Monde}, 10 June 1998.} Polemical perspectives are held by two Orthodox groups: on the one hand the \textit{intégristes}, who are against any renewal of liturgy or theology, ecumenism or membership of the World Council of Churches,\footnote{Michael Plekon, \textit{Living Icons} (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), p. 235.} and on the other hand, those Orthodox who are open to discussion with other confessions, who actively seek to heal the schisms and divisions that have ruptured the unity of Christianity,\footnote{Plekon, \textit{Living Icons}, p. 225.} who welcomed the meeting of Pope Paul VI and Athenagoras I and their fraternal decision to lift the centuries-old anathemas. All the priests whose books are forbidden in Russia, believe that the tradition of the Church is alive and therefore changing, yet able to hold onto the truth. Leonid Kishkovsky is optimistic that the tendency towards polarisation and extremism in the Church ‘has not become the governing reality’,\footnote{Leonid Kishkovsky, ‘Russian theology after totalitarianism’, in \textit{Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology}, pp. 261-292, (p. 268).} and this is demonstrated by the subsequent publishing in Ekaterinburg of the same authors whose books had been previously burnt, and also several conferences convened by the Synodal Theological Commission to encourage theological discussion and exploration.

Clément judged that the cleavage, which he observes in the Russian Church, is more complex than it appears and also exists in other parts of the Orthodox Church, where extremes of inclusivity and exclusivity are evident in the actions of ecclesial authorities and Church members; rigid conformity to tradition is often countered by the reactive tendency towards openness and adaptation.\footnote{Kishkovsky, ‘Russian theology’, p. 236.} Alexander Men was particularly aware of the polemical tensions that surrounded his own ministry and were present in the history of the Russian Church. Like Clément, Men drew from the works of Dostoevsky to better express his view, that the tendencies characteristic of both polemic ecclesial perspectives, as illustrated by the monks Ferapont and Zossima in \textit{The Brothers Karamazov}, in fact provide a balance and can complement each other.
Alexander Men was little known in the West until his murder in 1990 raised awareness and interest in his attempt to bring about a renewal of the Church in Russia. Under constant surveillance by the KGB Fr Men nevertheless worked tirelessly to serve the Church. The circumstances of his death appear to indicate that professionals perpetrated the attack, an axe blow to the head. Yves Hamant notes that the axe is the traditional symbol of popular justice, it was also used to threaten Jews during pogroms; Fr Men’s parents were both Jewish. Mother and son received baptism in the Orthodox Church shortly after Alexander’s birth in 1935, during the period of Stalin’s persecutions. Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger of France, also of Jewish background, judged that Fr Men ‘was felt to be a menace by the Communist authorities [...] and also the anti-Semites, and in order to silence him one or other group had him killed.’ Fr Men’s life and work contributed to the renewal in Russia, showing a ‘society accustomed to living in fear the way to living without fear. This absolute fearlessness was no doubt due to his complex God-centredness.’

Men had a sense of urgency: ‘At present I am like the sower in the parable. I have been given a unique chance to spread the seed.’

While both Clément and Men remained devoted to the tradition of the Orthodox Church, Holy Scripture and the Eucharist, both are criticised for being too ecumenical, too liberal and too un-Orthodox. The faithfulness of Men and Clément to the Orthodox tradition is infused with a radical openness in following Christ, which led them to embrace not only what is ecclesiological, but also the world and all people. They are both authentic prophetic signs, not only for the Eastern Orthodox Church but for all Christians, which point to the cross-bearing role of the Christian witness and to the Resurrection. Alexander Men’s words given at his last lecture the night before his assassination are full of Christian

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515 Yves Hamant lived in Russia during the Brezhnev period and knew Fr Men personally since 1970. He is a member of the commission created by the Patriarchate of Moscow to preserve and make known Fr Men’s works. See Yves Hamant, *Alexander Men: A Witness for Contemporary Russia* (Redondo Beach: Oakwood Publications, 1995), opening page, unnumbered. Also Michel Evdokimov, *Fr Alexander Men: Martyr of Atheism*, (Leominster: Gracewing, 2011).
516 Hamant, p. 5.
519 Hamant quotes Fr Alexander, see note 289, p. 204.
hope, confidence and patience, values that also mark Olivier Clément: ‘This victory began on the night of the Resurrection, and it will continue as long as the world exists.’

Clément judges that the influence of the Orthodox Russians of the Diaspora is even more important today, but he recalls a reflection of Alexander Men, ‘Christianity has only started.’ Their shared discernment may be correct, yet as the Churches grow in greater trust and openness in an ecclesiology of communion, and bearing in mind the character of Christ as the Alpha and the Omega, and that we are in Christ, Eliot’s words bring an eschatological dimension: ‘We shall not cease from exploration. And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.’

PART 1.ii Conclusions to Part 1
Clément stands in a formidable line of Orthodox theologians whose ministries developed through writing, teaching, preaching and pastoral care: Afanasiev, Berdiaev, Bulgakov, Lossky, and Evdokimov to name a few. The return to Patristic sources and eucharistic renewal opened them to the work of the Spirit in the Churches and in the world, a work they embraced with passion and courage. Clément inherited their dynamic and creative intellectual achievements; as a French European, he wrote from a unique historical and geographical position on matters of contemporary relevance and interest to thinkers and theologians of Western European cultures. He offered an ecclesial vision which, firmly rooted in the tradition of the Church, was open and full of hope for human life. His formation as a French Orthodox thinker was influenced by the thought of Weil and Solzhenitsyn, the latter for whom he became a voice in Europe.

Born in a predominantly Protestant area of France, from a non-ecclesial background, Clément’s early lack of familiarity with Catholicism in many ways left a significant gap in his understanding of Catholic ecclesial culture. This influenced some of his reflections, reception and understanding of the Catholic Church before Vatican II, although he was sensitive to the profound intuitions of the Council Fathers, which contributed to developing his theology of an

520 Olivier Clément, L’Eglise orthodoxe, p. 123.
ecclesiology of communion. He developed distinctive insights and intuition, derived from his European upbringing and atheist family background, into the identity crisis experienced by those who lived in the culture of Western secular nihilism. Through his reflections on trinitarian anthropology he wanted to share from the tradition of Orthodox thought on anthropology, which centres on the divine-humanity of Christ and of the Trinity, as a *kairos* of communion for each person and generation. Clément’s profound and sympathetic understanding of Western society and politics formed an important aspect of his identity, which was significant in his emergence as an Eastern Orthodox thinker in dialogue with Western thought.
PART 2
OLIVIER CLÉMENT AND EASTERN CHRISTIANITY:
DIALOGUES AND ENCOUNTERS

PART 2.i Introduction
The twentieth century has been regarded as the dark century of totalitarian evil, murder, and nihilism when God was evicted from rational thought; yet it is also an era of amazing change in Christian self-understanding, pioneered by great thinkers from the European continent, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. These streams of Christian ecclesial renewal converged at the convocation of the Second Vatican Council by Pope John XXIII, at which the Orthodox presence contributed valuable theological and experiential gifts relating to the role and action of the Holy Spirit within the Church and the modern world. The confluence continues to flow into the twenty-first century; the call by John XXIII for renewal within the Catholic Church, the largest Christian confession in the world, was essential for a renewal of Christianity worldwide. For the first time the official Catholic Church teaching at Vatican II recognised that the Holy Spirit is present in a salvific way in the other communities of faith. 522 ‘There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without interior conversion.’ 523 Vatican II provided three foundational reasons for ecumenism: first, baptised Christians of other ecclesial groups are our brothers and sisters in Christ; second, these ‘others’ are not outside the Church, the Body of Christ, they are inside, within, although Catholic theologians may refer to an ‘imperfect communion’; what we share with other Christians is greater than what divides us. 524

Part 2 examines the genesis of Catholic thought in Russia, and the early twentieth century understanding of the Catholic Church in its quest for unity. Chapter 2 focuses on Clément’s response to the invitation in John Paul II’s encyclical, Ut unum sint, for theological discussion on issues concerning the papacy. Clément examines ways in which the Orthodox can help the process of ‘ecumenical reinterpretation’ of primacy in the universal Church. An Orthodox view of Eastern

523 Unitatis Redintegratio 7.
524 Peter Hocken, Pentecost and Parousia, p. 19.
Catholic and Eastern Orthodox relations is discussed with reference to the ‘Antiochian paradigm’ in Chapter 3, and finally Clément’s theological and ecclesiological perspective on the Christian encounter with Islam, and Muslim-Christian relations in Europe.
2.1.i The Russicum and the Pro Russia Commission

The Roman seminary known as the Russicum, founded by Pope Pius XI in 1929, was largely the idea of the French Jesuit Michel d’Herbigny\textsuperscript{525} and formed part of the wider Pro Russia papal commission established in 1925. D’Herbigny became the confidant of Pope Pius XI who trusted him implicitly with Russian affairs, making him head of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in 1925 and leader of Pro Russia, which at first worked as a division of the Oriental Congregation, but by 1930 had become autonomous, with d’Herbigny as president. The clandestine elevation of d’Herbigny to episcopal bishop by Cardinal Pacelli, the future Pius XII, was to enable him to carry out his plan in 1926 to ordain Catholic priests inside Soviet Russia without the knowledge of the Bolshevik government. The plan ended almost immediately in disaster. D’Herbigny took the decision in 1926 to create nine apostolic administrations inside the Soviet Union; nearly all the administrators, including four bishops, were arrested within a few months of their appointment. Sixteen Catholic bishops and priests, including Exarch Leonid Fedorov, were sent to prison, executed or expelled, thus virtually destroying the formal structure of the Catholic Church in Russia.

On his return, d’Herbigny became the centre of controversy.\textsuperscript{526} By 1934 Pius XI restructured the Pro Russia Commission, limiting its sphere of influence to affairs of the Latin rite within Russia; responsibility concerning the Byzantine-Slavonic rite was returned to the Oriental Congregation\textsuperscript{527}, and d’Herbigny disappeared into silent obscurity.

The Russian College had been established to help the people of Russia suffering religious persecution under the Bolsheviks, but was not able to meet this aim in its chosen ‘mission-field’. Instead it provided training for exiled Russians,

\textsuperscript{525} Simon, p. 350.
\textsuperscript{526} The last twenty years of d’Herbingy’s life (1880-1957) passed in obscurity in Aix-en-Provence.
\textsuperscript{527} Simon, p. 290.
Ukrainians, Belarusians and Slavs, who were never however, able to serve as priests in Russia behind the Iron Curtain. Instead they served Russian émigrés in Europe, and North and South America, where some of these parishes continue to the present day.\footnote{Russicum graduate, Fr Andrew Rogosh, assisted Russian Catholics in New York where he established St Michael’s Chapel in 1936, still operating today. See Simon, ‘How Russians See Us’, p. 349.} Of the Jesuits serving at Dubno Seminary, three were imprisoned: Antoni Niemacewicz SJ was born in the Russian Empire and entered the Society of Jesus in 1929. He was sent to Albertyn moving to Dubno in 1934 and chosen by Archbishop Szeptycki as Exarch of the Belarusian Eastern Catholic Church. He was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to Berlin where he died. His confreres Antoni Zabek SJ and Pawel Macewicz SJ also served at Albertyn and Dubno, were arrested by the Nazis and imprisoned. Zabek was released in 1944 and worked as an underground Eastern Catholic priest near Vilnius but was arrested again by the Soviets and sentenced to twenty-five years in camps, finally in Siberia. He was released however in 1956 and worked secretly as a priest in Belarus. Pawel was arrested by the Gestapo in 1942 but liberated in 1944.

During the Second World War some Jesuits clandestinely entered the Soviet Union; this usually ended with imprisonment. Viktor Novikov records that ‘Life in the camps was a continuation of the practice of the spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius,’ and that contact between different Christian denominations in the camps had been harmonious.\footnote{C Simm, ‘The Life and Times of Vendelin Javorka: A Russian Odyssey, Diakonia, 35 (2002), 5-22.}

2.1.ii The Pontifical College Russicum of St Theresa of the Child Jesus


Vendelin Javorka,\footnote{Simon, Pro Russia, pp. 274-275. Charles Bourgeois, 1887-1963, French Jesuit born in Paris, studied Russian while caring pastorally for Russian émigrés in Paris. He was called to Rome in 1924 and transferred to the Byzantine-Slavonic rite. Repatriated to France in 1946 he left for Brazil where he cared for Russians in San Paola for twelve years before his accidental death. See Charles Bourgeois, A Priest in Russia and the Baltic (Dublin: Cahill & Co, 1955).} became the Russicum’s first rector in 1929. He transferred from the Latin to the Byzantine-Slavonic rite in 1925, a year after Charles Bourgeois SJ,\footnote{Simon, Pro Russia, pp. 274-275. Charles Bourgeois, 1887-1963, French Jesuit born in Paris, studied Russian while caring pastorally for Russian émigrés in Paris. He was called to Rome in 1924 and transferred to the Byzantine-Slavonic rite. Repatriated to France in 1946 he left for Brazil where he cared for Russians in San Paola for twelve years before his accidental death. See Charles Bourgeois, A Priest in Russia and the Baltic (Dublin: Cahill & Co, 1955).} who worked with Eastern Slavs in Poland and helped to found the parish at Albertyn in Eastern Poland, where he was arrested by the Gestapo.
and interned for two years before arriving in Moscow. In 1934 Javorka left Rome for Manchuria and China where groups of Russian émigrés had settled, returning to the Russicum again in 1939 as vice-rector. In 1941 he returned to his native Slovakia, aged sixty, but was imprisoned by Soviet authorities as a foreign agent in 1944 and sentenced to ten years’ hard labour in concentration camps in the coldest region of Russia. On a starvation diet, he nevertheless survived and was released in 1954. He rejoined his brother’s family in Slovakia and regaining his health, celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his priesthood in 1965. He died the following year.

The Catholic understanding of Christian unity as unionism during the pontificates of Pius X, Benedict XV and Pius XI was beginning to emerge from unionism to ecumenism. Whereas Javorka never quite lost his Latin unite way of thinking, Philippe de Régis, although neither Russian nor Slav, promoted a more Russian atmosphere in the college. As second rector of the College, in 1934, he at first saw the goal of the Russicum was to train Catholic priests of the Byzantine-Slavonic Rite532 for apostolic work concerning Church unity and confession of Petrine primacy in Russia, if circumstances permitted, or at least with Russians in Diaspora.533 The rite was implemented in Russian Catholic parishes at that time being formed around the world.

The work of Philippe de Régis SJ with and for Russians started in the Jesuit novitiate near Lyons where he organised holidays for children of Russian émigrés; later as a priest he helped Jesuits of the Byzantine rite establish the Missio Orientalis, at Albertyn in 1924. He was called to the Russicum (1934) and remained as rector until the Second World War when he returned to France (1940). In Paris he founded a school for Russian boys, and with the help of

532 For Uniate Churches in Poland see Konrad Sadkowski, “The Roman Catholic Clergy, the Byzantine Slavonic Rite and Polish National Identity: The Case of Grabowiec, 1931-34”, Religion, State and Society, 28 (2000), 175-184. The term Byzantine-Slavonic was contemporary to that era. At the formation of the Russian Catholic exarchate in 1917 by Szeptycki, it had been determined that ‘in accord with the decisions of the Apostolic Roman See, we shall use that rite which exists at the present time in Russia, not allowing any departure from it’, the introduction of any additions from the Latin rite liturgy without the express wish of Rome was forbidden, even if other communities had introduced some Latin forms. This referred to the Ruthenian rite of Greek Catholics which the Russicum was not to follow.

533 Simon, Pro Russia, p. 295: Philippe de Regis letter to Pontificia Commissione, 20 February 1934.
teaching sisters, another for Russian girls; he visited Russian prisoners of war to offer spiritual assistance. Russians and Slavs streamed into France, and were placed in camps; the threat of repatriation meant the Gulag or death. After the liberation of Paris he became a commander in the Corps de Repatriement caring for displaced people; he excelled at this and was asked to co-ordinate the camps of the entire Clermont-Ferrand region in central France. He found these detainees had little understanding of religion, but openness and a complete lack of prejudice towards Catholicism.

De Régis was recalled in 1945 to be rector at the Russicum. Many Russians fleeing the Red Army were arriving in Rome, and de Régis was again caught up with refugee work. He assisted Russian émigrés arriving from Europe and China to find a new life in the Americas, and in 1947 de Régis himself set sail for Argentina, taking five Russian Catholic priests in the mistaken belief there would be a large Russian émigré population. On arrival he founded a small parish in Buenos Aires with a boarding school for Russian boys; in 1954 he established another at Sao Paulo in Brazil. He visited a Russian community in Santiago, Chile, and sent them a priest, before travelling on to Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru, where he found a significant number of Russian immigrants from Shanghai. Exhausted, sleeping in a poustinia, de Régis became ill with leukaemia and died suddenly in 1955, aged 58; at his funeral, Orthodox and Catholic priests of the Byzantine rite carried his coffin.

The ecumenical predictions in De Régis’ *Le travail futur*, written in the last year of his life form a prophetic testimony to his intrinsically ecumenical perspective towards Russia. Over time he moved from the concept of being a missionary consecrated by the pope for a special mission, which for Pius XI was the conversion of Russia, to seeing the tiny presence of the Russian Catholic Church, not as a rival but an important, supportive collaborator of Russian Orthodoxy. De Régis’ predictions were realised at the Second Vatican Council and become part of the Church’s official teaching on ecumenism: the Orthodox were seen as ‘sister’ Churches, proselytism was abandoned, grace and salvation

outside the Roman Catholic Church recognised. In *Le travail futur*, he foresees a time when Russia is finally ‘thrown open’ and while he passionately believes priests must embrace evangelisation, writes, ‘I deplore or would judge fatal the idea of proselytism in the new Russia – a proselytism which strives only to extend the boundaries of Catholicism or recruit new members for the Catholic Church [...] Only one method can be employed: fraternal and disinterested collaboration with the Russian Orthodox Church in the task of education and religious training.’ Concerning dogma, he writes, ‘it is difficult to concede any ground [...] but [...] faced with a different mentality our perspectives change.’

Paul Mailleux SJ\(^{536}\) became the sixth rector of the Russicum, 1966-77, transforming it into a College openly welcome to Russia and the Orthodox Church, and an Orthodox-Catholic centre of ecumenical dialogue. He established friendly relations with Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad and Novgorad, who was responsible for the external relations of the patriarchate of Moscow. Nikodim became devoted to Ignatian spirituality and was responsible for sending the first students from the Soviet Union to the Russicum, and for creating a more positive image of the Russicum among the Russian Orthodox.

Nikodim, born in 1929, became a youthful member of the Communist pioneer movement, yet somehow found a Christian vocation; this alienated him from his family when he chose to become a monk at the age of eighteen. He rose to high office in the Orthodox Church remaining a loyal Soviet citizen. His earlier critical attitude toward Roman Catholicism, however, became conciliatory as changes occurred under Pope John XXIII, he even contributed to the translation of the Latin Mass into modern Russian, which he undertook in a spirit of prayer. It was thanks to Nikodim that the Orthodox patriarchate developed a more friendly and open stance towards the Holy See during the 1960s and 70s. Nikodim’s commitment to Orthodox-Roman Catholic relations drew criticism from some conservative Russian Orthodox, but it also initiated cordial relations and fruitful

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\(^{536}\) Simon, ‘In Commitment to the Jesuit Paul Mailleux’, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, IV, pp. 419-524.
ecumenical dialogue between the Vatican and the Moscow patriarchate, with the result Orthodox-Catholic ecumenism was born.

Nikodim led the first Russian pilgrimage to Rome in 1969 and returned to the Russicum on several occasions before his death in 1978, when he died in the arms of John Paul I during a private audience in the Vatican. It is interesting to note that Nikodim visited the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Josef Cardinal Slipyj who had endured eighteen years in Siberian Gulags since 1945, and the annihilation of his Church, before his release in 1961 following Pope John XXIII conciliatory actions during the Cuban missile crisis.537

Since Vatican II (1962-1965) the Russicum has become a European ecumenical college, welcoming Greek Catholic students of the Latin rite or Orthodox Christians. However, when the Soviet Union fell and Russia opened to the West there appeared almost no-one who had trained at the Russicum who wished to be involved in the apostolate in Russia.538 Mailleux was one of the first Jesuits to be invited by the Russian Patriarchate to visit Moscow. Jesuit pioneers in ecumenism followed: Spanish Jesuit Miguel Arranz was invited by the patriarchate to lecture at Leningrad Theological Academy, later the Superior General Pedro Arrupe twice visited the Soviet union at the invitation of the Moscow patriarchate, and American Jesuit John Long, Rector at the Russicum till 1995 and a leading ecumenist and expert on Russian Orthodoxy enabled Orthodox students to study at the Russicum.

2.1.iii Contemporary Situation (1989-2014)
Perestroika and the fall of Communism brought certain freedoms for religious organisations registered by the Soviet state. Legally, all religious associations are separated from the state and equal before the law.539

Two Catholic seminaries opened, in St Petersburg and Novosibirsk respectively, with three Russians ordained priests in 1999, and 47 Russian seminarians in

537 For detailed information about Nikidim see Simon, Pro Russia, pp. 725-732.
538 Simon, Pro Russia, p. 39. Most were periti for Western bishops or engaged in teaching positions.
These apostolates are supported by Catholic personnel and resources from Jesuits, other religious orders and several international charities, including aid from the Holy See. The Vatican supports the right of Eastern Catholics to practise their faith in western Ukraine or Belarus, but discourages transferring from Orthodoxy to Eastern or Latin Rite Catholicism. There is no official promotion of the Catholic Byzantine Rite in Russia. During his visit to the Ukraine in 2001, however John Paul II’s beatification of Exarch Leonid Federov and Exarch Kliment Szeptycki (1869-1951), Leonid’s successor and Metropolitan Szeptycki’s brother who died in a Soviet prison, provided inspiration for Byzantine Rite, or Greek Catholics, worldwide.

A remarkable Jesuit, Joseph Werth, (b. 1952) is currently Bishop of Novosibirsk; he was appointed Latin Apostolic Administrator of Siberia for Russian Catholics in 2005 by John Paul II. To give some scale, this area covers 4.2 million square miles and extends through nine different time zones. Initially supported only by two priests he now has over one hundred priests, nuns and lay workers from around the world to help minister to over one million Catholics, mostly of German and Polish ethnic origin. Bishop Werth’s family history is extraordinary: his paternal grandfather was deported as a kulak in 1929 with his wife and children, transported by train with 30,000 other ethnic Germans to Siberia in midwinter. To survive people dug holes in the earth; thousands perished. His maternal grandfather was also deported there in 1931, the year of the Holodomor referred to earlier. This area is now the city of Karaganda where the bishop was born on 4 October 1952, second of eleven children. The family held on to the Catholic faith although Joseph did not experience liturgy in a church or know there were seminaries until, at the age of twenty, while on national service he was sent to Lithuania. Joseph studied clandestinely for the priesthood in Lithuania and became a Jesuit in 1984, the first Roman Catholic priest ordained since the 1930s in the Asian part of former Soviet Union.

Schafly, ‘Roman Catholicism in Post-Soviet Russia’, p. 2.
Simon, Pro Russia, p. 192, n. 240.
A continuing relationship between the Society of Jesus and the Eastern Churches is of great importance. Creating a dialogical discourse between Catholic, Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches is an on-going affair in the sphere of evolving ecumenical understanding.
CHAPTER 2.2
An Orthodox Reflection on the Papal Primacy:
Olivier Clément’s Response to *Ut Unum Sint*

‘Orthodoxy has the plenitude of life in Christ, but it does not have an exclusive monopoly on the truth.’
*Metropolitan Kallistos Ware* ⁵⁴³

2.2.i Introduction

This chapter situates Clément ecclesially in the tradition of the Orthodox Church and ecumenically and dialogically with Catholicism to discuss an Orthodox view of the papacy and his response to *Ut unum sint*. ⁵⁴⁴ It explores ways in which the Orthodox can help the process of ‘ecumenical reinterpretation’ of primacy in the universal Church, and the possibility that there is a place in Orthodox ecclesiology for a position of ‘universal leadership’. ⁵⁴⁵

2.2.ii Clément: National and Ecclesial Identity

Olivier Clément, deeply desired that both lungs of Christianity would breathe fully and in harmony, ⁵⁴⁶ and it would seem that nothing in his immediate family background predisposed him to become one of the great Christian dialogical theologians of the twentieth century. However, Clément is recognised as one of the major figures of the ‘Paris School’ that flourished in France, and also as a significant pioneer of the renewal of Orthodox theology from mid-twentieth century until his death on 15 January 2009. The flaming torch, as it were, of the ‘Russian idea’ was passed on to Clément who brought it forward into the twenty-first century. The importance of his thinking continues to have significant contemporary relevance.

To situate Clément ecclesially in Orthodoxy and dialogically with Catholicism, we consider Clément’s identity as both French and European, and the origins of his thought on ecclesial authority which would have been influenced by those

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⁵⁴⁶ John Paul II used this metaphor. See also Henri Tincq, *Le Monde*, 16 January, 2009.
Russian émigrés who sought to come under the ecclesial authority of Constantinople rather than Moscow, when a temporary Russian exarchate was established in Western Europe in 1931. This orientation and Clément’s later collaboration with Patriarch Athenagoras I was an early defining influence. The experience of the patriarch who had bravely protected the island of Corfu against Mussolini’s marine attack, and who later as archbishop in America became a friend of President Truman during 1930-1948, inclined him towards openness and understanding of the West and modernity. Clément and Athenagoras shared the desire to raise awareness of Orthodoxy, which was at that time almost unknown in the West, and to work for Christian unity.

Clément sought to implement a new paradigm for ecumenism through an ecclesiology of communion and a synthesis of culture and Christian values. He notes that for Christians of the first centuries, the Church was above all the Body of Christ, that there was no ecclesiology per se; and affirms, ‘It is the eucharist that makes the Church the Body of Christ.’\(^{547}\) Clément’s colleague, Nicolas Afanasieff,\(^{548}\) professor at St Sergius Institute from 1930 until his death in 1966, states in his thesis on eucharistic theology, that the gathering of the faithful around the Scriptures and eucharistic table forms the Church’s ecclesial identity.

Afanasieff’s eucharistic theology, ‘the Eucharist makes the Church’, made a significant contribution to ecumenical dialogue. This ecclesiology of communion recognised by most Christian Churches and Confessions today, was prior to the 1960s a radical expression of ecclesiology for both Orthodox and Catholic Churches, whose identity was characterised externally by hierarchical structures, rules and rubrics. Afanasieff returned to the early Patristic sources to understand the Church in its relationship and engagement with the world, and with the culture in which it lived. His theological vision was shared by many important contemporary Catholic theologians, including Louis Bouyer, a Lutheran minister who converted to Catholicism, and acted as a consultant at Vatican II; French Jesuits Henri de Lubac, peritus at the Council, and Jean Daniélou, invited by John XXIII to attend the Council as an expert; Dominican Marie-Dominique Chenu also a peritus at the Council; Dominican scholar and ecumenist Yves Congar and


others. The so-called ‘return to the sources’ brought about a restoration of tradition and ecclesial renewal, as many scholars sought to bring Tradition and contemporary problems into a creative Christian synthesis; it also prepared the Council Fathers of Vatican II to be more openly receptive to elements of truth embodied in the Eastern tradition; Clément recalls that Orthodox observer Paul Evdokimov commented on this receptivity and openness. Athenagoras I, with whom Clément was to identify closely, recommended Afanasiev to be an official observer at the Second Vatican Council, where his ecclesiological work influenced the writing of Lumen Gentium. Orthodox influence was a reality at Vatican II, ‘a kind of transfusion of ecclesial lifeblood from the East to the West’ occurred, due also to the presence of Eastern Catholic Churches who unite Orthodox East and Latin West within their ecclesial expressions. This influence resulted in greater emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit; the important role of the laity; and a more collegial understanding in connection with papal authority. In Hermann Pottmeyer’s assessment the Fathers and theologians of Vatican II were convinced that the Petrine office was a gift of God to his Church; they ‘understood the universal church as a community of local churches requiring collegial leadership open to participation by all.’ He judges the Council had provided a theological foundation for an ‘ecclesiology of communion’, but had failed to overcome centralisation of papal jurisdiction. The Orthodox Bishop Vsevelod of Scopolos declares the ‘Roman Primacy is and should be a gift of God to His Church, a service to the Church which we need.’ Similarly Clément recalls the ‘presidency of love’ vested in the Church of Rome and the need to recall ‘the special role of Peter (prōtos not arché) to which the New Testament attests.’ Prōtos refers here to the first in a series, Clément points out, and not

551 Clément, Dialogues.
552 Michael Plekon, Living Icons, pp. 149-150.
554 For a Catholic response to UUS see Hermann J. Pottmeyer, Towards a Papacy in Communion (New York: Crossroad, 1998), see p. 129.
555 Pottmeyer, Towards a Papacy, p. 7.
557 Clément, You are Peter, p. 87.
arché, the first cause, which could only be Christ. Alexander Schmemann’s view accords with Vsevelod and Clément in recognising a three-fold structure of the ‘local primacy’, the ‘regional primacy’ and the ‘highest and ultimate form of primacy: universal primacy’, also identified by Pottmeyer as normative. Schmemann affirms that as well as ‘centres of agreement’, universal primacy also existed; the ecclesiological error in his view lies in the primacy’s identification with supreme power; this should not force Orthodoxy to reject primacy but to seek an Orthodox interpretation.

Pope John XXIII’s convocation of the Second Vatican Council initiated an era of papal commitment to dialogue in which three subsequent popes, Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI, have called for a deeper reflection on Christian unity. Benedict XVI declares ‘The task of ecumenical commitment is even more urgent today, to give our society, which is marked by tragic conflicts and lacerating divisions, a sign and an impulse towards reconciliation and peace.’ What is needed is a hermeneutics of renewal initiated at Vatican II in synthesis with a hermeneutics of tradition. In Clément’s view the phenomenon of globalisation demands that Christians join together as leaven in the history of the world. United in love and solidarity, the Church becomes an icon of the Body of Christ that makes Christ present in a visible form, not only to other religions but to a ‘secular’ non-believing or atheist society, where consumers, politicians and intellectuals seek truth in the material.

Clément’s work for unity made him unpopular with some members of his own Church, as when he critiqued the tendency towards nationalism at the end of the ‘Cold War’ and revival of the Orthodox Church. Clément writes in 1997, ‘Orthodoxy must provide an unbiased witness to all humanity’ and ‘free itself from the idolatry of nationalism.’ Clément’s discussions with many eminent religious leaders of the twentieth century on important contemporary spiritual,
ecclesial and cultural problems enabled him to make an informed and sensitive ecumenical contribution. In 1998 John Paul II invited Clément to compose a new Via Crucis text for the Good Friday meditation and procession from Rome’s Coliseum to the Roman Forum. Clément reflects that the death of Christ makes all attitudes other than penitence and reconciliation derisory; it is no longer possible to think of separation while meditating on the Via Crucis. John Paul II’s request for an Orthodox theologian to compose the meditation reflected his desire to recognise and bring healing to historical wounds and divisions, a course which he further pursued through words of apology and reconciliation.

