

ECUMENISM

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Promoting dialogue and unity

ALELUIA ALELUIA



***The 2014 Irénée Beaubien Institute of the
Canadian Centre for Ecumenism***

Week of prayer for Christian unity 2015

Centre canadien
d'œcuménisme



Canadian Centre
for Ecumenism

INFORMATION • DIALOGUE • RECONCILIATION





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ECUMENISM

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Editorial

The living waters of dialogue

David Fines Doesn't it seem that the New Year started off more tumultuously than usual? Many conflicts look likely to continue during 2015: wars in Syria, Iraq and Ukraine, rivalry between brothers in the Middle East, North Africa and Yemen, fighting in Nigeria, Chad and Sudan, bloodshed and violence in Egypt, Afghanistan and Thailand... And as people of faith, we regret to find a religious component in many of these confrontations,.

The fatal attack at the offices of the provocative satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris came as a sudden shock in the world of our religious convictions, showing the horrors that we can be dragged into by extremism, absolutism, fundamentalism and hatred. We who seek to be instruments of peace are stunned by such acts, unable to understand them, and feel powerless to stop them.

Some political leaders nonetheless made an effort to do something: we saw a prime minister invite leaders from the Muslim community, and the mayor of Montreal invite leaders of faith communities. We saw walks of solidarity take place around the world. We saw religious leaders shake hands, embrace each other, pray together. Powerful gestures...

But at the same time, the government announces harsher conditions for the holding of detainees, wider police powers, which were already broad, an increase in the means for investigating and charging offences. We have heard elected officials invoke a city by-law to "forbid" prayer at a community centre.

We no longer know which saint to turn to. What can we do?

In January, many churches around the world celebrated the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Believers from all denominations sang and danced, prayed and worshipped together in joy and the breath of the Spirit. They meditated on the story of the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. The theme of the 2015 Week of Prayer, "Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink"", was offered to the community of faith by an ecumenical team from Brazil.

What an extraordinary text! What kind of prophetic passage have Christians offered to our troubled world?

In this story, the first thing is that Jesus decides to travel through Samaria. He makes the decision to enter a hostile territory, to go beyond his people's prejudice and meet with those who were disdained by his own community. And in the end, the differences were far less important than the things they had in common.



Second, it is Jesus who addresses the woman first: "Give me a drink." He is the one who takes the initiative, who takes the first step. The conversation unfolds between him and the woman because he has "dared" to initiate it; and the ensuing dialogue results in revelation, truth and grace.

Third, this living water that is shared from one to another is the Word of God that flows abundantly and gives life in abundance, a word that renews and changes hearts.

In our troubled world, praying for each other is good; praying together for peace on earth is better. But what is asked of us is more than that: we are asked to imitate Jesus by 1) going to the other; 2) initiating dialogue; and 3) drinking from the same source of living water.

In 2015, we increasingly see that ecumenical dialogue and interfaith dialogue are no longer optional. Leaders are called upon to engage in such dialogue, of course, but lay people are as well: humbly, patiently and lovingly.

David Fines

Green Church Conference 2015

April 14, 2015 from 9am to 4pm
in Québec City
at Saint-Ignace-de-Loyola Church
3325, rue Loyola, Beauport (Québec) G1E 2S1

Guest Speaker: Dr. Alan K. Betts
Atmospheric Science Researcher
He collaborates with Methodists in Vermont (USA).



Schedule of the Day

AM

08:30 Registration and Welcome
09:00 Introduction
09:30 Keynote address by Dr. Betts and Questions
10:45 Break
11:00 Workshop Period 1
11:45 Lunch and kiosk visits

PM

01:00 Workshop Period 2
01:45 Break
02:00 Workshop Period 3
02:45 Break
03:00 Closing Ceremony
04:00 End of the day

Workshops

Sustainable Transportation to Church (Rue Sécuré)
Green Pages of the Bible (Canadian Bible Society)
Orthodox Tradition and Ecology
Community Agriculture (Anglican Diocese of Quebec)
Écojustice (Development and Peace)
Option for a Simpler lifestyle (RQSV)
Energy-efficient Religions Buildings

Registration Fee:

\$35 (Regular Fee)
\$25 (Member Fee)
\$15 (Student Fee)

*All fees include lunch.

Logistical issues?

email: conference@greenchurch.ca
Phone: 418-683-9901

General inquiries?

email: info@greenchurch.ca
Phone: 1-877-645-6863 ext. 28

Need Accomodation?

The *Maison du renouveau* is only 10 minutes away from St-Ignace Church. Room and breakfast for only 37\$. www.maisondurenouveau.com

Green Church Conference 2015 Theme: *Creating a Climate of Hope*

Members of various churches from all over Quebec will be gathering this Spring for the Green Church Conference 2015. These popular conferences provide an opportunity for participants to reflect together on the environmental challenges facing the planet and to share information about the solutions various churches have developed to better care for it. The event will take place at St-Ignace-de-Loyola Church in Quebec City on April 14, 2015. The keynote speaker, climatologist Dr. Alan Betts, will address the theme: "Creating a Climate of Hope".

Some 200 participants from the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox, Evangelical and Reformed Churches are expected to attend the Green Church Conference. Pastoral workers and members of faith communities will be joined by environmental groups. The Catholic bishop, Gérald Cyprien Lacroix, and the Anglican bishop, Dennis Drainville as well as other pastors will be in attendance. The program features a keynote speaker and workshops related to the theme. The day will close with a time of worship focusing on the protection of Creation. A common declaration will be signed by many Churches, a first in Canada on an ecological issue.

On January 15, Pope Francis spoke about the climate: "For the most part, it is human beings who abuse nature, constantly. God always forgives, we men and women sometimes forgive, but nature never forgives." Last September 1st, the Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew 1st, spoke about the Church's involvement in the protection of the environment: "We cannot remain silent about the fact that humanity does not properly honor this divine gift and instead destroys the environment through greed and other selfish ambitions."

All are welcome to attend the Green Church Conference 2015 at St-Ignace-de-Loyola Church in Quebec City (3325 rue Loyola, Beauport, QC) from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesday, April 14, 2015. For more information on this conference and the two previous conferences, visit the conference page at conference.greenchurch.ca

News from the Center

A meeting of minds!

Fr. Irénée Beaubien, s.j. et Fr. Benoît Lacroix, o.p. renewed an old friendship at the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism on January 19, 2015

Irénée Beaubien is a member of the Jesuit community, and the “father” of ecumenism in Quebec and in Canada. In 1963, he founded a diocesan ecumenical centre that in 1975 became the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism. He was also the originator of the Christian Pavilion at Expo '67.

Benoît Lacroix a Dominican brother, is a theologian, researcher and prolific writer whose many articles study the relationship between the people of Quebec and their mediaeval ancestors.

Both have received many awards and honours. Among them, they are both Officers of the Order of Canada.

Fr. Lacroix will celebrate his 100th birthday on September 8th, 2015 and Fr. Beaubien on January 26, 2016.

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.



Theme: The 2014 Irénée Beaubien Institute of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism

Irénée Beaubien s.j. Ecumenical Institute

Dr. Adriana Bara Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism



The CCE Director Dr. Adriana Bara with Archbishop Christian Lépine

In October 2014, the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism launched the 1st *Irénée Beaubien, s.j. Ecumenical Institute* which assembled noted experts in ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. Fifty years after the foundation of the Centre, this event created a space where the theory and the practice of ecumenism intersected for overcoming differences and working together. The Ecumenical Institute is named in

honour of Fr. Irénée Beaubien, s.j founder of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, one of the pioneers in ecumenical movement in the world in general and in Canada in particular.

The *Institute* brought together more the 150 persons from different churches for two days of conferences, in the Anglican diocese's Fulford Hall in Montréal, located at 1444 Union Avenue. There were 14 guest-speakers: professors, archbishops, bishops, pastors, and lay Christians, all involved in ecumenism, who lectured on the understanding and practice of ecumenism. Question periods following each talk provided the opportunity for clarification and exchange. The conferences in French and English were simultaneously translated, and the participants were invited to listen to the conferences on the language of your choice. We are very pleased to publish the lectures in this issue dedicated to the 1st *Irénée Beaubien, s.j. Ecumenical Institute*.

Within the Institute the Centre also organized three interreligious visits, to a mosque, a church and a synagogue and organized a workshop on icon painting. We are very pleased with the success of this first Institute and hope to make it an annual event. We want to thank all the Institute's sponsors: the Catholic Archdiocese of Montreal, the Anglican Church of Montreal, the Department of Theological Studies of Concordia University, and the Federal Government of Canada, Citizenship and Immigration, Canada.

Sponsors:



The 14 conferences of the 2014 Irénée Beaubien Institute together with the question and answer periods are now available.

This collection of 4 DVDs is an excellent tool for promoting ecumenical awareness and education in church and action groups, in school and university classes, in discussions at many levels. Seeing and sharing the dedication of the speakers and the vitality of their interaction with the participants brings ecumenism and the vitality of their interaction with the participants brings ecumenism to life!

To procure the package of 4 DVDs for 40\$ please contact the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, 2715, ch. Côte-Sainte-Catherine, Montréal, H3T 1B6. (514) 937-4986. Email: info@unitechretienne.ca



Re-Thinking Communion and Truth after the Volf-Zizioulas Dispute Presentation

Dr. Dragos Giulea

Dr. Dragos Giulea, research fellow and part-time faculty member at Concordia University, earned a Ph.D. in Early Christianity and Patristics from Marquette University, USA, in 2010. His monograph, *Pre-Nicene Christology in Paschal Contexts*, was published by Brill in 2013. He is also the author of many articles that have come out in such significant international journals as *Vigiliae Christianae*, the *Journal of Religion*, *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum*, *Numen* and *Theoforum*. He has earned as well a previous doctorate in philosophy in Bucharest, Romania (2004), and published his monograph on Constantin Noica's phenomenological thought at *Humanitas*, the most prestigious Romanian academic publishing house. In 2013 he was ordained as an Orthodox priest of the Orthodox Church in America.

Abstract:

The concepts of truth and communion have profound logical ties with the idea of faith. My paper is a reflection on these relationships occasioned by a few polemical comments that Miroslav Volf and John Zizioulas exchanged on the matter of faith. While Volf observed that faith did not play any role in Zizioulas' thought and Zizioulas replied that faith could not be a mere psychological event but an event of communion with God, my presentation develops a perspective in which subjectivity becomes a vital theological dimension. Thus, the paper will revise the concepts of truth and communion in their relationship with faith, which is discovered rather as an epistemic process that implies degrees and advance. In so doing, a subjective inspection will unveil a certain dialectic in which the progress in the numinous dimension of faith, truth and communion equally implies a dimension of obscurity, epistemic shadow and ecclesial fragmentation.

Communion and truth have special and profound ties in the visions of Miroslav Volf and John Zizioulas, two main figures of contemporary theology. Zizioulas is well known for his viewpoint that truth is communion, the Eucharistic life and relationship of a Christian community. For Volf, the truth is



particularly the truth of the revelation in which all Christians participate. Additionally, truth and communion have a constitutive relationship with faith. Any Christian community gravitates around faith because the act of faith actually generates the ecclesia. Faith is also a discovery of Christ as truth, which is never fully manifested and discovered, and faith remains faith as long as truth is not fully manifested. In the eschaton or in God's kingdom, as St Paul the Apostle tells us, there is no longer need of faith in God because he will be present in all his glory.

According to Zizioulas, the authentic life is the direct encounter with Christ, with his divine presence within the Eucharist that delineates and constitutes the ecclesia, the church.

Miroslav Volf and John Zizioulas have exchanged a few polemical comments regarding the concept of faith and its logical ties with the notions of "communion," "Christian unity," and "truth." In *After Our Likeness*, Volf observes that "faith plays no role in Zizioulas's soteriology and ecclesiology."¹ The observation is true, indeed, in what concerns Zizioulas's early books, particularly his celebrated *Being as Communion*. Moreover, as Volf again observes, social life and subjectivity do not play an important role in Zizioulas's theological vision:

Zizioulas accordingly has committed two mutually determinative anthropological mistakes in his understanding of Christian initiation. By understanding human beings who live without Christ as isolated individuals, and by negating the cognitive and volitional mediation of salvation, he negates both the essential sociality and the subjecthood of human beings.²

However, beyond these omissions, John Zizioulas remains, in my opinion, a remarkable and profoundly innovative theologian of our days, the author of a fundamental theological paradigm. Today I will try to recover these minuses in Zizioulas's vision by means of reshaping, from a subjective perspective, his profound intuition that *truth is communion*. While investigating some Patristic sources, I realized that a certain dimension present in the ancient Patristic writings is missing in both Zizioulas and Volf, namely, a certain dynamic dimension, the spiritual progress, the advance into the truth. Both Zizioulas and Volf create two mostly static theological visions, one more eschatologized and one more sociologized, if I may say. *And it is here that we may perceive the relevance of*

studying patristics. While inspecting the topic of subjectivity, we can realize that such early Christian authors as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, German of Constantinople and many others envisioned life in Christ, and especially in the sacraments, as a continuous progress into the mystery of God, as a mystagogy as we may say with pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor, while Gregory of Nyssa talked about an *epektasis*, a continuous advance or progress in God.

Zizioulas's Conception on Truth and Communion

For Zizioulas, ecclesial communion is a relationship that imitates and simultaneously participates in the Trinitarian communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The intratrinitarian communion is the very essence or being of God. God's being or essence is not an object but a way of existing, which is the constant and eternal relationship of the three divine persons. Human communion is also envisioned as our authentic existence, in an existentialist way, here identified with the Eucharistic living, the shared relationship of a community in Spirit, their life in the Spirit. Additionally, Zizioulas does not conceive of truth in a cognitive paradigm but in a personal and ontological way, as a communal occurrence in the Spirit. The truth of Christ is an event of communion, not a matter of logical consistency or of relation between our mind and external things. We have to mention at this point that, from a philosophical perspective, Zizioulas does not define being and truth in a traditional realistic way or in a modern logico-analytic manner, but rather following an existentialist and phenomenological path, being more influenced by such authors as Kierkegaard,³ Heidegger, Buber and the personalists.

Thus, being is not a thing, an object, either a created entity or God himself, but a relationship, the way things are in their authentic existence, particularly as communion. And it is because of this axiom that humans as individuals are not important, as Volf observes, because individuals without communion live an inauthentic life, as Kierkegaard and Heidegger would express it. In a similar way, humans as individuals do not count in Martin Buber's philosophy of the "I-Thou" because authentic existence is that of the relationship I-Thou which Buber struggles to describe. In a certain way, Zizioulas's philosophy, like Buber's and that of the existentialist philosophers, is the philosophy that attempts to define the authentic life, particularly the authentic moments of life. And in this sense I submit that his theology is a static description of the life in Christ and not a dynamic mystagogy as in Patristic times.

According to Zizioulas, the authentic life is the direct encounter with Christ, with his divine presence within the Eucharist that delineates and constitutes the ecclesia, the church. The church, therefore, is first and foremost not an institution or a Sunday club, but this assembly that encounters Christ within the Eucharist, and for that reason the Eucharist becomes an event “constitutive of the being of the Church” (p. 21). Additionally, in what regards the truth, the Eucharist also becomes the locus of the Truth; it is the event in which the Truth is manifested and the communion constituted, while truth becomes identical with the communion. (p.101)

Volf’s Understanding of Truth and Communion

Truth does not play an important role in Volf’s ecclesiology. He rarely employs the word “truth,” using it particularly in such expressions as the “truth of the Gospel,” “the Spirit of truth,” or the “truth of the revelation.” (p. 245). We may observe that the central notion here is the revelation in Jesus Christ, an element that remains unchanged in history and will be fulfilled at the eschaton (p. 245). Revelation is the depository of truth, while everything else is a matter of cultural and social accommodation and adjustment, therefore of historical evolution and change, and consequently not a matter of truth or direct encounter with the truth. In the good tradition of his church, he denies any ecclesiastical truth:

Though God’s revelation is complete and trustworthy, there is no such thing as an infallible interpretation of this revelation, no ecclesiastical truth of obligatory character for one’s conscience, no ecclesiastical truth concerning what one is to believe and to do, and thus no ecclesiastical truth concerning who belongs to the church and who does not.⁴

An evident element of this passage is the delimitation from traditional ecclesiastical visions (at least, Catholic and Orthodox, which Volf analyzes in parallel in his book, in the particular cases of Ratzinger and Zizioulas). For Volf, therefore, the church is not a repository of truth, but participates in the truth of the revelation:

Insofar as the church proclaims this revelation in the power of the Spirit, its own proclamation also participates in the truth of the revelation. This is why the church can proclaim not only its opinion on the word of God, but the word of God itself.⁵

My observation at this point is that the participation in the revelation in Jesus Christ was possible in a direct way

only in the time when Jesus was walking on earth. After his ascension, this participation is no longer direct but mediated through certain textual remains that testify about it, like those of the New Testament, or through a tradition, either a hermeneutical interpretation (and Volf as well assumes and preserves one of these interpretations) or a certain liturgical practice. Traditions, as we know, preserve and, at the same time, alter a certain original given event.

Ontologically, taking the bread which is Christ’s body, we take a mysterious something of his identity.

However, here I would refer to a Biblical verse, therefore a text accepted by all Christians, in which Christ affirms about himself: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” Since Christ is the truth, Christians may talk about a direct encounter with the truth in a variety of ways. In his time, in a direct way, and after his ascension or leaving, in prayer and worship, because Christ himself affirmed that, “when two or three will be gathered in my name I will be in their midst”. And we also have to mention a certain element here, namely, that of the public worship called the eucharist, a central aspect in Zizioulas’s theology. Why is the Eucharist a central element? Because again the revelation included in the New Testament testifies that Christ himself asserted about the Bread and Wine of the communion that “this is my body and this is my blood for the remission of sins” etc. There are two dimensions of this verse, one ontological and one soteriological. Soteriologically, it means that Christ’s body and blood have a direct relevance for human salvation: we are saved if we consume them, according to John 6:54: “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

Ontologically, taking the bread which is Christ’s body, we take a mysterious something of his identity. We do not know exactly the nature of this mysterious element and the unknowable way in which Christ is present within the Bread, or how much of Christ’s identity his body is, etc., etc. However, from the same passage in John we find that this is the body of resurrection and this is a direct encounter, a personal relationship with Christ, the Truth, without any mediation through certain textual remains, creed or dogma. After the direct encounter which the Apostles had with the incarnate Jesus, following his ascension, the Eucharist remains the only possibility of a direct, unmediated encounter with him, beyond that of a direct vision as Saint Paul has on the way to Damascus.

Recalling again Zizioulas, the Eucharist is a direct encounter with Christ, with his divine presence that delineates and constitutes the true ecclesia, the church, as Christ promises to abide in those who eat his body. With his body, he therefore constitutes the body of the Church. This idea is not a later invention but again a biblical topic, present in the Gospel of John:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. “For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.” (John 6:53-56)

However, at this point of the discussion I would like to bring forward the way Clement of Alexandria investigates the concept of faith by means of a large palette of Stoic terminology. In so doing, he shows that faith is a complex subjective event, more an epistemic process rather than a feeling, sentiment or commitment to a doctrine.

Unlike Zizioulas, Volf prefers to define the constitution of the ecclesia through faith, which he conceives as a subjective commitment to a person (particularly, Jesus, the Savior) or to a doctrine (for instance, Christian belief).⁶ When publicly confessed, this subjective commitment becomes the constitutive mark of the church.⁷ According to Volf, therefore, faith represents a twofold human action, subjective and objective, in which the *objective faith* stays for the public expression and confession of the believer’s *subjective faith*.⁸

From a subjective viewpoint, faith is a mediating channel of grace, an event in which the consciousness plays both an active and a passive role; it is a moment of will and a moment of receiving a new input of knowledge. Yet, faith essentially remains a gift of God.⁹ From a linguistic standpoint, faith represents a verbal (discursive, assertoric) and equally nonverbal event.¹⁰ Thus, at the level of ecclesial society, “the transmission of faith occurs through interpersonal ecclesial interaction. God’s salvific activity always takes place through the multidimensional confession of faith of the *communio fidelium*.”¹¹

Subjectivity and Mystagogy: The Constant Progress in God

It is sometimes believed that subjectivity is a modern invention. The subject, nevertheless, was already a fundamental topic of ancient philosophy, from Socrates to Plotinus, and the Stoics made of the mind processes a major domain of philosophical investigation. Certain patristic authors, from Clement to Origen, to the Cappadocians, to Augustine, to Evagrius to the Philochalic fathers, investigated several times human subjectivity and psyche. Hence, what Descartes and Kant actually “discovered” was not the subject or consciousness as such but rather that our knowledge depends in convoluted ways on our subject, while our conception of the external world is shaped through our capacities of perception and thought.

However, at this point of the discussion I would like to bring forward the way Clement of Alexandria investigates the concept of faith by means of a large palette of Stoic terminology. In so doing, he shows that faith is a complex subjective event, more an epistemic process rather than a feeling, sentiment or commitment to a doctrine. Coming back to Volf, he is inspired by Lindbeck while describing faith, in Wittgensteinian terms, as part of the basic grammar of being a Christian:

The faith with which I believe is shaped by the ecclesially mediated forms in which it is expressed; there is no pure, ecclesially unmediated faith consisting of pure feeling. Hence, even my most personal faith can only be that which is ecclesially mediated. Moreover, it is only through life in the congregation in whose confession I participate that I discover the meaning of the confession of faith. Although ecclesial socialization does indeed take place through learning the language of faith — this is the most important content and instrument of ecclesial socialization — learning the language of faith nevertheless also presupposes ecclesial socialization.¹²

In a real community, however, the game of faith is not perfectly played. Real believers are in fact not perfect semantic practitioners who brilliantly learn the grammar of faith and function appropriately in the ecclesial community that uses that particular language. To the contrary, they rather behave more like the biblical character who articulated: “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mk. 9:24). What we can see in this line is that the Bible itself opens a dimension of epistemological shadow and obscurity in what regards faith, and a sort of dialectic of a simultaneous presence and absence of faith. Likewise, the Eucharistic persons in Zizioulas’s vision seem to be perfect, or at least good, liturgical and mystical

practitioners found in a perfect, or at least good or functional, relationship with God and human beings.

Consequently, empirical observation and the Bible itself admit degrees of faith and communion, and essentially understand faith and communion as enduring processes that include progress and mystagogy in God. This mystagogical perspective is absent in Zizioulas's theology and contradicts Volf's vision that faith is rather a moment of community and grace when the subject receives the gift of faith and makes it public, a privileged moment of origins in which faith brings salvific grace and generates simultaneously an instant inclusion into the ecclesial community.¹³

Regarding Zizioulas, the presupposition of postulating the authentic existence in Buber's I-Thou relationship and in Zizioulas's ecclesial communion represents an existential purpose and model, a goal, the aspiration that stands as the purpose of human existence and of the Christian ecclesia. However, these existential models do not represent a description of the real world and ecclesia, their ontic condition, but their existential goals and the rare instantiations of these existential goals. A new mystagogical approach should preserve them both as the final aspirations of humanity and ecclesia as well as their gradual instantiation, the constant growth and progress in our communion with God and the ecclesia.

