

# THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF MAN AS UNFOLDMENT OF THE TRIAD OF REALITY (FUNCTION, BEING AND WILL)

**John Kirby**

“History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake.” James Joyce, *Ulysses*

“...It is very unfortunate that Gurdjieff talked in terms that will could be possessed. It is better to say that will can have us, once we have surrendered our illusions.” J G Bennett, *Deeper Man* p.19

These few pages are an outline of the religious evolution of man seen as a manifestation of Function, Being and Will, called by John Bennett the *triad of reality*. Simply put: the functional age more or less corresponds to the time known as the period of the old testament, being as from around the time of Christ's incarnation until now, and the age of will as starting around now, that is the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

What follows in these few pages is just a sketch of this evolutionary religious process so as to enable the reader to see, explore and discover for themselves how it might be, rather than take on a fixed definition or ‘teaching’ of some kind. This is most important as the experiencing of the age of will that we are entering into can, potentially at least, so radically transform our understanding, and our *individual* understanding, of who and what we are that it is helpful to approach the ideas here of religious evolution as things to be discovered and entered into *for ourselves*.

A way of starting doing this is to stop at this point and simply contemplate on the title of the piece for a minute or two. Allowing this to take place should make all that follows more one's own.

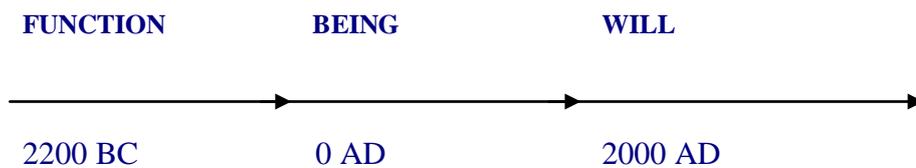
The meeting of God with man that we call ‘religion’ splits into three manifesting as Function, Being and Will as it enters time, bringing about the unfolding of the evolution of the religious life of man. By this means ‘fallen’ man, humanity that has gone wrong, is brought back to unity of will and action with God. So Function, Being and Will as the religious history of man is indeed the *triad of reality*. In this sense ‘reality’ means to no longer be fallen man, to use a religious term.

The idea of Function, Being and Will as the triad of reality in our religious evolution brings to light many things. If Christ, for example, is the way, the truth and the life can the age of will, starting around now, only come into fruition if that which was offered at the beginning of – and during – the age of being, that is all the devotion, worship and transformation is sufficiently fulfilled?

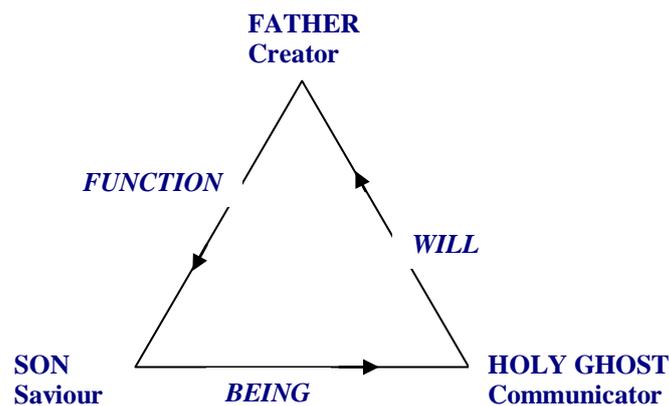
This could be answered both yes and no. If Function, Being and Will is the triad of reality offering our religious evolution then it must be known as such by the highest of powers and intelligences. Thereby the process of devotion and transformation throughout the age of Being now coming to an end always being known can be aided at any time with the appropriate input. The likes of

St Benedict, Rumi, St Francis of Assisi and Mohammed come to mind, and these, of course, are just the most public of figures giving strong senses of direction at critical times. The more Christ's bringing of Love is realized and fulfilled the more readily we are awake to and hungry for any real change, and the more likely to recognize it. We don't have, of course, to think in the technical terms of Function, Being and Will but these may help us see what is significant about what has happened in the past and may be happening now and in the future.

