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Being a People: Reflections on the Concept of the 'Laity'*

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I

'Once you were not a people; but now you are the people of God' (I Peter 2:10). This is perhaps the fundamental text for thinking about the meaning of *laos* in Christian theology, a text that directly evokes the promise of Hosea 2:24, though it gives it a new turn of significance. In Hosea, God has declared that he will cast off those who were called his people (1:9), reversing the ancient covenant formula expressing God's commitment to Israel (Ex. 6:7, Deut. 4:20; c.f. Jer. 13:11, 31:34). God has forged a nation out of the disparate elements he has brought out of Egypt, and has adopted this nation as his own, the one to which he gives his law and reveals his name. But in the New Testament usage cited, it is as if the author addresses himself to the even more diverse persons who now make up the Church; they have *never* been a 'nation', they have never belonged together, but now they have been given – as we might say – a 'stake' in each other, a common ground of identity.

This is to say more than that the grace of God creates a 'community' – a word notoriously difficult to define with any precision. A 'people' is both a group that provides a basic, non-negotiable identity for its members, a foundation of shared kinship, and a structure within which the life of its members is lived. For the Church of God to be described as a *laos* is for it to be seen as in important respects like a nation, a political and social body. When the Christian Scriptures call the Church 'Israel', they are not simply employing a loose metaphor for a collection of like-minded individuals or for a body of close-knit persons characterised by a particularly strong corporate life; they are claiming that there is a given common ground for the identity of Christian believers that is more like belonging to an ethnic or linguistic group than anything else and that has a public structure that manifests this common ground.

It could be said at once that this identifies the Church with a kind of tribalism, with an exclusive and potentially divisive sense of belonging that sets up markers designed to keep others out; this, surely, is what a nation or a people looks like in much of our experience. An age in which monstrous forms of nationalism have brought about a regime of death and misery in so much of Europe and Africa, an age

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in which destructive myths of national identity foment racism and murderous prejudice, is not an age likely to be sympathetic to the idea that the Church is more like a 'nation' than a free or voluntary community. In response to this, however, I shall be looking at the work of one Anglican theologian who would argue that it is precisely *because* our age is like this that we need to retrieve the image of the Church as nation. William Stringfellow – probably the most creative and disturbing lay theologian of the Anglican Church in this century – wrote in the 1970s that the Church was called above all to be a *holy* nation, exactly as was Israel, in the sense that the Church is summoned to show with a nation *might* be.[1] Stringfellow claims that Christians are in danger of making too much of the vocation of 'exceptional' believers, heroes of faith, whose consciences are exceptionally well-endowed, as if with a sort of artistic genius. Their witness is like the masterpiece of a major creative spirit.[2] In contrast, says Stringfellow, we should think of conscience as a common and given reality for the whole Church. The *Church* is supposed to do the witnessing. And it is supposed to do so precisely because only the Church as a visible body can effectively stand against other collectivities, other kinds of belonging that do indeed speak of exclusion and mutual fear. At a time when the frontiers of other collectivities are being more and more firmly drawn and closely defended, the Church (as in its first years of existence) is there to relativise all other belongings by its witness to a common identity given by God's grace, not by any natural processes.[3] In such a 'nation' there is no way of knowing in advance who is and who isn't an insider, who does and who doesn't belong with you; you know only that a people has been created where once there was no people, that a common identity has been given to those with nothing in common. And on this basis, all grounds of identity that rest upon natural kinship are put in question.

'The church', says Stringfellow, '... is the exemplary nation juxtaposed to all the other nations'.[4] In the face of the demonic presence in national social and political life of the trend towards idolatry, towards absolutising the local and tangible, and of the incapacity of worldly nations effectively to repent and be converted, the Church – a visible, institutional ground of identity, a historically tangible 'people' – represents the calling of all human beings to belong together in justice. In this sense, the Church is also, for Stringfellow, 'the priest of nations': while it is visibly a polity and structure among others, it has the task not only of showing to others what the true ground of human belonging is, but also of undertaking what he calls 'advocacy' on behalf of every victim in such a way that it becomes worship.[5] This is a complex idea, expressed (as usual with Stringfellow) in painfully compressed form. What it seems to mean is this. The Church's willingness to stand with the victims of the nations of this world arises out of its own experience of God's victory over death, its own experience of the possibility of resisting the power of idolatry and so discovering what cannot be destroyed. So when it stands with the powerless and the victims, it does so in conscious and articulate gratitude for God's ability to take us beyond death. Advocacy becomes praise; and praise itself, properly understood, is a political matter because it witnesses to a God who brings us where no power or principality of this earth can intimidate or confine us.[6]

