

A theological basis for sindonology & its ecumenical implications*

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ABSTRACT

After presenting a theological basis for sindonology as valid and significant field for continuing study, the author examines its ecumenical implications and offers concrete proposals for future cooperative efforts among the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant families of the Church. Suggested projects range from making out-of-print classics available through internet electronic “libraries” to joint travelling exhibits of art objects owned by various international Holy Shroud organizations.

A THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR SINDONOLOGY

The strength of the Shroud is its vividness to history – a vividness that antedates any New Testament writing – and that moves the Word of God into a new visual language. By means of this vivid witness, we see the face and body of the actual historical Jesus and we have our resurrection faith shaken but finally reshaped in a form closer to that of the first disciples.¹

Three years ago in the May/June 1998 issue of *Shroud Sources* carried a report from the March 10 issue of *Avvenire* of that year in which Mons. Giuseppe Ghiberti, then advisor to Cardinal Giovanni Saldarini, responded to an article from the March issue of *Riforma*, an Italian Protestant magazine. Several articles in this publication asked the Church to de-emphasize the Shroud fearing that it is “being used as a tool by the Catholic Church to sustain Christian faith on the base of a piece of linen” - a move which was judged to be a “corrupting use of the ‘sacred’”.

Mons. Ghiberti noted that Protestants and Catholics have different views about the Shroud, but that “the nature of the cloth should not be an ecumenically divisive issue”. So far so good!

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But then - in my humble opinion - Fr. Ghiberti mistakenly opined that "for Protestants the Faith cannot be sustained or helped by an image or a relic" while correctly observing that for Catholics "it is not up to humans to teach God what means he should use to stimulate and aid the faith of people". With all do respect to the situation in Italy where Protestants are in a diminutive minority, when one evaluates Protestant response to the Holy Shroud in my own country he or she is likely to reach a somewhat different conclusion.

The point of this paper is two-fold:

1. The Shroud is for "all sorts and conditions of men and women" without respect to denomination. God lifts it up now as on that first Easter morn when it was initially discovered so that "All may be drawn unto Him" who is the Risen Lord and Christ.

2. In the words of Ewa Kuryluk, the Shroud is "**a textile *acheiropoietos* – a skin-cloth-icon created through the touching of Christ with the purpose of touching others**" [Emphasis added.]²

We would agree that many twentieth century Christians in general and its theologians in particular see little or no reason to devote even the slightest effort to the study of the shroud (*i.e. sindonology*). Their reasoning takes something like the following tack: "I already accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and I made that decision long ago without the slightest idea that there even was a Shroud! Why should I waste any of my time reading about the Shroud? And, by the way, didn't C-14 testing prove that it was a 'fake' anyway?"

Though a popularly held view, unfortunately in the long run it proves to be both simplistic and founded on the sands of *misplaced concreteness*. A "simple" faith may indeed be a beautiful one, but that does not necessarily make it either "true" or based on verifiable fact. The Church of the Latter Day Saints of Christ strives to lead a very moral life based on *The Book of Mormon*. Devout as their belief may be, not one of the many alleged geographical sites mentioned in their "legends" has ever been discovered and/or verified by archaeology.

Roger Chambers [Disciples of Christ (Campbellites)] moves us to a deeper level of consideration in his incisive article entitled "The War of the Shroud":

"The resurrection is of course, the foundation of the Christian system. *The apostolic church established its credibility objectively and evidentially, i. e. eyewitness testimony. Skeptics were invited to check the evidence. Never was it suggested that anyone accept the resurrection on emotional or devotional grounds ("You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart")*".

As the church of the first three centuries evolved into an imperial state church, it adopted *dualistic epistemology* (theory of knowledge) as codified by Augustine. This to say that the unbeliever is incapable of faith so God infused it into the elect by a miraculous process. *Faith*

emerged *the enemy of reason*. The move from learned faith to infused truth was, of course, the move from evidence to mysticism...³

When we look at the twentieth century, we discover that both Barth and Bultmann have injected their own ideological bias into the contemporary Protestant mind set. The Rev. Dr. David Scaer sums it succinctly in noting:

“Karl Barth based his theology on a concept of "God's Word" which had no need of real history. The reluctance of much of conservative Protestantism to tackle such thorny theological questions as the authenticity of the shroud may, in fact, derive from the unrecognized Barthianism that relies on the "Heavenly Word" and ignores historical questions. Answering historical questions often in fact, considered the height of unbelief by the followers of Barth”...⁴

James P. Carley offers a telling analysis of the cost of haughtily dismissing the "concrete" and its role in nurturing the faith of countless believing Christians:

“Relics depend on faith ... When Henry's [*i.e.* Henry the VIII of England] agents smashed the pagan images, as they called them, and undermined the trust the pious had put in their efficacy, they managed to destroy a whole metaphysical system in which relics functioned as meaningful links with the immortal world. Much superstition was no doubt overcome at the Reformation, but it was done at great psychological cost. Protestant man became considerably more alone in the world than were his Catholic predecessors who had their tangible links with eternity”.⁵

Even a conservative biblical scholar like Gary Habermas is quite forthright in proclaiming:

“Especially distressing are some evangelical critiques based on partial information.... One uncanny facet becomes immediately obvious in a study of the shroud. What looks at first report to be rather problematical has repeatedly turned out to fit very closely with the known facts....

