

The Worldliness of Catholicism: Fu Jen University as an Instrument of Cultural Pluralism in the Republic of China

Cultural pluralism is an elusive concept. Although the term has been widely used in anthropological, philosophical and religious circles during the past two decades, its meaning often remains confused. Like a chameleon, cultural pluralism seems to take on the coloring of whatever context it is in. However, three trends in the usage of the term can be isolated. These can be characterized as *laissez-faire*, syncretistic, and assimilative.

A *laissez-faire* interpretation recognizes a broad range of diverse value systems and life-styles in modern society. Convinced that substantial agreement is no longer possible, proponents of this kind of cultural pluralism take a "live and let live" attitude. They stress the need for tolerance and refuse to make value judgments about opposing views. Such a position is especially appealing in a country like the United States, which emphasizes individual freedoms and experiences strong polarizations among diverging groups.

A syncretistic attitude toward cultural pluralism begins with the same analysis of modern society but affirms the possibility of achieving unity. This syncretism mixes all elements without sufficient reflection upon what is actually contradictory or harmonious. As a result, the unity achieved is usually shallow. Cultures which have lost or never developed the habit of critical thinking are especially prone to such syncretism.

Neither of these two approaches is being proposed as the way in which Fu Jen University should meet the multiplicity of views and life-styles found in the modern world. Rather, it should promote a cultural pluralism that strives for unity through genuine assimilation. Such an approach certainly involves an openness to the fullness of human experience. It demands mutual respect and the serious attempt to understand as fully as possible before making judgments. It then applies an intellectual discrimination which seeks for integration on a profound level. It never forgets the ultimate questions of life. Only in this way can cultural pluralism protect the many freedoms which enrich the human personality and strengthen the unity of the community by the promotion of legitimate differences.

As Catholic, we believe in the Holy Spirit and the multitude of his gifts. He brings forth gifts of both unity and diversity in his church and in the world. The life-giving center of this unity and diversity in his church and in the world. The life-giving center of this unity is Jesus Christ Himself. As one scholar has expressed it, "This is what the Church, for all its palpable defects and frequent stupidities, stands for and offers: the ultimate solidarity of each in all... an organism of persons in all their variety united around the Person who is the center of circumference of them all, Christ."¹ Earlier, Pope Pius XII had pointed out the mistake of narrowly equating the Catholic Church with western culture: "She never identifies herself with any one culture, and she is ready to make a covenant with every culture. She readily recognizes in every culture what is not contrary to the work of the Creator."² The early Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci already understood that three hundred years ago. For too short a time, the Son of Man appeared as a Chinese scholar. Catholic to the roots, Ricci and his companions lived by the universalism of Confucius himself: "Choose the good qualities in others and follow them; find out their bad qualities and learn to mend your ways."³

¹ R. C. Zaehner, *Matter and Spirit: Their Convergence in Eastern Religions Marx and Teilhard de Chardin*, Religious Perspectives, Vol. 8 (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 205.

² Letter of June 27, 1955, to the Bishop of Augsburg.

³ Analects IV, 17.

Operating in the same spirit, this paper contains three major movements. In the first, the social phenomenon of cultural pluralism will be examined, as it is experienced in the Republic of China today. It should become apparent that China is ideal ground for fostering mutual respect for differences within a context of unity. In the second, the responsibility of a Catholic university in facing this challenge will be discussed. Finally, several proposals will suggest how Fu Jen University can respond concretely.

1. *The Phenomenon of Cultural Pluralism in the Republic of China*

A brief consideration of the present situation in Taiwan will reveal that diversities in life style and attitudes are increasing. Today, the Republic of China is indeed a pluralistic society.

1.1. *The Political Situation.* One of the greatest personal tragedies after the events of 1949 was the uprooting of millions from their ancestral homes. As a result, people from every province on the mainland now live in Taiwan. Their life-styles sometimes reflect quite different customs, attitudes, and even linguistic backgrounds. Add this to the differences already existing between the native Taiwanese. The Hakka and the various tribes of aborigines, who number around 240,000. The present population of Taiwan is truly a cross-section of the whole of China, so some diversities will naturally be felt. The unique political situation and the continued need for military security also have an unavoidable effect on the traditional way of life.

1.2. *The Economic Situation.* Despite the continued encouragement of the traditional culture, industrialization and urbanization are having their impact. There is a noticeable difference in life-styles between those who live in large urban centers like Taipei or Kaohsiung and those who live in the rural areas of the less developed East Coast. Western influences enter through the Chinese who have studied abroad, through the foreigners in business, industry, and education, as well as through the mass media. Aside from its positive thrust, the strong pull towards material progress also stirs spiritual unrest. It leads some to believe that the traditional outlook is irrelevant to the practical demands of living in the twentieth century.