In this role of advocacy, the Church offers God's judgment upon the life of a nation that does not live by true *law* – that is, by a justice that is open to and for all; and it does so for the sake of the healing of a nation. Stringfellow discusses the need (in the 1960s) for resistance to the Vietnam War in terms of the need of 1960s America for healing and the 'restoration of humanity'. The blessing of the persecutors commanded by Christ becomes a passionate prayer for their own release

from untruth and lawlessness. The 'nation' of the Church, which, like ancient Israel, seeks to live by the fundamental law of God, exhibits what it is to live by law; it offers justice for and to all in its own life, and it demonstrates to the other nations what is at their own heart, if they are at all seeking to live by law.[7] This is

> the church which is the exemplary nation juxtaposed to all the other nations; the church which as a principality and institution transcends the bondage to death in the midst of fallen creation; the church which presents and represents in its corporate life creation restored in celebration of the World of God; the church in which the vocation of worship and advocacy signifies the renewed vocation of every creature.[8]

By bringing to clear utterance the experience of a God who overcomes death, the Church breaks down the barrier between this earth and God's heaven, God's kingdom, and in so doing exercises a priestly task in and on behalf of the nations.

II

All this is involved in belonging to the *laos* which is the Church; all this is involved in being a layperson. It has been said tediously often that the common modern meaning of 'layperson', someone who has no expertise in some subject or other, is wholly at odds with what the term means primitively in the theological context. There can be no sensible discussion of lay vocations without confronting what we mean by the Christian *laos* in the first place. But before going on to explore further what it is that the *laos* does, I want to pause to ask *how* the *laos* comes to be. So far, we have seen how the Jewish and Christian Scriptures speak of God's act and calling as the sole ground of the new people's existence. If a nation's identity has something to do with the ability to identify a history in common, or a common origin, then the common origin of *this* nation is in that set of events to which the Church looks back as mediating the summons or invitation of God: the events of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

But to say this does less than justice to what is involved in the creation of the Church. The Church is not simply the body of those summoned to be *with* Jesus, but more significantly of those who are called to participate in what Jesus *does*. This is the possibility established in the resurrection: Jesus has called disciples to be with him in his ministry and has commissioned them to do certain things in his name; after the resurrection, that call is renewed and reinforced. Not even death can silence the call, not even the refusals of the disciples themselves. And in the resurrection life, the call is no longer primarily a summons heard from outside, but is now an impulsion from within, the prompting and enabling that the Holy Spirit gives. In the sacramental communion of the Body of Christ, the call of Jesus is bound up with the already existing presence of the action of Jesus through the indwelling of the Spirit who equips us for praying the prayer of Jesus (Rom. 8, Gal. 4).

Thus to belong to the Christian *laos* is to be involved in a divine action. We may not always or even often be aware of this action that animates our own action, and our actions and dispositions may frequently get in the way of the realising of God's action. Yet this is the identifying feature of being in Christ. There is no 'lay' identity without the action of God in Jesus Christ being present; there is therefore no appropriation of this identity without a recognition of the call to live more deeply 'into' the reality of what Jesus does. And what this amounts to is, of course, a complex matter. We can fairly easily speak of sharing Christ's 'active' ministry of healing and

absolution, of the proclamation of the coming order of justice and inclusion; but we have to recall that Jesus' proclamation of the coming Kingdom gradually, as the Gospel narrative unfolds, becomes inseparable from his own self-offering, his surrender to the Father and his embrace of the cross. The action of Jesus rests at every point on this 'givenness' to the Father, the attentiveness to the uncompromising reality of the God who is acknowledged as his source and nurturer that enables his practical ministry and draws him through the horror of abandonment and death. The baptised member of the *laos* is involved in a divine action that leads into the breaking of easy models of divinity, into Jesus' dereliction and the victory over death that can come only by way of that absolute dereliction, that absolute dissolution of what we think we know of God.

