

ECUMENISM

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Promoting dialogue and unity



Ecumenism in Practice

Centre canadien
d'œcuménisme



Canadian Centre
for Ecumenism

INFORMATION • DIALOGUE • RECONCILIATION





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ECUMENISM

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(Picture: D. Fines)

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Œcuménisme est également publié en français.

Editorial

The Good News instead of bad news

David Fines According to the last census, in 2011, religious practice had declined in the previous two decades: only 67% of Canadians belonged to a Christian denomination, compared to 77% 10 years earlier. The most striking aspects of the census figures are the drastic decline among the traditional denominations, the significant rise of new religions, and above all, the spectacular growth of those who classify themselves as “no religion”; their numbers almost doubled in 20 years, to total almost 24% of the population.

Certainly, with the increasing number of religious and cultural minorities as a result of immigration, religion still plays an important role, especially in urban areas. The mainstream Christian denominations, even if they experience significantly less attendance (except among the Orthodox, a minority), still hold sway across the country. The decline in membership may not seem rapid, but it is inexorable. Just by counting the unused churches and places of worship posted with “for sale” signs, as well as all the pews that remain obstinately empty on a Sunday morning, it is apparent that many of our practices have less to do with Christian faith than with the traditional culture of a majority of the population. A logical deduction in that as the Christian faith moves into the future it is increasingly taking on other forms of expression and commitment.

Our society is facing a degree of diversity unprecedented in its history. Some two hundred different identities and origins are now represented. In schools, cities and parliaments, ancient beliefs exist side by side with contemporary absence of faith, coloured by a multitude of cultural adaptations. Sometimes the believers and non-believers glare at each other, sometimes they work together to seek a common future; sometimes they distance themselves from each other or take refuge in marginalization.

Should we be worried about these changes?

Perhaps the statistics from these successive surveys may demoralize us and cause us to despair. Analyzing them may make us sad or nostalgic for the past. Many groups may find them deplorable and distressing.

Perhaps the Churches, both leaders and members, could, as 21st century prophets looking through the eyes of a faith that can move mountains and hope against hope, see this movement as a genuine “sign of the times.” We absolutely must seize this opportunity God is offering us to renew His Church and radically transform it so that it will bear an abundance of new fruit.



Are churches closing? Let’s turn them into spaces where there is freedom, communion, new life, and celebration. Are the Churches feeling abandoned? Let them discover or learn how to promote their many common values together, values that are real and more relevant than ever, values that all Christian denominations and religions share: love, charity, caring for others, altruism, solidarity, hospitality, justice, goodness, integrity, honesty, deep respect for human life, concern for the environment and care for God’s Creation.

At the feast of Pentecost in May, at my church, we read this wonderful passage from Paul’s Letter to the Galatians: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” (Gal 5:22-23; NIV)

No, against such things there is no law, nor statistics dictate the future.

Have a great summer!

David Fines

News from the Center

Praying together

On February 8, during an ecumenical pilgrimage, people from different denominations gathered at Saint-Jean United Church in Montreal and together prayed this Prayer from the Jerusalem Churches for Peace. Afterwards, the prayer was used for small group reflection. Conclusion: how important it is to pray for peace.

Prayer from the Jerusalem Churches for Peace*

Almighty God, thank you for your Word made flesh in Jesus Christ and for the challenge for unity, justice and reconciliation between all people, given to us in the Holy Scriptures.

Give peace, O Lord, to those who take refuge in you.

As we focus this year on Jerusalem and its children,

1. We, the churches in Jerusalem, pray that Christians wherever they may be in the world, may remember the continuous emigration of the Christians in the Holy Land. Jerusalem is the Mother City of our faith and the spiritual Home for each of us. In Jerusalem, the city of Pentecost, every Christian was born. From Jerusalem the word of God spread to the ends of the earth.

We pray that the Christians in Jerusalem may be able to see their witness through their presence.

2. We, the churches in Jerusalem, pray that the word of God will be prophetic, bearing your voice in the present and future. Everything that happens in our land, everyone who lives here, all the pains and hopes, all the injustice and all the efforts to stop this injustice, are part of the prayer of our Church and the service of all her institutions.

We pray that our Church raises her voice against oppression and works for justice, non-violence and reconciliation.

3. We, the churches in Jerusalem, pray for courage to speak the Word of God honestly and lovingly in the local context and in the midst of daily events. If the Church does take sides, it is with the oppressed, to stand alongside them, just as Christ our Lord stood by the side of each poor person and each sinner, calling them to repentance, to life, and to the restoration of the dignity bestowed on them by God and

that no one has the right to take away. God is not the ally of one against the other, nor the opponent of one in the face of the other.

God is the Lord of all and loves all, demanding justice from all and issuing to all of us the same commandment to love one another.

4. We, the churches in Jerusalem, pray for hope where hopelessness reigns, hope for a peaceful solution to the conflict that tears your people apart. In a time when reconciliation no longer seems possible and few believe in a two-state solution, we pray that you will inspire all people of good faith to take a step in solidarity with your suffering children in the Holy Land.

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Creator has been pleased to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

5. We, the churches in Jerusalem, have faith in you, our Teacher, and with the bonds you made between us and our brothers and sisters to overcome. We thirst for justice, O God, because we know that there will be no peace until equity prevails for all people and until the forces of evil are defeated by your commandment of love, respect, and honor. *God bless us with your love to keep our faith and actions towards a Universal and Holy Jerusalem for all. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.*

*The Churches of Jerusalem for the World Week for Peace 2013 in Palestine Israel

Globetrotting interfaith group visits the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism

Five young adults from different religious backgrounds, a Muslim, a Catholic, a Jew, an agnostic and an atheist, went around the world in 300 days, bringing their tour to an end with a visit to the CCE on April 24, 2014. Looking for new models of coexistence and social cohesion, the participants explored the history of the ecumenical movement in Canada and the Centre’s projects. The *Interfaith Tour* team filmed a video of their discussion with Adriana Bara and Norman Lévesque.

The five Parisian students returned to Paris, their starting point, on April 28 after a 10-month interfaith trip around the world, and called for more inclusive secularism in France.



The young travellers, aged between 20 and 29, backpacked through some 40 countries to show that it is possible for people of different faiths or none to live together, and to find out about global initiatives promoting interfaith dialogue. In the course of their travels, they were received at the Élysée Palace and met Pope Francis as well as the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar. Along with cooperative efforts between Christian and Muslim single mothers in the shantytowns of Kenya and joint projects being carried on together by Jews and Muslims

from Israel and the Palestinian Territories, the travellers recorded and studied more than 400 projects worldwide involving cooperation between religions.

With the assistance of Auvidéc Média

Interfaith Eco-Action Day: May 19, 2014, Sir-George-Étienne-Cartier Park

The CCE was a partner in the fourth annual *Interfaith Eco-Action Day* May 19 at Sir-George-Étienne Cartier Park. Several hundred pounds of garbage and recyclables were removed. The Christian Jewish Dialogue of Montreal, Concordia's Multi-Faith Chaplaincy, the Boys and Girls Club of Lachine, Eco Quartier Sud-Ouest and our Centre hosted the event, which included graffiti clean-up, and cleaning and greening of various parks and streets in the district. These Eco-Action events are a practical expression of faith in action. People of different faiths come together to make a difference in the community and to express the common belief that we are all entrusted with the care of the Earth. Student volunteers along with Jewish, Christian, Sikh, and Muslim community members worked together for the common good and in support of common values.



WHY an Irénée Beaubien, s.j. Ecumenical Institute in Montreal in 2014?

To encourage the development of ecumenism and dialogue as common shared values within the context of North American religious pluralism, globalization and secularism, the Irénée Beaubien, s.j. Ecumenical Institute will open its doors in October, 2014 in Montreal.

To promote ecumenical exchanges between Christians of different denominations and to assure the knowledge and understanding necessary to undertake positive and respectful dialogue, the

Irénée Beaubien, s.j. Ecumenical Institute will facilitate the intersection of theory and practical application.

To stimulate reflection and to provide a solid basis for future ecumenical action, the Irénée Beaubien, s.j. Ecumenical Institute, supported by the 50 years of existence of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, acts as a bridge between past and future.

To follow Christ's example of love and mutual enrichment,

the Irénée Beaubien, s.j. Ecumenical Institute creates a meeting place for experts in the knowledge and the practice of ecumenism. The population as a whole will also reap the benefits of the Institute through the publication of its papers in *ECUMENISM* magazine and the communication of its riches through the Radio Ville-Marie program, *EN DIALOGUE*.

To promote intergenerational dialogue, the Irénée Beaubien, s.j. Ecumenical Institute offers the opportunity for younger students to learn from experienced ecumenists who, in turn, will see that their efforts in the ecumenical field are appreciated and valued.

The Irénée Beaubien Ecumenical Institute of 2014

carries on the tradition of the annual Summer Ecumenical Institutes initiated by the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism in 1986.

The 2014 Institute offers :

- 14 speakers from different denominations, university specialists in ecumenism and ecclesial authorities,
- 2 days of conferences and enriching discussions providing an intellectual and emotional experience of Christian love.
- 5 days of icon workshops allowing participants to learn how to paint an icon and to discover the spirituality behind icons.
- 5 pilgrimages to local churches reveal the inner beauty of Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Orthodox and Oriental churches.
- 1 round-table discussion on "The Practical Applications of Ecumenical Theory in Everyday Life" will close the Institute.

Over 100 participants from different denominations will attend the Institute.

Exploring the challenge of ecumenism in today's world and developing an ecumenical mentality enhances the quality of the society in which we live with Christian love and mutual respect of our differences.

The theoretical knowledge transmitted by the speakers and the practical ecumenical strategies shared during the Institute, can be communicated and applied in other contexts: academic, ecclesial, and social.



L'Institut œcuménique Irénée Beaubien s.j.
du Centre canadien d'œcuménisme

Irénée Beaubien s.j. Ecumenical Institute
of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism

OCTOBRE / OCTOBER 2014



*Les défis de l'œcuménisme dans le
monde d'aujourd'hui*

*The Challenges of Ecumenism in
Today's World*

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VENDREDI/ FRIDAY, 24 OCTOBRE/ OCTOBER
SAMEDI/SATURDAY, 25 OCTOBRE/OCTOBER
9:00 am - 5 p.m.

**CONFÉRENCIERS INVITÉS/
GUESTSPEAKERS**

S.E. Mgr Christian Lépine - *Archevêque de l'Église
catholique romaine de Montréal*

The Right Rev. Barry B. Clarke - *Bishop of the
Anglican Diocese of Montreal*

Mgr Ioan Casian - *Évêque vicaire de l'Église
orthodoxe roumaine des Amériques*

Rev. Thomas Ryan, CSP - *Paulist North American
Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations,
Washington, DC.*

Rev. Gilles Barette - *Missionnaire d'Afrique (Pères
Blancs), Montréal*

Prof. Dr. Matthew Anderson - *Concordia University*

Prof. Dr. Dragos Giulea - *Concordia University*

Prof. Dr. Christine Jamieson - *Concordia University*

Rev. Dr. Ighor Kutash - *Université Saint-Paul,
Ottawa*

Prof. Dr. Paul Ladouceur - *Université de
Sherbrooke & Trinity College (Univ. of Toronto)*

Prof. Dr. Gilles Routhier - *Université Laval*

Prof. Emeritus Richard Schneider - *York
University, Toronto*

Prof. Dr. Lucian Turcescu - *Concordia University*

Prof. Sara Terreault- *Concordia University*

LUNDI, 27 au VENDREDI 31 OCTOBRE
de 9h00 à 17h00

MONDAY, 27 - FRIDAY 31 OCTOBER
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