1.3. *The Religious Situation.* Freedom of worship is guaranteed by the Republic's Constitution, and various religions exist side by side. The basic traditional belief centers on "Heaven" (*Tien-Kung*) as the highest spirit; a special sacrifice to him is common on Chinese New Year. Moreover, ancestor worship, the concrete expression of a belief in the communion of the living and the dead, is still practised by the majority of families. Buddhism, the largest specific religion, claims some 5,750,000 devotees, though the number is uncertain. Taoism has an estimated 3,300,000 followers. Although the leadership distinguishes very clearly between Buddhist and Taoist religions, the ordinary faithful freely mix all traditions in a syncretistic popular religion where borderlines cannot be drawn. The main concern of the average believer is beyond doubt the security and prosperity of his own family. Christianity, still seen as a foreign import even by some of its firm believers because of its incomplete assimilation of Chinese cultural patterns, includes 300,000 Catholics and 300,000 other Christians. There are some 42,500 Muslims.

A recent series of newspaper articles on Buddhism reveals some attitudes which this pluralistic situation gives rise to. A number of temples are cited for their involvement in social activities, but criticism is levelled at the exploitation of simple people's beliefs or the irresponsible solicitation of funds for the construction of luxurious temples and extravagant celebrations. An underlying premiss in most of the articles is that religion has no real object and is only superstition. Since it nevertheless produces some good effects, it should be utilized for the education of the masses. Buddhism is called upon to cooperate with the government to serve the physical well-being of the nation. In contrast, Christianity is often praised for its social involvement and its concern for education; that is, an agency for material improvement.

Certainly, any religion which falls out of touch with human experience will be seen as sterile, fit only for the museum, and irrelevant to the modern world. As one journalist expressed it: "The meaning of religion is to love universally and to help mankind, to relieve from misery and difficulties; religion can be said to be a kind of education urging people to build a good society." But such a humanistic attitude misses the genuinely transcendental aspirations of the major religions. In the same series of articles,

another journalist suggests a deeper insight: "Man came out of nothingness and eventually will return to nothingness; in this unknowable nothingness there has to be a higher authority which is in command of man's fate. This authority is venerated under various forms and produces all kinds of religions.... Though the forms of worship are different.... they arrive at the same end."

1.4. *The Philosophical Situation.* In philosophical circles, four major trends can be identified in Taiwan: neoconfucian humanism, scientific humanism, existentialism and naturalistic liberalism.⁴ Mostly professors of Chinese literature or philosophy, members of the New Confucian Humanism School are convinced that their reinterpretation of Confucianism and ancient cultural values is the answer to the world's need for a genuine humanism. Proponents of the New Scientific Humanism School, often trained in the West, refuse to go beyond the data available through empirical inquiry. Yet a philosopher like Yin Hai-kuang, who is not an amoralist, also proposes a human ideal close to Christian charity. This school of thought finds a ready audience in those who are more interested in modernization than fidelity to tradition. Moreover, even if Chinese culture is defended in the educational system, the official training tends to develop a scientific and positivist mentality.

The hottest debates have taken place between these two rival schools. On the other hand, existentialism and naturalistic liberalism do not represent formal philosophical schools. Existentialism enjoys a certain popularity especially among university students with literary training. They detect in it a philosophical justification for total emancipation from any external pressure. Naturalistic liberalism exerts its influence in a different way, through popular books, reviews, and films. Its basic premiss is total emancipation on a moral level: satisfy any natural desire as long as you harm no one. While derived from Western influences, this philosophy also has deep roots in Taoist naturalism.

1.5. *The Literary Situation.* The struggle between tradition and modernization apparent among the philosophers has also been

⁴ For a more complete treatment of this subject, see Jean Lefeuve, S.J., "Philosophy in Taiwan," (mimeo.) Hsinchu: Taiwan Sociographic Survey, 1972.

a ferment in literary circles.⁵ Beginning around 1954, poets belonging to the Modernist School and the Blue Starts Poetry Society, for example, argued the relative merits of modern Western approaches and the classical tradition, intellectualism and lyricism, conventional poetic diction and plain prose. The scales were tipped heavily towards radical westernization when the Epoch Society adopted French surrealism in the 1960's. However, their experiments led to a state of nihilism and obscurity that brought heavy criticism from an alienated public. With the emergence of a younger generation of poets around 1970, Western literature continues to offer models of technique but the need for poetry to be rooted in its native soil is more widely recognized.