2.2.iii The Exercise of Papal Primacy

While some Orthodox expressed scepticism after Vatican II, John Paul II’s encyclical on ecumenism Ut Unum Sint, 25 May 1995, was acknowledged among positive developments since the Council and recognised as ‘affirming’ and of ‘tremendous historical significance’. John Paul’s encyclical invited Christian leaders and theologians, not in union with Rome, to engage with him in patient and fraternal dialogue, ‘in a common reflection of papal primacy.’ The pope hoped to rediscover together ‘forms in which this ministry may accomplish a service of love recognised by all concerned’ (UUS 95); ‘to find a way of exercising the primacy which […] is open to a new situation’, (UUS 95); that leaving ‘useless controversies behind, we could listen to one another, keeping before us the will of Christ for his Church and allowing ourselves to be deeply moved by His plea “that they may all be one […] so that the world may believe that you have sent me,”’ John 17:21 (UUS 96).

565 In May 2001, John Paul II went on pilgrimage to Greece, the first visit by a pope since the Great Schism of 1054, when excommunication of the patriarch of Constantinople by papal legates was responded to by the patriarch’s excommunication of the legates: Christianity was divided on doctrinal, theological, linguistic, political and geographical lines, into Western (Latin) and Eastern (Greek) branches. The pope asked God to forgive Catholics for sins against Orthodox Christians, specifically mentioning the pillage of Constantinople by Crusaders in 1204. In 2004 John Paul II returned a precious icon to the Russian Orthodox Church as a personal gift from himself, an eighteenth-century copy of the Virgin of Kazan which had hung above his desk in the Vatican. The relics of two saints kept in St Peter’s for approximately 800 years, were returned to Bartholomew I in Constantinople, who responded: ‘There are no problems which are insurmountable, when love, justice and peace meet’. ‘The Catholic Church desires nothing less than full communion between East and West,’ Ut unim sint, 61, 1995.
566 Cohen, p. 335.
567 Clément, You are Peter, p. 9.
Clément’s response to this invitation was *Rome Autrement,* a ‘concise, learned and articulate’ reflection on the papal primacy, published in 1997. He opens by stating that ‘the problem of the papacy is clearly the greatest difficulty facing ecumenical dialogue today, and particularly the dialogue between Catholicism and Orthodoxy.’ But in his view, John Paul’s encyclical is a ‘doorway of hope’. As an historian Clément judges that knowledge of past changes in the Petrine office assists in creatively shaping an ecclesiology to the needs of the present and the future. His opening emphasis is the history and experience of the ‘undivided Church’; he then recalls the contrasting development of Eastern and Western Christianity; and concludes with the tasks that call Christians to unity.

His approach is irenic. During the five decades of his Christian life, Clément’s understanding of Christian unity matured and deepened. In an interview for *France Catholique* in 2004, he reflects on his decision above all to give up the use of polemics. He recalls it was Patriarch Athenagoras, the man of reconciliation and unity, who freed him from ‘fear of the other’, and opened a ‘capacity’ to love, that chooses to regard another Christian as a brother rather than be against him. This capacity, he believes, matured since meeting John Paul II. ‘Moving beyond polemics, we need today to reflect on a period of ecclesial life in which tensions were resolved neither against the pope, nor against the councils, but *in a different way.*’ It would seem the prophetic Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras I, demonstrated a ‘different way’. A year after Athenagoras and Paul VI met in Jerusalem the anathemas exchanged in 1054 were lifted, signalling a new era, ‘a dialogue of charity’ had begun. It is significant that Clément chose a photograph of Paul VI and Athenagoras embracing fraternally in Jerusalem in 1964 for the front cover of *Rome Autrement.* In 1967 Paul VI visited Istanbul and

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569 A phrase that contrasts with Peter Brunner’s statement that Vatican I ‘slammed the door shut’, and marks a new beginning; Peter Brunner, *Evangelium und Papsttum*, Evangelisch-lutherische Kirchenzeitung, 10 (1956) 42, cited in Pottmeyer, p. 16.
571 Clément, *You are Peter,* Introduction, p. 9.
573 Clément, *Conversations,* p. 177
574 Clément, *You are Peter,* p. 83.
as a sign of atonement prayed at the Hagia Sophia on the spot where a cardinal had excommunicated the ecumenical patriarch in the name of the See of Rome in 1054. Later in the Phanar, Athenagoras greeted Paul VI as ‘the very holy successor to Peter’; and in a message in 1971, Athenagoras declared he saw the bishop of Rome as ‘the elder brother’, ‘the herald and eminent artisan of peace, love and unity of Christians’. In a spontaneous response Paul VI knelt and embraced the feet of the metropolitan who brought the message, symbolically reversing the negative response of Pius IX on 1870, who put his weight on the neck of the Greek Catholic Patriarch of Antioch who dared oppose the dogma of Vatican I. The dialogue between Athenagoras and Paul VI is recorded in the *Tomas Agapis*, published simultaneously by the Phanar and the Vatican, and in Clément’s opinion it remains for today, and still more for tomorrow a true *locus theologicus*, a theological meeting-point. The pope and the patriarch demonstrated the use of a common language between two sister-churches: of the Apostles and the Fathers as well as over a thousand years as an undivided Church. ‘From this perspective of an ecclesiology of communion the Patriarch […] stressed that it was not the mystery of the Roman primacy that was questioned by the Orthodox, only some of its modern applications.’ He frequently used the phrase of Ignatius of Antioch to speak of a ‘presidency of love’ vested in the Church of Rome. The term ‘sister Churches’ appeared in correspondence between Athenagoras and John XXIII, then between the patriarch and Paul VI, and was frequently used by John Paul II, as when he visited Constantinople in 1979 and in *Ut Unum Sint* (56), where he refers to ‘the doctrine of Sister Churches’ (60). Dialogue between the two Churches, Clément believed was no longer simply one ‘of charity’ but had become properly theological. Before his election as Athenagoras’ successor, Patriarch Bartholomew I served eight years as vice-president of the ecumenical council, ‘Faith and Constitution’, where Catholics were fully represented. It was within that council, Clément observes, that progress

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576 Ibid.
577 Ibid.
578 Clément, You are Peter, p. 84.
579 Ibid.
characterised by integrity had been made; Bartholomew is thus very well informed about ecumenical problems and has knowledge of contemporary exegesis that, in Clément’s view, Athenagoras lacked.\(^{582}\)

In 1995 Patriarch Bartholomew referred to ‘our elder brother, John Paul II’, but was quick to issue warnings, perhaps in awareness of the anti-Western and anti-Catholic view held by many Orthodox following the collapse of Communism and subsequent intrusion of objectionable aspects of Western culture into the eastern and south-eastern countries of Europe; for these Orthodox, although a minority, the West means Rome.\(^{583}\) Although Bartholomew was in agreement with the Vatican concerning the *filioque* problem,\(^{584}\) he strongly criticised Rome’s interpretation of the passage from Matthew 16:18, which continues to provoke controversy, ‘You are Peter, the rock, and on this rock I will build my Church.’ At a subsequent meeting in Rome between Bartholomew I and John Paul II on 27-29 June 1995, the patriarch, as the pope’s personal guest, was invited to give the homily in St Peter’s, he again raised Peter’s confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi, emphasising how deeply controversial the interpretation of the text Matthew 16:18 remained, stressing the ‘need for self-criticism and continuous repentance’; when a kenotic ethos finally prevails then we will restore the unity of faith.\(^{585}\) The pope said little apparently but agreed the exercise of the primacy only makes sense as service and requires humility. Clément notes the pope’s real response is found at the conclusion of *Ut Unum Sint* which calls for a reflection on the role of the primacy. He judges the encounter was rich in symbolism but a ‘failure as a meeting of minds’.\(^{586}\) In Zurich, December 1995, Bartholomew affirmed his view that the ‘only authority of divine origin existing in the Church was that of the bishops and their collegiality […] the pope’s role had no scriptural foundation.’\(^{587}\) In June 1996, in an interview with a Polish weekly, Bartholomew ‘reaffirmed that “the ministry of the Pope has become the biggest and most scandalous stumbling-block” to dialogue between Orthodox and Roman

\(^{582}\) Clément, *You are Peter*, p. 85.

\(^{583}\) Ibid., p. 86.


\(^{585}\) Clément, *Conversations*, p. 188.

\(^{586}\) Clément, *You are Peter*, p. 86.

\(^{587}\) Clément, *You are Peter*, p. 87.
Catholics,⁵⁸⁸ he went on to question the exercise of the papal ‘ministry since the end of the first millennium, notably the “mistaken theological claims” to universal papal jurisdiction.⁵⁸⁹ Bartholomew stated the Church of Rome founded by the Apostles Peter and Paul, had the responsibility of solicitude, ‘presiding in love’ among the local Churches but not of governing them.⁵⁹⁰ Clément judges that while it is necessary to be open, and criticism of the way the Roman primacy is exercised is justified, these statements seem somewhat ‘reductive and polemical’. In Clément’s view it is important to remember the ‘mystery’ recognised by the East from the fifth century of the presence of Peter (and Paul) in Rome, and the ‘presidency of love’ vested in the Church of Rome. Clément finds it important to recall the special role of Peter as prōtos not arché,⁵⁹¹ validated by the New Testament. He recalls Serge Bulgakov’s appraisal, that the separation of Orthodox and Catholic Christians does not mean the radical formation of two Churches; rather it is ‘a crack in the single trunk, which continued to bring fruits of holiness to both sides;’ if history is accelerated in the West, the archaism of the Eastern Christian tenaciously brings witness to the arché, the original.⁵⁹² Clément adds that ‘Vatican II recognised that the Petrine ministry could only function within the grace sustaining the episcopacy, for there is no sacrament of papacy.’⁵⁹³

Clément attempts an explanation of the ‘intransigent positions taken by the patriarch’.⁵⁹⁴ He points to a hardening, reactionary position of some Orthodox, which the patriarch must take into consideration, and secondly the admirable ecclesiology developed by John Zizioulas, close advisor of Bartholomew. Zizioulas prefers the theological method, considering the ‘historical approach to the question of papal primacy has proved to be almost pointless in the debate and can be of very little use in the ecumenical discussion of the issue.’⁵⁹⁵ He sees no

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid. Clément cites Bartholomew’s interview for the Polish weekly, Tygodnik Powszechny. See also Hryniewicz, p. 9.
⁵⁸⁹ Clément, You are Peter, p. 87. For Russian view on Rome and Constantinople, see Cyril Hovorun, ‘Apostolicity and Right of Appeal’, Heiligkeit und Apostolizität der Kirche, Pro Oriente Band XXXV, Innsbruck, pp. 241-246.
⁵⁹⁰ Clément, Conversations, p. 188.
⁵⁹¹ Ibid.
⁵⁹² Clément, L’Église Orthodoxe.
⁵⁹³ Clément, You are Peter, p. 87.
⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 88.
other structure of grace in the Church than that of the episcopacy, a view which contrasts with the great ecclesiologist Nicolas Afanasiev, who observed that from the earliest years of the Church, a greater ‘priority of reception’ was accorded to the Church of Rome.

Within this context Clément recalls a prophetic event which occurred a month after the publication of *Ut Unum Sint*. When the synod of the Greek Catholic Church took place in Lebanon nearly all bishops present signed a profession of faith that expressed firstly, ‘I believe everything that the Orthodox Church teaches’, secondly, ‘I am in communion with the bishop of Rome, in the role that the Eastern Fathers accorded him before the separation.’ The text was approved by Metropolitan George Khodr of the Orthodox patriarchate of Antioch, with the agreement of the Patriarch Ignatius IV Hazim. The metropolitan declared, ‘I consider this profession of faith to set the necessary and sufficient conditions for re-establishing the unity of the Orthodox Churches with Rome.

**2.2.iv The Mystery of Primacy**

Debates about the Church as an institution, Clément considers, fail to see the real state of ‘ecclesial being’ as the experience of a person in communion, for whom humanity and the cosmos are by nature ‘resurrectional and paschal’. Russian émigré theologian, Georges Florovsky, considers there is a ‘preparatory grace’ present in the eucharistic communion of the divided Churches, that introduces an eschatological dimension of ‘sacramental grace as an in-breaking of the future into the present in the life of the Church’. The ecclesiology of John Paul II stresses this category of communion: ‘The reality of the Church as communion is [...] the central content of the “mystery”, it cannot be understood in merely sociological or psychological terms.’ The supreme model of the Church, John

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596 Clément, *You are Peter*, p. 88.
597 Clément, *You are Peter*, p. 88. See Zizioulas, ‘The Future Exercise’, p. 173, concerning the local and universal Church: Afanasiev reversed the priority preferred by Catholic ecclesiology by positing the local church first; Zizioulas considers the Eucharist points to the ‘simultaneity of the locality and the universality in ecclesiology’
598 Clément, *You are Peter*, pp. 88-89.
600 Georges Florovsky, ‘The Eastern Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Movement’, *Theology Today*, 7 (1950), 68-79.
Paul explains, is ‘the divine Trinity as a communion personarum.’ Unity of the Church was for Clément, he says, ‘a Trinitarian obligation’. His early quest as an atheist for the meaning of being fully human became a life-long search that developed into a theology of the mystery of the human person, to whom he accorded eternal value and dignity, rooted in the Trinity, recognising that Christ crucified and risen is the ultimate meaning of the existence of the human person, of history and death. Clément expressed his deep gratitude to the Orthodox Church, first for opening him up to an awareness of an ‘Easter joy that heals the secret wounds of the soul’, and secondly, for the ‘sense of mystery and a sense of joy’ that characterises Orthodox liturgy and ascesis. The key to understanding all significant processes of change, he expresses in his commentary on the roots of Christian mysticism, is the interpretation of the whole of life and the universe in the light of Christ’s death and resurrection; the witness of the Church; and the ‘mystery’ of Christ who restores us to life and brings about the transfiguration of the cosmos.

The mystery of primacy for Clément is linked first to the veneration of the Church of Rome in the early centuries as the Church of the martyr-apostles Peter and Paul, then to the martyr-bishops, so that its true role could only be martyria – that it is a primacy of service that extends in the special double sense of witness and martyrdom. Secondly, primacy has another foundation: Christ’s teaching on the unity of the disciples as based on the love of the Father and the Son, that is a Trinitarian love. Clément concludes that the Father, within the Trinity, makes himself responsible for a communion which is primary. This for Clément evokes the Orthodox Canon 34: ‘It is fitting that the bishops should know who among them is first and that they acknowledge him as head, and that they do nothing outside their own churches without having consulted him. But neither should the one who is first do anything without deliberating with all the others [...] In this way there will be unity of thought, and God (the Father) will by glorified through the Lord in the Holy Spirit.’ It is therefore Clément’s judgement that in no way is

603 Clément, Mémoires, p. 21.
605 Clément, Sources, p. 12.
it essential to the exercise of primacy that the bishop of Rome should appoint the bishops of the entire world, nor that his administrative headquarters should be a sovereign territory; nor that he should be head of state among all the powerful.\(^{606}\)

Clément points to the papacy of the first eight centuries, who without such a state, bore witness to the independence of the Church through martyrdom if necessary.\(^{607}\)

Clément believes ‘it is possible to conceive of a Church restructured around dynamic eucharistic communities, each gathered round its bishop yet linked [...] to centres of unison and of communion [...] with universal primacy ultimately pertaining to the bishop of Rome as the embodiment of both the presence of Peter and the charismatic inspiration of Paul.’\(^{608}\) In the first millennium Rome did not claim jurisdiction over the other Churches, she possessed an ‘authority’, not power, the petrine role was to keep watch over the local Churches to prevent them breaking away, to intervene if requested, to serve as a point of reference.\(^{609}\)

Clément cites John Paul II declaration, ‘What I seek with the Orthodox is communion not jurisdiction.’ On a number of occasions John Paul II, but always during private interviews, ‘has spoken of a primatial authority “with different gears” which would fully respect, as the Antiochenes propose, the internal freedom of the eastern Churches, as it existed during the first millennium.’ It would be necessary to specify that infallibility is conferred exclusively by the Holy Spirit; Clément recognises that Vatican I made it clear that it is not the pope who is infallible but his definitions, and this by the particular assistance of the Holy Spirit. As such they would have intrinsic validity and would not require confirmation by the Church, although the statement *non ex consensus ecclesiae* (not with the Church’s consensus) is most unfortunate. It would be necessary to foresee a link between the three forms of Peter’s succession: the faith of the people of God, which can be expressed on occasion by a single prophet; the episcopacy in its collegiality; and the bishop of that Church that was ‘founded and constituted by the apostles Peter and Paul.’\(^{610}\)

Prayer and confidence in the promises of Christ, and openness to the promptings of the Holy Spirit must lie at

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\(^{606}\) Clément, *You are Peter*, pp. 91-92.

\(^{607}\) Clément, *You are Peter*, p. 92.

\(^{608}\) Clément, *You are Peter*, p. 92.

\(^{609}\) Ibid., p. 29.

\(^{610}\) Ibid., pp. 91-92.
the heart of ecumenical endeavour. ‘The one essential’ change required in the exercise of papal primacy in Clément’s judgement, ‘would be to pass from a situation where the hierarchical dovetailing of power structures has legal backup, to one where tensions are held in balance without predetermined juridical solutions.’ A fruitful step forward would be to proceed to a common reflection, as John Paul II requested at the end of *Ut Unum Sint*, on decisions made during the centuries of division. Clément reflects that when John Paul II visited the patriarch in Constantinople, he knew it involved risks from nationalist and Islamic circles used by Communist regimes; the intended assassination attempt ‘became the sacrifice which gave to that visit a mystical dimension [...] For the blood then shed made [...] the *Pontifex maximus* the *Servus servorum Dei*.’

611 ‘There is a close connection between the confession of faith and martyrdom.’

The Church moves slowly, and ecumenical advancement is a slow process. Olivier Clément gives us a compass reading that indicates progress in the process of mutual correction and mutual enrichment is underway, a healing of memories has started. His contribution, as Avery Cardinal Dulles declared, is ‘a beacon of hope for the future.’

611 Clément, *You are Peter*, p. 95.
612 Ibid., p. 18.
613 Dulles, Foreward, in Clément, *You are Peter*, p. 8.
CHAPTER 2.3

Olivier Clément: A European Theologian between Eastern and Western Christianity – a reflection on ‘the Antiochian Paradigm’ for relations between Eastern Catholics and Eastern Orthodox. Pointers from the Middle East for Europe today

‘Remember in your prayers the Church in Syria.’
Saint Ignatius of Antioch c. 35-98

2.3.i  Introduction

The life of French Orthodox thinker, Olivier Clément, spans across nine decades, 1921-2009. In the light of Olivier Clément’s mature theological and ecclesial vision of Christianity, this chapter examines aspects which characterise what I am calling ‘the Antiochian paradigm’, which has arisen from a plurality of Christian expressions living within a dominant Muslim milieu; it includes the development of the Melkite Church; a dynamic ecumenical movement seeking unity but within indigenous plurality; inter-religious dialogue between Christians; and the multiple expressions of Islam in Syria and Lebanon.614 There are also the political Islamic movements whose ideologies motivate activist groups such as Isis.615

Antioch, the historical crossroads of pre-Christian civilisations, became known as the ‘cradle of Christianity’, where Christians first received their name. From Antioch the faith spread north, south, east and west, creating by the second century Churches that differed ethnically and culturally, but which remained in communion with the single Church, expressing this unity in diversity through synodal meetings.616

Clément reflects on the religious plurality of expression found in Antioch where the streams of Christianity flow through five different patriarchates, and a balance is maintained in relationships between Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Christians

614 Sunni, Shi’a, Alawite, Ismailia, Druze, Sufism – an ascetic form – and other branches of Islam.
in a dominantly Muslim environment. The patriarchates of Antioch today, for historical-political reasons, are situated in Damascus at the heart of the Arab and Islamic world in the present Syrian Arab Republic and in neighbouring Lebanon. Clément transposes this dialogical Middle Eastern paradigm into a European context, which has particular relevance for Ukraine and the West.

Russian émigré theologians in France understood Orthodoxy to be universal: Sergius Bulgakov puts it succinctly: “The Church is not an institution but a new life in Christ, moved by the Holy Spirit.”\(^6\) The Russian Church has a missionary past that has been flexible, and although, as during the Soviet Russianization of Ukraine, this has not always been the case, Orthodoxy adapted and translated the liturgy to the vernacular of the new country. Clément became part of the cultural and linguistic change in the theological expression of Orthodox Russians exiled in Paris, later known as the Paris School, which was distinctively francophone.

2.3.ii An Orthodox view from the Paris School on the Eastern Catholic Churches

Clément supported and promoted the ecumenical movement between Orthodoxy and Catholicism, and reconciliation between the Greek-Catholic and Orthodox Churches,\(^6\) also expressed by Nicolas Lossky. Lossky judges the existence of the Eastern Catholic Churches can be seen as ‘an invitation and an opportunity to share a common ecclesial experience of God in Liturgy, in order to strive together to recover the common ecclesiology.’\(^6\) The ecumenical striving of the Orthodox and Melkite Churches of Antioch is a paradigm that could open new ways for the Moscow patriarchate to perceive the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, rather than pejoratively rejecting it as the ‘uniate problem’.\(^6\) Alexander Schmemann, Orthodox contemporary of Clément, conceived the notion of ‘liturgical theology’ to describe ‘the theological meaning of worship,’\(^6\) Lossky judges that the ‘uniate

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\(^6\) Clément, *You Are Peter*, pp. 88-89.
the problem’ will disappear when we have rediscovered this common ecclesiology together.\footnote{Lossky, ‘La presence orthodoxe’, p. 352.}

However, with the papacy seen by many Orthodox as the greatest stumbling block against solidarity and dialogue, Clément responded in his book \textit{Rome Autrement}, to John Paul II’s invitation in 1995\footnote{John Paul II, \textit{Ut unum sint}, Encyclical Letter on Ecumenism, 25 May 1995.} to theologians of all denominations to engage in fraternal discussion on the role of the papacy. Clément points to the significant synod of the Greek-Catholic Church, which took place in Lebanon a month after the publication of \textit{Ut Unum Sint}, as a way towards reconciliation. Nearly all the bishops present signed a profession of faith stating, ‘I believe everything that the Orthodox Church teaches’, and, ‘I am in communion with the bishop of Rome, in the role that the Eastern Fathers accorded him before the separation.’ With the agreement of Patriarch Ignatius IV Hazim,\footnote{Ignatius IV Hazim, Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East, 1979-2012. Cragg writes of ‘The Tragedy of Lebanon’, see Kenneth Cragg, \textit{The Arab Christian: A History in the Middle East} (Louisville KY: John Knox Press, 1991), pp. 204-232.} the text was approved by Metropolitan Georges Khodr of the Orthodox patriarchate of Antioch, who considered ‘this profession of faith set the necessary and sufficient conditions for re-establishing the unity of the Orthodox Churches with Rome.’ The ‘collegial character of the organisation of the Church based on the original body of Apostles, was everyday doctrine among Melkite, Greek, Syrian, Chaldean and Lebanese Catholics.’\footnote{Will Cohen, ‘Recovery and Discovery of Ecclesiological Balance’, \textit{Logos}, 46 (2005), pp. 327-345 (p. 329); Cohen cites, X. Rynne, \textit{Vatican Council II} (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1999), p. 17.} Clément judged, in spite of very modest recognition, with silence from the Vatican and the autocephalous Churches, a healing over of wounds had begun.\footnote{Clément, \textit{You are Peter}, pp. 88-89.}

\textbf{2.3.iii Clément’s warning against Totalitarian Ideologies}

Clément recognised the global importance for a paradigm of Christian unity in diversity to be part of Christian dialogue with Islam and with a so-called ‘secularised’ society in an increasingly plural European community. Western ecclesial and political governance has not appreciated the need to protect and support the Christian presence in the Middle East, which has for so long acted as a ‘glue’ for social cohesion within Muslim states. Modern Western society has
largely failed to recognise that by removing Christianity from its public discourse, it has silenced an important ally in the defence of Western values of rationalism and freedom, leaving a space for the emergence of totalitarian ideologies. In 2003, Clément issued a warning note that a new Islamic ideological movement had begun to ‘exploit the juridical and mental structures of society’ in France and Western Europe; Jacques Jomier supports his assessment: what drives the movement [Tariq Ramadan] is not the modernisation of Islam but the Islamification of modernity. In these circumstances Clément judges the Christian is ‘called to a more profound and lucid Christianity, one able at the same time, to both welcome and illuminate everything.’ He dedicates his contribution to a book on Muslim-Christian dialogue to the Arab Christians of Antioch, particularly remembering the martyrs of Lebanon ‘where Christians and Muslims must again learn to love each other anew.’

2.3.iv Antiochian Paradigm: An historical overview

Melkite Catholic priest Jean Corbon affirms that historical heritage reveals a common thread with which the identity of the diverse Churches has been woven, a common thread which includes also the geography and the individual people. Greek culture, Hellenistic Judaism and Roman civilization streamed together to become the Antiochian Middle-Eastern Christian tradition of Cilicia, Syria and Lebanon, under the rule of the Roman Empire. Jesus began his ministry in Galilee, then travelled into the southern area of today’s Syria, to Caesarea Philippi. Less than five years after the Resurrection there were many followers of Christ in Damascus, today the seat of the five patriarchates of Antioch, three of which are autonomous Eastern Catholic Churches in full communion with Rome: the Syriac Catholic Church; the Melkite Greek Catholic Church; the Maronite

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630 Clément, ‘Be Careful’.
631 Talbi and Clément, Un Respect Têteu, pp. 111-305 (p. 112).
632 Corbon, p. 98.
633 South Eastern Turkey today.
634 Dick, p. 71.
Church; the Syriac Oriental Orthodox Church and the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East. These patriarchs recognize each other as holding authentic Patriarchates that share a common heritage.

The Antiochian paradigm is therefore characterised by universality; the Churches of Antioch claim canonical descent from the first Christian community founded by the Apostle Peter, Antioch’s first bishop, and St Paul, Antioch’s patron saints. During the Crusader capture of Antioch in 1098, the Melkite patriarch, John V, found his position usurped and took refuge in Constantinople during the period of the Crusades, a factor which contributed to the ‘Byzantinization’ of the Melkites, their liturgy and canonical practices. Antioch was razed to the ground in 1268 by the Mamluks of Egypt, who defeated the Crusaders, and the Melkite patriarchs retreated to Damascus. The Church’s main concern was survival and the patriarchal structure enabled this to be achieved, since the patriarch was able to ensure Apostolic succession without reference to any foreign authority.

2.3.v Antiochian Paradigm: Dialogue and Unity

The five ancient patriarchates known as the Pentarchy of Churches who accepted the decision of the Council of Chalcedon included the patriarchate of Antioch, which has survived 1,400 years in a homeland dominated by Islamic culture and power, a Christian witness in charity with Muslims with whom there is a shared Arab identity. Antoine Audo gives us a Catholic perspective of Eastern Christian identity and Christian unity in his memoir of Melkite Catholics, Néophyte Edelby, 1920-1995, an Arab Christian of Syrian origin, and Maronite

636 Dick, p. 76.
637 Ibid.
638 Corbon, p. 94.
priest, Afif Osseïrane, 1919-1988, a Shi’ite Muslim from Lebanon who converted to Christianity in 1945. These two men of prayer, who inspired respect and affection, have a message for Christians and Muslims today.

Both men lived through political change and upheaval: the end of the Ottoman Empire; the French Mandate in Syria-Lebanon; national independence; the creation of the State of Israel; the Six Days’ War; the Lebanese War. They were rooted in Arab Muslim culture, speaking and writing eloquently in Arabic; and fluent in many languages. A remarkable outcome of Osseïrane’s life is affirmed by Youakim Moubarac: his conversion to Christianity brought him into closer fidelity with his family and Muslim environment, because he lived out ‘his Christian difference in their midst.’ Ignace Dick praises Bishop Edelby’s wisdom, his love of religions and openness to the East and to world culture.

The Arab word moussayara, which Bishop Audo assures is so difficult to translate, deeply expresses Eastern and Arabic generosity, a trait rooted in the Gospel words of Christ, and deeply characteristic of Bishop Edelby: it means ‘to walk in company with’. It does not only convey ‘conviviality’, rather it is ‘the feeling of profound, complete, concrete charity towards everyone, to brothers and sisters in humanity […] Moussayara is an attitude of welcome, of patience, of balance. The wise man does all he can to distance himself from harsh and violent positions.’ Edelby, who integrates several identities, Arab, Eastern, Byzantine and Catholic, is ‘the bearer of a call to communion in respect of difference’: ‘an authentic communion between truth and love.’

A Maronite priest observed how Fr Osseïrane’s ‘spirit of prayer’ enabled him to love Islam; the prayer of adoration is a ‘prayer common to Syrian Christianity and to Islam’, Afif Osseïrane was ‘the inheritor of a double legacy’.

646 Audo, p. 28.
recite the Beatitudes using a Quranic melody, filled with respect and admiration it conveyed a prophetic message to the young Christians he served. Osseirane was ordained as a Maronite priest of Beirut in 1962. He was deeply influenced by the spirituality of Charles de Foucauld, in that he lived it. Bishop Audo sees a mysterious connection between de Foucauld, called to return to Christianity after seeing Muslims praying in the desert, and Osseirane, a convert from Islam to Christianity who remained a friend of both. Audo concludes, ‘Disinterested charity, acceptance of the other just as they are, is the road to reconciliation and peace’; he calls Christians in a Muslim environment to give witness through their prayer and attitude of adoration; to infuse politics with grace and love in order to liberate it from tendencies of power and possession, and found it on justice.

2.3.vi Antiochian Paradigm: Ecumenical Movement

Patriarch Bartholomew I, with Clément and Albert Camus, refers to characteristics of the region as ‘Mediterranean humanism’ and ‘Mediterranean genius’, which they assess to be inclusive, have a future dialogical role for building peace through the rediscovery of values that once flourished in that region: the recognition of ‘the sacred character of each person, a love which, through compassion, forgiveness, justice and peace, transcends all boundaries and does not discriminate.’ Jean Corbon also refers to a ‘particular genius’ that characterises, through language, music, symbols and gestures, the liturgy and mystery of Churches of the Middle East: ‘the essence of their culture was absorbed by Christ and transfigured by the Holy Spirit.’ The ‘most precious heirloom of the Churches of the Middle East’ is the experience of the liturgy, which made them a living Church, enabling them to preserve the gift of faith passed on by the Apostles to the present day; the diversity of their ecclesial

649 Ibid., p. 27.
651 Olivier Clément, Conversations, p. 211; Clément cites from a letter by Patriarch Bartholomew I to Yasser Arafat, former Chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation.
652 Clément, Conversations, p. 211.
653 Corbon, p. 102.
identities has not prevented them from ‘being universal beneath the surface, like underground waters which give rise to several springs.’

During the twentieth century Christian cultures in Syria and Lebanon have responded to a deep vocational call to ecumenical dialogue in an evolutionary step towards Christian unity. Pope Francis recently identified this journey of Christians in the Middle East as an ‘ecumenism of suffering’. Christian differences in the past had brought division, yet it is precisely difference in the twentieth century that has become the axial point of unity. This is demonstrated in the leadership of Metropolitan Georges Khodr, who committed his ministry to ecumenism and dialogue with Islam, worked with the Orthodox Greek Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, Ignatius IV Hazim, to bring about an Orthodox revival. Khodr, a key founder member of the Orthodox Youth Movement in Lebanon in 1942, is said to have ‘brought new vitality and vision into the Church through deepened awareness of its spiritual meaning, through social action and [...] a clergy close to the people.’ In 1988, Hazim founded the University of Balamand in Lebanon, committed to values based on freedom, tolerance, plurality and human dignity, committed to spreading these throughout the Middle East. Khodr who studied at the St Sergius Institute in Paris in 1952, and was closely connected to Clément, was a professor at Balamand University.