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ICON PAINTING WORKSHOP**

Dr. Adriana Bara - *Centre canadien
d'œcuménisme/Canadian Centre for Ecumenism*

Viorica Balaban - *iconographe/iconographer*

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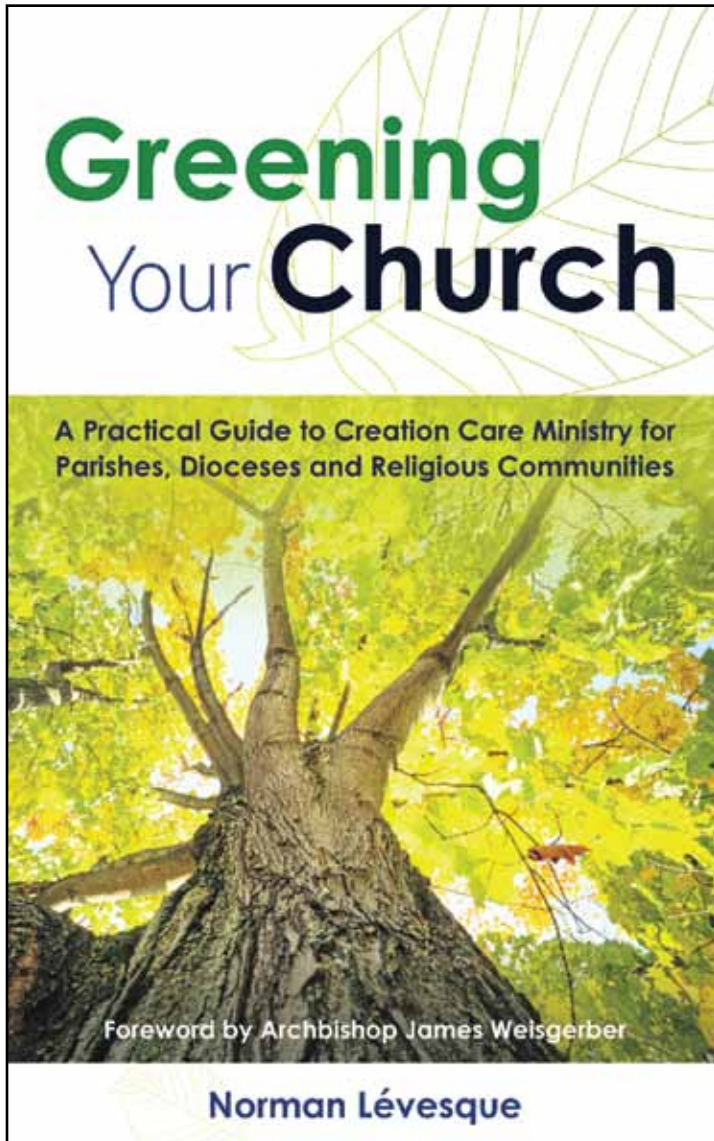
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New publication

Norman Levesque, Associate Director of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, has just published a guide entitled “Greening Your Church – A Practical Guide to Creation Care Ministry for Parishes, Dioceses and Religious Communities.”

“Greening the Church,” published simultaneously in French and English, is a practical guide to making churches more eco-friendly and environmentally aware. Using the example of ecological saints such as Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of environmentalists, and Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, the guide offers prayers, group activities and many different ways to help care for God’s Creation, from bike racks in front of the church and carpooling to Sunday Mass to composting, recycling and hosting community events ecologically.



The book is divided into two main parts:

- A theological view of creation, to give an overview of the wealth of Christian tradition concerning the environment.
- A pastoral view of creation, to present an intervention model and ideas for prayer, awareness and action that churches can undertake to better understand and protect the God-given life of our planet.

This book is a vital tool for all clergy, pastoral workers and teachers looking to lead the way in saving the environment. Let this excellent guide help you to celebrate the glory of God’s Creation, keep it alive for generations to come, and grow in appreciation of its wonders.

Volunteers Needed

Receptionist

We are seeking an individual with strong interpersonal skills, an openness to world religions and the ability to communicate in English and French. The working schedule is flexible depending on your availability.

Computer Technician

We need someone with the skills needed to maintain our small computer network, perform updates, backup copies, etc.

If you have these or other talents to share, come join our team! Contact us.



Green Church

Canadian Centre for Ecumenism

Green Churches: Top 25 verses about Creation in the Bible

Bible : The Green Verses

by Norman Lévesque, theologian and environmentalist

The Bible, the foundation of faith teachings for all Christians, contains many passages with ecological values. They often concern respect for the earth and its creatures and a right relationship with God's Creation. For this list of the top 25 verses on the theme of Creation in the Bible, quotes are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSV 1989).

TOP 25 VERSES about Creation in the Bible

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.
(Genesis 1:31)

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. (Genesis 2:15)

Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing on the ground according to its kind, two of every kind shall come in to you, to keep them alive. (Genesis 6:20)

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after



you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. (Genesis 9:8-10)

For six years you shall sow your field, and for six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in their yield; but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of complete rest for the land, a sabbath for the Lord: you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. (Leviticus 25:3-4)



If you will only heed every commandment... you will gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil; and he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you will eat your fill. (Deuteronomy 11:13-15)

You are the Lord, you alone; you have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. To all of them you give life. (Nehemiah 9:6)

But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. (Job 12:7-8)



If my land has cried out against me... , let thorns grow instead of wheat, and foul weeds instead of barley. (Job 31:38-40)

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it. (Psalm 24(23):1)

O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. (Psalm 104(103):24)

You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing. (Psalm 145:16)

The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens. (Proverbs 3:19)

For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and humans have no advantage over the animals; for all is vanity. (Ecclesiastes 3:19)



As a lily among brambles, so is my love among maidens. As an apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among young men. (Song of Solomon 2:2-3)

The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. (Isaiah 24:5)

How long will the land mourn, and the grass of every field wither? For the wickedness of those who live in it the animals and the birds are swept away. (Jeremiah 12:4)

Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing. (Hosea 4:3)

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5)

Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. (Matthew 6:26)

Jesus was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. (Mark 1:13)

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15 NKJV)



Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. (Romans 1:20)

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now. (Romans 8:22)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. (Revelation 21:1)



Theme: Ecumenism in Practice

Christian Unity in Action : Why should Christians work together?

Pamela Gabauer Pamela Gebauer is a full-time staff member with the Montreal urban mission Christian Direction. She is currently working in neighbourhood ministry in the borough of Saint-Laurent with a network of 15 churches. She has also been involved in the coordination of an overseas network of denominations, missions and theological schools working in large cities of la Francophonie (Urbanus). In addition, she provides demographic research studies for churches and missions seeking to understand the context of their neighbourhood or city in Quebec. She has a Masters in Theological Studies from Concordia University.

Many might consider the theme of Christians working together in a collaborative effort to be a relatively recent idea. However, if we take a few moments to consider the words of the historians and theologians of the first few centuries, we see that the way that early Christians practiced Christ's final and new commandment contained in John 13:35¹ had a significant impact on cities in the Roman Empire. Tertullian in his *Apology*, Chapter 39, has preserved some of the Romans' observations of Christians in their actions of charity and love for one another:

On the monthly day, if he likes, each puts in a small donation; but only if it be his pleasure, and only if he be able: for there is no compulsion; all is voluntary. These gifts are ... not spent on feasts, and drinking-bouts, and eating-houses, but to support and bury poor people, to supply the wants of boys and girls destitute of means and parents, and of old persons confined now to the house; such, too, as have suffered shipwreck; and if there happen to be any in the mines or banished to the islands or shut up in the prisons, for nothing but their fidelity to the cause of God's Church, they become the nurslings of their confession. But it is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. See, they say, how they love one another.

See *how they love one another* – this saying of outsiders of the Christian faith about the actions of these early Christians is still remembered and quoted up to the present day. Even scholars, like Rodney Stark, looking at the early growth of Christianity from a purely sociological perspective, cannot deny the positive impact that Christians had on cities in the first few centuries:



Christianity revitalized life in Greco-Roman cities by providing new norms and new kinds of social relationships able to cope with many urgent problems. To cities filled with the homeless and impoverished, Christianity offered charity as well as hope. To cities filled with newcomers and strangers, Christianity offered an immediate basis for attachment. To cities filled with orphans and widows, Christianity provided a new and expanded sense of family. To cities torn by violent ethnic strife, Christianity offered a new basis for social solidarity. And to cities faced with epidemics, fire, and earthquakes, Christianity offered effective nursing services. .

For what they brought was not simply an urban movement, but a new culture capable of making life in Greco-Roman cities more tolerable.²

Our current Western culture has a tendency to promote self-sufficiency, personal effort, and the value of the individual above all. Of course, the promotion of freedom of speech and other individual rights and liberties is the hallmark of a democratic society, something valued by all its citizens. Jesus Christ proposes to His followers, however, two great commandments involving the individual's relationship both to God and to neighbour: Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind! This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."³ Jesus prayed that His disciples might be one so that the "world may believe that you have sent me."⁴ Christians' working together in love in Christ's name, become a powerful testimony of that love. What is surprising is that in spite of our individualism, Christians are often working together behind the scenes, in extremely difficult and hazardous conditions to help those in need and to demonstrate the truth of Christ's love to the world.

Brian Stewart, a former CBC journalist who covered news in ten different war zones over the years, gave an inspiring convocation address at the 160th anniversary of Knox College, University of Toronto in 2004. Here are some of his comments about Christians working together, taking action in difficult areas:

For many years I've been struck by the rather blithe notion, spread in many circles including the media, and taken up by a rather large section of our younger population that organized, mainstream Christianity has been reduced to a musty, dimly lit backwater of contemporary life, a fading force. Well, I'm here to tell you from what I've seen from my «ring-side seat» at events over decades that there is nothing that is further from the truth... I've found there is no movement, or force, closer to the raw truth of war, famines, crises, and the vast human predicament, than organized Christianity in action. And there is no alliance more determined and dogged in action than church workers, ordained and lay members, when mobilized for a common good... At the start of my career I'd largely abandoned religion for I too regarded the Church as a rather tiresome irrelevance. What ultimately persuaded me otherwise... was the reality of Christianity's mission, physically and in spirit, before my very eyes... I witnessed so many other Church efforts. Saving children in Mozambique from life on garbage dumps; schools for illiterate ex-field hands in the slums of Brazil; the quiet comforting of runaways

and addicts in a thousand asphalt city jungles; small groups of Christians visiting the lonely and mentally fragile in low-income boarding house flats; the out of the cold program right here in Toronto. Groups from many churches work in famine camps, feeding, saving, comforting the dying... "Even here," churches seemed to say "Even here," however remote or wretched or dangerous. "Even here" we will be by your side, even to the end.⁵

These wonderful examples of Christian unity in action cited above does not eliminate the need for us to learn more about how to work together as Christians. There often seems to be so many reasons for an individual or a group to "go it alone." Sometimes it seems easier and more efficient to plan and to do a mission project by ourselves. There is an African proverb that says, If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

What are some benefits of Christians' working together?

Phillip Butler, former director of an international Christian organization called Interdev, has given much thought to this question. He has worked in 70 different countries seeking to develop collaborative partnerships and networks among Christian missions and churches working often in difficult mission fields. He published a summary of his many published articles and learning over the years in 2006 in a book entitled *Well Connected*.⁶ In it he outlines some of the biblical as well as practical reasons why Christians should work together. Some of the practical benefits that he mentions for working together rather than alone are as follows:

Partnering allows the partners to contribute from their area of strength rather than having to do many things, some poorly.

Partnering allows greater flexibility in accomplishing things since there are more ideas and more resources available from all the partners.

Partnering lowers the risk of failure, especially in larger projects, since there are more resources and the work load is shared.

Partnering brings hope to those who are working in difficult situations. They no longer feel alone and there is more hope for tangible results.

Examples of Christian Collaborations

Laying the foundation for collaboration is very important. Being able to work together involves having an open dialogue with the other and establishing a relationship of trust. This trust spills over as consensus is developed as to the nature and process of the collaboration. Oftentimes, collaboration begins as the result of a shared vision about a common need or to share information about what is already being done. These informal meetings sometimes result in the forming of a network. A network is any group of organizations or churches, who, on a voluntary basis, exchanges information and coordinates actions in a limited way so that their individual autonomy remains intact. The group meets when it wishes to do so. At the same time, those participating feel that their individual purposes are enhanced. A network tends to be more loosely structured and informal with limited accountability and commitment. It is usually broad-based and highly voluntary. In addition it is built around relationships and consensus and usually united around a common mission or need. In order to survive and flourish, a network needs someone to facilitate ongoing exchange, meetings and projects.

I have been involved in coordinating an international network of churches and missions working in La Francophonie⁷ since 1995. It exists to help promote and improve the theological training of urban pastors and workers in large French-speaking cities. The network desires to cooperate with all those working in these cities in order to provide them with well-conceived, practical and contextual training. The denominations and missions wanted to share what they had already learned in their own ministry setting and make it accessible to other Christian urban workers and pastors in similar ones. Since 1995, this network, Urbanus, has held training consultations in 25 cities in 13 countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda, Haiti and France to mention but a few. More than 35 theological schools have incorporated contextual training into their curricula and shared teaching staff. In addition, practical training resources have been published and made available electronically and on CD-ROM. Some of the training topics covered such things as ministry to those with Aids, helping survivors of earthquake (Haiti 2010) deal with grief and post-traumatic stress, and planting churches in pluralistically complex developing cities. While remaining loosely affiliated, the broad network spanning Canada, Europe, Africa and Haiti has succeeded in doing much more together than any single group could have ever accomplished on its own.