1.6. *The Ethical Situation.* In early March 1977, an overseas Chinese published a perceptive article in a local newspaper, arguing that Taiwan's developments in philosophy and ethics have not kept pace with the remarkable progress in science and technology. The consequence is a serious imbalance in society. Admitting the obvious problems of the West, he still believes that the United States has managed a more harmonious integration between morality and material progress than Taiwan. This he attributes largely to the centuries-long infusion into the culture of the moral code embodied in the Ten Commandments and the Catholic doctrine of love. Even those who no longer profess to be Christians generally respect the *internal* and *external* restraints of law and social responsibility more evidently than here.

On a practical level, this writer deplores the Ministry of Education's recent decision that no new graduate schools will be opened unless they have direct relevance for the Ten Major Construction Projects. He prophesies that if greater attention is not given to the liberal arts and humanities during the next ten years, the end result will be serious moral chaos in the Republic of China. The imbalance between lived values and material progress will not be corrected. As another concerned local observer has said, "Mao was in no hurry to bury us, for he knew we would bury ourselves under the weight of our own progress."

⁵ For a more thorough discussion, see Yu Kwang-chung, "Chinese Poetry in Taiwan," *Free China Review Supplement* (June 1972), 9-18.

1.7. *The Situation of the Young.* Faced with this multiplicity of coexisting value systems and life-styles, the young feel the contradictions of society most strongly. They are just at the point where they must define their own identities and roles. If they see that their elders profess a noble philosophy of life but live by a different standard, their choices are made more difficult. Naturally, a high number of young people go through this crisis of growth with flying colors, depending on the strength of their personalities and the support given them by their parents, teachers, and friends. Others reveal an inability to assimilate the many strands running through modern society.

In view of the need for loyal citizens committed to the fight against communism, there may be an overdependence on mechanical repetition in the elementary and secondary schools. When their thinking abilities begin to develop, some young people feel psychologically confused and intellectually illiterate about political issues. The pity is that they may no longer trust the spoken or written word.

Concluding that the accumulation of wealth will bring them all the happinesses of life, many young people reject social responsibility for those beyond their own families or friends. Conflicting values about such things as marriage patterns and the changing position of women in society sometimes lead to the frustration.

The currency of different attitudes toward religion may also result in vague and confused ideas. If the religious traditions become satisfied with external forms and lose touch with the realities of human experience, as many feel, their impact is insignificant. However, it seems that most young people still maintain an interest in some kind of reason behind life.

Torn between a desire to affirm the traditional culture and the attractions of modernization, many young people still develop a viable synthesis. Others settle for a shallow understanding of both Chinese and Western culture, with regrettable results.

As cultural patterns become more complicated, a morality based on traditional patterns tends to break down. As various philosophies vie for attention, many young people are less able to judge what is right and what is wrong.

In short, the pluralisms of society do not make it easy for the young to develop habits of clear analysis and discernment.

1.8. *Sources of Cultural Pluralism in the Past Century.* Many of the pluralisms mentioned above have emerged from the specific historical situation of Taiwan in the past thirty years. But others trace their beginnings to developments on the mainland in the past century. In the nineteenth century, new "barbarians" from the West tried to break into China's boundaries. While trying to ignore their political designs, China discovered the Western sciences and technology as well as Western approaches to democracy, personal freedom, and self-consciousness. Many hold values were seen in a new light and lost their attraction and binding force. After the revolution of 1911, an atheistic, scientific and democratic new way of life was proclaimed in the leading universities and in progressive literary circles. Many a scholar even proposed giving up the entire traditional culture as no longer of any use. Unfortunately, communism was introduced to the Chinese people just when the May 4th Movement had shattered the cultural tradition and caused a kind of spiritual vacuum.

1.9. *Causes Deep in History.* How is it possible that a culture as rich and enduring as China's was left unprepared for the modern contact with Western culture? One answer is that distortions of her ancient philosophy developed during the tens of centuries when there was no competition from rival cultures.

The central point in China's ancient culture was the *harmonious* and *uniform* advancement of "knowledge" of the Laws of Heaven, Earth, and Man. To keep the whole structure in balance, metaphysical thought, physical achievement, and humanist doctrines should have been equally stressed. In reality, *Man* came to be emphasized over and above *Heaven* and *Earth*. The process began as far back as the third century B.C., with the scholar Hsun Tzu. While loyal to the *Ju* school, his approach was completely agnostic and skeptical. In his *Short History of Confucian Philosophy*, Liu Wu-Chi suggests that "the Chinese people lost their faith in Hsun Tzu's time and have not yet found it."⁶

The element *Man* grew disproportionately in importance especially after the destruction of books and massacre of scholars

⁶ (Baltimore: Pelican, 1955), p. 96.

ordered by Shih Huang Ti in 221 B.C. The Legalists unified China, but they also brought to a close the most vital and productive age of Chinese thought. The formalization and even the ossification of classic thought became a problem for centuries to come. With the loss of sacred awareness at the heart of Confucius' doctrine, the door was opened to its secularization. Perhaps this is what happened in those scholastic revivals of *Ju* philosophy which emphasized its technical aspects at the expense of the living reality. Confucius' doctrine was further weakened by statesmen throughout history who kept an outward facade of *Ju* but were inwardly rigid, heartless, or unprincipled.