“An exegetical study of the relevant portions of the NT does not render the shroud fraudulent. To the contrary: Not only are there no discrepancies, but the shroud is compatible with the data, and certain texts (such as John 11:44 and 20:67) actually favor the type of burial depicted in the shroud. Second, burial like that of the man of the shroud was apparently practiced by Jews in Jesus' time as revealed by the Essene community, the *Code of Jewish Law* and the Mishna ... Since we have found that the shroud is neither proven nor disproven by the gospel texts and that it is a viable option, a third point might now be stated. The actual authenticity of the shroud must be made on other grounds, such as scientific and historical investigation....

“[In fact,] not only does the shroud provide some exciting new evidence for the resurrection of Jesus, but it complements the extremely strong historical evidence for this event as well. In fact, the evidence from the shroud is strong enough that **if Jesus was not buried in this garment, then we might have a problem, for it would seem that someone else would have appeared to have risen from the dead**”.⁶ [Emphasis added.]

All are agreed that there were no human witnesses to the actual moment of Resurrection.

Therefore it should come as no surprise that the trend in biblical scholarship has been to focus on the *subjective impact* of this event rather than upon the rather scanty *objective traces* of same which are available for a more empirical analysis. The Resurrection was primarily an objective event which involved matter and occurred in space and time. As such, there should be no *a priori* reason to eliminate the possibility that this event left a physical trace - a "trace" which we still have with us to this day and known as the Shroud of Turin. If the artifacts of Jericho are legitimate physical traces studied to trace the empirical history of that city, why should the Shroud - possibly the only artifact of the most important event of all time - be dismissed as unworthy of the most exacting analysis of which man is capable? Surprisingly enough, biblical scholars seem to overlook the fact that the Shroud is

“the only relic mentioned in the Bible after the Resurrection [Jn 20:5-7]. The Cross isn't mentioned after the Crucifixion, or the Crown of Thorns, or anything else, just the Shroud. Why?”⁷

Mark Heim, a Baptist pastor, goes beyond Habermas in his own carefully developed line of reasoning which argues that:

“Jesus being truly human such traces did exist and, for all I know, still exist unless a first century Marty [*i.e.* The Rev. Dr. Martin Marty, Lutheran and publisher of an influential Protestant journal, *The Christian Century*,] followed him about tidying up. Dangers of abuse of any such remnant there surely are, but that does not mean we should resolutely purge ourselves of any intimation that *the resurrection was nastily tangible* - was, well, *real: like a cloth you can hold in your hand*. What changed [the apostles] was not the moral impact of anyone, but rather a firsthand encounter with reality, the resurrection witnessed to them by Christ's actual presence among them by what we loosely call evidence. Evidence did not and could not compel them to believe, but *it was the occasion for their believing*. *If it were not to play even this role, then why any resurrection appearances at all?* Were the disciples simply to make up the idea of the resurrection on their own? Were they like *est* initiates, simply supposed to "get it"? That is not what the Gospels indicate. The disciples got it, but prodding was required”⁸. [*Italics added.*]

The Shroud of Turin: Its Ecumenical Implications

History may provide a clue as to what the cloth's future ecumenical implications may be. After almost 2,000 of years of history since its discovery in the Empty Tomb, the Shroud has been on the move both literally and figuratively. If Ian Wilson's thesis is accepted that the Image of Edessa-Mandylion- Shroud of Turin are one and the same, then the Holy Linen truly has traveled from the Tomb to Turin. In the process it has survived a flood at Edessa, the sack of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade, a near disastrous fire at Chambéry, and the most recent fire of 1997 in which it was once again saved from the flames of a “suspicious” fire which severely damaging and nearly destroying the Guarini Chapel.

As I began to reflect upon its journey through time I also began to discover the ecumenical dimension of its travels. Could it be that, in addition to its physical preservation through the ages, God also has intended it to be an ecumenical bridge and unifier? Until the day When we can once

again share One Cup and One Loaf, what could serve as a better focus for ecumenical unity than this "Polaroid" of the Resurrection. "To the Jew first and also to the Greek" (**Rom. 1:16**), the Shroud has moved from the East to the West. Is it merely by chance that in the process it has been "lifted up" so that "all" are being drawn to Him whose sacred image it bears? Is it merely by chance that those first Jewish disciples who visited the Holy Sepulchre learned of the fullness of the Resurrection from this sacred linen's very emptiness - an experience so powerful that it sent them forth into all the world to share the fullness of its Gospel message? Was it by chance that an afflicted Parthian king was cured and converted by it? Was it merely by chance that our Orthodox brothers and sisters were privileged to be its custodians for nearly 1200 years, meticulously recording in their iconography and numismatics the features of our Lord which it bears? Could it be that God assigned them this very role in response to those first Greeks who approached St. Philip with the plea that "we would see Jesus" (**Jn. 12:21**)? Was it by chance that the Church of Rome was to become its next and faithful guardian? And is it by chance that now in the twentieth century the worldwide Protestant community is currently coming to appreciate the Holy Shroud's true significance? Even charismatic TV evangelists like those on the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) and the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) have devoted hour-long programs to "The Shroud of Mystery".

