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Russell, Concord, IBS 11, October 1989

Godly Concord: en homonoia (1 Clement 9.4)

E.A. Russell

What we propose to do in this short article is to look at some occurrences of homonoia in 1 Clement and to make some observations. The term only occurs in Apostolic Fathers in 1 Clement (on fourteen occasions) /1, in Ignatius (on seven occasions) /2 and on two occasions in the Shepherd of Hermas (Mandates 8.9; Similitudes 15.2

Perhaps the most unusual and challenging usage is that found in our heading, en homonoia. It comes in a passage where Clement is insisting on the need for repentance and makes use of Isaiah's words to give some assurance to the Church: /3 "If your sins are as scarlet they shall be as white as snow." (1.18) Then he proceeds to exhort the members of the Church directly: "Wherefore let us obey his excellent and glorious will," (translation of Kirsopp Lake in Loeb edition), urging them to fix their gaze on the heroes of the past e.g. Enoch, Noah and Abraham. /4

en homonoia:

Noah was found faithful in his service in foretelling a new beginning and through him the Master saved the living creatures which entered in concord (en homonoia) into the Ark.

This was God's response to the fact that "all living things on earth were corrupt."(Gen.6.12). On the terms of the Covenant God establishes, however, members of Noah's family group are to be saved and along with them a specific number of living creatures, designated by God.

/5

Thus the corruption of people has affected the animal creation as well. Is there a suggestion that animals' qualification is bound up with human qualification? Those chosen by Noah on God's instruction alone survive. Other animals share in the corporate guilt and whether they like it or not, they perish with the guilty.

Is there then no rationality or moral sense among the animal creation? If the animals enter "in concord", is it so because of the divine instruction and they have no say in it? What God, the Creator, ordains, partakes

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of homonoia? Noah's actions, unlike that of the others of the human race, are in harmony with the divine will and as the animals respond to and fulfil the divine instructor they, too, are in harmony with the divine will. Their place is bound up with that of Noah. Without this relationship with Noah they would perish like all the rest.

But is there implicit in this a suggestion of the animal creation assenting to it. The Greek word homonoia is made up of the blending of two words homos (or homoiios), meaning "same" or "like" and nous meaning "mind" Together they represent "agreement" or "concord," and generally between persons. The related verb homonoieo (again, like homonoia, not found in the NT) occurs only in 1 Clement in the Apostolic Fathers and on one occasion. In Classical Greek it means "agree" or "consent". If then the animals rationally consent, we have the picture of the male and female living creatures, accepting the partner Noah has chosen and presumably nodding their heads in agreement, entering into their place in the Ark and being totally one with the wishes of the patriarch.

The ancient account does not supply us with the reason for Noah's choice except that they should be ritually clean. (so in what is called the Yahwistic narrative; cf New Jerusalem Bible, 25; N.c). It was Jewish belief prior to 100 BC /6 that all animals had spoken one language before the Fall. This presupposes surely a certain rationality. In Jubilees (in reference to the Fall; 3.28) we read:

On that day the mouth of all the beasts and cattle and birds and whatever walked or moved was stopped from speaking because all of them used to speak to one another with one speech and one language.

Note, too, that penalties are prescribed for the crimes committed by animals, e.g., "for your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning; of every beast I will require it," (Gen 9.5); in Ex 21.28 when an ox gores a man to death, it is to be stoned.. Again. in 2 Enoch it is presumed that every animal soul will judge the human beings who have treated them badly. (58.6), but they themselves do not appear to be morally responsible - something which appears to contradict Jewish belief as well as Muslim. /7
Later, the Mishnah speaks of the trial of accused animals.