After the time of the Legalists, the element *Man* came to be subdivided into three parts: *Ch'uin*, *Ch'in*, and *Shih* (Ruler, Parents, and Teacher). Each part began to be given a more important place in society and thought. In "New Appraisal of the Chinese Cultural Heritage," V.S. Pan concludes: "Man had taken up three-fifths of the whole substance that constituted our culture, leaving one-fifth to Heaven and the remaining fifth to Earth. That is a lopsided structure... None of these parts should be allowed to assume the role of the whole Man or to be of importance equal to *Heaven* and *Earth*." He also claims that in recent centuries, "the distorted importance of Shih or the Intellectual Power has caused the greatest damage. Shih must not be identified with the Person-of-the-Teacher and not even with scholars as a whole, but with the Truth-Taught-by the Experience-of-the-Past."⁷

1.10. *The Wisdom of Confucius*. Since Confucius lived 2,500 years ago, it is only natural that many of his concepts do not apply in today's social context. His legacy, even as it has been developed in China's history, is nonetheless a humanist and personalist doctrine of magnificence and productivity. If, however, some people feel the Confucian way of life can no longer stir moral energies, it is because they have forgotten the religious and sacred character of this humanism. In rejecting those elements of Confucianism which do not apply in a modern industrial society, they have also thrown out those eternal truths which are applicable to any society at any time. What has especially been

⁷ *Free China Review*, 23 (May 1973), 29-30.

lost over the centuries is the deep and sacred significance of liturgical rites, *Li*.

The starting point of Confucius' teaching is that Heaven is a transcendent and objective reality. It is the ultimately real, although its metaphysical nature is never discussed. The other realities of Earth and of Man are changing and contingent. Confucius had a sacred sense of the "will of heaven" inscribed in the very nature of man. This wisdom immanent in nature is "acted out" in the rites.

For Confucius, *Li* are the visible expression of various affective relationships which bind men to one another. But they are also the visible expression of the hidden reality of the universe: the manifestation of heaven. It is not enough for the divine order to be present metaphysically. It is not enough for man to bring the divine order into the life of society by moral conduct. "The will of heaven is something that has to be *celebrated* in earthly society, and celebrated with beauty and solemnity. Without this element of splendor and harmony, wisdom is not complete."⁸ Thus, symbolic ceremony recognizes the divine, strengthens human community, and gives morality a character of deeper realization. Without it, Confucianism can degenerate into sentimental humanitarianism. Men will continue to express abstract love and concern for all persons while taking their money out of their pockets.

It has been a modern fashion to label ritual as a relic of a superstitious age, meaningless in an age of science. Unfortunately, those who perform rites in a purely formal and empty way bolster this opinion. But actually, ritual in touch with living experience serves a perennial need. Even in so unceremonious a country as the United States, an increasing number of people admit this fact. John Updike, a major creative writer who has sold millions of his books in the last eighteen years, concludes a brilliant early story with the words. "We in America need ceremonies." This has become a leit-motif of his probings into the problems of the American middle-class. The *form* of many Confucian rites may no longer be relevant, but the *truth* behind them remains.

⁸ For the ideas and much of the phrasing on Confucius' thought, I am indebted to Thomas Merton's thought-provoking essay, "Classic Chinese Thought," in *Mystics and Zen Masters* (New York: Delta, 1967), pp. 45-68. The quotation is from p. 60.

1.11. *Cultural Renaissance*. In the light of the strong underlying Chinese commitment to harmony in all things, we can ask the question posited in the Second Vatican Council's document on The Church in the Modern World: "How can the vitality and growth of a new culture be fostered without the loss of a living fidelity to the heritage of tradition?" Change is essential but continuity is also necessary. The law of the healthy living organism is that of renewal. Not the elimination of the living values of the past, but of obsolescent elements, and the assimilation of new, helpful and relevant ones.

If the present pluralistic situation is approached in a creative way, China has nothing to fear. Based on her history and philosophical tradition, the prognosis for success in this effort is higher than in many other cultures. From the earliest times, China has been able to acculturate other peoples who had come as predators or conquerors. The Mongols and the Manchus represent only two cases out of many. Throughout history China has not only tolerated but in fact absorbed numerous foreign influences, including religions like Buddhism, for the benefit of her people.

