A Vision for the Third Millennium the Age of Global Dialogue
Dialogue or Death !

In his article «A Vision for the Third Millennium, 'The Age of Global Dialogue': Dialogue or Death», Swidler attempts to show that humankind is in a crucial transition from a stage where monologue is the chief characteristic of relations, to one where dialogue is the chief characteristic. Because of technological advances, dialogue is both more possible than ever before and also more necessary than ever before. The change from monologue to dialogue is a change from a way of interacting modeled on confrontation to one modeled on listening. The change is being caused by a number of important parallel shifts, such as an increased awareness of the tenacity of knowledge and the shrinking of the world to a «global community». But while Swidler characterizes the change from monologue to dialogue as «*the most fundamental, most radical and utterly transformative* of the key elements of the newly emerging paradigm,» he warns that this change is not a guaranteed event. With the great technological advances that make dialogue more possible than ever come new opportunities for technological abuses. Therefore, he warns, we are faced with two choices: dialogue or death.

1. A Radically New Age

Those thinkers who early in the twentieth century with great historical/sociological analysis predicted the impending demise of Western Civilization were clearly mistaken. After World War I, in 1922, Oswald Spengler wrote his widely acclaimed book, *The Decline of the West*[1] . After the beginning of World War II Pitirim A. Sorokin published in 1941 his likewise popular book, *The Crisis of Our Age*[2] . Given the massive, world-wide scale of the unprecedented destruction and horror of the world's first global war, 1914-18, and the even vastly greater of the second global conflict, 1939-45, the pessimistic predictions of these scholars and the great following they found are understandable.

In fact, however, those vast world conflagrations were manifestations of the dark side of the unique breakthrough in the history of humankind in the modern development of Christendom-become-Western

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Civilization, now becoming Global Civilization. Never before had there been world wars; likewise, never before had there been world political organizations (League of Nations, United Nations).

The prophets of doom were correct in their understanding that humanity is entering into a radically new age. Early in the twentieth century the nay-sayers usually spoke of the doom of only Western Civilization, but after the advent of nuclear power and the Cold War, the new generation warned of *global* disaster. This emerging awareness of possible global disaster is a another clear, albeit negative, sign that something profoundly radically new was entering onto the stage of human history.

In the 1990s professor Samuel Huntington of Harvard University named a central contemporary reality when he argued that with the fading of the Cold War, in its place was the rising of a Clash of Civilizations;[3] fundamentalisms of all sorts, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, nationalist, ethnic, tribal, were tearing at the fabric of the New World Order even as it was being woven. At least we thought we understood the other side in the Cold War, whether we admired, respected, tolerated or despised it. But in the nineties we entered into a state of cacophonous confusion and consequently were floundering, or even foundering: e.g., Rwanda, Bosnia, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, the Middle East-and then the most shocking blow of all: September 11. But these outbreaks of violence are only the most visible flashpoints of the contemporary malaise. The problems run much deeper. They are cultural, ethical, religious, spiritual. A world with clashing, or potentially clashing, cultures, religious, ethnic groups-civilizations-*is* the world of the End of the Second, Beginning of the Third Millennium.

However, that is not all it is. In the midst of our current, and essential, War on Terrorism, the very antithesis of the Clash of Civilizations is likewise a reality, and an increasing one. Humanity is also in the midst of a deep evolutionary shift towards a higher, communal, and dialogical way of life. This evolution of religions and cultures points towards a process essential to healing the deep problems that inhere in all aspects of our human cultures and even threaten our very survival, namely: the awakening of humankind to the power of *dialogue*.[4]

There have been a number of scholarly analyses other than that of Huntington pointing to the emergence of a radically new age in human history. I will deal with two of them. The first is the concept of the Paradigm-Shift, particularly as expounded by Hans Küng[5]. The second is the notion of the Second Axial Period, as articulated by Ewert Cousins[6]. Then, including these two, but setting them in a still larger context, I shall lay out my own analysis, which I see as the movement of humankind out of a multi-millennia long Age of Monologue into the newly inbreaking Age of Dialogue, indeed, an inbreaking Age of Global Dialogue.