2.3.vii Eastern Catholic Theology: Melkite and Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Renewal

Jean Corbon defines what is common among the theologians of the Eastern Churches whether Armenian, Coptic, Melkite or Syrian, as their vast culture; their work on apologetics and controversy has made them as valuable for Muslim as Christian thinkers. He concludes that ecumenism existed here before its discovery in the West and Christian-Islamic dialogue existed long before our discovery of inter-faith dialogue. Edward Farrugia judges that the ‘primordial Christian Orient was an undifferentiated union of plural Churches which slowly emerged as a

654 Corbon, p. 102. See also Lossky, ‘A memoir’, p. 95.
differentiated whole under the pressure of events,’ and ‘its theology was likewise plural, vibrant and undifferentiated.’ According to Clément, for theologians, theology, prayer and intellect are inseparable, bringing a union of the intellect and the heart. Edward Farrugia sees a distinguishing characteristic of Eastern Christianity which the West has separated, he believes there is a need to study ‘dogma and spirituality’ together ‘in order to return to the Sources in the Spirit of Vatican II’, where ‘spirituality means lived dogma.’

The ecumenical witness of the Melkite Greek-Catholic Church with the Orthodox Church in Antioch appears as a key for Christian unity and for Europe, particularly Eastern Europe and the Ukraine, where the Ukrainian Catholic Church came into existence at the Union of Brest in 1596. Christianity was introduced into Rus’-Ukraine in 988 from Constantinople; however, the Ukrainian Church did not follow Constantinople into schism with the West in 1054. During the sixteenth century the influence of Constantinople in the Slavic world was in decline and the power of the Moscow patriarchate in ascendancy, engendering a complex political and religious situation.

Eastern Catholic theology derives richness from both Western Catholic and Orthodox theology, but is a cultural reality in itself. Robert Taft judges it to be a theology ‘that seeks to breath with both lungs’ bringing oxygen to both sides of the East-West Christian divide. He affirms, ‘Nothing whatever can be understood apart from its history, and that is doubly true here’: the beginnings of a Renewal of Eastern Catholicism started at the First Vatican Council, 1869-1870, at which the Eastern Catholic Patriarchs, particularly the Melkite patriarch, objected to the lack of understanding of the Catholic East. The particular

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661 Rus’ is the ancient name of the territory which today includes much of Ukraine and Belarus.
663 Taft, ‘Eastern Catholic’, p. 54.
patrimony of Eastern Churches was further recognised under Popes Leo XIII and Benedict XV, bringing a new status to Catholic Eastern traditions.

Key figures who took rapprochement further were Lambert Beauduin OSB, French born Cyril Korolevsky, 1878-1959, and Andrej Szeptycki, 1879-1944, Archbishop of L’viv and primate of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. To ensure training of priests who were not ‘Latinised’, Szeptycki founded the L’viv Theological Academy in 1928; closed by the Soviet regime for fifty years, opening again in 1994. Recognised today as a sign of intellectual and theological renewal in the Church, it grew from the vision of these Eastern Catholics. The work continues through the Institute of Ecumenical Studies at the Ukrainian Catholic University of L’viv, founded by the French scholar and Orthodox Christian, Antoine Arjakovsky, a student, colleague and friend of Olivier Clément. Arjakovsky’s Conversations with Lubomyr Cardinal Husar highlights the importance of Ukraine as a geographical centre of Europe and the judgement that the future of the Europe both politically and spiritually, will depend on what happens in Ukraine. Cardinal Husar, Head of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, longed for a Ukrainian Church in communion with both Rome and the Orthodox Churches, faithful to the heritage of Rome and Constantinople; however, many Orthodox believe it is not possible ‘to be Catholic and Eastern at the same time’. The Eastern Catholic Church considers that a Church in communion with the Roman Apostolic See remains a particular Church in the full theological and canonical sense; Cardinal Hussar believes ‘no Orthodox could quarrel with such a concept of the Union,’ he seeks to show that Eastern Catholic Churches are ‘objective witnesses to the universality of the Church, completely Catholic and Eastern; in this reality ‘lies the ecumenical mission of the Eastern Catholic Churches.’

667 Ibid., p. 59.
668 Antoine Arjakovsky, Conversations with Lubomyr Cardinal Husar: Towards a Post-Confessional Christianity (L’viv: Ukrainian Catholic University Press, 2007).
669 Ibid., p. 97.
670 Ibid., p. 123.
671 Ibid., p. 127.
672 Ibid., p. 123.
In the years prior to Vatican II, French-speaking Melkite bishops had been in
dialogue with twentieth-century French Catholic intellectuals and theologians,
enabling the informed intervention of Patriarch Maximos IV Saigh of the Melkite
Greek-Catholic Church at the Second Vatican Council. In explaining why he
had been able to take a leadership role for the Eastern Churches Maximos judged
that Catholic Melkites had never lost touch with their Orthodox roots and had not
become closed in on themselves; they were thus better able to distinguish what
was ‘Catholic’ from what was ‘contingent’, enabling them to act as a
counterbalance to Latin Catholic unilateralism. This together with the strong
synodal cohesion of the Melkite hierarchy, although a small minority group at the
council, led to an articulated unity. Melkite conciliarity thus demonstrated an
‘Antiochian ecclesial paradigm’ which the council would vote to re-establish in
Western Catholicism. The Melkites were frequently referred to as a ‘bridge’
between East and West, where their deep understanding of both East and West,
‘allowed the voice of the East to be heard at Council sessions.’ Karl Rahner
perceived that a new era of Church history had commenced with Vatican II,
naming it ‘the period of the Church of myriad cultures.’

Maximos IV spoke at the council in French, not Latin, affirming the use of ‘every
language is in effect, liturgical.’ Ecclesiological recommendations made at the
council by the Melkite bishops included: the use of the vernacular; eucharistic
communion under both species in the Latin liturgy; the permanent diaconate; new
attitudes and language in ecumenical dialogue; recognition and acceptance of
Eastern Catholic communities as ‘Churches’ and not simply as ‘rites’. All these
suggestions were agreed in council documents concerning the Eastern Catholic
Churches.

673 For a study of the Melkite presence at Vatican II, see Gaby Hachem, ‘Primaute et oeuménisme
chez les Melkites catholiques à Vatican II’, Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique, 93 (1988), pp. 398-
441.
675 Ibid., p. 66.
677 Taft, ‘Eastern Catholic’, p. 68.
Eastern Catholic theology is a theology in via, a process Taft views as ‘alive, exciting, dynamic and full of hope’. Eastern Catholic Churches have lived as minority Churches either in an Islamic milieu or within three generations of Communist persecution, but an inner vitality flows from the Eastern liturgy, which has a profound rootedness in what is best of their past tradition, a sense of transcendence, a high Christology, a belief in the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the world, and emphasis on the local Church and synodal structure of Church governance. The Eastern Catholic Church can be said to be a model of unity of East and West within itself.

2.3.viii Antiochian Paradigm: Dialogue for Peace

In a recent interview Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, John X, requested world governments to find a political solution to violence through dialogue, to reach a peaceful solution for the whole region, rather than singling out any particular group for assistance. This is reiterated by the Melkite Greek-Catholic Patriarch Gregorios III: ‘reaching a political solution to the crisis in Syria is key to peace in the Arab world and the whole world.’

Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew make a call for peace and solidarity that links Antioch and Ukraine: ‘we call on all religious leaders to pursue and to strengthen interreligious dialogue and to make every effort to build a culture of peace and solidarity between persons and between peoples. We also remember all the people who experience the sufferings of war. In particular, we pray for peace in Ukraine, a country of ancient Christian tradition, while we call upon all parties involved to pursue the path of dialogue and of respect for international law in order to bring an end to the conflict and allow all Ukrainians to live in harmony.’

678 Taft, ‘Eastern Catholic’, p. 73.
679 Ibid., p. 78; Clément, Rome Autrement.
Religious affiliation in the Middle East can often replace ethnic identity; however, the Christians of Syria are proud to be Arabs, they have played an active role in the development of Arab Muslim society. The recognition of the importance of prayer within these groups, and contemplation within Christian Churches and Shi’a Islam, creates a space for dialogue and encounter. This challenges contemporary Western culture and society, as well as the culture of ‘indifference’ which clouds some modern Western judgement.

Clément’s thought on the dignity and value of the human person and the Christian ‘call’ to resemble God in a lived unity with all humanity are deeply rooted in an Eastern Orthodox theology of Trinitarian unity and diversity. ‘Just as essential unity of God is realized in personal love, so we are called to resemble God in realizing our essential unity with all humanity.’ A perpetual Pentecost, that has continued since the Church began, ensures that the life-giving Holy Spirit calls each of us into communion with others, but sin, Clément points out, can turn ‘this diverse unity into a hostile multiplicity’. We are called to repentance, and Godlike humility. Clément notes that it was the mixture of humility and humour in the response of the ‘foreign’ Syro-Phoenician woman, an ancestor of today’s Lebanon, that obtained a miracle of healing from Jesus (Mark 7:24-30).

2.3.ix Conclusions
The Churches of Antioch have shown that diversity and plurality are not a barrier to unity, and their desire for unity has enabled a dynamic ecumenical movement that has already brought some reconciliation. The ‘most precious heirloom of the Churches of the Middle East’ is the experience of the liturgy, which made them living Churches, enabling them to preserve the gift of faith passed on by the Apostles to the present day. The diversity of their ecclesial identities has not prevented them from ‘being universal beneath the surface, like underground

waters which give rise to several springs.’ This is a paradigm, and these are springs, which Olivier Clément wants all the Churches to draw from.

The Eastern Catholic Church has retained the liturgy and synodal system that remains close to Orthodoxy while living in communion with the Catholic Church; it has experienced a theological renewal that is ‘alive, exciting, hopeful’, not enclosed in on itself. From the Churches of Antioch and the East come liturgical and spiritual gifts: ‘Patristic theology’, very different from knowledge of Patristic writings; ‘liturgical theology’, alive in the Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches, carries potential seeds of unity. It would seem that the Moscow patriarchate judges it is impossible to be Catholic and Eastern at the same time, yet Eastern Catholic theology has demonstrated new vitality in the face of severe adversity and Eastern Catholics have shown a way to breathe with both lungs of East and West. The ecumenical mission of the Eastern Catholic Churches today, as it was at their inception, is to witness to the true universality of the Church both Catholic and Eastern.687

If this is so, the Western Churches and Russian Orthodoxy are called to a new openness which will allow a common ecclesial experience of God in the liturgy to become an ecclesiology of unity and worship. A common ecclesial experience of Eastern and Western liturgical theology through ‘the uncovering of the theological meaning of worship’688 may prove to be the axial point of future Christian unity. The role of the Eastern Churches in this time also, as at Vatican II, can be to act as a ‘bridge’ and providential balance, against a latent unilateralism of either the Catholic Church or the Moscow patriarchate as power structures.

The Antiochian paradigm also demonstrates that inter-religious dialogue between Middle Eastern Christians and the multiple expressions of Islam in Syria and Lebanon can succeed. Ignace Dick judges that Syria best expresses a possibility of living freely together in plurality in an Arabic and Islamic culture; moussayara, walking in company with while distancing oneself from violence is characteristic.

of the Antiochian paradigm. Prayer must play an important role in bringing Muslims and Christians into a peaceful dialogical space.

Clément believes ‘secularisation’ will be a lasting event, and that ‘all Churches in Europe, especially in Western Europe will ultimately have to find a new place for themselves in secular society.’ The irenic and pluri-dimensional dialogical approach of the Antiochian paradigm is part of Clément’s mature analysis to bring a socio-cultural evolution which allows individuals and peoples to choose peace, non-violence and life. He believes Christians are called to repentance and humility, discerning that the Christian is meant to discover and recognise traces of Christ in all human reality, whether religious or not.

CHAPTER 2.4
Eastern Orthodoxy and Muslim-Christian relations between Europe and the Middle East: Olivier Clément's Perspectives on Theology and Ecclesiology in the Christian Encounter with Islam

2.4.i Introduction
Clément remained rooted in Orthodoxy and enduringly loyal to his friends and colleagues, the philosophers and theologians of the Russian Diaspora, in particular Nicolas Berdiaev, Vladimir Lossky and Paul Evdokimov, yet he continued to identify deeply with France and Europe. After the student revolt in Paris in 1968, which he considered to be caused by spiritual malaise, the revolt of the son against the father, he built strong filial relationships with the patriarchs of Constantinople, Athenagoras and Bartholomew I, and used his literary skills to make their views, and Orthodoxy, better known in the West. His understanding and appreciation of a wider Christian landscape also matured, allowing Catholicism to hold a crucially important place.

2.4.ii A ‘Mediterranean Man’
While Clément lived and worked mainly in Paris, he identified himself as a ‘Mediterranean man’. He held an abiding affection for the ambience and conviviality of Mediterranean village life, the culture of his childhood, and the countries of the Mediterranean. He came to see the Mediterranean as holding immense historic, political and future importance for Europe and the Middle East, and therefore, globally.

His experience of the tragic consequences of atheism and totalitarianism in post-war Europe and Russia fostered in him a spirit of ecumenism which became an enduring passion of his life. A characteristic of Russian émigré theology was the notion of sobornost, defined as freedom, unity and conciliarity; it carried the meaning that Church life is ‘collaborative and yet hierarchical’, building up the Body of Christ. Nicolas Afanasiev’s thesis on eucharistic theology, states it is the gathering of the faithful around the Scriptures and eucharistic table that forms

the Church’s ecclesial identity. This starting point of the ecclesiology of
communion recognised by most Christian Churches and Confessions today, was a
significant contribution to ecumenical dialogue. Clément worked tirelessly for a
mutual and fraternal respect between East and West that did not require a change
of identity or character. His attitude to ecumenism, however, made him unpopular
with some members of his own Church, particularly after his critique of
nationalism amongst Orthodox clergy. This spirit of ecumenism and encounter
with the Antiochian paradigm broadened his work to include interfaith dialogue.

2.4.iii Clemént’s wider dialogical aims
In 1989, Tunisian born historian and intellectual, Mohamed Talbi, and Olivier
Clément agreed to co-author a book on faith and dialogue entitled, *Un Respect
Têtu*: ‘Hard-headed Respect’ reflects both the mind-set of the writers and their
joint project. Their approach to Islamic-Christian dialogue, which they consider to
be of major contemporary importance, conveys a sense of practical, realistic,
unsentimental respect for the ‘other’, and importantly for the faith of the ‘other’.
An organic approach of person to person characterizes their search for truth that
they endeavour to keep free and unbiased by nationalistic loyalties. Clément
writes to be of service, not only for Muslims that they might understand
Christianity better, but also for ‘seekers of God’ in the West and in Russia.
Clément sees that for the Christian, relationality is part of the mystery of God, and
constitutes the vocation of the created being; he judges that for Christians, the
Mohammadan message in Islam has a place in the designs of God in which
Christians are called to participate. He wishes particularly to dedicate the book to
Christian Arabs of Antioch, among whom he has many friends, but above all he
dedicates it to the martyrs of Lebanon, ‘where Christians and Muslims must again
learn to love each other anew.’

Clément’s contribution to the book is divided into two parts: Part One, Clément
calls a ‘Little Introduction to Christianity’. In this he expresses his special interest
in the Churches of Asia and Africa in the Middle East, which co-existed alongside
Islam for many centuries, he also wants to show that these ancient Churches and
Christianity in Europe need each other and need to identify with each other.

691 Talbi and Clément, *Un Respect Têtu*, p. 112.
Christianity is an ‘immense and complex spiritual world’ into which Clément attempts to make some ‘depth charges’ or ‘scalpel cuts’, as he puts it. But his introduction to Christianity is more than a neutral historical exposition; it is a profession of faith. Clément opens his discourse on Christianity with this quotation: ‘What we hold most dear is Christ himself. Christ and all that comes from Him.’ These words are the reply of staretz John, a fictional character, when the one he is about to declare to be the Antichrist asks, what is the most important thing for him in Christianity? They are taken from the fascinating and prophetic work of Russian Orthodox religious philosopher, Vladimir Soloviev, entitled, *A Short Story of the Antichrist.* The work was written in the year of Soloviev’s death, 1900, on the eve of the terrible, yet largely unexpected, catastrophes of the twentieth century. Soloviev’s eschatological theme predicts forgetfulness of God, the secularisation of Europe, great wars, civil strife and revolutions which would pave the way for a United States of Europe at the end of the twentieth century, and the rise of the Antichrist, who is fascinatingly portrayed as an urbane philanthropist who, while accepting the social, cultural teaching of Jesus, rejects the central message that he is the Son of God, who died, is risen, is alive and active today. Yet Soloviev was optimistic that ethical and humanistic ecumenism would result in the different ecclesial groups being united in diversity. In his story, a parable, the coming of the Antichrist will be preceded by a general apostasy, but three men remain to reject the Antichrist, Peter II (Catholicism), the Elder John (Orthodoxy), and Professor Pauli (Protestantism). At a Council called by the Antichrist, their stand in fact does lead Christianity to a final unity.

In a Lenten retreat talk given by Giacomo Cardinal Biffi to John Paul II and the Roman Curia in March 2000, the cardinal took as his theme, ‘Soloviev and Our Time’, based on Soloviev’s *A Short Story of the Antichrist.* Biffi describes

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693 Vladimir Soloviev, Russian philosopher and poet was born January 1853 and died in 1900, aged 47. His last book, a fictional work, *Three conversations on War, Progress, and the End of History*, was translated and published in France in 1984. Soloviev contributed significantly to the Russian spiritual renaissance at the beginning of the twentieth century. See also Gio Piovesana e Michelinna Tenace, *L’Anticristo: con la traduzione del saggio di Solov’ev* (Rome: Centro Aletti, Pontificio Instituto Orientale, 1995).
Soloviev as a ‘friend of truth and an enemy of ideology’.\textsuperscript{694} John Paul II who had previously been unaware of the story, was deeply moved by it.\textsuperscript{695} Hans Urs von Balthasar regarded Soloviev’s work as ‘the most universal, speculative creation of the modern period’,\textsuperscript{696} and accorded Soloviev, who is sometimes referred to as ‘the Russian Newman’, a similar level of recognition as St Thomas Aquinas. Biffi later delivered a Lenten meditation to Pope Benedict XVI on the same theme in 2007, which the pope cites in his book, \textit{Jesus of Nazareth}.

This notion of religious ideology as a destructive force is one that recurs in Clément’s discourse; Soloviev’s religious philosophy can be seen as foundational to the creative thinking of the Russian Orthodox theologians of the Diaspora, and therefore to Clément. Christianity cannot be reduced to a set of values, being a Christian involves a personal encounter with Christ; solidarity, peace, respect for nature are relative values which, if they are seen as absolute, can become ideological idolatries. Soloviev’s book was published in France in 1984, and again resurfaced in Russian theological circles after the breakup of the Soviet Union as a way to a new Russian philosophy. It is therefore both foundational in Clément’s Orthodoxy and significant in his analysis of ecumenical and interfaith dialogue at the time he collaborated with Talbi in their dialogical book published in 1989.

\section*{2.4.iv Interfaith dialogue: Triune relationality – the Christian starting point}

Clément enters interfaith dialogue with an understanding that the most profitable starting point from the Christian side for any dialogue with Islam is Christian ecclesial unity. If we can achieve unity between the Christian Churches we will be better equipped to proclaim the unity of the triune God, as the Churches come together in unity as the Body of Christ. Clément dedicated his life to working for unity among Christian ecclesial groups of East and West; he wants Christians and

\textsuperscript{694} Biffi also delivered a Lenten meditation to Pope Benedict XVI and the Roman curia on the subject of Soloviev’s Antichrist. Pope Benedict XVI’s book \textit{Jesus of Nazareth}, mentions a fascinating story of the Antichrist by Soloviev on pp. 30 - 41.

\textsuperscript{695} For text of Cardinal Biffi’s lecture see <http://Catholicism.or/ad-rem-no-25.html>. [Accessed 3.3.15].

Muslims to listen to each other, to undertake a reciprocal spiritual sharing and questioning that unites both in a sense of justice. There is no polemical stance here or position of religious superiority, but a desire for relationships to flourish as the ‘other’ is deeply listened to with respect. In this interreligious dialogue, Clément sees hard-headed respect as primarily respect for oneself, for one’s faith, and for the other; it is at the heart of Christian understanding of the mystery of a relationality which is constitutive of God himself, as Trinity, and constitutive of all human beings. ‘In the image of and by participation in Trinitarian existence, we are called simultaneously to diversity and communion. In both God and man, being is relational.’

The recognition of Christ on the shore, and on the road to Emmaus, was a sudden awakening of personal relationship, which was already an ecclesial relationship of persons, because the fish and the bread are symbols of the Eucharist, and Christ, risen in the power of the Holy Spirit, is both with and in us. The created being is potentially sacramental and this cosmic sacrament must come true through the communion of men between themselves and with God. Clément’s has a hardheaded respect for the faith in which as a Christian he attempts to live, and in which he hoped to die. Yet his driving force is to speak of God’s love, which he has experienced personally, and in understanding deeply that death, all forms of death, and the worst is not physical, become ‘the veil torn by love.’

Our task, Clément believes, ‘is to make known at the surface of the world, the brazier that Christ does not cease to light at the edge of the lake, at the edge of the heart, at the heart of human communion and dignity.’ Clément sees traces of the Trinity in the mysticism of Islam; the Qur’an speaks of the Word and the Spirit of God, thus making a Trinitarian ‘space’. Clément appeals to Christians to reflect on the message of Mohammad with an open heart.

The second part of Clément’s writing describes Islam, as seen from a Christian viewpoint. He draws on the writings and vision of a series of French or French-speaking Islamicists, many of whom were contemporaries and known to himself; these men introduced a fresh understanding of Islam to twentieth-century Western theologians. A remarkable aspect of the opening up of Western theological

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697 Clément, Conversations, p. 154. See also Clément, Un Respect Tête, p. 112.
698 Clément, Un Respect Tête, p. 125.
699 Ibid., p. 128.
700 Ibid., p. 282.
understanding to the importance of Islamic/Christian dialogue is the intensely francophone element that allowed it to happen. Clément cites the significant French influences that shaped this phenomenon. He was deeply influenced by the writing of the great Catholic scholar and French Orientalist, Louis Massignon, whom he knew a little, and also by the work of Massignon’s disciple, Youakim Moubarac, a Lebanese scholar and priest who studied in Paris and died in France. While captive in Iraq in 1908, Massignon underwent a dramatic conversion experience; as he understood it, he was brought back to the Catholic faith of his childhood through the prayers of five Christian and Muslim intercessors one of whom was the Catholic mystic, Charles de Foucauld, another the Muslim martyr, Husayn Mansûr Hallâj who wanted to die like Jesus and was crucified in 922. This metanoic experience completely changed the direction of Massignon’s life. Massignon chose the Passion of Hallâj for his doctoral thesis. In 1934 he and Mary Kahil, an Arab Melkite Christian, dedicated their lives to pray for the Muslim people in response to the marginalization of many Arab Christians in Egypt under Muslim domination. The prayer group Badaliya, in Arabic ‘substitution’, was formed in 1947 received official status from Rome and support from many including the future Pope Paul VI.

The double trajectory of Massignon’s life from this point led to his priesthood in the Eastern Catholic Church of Antioch. He dedicated his life to achieving fraternal unity between Christians and Muslims; he would visit the tombs of Muslims to pray for the Muslim dead, especially those who had died in the violence of the fifties in France. He judged Islam to be ‘a natural religion [...] that reclaims the religion of Abraham, the pure monotheist of Patriarchal times.’ In an interview in 1948 entitled ‘Le Signe Marial’, ‘The Marian Sign’ Massignon defines his theological view on the authenticity of Mohammad’s prophecy: rather than describing it as true or false, he chooses the words positive and negative, both considered as authentic prophecy. ‘Positive’ prophecy challenges human

701 Ibid., p. 112.
702 Youakim Moubarac, 1924-1995, dedicated his life to interfaith dialogue between Christianity and Islam, to the unity of the Church and to the Maronite Antiochian heritage.
703 Clément, Un Respect Têtu, p. 181.
behaviour and sinfulness, ‘negative’ prophecy in Mohammad’s case signifies an eschatological character that is witnessing to ‘the final separation of the good from the evil’. Because his prophethood occurred after Jesus’ first coming, and is an anticipation of the Second Coming, this should alert Christians to an acceptance of the authenticity of Mohammad as an eschatological prophet.

Clément also cites support of the authentic nature of the Quranic prophecy in the writings of intellectuals Roger Arnaldez, French Islamist, Bendali Jaouzi, a Palestinian Christian, the British linguist Robert Charles Zaehner, who converted to Catholicism, and Athenagoras I, who describes Muhammad as a prophet of the Old Covenant, referring to Abraham as the first Muslim; it is a faith which is not only pre-Incarnation but pre-Decalogue. Athenagoras points to Gregory Palamas’ judgement that Islam led people from a degenerate, idolatrous paganism to faith in Abraham. Clément evoking the second-century Father, St Ireneus of Lyons, sees Mohammad not only as a prophet of the Old Testament linked to the Christian era but also a prophet of the ultimate Parousia; Jesus in his eschatological imminence characterises Islam. Islam challenges Israel waiting for a Messiah born of human paternity; it reproaches Christianity which became settled, closed and divided.

Clément sees the task of Christians in dialogue as defined by the Fathers, is to find again the eschatological perspective inclusive of the universal character of salvation: the whole of humanity is touched by the Spirit. The Fathers, whose ‘worldview’ interestingly, was that of the Mediterranean countries and of the Near East, detected the presence of the Holy Spirit present in all humanity.

There were participants from England also in this important arena, who shared the key theological principle of the action of the Holy Spirit in the world. Anglican Bishop Kenneth Cragg, held in high regard as a pioneer of dialogical ecumenism by Clément, continued to write strongly on this subject well into his nineties while living in Oxford. Both men were historians who professed the centrality of Jesus in their theology, and have each written over 40 books and numerous articles; both believe the Spirit speaks in Islam; in other faiths; and in other

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706 Clément, Un Respect Tête, p. 284.
707 Clément, Un Respect Tête, p. 272.
cultures. Bishop Cragg, a profound religious thinker, has spent much of his long life reflecting on the relationship between Islam and Christianity. He judges the Christian must approach Islam as an ambassador representing not another country but the religious ‘other’, who must learn the language and customs of Islam, not so much to understand them, but to be understood.

2.4.v The Antiochian Paradigm
Clément reminds us in his introduction to Sources, the seminal collection of texts from the Patristic era accompanied by Clément’s own commentary, that Christianity is an Oriental religion, and it is a mystical religion.

Georges Khodr, born in Lebanon, in 1923 into a Christian family, was educated at a Jesuit university and studied law. With fifteen other law students he became a founding member in 1942 of the Orthodox Youth Movement (OYM), and a pioneer in renewal in many areas of ecclesial life in the patriarchate of Antioch: Bible study groups, the rebirth of monasticism, parish renewal, religious social events and the opening of Christian hostels during the 1940s. Renewal at Antioch was sought by a return to the sources, that is, the Bible and the Church which they found described there, and the Eucharist. It seems, apart from texts in services the Bible was not read by the Orthodox people; a similar situation existed in the pre-Vatican II Catholic Church. There is a Russian stream of Orthodoxy also flowing at Antioch. In 1950 Khodr studied in Paris at the St Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute, a place of great influence in Clément’s life and where he and many of the theologians of the Russian Diaspora taught.

In the 1980s a continuation of this renewal flourished in the Archdiocese of Beirut under the leadership of Bishop Elias Audeh. This deeply scriptural and spiritual renewal grew among groups of young people who became aware of their own personal relationship with Jesus and discipleship to him; in this sense it was a deeply evangelical movement of the Holy Spirit, that brought the experience of

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711 Olivier Clément, Sources.
Pentecost to their lives. The Church became for them a meeting place with Jesus where individual healings took place. Their prayer life and in particular the use of the Eastern Jesus Prayer\footnote{Mofarrij, ‘Renewal’, p. 234, footnote 5, \textit{On the Invocation of the Name of Jesus by a Monk of the Eastern Church}, London: The Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius. Lev Gillet wrote under the pseudonym — Monk of the Eastern Church.} became an imperative. This renewal spread across the frontier firing line that separated the two Beiruts, West and East, at that time of the civil war it appears that a movement of renewal was irrupting on both sides of Beirut. Khodr’s involvement in a wider ecumenical renewal was influenced by Riad Mofarrij,\footnote{Riad Mofarrij, Greek Orthodox Christian of Antiochian Church, felt called to join the Catholic ‘Word of God’ lay community in Beirut. This ecumenical community is one of ‘a community of communities’ called ‘The Sword of the Spirit’, founded in 1982 as a student evangelical outreach at the University of Michigan, USA, now worldwide. Fr Lev Gillet encouraged Mofarrij to join the community of Catholics in Beirut but to research in depth the theology of Orthodoxy.} another Lebanese founding member of OYM, who had joined a Catholic-ecumenical community which after time drew Orthodox into membership: Khodr was impressed with the spirituality of these Orthodox.

Metropolitan Georges Khodr represents the Eastern Orthodox tradition of the Middle East, and specifically the Byzantine Church of Antioch, which covers Lebanon and Syria and is a member of the World Council of Churches. The autocephalous Orthodox Church of Antioch is third in rank after Constantinople and Alexandria and was the largest Arab Christian Church in the Middle East; 40-45\% of the population in the predominately Muslim population in Lebanon were at that time Christian, while in Syria the percentage was 8-10\%. Khodr addressed the WCC Central Committee, which met in 1970 to define a programme on ‘Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies’, with a lecture entitled ‘Christianity in a Pluralist World: The Economy of the Holy Spirit’. Khodr sees the mission of the Church in dialogue is ‘to nurture the spiritual tradition of religions it encountered by “improving” them from within [...] while not alienating them.’\footnote{Kerr, ‘The Prophethood’, p. 433.} He amplifies this point by recalling the relationship of the Eastern Church with Islam, particularly the Assyrian (Nestorian)\footnote{For clarification of the term ‘Nestorian’ see Sebastian Brock, ‘The Syriac Churches of the Middle East and Dialogue with the Catholic Church’, in \textit{The Catholic Church in the Contemporary Middle East}, eds Anthony O’Mahony and John Flannery (London: Melisende, 2010), pp. 107-118.} Church: the prophetic character of Muhammad is defined in Assyrian ‘texts on the basis of specific analysis of the Muhammadan message. But there is no blurring of the
centrality and ontological uniqueness of Jesus Christ. Khodr sees ‘the line which leads from Abraham, Father of believers, to the Arab Prophet is a mysterious and providential way’, and that touches of the Word are evident in the Qur’an: the Qur’an vibrates with a powerful nostalgia of Christ. The Assyrian Patriarch Timothy, who died in 823, answered the ruling ‘Abbasid caliph al-Mahdi’s question, ‘What say ye of Mohammad?’ with the reply ‘he walked in the path of the prophets’ – a very dialogical response compared to the Christian-Islamic polemics which followed down through the centuries until Massignon defended Mohammad’s authenticity as a prophet.

In his chapter on the Christian view of Islam, Clément cites Khodr’s words: Christ is not an institution, but is found in the transformation of hearts to gentleness and humility and jihad for those who suffer; jihad here means to struggle for the other. Clément lives in the knowledge and expectation that the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit is continually expressed in history; this requires a creative and dynamic Christian response, never a static approach to doctrine. He points to the discernment of Georges Khodr and Kenneth Cragg who discern the Christian is meant to discover and recognize the ‘traces of Christ’ in all human reality, whether religious or not. Islam constitutes a spiritual universe in which Jesus is present, and it is this presence that Christian witness must unveil and reveal, in awareness that Islam explicitly negates Christian dogma concerning Jesus: the Trinity, the Cross and Redemption. Yet Jesus appears as the major representative of the way of love in mystical Islam, and the Cross of Jesus was witnessed to by the sacrificial death of Muslim Hocëîn Mansûr Hallâj, inspiration of Louis Massignon.