Moreover, China's philosophical tradition encourages several qualities which are crucial for creating genuine unity out of diversity. These are *Ch'eng* (Primal-Purity), *Jen* (All-in-One-Love), *Chung* (Constant Mean), and *Hsing* (Movement). In particular, *Jen* promotes mutual respect for differences and mutual love for similarities, so that all persons may evolve and progress side-by-side. *Chung* offers the possibility of coming to agreement in the handling of affairs or the solution of problems. In the *Chung Yung*, it is stated: "As the Mean or state of equilibrium and harmony is reached, Heaven and Earth are in position and myriad being all enjoy life and its propagation."⁹ This state of equilibrium, true to our life experience, incorporates both a static and a dynamic principle of reality — balance created out of tension. The modern conception of the atom is an excellent physical example of how *Chung* should operate. Only death is pure stasis.

There already exists in the Republic of China a nationwide organization to promote the kind of cultural pluralism being proposed here. The Cultural Renaissance Movement (*Wen Hua Fu*

⁹ I, 5.

Shin Yui T'ung), of which Cardinal Yipin, the president of Fu Jen, serves as one of the vice-chairmen, aims at stressing the transcendental roots of traditional Chinese morality. It operates on the belief that a morality without a supporting framework will inevitably collapse. At the same time, it is attempting to assimilate the new material of democracy and science into the total picture. To follow the teachings of the scholar class of recent centuries blindly or to adopt Western influences uncritically would both lead to disaster. "We must learn from the mistakes which accompanied the transmission of our culture from generation to generation and adjust our future actions accordingly."¹⁰

In the process, it is good to remember that the significant factor in the European Renaissance was not the revival of ancient Greek and Roman painting, sculpture, architecture and literature. The Renaissance was not so much a renaissance as a *revelation* that humanism and technology must be added to religion and philosophy. In China today, a reverse kind of revelation is needed. Much has already been done to correct the overemphasis on humanism by recent advances in economics, science and technology. But a new imbalance may have already set in; equal attention must be given to deepening understanding in the areas of philosophy and religion.

2. *The Catholic University as an Instrument of Cultural Pluralism*

"Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Prov. 29:18). Today the Republic of China has an urgent need for a rational vision of reality that shall bring into life-giving harmony the values of its cultural tradition and the beneficial aspects of Western literature, science, technology, the free-enterprise economy, the nation-state system, and the various forms of Christianity. In this task, the universities have a significant role to play.

2.1 *The University as a Place of Universal Learning.*

The hallmark of any good university is an openness to the fullness of human experience. Academic responsibility naturally demands clear distinctions between what is established and authen-

¹⁰ *Free China Review*, p. 30.

tic and what is only opinion and speculation. Values and commitments can be clarified by the careful presentation of differing views and styles of life. In this context, religious freedom is also a necessary feature of all universities. Professors of any persuasion can express their own beliefs, but only in such a way that students are left free in their choice of a religion or no religion.

Through courses offered by the Departments of Philosophy, History, Chinese and Foreign Languages and Literatures, the whole range of the history of culture, past and present, East and West, is explored. Because this is done in one locality and in one community, the university is a natural setting for interdisciplinary teaching and research. Through many-sided dialogue, conducted with mutual respect, genuine consensus can emerge. Since most universities in Taiwan have a number of foreigners on the teaching staff, students also have the opportunity for person-to-person dialogue with professors of different backgrounds and cultures.

2.2 The Christian University. All Christian Universities — both Catholic and Protestant — must fulfill the obligations of *any* good university. In addition, they are founded on the impulse to give witness to Christian faith in the realm of higher education. All Christians share a common belief in Jesus Christ. All accept the Bible as a basic source of God's Revelation. They generally believe that God's eternal purpose is to create a universal communion of humankind with God and with one another. They try to express and work for this communion in a fellowship of loving service. If their faith is truly the source of their energies, the attractive power of the Risen and Deathless Christ will shine through their actions.

Where Catholics and other Christians tend to diverge are on specific issues — doctrines, theological interpretations, forms of worship, and approaches to morality. In all sincerity, each particular Christian community may come to different conclusions in discerning how it must be faithful to the Gospel. To take the case in point, Catholic and other Christian universities may reveal different insights and emphases in dealing with cultural pluralism. These variations may be related not only to differing beliefs, but also to different historical traditions.

2.3. *The Catholic University.* Something has already been said about the Catholic approach to cultural pluralism in the introduction. The commitment to unity in Christ and the openness to diversity in cultures presented there has been a basic pattern in the Church's history, despite mistakes and setbacks in particular instances.