History's very preservation of this Holy Cloth should alert the ecumenical community to a divine purpose which should not be ignored. Though no branch of Christianity has ever required belief in the Shroud's authenticity as an article of faith, many denominations are now coming to perceive that it can do much in the way of adding both depth and detail to a faith already held. One 6th Grader after a visit to the **TURIN SHROUD EXHIBIT** (a 5,000 sq. ft. on display in Atlanta, GA from 1982-1987) noted: "I never knew before that He hurt so much for us. I am going to try to live better for Him". A "lapsed" adult who had not darkened the doors of a church in over twenty-one years, confessed with tears in his eyes "My visit to the **Exhibit** has changed my life. I didn't do much with the first half, but I would like to give the second half back to God". Lest one think that he was merely overcome with the emotion of the moment, I can tell you that not only does he now serve on the governing board of his local congregation, but I had the privilege of writing a letter of recommendation for him to begin his formal seminary training.

Daily at the **Exhibit** we came in contact with many who would never attend services at a local parish, let alone even visit any church to see an exhibition devoted to an alleged "relic". For many of them the "religion" of the twentieth century is symbolized by the scientist's white laboratory jacket - certainly not the black cassock of a priest. However, quite frequently these devotees of technology discovered a truth long ago known to their theological brothers and sisters. They came to *scoff*, but they stayed to *pray*. This phenomenon is well described by an American Baptist minister who astutely observed: "Maybe the greatest attribute of the Shroud is that it creates *doubt in the doubter*, and God doesn't need much of a toehold to get a start". Like St. Thomas before them, some of these "doubters" find themselves profoundly moved when they discover that although in 1978 Science went to test the Shroud, in reality it is the Shroud which still continues to test the scientists. We should not be surprised if God once in the 21st century again converts *doubtful skepticism* into *dedicated service*.

Are we so blind that we fail to discern that in the study of the Shroud our Lord is once again being "lifted up (to) draw all" (**Jn. 12:22**) to Himself.? Is it not possible that once again "when the time had fully come," (**Gal. 4:4**) God is using this autograph of His Son scripted in His own Blood to make Him known as never before to a generation blessed with analytical methods heretofore not technically *possible*? *Mirabile dictu*, could this "Polaroid of the Resurrection" and the means to reproduce same via printed and electronic media all over the world now have the potential even to be more fully appreciated than it was 2,000 years ago? Truly, such implications are staggering.

Although the linen is now legally the possession of the Pontiff and all his successors, its message is for all the world. One day at the Trappist Monastery of the Holy Spirit 20 miles east of Atlanta, I was to learn this truth phrased in a way that has stayed with me through the years. Fr. Anthony Delesi said: "You know, Kim, we Roman Catholics have taken care of the Shroud for the last 800 years - after we stole it from the Greeks who had been its custodians for the previous 300 years. However, in truth it belongs to no denomination - possibly not even to Christianity - for in reality it is **GOD'S 'LOVE LETTER IN LINEN' TO ALL MANKIND**".

Certainly the Rev. Dr. James Kennedy, a Presbyterian from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, acknowledges this truth in his wonderful sermon entitled "Save the wrappings"⁹. Dr. Kennedy observes that our Lord was born in a borrowed cave, wrapped in line swaddling clothes, and was buried in a borrowed tomb enveloped in a linen shroud. In between these two events was "the Greatest Story Ever Told".

Are we in the twenty-first century not being called by God to use these final wrappings", which He has taken such pains to preserve, to supplement our witness in reaching the hearts of those for whom He lived, died and rose again? We would do well to heed Sir Wycke Bayliss who at the turn of the century astutely observed that there are at least two Gospel "traditions": an early one in art and a later one of the written Word. The skill of the artist portrayed Him as The Son of Man; the pen of the writer of scripture brings us to that deeper truth that this Son of Man is also the Christ, the Son of God.

The Rev. Dr. David Scaer, a Lutheran pastor, challenges all Christians with his profound article entitled: "The Shroud of Turin - Protestant Embarrassment or Opportunity?" In addition to Protestantism's natural aversion to relics, Scaer notes that undue reliance on revelation through the written Word fails to give just due to the word made flesh in and through history. Scaer concludes his article with the following:

"The Shroud of Turin may very well be an authentic link with a past which was not only sacred but real. Acceptance of the authenticity of the Shroud obviously cannot be made a criterion for orthodoxy, but a prior refusal to consider the question borders on disregard of the historical claims of Christianity. Perhaps we shall be given the same opportunity as Peter and John to see the burial garments of the Lord" (**John 20. 6,7**)¹⁰.

Our Lord Himself realized that His own generation sought a "sign," and He promised to leave

them only one - the sign of Jonah". (**Matt. 12:39**). Lest modern-day Christians think such speculation is too far fetched, they would do well to note that for a first century Jew the story of Jonah was a parable of Israel's "burial" in Egypt and its subsequent "resurrection" as a nation (cf. Ezek. 37:1-14); and that for writers of the New Testament, the Messiah must recapitulate the history of Israel. Those of us who believe in the Shroud's authenticity believe that not only did He keep His promise, but that this very "sign" is still with us today locked in a silver casket in Turin's Cathedral Church of St. John the Baptist. Those of us who do so believe would do well to remember that "unto whom much is given much is required." (**Luke 12:48**). We of all people should give special heed to a caveat offered by the late Anglican Bishop John A.T. Robinson:

"If in the recognition of the face and hands and feet and all the other wounds (on the Holy Shroud), we, like those who knew Him best, are led to say, "It is the Lord!", then perhaps we may have to learn to count ourselves also among those who have "seen and believed." But that, as St. John makes clear, brings with it no special blessing (**20.-29**)--rather special responsibility" (**17:18-21**)¹¹.