FBW can be seen as unfolding in linear time as a horizontal line:

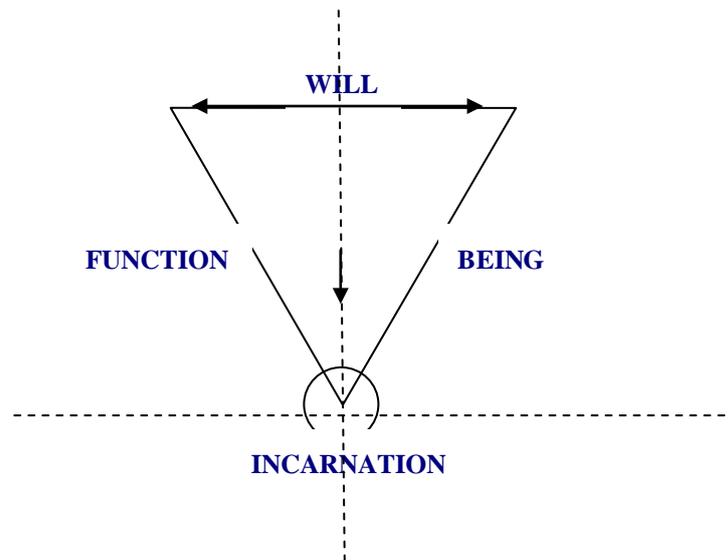


But also in the form of the timeless Function, Being and Will, or triangle:



Will is the active element (universal affirmation), Function the denying (universal denial) and Being the reconciling (universal reconciliation). In time we see will completing the triad of reality by linking all three together. In linear time this can only be begun to be seen as happening or even possible as the beginning of the age of will dawns. Once will as the third element enters the evolutionary process in time then the triad is formed and can be understood. On a more personal level Bennett writes: "We can say that will is the universal affirmation, function is the universal denial, and being is the universal reconciliation. The three forces can then 'crystalize' or take root in the three centers." Hence, in our religious evolution we now need to know there are three centres and three forces although they have always, of course, been there. We need to know and recognize the three forces in the history of our religious evolution so we can respond to what is happening and understand its context and so apply what is happening more articulately and energetically in the greater light that such understanding and knowledge can bring.

There is an important point of contact when the age of function meets the age of being. This point is the time of the Incarnation of Christ. Such a graphical representation of the triad of Function, Being and Will contacting time suggests that the religious evolution of man starts with the Incarnation of Christ entering time from beyond time and actually goes backward and forward from there in time, something which is not perceptible if only looking from the linear, horizontal, graphic flow of religious evolution in time. So this threefold process as our religious evolution can be called triad of **reality** as it is focused, centred on and issues from **Christ**, the source of all religious reality.



Denis Saurat describes this rather beautifully in his book *Death and the Dreamer* which I quote at large here (I do this partly because Saurat writes so well of this but mostly to help show the greater context of how the triad of reality, FBW, unfolds as an act of the Will of God and that the centre and source of religious evolutionary act is the will and act of Christ as the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the trinity):

“The Conception of Christ as being at the Centre of time implies a capacity in time itself to unfold backwards, since Christ appears to us to have lived sometime from about 0 A.D. to 33 A.D. From the birth or conception or incarnation of Christ to the beginning of the world time flows backwards; from Christ to us it flows forward.

“But this is only appearance. In fact we are only conscious of our present time, from which we project our hopes and desires into the future, and our memories and desires into the past...

“You are trying to insert Christ into time: so you fail, of course. Think of the prophets: they astonish you, those prophets. Don't you understand? Christ was there; Christ is here; the prophets came after Christ, flowing backwards in time from Christ. Of course they could not understand. Did not Moses tell you that he saw the hinder parts of God? They could see only the back of Christ—the darkness behind him. They were highly excited, but not very clear-sighted. Surely. That is why they were placed before Christ, as you

put it. Also they tell you that man was made in the image of God; how could you understand that ? You believed that somewhere round 4000 B.C. there lived a sort of Huge Man called God who had made a much smaller man in his image. Not at all. Man was made in the image of Jesus-Christ.

“Well, you think it out: you will understand in the end that there is only one thing in the world: Jesus-Christ, and all our deformations of Jesus-Christ, of his Will.