God and Humankind are inextricably bound in the Catholic consciousness. In the first place, Catholic Christianity has constantly affirmed that God became fully man in Jesus Christ. It has never reduced the mystery of God to a human phenomenon or to some vague mysteriousness within the universe. Neither has it limited man to a passing event on an undistinguished planet. Through 2,000 years, "Catholicism has, with at times extreme caution, met each emerging facet of human history and culture, carefully separated the wheat from the chaff, the humanly good from the destructive, and integrated these human and worldly elements into its own understanding of human life and destiny, its modes of expression and its wisdom."¹¹ This can truly be called "the worldliness of Catholicism," in the best sense of the word.

Based on this history, it can also be said that Catholic Christianity has approached the mind of man and the *human* world more seriously than any other religious tradition. Within the present academic world, "there is no other religious tradition with such an intellectual character, with such a universality, with such an openness, at least in the long view, to all things human as the Catholic tradition."¹²

In a lucid speech delivered only a few months before his untimely death, the Jesuit scholar Father De La Costa demonstrated how the European Catholic universities of the middle ages fit this conception: "Medieval universities arose out of the basic need for a rational vision of reality. The effort began with the attempt to understand tradition, to reconcile the contradictions within it, or at least to choose between them, and hence to the development of logic. Part of this tradition was the non-Christian

¹¹ Donald Merrifield, S.J., "What Makes A University Catholic?" *Origins U.S.A.*, p. 509. The concept of "the worldliness of Catholicism" is taken from this article.

¹² *Ibid.*

yet humanist Aristotelian logic. Could these two visions of reality, the one arising from the Christian gospel, the other from pagan humanism, be reconciled?"¹³

The challenge is obvious. To be true to its history, the Catholic University must be faithful to the fullness of its Catholicism. However, it must also respond with respect, openness, and creativity to the situation in which it finds itself. Considering the qualities of Chinese culture and the Catholic tradition as outlined above, there are very real possibilities for the integration and faith.

For instance, the imbalance in attention given to Heaven and Man has already been mentioned. The fact that Confucius did not need to discuss the metaphysical nature of Heaven, but could take it for granted in his society, may be one of the reasons. On the other hand, the Catholic tradition has always recognized the need to build the structure of Man on a human, personal, and indeed divine center. During the centuries that China was developing one of the most splendid systems of humanism in the world, the Catholic tradition produced just as splendid a philosophy about metaphysical realities. The combination of the two, in a manner that speaks to modern society, can help correct the imbalance. Idealism could find a source of moral energy for action.

Developing such a synthesis will demand much serious reflection, dialogue, and responsible criticism of the many currents in contemporary thought and values. In the most profound meaning of the phrase, Fu Jen University will have to become a learning and discovering community.

2.4. Non-Catholics in a Catholic University. To become a vital center of Catholic intellectual reflection, the Catholic University needs a significant number of articulate and committed Catholics. At Fu Jen, of 10,489 students and 942 faculty members, 602 students and 138 faculty members are Catholics. Since the number is so small, the depth of commitment must be all the greater.

¹³ "The Role of the Christian University in Asia," at the Founding Conference of The Association of Christian Universities and Colleges in Asia, 6-9 December 1976.

Moreover, all those who become part of the Catholic University should be aware of the particular character of its concerns. Fellow Christians, those of other faiths, even those who profess no religious faith can make very important contributions to the Catholic University. In a climate of mutual respect, they bring a healthy diversity of points of view, keep us from being turned in on ourselves, and challenge us to be true to the best in the Catholic tradition. Cooperating with each other, we can reach a richer consensus.

3. *Suggestions for Concrete Action*

A practical question remains. How can the University incarnate the values presented throughout this paper in its daily experience? At the moment, Fu Jen is just emerging from a period of intensive physical upbuilding and organization according to the educational regulations of the country. The time is now ripe to create *corporate* ways for witnessing to our faith and responding imaginatively to the diversities found in modern society.

3.1. *Classroom Practices.* In seeking unity amid our many diversities, each professor should stress active thinking and cooperation with his students, not forcing values upon them. He should enter into dialogue with the students whenever possible, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. If he is a reflective and discriminating person, he can lead his students to become aware not only of what they desire, but also of what they need. Methods of teaching need to be changed to meet this situation.