The divine action in which the laity are caught up is, in other words, fundamentally a matter of *sacrifice*. Belonging to a priestly people means the absorption in one's life of the pattern of Christ's life. Utter attentiveness to the Father, an attentiveness that takes us strangely beyond any graspable picture of the divine source, demands the sacrifice of the God we can control. And as such it entails the willingness to be open to God in any and every situation, including and especially situations of apparent Godlessness. By sustaining such an openness, there is a sort of bringing of the situation to God, or at least a *naming* of the God present already. This naming and offering is the priestly task of the people, their sacrifice of praise.

III

The foremost Romanian Orthodox theologian of this century, Dumitru Staniloae, placed at the heart of his account of the relation of Christians to the world around them the notion of a *responsibility* laid upon human beings.[9] They are made to be listeners; their vocation is always to be 'answerable' as well as answering. All created things exist in response to the word of God in creation; each element of creation shows the creative word by its very being-in-response. But the human calling is to accept and assimilate and actualise these 'words' reflected in the environment, to make concrete their interconnection in the human project of building a reconciled world through history.[10] In our involvement with the created world, we listen for the word of God that is there, and we struggle to 'speak' it afresh for ourselves, drawing it into the task of shaping *human* meanings.[11] In this sense, we make answer for creation to God; we try to 'name' what is before us in such a way that God's action moves in our act and speech. And this is especially the case as we try to engage in love with one another, looking or listening for the complex word that is there in another human presence. *Our* response to another person is part of God's enabling of *their* response, and so of their fulfilled life.

In a conversation of 1981[12] Staniloae spoke of our discipleship in terms of a continuing pilgrimage into this responsibility, into the 'fire' of responsibility, connecting the theme with Christ's impatience to complete his work (c.f. Luke 12:49). This fire is

> the impatience to do something for others, to give oneself to others, to give oneself to God. In this sense, it is impossible to recognise in the Church the Body of Christ unless the Church is giving itself in this way. This Body receives from Christ that fire of responsibility by which the baptised are bound one to another, and which they spread around themselves.[13]

The Body of Christ is thus characterised by a sort of *eros*: responsibility means not a diffuse sense of obligation to do good, but an experienced need or hunger for the naming of the world in and through God and the service that arises from this. Staniloae is deploying the heavily charged language of 'impatience' and the association of Christ's impatience with the consuming presence of the Spirit in him in order to avoid any suggestion that activism in itself can rightly be seen as the proper exercise of the believer's responsibility. Ultimately, a 'responsibility' that does not communicate the *eros*, the fieriness, of Christ's responsibility, says Staniloae, fails to be a truthful response to God and God's creation.[14]

It is clear that Stringfellow's notion of 'advocacy', outlined earlier, stands very close to Staniloae's 'responsibility'. The former makes no sense without the underlying conviction of God's victory over death, and it issues always in praise: the end of advocacy is that God is glorified. The latter associates all we do or struggle to do with a divine action that is not simply a pattern of exemplary behaviour in human history, but is still more significantly an eternal purposiveness, manifest in the earthly Jesus in the dramatic form of impatient longing. For both theologians, the Anglican and the Orthodox, standing alongside the sufferer or victim is a theologically freighted action, a move into the space opened up by the prior movement of God to the side of the sufferer. The speech of the believer becomes the attempt to allow God's word to be heard, the word that is at the ground of the sufferer's being, and, by letting it be heard, to begin to weave it closer into the broad pattern of a reconciled world, where the words of created diversity are brought back into harmony with the true and single Word of God which is eternal. It is Stringfellow who says that the *laos* listens to the Word of God in liturgy

> so that they may be so enlightened by the Word of God within the congregation that they will become sensitive to and perceptive of the Word of God as they encounter the Word in the common life of the world in which their various ministries as lay people take place.[15]