“People believe that the world was created so many years before Christ. They used to say 4000 B.C. Now they say much more. Some even put the date so far back that they prefer to say that the world has never been created. That is all nonsense. The world was created exactly nine months before the birth of Jesus-Christ. At the very moment of the Virgin Conception of Christ in the Very Holy Virgin Mary. People think that there is a period before Christ and a period after Christ. That is all nonsense. Everything was created in that instant nine months before the birth of Christ.

“Of course, after that, things had to be put in order: first of all the Very Holy Virgin, so that mankind could be organised round the Word. The Very Holy Virgin is, if you wish to speak historically—always a false way of speaking, mind you— the first created human being.

“You people think that time is something that unrolls itself, beginning at count one, then becomes two, three, four, and so on. That is stupid.

“Time begins nine months B.C. And it ends there too. But it makes, so to speak, a lot of noise in all directions: backwards, forwards, all round. That makes you believe that the Jews, the “Egyptians, the nummulites, the nebulae, came B.C., that the Roman Emperors, the Kings of France, the Spanish war, came after Christ. Not at all. If you bang a gong, the sound flows in all directions; it does not come from the left, enter the gong, and then flow on to the right.

“Thus Creation spread before, after, around Christ, and around every moment of B.C. and every moment of A.D. Can you understand that?

“Everything was in that instant, and everything was unfolded into all possible directions so that you might see it: so that God might see it, in all its details. And it is going on unfolding now: Creation is spreading, ever spreading, into the past as into the future, into space, ever, for ever.”

Those familiar with Mary Douglas’s book of 2007 *Thinking In Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition*, will see the strong correspondences between Saurat’s ideas on time starting at a particular point and moving back and fore from that point, and Douglas’s similar literary discoveries and exploration.

It is important, however, at this point to show that the position of Christ is beyond comparison of Christianity with other religions, and is not suggesting that any religion is 'better' than any other. Rudolf Steiner put it well in 1908:

Christianity is only in the beginning of its activity, and its real mission will be fulfilled when it is understood in its true spiritual form.

What Christianity bestows goes with us into all ages of time to come and will still be one of the essential impulses in humanity when religion, as we know it, is no longer in existence. Even when religion as such has been transcended, Christianity will remain. The fact that it was first of all a religion is connected with the evolutionary process of humanity. But Christianity as a world-view is greater than all religions.

If we contemplate a little on this time of Christ's Incarnation (beginning of age of Being) we can see that Christ had to Incarnate at the time he did as the world and age of Function was finishing because there was still insufficient strength and level of being in man able to begin this age of being without an action and input from above, hence the Incarnation and Redemption.

## **Function, Being and Will as Evolutionary Process**

According to the hypothesis of universal hazard put forward in Vol II, the Cosmic Individuality alone is able to redeem Existence from the consequences of sin. This redemptive act, which is a sacrifice of Being by involvement in Existence, is not restricted to any time or place.

JGB, *The Dramatic Universe* Vol IV, p339

Function, Being and Will must be so sharply distinguished that each taken separately will serve to give a complete account of all that exists [see how that relates to FBW as religious history]. As I have said before, Function, Being and Will are each co-extensive with Reality. We can therefore study our problems under each of the three categories separately, and afterwards bring together the results in terms of the triad.

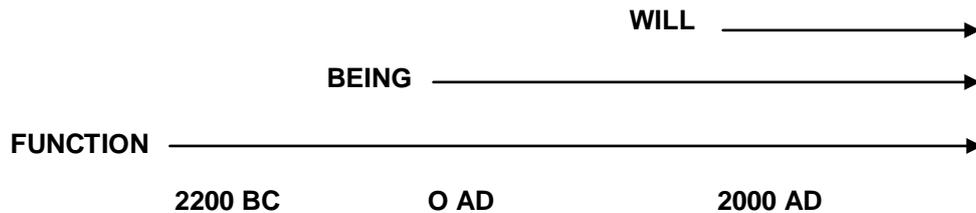
JGB *The Dramatic Universe* (1952 unpublished edition)

Functionality is the relationship man in time has with God, but given by God as man doesn't know about any of this.

Being is the development of the relationship between man and God in eternity, developing the true self of the individual while embracing and not forgetting the world of Function. So the unfolding of the age of Being must, and does, embrace the world of, and age of, Function.

