
A summary of the article; “Final Reflections”, Fernandez, L. S. “the Currents of historical thought”,

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by **George N Njenga**

Final considerations

1. The Answers are Still Insufficient

The currents of European thought over the last 500 years have left Europe, and a significant part of the rest of the world, scarred, because they have not given an adequate response to the questions of human life, community and government. Despite the great scientific leap, the question of human dignity, value and life has been almost left to oblivion. As a result, Europe continues to experience still graver threats to its existence and development. Suarez feels that Europe has reached a post-modern period in which the European has to go back to his Christian roots and re-trace where he deviated. In this way he may find the true answers to the quest for freedom and human development. Human development cannot be placed in the hands of the unbeliever, least of all should the Christian historian retract himself to the submission of paradigms that take him away from God. The Christian historian must primarily explain History from the profound meaning given it by God in Jesus Christ. This is what he feels Europe needs and he has the sensation that the European is once again looking for his lost religious values.

In the 19th Century Positivists, Nationalists and Marxist tried to impose a new historical conscience based on man as the source and end of his actions. This neither brought the promise of happiness, nor the comfort of a certain hope for the future of man, nor an economic utopia. All they have ended up giving is a sense of man sacrificed at the altar of science and mechanics. Wars have not disappeared; they are crueler every time. In fact, the accelerated dominion of technician (or specialist) continues to exert itself on human life, and its development constitutes a serious threat to morality and human dignity. Although the machines are moving at incredible speeds, they offer a gloomy forecast of the future of Europe. Sounding rather pessimistic, Suarez elucidates that “we are marching towards a true disaster unless the ecological balance recovers, puts a stop to the wastefulness of goods, violence, eroticism and the drug addiction”. Based on Fukuyama’s research project, European Governments have lost control of their citizens. It seems as if Europe has given in to every wind of conscience and waywardness, and to selfishness - through abdication of reason; democracy inclines in favor of an essential voluntarism of the “I”, whether it is expressed by right or leftists or the right and democracy swings to every wind of desire and conviction. He feels that things are changing in post-modern Europe.

Suarez feels that the Christian historian has a legitimate role to play in this desolate panorama once the effects of Positivism and Marxism have waned. At the foundation of this legitimacy is the sense that the Christian historian has to reject the “historical perspective” enunciated by Marxist-Leninists, reducing man and his history to the mere curiosity of Archeologists, and give history a “universal perspective” in time and space. Secondly that history is profoundly affected by human freedom at its very foundations. Could the historian have committed the error of feeding the evil sentiments of nationalism, taking sides in favor of some

options as opposed to others, formulating favorable or opposite judgments of value prejudices that have been fanned – a role certainly not to be predicated of the historian? Far from this, the Christian Historian has to explain and to re-discover the meaning of “euro-piety” by providing Europe once more with a revised and true historical knowledge based on its Christian past.

Marxists proposed to prove the non-existence of God scientifically in vain because this sentiment now seems a ridiculous proposition given the rise and fall of Marxism and also because he denied the evidence against this opinion. The finiteness of the Universe calls for the existence of God. Historians seem to have fallen into the same temptation of denying reality. But a rupture with past evidence does not mean freedom in any way but rather deprivation. It is urgent that the historian realizes that, independently of what pleases him or not, the past is, alive and here, and it cannot be avoided without losing one's identity at the same time. Freedom is not independence but exercise of the will to choose and, therefore, resignation. All the History of Europe from the emergence of Christianity has been built on the foundation of freedom and without her it becomes incomprehensible.

2. A New Path for Science

Historians and scientists cannot do away with God and head towards the right direction as the past centuries have shown us. Our science should not find an obstacle in God; it must cooperate in our path towards Him. Newton warned of the consequences of such a position, Copernicus was a Catholic priest, Galileo's faith did not vacillate, in spite of the lack of understanding of certain judges, and Einstein invoked a God “who does not play poker” to explain his theory of relativity. Suarez cautions that in thoroughly reviewing past great doctrines historical interpretation

“we would have to bow to some great figures, recognizing their literary value but not their thought”. The historian must be humble and admit his own limitations and the provisional state of his findings. Nevertheless, when confronted with the propositions so far we should carefully consider that wisdom must be open to new findings from two perspectives; that the strategy of natural science is constantly being revised; and that historical knowledge cannot be subservient to methods other than its own. The historian should abandon himself to a more rigorous science and anthropocentrism, in order to pass on to his anthropo-finality. In short, if science is correct, it must serve man in body and spirit rather than use him. Any science is wrong when it insists on rejecting God by an act of free will, and resorts to the game of chance pretending that the prodigious universe is a container of everything, are only just like life, a product of fate. The universe contains in its nature the light that leads us to its creator regardless of any theorems on how it came to be. Its immensity should not cast a shadow of infiniteness but rather help us exclaim at the wonder the creator must be. We must leave aside these theorems to the authors of great movies and books and turn to the Absolute and Final cause, who is God. We cannot deify man as the center and end of all things.