2. Dialogue: the Way Forward

The future, I submit, offers two alternatives: **Death or Dialogue** (if you will, the Samuel Huntington or the Leonard Swidler view). This statement is not over-dramatization. In the past, all of us talked only with ourselves, that is, with those who thought as we did-or should! Until the edge of the present era, we humans lived in the **Age of Monologue**. That age is now passing. We are now poised at the entrance to the **Age of Dialogue**. We travel all over the globe, and the globe comes to us. Our streets, businesses, and homes are filled with overseas products. Through our Asian-made television sets we invite into our living rooms myriads of people of strange nations, cultures, and religions. Most terrifying of all, World Terrorism has struck us in our own front yard.

We can no longer ignore The Other, but we can close our minds and spirits to them, look at them with fear and misunderstanding, resent them, and perhaps even hate them. This way of encounter leads to hostility and eventually war and death. Today nuclear, ecological, or terroristic devastation lies just a little ways further down the path of Monologue. It is only by struggling out of the self-centered monologic mindset into dialogue with The Other that we can avoid such cataclysmic disasters. In brief: We must move from the Age of Monologue to the Age of Dialogue.

What we understand to be the Aexplanation of the ultimate meaning of life, and how to live accordingly, is what we call our religion. Since our religion is so comprehensive, so all-inclusive, it is the most fundamental area in which The Other is likely to be different from us-and hence possibly seen as the most threatening. Again, this is not over-dramatization. The current catalogue of conflicts which have religion as a constituent element is staggering, including such obvious neuralgic flashpoints as Northern Ireland, Lebanon, Israel, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Pakistan, India, Tibet, Afghanistan, the Sudan, Armenia/Azerbaijan, Nigeria-and now Islamist Terror.

Hence, if humankind is to move from the Age of Monologue into the Age of Dialogue, the religions must enter into this movement full force. They have in fact begun to make serious progress along this path, though the journey stretches far ahead, indeed.

3. Dialogue: A Whole New Way of Thinking

Dialogue, especially dialogue in the religious area, is not simply a series of conversations. It is a whole new way of thinking, a way of seeing and reflecting on the world and its meaning. When we speak of Adialogue, we do not mean just another conversation. We mean an experience of encountering people of different fundamental convictions in such a way that each one's assumptions come to light, and that all can move ahead in reciprocal learning. Dialogue means strengthening and affirming our fundamental beliefs and practices, but transforming them as well.

4. Dialogue: Its Meaning

Dialogue is conversation between two or more persons with differing views, the primary purpose of which is for each participant to learn from the other so that s/he can change and grow. Of course, *in addition* both partners *also* share their understanding with their partners, but we enter into dialogue *primarily* so *we* can learn, change, and grow, not so that we can force change on the *other*.

In the past, when we encountered those who differed from us in the religious sphere, we did so usually either to defeat them as opponents, or to learn about them so as to deal with them more effectively. In other words, we usually faced those who differed with us in a confrontation- sometimes more openly polemically, sometimes more subtly so, but usually with the ultimate goal of overcoming the other because we were convinced that we alone had the truth.

But that is not what dialogue is. Dialogue is not debate. In dialogue each partner must listen to the other as openly and sympathetically as possible in an attempt to understand the other's position as precisely and, as it were, as much from within, as possible. Such an attitude automatically assumes that at any point we might find the partner's position so persuasive that, if we were to act with integrity, we ourselves would have to change. Until recently in religious traditions, the idea of seeking religious wisdom, insight, or truth through dialogue occurred to very few people. Today the situation is dramatically reversed.

5. Dialogue: Reasons for Its Rise

There are the many external factors that have appeared in the past century and a half which have contributed to the creation of what we today call the global village. All these externals have made it increasingly impossible to live in isolation. But underlying, and even preceding, the external forces opening the way to dialogue is a shift in consciousness that has been taking place for the past two centuries. We call this shift in consciousness a Paradigm-Shift in how we perceive the world.

6. A Major Paradigm-Shift

Thomas Kuhn revolutionized our understanding of the development of scientific thinking with his notion of paradigm shifts. He painstakingly showed that fundamental paradigms are the large thought frames within which we place and interpret all observed data and that scientific advancement inevitably brings about eventual paradigm shifts-from geocentrism to heliocentrism, for example, or from Newtonian to Einsteinian physics-which are always vigorously resisted at first, as was the thought of Galileo, but finally prevail.[7] This insight, however, is valid not only for the development of thought in the natural sciences, but is also applicable to all disciplines of thought, including religious thought.