2.4.vi ‘Secular’ Europe

A revolt in the West dating from the nineteenth century against what Clément terms ‘clerical totalitarianism’ gathered momentum. Its opposition to ecclesiastical institutions, led to ‘Christians without a Church’, but also a humanism that remained open to Gospel values and a system of government based

\[718\] Clément, Un Respect Têtu, p. 282.
\[719\] In this context jihad means struggle. On the meaning of jihad, see Talbi, p. 26.
\[720\] Clément, Un Respect Têtu, p. 286.
\[721\] Clément, Conversations, p. 156.
on human rights. Gradually religion became just one dimension among many, the
Church was no longer a regulatory force within Western society, and as
sociologist Grace Davies recently wrote, people were ‘believing not belonging’. A
culture developed which encouraged research, polemics, diversity and change,
which was also nevertheless self-critiquing; its laws however were rooted and
based on Christian teaching and an insistence on human rights. ‘Secularization is
[...] simultaneously the daughter of Athens and Jerusalem.’ European culture
began to emerge ‘as the first open culture in history [...] with no other implicit
philosophy than a philosophy of the “other” welcomed in his otherness.’ But as
foretold by Soloviev on the eve of the twentieth century, society alone could not
sustain this Utopian vision: dreadful consequences ensued involving for many the
loss of a meaningful matrix for life: the desire to live, stable relationships between
men and women, between parents and children. As villages emptied, cities
became overpopulated, production and consumerism ruled and the abyss of
collective totalitarian nihilism opened; followed by individual nihilism.

Twentieth-century Eastern European Christians, particularly the Orthodox, have
witnessed the destruction of their cultures during more than half a century of
persecution; Clément judges that this can turn the Church into a religious ghetto,
that leaves Christians more liturgized than evangelized; to be an Orthodox
Christian can become a sign of identity and belonging that results in a religious
nationalism which Clément sees as ‘the Orthodox form of secularization’.
Clément brings a high degree of sensitivity to discourse on the totalitarian instinct.

2.4.vii  ‘Mediterranean genius’
Clément experienced a religious anthropological view in Dupront’s historical
research; it arose for Clément again in the work of another contemporary writer,
Albert Camus, in his Letter to a German Friend. Camus and Clément both
shared admiration for ‘Mediterranean humanism’ and its philosophical turn
grounded in nature and moderation. Camus refers to the ‘Mediterranean genius’ in

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722 Ibid., p. 159.
723 Ibid.
724 Clément, Conversations, p. 160.
725 Clément, L’autre soleil, p. 90.
his lecture on *The New Mediterranean Culture*, delivered in Algeria, 1937.\textsuperscript{726} Camus and Clément’s very French understanding of the Mediterranean is characterised as ‘inclusive, multicultural and progressive’. In his discussion concerning Christian-Islamic relations, Clément cites Patriarch Bartholomew’s view that the people living round the sea must be invited to build peace in the Mediterranean through the rediscovery of the principles and values which flourished for many centuries in this region.\textsuperscript{727}

It would seem that knowledge of the Mediterranean ethos is crucial to understanding the origins and character of many modern societies. A culture developed in the Middle Ages among both Christians and Muslims, that was based on ‘a rationale that remained close to the Greek *logos* and the biblical Wisdom’,\textsuperscript{728} which lies at the roots of contemporary Western and Middle Eastern cultures. Pondering the history, significance and meaning of this region is important to any Christian-Islamic discussion. Today over twenty-one modern states have a coastline on the Mediterranean sea,\textsuperscript{729} including eight of the twenty-one Islamic countries of the Middle East,\textsuperscript{730} where often minority Christian groups have lived since the coming of Islam.

Clément recalls Camus as a man of modesty with a sense of limitations. Born in Algeria, Camus became an author and a key twentieth-century French philosopher. He arrived in France in 1938, aged twenty-five; later Camus described himself as ‘French by birth and, since 1940, by deliberate choice’,\textsuperscript{731} and a self-professed atheist – although Clément wonders about this. Camus rejected ideological associations, opposed nihilism and totalitarianism in its many

\textsuperscript{727} Clément, *Conversations*, p. 211.
\textsuperscript{728} Ibid., p. 212.
\textsuperscript{729} In Europe, west to east: Spain, France, Monaco, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovinia, Montenegro, Albania, Greece. In Asia, north to south: Turkey, Syria, Cyprus, Lebanon, Israel. In Africa, east to west: Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco. There are additional Territories: Gibraltar ((UK), Centa and Melilla (Spain), Mount Athos (Autonomous monastic state), Gaza Strip (PNO), as well as other countries that do not border the sea but are considered to be Mediterranean countries in a wider sense: Macedonia, San Marino, Serbia and the Vatican.
\textsuperscript{730} Algeria, Bahrein, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, UAE, Yemen.
forms, and like both Dupront and Clément became active in the French Resistance, directing the famous Resistance Journal *Combat*. He formulated his philosophy at this time: no matter how inexplicable existence might be, human life remains sacred. By 1949 he became a leading spokesman for the French working class, but rejected Marxism. In his political-philosophical essay, *L’Homme Révolté* (‘The Rebel’) written as a corrective to Marxism and Nazism, he explains a rebel understands the difference between revolution and revolt which is a peaceful, evolutorial process, needing leadership but not violence. Camus spoke out with courage against the atrocities of the Soviet Union, particularly following the Hungarian Uprising of 1956; his early death after a car crash came in 1960 when he was only forty-seven.

2.4.viii Two Faces of Islam

Over time Clément’s experience of ecumenism and interfaith dialogue develops in awareness that Orthodoxy needs to accompany Catholicism in Europe, and this sensitizes him to the presence of Islam and its two possible ‘faces’ of which Mohamed Talbi and Tariq Ramadan could be representative.

Talbi, an important Muslim modernist thinker of the twentieth century, was born in Tunis in 1921. After a traditional Islamic education he studied in Paris in 1947 for his doctoral studies in Islamic history. The vibrant intellectual culture of Paris made a strong and positive impression; he later expresses gratitude for his exposure to the thinking of Marx, Freud and the great Islamic scholars who guided his studies, which he interpreted in the light of his own traditional Tunisian and Sufi influenced background. His interest in other religions and his European experience of different cultures is a crucial part of Talbi’s development as a modernist thinker.\(^{732}\) Talbi considers pluralism to be characteristic of all great religions. He sees modern pluralism as integral to the Qur’an and Islamic tradition: an intellectual and religious freedom which respects the other and his or her views, a mutual respect that creates a space for dialogue. Rejecting a literal understanding of the Qur’an he argues for an historic reading which speaks of pluralism, freedom – the right of every individual in society, an apolitical Islam.

and equality status of women;\textsuperscript{733} he rejects a literal understanding. Democracy in spite of failings is the best system of government for Muslims today. Talbi sees the pluralism he considers to be characteristic of all great religions as more urgently needed now to deal with modern globalisation. Talbi believes that the ethical values of the Qur’an provide a model for contemporary culture and situations; it must be interpreted ‘at this moment and in this place’.\textsuperscript{734} He would welcome the ‘Islamisation of modernity and the modernisation of Islam;’ in so doing Islam would rediscover ‘its own humane truth in integration with the most humane values of modern culture.’\textsuperscript{735} Talbi approves of diversity of views, but criticises those who believe their own interpretations are somehow the total truth; ‘knowledge however compelling, is never absolutely certain,’\textsuperscript{736} he says. He wants to define the \textit{Umma} as ‘the community of moderation’\textsuperscript{737} yet predicts a polarisation between ‘totalitarianism and anarchy’\textsuperscript{738} within it.

Tariq Ramadan’s position on Islamic modernism and tradition is at variance with Talbi’s, and Olivier Clément issues a warning. Ramadan was born in Geneva 42 years ago, studied as an imam in Cairo, attained a degree in French literature, studied the European philosophers and achieved two doctorates in Islamic studies. He teaches philosophy, French literature and Islamic studies at the Universities of Fribourg and Geneva and lectures internationally. He has attracted critical reviews for anti-Semitism and radical views; he sees the West as having innate hostility towards Islam, and predicts its decline and the ascendency of Islam. His maternal grandfather, Hassan Al-Banna, founded the Muslim Brotherhood movement in 1929, of which his father was an active promoter. His brother Hani, directs an Islamic Centre in Geneva that has been accused of links with the terrorist network of Al-Qaeda, although Ramadan denies contact with it.

Ramadan’s ideology brings Islamic politics into dialogue with earlier radical Western critiques by Nietzsche, Heidegger and neo-Marxist thought. He wants...
Islam to overcome Western modernity in an Islamisation of the West. Yet Western intellectuals applaud Ramadan, because his ideology includes some democratic elements, equal citizenship and free expression. One lone voice of criticism is raised against Ramadan’s model of Islam: Olivier Clément in an article published by him in 2003 in the Catholic University of Milan’s magazine, *Vita e Pensiero*. He sees a new exploitation of the juridical and mental structures of Western society that signals a new motivation. A problem is the new ideology has a spokesman, Ramadan, who presents himself as a Western intellectual and while affirming his Muslim faith, it would seem he wants to replace the values of Western civilisation, affirm Islamic identity and present it as true universality that will fill the spiritual void left by a diminishing Christian and Jewish religious presence. For him all good people such as Mother Teresa, Helder Camara and Sister Emanuelle are implicitly Muslims, and declares, ‘today the Muslims who live in the West must unite themselves to the revolution of the anti-establishment groups[…]’ Jaques Jomier judges that Ramadan’s project stems from a very different perspective to that of Talbi, who engages and takes interest in European thought and Christianity, while Ramadan it would seem, sees the West as a space for Islam to reassert its old dominance.

Clément has experienced deeply the damage caused by totalitarianism through his critical analysis of Solzhenitsyn’s lived experience and work, while his own experience of atheism and twentieth-century totalitarianism has carved a sacred space in him. He sees some of the same traces of an idolatrous Islamic totalitarianism appearing in Islam.

2.4.ix Conclusion

France looks to the Mediterranean and looks northwards to Europe and the Atlantic. Constantinople and Antioch are frontier European Christian presences: while 40-45% of the predominately Muslim population in Lebanon is Christian, the other Arab nation states of the Mediterranean and Middle East have a diminishing, or no, Christian presence. The Mediterranean is a place of conviviality and Christian consciousness, to which Clément has responded over a

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739 41% population were Christians in 2014: CIA World Factbook, Lebanon [retrieved 7 October 2014].
lifetime; he came to appreciate the context of Antioch as a Christian presence that has endured and has experienced spiritual revival in the twentieth century. His mature ecclesial consciousness has assimilated Constantinople and, over time, he became aware of the special vocation of Antioch and the renewal of Catholicism in Europe; he sees the united cooperation of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches as vital to the future of Europe, together with hard-headed dialogue between Islam and Christianity.

Clément judges that Talbi’s call for mutual respect, that creates a space for dialogue, must include the intuition of Louis Massignon: a mutual compassion, that attempts to rejoin the strong transhistoric lines of Islamic philosophical reflection, mysticism and justice for the humiliated ones of the Third World. But Clément also is pointing to a problem. The difference between Talbi and Ramadan is that Talbi engages and takes an interest in other religious traditions, including Christianity, whilst for Ramadan the West is a platform for Islam to reconfirm itself. Clément is aware of this and takes critical note.

PART 2.ii Conclusion to Part 2
The streams of renewal that occurred in the Christian Churches during the early twentieth century, particularly in Europe and the Middle East, brought profound theological developments and changes: these included the pioneer work undertaken on Biblical studies, liturgical renewal, ressourcement of Patristic teachings, the role of the laity, and ecumenism. The evolving Catholic Pro Russia understanding of Christian unity, and its failure to achieve this in Russia, is also an important part of understanding the on-going process. Olivier Clément experienced one stream of renewal unexpectedly through his early encounter with the Orthodox Church and the creative theology of the Russian émigrés. As his personal experience of Christianity matured, particularly during his meeting with Patriarch Athenagoras I over a period of three months, and the changes of renewal within the Catholic Church following the Second Vatican Council, he became convinced of the need to work for Christian unity. The Antiochian paradigm is of great ecumenical importance.

Clément’s strong ecclesial vision and profound theological reflection considers renewal of the Church is not primarily a theological theory or improved morality
but a lived faith experience. Dialogical ecumenism is at the heart of Christian renewal in the twenty-first century and has enabled an inter-religious dialogue that can integrate and unify globally the people, cultures and religions with recognition and respect for rich diversity. Clément, however, gives a warning against Islamic fundamentalism and judges that united cooperation of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches as vital to the future of Europe, together with hard-headed dialogue between Islam and Christianity.
PART 3

OLIVIER CLÉMENT: A EUROPEAN THINKER AT A
PIVOTAL POINT IN EUROPEAN RELIGIOUS AND
POLITICAL HISTORY

PART 3.i Introduction

Chapters 1 and 2 situate Clément as a Christian thinker within the political and religious milieu of France and Europe in a discussion on laïcité and secularity, and the European identity in a post-ideological era. Chapter 3 discusses Clément’s theological reflections on Europe and the role of Christian unity, exemplified in the ‘parable’ of Taizé, against the religious face of totalitarianism. In the closing chapter Clément’s work and thought on ecumenism, interreligious dialogue is brought alongside that of Massignon, Merton and de Chergé, within a paradigm of a theology of eschatological hope.
CHAPTER 3.1

Laïcité and Religion: Towards an understanding of
‘Secularity’ and ‘Laïcité’ in French Politics and Identity

‘Compassionate love ... is the only just love.’
Simone Weil

‘Secularism’ was voted the word of the year in 2015 by a jury of experts chaired by Robert Alain Rey, whose Historical Dictionary of the French Language defines the term as the ‘political and social conception involving the separation of religion and civil society’, referring particularly to the character of secular education. In the context of the ideological debate between religious values and republican values secular denotes an independence from any religious belief. According to Nathalie Caron, the English word secular can be translated easily into French by séculier, but French people tend to understand secular as laïque, which in turn links the meaning of ‘secular’ to the French idea of laïcité. Caron considers laïcité to be ‘an essential component of French identity’. This chapter explores the meaning for contemporary French and European society of laïcité, which has become a contested ‘space’ characterized by the Janus face of positive and negative secularism. While positive laïcité could create a space for dialogue, tolerance and plurality, negative laïcité inclines towards state control that can lead to the totalizing tendencies of militant secular regimes that result in the violation of the human rights of religious minorities and groups, as experienced in Turkey and the Soviet Union.

Fadel Sidarouss SJ, Coptic Catholic and Jesuit from Egypt in the Near East Province, suggests that an international occurrence of a return to national and

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742 Caron, ‘Laïcité and Secular Attitudes’, p. 114.
religious identity may be the result of globalisation and the imposition of invasive ideologies, which threaten the very existence and identity of the ‘other’.745 Sidarouss’ notion of an ‘enlightened secularism’ finds expression in Brian T Trainor’s thoughts on the ‘sacred reign: secular rule’ model given by St Augustine, in which the “‘secular’ is truly itself […] when it is oriented to the sacred.”746 In a paradigm of dialogical alterity Jurgen Habermas and the future Pope Benedict XVI co-authored a book on *The Dialectics of Secularisation*, in which believer and non-believer reject the notion of a ‘neutral’ secular state, which judges itself above all religious and cultural differences, but advocates the West recognise and embrace the complementarity of the ‘sacred’ and the ‘secular’ in a *sacred-secular dialectic of truth*.747

‘Secularization’, derived from the Latin word *saeculum* (world) has changed in meaning throughout the centuries, diversifying particularly during the twentieth century when it was often used to describe the marginalization of religion in modern Western societies, and the exclusion of religion from major public spheres in which the Church had previously exerted influence, such as politics, family and social life.748 Bryan R Wilson defined secularization in 1966 as ‘the process whereby religious thinking, practice and institutions lose social significance.’749 However, due to cultural and historical associations, individuals and nations understand the word ‘secular’750 in different ways.

A concept of unity is carried by the word *laïcité*, derived from the Greek *laos*, which describes unity of the population, every *laïc*, from the Greek word *laïkos*, is

747 Ibid., pp. 284-5.
The aim of establishing a French secular society was to create a space where political identity replaced religion with a common republican culture, yet a different reality has emerged; in contemporary Europe the Judeo-Christian heritage is accompanied by a ‘European’ Islam of approximately thirty million members, together with other minority religious groups, resulting in a pluri-religious society. Geffré considers Christianity is ‘experiencing a theological turning-point’ inspired by religious pluralism, which requires further development.
in a ‘theology of religious pluralism’. He further identifies the need for an ‘inter-religious theology’ that remains faithful to the singularity of Christianity but speaks of the ‘Christic’ values of non-Christian religions that ‘have a secret relationship to the mystery of Christ’. The Church must now reach beyond Jerusalem and Athens to take into account religions whose members are neither Jew nor Christian. Although the Republic must develop humanitarian policies for an increasingly multi-ethnic society, religious minorities in France have in fact benefitted from laïcité, as did Protestants and Jews who were the initial ‘driving force’ in establishing the Third Republic and the laicization of French institutions and society. Article 1 of the 1958 Constitution states: ‘France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs.’ Caron concludes that as a result of this Constitution all French are secular and laïcité is a valued aspect of the ‘Republican pact’. Within this view, laïcité, is a key word in understanding the contemporary French mindset, which, it would seem, French people value with something akin to a ‘religious’ fervour. In 2004 Nicolas Sarkozy, President of the French Republic, wrote a reflection on the values of the Republic and the future of French laïcité. Sarkozy’s phrase ‘positive secularism’ recognises that religions can play a ‘constructive role in society’, he favours openness, ‘flexibility and tolerance’ rather than a ‘political and polemic’ secularism. However, if ‘positive secularism’, ‘laïcité positive’, becomes selective about which religion it finds acceptable, and constraints are applied to those religions which are judged less acceptable, the ‘positive’ vision of laïcité risks becoming ‘restricted and narrow’; any new French legislation that worked against Islam would also affect Catholicism and Judaism.

756 Ibid., p. 20.
757 Ibid., p. 23.
758 Ibid., p. 24.
760 Caron, ‘Laïcité and Secular Attitudes’, p. 114.
761 Caron, ‘Laïcité and Secular Attitudes’, p. 122, n. 5; ‘Republican pact’ was a term used by Charles de Gaulle after the Second World War (1939-1945) to refer to what united the French when the Fourth Republic was created in 1946.
763 Sarkozy, La République, p. 170, cited by Altglas, p. 76.
After the referendum in Switzerland, which voted against the building of Muslim minarets, Sarkozy called for mutual respect between ‘those who arrive’ and ‘those who welcome’.\(^764\) This positive concept championed by Sarkozy, however, is contested by a growing tension within secularism, in which the debate on national identity tended to stigmatize Muslims.\(^765\) The negative political stance, against Islam, leans towards a restrictive and closed militant secularism, *laïcité de combat*, at odds with a more ‘balanced perception of *laïcité*’.\(^766\) Religious freedom is at risk of violation in countries marked by militant secularism, a factor that challenges Turkey’s aspiration concerning entry into the European Union. ‘Kemalism’ in Turkey for example, demonstrated that militant secularism reacts similarly to militant religious fundamentalism by strategies of attack and suppression against other religious groups.\(^767\)

Olivier Roy, French thinker and leading expert on Islam and currently head of the Mediterranean Studies at the European University Institute in Italy, recently completed a four-year study-project on religion in Europe. He judges the ‘ever-increasing clash between the sacred and the secular is slowly pulling European society apart.’\(^768\) Many connect the rise in debate and protest about religion to the increase of Muslims in Western societies, Roy, however, judges it is linked to a dislocation between religion and the dominant culture, and the latter’s wish to keep all aspects of religion, whether headscarves, crosses or special foods, out of the public sphere. Religion was expelled from the public sphere and debate, but until a few decades ago Christianity had retained its position as part of Europe’s identity, and as Clément has pointed out even atheists often shared the values of Christianity. Has secularism turned in on itself and become ‘closed’ as the Church was previously? In excluding religion from being seen or heard in the public

\(^765\) Isabelle de Gaulmyn, ‘Nicolas Sarkozy, de la *laïcité* positive ‘à la *laïcité* restrictive’, *La Croix*, 15 February 2012.
\(^767\) Prodromou, ‘Turkey’, p. 11.
forum, Olivier Roy argues that ‘secularism fostered the emergence of shallow fundamentalisms’ that react against Western societies they judge to be pagan.”

With practising Christians a minority in Western populations, society is moving away from Christian anthropology to a secular paradigm no longer founded on common values but on the dominant concept of human rights. Clément’s anthropology starts with repentance and change of heart, which also includes a turn towards alterity. He writes with a certainty of the newness of Christianity for each generation, which will be witnessed to by those who pray with love and compassion for all people, for the world and for the cosmos. As already observed by Clément, Roy believes the Church can no longer impose rules. Pope Francis in two apostolic exhortations, and in declaring a Year of Mercy, has placed emphasis on love, compassion and people, not rules. ‘Compassionate love … is the only just love,’ writes Simone Weil.

In the twenty-first century it may be fruitful for secular philosophy to revisit Simone Weil’s thinking on rights, obligation and compassion, and her plan outlined in The Need for Roots for re-building post-war France, discarded by Charles de Gaulle. The opening sentence states, ‘The notion of obligation takes precedence over that of rights, which is subordinate and relative to it.’ Albert Camus regarded her as ‘the most penetrating and prophetic social political thinker since Marx.’ She points to a difference between Rights founded on economics and obligation called forth by compassion. Obligation carries a sense of justice, yet Weil is aware that Jesus’ commandment to ‘love one another’ goes beyond justice, it incorporates the compassion recognised by Massignon and Clément. ‘Praise to God and compassion for creatures, it is the same movement of the heart,’ writes Weil. Weil’s writing, because it spans the religious and the secular holds out a challenge to Christian Churches today; Roy predicts that faith

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769 Roy, La Sainte Ignorance.
772 Simone Weil, First and Last Notebooks.
will prevail but religion will either become like a sect or ‘respiritualise’;\textsuperscript{773} which suggests life in the Spirit, or near-death, as an institutionalised sect.

While France, in spite of positive and negative secular tendencies, is a secular country with a living memory of Catholic culture, this is no longer effective in establishing Church leadership within Western thought. Catholic inheritance is present in a fossilised way and has lost significant meaning: the choice of first names which link birthdates with saints’ feast-days; villages and towns named after saints; names of Christian festivals mark public holidays: Easter Monday, Ascension Thursday, All Saints’ Day for example, while celebrations of art and music occur during Pentecost weekend, and the frequency of wayside stone crosses and crucifixes in certain areas is noticeable. This may suggest an openness and tolerance, which could characterise the ideal of a positive ‘laïcité’ allowing difference and plurality, and the possibility of creating a dialogical space\textsuperscript{774} that allows the person to experience God through absence. In Paris in 2001, Benedict XVI compared the Athens of St Paul’s discourse on the ‘unknown God’ with Paris today,\textsuperscript{775} judging that as in the past when the unknown God was hidden yet present, so too the present absence of God is silently besieged by the question concerning him; to seek God and to let oneself be found by him. This is today no less necessary than in former times.\textsuperscript{776}

Clément became aware of this absence and silence during his youth, later understanding it as a space in which God allows a person to find Him, a place of encounter that becomes a place of dialogue.\textsuperscript{777} On Pentecost 29 May 1977, Oscar Romero identified this ability ‘to enter into dialogue with your creator’, as a beautiful dimension of the human vocation; the reality revealed by Pentecost is that ‘God creates a space in which to share with humankind his life, truth and

\textsuperscript{773} Roy, \textit{The Tablet}, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{774} See Anthony O’Mahony reference on secularism as a dialogical space, with reference to Ali Shariati and ‘political spirituality’, above in note 18, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{776} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{777} See Clément, \textit{L’autre soleil}. 
Martin Buber’s dialogical philosophy of *I and Thou* speaks to both Christian and non-Christian thinkers, attempting to offer hope of a cure to fractured society, through ‘genuine human relationships’. In Buber’s paradigm the way forward is through dialogue that carries obligations of ‘joint presence, true intention and mutual opening of hearts, and to practise dialogue and communication in the face of grievances, conflict and asymmetric power relations.’ Following Buber’s understanding of epistemology and ethics and his dialogical anthropological, social and political philosophy, Ish-Shalom seeks to establish a scholarly community as a ‘pluralist community of dialogue’ to serve the wider community within the field of International Relations; in this paradigm *Truth* becomes the *Thou*, and the community of ‘truth-seekers’ in dialogue would become the ‘*We*’, moving beyond an ‘*I* and *it*’ exclusive concept. The event of Pentecost carried, and continues to carry, the dynamism of Truth and dialogue; Clément judges that ‘change will only be possible by means of a thorough-going renewal of pneumatology and Pentecostal dynamism that will conquer the fear and suspicion that the notion of “Pentecost” provokes.’ Benedict XVI speaking of the ‘we’ of the Church, describes Pentecost as the feast of union, comprehension and human communion: ‘We do not grow in knowledge by locking ourselves into our own ego, but only in an attitude of profound inner humility do we become capable of listening and sharing in the “we” of the Church.’

It is a paradox that the French Revolution, 1789, created a space for the contemporary Catholic Church to express itself through Gospel values, freed from the image of a power-dominated national institution; it also created a space of

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779 Ron Margolin, ‘The Implicit Secularism of Martin Buber’s Thought’, *Israel Studies*, 13, (2008), pp. 64-88; Margolin estimates secular humanists in Israel identified with Buber because the implicit secularity he combined with religiosity formed what may be termed “religious secularism”.


781 Ibid., p. 843.

782 Ibid., p. 837.


welcome for the Russian Orthodox émigré Church in the early twentieth century. The general French self-identification today with laïcité, whether by practising Christians or not, shows the separation of Church and state has been accepted by most French citizens as having a positive value. Clément views secularity as the daughter of Christianity; it can be seen as a 'dialogical religious space' where the atheist is at home in his search for truth, a search which is profoundly 'religious' in character whether he/she would see it that way or not, and in which political theology can be dialogically developed.

Some Protestant thought characterises laïcité as a predominantly Protestant ideal. Patrick Cabanel recognises the primary role of Catholicism in an understanding of French identity but draws attention to Protestant influences on contemporary French history and political culture. He judges that, against the wishes of the dominant Catholic Church, the Third Republic was enabled by the minority Protestant presence within the country and government, to establish itself as a modern nation state in ‘a powerful synthesis between patriotism and secularism’. Cabanel draws a comparison between the emergence of the Third Republic in France, a country with a 98% Catholic population, and that of the predominantly Catholic Czech nation (96%) under the leadership of Protestant supporter Tomas Masaryk; both were transitions in which Protestants played a major role. Cabanel judges the causes of the break with Catholicism stemmed from the international dimension of the Church, its allegiance to a foreign spiritual capital, Rome, and the support of an international order, the Society of Jesus. It was, Cabanel believes, a break that other nations had achieved through the Reformation; he categorises the French separation of Church and state as a ‘republican Protestantisation of France’. Clément’s thought has a wider and

787 See the following reference which sets out the context for Masaryk’s anti-Catholicism and its influence on Czech Lands which states: ‘By 1921, 1.5 million Czechs had already left the Roman Catholic Church. In the early years of the Czech Republic, 150,000 Catholics converted to Protestantism and the ‘Hus Church’ grew by 500,000 members […’]; Arnold Suppan, ‘Catholic People’s Parties in East Central Europe: The Bohemian Lands and Slovakia’, in Political Catholicism in Europe 1918-1945, ed. by W Kaiser and H Wohnout (Abingdon: Routledge 2004), pp. 217-234, p. 222.
789 Ibid.
more inclusive ambience, which is not nationally confined to a localised debate in France. Clément understood laïcité could allow the possibility for forbidden identity to be retrieved; the important aspect of Christian identity expressed by Greek-Catholic identity was suppressed by the Czech nation under Masaryk, and again by the Russian Orthodox Church in the Ukraine during the Soviet regime, action that the Russian Orthodox Church chooses to deny. Greek-Catholic identity transgresses because it is not a national identity. As noted above, in Part 2, Louis Massignon expressed concern around problems of Muslim Arab identity. Both the secular state and Church experience a sense of crisis in dealing with the ‘other’. Yet crisis can be a ‘sign of vitality for any person, institution or group in the process of becoming new and different’, the meeting with the other, the different, ‘triggers a crisis when there is openness to the Spirit.’\textsuperscript{790} Clément, seeking Christian unity amidst diversity, makes the forbidden an aspect of retrieval; suppression of identity is also present in a French ‘militant’ conception of laïcité. For Clément reconciliation is the key to true unity; Christianity with its rich heritage has a pivotal contribution to make.

In considering the origins of ‘secularisation’, Olivier Clément suggests that, for better or worse, the Churches themselves have largely brought it about.\textsuperscript{791} He observes that notwithstanding the influence of St Francis of Assisi and his 
\textit{Canticle of the Creatures}, there has been a certain forgetfulness by Christianity of the human and cosmic dimension of the Resurrection; the role of the Holy Spirit and the sacramental dimension of the earth; that Byzantine theology of the ‘divine energies’ became hidden with the fall of Constantinople; while the Reform and Counter-Reform have all contributed to bringing about a laïque society and a type of Christian thought consistent with a school of morals.\textsuperscript{792} Society in general has lost an understanding of the power of transcendence and the meaning of the Resurrection. Geffré suggests that Christianity may have contributed to a domestication of the mystery dimension of the cosmos, of the person and of God, ‘through a sort of mimetic rivalry with an increasingly triumphant reason’.\textsuperscript{793} Clément judges nevertheless there are benefits from secularisation. Released from

\begin{itemize}
\item 791 Clément, \textit{Sillons de Lumière}, p. 19.
\item 792 Ibid., p. 20.
\item 793 Geffré, ‘The Crisis of Christian Identity’, p. 15.
\end{itemize}
a dominating clerical influence, Western culture has ‘exploded’ in all directions; encircling the planet, exploring cosmic space, while artistic creation of music and painting has flourished.\textsuperscript{794} This open culture has encouraged the emancipation of woman, is self-critical, profoundly ‘seeking’ and questioning, and is characterised by an implicit philosophy of ‘the other’ welcomed in his or her alterity. It forms a society which expresses itself though a democratic, pluralist culture in which no one has the right to impose his idea of ‘truth’.\textsuperscript{795}

Clément is ‘profoundly rooted in French culture and in the contemporary world of France’ and its ‘\textit{laïque} milieu’;\textsuperscript{796} he is also a man who lived his adult life in Paris in contact with intellectual debate. In his view, ‘\textit{laïcité} is the normality in which we are all immersed. ‘In some sort of way secular society is our environment, it is the air that we breathe even when we sleep. To be a Christian today starts from there.’\textsuperscript{797} Christians placed between secularity and that pole of Christian life, the liturgy, can achieve an unexpected fruitfulness because the Christian believer by his presence suggests another dimension to existence. Clément points to the community of Sant’Egidio where a synthesis of prayer with love for the poor, combines service for the poor with the search for peace.\textsuperscript{798}

**May 68**

Clément, aged forty-seven, was a teacher at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand in the Latin Quarter of Paris when the crisis of May 1968 occurred, or ‘May 68’, as the revolt which brought France almost to a standstill, is known. Students, animated by Marxist and anarchist movements, barricaded themselves in the Latin Quarter close to his school, where the atmosphere of rebellion disrupted life between the staff and pupils. He judged this was a spiritual crisis in which the young people rejected continuity between the generations and recognition of tradition; it was a revolt of the son against the father.\textsuperscript{799} Clément faced the rejection by young people of his own generation, which had lived through the war and had fought courageously for the rebuilding of France and Europe. Without condemning

\textsuperscript{794} Clément, \textit{Sillons}, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{795} Ibid., p. 21.
\textsuperscript{797} Clément, \textit{Petite boussole}, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{798} Ibid., p. 31.
\textsuperscript{799} See Andrea Riccardi, ‘Préface’, p. 17.
young hopes of a Utopian future, Clément believed that ‘the only creative revolutions of history are realised by the transformation of hearts.’