The age and realm of Will is the discovery of the ever deepening role of Being in regards to Function and man's relationship with God in hyparxis: finding that being and true self is not the final religious evolutionary step after all, but it is rather the uniting of ones will with 'God's will'.

We can see it this way:



Each element is distinct but not separate in the unfolding of the process. Bennett writes:

Man as concrete reality must participate in the fundamental triad of Function, Being and Will. Each of these three elements has its characteristic structure, and, since they are different substances which cannot be reduced to any common term, it is impossible to give a consistent account of human nature unless their contributions are kept *distinct*. This does not mean that we can keep them *separate* for all three enter into every possible kind of experience. *The Dramatic Universe*, Vol III p.130.

This continuing evolutionary adding is well described by Bernadette Roberts albeit in terms of an individual's evolution:

Despite the successive nature of revelation, no revelation cancels out a previous one. To the contrary, each successive revelation expands the previous one. Thus no authentic revelation is ever nullified or superceded; each is the Truth of God.

*Essays on the Christian Contemplative Journey*

And so it is with this third and final part of the religious evolution starting in our time. It is true that the age of will includes and embraces the previous two ages, but more than that being the third and final part something else comes into play, ie the third element reaches out and goes back to the beginning of the first element, function, to bring in something more than the sum of its parts as it is now a complete triad, fulfilled, or at least now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century entering the time of fulfilment.

We can see the same process at work in the organic world:

Now we can see how the Sun, planets and Earth combine to produce Nature or organic life. It means that matter in electronic state, matter in molecular state, and matter in mineral state combine to produce matter in cellular state. All organic life on Earth, all cellular matter consists, from one aspect, of electrons or matter in electronic state, from another aspect of molecules or matter in molecular state, and from a third aspect of minerals, or matter in mineral state. In men, animals, plants, these three states of matter are superimposed upon each other, so to speak, to create the fourth or 'natural' state of matter.

Rodney Collin, *Theory of Celestial Influence*

And so in our religious evolution: Function, corresponding to mineral state, Being corresponding to molecular state and Will corresponding to the electronic state can combine to create the fourth or natural state for man, un-fallen state, through the process of the triad of reality.

It is understandable that as the third element of the triad, it is generally as Will enters the chronological picture in the way described in this essay that we become aware at all of there being a triad 'unfolding' in time. Until then, which in time is within the last few generations, combined with being 'third force blind' there was no talk or thought or understanding of there being a 'third' phase of religious evolution. Indeed, there was not necessarily any thoughts of 'stages' at all.

As Bernadette Roberts has said we should not stop at any one point in our evolution, individually or collectively, as we cannot ever know we are seeing the whole picture and there is always the danger of seeing a part as the whole. Although this is easier to say with hindsight it is still an important lesson to try and keep with us. Jesus makes it clear in John's gospel that all was possible for the Jews if they could just accept him for what he said he was, this then being added to the greatness of the past that they knew they had. At the same time it should be remembered that the fulfilment of each stage is essential to the overall completion of the triad.

The age of Being could not properly come about until the age of Function had as fully as possible prepared things. It is hoped that the age of Being through 2,000 years of devotion and worship has changed the soul-stuff of man and in so doing prepared the way for the coming of the age of Will.

When Being comes it integrates with the ending of the age of Function, incorporates and embraces it. But, of course, the results of Function must open to Being when it comes. We can think of the interaction between the Jews and Jesus here. Equally Being must open to the age of Will for our religious evolution to proceed well. We can see all this in our individual evolution. Forms of fundamentalism are a rejection of the new which is a tragedy, in whatever degree and however understandable.

On a personal level I find that the more I look at this religious evolution in what can be seen as a systematic way of Function, Being and Will the more astonishingly beautiful becomes the experience. Somehow, it seems as beautiful as the planet itself.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE THREE ELEMENTS**

Experience itself is not homogeneous: it has elements differing in their essential nature – namely, the elements of function, being and of will. All three elements enter into any possible experience.

Function is the knowable (Section 1.3.3). Being is inner togetherness (Section 1.3.4). Will is understanding in its subjective aspect and law in its objective operations (Section 1.3.6).

*The Dramatic Universe* Vol III p130.