That "special responsibility" is to get beyond the linen to the Lord - to see Him in the faces of the dispossessed, the victims of injustice, the poor, the neglected and all the others for whom He died. "Facts" learned about the Man of the Shroud do not guarantee dedicated service in His Name. Alas, these "facts" can become nothing more than religious erudition in pious garb unless they lead to the deepening of the student's own faith reflected in concern for and service to those for whom the Man of the Shroud came to minister.

The Holy Shroud provides a unique and wonderful opportunity for **ECUMENICITY** and **EVANGELISM** to walk hand in hand. We who are called to be its advocates should not be focused on denominational *converts* or *quotas*, but rather only on the *commitment* and *quality* of those who are brought closer to the Lord through their encounter with it. Some may be called to be Baptists, some Orthodox, some Roman, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, or any one of the other multiple Protestant options. Let us trust God to lead His people where He may, even when it is not in the direction of our personal denominational preference. Let the believer discover new depth to a faith already possessed. Let the "convert" bask in the joy of a life filled with new meaning and purpose. Let all go forth to "love and serve the Lord".

Some twenty years ago this ecumenical dimension of this sacred linen became very evident to me on the night of August 16, 1983, when local judicatory leaders offered their corporate blessing to the **TURIN SHROUD EXHIBIT** and participated in the *Evening Office of the Holy Shroud*. The Greek Archbishop, the Roman Catholic Archbishop, the Episcopal Bishop and the Presiding Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church gathered before the world's first full size, backlit transparency of the Shroud and joined clergy representing the Assemblies of God, Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists and Presbyterians in an amazing witness to ecumenical unity. At the conclusion of the service, His Grace Bishop John of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Atlanta, turned to me and said: "Thank you very much for picking our day." I didn't fully understand the significance of his remark until he went on to explain to me that August 16th is the Feast of the Holy Mandyllion commemorating the occasion in 944 A.D. when the Shroud was first shown to

the public in Byzantium following its arrival the previous day from Edessa in southeastern Turkey. What made things all the more amazing was that those who had scheduled the dedication had no idea of the significance of the date. It just happened to be the one night that all the various clergy had free on their busy calendars. Was it merely coincidence, or was it yet another *sign* of God's larger purpose for his Son's burial cloth?

The following January, bishops, clergy and laity of the local Roman Catholic and Episcopal Dioceses returned to the **TURIN SHROUD EXHIBIT** to sign a mutual covenant of cooperation and unity. The participants had agreed upon the **EXHIBIT** as an appropriate and neutral site for the covenant's signing rather than selecting either of their respective cathedrals.

One further *sign* of the Shroud's ecumenical appeal. In all of Christian history, only one denomination has gone from Orthodox to Catholic to Protestant. That branch of the faith is the Moravian Brethren. How fitting that when the **EXHIBIT** was forced out of its home at the Omni International by its then new owner, CNN's Ted Turner, it was David Walz - a Moravian who designed and created a beautiful 80 panel travelling exhibit which continues to tour the United States in its own custom trailer and is usually booked a year in advance.

How God may choose to further ecumenical cooperation in the new millennium must wait to be seen. However, at the **ATLANTA INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CONTINUING STUDY OF THE SHROUD OF TURIN, INC.** we continue to pray that the intent of the prayer first offered at that ecumenical dedicatory service back in 1983 may continue to prove to be prophetic:

“Accept we pray, this Exhibition of the Turin Shroud, and grant that those who look upon it may have their hearts open to things which can be seen only by the eyes of faith. By the Holy Spirit, use it to preach the Gospel of Salvation with power and grace to those who have not heard it, turn the hearts of those who resist it, and bring home to your fold those who have gone astray; that there may be one flock under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord”.¹²

Somewhere along the way the "Shroud Crowd" of the future will realize that the *teachings* of the Man of the Cloth are even more significant than the myriad revelations of truth which it contains. Somewhere in this pilgrimage men and women devoted to its study will rediscover a central truth long ago proclaimed by Him whose image it bears: "I would that you were one even as the Father and I are one". (**John 17.21**). When that day arrives maybe the scandal of a divided Christianity "will begin to break down its dividing walls of hostility. And on that day when Christianity is able to present one "Face" to the non-Christian world, then maybe the former will be taken more seriously by those who use its very fragmentation as an argument against acceptance of its teachings. Like St Peter, we who serve the apostolate of the Holy Shroud can then proclaim.- "Gold and silver have I none, but what I have I will certainly give you" (**Acts 1:6**). What we do have is a unique piece of linen which bears upon it an even more unique and significant gift for all the world - **AN ECUMENICAL BRIDGE OF COOPERATION FOR THE PRESENT; A POTENTIAL GIFT OF GRACE FOR ECUMENICAL UNITY AND**

EVANGELISM FOR THE FUTURE.

THE ECUMENICAL IMPERATIVE: PRESERVATION AND PROCLAMATION

In preparing for this Vetralla Conference, I went to my files and dug out a memo that I had sent out in June of 1988. In re-reading it, I was amazed how many of its conclusions and recommendations might still be applicable to the present. With minor revision and editing, I offer for your consideration what I believe should be the direction and emphases taken by those groups like the **Holy Shroud Guild** and the **Atlanta International Center** in my own country and any and all other groups throughout the world - from Mexico to Moscow, those in Australia, Canada, England, France, Germany, Italy, Malta, Russia, *etc.* - and all others whose primary concern with the Holy Shroud revolves around its religious significance and purpose.

With the emergence of Barrie Schwartz's premier web site www.shroud.com, sindonophiles around the world now have access directly from their own homes to a wealth of Shroud graphics and articles never before available.