The anarchic situation of May 68 was a significant turning point in Clément’s life and that of French society. In the aftermath, Clément accepted the invitation of a publisher to go to Istanbul to interview Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras I. The seminal and historically important book that followed is a rich response to the revolt of 68. It portrays symbolically, through the living icon of Athenagoras, an image of the passing down of faith and wisdom from one generation to another, from a father to a son. It was a true encounter and dialogue between minds and hearts, which challenged the generational rejection of Christian faith and an era of ideologies. Thomas Spidlik SJ expresses the importance of this generational heritage in his introduction to a book of texts from the Fathers of the Church, which, as Clément also believed, have meaning for the world today. Spidlik discerns: ‘When I make a choice, it is the latest choice, the most recent act of millions of people who form a single chain from far distant [...] right down to me. The Church ‘has an immense wealth handed down of prayer, meditation, contemplation and holiness. Millions of people have prayed, meditated, contemplated and reached holiness.’

Clément’s roots reach deeply into French and European soil yet he is grafted into the Eastern Christian Church, and becomes for us a complex synthesis of East and West, who from a place of faith and wisdom is able to offer a ‘little spiritual compass’ to people of the twenty first century, immersed in a ‘secularised’ society.

Christianity came under increasing criticism during May 68. Clément, together with Dominican Marie-Joseph Le Guillou and the Protestant minister Jean Bosc attempted to address the crisis with an ecumenical response. Many Catholics
were impressed by Clément’s lectures at ISEO,\textsuperscript{807} which were delivered with a complete lack of polemic, with intelligence and passion, as a Christian who had encountered Christ.\textsuperscript{808} Clément’s important contribution brought him into association with the renewal taking place in the Catholic Church. He was at ease in Catholic groups such as the Bose Community near Turin in Italy, founded by Enzo Bianchi, also Andrea Riccardi’s Sant’Egidio movement in Rome. Clément was recognised as a master of the type of Christian reconciliation expressed powerfully and symbolically by the Taizé community founded by Robert Schulze, which goes far beyond theological debate. Both the communities of Taizé and Sant’Egidio, Clément judges, move towards a new holiness that is open to the Holy Spirit and to all the complexity of social and cultural life.\textsuperscript{809} The validity of Christian witness to the world depends on reconciliation of historic differences between the Churches and being united in communion in an undivided Church. ‘The historic meeting between Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras, in January 1964 in Jerusalem was a bold symbol of the desire for such reconciliation.’\textsuperscript{810} The establishment of ecumenical dialogue and the meeting last year, 2014, between Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew, again in Jerusalem, is a sign of hope in the desire for unity that exhibits a ‘profound witness to a divided age.’ Oscar Romero distinguishes between uniformity and unity: ‘Unity embraces diversity and respects the thoughts of others. Through all these individual ideas, unity is created and this unity is much richer than any single individual’s thoughts’.\textsuperscript{811} The Church needs to speak from a position of unity.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Clément, rooted in Orthodoxy, was integrated into the wider Christian milieu, with a deep understanding of the cultural roots of the laïque ‘religion’, which he had received through his family and inherited from the history of his Cévenole ancestry and the region of his birth and childhood;\textsuperscript{812} a region torn by the War of

\textsuperscript{807} Dagens, ‘\textit{Un grand témoin’}, p. 429. As a Catholic priest Mgr Dagens regularly attended lectures at the \textit{Institut supérieur d’études ecuméniques} (ISEO), where Clément taught.

\textsuperscript{808} Dagens, pp. 427-8.


\textsuperscript{811} Romero, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{812} See Patrick Cabanel, \textit{Histoire des Cévennes}. 
Religions. He understood personally the struggle within hearts and minds, which in some way is transformed to become the leaven in the dough of human history; he brought the ‘logic of the Gospel of Christ as salt and yeast, or light shining in the darkness, or the mysterious power of reconciliation’\textsuperscript{813} as a gift to the world.

\textsuperscript{813} Dagens, p. 433.
CHAPTER 3.2
European Identity in a Post-Ideological Era:
Olivier Clément’s Contribution towards a Paradigm for Europe –
Ecclesia In Europa

3.2.i Introduction: Hope for a new Europe

Olivier Clément recognised that atheism and nihilism, and a drift towards a milieu that largely rejected God, had swallowed up the hope and joy of people in Europe after the Second World War. It led them sleepwalking towards a technologically sophisticated and materialistic urban way of life where consumerism and economic growth disconnected the human person from the earth, with no answers to questions concerning a meaning to life, death and history. Neither Marxist nor Communist ideology attempts to answer questions about death;\(^{814}\) in its attempt to deal with the collective good it forgot the irreducibility of the human spirit. Clément wanted to reach out to the people of Europe, and the world, especially to the young and to those who may be contemplating death by suicide\(^{815}\) with answers to those questions of life and death; he writes and speaks meaningfully and accessibly to all who seek after truth, proclaiming that truth, love and beauty do exist and that death does not have the last word. The secret, which is an open secret for all, is in the resurrection of Christ: that Jesus is alive in His Church, a source of hope for Europe and all people.\(^{816}\)

Clément met John Paul II twice in Paris and again in Rome when Clément lived and taught at the Aletti Centre; he was impressed by the pope’s ability to truly listen to others, his simplicity and his powerful vitality. John Paul was particularly interested in Clément’s writing on death.\(^{817}\) They met many times and became friends, during which time he was impressed by the pope’s fraternal attitude to the Orthodox. In an Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Europa, John Paul II calls the whole Church to be ‘at the service of love’, to become a believable sign ‘of an

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\(^{815}\) The World Health Organisation chart a rising trend of suicide among young people in 21 out of 30 European countries; suicide rates have increased 60% in the last 45 years, with highest rates reported in Eastern Europe and lowest in the Eastern Mediterranean region. According to statistics for 2012 from the National Office for Suicide Prevention, suicide rates among young people in Ireland are fourth highest in the EU.

\(^{816}\) Clément, Joie de la Resurrection.

\(^{817}\) Clément, Corps de mort et de gloire; Clément, Mémoires d’espérance, p. 134.
existential and experiential love, to lead men and women to an encounter with the
love of God and Christ who comes in search of them.\textsuperscript{818} The words could have
been written by Clément, who in the opening paragraph of his spiritual
autobiography witnesses to a turning around of his heart that made the future
possible, that enabled him to speak of Him who searches for us; how He sought
for him, and was found.\textsuperscript{819} \textit{Ecclesia in Europa} speaks of the Church’s vocation as
an outreach in love that ‘must extend beyond the confines of ecclesial
communities [...] to every person, so that love for everyone can become a stimulus
to authentic solidarity in every part of society. When the Church is at the service
of love, she also facilitates the growth of a “culture of solidarity” and thus helps to
restore life to the universal values of human coexistence.’\textsuperscript{820} From two synods on
Europe John Paul II dedicated approximately a thousand statements to Europe, a
remarkable number compared with only one hundred and thirty-seven statements
from previous popes from 1938-1978.\textsuperscript{821} The vision of John Paul II and of Olivier
Clément is for a continent and people who implement fair trade globally; who are
major contributors of justice and peace in the world; who work towards a
universal union of brothers and sisters in communion with each other, yet not
confined to a politico-economic union enclosed in on its own self interest.

Vatican II provides Europe with a paradigm in its movement from a ‘perfect
society’ closed in on itself to a Church with dialogical commitment to all people;
Europe needs to move away from an unsuccessful anthropological model with a
primary focus on acquisition and consumerism; of material and economic power.
Questions concerning the identity of Europe ‘are central to the meaning and the
future of the European project.’\textsuperscript{822} The flourishing of religion as a faith experience
in the global South, together with an antithetical rise of Islamic groups and their

\textsuperscript{818} John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation \textit{Ecclesia in Europa}, June 2003, No. 85. The Exhortation
followed the European Synod of Bishops in Rome 21-23 October 1999, on the theme ‘Jesus Christ
alive in his Church, source of hope for Europe’. See Gerald O’Collins SJ, \textit{Living Vatican II: The

\textsuperscript{819} Clément, \textit{L’Autre Soleil}, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{820} \textit{Ecclesia in Europa}, Nos. 10, 11.

\textsuperscript{821} Mons. Aldo Giordano, ‘Preface’, \textit{Hope for a New Europe} (London: Goodnews Publications,

\textsuperscript{822} For wider discussion on European identity and the role of religion and politics in Europe and
globally, see Scott M Thomas and Anthony O’Mahony’, ‘Postsecularity and the Contending
Visions of the European Political Imagination in International Relations’, \textit{Towards a Postsecular
International Politics: New Forms of Community, Identity and Power}, ed. by Luca Mavelli and
effect on Western and global politics has been contrary to the political expectations of some elements of the European Union which aimed to factor religion out.\footnote{Thomas and O’Mahony, ibid. See also Anthony O’Mahony, ‘The Vatican and Europe: Political Theology and Ecclesiology in Papal Statements from Pius XII to Benedict XVI’, \textit{International Journal for the Study of the Christian Churches}, 9, (2009), 177-194.} If the dedicated work of John Paul II and Oliver Clément, among others, to further ecumenical dialogue results in the hoped for unity between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, Europe and the West must reassess and recognise the importance of the Christian voice for Europe’s future. John Paul writes in \textit{Redemptoris Missio},\footnote{John Paul II, Encyclical \textit{Redemptoris Missio}, July 1990.} “people will always [...] want to know what meaning to give their life, their activity and their death.”\footnote{\textit{Redemptoris Missio} cites Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, p. 41.} The Spirit, therefore, is at the very source of man’s activity and religious questioning, a questioning which is occasioned not only by contingent situations but by the very structure of his being.’

Olivier Clément and John Paul II shared a passion for Christ and for Europe, and a passionate belief that ‘Jesus Christ is alive in his Church’, he is the ‘source of all hope for Europe’,\footnote{John Paul II, \textit{Ecclesia in Europa}.} they are protagonists for the history of Christianity and Europe against a pessimistic tide within the Church and within politics that sees Europe diminishing culturally, economically and spiritually. They wanted to awaken the consciousness of Europe from its spiritual torpor and to revive the disbanded memory of its Christian roots and values with the ‘Gospel of Hope’\footnote{Each of the six Chapter headings in \textit{Ecclesia in Europa}, includes ‘The Gospel of Hope’; chapter 6 is entitled ‘The Gospel of Hope for a New Europe’.} by raising again awareness of the Holy Spirit active in their world, and in the whole world. In his extensive writing Olivier Clément calls for the basic existential questions to be raised again by a post-ideological Europe, the great questions with which he himself had once wrestled before his encounter with Christ. In notes that Clément wrote in 1995-2000, he wished to elaborate on themes and people who had contributed to his thinking and conversion to Christianity.\footnote{Clément was not able to elaborate on these notes for a new edition of his spiritual autobiography before his death.} Under the heading \textit{La Conversion} he lists first Lossky, Dostoevsky and Berdiaev, and then, prefaced by the words ‘the great Protestant and Catholic
theologians, the great mystics of the West (above all Eckhart), appears ‘le milieu divin de Teilhard de Chardin’. 829

3.2.ii John Paul II and Teilhard de Chardin

De Chardin’s philosophical theology with its evolutionary turn to the parousia appears fresh and relevant sixty years and more after his death. De Chardin writes, ‘To understand the spiritual events which are so convulsing the age we live in we need to be constantly looking back […] to their common origin - the discovery of time.’830 De Chardin perceived creation unfolding like ‘a great continuous act, spaced out over the totality of time; it is still going on, and the World is constantly, even if imperceptibly, emerging a little further above nothingness;’ ‘it is the axis of a sort of cosmogenesis.’831 He characterises the connection of time to the growth of the world as a ‘power of organic development’; this organicity was a new perception that opened up a modern understanding of the evolutionary process. New technologies and modern scientific research have brought great evolutionary advancement to humankind, which in de Chardin’s view is a greater revolution than that of Galileo’s discovery. The human person has been drawn towards a union which has cosmic implications in which ‘the human person can no longer remain an “onlooker” in the immensity of Evolution.’832 Teilhard sees the danger of egoism in the evolutionary process, ‘No evolutionary future awaits man except in association with all other men’ because the egoistic individual confuses ‘individuality with personality’,833 the individual becomes isolated but the person seeks communion with the other.

832 De Lubac, p. 24.
During modernity a prevailing view of political liberalism encouraged separation of religion from politics.\textsuperscript{834} Political liberalism, often driven by cultural anticlericalism, wished to exclude the Church and Christianity from the public domain, thus securing dominance for itself. It is however unable to sustain an adequate conversation with the religious and political forces of today, which has created an ideological hardening, for example, in \textit{laicite}. Nazism had introduced a mythic religious quality in art, which romanticised a quasi Christian-Fascist narrative in an attempt to put a heroic Wagnerian gloss over the evil of their totalitarian ideology. The privatisation of religion gradually reduced the impact of the Christian voice as it became excluded from the open forum and political discourse.\textsuperscript{835} One argument for this exclusion was that religions cause war between regions and clashes between civilisations; Clément judges it is the idolatry of ideologies and nationalism that leads to conflict rather than religious belief which should always lead to hospitality towards the other and peace. He notes Feuerbach’s observation, ‘From now on politics will be our religion’, shortly before Marx ‘socialised God’.\textsuperscript{836} Clément was well aware that socialism was regarded as a ‘third religion’; he later defines the genesis of modern socialism as ‘a combination of evangelical fervour, humanism that has become atheistical, and resentment born of powerlessness.’\textsuperscript{837} Globalisation and technological advancement have brought comfort to the wealthy but an impoverished sense of emptiness to modern life, in which governments and society appear to have no aim beyond unlimited economic growth; there is a great need for humankind to reconnect with the earth once more. He sees that ‘the spiritual under-development of some, combines with material under-development of others, to create a “third world” in our shanty towns.’\textsuperscript{838} He judges the notion that ‘everything is politics’ has become an ‘opium’ for the younger generation and for an intelligentsia who in denying God, are seeking Him.

\textsuperscript{835} Thomas and O’Mahony, ‘Postsecularity’, p. 116, see discussion on ‘boundaries’ of the sacred and secular.
\textsuperscript{836} Clément, \textit{On Human Being}, p. 91.
\textsuperscript{837} Ibid., p. 98.
\textsuperscript{838} Ibid.
It is vital in Clément’s view, that Christians at this time of spiritual crisis recall that the ‘infrastructure of history’ is the relationship between humanity and the living God; that the meaning and centre of history is Christ, *homo maximus*; that the creative movement in the world is the Holy Spirit at work in co-operation with the freedom of the person. The human race is called to be a *pneumatophore*, through the free communion of persons united to God living in the tension between the opposing poles of the Kingdom of God to come and the kingdom of Caesar now, continuing until the final transfiguration of the earth. This is why Christian witness is linked to martyrdom; martyrs pray for their persecutors and in so doing, together with the prayers of the liturgy and Christian assembly, they open up history to the eternity which is the Church’s destiny. Clément believes that Christians, by their *active presence* and intercession, safeguard cosmic order and human society. He points also to the shared recognition of Islam and Judaism, of the role of the ‘last of the righteous’; the Jewish ‘Talmud states the world is kept in existence by the intercession of thirty-six righteous who are renewed from generation to generation and receive “the Presence daily.”’ De Chardin advises, ‘if we wish to give new vigour to our minds, we must steep ourselves in tradition.’ Christian intercession is thus ‘an invisible pillar joining heaven and earth which enables nature and history to bear fruit.’ He remembers the great Patriarch St John Chrysostom’s teaching on the ‘sacrament of the brother’, who defended spiritual liberty and the rights of the poor, even unto martyrdom: the poor person is *another Christ* and the sacrament of the eucharist must be continued by working for greater justice.

As in Galileo’s era, when long-standing patterns of thought are challenged human beings and institutions face a crisis, de Chardin insists, as Clément also insisted during the student revolt of May 1968 in Paris, that this is primarily a spiritual crisis; social change is of secondary importance. A ‘collective awakening’ to the notion of ‘organic time’ has altered the contemporary view and understanding of life. The direction to which he pointed is faithful to the Gospel message and reminiscent of the Orthodox depiction of Christ as true God true man: ‘without

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840 Ibid., p. 93.
841 Ibid., p. 94.
mixture, without confusion, the true God, the Christian God alone can overcome the crisis of our hearts [...] the star for which the world is waiting can only be “Christ himself in whom we hope”. At the end of his commentary on Romans 8:1-2, Pope Benedict XVI praised the French Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin as a model for priests, attributing to him the idea of a cosmic liturgy. ‘The role of the priesthood is to consecrate the world so that it may become a living host, a liturgy: so that the liturgy may not be something alongside the reality of the world, but that the world itself shall become a living host, a liturgy. This is also the great vision of Teilhard de Chardin.’

In each age prophets are raised up to point the way to the truth. The prophetic voice of John Paul II, Olivier Clément and Teilhard de Chardin proclaims with other great witnesses, that Jesus Christ exists for them and for all men, and He alone, today as always, is the ‘truth of life’.

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843 See Nichols, Byzantine Gospel: Maximus the Confessor.
CHAPTER 3.3
Conscience and Freedom:
Clément’s Theologica Reflections concerning Europe
The religious face of ‘totalitarianism’

3.3.i Introduction

This chapter reflects on Clément’s connection with Russia through his choice of Orthodoxy; the importance to him of the great Russian writers, particularly Alexander Solzhenitsyn, and Clément’s reflections on conscience and freedom, atheism and totalitarianism, reconciliation and unity, death and resurrection. The theme of repentance and reconciliation is important to Clément as the only way to true freedom, collectively and personally, a discovery he experienced in turning to face Christ. The face for Clément, as for Emmanuel Levinas, represents the living presence of another person who calls forth ‘obligation’ and requires the conscience to answer, a dimension of the divine is present in the encounter with the face of the other. For Levinas the face calls forth an asymmetrical relationality, rather than Martin Buber’s symmetrical paradigm of ‘I and thou’. For Clément the face is also the place of invitation and of communion; he has found the icon to be deeply important to this experience in prayer, especially an icon of the face of Christ, where the light in the face is joined by a ‘participation of the Holy Spirit’ and becomes the ‘superabundance of communion’. 845

Clément however sees there is another type of religious ‘face’ that could lead Western Europe into a trap: the religious face of ‘totalitarianism’. Christianity, especially a united Christianity of East and West, would assist Europe in understanding this possibility in a deeper way; Solzhenitsyn, by choosing identity with Europe, 846 is a witness for the whole continent. Yet it was precisely in the extreme suffering and poverty of atheism that Solzhenitsyn and Clément met Christ, or as Clément puts it in L’autre soleil, ‘Christ found him’. Clément points out that Solzhenitsyn, in The Gulag Archipelago, invites Russia and the Socialist movement to undergo a collective metanoia. He observes that the experience of metanoia, moving from repentance to reconciliation, is not only individual but linked to the destiny of a whole generation, a whole society, a whole people.

846 See Clément’s insights discussed on page 58 of this paper.
3.2.ii Background
In the late 1930s, Metropolitan Evlogii in Paris felt unable to remain within the Moscow patriarchate because of the atheistic influence of Communism in Russia and the denials of the Moscow patriarchate to the West stating there were neither persecutions nor martyrs in Soviet Russia. The majority of émigrés turned to the patriarch of Constantinople for support, and established a temporary Russian exarchate in Western Europe, which in Paris met at the St Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute where Clément later taught as a Professor of Moral Theology. The exarchate was closed by Patriarch Athenagoras in 1965, but reinstated by him in 1971 and granted internal authority. Clément was deeply impressed by the open and ecumenical theology of Athenagoras I, Patriarch of Constantinople from 1948-1972. As a contemporary political theologian Clément was firmly rooted in the Orthodox tradition, but remained both French and Western European. Vladimir Lossky continued to support the Moscow patriarchate, this in some ways separated him from the theologians of St Sergius Institute. Lossky and Paul Evdokimov were to develop along differing ecclesial perspectives, which in Clément’s view however, were theologically complementary. The creativity of these three theologians Lossky, Evdokimov and Clément, impacted significantly on Western religious thought at a time of Catholic theological renewal. Christian unity became an increasingly important issue for Clément not only regarding the Church, but also for the future of Europe.

Friedrich Nietzsche\(^8^{47}\) had prophetically recognised that the god portrayed by moralistic religion had become ‘unbelievable’ and therefore irrelevant. Then the evangelistic socialism of 1848, loved by Dostoevsky, because it had not rejected Christ and was not a system,\(^8^{48}\) gave way to the Marxist Communist system. The French socialism of his parents and grandparents, Clément writes, accented the social and communal dimension of the Gospel; aspects that he judged had been forgotten by the French Catholic Church and contributed to the rise of atheism. Philosophers Paul Ricoeur, who had spent five years in a German prison camp from 1940-1945, and Alisdair MacIntyre noted in *The Religious Significance of* 


\(^8^{48}\) Clément, *L’autre soleil*, p. 22.
Atheism, published in 1969, that interest had waned in contemporary debate between atheists and theists. During his own quest, Clément observed that the culture of Europe recognised every human being as individual and unique, but people were like islands in an ocean of solitude, ‘a differentiation with no real contact’. There was an absence of communion.

To ask ‘why’, is in reality a sort of prayer, Clément observes. The answer to Clément’s religious quest came in a personal spiritual encounter with Christ and an experience of metanoia that turned him around and led him to a deep understanding of the meaning of life, personal transcendence and the irreducible strength that a person is given through recognition of an inner light and of the ‘other light’. The answers to his questions had brought the Face and Word of Christ into focus as a person who is the ‘fullness of humanity’. The ‘face’ is a characteristic theme of French religious thought; St Thérèse of Lisieux’, admired by Clément, chose the name, ‘Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face’, in recognition of God’s love through the kenosis of the Incarnation. For French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, the face represents the living presence of another person who calls forth ‘obligation’; only the ‘face to face’ encounter allows true connection with infinity. Clément cites in his book, ‘The Interior Face’, Athenagoras’ phrase, ‘the interior ocean of a look’, pointing out in another context that the light in the face is not an impersonal ocean but the superabundance of communion. He agrees with Levinas, who recognises that the dimension of the divine is present in the encounter with the face of the other: ‘in the complete nakedness of defenceless eyes, in the nakedness of the absolute openness of the Transcendent’. Clément understands the eye of a person as the place of the greatest nakedness to infinity; the face of man can become the face of Beauty: the inexpressible beauty of the luminous glory of the face of Christ. In his Via Crucis, written at John Paul II’s request, Clément writes in wonder, that the

850 Taizé, p. 8.
851 Clément, Taizé, p. 5.
852 Clément, L’autre soleil, p.10.
853 Clément, Taizé, p. 8
854 Clément, Le Visage Interieur, p. 52.
856 Ibid., p. 51.
unimaginable God has revealed his Face as the face of man disfigured and the face of a man transfigured, and adds from Psalm 27: ‘My heart has said of you, “Seek his face”. It is your face Lord that I seek, do not hide your face from me.’ (Ps. 27:8-9).

3.2.iii Post-war nihilism

After the ‘cataclysmic trench warfare of 1916, Europe entered a period of nihilism.’ Nietzsche’s foreboding of the ‘death of God’ began to be experienced in the chilling mud and noise of the trenches; Clément judges the physical death then endured brought a spiritual suffocation: ‘The search for the whole in the part produced totalitarianism.’ He names Teilhard de Chardin, as one of a few prophets at that time, whose letters from the trenches see that the risen Christ was entering the hell created by his own absence in order to raise the dead there to life; and noted in a diary that the war was ‘a meeting with the Absolute’. After the Second World War, in the East, a sudden rise of ‘secular’ messianism was expressed in Stalin’s mass terror. Clément notes:

After two thousand years of Christianity in which the tension between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Caesar has gradually given rise to freedom of thought and spirit, man is making a [...] regression to armed messianism (abolishing evil by means of evil, ending war by promoting war)." 

But in the West a turn to the nihilism of forgetfulness increased in a search for happiness in the here and now: people it would seem accepted Epicurus’ idea that, ‘while we are here, death is absent, and when death comes we are gone.’

Clément recognises that the nothingness of atheism which permeated post-war

858 Clément, Solzhenitsyn, p. 9.
860 Clément, Solzhenitsyn, p.10; Teilhard de Chardin SJ was conscripted in 1914 as a stretcher bearer. During the First World War he wrote letters from the trenches to his cousin Marguerite, in Paris, who later edited them, with his diaries from the period 1914-1918, as Genèse d’une Pensée, Grasset (Paris: Grasset, 1961).
861 Paul Bradley, This Strange Eventful History: A Philosophy of Meaning (Baltimore: Agora, 2011), p. 98.
862 Clément, On Human Being.
863 Clément, Solzhenitsyn, p. 25.
Western culture led people to believe ‘death does not concern us’; but for ‘Christians who appreciate the unique value of each person’, he writes, ‘the Church’s Office for the Dead underlines the unnatural character of death in order to move out with greater joy than ever in the hope of personal resurrection.’ He suggests that a civilisation which seeks at all costs to suppress the meaning of death produces a sort of ‘metaphysical neurosis’; rather than escaping from death by blocking ‘this gateway to the transcendent’, feelings of insecurity and despair are multiplied. Clément identified a loss of freedom that descends into war when free spirits are reduced to silence and the call to the sacrifice of monasticism, ‘the revolt against all compromise’ is no longer heard.

3.2.iv ‘Post-ideological’ Christianity: the parable of Taizé
The ecumenical monastic community of Taizé, expresses a Christianity which Clément defines as ‘post-ideological’. In the face of the horror and death of the Second World War, people attempting to live the Christian life found they were not able to remain divided; the spirit of ecumenism that developed in the prison camps was also the founding motive of Taizé: a mutual service and hope inseparable from prayer and love. Catholic Dominican theologian Yves Congar, drafted into the French army as a chaplain, experienced the German prison camps, 1940-1945, including Colditz. On his release he worked tirelessly as a theologian who encouraged ecumenical relationship with Protestant Christianity, publishing books on Mary, the Eucharist and the Holy Spirit, but was exiled by the Vatican and his work censored 1947-1956, following an article on the worker priests – a group of Dominicans who worked in solidarity with the working class. His exile ended in 1960 when John XXIII invited him to assist in preparations for the Second Vatican Council at which he made significant theological contributions. John Paul II appointed him a cardinal in 1994. The ecumenical links between Brother Roger and Popes John XXIII, Paul VI and John Paul II were significant to the flourishing of Taizé.

865 Taizé community: Brother Roger born 1915 in Switzerland, rode a bicycle from Zurich to Taizé in 1940, at that time just inside unoccupied France, in order to hide Jewish refugees. He was forced to leave, but returned to Taizé in 1944 to found the monastic community.
Clément compares the growth of Taizé to yeast being worked into the dough of history; as a witness to the alternative history ‘expressed in the Beatitudes, of the poor and the neglected who nevertheless stop the Herods and Pilates of the world from destroying humanity,’ remembering perhaps Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin and others of his time. The monastic community of Taizé, formed of brothers from different Christian denominations, seeks to live in the spirit of the Beatitudes: joy, simplicity and mercy, in order to witness to reconciliation among Christians in the world and service to people by Christians. They offer unselfish friendship while remaining, in the words of the fourth-century monk Evagrius, ‘separate from everyone and united to everyone’, offering a traditional hospitality which is suited to the needs of today, and tomorrow. Taizé is looking for the re-emergence of the undivided Church, which is in Clément’s view ‘the crucial phenomenon of our time’. Ten years before his death, Clément writes that for a long time he has identified his own personal search with that of Taizé, which became one of his spiritual homes. There he identifies the authenticity of Orthodoxy, which ‘goes beyond historical limitations to bear witness to the original and the ultimate.’ He delighted in the many young Orthodox from eastern and south-eastern Europe who gathered in thousands at Taizé each year: and saw it as the ‘Europe of the communion of saints.’

Taizé is important as a parable of the Church brought together in diversity to show the divided Church remains the One Church. ‘This unity is not something to be made,’ Clément discerns, ‘it is there to be discovered!’ In his book, A Little Spiritual Compass for our Time, Clément writes in 2008, the year before his death, ‘A Christian rooted in his own Church can breathe with the “two lungs” of Eastern and Western Christianity.’ Not only can breathe with both lungs, but Clément insists ‘must’, because each carries within it the other. This metaphor, used often by John Paul II, originated from the Russian émigré philosopher and poet Viatcheslav Ivanov who took refuge in Rome after the Bolshevik Revolution. Brother Roger the founder of Taize is a good example of such a

869 Clément, *Taizé*, p. 31; words of Evagrius of Pontus, 346-399AD.
872 Viatcheslav Ivanov, 1866-1949.
Christian. Coming from a Protestant background he devoted his life to reconciling different Christian Churches and took the unprecedented step of entering into communion with the faith of the Catholic Church, but without ‘conversion’. In the presence of John Paul II in St Peter’s Basilica in Rome he declared, ‘I have found my own identity as a Christian by reconciling within myself the faith of my origins with the mystery of the Catholic faith, without breaking fellowship with anyone.’ Brother Roger received the Catholic Eucharist every morning at Catholic Mass at Taizé and received the sacrament from John Paul II on several occasions, and also from Benedict XVI at the funeral Mass of John Paul II. Commenting on this unusual dispensation, Cardinal Walter Kasper said that Brother Roger enriched his faith through deeper understanding of the role of Mary in salvation history and the real presence in the Eucharist, together with the ministry of unity exercised by the bishop of Rome. In respect of this the Catholic Church allowed him to receive communion, so that in 2005 Cardinal Walter Kasper presided at Brother Roger’s funeral. Benedict XVI spoke of Brother Roger as a ‘luminous example of “interiorised and spiritualized ecumenism”’. 873

3.2.v Solzhenitsyn: A prophetic voice

In his moving study *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn*, Clément identifies the role of Alexander Solzhenitsyn874 as prophetic rather than political. His choice of the face of John the Baptist, portrayed in an icon, for the cover of his book carries the visual message that in Solzhenitsyn we are dealing with a prophet of truth, a call to repentance, and a witness to Christ. Solzhenitsyn’s witness and writing are important to Clément who discerned that Solzhenitsyn was a ‘sign’ that witnessed to the failure of atheism which ultimately destroys humanity both physically and morally. Solzhenitsyn attempted to restore to the Russian people the freedom to


874 Alexander Isayevich Solzhenitsyn was born 11 December 1918 in Kislovodsk, the Caucasus. A talented pupil who he knew he wished to be an author by the age of ten. For pragmatic reasons he studied mathematics and physics at Rostov University. Ironically this was to save his life in the prison camps, where he was first consigned to scientific research. Between 1941-1945 he served with the Soviet Army on the German front, but was imprisoned in 1945 for alluding unfavourably to Stalin in a letter to a friend and sentenced to eight years hard labour. Released in 1953 he was sentenced to internal exile for life, but released in 1956. He spent eleven years in prison camps and exile, facing the questions of life and death, in a microcosm of Soviet life at that time. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970. See *Solzhenitsyn: A Documentary Record*, ed. by Leopold Labedz (Harmonsworth: Penguin Press, 1970).
speak and receive truth. Clément sums it up in the Russian word *pravda* used by Solzhenitsyn to signify justice and truth that respects and allows life to develop, rather than in an ideological sense, which can provide ‘evil with a justification’ and ‘transforms fanatics into criminals’. ‘Thanks to ideology’, Solzhenitsyn observes, ‘the twentieth century was fated to experience evil-doing on a scale calculated in the millions.’ The sense of *pravda* is a leitmotif in Solzhenitsyn’s thought which he appropriates for all people and all problems of industrialised societies, whether capitalist of socialist.