Thus, while ontologically we also exist as social individuals, as Volf points out, society in which we live rarely becomes the occasion of a relationship, as Martin Buber and Zizioulas maintain. However, an inspection of the social life makes us realize that the I-Thou relationships and ecclesial communion are rare instances of authenticity in a human life most frequently characterized by separation, individual existence, and lack of relationship and communion.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, what I would like to point out to both Zizioulas and Volf, is that life in God, in his truth and in Christian community implies several degrees, while still remaining under Jesus Christ's mercy and love. And at this moment we have to recall again that ancient patristic writers commonly understood the relationship with God as a mystagogy, as a constant progress and initiation into God's mystery in which faith, will, and the knowledge of the divine presuppose degrees and may imply growth and strengthening. Moreover, unlike Zizioulas and Volf, I submit that the church is constituted by participating into a mystagogy, into God's mysteries or sacraments. We may call to mind particularly the case of baptism in ancient Christianity to realize that it was not faith

that determined the membership within the ecclesia, but the mystery of the baptism.

We may call to mind particularly the case of baptism in ancient Christianity to realize that it was not faith that determined the membership within the ecclesia, but the mystery of the baptism.

I would see life in God, therefore, more as a process of advancement in faith, truth, and communion, which starts from a certain horizon or area of epistemic obscurity, social individualization and ecclesial separation, but in which faith and initiation into God's truth and the relationship with God find their ways and avenues, and their gradual progress, the *epektasis*. Earthly Christian life is marked by the notion of faith, which presupposes a certain dimension of separation and obscurity, of lack of access to, and knowledge of God's truth, of partial revelation and imperfection. At the same time, faith already implies an epistemic dimension of process as it is an invisible, mystical advance within God's communion and truth, a mystagogy into Christ's light, truth, communion and plenitude.

¹ Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), p. 95.

² *Ibid.*, p. 185.

³ In the fallen existence, as Zizioulas observes, faith and praxis "are able to coincide only for 'a moment'" (p. 104). He also mentions here Kierkegaard and his discovery of the idea of the authentic moment of existence. This is more in tone with my mystagogic approach of the progress into the relation. He also affirms: "Truth and being are existentially identified only in Christ's resurrection." (p. 108)

⁴ Volf, p. 244.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁶ Volf, *After Our Likeness*, pp. 145-55.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 150: "This public confession of faith in Christ through the pluriform speaking of the word is the central constitutive mark of the church. It is through this that the church lives as church and manifests itself externally as church."

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 169-70.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 163.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Volf, *After Our Likeness*, p. 173: "Inclusion into the ecclesial communion is accordingly already given with the reception of salvific

Main elements for an ecumenical roadmap: An essay on a polyphonic dialogue

Mgr Ioan Casian of Vicina

His Grace Bishop Ioan Casian of Vicina studied from 1989-1993 at Andrei Şaguna Theological Faculty in Sibiu, Romania, and graduated with a thesis in Canon Law on the subject "Iconomia in the Orthodox Church". From 1993-1995, he stayed in Jerusalem, where he took courses in ancient Greek at the Flagelazione Pontifical Institute, and in French at the French Culture and Language Institute there. From 1995-1998, he studied Monastic Spirituality and Patristics in the Faculty of History at the Pontifical Athenaeum of Saint Anselm (Rome), as well as History, Art and Classical Languages at the Pontifical Oriental Institute. Following his studies, he was called to Paris by Metropolitan Iosif of Western Europe, where he served as administrative secretary until 2002. From 2002-2003, he was the priest at St. Joseph of Bordeaux parish. From April 2003 until June 2006, he was the priest at St. Nicholas Romanian Orthodox Church in Queens, New York (USA). In 2004 he received the title of Archimandrite. Ioan Casian was elected in 2006 by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church as Vicar Bishop for the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas. He was then ordained to the episcopate at Sts. Constantine and Helen Cathedral in Chicago. Since then, he has conducted his pastoral mission especially among the Romanian parishes on the East Coast of the U.S. and Canada.

Summary:

This lecture will approach ecumenical dialogue and its potential from a Biblical and human point of view, while taking into account the reality that the Christian world is still divided.

It will consider the concept of metanoia, i.e. a profound change of heart, and an alternative vision of dialogue that is renewed by love and humility, an openness to and willingness to listen to the other. The presentation will emphasize the need for a change in the educational paradigm, so that the different visions Christians have of each other may converge in a dialogue that unites them through each Christian tradition's explicit desire to speak of and with the same Lord and God, Jesus Christ, while using the theological language and experience specific to each one.

Every Christian tradition is a hermeneutic, and thus dynamic, community, that through its reading of the great mystery of God's revelation hic et nunc contributes to a richer and more nuanced understanding of life itself. This process will allow each tradition to maintain its specific identity while reflecting in a realistic way on the contemporary context and suggesting paths that could be taken that will harmonize and synchronize with its collective experience and memory. Finally, a summary of the points of convergence could be a lever for a deeper common understanding.

The central theme of this conference, which bears the name "The Challenges of Ecumenism in Today's World," immediately plunges us into inter-Christian dialogue and its contemporary context. We may question the relevance of ecumenism today. What is its place in a contemporary society



that puts forward values and paradigms that often differ from traditional ones, a society in which we simultaneously encounter economic liberalism, consumerism and spectacle, pluralism and globalization, against the backdrop of an immense change in civilization determined by the impact of new technologies and multimedia.¹ Is the ecumenical dynamic still relevant, or has it run out of steam after the years of enthusiasm before and after Vatican II? Is ecumenism still relevant to the concerns and dynamic of our society?

For me, the answer is yes. Yes, because my deep conviction is that the current economic and social crisis is basically the visible tip of a moral crisis, a crisis of values. And who better to speak to this kind of crisis than the Christian traditions that for centuries have helped to build these societies? Certainly, we will not have the time to offer an exhaustive answer this morning, but we will attempt to give a few thoughts on what could be considered a feasible vision and the main elements necessary for a convincing and effective ecumenical dialogue. To do so, I will take a three-step approach:

1. Identify aspects of the word “ecumenical” that are of interest for the purposes of this talk.
2. Suggest a vision and a spirit and set the basic principles.
3. Discern compatible ways to concretize this vision.

1. Identify aspects of the word “ecumenical”

By taking a convenient resource (Encyclopedia Britannica) and going to the entry for “ecumenism”, it is easy to get a general idea of the meaning of the word *ecumenical*. In terms of grammar and linguistics, the word *ecumenism*² comes from the root of another Greek word – *oikos* – which means house, family or nation. *Oikoumené* means the entire inhabited world. *Oikoumenikos* means “open to or participating in the entire world”. In the New Testament, we find two places where the meaning of *oikoumené* is of interest to us: Matthew 24:14,³ where it describes the place where God’s mission of reconciliation takes place, and Hebrews 2:5,⁴ where it refers to the world destined to be restored and saved by Christ.

I think that we can retain three nuances of the word *ecumenical* that are of interest to us. First, the grammatical root meaning *home, family and nation* allows us to think of the *ecumenical* process as an interior requirement that springs from a natural and human/relational responsibility (family => society => nation => world). Secondly, the *ecumenical* process comes out of a responsibility toward God, since it is His reconciling mission. Third, the *ecumenical* process has a specific destination that is inextricably linked to God’s redeeming work, the goal of which is to restore the salvation of all in Christ. The words *ecumenical/ecumenism* imply therefore that from a Christian point of view, there is a two-fold responsibility: one that is horizontal – oneself, the other, and the society derived from our common house, which is the world (*oikoumené*); and a vertical one – since the word *ecumenical* presupposes a relationship of reconciling dialogue with God in order to have restoration and salvation.

The question that seems to come up here, I believe, is the following: is there a vision that could satisfy these requirements/responsibilities? And if so, what would be its main constituent elements that would help in the *ecumenical* process?

2. A vision that is both old and new: a presence – ‘Jesus Christ’⁵, a spirit – ‘all in Christ’⁶ and its principles – ‘an incarnated *metanoia*’

The subtitle of my talk - a polyphonic dialogue⁷ - throws a certain light on the “methodological” perspective of a renewed approach to the *ecumenical* journey. First, let us talk about dialogue.

a. A founding presence – ‘Jesus Christ’

A few years ago, the current Patriarch Daniel of Romania wrote this about the *ecumenical* movement: “The secret of the *ecumenical* movement’s success has always been in rediscovering the centrality of Christ in the lives and activities of Christians the world over.”⁸

This is an idea essential to the *ecumenical* movement. To help the *ecumenical* cause to progress and transcend historic divisions, we must rediscover Christ Himself – the object of our common faith – as the uniting factor for all Christian traditions. This rediscovery will help us as a whole to maintain a synchronous dialogic relationship with the Lord present among us *hic et nunc*. This can be done by understanding and promoting the *ecumenical* movement as a vast “movement of *metanoia* and renewal, a movement that converts deviations to the fullness of the true faith, from self-sufficient denominationalism to real service, from competition to cooperation, from hate and suspicion to love and trust.”⁹ This creates an openness to the Lord Himself, toward the other and toward oneself, accompanied by genuine and authentic listening. Furthermore, continues Patriarch Daniel, the spirit at the beginning of the *ecumenical* movement was a “movement of repentance or abasement of all Christians and Churches, leading to a convergence and an agreement of heart and mind”¹⁰ that corresponds perfectly to the Lord’s first words at the start of his public mission: “Repent (*metanoete*), for the Kingdom of Heaven is near” (Mt 4:17). This would lay the foundations for a dialogue freed from the historically restrictive limitation of theological language and thought.

This perspective presents a number of advantages in my opinion:

- i. It will ensure coherence and consistency in the dialogue because the Lord will remain the criterion, the vision and the “moderator” through His presence.
- ii. It may help to understand the *ecumenical* process as humble service to the crucified and risen Lord rather than a simple glorification of local tradition.¹¹
- iii. It will not be a prisoner of the historical developments specific to each tradition. Through its critical functionality

(namely discernment), each tradition can go beyond its cumulative function¹² that seems to have dominated for so long.

b. A spirit – “all in Christ” –, the harmony of unity while respecting differences.

Once our priority is established – a dialogue of all, with the Lord present *hic et nunc* –, what are we still missing? The Romanian author, Nicolae Steinhardt (1912-1989) – known also as the “monk of Rohia”¹⁴ – offers us some clarification. He says: “The contemporary human soul is a kingdom torn between the calls of vigilant tradition and the imperatives of the indomitable state of becoming”.¹⁵

What the monk of Rohia is telling us here is that the dynamic of our process is already part of a journey that it must negotiate as best it can through “critical thinking” (discernment/ *diacrisis*) the most historically appropriate form for the contemporary ecumenical process. There will be a *dialecticodialogic* movement between the elements of a faith incarnated in historical forms and perceived intuitions of forms to come. The soul of our churches is torn between the temptation to live in “comfortable” nostalgia for the past, or to try to venture forth in the naivety and imponderability, if not imprudence, of simply becoming.

This is where the second term comes in – the polyphonic aspect – which is the spirit of flexibility/finesse in the ecumenical process that, while taking into consideration the concrete and diverse reality of Christian traditions, should “permit all (the traditions) to speak of their concerns,¹⁶ express their philosophy, affirm their unity ... even if their unfinished sentences,¹⁷ their favourite words, their concepts¹⁸ aspiring to clarity are no more than feeble efforts¹⁹ to reveal ... a glimmer of the existential shiver, barely grasped ... wishing to understand it and transmit it. It is a vast monologue recited by many voices, a polyphonic monologue.”²⁰ If we transfer this spirit to our remarks, basically, Nicolae Steinhardt is urging us to an ecumenical approach that should consider a renewed language that would encompass in a spirit of listening as much the important elements of each tradition as its dissatisfaction, lack of success, wounds, in a word, the historical traces that have marked its collective memory. The polyphonic key would therefore be a spirit that is attentive to both the harmonious and symphonic aspect of the whole, as well as the specific details of each tradition that enable it to express itself and clarify its aspirations, its concerns and its expectations. The ecumenical process would look like a single musical score, which, while encompassing many different chords and notes, would be a single and harmonious work, taken as a whole.

c. Basic principles for a renewed ecumenical awareness – “an incarnated *metanoia*”

Professor Robert Taft proposes two main elements to which I would add a third which, at this stage, could forge a renewed ecumenical awareness:

i. a change of heart and mind in the ecumenical process, without which no substantial progress will be made;²¹

ii. a change of educational paradigm, i.e. to adopt a genuinely ecumenical theology and teaching;²²

iii. that each tradition, as a hermeneutic community interpreting the great mystery of revelation in Christ *hic et nunc*, contributes to a richer and more nuanced understanding of life in God.

A change of heart and mind means being part of the solution as an instrument of peace and harmony that reconciles and unites instead of dividing and judging. Ecumenical theology and teaching means a more objective and less denominational approach, with preferential consideration given to witness that strengthens an awareness of the undivided Church.²³ As a hermeneutic community, each Christian tradition must use everything it is and has – the theological, liturgical, esthetic, administrative, practical and canonical – to express as completely as possible its understanding of the mystery of God, man and salvation as it understands it and has experienced it over time, while maintaining the harmony and synchrony of its experience and collective memory with respect for those of others.

3. A few compatible and unifying ways that could help concretize this vision

In the spirit of what has been said above, it seems important to me to propose a few main elements that could help in the emergence of a dynamic vision to bring together the different Christian traditions into a common harmonious voice that respects each one’s differences and is close to our expectations.

a. In a spirit of repentance (*metanoia*) and change of heart and mind, there is a common responsibility to assume the past of our churches.

The spirit of repentance will help us pass from a polemic spirit to dialogue, from a spirit of competition to cooperation, from a spirit of solitude to solidarity, from the truth of a denomination to universal truth, from an identity forged by separation to an identity based on holiness.²⁴

b. In the context of promoting ecumenical theology and teaching, a possible avenue toward rapprochement, suitable for all, could be promoting an *open sobornicity* (catholicity) that would consist in common study, prayer and action by all Christians and, from a theological viewpoint, in borrowing the valid theological concepts of other Christian traditions provided that they remain rooted in the common spirit of the Bible and patristics.²⁵ The Orthodox concept of sobornicity (catholicity) as genuine unity in plurality could well serve as an inspiration to the churches in their ecumenical dialogic and relational dynamic. This vision would combine a real, multi-form unity with mutual recognition of diversity in different areas and mutual respect for their freedom in a shared unity.²⁶

This vision is summed up by Hans Küng, when he says that he does not wish to have a uniform Church, but one in which there are denominational, regional and national profiles, with an ecumenical unity between the Christian churches based on reconciliation of differences.

c. The adoption of a less rigid dogmatic vision that would view dogma as key formulations, that do not limit the endless abyss of God but are doors into this unfathomable mystery, could be a possible way to relax dialogue and attitudes concerning the “dogmatic difficulties” so often invoked in ecumenical dialogue in the past.²⁸

d. Today, it is imperative for the ecumenical movement to clarify the difference between diversity and division in faith. Diversity is the beauty of a rich communion while division in faith is a loss of the fullness of communion between God and man. Division can be overcome by conversion to the truth, by research and dialogue in a spirit of humility; schism can be healed by reconciliation in a spirit of love and forgiveness.²⁹

e. An ascetic and Easter spirituality that does not separate the mystery of the Cross from that of the Resurrection and that celebrates in the Holy Spirit the presence of the risen Christ in the midst of our church communities³⁰ could reveal a new inter-church dynamic and inspire a common effort in the evangelizing spirit of Christ.

Conclusion

Beyond being just a simple stylistic exercise, this essay has attempted to present a few of the main elements of a vision that seems very pertinent to me and that could advance the state of discussion on the issue of ecumenism.

In sum, perhaps the important thing to remember is the imperative of discovering the centrality of Christ

in ecumenical dialogue, and *metanoia* as a “practical methodology” that ensures an openness to the Lord, my neighbour and myself in a spirit of listening, love and humility. A change in the educational paradigm would be welcome so that the necessary principles for a renewed ecumenical awareness can create an increasingly confident, harmonious and synchronous convergence of the multiple elements that would lead to a dialogue that is authentic in spirit and in truth.

¹ Ioan I. Ică. *La théologie orthodoxe moderne et contemporaine – moments, figures, parcours, interprétation*. p 82-84 (in Ionitã Viorel. *La théologie orthodoxe...*)

² *Ecumenism* in <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/115240/Christianity/67623/Ecumenism>

³ “And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world (oikoumenē = inhabited world), as a testimony to all the nations...”

⁴ “Now God did not subject the coming world (oikoumenēn), about which we are speaking, to angels.” [in view of salvation – n.n.]

⁵ “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever.” (Hb 13:8)

⁶ “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal 3:27-28) “You have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!” (Col 3:9-11)

⁷ Steinhardt, p. 17-21.

⁸ Ciobotea, p. 2 445.

⁹ Ciobotea, p. 232.

¹⁰ Ciobotea, p. 244.

¹¹ Ciobotea, p. 232.6.

¹² Ciobotea, p. 237.

¹³ He was a writer, essayist, literary critic, translator and Orthodox monk. He converted to Orthodox Christianity during his years in prison.

¹⁴ Rohia is a monastery in northwestern Romania where he lived out his monastic life, writing and working until his death.

¹⁵ Steinhardt, p. 217.

¹⁶ pās (in Romanian): pain, grief, chagrin, care.

¹⁷ *Întrețaiate* (Romanian).

¹⁸ “slogans” (lit.)

¹⁹ “pathetic” (lit.)

²⁰ Steinhardt, p. 20. In the text, Nicolae Steinhardt shows how the narrator assumes the role of the voice that sets the general tone for the dialogue of characters but at the same time succeeds through his voice to express the echoes of their individual voices.

²¹ Robert Taft: *Perceptions and Realities in Orthodox – Catholic Relations Today: Reflections on the Past, Prospects for the Future*, p. 44 (in G.E. Demacopoulos and A. Papanikolaou...)

²² Ibidem, p. 37-38.

²³ Ciobotea, p. 24, 38-39.

²⁴ Ciobotea, p. 250-252.

²⁵ Radu Bordeianu, in *Voluntary Ecumenism: Dumitru Stăniloae's Interaction with the West and Open Sobornicity*. p. 247, 251 (in G.E. Demacopoulos and A. Papanikolaou...).

²⁶ Ciobotea, p. 222.

²⁷ Hans Küng, p. 192.

²⁸ Staniloae, p. 215-216.

²⁹ Ciobotea, p. 239.

³⁰ Ciobotea, p. 224.

Spiritual Unity

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in Dr. Dragos Giulea's "Re-Thinking Communion and Truth after the Volf-Zizioulas Dispute", he speaks of what communion and truth meant to Volf and Zizioulas by comparing each viewpoint and then slightly integrating his own perspective on both subjects. I think he tries to make his listeners understand that only through acceptance of the two can Christianity be united. Ontologically, the bread of the communion, Christ's body, is a direct link to the Truth.

During the lecture on "Aboriginal Spirituality, An Ecumenical Encounter" by Dr. Christine Jamieson, she spoke about a conference that took place prior to this seminar and she compared the spirituality of the First Nations people and the Christian religion coming from two different perspectives. The aim of her speech was to enforce the power of fully comprehending what is being spoken rather than speaking in hopes of overruling a population. Also, she demonstrates that spirituality and religion are not quite the same thing.

Next in line is Father Thomas Ryan's lecture on "Spiritual and Receptive Ecumenism". He spoke about the importance of prayer on the larger scale of unity; it starts with the self, changing your heart and your mind and then moving to unite with the rest of the branches of the Christian religion. Only by finding our inner spiritual self can we hope to achieve unity with everyone else.

Last on my list is Dr. Matthew Anderson's "Ecumenism with its feet on the ground: walking pilgrimages" (Not published in the magazine). He spoke of the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela as an ecumenical practice. This spiritual journey is undertaken in hopes of reaching a sacred, or holy, or secret place. By having a big group of people undergo the same adventure and taking the same road, we get one step closer to seeing everybody as a brother or sister.

I was overjoyed when Dr. Jamieson spoke of an "ecumenical encounter" and presented two points-of-view: that of Elder Charlie Patton and of Right Reverend Mark MacDonald on the Aboriginal and Western civilization of Christianity. While Patton is angered by the split that was brought about by the European culture during colonization, MacDonald strongly believes that through sharing discourse between people of different backgrounds can two separate groups come to understand each other and accept each other.

Father Ryan's wise words of compassion on the approach that each person must take towards our greater goal are

what affected me the most. He truly pointed out that we cannot hope to have a peaceful bonding if one cannot begin to accept the other's stance. What I didn't enjoy, though not at all his fault, was the lack of time he had to speak of the receptive part of his lecture. Elaboration on that subject would have been much appreciated as I was hoping to learn a little bit more about how one should be receptive of others. But in the little time he had to speak about it, one line took my attention, when he said "learning over teaching" because if you are willing to learn from someone or something, you will grow as a spiritual being.

In his lecture, Dr. Anderson exposed the truth about the pilgrimage: being stuck with the basic needs of a human being. When going on a pilgrimage, you are in no need of luxury or any kind of technology, but rather investing your time and energy into finding your focus and finding your way. As much as it is a journey to a physical place, it is just as much a journey within the self.

After such fruitful and colorful speeches, the question still remains: Does Ecumenism have a place in today's world? Well considering that Ecumenism is the principle of uniting the world's Christian churches, I strongly believe that it is a step forward and clearly the overwhelming theme of the seminars was that of unity and with the Ecumenical movement we get closer to uniting humanity under the same roof. All of Christianity looks upon truth and communion as a profound logical tie with the idea of faith. That common ground, the faith in God, is one of the things that would help bring the multiple branches together. The movement allows us to communicate on a better level with each other; by listening to others and understanding how their ideas differ from your own, you can have a change of heart. Since it's all about how one envisions it, Christians should converge in the dialogue afforded unambiguously by the desire to speak of the Lord. Instead of having one branch overpower the others and drastically change their identity, if we alter it slightly by combining the acquired knowledge from the other branches, union can be achieved. Moreover, the Ecumenical movement allows for peace to be possible as well. If one religion is capable of achieving peace within itself, there may be a chance that it serves as an example for all the other religions in the world and possibly have them follow a similar path that will hopefully lead to peace in this world. On another note, conflict begets conflict. People nowadays search for something to believe in. When people see a religion in conflict with itself, a divided religion, they will not

want to associate with that religion. Yet, if they see us all within the same church, their curiosity will be peaked and they will want to find out why and how we are living in peace within that religion. Christians are genuinely good by nature deep down to their core and when they notice something united, or positive, they will want to affiliate with that specific

thing. Also, Christians in today's society are far from the Lord Jesus Christ because of all the different branches being in conflict within the religion. The Ecumenical movement would help us move closer to our Lord. In doing so, people would then be more understanding of what Christ stood for and what religion truly is.

An Ecumenical Dance with Anglicans

The Right Reverend Barry B. Clarke

The 11th Anglican Bishop of Montreal, Barry B. Clarke was consecrated and installed on October 14th, 2004 at Christ Church Cathedral in Montreal.

Born October 10th, 1952, Barry Clarke is the first Montreal-born bishop of Montreal. He graduated with a Bachelor in Theology degree from McGill University, in 1977, followed in 1978 by a Diploma in Ministry from the Montreal Theological College, becoming the seventh alumni from the college to be consecrated Bishop. Barry Clarke was ordained to the diaconate in 1978 and to the presbyterate in 1979 by the Right Reverend Reginald Hollis, ninth Bishop of Montreal. Having served as assistant at St. Matthias, from 1978 to 1980, he was called to be Rector of Trinity Church, St-Bruno, where he served from 1980 to 1984. In 1984, he was called as Rector of St. Michael and All Angels, where he served from 1984 to 1993. He was then named Rector of St Paul's, Lachine where he served until relocating to the See City of Montreal upon his election in 2004. During his parish ministries, Bishop Clarke was involved in community and youth work, and served on numerous diocesan councils, commissions and committees including the Synod Planning Committee, the Diocesan Youth Group, Diocesan Council and the Lay Pastoral Visitors. He also served as Regional Dean of the Deanery of Ste-Anne from 1988 to 1992, Regional Dean of the Deanery of Pointe-Claire from 1997 to 2003, and Archdeacon of St. Lawrence from 2003 to his election. He was also Chaplain of the International Order of St Luke the Physician and Priest Associate to the Sisters of St John the Divine.