Lest we become too enamored with our own technological success, let us also be quick to acknowledge that some of the very basic texts (*e.g.* Pierre Barbet's *A Doctor at Calvary*, Werner Bulst's *The Shroud of Turin*, José-Luis Carreño Etxeandia - *Las huellas de la Resurreccion* - Ed. Don Bosco, Pamplona 1978 (spagnolo), Luigi Fossati - *La Santa Sindone/Nuova luce su antichi documenti* – Borla Ed., Torino 1961, John Heller's *Report on the Shroud of Turin*, Giuseppe Maria Pugno - *La Santa Sindone che si venera a Torino* - SEI, Torino 1961, Pietro Savio - *Ricerche storiche sulla Santa Sindone* - SEI, Torino 1957, Manuel Sole' - *La Sabana Santa de Turin* - Ed. Mensajero, Bilbao 1986 (Spagnolo), Paul Vignon's *The Shroud of Christ*, John Walsh's *The Shroud* and Ian Wilson's *The Shroud of Turin, The Mysterious Shroud, and Holy Faces, Secret Places*) are now out of print, not readily available at the local library and sometimes difficult to obtain even via inter-library loan. Alas, many potential new "Shroudies" inspired by both Schwartz's site and Russ Breault's **Shroud of Turin Education Project (STEP)** are stymied in their research projects when the very texts they need are unavailable.

SHROUD LIBRARIES, RESEARCH PAPERS, ETC.

The demise of America's greatest contributor's to the promulgation of the Shroud' message (*i.e.* Frs. Wuenschel, Rinaldi, Otterbein and Prof. Alan Adler) warns us of the necessity not only to insure adequate plans for the *preservation* of their collections, but also of providing *access* to them for future generations of Shroud scholars. Had it not been for prompt action at the time of Fr. Filas' untimely death, his collection might well have been tragically lost or neglected by his fellow faculty members at Loyola, many of whom like his superior Fr. Robert Wilde not only failed to share his enthusiasm; but, in, the latter's case, firmly believed the Shroud to be a fake. The whereabouts of much of Fr. Peter Weyland's work remains a cause for concern and needs to be located and catalogued.

There still remain scientific papers in the hands of individual STURP members which have been neither peer-reviewed nor published, possibly containing myriad clues for continuing research. These documents also need to be collected and catalogued in a central repository.

And while we struggle with the vast amount of material already known to exist, what definite plans have been made by the groups assembled here in Vetralla to insure the preservation and effective utilization of their own collections? What is to become of the enormous collection of the **Colorado Shroud Center** when the Jacksons are no longer able to carry on their work? The same can be asked of the Whangers with regard to the **Council for the Study of the Shroud of Turin**. Add to these the unpublished research of individuals like Paul Maloney, Dan Scavone, Gus Accetta, Warren Grunfest, the Whangers, myself and a host of others whose computer and paper files need to be passed on to future researchers? With the exception of Turin's Centro Internazionale di Sindonologia, what other international groups have made plans to insure that their organization, mission and resource files are passed on to the next generation?

For example in the AICCSST archives alone can be found the original 1961 manuscript of B.G. Sandhurst's (*i.e.* a pseudonym used by the father of Fr. Maurus Green) "The Silent Witness" complete with the original B&W photographs. We also have a xerox copy of the unpublished 1936 manuscript by Theodora Bates in which this amazing laywoman already had concluded that the Image of Edessa/"Shroud" (*i.e.* Mandylion) of Constantinople/ Shroud of Turin were one and the same. We have xeroxes of Gabriel Quidor's original blueprints filed with the French patent office from which in 1910 he produced the first *bas* relief made directly from the densities on the Holy Cloth first photographed by Secondo Pia - 64 years before that process was perfected by his fellow countryman Paul Gastineau and 67 years before the now-famous 3-D "sculpture" created by Jackson and Jumper which in turn has been surpassed by Mattei's superb creation.

Sometime in the very near future we need to explore the expensive and time consuming process of digitizing these basic texts and creating a central source like the Vatican Library at St. Louis University where scholars - from high school students to university professors - can gain access to them. For the professionals, a committee could be selected to chose just which volumes - and in what priority - of the **Wuenschel Collection** should be included in such a repository. Even in this magnificent collection, not all texts are of real or equal value to the serious researcher. Thanks be to God that this entire collection has been microfiched; but there lies ahead the laborious and expensive task of converting that format into a digitized one. Legal advice will be required as to which volumes may or may not be so reproduced without violating copyrights; and, in the case of more modern works, permission and arrangements must be negotiated with contemporary publishers.

Simultaneously, the international community of sindonologists must become a part of this project. God alone knows what treasures waiting to be mined already exist in texts published in French, Italian, German and Spanish to say nothing of more ancient works in Greek, Latin, Syriac and possibly even Coptic - some hidden away in monasteries and unknown even to those who possess them. We eagerly await publication of Mark Guscin's research on the manuscripts and icons conducted last June at Mt. Athos. For the non-linguist, just imagine what a priceless gift it

would be to have an English translation of Ernst von Dobshütz' *Christusbilder* or of Gertrud Schiller's *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*, Vol. 3?