Clément identifies ‘separation and anguish’ as two essential characteristics of being human that surface in the labour camps force a choice between death and freedom. To survive, a man can become an animal or an object, or choose to remain a man; a choice between Berdiaev’s ‘the beast in a man’ and ‘the divine in a man’, because it is impossible to remain neutral; a choice between the ‘darkness of hell and the light which comes from “something else more brilliant than the sun”’. Some will become wolves, but illuminated by a light that originates elsewhere, the horror can move through transcendence to become resurrection. Berdiaev, who had argued against the domination of the Bolshevik regime over the freedom of the individual and speech, was arrested in 1922 and sent into exile.

Clément identified a threat that Western Europe could fall into the trap of atheism and ideological regimes. He judged that the post-war liberalism of the Western Europe and the rise of totalitarianism both subjected the person to materialism: liberalism by ignoring death, and Communism with no answer to it; furthermore he saw the possibility of ‘totalitarianism’ having a religious face, and was not afraid to issue a warning against an Islamic fundamentalist threat. A united Christianity could enable Europe to understand this reality at a more profound level, a fact which reinforced Clément in his work for ecumenical goals which could unite Christians of East and West; Solzhenitsyn by choosing to link Russia with Europe rather than Asia is a prophetic witness for the whole continent.

876 Ibid., p. 218.
879 Clément, ‘Be Careful’.
Raymond Aron uses the term ‘totalitarianism’ to define fascism of Hitler and Mussolini, and the Communism of Stalin’s reign of terror, followed by the Soviet Communist period after 1956, Mao in China and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia; we can add North Korea today. Aron, who had experienced the rise of Hitler’s Nazi Socialism in Germany, on his return to France, wanted to formulate a political theory to warn and advise democratic governments against aggressive fascist regimes and the political character of totalitarianism. These regimes had abolished the notion of ‘discussion going on among human beings as to define just political institutions’, and were constructed on ‘terror’ and ‘fear’. ‘a single party system’, ‘one state ideology’ and ‘systematic state propaganda’.

Clément explores the cipher of death-resurrection portrayed in Solzhenitsyn’s writings by de-ciphering a progression of human experience in the Gulags: hell, death, ascetical process of detachment, signs of resurrection. Clément refers to dipsychia: ‘the divided heart, a New Testament understanding, in which unity has been destroyed by untruth’; resulting in an obvious contradiction in what is said and what is done. In Clément’s view Solzhenitsyn writes with ‘boundless compassion’, calling Russia and the Socialist movement, to a type of ‘collective metanoia’ that would enable the creation of something truly living. ‘Transcendence knocks’, writes Clément, ‘at every man’s door.’ The one who ‘listens to the irreducible sign of transcendence in the voice of his conscience sets limits to power’; but for ‘those who know no limits because ideology keeps them locked in immanence power is a fatal poison.’ Solzhenitsyn recognises a ‘communion of saints’ within the camps; those who stripped themselves down to the ‘one thing necessary’, because they either first possessed it or came to find a relationship with transcendence. This is the paradox of the camps: corruption was a life experience there, yet some people ‘survived uncorrupted’ through the ‘crucible of suffering’ because of the mysterious choice Clément identifies between ‘survival and conscience’.

Solzhenitsyn wrote in The Oak and the

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Notes:

880 Raymond Aron, sociologist and political thinker.
881 Kjeldahl, ‘Raymond Aron and Totalitarianism’, pp. 121-123.
882 Clément, Taizé, p. 12.
884 Ibid., p. 223.
885 Ibid., p. 224.
Calf, ‘The most terrible danger of all is that you may do violence to your conscience, sully your honour. No threat of physical destruction can compare with it.’ Solzhenitsyn was afraid of being tricked into a spiritual compromise. Suffering, in some cases ennobled, and there were those ‘whose clear conscience shone in their eyes, “like a clear mountain lake”,’ clear, limpid water and blue sky always symbolised spiritual goodness for Solzhenitsyn. Clément sums up Solzhenitsyn’s experience of conversion, first recalling the lost faith scattered by a need to rationalise everything into an ideological system that made his heart race; remembered by Solzhenitsyn in a rhyme composed in the camp hospital:

Blood seethed – and every swirl
Gleamed iridescently before me,
Without a rumble the building of my faith
Quietly crumbled within my heart.

The suffering of the camps, illness, the nearness of death and of nothingness, brought an openness of heart that discerned another Presence. ‘Though I renounced You, You were with me’, he writes in The Gulag Archipelago. Solzhenitsyn thought in his early allegiance to Lenin’s cause that he was doing good; as he lay on the rotting straw of his prison, he recognised much of it as evil, and only then in such poverty he felt the stirrings of good in himself. Clément is quick to note, not good in a moral sense, but ‘in the sense of the Being who is love’; words which have personal and ontological meaning for both writers: ‘evil means separation and good means communion, with God and with one’s fellows.’

Solzhenitsyn calls for a collective repentance that has to begin with oneself, in an organic, yet tragic, communion with one’s whole generation. In a letter to Patriarch Pimen, written in Lent 1972, he gives a heart-rending account of

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888 Clément, Solzhenitsyn, p. 226.
889 Solzhenitsyn, Gulag Archipelago, pp. 556-557.
891 Ibid., p. 21.
892 See Gerhard Simon, Church, State and Opposition in the USSR (London: Hurst & Co, 1974), pp. 201-205.
deprivations endured by Christians living in contemporary Russia. He notes that the persecutions inaugurated by Krushchev during which thousands of churches had been closed and priests left unable to care for parishes or people, had raised few objections from the Moscow hierarchy. He challenges the Church in his letter to understand that what had happened had not been inevitable if the Church had not renounced her independence. He describes it as an act of ‘voluntary internal enslavement’ and ‘self destruction’; the entire administration had been given over to the Committee on Religious Affairs and the Church directed dictatorially by atheists. How can the planned destruction of the spirit of the Church under the guidance of atheists be the best way to preserve it, he asks? For whom? Certainly not Christ he declares! It is impossible to preserve the Church by falsehood. Solzhenitsyn urges the hierarchy to defend the Church even to martyrdom. He appealed to the new patriarch to act according to conscience and justice, declaring that silence becomes impossible. In the letter he publicly declares himself, for the first time, a believing member of the Orthodox Church, and aligns himself with critics of the Church leadership, although at no time disputing Pimen’s canonical status. Pimen did not, or could not, make a direct reply; an assistant priest replied by letter that the hierarchy saw no alternative way of preserving the Church’s legal existence. In speaking out in response to conscience, freedom and justice, Solzhenitsyn becomes the voice and moral leader of thinkers from the East and the West. This is important for Clément, who has been deeply influenced by the impact of Russian Orthodox religious thought and by the work of the great Russian writers of the past, particularly Dostoevsky, as has another strong European Christian voice, Rowan Williams. Clément is able to align himself with the thought and work of Solzhenitsyn morally, intellectually and through their common love of the spiritual heritage of Russian Orthodoxy. Solzhenitsyn and Clément are looking for a renewal of the Church and warning of the dangers of an idolatrous nationalism and the failure of totalitarian Communism.

Solzhenitsyn’s essay ‘Live not by the Lie’, published in _samizdat_, was written on the day the secret police broke into Solzhenitsyn’s apartment and arrested him;

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894 An underground publishing system house used to print and circulate banned literature.
the next day he was deported to the West. In his essay Solzhenitsyn urged people to accept responsibility for what had happened in Russia; state power depended on the ‘willingness of individuals to bow before lies’, he writes. He pointed out a way to respond, ‘Our path is not to support the lie consciously in anything.’ This would not be easy, it was ‘a difficult choice for the body, but the only one for the soul.’

Replying to the question, ‘What is a lie?’ he advises, ‘Decide for yourself, as your conscience dictates.’ In stressing what should not be done rather than what should be done, ‘Live not by the Lie’, was an apophatic proclamation from which the moral emphasis spoke to people across cultures and political divides. To refuse to lie was a ‘minimal but also optimal’ strategy, because the regime was helpless in the face of the irreducible human spirit.

Solzhenitsyn was prophetic, not only because he spoke the truth but because he identified the strength in ordinary people who by refusing in everyday choices not to support lies, can deny legitimacy to a tyrannical regime.

Clément links the theme of justice and compassion with Christ the Pantocrator represented in cupolas of Orthodox churches, a title that recognises Christ’s power to bestow the gift of life and to bring meaning to life. The measure of this power is the Cross, bestowing a light by which the person can judge himself and receive reconciliation if he recognises the hell he has created for himself and others. The mercy of the Pantocrator here comes as justice. The crucial (and ‘crucial’ derives from the French word cross) experience for Solzhenitsyn was the Soviet labour camps. At the Nobel Prize award, and supported by their intercession Clément suggests, he presents himself as spokesman for all who died, ‘bowing my head as I stand aside to let those other men who deserve this honour before me take their place on this platform.’

To go into the ‘invisible country’ of the labour camps, is to ‘descend into hell’. Clément explains the definition of hell given by the monk Boobbyer, p. 79.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Boobbyer, p. 80.

The Pantocrator is an iconic depiction of Christ. When the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek, ‘Pantocrator’ was used for ‘Lord of Hosts’ or ‘God Almighty’ (El Shaddai).

Clément, Solzhenitsyn, p. 12.
Macarius, as a place where ‘it is not possible to see anyone face to face’, is an apt correlation with the Gulag where prisoners are first isolated and not allowed to see or know who their neighbour is. There is an important insight here with Clément and Levinas’ understanding that human encounter with God is opened up in the encounter with the human face of the other; an insight which Communism understood, instinctively perhaps, how to use in the attempt to reduce the human spirit to a state of submission. Fr Sofrony, Clément’s spiritual father in Paris and a monk and disciple of Staretz Silouan who died on Mount Athos in 1938, led Clément into a deeper understanding that ‘Christianity is not an ideology, but the Resurrection.’ Silouan’s monastic vocation inspired him ‘to pray for the dead suffering in the hell of separation from God’; he prayed also ‘for the living and for generations to come […] he could not bear to think anyone would languish in “outer darkness.”’ Clément was particularly moved by the words which Silouan believed were spoken to him by the Lord, after he had experienced the flames of hell around him: ‘Keep your soul in hell and do not despair,’ a quotation often cited and loved by Clément.

In the Orthodox understanding of Easter, particularly stressed in Russian spirituality, the nativity of Christ is the first great kenosis of God voluntarily emptying himself of his divine condition to enter the ‘abyss’ of sinful human existence. Clément explains his thoughts of incarnation and resurrection first by using John’s Prologue. ‘The light shines in the darkness’, and here ‘darkness signifies the hell in which humanity is capable of imprisoning itself’; Sunday is identified with Easter, the word in Russian voskresenie means resurrection. Solzhenitsyn posits the action of his story The First Circle (a title that refers to

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902 Clément, Roots, Abbot Macarius, Apophthegms, p. 181
903 Fr Sofrony, a monk of Mt Athos, left Athos for France 1938. He became a spiritual father to Clément in Paris, where Clément was able to see him frequently, at that time. He founded a monastic community at Tolleshunt Knights, Essex, 1958.
906 Sofrony, p. 38.
Dante and the first circle of hell) on a Christmas day that falls on Sunday, thus linking Christmas, the voluntary descent of the Incarnation into the hell of humankind, with Sunday understood as Easter to render the cipher ‘death-resurrection’.\textsuperscript{908} By choosing the Western date of 25 December rather than 7 January of the Julian calendar Solzhenitsyn has placed Russia firmly within Europe rather than Asia, which was the choice of Stalin. Russian conscience is obsessed by the theme of the innocent man who takes the Cross and the Beatitudes ‘so seriously that he seems mad to the Pharisees – the Church yesterday, the State today.’\textsuperscript{909} The two key characters of \textit{The First Circle} voluntarily choose to descend into the ‘lower circles’ of hell, interpreted as the ‘holiness of those who voluntarily suffer passion’, thus revealing ‘the presence of the Innocent One who submits to death to bring life to those who kill him.’\textsuperscript{910}

\textbf{3.2.vi Conclusion}

Clément’s great gifts as a literary critic give us a profoundly intellectual critique of Solzhenitsyn that illuminates the greatness of the Russian author, and introduces us to a deeply spiritual understanding of Solzhenitsyn. From his own experience of atheism and Christianity he explores the heart of the matter, that death is always present in the midst of life, that existence can nevertheless fill us with awe and wonder, and that every human face is a way to joy, truth and the Divine. Solzhenitsyn is important because he ‘speaks for every man; he speaks for us’ and the struggle he is involved in is not strictly political: it is prophetic.\textsuperscript{911} It is the struggle for justice and truth: not ideological truth, but the truth proper to living beings and the justice that respects all life in order that it may flourish. ‘Marxism has nothing to say about death.’\textsuperscript{912} The meaning of death and resurrection is a leitmotif throughout the writing of Solzhenitsyn and Clément.

In Clément’s view ideologies of Communism, atheism, nationalism, and sometimes religions, can become dangerous idolatries. In parts of the Orthodox world the creative Christian theology of theologians of the Russian Diaspora was submerged, but Clément judges, in the long term not vanquished: as one cannot

\textsuperscript{908} Clément, \textit{Solzhenitsyn}, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{909} Ibid., p. 18.
\textsuperscript{910} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{911} Ibid., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{912} Ibid., p. 26.
build on ‘nothing’, and because Christ is risen, Christianity will again gain the upper hand.
CHAPTER 3.4

Authenticity, Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue:
Louis Massignon, Olivier Clément, Thomas Merton, Christian de Chergé -
Radical Hospitality Radical Faith

'Distinguer pour unir'
Jacques Maritain

3.4.i Introduction

A concatenation of ecclesiological and experiential occurrences connects the lives of Louis Massignon, Olivier Clément, Thomas Merton and Christian de Chergé. Massignon and Clément reflect aspects of modern Eastern Christian thought: Massignon ‘converted’ to the Eastern Catholic Melkite tradition and Clément to Eastern Orthodoxy, while Merton and de Chergé ‘converted’ to monasticism becoming monks of the Cistercian Order; all lived however within the framework of ‘interior monasticism’ and the eschatological awareness eloquently expressed by monasticism. Interior monasticism is an important term coined by Paul Evdokimov, a Russian Orthodox thinker whose thought on monasticism we return to later. Within the personal stance chosen by each of the four men in their early adult years, a spectrum that ranged from atheism, self confessed dissolution and young faith, each experienced a metanoic encounter with Christ.

The four pioneers were born in France, and were strongly influenced by its geographical and cultural landscape. Twentieth-century European French society had reached a high level of laïcité, a consequence of the Enlightenment and secularised politics following the Second World War. The national religion of France was Catholicism but Catholics were a minority group within a non-


\[915\] Clément, L’autre soleil, p. 9.

\[916\] ‘Secularisation’ is the nearest English word conveying the meaning of laïcité. For an interesting new perspective on the history of the Christian West see John W O’Malley, Four Cultures of the West (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press), 2004.
Catholic and laïc milieu. This chapter reflects on the vocations of these four Christians within the context of the ecclesiological and political circumstances of their time, and their significant and authentic contribution to changes within the Catholic Church, that led up to and beyond the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Each contributed creatively to the great ecclesiological and theological movement that enabled the Church to view itself in a new way and to listen to the ‘other’. This new openness of the Catholic Church towards interreligious dialogue with Jews and Muslims and ecumenical discourse with other Christian Churches was truly remarkable after centuries of religious polemic and persecution.

The convocation of the Second Vatican Council by Pope John XXIII enabled the Church to begin the process of an inner renewal, which brought a change of direction and self-understanding, first by the Council Fathers then by the local Churches. The ‘change of heart’ can be thought of as metanoic, as it refocused on Christ and moved from a closed, embattled post-Reformation view, that considered the Church to be a ‘perfect society’, to a fresh openness towards the other expressed with charity and hope. This was proclaimed strikingly in the Council documents Nostra Aetate, Lumen Gentium and Unitatis Redintegratio, which translates as Restoration of Unity: ‘Upon the Moslems, too, the Church looks with esteem’ (NA3): ‘But the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place among these are the Moslems, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God ....’ (LG16). The Church, at Vatican II, put Judaism and Islam in a special category by recognising Christians, Jews and Muslims worshipped the same ‘one and merciful God’.

A journey towards seeing Jews and Muslims no longer as the enemy but as part of God’s plan had begun, the Church was inviting its people to participate in

917 The Trent ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church, December 1545-December 1563, issued condemnations on what were defined at that time as Protestant heresies of the Reformation.
918 Vatican II: Declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions, Nostra Aetate, 2.
dialogue with the ‘other’. In the introduction to its Decree on Ecumenism the Council Fathers recognised the ecumenical movement is ‘fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit’ (UR1), and encouraged Catholics to respond to this grace and to this divine call.’

This chapter examines first the ecclesiological and political context of the twentieth century during which a kairos for the Church crystallised in the convocation of Vatican II in 1962. The ecclesial and theo-anthropological thought of Massignon, Merton, Clément and de Chergé developed and evinced as a prophetic witness of lived radical hospitality and radical faith that reveals the true meaning of dialogue with the other. Dialogue can only bear fruit if it is an authentic expression of love and compassion; this is rightfully characteristic and manifest in the three monotheistic religions. Dialogical engagement has contemporary global relevance for countries hosting multi-cultural and diverse religious communities, where people may experience a sense of double disengagement following forced Diaspora from their homeland and inability to integrate in the new. Wars and economic disasters have produced global pluralistic societies; although in France, the country which forms an important social and geographical context here, the concept of pluralism has largely been resisted by political action. A worldwide discourse evolved around issues of world peace and the dialogue of civilisations heightened by events surrounding the extremist attack on 11 September 2001. The vocation of world religions is to become leaven in the dough.

Two key themes are advanced: biographical context is essential to understanding and assessing the significance of the contribution of these Christians’ evolving ecclesial and theological thought; experiential spirituality is foundational in their committed response to Christ and a theology of dialogical encounter. These themes are explored in the vocations of Massignon, Merton. Clément and de Chergé, followed by Conclusions.

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821 Vatican II: Decree on Ecumenism, Unitatis Redintegratio.
822 Pluralism, understood as the existence of groups with distinctive ethnic origin, cultural and religious forms: Napoleon created Departments, areas of national ‘space’, as a way of eliminating differences. The Third Republic enforced laïcité (secularism) by separating the Church and State in 1905; France became a nation of one language, one religion, one territory when religion and state separated; concerning religion the French saw themselves as Catholics or non-Catholics.
Islamicist Louis Massignon became a Melkite Greek-Catholic priest\textsuperscript{924} late in life, Cistercian monk Thomas Merton converted to Catholicism in 1939, lay theologian Olivier Clément became an Orthodox Christian in the Russian Orthodox Church in Paris in 1951, Christian de Chergé was ordained a Catholic priest in 1964 and entered the Cistercian Order in 1969 to became abbot of a Cistercian monastic community in the Atlas Mountains of Algeria. Through authenticity, integrity and prayer they became spiritual ascetics who embodied mystical acceptance of all humanity and creation on a cosmic scale in Christ. Their mature witness acts as a signpost for people of the twenty-first century that points towards Christ,\textsuperscript{925} proclaims the dignity and irreducible spirit of the human person, and seeks unity in diversity; a diversity which is Trinitarian in character.

Clément speaks of Massignon’s ‘science of compassion’: that is, knowledge acquired by compassion in an attempt to put oneself in the other’s place while taking into consideration the spiritual, social, intellectual, political experience of the other or the other’s religion. For Massignon ‘the human word [...] is a sharp personal calling destined to make us go beyond ourselves, our country, our clan: to go beyond all in love.’\textsuperscript{926} The encounter with the Other opens a ‘space where language itself reveals the nature of pilgrimage as a way of going out of oneself in order to converge with another in the presence of the “Divine Absentee”.’\textsuperscript{927} ‘To understand something is not to annex it, it is to transfer it by decentring oneself (par décentrement) to the heart of the other. The essence of language should be a kind of decentring.’\textsuperscript{928} Massignon’s personal experience led him to believe that by learning the language and experiencing the traditions and culture of other religions one’s own faith is enhanced. He observes that language itself is both a


\textsuperscript{925} Clément, \textit{Petite Boussole}.


‘pilgrimage’ and a ‘spiritual displacement’, because language with another evokes ‘an Absentee, the third person […] the Unknown.’

Massignon, Merton, de Chergé and Clément sought a way that leads to authentic convivial harmony between peoples, communities, cultures and faiths. They believed that the healing of divisions between Eastern and Western Christians and of antagonism and warfare between Islam and Christianity during one and a half millennia, could flow from a spiritual experience of God, practised and lived by believers open to dialogical encounter with the other. The lives and thought of these men as theologians, writers and transcultural spokesmen for human concerns continues to challenge people of faith in the twenty-first century: all four were passeurs who could traverse between intellectual and cultural ‘shores’ of different faiths and countries, exchanging valuable gifts. Their endeavours received acclaim and sometimes rejection from their own Churches during their lifetimes; however, ‘every exceptional spiritual personality necessarily sheds light’ on the ‘spiritual meaning of sacred space’, a space which is ‘constituted by sacred hospitality and the recognition of the Other in it.’ Clément sees that ‘the “apostolic man”, or staretz, regardless of his place in the hierarchy, consciously becomes a “pneumatophore”, while Tradition is the “pneumatosphere”, a carrier of the Spirit’, which ‘makes the Word alive and present in all historical circumstances.

Points of convergence and congruencies are revealed in the thought of these four Christians and in the different trajectories each life took. Massignon coined the term ‘la courbe de vie’ to speak of ‘the curve of life’ of individuals he regarded as special intercessors for their fellow people. A significant nœud on the trajectory for all four men is an experience of metanoic conversion to Christianity: a relationship with Christ, which they fostered in prayer and rootedness in their own

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929 Laude, Louis Massignon, p. 2.
930 Ibid.
931 Monk or elder whose wisdom stems from his ascetic experience.
Christian tradition, expressed in an ‘inner hospitality towards the Other’, both divine and human. Roger Arnaldez describes how the law of God, ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart [...] and your neighbour as yourself’ (Matt 22:37-40), is made possible by the indwelling of the Spirit:

The law that Christ brings is the Law of love: this law ‘completes’ the law of Moses by releasing in it the Spirit whose significance is not merely symbolic [...] but rather a powerful wind capable of regenerating, animating and intensifying the moral and religious life of humanity. This law truly becomes an active presence of God in us, so that God really is with each of us, perfectly interiorizing the meaning of Emmanuel.934

It is the ‘interiorizing of the meaning of Emmanuel’ that enables the possibility of responding to the Spirit’s call to holiness by a life of interiorised monasticism.

They were gifted writers with a poetic love of language: de Chergé’s writing and homilies are more recently published and appreciated,935 while Massignon, Merton and Clément were able to reach and influence a wide audience during their lives, aiming to raise religious consciousness and heal divisions. Among that audience were the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council convoked by Pope John XXIII, the second conciliar meeting since the Council of Trent over three hundred years before. Connecting strands of cause and effect linked the lives of Massignon and Merton to Vatican II; and their legacy and influence on the twenty-first century debate on peace and justice in a multi-cultural world order was taken forward by Clément and de Chergé. They show that a peaceful and just coexistence between nations requires the will and mindset of hospitality from each nation and person in the encounter with the cultural and religious identity of the ‘other’. A theology of encounter is not offered as a political tool to bring about world peace or avert a ‘clash of civilisations’, but recognises the call of God to unity and spiritual communion. The lives of Massignon, Merton, de Chergé and Clément offer concrete paradigms that point to the possibility of fruitful encounter

934 Arnaldez, Trois Messagers, p. 8.
between persons and between peoples, who recognise the mutual and fundamental worth and dignity of each person.

Support for this view appears ‘In Defence of a Dialogue of Civilisations’ by Fabio Petito,\textsuperscript{936} who judges Massignon’s ‘dialogical life-journey’ stands as a convincing paradigm in defence of the political discourse for a ‘dialogue of civilisations’,\textsuperscript{937} against a secular politics of reason. He challenges the notion that civilisational dialogue generates conflict rather than peace, with the argument that ‘stronger’ civilisational identities contribute to a more peaceful and stable world order. He draws on Gadamer’s hermeneutic of ‘a fusion of horizons’,\textsuperscript{938} to interpret how this might look. The notion of a dialogue of civilisations emerged in the 1990s in reaction to political debate on future world order,\textsuperscript{939} which recognised that after the collapse of Communist totalitarianism a form of Islamic totalitarianism might enter the world stage. This dialogue must be based on the vision and will for world justice and peace, a human solidarity expressed in unity in diversity. Olivier Clément saw some traces of an idolatrous Islamic totalitarianism appearing in Islam, which caused him to raise a note of warning in 2003. Clément detects a possible exploitation of the juridical and mental structures of Western society that signalled a new political motivation. He voices criticism of a model of Islam\textsuperscript{940} which wants to replace the values of Western civilisation, affirm Islamic identity and present it as the true universality.

Samuel Huntington provoked international debate in 1993 by his article ‘Clash of Civilisations’, in which he predicted future conflicts would occur frequently and violently because of cultural rather than ideological differences. In Huntington’s view tensions will increase the more Islam and the West attempt dialogue. In response to Huntington, Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, a scholar and Shi’a religious thinker, in 1998 called for a dialogue between Islamic and Judeo-

\textsuperscript{937} Petito, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{939} Petito, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{940} See n. 629 on p. 152 above.
Christian civilisations. At a United Nations conference in 2000 Khatami presented an alternative paradigm for international relationships that in many ways resonates with the views of Massignon, Merton, Clément and de Chergé. He marks the importance of considering the historical landscape and appeals for empathy and compassion to substitute the prevailing will for power and the ‘glorification of might’. Huntington’s subsequent book (2003) on the clash of civilisations, gives an interpretation of a post-cold war global future, which Petito judges to be a ‘minimalist morality of co-existence’ by agreeing to ‘reciprocal non-interference’.

Huntington’s interpretation could produce a disastrous mind-set that subverts the flourishing of humankind, and relies on Western domination, which can appear to disregard the value of the ‘other’ in contributing to a political, economic and cultural construct. Regardless of cultural differences there exists in individuals the basic hope for dignity and just political governance. A dialogue of civilisations that includes an understanding of authentic and lived Christianity, that is, a theocentric anthropology of Self with the Other, will succeed over against a predominantly Western secularist-laïcité political view that presents a negative political construct of Self against the Other. Massignon, Clément, Merton and de Chergé deeply understood this, and were led to take dialogue to the deeper spiritual level of encounter with the other. In Clément’s thought the coming of the Holy Spirit has enabled man to become ‘pneumatophore’, ‘every gesture that creates love, justice and beauty anticipates the transfiguration of the world of the


Eighth Day,\textsuperscript{943} as ‘the Spirit in co-operation with our freedom, gradually shows the face of Christ who comes.’\textsuperscript{944}

**Second Vatican Council: 11 October 1962 – 8 December 1965**

When Pope John XXIII convoked Vatican II, he declared his wish to open the windows of the Vatican to allow aggiornamento and the fresh air of the Spirit to bring the Catholic Church into the modern world. The Council enabled the Church to express its identity, to enter into dialogue with modernity and creatively face contemporary challenges concerning issues of diversity, ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. The work and thought of Massignon and Merton, as well as the milieu in which Clément and de Chergé worked, influenced and contributed to important findings and documents of the Second Vatican Council.

Many Council Fathers including the future Pope Paul VI and Melkite Patriarch Maximos IV knew Massignon personally. Massignon’s decision to become a priest of the Greek Catholic Melkite rite in 1949\textsuperscript{945} enabled him to attain his long-standing desire to be associated with Arab Christianity in its proximity and dialogue with Islam, and to pray in Arabic, the language of the Qur’an, during the eucharistic offering. Clément refers to it as Massignon’s ‘arabisation’, which would seem to be a type of double belonging to East and West, Christianity and Islam. Orthodox Metropolitan Georges Khodr of Mount Lebanon, who knew Massignon, praised his ability to speak Arabic with purity and fluency.\textsuperscript{946} According to Massignon ‘the Greek-Catholic rite, the Arab rite, is destined to explain Muslim thought to the West.’\textsuperscript{947} Maximos IV, Patriarch of the Melkite Greek-Catholic Church, 1947-1967, authorised Massignon’s ordination to the

\textsuperscript{943} Clément, *Jesus the One Consecrated.*
\textsuperscript{944} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{945} Anthony O’Mahony, ‘Louis Massignon, the Melkite Church and Islam’, *ARAM: Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies*, 20 (2008), pp. 267-297.
priesthood by Pierre-Kamel Medawar his Auxiliary Bishop. Two years earlier Medawar had granted the *imprimatur* to the work of the *Badaliya*⁹⁴⁸ a prayer movement founded by Massignon and Mary Kahil in Egypt as a way of supporting Christians marginalised in a predominantly Muslim country, and as a way of befriending and praying with Muslims. Massignon saw *Badaliya* prayer as a testimony to the universal love of Christ.

Christian Krokus judges that Medawar, as a strong supporter of Massignon’s work and *Badaliya* prayer, would have favourably presented Massignon’s vision for Christian-Muslim relations to Patriarch Maximos IV. The eighty-four year old patriarch ‘knew the importance of Arabic for the Muslim mind’ and ‘the strong potential of his Church as a bridge between Arab (Muslim) and Western minds.’⁹⁴⁹ At the Second Vatican Council Maximos spoke out for the Churches of the Middle East, who had survived the religious, spiritual and political milieu of Muslim dominance since the seventh century. He recommended that if the Jews were to be discussed ‘then we should likewise take up the question of Muslims, among whom we must live in a minority.’⁹⁵⁰ Massignon wrote in a letter concerning *Badaliya*, 24 July 1934, ‘Pius XI blessed the oblation of my life and death for my Muslim brothers and sisters […].’⁹⁵¹ Massignon also gained support from Cardinal Giambattista Montini, later Paul VI, concerning the *Badaliya*, and it is thought the cardinal was a member of the Rome *Badaliya* group. This appears to have had consequences later at the Second Vatican Council. ‘When Vatican II undertook to speak of Islam, the memory of Louis Massignon who died in 1962 on the eve of the Council’s opening was in the mind of Paul VI, ‘as I can testify’, writes Robert Casper,⁹⁵² former tutor of Christian de Chergé. ‘In speaking of Moslems and of Jews, the Council stresses our common father in faith, Abraham.

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⁹⁴⁸ *Badaliya*, Arabic for substitution; at the heart of the Christian faith experience is the mystery of Jesus’ sacrifice of his life for all humanity. See Paolo Dall’Oglio SJ, ‘Louis Massignon and *Badaliya*’, *ARAM*, 20 (2008), pp. 329-336; Dall’Oglio founded the contemplative monastic community at *Deir Mar Musa* in Syria in 1992.


⁹⁵¹ Salenson, p. 36.