Abstract:

Since the onset of the ecumenical movement, the Anglican community has been involved in dialogue, ministry and mission with our partners. We continue to dance and we pray our dancing partners will continue to dance and pray with us.

Introduction

The vision which rises before us is that of a Church, genuinely Catholic, loyal to all truth, and gathering into its fellowship all "who profess and call themselves Christians," within whose visible unity all the treasures of faith and order, bequeathed as a heritage by the past to the present, shall be possessed in common, and made serviceable to the whole Body of Christ. Within this unity Christian Communion now separated from one another would retain much that has long been distinctive in their methods of worship and service. It is through a rich diversity of life and devotion that the unity of the whole fellowship will be fulfilled.



Anglicans are held together in a life of visible communion. Baptism is God's gift of unity, the means by which an individual participates in the life of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and is brought into a living community of faith. The confession of a common faith, the celebration of the Eucharist, a life of common prayer, the service of an ordered ministry, conciliar structures, shared service and mission sustain a life of Anglican belonging. These elements belong to the universal Church and are not unique to Anglicans. They are nevertheless, lived out in a recognisable and characteristically Anglican way.

Ecumenical

Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission (JALC) – The new iteration of JALC met in February and issued a communiqué indicating its priorities for the next six years of its mandate. Some of these are already being undertaken. A joint meeting of our churches' senior staff took place in May and it is intended these meetings will happen twice annually. The four heads of the Anglican and Lutheran churches in full communion in North America will have their annual meeting in Toronto in July.

Anglican-United Church Dialogue – Last month the Council of General Synod approved the dialogue's request to have its mandate prolonged so that it may continue its conversations about mutual recognition of ministries, and to have a bishop added to the Anglican delegation. The Anglicans on the dialogue have made recommendations to the Primate, who will make an appointment.

Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue (ARC) – ARC Canada is completing its work on the Common Witness Project, which includes the filming of vignettes to accompany the texts that seek to offer answers to common existential questions from our common Christian tradition.

Anglican-Roman Catholic Bishops' Dialogue – This annual gathering took place in December in Mississauga, and again included a joint meeting with ARC Canada. The Catholic bishops are especially interested in our church's conversation about the marriage canon.

International dialogues – The appointments of the Rev. Tim Perry (Algoma) and the Ven. Edward Simonton (Quebec) to the Anglican Communion's ecumenical dialogues with, respectively, the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the Oriental Orthodox churches have been confirmed. Three other Canadian Anglicans continue to serve on our international dialogues with the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches.

Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) – The Commission on Faith and Witness, which includes the Rev. Craig Bowers (Ottawa), continues its work on religious pluralism in the Canadian context. The CCC is marking its 70th anniversary this year, and will in part mark the occasion with a week-long gathering of its commissions, working groups, and governing board in November.

World Council of Churches (WCC) – A number of theological colleges and diocesan doctrine commissions have undertaken a study of *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, the convergence statement on ecclesiology produced by the WCC's Commission on Faith and Order. These will be fed into the Anglican Church of Canada's official response to the text.

Interfaith

National Muslim-Christian Liaison Committee – Ms. Stephanie DeForest (Niagara) has indicated her interest in continuing to serve as an Anglican representative. The Rev. Dr. Bill Danaher (Huron) has also expressed interest, and would bring added theological depth and ecclesial experience to the conversations. Two Anglican representatives are welcome on the committee and an additional member would have minimal cost implications. The coordinating committee is therefore asked to approve both appointments.

Canadian Christian-Jewish Consultation (CCJC) – The Anglican Church of Canada has submitted its formal response to a letter from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) explaining its current position with regard to the United Church of Canada's participation in the CCJC. We have indicated a desire for the consultation to continue, but question how representative it can be without Canada's second-largest Christian denomination at the table. The CCC is compiling member church responses to CIJA's letter. The CCJC has been in limbo since the fall of 2012, following the United Church's call for a boycott of certain Israeli goods.

Network for Interfaith Concerns (NIFCON) – This network of the Anglican Communion has expressed interest in beginning an international-level bilateral conversation with Hindus in the India diaspora. Canada, which has a significant Hindu presence of approximately 500,000 people, has been invited to participate in this conversation. Efforts to identify a member of our church with a particular interest, background, or engagement in relations with Hindus have so far proven fruitless.

by: Archdeacon Bruce Myers, Anglican Church of Canada's Coordinator for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

The Lund Principle

The 3rd World Conference on Faith and Order was held in 1952 in Lund, Sweden after the union of churches in South India in 1947. This immensely successful venture, led in large part by Lesslie Newbigin who became the first bishop of the new Church of South India, created a high level of desire for further church unions. Following Lund, interpretations of the Lund Principle: that the Churches should “act together in all matters except those in which deep differences compel them to act separately”, arose which weakened its original impact. For example, it was used oratorically as a general principle to encourage limited and “spasmodic relationships” (Morris West), such as the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This is a time of prayer for unity that I deeply support. But the writers of this statement intended that their question be applied to the ongoing, day-to-day life of the churches. If answered affirmatively, which the writers hoped for, it would press the question of more permanent change, both locally and nationally. Churches would be required to act, not passively talk about unity.

Building Bridges

The title of this section, *Building Bridges*, is taken from a quote from the writings of His Holiness Karekin I, “*I am ever more convinced that the principal task of everyone who wishes to engage in ecumenism is to build new bridges between our churches, our traditions and our cultures.*”

The sub-title, *The Ecumenical Journey of Karekin I, IS MEANT TO DESCRIBE THIS VOLUME*. That is, when read in chronological order, it shows Karekin Sarkissian’s journey from the earliest days of his priesthood to his final days as Catholicos of All Armenias, in his quest for ecumenical understanding.

Toward the end of his life, His Holiness very clearly defined what ecumenism meant to him.

Ecumenism, for me, is a deeply spiritual reality. It is a dimension of the very essence of our Christian faith. We must refer to Chapter seventeen of Saint John’s Gospel, in which the will of our Lord Jesus Christ clearly shows us: “Father, let all be one... Let them be one... so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” This is not just a desire like any other; the credibility of the Christian faith is inextricably linked to that quality of ecclesiastical existence, to the fact that we show in our lives the unity given to us by Christ, the unity that is the very life of the Holy Trinity.

If by the word “ecumenism” we are designating the constant quest to manifest that concrete objective. In the ecumenical movement we try by all means to make the quest for unity the central theme of our theological reflection and of our common actions.

Certainly, some events and expressions of the ecumenical movement have not always been faithful to the authentic spirit of ecumenism. But that is similar to the authentic spirit of sainthood, which is the vocation of every Christian – you never reach the summit, and you might experience failure. Similarly, on the ecumenical path, there are also steps backward, but they do not threaten the essence of the process. On the path toward complete unity of the churches, there are obstacles. But we must never be discouraged; we must always remain engaged in dialogue, in communication, in spite of all difficulties. Our movement toward unity is a duty, an imperative that we have received from our Lord, and in spite of our human fragility, all of our weaknesses and shortcomings, we must never renounce it.

From *Between Heaven and Earth*, A conversation with His Holiness Karekin I by Giovanni Guaita

Conclusion

Today’s world presents many challenges, not only to Anglicans, in following our Savior Jesus Christ in faithful obedience. Rapid technological change confronts us with new situations and poses new questions; secularisation and other faiths offer their contending views; while globalising information systems bring greater awareness of and interchange between our many different and evolving cultures. Of course Christians always and everywhere have had to wrestle with authentic expression of the gospel in their own contexts, discerning between appropriate inculturation and erroneous syncretism. My hope and prayer is that this book will help Anglicans and other Christians in similar discernment of how we can most truly respond to our Lord’s prayer that we should be one, and thus more fully ‘lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.’ (Ephesians 4.1-6)

Catholics and Evangelicals: Complementarity on Creation

Dr. Paul Allen

Dr. Paul Allen is Associate Professor in the Department of Theological Studies at Concordia University, Montreal, Canada. He specializes in systematic theology, the science-theology dialogue and theological anthropology. His publications include his doctoral dissertation, published as *Ernan McMullin and Critical Realism in the Science-Theology Dialogue* and (with Peter M.J. Hess) *Catholicism and Science*. More recently, he has written *Theological Method: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T & T Clark, 2012) as well as articles in journals such as *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, *The American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* and the *Heythrop Journal of Theology*. He has taught courses introducing theology, political theology, the Christian Understanding of God and the thought of Pope Benedict XVI. His BioLogos grant project is entitled: "Creatures of God: An Evangelical-Catholic Dialogue on Sin, Evolution and Human Nature". He lives in Montreal with his wife and two children.

Summary:

Recent dialogue meetings and mutual apologies between the Catholic Church and evangelical Protestant leaders are a sign of increased cooperation, a healthy meeting of minds amidst the backdrop of some interdenominational stagnation. Prompting this particular exchange is the shared understanding Catholics and evangelicals have of creation as a divine revelation of God. Evident in the theology of Karl Barth and Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI) for instance, Catholic and evangelical theologies stress the complementarity of biblical theology and natural law moral principles, which are twin expressions of a theology of creation. This complementarity has borne fruit in a shared understanding of sexual ethics and ecological concern.

The Canadian Centre for Ecumenism is to be commended for holding this two day symposium on the very important theme of Christian dialogue. It is vital to assess and re-assess the state of ecumenical relations, with renewed attention to the way in which we presuppose what it is that ecumenical relations are about. In this ongoing work of reassessment, one particular thread of bilateral relations does not receive the attention that it should. I am speaking of the relations, such as they are, between the Roman Catholic Church and the evangelical churches of Reformed Protestant Christianity. Together representing some 1.7 billion of the world's 2.3 billion Christians (1.2 billion and 550 million respectively), official and informal discussion on substantive issues between Catholics and evangelicals has an enormous



potential impact on the way Christianity moves forward and upon the dynamics of most of the world's societies and cultures.¹ And, one of the most critical societies in which Catholic/evangelical relations could well be key in the next 50-100 years is China.

Evangelical-Catholic dialogue is an ad hoc affair. There have been ongoing efforts at dialogue and attempts at reconciliation over important matters. Internationally, the most important of these was the Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission, which consisted of three meetings held between 1977 and 1984. As the title suggests, the focus of these meetings was the great commission, which to evoke the language of I Timothy, means that “all men [and women] be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” These meetings of pastors and scholars set the tone for much of what has transpired since, under the aegis of an evangelical-Catholic dialogue. The vast majority of discussions among evangelicals and Catholics has focused upon the nature of Christian salvation and the character of the evangelical mission to which Christians are called in spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. The background for such discussions however has been the ever present tension felt on both sides toward each other: the problem of sheep stealing from a Catholic perspective, the problem of official discouragement and even discrimination perceived by evangelicals toward Catholics, especially in majority Catholic areas and countries.

Twenty years ago, a group of distinguished American scholars and church leaders formulated a statement titled ‘Evangelicals and Catholics Together’²² (ECT). This document highlights the common mission of Catholics and evangelicals. It spawned a series of gatherings and has resulted in a much higher degree of mutual respect and agreement among leading North American evangelical and Catholic leaders. Partly through the openness that this process created, many evangelicals came to admire the depth and seriousness of Pope John Paul II’s efforts to buttress the Christian faith, an effort that was to become communism’s Achilles heel through the protests in Catholic Poland that eventually led to its downfall. On the Catholic side, there has been a new and broadening movement of charismatic renewal within the church and a greater appreciation for spontaneous forms of prayer and worship. Lately, in part due to his own personal experience with evangelicals, Pope Francis has been explicit about the benefits for Catholics of paying attention to evangelical faith witness.

A part of the ECT project has been the felt ability on both ecclesial sides to collectively advocate for public policy positions and for principles that adjudicate difficulties between church and state. Some of the issues being dealt with (for example, the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman, the legal and political scope given to religious

freedom) are vexing issues that divide western societies at their core. On these issues, offshoots of evangelical-Catholic dialogue such as the Manhattan Statement of a few years ago have taken the lead. So far, the ECT project has not indicated a willingness to deal with other issues of common Catholic-evangelical concern, such as issues of economic restructuring and environmental conservation. There may be political barometers that serve as hidden criteria in limiting the scope of the issues about which Catholics and evangelicals can collaborate. Given the broadening public theology within American evangelicalism, this may change soon. Moving beyond the ECT witness, I believe that we are seeing greater convergence between Catholics and evangelicals. Specifically, this convergence anticipates an exciting complementarity between evangelicals and Catholics on the issue of describing creation.

One focal point of recent evangelical and Catholic thought that bears mentioning regards Gen. 1:28 where God announces to Adam and Eve that they are to exercise “dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” The stewardship model of human-nature relations is well known and it is, for instance, behind Pope Benedict’s attention to the Vatican’s environmental impacts. In fact, Catholic interest in the natural environment is a storied one, with the Vatican opening an astronomical observatory as early as the 1770’s. Both the church’s scientific and theological interest in nature stem from its teaching that “To human beings God even gives the power of freely sharing in his providence...” as the catechism states. Human activity is a function of human freedom, which is rooted in a robust theology of the *imago dei*, a doctrine that is elaborated on the basis of the preceding verses in Gen. 1:26-27. So, the biblical theology of dominion is about the conferral of power – Adam and Eve share God’s power, even after their expulsion from Eden by virtue of their vocation to pro-create another generation. The generative power of God is thus shared with humans whose sexual dimorphism is the formal condition for the possibility of widening the numbers of those who mirror God and God’s glory. In Catholic thought, insufficient attention has been paid to the specifically biblical source behind the admonition to share power in a distributed way instead of a dominating impulse.

Yet, Catholic natural law tradition has provided an expansive account of human nature and the range of virtues that cultivate our human nature and make it ready to receive God’s grace. Thomas Aquinas provides the most extensive account of the natural basis for practicing the virtues, adhering to a moral

life and pursuing political arrangements that reflect a divinely ordered hierarchy. For Aquinas, the political life is a natural dimension to the created order, somewhat contrary to the more skeptical position of Augustine on the same question. The view that Aquinas adopts helps explain why Catholics have always been at home immersed in the political process in the variety of national and cultural contexts in which they are found, somewhat in contradistinction to many evangelicals, whose ecclesial roots are in the nonconformist and dissenting movements of England, Scotland and German-speaking lands of Europe in particular. Pope John Paul II's theology of the body is a reflection on the Genesis narrative and the primordial meaning that Adam and Eve have for Christian marriage, but it is also clearly indebted to a phenomenological, Thomist and Aristotelian interpretation of human embodiment. On sexuality and the meaning of power and authority, Catholics can learn from evangelicals in regards to the biblical sources that pivot the moral compass in particular directions while evangelicals have much to learn from Catholics about the utility of natural law reasoning.

Contemporary evangelicalism is in a state of retreat bordering on implosion among younger Americans. A 2012 NY Times op-ed by pastor John Dickerson noted the specifically political commitments that both caused and were affected by a loss of evangelical influence among the American Republican party. He cites G. K. Chesterton's quote at the end of an article that essentially predicts a steep decline in American evangelicalism as a religious force for good: "Christianity has died many times and risen again; for it had a God who knew the way out of the grave."³

Here is an object lesson that many American evangelicals are only beginning to learn now. Christian political action cannot be achieved on the basis of indirectly derived principles. It must be conceived as an outgrowth of a broader worldview that is ultimately rooted in an understanding of the created order. On this latter point, evangelical scholars have helped bring context and a sense of proper meaning to bear on creation's interpretation. Yet North American evangelical church attitudes have, ironically, not caught up with evangelical biblical scholarship. As biblical scholar J. Richard Middleton claims, the best reading of Gen. 1 and 2 yields a picture of human beings serving as the divine presence on earth. This is what lies behind the meaning of the term 'co-creator' in reference to human beings.⁴

On a contextually nuanced reading of Genesis 1-2, the reader sees that human beings ought to exercise their authority as God does -- benevolently. Our status as made in the image of

God is declared not once but twice in the preceding verses 26 and 27. Human dominion is thus creation care not warfare. Also, as biblical scholars have noted, the creation narrative of Genesis 2 provides a canonical context for a proper understanding of Genesis 1. In Genesis 2, the human one (*adam*) is made from the dust of the earth (*adamah*). And so, in response to critics of the Christian understanding of human beings, the biblical texts do indeed warrant the closest relationship between humanity, the material elements that make up our bodies and the earthly realm in which we have our abode. We are indeed our bodies because we are not inherently immortal souls, but we are more than our bodies. In a different manner altogether, Catholic thought has expressed human identity in terms of an anthropology with a nod to Aristotelian hylemorphism: the soul is the *form* of the body, it is not opposed to it. The soul emerges in human evolution from ancestor species and materiality in general. This is metaphysics of course, not biblical exegesis. It happens to be a distinctly Catholic contribution to a many-sided understanding of human nature.

And so, such is the shape of what evangelicals and Catholics can do together: change culture and foster a shared Christian identity. Each tradition must bring its strengths to bear on an integral, Christian understanding of human nature. My wish is that initiatives like ECT will deepen their commitments to a unified Christian witness to our cultures by deepening its theological anthropology, its common theological exegesis of the biblical texts that serve as the foundations for Christian witness. Ecumenical exchanges that are founded on solid foundations can move mountains - by speaking to power about true power. Ecumenism must not become an irrelevant sideshow amidst secular cultures that leaves aside the impetus and vitality of Catholicism and evangelicalism, two large streams within the wider Christian body.

¹ See "Christianity and its Global Context 1970-2020" from Gordon Conwell Seminary's Centre for Global Christianity, available at: <http://www.gordonconwell.com/netcommunity/CSGCResources/ChristianityinitsGlobalContext.pdf>

² <http://www.firstthings.com/article/1994/05/evangelicals--catholics-together-the-christian-mission-in-the-third-millennium-2>

³ John Dickerson, "The Decline of Evangelical America" <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/16/opinion/sunday/the-decline-of-evangelical-america.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>

⁴ See his book *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis One* (2005). <http://bakerpublishinggroup.com/books/the-liberating-image/231440>

The Challenges of Ecumenism in Today's World Conference

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At the ecumenism conference entitled 'The Challenges of Ecumenism in Today's World', I had the great opportunity to listen to three speakers lecture on various aspects of ecumenism. Some chose to focus more on certain denominations or cultures, whereas others chose to concentrate on the discourse between denominations regarding specific beliefs within their doctrines. I had the chance to listen to Dr. Christine Jamieson, Dr. Paul Allen and Bishop Thomas Dowd.

Dr. Christine Jamieson's lecture was entitled 'Aboriginal Spirituality: An Ecumenical Encounter'. Her lecture focused on the varying beliefs of the Aboriginal people of Canada regarding Christianity in general, as well as the differences between the Aboriginal approach to Christianity compared to the Western approach. The main objective of her lecture was to speak of positive and negative reactions to the intermingling between Aboriginal spirituality and Christianity from an ecumenical standpoint.

Another lecture, entitled 'Catholics and Evangelicals: Complementarity on Creation', given by Dr. Paul Allen, spoke of the ecumenical discourse between two of the larger denominations within Christianity - Catholicism and Reformed Protestantism. He specifically focused on their dialogue regarding the creation narratives in the book of Genesis as well as the purpose of humanity. The objective of his lecture was to argue the need to increase the importance of Christian influence in society, and establish the role of human beings as God's creation and as the keepers of creation.

Instead, he explained Christianity as assimilated to Aboriginal cosmology, and unthreatening to Aboriginal spirituality and tradition.



The third lecture I was able to attend was Bishop Thomas Dowd's 'Vatican II and Ecumenism'. He spoke of ecumenism as explaining our neighbour's faith to them so that they would recognise themselves in it. His main goal was to highlight the respect one denomination must have for others in order for ecumenism to progress, as well as the sincere efforts that need to be put in to come together as one.

Dr. Jamieson's lecture on Aboriginal spirituality was enlightening because she explained opposing Aboriginal perspectives on the issue of Christianity being adopted as a religion by First Nations people. Though she only spoke for about twenty minutes, she gave the attendees a detailed and understandable insight into the sentiments behind each opinion.

What I found particularly interesting was the opinion of one of the individuals she spoke of, Reverend Mark MacDonald,

who spoke of Christianity not as a 'foreign construct' onto Aboriginal spirituality. Instead, he explained Christianity as assimilated to Aboriginal cosmology, and unthreatening to Aboriginal spirituality and tradition. He explained that Christianity is approached in an entirely different way by the First Nations people, giving an example of their interpretation of a Biblical passage found in Malachi 1:11.

My mind was very receptive to this concept because I believe that the Bible is meant for people to derive their own interpretations to apply to their particular culture or life circumstances. This example of Aboriginal people doing the same was simply unknown to me, and I appreciate Dr. Jamieson's broadening the education of the attendees on this matter. I am reminded of Bishop Thomas Dowd's words in his lecture pertaining to this. He spoke of learning more about other cultures, so that we can explain their faith to them in a way that they can self-identify their beliefs. In the same way, Dr. Jamieson has educated me more on the Aboriginal approach to Christianity and assisted in making me and other attendees less ignorant on this subject.

In Professor Allen's lecture on the dialogue between Catholics and Evangelicals, I appreciate the explanation of the Christian duty of humanity toward the rest of creation, as I feel that this is a topic that perhaps is not being broached as often as it should be. As Christians, the obligation toward creation is a large part of God's purpose, as clearly mentioned in the creation narrative.

Bishop Thomas Dowd's lecture on ecumenism as explained in Vatican II was the lecture I enjoyed the most because it pertained to the main theme of ecumenism in today's world and was easy to understand. I particularly appreciated his explanation of ecumenism consisting of the ability to explain a person's faith in a way that they would see themselves. Bishop Dowd's explanation was systematic, in that he provided five characteristics of what ecumenism should ideally be like, using comprehensible vocabulary. His opinion of ecumenism was also very practical and optimistic because he acknowledged limitations, but expected good results provided the right approach being taken.

A recurring theme that I found in the lectures was the importance of being aware of and receptive to opposing beliefs before coming to unfair conclusions. Another common theme was the inclusion of other denominations, or outsiders as a crucial step in the progress of ecumenism.

I believe that ecumenism does have a place in today's world for many reasons, the first being that since there are so

many people who are skeptical of Christianity and religion in general, people need to see that there is something that separates Christianity from the turmoil and discord they see in the world. If there is disunion and animosity within Christian denominations, we as Christians are offering nothing different to the world that would make them consider Christianity at all. Secondly, I believe that, as Dr. Allen mentioned in his lecture, people do not consider a Christian standpoint to be very important anymore, and that does need to be rectified. I feel like this can only be done if Christians, regardless of denomination, were to be willing to listen to each other and present a united front.

My third reason is that God clearly intended for the church to be as one, not as separate entities. This is evident in the Bible, for example, in John 17:22-23, Jesus prays to the Father, "The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." Since God clearly intended for the church to be united, not doing so would be considered a sin, as we are thus deliberately going against God's will. Thus, ecumenism is something that does need to have a place in today's world.

Fourthly, I believe that people are forgetting about the fundamental ideas of Christianity and focusing too much on the political aspects of it, resulting in disparity in beliefs. We also forget that people are allowed to derive different understandings from Scripture, and we should respect that while remaining united. Lastly, the efforts of ecumenism relate to learning more about different cultures and insights into Scripture. This will help us with our own spiritual journey, because if we come together to learn about Scripture, we will receive more due to people sharing different insights that we would not have had otherwise. We will thus come closer to God, which is every Christian's main objective during this life.