Finally, add to the above list the need to assemble an Audio-Visual Library where 35mm slides, movies, videos, audio tapes, *etc.* could be stored and accessed by future researchers. Have any of you ever tried to come up with a full length reproduction of the *epitaphios* of Uroš Milutin depicting the Man of the Shroud in a "standing" or vertical posture with his arms crossed à la the Man of Sorrows/Christ of Pity? Not only is this cloth highly significant for both iconographic and liturgical scholars, but the danger to which it has been exposed in the recent bombings of Bgrade points to the larger need to insure photographic preservation of it and all other such existing visual representations of the Shroud. How grateful we all are to Lennox Manton for his superb photographs of the Cappadocian frescoes which have now begun to deteriorate considerably.

OTHER VALUABLE ITEMS

Many items related to the Shroud are "one of a kind" (*e.g.* the STURP table on which the actual 1978 testing was performed, the cloth replica shroud crafted by England's John Weston for "The Silent Witness", the pre- and post-mortem forensic sculptures of the Head of the Man of the Shroud effected by Thomas Goyne and most recently the magnificent full length sculpture created in 2000 by Luigi Mattei. Many others are too delicate and/or too valuable to be chanced to just any travelling exhibit (*e.g.* Richard Orareo's Boston Collection, *bas* reliefs of the Holy Face by Robazza, Ferri, Gastineau and Bassani, the Mexican "Face of Threads" crafted from metallic wires, a wood carving of the Holy Face by Charles Eze of Nigeria, the full-size replica *mandylion* by Mary Whanger and one of six extant fiberglass "sculptures" of the Man of the Shroud constructed by Drs. Jackson and Jumper from the readings made by the VP-8 Image Analyzer. However, with proper insurance and security individual owners and groups might be persuaded to permit these "treasures" to become part of an international travelling exhibit which would be especially appropriate for Lent in some of the world's major cities.

THE NEED FOR A PERMANENT REPOSITORY

Like the Boston Collection, all of these items can be photographed digitally and even preserved and distributed on CD-ROMs. However, the need still remains for a permanent display site - be it a museum, art gallery, central "Department of Sindonology" on a university campus or whatever.

Truly a university - with a school of theology, one of medicine, liberal arts, and a strong school and/or alliance with a nearby institution prestigious in the hard sciences - would be the ideal location for such a repository. We are already aware what today's modern computer's and laser discs are capable of providing in terms of storage of both data and images which in turn can be retrieved by scholars around the world who have access to the university's network terminals. The ideal scenario would be to convince the chosen institution to offer the first multi-disciplinary course of sindonolgy in the USA. Professors already on the faculty of its different departments could be utilized to teach as was done for years at Connecticut's Wesleyan University for the

mandatory course in freshman Humanities. Some of these scholars might even be inspired to conduct further research in their own specialized fields of expertise on this the world's most-studied artifact. Even the most skeptical and "empirical" just might discover that the Shroud's initial appeal to their minds eventually results in a conversion of their hearts. And if seminary involvement is part of the larger area of inclusion, clergy and Christian educators could carry the message to local judicatories and congregations while others, currently not inclined to the Faith might find as have so many through the centuries that though "they came to scoff, they stayed to pray".

EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT "STEWARDSHIP" OF RESOURCES

All of us who are called to the apostolate of the Holy Shroud have an obligation to get beyond the linen to the Lord whose Image it bears. Thus, we have a mandate to look beyond the limitations of the present to the fullness of the possibilities for the future. Greater ecumenical cooperation and participation is the wave of the future, and all Christians - especially those of us with this privileged ministry of the Holy Shroud - should be prepared to offer their special "gift" to the larger Church family when the occasion permits.

It has become increasingly clear since the Holy Shroud's last public expositions in 1998 and 2000 that this sacred linen has drawn world-wide ecumenical interest and support. With the beginning of a new millennium and the computer technology which will be even more marvelous and utilitarian than what is presently available, we have both an ecumenical *imperative* and *opportunity* to proclaim the Shroud and its Gospel as never before. While debates as to its authenticity and relevance will continue both within the Roman Catholic Church and among the Greek Orthodox and various Protestant denominations, the window for joint exploration and study has never been more open. One does not have to raise the thorny issues of Apostolic Succession, an all male priesthood, *etc.* in the common search for the meaning of this linen artifact left by the Lord Himself. God willing more and more Christians will come to share the insight of the Blessed Sebastian Valfré (1629-1710), an Oratorian and chaplain to Duke Victor Amadeus of Savoy, that: "the Cross receives the living Saviour and gives Him back dead; the Shroud receives the dead Saviour and gives him back alive".

Even before the Jacksons and others like Emanuela Marinelli had established links with Russia, the following quote from two Russian Orthodox monks appeared in an issue of *Diakonia*:

...."anything which God lifts up to inspire our search for inner truth commands our veneration. If the Holy Shroud lifts us up to a sincere search for God, it becomes an icon. In this sense, we might be so bold as to say that the crucial question about the Shroud, which must pass beyond the Shroud and touch on the power of the resurrection itself, makes its historical authenticity secondary. We must take great care, then, not to join with those who hate the spiritual and unwisely condemn something that God, in His wisdom, may have set forth to wake a sleeping people"¹³.