A major paradigm shift in systematic religious reflection, i.e., in theology, then, means a major change in the very idea of what it is to do theology.[8] Let me give

an example from the Christian tradition: The major Christian theological revolution that occurred at the first ecumenical council (Nicaea, A.D. 325) did not so much resolve the battle over whether the Son and Father were of the same substance, *homoousion*, important as that was, but rather that, by defining "homoousion", it tacitly admitted that here were issues in theology which could not be solved simply on the basis of recourse to the language of the Scriptures.[9] In the next several centuries a flood of new answers poured forth to questions being posed in categories of thought unused by Jesus and his first, Jewish, followers-namely, in Greek abstract philosophical categories of thought.

As the paradigm within which the data of what Jesus thought, taught, and wrought and how his Jewish followers responded, was perceived and understood shifted from the Semitic, concrete biblical thought world to a Hellenistic, largely abstract philosophical one, the questions asked, and the terms in which they were asked, shifted accordingly, and of course so did the answers. As always, when a new major paradigm shift occurs, old answers are no longer helpful, for they respond to questions no longer posed, in thought categories no longer used, within a conceptual framework which no longer prevails. It is not that the old answers are now declared wrong; it is simply that they no longer apply. Aristotle's answers in physics and chemistry in terms of the four elements of air, fire, water and earth, for example, simply do not speak to the questions posed by modern chemists and physicists.
Tenth-century Christian theologians answering that Mary remained a virgin while giving birth to Jesus (i.e., her hymen was not broken) were answering a question that no modern critical-thinking Christian theologian would pose, for it presupposed a thought-world which placed a high value on unbroken hymens. That thought world is gone. Hence, the old answer is im-pertinent.

7. The Modern Major Paradigm-shift

Since the eighteenth century Enlightenment, Christendom-then become Western Civilization-has been undergoing a major paradigm shift, especially in how we understand our process of understanding-in other words, our epistemology. This new epistemological paradigm is increasingly determining how we perceive, think about, and subsequently decide and act on things.

Whereas our Western notion of truth was largely absolute, static, and monologic or exclusive up into the nineteenth century, it has since become deabsolutized, dynamic and dialogic-in a word, it has become relational.[10] This new view of truth came about in at least six different, but closely related, ways. In brief they are:

1. **Historicism:** Truth is deabsolutized by the perception that reality is always described in terms of the circumstances of the time in which it is expressed.
2. **Intentionality:** Seeking the truth with the intention of acting accordingly deabsolutizes the statement.

3. **Sociology of knowledge:** Truth is deabsolutized in terms of geography, culture, and social standing.
4. **Limits of language:** Truth as the meaning of something and especially as talk about the transcendent is deabsolutized by the nature of human language.
5. **Hermeneutics:** All truth, all knowledge, is seen as interpreted truth, knowledge, and hence is deabsolutized by the observer who is always also interpreter.
6. **Dialogue:** The knower engages reality in a dialogue in a language the knower provides, thereby deabsolutizing all statements about reality.

Let me, for the sake of brevity, reflect on just two of these six ways our understanding of truth has been deabsolutized.

0. Absolutism: Before the nineteenth century in Europe *truth, that is, a statement about reality*, was conceived in an absolute, static, exclusivistic either-or manner. If something was true at one time, it was always true. For example, if it was true for the Pauline writer to say in the first century that women should keep silence in the church, then it was always true that women should keep silence in the church; or if it was true for Pope Boniface VIII to state in 1302, we declare, state, and define that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of all human beings that they submit to the Roman Pontiff,[11] then it was always true that they need do so. Truth was thus understood to be absolute, static.

This is an *absolutist* view of truth.

1. Historicism: In the nineteenth century many scholars came to perceive all statements about something as partially the products of their historical circumstances. These scholars argued that only if the truth statements were placed in their original historical situation could they be properly understood. The understanding of the text could be found only in *con*text. Thus, all statements about the meaning of things were now seen to be deabsolutized in terms of time.