Stringfellow insists that this ministry is better characterised by the designation of prophecy rather than of priesthood.[16] But this has a lot to do with Stringfellow's specific goal of forcing his Protestant American readers to be more serious about the whole notion of a priesthood. We shall be looking further at this point in due course. But it would, I think, be a mistake not to underline the priestly sense of the calling of the *laos* within this framework. Stringfellow's 'advocacy', with its clear directedness towards worship, has to be understood in relation to the kinds of theme that Staniloae and a good few other Orthodox theologians (notably Alexander Schmemann and Christos Yannaras) have developed about the priestliness of the human task as such – the human as the pivot between the earth and heaven, the one who has the freedom and the resource, as a spiritual and linguistic being, to uncover the truth of the created order in the light of heavenly vision. In this context, baptism into the *laos* is endowment with a sort of 'academic' authority to call things by their right names; and it is Stringfellow who, in the preface to a book he never completed, emphasised the authority conveyed in baptism, in particular the authority resting on a true discernment of 'the way the world is ... [freeing] the baptised to live in the world and ...serve the evident needs of the world's common existence'.[17] All specific authority in the Church must rest on this gift and serve it, so that the whole Body may be strengthened in its corporate and public service. For Stringfellow, the most lethal distortion of baptism is what he calls its 'privatization': in contemporary usage, it no longer signifies the adoption of a new 'citizenship', but is the token either of

individual commitment to Christ (as in the understanding of most Churches practising believers' baptism) or of familial piety and resignation in the structures of existing society (where infant baptism is practised). This results in a damaging separation between baptism in water and baptism in the Spirit: Baptists and charismatics complain about the lack of visible effect in water baptism in the traditional Churches, and make claims for the *additional* gift provided by the Spirit; but those who baptise children and insist upon sacramental efficacy in the rite tend to insist also upon the mysterious and hidden character of this effect.[18] The idea that the Holy Spirit's activity in baptism might be discerned in the conferring of an authority to challenge the citizens of this world or of the existing nations seems to disappear. What we ought to have in focus in baptism is the confession of the congregation that the Word of God is sovereign; when a child is baptised, the congregation makes the audacious promise to nurture that child 'in resistance to the worldly powers that pretend to rule'.[19] It is the Church's act (through the baptismal ritual), but also the gift of the Spirit, giving discernment of oneself and the world. Together these two actions, of congregation and Spirit, create the new citizenship of those authorised to proclaim the victory of Christ over death.[20]

In practical discipleship, this must be displayed in the willingness of the *laos* to be present and active in every area of human work and engagement, including – and especially – areas that seem compromised or foolish or risky. They show, in this, what Stringfellow calls an 'awful innocence':[21] They are authorised to make fools of themselves – by trying to be Christians in politics or the arts, in business or in community work, in the army and in the peace movements. They are alongside others in these worlds to assert that the reign of God is operative even here, and in spite of radical and repeated failure to witness effectively to it. Anyone may be befriended and *represented* by the Christians, by their freedom to stand with anyone and bear him or her to God in prayer. It is again a kind of translation of Staniloae on 'responsibility': *here*, in this situation, God's Word has been spoken and the believer is summoned to echo it and answer it and, in some sense, answer *for* what it has become in the compromises of the world.

IV

Put slightly differently: it seems that the calling of the laity is above all to *intercede*. To be an advocate *within* the world for the powerless and victims is inseparable from the task of representing the powerless before God. Where I stand, day by day in the world, will determine what I can and must do in the liturgy where the connections of the world and the Kingdom are woven afresh. There will be no truthful liturgy without the conscious bringing into the sphere of God's action in Christ as presented in the liturgy the knowledge that arises from where the baptised person actually stands. Here we may turn to another and dramatically different Anglican theologian, the liturgist Gregory Dix, who did more than any other twentieth-century writer in the Church of England to underline the liturgical ministry of the laity at the Eucharist. In *The Shape of the Liturgy*, Dix notes the importance in early liturgies of sending away those under instruction for baptism *before* the intercessions: those who have not yet taken on the identity of Christ in baptism '*cannot* join in offering that prevailing prayer [i.e. the prayer of Christ for the world to the Father]'.[22] So at this point the catechumens are dismissed with a blessing, a subject for prayer is announced by the priest or deacon and the people pray silently on their knees for a period, after which the petitions are summed up by the celebrant. At the intercession,

each 'order' in the Church plays its own part – the laity by bringing to mind what their own location in the world has laid on their hearts. And for Dix this is also what is symbolised by the offering of the people in the early liturgies, the active and visible presentation by the people of the elements of the Eucharist.[23] When, in the liturgy of Serapion, we find a prayer before communion that God will (through the receiving of communion, presumably) bless 'those who have offered', this must reflect the fact that the laity brought their own bread and wine to be presented. 'To be one of "the people" (laity) to offer the *prosphora* (the Eucharistic elements) and to partake of communion, were still all virtually the same thing in Serapion's time in Egypt.'[24]