Both the **Mass** and the **Office of The Holy Shroud**, first authorized in 1506 by Pope Julius II, may someday become approved liturgies employed to celebrate our common ecumenical devotion to the Holy Shroud. Just such an evening office was celebrated in Atlanta to commemorate the 1982 opening of the **TURIN SHROUD EXHIBIT** at the Omni, now the CNN Center in Atlanta. The date chosen was August the 16th - the Feast of the Holy Mandylion for the Greek Orthodox - and those present included both the Greek and Roman Catholic Archbishops, the Episcopal Bishop of Atlanta, the Presiding Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and official representatives from the Lutheran Church in America, the United Methodist Church and the Southern Baptists. Such a gathering reveals how easily a traditional office can be adapted to permit joint participation when supported and approved by the larger ecumenical community. Though not a viable possibility at this moment in history, a joint baptismal service by Roman Catholics, Episcopalians and Lutherans at Pentecost of 1988 in Sacramento, California hints at a future time when even the Mass might be celebrated “at the same time in the same place” with each denomination consecrating the elements according to its own ritual and providing separate stations for reception by worshipers à la procedure at Taizé in France. True, at the moment this is a matter of extreme delicacy, but the joint baptismal rite cited above grows out of a joint study commissions of Roman Catholic scholars with their Anglican and Lutheran counterparts where issues such as the validity of priestly orders and sacraments has been recognized, though not formally approved at this time. Despite the unlikelihood of such an ecumenical Communion in our own lifetime, our prayers continue that the interest shared in the body and blood of the holy linen may some day also be shared in a common liturgy of the Holy Eucharist. Ecumenicity has not failed; like Christianity, it has never really been “tried”.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE INTERNATIONAL/ECUMENICAL COOPERATION

1. Replication of Art Works:

- A. Engravings (2000 Ostensione prints)
- B. Paintings
- C. Bas Reliefs (Vigna, Mattei, Bassani, Ferri, Goyne, Quidor (1910 biochromate from original Pia Plates), Gastineau, *etc.*)
- D. Silks (see Orareo Collection)
- E. Icons (Mount Sinai encaustic)
- F. Mosaics
- G. Liturgical cloths [*epitaphioi* (Uros Milutin, Athens, *etc.*)]

2. Full length bodies:

- A. Msgr. Giulio Ricci
- B. STURP
- C. Luigi E. Mattei

3. Full length back-lit transparencies

4. Archaeological artifacts:

- A. *Lancea*
- B. Nail
- C. *Flagrum*
- D. Medical models of hands and feet depicting the nails
- E. Replica of the *Mandyllion*
- F. Replica of Jackson's Pharos Chapel display where *Mandyllion* raised out of its box
- G. Full size replication of Shroud itself on 3:1 herringbone twill (see Kevin Moran)
- H. Lirey Pilgrim's medal
- I. Lierre 1/3 size copy

Videos:

Reproduction of selected DVD's and tapes in PAL, and SECAM formats with soundtracks in English, Italian, French, Spanish & German

International Exhibits:

On March 8, my friend and fellow presenter Barrie Schwartz, posted the following announcements on his marvelous website **www.shroud.com**:

Shroud Exhibits Planned Around The World

Mark Ferris has written to inform us of an upcoming Shroud exhibit on the island of Malta that will include a lifesize color photograph of the Shroud of Turin. The event is scheduled to begin at 6:00 pm, April 1, 2001, and will include opening ceremonies inaugurated by the Hon. Jesmond Mulgiette, Malta's Parliament Minister for Youth and Culture. The opening day includes the participation of 150 people in a re-enactment of the Passion of Christ along with a procession of 70 bandsmen. The exhibit includes 13 life-size statues representing the Last Supper and biblical and Roman armors.

Adolfo Orozco and Gerardo Halbinger of the Centro Mexicano de Sindonologia (CMS) [Mexican Center of Sindonology] have written to inform us that Cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera, Archbishop of Mexico, approved the exhibit of the negative of the face of the Man of the Shroud at the main facade of the metropolitan Cathedral of Mexico for 40 days during the Lenten season of 2001. The 12m x 7m image will be placed facing the main square (Zócalo) in Mexico City. The Centro is also producing a sindonology exhibit that will be on display inside the cathedral during the entire Lenten season.¹⁴

And even as I speak to you this (morning/afternoon), plans are underway to bring a copy of Prof. Luigi Mattei's wondrous and true-to-life sculpture of the Man of the Shroud to the United States for a tour in such cities as New York, Washington, Atlanta, New Orleans, Los Angeles and

Chicago. Hopefully while on the North American continent, Shroud groups in both Mexico and Canada can be recruited to extend its stay with exhibitions in both of those countries.

Our individual efforts and projects are all worthy of praise, but joint efforts like today's conference here in Vetralla are truly in the spirit of the Gospel of the Man of the Shroud who prayed that that we all might be one even as He and the Father were One (Jn. 17:20-24).

TIMING

THE TIME IS NOW! It is not by chance that God has chosen the 21st century with its great technological revolution to be the chosen vehicle for revealing some of the mysteries of the Holy Shroud. Ironically, the very rational empiricism responsible for sophisticated skepticism and agnosticism is being used by God to "convert" former non-believers. Countless stories can be told of those who in their investigation of the Shroud "came to scoff, but stayed to pray". Recent word from India tells us of amazement on the part of Hindus and Buddhists that Christianity is willing to submit its most precious relic to rigorous scientific investigation. Neither of these faiths can offer anything for such empirical scrutiny. I personally have known Jews who have been "converted" or "completed Jews" as a result of their study of this holy cloth. Overseas missionaries continue to request pictures of the Man of the Shroud having learned that this "visual aid" has a profound effect on illiterates for whom reams of printed material would have no effect. And, *mirabile dictu*, over fifteen years ago in 1986 more than 90 Muslim high school and college students holding a convention in Atlanta requested a group tour with discussion to follow at the **TURIN SHROUD EXHIBIT** so that they might learn more about Christianity.