This is a *historical* view of truth. Clearly at its heart is a notion of *relationality*: Any statement about the truth of the meaning of something has to be understood in relationship to its historical context.

3. The sociology of knowledge: Just as statements about the meaning of things were seen by some thinkers to be historically deabsolutized in time, so too, starting in the twentieth century with scholars like Karl Mannheim, such statements began to be seen as deabsolutized by such things as the culture, class and gender of the thinker-speaker, regardless of time. All reality was said to be perceived from the perspective of the perceiver's own world view. Any statement about the meaning of something was seen to be perspectival, standpoint-bound, *standortgebunden*, as Karl Mannheim put it, and thus deabsolutized.

This is a *perspectival* view of truth and is likewise *relational*: All statements are fundamentally related to the standpoint of the speaker.

In sum, our understanding of truth and reality has been undergoing a radical shift. This new paradigm which is being born understands all statements about reality, especially about the meaning of things, to be historical, intentional, perspectival, partial, interpretive and dialogic. What is common to all these qualities is the notion of *relationality*, that is, that all expressions or understandings of reality are in some fundamental way related to the speaker or knower.

With the new and irreversible understanding of the meaning of truth resulting from all these epistemological advances, the modern critical thinker has undergone a radical Copernican turn. Recall that just as the vigorously resisted shift in astronomy from geocentrism to heliocentrism revolutionized that science, the paradigm shift in the understanding of truth statements has revolutionized all the humanities, including theology. The macro-paradigm with which critical thinkers operate today is, as noted, characterized by historical, social, linguistic, hermeneutical, praxis and dialogic-*relational*-consciousness. This paradigm shift is far advanced among thinkers and doers; but as in the case of Copernicus, and even more dramatically of Galileo, there of course are still many resisters in positions of great institutional power.

[Our perception, and hence description, of reality is like our view of an object in the center of a circle of viewers. My view and description of the object, or reality, may well be true, but it will not include what someone on the other side of the circle perceives and describes, which also may well be true. So, neither of our perceptions and descriptions of reality can be total, complete- absolute in that sense-or objective in the sense of not in any way being dependent on a subject or viewer. At the same time, however, it is also obvious that there is an objective, doubtless true aspect to each perception and description, even though each is relational to the perceiver-subject.]

But if we can no longer hold to an absolutist view of the truth of the meaning of things, we must take certain steps. First, besides striving to be as accurate and fair as possible in gathering and assessing information and submitting it to the critiques of our peers and other thinkers and scholars, we need also to dredge out, state clearly, and analyze our own pre-suppositions-a constant, ongoing task. Even in this of course we will be operating from a particular standpoint.

Therefore, we need, second, to engage in dialogue with those who have differing cultural, social philosophical, religious viewpoints so as to strive toward an ever fuller perception of truth. If we do not engage in such dialogue we will not only be trapped within the perspective of our own standpoint, but we will now also be aware of our lack. We will no longer, with integrity, be able to remain deliberately turned in on ourselves. Our search for the truth makes it a necessity for us as human beings to engage in dialogue.

8. The Axial Period

It was the German philosopher Karl Jaspers who over fifty years ago pointed to a paradigm-shift of unprecedented magnitude in his book *The Origin and Goal of History*.[12] He referred to the period from 800-200 B.C.E. as the Axial Period because it gave birth to everything which, since then, man has been able to be. It is here in this period that we meet with the most deepcut dividing line in history. Man, as we know him today, came into being. For short, we may style this the *Axial Period*.[13] Although the leaders who effected this change were philosophers and religious teachers, the change was so radical that it affected all aspects of culture, for it *transformed consciousness itself*. It was within the horizons of this form of consciousness that the great civilizations of Asia, the Middle East, and Europe developed. Although within these horizons many developments occurred through the subsequent centuries, the horizons themselves did not change. It was this form of consciousness which spread to other regions through migration and explorations, thus becoming the dominant, though not exclusive, form of consciousness in the world. To this day, whether we have been born and raised in the culture of China, India, Europe, or the Americas, we bear the structure of consciousness that was shaped in this Axial Period.