All this begins to answer more fully the concern articulated early on in this lecture about how the model of the Church as 'nation' might turn out to be collusive with an exclusivism or tribalism about who belongs and who does not. If the identifying mark of a citizen in the 'nation' of the Church is a wholly demanding responsibility for any and every situation, a call to represent and to speak for any and every human person, then, while the Church's boundaries are in practice fixed by the commitment undertaken in baptism, the purpose of that commitment is the giving, not the denying of a voice and a presence. Because the calling of the *laos* is intercession, advocacy with God and with God's world, the Christian nation exists to proclaim and honour the connection which God has already made between the world and the divine life, in creation and in redemption. The liturgy of the Eucharist is, most basically, the prayer that immerses itself in God's action of self-identification with the powerless (that is, with all human persons, sharing as they do the frustration of the world's situation of tragedy: but more specifically with those in any given situation whose voices are being drowned out by others); it is grounded in the *life* of 'Christian citizenship', citizenship, that is, in the nation of the Church, which permits day by day the free identification of the believer with the world.

And in this context, the ministry of the ordained in the Church has to be seen as the continuing *formation* of this citizenship – training in the spiritual resources needed for it, working towards a proper and nurturing conversation in the Church between those exercising their ministry in the diversities of the world around. Within the liturgy itself, the celebrant has the task of allowing a voice to the people of God as they seek to give voice to their intercessory advocacy. It is the priest's task to bring all such concerns into the one common prayer of the Church. Staniloae puts it vividly in saying that 'the priest assembles and concentrates the community':[25] the priest publicly makes one voice out of many, receiving and voicing the diverse petitions given; and the priest is also given the responsibility of 'proposing' matters for the prayers of the people, transmitting the concern of one to the consciousness of all.[26] Nothing could be further from this vision of the relation of priest and laity than the picture of the priest as the *solitary* representative of the congregation to God, or of God to the congregation, or the priest as charged with a purely *individual* power to effect sacramental transformation. The sacramental transformation is, crucially, the work of the *laos* in its entirety, beginning in the involvement and advocacy of daily experience, the opening of situations to the articulating of God's victory. Thus it is impossible to see the daily work and 'secular' identity of the baptised as matters of theological indifference: the whole must be seen as a matter of eucharistic intercession, the making of connections. And this in turn means that the Church will always be engaged in what can be intense debate as to how the witness of solidarity and advocacy may be carried out. There is no comfortable neutrality about what Christians may do 'professionally'. Stringfellow says that 'There is no corner of

human existence, however degraded or neglected, into which they may not venture; ... no cause, however vain or stupid, in which they may not witness';[27] but this should not be taken – in the manner of a certain kind of old-fashioned Lutheranism – to mean that what Christians do in 'the world', as citizens of the existing order in society, is of no interest for their moral and spiritual standing. The pacifist Christian has every right to challenge the Christian in the armed forces; but the latter has also the right and responsibility to challenge moral commendations that are really just strategies of withdrawal. In these debates begins the 'offering' of the world by the baptised citizen in God's nation.

V

The whole of this paper has argued for a definition of the laity in the terms spelled out by Dix – as the 'order' of those who, by baptism, have undertaken a very particular task in and for the world. The central theological paradox is that understanding what it is to be a 'layperson', a citizen of the Christian nation, is inseparable from understanding what it means to call the Church as a whole 'priestly', a community existing to speak for the world, to undertake the task of representation. This task of offering, speaking, connecting, this ministry of advocacy and intercession, is the essential characteristic of the lay vocation. 'Seen this way the negative aspect of the characterisation "lay" completely disappears and the word can be avoided and completely replaced by "Christian".'[28] This fine phrase from Hans von Balthasar might well serve as a suitable coda for the argument; though Balthasar himself has a model of the lay identity that still leaves something to be desired. His emphasis is upon the laity as sharing Christ's *mission* – which is entirely right; but the way this is elaborated stresses the role of the ordained as 'emissary' from Christ to the Church, so that the ordained ministry becomes an agency for the sending of the laity.[29] This takes us only so far if it is not connected to a theology of what that mission moves into: not only the sending of Christ into the world, but the representing and bearing of the world to the Father. I suspect that there is here not only something of a Latin–Eastern divide over theologies of the ordained ministry but also a difference of emphasis in basic anthropology – the vocation of the human being to become a priest within creation.[30]