Sanhedrin, ch.1/8

If then we are to say that the animals in some way are rational and understand right and wrong, then those who are chosen identify with Noah who responds to the Divine will. There is an interesting and perhaps relevant story to our discussion in the Testament of Job (20.7,8):

Job says: In great trouble and distress I left the city, and I sat on a dung heap worm-ridden in body....Many worms were in my body, and if a worm ever sprang off, I would take it up and return it to its original place, saying, 'Stay in the same place where you were put until you are directed otherwise by your Commander' (God)

Here then we have presented a worm which attempts to go against the purpose of God. Dr R.P. Spittler, in a comment on this passage writes: "The worm's forced compliance with its ordained role shows a touch of humour on the part of the author, who elsewhere associates animals and humans by having the cattle mourn over the death of Sitis (Job's wife)"and draws a parallel with the picture in Mark of Jesus being in the wilderness with the wild animals (Mk 1.13b). /9 Equally it seems to us there is something of the bizarre in the animals consenting to link up with a female partner and enter into the ark. Presumably there is something of the ideal in this where the fierce and violent in creation join in with the timid and vulnerable en homonoia. Isaiah speaks of wolf dwelling or feeding with the lamb (11.6; 65.25), "the calf and the lion and the fatling together...the cow and the bear shall feed;..the lion shall eat straw like the ox...They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain." (11.9). It is not however clear that such an ideal vision has any relationship with the Noah story.

1 Clement quotes widely and often with great precision from the LXX, suggesting that he had a copy of of its manuscript at his disposal. /10 Sometimes he merely gives a summary of the biblical account. Yet even here in his additions we can discern where his dominant purpose lies

We are told, for example, that Lot was saved because

because of his piety and hospitality (dia philoxenian kai eusebeian 11.1). In obedience to God he fled from the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. But what about his wife? Clement writes: "She changed her mind and did not remain in agreement (en homonoia) with him." (11.2ff) Thus the concord, the homonoia had to do with the divine instruction to which Lot was obedient. The disharmony came with disobedience. Thus the family was split up and disobedience followed.

Clement's concept of homonoia is related to his view of creation. He is not, however, a profound theologian as a comparison of his writing with e.g. Paul or the Epistle to the Hebrews will show. He writes in a simple straightforward style perhaps because his purpose is more practical than theological. /11 This, however, does not mean that he cannot write impressively at times and even passionately. Of creation, he writes:

Sun and moon and the companies of the stars roll on, according to his direction (hupotagen), in harmony (en homonoia) in their appointed courses and swerve not from them at all. (20.3)

The smallest of the animals meet together in concord (en homonoia) and peace." (20.10)

All these things did the great Creator and Master of the universe ordain (prosetaxen) to be in peace and concord (homonoia) (20.11)

To get the full impact of the description it would be necessary to read this inspired and poetic discourse. It is an ideal picture. Clement is not concerned at this juncture with all the contradictions to be found within the universe. He is concerned with the positive affirmations of faith. He is so caught up with the majesty and sovereignty and greatness of God, he is not at this point concerned with spelling out the discords that permeate life. Clement addresses a specific situation and his preoccupation with harmony and concord is intended to make the divisions among the Corinthians as uncomfortable as possible.

Clement, then, avails himself of every opportunity to stress harmony but such stress only highlights of course

the disharmony, dissension or division. Such division receives great emphasis in the letter. Even though it is some forty years since Paul directed his letters to the church at Corinth (assuming 1 Clement was written about 96 AD), the tendency to division persists. That it is an intractable situation is reflected in the vehement style, language and repetition. Right at the start of his letter, Clement brings up the subject uppermost in his mind and uses the strongest language to describe the sedition (stasis). It is an abominable (miara) and unholy (anosios) sedition (stasis), "alien and foreign to the elect of God." (1.1) It expresses itself in jealousy strife and sedition, persecution and disorder (akatastasia) war and captivity. He writes: "Thus 'the worthless' (atimoi) rose up 'against those who were in honour,' those of no reputation against the renowned, the foolish against the prudent, the 'young against the old.' " (3.2,3)

The division becomes a kind of fixation with Clement. He can hardly get it out of his mind. Sometimes it is described as "schism" (schisma) (2.6; 46.5,9; 49.5; 54.2); sometimes as "sedition" (stasis) (1.1; 2.6; 3.2; 46.9; 51.3; 54.2; 57.1; 63.1); sometimes it becomes "create sedition" (stasiaze) (4.12; 43.2; 46.7; 47.6; 51.3; 55.1) Rather less frequently we have "division" (dichostasia: 46.5; 51.1) or "disorder" (akatastasia(3.2; 43.6; 14.1)).