Prior to the Axial Period the dominant form of consciousness was cosmic, collective, tribal, mythic, and ritualistic. This was the characteristic form of consciousness of primal peoples. It is true that between the time of these traditional cultures and the Axial Period there emerged great empires in Egypt, China, and Mesopotamia, but they did not yet produce the full consciousness of the Axial Period.

The consciousness of the tribal cultures was intimately related to the cosmos and the fertility cycles of nature. As they felt themselves part of nature, so they experienced themselves as part of the tribe. It was the web of interrelationships within the tribe that sustained them psychologically, energizing all aspects of their lives. To be separated from the tribe threatened them with death, both physical and psychological. However, their relation to the collectivity often did not extend beyond their own tribe, for they often looked upon other tribes as hostile.

The Axial Period ushered in a radically new form of consciousness. Whereas primal consciousness was tribal, Axial consciousness was individual. Know thyself became the watch-word of Greece; the Upanishads identified the *atman*, the transcendent center of the self. The Buddha charted the way of individual enlightenment; Confucius pointed out the path to becoming a Sage; the Jewish prophets awakened individual moral responsibility. This sense of individual identity, as distinct from the tribe and nature, is the most characteristic mark of Axial consciousness. From this flow other characteristics: consciousness which is self-reflective, analytic, and which can be applied to nature in the form of scientific theories, to society in the form of social critique, to knowledge in the form of philosophy, to religion in the form of mapping an individual spiritual

journey. This self-reflective, analytic, critical consciousness stood in sharp contrast to primal mythic and ritualistic consciousness. When the self-reflective *logos* emerged in the Axial Period, it tended to oppose the traditional *mythos*. Of course, mythic and ritualistic forms of consciousness survive in the post-Axial Period even to this day, but they are often submerged, surfacing chiefly in dreams, literature, and art.

9. The Second Axial Period

Following the lead of Ewert Cousins, if we shift our gaze from the first millennium B.C.E. to the eve of the twenty-first century, we can discern another transformation of consciousness, which is so profound and far-reaching that Cousins calls it the Second Axial Period.[14] Like the first, it is happening simultaneously around the earth, and also like the first, it will doubtless shape the horizon of consciousness for future centuries. Not surprisingly, too, it will have great significance for world religions, which were constituted in the First Axial Period. This new form of consciousness is different from that of the First Axial Period. Then it was individual consciousness, now it is global consciousness.

In order to understand better the forces at work in the Second Axial Period, Cousins draws from the thought of the paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.[15] In the light of his research in evolution, Teilhard charted the development of consciousness from its roots in the geosphere and biosphere on into the future. In a process which he calls Aplanetization, he observed that a shift in the forces of evolution had occurred over the past hundred and fifty years. This shift is from divergence to convergence. When human beings first appeared on this planet, they clustered together in family and tribal units, forming their own group identity and separating themselves from other tribes. In this way humans diverged, creating separate nations and a rich variety of cultures.

However, the spherical shape of the earth prevented unlimited divergence. With the increase in population and the rapid development of communication, groups could no longer remain apart. After dominating the process for millennia, the forces of divergence have been superseded by those of convergence. This shift to convergence is drawing the various cultures into a single planetized community. Although we have been conditioned by thousands of years of divergence, we now have no other course open to us but to cooperate creatively with the forces of convergence as these are drawing us toward global consciousness.[16]

According to Teilhard this new global consciousness will not level all differences among peoples; rather it will generate what he calls creative unions in which diversity is not erased but intensified. His understanding of creative unions is based on his general theory of evolution and the dynamic which he observes throughout the universe. From the geosphere to the biosphere to the realm of consciousness, a single process is at work, which he articulates as the law of complexity-consciousness. Just now, because of the shift from di-

vergence to convergence, the forces of planetization are bringing about an unprecedented complexification of consciousness through the convergence of cultures and religions, working toward a *uni-versitas*, a unity in diversity.

In the light of Teilhard's thought, then, we can better understand the meeting of religions at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The world religions are the product of the First Axial Period and the forces of divergence. Although in the first millennium B.C.E., there was a common transformation of consciousness, it occurred in diverse geographical regions within already differentiated cultures. In each case the religion was shaped by this differentiation in its origin, and developed along differentiated lines. This produced a remarkable richness of spiritual wisdom, of spiritual energies and of religious-cultural forms to express, preserve, and transmit this heritage. However, now that the forces of divergence have shifted to convergence, the religions must meet each other, discovering what is most authentic in each other, thereby releasing creative energy toward a more complexified yet unifying form of religious consciousness.