But the point of this is that we need constantly to look critically at the ways in which Christians repeatedly tend to think of lay ministry as a lay *participation* in the tasks of the clergy and to reduce Christian representation in the world at large to the presence of clergy within a secular situation (perhaps some of the debates over the presence of bishops in the British House of Lords might profit from reflection on this). That non-ordained persons might have an active role to play in public worship is hardly in dispute – though we need to be careful about recognising the point at which this begins to shift into a regular role of coordination that is the proper province of priest or deacon. The popular idea that the visible participation of non-ordained people in the 'leadership' of worship (as opposed to the regular performing of specific functions within the liturgy) is somehow a mark of how seriously we take 'the laity' rests on a mistake, the kind of mistake castigated by Stringfellow. It supposes that there is one significant ministry in the Church, that of the public performance of religious functions. Naturally enough, there will appear to be no particular reason why the same people should always perform these functions. At the same time, if the public performance of religious functions is what ministry is about, it helps if there can be some people who can be relied on to do this reasonably

'professionally' – whether in or out of the liturgical assembly. Hence Stringfellow's accusation that what this scheme produces is clerics regarded as 'a superficial, symbolic, ceremonial laity', a religious presence in various predominantly secular environments.[31]

A theology that differentiates roles in the Church must begin again and again from a proper theological account of what it is we are baptised into; and this has been so often a major weakness in thinking theologically about the laity. Otherwise it will slip back into being in one way or another a differentiation between those in the Church who are active and those who are passive, with the 'active' regarded as religious functionaries across the board in the manner described by Stringfellow. In an environment where assumptions could perhaps be made about the essentially baptised character of the culture as a whole, the presence of the ordained in non-liturgical contexts might possibly have been justified on the basis that there is an almost paraliturgical character to any public gathering. But where the Church's identity as 'nation' is more and more clearly a distinctive minority identity – or, at least, an identity publicly different from that of the culture in general – it is imperative to clarify what is the responsibility of clergy in relation to the baptised, and thus to clarify what is expected of the baptised.

The idea of a 'lay apostolate', once a popular way of speaking in Catholic circles, crystallises some of the confusions we have been noting: it suggests, however innocently, that there is a central or even normative 'apostolic' task, of which there may be a specific *reflection* among laypeople. Instead, we need a definition of the apostolic linked directly with baptism. But we also need to beware of identifying 'apostolate' simply with the active promotion of the faith. It is emphatically true, as Stringfellow reminds us, that the prophetic and the apologetic are essential aspects of the lay vocation;[32] but he equally makes it clear that they are grounded in the deeper calling of 'bearing' the world Godwards in Christ. The implication of this is clear and of the first importance. Obviously, the Church, if it is to be authentically a *laos*, must be a community of nurture and of learning; but we should not simply identify that learning with training to do things – with clergy or paraclerical professionals educating the laity in certain skills for defending or communicating the Gospel. If the calling is in fact advocacy and intercession, carrying the world Godwards, they need formation in prayer, in the 'skill' of abiding in that movement Godwards that is the movement of Christ to the Father – what Dix, in one of his greatest passages, called the one coming of Christ in time and eternity, 'the bringing of man, the creature of time, to the Ancient of Days, in eternity'.[33]

In conclusion: before ever we ask what 'the laity' can or should be doing in the Church (assuming, as we all tend to do, that what clergy do is so clear that it doesn't need discussion ...), we have to address the question of what the Church, the nation of the baptised, does; and this in turn depends upon having a clear answer to the question of what *Christ* does. Without this christological and trinitarian focus, all that is said theologically about the laity is likely to reduce itself to recommendations for good works. Staniloae, lamenting the fact that hardly anything is said, when discussing our responsibility in society, about 'the root of our responsibility in Christ' also observes that 'Without a really rigorous *enracinement* in the love of Christ, the spirit of domination is always waiting to ensnare us.'[34] It is a spirit that may be shown in the arrogance of clericalism and in the obsession with business and managing that can take control of Christian (and other) enterprises in social betterment. At the end of the day, the sobering truth is that – as Stringfellow has it – the Christian's freedom for the 'awful innocence' of involvement and advocacy reflects

the awful folly of Christ's incarnation; the folly that creates us who were once not a people as the people of God, the holy and priestly nation.