Aboriginal Spirituality: An Ecumenical Encounter¹

Christine Jamieson, PhD

Christine Jamieson is an Associate Professor in the Department of Theological Studies at Concordia University in Montreal. Her specialization is in social ethics. Her research spans issues related to bioethics and clinical ethics. In particular, she explores themes around human dignity, values conflict and values integration. She is also currently involved in a research project on the bible and ethics, working with a Hebrew bible specialist. Her interest in Aboriginal spirituality grows out of her own Aboriginal roots; her grandfather was from the Salish Nation (West Coast interior).

Abstract:

This presentation will explore the relationship between Christian and Aboriginal spirituality. While the colonizing approach of Christianity toward Aboriginal peoples has a dark and oppressive history, there have been important points of encounter resulting in positive and fruitful expressions of human experience of the divine. The Aboriginal emphasis on the relational and interconnectedness of all reality is an important starting point for understanding the particular realm of meaning of Aboriginal spirituality. This starting point presents an opening for the “ecumenical encounter” this presentation seeks to explore.

It is with deep respect that I acknowledge the ancestors and the people of the traditional territory of the Mohawk nation on which we are holding this conference. I thank them for allowing us to work within their ancestral territory.

My interest in Aboriginal Spirituality stems from connection with the Interior Salish peoples of British Columbia. My grandfather was part of the Boothroyd First Nation in the Fraser Canyon Area.

In my short presentation this morning, I wish to speak about two reactions to the encounter between Aboriginal spirituality and Christianity and then to offer some reflections on these reactions in relation to ecumenical encounter.

Last winter, the Department of Theological Studies with support from the Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches hosted a conference that we titled “Beyond Dream-catchers: Aboriginal Theology and Spirituality in the Canadian Context”. The conference was a multi-layered event drawing together aboriginal expression through ceremony, art, literature, media and presentations fostering dialogue



through formal question and answer sessions and informal gatherings over breaks and meals. Those of us who carried the vision to set this event in place were animated by the conviction that Aboriginal spirituality and theology can speak to the marginalization of religion in a secular culture. In addition, there is a deep healing and growth that needs to take place between settlers and first nations people.

There are many aspects of the one and a half-day conference that were quite exceptional, but today I only want to speak

about two reactions to the encounter between Aboriginal spirituality and Christianity that we experienced at the conference.

He alluded to a “split” in aboriginal peoples that referred to the insertion of the European culture into traditional Aboriginal ways and the destruction that it brought.

One of the speakers was Elder Charlie Patton from the Mohawk Trail Longhouse on the Kahnawake Mohawk Territory on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River. He spoke of his anger when he was young and his eventual journey to peace in his later life while not forgetting what the elders and chiefs in years past taught him: “the only way our people will be strong is if they will be one mind, one body, one spirit.” He alluded to a “split” in aboriginal peoples that referred to the insertion of the European culture into traditional Aboriginal ways and the destruction that it brought. This insertion, according to Patton, must be resisted. He told the story of a Mohawk visionary’s dream prophesying that when the Europeans come, they will bring five things that will destroy the Mohawk people. They will bring their black book (the Bible), their playing cards (resulting in gambling), their strong water (the “mind changers”, alcohol and drugs to confuse one’s mind and one’s sense of one’s identity), their fiddle (representing their culture) and their diseases (particularly smallpox).

For Patton, people are either Mohawk following the Mohawk tradition or they are Christian following the Christian tradition. They cannot be both. If one thinks about Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, many Mohawks and Aboriginals in general see her as a model and an inspiration. Yet, Charlie Patton, while meaning no disrespect, sees Kateri as an example of the disenfranchisement of the Mohawk people (and perhaps he would also broaden this to all Aboriginal peoples). Kateri gave up her Mohawk tradition and became a Catholic Christian. This is not a happy union but rather the relinquishing of one’s very identity. You cannot be both, according to Charlie Patton.

In reflecting on this stance, it emerges from a person rooted in a tradition or an identity that is under siege. Patton’s effort is to safeguard his tradition and identity. He has been entrusted with it and he sees it in danger of disappearing. It is

important, then, to isolate himself and his people from those forces that would undermine his tradition no matter how well meaning they might be. Charlie Patton’s perspective is rooted in part in the fragility of his culture and his people. Their identity is rooted in the land and in their language. Both are at risk of being lost.

Another speaker at the conference, the Right Reverend Mark MacDonald, of Ojibway background and Canada’s first National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, has a markedly different perspective. For Mark MacDonald, the Gospel message is not a foreign construct added onto Aboriginal spirituality and tradition, rather, it is and has been assimilated into Aboriginal cosmology and used as a support to resist the evil that threatens Aboriginal tradition and identity. In another context,² MacDonald related the smudging ceremony to a passage from the Book of Malachi, chapter 1, verse 11: “For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts.” (*New Revised Version*) The smudging is the Aboriginal way of offering incense to the God of creation. MacDonald states: “As we come closer to the culmination of history people from every language and culture around the world will offer incense to the God of creation.” He does not see the Gospel as a threat but, rather, he sees it as part of a growing spiritual movement, a movement that is happening for all but particularly for aboriginal people. He expressed a profound optimism concerning aboriginal spirituality. Aboriginal people cannot be “tamed” according to the European Christian framework, they are most resistant to assimilation. He quoted the first chapter of John’s gospel:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (Jn 1: 1-5 *New Revised Version*)

The first chapter of John is the Word that comes, a Word that is light to all people. The gospel of John presents “a journey of truth through creation and history that is relentless”. “The idea that appears in the first chapter of the gospel of John”, as MacDonald explains, is that “the Creator has placed within history, within creation, a way of life that will ultimately triumph over evil.” In the context of Aboriginal life and history, the evil that will be overcome is

the colonization of peoples. From this is born a hope that MacDonald indicates has “inspired our elders and kept them strong in face of such despair.” For MacDonald, it is this hope that is the heart of a growing spiritual movement, a “spiritual movement that has very little to do with how we have understood Christian Faith and Christian institutions in the past.” This spiritual movement, according to MacDonald, “is spiritual and not religious”. He says, “It is the way that our elders have always lived. They have not been good at religion but have been very good at spirituality.” They have been completely spiritual in every aspect of their lives even though, from the perspective of church institutions, they may not be “religious”. According to MacDonald, what is needed to be true to this spiritual movement is to “work on being a new community . . . learning how to live as relatives.” We have to understand anew “the way in which Jesus commands us to be brothers and sisters of everyone.” As MacDonald insists, “Jesus’ command is an artifact of Western culture we know so well that we don’t have to hear it anymore.” But, in reality, we need to listen again, “to try to understand not what we have always heard but what is being said.” This is intricately related to justice. “What is very clear is that there has to be a justice for aboriginal people.” There is a “horrible poverty that is obscured by the richness of those who have taken.” The spiritual movement that is emerging will demand justice.

It is remarkable to note these two diverse perspectives in reaction to the encounter between Aboriginal peoples and Christianity. In my own reflection on these diverse reactions, there are some points I wish to highlight.

Reverend Raymond Aldred, a professor of theology at Ambrose University in Calgary and from the Cree tradition, speaks about a cultural gap that exists between different groups of people.³ Rather than seeing this as a threat, Aldred speaks of it as a place where dialogue can begin. He indicates that acknowledging the legitimacy of the other is what treaties are all about. I am struck by this idea, that the gap between groups, between cultures, is the very place where dialogue can happen. Aldred is speaking about dialogue in order to truly understand, not as a movement to defeat or to gain dominance. The gap between Aboriginal peoples and the European settlers is a place of rich learning and could, in my view, address some of the impoverishment facing Western civilization in the 21st century. Here I am speaking about the ecological crisis that has come about because the land and non-human beings are treated as things to be owned, used and disposed of by human beings. I am also referring to the spiritual crisis that is the result of the severing of the link with the transcendent dimension of human existence.

Both crises are the fruit of a radical secular and scientific worldview that does not recognize or respect the relational nature of all beings, including the earth, vegetation and non-human animals. The secular, scientific worldview with its emphasis on individual autonomy has moved the Western world further and further away from community and relational living. The resurgence of Aboriginal spirituality, a resurgence that remarkably has survived the onslaughts of reservations, residential schools and the disenfranchisement of land, is emerging as a counter point to the path the Western world has taken. As Aldred asserts, “Canadians struggle with seeing value in Aboriginal peoples as people, as nations.” For the Aboriginal Peoples, to deny one’s communal identity is to deny one’s humanity. Through a strange twist, the western, scientific and secular world is denying its own humanity when it makes the land a thing to be owned and whose resources are to be used up and depleted. As Aldred states, “the land is our relative, it is part of the family.” And it is not just the land that is our relative. All beings are our relatives, vegetation, non-human animals and spiritual beings. Aldred asserts that colonialism and neo colonialism are a “focused attack on eradicating these relationships.” In Aldred’s view, the west cannot “do” community, it has lost that capacity. The West needs Aboriginal peoples; it needs Aboriginal nations to learn community. Related to this, the Western scientific, secular world has lost its recognition of the transcendent, the Creator, the one who sustains all of life. If the loss of our community, our communal reality has resulted in the disintegration of the environment, the loss of our spiritual self is causing the profound disintegration of a sense of meaning.

Through a strange twist, the western, scientific and secular world is denying its own humanity when it makes the land a thing to be owned and whose resources are to be used up and depleted.

Aboriginal theology is a type of contextual theology. Contextual theology takes “space” seriously. Unlike more traditional theology that tends to focus on “time” or history, Aboriginal theology focuses on God in context. In *this* place is where the Creator sustains and redeems creation. It is in the openness of land and space that we meet the spirit of God at work in creation, incarnated. This brings us back to Mark MacDonald’s point and also something Aldred emphasizes in his work. Both place an emphasis on understanding how

God becomes flesh in concrete situations. Being capable of perceiving this spontaneously leads to a justice that comes out of the recognition of human and nonhuman suffering.

One might question, what is the purpose of dialogue? Is it to encounter another without that other changing us? Or is it meant to change us? Is the purpose of dialogue to encounter another, either an individual or a group, in order to be affected and changed?

Coming back to the two somewhat polar opposite perspectives of the Aboriginal encounter with Christianity, the ramifications of the two approaches to dialogue strike me. One is protective and isolated, the other optimistic and open. In many ways, it is easier to understand the defensive reaction of the former than to fathom the confidence of the latter. One might question, what is the purpose of dialogue? Is it to encounter another without that other changing us? Or is it meant to change us? Is the purpose of dialogue to encounter another, either an individual or a group, in order to be affected and changed? Allowing the other to teach us something about who he or she is, who they are, will change us. If we think about the symbolism of the healing circle, this is precisely the power of the circle. Through encountering others in the healing circle, the victim, the perpetrator, families and the community are brought to healing. It cannot happen in any other manner. That is Aldred's insight when he insists that the West cannot teach itself about community. It must enter into relationship with Aboriginal peoples in order to learn community.

Charlie Patton's stance of "leave us alone", this is our way, we do not want to intrude on your way so do not intrude on us, strikes me as sad. I find it sad because the deep desire for encounter is denied as is the opening to understanding between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people. Yet, it is understandable and must be respected. Mark MacDonald's approach, his willingness to encounter the other without fear of contamination offers more hope for true ecumenical encounter, for true healing and reconciliation. Christianity

needs Aboriginal spirituality. The secular, scientific worldview of the Western technological world needs the Aboriginal worldview. We must promote these encounters and we must listen attentively.

¹ Part of this talk draws from an article I wrote with Brian McDonough titled "Beyond Dream-Catchers: Aboriginal Theology and Spirituality in the Canadian Context," *The Ecumenist: A Journal of Theology, Culture and Society*, V, 51, No. 3 (Summer 2014).

² I am referring to an explanation that Bishop MacDonald gave about the smudging ceremony at a day-long conference titled "A Dialogue on the Role of Religion and Spirituality in the Aboriginal Worldview" held at the Waterloo Lutheran Seminary on November 12, 2012.

³ In this account of the view of Rev. Raymond Aldred, I am drawing on a Key Note presentation he gave titled, "Freedom: A Cree Theologian's Account" at the November 12, 2012 Waterloo Lutheran Seminary conference cited above.

Spiritual and Receptive Ecumenism

Thomas Ryan, CSP

Fr. Thomas Ryan, CSP, directed the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism from 1984-1995 before serving as director of Unitas, an ecumenical centre for spirituality and Christian meditation from 1995-1999. From 2000 to the present, he has served as the founder-director of the Paulist North American Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations in Washington, DC. He is the author of 14 books, leads ecumenical retreats, and preaches ecumenical parish missions.

Abstract:

Spiritual Ecumenism—The bishops at Vatican II called spiritual ecumenism, “the soul of the whole ecumenical movement.” They defined it as “change of heart and holiness of life”—and thus conversion—as well as “public and private prayer for the unity of Christians.” We will only be able to make progress if we return to our spiritual roots and search for a renewed ecumenical spirituality. That means listening and opening ourselves to the demands of the Spirit who speaks through various forms of piety. A spiritual empathy is needed, an intimate understanding from the inside, with the heart as well as with the mind, of what may be for us initially strange Christian and ecclesial forms of life. Spiritual ecumenism involves a readiness to rethink, to bear the otherness of the other. It requires tolerance, patience, respect, good will and love which does not boast but rejoices in the truth. We will look at other attitudes of heart and mind involved in spiritual ecumenism, as well as look at what it does not mean.

Receptive ecumenism—How can the various traditions of Christian faith more genuinely and effectively learn or receive from one another with integrity, now? Encouraged is an approach which is both realistic in the face of current difficulties and, at the same time, imaginative and bold. How are we to live in the interim, not giving up on the vision; not tempted to settle for less? How might we learn and receive from one another in this middle time with its challenges and problems? As the therapeutic adage goes: “We cannot change others. We can only change ourselves”—and, thereby, the way we relate to others. But doing this will itself alter things and open up new possibilities. The heart of receptive ecumenism is moving away from wishing that others could be more like us, to instead ask what we can and must learn from the other. Similarly, the ethic at work in Receptive Ecumenism is one wherein each tradition takes responsibility for its own potential learning from others and is, in turn, willing to facilitate the learning of others as requested, but without either requiring how this should be done, and without making this a precondition to attending to one’s own. In short, learning will take precedence over teaching. What are some of the gifts to be found in other traditions of Christian faith that would enrich us in our own?



Spiritual ecumenism is an opening of ourselves to the transformational power of the Holy Spirit who changes our hearts and leads us to repentance, conversion, and holiness of life. In this completely spiritual space we place ourselves before God and ask whether we have been faithful to God’s plan for the church. This humble attitude of heart is the necessary ground and environment enabling the quest for Christian unity to be both fruitful and sustained.

From its very inception, the ecumenical movement was rooted in the soil of spiritual inspiration. In 1907 Fr. Paul

Wattson in New York offered the idea of an octave (eight days) of prayer between the feast of St. Peter's Chair on January 18 and the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul on January 25. A year later it was initiated. In 1935 Abbé Paul Couturier, a priest of the archdiocese of Lyons in France, gave the Week of Prayer new energy by bringing more Protestants into the circle. As is always the case with prayer, it was a result of the impulse of the Holy Spirit.

"The measure of our concern for unity," said the delegates to the World Council of Churches' Second Assembly in 1954, "is the degree to which we pray for it. We cannot expect God to give us unity unless we prepare ourselves to receive his gift by costly and purifying prayer. To pray together is to be drawn together."¹

Ten years later, in 1964 the world assembly of Catholic bishops at Vatican II called spiritual ecumenism, "the soul of the whole ecumenical movement." They defined it as "change of heart and holiness of life"—and thus conversion—as well as "public and private prayer for the unity of Christians."²

Repentance and conversion are called for because, as the Decree on Ecumenism said in its opening lines, our division "openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages that most holy cause, the preaching of the Gospel to every creature."³

To confront this scandal and to work to overcome it presupposes a profound spirituality. We will only make progress in our work for Christian unity when we engage in returning to its spiritual roots. If we relate to the source of that original impetus as though it were simply our starting point which we have now left behind us, rather than one which must always accompany us, we will find it necessary to pull off the road because our tires are flat. Sustaining our ecumenical activity today requires a spiritual depth for the long haul.

John Paul II told the College of Cardinals in a state-of-the-Catholic church address: "I pray every day for Christian unity." I wonder how many Christians could say as much. Imagine what a different Church it would be if many members in all the churches that make up the one Church of Christ could say the same. It would make a difference because prayer's first effect is in us. Our own hearts and minds would be shaped by our own prayer and become more sensitive to the opportunities we have to translate that prayer into practice. Prayer will always hold the first place in unity efforts because it is prayer that most changes our hearts, and it is our hearts that most need to be changed.

Pope Benedict XVI said as much at the 20th World Youth Day in 2005: "We can only obtain unity as a gift of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, spiritual ecumenism—prayer, conversion and the sanctification of life—constitutes the heart of the . . . ecumenical movement. . . ."

I am convinced that if more and more people unite themselves interiorly to the Lord's prayer "that all may be one," then this prayer, made in the name of Jesus, will not go unheard.⁴

Spiritual ecumenism is by no means, however, limited to prayer. It also involves openness to the possibility of a change of heart, for as the Decree on Ecumenism said, "there can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without interior conversion (no. 7)."

In his presentation on the 40th anniversary of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, Cardinal Walter Kasper developed the notion of spiritual ecumenism further and specified some of its concrete expressions beyond prayer: shared reading and meditation of sacred scripture; exchanges between monasteries, communities and spirituality movements; visits to pilgrim sites and centers of spirituality.⁵

Spiritual ecumenism is also an exchange of spiritual gifts such as these:

- Contemplative and charismatic ways of praying
- The *lectio divina* method for praying with the Word of God
- Devotional practices like the veneration of icons
- The tradition of spiritual direction and the training of spiritual directors
- The practice of annual retreats and monthly desert days
- Methods of singing, preaching, and sharing the faith
- Sharing effective pastoral approaches to youth and young adults

After working for fourteen years at the Canadian Center for Ecumenism, I saw the need for more places where Christians from different traditions of practice could come together for days at a time to share faith and life, to pray with one another and engage in the exchange of spiritual gifts. So I became involved in the work of founding Unitas, an ecumenical center for spirituality co-sponsored by eight different denominations in Montreal. By the time I left there

five years later in response to the Paulist community's call to develop a Paulist North American Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations in the U.S., there were 5000 participants annually in our programs and retreats. It met a need.

The approach we took there was one of spiritual ecumenism. The time spent in faith sharing and prayer together, the spiritual gifts exchanged, transformed peoples' perceptions of one another and enriched their lives in concrete and lasting ways. It was a way of engaging in the work for Christian unity that moved on the level of church members and had a direct, positive impact on their lives and their subsequent witness and prayer.

This is why today spiritual ecumenism continues to play a large role in the deployment of my time and energy. One of the forms it takes is leading ecumenical retreats. The retreats are offered on themes with broad and popular appeal: Together in Christ. Cultivating a Holistic Spirituality. Prayer of Heart and Body. Savoring Life in Every Season. Pray All Ways. Becoming Free. Lessons from the Mystics. Contemplative Prayer in the Christian Tradition. Challenge and Inspiration from Other Religions.⁶

Ecumenical retreats do not need to focus on the classical issues that have historically divided us. They can also focus on the realities people face in their daily living, inviting the participants to share with one another the spiritual resources that they find helpful in living the gospel today. It's an opportunity for people who come from different traditions of Christian faith to engage in a weekend or weeklong period of sharing their faith and life experience, praying together, singing in harmony, learning and drawing inspiration from one another, and experiencing the richness of inhabiting periods of silence together in community.

Coming into the retreat, their perception of one another as Catholic or Protestant or Evangelical or Orthodox may have simply been shaped by social stereotypes from their upbringing. But after joining their hearts and voices in prayer each day, after sharing faith over meals or in groups, after experiencing each other's love of the Lord up close, by the time they leave a relationship has been created, contact information exchanged, and the former stranger is now recognized as a brother or sister in the Lord.

Another expression for me of spiritual and receptive ecumenism is preaching co-sponsored, four-day congregational faith renewal events called Gospel Call with a Protestant preaching partner. It is one such event that brings me to Montreal this week.

On the weekend, my partner, Rev. John Armstrong from a Reformed church background, and I split up and preach in as many of the co-sponsoring churches' Sunday services as is logistically possible.

Then we preach together at three evening Services of the Word, each of which is usually held in a different church to provide participants with an opportunity to pray together in each other's worship spaces. The pastor of the hosting church presides; the missionaries (my partner and I) preach and lead all participants in a ritual action emphasizing the commonality of our faith and in accord with the theme of that particular evening's scriptural readings.

The fellowship dimension is integral as well. On the opening evening, preceding the evening service there is a potluck supper, jointly sponsored and organized by the participating congregations. Following the evening services on the next three days, everyone is invited to gather in the hosting congregation's fellowship hall for refreshments and socializing.

And during the course of each weekday, a different spiritual growth and development opportunity is offered by my partner and I in the form of a breakfast workshop for people on their way to work in the morning; a mid-morning Bible study; and a luncheon reflection and sharing group. Similarly, these sessions are located in the various churches to provide people with an opportunity to become comfortable entering into each other's churches.

On the last evening, people who are engaged in similar ministries in the various co-sponsoring congregations come together, e.g. those involved in youth ministry, liturgy and music, administration, social action, Christian education. In a session that begins and ends with prayer, we lead representatives from the cosponsoring parishes in a process of sharing with one another what they do, the resources they use, and whether there are any ways they can support each other's efforts or act together. This input provides direction for ongoing collaboration between the local churches as they face the future. The number of co-sponsoring congregations can be as few as three or as many as ten.⁷

The first such mission took place in Sherwood Park, Alberta in 1989. The congregations involved responded so positively to it that they wanted to do it again the following year. They did, and they have done it every year since! Two weeks ago my original preaching partner, Rev. William Derby, who at the time was associate pastor at the Anglican cathedral in Montreal, and I were invited back to Sherwood Park to lead them in their 25th anniversary ecumenical mission.

Of all the ministerial engagements I have been blessed to participate in over the years, these missions and ecumenical retreats are the most fulfilling. Their correlation with spiritual and receptive ecumenism is rich and direct. The ecumenical movement is not only an exchange of ideas and documents, nor only a matter of working side by side to overcome poverty and racism; it is also an exchange of spiritual gifts and spiritual experiences. It need not start with what divides us but with what we have in common. It starts with common Christian experiences and with facing together common Christian challenges in our more or less secularized and multi-cultural world.

We have also hopefully learned that the work for Christian unity has nothing to do with syncretism or a lowest-common-denominatorism or peaceful co-existence in division. It has to do with full visible communion in faith, sacramental life, apostolic ministry, and mission. Full communion does not mean uniformity, but exists alongside cultural diversity, alongside different liturgical rites, different forms of piety, different but complementary emphases and perspectives.⁸

As Cardinal Walter Kasper said in his book *Harvesting the Fruits*, There is no reason to be discouraged or frustrated, or to speak of an 'ecumenical winter'. The Spirit who initiated the ecumenical movement has also accompanied it and made it fruitful. We have achieved more than we could have imagined or dreamed forty years ago. Yet we must also admit, realistically, that we have not yet reached the goal of our ecumenical pilgrimage, but are still at an intermediate stage. There remain fundamental problems to solve and differences to overcome.⁹

Receptive Ecumenism

How can we keep the momentum going in this intermediate stage when the hope for more ministerial, sacramental, and structural unity is now widely seen as being unrealistic? The new strategy is referred to as Receptive Ecumenism. It is presented as a third phase in the ecumenical movement. Phase one and two are the traditional complementary forms of Christian unity efforts known as Life and Work and Faith and Order. The Life and Work movement emerged from the ground-breaking 1910

Edinburgh World Missionary Conference and sought to bring the churches from mutual hostility and mistrust to recognition and effective collaboration in worship, work, and mission. As an "ecumenism of life", it would later represent one of the key foundational stones for the establishment of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948. Its core concern was to develop shared relationship and feet-on-the-ground practical cooperation between formerly divided traditions of Christian faith.