3. The Starting Point

The starting point has to be in the nature freedom and love, characteristics of man which are at the center of his history and two conditions without which man becomes incomprehensible. History must start from the perspective of man in his entirety, both matter and spirit. Given that we are making a quantum jump in a new time-axis as Professor Jasper puts it, historians should consider human crises as reconsiderations and submissions of value judgments which can lead to the improvement or deterioration. Historians can give a fundamental contribution

instead of becoming fetish, as the Marxists observes of things, or on the other hand give in to both revolution and/or conservatism. Revolution is doomed to failure for it becomes the very evil it loves to destroy and conservatism leads to multiple sclerosis. The Historian must bring to bear the patrimony which past human experiences offers and without which man loses his identity.

Among the things that the historian should propose are; that the westernized European has come to the full import of the power of the masses; that it has lead to well-being as well as vulgarity, sensuality, laziness, and equalization, and other similar manifestations; that there is no equality other than that of the crushed masses of the modern states; that revolution only ends up generating a new despotism worse than the previous one; and that therefore there is reason to propose a rationale that would allow societies and cultures freely develop on their own; that implies change and growth and help men to progress. Man, to differentiate him from the other living beings, has the luminous presence of the spirit who cooperates with him in pro-Creation who allows him to be “historical”, separating him from the repetitive instinct that reigns in Nature. He indeed has a certain dominion over the succession of natural events (what we refer to as time), and for that very reason, historical occurrence is a form of Revelation which reveals God’s plan for creation. Man has committed terrible destruction throughout history but he also has the capacity to repair them. He is, as Toynbee puts it, both the challenge and the answer.

4. Towards a New Historical Conscience

Historians in the past have preyed on the methods of other sciences thereby delimiting themselves into several fields and resisting contemplation of the context

of man as a whole. Now there is a new beginning in which there is an increased attraction to religious values and the desire to try a new Humanism. Politics is giving way to other decisions of an international character and together with the dignity of man and woman in civil and political law there is an understanding that the unity in society lies in the virtue of solidarity. It is also true that society must correct its consumerist tendencies and stop placing rights before duties. By the same token, man should go back to his humanism, his human *geist* (or spirit), and resist the temptation of submitting himself to materialism by forsaking his Christian past. He can learn from the crises that took place in the 3rd and the 14th century A.D. The decadence in the 3rd Century led mainly to the fragmentation of the Roman Empire; in the 14th century it led to a conversion that allowed the passage to modernity. This clearly shows that History is always a study of the development of human spirit of freedom.

The European is in need of a profound moral regeneration. No historian can legitimately be called Christian, if he reduces Jesus Christ to the level of a human personage, albeit, that He is perfect God and perfect man. Christ is, for Cullmann, is the center and Gentleman of history. It would help everyone, and in the first place the non-believer, to explain the course of History from a Christian perspective and for that there would be a great sigh of relief. God, first Cause of the universe, governs the destiny of Humanity in a logical manner and a non-dialectic sequence. He leads us towards an encounter with Christ - "perfectus Deo, perfectus homo – perfect God and perfect man" extending himself through time and perceived through faith. But that hope in our faith keeps man in tension, acts upon him as an impulse and moves him to improve. Thus there arises an awareness of progress that, as Suarez has repeated many times, consist in the advancement of "humanity". Christianity is not a socio-political movement or a revolutionary movement of

mankind. Its goal extends to the world. When the Gospels speak of justice they are not referring to an increase in wages, (this is a general human obligation), but of the relationship between man and God in a filial relationship where the Father gives and conserves in existence. Divine Providence is manifested throughout History but it does not determine in anyway the forms of society. The passage of History appears, before a Christian, as the context of his progress and Christianity calls man to the development of his material and spiritual nature. God has given man freedom to decide, individually and collectively, the fullness of the destiny of himself and his society even if he can be mad enough to use his freedom in denying God only to destroy himself.

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