A most interesting example of how the situation can affect the language is to be found in Clement's loose quotation or reminiscence of 1 Corinthians 13. We need only use the relevant part:

Love bears all things, is longsuffering in all
There is nothing base, nothing haughty in love.
Love has no division (schisma); love does not
make for division (stasiazei); love does every-
thing in concord (en homonoia).

It hardly needs to be said that the words underlined do not occur in 1 Corinthians 13. Indeed there is scarcely any word link with 1 Corinthians 13. /12

The word "sedition" (stasis) is deliberately chosen. Some members are in revolt against their leaders. They have gone as far as to remove leaders from office.

We have the story only as Clement hands it down to us. He makes a defence of the apostles, that they are from Christ and Christ is from God. It was the apostles who tested the first converts by the Holy Spirit and appointed them to be bishops and deacons (42.1,4). Those appointed by the apostles are their leaders, as are other eminent men appointed with the consent of the whole church. Clement stresses the grievous nature of the sin of rejecting from the episcopate those who have carried out their ministry faultlessly (amemptōs)(44.3,4,6) It is worth noting that 1 Clement regards himself as speaking through the Holy Spirit and thus often shaping what he says in response to Him and in relation to the situation. As he himself expresses it: "the things which we have written to you through the Holy Spirit (63.2)

One of the most passionate passages is to be found in chapter 46 which is worth quoting if only for its illustration of the language of division:

Why are there strife (eris) and passion (thumos) and divisions (dichostasia) and schisms(schismata) and war (polemos) among you? Or have we not one God, and one Christ, and one Spirit of grace poured out upon us? And is there not one calling in Christ? Why do we divide (dielkomen) and tear asunder (diespōmen) the members of Christ and raise up strife (stasiázomen) and reach such a pitch of madness as to forget that we are members one of another?..... Your division (schisma) has turned aside many, has cast many into discouragement, many to doubt, all of us to grief; yet your sedition (stasis) continues.

In a minority situation, the church can hardly afford the fragmenting of its members. The language of Clement reflects doubtless the urgency of the situation. This, it becomes clear, is no dead, irrelevant word from ancient times but one of stark relevance to our present day Church on all levels.

Over against this Clement does not hesitate to keep on repeating himself. He uses homonoia and links it regularly with peace: The first use of homonoia in 1 Clement is linked with the creation where "the heavens are subject to him (God) in peace" (20.1) and "the sun and moon and the companies of the stars roll on,

according to his direction, en homonoia, in their appointed courses, and swerve not from them at all." (20.3). Even the smallest animals are not exempt within this cosmic pattern: "and the smallest animals meettogether in concord and peace." (20.10). Clement concludes: "All these things did the great Creator and Master of the universe ordain to be in peace and concord." (20.11) Clement is concerned about personal godliness. He exhorts: "Let us clothe ourselves in homonoia and humility;" (30.3) "Let us hasten on to the goal of peace." (19.2).