Other group collaborations are more community-based and work in neighbourhoods for a common purpose. The

Tyndale-St. George Community Centre located in Montreal in the neighbourhood of Little Burgundy is an example of the partnership of the Presbyterian Church and the Anglican Church in Montreal working together since 1976. They seek to provide help to new immigrants and refugees, youth and low-income families living in this area and offer many types of programs.

Currently, I am working with a network of some 10 churches in the borough of Saint-Laurent in Montreal. By combining our resources we have been helping low-income families with school supplies at the beginning of the school year, offering English and French conversation groups to new immigrants as they seek employment, and partnering with a local organization and church to offer a weekly food bank. In addition, several local pastors meet together for prayer and mutual encouragement every couple of months. Even though some of the churches are quite small, working together on these projects for the community has multiplied the resources and made our presence more visible in the community.

There are many more examples of Kingdom collaborations waiting for you to discover, perhaps, in your own community – Christians following Christ's words to His disciples before he died, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." I would ask you to consider how God might be calling you and your church to unite with others in demonstrating Christian love in action in your community.

1 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

2 Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*, Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 161.

3 Matthew 22: 37- 40.

4 John 17: 21.

5 For full text see <http://www.christianity.ca/page.aspx?pid=11235>, accessed on April 25, 2014.

7 Phillip Butler, *Well Connected*, Authentic, 2006. Also available as a free online document at <http://powerofconnecting.net/WellConnected-PhillButler.pdf>.

8 La Francophonie is a commonwealth of more than 50 countries or regions where the primary business language is French, where a significant proportion of the population speaks French and identifies with the French culture. There are 23 cities within this group with populations over 1 million.

Ecumenism in Montreal – From Earth to Heaven

Deacon Brian Cordeiro, M.A. (Theology)

Brian Cordeiro works as the Associate Director of Finance at the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Montreal and is a Permanent Deacon of the Archdiocese. In 2008 he took the position of treasurer of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism. Brian has completed his Master's in theology in ecumenism from Concordia University and continues working arduously with all Christians to achieve greater unity.

Ecumenism at an international level is over a hundred years old and the Catholic Church's push for Christian unity in its *Decree on Ecumenism* from the Second Vatican Council (VCI) celebrates fifty years in 2014. Here in Montreal, the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism is also in its fiftieth year of existence. It is therefore an excellent opportunity to take a serious look at how grassroots efforts to foster Christian unity in Montreal have been shaping up. This article will comment on some of the significant ecumenical events that have taken place in Montreal in the past two years and to provide some guidance on upcoming events in the coming year. Unity is God's work through humans; hence the title of this article.

One of the first things that becomes apparent to those who seek to foster ecumenism is the fact that the term "ecumenism" is not understood by many Christians; and is often confused with inter-religious dialogue. To avoid such misunderstandings it is often simpler to refer to "ecumenism" as "Christian Unity". Christian unity by its very description makes it clear that such dialogue is centred around our common beliefs as Christians – the Trinity, the person of Jesus, the Bible and the salvific value of Christ's sacrifice for us on the Cross.

The Canadian Centre for Ecumenism in Montreal which was founded by Jesuit Fr. Irene Beaubien has provided a base in Montreal for ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue for over fifty years. When we look back at ecumenical activity in Montreal over the past two years, we have to discuss the international *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*. This prayer is each year composed by one country before it is finalised by an international body with representation from a number of Churches. The 2014 prayers were prepared by Canada and were used throughout the world. The ecumenical celebration in Montreal on January 19, 2014 at Christ Church Anglican Cathedral to celebrate the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* was particularly joyous for Canadians since the prayer had a decidedly Canadian content, reflecting the vastness of our land, our diversity and the richness of the native Indian and other cultures. The service was attended by around six



hundred Christians. The excellent choir of the Cathedral, the feet-tapping music of the Imani Church choir, the wide spectrum of church leaders and a Mohawk presence made it a particularly successful and joyous celebration. The service was recorded and televised a week later by *Radio-Canada* on its program "Jour du Seigneur" and also by French television station *France 2* in France and other countries.

On the West Island of Montréal, we celebrated the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2014 over three weekends. On January 12th, we had a pulpit exchange. Clergy from five Catholic, Lutheran and Anglican churches preached in a church other than their own. Such a pulpit exchange had not taken place in over twenty years and so it was particularly satisfying to hear the positive feedback of members of different communities, who with one voice echoed their joy in hosting their Christian brothers and sisters. Then on January 19th, we joined in the Montreal-wide celebration at Christ Church Anglican Cathedral and a week later, on January 26th, we had our own local celebration of the Christian unity service at St. Luke's Catholic Church.

Journeying together

I am a firm believer that dialogue and social contact between Christian brothers and sisters at the grassroots level is the best way to remove distrust, enhance openness and joy in what each of us has to offer. With this in mind, we on the West Island had a wonderful evening of teaching, praise, music and fellowship on October 23, 2013 at St. Luke's Catholic Church. On December 8, we had an ecumenical Christmas Carol service at Christ the Redeemer Lutheran Church and participation at both these events was excellent. On April 18, 2014, Good Friday, a number of Churches joined in an ecumenical *Walk of Faith* doing Stations of the Cross outdoors and stopping at several Christian churches. This outdoor walk is an excellent evangelical tool as people watch Christians walking together to give thanks for Jesus' sacrifice for us on the Cross. Each year in Montreal, there are a number of Good Friday outdoor walks which are ecumenical and comprise of a number of Christian Churches joining together.

2014 is the fiftieth anniversary of VCI's *Decree on Ecumenism* and also the fiftieth anniversary of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism and also St. Luke's Catholic Church, to which I belong. To celebrate our fiftieth anniversary at St. Luke's, we will be hosting on October 25th and 26th, 2014 an ecumenical renewal mission for Montreal called "Gospel Call". The mission is being preached by Catholic Paulist Fr. Tom Ryan, who heads the Paulist Office for Interreligious and Ecumenical Dialogue in Washington, D.C. and Rev. John Armstrong from the Reformed Church whose book "Your Church is too Small" has been widely received in ecumenical circles. Both these mission leaders are known in the international ecumenical world. The mission in a truly ecumenical spirit will not be merely a St. Luke or a Catholic event. The mission continues with a Monday October 27 morning session at St. Michael's and All Angels Anglican Church and an evening session that same day at First Christian Reformed Church and winds up with a session for church representatives on

Tuesday, October 28 at Christ Redeemer Lutheran Church. There will Anglicans, Lutherans, United Church, Orthodox, Greek Melkites, Salvation Army, Copts and Christians from many other churches participating in the mission with choirs giving the mission a distinctive ecumenical flavour.



Christian unity springs from a change of hearts, which only the Holy Spirit can bring about. But we, as humble instruments of the Holy Spirit, are called to place our gifts at the service of this common cause of Christian unity, a theme which was so dear to our Saviour's heart, as exemplified by His prayer in John 17:21 "that they (Christians) may all be one. As you Father are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." Christian unity must be practised in love. We are truly grateful to the Holy Spirit and are encouraged by signs of growing support for Christian unity in Montreal. May our efforts in Montreal continue to be blest by the Holy Spirit and may they help to light the fire of unified fraternal love in the hearts of all Christians! Come Holy Spirit and touch our hearts! Rain down the fire of unity on us! May the efforts of those who seek to foster Christian unity on earth please the Trinity! From earth to heaven indeed!



Interchurch Couples and Families: Issues and Goals

Ray and Fenella Temmerman

Ray and Fenella Temmerman, a Catholic and Anglican couple living in Winnipeg, Manitoba, worship together in both their parishes and are active in a variety of ecumenical activities.

Ray operates the interchurchfamilies.org website, as well as an international discussion group where people discuss the joys and difficulties, hopes and dreams of their path to Christian unity. They were principal coordinators of the 10th International Conference of Interchurch Families, held in Edmonton, Alberta in 2001.

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Perhaps the first thing we should do is define what constitutes an interchurch couple. For simplicity, let's take the definition interchurch families themselves use most often.

An interchurch family includes a husband and wife who come from two different church traditions (often a Roman Catholic married to a Christian of another communion). Both of them retain their original church membership, but so far as they are able they are committed to live, worship and participate in their spouse's church also. If they have children, as parents they exercise a joint responsibility under God for their religious and spiritual upbringing, and they teach them by word and example to appreciate both their Christian traditions.

Interchurch families, then, are not simply those who fall under that canonical category called «mixed marriages». That connotation refers to all Catholics who are married to a Christian of another tradition, and may include families where one or both spouses don't worship or practice their faith in any significant way. Interchurch couples, on the contrary, deliberately and conscientiously share their faith with each other, and worship and participate to the extent they are able in both their churches.

Theirs is an alive and dynamic faith, always being challenged and called into greater depth and understanding. Their children are nurtured in an environment of awareness of and



Ray and Fenella Temmerman

respect for both traditions. While it has often been said that this will confuse the children, the experience of interchurch families has shown that, while there may be confusion, that confusion is most often within the churches, rather than within the children.

Issues

It's worth looking at the issues that interchurch couples and their ecclesial communities need to deal with. It's only by being aware, not only of the issues but of potentially liberating opportunities, that we will enable people to take on the fullness of their faith in Christ as lived out in this or that tradition. We'll look at several key components.

Baptism

A child cannot be baptized twice, once into the father's tradition and once into the mother's. One is baptized into the body of Christ, the Church, once and for all time. But must such a baptism be seen as incarnating into only one tradition? At the moment, that appears to be the understanding. Indeed, some traditions are able to recognize initiation into their tradition only if the pastor of that tradition has performed the baptism. Must it be so?

Why not have the minister of one tradition perform the baptism, then the minister of the other tradition immediately receive that validly baptized child into his/her tradition, in accordance with the intent of the parents? Let us cease viewing such reception as a rejection of, an exiling from, the



church of baptism. Let us see it instead as an incorporation of all that is rich and good from that tradition into the tradition in which one is being received. Let us allow the parents and children to live out their incarnational reality within their two Christian traditions, recognizing the orthopraxy of such a lived unity, even as we wait for the theological and legal orthodoxy to be established. Were this done, not at separate ceremonies (which would emphasize the partial separation of the churches) but at the same ceremony (which would emphasize what is held in common), then blood family and church family alike would see and be called to rejoice in the rich reality that is being lived out before their eyes.

Where baptismal traditions differ, the proposal put forward in 1995 by Ruth Reardon of the Association of Interchurch Families of the United Kingdom is worth considering. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) could be adapted for children and infants. Children could be accepted into the order of catechumens in a public ceremony witnessed by the church community, with the church accepting them as persons intending to become its members. According to Article 47 of the RCIA, "catechumens are considered part of the household of Christ."

Reardon goes on to say "[t]he catechumenate is an indeterminate period; the presentations of the Creed, the Lord's prayer and the Ephphetha Rite can all take place during this period, and would make a lot of sense in the development of a growing child. The second big stage, the Rite of Election, would need to take place at a time when the child was more immediately preparing for baptism." Recognized as joined to the Church, the catechumen could be appropriately catechized until he/she makes a faith decision and accepts baptism. Such a process may well serve to satisfy the aspirations of both baptismal traditions.

At the very least, let's invite the pastors of both traditions to take part in baptismal preparation, as well as in the service in which the baptism takes place. This will enable both spouses, as well as their respective blood and ecclesial families, to be involved, and to see that the new addition to the family is being well provided for, truly welcomed, by both traditions. If there are lingering fears or animosities regarding faith in one or both of the families, that common preparation and participation will go a long way toward their healing.

Eucharist

The Scriptures proclaim (Mk. 10:8), the Church believes and teaches (CCC #1644), and we experience and believe, that in marriage God takes two people and makes them one. The Scriptures also tell us (Jn. 6:53) that unless we eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink of His blood, we can have no life in us. And so the question must be asked: Where is that one, made so by God in marriage, to take and eat, take and drink?