From the *Glossary to the Dramatic Universe*:

*Function:* the knowable element in any situation. What anything does and laws and conditions of physical life, opposed to what it is and what it wills.

*Being:* Any organized complexity abstracted from what it does (function) and from its initiating power (will). To be distinguished from Existence as that which is unconditioned by space, time etc.

*Will:* The Affirming impulse in the triad with Being and Function.

*Function:* The knowable element in the triad FBW. Function causal, logical, mathematical and associated with the dyad.

*Being:* Each and every situation and all situations, possible and impossible, finite and infinite, potential and actual, that can be reached or conceived by means of continuous transitions from human experience.

*Will:* Will is relatedness as a dynamic quality of experience. Since relatedness requires three independent terms, Will is associated with the triad. It is assumed that all relatedness has one common source, hence that there is one Transfinite Will. All 'wills' derive from the Source by its own self-limitation.

On will:

It seems that we can conceive Will as the primal source of all relatedness without the implication that the terms to be related must first 'come into' existence. However relatedness, as we saw in the Introduction, requires a three-term system for its manifestation. Such a system is already given in the three modes of experience – Function, Being and Will. If we assume that Will is the principle by which Function and Being are mutually related we find a means of expressing the property, that we intuitively ascribe to the Supreme Will, of Transcendence-Immanence.

*The Dramatic Universe Vol II p. 70*

## CHANGES IN RELIGIOUS LIFE



**Reconstruction of Pyramids in Caral, Peru 2600-2000 BC**

The beginnings of the religious life as outlined in this piece would seem to have begun as far back as 2600BC. Recent findings such as the Lost Pyramids of Caral in Peru with their enclosing structured habitations, and other discoveries as well as previously known locations around the world in such places as Egypt, China and the Middle East, seem to

point centres of population being formed at that time. Changing from being more wandering peoples to having physical locations as centres of population greatly aids the process of the instigation of the religious life and religious evolution of man. This, then, coincides with the dawning of the age of function and is clearly manifest in the design and structure of such places as, amongst many others, Caral in Peru. Those who read of Caral or see the BBC Horizon programme on the subject will see just how carefully structured the precise functional layout of these centres of population was. Indeed discoveries at Caral reflect the exactness of size, proportion and planning in the same spirit as spelt out in the Old Testament for their contemporaries in the Middle East.

John Michell writes of the very beginning of the age of Function:

In the heroic days before settlement and the buildings of cities and temples, the tribes of Israel travelled between the sacred places of their territory, carrying with them the Ark of the Covenant and the materials of its resting place, the Tabernacle. At the traditional spots where they pitched camp they erected the Tabernacle, a series of curtained enclosures with the Ark lodged in its inner sanctuary, and set up their tents in ritual order around it. The Temple at Jerusalem was designed in imitation of the Tabernacle.

Religion in those days was an entirely practical affair. The wandering tribes depended for their livelihood on communion with the native spirits of their landscape, and the Tabernacle was designed, like the Temple after it, to attract by similitude the powers of divinity. The names given to the various deities, or the various aspects of the vital principle in nature, were based on the sounds which were found most effective in evoking their response; from these sounds arose the alphabet. The legendary architect of the Tabernacle, Betzal'el, was said to have known 'the combination of letters with which heaven and earth were made', and to have fashioned the Tabernacle in accordance with them.

Each letter represented a particular type of universal energy. It also corresponded to the shape, colour, perfume and other characteristic attributes of the god it symbolized, and most essentially to the god's number. When temples were built as instruments of invocation, they expressed in their dimensions, in their furnishings and in the areas and shapes of the spaces they enclosed, the number of the god to whom they were dedicated."

*The Dimensions of Paradise, p56*

Also this touches on how full and rich in potential is each stage of our religious evolution. Of course the Old Testament is rich in descriptions of the quality of Function of the religious life of the people of Israel in those generations, Ezekiel, Zechariah, etc.

Age of Being: The old needing to accept the new: St Paul and his conversion as dramatic example.

The Age of Will is intimated in *Talking With Angels*:

May the immense love with which you seek God turn inward.

When the earth serves, when the host of angels serves, they unite within you..

Your body is the earth.

The body of the old serpent has crawled forth.