Such a creative encounter has been called the dialogic dialogue to distinguish it from the dialectic dialogue in which one tries to refute the claims of the other.[17] This dialogic dialogue has three phases:

1. The partners meet each other in an atmosphere of mutual understanding, ready to alter misconceptions about each other and eager to appreciate the values of the other.
2. The partners are mutually enriched, by passing over into the consciousness of the other so that each can experience the other's values from within the other's perspective. It is important at this point to respect the autonomy of the other tradition: in Teilhard's terms, to achieve union in which differences are valued as a basis of creativity.
3. If such a creative union is achieved, then the religions will have moved into the complexified yet unifying form of consciousness that will be characteristic of the twenty-first century. This will be complexified/unifying global consciousness, not a mere universal, undifferentiated, abstract consciousness. It will be global through the global convergence of cultures and religions and complexified by the dynamics of dialogic dialogue.

This global consciousness, complexified through the meeting of cultures and religions, is only one characteristic of the Second Axial Period. The consciousness of this period is global in another sense, i.e., in rediscovering its roots in the earth. At the very moment when the various cultures and religions are meeting each other and creating a new global community, our life on the planet is being threatened. The very tools which we have used to bring about this convergence-industrialization and technology-are undercutting the biological support system that sustains our life. The future of consciousness, even life on the earth, is shrouded in uncertainty.

Cousins is not suggesting a romantic attempt to live in the past, rather that the evolution of consciousness

proceeds by way of recapitulation. Having developed self-reflective, analytic, critical consciousness in the First Axial Period, we must now, while retaining these values, reappropriate and integrate into that consciousness the collective and cosmic dimensions of the pre-Axial consciousness. We must recapture the unity of tribal consciousness by seeing humanity as a single tribe. And we must see this single tribe related organically to the total cosmos.

10. The Age of Global Dialogue

Ewert Cousins has basically affirmed everything Hans Küng described as the newly emerging contemporary paradigm-shift, but he sees the present shift as much more profound than simply another in a series of major paradigm-shifts of human history. He sees the current transformation as a shift of the magnitude of the First Axial Period which will similarly reshape human consciousness. I too want to basically affirm what Küng sees as the emerging contemporary Major Paradigm-Shift, as well as with Cousins that this shift is so profound as to match in magnitude the transformation of human consciousness of the Axial Period, so that it should be referred to as a Second Axial Period.

More than that, however, beyond these two radical shifts, while including both of them, humankind is emerging out of the from-the-beginning-till-now millennia-long Age of Monologue into the newly dawning Age of Dialogue.

The turn toward dialogue is, in my judgment, *the most fundamental, most radical and utterly transformative* of the key elements of the newly emerging paradigm which Küng outlined and Cousins perceptively discerned as one of the central constituents of the Second Axial Age. Something remarkable happens when we experience the depth of personal and communal dialogical awakening. There is a profound shift in how we perceive our selves, our lives, our priorities, our relationships, our world, which in turn clarifies our global vision as it at the same time releases passionate moral energy, intensified social responsibility, and a deepened spirituality.

However, this shift from monologue to dialogue constitutes such a radical reversal in human consciousness, is so utterly new in the history of humankind *from the beginning*, that it must be designated as literally revolutionary, that is, it turns everything absolutely around. Standing in this new consciousness of global dialogue, everything is different. We must proclaim with Shakespeare in the Tempest: What a brave new world that hath such creatures in it!