Corollary questions also arise. Given that one is indivisible, then if half of that one is not welcome to take and eat, take and drink, here in this place and service, can the other half of that one be welcome? Must that one choose either a) [R]1] to affirm the sacrament of marriage by refraining from dividing and so not receive the Eucharist, the ultimate sacrament of unity, or b) [R]2] to deny the unity of the sacrament of marriage in order to receive the sacrament of unity – and in that denial and division render oneself indisposed to receive the Eucharist? These are questions the churches must grapple with on the journey to Christian unity. The answers impact heavily on interchurch families.

Confirmation

Confirmation presents a real challenge, both for interchurch families and for their churches. In addition to being an act of God, it is seen as a choice to be part of a community of faith, with each church seeing it as a choice and commitment to their specific faith tradition. This can be quite a challenge for interchurch children, for whom both traditions are part of their very makeup. (Interchurch couples carry two traditions within the unity of their marriage. Their children carry two traditions within one body.) Some have resolved it by being confirmed in one church, then having that confirmation affirmed in their other church. But some have chosen not to be confirmed at all as long as they are faced with this choice. In so doing, they present a powerful challenge to the churches, who are as yet divided in this and other ways.

Funerals and the Eucharist

The death of a spouse is a key event where the strength and stability of the family life that flows from marriage is threatened. In death, of course, the marital union has been broken. It is in this time, however, that the experience of exile can be deeply felt, if the remaining spouse cannot be made truly welcome, in the community and before God, as he or she brings closure to their married life together.

While spouses would normally prefer to have their funeral service held in their own tradition, the remaining spouse must be able to deal with the funeral in a way which minimizes stress – even if that means having the service in a different church.

There is also a real need to express family unity and solidarity in a time of grief. If we cannot recognize, at the point of final celebration of life, the grave and pressing need for expressions of unity, and for Eucharist as the ultimate sign and symbol of unity, what will we consider sufficiently grave and pressing that we may offer it, welcome interchurch couples, and end their exile? Conversely, if we can do so then, why not now, in life, when strength and nourishment are needed for the journey, and for what is seen as the primary moving force in marriage, i.e. the unity and stability of their marital union?

Life in General

Let our churches begin to share space and resources together, learning to live, as married couples do, under one roof, where gifts can be discovered and magnified, the shadows of our deepest selves brought into the light. Though always challenging, this can help create and nurture respect for the 'other'.

Two Goals, Two Reasons

If we, as churches, having allowed couples to marry across denominational lines, are going to encourage such marriages to be faith-filled and faithful, we must have two goals in mind. While remaining faithful to who we are before God, we must as much as possible move forward by removing the barriers to growth in faith. While those barriers continue to exist, we must help couples build the resources to live with existing barriers in a positive manner.

To help achieve these goals, we should look to the gift in our midst: interchurch couples who are experiencing joy in their faith and in their churches, and who are instruments of unity, sanctity, catholicity and apostolicity. We can look to them for two reasons. They can show us where the barriers are, and what might be done to remove them. They also show by their example how to wait in joyful hope while they work, along with the whole Church, for the removal of the barriers.

My Journey into Religious Diversity

Reverend John Tonks

John Tonks is President of the Board of Kairos Pneuma Chaplaincy. On July, 2013 KPC entered into a contract for the provision of Chaplaincy services to the Correctional Service of Canada. In 1984 John graduated from Acadia Divinity College with a Diploma in Prison Ministry. It was during this time of study that he began going to Springhill Institution as a volunteer with Dr. Charles Taylor and other students to take part in the Kairos Marathons. During those early years while pastoring he began a ministry to the local provincial jail in Lunenburg County, a ministry which would last over 20 years, and continues to this day. John and Sharon live in Glenhome, NS, and have three adult children: Angela, Mark and Michelle.

*“Father, I have failed you, failed society,
And failed myself.
I’m serving life for murder in this institution,
But you know that already
For you know me.
I ask your forgiveness, as I do
In this dark room every night.
I have come to know you during my incarceration.
Father, in my talks with you,
I’ve made no commitment.
But I feel I must do this now.
In the darkness of this prison cell,
I repeat the words of Jesus, Your Son,
‘Into Thy hands I commit my spirit.’
(That They May have Life; Taylor, Charles; Lancelot Press, 1984,
p.15)*

For over 30 years I have been actively involved in a ministry rich in diversity. I have made friends with individuals of all faiths and many different cultures. As a volunteer and prison chaplain I have listened to the anguish of the souls of those who were of my faith and those who followed a different Spiritual path. Together, we met, at the deep places of our lives, and became a blessing to each other.

This is the story of my journey into religious diversity, a path which I chose to accept and a path, I believe was chosen for me.

My story begins over 60 years ago. I grew up in small town Nova Scotia. I had loving parents whose faith was very much a normal part of our life. My mother was the stronger of the two as far as church involvement was concerned. I followed her example and even as a teenager was active in our local Baptist Church. The foundation of my strong Christian faith was laid. As well as a strong faith, a deep respect for others was nurtured.

The example of my parents

It seems to me as I look back on those days growing up, that through their example my parents gave me a gift, I am not sure they even realized. The gift was that of an open heart and an accepting spirit. Our home was one where everyone was welcomed. It did not matter what faith you practiced or



did not practice you were welcomed into our family circle. The colour of your skin or the culture from which you came did not matter. Within this home there was always room for the strays that my brother and I would bring home for Thanksgiving holidays when we were attending University. I was lucky to have been raised in such a home. It was not perfect by any means. My parents like all of us had limits to their openness. Those limits were not, however, evident to me as a child.

Coming from that environment enabled me to have a freedom which many of my friends and other students did not have. I could allow others to have their own journey of the spirit without feeling that my journey was threatened. This of course was a process for me and there were times because of pressures from peers I doubted my own faith and openness of spirit. There was a time of wandering in the wilderness but the foundation laid in my home became the cornerstone for me. This cornerstone opened new avenues of knowledge and freedom of spirit which would not have been possible without it.

After the wilderness wandering, I came back to my calling into ministry. A calling I ran from and struggled with, but could never escape. It was during this period of time a new door opened and a new experience of growth began.

While studying theology at Acadia University and Divinity College, I decided to join a course called "Release to the Captives". It was a course helping us understand a culture and an environment of which most if not all of us had no knowledge. The professor was the late Dr. Charles Taylor. As part of that course we were required to attend a minimum of three group sessions with prisoners at the medium security prison at Springhill. My first trip in fulfillment of this requirement was in February of 1981. I had never been



inside a prison in my life. I had no idea what to expect, I wasn't even sure of what we would do there. As we walked from the Main entrance down the breezeway towards the chapel a deep, deep sense of peace flowed into me. I had arrived home. From that moment on I was hooked. This is where I want to spend my life in ministry. I would become a prison chaplain. From that first trip and every 6 weeks since then I traveled with Charlie and the group to Springhill. During one of those six summers I enrolled in a course offered in the prison. Then in January of 1988 the dream became a reality, I began my ministry as prison chaplain. A journey that has led me from Prison Chaplain to Regional Chaplain to back to volunteering and finally now as President of Kairos Pneuma Chaplaincy Inc.

Enriching interactions

During this journey of over 30 years, I have grown stronger in my faith as a result of the transformations of lives which have been deeply wounded. My interaction with persons of faith even though different than mine has also contributed to my growth of faith. A faith that reminds me that this ministry regardless of the Spiritual Path one follows is God's. God, working through the men and women of all faiths leads all to healing and wholeness. The prayer at the beginning of this

article is a reminder of that. This is the prayer of a young man doing a life sentence. As he sat alone in the darkness in his prison cell, with no priest, no minister, no Imam, no spiritual leader present, he was alone with the God of his understanding. In this aloneness he comes to understand that he needs something beyond himself, he needs God. At that moment his life begins its journey to healing and wholeness.

During this journey I have had the great joy of working with many spiritual leaders. Some have been Christian ministers and some who come with the richness of their faith and traditions. Many non-Christian individuals of a variety of faiths I call brother or sister. They have shared their path of faith with me and that enriches my life and understanding. Whenever I have had the opportunity to sit with an Imam, a Buddhist teacher, a Hindu, a Sikh, or a Pagan leader, and share our journeys with openness and respect I find myself blessed. To take the time to understand each other and to sit together respecting one another dispels the fear we often contrive within our minds. It allows us to be free within our faith.

On one occasion I was visiting a community chaplaincy in the Atlantic Region. While I was in the city, I had contacted the Imam who visited our prisons. I wanted to meet up with him to sign the contract for his services for our prisons in the area. He invited me to his home for a meal. An invitation I gladly accepted. The hospitality extended by this individual and his brother was without equal. They had prepared traditional dishes for me to try. Some were a bit too spicy for my palate, and I took a teasing about that. It was such an enjoyable way to spend an evening alone in a city. Our differences of faith did not matter; we met as three friends sharing a meal and friendship, even being able to relax and tease one another.

These are some of the very human experiences I have been able to have in my journey in a climate of religious diversity. I have been blessed as a human being to be able to count those of other faiths and denominations as friends. I have been freed to be me because of the respect, sharing, and knowledge gained in my interaction with these men and women who have crossed my path.

Now to be President of a Company which has as its goal to provide quality chaplaincy to the Correctional Service of Canada I have the opportunity to broaden my experience of religious diversity. Our organization holds sacred the concepts of inclusiveness, respect, and equality. To be part of this new path in chaplaincy is a joy which breathes new life into my heart.

Unitas, an ecumenical meditation centre

André Beauchamp

André Beauchamp is a secular Catholic priest in Montreal, Quebec. A well-known theologian on environmental issues and a keen ecumenist, he has been Chair of the Board of Directors of Unitas for 15 years.

The mission of Unitas is to spread the practice of Christian meditation by promoting the charism of John Main. John Main – a lawyer who became a Benedictine monk – was dissatisfied with the usual methods of prayer. This led him into an interior dryness. He turned to a Hindu master who introduced him to meditation, which we could call Eastern meditation, less focused on inner discourse than on no discourse. He discovered that controlling his breath and using a mantra prevented discursive reflection. The mantra he used was *Maranatha*.

John Main realized that this practice had points of similarity with the spiritual experience of the Desert Fathers in the Christian tradition, and found examples in John Cassian. It was not a heterodox method of praying – flirting with the East – but rather one that intersected with mainstream tradition. John Main taught and practised Christian meditation in the U.S. and Canada. He lived in Montreal and left a number of disciples following his death. He was greatly supported by Bishop Leonard Crowley, Auxiliary Bishop of the Catholic diocese of Montreal.

John Main's experience was much like that of Thomas Merton, whose writings are better known than John Main's.

For John Main, Christian meditation was a grace for our time, partly because it met the needs of our time, with its lack of silence and inner life, overconsumption, intellectualization of the Gospel message, faith not keeping pace with people's experience, ritualism, etc. As a result, he wished to focus on experience and not on discourse. For John Main, meditation was essentially Christian because it looked to Jesus and was very often rooted in commentary on a Gospel passage. Main's short writings on this point are of great simplicity. It is a prayer of trust, in dialogue, but not intellectualized. For myself, as for all followers of his method of meditating, the ecumenical dimension was a natural part of it as far as John Main was concerned, inasmuch as his approach was not one of dogmatic confrontation, but first and foremost of spiritual experience. Community experience was also essential for him.

After his death, there were strong tensions among his potential successors. Lawrence Freeman became prior, but was probably a little young for the task. The Benedictine monastery on Pine Avenue in Montreal closed its doors, but a monastic community, formed mainly of laypersons, has continued to exist and follow John Main's practices. Lawrence Freeman gradually developed the Christian meditation movement, while in Montréal, and the experiment went on with Thomas Ryan, an American Paulist who at that time was Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism.

It was Tom Ryan who created Unitas with a dual purpose: to promote Christian meditation as taught by John Main, and to do so in Montreal's ecumenical context. It was therefore with the agreement and cooperation of the Christian churches that Unitas came to be. Its Charter stipulates that some of the Board members must come from the meditator base and that four others must be appointed by their Church. Initially, the Churches contributed to its funding, but had to stop as a result of major financial crises within themselves. At present, the Catholic Church is the main donor through a fund created by John Main.



Like many organizations of this type, Unitas is currently dealing with problems of raising sufficient funds and recruiting the right personnel. Rapid changes in the world of communications also mean that the organization must completely rethink its actions and activities. But the issue of spiritual experience is the question of the hour. We are currently witnessing a shift from a concern with religion, very much focused on church as institution, to a concern

for the spiritual, focused on experience. This will lead to a new configuration of both ecumenical and interfaith dialogue. Against the backdrop of the environmental crisis, the battered economy and the instrumentalization of human beings, we can perhaps consider our interdenominational quarrels to be so much petty feuding.