The old serpent's body is the curse brought upon earth by all of the Adams.

But the Christ, the New, will come when earth and angel are united in you.

BROTHER-SISTER OF CHRIST IS BORN.

THE NEW CHRIST IS LIGHT OVER ALL.

p 410

FOR THE DIVINE DWELLS BEYOND TIME AND SPACE.

DO NOT BE WITH HIM: BE HIM!

DO NOT TAKE THE HOST INTO YOUR MOUTH:

BE THE HOST YOURSELF!" TWA

p 341

And in Gurdjieff:

Religion is doing; a man does not merely think his religion or feel it, he "lives" his religion as much as he is able, otherwise it is not religion but fantasy or philosophy.

Bennett's encounter with Subud is revealing:



**Bennett and 'Bapak', founder of Subud, 1957.**

It may be that we have come to the true relationship between Subud and Christian Mysticism. It seems that Subud, with its absence of dogma and outward form; with its insistence upon the reality of purification, illumination and Union with God, can help prepare the way for the revival of true religion. It may be also that this revival will take the

shape of an immense broadening and deepening of Christianity itself, so that the Church of the future will recognize that the Christ is the Saviour not of professing Christians alone, but that He is the manifestation of that Divine Love that has drawn all men of all races and all times towards God. We shall perhaps understand Subud better also, if we are able to see that the action of the latihan is not something new and strange, but has been shared by all true mystics, ever since man has been man." *Christian Mysticism and Subud*, p.57

## **THE GREAT WORK**

John Bennett on Wisdom:

Wisdom (*Sophia*, Divine Wisdom) is here to be understood as a Reality more concrete than knowledge or even understanding. This can be seen in the Hebrew word *Hokma* which expresses the idea of Mastery: that is, wisdom in action. Wisdom is an independent, that is complete, Reality and not an attribute. We may participate in it, but we do not possess it. In the aspect of Will, it is the Universal Individuality. In the aspect of Being, it is a spiritual organism in which are operative the four cosmic energies of Consciousness, Creativity, Love and Transcendence. In the aspect of Function, it is the Great Work, the **Magnum Opus**, whereby the evolutionary process of the world, or the return of the Creation to its Source, is sustained.

*The Dramatic Universe Vol III p 270.*

As we begin to see in the unfoldment of the FBW as triad of reality in the last few thousand years, there needs to be an established world of being/consciousness for the will to act in collaboration with, ie different religions (unity in diversity, diversity in unity). So the age of will, bringing about the completion of the triad of reality, is able to be experienced as long as several factors are in place:

1. We understand the nature of will.

2. The practices of the age of will are able to work with function and being, perhaps especially being, individually and collectively, as the human soul stuff has grown. This is a good point to mention something currently taking place: many of you may be aware of the daily appearances of the Virgin Mary in Medjugorje, a village in Bosnia-Hercogovina since 1981. I looked at a web site that not only has a record of all of her messages from there but also concordance of her messages since 1984 (<http://www.medjugorje.org/framconc.htm>). Rather naively I looked up the word will only to find it didn't occur at all. But then I looked up, more appropriately, the word decide and was amazed to find it occurs over 60 times. I was reminded again of Bennett's words, "Will does not do things, it is that which decides the action."

For example:

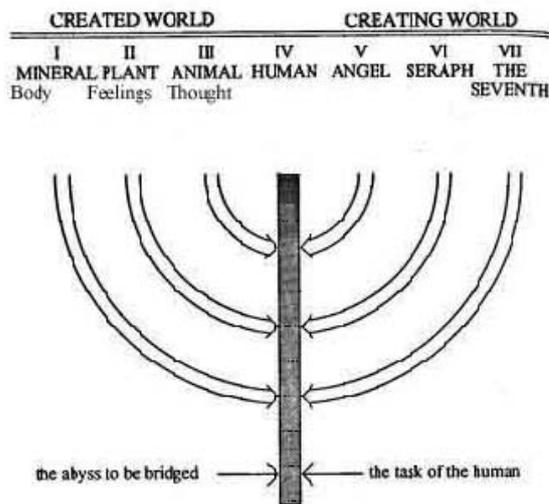
October 25, 1987: "My dear children! Today I want to call all of you to decide for Paradise. The way is difficult for those who have not decided for God. Dear children, decide and believe that God is offering Himself to you in His fullness. You are invited and you need to answer the call of the Father, Who is calling you through me. Pray, because in prayer each one of you will be able to achieve complete love. I am blessing you and I desire to help you so that each one of you might be under my motherly mantle. Thank you for having responded to my call."