Ecumenism's second phase, the Faith and Order movement, also evolved from the Edinburgh gathering. It sought to address the institutional, ministerial, and sacramental divisions that have perdured over centuries. It brought to bear an "ecumenism of dialogue" on formal doctrinal and ecclesiological causes of division, and it also served as a keystone undertaking in the creation of the WCC.

When the Catholic Church formally entered into the ecumenical movement following the Second Vatican Council and invested strongly in national and international dialogues, the progress on this level was such that it fed dizzy expectations about the possible realization of full structural, sacramental, and ministerial communion within a generation. In contrast, however, to those heady days, the great wave of reconciliation through theological dialogue and clarification appears to have crashed on the beach, leaving some of the great dialogue documents as the high-water mark of a tide now turned. We now realize that we are dealing with substantive, long-term differences that, at the formal level, are not going to be resolved for the foreseeable future. There's no denying that over the past decade or so formal ecumenism has experienced an energy drain with the surfacing of significant doctrinal issues not easily resolved, leaving the movement for unity in a place of apparent impasse.¹⁰

How are we to live in the interim, not giving up on the vision; not tempted to settle for less? How might we learn and receive from one another in this middle time with its challenges and problems?

It is precisely in this period that receptive ecumenism has emerged as a new strategy. Pioneered through a series of projects in England operating out of Durham University's Department of Theology and Religion in recent years, receptive ecumenism proceeds by bringing to the fore the dispositions of hospitality, humble learning, and ongoing conversion that have always been quietly essential to good ecumenical work. Receptive ecumenism turns those dispositions into an explicit strategy and a core task.¹¹

The primary call of Receptive Ecumenism is to take responsibility for one's own and one's own community's learning, without first demanding that the other do likewise. Instead of approaching the other, thinking, "What do they need to learn from us?", we ask, "What is it that we need to and can learn from them? How are we moving into holy ground when we move into each other's presence?"¹²

Required is a fundamental shift from each tradition of Christian faith assertively defending its own perceived inheritance in competition with each other, to taking responsibility for its own potential learning from others. In

short, learning will take precedence over teaching. As the therapeutic adage goes, “We cannot change others; we can only change ourselves.”¹³

Receptive Ecumenism is guided both by theological principle and practical insight. The theological principle is that if the call to full, visible communion is really a gospel imperative, then the fresh challenges being faced by us in the ecumenical journey should not be read as an insuperable roadblock or as arrival at the end of the road. In Christian understanding, God can be trusted to provide us with the resources needed to respond to God’s call to unity and to live that call fruitfully in any given context. There must be a fitting means of continuing to walk towards and to live in anticipation of the reality of full communion.¹⁴

The approach here is to view the churches collectively as each being on a long-term path to ecclesial renewal and growth. In short, of being in a state of *semper reformandi* (always reforming) as Martin Luther put it, or in a state of *semper purificanda* (always purifying itself) as Vatican II’s Dogmatic

Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, expressed it. In this perspective, the longer-term ecumenical journey on which the churches are embarked, and the recalibration of ecumenical expectation that this evokes, is not a case of poor judgment on our part as to what is possible. It is a consequence of the softwood having been cut through and the hardwood now being engaged. The only route possible now is that of grace-filled learning as to how we are all being called to grow to a new place where new things become possible. The fig tree is being given the additional time it needs if it is to bear fruit.¹⁵

Complementing these theological convictions are some pragmatic principles and insights. During the same period that the churches have come to see the fulfillment of the ecumenical goal as being on a slower track than once envisaged, they have also come to more sober evaluations of their respective shortcomings, challenges, and needs. Each tradition has its own specific difficulties which it can be incapable of resolving from its own existing resources.

Opening to refreshment and renewal from without, to alternative approaches and ecclesial experiences of other traditions, can become a dynamic process that will take each tradition to new places for their own respective health and flourishing. As each tradition opens to learn and receive from associated understandings and practices in other traditions, there will be a life-giving move toward a more honest assessment of where the specific difficulties in their

own tradition lie and how they might fruitfully learn in these regards, with appropriate testing, from other traditions.¹⁶

Receptive Ecumenism offers a constructive way ahead in a situation where some of the dialogues seem to have run out of steam. It starts with humble recognition of the wounds, tears, and difficulties in one’s own tradition and asks how the particular and different gifts, experiences, and ways of proceeding in the other traditions can speak to and help to heal these wounds. Receptive Ecumenism represents a way forward in which the currently divided traditions can walk towards full structural, ministerial, sacramental communion and their own healing together.¹⁷

¹ “Report of the Advisory Commission for the 2nd Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Evanston, 1954”; *The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices*, Michael Kinnamon, Brian Cope, eds. (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997), 137.

² Decree on Ecumenism, no. 8.

³ Decree on Ecumenism, no. 1.

⁴ Ecumenical Meeting, 20th World Youth Day, August 19, 2005. Cited in *The Word Among Us*, May, 2008, p. 26.

⁵ Walter Kasper, “The Ecumenical Movement in the 21st Century,” presentation at the event marking the 40th anniversary of the Joint Working group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC, 2005.

⁶ More information on each of these themes is available at <http://www.tomryancsp.org/retreats.htm>

⁷ More information on Gospel Call is available at <http://www.paulist.org/ecumenism/gospel-call>

⁸ Walter Kasper, *Harvesting the Fruits* (London, England: Continuum, 2009), 6.

⁹ Kasper, *Harvesting*, 8.

¹⁰ Paul D. Murray, “Introducing Receptive Ecumenism,” *The Ecumenist* Vol. 51 No. 2 (Spring, 2014), 2, 3.

¹¹ Kiply Lukan Yaworski, “Receptive ecumenism practical, flexible and broad,” *The Prairie Messenger*, Jan 1, 2014.

¹² Mary Tanner, “From Vatican II to Mississauga—Lessons in Receptive Ecumenical Learning from the A-RC Bilateral Dialogue Process, in *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning: Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism*, ed. Paul Murray (Oxford University Press 2008), 258.

¹³ Paul D. Murray, “Establishing the Agenda,” *Receptive Ecumenism*, 15

¹⁴ Paul D. Murray, “Introducing Receptive Ecumenism,” *The Ecumenist*, 4.

¹⁵ Murray, “Introducing Receptive Ecumenism,” 4.

¹⁶ Murray, “Introducing,” 4, 6.

¹⁷ Murray, “Introducing,” 7.

A Reflection of The Challenges of Ecumenism in Today's World Conference

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The two-day conference titled “The Challenges of Ecumenism in Today's World” had a variety of unique speakers who shared their opinions or views on ecumenism. These speakers included Bishop Thomas Dowd, Bishop Barry Clark, Father Thomas Ryan, and Dr. Matthew Anderson.

Bishop Thomas Dowd's presentation was titled “Vatican II and Ecumenism”; his presentation was focused on commemorating the 50TH anniversary of *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the Vatican II decree on ecumenism. Bishop Dowd discussed the five activities that can be done to promote ecumenism, so that one day all Christians will gather together in one church as it should be. Bishop Barry Clark's presentation was titled “An Ecumenical Dance with Anglicans”; his presentation was focused on the involvement of the Anglican community in the ecumenical movement by engaging in dialog. Bishop Clark discussed how Anglicans are communicating with other faiths and described it as a dance where they hope and pray that their dancing partners will continue to dance and pray with them.

Father Thomas Ryan's presentation was titled “Spiritual and Receptive Ecumenism”; he discussed how spiritual ecumenism is opening oneself to the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. Father Ryan believes that Christians will only be able to make progress if they return to their spiritual roots and search for a renewed ecumenical spirituality. Dr. Matthew Anderson's presentation was titled “Ecumenism with its feet on the ground: walking pilgrimages”; Dr. Anderson shared his documentary “Something Grand” on the Camino de Santiago. Dr. Anderson follows pilgrims on the 800-kilometer journey from France to Santiago, Spain, asking various pilgrims “why are you doing this?” the answers he received were as complex and unique as the walkers themselves.

Ecumenism is a slow process that cannot simply be achieved overnight. In order for ecumenism to be achieved and have a place in today's world it requires time to become fully developed to address the differences in the various Christian faiths allowing it to be accepted by all.

Ecumenism does have a place in the 21st century and it has the potential to exist in today's world despite the division within

the Christian community. Visible unity between Christians is possible as they are all believers in God the Father and Jesus Christ, through the faith they received in baptism. Before his crucifixion Jesus Christ prayed for his disciples and all Christians: “that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:21) thus Christian unity is related to the unity with God.

Ecumenism has a place in today's world as the diversity of cultures and traditions are now beginning to be recognized as a source of creativity allowing people to look past their differences. One instance of differences being accepted is in the Anglican Church where they are allowing non-Anglicans to participate in mass and in some cases receive communion along with the Anglicans.

In rural communities ecumenism has the potential to benefit small churches that could be potentially struggling to support themselves due to a diminished following thereby leading to their financial difficulties. By embracing ecumenism these smaller churches would have the opportunity to combine into one allowing for a larger following. This would provide a solution to their financial problems and create a larger community where everyone is included.

With interfaith marriages becoming increasingly popular in today's society, ecumenism would ensure that both spouses would be able to be embraced by their partner's church. This would allow them to partake in mass and join the community without feeling like an outsider.

If churches were to embrace ecumenism the uniting of the churches could help with the current faith crisis that has occurred. By participating in ecumenism, the churches could work together to solve the current faith crisis as all branches of Christianity are experiencing this decline in faith globally. By uniting together the churches could also work together to address other issues that have occurred in recent years such as the acceptance of homosexuals and the role of women in the church. If they were to communicate with one another they could learn from other churches' experiences and apply this to their own situations.

It is apparent that there are many issues that presently divide Christians and these will need to be addressed before ecumenism can be fully achieved. Ecumenism is not a simple task that can be achieved overnight or even within a matter of years. It could potentially take centuries before ecumenism is fully achieved, as it will be a slow and gradual process. Like all change, it will need to be embraced by those involved and

presently these people hold strongly to their individual faiths. However that doesn't mean that people should give up as ecumenism has a place in today's world and by making small changes we can begin to create the foundation for the future where hopefully ecumenism will occur.

Two Orthodox Visions of Ecumenism: Sergei Bulgakov and Georges Florovsky

Dr Paul Ladouceur Dr. Paul Ladouceur teaches in the Orthodox theology program at the Université de Sherbrooke and Trinity College, University of Toronto. He has published or edited several books and other publications on Orthodoxy, including *Rencontre avec l'Orthodoxie* (published by Alexandre), une introduction à la tradition orthodoxe (English version: *Living Orthodoxy*). He was the editor of two books published in France: *Lev Gillet « Un moine de l'Église d'Orient »*, *Le Pasteur de nos âmes* (F.-X. de Guibert); and *Le Jour du Saint Esprit* (published by Le Cerf), traductions françaises d'ouvrages de sainte Marie de Paris (Mère Marie Skobtsov). He is currently preparing an edition of the most important theological texts of Father Georges Florovsky as well as a study on modern Orthodox theology. His articles have appeared in Orthodox magazines in France, the U.S., Canada and the U.K. Paul Ladouceur is the founder and webmaster of the Orthodox website « Pages orthodoxes La Transfiguration », and an e-newsletter on the Orthodox tradition, *Lumière du Thabor*. Paul Ladouceur is a member of the Faith and Witness Commission of the Canadian Council of Churches.

Summary:

Father Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944) and Father Georges Florovsky (1893-1979) are the most important Orthodox theologians of the 20th century. Although they were colleagues at the Institut de théologie orthodoxe Saint-Serge in Paris for some 15 years, their theological visions were very different. According to Bulgakov, Christian truth can and even must express itself in modern terms according to the times, while Florovsky insists that only the theological categories and terms of the Greek Fathers have a universal value for Christian theology. These contrasting theological approaches are also reflected in their ecclesiologies and their visions of ecumenism. Even if Bulgakov and Florovsky considered that only the Orthodox Church possessed the truth of Christ in its fullness, they were very involved in the ecumenical movement. But while Bulgakov emphasized what brought Christians together, the unity of the Church in spite of the divisions between Christians, for Florovsky, disagreements over dogma (for example, the Filioque) had created a rift between Christian denominations.



These two ecumenical approaches were seen, among others, during a conflict over intercommunion in the mid-1930s. Father Sergei suggested that the Orthodox and Anglicans who were members of the Fellowship of Saint Alban and Saint Sergius could receive communion during liturgies of the other Church during meetings of the Fellowship, while Father Georges was opposed to the idea. Finally, Bulgakov had to withdraw his proposal, and it was Florovsky's ecumenical vision that has remained dominant in Orthodoxy.

The ecumenical dialogue of the 1920s and 1930s compelled the Orthodox to re-examine their ecclesiology and define their goals and motivations in the ecumenical movement.

This article explores the theological foundations of Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement through the thinking of Father Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944) and Father Georges Florovsky (1893-1979), with the aim of discovering some lessons for ecumenism today.

Sergei Bulgakov and Georges Florovsky are the most important Orthodox theologians of the 20th century. While Bulgakov was the most prominent Orthodox theologian of the first half of the 20th century, it was Florovsky who dominated Orthodox theology in the second half of the century, with his call, widely heard, to return to the patristic sources of theology.

Also, they were separated by a generation. Born in 1871, Bulgakov was a mature philosopher and writer, one of the leaders of the religious renaissance in Russia before the First World War, and was expelled from the Soviet Union by Lenin in 1922. Florovsky, born in 1893, had not yet finished his studies in philosophy and history when he left Russia in 1920. The two met in 1924 in Prague, then an important intellectual centre for Russian émigrés. In 1925, Bulgakov moved to Paris and became a professor of dogmatic theology and dean of the newly-founded *Institut de théologie orthodoxe Saint-Serge*. He invited Florovsky to come and teach Patristics at the *Institut*, even though he had no education in theology. Florovsky threw himself into studying the Church Fathers and found his true vocation.

Two theological visions – Two ecumenical perspectives

Although they had been colleagues at the *Institut de théologie orthodoxe Saint-Serge* in Paris for some 15 years, their theological visions are very different. According to Bulgakov, Christian truth can and even must express itself in modern terms according to the times, while Florovsky insists that only the theological categories and terms of the Greek Fathers have a universal value for Christian theology. Thus, Sergei Bulgakov saw in his theology of Divine Wisdom (or Sophia) a faithfulness to the thinking of the Church, while for Georges Florovsky, this was a radical departure from the theology of the Fathers that resulted in doctrines foreign to Orthodoxy.

These contrasting theological approaches are also reflected in their ecclesiologies and their visions of ecumenism. The ecumenical dialogue of the 1920s and 1930s compelled the Orthodox to re-examine their ecclesiology and define their goals and motivations in the ecumenical movement. This is when definite differences appeared between Bulgakov and Florovsky.

They shared a very strong commitment to the ecumenical movement, but their outlooks and approaches were markedly different. For Bulgakov, real unity between Christians was possible, because it was a matter of discovering the unity that already existed in the Holy Spirit, in spite of the obvious divisions between Christian denominations. Antoine Arjakovsky summarized Father Sergei Bulgakov's perspective: "In practical terms...the unity given, "already present" in the Church (Divine Wisdom), was to be brought about in history (Created Wisdom) by the assembly of believers (*ekklesia*) taking part in the common work (the liturgy)."¹

Bulgakov emphasizes what unites Christians— "their prayer, their understanding of the Gospel as the verbal icon of the Christ, their spiritual life, their common recognition of the sacrament of baptism"² – rather than what divided them. This openness united him in complete faithfulness to the Orthodox tradition; he saw the fullness of Truth only in the Orthodox Church: "Orthodoxy is the Church of Christ on earth", he wrote in his book *Orthodoxie* (1932);³ the Kingdom of God was not only to come, but was already present in the unity of Christians. Father Bulgakov's ecumenism, like his ecclesiology, was *mystical, sacramental, charismatic, prophetic and eschatological*.

For Florovsky, the division of the Churches was dogmatic in nature; disagreements over dogma (for example, over the *Filioque*) had created a deep rift between Christian denominations. He set out such requirements for the reunification of the Churches that he put little credence in “conferences of theologians” and delayed “to the twilight of eschatology”, that is, to the end of time, “the moment of genuine reunification.”⁴ From this perspective, it is above all *witness* that justifies the involvement of Orthodox in ecumenical meetings: witnessing to the truth of Christ that exists in its fullness only in the Orthodox Church. There is no possibility of a genuine meeting of equals in ecumenism, except in the context of conversion to Orthodoxy. His ecumenical perspective is therefore *dogmatic, historical, patristic and exclusive*.

The Fellowship of Saint Alban and Saint Sergius

In 1928, Florovsky became a member of the Fellowship of Saint Alban and Saint Sergius, founded the previous year to promote dialogue and rapprochement between the Anglican and Orthodox Churches. Metropolitan Eulogius, the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church in Western Europe, had a keen interest in ecumenical initiatives. He shared the chairmanship of the Fellowship with an Anglican bishop, Walter Frere. Bulgakov, with the strong backing of Metropolitan Eulogius, played a very important role in the Fellowship until 1937. He was the *de facto* senior Orthodox representative in the Fellowship through his prestige as a theologian and his responsibilities at the *Institut Saint-Serge*.

Florovsky, thanks to his erudition, his eloquence, his personal charm and his excellent command of English, quickly became one of the main Orthodox representatives. Even if Bulgakov, enjoying great personal respect from the Anglicans, was the main theological spokesman for the Orthodox in the Fellowship, the Anglicans found it difficult to receive his theology, particularly his sophiology. The Anglicans were more drawn to the Biblical and patristic orientations of the other Orthodox members of the group, including Georges Florovsky, Lev Gillet and Serge Tchétverikov.

The quarrel over intercommunion

The different approaches to ecumenism between Bulgakov and Florovsky reached their apogee around the issue of intercommunion at Fellowship meetings.⁵ This took place at the same time as the clash of ideas around ecclesiology between the traditionalists and the modernists among the Russians.⁶

In June 1933, after six years of meetings, Bulgakov proposed “partial intercommunion” to members of the Fellowship: with the blessing of the Anglican and Orthodox bishops concerned, the Anglicans would communicate at liturgies celebrated by Orthodox clergy during meetings of the Fellowship, and vice versa. Affirming the pre-eminence of the Eucharistic unity taking place before the altar, Father Sergei nonetheless laid down certain conditions: a “dogmatic minimum”:

- Common agreement on Eucharistic dogma, in broad terms;
- Recognition of the real presence of Jesus Christ, through the consecration of the bread and the wine, while the theological explanation of this consecration may remain open;
- The creeds of the first seven ecumenical councils;
- The existence of the sacrament of orders in the apostolic succession;
- The consent of the bishops of the specific Churches as well as their mutual sacramental blessing.⁷

Our common prayer at these conferences is a revelation – we have been separated for so long, and here we are praying together. God is calling us to unite ourselves.

This great openness, characteristic of Bulgakov’s ecumenical perspective, was strongly supported by a number of Orthodox, including Nicolas Berdiaev, Georges Fedotov, Antoine Kartashev, Leon Zander and Nicolas Zernov. But the idea raised protest among other Orthodox, especially Georges Florovsky, Serge Tchétverikov and Nicolas Arseniev.

Leon Sander, who was close to Father Sergei, summarized the common experience of Anglicans and Orthodox in Father Sergei’s eyes [translation]:

They were open to each other and acknowledged for the first time that the differences separating the two Churches completely disappeared before the holiness and importance of what united them. This openness could aptly

be called “revelation”, because it was in the order of mystical experience and did not consist in discovering a similarity in terms of dogma or doctrine, but in a penetration into holiness, into the Holy Spirit, rich in blessing, which forms the inmost being of the two Churches. This does not happen at conferences or in discussions, but in common prayer: Anglicans taking part in the Orthodox liturgy and Orthodox in the Anglican liturgy. In this prayerful encounter before the altar, they discover and recognize the unity of the mysterious life that inhabits both Churches.⁸

We feel and discern a genuine life, a “standing before the face of God”, a unity in Christ that simply cannot be defeated by denominational division.

And so, at the Fellowship’s conference in June 1933, Father Sergei said, among other things [translation]:

Our common prayer at these conferences is a revelation – we have been separated for so long, and here we are praying together. God is calling us to unite ourselves. It is spiritually dangerous to keep talking endlessly about only our differences. We have been directed to the high wall of separation and we cannot remain in eternal contemplation of it. Having come this far, we have a personal responsibility for the task of reuniting. We must do what we can in the present historical circumstances...God calls us to act here and now.⁹

For Bulgakov, there was a genuine encounter between the Orthodox and the Anglicans of the Fellowship, a “partial reuniting” of the two Churches, which should culminate in “partial intercommunion.” Without denying the pertinence of canonical authority in the Orthodox Church, Bulgakov said that there was another authority, that of spiritual experience. And by virtue of spiritual experience, in accordance with canonical authority – the bishops on both sides –, this partial intercommunion should be permitted. Bulgakov saw this as a step along the way to establishing full reunion between the Churches.

Florovsky’s objections were related to his ecumenical perspective. With major issues of dogma separating the two Churches, there was no question of intercommunion without

full agreement on dogma. Bulgakov himself summarized the position of his adversaries in this way: “Dogmatic agreement is the *prius*, and the *eucharistic*, the *posterius*, a sort of result of the first.”¹⁰ For Florovsky, full dogmatic agreement – unity in truth – had to take precedence over unity based on common prayer and love. He laid the emphasis on canonical authority rather than on the experience of common prayer.

Florovsky’s other objections were that the Fellowship’s participants were not representative of their respective Churches and that communion could not be “partial” because communion was a catholic action, not a private one.¹¹ He also cast doubt on the contribution that partial intercommunion could make to bringing about church reunion.

After the 1933 conference, Bulgakov and Florovsky launched a war of words. Bulgakov fired the first salvo with his article “By Jacob’s Well (Jn 4:23) on the actual unity of the apparently divided Church: in prayer, faith, and sacrament”¹² (a fundamental text on his ecclesiology and his ecumenical perspective). Taking as his starting point Jesus’ word to the Samaritan woman on worshipping God “in spirit and in truth”, Bulgakov presents an essentially mystical vision of the Church, based on recognition of Christ and animated by mutual love. From this perspective, Christian unity is based on common prayer: “the way toward reunion of the East and West does not lie through tournaments between theologians of the East and West, but through a reunion before the altar.” The priesthood of East and West must act as one priesthood, “celebrating the one Eucharist.”¹³

Florovsky countered with his article « Les frontières de l’Église »¹⁴ (“The Limits of the Church”), also a fundamental text on his ecclesiology. He called on historical arguments: the attitude of certain Church Fathers toward the heretics and schismatics of the first centuries, and the practice of gradual reintegration into the Church of those who had wandered away. However, he did not accept the doctrine of Cyprian of Carthage that there was no grace outside the Church (Orthodox), and instead followed Augustine in recognizing that the Holy Spirit acted beyond the canonical limits of the Church. His idea of the way to Christian reunification, however, was through the reintegration of all Christians within the Orthodox Church. Thus the very idea of a “partial union” and “partial intercommunion” without complete agreement between the Churches could not be received.

The differences in approach to ecclesiology and ecumenism between the two theologians could not be more obvious than

in these two articles. Florovsky was not alone in opposing Bulgakov's bold proposal. There was some hesitation on the Anglican side as well, but the Anglican bishops finally gave their consent.