Let's let in some fresh air.

Anglicans and Roman Catholics reconvene for Part 2 of Ecumenical Series “Meet Your Relatives, Grassroots Ecumenism”

Anne Larochelle

Ecumenical and Multi-faith Unit, Anglican Diocese of New Westminster

The second of three in a series of Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogues was held on Sunday afternoon, March 23 at Holy Trinity Cathedral in New Westminster. Organizers were overwhelmed by the favourable response to the first event which took place at St. Helen's Roman Catholic Church in January when 100 people answered the invitation to “Meet Your Relatives.”

The dialogue is a joint initiative of the Anglican Ecumenical and Multi-faith Unit, chaired by The Venerable Grant Rodgers, and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, which is coordinated by Marjeta Bobnar.

Once again the program featured a conversation between two theologians, one the Rev. Dr. Richard Leggett, Rector of St. Faith's Anglican Parish, and Professor Emeritus of Liturgical Studies at the Vancouver School of Theology. Dr. Leggett is a long time contributor to ecumenical and interfaith relations. The other is Christophe Potworowski, a Professor of Theology at Redeemer Pacific College. Dr. Potworowski held the Kennedy Smith Chair in Catholic Studies at McGill University and was President of Newman Theological College in Edmonton before taking his current position.

When asked about topics of conversation, Dr. Potworowski mentioned that people seemed keenly interested in talking about some of the “differences” between the two traditions.

He added, “I think avoiding talking about our differences is avoiding the elephant in the room. However, we can't really do anything about resolving the issues; that is not up to us. The question is, how can we learn to live with them better? One example addressed on March 23 is the place of the Eucharist in Roman Catholic/Anglican relations.”

Rev. Dr. Leggett agreed. “Dialogue motivated by spiritual curiosity and a desire to gain understanding bears ecumenical fruit. We recognize differences but focus on what unites us. Differences and divisions are not, by necessity, synonymous. We talked about unity and uniformity during our conversation in January. Uniformity is not the goal.”

“One of the stated objectives is to provide an opportunity to listen to the wisdom of our various voices,” said Anne Larochelle, a member of EMU and one of the organizers of the series. “Honouring each other as members of the Body of Christ, while respecting the uniqueness inherent to our traditions, we celebrate the oneness that exists between us by virtue of our baptism. From there, the possibility exists to grow together in that very oneness of faith and to explore ways to serve our communities together.”

The afternoon included a short liturgy, small group dialogue, and refreshments.

Music and ecumenism

Yaovi Gasséssé Siliadin

The author is an experienced and skilled musician from Togo. He is actually a student in Administration in Montréal.

Nowadays, there are still many regions of the world when interreligious conflicts are raging, notably in the Central African Republic, Nigeria, Egypt and Palestine. In this context, interfaith dialogue is more necessary than ever. Pope Francis' visit to Palestine at the very moment I am writing this article (at the end of May) is a strong symbol of this necessity. This is why the time is right to look into the factors that favour interfaith dialogue. I believe music is one of these factors because it has a particular virtue. It is this virtue that I will discuss in this article. Throughout the article I use the word *ecumenism* as a synonym for universality. Although the word *ecumenism* originally referred to the movement for the unity of Christians independent of their denomination, its meaning is ever expanding to include dialogue between all human beings, whatever their religious convictions.

To better picture the virtue in question, let me share a short anecdote. For years following my baptism, I did not enjoy going to church very much: in my childhood I preferred playing football and marbles with my neighbourhood friends. I went to church only to avoid being punished by my mother. But when I did go, I was fascinated by the pianist who accompanied the mass. I would go sit beside the choir just to admire his agile fingers that brought out marvellous sounds from the piano. One fine day, after admiring this artist each Sunday, I felt a profound determination within me: I wanted to become a church pianist, to contribute to the praise and worship! I began to follow this calling and become truly engaged in the church. I went from rarely attending church to spending almost all my time there, to the point where my mother threatened to punish me again, but this time for spending too much time in church! The moral of the story is that it is music that drew me to Christ. The virtue of music that I am speaking about is this power of attraction. Music inherently has this power of attraction because it is above all an art: it is beautiful, marvellous and fascinating. Some define music as the art of making the cosmos vibrate. This definition implies that music acts on everything that lives in the universe. It is therefore as universal as ecumenism because it affects all people regardless of their religious convictions. Music indeed had an impact on me at a time when I did not really have any religious convictions.



I just mentioned that I was Christian, but it is thanks to Christian music that I became truly engaged in the church. Even if I was not practising at the time, I was still a Christian. This raises the question of whether I was therefore predisposed to be attracted by the beauty of Christian music. If I were not Christian, would the music have had the same effect on me? This is a legitimate question. However, the virtue of music that I am talking about is universal. It is not linked to a particular religion. I will once again illustrate this point from my personal experience.

When I was studying engineering at the Polytechnic school in Tunisia, we lived on site in the school residence. At the time I was the only Christian at the school. Everyone else was Muslim. Very often, I would play the piano at the residence's music club. I played mainly Christian music. This did not deter my classmates from coming to listen. They found it lovely. They would spend hours with me at the music club. The virtue of music affected them to the point that I was subsequently

named president of the music club. I was also selected to represent the school in a music contest on Tunisian television, which I in fact won. I will always remember this because I never felt more integrated in this Muslim Arab community. And it was all thanks to music.

The ecumenical nature of music is very apparent in musical circles. Among these performing artists, religious considerations are almost nonexistent. What counts is the quality of the music. When artists gather together, their purpose is not to profess their faith; they come intending to demonstrate their talent because talent determines their



place in the musical circle. They also come to discover the talents of others. In fact, all musicians have extraordinary curiosity. This is what propels them to discover works composed by their peers. By discovering others, they discover themselves. As a result, a quality shared by all musicians is open-mindedness. For example, a Western Christian musician greatly enjoys discussing music with a Muslim Arab musician. The main reason is that the two artists do not have the same style. Each seeks to discover what makes the other's music unique. In the end, both musicians are enriched by this interaction.

When I recorded my first album, I experienced this Islamic-Christian and Arab-Western-African ecumenism. I am certainly a Christian, and my musical style is essentially Western Christian, but I come from Togo, so I also know the traditional music of my homeland. In addition, I was in Tunisia at the time and had a chance to work on my album with

Muslim musicians whose music was rooted in Arab styles. When I recorded the vocals and instruments, the Muslim studio director impressed me with his open-mindedness and curiosity. He had completely projected himself into my world and was fully focused on making my Christian album a success. It was a marvellous experience. One time, when we recorded instruments for the track *Écoute la voix du Seigneur* (Listen to the voice of the Lord), he stood up and said: "I want to propose an introduction on my violin." This introduction was totally in the Arabic musical style. After having played it, he thought I might not like it. I could see it in his face. He asked me: "Axel, how did you like it?" I replied, "It's perfect!" And indeed it was. I wanted to give this album a Tunisian flair because I recorded it in Tunisia. I could not have dreamed of a better introduction!

Another time, we recorded the instruments for an African *Gloria*, "Kembo Alléluia." He was unfamiliar with this style, so I played all the instruments. But I was missing a bridge. When we listened to the track again, he suddenly leapt to the piano and started playing notes as if in a trance. He was visibly inspired by this joyful music, and I had never heard a more beautiful bridge. After having played it, he said to me: "Sorry, Axel, I just got a bit carried away. We can erase everything I played and we'll find something else." I answered "No, that was the perfect bridge."

My fondest memory of my experience of ecumenism in Tunisia was the album launch concert. I aspired to make the concert a one-of-a-kind event in Tunisia. I wanted the classical portion of the concert to be accompanied by a symphony orchestra. By the grace of the Holy Spirit, it happened at the time that the chamber orchestra of Sfax, made up of Muslim musicians, was looking to collaborate with choirs for concerts. I contacted them and we made an agreement. This was the first time such a performance happened in Tunis. A Catholic Christian concert accompanied by an orchestra of Muslims at the Tunis Cathedral. It was magnificent. In the audience there were as many Christians as Muslims, and the atmosphere was electric. The Muslims sang and danced to Christian songs.

To summarize, music has an essential virtue that lets it affect everyone, regardless of his or her religious convictions. This virtue makes music a natural vector of ecumenism and makes the musical world an ecumenical one. In the world of music, difference is fascinating, and diversity is beautiful and enriching. Why not be inspired by the natural ecumenism existing in the musical world to achieve religious ecumenism, so desirable in some regions of the world? Let us not forget that Jesus appealed to us to engage in dialogue and ecumenism (notably in chapter 4 of the Gospel of John).

Ecumenical News

International

The new mayor of Nazareth, the Muslim Ali Sallam, stated in a March meeting with representatives of religious communities in the city that it was his “greatest desire” that the feast of the Annunciation be proclaimed an official civic holiday “for all Nazareth”. Mayor Sallam made explicit reference to Lebanon where the feast has been observed nationally since 2010: “Since the Qur’an speaks a lot of the Virgin Mary and as this feast has become a national holiday in Lebanon, why not declare it as a holiday for the city of Nazareth, where the event of the Annunciation happened?” All of the delegations present – Christians, Muslims and Druze – greeted this statement with great applause and expressed full support for the initiative. *America, Fides*

The Malines Conversation Group complements and supports the work of the international Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogues as an unofficial group in the style of the Malines Conversations which took place in the 1920’s. The group is made up of eight Anglicans and eight Roman Catholics, including Bishop Don Bolen of Saskatoon. Their first meeting took place in Belgium in 2013 at the Benedictine Monastery of Chevetogne whose founder, Dom Beauduin proposed the notion of “united but not absorbed” to describe the unity being sought by the participants in the original Malines Conversations. This year, the group met in Canterbury, England from March 30 to April 3 in the company of its co-patrons, Cardinal Godfried Danneels and the former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams. *Prairie Messenger*

Canadian, Christopher Ferguson, has been elected as the next General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). More than 80 million Christians in 105 countries are Reformed Church members. Ordained in the United Church of Canada, Ferguson, 61, has served in ministry in Canada, the Middle East, Latin America and at the United Nations. He and his wife, Susan, will relocate from Bogota, Colombia to Hanover, Germany this summer. He will begin his duties on 1 August, providing for a month’s transition time with Setri Nyomi, who has served the maximum of two terms (14 years) as general secretary. *WCRC News*

The North American Academy of Ecumenists and the Faith and Order Commission of the Southern California Ecumenical Council will hold a joint conference on “The Church: Towards a Common Vision”, September 26-28 in Burbank, California. Guest speakers include Rev. Canon Dr. John Gibaut, Director of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches; Archbishop Hovnan

Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America; Rev. Sandra Beardsall, professor of church history and ecumenism at St. Andrew’s College in Saskatoon; Rev. Dr. Thomas Rausch, professor of theological studies, Loyola Marymount University; Rev. Dr. Thomas Best, NAAE vice-president. *NAAE Conference*

An agreement on the mutual recognition of baptism was signed on the day after Easter in Switzerland by the country’s Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Old Catholic, Reformed and Roman Catholic churches. During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, several Portuguese churches entered a similar pact. *WCC News*

An interreligious dialogue meeting in Tanzania closed on May 8 with the official signing of a “Joint Interreligious Declaration on Peace Building, Democracy and Development.” For three days, representatives of various Christian denominations as well as different Muslim institutions discussed issues of freedom of religion, developments in Christian Muslim relations in Africa, democracy and poverty alleviation. The participants strongly affirmed their solidarity with one another in the process of building peace, promoting democracy and ensuring sustainable development in their region. *Lutheran World Federation*

Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Syriac Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, died on 21 March 2014 at the age of 81. Iwas had been a president of the World Council of Churches and had attended the Second Vatican Council as an observer. In his message of condolence, WCC general secretary, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, mentioned that many in the WCC leadership who had the privilege of working closely with Patriarch Ignatius Zakka Iwas throughout the many years of his involvement in the ecumenical movement “recall his caring love for all, his genuine hospitality and his kind, encouraging words in all circumstances”. In his telegram, Pope Francis said: “His Holiness was a man of dialogue and peace with regard to the followers of all religious traditions.” The Pope gave “heartfelt thanks to God” for the Patriarch’s “extraordinary contribution to strengthening communion between Syrian Orthodox Christians and the Catholic faithful.” *WCC News and Auvidet Media*