For the teacher who has been himself as the only authority in the classroom and for the student who has been conditioned to being the passive recipient, working from such attitudes will not be easy. After a few unsettling and less than successful efforts at dialogue, both professor and students may desire to return to the so-called traditional method of teaching. Actually, this method itself has been abused, as Confucius pointed out in criticizing the teachers of his own time:

The teachers of today just go on repeating things in a rigma-role fashion, annoy the students with constant questions and repeat the same things over and over again. They do not try to find out what the students' natural

inclinations are, so that the students are forced to pretend to like their studies, nor do they try to bring out the best in their talents. What they give to the students wrong in the first place and what they expect of the students is just as wrong. As a result, the students hide their favorite readings and hate their teachers, are exasperated at the difficulty of their studies and do not know what good study does them. Although they go through the regular course of instruction, they are quick to leave it when they are through.¹⁴

Regular departmental meetings can do much to encourage each professor in his search for more suitable methods and to share insights into our common task.

3.2. *Emphasis in the Curriculum.* Within the framework of government regulations, a more creative evaluation of present curricula is still possible. The following suggestions can be taken merely as signposts for the approach to follow in each department. (a) The *Philosophy of Life* course, which is required of each student, is central to the metaphysical and ethical foundations upon which we hope the students will build their lives. This course, more than any other, is open for pluralistic dialogue — between various religious traditions and between various philosophical strands running through the lived experience of the students. In this way, the Cultural Renaissance Movement will begin to have an impact on the grassroots level. Undoubtedly, the greatest challenge to the professor of philosophy of life is how to draw out of the young a thirst for knowledge of the ultimate questions, how to help the young realize that they have a call, how to co-shape with the young their moral identities. Regular ongoing dialogue is needed not only in the classroom, but also among the professors.

(b) *Anti-communism* is one of the philosophical underpinnings of the government of the Republic of China. The required courses in "The Three Principles of the People" and military training are related to nation-building, preservation of the Republic of China from mainland domination, and the eventual reunification of Free China. As the students grow in critical and analytical perceptiveness in their other courses of study, it is no longer satisfactory to use an empty, purely formal language. As with "estab-

¹⁴ Li Chi, chapter *Hsueh Chi*.

lished" philosophies in any country, the danger is what many students will uncritically reject the courses as propaganda, also throwing out their solid content. Consequently, those who go abroad for further studies may be unprepared for a critical evaluation of communism. Only if the students are able to understand and articulately discuss wider political issues will they be able to recognize the real evil of communism.

Theologians and philosophers on campus, imbued with a deep love of country and with Catholicism's profound humanism, should enter into dialogue with the professors of these courses to develop a more spontaneous and imaginative program of political education. Since this is such a sensitive area, it is absolutely imperative that the dialogue go on in an open and honest way, in constant contact with government officials. The aim should be an enrichment and deepening of the spiritual foundations of these courses, thus helping to correct the imbalance between technological advance and philosophical stagnation mentioned earlier.

What Catholicism can especially offer is an analysis of the basic anti-humanism toward the individual and society which is at the root of communism as a system. Although Marxism promises the ultimate solidarity of all human minds in an infinite mind (Engels), this ideal cannot be realized, because it has no personal center like Christ on which to converge. All communism can put forward is a spurious god-man like Stalin or Mao. This too has to be one of its fatal weaknesses.

(c) Another way to counter the imbalance between economic growth and the growing amorality in society is through a value-oriented *liberal arts* program. Under the present entrance examination system, a high percentage of students find themselves in any given department because their scores were not high enough to get into the departments fitting their interests and talents. These students cannot be realistically expected to commit themselves fullheartedly to that department's specialization. As a result, the quality of teaching and interest generated in the general education courses becomes even more important. There students can still develop the critical and reflective abilities necessary for living and working in modern society.

Focussing on value-oriented education, professors of philosophy, history, language and literature will not limit themselves

to purely technical and historical approaches. They will draw their students to an awareness of how all cultures search for the same truth but in different ways. By various methods, they will invite their students to relate their readings to their lived experience. They do no service, however, by producing graduates highly literate in Western language, literature, and culture, who retain the literacy of a secondary school student with regard to their own language and culture. Even Departments of Foreign Languages should be sensitive to the need for an ever-deepening study of Chinese history, language, and literature. This includes training for critical appreciation of contemporary Taiwan's genuinely creative examples of thought, literature, music and art.

(d) Value-oriented education is even more crucial for *science* students. Learning the necessary skills of the scientific method and influenced by the cult of a deterministic science in the secondary schools, science students can unconsciously choose a narrow philosophy of life. Along with their technical training, science students should be introduced to the latest, most stimulating examples of scientists' philosophical thinking on the relationships of science and technology to human society and the ultimate questions. At the same time, it can be demonstrated how the most profound religious points of view fulfill and go beyond the limitations of scientific study. The implications run deep. For instance, in reporting the most recent scientific research concerning the "black hole" theory in astronomy, Frank R. Haig has raised some provocative questions: "What happens to those philosophical systems, modeled on the rigid determinism of a science, when they are seen now as more outmoded? What happens to a system such as classic communism, which depends on a 19th-century mind set that is becoming in our day a scientific embarrassment?"¹⁵

3.3. *Interdisciplinary Programs.* In theory, everyone sees the advantage of such programs. Unfortunately, precious few attempts at interdisciplinary action succeed in remaining so; they often break up into each professor protecting his own niche. Committed to intellectual reflection which is integrative, focussed on

¹⁵ "Science's Now Cloudy Crystal Ball," *America*, 136 (5 March 1977), 193.

the ultimate questions, and open to the fullness of human experience, those who embark upon disciplinary research must make special efforts to listen, discern, and form consensus on true values from any source.