However, faced with Orthodox opposition and Anglican hesitation, Bulgakov backed down. In 1935, he revised his proposal and limited it to "spiritual intercommunion", not sharing the same Eucharistic cup. He wrote in *Sobornost* [translation]:

The principle of spiritual intercommunion born in our fellowship and which expresses its nature is certainly new from a dogmatic point of view... It represents an inevitable attempt to appreciate the value of a new religious experience closely associated with this movement. In this experience, boundaries between denominations are overcome despite the walls that separate them. We feel and discern a genuine life, a "standing before the face of God", a unity in Christ that simply cannot be defeated by denominational division.¹⁵

Thus, even the faith, vision and ardour of Father Sergei were not enough to overcome the objections and hesitations concerning his proposal for intercommunion.

Ecumenism: Prophetic or patristic?

After 1935, the fallout from the sophiology controversy cast a shadow over the activities of the Fellowship. The possibility of union between the Orthodox and Anglican Churches disappeared from the agenda. The *kairos*, the propitious moment to act, had come and gone. At the end of the 1930s and after the war, the Fellowship was eclipsed by the broader ecumenical movement, dominated by the churches of the Reformation, when the World Council of Churches was being set up in 1948.

Father Sergei had to withdraw from his ecumenical activities in 1937 for health reasons, but he gave his place to Father Georges: even though the two theologians did not agree on the basic approach of Orthodox theology, they did respect each other. Florovsky resumed his ecumenical activities after the Second World War; he became one of the founding members of the World Council of Churches and for 20 years was the main Orthodox spokesman at ecumenical meetings. If Father Sergei Bulgakov championed a *prophetic* vision above all of the Orthodox involvement in the ecumenical movement, emphasizing the existing elements of unity between Christian denominations; the ecumenical vision of Father Georges Florovsky was instead *patristic*, stressing the

dogmatic issues that separated the Churches. At the end of the day, it was Florovsky's ecumenical vision that became and remains dominant in Orthodoxy: agreement on dogmatic questions must precede the return to Eucharistic communion at the same cup. The lack of intercommunion thus becomes a painful identifying symbol of the separation of the Churches. This does not prevent Orthodox participation in other activities and signs of Christian unity, such as non-Eucharistic prayer and social action.

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¹ Antoine Arjakovsky, *La Génération des penseurs religieux de l'émigration russe*, éd. L'Esprit et la lettre, Paris, 2002, p. 414.

² Antoine Arjakovsky, *Essai sur le père Serge Boulgakov*, éd. Parole et silence, Paris, 2006, p. 53.

³ Serge Boulgakov, *L'Orthodoxie, L'Âge d'homme*, Lausanne, 1980, p. 7.

⁴ Georges Florovsky, « La problématique de la réunion chrétienne », *Pout*, 1933 ; quoted in Arjakovsky, *La Génération...*, p. 408.

⁵ On "intercommunion", see Sergius Nikolaev, "Spiritual unity: The Role of Religious Authority in the Disputes between Sergei Bulgakov and G. Florovsky concerning Intercommunion", *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 49, 1-2, 2005 ; Arjakovsky, *La Génération...*, p. 418-421 ; Barbara Hallensleben, « Intercommunion spirituelle entre Orient et Occident. Le théologien russe Serge Boulgakov (1871-1944) », in : *Le Christianisme, nuée de témoins*, Éditions universitaires, Fribourg, 1998.

⁶ The epistolary debates between the two perspectives took place in the reviews *Pout* and *Sobornost*.

⁷ S. Bulgakov, "Ways to Church Reunion", *Sobornost* 2, 1935 ; trad.: « Voies pour la réunion de l'Église », *Istina*, 2, 1969, p. 238-245.

⁸ L. Zander, *Bog i mir* [Dieu et le monde], YMCA-Press, 1948, t. I, p. 168. Cited in Hallensleben, p. 96.

⁹ Summary of the speech by Father S. Bulgakov, cited in Nikolaev, p. 107.

¹⁰ S. Bulgakov, "Ways to Church Reunion", cited in Hallensleben, p. 98.

¹¹ Arjakovsky, *La Génération...*, p. 419. See also the summary of Florovsky's objections to Bulgakov's views, cited in Nikolaev, p. 114.

¹² S. Bulgakov, « U Kladezia Iakovlia (Io. 4.23) », in: *Khristianskoe vozsoedinenie : ekumenicheskaia problema v provoslavnom soznanii*, YMCA-Press, 1933, p. 9-32. In English in the *Journal of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius*, 22, 1933.

¹³ Bulgakov, "By Jacob's Well", in *A Bulgakov Anthology*, p. 112-113.

¹⁴ Georges Florovsky, "The Limits of the Church", *Church Quarterly Review*, 117, 1933.

¹⁵ S. Bulgakov, "Spiritual Intercommunion", *Sobornost*, 4, 1935.

Ecumenism: Out of style?

Dr. Gilles Routhier

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Summary:

At the start of the 1960s, ecumenism had the wind in its sails in Montreal. Its blossoming was a breath of fresh air in a climate of separation and denominational rivalries. It bore wonderful fruit, but today, it no longer seems to arouse the same passion and stir the same interest. And yet, with the arrival of new immigrants, especially from the Balkans, confessional diversity has grown in a city like Montreal. No longer does ecumenism apply only to the historic Christian traditions that have existed in Montreal for centuries and that perhaps feel less need for it now. Has ecumenism gone out of style, leaving behind the new arrivals who live on our margins and belong to smaller and less integrated communities?

You will have noticed that my title is not a statement, but a question, one that leads me to reflect. To answer it, I will first enquire of history, which, in the words of John XXIII, is the mistress of wisdom. This look back at history is not intended to bring a feeling of nostalgia for the “good old days”, but to remember so that we can go farther today. It will also allow us to interpret the present moment in ecumenism and discern pathways for the future.

I-The ecumenical effervescence of the 1960s-1970s

At the start of the 1960s, Montreal,¹ which really had not received a long and deep period of preparation until then,² walked to the beat of ecumenism. We can refer to Montreal's ecumenical effervescence, and repeat the assessment of Dr. Long and Gregory Baum who stated in 1963 that Montreal was in the vanguard of ecumenism. Since 1962, ecumenism, which until then had been simmering quietly, became public and official in the diocese of Montreal. The publication on January 13, 1962 of Cardinal Léger's pastoral letter “Disunited Christians” marked an important step and brought about a major change in perspective. It was no longer a matter of winning Protestants over to Catholicism, but of praying for unity, which would involve the renewal and conversion of the Catholic Church. In his pastoral letter, the cardinal not only reported on the progress of ecumenism in his diocese, but also acknowledged that “concern for unity has become the major quality of contemporary Christianity” and that this



important movement was born of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In reflecting on the mystery of unity and the disunity of Christians, he emphasized that, in spite of divisions, everyone who has validly received baptism has been “inserted into Christ and become one body with him” and, as a result, they are “members one of the other”, “attached to Christ and his Church.” He also noted that in regard to the expressed will of Christ, disunity represented “a scandal” and “an evil.” In his view, a “return to unity” was linked to “the internal renewal of the Catholic Church,” prayer and ecumenical dialogue carried on in charity. The cardinal invited his diocesan bishops to pray for unity and, animated by repentance and sorrow, to enter into dialogue with their fellow Christians, acknowledging that we are all responsible for the disunity of Christians. This pastoral letter lays an important foundation because, first of all, it distinguishes between what is essential in the Christian faith (the manifestation of the love of God in the death and resurrection of Christ) and other truths that remain subordinate to this essential one, and, second, it presents dialogue, not as a tool of persuasion but as a means for understanding each other.

That year, for the first time, Catholics and Protestants gathered publicly for an evening of prayer together. The event, at Notre-Dame church in Montreal, brought the underground ecumenism that had been going on for

some years out into the light of day. In May that year, the diocese of Montreal launched the first Diocesan Ecumenical Commission in North America. Composed of six priests and two laypeople, it was chaired by Fr. Irénée Beaubien, who had inspired the project. Cardinal Léger set seven objectives for the Commission:

- Develop an ecumenical spirit and attitude and spread them among Catholics;
- Foster a climate of greater understanding and rapprochement between the Catholic Church and other Christian churches;
- Maintain and intensify the ecumenical dialogue undertaken discreetly with Protestant pastors in recent years;
- Educate Catholics in everything to do with efforts toward Christian unity through an ecumenical approach;
- Uproot prejudice and misunderstandings that form an obstacle to Christian unity;
- Facilitate official contacts between the various Christian groups and the Catholic Church;
- Invite all Christians to pray to receive the great favour of unity as it was requested by Christ himself.³

In short, it was to carry on, at the diocesan level, the same work being done at the international level by the *Secretariat for Christian Unity* set up by John XXIII a few years earlier. From then on, ecumenism, which had mainly been a private initiative of Fr. Beaubien and a few others, emerged into the light of day.

In December 1962, on his return from the first session of the Council, where he distinguished himself through his ecumenical sensitivity, especially in his intervention on *De fontibus revelationis*, Cardinal Léger had declared that ecumenism was an irreversible movement.

One month later, in a letter to his diocesan bishops,⁴ on the occasion of the Week of Prayer for Unity, Léger urged the Catholics of his diocese to enter the movement. He was led to do so for two reasons: the ecumenical council then underway and the upcoming meeting, in Montreal, of the World Council of Churches' World Conference on Faith and Order. He therefore asked his bishops to pray for the success of both events. During the preparations for Faith and Order, ecumenical fever rose a degree. The press often remarked on this ecumenical effervescence and the radio⁵ mentioned it as well. In addition, there were numerous other public

manifestations: courses, evenings, lectures, group meetings, etc., in Montreal in 1963.⁶ That year, the reflection group for theologians begun in 1959 had as its theme "Scripture and Tradition". In this context, the Dominicans organized the Saint-Albert interdenominational meetings. On January 3, some 40 Protestant pastors and Catholics and Orthodox priests met at the Dominican convent to discuss the theme "Tradition and traditions in the history of Christianity". Three presentations expressed the point of view of the various Churches on this question.

In addition, Catholics were working with the local committee assigned by the WCC to prepare the Faith and Order Conference in Montreal. Starting in fall 1962, three members of the Diocesan Ecumenical Commission were invited, as observers and friends, to sit on the committee preparing the conference. It was in this connection that Fr. Beaubien came to chair a subcommittee assigned to organize an *Evening of Christian Fellowship* at the *Université de Montreal*, on July 21, 1963. It was in fact at his suggestion that the committee decided to include an evening of fellowship as part of the program for the conference. In Fr. Beaubien's mind, being restricted to doctrinal discussions was not enough. He wanted there to be an event that would capture the imagination and help people gain a new understanding.

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In the fall, a new ecumenical institution appeared on the Montreal scene. The Centre for Ecumenism was founded in June 1963 in the same location as the Inquiry Forum on Drummond Street. The new Centre's objective was resolutely ecumenical: to contribute to better mutual understanding between Catholics and Christians belonging to other denominations.⁷ It offered the services of a library, a reading room and a meeting room. It gave training courses that were ecumenical in spirit and especially intended for Catholics, organized prayer meetings, study groups, meetings, etc. The Centre was also the site of the meetings of two ecumenical dialogue groups (one French-speaking and one English-speaking). The goal was to create a meeting place that would foster exchanges, a place that would encourage collaboration between baptized brothers and sisters, a place for seeking unity.

That same year, some Catholic nuns joined with Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian and United deaconesses and church workers to pray for Christian unity. In fact, in July 1963, at the invitation of Cardinal Léger, they met with representatives of two Anglican congregations to pray for the intentions of the 4th World Conference of Faith and Order. The atmosphere of fellowship at that evening of prayer was so marked that it was decided to continue with the initiative. And so, on October 14, 1963, was born the *Rencontres œcuméniques des religieuses* (R.O.R.), which at one time involved some 20 communities.

The 4th World Conference of Faith and Order held in Montreal (July 12-26, 1963) was a key moment in the evolution of ecumenism in Montreal. Even though the Catholic Church was not a member of the WCC, it was genuinely involved in the Conference, not only through the Diocesan Ecumenical Commission's role in preparing the event, but also by the Vatican's sending of five observers,⁸ the participation of 15 guests,⁹ and Cardinal Léger's presence at the *Evening of Christian Fellowship*. Never before had there been so much Catholic participation at a WCC conference. Faith and Order was a particularly important event for promoting ecumenical dialogue in Montreal and, more broadly, in Canada as a whole.

The form and content of the meeting showed that Christians had entered a new season in their mutual relations.

This gathering in Montreal was not immediately intended for the ecumenical formation of the faithful.¹⁰ However, more than any speech or pastoral letter, it was a powerful symbol of the change that was taking place and attracted considerable media attention to a movement that already had solid roots in the Catholic Church of Montreal.¹¹ As B. Lambert said in an interview in Montreal daily *La Presse* [translation], "Living under the same roof as Orthodox bishops from Russia, the Middle East or India, Anglican and Methodist bishops, pastors from every corner of the world, listening to them, asking them questions, it was a unique experience and gave us a glimpse of a new era which the Christian world has entered and in which the Catholic Church has undertaken to play its role."¹²

On the opening day of the conference, Cardinal Léger had a short message of thanksgiving read in all the churches of his diocese, to the Master of unity and Lord of all mankind, for the

gathering, in Montreal, of brothers from the World Council of Churches.¹⁴ It was undoubtedly the evening of Christian fellowship, held at the *Université de Montréal* on July 21, 1963, bringing together 1,500 Christians, which garnered the most attention. It was the first time that a Cardinal of the Catholic Church had officially taken part in a public activity of the WCC and spoken among representatives of other Christian churches. This gesture had considerable impact and the breakthrough it represented in Catholic practice must not be underestimated. Could the archdiocese of Montreal commit the Catholic Church in this manner, along with the new pope, elected only a month earlier, and who had not yet given his guidelines concerning ecumenism?

The event was covered in newspapers and magazines, in Canada and around the world. For Cardinal Léger, the importance of the conference in Montreal did not derive only from the themes discussed, but from the event itself, the fact that Christians from different traditions could gather together to talk.¹⁵ The form and content of the meeting showed that Christians had entered a new season in their mutual relations. He emphasized the importance of making sure that this new season of dialogue between Christians was based on listening to Scripture. For him, it was not just a matter of approving documents, but embarking on a walk together that would bring Christian communities to unity, which was "a gift from God, the fruit of prayer."

Montreal's ecumenical commitment did not evaporate following Vatican II. "The Council is ended! Let the Council begin!" began the editorial of the first issue of the magazine *Ecumenism* launched by the new National Office of Ecumenism. In the wake of the Council, the National Office of Ecumenism/*Office national d'œcuménisme* was set up in 1966. The *Office national d'œcuménisme* served the country's 34 French-speaking dioceses.

Next, there was Man and His World, Expo '67 and the Christian Pavilion. For the first time, the Christian churches did not have divided pavilions at a World's Fair. The Holy See had waived having a separate Catholic pavilion. Truly, it was a time of ecumenical effervescence in Montreal and, beyond it, in Quebec and Canada as a whole.

2-Routine and disillusion

If I had to choose one song from all the poetry written in Quebec that would characterize the present climate of ecumenism in Montreal and, more broadly, in Quebec and Canada (with the possible exception of Saskatchewan), I would choose one that dates back to 1974, *Le blues de la Métropole* (Big City Blues)[translation]:

*In sixty-seven, everything was great
It was the year of love, it was the year of Expo
Everyone had their passport with a nice photo
I had flowers in my hair, just fooling around
I had a girlfriend who was pretty good-looking
Now she's living off the land with 14 of my friends
She's gone to raise chickens in the country
Who would have thought that someday nature would take my
buddies away...*

To repeat the title of the album by the group Beau Dommage this song is taken from, “Où est passée la noce ?” (“Where has the Wedding Gone?”) Are we experiencing the “Big City Blues”, or more accurately, the “ecumenical blues”, to paraphrase that famous group of singer-songwriters? Or “Is ecumenism dying?”¹⁶ according to the name of a course given by Jean-Marie Tillard during the 1993 winter session at the Dominican college in Ottawa?

In this course, following on the heels of the publication of *Communio notio* (1992), Tillard suggested that Cardinal Ratzinger and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith were isolated not only among the various Catholic theologians and local leaders engaged in ecumenical dialogue, but also among the leaders of the other Churches. He blamed them, in no uncertain terms, for the role of the Catholic Church in the crisis that ecumenism was experiencing, even though he also did not spare the Lutheran Church, which itself was tempted to withdraw into a similar isolationism. Tillard concluded that like the Lutheran churches, the Catholic Church was working to consolidate its identity by strongly reaffirming its specific points of view even on matters that its theologians considered as needing careful re-examination in communion with the Christians of the other Churches,¹⁷ according to the process of ecumenism by conversion. For him, falling back on identity contrasted with the positive response to the Catholic Church’s involvement in ecumenical dialogue following the Council, its entry into Faith and Order, the freedom given its theologians¹⁸ mandated to prepare the Lima document (BEM), the exemplary reception given by Cardinals Béa and Willebrands and Fr. Pierre Duprey of the Secretariat for Christian Unity to the “theologians and leaders of non-Catholic Churches (mainly Eastern).” He considered that the climate had undergone a drastic change. Certainly, it can be thought that the Dominican theologian, no doubt personally hurt and called into question by the publication of *Communio notio*, reacted (too) emotionally to this loss of drive in ecumenical involvement.

In his memoir, *Je crois en dépit de tout*, he returns to this “springtime of the Catholic Church” which turned into “a

sudden winter, before summer and harvest-time,” a crisis of faith before which the Curia’s concern took an unexpected turn. It was expressed by an emphasis on the authority of the Magisterium and the duty of submitting to it.¹⁹ Could it be, as Jean-Marie Tillard suggests, that we have entered an ecumenical winter? If so, what caused it, and are we condemned to a long Ice Age?

What has caused the decline in interest in ecumenism at the local level?

The situation can be seen from a global, i.e. worldwide, perspective, by developing a macroanalysis of relations between the Churches, focusing in particular on the attitude of the Catholic Church through its official organs, notably the CDF. However, since I wanted to examine the local situation, I am going to continue in this vein,²⁰ because if ecumenism is not developed on the local level, then the official dialogues will remain dead letters.

I will deal with two questions in turn:

What has caused the decline in interest in ecumenism at the local level?

What can we do about it?

Answering the first question will help us to understand the situation, which is no small thing. Answering the second may broaden our perspective, lead to renewed efforts and give us hope.

3- What has caused the decline in interest in ecumenism at the local level?

I have already mentioned how much the generational factor, often neglected, is decisive in the reception of Vatican II. If I look beyond the boundaries of ecumenism into areas that are less familiar to me, I can see similar phenomena in other spheres. The feminists of yesterday are wondering whether their struggle was their generation’s cause, just as the Quebec sovereignists of the 70s are perplexed by their offspring’s lack of passion for their cause, not to mention the leftists of the 70s. Other causes (the environment, anti-globalization, etc.) seem to have replaced the ones that mobilized the youth of the 1970s. This is because new generations have a different experience of history than their forebears, which leads them to ask questions a different way, or to ask other questions entirely. It is not because ecumenism was just the cause of another generation, but the fact that we have to look at it a

different way with a different generation means that if we do not, we may end up having to bury it for good.

It must be acknowledged that the world has changed and that we are living in a different context. Ecumenism was born and developed in a specific context: first of all, a missionary context (the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910); the result of missionary activity was to export Europe's divisions to its various colonial extensions; and then, the European context, battered and torn apart. In both cases, denominational lines were fairly clearly drawn and the Christian denominations present were few in number and had their home in Europe: Orthodoxy, Catholicism, the different variants of the Reformed Churches and Anglicanism. The ecumenical dialogues in fact centred mainly on Orthodox-Catholic relations, Reformed-Catholic relations and Anglican-Catholic relations.

My feeling is that ecumenism as such has not gone out of style, but ecumenism, as it has been known since the beginning of the 20th century and especially since the post-war period, is showing its age.

This world with clear denominational boundaries does not exist anymore. First in the United States (at least for the most part), then in the countries of the South, mainly in Africa and Asia, free Churches and new Churches have multiplied. At the same time, the historic Churches no longer have the same energy, or if they have retained it, it is because of their growth in the countries of the South. This is the case not only of the Catholic Church, but of other Churches as well. For instance, Anglicans are more numerous today in the countries of the South than they are in Great Britain (there are 139 Anglican bishops in Nigeria versus 44 in England).

My feeling is that ecumenism as such has not gone out of style, but ecumenism, as it has been known since the beginning of the 20th century and especially since the post-war period, is showing its age. In this new context (a profoundly different one), it is called to make a major change. Born in Europe and exported to mission countries, colonial extensions of Europe's divisions, this type of ecumenism is in decline. Because of its birthplace, it has mainly been concerned up to now with matters related to the divisions that occurred in Europe in the 16th century, denominational divisions, to be sure, but also political and cultural ones.²¹ At the time of the Reformation, the division of the Churches, accompanied by

violent and bloody wars of religion, caused a deep trauma in European society. Identities were based on denominational affiliation. That was the case in Switzerland, Ireland and other countries. Social, cultural and sometimes political borders were related to denominational divisions. It took several centuries for this open wound in Europe to heal over, at least in Western Europe, while the recent conflicts in the Balkans offer a sad illustration of the contrary.

Several factors account for the development of a new context: social mobility and the mixing of populations (there are fewer and fewer exclusively Protestant or Catholic domains, but a mixture); the development of state-run healthcare, education and social service networks, with no religious affiliation; the weakening of religion as a variable in defining individual identity as a result of the decline in religious practice or strong religious affiliation. People do not define themselves anymore as Catholic or Protestant, facing or opposing people who belong to another Christian denomination. The ghettoization of social development we have experienced [Catholic, Protestant or Jewish schools; confessional hospitals; confessional mutual aid networks (savings, insurance, daycare, etc.); Catholic or Protestant recreation associations (sports centres, summer camps, movies, clubs, etc.), confessional press and media] barely exist anymore.

With the healing over of the social and cultural fracture that resulted from confessional differences, the most powerful engine of classical ecumenism – the need to rebuild European unity – disappeared. Far be it for me to say that ecumenism is an undertaking motivated only by this need to overcome the social fractures and social divisions, and that it may not have its own proper theological and spiritual foundation; or that it is not at the centre of proclaiming the Gospel. All this is true and undeniable. However, we must recognize that, even in the Church, not everything is driven by spiritual, doctrinal or evangelical motives. As we know, in the division between Christians, non-doctrinal factors have often been more important than the doctrinal ones. At the same time, in rebuilding unity, non-doctrinal factors have a significant amount of weight, especially among the faithful who are far from doctrinal studies.

For the ordinary churchgoer or average citizen, the greatest ecumenical achievement of the late 20th century, the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification of 1999, settled the disputes of the 16th century, and he could not say *causa nostra agitur*. However, the Declaration, because it was a breakthrough in terms of method, the central object of Christianity that was at stake and the decisive nature of this issue with regard to the break-

up and eventual reconciliation between the Churches, is not in doubt. And yet, if it mobilized a small number of specialists and stirred up a few circles in the Church (particularly among the Lutherans), it did not succeed in moving people or attracting attention. Similarly, what I consider to be remarkable work done on the present value and scope of the anathemas and excommunications of the 16th century has not managed to touch or move many people.²² The reason is simple: people simply are not there anymore. It is true that you cannot cut yourself off from the past, but the past no longer haunts people's minds the way it did only a few decades ago.