“Baptism and Incorporation into the Body of Christ, the Church” is the topic of a dialogue between scholars of Lutheran, Catholic and Mennonite churches. The Trilateral Dialogue Commission on Baptism held its second meeting from 26-31 January in Strasbourg, France. The relation between baptism, grace and sin was the subject of the discussions. *Lutheran World Information*

In a joint letter, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) together with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) recommended the document, “From Conflict to Communion, Lutheran-Roman Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017” to their respective churches. The study document is intended to be an accompaniment for the upcoming Reformation commemoration in 2017 as well as a reflection of 50 years of ecumenical dialogue between the Catholic Church and the LWF. It represents the first international attempt to jointly describe the history of the Reformation, to analyse the theological issues at stake, to trace ecumenical developments between the two communions and to identify where convergence has been achieved and where differences remain. It is recommended that Catholics and Lutherans come together to study the document. *Lutheran World Information*

Thousands of Christians and Muslims came together in Lahore and Islamabad, Pakistan on April 2nd to observe the “Wednesday of Prayer and Fasting” to show their solidarity with those condemned under the anti-blasphemy law and to demonstrate for its dismantling. Recalling that freedom of religion is inscribed in the constitution of Pakistan, the young Muslim, Ageel Mehadi, explained that this is why he decided to “come to pray and fast in solidarity with my Christian brothers and sisters”. *Radio Ville-Marie*

At the Wilken Colloquium for Catholic-Evangelical Dialogue, held in February at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, Brett Salkeld, ecumenical officer for the Regina Catholic archdiocese, received an award for his doctoral dissertation on “Transubstantiation: Sign and Reality in Ecumenical Dialogue”. The Colloquium is an annual invitation-only gathering that attracts about 100 participants from around North America. It was established in 2012 to discuss different interpretations of Scripture in Christian denominations. Salkeld said the award establishes him as “someone hopefully worth listening to on these questions” and as a serious scholar who may be consulted by people interested in Catholic-Evangelical dialogue. *Prairie Messenger*

A Great and Holy Council of all Orthodox churches will convene in 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey. This will be the first such council to be held since the schism of 1054 which saw the separation of the Eastern and Western churches. The Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew I, will preside over the Council together with the primates of the autocephalous churches. All the decisions at the Council as well as during the preparatory stages will be taken unanimously. They will not be voted, but arrived at by consensus, with each church having the same weight. It is suggested that the delegation of each local church be made up of the primate and not more than 24 bishops. The total would number approximately 360 of the over 820 current Orthodox bishops. The Council wants to overcome past

animosities so as to achieve a deeper unity in proclaiming the Orthodox message to a multicultural, pluralistic and ever-changing world. *Radio Ville-Marie, Chrétiens En Marche*

In northern Nigeria, Protestant pastor, James Wuye and Imam Muhammad Ashafa, former enemies, have been working together for reconciliation between Christians and Muslims for the past 15 years. Imam Ashafa explains that his conversion came about while listening to a fellow Muslim preaching on a text from the Coran exhorting changing evil into good and turning one’s worst enemies into friends. Rev. Wuye also changed his attitude when a confrere’s admonition that he could not preach the Gospel with hatred in his heart, struck home. The process of forgiveness and reconciliation took several years and the two are now the best of friends. Imam Ashafa maintains that he is not a Christian and does not want to become one. Neither does Rev. Wuye want to become a Muslim. They both agree that what helps them go forward is seeing that religion can help build bridges. *Radio Ville-Marie*

Many Protestants have adopted what up to now they have seen as the predominately Catholic tradition of Lent. An expert on ecumenism and ecclesiology, Christopher Ruddy said there “seems to be a growing appreciation” of the observance of Lent in Protestant churches. “There’s certainly a sense of a spiritual desire to prepare for Lent ... a desire of conversion,” continued the associate professor at Catholic University of America. Though the Bible makes no reference of Lent, some of its practices are very relevant, according to Rev. Will Johnston of National Community Church. Organizations such as *Renovare*, a non-profit Christian ministry in Colorado, provide resources to educate evangelicals on the Lenten season. Lent is also an age-old tradition for the Orthodox, Anglicans, and Lutherans. *Prairie Messenger*

A network to fight human trafficking was launched by representatives from the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Muslim faiths at a large interreligious meeting on December 2, 2013, with the signing of an agreement to create the Global Freedom Network. Its goal is to eradicate, by 2020, modern forms of slavery that affect 30 million victims (as estimated in the 2013 Global Slavery Index) “hidden away ... in places of prostitution, in factories and farms, on fishing boats ... in private homes.” To make people aware of the scourge of modern slavery, the new interfaith network is promising a World Day of Prayer for the victims of human trafficking. Bishop Sorondo has announced that the Pope will be inviting other religious leaders to the day of prayer, to be held this coming December 2 at the Roman Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls. The UN has named December 2 the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. *Auvidéc Médial La Croix Urbi&Orbi*

National

A statement from the Canadian Council of Churches on relations with indigenous peoples was delivered at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission national event in Edmonton on March 28. The statement was signed by representatives of the CCC's 25 member churches. It expressed regret at the disastrous effects of the residential school system despite the presence of "some well-intentioned and even caring and loving school staff." Canadian churches will face up to the challenge of reconciliation. They want to deepen bonds of friendship and solidarity and "to consult with you about how we can walk together in the present and the future." *Western Catholic Reporter*

Members of the Anglican-United Church dialogue wrapped up their third session in Vancouver in January. The talks focused on the doctrinal identities of the two churches, including understandings of sacraments and ministry. While previous sessions focused on commonalities, this phase addressed differences. "We found that on core theological commitments, we are really in much the same place," wrote Anglican co-chair, William Harrison. Future dialogue may address the understanding of ministry. Relations between the two denominations were strained after the rejection of a formal merger in 1975. Dialogue resumed in 2003. *Anglican Journal*

The General Assembly of the Armenian Diocese of Canada of the Catholicosate of Cilicia met 9-10 May 2014 and elected Bishop Meghrik Parikian as the new Prelate. His Holiness Aram I confirmed the election on May 13. Bishop Parikian has been serving the Parish of Toronto and its regions since 2002. After his ordination as a priest, Bishop Parikian studied at the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, Geneva. He succeeds Archbishop Khajak Hagopian who has retired as the Prelate and Patriarchal Vicar of the Diocese of Canada after 15 years. *Antelias News*

The first in the Reformation @ 500 series took place in November, 2013 at St. Andrew's Hall of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. The topic of "Grace Alone" was addressed by several speakers. St. Andrew's dean, Stephen Farris, noted that law is not opposed to grace and, according to John Calvin, it can be an instrument of grace, revealing the path to be lived by those who have received God's grace. Not all North American Christian traditions have adopted individualistic understandings of grace, argued Mary Fontaine, director of Hummingbird Ministries, a Presbyterian ministry with Aboriginal Peoples in Vancouver. The First Nations community lives in hope of communal reconciliation, including reconciliation with creation. Since creation is the first sign of God's grace, honouring and protecting creation is a celebration of the Creator's act of grace in making the universe. The Grace Alone event was the first of five events taking place from 2013 to 2017, exploring the "five solas" of the Reformation: grace alone, faith alone, scripture alone, Christ alone, and to God's glory alone. The project's purpose is to address the question: What might these theological

concepts, so central to the Reformation, say to the churches in Canada today? The fall 2014 gathering in Nova Scotia will explore Faith Alone. Gatherings will then take place in Montreal and Winnipeg, before the final gathering in Toronto in the fall of 2017. *Presbyterian Record*

Projects supported by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank will benefit over 49,000 people in six countries. The projects are being implemented by the Mennonite Central Committee, World Relief Canada, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, the Evangelical Missionary Church, and Emergency Relief and Development Overseas. People in South Sudan who have had to abandon their farms because of violent fighting and who risk starvation, will be among those who benefit from these projects. The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of 15 churches and church agencies working together to end global hunger. *Prairie Messenger*

Canada's ambassador of religious freedom, Andrew Bennett, urged a Christian audience in Ottawa on April 4 to engage in the public sphere. He encouraged his listeners at Dean of Augustine College, to undertake "greater efforts to participate in society openly as Christians." Bennett said that Christian faith must be continually given voice in engagement with the world and love of others including Christians, people of other faiths earnestly seeking God, and people who freely choose not to have religious faith. *Western Catholic Reporter*

Anglican and Lutheran churches and other faith communities have been invited to take part in the seventh national justice camp, hosted by the Anglican diocese of Edmonton, August 15 to 21. The camp will explore how to live in harmony with the land and will also look at the interrelationship between aboriginal people and the settlers. Participants will choose from seven hands-on initiatives: urban poverty, aboriginal reconciliation, ecology and conservation, food and farming, arts, and interreligious perspectives. *Anglican Journal*

The Canadian Council of Churches has announced that the resource kits for the 2015 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity as well as materials for use in worship services, preaching and Bible study are now available online at WeekofPrayer.ca for the English version and SemainedePriere.ca for the French version. The 2015 kit, prepared by an ecumenical team from Brazil, includes a letter of introduction listing the members of the writing team; an introduction to the theme, "Jesus said to her: 'Give me a drink'" (John 4:7); an eight-day guide with Biblical reflections; a suggested outline for an ecumenical worship service on the theme for 2015; suggestions for integrating regular services during the octave from January 18 to 25; and a special poster to get faith communities involved. *Auvidéc Média/Canadian Council of Churches*

The Canadian Council of Churches has announced that it has welcomed Oikocredit as an affiliate member. Oikocredit is a worldwide co-operative society with a mission to promote global justice by challenging people, churches and others to share their resources through socially responsible investments and by empowering disadvantaged people with credit. Oikocredit was founded at a meeting of the World Council of Churches in 1968 and has been active in Canada since the 1980s. *Auvidec Média*

West

Multi-faith visual art works created by students from across Saskatchewan on the theme of celebrating art, faith and spirituality were displayed at the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina in March. The artistic creations are the result of a project initiated in 2011 by Multi-Faith Saskatchewan. “We want to get out the message of love, compassion and peace on earth,” said teacher, Krishan Kapila. At the end of April, they formed part of a traveling exhibit that visited Fort Qu’Appelle as the first stop in a multi-city tour. *Prairie Messenger*

“Global Impact Week: Catholics and Evangelicals in God’s Mission – Together”, held March 4-8, was the first event of its kind in Calgary. Director of the Paulist Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, Fr. Thomas Ryan, and Ambrose University College and Seminary president, Rev. Dr. Gordon Smith, were the keynote speakers. The event included public sessions and presentations to Ambrose College students. Smith said he sees value in requiring converts to Catholicism to undertake a period of formation which is radically different from the personal conversion experiences of Evangelicals. Ryan reminded listeners that Christ is not divided. In seeking him, we find one another. Audio transcripts of the keynote presentations and the final session, “Ecumenism and Evangelization: Challenges and Opportunities”, are available from the Ambrose website, www.ambrose.edu. *Western Catholic Reporter*

Jewish Study of the Word was the subject of a three-session program held in February and March at St. Mary’s Academy in Winnipeg. It was presented by the Bat Kol (Voice of God) committee which helps Christians to study Bible within its Jewish milieu, using Jewish sources. Bat Kol groups around the world work to foster an understanding and appreciation of Jewish prayer and the Jewish biblical cycle. *Prairie Messenger*

Local religious groups are supporting the Poverty Costs initiative in Saskatoon. Endorsements have been received from seven Christian denominations, the Unitarian Church and Congregation Agudas Israel. Leaders of these communities are describing how the moral imperative to reduce poverty can unite people of faith across the province. On display at a Poverty 101 awareness event, held on March 13 at the Jewish Community Centre, were words and photos by low-income women given disposable cameras as part of

a Photovoice project to depict the impact of poverty and of policies related to housing, education, employment, childcare and income assistance. Table decorations featured a quote from Gandhi: “Poverty is the worst form of violence.” *Prairie Messenger*

Speaking in the Hanley Memorial Lecture Series

at St. Paul’s College in Winnipeg in March, professor of systematic and historical theology at St. Paul’s University in Ottawa, Catherine E. Clifford noted that Vatican Council II “produced a shift from an ecumenism of return, to an ecumenism of recognition.” In the past 40 years extensive progress has been made in overcoming many of the churches’ divisive issues. Many Christians now recognize one another’s baptism and can easily marry members of other Christian churches. “We have far more in common than what divides us,” Clifford said as she quoted French priest and theologian, Yves Congar: “Ecumenism begins when one acknowledges that others are also correct even if they say things that are different from us.” *Prairie Messenger*