At present, there are almost no structures for inter-departmental and inter-collegiate communication between faculty and students. The presence of interdisciplinary research and courses of study by their very nature would foster assimilative cultural pluralism.

3.4. *Exchange Programs with Other Christian Institutes and Universities.* Under the same impulse, we should exchange professors and develop common research projects, workshops and seminars with the other Christian universities. While the School of Theology is not an official part of the university due to government regulations, it should be the first institute with which we attempt such cooperation. Considering the limitations of our resources and energies, the setting up of priorities and the coordination of research will be important.

At the moment of writing, *Monumenta Serica* proposes to assist Fu Jen graduates studying in Europe and to serve as a scholarly mediator in the West. This Institute, inaugurated in Peiping by the Society of the Divine Word in 1935, researches all aspects of Chinese culture, especially philosophy and religion. Since 1949, it has continued in Japan, the United States, and now Germany, sharing its findings with the academic world through an international journal. Closer ties could increase the University's potential for realizing the hopes of this paper.

3.5. *A Clearing-House for Interdisciplinary and Inter-University Research.* To facilitate the above proposals, a clearing-house is needed on campus, with a modest budget and minimal staff, to spread information about work in progress and to draw people of various departments together.

3.6. *Spontaneous Formation of Small Research Groups.* Certainly, there are on campus persons whose personal values coincide with those expressed here. Without waiting for corporate structures to emerge, let them informally band together and commit themselves to cooperative effort on relevant projects for what-

ever time it takes. Truly sound and challenging responses to the present situation can later be widely disseminated. Such are the salt of the earth.

3.7. *An Ecumenical Religious Activities Center.* The physical structure of the Religious Activities Center which is now being planned will announce to the entire university community what we believe the Church to be. If we truly believe that the Catholic tradition keeps central the transcendent realities yet also remains open to all that is human, then this should be reflected in the Center. Around the focal point of a modest but unmistakable place of Catholic worship, various groups should be able to come together simultaneously — non-Christians preparing for their social work, Buddhists in meditation or discussion, Christians of other faiths for a prayer meeting, Catholics for the Eucharistic Celebration or Christian Life Community. What better way to promote cultural pluralism and encourage ecumenical dialogue?

3.8. *A Focal Point of Dialogue.* We reject the two oversimplified views that non-Catholic religious experience has no validity or that all religious traditions are equally true and supernatural in all respects. However, we do believe that the Spirit has spoken and continues to speak to the great non-Christian religions as well as to the Christian churches. Although ecumenism is still in the early stages on Taiwan, there are certain things which the university can do to further inter-confessional dialogue.

In the first place, there is a need for an objective study of the authentic documents of each religious tradition. Researchers can especially discover what the Gospel confirms and fulfills in the classical philosophy and literature. Questionnaires, attitudinal surveys, and interviews that uncover what the people of Taiwan really believe, what beliefs they actually act upon, can clarify the syncretistic nature of popular religion. Such preparatory study can keep dialogue from deteriorating into the uncritical acceptance of irreconcilable differences. A deeper and more serious form of research will clear the way for more qualified solutions.

4. Conclusion

Whether the age to come will be better or worse than the one we are now living in depends very much on the choices and

directions we take. As the American contemplative Thomas Merton has written:

We hopefully look forward not to an age of eclecticism and syncretism, certainly, but to an age of understanding and adaptation that will be able to synthesize and make use of all that is good and noble in all the traditions of the past. If the world is to survive and if civilization is to endure or rather perhaps weather its present crisis and recover its dimension of "wisdom," we must hope for a new world culture that takes account of all civilized philosophies.

The Christian scholar is obligated by his sacred vocation to understand and even preserve the heritage of all the great traditions insofar as they contain truths that cannot be neglected and that offer precious insights into Christianity itself. As the monks of the Middle Ages and the scholastics of the thirteenth century preserved the cultural traditions of Greece and Rome and adapted what they found in Arabic philosophy and science, so we too have a far greater task before us. It is time that we begin to consider something of our responsibility.¹⁶

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¹⁶ *Mystics*, p. 65.