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This is where Louis Massignon [...] told us to begin.' \(^{953}\) O’Mahony judges that Massignon gave the Council the knowledge and language to speak of interreligious dialogue between Christians and Muslims, but it appears important to note that Vatican II ‘spoke about Muslims but not about Islam.’ \(^{954}\)

Maximos IV spoke out strongly at the Council against the latinization of the Catholic Eastern Churches and encouraged reconciliation between Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches and pointed to the importance of the Christian presence in its homeland. ‘Christianity in the Middle East has a witness beyond itself.’ \(^{955}\) He was raised to the position of cardinal by Paul VI in January 1965, for his contribution to Christian ecumenism, and won support from both the Orthodox observers at the Council and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras I, whom they represented. The Maronite and Coptic patriarchs also became cardinals at that time.

As noted above the irenic personality of Patriarch Athenagoras I exerted a significant influence on the life and thought of Olivier Clément. His three-month visit to Athenagoras in 1968 resulted in a change of heart from a polemical attitude \(^{956}\) to one of peace; ‘he set me free’, notes Clément. \(^{957}\) Clément’s acclaimed book, *Dialogues with the Patriarch Athenagoras*, which he wrote as a ‘service to unity’, \(^{958}\) marked an opening in Clément’s perception of ecclesial identity. Speaking on 28 October 2012 to an Orthodox delegation to the Vatican fifty years after Vatican II, Pope Benedict XVI recalled ‘the person and works of the unforgettable Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras who together with Pope John XXIII and [...] Paul VI, moved by that passion for Church unity [...] promoted important initiatives which paved the way to renewed relations between the


\(^{954}\) O’Mahony, ‘Catholic Theological Perspectives’, p. 387.


\(^{956}\) Olivier Clément, ‘*Vers un Dialogue avec le Catholisme*’, *Contacts*, 16 (1964), 16-37. In this earlier work Clément perceives Catholicism from a more Orthodox polemical stance.

\(^{957}\) Clément, *Dialogues*, p. 10.

\(^{958}\) Ibid.
Catholic Church and Oriental Orthodox Churches. The radical thought on interreligious dialogue initiated by Massignon and Merton influenced the decisions of Vatican II, and was taken forward by Popes Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI. It was also taken forward in the lives and vocations of Clément and de Chergé.

Clément considered John Paul II’s invitation to leaders of all religions, to join him in a Day of Prayer for Peace at Assisi in 1986, and again at Assisi in 2002, when religious leaders signed a peace charter that was disseminated to governments globally, were two great moments of his pontificate. John Paul II’s prophetic gift regarding interreligious dialogue was demonstrated as an authentic response to the UN Year of Peace 1986, with a deep understanding of unity in diversity and the theology of encounter. Clément remembers with admiration John Paul’s pastoral and state visit to Kazakhstan in 2001 when he commended Muslims for their spiritual values and ability to creatively participate in world culture, and encouraged multi-national Kazakhstan in its mission to become a bridge between religions, nations and continents.

Pope Benedict in Istanbul in 2006 met Patriarch Bartholomew I; referring to the Christian roots in Turkey for over a millennium; he sought to take forward Christian unity between East and West and overcome differences between Christians and Muslims. During his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in May 2014, Pope Francis met Patriarch Bartholomew, an encounter resonating with echoes of Paul VI and Athenagoras I meeting in Jerusalem in 1964. The theme of Christian

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959 Solemnity of Ss Peter and Paul, 28 October 2012, Vatican City, Benedict XVI received a delegation sent by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I; see News.Va, L’Osservatore Romano.
961 World Day of Prayer, 27 October 1986: 160 religious leaders gathered to spend a day of prayer and fasting for peace.
963 Clément, Mémoires, p. 136.
964 See collection of studies in John Paul II and Interreligious Dialogue, ed. by Byron L Sherwin & Harold Kasimow (New York: Orbis, 1999), pp.169-177
965 Papal visit to Kazakhstan, <w2.vatican.va/.../john-paul-ii/.../hf_jp-ii_spe_20010924_kazakhstan-astana>, [Accessed 15/6/15].
unity for Clément was given impetus by the social and dialogical changes set in motion by the Council. Known and respected by John Paul II, Clément, at the pope’s invitation entered into dialogue both in person and in writing with the pope on issues surrounding Christian unity and the role of the papacy. Clément’s book, *Rome Autrement*, is a valuable contribution to the history of Orthodoxy in the West and the problems posed by papal primacy for both Orthodox and Western Christians. It would seem that John Paul II valued Clément’s gifts as a theologian and poet.966

3.4.iii  **Louis Massignon** (1883-1962)

Louis Massignon ‘saw himself as an ardent Frenchman, profoundly rooted in his land and its dead.’967 This memorial phrase could equally have been written of Olivier Clément who was profoundly French and deeply respectful of his French ancestry; it formed the cultural landscape from which his quest for truth brought him to become a leading Orthodox thinker and writer on theology, anthropology and spirituality. Massignon found ‘space’ to become France’s most celebrated Islamicist, a leading Catholic intellectual, and one of the most important scholars of Arabic and Islam of the twentieth century.

He entered the Lycée Louis le Grand in Paris aged thirteen, coincidently the same school at which Clément taught for most of his adult life. At the age of twenty Massignon had given up Catholicism, for what he later judged to be a self-centred way of life. In 1907 however, he became deeply interested in the life and martyrdom of al-Hallâj, a tenth-century Sufi mystic in Baghdad, and chose him as the subject for his thesis. Hallâj’s teaching and death became a personal inspiration and leitmotif that shaped Massignon’s future and destiny. The thesis became a four-volume book, *La Passion d’al-Husayn ibn Mansûr al Hallâj, martyr mystique de l’Islam*,968 that described the life and teaching of Hallaj and explored the whole milieu of early Islamic civilisation. To obtain a clear understanding of an era, Massignon considered historians must enter

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966 John Paul II read the text written by Clément on Good Friday Stations of the Cross as he moved from the *Coliseum* to the Roman Forum in 1998.
968 An abridged English version: *Hallaj: Mystic and Martyr*, ed. and trans. by Herbert Mason (Princeton: University Press, 1994); Mason was Massignon’s student and friend, his translation and preparation took 13 years.
imaginatively into the spiritual, social and political culture of that time, rather than viewing the past through the lens of post-Enlightenment rationalism. Massignon’s book became a landmark that aroused the interest of scholars in the West and brought about a change in Catholic theology: the recognition that authentic mysticism could exist outside the Catholic Church and even outside the boundaries of Christianity. Massignon challenged the West to recognise that Islam too was a way to reach God in the heart. Clément also brought about a change in Catholic thinking concerning mysticism and spirituality of the Eastern Orthodox Church, which was either unknown in the West or held in low regard by many Western Catholics. His aim in his seminal book Sources\textsuperscript{969} is to awaken the Western reader to a knowledge and appreciation of the Eastern tradition and the relevance of early Patristic teaching and Christian mysticism for contemporary Europe.

Massignon, aged 25, intelligent and linguistically gifted, but on his own admission somewhat naive, led an official archaeological mission in 1908, to an area of central Mesopotamia near Baghdad that was politically fraught with the risk of a revolution erupting to end Ottoman rule. On arrival in Baghdad, Massignon wished to befriend Muslims, and lodged with the Alusi family who showed him great hospitality; he lived in the Arab quarter and wore Arab type clothing, all of which shocked his fellow Europeans, irritated his superiors and baffled locals who viewed him with suspicion.\textsuperscript{970} Spending too long carrying out research on Hallâj and visiting his tomb, he finally set off across the desert to engage in exploration 150 miles from Baghdad. He was taken prisoner and, perhaps to cool potential political ferment and avoid unwanted questions, was declared to be mentally unwell. It was within these strange circumstances that Massignon attempted suicide and shortly after experienced an event he describes as the Visitation by a Stranger that brought conversion, followed by his return to Catholicism. His artist father decided his son’s sudden change from ‘an agnostic, free-thinker and lover of life’ like himself, to an ‘ardent believer and ascetic’ must indicate ‘an

\textsuperscript{969} Clément, Sources, p. 11.

intellectual collapse’, but finally recognised ‘the authenticity of his son’s new vocation and admiration for the mystic Hallâj.’

The word authenticity is important as a marker in the experience of metanoia and its outcomes, part of the ‘courbe de vie’ also of Clément, Merton and de Chergé. Clément and Merton experienced conversion and an encounter they identified as a spiritual meeting, that brought repentance, forgiveness and faith following a time of dissolution in their personal lives, and a tendency towards suicide; de Chergé entered into a deeper commitment to Christ after an Algerian Muslim gave up his life for him. The importance of these spiritual experiences as foundational events cannot be separated from their future theological thought, commitment and development. Biographical context forms the humus from which their faith grew.

Mystical experiences can only be validated by the Gospel criterion: events can be judged by the ‘fruits’ that follow. St John of the Cross taught that if the experience is ‘authentic it will of itself work its intended effect.’ Multiple good fruits over a life-long commitment can be seen in the life of Massignon, which manifested themselves as hospitality, substitution, compassion, witness and dialogue. The same is true of Merton, de Chergé and Clément: an interior monasticism, expressed through prayer to unite with the ‘substitution’ of Christ on the Cross for all mankind, lived as a life of inner prayer and outreach to others.

Clément’s spiritual father, Fr Sophrony, was a monk of Mount Athos and disciple of Staretz Silouan who died on Mount Athos in 1938. Clément was in frequent contact with Sophrony when he lived in Paris and gained from him the understanding that ‘Christianity is not an ideology, but the Resurrection.’ Merton was moved by the words which Staretz Silouan believed were spoken to him by Christ: ‘Keep your soul in hell and do not despair.’ Clément often reflected on these words, recorded in Fr Sophrony’s biography of the Staretz.

973 Ibid.
974 Evdokimov, Les âges, p. 113: ‘monachisme intériorisé’.
976 Silouan, canonised by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, 1987 was largely unknown until Archimandrite Sophrony’s biography: The Undistorted Image.
977 Riccardi, p. 13.
978 See Sophrony, p. 33; Clément, Petite boussole, p. 125.
Silouan’s monastic vocation led him ‘to pray for the dead suffering in the hell of separation from God’; he prayed also ‘for the living and for generations to come […] he could not bear to think anyone would languish in “outer darkness.”’

Within the context of those words, Clément compares St Thérèse of Lisieux with St Silouan: Thérèse trusted in God and resolved to keep faith during the dark night of the soul when the apparent absence of God became part of her spiritual journey. Clément believes that Christians, we are all called to be seated at the table of sinners, as St Thérèse saw herself, while carrying within themselves the mystery of the Resurrection, praying for universal salvation, so that all may taste the joy of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Clément and Evdokimov discerned the role of the Staretz was a prophetic image for our times, that pointed to a universal vocation of interiorised monasticism for laity in the modern world, not merely as ‘an interior life for a layman’, but carrying the notion of a ‘lay-monk’ who penetrates to the ‘ontological roots, the mystical essence, of the monastic life on an ecumenical and trans-confessional level.’ The role of the monk in the world is to be a visionary witness; this can be the vocation of all believers. Williams refers to the early ‘insistence that monasticism is first and foremost a lay movement,’ and judges that the lay character of monasticism is one of monasticism’s significant contributions to ecumenical encounter. Phan affirms Evdokimov’s theological discernment, that the asceticism of the Desert Fathers retains its enduring significance for all ages and all times; it forms an ascetical archetype characterised by total obedience to the will of God, which suppresses self-complacency; chastity consisting in the total consecration of one’s existence; poverty, which is a total openness and receptivity towards God’s designs; prayer, which becomes a constant state of the soul; and eschatological maximalism, that is an existential attitude to, and active expectation of, the Parousia. Evdokimov concludes that ‘monastic holiness and

979 Sophrony, p. 38.
983 Ibid.
984 Phan, *Culture and Eschatology*, p. 197.
conjugal holiness are two sides of Mount Tabor,’ contradictory for human reason yet they are interiorly united and mysteriously identical.\textsuperscript{985}

The monastic tradition of Eastern Orthodox Christianity greatly influenced Clément’s spiritual journey and theology. A convergence of theological thought unites Clément, Evdokimov and Merton, with regard to authenticity and monasticism. Rowan Williams identifies ‘authenticity’ as a recurrent unifying theme of Merton’s life and writing since the time of \textit{Elected Silence},\textsuperscript{986} which challenges Merton and his audience concerning personal and artistic integrity. A new choice of life, as a monk for example, is ‘artificial or \textit{inauthentic}\textsuperscript{987} without metanoia, and the healing forgiveness of Christ being first experientially received. Williams judges ‘the monastic vocation demands a real encounter with one’s own “nothingness”, with the false and illusory \textit{persona} created by one’s betrayal of the true self […] in a concordat with a false and illusory society.’\textsuperscript{988} Clément and Evdokimov want their readers to understand that the monastic vocation is shared by all Christians and will demand the same vocational call: a real encounter with our own “nothingness”.

According to Evdokimov, the monk is essentially an eschatological man:

\begin{quote}
After the concordat which established the Church in history and offered it a legal status and a peaceful existence, the witness which the martyrs had borne to the last things passed over to the monks and was transformed by them into a ministry of eschatological maximalism.\textsuperscript{989}
\end{quote}

For Evdokimov ‘the spirit of monasticism’ is ‘the crystallisation of the evangelical ideal’, an ascesis practised by the Desert Fathers ‘in the place of all

\begin{footnotes}
\item[987] Williams, ‘Bread’, p. 176.
\item[988] Williams, ‘Bread’, p. 177.
\end{footnotes}

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and once for all.'990 He believes an eschatological transformation of culture can be realised through the practice of interiorized monasticism.

O’Mahony observes that monasticism was a distinctive feature of Christian life in the place where Islam was born and in the Christian communities that became integrated into the world of Islam, and anti-monastic influences found their way into the interpretation of certain Quranic phrases. Celibacy was not accepted by Muslims and Muhammad opposed extreme ascetic practices. In his Essai993 Massignon cites the Quranic statements. ‘There is no monastic in Islam’ and ‘The monasticism of my community is jihad (holy war).’994 Traditionally monasticism has been considered by Muslims to demonstrate a Christian attitude of putting unnecessary religious burdens on people.995 However, Christian monks were among the first to use Arabic for ecclesiastical liturgies and writings.996 The martyrdom of the seven monks of Tibhirine in May 1996, and subsequent justification on religious grounds by some Islamic thinkers brought awareness of the theological understanding of Islam concerning Christian monks and monasticism.997

Impressed by the humility and example of St Francis of Assisi, Massignon became a Franciscan tertiary in 1931; in Egypt, 1934, at the abandoned Franciscan Church in Damietta built on the site where St Francis met the Sultan al-Malik in 1219, Massignon prayed with Mary Kahil, an Egyptian Melkite Christian.998 They took a vow of Badaliya, placing themselves in substitution and prayer for Muslims, desiring to bring about mutual respect and dialogue. Today Badaliya groups exist around the world. Importantly, their prayer intention is not for the conversion of Muslims, but that the will of God might be accomplished in them.

990 Evdokimov, Les âges, p. 113.
994 O’Mahony, p. 29
995 O’Mahony, p. 31.
997 O’Mahony, p. 25.
998 The contribution made by Massignon, Mary Kahil and Badaliya is further referred to above, p. 227.
and through them. Massignon paved the way for a greater openness in the Catholic Church towards Islam which was expressed in Vatican II’s document, *Nostra Aetate*\(^{999}\) in 1965. Paolo Dall’Oglio SJ, writing in 2008 judged that Massignon has become a contemporary source of inspiration in France and for Christian theology with regard to the Christian-Islamic relationship, and has been a significant influence in Arabic and Islamic scholarship.\(^{1000}\) The spirit of Badaliya was the foundation of spirituality at the desert monastic community established in Syria by Dall’Oglio at *Deir Mar Musa*, in daily prayers in Arabic, hospitality and sharing the life of local Muslims.

Some have commented that later in life Massignon described the Visitation of the Stranger in more poetic language. This would seem a natural outcome for a poet to attempt to find words to describe an experience, which in fact is impossible to express adequately in words, which he believed to be *supernatural* and *unspeakable*. Massignon quotes the thirteenth century Persian poet Rûmi, 1207-1273,\(^{1001}\) to assist in describing his experiential knowledge of the Visitation by the Stranger:

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\begin{align*}
\text{This Someone, whose beauty makes the Angels jealous,} \\
\text{Came at break of day, and He looked into my heart;} \\
\text{He wept, and I wept, until the coming of the dawn,} \\
\text{Then He asked me: of us two, say, “Who is the lover”.}
\end{align*}
\]

It was important for him to witness to what he believed was the driving force in his life: his faith in God and the substitution of Christ on the Cross for all people. During the *Visitation of the Stranger* he became aware that ten intercessors were praying for his conversion; these included his mother, the Muslim Sufi mystic al-Hallâj and Charles de Foucauld, with whom he had corresponded. This inner knowledge convinced him of the validity of intercessory prayer; he regularly revisited the tomb of Hallâj throughout his life. Later in 1909 he met de Foucauld in France, at a time when de Foucauld was waiting and hoping for someone to

\(^{999}\) *Nostra Aetate*, Proclaimed by Pope Paul VI, 28 October 1965.
\(^{1000}\) Dall’Oglio, ‘Louis Massignon’, p. 331.
join him as a hermit in the desert of southern Algeria. De Foucauld succeeded in sharing his Christ-like life with Muslims in Algeria, who saw him as a Sufi saint and Christian hermit. He founded a confraternity, which after his death became the Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus, the *Union Solidarité*.

Speaking of his conversion Massignon felt the significance of the circumstances, ‘It is in Arabic [...] that I recognised God for the first time, that I made my first prayer to him’. An intensely deep commitment to self-denial became characteristic of Massignon’s faith and life. Professor Albert Hourani, British Lebanese historian, Oxford graduate and later lecturer at Magdalen College, converted to Catholicism through Massignon’s witness. He writes on Massignon’s understanding of the meaning of history, which was judged not to be found in the social structure of events but, in the Word of God received in each individual, an encounter which could take place within established Traditions, or as a sudden confrontation, when God irrupts in an ordinary life in a way that enables the person to see beyond his own concept of reality, to ‘another beauty’.

Massignon believed that he had been drawn into a ‘chain of witness’ during the encounter, leading to the understanding that his particular vocation lay in the act of substitution, through which Muslims would come to the knowledge of the meaning of the incarnation of Christ. Massignon believed that the only way he could respond to his deep desire ‘to die with Christ, because martyrdom eludes me’ was to become an ordained priest, and in this way unite himself as an *alter Christus* in Christ’s passion and ‘his supreme act of sacrifice and salvation’.

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3.4.iv Thomas Merton (1915-1968)

The place of Merton’s birth in Southern France, where Merton spent childhood days with his father, was only a few miles away from the village in which Clément was born.\footnote{Clément was born at Aniane in the Languedoc region of Southern France on 17 November 1921. Merton was born in Prades, Pyrénées-Orientales, 31 January 2015.} England he knew as a schoolboy; it was here, aged sixteen, he faced the trauma of his father’s early death in a London hospital; his mother had died when he was six. After his father’s death Merton visited Rome where he was unexpectedly enthralled by Byzantine mosaics depicting Christ: ‘For the first time I began to find out something of who this Person was that men called Christ,’\footnote{Thomas Merton, \textit{The Seven Storey Mountain} (London: Sheldon Press, 1975), p. 109.} ‘it was there that I first saw Him [...] the Christ of the Apocalypse, the Christ of the Martyrs [...] the Christ of all the Fathers.’\footnote{Ibid., p. 108.} These mosaics and frescoes revealed Christ, but above all ‘this grace was Christ himself, present in those churches, in all his power, and in his humanity, in his human flesh and his material, physical, corporeal Presence.’\footnote{Ibid.} Those churches taught Merton the doctrine of a God of infinite power, wisdom and love revealed through the manhood of Christ. He bought a vulgate text and began reading the New Testament. Yet there was still no deep sense of conversion. That came suddenly one night in his room. The light was on when his father, who had been dead a year, seemed to be there with him, in a vivid, real and startling way. Merton felt pierced deeply by a light; he became suddenly overwhelmed by a profound insight into the state of his soul. Filled with horror and a sense of urgency he longed for escape and freedom; he prayed God would free him from the terrible things that held him in slavery. Through many tears he spoke to his father and to God.\footnote{Merton, \textit{The Seven}, p. 108.} He understood it to be a great grace and continued to pray and visit churches. But the experience did not hold. He entered Cambridge as an undergraduate at eighteen but his belief at that time that life was meaningless, seemed to lead to the outcome described by Dostoevsky in \textit{The Brothers Karamazov};\footnote{Fyodor Dostoevsky, \textit{The Brothers Karamazov}, see Paul Evdokimov, \textit{Dostoïevski et le problème du mal} (Paris: DDB, 1961); and Rowan Williams, \textit{Dostoevsky: Language, Faith and Fiction}.} if God is evacuated then everything or anything is permissible. Merton recalls his year at Cambridge as a time of decadence and sorrow. His unacceptable behaviour resulted in his dispatch to America and Columbia University in Manhattan in 1935. Once there he became
attracted to Communism because of its apparent pacifism and promises of a new social order. It became however a milestone on his journey towards Catholicism.

Reading Etienne Gilson’s book *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* in 1937 opened Merton to Catholicism; a year later a book on the conversion of Gerard Manley Hopkins and his priestly vocation, followed by a meeting with Jacques Maritain, who concurrently with Gilson had re-interpreted the work of St Thomas Aquinas, led Merton to Corpus Christi Church where he was baptised on 22 February 1939. Merton, who felt his vocation to be with the Franciscan Order, saw Francis as an ‘Apostle who incarnated the whole spirit and message of the Gospels most perfectly.’\(^{1014}\) St Francis was, of all saints, ‘another Christ’ he writes in *No Man is an Island*. To be an *alter Christus* was the longing of Massignon’s life and the reason he became an ordained priest. In prayer, Merton connects with Massignon’s thought on substitution; in 1939 in his prayer to St Francis, after the rejection of his application to join the Franciscan Friary in New York, he asks for guidance through the saint’s prayers, that he ‘may soon be able to suffer so that someone else may not suffer.’ Merton’s quest led to his monastic vocation and desire for solitude as a Cistercian monk in 1941. Paradoxically almost immediately he became famous as an author of books on spirituality, monasticism, justice and peace issues, and a forerunner of inter-religious dialogue at a depth never before envisaged by the pre-Vatican II Catholic Church. Merton’s aim in writing was to make known God’s mercy and grace; he believed the spontaneous language of personal experience to be the most effective way to speak of God to twentieth century *laïcité*. Abbot John Eudes Bamberger entered Gethsemani in 1950 after reading *Seven Storey Mountain* while training to become a doctor; he states that Merton’s writing is ‘a process of cleansing the mirror of the heart so that it reflects all in the light of Christ [...] the luminous presence continues to shine out from many of his pages.’\(^{1015}\)

As a Cistercian monk at Gethsemani, Kentucky, Merton became deeply involved with the peace movement and supported the non-violent civil rights movement. In 1962, seventeen years after Hiroshima, the United States, Soviet Union, Great

\(^{1014}\) Thomas Merton, *No Man is an Island* (Kansas: Harvest, 1978).

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Britain and France were sole possessors of nuclear weapons, and a Catholic was President of the United States. In this political climate, Merton wished in some way to contribute to the Second Vatican Council and the voice of the Church for peace. He wrote *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*. Merton’s original manuscript was banned from being printed as a book by Dom Gabriel Sortais, the Abbot General of the Order of Cistercians of Strict Observance, and Merton silenced from further writing about war and nuclear armament. Dom Sortais was urged by Jacques Maritain to allow Merton to write, as he considered his work contained some of the finest writing of the twentieth century. Meanwhile, private circulation to friends of mimeographed copies had not been banned, and Merton sent a mimeographed copy of his unpublished work to Pope John XXIII. Gabriel Sortais forms a link between Merton and de Chergé: Dom Sortais and Leo-Etienne Duval, Archbishop of Algeria, both attended the Second Vatican Council. In 1963, Sortais expressed to Cardinal Duval his decision to close the Tibhirine Monastery founded in 1938, Cardinal Duval argued for the monastery to remain, as he saw Tibhirine as ‘the lung of the diocese’. The monastery was not closed and de Chergé was to live his monastic vocation there at Our Lady of Atlas for twenty-five years until 1996.

It is thought that Merton’s work, *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, influenced passages in *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, on the Church’s position against war and violence. It is noted in the foreword of the book published in 2004 that John XXIII showed his approval of Merton’s work through a personal gift and messages to Merton at Gethsemani Monastery. Many of the views expressed by Merton, critical of war and nuclear weapons, appeared in papal statements that culminated in John XXIII’s encyclical, *Pacem in Terris* in April 1963. Aware of the persecutions of Soviet totalitarian Communism but with true monastic insight Merton notes the

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1018 Salenson, p. 17.
1020 Ibid., p. xv.
demons within, against which we must struggle: ‘The struggle against totalitarianism is directed not only against an external enemy [...] but also against our own hidden tendencies towards fascist or collectivist aberrations.’

Merton had a special relationship with Russia, evident in his correspondence with Boris Pasternak, and through his appreciation of the Patristic writings of the Philokalia, his interest in Orthodox mysticism and of the importance of icons in his life. He notes his interest in the writings of the Russian émigré religious philosophers who were pivotal in Clément’s conversion. It is a paradox that as a Cistercian monk who desired solitude, Merton became a global traveller whose books on mysticism and social action were translated into many languages. Canon A M Allchin points out that ‘Merton’s home was in God, since God’s heart was his hermitage he was at home everywhere … in God’s creation.’ But this was possible only because ‘the universal was rooted in the particular’, which was Merton’s little hermitage in the woods where he sought solitude and prayer. He noted in his journal 30 December 1949, ‘Our whole life must be a dialectic between community and solitude.’ This is true also of St Bernard of Clairvaux who ‘described himself as a chimaera, because he was a monk whose frequent ecclesiastical and political involvements meant that he was rarely to be found in his monastery.

Sufism
Merton felt drawn to identify mystical forms of expression in other religions, this led to his exploration of Asian religions, especially Zen and other forms of Buddhism. Under the guidance of Louis Massignon, he studied Islam and the early Muslim mystics, developing a particular interest in Sufism. Fluent in French, he was reading Massignon’s classic study in comparative mysticism, Essai sur les

1021 Ibid., p. xix, cites Merton’s chapter ‘Can We Choose Peace? pp. 8-19.
origins du lexique technique de la mystique Musulmane,\textsuperscript{1025} on his Asian journey in 1968. Merton noted the phrase ‘experiential knowledge’ which described the approach Massignon took in his study of Muslim mystics,\textsuperscript{1026} by this he meant he was looking for the ‘grace which is wholly divine’;\textsuperscript{1027} Merton also adopted this approach. Massignon and Merton were unique at that time in their openness to interreligious dialogue in this way, believing ‘grace which was divine’ would be found in non-Christian faiths. Merton was impressed that the witness and intercession of a Muslim mystic had been instrumental in Massignon’s conversion and return to the Catholic faith of his childhood, noting in his diary that ‘Massignon and de Foucauld were both converted to Christianity by the witness of Islam to the one, true, living God.’\textsuperscript{1028} A mutual friend of Massignon and Merton, Herbert Mason, records, ‘Merton told me himself of the far-reaching effect this book had on his life, coming at a particularly critical moment for him, in helping him turn his attention towards the East.’\textsuperscript{1029} In 1959 Merton and Massignon began an exchange of correspondence, which continued until 1961. Mason believed ‘Merton sensed that M[assignon] was spiritually revolutionary for future Islamic/Christian influences.’\textsuperscript{1030} Merton believed of his own vocation, that if ‘literature, contemplative solitude, Latin America, Asia, Zen, Islam etc.,’ were excluded from his life ‘he would be less a monk.’\textsuperscript{1031}

Merton’s knowledge of Sufism was enriched by meeting and corresponding with Muslim student of Sufism Abdul Aziz. In correspondence, 1964, to Aziz, Merton anticipates the theology of the Second Vatican Council’s \textit{Nostra Aetate}, promulgated the following year, 28 October 1965, he writes: ‘How can one be in contact with the great thinkers and men of prayer of the various religions without recognising that these men have known God and have loved Him because they


\textsuperscript{1027} Griffith, ‘Mystics’, p. 301.


\textsuperscript{1031} Merton, \textit{Dancing}, p. 125.
recognised themselves loved by Him.'\textsuperscript{1032} However he affirms his Christian rootedness: ‘It is true there are different ways to Him, and some are more perfect and more complete than others. It is true that the revelation given to the “People of the Book”, Christians, Jews and Muslims, is more detailed and more perfect than that given through natural means only to the other religions.’\textsuperscript{1033} Both Massignon and Merton believed that the Catholic devotion to Our Lady of Fatima, the city in Portugal named after Muhammad’s daughter where once many Muslims lived, had a mystical importance that endorsed the notion of inter-faith communication between Muslims and Christians. Merton could see the far-reaching importance of this interaction globally. He wrote, ‘It seems to me that mutual comprehension between Christians and Muslims is something of vital importance today, and unfortunately it is rare and uncertain, or else subjected to the vagaries of politics.’\textsuperscript{1034}

In a letter to Aziz, 1965, Merton relates how close he feels to Sufi mysticism, ‘My prayer is then a kind of praise rising up out of the centre of Nothing and Silence […]. If He wills He can make the Nothingness into total clarity […]. It is not thinking about anything, but a direct seeking of the Face of the Invisible, which cannot be found unless we become lost in Him who is invisible.’\textsuperscript{1035} In some of his writings and lectures Merton recommended the Sufi practice of \textit{dhikr} which has much in common with the ‘Jesus Prayer’ from the hesychast tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy. Clément comments that the West sometimes places the Jesus prayer with other non-Christian methods such as the Muslim \textit{dhikr}, the Hindu \textit{japayoga}, but its ecclesial context for the Eastern Christian is \textit{hesychia}, a way of centring and focusing on God which for monks means silence and the peace of union with God.\textsuperscript{1036} Clément points to the Trinitarian character of the prayer, implicit in the text ‘No-one can say that Jesus is Lord unless the Holy Spirit is in him’ (1 Cor 12:3). Merton describes it as, ‘attention to the presence of God’ and ‘being before God as if you saw Him,’\textsuperscript{1037} noting words of St Theophan the

\textsuperscript{1033} Merton, \textit{Hidden}, p. 58.\
\textsuperscript{1034} Merton, \textit{Hidden}, p. 53. See Griffith, ‘Mystics’, p. 309.\
\textsuperscript{1035} Merton, Hidden, pp. 63-64. See Griffith, ‘Mystics’, p. 311.\
\textsuperscript{1036} Olivier Clément, ‘La Prière du Cœur’, \textit{Spiritualité Orientale}, 6 (Abbaye de Bellefontaine: 1970), pp. 41-98 (p. 44).\
\textsuperscript{1037} Merton, \textit{Hidden}, pp. 63-64. See Griffith, ‘Mystics’, p. 311.
Recluse, ‘Prayer is descending with the mind into your heart and there standing before the Face of the Lord, ever present, all seeing within you.’ Merton allowed Sufi ascetism to be at the heart of his prayer life, which he identified with the Sufi word *fana*, or ‘annihilation of all that is not God in oneself, and of the mystical presence of God (*baqa*) abiding in the saint as a witness to the Real.’ As Canon Allehin discerned of Merton, ‘God’s heart was his hermitage’; Merton uses Massignon’s phrase, *le point vierge*, to describe the secret centre of his own heart, touched only by God: ‘At the centre of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusion, a point of pure truth, a point or spark which belongs to God [...] This little point [...] is the pure glory of God in us. It is like a pure diamond, blazing with the invisible light of heaven. It is in everybody.’