11. Conclusion

To sum up and reiterate: In the latter part of the twentieth century humankind is undergoing a Macro-Paradigm-Shift (Hans Küng). More than that, at this time humankind is moving into a transformative shift in consciousness of the magnitude of the Axial Period

(800-200 B.C.E.) so that we must speak of the emerging of the Second Axial Period (Ewert Cousins). Even more profound, however, now at the beginning of the Third Millennium humankind is slipping out of the shadowy Age of Monologue, where it has been since its beginning, into the dawn of the Age of Dialogue (Leonard Swidler). Into this new Age of Dialogue Küng's Macro-Paradigm-Shift and Cousins' Second Axial Period are sublated, that is, taken up and transformed. Moreover, humankind's consciousness is becoming increasingly global. Hence, our dialogue partners necessarily must also be increasingly global. In this new Age of Dialogue, dialogue on a global basis is now not only a possibility, it is a necessity. As I noted in the title of a book of mine-humankind is faced ultimately with two choices: **Dialogue or Death!**[18]

Notes

[1] Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (Munich: Beck, 1922-23), 2 vols.

[2] Pitirim A. Sorokin, *The Crisis of Our Age* (New York: Dutton, 1941).

[3] Samuel Huntington, Clash of Civilizations, *Foreign Affairs*, July, 1993, pp. 22-49. See also his, *The Conflict of Civilizations*, 1996.

[4] Huntington himself points to this move toward global dialogue, even if only in the form of a *need*: We need to develop a more profound understanding of the basic religious and philosophical assumptions underlying other civilizations.... It will require an effort to identify elements of commonality between Western and other civilizations....to learn to coexist with the others (*Foreign Affairs*, p. 49).

[5] See among others, Hans Küng, *Theologie im Aufbruch* (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1987), esp. pp. 153 ff.

[6] See especially Ewert Cousins, Judaism-Christianity-Islam: Facing Modernity Together, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 30:3-4 (Summer-Fall, 1993), pp. 417-425.

[7] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd ed., 1970).

[8] Quentin Quesnell, On Not Negotiating the Self in the Structure of Theological Revolutions, typescript at Jan. 3-11, 1984 conference in Honolulu on Paradigm Shifts in Buddhism and Christianity: Cultural Systems and the Self, p. 2.

[9] Ibid., p. 3.

[10] Already two millennia and more ago some Hindu and Buddhist thinkers held a nonabsolutistic epistemology, but that fact had no significant impact on the West; because of the cultural eclipse of those civilizations in the modern period and the dominance of the Western scientific worldview, these ancient nonabsolutistic epistemologies have until now played no significant role in the emerging global society-though in the context of dialogue, they should in the future.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century Eastern thought has become increasingly better known in the West, and proportionately influential. This knowledge and influence appears to be increasing geometrically in recent decades. It is even beginning to move into the hardest of our so-called hard sciences, nuclear physics, as evidenced by the popular book of the theoretical physicist Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 2nd ed., 1983).

[11] Boniface VIII, Unam sanctam, in J. Neuener and J. Depuis, eds., *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1972), no. 875, p. 211.

[12] Karl Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (Zurich: Artemis, 1949), pp. 19-43.

[13] Ibid., p. 19; trans. Michael Bullock, *The Origin and Goal of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 1. For the ongoing academic discussion of Jaspers' position on the Axial Period, see *Wisdom, Revelation, and Doubt: Perspectives on the First Millennium B.C., Daedalus* (Spring, 1975); and *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations*, ed. S.N. Eisenstadt (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989).

[14] I am in this section especially indebted to Ewert Cousins' essay Judaism-Christianity-Islam: Facing Modernity Together, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 30:3-4 (Summer-Fall, 1993), pp. 417-425. For a more comprehensive treatment of Cousins' concept of the Second Axial Period, see his book *Christ of the 21st Century* (Rockport, MA: Element, 1992).

[15] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Le Phénomène humain* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1955); see also *L'Activation de l'énergie* (Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1962) and *L'Energie humaine* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1962). For a more detailed study of Teilhard's thought in relation to the second Axial Period, see Ewert Cousins' paper Teilhard de Chardin and the Religious Phenomenon, delivered in Paris at the International Symposium on the Occasion of the Centenary of the Birth of Teilhard de Chardin, organized by UNESCO, September 16-18, 1981, UNESCO Document Code: SS.82/WS/36.

[16] Teilhard, *Le Phénomène humain*, pp. 268-269.

[17] On the concept of dialogic dialogue, see Raimundo Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), pp. 241-245; see also his *The Intrareligious Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978).

[18] Leonard Swidler et alii, *Death or Dialogue. From the Age of Monologue to the Age of Global Dialogue* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990).