People have often complained in recent years about the documents prepared by the commissions for theological dialogue not being received. There are two levels in this. First, non-reception by the church leaders who mandated these dialogues. They are often openly criticized and forced to take all the blame. But that means passing over or not mentioning the other level, which is just as important: non-reception by the faithful. On occasion, especially since the start of the 1980s, following BEM, there has been regret that documents have not been received by the faithful; regret, but no more than that. No one wants to believe that it is non-reception by the faithful, probably more than confessional and identity-based resistance from the church apparatus, that is slowing the way to unity. The faithful as a whole not receiving documents, unlike church leaders not receiving them, is not a judgment, however, on the truth of the doctrine presented in the texts of the agreement, but rather on the opportuneness of discussing such issues. We know that reception of a document is not a judgment of the truth it contains, but on whether the teaching is opportune.

Yves Congar observed: [translation] "Reception does not constitute the legal quality of a decision ... It does not confer validity; it records, recognizes and attests that this responds to the good of the Church."²³ In another article, he takes his reflection further, writing: "When I speak of 'reception', I do not mean canonically validating a decision, but the fact that the body of the Church recognizes that its good is served in this decision and, consequently, adopts it and truly lives it."²⁴ He emphasizes that a local church's reception of a teaching indicates that it finds that its good is served in the teaching that it is offered. This idea has been subsequently taken up and developed and more and more authors have stressed that reception by a local church constitutes a judgment concerning the opportuneness, in that church's circumstances, of the teaching it is offered. More than a judgment of the intrinsic truth of a proposition, reception then judges whether a statement is opportune for a local church.²⁵ The proposition may be more opportune

in one setting than in another. As a result, they point out that reception indicates, not the truth of a teaching, but its opportuneness²⁶ or its relevance. The distinction made by the Lutheran-Roman Catholic International Commission between recognition and reception is vital here.²⁷ A church may recognize such a declaration as authentic and in accord with the Catholic faith, but not receive it, i.e. not assimilate it, not allow its life to be transformed by it because this church does not see it as serving its good. It is therefore a judgment on the opportuneness of the declaration.

On one hand, let us note that religious realities are something from which our contemporaries have distanced themselves: Churches, church authority, sacramental practice.

Here, I think of the non-reception by the faithful, often seen, of the results of ecumenical dialogues. These documents are often of very high quality, despite the reticence, sometimes, and not always for doctrinal reasons, of church authorities to receive them. How can it be that reflections of such quality often pass unnoticed and without raising much interest among the faithful? The situation cannot simply be attributed to the fact that the commissions' work goes on at a certain remove from the life of the Churches, or that the commissions are not more organically related to the Churches other than through their summit. Neither is the fault due to a deficient communication and animation strategy. Certainly all these may be true and need work. But it seems to me that the problem lies elsewhere. Deep down, and while I may be exaggerating a bit, I am forced to realize that discussions on topics of this nature interest very few people. I say it with regret, but I must say it.

Most of the bilateral dialogues in which the Catholic Church is engaged have to do with the exercise of authority and with ministry, to the great delight of ecclesiologists. The second most frequent theme is the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist. Naturally, these are not secondary issues, but the evidence is that they do not stir up a great deal of interest outside of a circle of specialists, although they have stirred up passions at certain times.

On one hand, let us note that religious realities are something from which our contemporaries have distanced themselves: Churches, church authority, sacramental practice. The contemporary religious mentality and dialogue commissions are evolving in two different directions: while the religious

mentality is moving away from institutional religion and its defined and regulated forms, the commissions are focusing all their attention on exactly these matters.²⁸ It must be admitted that we find ourselves in a curious position.

Of course, we cannot neglect these questions (Churches and sacraments) if we want to move toward reconciliation and full or visible communion. In addition, it must be acknowledged that important progress has been made in these matters. However, today we can see real difficulties and real differences that prevent us, at least for the moment, from going further. While continuing to work on these matters, it is probably necessary to deal with other themes that are closer to the lives of the faithful.

Out of style, I am not sure, but not relevant to people's lives, certainly.

We must take a clear look at the situation and meet difficulties head-on if we want to give ecumenism another chance. On the one hand, we have said, ecumenism lost one of its most powerful engines with the decline in feelings of social fracture in Europe. This was a non-religious factor, but still a decisive one. On the other hand, as we have just seen, the results of the present dialogues, however fecund and fruitful, and which have led to remarkable progress in recent years, do not seem to interest the faithful, and the issues they address do not seem relevant to them. This is not just something we can lay at the door of disaffection for issues that seem to the post-modern mentality as being more institutional. It is also because the existential and decisive aspect of these realities of life is no longer perceived, and their spiritual importance is not immediately grasped. They are seen as having to do with the religious apparatus and its power.

And so, the ecumenical movement (or at least the part of it we know the best, doctrinal or theological ecumenism) seems to have two strikes against it, or to be down after two innings. Out of style, I am not sure, but not relevant to people's lives, certainly.

At the same time, interfaith dialogue seems to be taking the place of ecumenism. Interfaith dialogue today is meeting with the same enthusiasm as ecumenism in the early 1960s. Following Vatican II, the decree *Nostra Aetate*, apart from certain circles that were sensitive to Jewish-Christian relations, passed completely under the radar. The criterion of whether a teaching is opportune can be seen operating here again. It was simply not relevant in the eyes of most Canadian Catholics, who did not see it as good for them. Today, however,

the issue of relations between different religions ranks at the top of the most important questions. Contrary to what is often heard, it is not just because people are attracted by the exoticism generated by non-Christian religions or the novelty of these issues, one fashion replacing another. The issue is much deeper and intersects here with what we have observed for ecumenism: today, on an existential level, the interfaith encounter has become an issue of great concern. It is borne, as ecumenism once was, by a vital concern, and is fuelled by a considerable amount of social energy. It is not merely due to curiosity or fascination with something from faraway places. Societal changes since Vatican II have completely changed people's interest in this issue.

For its part, if ecumenism does not become relevant again in today's world, with social, spiritual and existential interest, then it will become increasingly marginalized. Certainly it is handicapped in many other ways, which I will briefly list without going into them, but I think the main thing is that the movement has failed to reposition itself in a new context and effect the necessary changes if it wants to find new life. Unless it represents a vital issue, seeking Christian unity or the reconciliation of the Churches is condemned to stagnate. Before concluding this development, I will quickly list some of the other elements that could explain why ecumenism has fallen out of favour:

- Certainly, it is nothing new anymore to see Christians from different traditions meeting together. Without exception, ecumenical embraces no longer impress people and are no longer played over and over by the media. We have entered a phase in which ecumenism has become routine, after the moments of pure astonishment in those first meetings, when we had the impression that we were witnessing a transgression, the violation of an interdict. After the bold, pioneering actions that took place under the wide-eyed gaze of speechless onlookers came the ordinary time of ecumenism, scarcely interrupted by a handful of special events. Ecumenism lost its novelty. We are drawn to the new and exotic, and what is new today, what is "in" is interfaith dialogue, and we would gladly trade the achievements of ecumenism which now seem old or outdated, for the promise of interfaith. We are witnessing the process of the ecumenical charism becoming routine.
- Discouragement when confronted with the obstacles on what was thought to be the fast route to ecumenism has put off more than one person. We thought we were there already, without much effort. The magic of ecumenism was working. We thought that everything would be straightened out from the

top down, in large official meetings, without effort, without costly conversions. Unity seemed within reach. After a strong start that suggested quick and decisive progress toward a culmination in a reasonable time, the pace of ecumenism slowed. People became disenchanted because there has been no miracle. The pioneers died with their boots on, while others, tired of the dithering, are leaving the battlefield, impatient or discouraged, lacking the strength or energy to continue to the end, when the goalposts seem to keep moving back however much they advance. We have entered a season of ecumenical fatigue, and added to the lack of novelty that attracts and fascinates, there is also the discouragement because the road seems to have no end. Only the toughest and bravest are still standing. If there are roadblocks and new obstacles, it is not just because church leaders are hesitant and coming up with more and more obstacles to delay having to commit themselves as well as constantly pushing back deadlines. It is also not just because new questions keep coming up and becoming new obstacles. All that is true, of course, but it is also because there are genuine deep-seated problems of which we had only seen the surface. It is because we must develop all these questions, since our divisions are real and not merely superficial, that we get tired and sometimes give up. Today, we are aware that unity will not be easy, that the road will be long and will require genuine conversion. The road will be long, hard and steep and will require a great deal of courage, investment and hard work, which will not be rewarded right away, in order to reach the goal.

- If ecumenism is marking time, it is paradoxically because of the gains it has made. From now on, we are no longer in a state of war, if I can put it thus. We have made important steps in inter-Christian relations. This pacification, which is not, however, full communion, risks playing a trick on us. The gains made have camouflaged the urgency of continuing the journey. We risk being satisfied with what we have got, being content with this state of peaceful relations and stopping there. After all, it is pleasant to be good neighbours and bourgeois or worldly ecumenism may seem like enough. We see each other, we talk to each other, we maintain cordial relations like civilized people, but there is no question of living together in the same house. That would be too upsetting. We can put up with the other's strangeness for the length of an ecumenical cocktail party. But living with the other day after day, absolutely not. Full and visible communion is not a desirable objective for those who prefer a soft ecumenism to a tough one.

- In the 1960s, ecumenism benefited from people's strong desire to meet and for unity, a desire that had been repressed or frustrated for centuries. Today, there is no longer that vigorous push or irresistible pressure that comes from waters that have been pent up for centuries behind the dam of our divisions and all the energy that was released by the opening up of dialogues. Those stored-up waters produced a tumultuous and irresistible ecumenical torrent during the 1960s. The torrent was so powerful and the current so strong that it seemed able to sweep away everything in its path, to break down the most heavily anchored parts of our denominational divisions. Today, there are no stored-up waters behind the dam and we have to find the energy to fuel the work of ecumenism elsewhere than in that irrepressible current. It is impossible to institutionalize this energy, which sprang from context and circumstance. To my mind, it can only be found in developing a spiritual ecumenism that draws from the sources of the Gospel. If we do not feel division as an evil, then the desire for unity will not be revived, reawakened, deepened.

Today, we are aware that unity will not be easy, that the road will be long and will require genuine conversion.

Furthermore, when we consider our Western churches, tired and preoccupied with restructuring themselves, how much room is there for ecumenism? There are so many other pastoral emergencies and, in this situation, ecumenism seems more like a luxury than a priority. Ecumenism is at the bottom of the list, after more pressing matters are dealt with.

- We must also realize that in a world marked by very strong pluralism and religious formation that is often deficient, religious identity is often less well defined and more fragile. This has two opposing effects: either the development of a new rigidity among those who, lacking a strong religious identity, must form a shell to protect themselves from others. We are confronted with a nervous, worried and polemic religious identity. From this perspective, ecumenism can only be a threat because it questions what is a shaky religious identity. The other person is a threat. And so, rather than launching into an encounter and dialogue that could defeat us, we hold fast to our positions, even if it means hardening them as much as possible so that they become unassailable. A poorly defined religious identity, moreover, can become porous, soft, indefinite,

blown by every wind. There is also the loss of a clear and defined religious identity. We are confronted with a confused religious identity and a false ecumenism, a synthesis that accommodates the most diverse convictions and is closer to relativism than to ecumenism, in the sense that all points of view are good or valid, which means that there is no absolute truth. Ecumenism needs people who have a strong, well-founded, deeply-rooted religious identity, without being rigid; it also needs people whose religious identity is not polemic, defensive, worried and timid. This is rather rare at the moment.

- Finally, it must be recognized that local enthusiasms have sometimes been cooled by roadblocks, slowdowns and new obstacles thrown up by the authorities of the various Churches (Anglican, Orthodox, Catholic, etc.). This is not unimportant, and must be admitted. These roadblocks and new obstacles have had the effect of a cold shower and have discouraged more than one; some have given up and left the scene. However, I put this factor at the end of the list, while it is for some the universal explanation.

Can ecumenism have a new start? I am sure that it can.

3-Reigniting ecumenism

Can ecumenism have a new start? I am sure that it can. It will live, provided it is able to gain a new depth, be integrated into the normal, everyday life of the Churches, if it is no longer something unto itself, but a dimension of every pastoral action, all Christian life and every theological teaching. It cannot be left to the specialists, to particular organizations or to Church leaders, even if, at the same time, their actions and support remain important.

In Canada, an inspiring model is currently developing in Saskatchewan. We have there an example that combines pastoral leadership by the ministers, support for organizations dedicated to ecumenism, and ecumenism in everyday life that permeates the activities of these churches. It is an example to study closely and probably imitate.

Certainly, church unity is God's work, and it will come about when and how he chooses. At the same time,

repeating this phrase like a mantra can also be a way of refusing to get involved, suggesting that we do not need to work actively for unity, that God will do it without us. That would be a good way to extinguish the ecumenical light that illuminated the 20th century.

¹ A comparison can be made with what was happening at that time in The Netherlands (Catholic Conference for Ecumenical Questions), Belgium (Chevetogne), Paris (Istina), Paderborn (Johann-Adam-Möhler-Institute), Milan (Villa Cagnola), etc. To get an overview, cf. "You will be Called Repairer of the Breach." *The Diary of J.G.M. Willebrands 1958-1961*, edited by Theo Salemink, Leuven Peeters, 2009.

² It was not until 1952 that the first ecumenical initiative was officially put forward in Montreal: the *Inquiry Forum*, which was not erected as a corporation by the archdiocese until 1961. Until then, it was a private undertaking by the Jesuit Fathers. Led by Fr. Irénée Beaubien and based on similar models in the United States, where he discovered the idea, the *Inquiry Forum* presented itself as a place where non-Catholics could receive a presentation and outline of the Catholic faith. It was a way for non-Catholics interested in Catholicism to find out about Catholic beliefs and discover its true face. It was more of a missionary project, but of a new type. In its first year, a series of 26 classes, two a week, were offered for Montreal's non-Catholics. At the end, some asked to become Catholic. The experiment was repeated. Soon, a series of talks was added for couples who were undertaking a mixed marriage, as well as private classes at home and correspondence courses, plus a series of courses outside Montreal. Rounding out this scheme was the opening of a library for public consultation. In 1955, Fr. Beaubien published his first essay on Christian unity (*L'Unité chrétienne au Canada*). It was not until the middle of the decade that the perspective changed. Fr. Beaubien then understood that unity did not come about simply through individual conversions, but involved working together while respecting each other's differences, recognizing each other's Christian values and freedoms. Ecumenism in the diocese of Montreal took a new direction. Gradually, a genuine dialogue sprang up with Protestants, a dialogue that truly got underway starting in 1957. There were intermediate steps that led up to it. The first was taken in 1956. No longer were actions directed only at individuals, but at church leaders: the pastors. Beaubien organized a series of five talks on the Old Testament that were attended by some 30 pastors. The aim was no longer just to interest non-Catholics in Catholicism but to provide an opportunity for encounter that could eventually lead to dialogue. In addition, Beaubien was convinced that it was important to work on larger structures by targeting pastors. Catholic priests and Protestant ministers were invited to journey together and find common ground. A stay in Brussels in 1957 confirmed this new orientation for Fr. Beaubien. During his sabbatical year, he met with several theologians involved in ecumenism, notably Congar, De Lubac and Willebrands; he visited Holland and England and discovered the existence of the Catholic Conference for Ecumenical Questions. These contacts all confirmed his intuitions. On his return to Montreal, he organized a monthly dialogue between a group of French-speaking pastors and priests, from the diocese of Montreal, most of whom were professors of theology or Holy Scripture. These meetings, while dealing with theological matters, developed better theological understanding between the parties and better mutual understanding. Fr. Beaubien was trying to find a way of getting closer to the unity desired by Christ. That was why prayer had a large place in these meetings, and the year ended with a two-day retreat. In 1959, another group, consisting of theologians, was set up. These groups did not go public with their activities, and their members had to be discreet about them.

³ Quoted in A. Luchaire, « Il faut expliquer au plus grand nombre ce qu'est l'œcuménisme », *La Presse*, November 10, 1962.

⁴ Letter reproduced in *La Presse*, January 19, 1963. The official text can be found in the *Mandements des évêques de Montréal*, vol. 18, p. 260 ss.

⁵ It should be mentioned that in 1963, there was a special series of eight 15-minute programs broadcast on 42 radio stations, reaching 300,000 listeners.

⁶ One of these was the ecumenical evening at the Anglican theological college in January 1963.

⁷ Press release of June 8, 1963.

⁸ B. Lambert, G. Baum, G. Diekman, G. Tavad, J. C. Groot.

⁹ One of the Catholic participants was R. E. Brown, who spoke at the opening session on July 12 on the theme of "Unity and diversity in New Testament ecclesiology." On the Catholic participation at the conference and particularly the role of R. Brown, cf. A. Falconer, "The Work of the Faith and Order Commission from Montreal 1963 to Santiago de Compostela 1993," *Ecumenical Review*, 45 (1993), pp. 44-46.

¹⁰ More generally speaking, as the New York lawyer W. Stringfellow pointed out in his address, the conference, like any undertaking of that order, risked becoming the academic, professional and esoteric monologue of an ecumenical elite, in which the world was rarely heard and taken seriously, and in which, for the most part, professors, theorists, patriarchs, politicians, and, alas, bureaucrats talked among themselves about themselves and the various interests they represented in the present state of Christendom. It was a harsh answer to the question posed in the first session by A. Outler: "Is Montreal just another festival for theologians?", to which R. Mehl replied that the conference was not limited to being a theological academy.

¹¹ See Pierre Pagé.

¹² *La Presse* (July 20, 1963).

¹³ Text in *Documentation catholique*, vol. LX, 1408 (1963), col. 1216.

¹⁴ In addition to Léger, the following also spoke on this occasion: Visser't Hooft, G. Johnston and Athenagoras of Elaia. The texts of Visser't Hooft and Léger are reproduced in *Documentation catholique*, (1963), col. 1213-1220.

¹⁵ In addition to Léger's Montreal advisors, Charles Moeller contributed to preparing his address.

¹⁶ Cf. J.-M. Tillard, *L'œcuménisme serait-il à l'agonie ?*, copy of the pro manuscripto tantum notes for the exclusive use of course auditors. Fonds J.-M. Tillard, Rue Violet, Chevetogne monastery, box 4/10.

¹⁷ J.-M. Tillard, « L'œcuménisme serait-il à l'agonie ? », *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁸ Named here are "Ratzinger [sic], Raymond Brown, B.D. Dupuy, E. Lanne, P. Duprey, J.-M.R. Tillard", presented as the "young" (!) theologians who had experienced the work of Vatican II.

¹⁹ J.-M. Tillard, *Je crois en dépit de tout*, Paris: Cerf, 2001, 14.

²⁰ Cf. A. Birmelé, *L'œcuménisme au plan local*, 1983; La Collaboration œcuménique au plan régional, au plan national et au plan local, SPUC, SI 29, 1975, pp. 8-34.

²¹ Setting aside the schism of the 11th century, which also was not only religious, but also proceeded from non-doctrinal factors, often political and cultural.

²² Joseph Hoffmann; Pierre Jundt; Karl Lehmann; Harding Meyer; Wolfhart Pannenberg; Groupe œcuménique de travail entre théologiens catholiques et évangéliques, *Les Anathèmes du XVIe siècle sont-ils encore actuels ? : Les condamnations doctrinales du concile de Trente et des Réformateurs justifient-elles encore la division de nos Eglises ? Propositions soumises aux Eglises catholique, luthérienne et réformée en Allemagne*, 1999.

²³ Y. Congar, *La réception comme réalité ecclésiologique*, *RSPT*, 56 (1972), p. 399.

²⁴ Y. Congar, *Bulletin d'écclésiologie : Église - conciles - papauté*, *RSPT*, 62 (1978), p. 88.

²⁵ Many authors consider reception in terms of judgment of the opportuneness of a declaration, i.e. "a judgment as to whether what is being received serves the common good." Cf. E.J. Kilmartin, *Reception in History. An Ecclesiological Phenomenon and its Significance*, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 21 (1984), p. 37.

²⁶ J. Beumer points out that "non-reception is not a sign that a teaching is false, but rather that the proposition and the decree are inopportune." J. Beumer, *Das Erste Vatikanum und seine Rezeption*, *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift* 27 (1976), p. 273. H. Bacht was the first to develop a similar point of view: "What relates to the good of the community is not determined only by the question of 'the truth' of the decree or teaching proposed, but also

based on another criteria, its opportuneness." And to continue: "It cannot be concluded from the non-reception of a teaching ... that the teaching is false; it indicates precisely that, here and now, it has no power of life." H. Bacht, *Vom Lehramt der Kirche und in der Kirche*, *Catholica* 25/2 (1975), p. 161-162. W. Beinert, without referring to Bacht, follows him very closely. Cf. W. Beinert, *Die Rezeption und ihre Bedeutung für Leben und Lehre der Kirche*, *Catholica* 44 (1990), p. 114. Finally, we will see H.J. Pottmeyer, *Rezeption und Gehorsam – Aktuelle Aspekte der wiederentdeckten Realität "Rezeption"*, in W. Beinert (Hrsg.), *Glaube als Zustimmung : Zur Interpretation kirchlicher Rezeptionsvorgänge*, Herder, Freiburg/Basel/Wien (coll. *Quaestiones Disputatae*, 131), 1991, p. 86. Furthermore, in the area of canon law, a similar position is taken, to the effect that the community has no right of veto and cannot revoke a validly promulgated law, since the community does not have the legal authority to revoke a law. Non-reception of a law is the community's judgment that a law does not apply in its specific situation or that it is useless, or even that it is actually opposed to the common good. Cf. J. M. Huels, *Nonreception of Canon Law*, p. 4-5. Non-reception of a law therefore does not question the law's validity, but makes it null and void in a specific situation.

²⁷ Cf. H.M. Legrand and H. Meyer (ed.), *Face à l'unité : tous les textes officiels (1972-1985)*, Paris, Cerf, 1986, p. 321. On this distinction, see also J. M. Tillard, *L'Église canadienne* 22/4 (Oct. 1988), p. 110. The official response of the Orthodox Church (inter-orthodox symposium) to BEM also makes a distinction between the two concepts, indicating that its official response did not necessarily imply official and practical recognition of non-Orthodox ministry and sacraments. Cf. M. Thurian (ed.), *Ecumenical Perspective on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, vol. I, Geneva, coll. "Faith and Order Papers" 116, 1983, p. 121.

²⁸ Let us note that, more recently, the work of commissions has focused on ethical themes.

Challenges of Ecumenism in Today's World

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Expert guest speakers in theology, intellectuals and religious authorities met at the Conference “Challenges of Ecumenism in Today's World” organized by the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, a non-profit organization whose main focus is ecumenism and interfaith dialogue. The extensive presentations and discussions made available by the guest speakers gave evidence of the high quality of their expertise and experience in theological topics. The conference provided an update on the challenges ecumenical movements face in our globalized world. More than fourteen guest speakers (most PhD's, bishops and priests) made use of the Conference to express their views on ecumenical matters. Several overarching themes such as politics and inter-religion or unity in diversity emerged during the presentations. Dr. Lucian Turcescu presented “Secularization, Politics, and Inter-Religious Relations in Post-Communist Eastern Europe.” Dr. Turcescu spoke about secularization (division between state and religion) and property restitution by introducing his political analysis about the Peace of Westphalia (1648) and western models of church and state relations. His main goal was to highlight the importance of religion in the political sphere. Consideration for full respect for all religious beliefs was mentioned by M.Afr. Gilles Barrette during his presentation titled «Témoignage du Christ dans la rencontre des musulmans» (Witness of Christ in the encounter with Muslims.) FR. Barrette spoke about the importance of having an open interfaith dialogue in order to bring a humanistic perspective to ecumenism (see a person's essence rather than his or her religion or ethnicity). His main goal was to highlight the importance of seeing the common humanity in people. Challenges for establishing and confirming the importance of unity in the church were highlighted by Most Reverend Christian Lépine, Archbishop of the Catholic Church of Montreal, during his presentation titled: «L'œcuménisme, chemin de fraternité.» He explained that the unity of humanity in Jesus Christ was one strong way to advance the plan of God (walk the path of God). This unity could be accomplished by understanding the Word of Christ when building relationships of love for one another.