**Pilgrimage**

‘Our real journey in life is interior.’ Merton sees this as a form of ‘exposed consciousness.’ Referring to his time in Asia, Merton says, ‘I come as a pilgrim.’ According to Benedictine David Steindl-Rast, the goal of pilgrimage in the context of monastic tradition is ‘exposure’ to the sacred presence of the holy place. Massignon observes that language itself is both a ‘pilgrimage’ and a ‘spiritual displacement’, because language with another evokes, with that person, ‘an Absentee, the third person’. Clément identifies pilgrimage this way: ‘Christian destiny is a pilgrimage towards “the place of the heart” where the Lord awaits us, and where he draws us.’

Sixty years ago, at the start of the French Algerian war in 1954, which continued until 1962, Louis Massignon discovered *La Chapelle des Sept Dormants* in Brittany at Vieux-Marché, dedicated to seven Christian saints. Seeing correspondence with the story in Sura XVIII of the Seven Sleepers who died in

Ephesus, who are also venerated by Muslims for their complete surrender to the will of God, and who are seen by them to be saints of the parousia, Massignon sought permission from the local archbishop\textsuperscript{1045} to include Muslims as well as Christians on an annual pilgrimage as a sign of hope and peace. At the fiftieth anniversary of the pilgrimage to Brittany in 2014, presiding Archbishop Tessier of Algiers, wished to associate the seven Martyrs of Ephesus with the memory of the seven monks of Tibhirine monastery in Southern Algeria, who were assassinated in 1996, by establishing a place of pilgrimage in Algeria as a sign of hope.\textsuperscript{1046}

\section*{3.4.v Olivier Clément (1921-2009)}

Clément recorded the circumstances of his conversion in \textit{L’autre soleil}, which is recorded in Part 1 above. Christ irrupted into his life during a dramatic spiritual encounter, when ‘Someone’ was looking at him, the One in the icon; everything was silence, words of silence, the silence was of Him, he was no longer alone. Clément,.convicted by the Holy Spirit, was moved to repentance, was healed and reinstated in a new life with Christ. Williams reflects on Vladimir Lossky’s theology of the ‘silence of Christ and of scripture’, which Williams interprets: ‘the truths spoken to us by the Word of God are never spoken by words alone.’ Lossky defines this as ‘a margin of silence’ to which we must listen, or the words will mean nothing; ‘the faculty of hearing the silence of Jesus’ is ‘attributed by St Ignatius to those who in truth possess his Word.’\textsuperscript{1047} Clément had confronted the desert of ‘nothingness’ that haunted him since childhood, and experienced transformation into a new life with Christ; his quest for truth took him deeply into a life of prayer and interior monasticism, where solitude was no longer an emptiness but a \textit{communion}. He moved from atheism to baptism in the Russian Orthodox francophone Church and life as a lay theologian, to become a tireless seeker of ecumenical harmony between East and West, with a particular interest in the Middle Eastern Churches of Constantinople, Antioch and Lebanon and the Christian presence in Europe. Williams comments on becoming a new creation,

\textsuperscript{1045} A characteristic of Massignon was his deep respect for the authority of the Church. He submitted all new projects and ideas to the Magisterium for approval.
\textsuperscript{1047} Rowan Williams, \textit{A Margin of Silence}, p. 39.
which in a monastic frame, ‘the life of solitude and communion together’ is a ‘matter of ecumenical significance’, and a radical calling to the whole people of God: a radical call expressed by St Paul. The message of the Gospels call us into a community that finds its deepest paradigm, to use Clément’s term, the Uni-Trinity; he writes, ‘there is nothing more profound ultimately, than the person and the communion of persons.’ Clément wants to communicate this mystery to others. This community, ‘the Body of Christ, is a new nation, a new polis or city, a new language taught by the Spirit, a new family.

Clément observes we have moved on from the era of the Fathers who worked throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, Christians today must do this throughout the world, it is a matter of scale. Over time, Clément came to understand the Mediterranean as holding immense historic, political and future importance for Europe and the Middle East and therefore globally. He recognised the significance and context of the Churches of Antioch as a Christian presence that has endured within a predominantly Muslim milieu and which had experienced spiritual revival in the twentieth century. ‘Mediterranean humanism’ and ‘Mediterranean genius’ had encouraged an inclusive and dialogical character; an organic approach of person to person characterises their search for truth that they endeavour to keep free and unbiased from nationalistic tendencies. Clément wants to show that these ancient Churches and Christianity in Europe need each other and need to identify with each other. Clément judges that for Christians, the prophecy of Muhammad has a place in the designs of God to which Christians are called to participate. He sees in the mysticism of Islam and in the Qu’ran that speaks of the Word and the Spirit of God, a Trinitarian ‘space’. Clément appeals to Christians to reflect on the prophecy of Muhammad with an open heart. He sees Muhammad as a prophet of the Old Testament and a prophet of the ultimate eschaton: Islam questions Israel waiting for a Messiah born of human paternity, it questions Christianity which became divided, imprisoning the Spirit in a kind of

1049 Colossians 3:12-17.
1050 Clément, Mémoires, p. 28.
1051 Williams, ‘Monastic Virtues’, p. 308.
1052 Clément, Mémoires, p. 28.
1053 Clément, Conversations, p. 211.
‘ecclesiolatry’. It is a reproach to Christians for not recognising sufficiently the monastic perfection, of which Jesus is the model. He sees the task of Christians in dialogue is defined by the Church Fathers who saw the presence of the Holy Spirit in all humanity.

As a mature Christian he became aware of the special vocation of Antioch and the renewal of Catholicism in Europe; he judges the united cooperation of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches to be vital to the future of Europe, together with hard-headed dialogue between Islam and Christianity. Massignon’s sense of double belonging to Catholicism and also to the *Umma* of Islam, is significant for Clément. His relationship with Mohamed Talbi concerning Christianity and Islam in their co-authored book is part of that development in which he became aware of zones of conversation and dialogue, and the overall importance of Europe.

Clément was influenced by the writing of Louis Massignon, with whom he was acquainted, and also the work of Massignon’s disciple, Youakim Moubarac, Lebanese Maronite scholar and priest. Clément believed the mutual respect that creates a space for dialogue must include mutual compassion and justice for the poor of the Third World and Palestinian refugees of the Middle East. Endorsing the ecumenical concerns of Bartholomew I, Clément writes that ‘humanity, or at least a few persons, must become truly compassionate’, through a transforming ‘divinely-inspired humanism’. The separation of Christian East and West led to rupture and ‘disintegration’, the encounter again between East and West in the twentieth century could lead Christianity into unity and communion, through ‘life of the Spirit in the Body of Christ’, each member a ‘unique person in communion with all other persons’. This Christian reality would be able to strive for peace and raise its voice against ‘fundamentalism’. Isaac of Syria is cited:

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1055 Ibid., p. 284.
1056 Talbi and Clément, *Un Respect Tête*. The book is less dialogical in nature than the editor intended and became more an explanation of belief and structure of each faith because Talbi and Clément unfortunately were never able to meet in face-to-face dialogue.
1057 Y Moubarac, 1924-1995, dedicated his life to interfaith dialogue between Christianity and Islam, to the unity of the Church and to Maronite Antiochian heritage.
1059 Ibid., p. 232.
1060 Ibid., p. 233.
When God sees that you have, in all purity of heart, placed your trust in him more than yourself, then a power unknown to you will make its dwelling within you. And you will perceive in all your senses the power of the One who is with you.

Williams reflects on the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Kingdom of God in an expression well known by Orthodox Christians from St Seraphim of Sarov: ‘the purpose of the Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit’. Williams notes this is a connection ‘western theology has been slow to make’, as has the understanding that ‘the Holy Spirit is a foretaste of things to come’, which are fundamental to understanding Eastern Christianity and Russian Orthodoxy in particular.

Arab Christians in Antioch experienced the influence of a double stream of Russian and Greek Orthodox spirituality, while retaining their ‘Arabness’. This would have been attractive to Clément, as would the French language spoken fluently by most Lebanese after the French Protectorate was established in 1926, with French administration continuing until 1944. It would seem that John Paul II saw this possibility for ‘unity in diversity’ for the Middle East in a paradigm he hoped for and was partly realised in Lebanon. In 1997 during his visit to Beirut, when over a million people of all sects and beliefs attended his Mass in Martyrs’ Square, he proclaimed that ‘Lebanon is more than a country; it is a message of freedom and an example of pluralism for East and West.’ The pope’s visit, coming soon after the end of the tragic civil war, received almost unanimous support from political and religious leaders. His presence brought renewed hope of genuine reconciliation and justice in a country that had once been a model of pluralism in the Middle East. He encouraged young Muslims and Christians of the many faith groups of Lebanon to enter into greater dialogue, calling them to ‘open with confidence a new page in their history’. During the papal visit to Lebanon in 2012, Pope Benedict XVI discussed the relationship between secularism and politics, recognising the need for a healthy secularism, ‘un sens laïcité’ that frees religion and allows politics to be enriched by religion bringing harmony in service.

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1061 Williams, A Margin of Silence, p. 11.
1062 Ibid.
1063 A Special Assembly for Lebanon of the Synod of Bishops was convened 26.11.95-14.12.95 on the theme ‘Christ is our hope: renewed by his Spirit, in solidarity, we give witness to his love.’ The final document A New Hope for Lebanon was signed in Beirut by John Paul II, 10 May 1997.
of the common good. Antoine Audo, Jesuit Chaldean bishop of Aleppo, proclaimed the contribution of Christians at the heart of conflict in an Arab Muslim society, was love and solidarity for the good of all with courage to be involved in change without violence. The ‘Church of the Arabs’ has a special responsibility as a tiny Christian presence in the world of Islam. ‘Christianity in the Middle East has a witness beyond itself.’ The responsibility of a minority prayerful presence was realised in the monastic witness of Christian de Chergé.

3.4.vi Christian de Chergé (1937-1996)
Christian de Chergé’s future became rooted in a foreign land when as a young child his family lived for three years in Algeria at the beginning of the Second World War in 1939. In those early years in Algeria he was touched by the way Muslims prayed and encouraged by his mother to recognise that they prayed to the same God as he did. These childhood impressions would have formed the background for his thought throughout twenty-seven months national service in Algeria during the War of Independence (1954-1962). It was during this time that he met and became friends with Mohammed, an Algerian village policeman, a devout Muslim married with ten children. Walking together one evening, they were attacked by hostile members of the FLN, Mohammed immediately placed himself in front of de Chergé and argued successfully to save his life; the next day Mohammed was found murdered by his well. The sacrifice of his Muslim friend’s life, given for him, confirmed de Chergé in his dedication to Algeria and to God.

Christian was the son of a French general and one of eight siblings, all brought up as Catholics. He studied theology at the Institut Catholique de Paris from October 1956-June 1964. Olivier Clément was a Professor at the Catholic Institute as well as at the Orthodox Institute of St Sergius in Paris; both men would have been deeply disturbed by the massacre in Paris in 1961 when police attacked a peaceful demonstration of supporters of Algerian independence, killing, it is thought, 200

1064 At a special Guest Lecture at the Centre for Eastern Christianity, Heythrop College, on 19 October 2012, Bishop Audo spoke on the situation in the Middle-East especially Syria.  
1066 Front de Liberation Nationale, an Algerian socialist political party that sought Algerian independence from France.  
1067 Salenson, p. 2.
people. De Chergé continued his studies in Rome at the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies, under Robert Casper and Maurice Boormans for a further two years, when the work of Massignon would have been discussed. He was ordained in Paris, 1964, and in 1969 entered the Cistercian Abbey of Aiguebelle, mother house of Our Lady of Atlas at Tibhirine, where he took up his vocation to be ‘one who prays among others who pray’.\textsuperscript{1068} He remained at Tibhirine for twenty-five years, twelve of which he served as abbot of the community. He offered employment to local Algerians, medical care and lessons in literacy, organised an annual conference to promote Muslim-Christian dialogue and invited Muslims to stay in the monastery compound.

Confirmation of his monastic vocation occurred in the year before his solemn profession, referred to as a ‘nuit de feu’,\textsuperscript{1069} an experience that reminds us of Blaise Pascal’s night of fire.\textsuperscript{1070} Christian was praying a prayer of surrender one evening in the near darkness of the monastery church, between the altar and the tabernacle, when a Muslim guest came to him in the quiet of the evening and asked to pray with him. Their voices joined in praises of ‘the One from who all love is born’ for three hours; it gave Christian immense hope and knowledge that this was a possibility of eternity.\textsuperscript{1071} He says ‘These three hours made me live what my faith for centuries and centuries had known was possible.’\textsuperscript{1072} The death of Mohammed revealed the mystery of the communion of saints to de Chergé, an eschatological reality which is ‘a beyond that is present, a beyond that is coming towards us.’\textsuperscript{1073} He wanted to demonstrate that Muslims and Christians can live together: ‘the only way for us to give witness [...] is to be what we are in the midst of banal realities.’ De Chergé felt supported in his witness by the vision of John Paul II concerning interreligious dialogue.\textsuperscript{1074} Dialogue, he wrote, is ‘an interior path’ based on spiritual unity which exists between persons; ‘to draw close to the

\textsuperscript{1068} Salenson, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{1069} De Chergé speaks of a ‘night of fire’ in \textit{L’Invincible espérance} (Paris: Bayard, 2010), p. 3.
\textsuperscript{1070} Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), experienced a religious vision described afterwards by him as ‘Fire’, during the night of 23 November 1654, when he prayed to the ‘God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob [...] God of Jesus Christ’.
\textsuperscript{1071} Salenson, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{1072} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1073} Ibid., p. 102.
other and to draw close to God: these are one and the same.\textsuperscript{1075} Both de Chergé and Clément draw attention to St Thérèse of the Child Jesus who saw we are all seated at ‘the sinners table’; the foundation of dialogue is thus the ‘mercy of God for everyone’.

Two years before his death de Chergé wrote a letter forgiving his future assassins, sealed it and left it with his mother in France, to be opened posthumously. He not only forgave the rebels who killed him, he did so before the event, which in some way he anticipated would happen soon. The time came in May 1996 when a radical Muslim group kidnapped seven of the community including the abbot and later put them to death. Christian wrote, ‘I forgive with all my heart the one who will strike me down. I could not desire such a death […] my death will confirm those who hastily judged me naive or idealistic’. To ‘my last-minute friend […] I commend you to the God in whose face I see yours […]. And may we find each other happy “good thieves” in Paradise.’ In the fourth century, St Ephrem\textsuperscript{1076} understood that to speak publicly about theological thought and faith requires prayer in silence and in private:

\begin{quote}
Truth and love are wings which cannot be separated, 
for Truth cannot fly without Love, nor can Love soar 
aloft without Truth, their yoke is one of amity.\textsuperscript{1077}
\end{quote}

Unconditional hospitality shows compassion to the stranger, the guest, the foreigner; it is an essential element of becoming a follower of Christ. Genesis 18 describes Abrahamic hospitality: Abraham bowed down to welcome the faces of three uninvited strangers, then served them with food and drink. De Chergé embraced the spiritual ideal of radical hospitality and radical faith in interreligious fraternity.\textsuperscript{1078} Both Massignon and de Chergé entered into deeper understanding of

\textsuperscript{1075} Salenson, ‘Commissions’.
\textsuperscript{1076} St Ephrem the Syrian, a deacon, probably born in 306, he died 373 in the area now south-east Turkey. He spoke Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic, the language spoken in Palestine in the first century AD to the present day. He became famous as a gifted theologian and poet. See The Harp of the Spirit: Poems of Saint Ephrem the Syrian, Introduction and trans. by Sebastian Brock (Cambridge: Aquila Books, 2013), p. 152.
\textsuperscript{1077} Ibid., ‘Hymns on Faith No. 20.
the Catholic Eucharist and communion of saints \(^{1079}\) because of their encounter with a Muslim. De Chergé reflected often on the death of his friend Mohammed, ‘Each Eucharist makes him infinitely present to me in the Glorified Body for he lived the Eucharist to the end.’ \(^{1080}\) He rejoiced in his Christian monastic vocation, the gift of encounter with the other, lived in a Muslim context, as ‘the gift of the Spirit, whose secret joy will always be to establish communion and restore the likeness, playing with the differences.’ \(^{1081}\)

3.4.vii Conclusions

Prophets and pioneers arise in each era to point to what is authentic. The call for unity in diversity, expressed in the lives of Massignon, Merton, Clément and de Chergé, characterises this prophetic role. They were Christians who witnessed to the power of Christ and lived in the power of the Holy Spirit, alive and active in the world and the Church. The Holy Spirit activates the renewal of Christian theology in several places and persons simultaneously, if persons open to receive.

Merton writes:

> For as the wind carries thousands of invisible, and visible winged seeds, so the stream of time brings with it germs of spirituality that come to rest imperceptibly in the minds and wills of men. Most of these unnumbered seeds perish and are lost, because men are not prepared to receive them: for such seeds as these cannot spring up anywhere except in the good soil of liberty and desire. \(^{1082}\)

They all wished to share knowledge of the gift of God’s compassion and mercy, by living, speaking and writing a theology of encounter. Each of them had recognised God’s mercy in a personal, metanoic experience, which opened them to repentance and forgiveness and led them to express their faith within the context of radical hospitality. Spiritual experience and biographical cultural context were foundational to the vocational choices each one made, which led to a


\(^{1080}\) Salenson, ‘Commissions’, p. 23.


life of service, prayer, ecumenism, encounter with other religions and interior monasticism.

The eschatological orientation of monastic life and interreligious dialogue are linked together. Monastic life is a sign in the Church and a *kairos*\(^{1083}\) that Massignon, Clément, Merton and de Chergé have brought to the attention of men and women of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in a particular way. The monastic way reminds the Church that ‘eschatology refers to the transcendent dimension of reality, a reality that is fulfilled only if it is open to the divine [...] goes beyond its limits [...] transcends itself [...] and manifests God;’\(^{1084}\) in Massignon’s words, ‘to make us go beyond ourselves, our country, our clan: to go beyond all in love.’\(^{1085}\) They have highlighted the importance of interior monasticism as a call to holiness to the universal Church in a communion of saints past, present and to come.

The legacy of their lives lies in their shared passion for peace, justice, compassion for the poor and marginalised of society, and an openness to the other in an encounter that recognises the mutual and fundamental worth and dignity of each person. This legacy is a valuable contribution to the Church and people of the twenty-first century, for the guidance of politicians in a global and contemporary ‘dialogue of civilisations’ that seeks the future well-being of humankind. Mutual respect creates a space for dialogue: Massignon, Merton, Clément and de Chergé have given us an authentic paradigm of radical faith and radical hospitality: a lived theology of eschatological hope

Clément while remaining deeply committed to the Orthodox tradition was able to reassess his ancestral Catholic roots through the lens of spiritual renewal flowing in twentieth-century French Catholicism; he evaluated the spiritual and ecclesial paradigm of Antioch and the Mediterranean Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, which as at Antioch, learnt to co-exist alongside Islam. This maturing view enabled him to engage powerfully with issues regarding the papacy, ecclesial

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\(^{1084}\) Phan, *Culture and Eschatology*, p. 2.
unity and interfaith encounter. They highlighted the importance of interior monasticism as a call to holiness to the universal Church.

PART 3.ii Conclusion to Part 3

Laïcité is a key word in understanding the contemporary French mindset. Clément argues for an open, positive secularism that recognises religions play a constructive role in society. He warns against a political and polemic secularism that is selective and against diversity, and raises a warning against a totalitarian aspect that can arise in Islam; militant secularism reacts in a similar suppressive way to religious fundamentalist groups. The way of dialogue and encounter is a Christian response to militant secularism and religious fundamentalism, seen in the lives of Massignon, Merton, Clément and de Chergé in their testimony to the eschatological role of monasticism and possibility of ‘interiorised monasticism’. Their thought not only influenced the milieu in which they worked, it contributed concretely to important discussions of the Second Vatican Council and changes in the Catholic Church’s self-understanding in its relationship with other Christian Churches, other religions, modernity and all people.
Christ-centred and Christ-committed, Clément was a man of the Church, an ecclesial man, who believed the meaning of life was to be found in the Lord Jesus, who would transform the world. He responded to the universal call to holiness, a call by Christ that he heard through the ecclesial, liturgical and spiritual presence of the Orthodox Church. The call to holiness lies at the heart of John Paul II’s new evangelisation, the basis upon which Clément and the Pontiff enjoyed a fundamental relationship. Clément sought to bring the riches of Eastern and Western Christianity ecumenically into fruitful synergy, while living in his work and daily life the meaning of St John Chrysostom’s words, the ‘liturgy after the liturgy’. He embraced the wisdom expressed by Paul Evdokimov, ‘It is not enough to say prayers, one must become, be prayer, prayer incarnate. It is not enough to have moments of praise. All of life, each act, every gesture, even the smile on the human face, must become a hymn of adoration, an offering, a prayer. One should offer not what one has but what one is,’ a monastic prayer which was significantly ‘lay’ in character, which Evdokimov named interiorised monasticism.

During Clément’s long and creative life as a Christian writer, historian and Patristic scholar his ecclesiological and ecumenical endeavour contributed significantly to the renewal of Orthodox theology in the twentieth century, bringing the creative thought of the ‘Paris School’ into twenty-first century theological discourse. Clément’s importance as a thinker continues to have significant contemporary relevance for the future of Christianity in Europe and worldwide. He realised that a renewal of ecclesiology through ressourcement that pointed to the mystery of the Church and the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church and the world, would bring new life to ecclesial structures. Arjakovsky, who recognises Clément as a master for the Church of the twentieth-first
century, demonstrates ‘that Orthodox theology is not static and goes beyond the “orthodox” historical self-consciousness of a given era and even beyond the boundaries of the Orthodox Church.’ Clément took forward the baton held out by theologians and thinkers of the Russian ‘Paris School’, to make the West more aware of the riches of the Christian East; Arjakovsky has taken the baton, a synthesis of the ‘Paris School and Clément’s thought, to creatively bring it forward into the religious, public and political domain of East and West in the twenty-first century. Clément recognised an irenic and dialogical respect for the ‘other’ was essential in ecumenical endeavour and interreligious or cultural encounter; he was recognised as ‘master’ of personal encounter and witness, who touched many lives. The paradigm of the life and work of Lossky and Evdokimov as lay Orthodox theologians, opened a door for Clément to fulfil his own ‘destiny’. His writing carries with it a sense of joy that is infectious, a hope that is founded on the Resurrection of Christ who has overcome death, and who has called each person to become ‘one of the living’, as Clément describes it, it is a call from the Christ who prefers each person. He is a cosmic Christ: God who became man, so that man might become god.

Firmly rooted in the Orthodox tradition, he remained both French and European; as he grew in stature as a Christian thinker his sphere of influence became international. He established friendships with popes and patriarchs, Eastern and Western Churches and Communities, often becoming a spokesman for them to a wide audience through his books. In this way The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn provides an important spiritual, theological and political reading of Russia and Solzhenitsyn as well as of Clément himself; he acclaimed the parable presented by the Taizé and Sant’Egidio communities; he presented the thought of Patriarchs Athenagoras and Bartholomew. Over time Clément was able to reassess his deeper ancestral, and not just familial Catholic roots, through the lens of spiritual renewal flowing in twentieth century French Catholicism; he evaluated the spiritual and ecclesial paradigm of Antioch, and Mediterranean Orthodox and

1090 Arjakovsky, Olivier Clément, Un maître pour l’Église du XXI siècle.
1092 Arjakovsky, The Way; Conversations with Lubomyr Cardinal Husar; Russie Ukraine: De la Guerre à la paix.
Catholic Christianity, which as at Antioch, learnt to co-exist alongside Islam. Clément judges that the full meaning of the Council of Chalcedon has only begun to be understood fifteen centuries later.\textsuperscript{1094} Clément gives us a compass reading that indicates progress in mutual correction and mutual enrichment is underway, and a healing of memories has started. Speaking as a theologian of great stature to the world of the new millennium, he calls Christians to be rooted in a spirituality beyond history, to become witnesses of a prophetic and creative spirituality that is capable of throwing light on history as it evolves.

Clément deeply longed for the unity of an undivided Church. Congar judged that, ‘Theology is only really ‘catholic’ when […] it breathes deeply and uses both its lungs.’\textsuperscript{1095} It would seem Congar’s visit to Athenagoras in 1954, the ninth centenary of the ‘mutual estrangement’ in 1054, paved the way for Paul VI and Athenagoras to embrace as heads of Sister Churches in Jerusalem in 1964. Clément’s visit to Athenagoras in 1968, a landmark in his own development which gave him the direction and peace of Athenagoras’ own irenic approach, that marked Clément’s later writing. His written response to John Paul II’s invitation to fraternal discussion on the role of papal primacy in \textit{Rome Autrement}, is one example of this change in Clément. He perceived there was a place in Orthodox ecclesiology for the position of universal leadership, but this required ecumenical reinterpretation of primacy in the universal Church. In his ‘prophetic synthesis’\textsuperscript{1096} of East and West in \textit{Rome Autrement}, Clément judged John Paul II’s encyclical \textit{Ut unum sint} to be a doorway of ecumenical hope.

It would seem he regarded himself neither as Greek nor Russian Orthodox, but rather as a Christian rooted in the Orthodox Church, with the freedom to write and speak of things he held to be of great importance without being restricted by intégriste or nationalist ideologies. His attitude to ecumenism made him a figure of suspicion with some Orthodox, particularly after his critique of nationalism amongst Orthodox clergy during the 1990’s following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

\textsuperscript{1095} Clancy, p. 321.
\textsuperscript{1096} Arjakovsky, Olivier Clément, \textit{Un maître}. 

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The five different Patriarchates of Antioch today, situated at the heart of the Arab and Islamic world, in Damascus and neighbouring Beirut in Lebanon, to which they had historically been displaced, provided a paradigm of religious plurality where a balance is maintained in relationships between Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Christians in a dominantly Muslim environment. Reflecting on this indigenous plurality Clément was able to transpose this dialogical Middle Eastern paradigm into a European context, which has particular relevance for Ukraine and the West. An anticipation of Clément’s reflection on Greek Catholic tradition in Europe and Antioch can be found also in an earlier historical context, in which Russian Catholics brought their religious quest into a profound exchange with the Russian tradition in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Antiochian paradigm includes the development of the Melkite Church, an Ecumenical Movement seeking unity within indigenous plurality; and inter-religious dialogue between Christians and the multiple expressions of Islam in Syria and Lebanon. Clément promoted ecumenical movement between Orthodoxy, Catholicism and the Greek-Catholic and Orthodox Churches, which he perceived as a model which should open new ways of thinking by the Moscow Patriarchate regarding the Greek-Catholic Church in Ukraine. Clément recognised the global importance for a paradigm of Christian unity in diversity, that contributes to Christian dialogue with Islam and with a so-called ‘secularised’ society in an increasingly plural European community. Sidarouss’ notion of an ‘enlightened secularism’ lends itself to this paradigm of dialogical alterity, also put forward by Habermas and Ratzinger who advocate the West must recognise and embrace the complementarity of the ‘sacred’ and the ‘secular’ in a sacred-secular dialectic of truth. Clément however warns against totalitarian tendencies of religious ideologies.

Exploring the biographical and geographical context of the lives of three other great French-born thinkers of the twentieth century, Massignon, Merton, and De Chergé, alongside Clément, illuminated similarities that evolved in each courbe de vie. A personal encounter with Christ was seen to be essential to a ‘metanoic

1097 Arjakovsky, ‘In Support of a Radical Definition of Orthodoxy’; the author uses a ‘four-fold schema to analyse the history and identity of the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church’.
turn’ and subsequent response to the call of the Gospels through repentance and forgiveness of self and others. Experiential spirituality was foundational to their committed work in ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, and theology of encounter, in which they saw the Church acting as leaven in the dough of human endeavour. They embraced the notion of alterity within a multicultural world with compassion, knowing that a theology of encounter goes beyond dialogue in an authentic expression of love. The Arab *moussayara*, as explained earlier by Bishop Audo, ‘to walk in company with’, echoes the promise of Christ to be with us even to the end of time; it resonates with the call of the Gospel to walk with each other in an attitude of welcome, of patience, and of balance. Monastic life is a sign in the Church, a lay movement with ecumenical significance. The eschatological orientation of monastic life and interreligious dialogue are linked together in a *kairos* for the Church and for the world, which Massignon, Clément, Merton and de Chergé have brought to our attention in a particular way.

The quest for truth runs through this narrative like a strand of gold that leads to Massignon’s ‘point vierge’, which Merton describes as a ‘point of pure truth’ at the ‘centre of our being’ which ‘belongs entirely to God’; a strand which has filaments of ‘resistance’ and ‘protest’ woven into it. Resistance in Weil comes close to the spiritual roots of the ‘monastic protest’ of Massignon and Merton, yet her ‘monastic’ rigour in fasting was detrimental to her bodily health. These filaments are present in Clément and Evdokimov’s interior monasticism for all Christians; their endeavour to live the liturgy outside and beyond the church, found a balance and equilibrium in their dialogue with the modern world. In their quest, they are united in Solzhenitsyn’s command to ‘live not by the lie’; it is this quest for truth that makes them real and authentic persons. The early ascetics responded by a monastic protest, that Clément calls a ‘sanctified rebellion’ that removed them from a society that mistakenly judged political power and wealth could be a representative expression of Christianity. He notes a continuity of ‘monastic silence’ continued in Orthodoxy through Hesychasm, the ‘silence of

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1100 Oyer, Ibid.
contemplatives’, and identifies with St John Chrysostom, who defended the rights of the oppressed, in the saint’s phrase, ‘the sacrament of our brother’, that recognised the poor person is another Christ; Merton sees identification with the underprivileged as an ‘epiphany’. Clément expresses sorrow over the ‘schism between the sacrament of the altar and the sacrament of the brother’, discerning it as one of the most ruinous schisms in Christian history. ‘Christians cannot stay far from the abandoned and the rebellious’. Clément identifies two prophetic voices of the twentieth century in John XXIII and Athenagoras I, recognising the ‘revolutionary force within Christianity’ is ‘that of Christ the vanquisher of death’.

Clément’s thought on the nature of ‘human being’ developed over a lifetime, to become his important contribution to a theology of the person, an important key to relations with Christians and other religions. The person for him is an absolutely unique presence, unique in that it reflects the living God, an image of alterity. Sidarouss noted an international return to national and religious identity that may be the result of invasive ideologies threatening the very existence and identity of the ‘other’; Clément’s thought on the person as an image of alterity, not identity, thus has deep significance for the choices made in the twenty-first century. He has assisted the move away from individualism, which can become sterile, and stands in cultural opposition to ideological liberalism. In an age that considers cosmic images to be the most profound, Clément believed there is nothing more profound ultimately than the person, and the communion of persons. The source of this profound insight is the Trinity, or as Clément prefers, the ‘Uni-Trinity’. Lossky had directed Clément to the Fathers of the Church and pointed to their importance for the contemporary age. Clément’s seminal work Sources is a significant response to the richness he found. His understanding of Christianity broadened and matured throughout his life and his thought continues to make its mark in the twenty-first century; he is recognised as a contemporary Church Father, between

1103 Oyer, p. 84.  
1104 Clément, On Human Being, p. 98.  
1105 Ibid., p. 99.  
1106 Ibid., p.100.
East and West.\textsuperscript{1107} From a rich legacy of thought and action through nine decades of his life, his profound contribution to a theology of the ‘person’ may become his greatest legacy to the twenty-first century.

\textsuperscript{1107} Arjakovsky, ‘Olivier Clément, Un maître pour l’Église du XXI siècle.’


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