We who are part of the "Shroud Crowd" do not have to be convinced of the power of this First Gospel written on linen almost forty years before Mark's hand-scribed canonical version appeared. However, unless we take steps to insure continuing sindonological research and promulgation of the Shroud's many truths for future generations, we run the risk of having our great "treasure" buried under apathy and neglect. Unfortunately, history records that many a shroud group has come and gone over the years. Even the pioneer of american studies, **the HOLY SHROUD GUILD**, might someday cease to exist. Who will bear the banner of our holy apostolate for future generations of English-speaking devotees? As previously stated, my own evaluation is that a full-fledged university, complete with a seminary which serves both Roman Catholic and Protestant students as well as the larger undergraduate body, would provide both the permanency and prestige required of such a program.

But, and this is a very crucial "but", without careful planning at this moment in history our fondest dreams may be reduced to dust. As one old saw states it so well, "God provides the *inspiration*, but He expects man to supply the *perspiration*." In a more theological vein, God has abundantly provided His *prevenient grace*; we are now being asked to respond with our own *cooperating grace*. Alas, many of the scientists whom God used in 1978 to provide so many insights about the Shroud have eventually "lost interest" in pursuing their studies after the last C-14 test results were printed in the professional journals. Sadly, the widely publicized "claim" of a 1st century date by C-14 testing also has resulted in diminished interest by both the ordained and

the laity. All too many – lukewarm to begin with and woefully ignorant of the complexity of the issues – have already decided that the Shroud is no more than a “medieval forgery”.

At best, the scientists can give us only a probability figure that the Man of the Shroud was an historical personage named Jesus of Nazareth. As there is no laboratory test for "divinity", they can never tell us that this Son of Man was also the Son of God - the Christ, our Lord and Saviour. The latter Gospel is known only to the eyes and hearts of Faith. It is we who are members of the Church who are called upon by God to proclaim the *eternal meaning* and *divine purpose* of the Holy Shroud long after the hard, empirical data which it yields has been filed and forgotten by the scientific community.

Now, when the time is right, God has called us to be "conservatives" in the best sense of that word. We are called to *conserve, preserve, and promulgate* the essential message of the Holy Shroud for future generations - moving them beyond the linen to the Lord. **With ever more challenges like those of Avinoam Danin and others disputing the flawed C-14 dating of 1998**, the time will be right as never before to "recruit" the support of churchmen and academes alike to establish a permanent and on-going vehicle for the continuing study of the Holy Shroud. God can use even the hubris of the university as the choice for a permanent repository, that of contributors both large and small, and the very limitations of our own weakness - all to establish a vehicle for His Silent Witness on linen for future generations. It is our decision to chose whether or not we will. accept God's call in this venture. He does not need us, but He is offering us the chance to be part of this great plan. Like Joshua, we are being confronted with the challenge of "Choose you this day whom you will serve" **THE TIME IS NOW!** Do we have eyes to see and ears to hear? Or, will we like the priest and Levite secure in our own faith - walk by "on the other side" once again failing to hear our Lord's "Is it nothing to you who pass by?" **THE CHOICE IS OURS. HOW WILL WE RESPOND?**

If we heed God’s call, the *future* will determine the *present*. In truth what we establish as our goals and priorities for the future will determine where and how we allocate our talents and treasure today.

Endnotes:

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2. Ewa Kuryluk. 1991. *Veronica and Her Cloth*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, p. 220.
3. Roger Chambers. "The War of the Shroud." *Christian Standard*, April 18, 1982, pp. 13-14.
4. David Scaer. "The Shroud of Turin: Protestant Embarrassment or Opportunity?" *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, January 1979, p. 48.
5. James P. Carley. 1988. *Glastonbury Abbey: The Holy House at the head of the Moors Adventerous*. New York: St. Martin's Press, p. 180.

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6. Gary Habermas. "The Shroud Turin and its Significance for Biblical Studies", *Bible and Spade, Summer-Autumn* 1981, pp. 99, 95 & 102. Reprinted from the *Journal of the Evangelical Society*, Vol. 24, No. 1, March 1981.
 7. Kevin O. Johnson. 1999. *The Shroud and the Apocalypse*. 18th Printing. Dallas, TX: Pangaeus Press, p. 2.
 8. S. Mark Heim. "Shroudies and the Shape of Faith", *The Christian Century*, June 4-11, 1980, p. 650).
 9. The Rev. Dr. James Kennedy. Save the "Wrappings". Undated audio cassette produced by Coral Ridge Ministries, P.O. Box 5555, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 31310
 10. David Scaer. *Op. cit.*, p. .
 11. John A. T. Robinson. "The Shroud of Turin and the Grave Cloths of the Gospels." *Proceedings of the 1977 United States Conference of Research on the Shroud of Turin*. Bronx, NY: Holy Shroud Guild. 1977.
 12. *The Evening Office of the Holy Shroud*. Privately printed Order of Service for the Official Dedication of the **TURIN SHROUD EXHIBIT**, Tuesday, August 16, 1983 at the Omni International, Atlanta, Georgia.
 13. Archiamandrite Chrysostomos & Hiermonk Auxentios. "The Holy Shroud: The Controversy in Perspective." *Diakonia*, 1980, p.128.
 14. Schwartz, Barrie M. Breaking Website News!, The Shroud of Turin Website, <http://www.shroud.com> Late posted March 8, 2001.

Note: All Biblical quotes are taken from the *Revised Standard Edition*.