The Most Reverend Donald Bolen, Roman Catholic Bishop of Saskatoon

and former member of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, was awarded an honorary fellowship on May 9 by the Anglican-run University College of Emmanuel and St. Chad. Bishop Bolen was recognized for his ecumenical work in Canada. According to the website *Ecumenism in Canada*, he received the honour in recognition of his work in building Anglican-

Roman Catholic relations. Bishop Bolen said: “It’s been a great joy to work with Anglicans to foster reconciliation.” He considered that there was a deep bond of friendship

and deep relations between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. *Auvidec Média*

Ontario

Toronto’s Anglican and Roman Catholic auxiliary bishops gathered on April 24 to pray, eat lunch and discuss common pastoral challenges. They were joined at this first informal get-together by Fr. Damian MacPherson, director of ecumenical affairs for the Catholic archdiocese of Toronto and his Anglican counterpart, Rev. Canon Philip Hobson. *Catholic Register*

Toronto faith leaders accompanied 33 Muslims, Jews and Christians on the second *Path of Abraham* tour of the Holy Land in March. Fr. Damian MacPherson teamed up with Canadian Council of Churches general secretary, Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton, Abdulhai Patel and Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl to visit sites in Bethlehem, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Galilee and Tel Aviv. The trip offers people an opportunity to come to grips with the conflict between Israel and Palestine on a human level, said participant Judy Libman. After years convinced there could be no solution, Orthodox priest Fr. Robert Hutcheon, came away believing Palestinians and Jews who are working together in development and peace-building

projects do hold the key. The tour was a religious experience for both the heart and mind, said Muslim participant Nazira Tareen. *Catholic Register*

Striking similarities between Catholic and Muslim bioethics were revealed during a Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute lecture by Dr. Shabbir Alibhai at Toronto's University of St. Michael's College on March 5. "Assisted suicide is not permitted in Islam," said the doctor. Like Catholics, Islamic scholars believe food and water are basic necessities of life which families, friends, caregivers and doctors have a duty to provide. Organ donation is encouraged because anyone who prolongs or preserves a life is blessed by God. "Active euthanasia is considered to be completely unacceptable," Alibhai said. *Prairie Messenger*

The Canadian wing of the worldwide Focolare movement brought together interfaith leaders from Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Hindu faiths on March 20 to celebrate the memorial of Focolare founder Chiara Lubich at Toronto's Noor Cultural Centre. Toronto faith leaders who have worked with Focolare on interreligious dialogue spoke of how dialogue and the golden rule have taught them how to live unity. "Goodness and wisdom don't reside in a single community," said Samira Kanji. Focolare Canada co-director, Hortensia Lopez, said Focolare communities are a kind of laboratory where people of different faiths and no faith learn the meaning of unity. Today the community is active in 182 countries with two million members and associates around the world. *Catholic Register*

The Neighbourhood Interfaith Group of North Toronto held a panel discussion and dinner on May 14 at the Noor Cultural Centre. The panel discussion featured one scholar from each of the Abrahamic traditions addressing the topic of "Healing the World: Religion and Social Justice." Founded 30 years ago when two churches and two synagogues came together to encourage interfaith communication and understanding, the Neighbourhood Interfaith Group is now comprised of six churches, six synagogues, one Islamic organization and two schools. *North Toronto Interfaith*

Quebec

The 2014 Colloquium of the Montreal Institute of Orthodox Theology was held on May 3 at the Sign of the Theotokos Church on the theme of: "Is There A Place for Holiness in Today's Secular World?" Clergy and laity from various Orthodox churches participated in discussions following presentations by: Sotiris Gounelas on "Creation, man, church: The holy man as a model for life", Rev. Dr

Lambros Kamperidis on "Holy man and holy society", Rev. Dr. Andreas Andreopoulos on "The theology of image reversed and the gaze of sainthood". Acting as moderators were Dr. Evangelia Amirali and Barbara Frank. This colloquium is the fourteenth in a series of conferences on Orthodoxy at Sherbrooke University. *CCO*

South Shore clergy and lay leaders of several denominations gathered in February for a discussion of the proposed Charter of Values. The breakfast meeting was organized by the ecumenical committee of the Roman Catholic Diocese of St. Jean-Longueuil in cooperation with St. Mark's Anglican Parish in Longueuil. Bishop Barry Clarke of the Anglican Diocese of Montreal told the gathering of Anglican, Catholic, United Church and Presbyterian representatives that the debate over the Charter should encourage churches to examine what it is they really value. There was a consensus that the churches should provide a voice for the voiceless, including the minorities that would be most affected by the Charter. The new Liberal government of Quebec has changed the title of the former Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities to Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion. *Montreal Anglican*

The Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Montreal held the 35th Christian Commemoration of the Shoah on April 27 at Trinity Memorial Church in Montreal. This prayer service brings together Jews and Christians, on Holocaust Remembrance Day, to commemorate the approximately six million Jews and one million others who died in the Holocaust during World War II. The ceremony was part of the regular Sunday Eucharist and included music and prayers, as well as teachings and a candle lighting ritual led by Rabbi Lisa Gruschow and Cantor Rachelle Schubert of Temple Emmanu-el Beth Sholom. Light kosher refreshments followed the commemoration. Since 1980, the Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Montreal has invited a different church each year to engage with members of Montreal's Jewish communities in a shared act of remembrance on the Sunday closest to Holocaust Remembrance Day. In 1999, the Quebec National Assembly instituted "Holocaust-Yom Hashoah Day" to be observed each year according to the Jewish lunar calendar. *Montreal Anglican*

Joint Declaration by Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

WCC general secretary sees positive outcomes from meeting of Pope and Ecumenical Patriarch

The [Last May] meeting of Pope Francis, Bishop of Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople holds significance for global churches and the ecumenical movement beyond the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, said Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Referring to the text of the *Common Declaration* issued by the two church leaders on Sunday, 25 May, Tveit pointed to their confirmation of the call to church unity, the importance of their meeting in Jerusalem and the Holy Land and their shared conviction that we are all on our way as pilgrims together on a pilgrimage of justice and peace.

In their common declaration Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew pledged to continue on the path toward unity between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. “Our fraternal encounter today is a new and necessary step on the journey towards the unity to which only the Holy Spirit can lead us, that of communion in legitimate diversity,” the document said.

“It is important that the Bishop of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople met to confirm this calling of the church toward unity just as their predecessors did 50 years ago,” Tveit said. “And that this is viewed as a necessary step toward communion in ‘legitimate diversity.’”

“The need for and understanding of respectful diversity within the church was confirmed at our 10th Assembly in October last year, where both Orthodox and Roman Catholic leaders were present together with representatives of all the WCC member churches and beyond,” Tveit said. “To hear this directly from them adds to the inspiration we reexperienced at the assembly.”

The document also pointed toward the importance of their having met in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and the significance of this fact for churches in the region of the Middle East. The

two leaders said, “We express our shared profound concern for the situation of Christians in the Middle East and for their right to remain full citizens of their homelands. In trust we turn to the almighty and merciful God in a prayer for peace in the Holy Land and in the Middle East in general.”

“Their meeting in Jerusalem this past weekend and their joint prayer is a strong sign of commitment to justice and peace for all people in the region. It strengthens the church in the region, even while the church continues to struggle under pressure of conflict in the region, suffering under occupation, as with the Christians in Palestine, and regional economic hardship,” Tveit said.

Tveit also expressed hope in the two leaders’ declaration concerning the role of inter-religious dialogue. “This is of vital importance to our entire fellowship of churches, whether they are a religious majority or religious minority in their societies,” Tveit said. “This dialogue is of particular importance in a setting such as the Middle East.”

Tveit said the meeting of the two church leaders “is a sign of hope and inspiration for churches around the world as our unity, even in diversity, allows the church to move together on its common pilgrimage of justice and peace.”

The WCC is a global fellowship of 345 churches including nearly all of the world’s Orthodox churches as well as Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Evangelical, Pentecostal and Reformed Churches. The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople was one of the founding members of the WCC in 1948. Through its member churches the WCC represents more than 560 million Christians in more than 100 countries around the world.

While the Roman Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC, the two work formally in close cooperation on projects related to Christian unity, common witness, inter-religious dialogue and relations, ecumenical formation, human rights, migration and peace and justice.

Joint Declaration by Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

(25 May, 2014)

1. Like our venerable predecessors Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras who met here in Jerusalem fifty years ago, we too, Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, were determined to meet in the Holy Land “where our common Redeemer, Christ our Lord, lived, taught, died, rose again, and ascended into Heaven, whence he sent the Holy Spirit on the infant Church”. Our meeting, another encounter of the Bishops of the Churches of Rome and Constantinople founded respectively by the two Brothers the Apostles Peter and Andrew, is a source of profound spiritual joy for us. It presents a providential occasion to reflect on the depth and the authenticity of our existing bonds, themselves the fruit of a grace-filled journey on which the Lord has guided us since that blessed day of fifty years ago.

2. Our fraternal encounter today is a new and necessary step on the journey towards the unity to which only the Holy Spirit can lead us, that of communion in legitimate diversity. We call to mind with profound gratitude the steps that the Lord has already enabled us to undertake. The embrace exchanged between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras here in Jerusalem, after many centuries of silence, paved the way for a momentous gesture, the removal from the memory and from the midst of the Church of the acts of mutual excommunication in 1054. This was followed by an exchange of visits between the respective Sees of Rome and Constantinople, by regular correspondence and, later, by the decision announced by Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Dimitrios, of blessed memory both, to initiate a theological dialogue of truth between Catholics and Orthodox. Over these years, God, the source of all peace and love, has taught us to regard one another as members of the same Christian family, under one Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and to love one another, so that we may confess our faith in the same Gospel of Christ, as received by the Apostles and expressed and transmitted to us by the Ecumenical Councils and the Church Fathers. While fully aware of not having reached the goal of full communion, today we confirm our commitment to continue walking together towards the unity for which Christ our Lord prayed to the Father so “that all may be one” (Jn 17:21).

3. Well aware that unity is manifested in love of God and love of neighbour, we look forward in eager anticipation to the day in which we will finally partake together in the Eucharistic banquet. As Christians, we are called to prepare to receive this gift of Eucharistic communion, according to the teaching of Saint Irenaeus of Lyon, through the confession of the one faith, persevering prayer, inner conversion, renewal of life and fraternal dialogue. By achieving this hoped for goal, we will manifest to the world the love of God by which we are recognized as true disciples of Jesus Christ (cf. Jn 13:35).

4. To this end, the theological dialogue undertaken by the Joint International Commission offers a fundamental contribution to the search for full communion among Catholics and Orthodox. Throughout the subsequent times of Popes John Paul II and Benedict the XVI, and Patriarch Dimitrios, the progress of our theological encounters has been substantial. Today we express heartfelt appreciation for the achievements to date, as well as for the current endeavours. This is no mere theoretical exercise, but an exercise in truth and love that demands an ever deeper knowledge of each other's traditions in order to understand them and to learn from them. Thus we affirm once again that the theological dialogue does not seek a theological lowest common denominator on which to reach a compromise, but is rather about deepening one's grasp of the whole truth that Christ has given to his Church, a truth that we never cease to understand better as we follow the Holy Spirit's promptings. Hence, we affirm together that our faithfulness to the Lord demands fraternal encounter and true dialogue. Such a common pursuit does not lead us away from the truth; rather, through an exchange of gifts, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it will lead us into all truth (cf. Jn 16:13).

5. Yet even as we make this journey towards full communion we already have the duty to offer common witness to the love of God for all people by working together in the service of humanity, especially in defending the dignity of the human person at every stage of life and the sanctity of family based on marriage, in promoting peace and the common good, and in responding to the suffering that continues to afflict our world. We acknowledge that hunger, poverty, illiteracy, the inequitable distribution of resources must constantly be addressed. It is our duty to seek to build together a just and humane society in which no-one feels excluded or emarginated.

6. It is our profound conviction that the future of the human family depends also on how we safeguard – both prudently and compassionately, with justice and fairness – the gift of creation that our Creator has entrusted to us. Therefore, we acknowledge in repentance the wrongful mistreatment of our planet, which is tantamount to sin before the eyes of God. We reaffirm our responsibility and obligation to foster a sense of humility and moderation so that all may feel the need to respect creation and to safeguard it with care. Together, we pledge our commitment to raising awareness about the stewardship of creation; we appeal to all people of goodwill to consider ways of living less wastefully and more frugally, manifesting less greed and more generosity for the protection of God’s world and the benefit of His people.