Notes and References

1 W. Stringfellow, *Conscience and Obedience* (Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1977), pp. 89–105, especially pp. 99 ff; also in Bill Wylie Kellerman (ed.), *A Keeper of the Word: Selected Writings of William Stringfellow* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1994), pp. 127–29.

2 W. Stringfellow, *Suspect Tenderness* (Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, New York, 1971), pp. 97–103; also in Kellerman, *op. cit.*, pp. 297–301, especially pp. 298–99. C.f. Kellerman, *op. cit.*, p. 311, a text from W. Stringfellow, *Politics of Spirituality* (Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1984), pp. 30–31, and Stringfellow, *Conscience and Obedience*, pp. 100–1.

3 Stringfellow, *Conscience and Obedience*, pp. 102–3 (Kellerman, *op. cit.*, pp. 127–28).

4 Stringfellow, *Conscience and Obedience*, p. 102 (Kellerman, *op. cit.*, p. 127).

5 Stringfellow, *A Private and Public Faith* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1962), pp. 27, 49, 79 (also Kellerman, *op. cit.*, pp. 164–65); Stringfellow, *Conscience and Obedience*, pp. 94–99.

6 See especially the last two chapters of Stringfellow, *A Private and Public Faith*; also W. Stringfellow, *Free in Obedience* (Seabury Press, New York, 1964), pp. 49–50, 70 ff. (Kellerman, *op cit.*, pp. 192–203).

7 Stringfellow, *Conscience and Obedience*, pp. 101–5 (and c.f. pp. 35–51 on the question of lawful authority).

8 *ibid.*, p. 102 (Kellerman, *op. cit.*, p. 127).

9 See, for example, 'The foundation of Christian responsibility in the world: the dialogue of God and man', in A. M. Allchin (ed.), *The Tradition of Life: Romanian Essays in Spirituality and Theology* (Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, London, 1971), pp. 53–73.

10 *ibid.*, p. 68.

11 *ibid.*, p. 66, c.f. D. Staniloae, *Theology and the Church* (St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1980), pp. 211–12, and D. Staniloae (ed.), *Teologia Dogmatica Ortodoxa* (2nd edn) (Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune, Bucharest, 1996), vol. 1, pp. 279–80.

12 M. A. Costa de Beauregard, *Dumitru Staniloae: 'Ose comprendre que je t'aime'* (Cerf, Paris, 1983), p. 94.

13 *loc. cit.*

14 *ibid.*, pp. 94–95; c.f. pp. 85 ff.

15 Stringfellow, *A Private and Public Faith*, p. 58.

16 *ibid.*, pp. 58–59.

17 Kellerman, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

18 *ibid.*, pp. 159–62.

19 *ibid.*, p. 162.

20 See for example Stringfellow, *A Private and Public Faith*, p. 73.

21 *ibid.*, p. 48 (Kellerman, *op. cit.*, p. 165).

22 Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (A. and C. Black, London, 1945), p. 41.

23 *ibid.*, pp. 120, 164, 172.

24 *ibid.*, p. 172.

25 Beauregard, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

26 *ibid.*, pp. 132–33; c.f. Staniloae (ed.), *Teologia Dogmatica Ortodoxa*, vol. 3, pp. 107–9.

27 Stringfellow, *A Private and Public Faith*, p. 48 (Kellerman, *op. cit.*, p. 165).

28 M. Kehl and W. Loser (eds), *The von Balthasar Reader* (T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1982), p. 294 (from H. U. von Balthasar, *Neue Klarstellungen* (Johannes Verlag, Einsiedeln, 1979)).

29 *ibid.*, pp. 291–94.

30 An emphasis especially associated in the East with St Maximus the Confessor, and highly

significant for Staniloae and others; see, for example, Staniloae (ed.), *Teologia Dogmatica Ortodoxa*, vol. 3, p. 107; 'The foundation of Christian responsibility ...', pp. 68–69, 71–73.

[31] Stringfellow, *A Private and Public Faith*, p. 44 (Kellerman, *op. cit.*, p. 163).

[32] *ibid.*, pp. 58–59.

[33] Dix, *op. cit.*, pp. 262–63.

[34] Beauregard, *op. cit.*, p. 95.