He widens his vision to mankind and prays God, "Give concord and peace to us and to all those who dwell upon the earth;" (60.4) and extends his intercession to embrace all in authority, "and to them (earthly rulers) Lord, grant health, peace, homonoia, firmness that they may administer the government which thou hast given them without offence." (61.1)

As he draws to the close of his letter, the theme of concord surfaces once more: "You are bound to please almighty God and live in homonoia." (62.2). Equally with concord we have the stress on peace. When speaking of the messengers he has sent as witnesses and the church at Rome he writes: "We have done this that you may know that our whole care has been and is directed to your speedy attainment of peace." (63.4). And before the final grace he requests them to send back the messengers Ephebus, Valerius and Fortunatus as soon as possible and (here we quote) "that they may report the sooner the peace and concord which we pray for and desire." (65.1)

This great emphasis on concord, running through 1 Clement and treated with great seriousness, indicates something of the intractable and stubborn division that the church faces. We hear only one side of the story but some inklings are discernible of the other side. Is there perhaps a power struggle arising out of jealousy? Thus arises strife and disorder and breaking out into persecution and war. (3.2) "Thus the 'worthless' rose up 'against those who were in honour,' Those of no reputation against the renowned, the foolish against the prudent, the 'young against the old.'" (3.3) /13 Is there here then a generation gap, a revolt against the established order? Clement mentions the partisanship they had for Paul,

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Cephas and Apollos in the past but this was not as blameworthy as the present parisanship: They at least, Clement maintains, were people of high reputation: "it is a shameful report, beloved, extremely shameful, and unworthy of your training in Christ, that on account of one or two persons the steadfast and ancient church of the Corinthians is being disloyal to the presbyters." (47.6)

It is notable that there is no charge of immorality./¹⁴ The issue appears to have been one of church order in the matter of appointment of leaders. After an argument on leadership illustrated from the Jewish order of High, Priest, priest and Levite as having their place in the divine ministry, he goes on:

The Apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus the Christ was sent from God. The Christ therefore is from God and the Apostles from Christ. In both ways, then, they were in accordance with the appointed order of God's will. Having therefore received their commands, and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with faith confirmed by the word of God, they went forth in the assurance of the Holy Spirit preaching the good news (euaggelizomai) that the kingdom of God was coming. They preached from district to district, and from city to city, and they appointed their first converts, testing them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of the future believers. And this was no new method, for many years before had bishops and deacons been written of; for the scripture says thus in one place "I will establish their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith." (ch.42)

Thus the basis for bishops and deacons is taken from the LXX whereas the original Hebrew runs "I will make your overseers peace, and your taskmasters righteousness." (Isa 60.17). It is obvious there is no reference to the church's ministry here.

Clement claims that the apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife for the title of bishop(44.1), that they appointed "those already mentioned, and afterward added the codicil that if they should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministry." (44.2) In spite of all this the "defectors" have removed some from the ministry and the episcopate those who had done their work satisfactorily. This act Clement categorizes as "blasphemy."

Notes

1. 9.4;11.2;20.3,10,11; 21.2; 30.3;34.7;49.5;50.5;60.4; 61.1;63.2;65.1.
2. Eph 4.1,2;13.1; 1 Mag.6.1; 1 Tral 12.1; Philad 11.2
3. The quotation in verses four and five is taken word for word from the Septuagint of Isaiah 1. 16-20; this is only one example of a number in 1 Clement.
4. 1 Clement notably has many reminiscences of the Epistle to the Hebrews eg 9.2ff; 10.7; 12.1; 17.1ff; 19.2 and in particular chapter 36.
5. On the composition of the narrative in chapters six and seven of Genesis cf. the New Jerusalem Bible ad loc; also commentaries
6. We are indebted to R.H. Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the NT Vol II (Oxford 1963), 464 n.5 for an important note on the matter of animals' rationality including existence in a future world viz Egypt where animals were deified; Greek metempsychosis ie the soul of an animal at death being transferred into a new body of the same or other form; speculations that they were rational (Chrysippus) or the human and animal souls were alike (Sextus Medicus).
7. See the superb The OT, Pseudepigrapha, Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments, Vol I (Darton, Longman & Todd 1983), edited by Jas H. Charlesworth 186, Note e
8. See Charlesworth op.cit.
9. See article on "The Testament of Job" in Charlesworth, op.cit. Vol I, 848, Note g.
10. See N.3
11. Cf J.B. Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Vol I, Pt 1, (1890), 396
12. A comparison with 1 Cor 13 shows only a very slender link in Clement. The phrase "love bears all things" appears out of place while "bears" in Clement reflects anechetai where it is stegei in Paul (Cl 49.5; 1 Cor

7); makrothumei (suffers long) is used by both; "nothing base" (ouden banauson) appears related to ouk aschēmonei (Does not behave unseemly) while "nothing haughty" (ouden hyperēphanon) may be linked with "is not puffed up"(AV) (ou phusioutai). These appear to be the only links. Clement goes on to attach the phrases which reflect the church's division.