7. There is likewise an urgent need for effective and committed cooperation of Christians in order to safeguard everywhere the right to express publicly one’s faith and to be treated fairly when promoting that which Christianity continues to offer to contemporary society and culture. In this regard, we invite all Christians to promote an authentic dialogue with Judaism, Islam and other religious traditions. Indifference and mutual ignorance can only lead to mistrust and unfortunately even conflict.

8. From this holy city of Jerusalem, we express our shared profound concern for the situation of Christians in the Middle East and for their right to remain full citizens of their homelands. In trust we turn to the almighty and merciful God in a prayer for peace in the Holy Land and in the Middle East in general. We especially pray for the Churches in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, which have suffered most grievously due to recent events. We encourage all parties regardless of their religious convictions to continue to work for

reconciliation and for the just recognition of peoples’ rights. We are persuaded that it is not arms, but dialogue, pardon and reconciliation that are the only possible means to achieve peace.

9. In an historical context marked by violence, indifference and egoism, many men and women today feel that they have lost their bearings. It is precisely through our common witness to the good news of the Gospel that we may be able to help the people of our time to rediscover the way that leads to truth, justice and peace. United in our intentions, and recalling the example, fifty years ago here in Jerusalem, of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras, we call upon all Christians, together with believers of every religious tradition and all people of good will, to recognize the urgency of the hour that compels us to seek the reconciliation and unity of the human family, while fully respecting legitimate differences, for the good of all humanity and of future generations.

10. In undertaking this shared pilgrimage to the site where our one same Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, buried and rose again, we humbly commend to the intercession of the Most Holy and Ever Virgin Mary our future steps on the path towards the fullness of unity, entrusting to God’s infinite love the entire human family.

“May the Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!” (Num 6:25-26).

*Pope of Rome
[signed] Francis*

*The Ecumenical Patriarch
[signed] Bartholomew of Constantinople*

Book Survey Summer 2014

These brief summaries are made from an examination of books received at the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism. They are descriptive rather than evaluative.

Greening Your Church – A Practical Guide to Creation Care Ministry, Norman Lévesque, Novalis Publishing Inc., 2014, 100 pages, \$11.45



In face of the all pervasive environmental crisis, what can Christians do to repair and to care for Creation? How can we integrate this concern into our prayers and actions?

This user-friendly guide offers a faith-based understanding of the ecological issues confronting our planet and equips churches and Christian groups with the knowledge, spirituality and practical tools to play an active role in the new ministry of Creation care. Part 1, a theological view of Creation, provides an overview of the many treasures relating to the environment found in Christian tradition. Part 2, a pastoral view of Creation, presents a useful intervention model plus suggested activities that churches can readily undertake.

When its members take actions and make choices that help reduce their Christian community's environmental footprint, the Church is no longer just towed along at the mercy of the environmental current, but becomes an active partner with God in reconciling us with our natural environment and laying the foundation for a new world. Norman Lévesque, theologian and meteorologist, is director of the *Green Church* program of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism and associate director of the Centre.

Can a Renewal Movement be Renewed? -

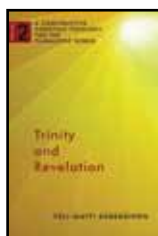
Questions for the Future of Ecumenism, Michael Kinnamon, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2014, 175 pages, \$24 US



The author argues in this book that the ecumenical movement, which gave such energy and direction to the church in the twentieth century, needs to be reconceived in a way that provides renewing power to the modern church – and he shows how this might happen. He describes the challenges facing ecumenism, identifies strengths and accomplishments upon which the church can build, and suggests practical, concrete steps to take in the direction of revitalization, especially at the local level. Various chapters address interfaith relationships, the relevancy of councils of churches, what the churches can say together about the environment, whether the ecumenical movement is a peace movement, whether it is too political, etc. Michael Kinnamon is Visiting Professor of Ecumenical Collaboration in Interreligious Dialogue at Seattle University's School of Theology and Ministry.

Trinity and Revelation,

A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World, Volume 2, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2014, 485 pages, \$40 US



In this volume, the author develops a constructive theology of triune revelation and the triune God in dialogue with Christian tradition, with contemporary theology in its global and contextual diversity, and with other major living faiths. Kärkkäinen believes that constructive theology should seek to engage not only theological resources but also cultural, religious, socio-political, and other resources. With the metaphor of hospitality as the framework for his discussion here, Kärkkäinen engages Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism in sympathetic and critical mutual dialogue while remaining robustly Christian in his convictions. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen is professor of systematic theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, and docent of ecumenics at the University of Helsinki, Finland.

We Can Make the World Economy a Sustainable Global Home,

Lewis S. Mudge, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2014, 175 pages, \$18 US



In this work, theologian and ethicist, Lewis Mudge, offers fresh philosophical and theological concepts, economic and political insights, and practical financial proposals to counter the causes and lasting effects of the worldwide recession that began in late 2007. Mudge questions modernity's accepted compartmentalization of fields of study that often separates them from larger moral concerns and responsible action. He particularly wanted to bring economics back from its predominant isolation within mathematical science to its humanistic roots. After 9/11, Mudge began to explore the historic connection of a responsibility ethic shared between Jews, Christians and Muslims. He sees that the Abrahamic texts and their commentaries situate humans as a species that values and is valued and that these texts invariably deal with concrete economic relationships, offering potentially helpful parallels for today. Chapter 4 collects responses to Mudge's ideas from Elliot N. Dorff for Judaism, John C. Knapp for Christianity, and Djamel Eddine Laouisset for Islam. Lewis S. Mudge (1929-2009) was Professor of Theology Emeritus at San Francisco Theological Seminary.

For Freedom or Bondage?

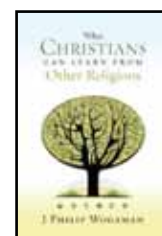
A Critique of African Pastoral Practices, Esther E. Acolatse, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2014, 232 pages, \$35 US



In many countries of Africa today, people wander from one pastor to another in search of a spiritual remedy for illnesses and other woes. Christians can live in bondage to their fears, seeing Jesus as a superior power to use against malevolent spiritual forces. The author argues that Christian pastoral practices in many African churches still include too much influence from African traditional religions. She examines Independent Charismatic churches in Ghana as a case study, offering theological and psychological analysis of current pastoral care practices through the lenses of Barth and Jung. In conclusion, the book offers a model for pastoral counselling with guidelines for practical application. Esther E. Acolatse is assistant professor of pastoral theology and world Christianity at Duke Divinity School, Durham, North Carolina.

What Christians Can Learn from Other Religions,

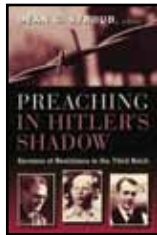
J. Philip Wogaman, Augsburg Fortress Canada, Kitchener, ON, 2014, 135 pages



Can better understanding of other faith traditions lead to better understanding of

our own? Can positive appreciation of other faiths contribute to peace, both in local communities and in the wider world? The author's response is, "I believe so." The task of this book is to search for aspects of other faiths that expand or clarify or reinforce meanings in one's own. After some preliminary observations in the first chapter, successive chapters examine what Christians can learn from primal religion, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese religions, Jainism, Sikhism, Baha'i, Zoroastrianism and atheism. The final chapter explores what other religions can learn from Christianity. J. Philip Wogaman is former Senior Minister at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, DC, past President of the Interfaith Alliance, and Professor Emeritus of Christian Ethics at Wesley Theological Seminary.

Preaching in Hitler's Shadow – Sermons of Resistance in the Third Reich, Dean G. Stroud, editor, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 2013, 203 pages, \$20.00 US.



This look at Christian life inside the Third Reich gives readers a real sense of the danger that preachers opposed to Hitler faced every time they went into the pulpit. The author pays special attention to the role that language played in the battle over the German soul, pointing out the use of Christian language in opposition to Nazi rhetoric. The second part of the book presents a selection of well-translated sermons by various preachers, including Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, and others not as well known but no less courageous. A running commentary offers cultural and historical insights, and each sermon is preceded by a short biography of the preacher. *Dean G. Stroud is professor emeritus of German studies at the University of Wisconsin in LaCrosse.*

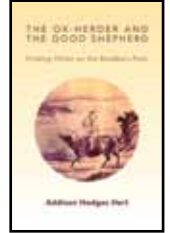
Secret Scriptures Revealed – A New Introduction to the Christian Apocrypha, Tony Burke, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 2013, 164 Pages, \$18.00 US.



This book was written as a response to the widespread conflict which exists over the significance of the Christian Apocrypha. It addresses the many myths and misconceptions about these imaginative texts and responds to questions about who wrote them, when they were written and why they were not included in the Bible. The opening chapter provides the background necessary for understanding apocryphal literature and defines key words such as apocrypha, canon, orthodoxy, heresy and Gnosticism. Consequent chapters examine how the texts are recovered and reconstructed and look at individual apocryphal writings, working chronologically through the early decades of Christianity. A large number

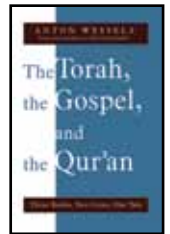
of texts are covered here including some rarely studied writings. Instead of dismissing the Christian Apocrypha, the author shows how these ancient texts can contribute to a better understanding of early Christian communities and the canonical Bible. *Tony Burke is associate professor of religious studies at York University in Toronto.*

The Ox-Herder and the Good Shepherd – Finding Christ on the Buddha's Path, Addison Hodges Hart, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 2013, 118 pages, \$15.00 US.



The series of pictures, poems and commentaries, produced in the twelfth century and known as the Ten Ox-Herding Pictures, trace a universally recognizable path of contemplative spirituality using the metaphor of a young herder looking for his lost ox. The author sees a parallel here with the teachings of Christ, the Good Shepherd. They share a common vision and demonstrate that authentic spiritual life begins with an inner transformation that leads to an outward life that is natural and loving. With this book, Hart shares the story that these pictures tell, exploring how this ancient Buddhist parable can enrich and illumine the Christian way. *Addison Hodges Hart is a retired pastor and college chaplain.*

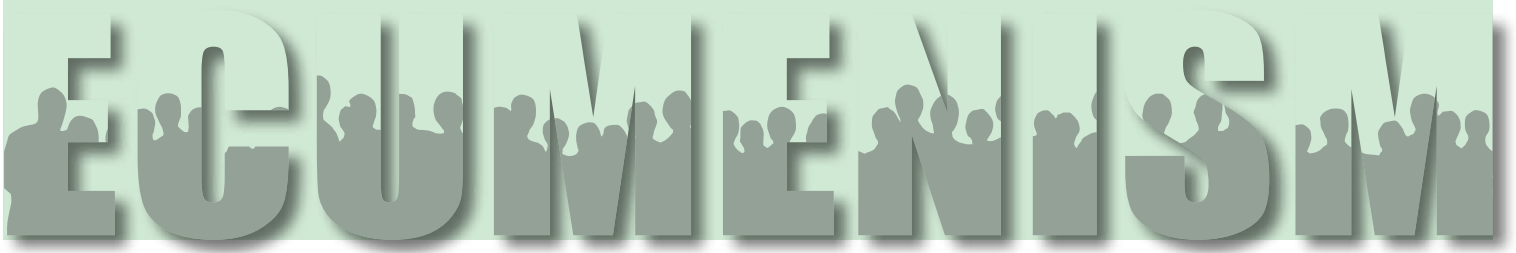
The Torah, the Gospel and the Qur'an, Anton Wessels, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 2013, 311 pages, \$28.00 US.



The author argues here that all three monotheistic traditions must read their Scriptures together and not against each other as these three books, in the end, actually tell one tale. Respectfully reading the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur'an together, he maintains, is of crucial importance because the world often sees these religious books as the cause of conflicts rather than the solution to them. Pervading all three of these sacred texts is the theme of two cities: the city where corruption and injustice rule versus the city where God rules, Babylon versus Jerusalem, Mecca versus Medina. Wessels shows that the interconnections go deep. In these three sacred texts there are strikingly similar discussions about the founding of cities, about exile from one's city, about violence in the city, about the role of the prophet in the city, about authority in the city, about intercession for the city, about the flourishing of the city, about the city of God. *Anton Wessels is professor emeritus of religion at the Free University of Amsterdam and an ordained Presbyterian Minister.*

Next issue: Institutional Chaplaincy

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