One can see initiation of the time of Will in these lines, such deciding is a call of continuous action.

November 25, 1987 "Dear children! Today also I call each one of you to decide to surrender again everything completely to me. Only that way will I be able to present each of you to God..."

3. That we understand the basics of FBW as the triad of reality and how it brings about, and is the harbinger, of the end of the time of the Fall, which is the Fall from reality. It may well be that we do not need another 2,000+ years for this to begin and become established, at least in some places. The three qualities of time in this period of FBW correspond with time, eternity and hyparxis; what is possible in this age of will starting now is associated with what we call hyparxis. Very much can happen in a short amount of time. One way of seeing this is in how much has changed in the accelerated rate of things since Mary has begun to carefully move in with us. This can transform being in a very short time while uniting with will in the new way.

There has to be an age of being for there to be something which can consciously surrender to will. "Will is open to reconciliation with function, but this reconciliation constitutes another world, the world of being." *Deeper Man*, p29. "If man is to transform himself the three worlds of being, function and will must combine in him." p. 72



In the menorah, the 123 can represent F, B and W. They are in the created world, have 'come into existence' and are linked correspondingly with the 765 of the creating world or that which wishes to bring us to reality which is done in the establishment of the 4<sup>th</sup>, the Human.

Other three terms whose individual qualities can be seen as corresponding to F,B and W in our religious evolution:

BODY	SOUL	SPIRIT
MOVING CENTRE	FEELING CENTRE	THINKING CENTRE See <i>Deeper Man</i> pp. 88-89 Also: "When they are linked together in an harmonious way, man becomes a remarkable power in the world; but the brains are instruments of function and they are not what a man is." <i>Deeper Man</i> , p. 21
FOOD	AIR	IMPRESSIONS
CREATING Divine <i>Fiat</i> - see	REDEEMING	SANCTIFYING

writings of Luisa Piccarreta		
FATHER	SON	HOLY SPIRIT
DYAD	TRIAD	TETRAD
MINERAL STATE OF MATTER	MOLECULAR STATE OF MATTER	ELECTRONIC STATE OF MATTER Mineral, molecular and electronic combine to make the cellular. See Rodney Collin's <i>Theory of Celestial Influence</i>
BIRTH AND DEATH	REDEMPTION, TRANSFORMATION Resurrection after death	NEITHER BIRTH NOR DEATH "Neither birth nor death, but eternal life, glory, song". <i>Talking with Angels</i>

I have many pages in landscape table format comprising of 3 columns each relating to corresponding qualities of F, B and W in the religious evolution of man, altogether too much material for this newsletter. These include:

Time	Eternity	Hyparxis
The World of Function dyad/creative/E3	The World of Being triad/unitive/E2	The World of Will tetrad/transcendent/ E1
Old Testament C 1500 BC – 0 AD	New Testament 0 – 1850 AD	? 1850 -
Ark of the Covenant before Christ, from Christ and thirdly more contemporary relevances.		
Manifestations of Christ in all three periods		
The same relation to Elijah In all three periods		
The same with Mary to include the Immaculate Conception, Annunciation, Visitation, Mediatrix, Our Lady of Mt Carmel and the Woman Clothed with Sun.		

*In each of the above listed cases are relevant passages of texts from each period of time as examples of the three ages of function, being and will. If you would like to browse these, email me and I'll send by return: johndkirby@aol.com*

To see these 6 or more thousand years as the unfolding in time of FB and W as the religious history of man can have very practical results. For

example, it shows we are now at the beginning of the age or period of will and enables us to ask what is the meaning and possible practical application of this; we have looked at Mary's messages from Medjugorje in this last generation as an answer..

“Conscious choice – what we call ‘will’ - is what we presume, but JGB following Gurdjieff would regard it as exceptional.” Mary uses the expression ‘consciously decide’ in her Medj messages that have scores of such usage of decide in the context of will.