13. Cf 1 Cor 1.26-29.

14 The term used in 35.5 which appears to reflect Rom. 1.29-32 can be used to describe the conditions which make for division: covetousness ie someone else's power; strife ie about leadership; so for malice or fraud, perhaps especially gossiping and evil-speaking; hatred of God may be nothing more than a difference of opinion about what God requires in the matter of leadership; pride and arrogance and vain-glory are inseparable from place-seeking; similarly we can explain inhospitality.

Addendum

Central to Clement's argument is the weight he places on the Old Testament, as true, given by the Holy Spirit with nothing unjust or counterfeit in it (45.2). . As for NT writers usually, the OT is the LXX. He drives home his point to the troublemakers by often long quotations; on jealousy (3-6) or repentance (7-8) (Why does he not use the summary of Jesus' preaching where repentance is central; cf Matthew 3.2;5.17 ?) or obedience ie to what Clement thinks is proper understanding of the conditions of leadership. Is his own position of bishop threatened (assuming he is a bishop)? The sources of his information apart from the LXX appear very limited, though, as noted above, Hebrews is referred to often whether directly or by reminiscence. He does not confine himself to the so-called Palestinian Canon but brings in the book of Wisdom (3.4;27.5); Sirach (cf 60.1;59.3) and Judith (59.3; 65.4)

It is doubtful if Paul would be happy with the phrasing that Lot and Rahab were saved by faith and hospitality (11.1;12.1) though no doubt the writer of the epistle of James would. The second coming has fallen into the background (but cf 42.3;50.3). The word parousia does not

occur. He uses the Suffering Servant passage of Isaiah 53 merely as an example of humility (Ch.16). The term euaggelion (Gospel), so characteristic of Paul, occurs on only one occasion while three out of five references to sot̄erion (salvation) are citations from the Psalms: 18.12(Ps 51); 15.6 (Ps 12); 35.12 (Ps 50). The great word "reconcile"(katallasso), found in 2 Cor 5 in particular and so suitable for a divided church does not appear

Unusually, in reference to the death of Christ, Clement writes: "Let us fix our gaze (atenizō, a term familiar to readers of Acts where it occurs on ten occasions) on the blood of Christ, and let us know that it is precious to his Father because it was poured out for our salvation."(7.4) (cf 1 Peter 1.19); the Lord Jesus Christ whose blood was given for us (21.6). Cl. does not use the word "Cross" (stauros) nor the verb "crucify" (stauroō). How much does he know of the Corinthian writings? His treatment of the resurrection is astonishing for its inadequacy if he knew 1 Cor 15, not to speak of the strange introduction of the story of the Phoenix (chs 24 & 25)

Going on the basis of 1 Clement, the writer knows little or nothing of the teaching of Jesus or if he does, he does not use it. Elements of the "Sermon on the Mount" appear in chapter 13 (the parallelism in the phrasing, making for easy memorisation is noteworthy):

Be merciful, that you may obtain mercy.

Forgive, that you may be forgiven.

As you do, so shall it be done unto you.

As you give, so shall it be given to you.

As you judge, so shall you be judged.

As you are kind, so shall kindness be shown to you.

With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to
you.

The other references are: to the sower going forth, linked with the resurrection (ch.24); to the warning of Jesus addressed to those who offend little ones. (ch.46) Occasionally the words of the OT writer are put in the mouth of Jesus (Ch.22 & Ps.34.11-17)