Challenges for establishing and confirming the importance of unity in a Church separated by doctrine has encouraged the creation of an Ecumenical movement. Rev. Lépine affirmed that the rule of Christ under the Holy Spirit could be considered a strong source of unity. In fact, this idea of unity in diversity was expressed by Pope Jean Paul II “the unity of all divided

humanity is the will of God.” It is important to take into consideration that as the world becomes globally connected, religious authorities and theologians are embracing a holistic and open perspective about Christendom which will enable an effective interfaith dialogue. Making connexions between Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox, etc. can be accomplished by understanding and appreciating differences among these groups. Fr. Barrette affirmed that unity presupposes diversity so, acknowledging differences among groups will enable a deeper understanding about their “standing” in religion rather than persuading them to adopt a different one. It is important to highlight that God intended to create a united and diverse population (nations) in order to find ourselves in Him. As mentioned in Act 17:27: “His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.” Choosing to work together by respecting our differences is a critical choice that will shift an individualist view into a more collective one. The feeling of being part of a community in Christ is a goal that must be accomplished in order to embrace God's command. As mentioned by St. Augustine about the presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist; “*sacramentum pietatis, signum unitatis, vinculum caritatis*” (sacrament of love, sign of unity, bond of charity).

The Most Reverend Christian Lépine mentioned that the church is the living body of Christ and it comes to live, stays alive and grows through the preaching of the living Word of God (i.e. receiving the Sacraments brings the presence of Christ alive). In fact, the church is not understood as an invisible entity but it has an actual bodily existence (a living organism.) As mentioned in I Timothy 3:15 “the church of the living God.” Fr. Barrette mentioned that his spiritual connection was nourished by his numerous missionary activities (the church at the grassroots.) Fr. Barrette's experiences allow us to “see” the importance of facilitating an effective dialogue by experiencing a direct communication with people. Ecumenism can therefore be regarded as an instrument of creative relationship between churches. As mentioned by St. Francis of Assisi, “we should be instruments of peace.”

One interesting point that came across during those presentations was the idea of meeting the other and meeting “oneself.” There is the necessity for Christians to see each other as brothers and sisters who, although they

may have different opinions on theological questions, need to preserve the relationship of love for one another. As mentioned by Thomas Aquinas, “the cause and the root of bringing forth hidden things is love.” We need to learn how to love each other by respecting our differences (recognizing other’s faiths.) People should be allowed to fall in love with different practices. Fr. Barrette highlighted that as we live in a pluralistic society so, we have the responsibility to listen to other people’s points of view and think about the ideas they present in order to achieve peace. If we encourage people from different backgrounds and religious beliefs to express their views, then we will increase the chances to achieve peace and promote common good. The Most Reverend Lépine highlighted that the church is a unique human community which is explicitly constituted by its communion in God, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. The idea of human community is important when encouraging an interfaith dialogue. It is possible that people from different religions can collaborate with each other in both small and big ways. Christians’ willingness to seek the truth through the Scriptures, Church and their community (God) can be achieved by having a humble attitude. It is important to remember that Christ encouraged people to be One (*Ut unum sint.*) As mentioned in John 17:21 “that all of them may be one, Father; just as you are in me and I am in you.” We all come from the same divine Source so, we must embrace our differences by highlighting our similarities (we are all brothers and sisters).

Prof. Sara Terreault made an interesting point by highlighting that people need to connect their “whole” being (body, soul, emotions), and not just reasoning, when listening to other beliefs. One subject that needed to be discussed in depth was the importance of the Word (Gospels’ interpretations) and the purpose of Christ’s teaching on earth. It is important to highlight that the church is not characterized by the possession of doctrine about sacraments but by her “actual” giving and receiving (i.e. church is a living organism). Having a deep and pure understanding of God’s Word will promote a sense of partnership and community (having a common purpose.) The unity of the church cannot exist without putting into practice God’s commandments (through Christ’s teachings on Earth.) As mentioned in Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is alive and active.”

Freedom of religion is closely connected with the concepts of civil liberties and human rights, which in democratic societies such Canada are usually afforded legal protection. As mentioned in article 18 of the Declaration on Human Rights, “everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.” It is important to highlight that politics and religion need to be separated (secularization) but, authorities must respect and acknowledge religious

diversity in order to decrease uncertainty. As mentioned by Peter Berger, the basic fault lines today are not between people with different beliefs, but between who hold these beliefs with an element of uncertainty. Dr. Turcescu made an interesting point when highlighting the need of rethinking secularization, rationalization and modernization.

The ecumenical movement has a place in today’s world because it encourages an open dialogue by bringing forward the “unknown.” In fact, Ecumenical movement encourages interfaith pluralism by mentioning the importance of education (learning other ways of embracing the Word). So, education is a key element when addressing our differences. Secondly, globalization and the balance of power in the world have increased the tension amongst peoples from different faiths. Religious unity is seen as a way of strengthening alliances between nations or states in order to obtain more power (ex. the Thirty Years of War 1618-1648 or the 9/11 attacks.) Moreover, this idea of religious unity is linked to Huntington’s Theory of Conflict. In fact, Huntington believed that religious identity was considered one of the most potent forces to form a coherent cultural unity. So, religion is a strong component in society because it is considered to be part of a person’s identity. Thirdly, ecumenism is a window that encourages bringing forward the “unknown” in order to have a deeper understanding of our differences. Fourthly, we need to have an honest and open dialogue in order to bring about the unity of Christendom. The ecumenical movement is very important because it encourages Christian communions to follow God’s command mentioned in Matthew 28: 16-20, “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” All things begin to be possible when people agree to start working together. There will be no reunion without a preliminary journeying towards a mutual encounter. Finally, ecumenical movements have a place in today’s world because they aim to bring forward God’s purpose of unity and love among one another. As mentioned in John 1:1-51, in Him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. Ecumenical dialogues between churches need to facilitate the change process by establishing meaningful connections among members of the Christian community. It is not enough for the Church to define the truth but, She should take the lead in tolerance and hope by her own good example.

A Witness for Christ in Encounters with Muslims

Gilles Barrette, M.Afr.

Gilles Barrette entered the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) in 1965, and then studied theology in Leuven, Belgium, (1966-68) and Strasbourg, France (1968-71). Ordained a priest in 1970, he arrived in Upper Volta in October 1971, where he had six months of language training before starting his parish work in the diocese of Ouahigouya. From 1975 to 1977, he studied Islamology at the Istituto di studi arabi e islamistica in Rome. For the following eight years, he was responsible for training catechist couples in two dioceses (Ouahigouya and Kaya). In 1985, he was appointed Provincial of the Missionaries of Africa in Burkina (formerly Upper Volta), Niger and Chad. From 1986-92, he served on the General Council of the Missionaries of Africa in Rome. After a sabbatical year in Quebec, he left for Marseilles in 1993 and lived there until 2006, working on relations between Christians and Muslims, pastoral ministry to migrants and teaching Islamology and missiology at the Institut (catholique) des Sciences et de Théologie des Religions in Marseilles and major seminaries in the south of France. He was also responsible for the new diocesan commission for Catholic-Muslim relations. At the same time, he was involved in regular parish work. In 2007, he was put in charge of the Centre Afrika in Montreal, a position he still holds, to help Africans integrate into Quebec society, in conjunction with the diocesan religious education service related to requests from Muslims.

Summary:

In this presentation, Gilles Barrette, after some brief words about his personal journey, expresses his deep convictions, which come out of his missionary and spiritual experience, the first being that God is love. He then goes on to mention the priority he gives to our human reality: faith in humankind. It is this context and this spirit that must permeate all encounters with Muslims. In closing, he mentions a few pastoral examples that permit rapprochement, understanding and witness: religious education of persons converting from Islam, Christians who are becoming Muslims and interfaith marriages (Christian-Muslim).

Allow me to tell you a little about the person who is speaking to you. I belong to the Society of Missionaries of Africa, also known as the White Fathers, a religious order that specializes in the African world and in encounters with Islam. I studied theology for two years in Leuven in Belgium and three years in Strasbourg, in France. It was while I was in France that I encountered Muslims for the first time; they were studying in various faculties at the university. I quickly developed an interest in the Muslim world, which was spoken of by our superiors and the founding documents of our missionary group. We talked with Muslim students about our respective studies, our home countries, and sometimes about religion. I was so interested that the paper I presented at the end of my studies was on the oneness of God in the Quran. To write my paper, I had to study both Muslim and Christian theology.

In 1971, I left for Upper Volta (Burkina Faso since 1984) and worked in a diocese in the northeast, where the population was mostly Muslim. I went to Rome for two years to study Islamology, and then returned to Burkina. For 15 years, I worked in a parish that served 144 villages and about 100,000 inhabitants; for eight years of those years, I was in charge of teaching catechist couples and was responsible for Burkina-Niger-Chad missionaries.



After a six-year stay in Rome as a member of my Congregation's generalate, visiting my confreres and trying to understand the situations in which they worked, including various forms of presence to the Muslim world, I was sent to Marseilles, France for 13 years to facilitate the integration of Africans, white or black, Christian, Muslim or from traditional African religions, into French society. The approach was to bring together men and women who might be divided by differences in culture, nationality and

religion and give them a chance to come to understand each other. At the *Institut des Sciences et de Théologie des Religions* (ISTR) in Marseilles, I was a lecturer on Islam for 10 years. I worked in community centres, houses of formation, parishes, teaching establishments and healthcare institutions, always with the aim of facilitating the encounter between Christians and Muslims. I should mention that Marseilles has a large Muslim population from Africa, but also from other European countries and the Middle East.

I was finally called back to Canada to take charge of the *Centre Afrika* here in Montreal. In Africa, in Europe and here, I have always been in contact with Muslims wanting to become Christian or to make use of a Christian service.

My convictions, fostered by my missionary and spiritual experience

Before speaking of witness, I would first like to express the convictions that inspire me in my Christian-Muslim encounters. In my heart, my head and my practice, this is true for any encounter.

- 1- God is LOVE.
- 2- The Spirit is at work in hearts and in the world long before our interventions.
- 3- God the Creator inhabits the heart of each person He has created.
- 4- Jesus Christ died and rose again for everyone, including Muslims.
- 5- How God acts: He always takes the first step (in love, salvation, encounter). He is the God who comes to us. Jesus reveals the Kingdom of His Father through his free offer of salvation, his compassion, mercy and respect for our freedom. God is the one who “converts”, not us.
- 6- Jesus was a man of encounter (with his Father and with individuals and groups). He calls people to holiness (perfection, mercy), “like the Father in heaven” (cf. Lv 19:2; Mt 5:48; Lk 6:36).
- 7- The apostles’ experience was encountering Jesus the man, hearing his words, getting to know him. They saw his works of power. But who is he? After having their hopes dashed came the resurrection, which had been announced but was unimaginable. Finally, the gift of the Holy Spirit. The apostles were turned into witnesses: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Mt 28:19-20).

- 8- Christ’s mission becomes that of the Church and of each baptized person.
- 9- The experience of each Christian: Jesus encounters us on our journey, accepts us as we are, listens to our story and sows a seed of inner life that revives us, chases away sadness, sends us as disciples on the pathways of the world, because he is recognized in the breaking of the bread (Eucharist, washing of feet).
- 10- Loving God, our neighbour and ourselves: the only commandment. “...the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race...” (LG 1)¹

These are my deeply-held convictions.

A – Encounter with the human person:

Believing in humankind

I would like to point out that in the Quran, the three basic doctrines of the Christian faith are denied by God himself: the Trinity: there is one God, and Jesus is not God: “Say not: “Three”!” (4:171); Jesus’ death and Resurrection: “they killed him not, nor crucified him, but the resemblance of Jesus was put over another man...but Allah raised him ...And on the Day of Resurrection, he will be a witness against them.”(4:157-9); the Incarnation: Jesus, true man, is not God: “It befits not Allah that He should beget a son.” “Verily, the likeness of Jesus before Allah is the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then (He) said to him: “Be!” - and he was.” (3:59).

Because I am a Christian, believing in the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God has a very important corollary: believing in man, concrete, as he is, as he has been, as he can become. Every man I encounter shares with me a common humanity. We cannot claim to believe that Christ is very God and very man, if we forget that he became flesh and embraced our human nature: “Taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself...” (Ph 2:7). It is difficult to put the great commandment of love into practice and claim to love God, whom we cannot see, unless we practise love for the neighbour we can see and with whom Jesus identified (Mt 25). An *encounter* does not happen first at the religious level. We speak too soon of Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, atheists, Jews, etc., as if the religious dimension has to come first. We overlook the fact that the person who claims a religious or philosophical affiliation is first and foremost *a human person. With no labels.* Let me explain. When we encounter the Other, we must be detached from ourselves, we must lay aside our prejudice, our fears, our generalizations, what I would call labels that are so easy for us to put on people. He’s a Muslim,

he dresses a certain way, he comes from another country, he behaves a certain way, he lives in a certain neighbourhood, he works in a certain profession, he is old, he is young, he has a good marriage or a bad one, etc. Encountering the Other at the level of our shared humanity is demanding, because it assumes for my part a certain growth in freedom that means I do not put up any obstacles to the encounter, without requiring the Other to do the same, at least not to begin with. That is also part of believing in man.

B – Muslim-Christian dialogue

Muslims and Christians are first of all *men and women*. Although they may come from another country, they are born, grow up, pray (perhaps), get married, suffer and die. They need clothes, food, work, a place to live, and rest. They take their children to school, go see their parents and visit the sick. They wonder about the creation of the world, the meaning of life, suffering, life after death... The basic needs of all human beings are things we have in common. Let us not forget *our shared humanity*. That is the first locus for dialogue, and *at this level of our shared humanity, YES, dialogue is possible*. Vatican II (GS I) says this: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts." GS 4-10 develops this theme: profound transformation, social, moral, psychological and religious change, the imbalances in the modern world, and the universal aspirations and deep questions of humankind.

It is on the common ground of humanity that Jesus arrived. Within his human reality and in the particular world that was his, he entered our humanity, doing good in his everyday life, taking part in his culture and religion, etc. He encountered people and groups (Jews and non-Jews). He raised questions and astonishment about his identity (who is he?, he does not speak like our scribes, the crowds run to him because he works wonders), he defended each person's humanity and offered growth and solidarity. It is within this humanity that he revealed his Father and the Kingdom. It took the Resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit to radically transform his disciples' outlook. The encounter between a Christian and someone from another faith tradition (Muslim, for instance) first involves our shared humanity. There is no Christian or Muslim birth, suffering, human growth, marriage or death. These are primarily human realities. A religious person may find strength, comfort and meaning in his or her faith, but the reality is human first and foremost. Let us not skip over the human reality. Within it, we offer, in the name of faith and the Gospel, growth in humanity for each

person and each society, which, to be holy and perfect as the heavenly Father is holy and perfect, can only welcome the values found in the person and message of Jesus, who died and rose again. This is the Christian conviction that I do not put in a box when I encounter the Other, just as the Other does not put his own convictions in a box.

I would like to point out here that I have never suggested to anyone that they become a Christian. My actions have always been on the side of being a weak sinner attempting to be faithful to Christ and the Gospel. I have never expected another to become Christian. I have always hoped that the Other would grow in humanity. It has always been the Other I encountered and worked with, who engaged in a religious dialogue. I very quickly developed an inner certainty that God is in the heart of every person and, as the document "Dialogue and Proclamation" (1991) says, God is the one who initiates the dialogue with the heart of every person. Christian witness is therefore to join in this intimate dialogue between God and each human conscience. The places for dialogue are numerous: the dialogue of everyday life, the dialogue of activities decided and carried out together: these two types of dialogue are open to anyone hoping to encounter the Other. Other possibilities are dialogue of a spiritual order. More difficult is dialogue of a theological order. The avenues of dialogue are wide, and it is essential to have courage and faith to engage in them, a courage that is part of the baptism of those who commit to walk in Jesus' footsteps. But it is important not to rush things, to take time (which is also part of the mystery of the Incarnation).

C- Encountering the other

Here, I would like to mention a few situations of which I have more experience, without going into detail:

- Say hello, help someone: when charity speaks louder than words.
- Join a party or a group: these are places where relations and friendships can happen, which help provide insights into the meaning of what I am experiencing and what the Other is experiencing.
- Be present to the Other at times of suffering or joy.
- Be available to listen to the Other: you can earn his trust, or trust becomes mutual.
- There are also pastoral situations in which I have been involved and which nourish my spiritual life:
- Catechumenate: When a Muslim wants to become a Christian: how and why he came to decide to become

a Christian, the difficulties and joys encountered along the way, the inner peace felt, his fresh way of reading the Gospels, and especially his way of saying who Jesus is for him.

- Mixed marriages: marriage preparation, the potential joy and challenges awaiting the couple, etc.
- When a Christian converts to Islam, or wants to leave it: warmth, compassion....
- When Islam comes under my roof, what do I do?
- When a Christian wants to baptize his child and chooses a Muslim godfather....
- When children and teens want baptism, first communion, confirmation, to be like the others, but one parent is Muslim and the other is Christian.

Conclusion

Encountering the Other is part of human existence. What would I be if the Other did not exist? The Other, whoever he is, is always unique and different from me. Just as I do, he has a personal life story made up of values, desires, weaknesses, vulnerabilities accepted or repressed, failures and successes. Meeting the Other, I can require nothing more than respect for any person's growth in humanity. I do not have to deny who I am or who the Other is. The encounter is not just passing each other in the street or on the bus. An encounter, if it is a real one, cannot fail to have an impact on me. However, I cannot demand that it have the same impact on the Other. We find ourselves in the presence of the mystery of the individual's freedom of conscience, which must always be promoted.

If I identify myself with the label of "believer", I must make sure that the Other can do so as well. There is no need to hide our identity as a believer, while acknowledging that we are different. We try to respect each other and encourage each other to deepen our personal identities as believers.

My personal experience of interfaith encounter, gathering around our common humanity, has helped me to better understand the Other, while deepening my own faith, going right to the heart of it. This has also helped me see things in my faith life to which I had accorded too much importance. That way, going straight to the heart of my faith, I have been able to relativize certain expressions of it. It happens, and has happened to me, that I go through long periods of time with the hope that the Other will make the same journey that

I have made. The Other whom I encounter may hope the same thing of me. However, I do thank the Lord that, as I said earlier, I have never told anyone to become a Christian. The Muslim men and women I have watched on their journey toward baptism came to me or were sent to me. They were seeking God, but in a different way from the one their world offered them. "I am already a Christian in my heart," said one seeker of Jesus the Christ. I think this is true of everyone, and my mission as a Christian is to be open to these calls, even though they may disturb me. Often actions speak louder than words. In my encounter with the Other, I do not have to hide my identity as a believer or require that the Other keep quiet about his identity as a believer. Both of us are called to bow before the Love of God present in our hearts, to submit freely to God's action in us. Because, and this is a deep conviction for me, only God converts the human heart, converting in the first and deepest meaning of the word, turning a person's heart toward God.

¹ Documents of the Catholic Church also give food for thought and strengthen convictions. Among the documents of Vatican II: GS 1, para. 1; NA 3 (beginning), and LG 16. There are also LG 13 and 17; AA 3, 14 and 27; OT 16; AG 3, 9, 11 ("the seeds of the Word", already found in St. Justin); AG 15, 18 and 22; GS 22 (very often used by John Paul II: "The Spirit is at work in every human heart and the Easter mystery is offered to all in a manner that only God knows"); GS 58, 76, 92. Paul VI spoke of the Church as "the expert in humanity". John Paul II said that "Man is the way to God", similar to St. John's phrase when Jesus says: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9). A recent article by Pope Francis, the present Pope, is called "Believing in man". There is also the document "Dialogue and Mission" and the missionary encyclicals of the Popes, not to mention Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation, "The Joy of the Gospel".

The road increasingly taken: pilgrimage as contemporary ecumenical practice?

Sara Terreault

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Abstract:

This paper will explore the recent growth in pilgrimage as popular spiritual practice. As part of the so-called “Spirituality Revolution” of the mid-twentieth century, popular pilgrimage practice today is commonly ecumenical, inter-faith, inter-convictional in nature. This paper will bring together contemporary accounts of the experience of pilgrimage from a variety of media resources, with the presenter’s own experience teaching the history and theology of pilgrimage in a culturally pluralistic university setting, organising pilgrimage journeys and walking ancient, reprinted and newly constructed pilgrimage routes. It will reflect on the diversity that marks contemporary pilgrimage practices and the deeply-shared human desires for both challenge and communion that animate and unify them.

1. Is pilgrimage ecumenical practice?

Spiritual teacher and Benedictine sister Macrina Wiederkehr communicates simply and effectively the crux of what is in fact a very complicated term when she describes pilgrimage as “ritual journey with a hallowed purpose”.¹ (Just a cursory glance through the literature in the burgeoning academic field of Pilgrimage Studies provides witness to this complexity!) Without compromising the particularities of varieties of pilgrimage practice, her definition alerts us to the basic *performance of meaning in (or via) movement* shared by the range of practices that have been referred to as “pilgrimage” through history, across traditions, and into the contemporary secularised world. In varying ways, the great spiritual traditions have deployed the metaphor of “journey” to represent the unfolding of human lives in general, and of spiritual growth in particular. Pilgrimage enacts the shared intuition that being human is not an inert state of affairs, but rather is dynamic, indeed *vectored*, toward otherness, others, and perhaps an Ultimate Other.

And yet in spite of its apparent universality, and its clear recent resurgence in popularity,² the hope for a robust ecumenical or inter-faith encounter in and by the practice of pilgrimage in contemporary culture calls for careful

reflection. Traditional religious pilgrimages emerged in more or less exclusivist contexts. Consider the *hajj* as an example of an expressly exclusive journey, the destination of which, Mecca, only Muslims may enter. In Christian tradition, pilgrimage has had a particularly

contentious history, both avidly practiced as penitential, sanctifying and maybe adventurous; *and* energetically condemned for its association with idolatry, manipulation by unscrupulous actions, ecclesiastical and otherwise, and fear of wanton behaviour by pilgrims far from home. Note, of course, the outright condemnation of pilgrimage by some Western reformers, Protestant and Catholic alike, in early modernity. The Marian pilgrimage sites that arose in the 19th and 20th centuries, by virtue of their Marianism, and further, by the doctrinal content of some of the messages communicated in the Marian appearances, there is potentially a *de jure* exclusion of non-Catholic Christians. For instance, Our Lady of Lourdes announced herself as “the Immaculate Conception” to young Bernadette Soubirous in 1858, just a few years after the controversial doctrine was defined by Pope Pius IX. This is clearly problematic for many Christians.

Within postmodern culture, a wide – and perhaps *wild* – array of pilgrimages sacred and secular have emerged. For adherents to what has been referred to as “New Age” spirituality, for instance, a trip to the “energy vortexes” at Sedona in the Verde Valley in Arizona might be in order. Other popular pilgrimage focal points range so broadly as to include Graceland, the mansion estate of Elvis Presley in Memphis, Tennessee, and battle sites like the Somme in France, attracting people who explicitly self-identify as “pilgrims”, regardless of the depth – or lack thereof – that others might



ascribe to their journeys. Doubtless, the potential for shared sacred meaning in these pilgrimages would be up for debate.

So to all appearances, for a practice that has been performed across millennia and within all the great spiritual traditions, and now reiterated in sometimes utterly secular contexts, pilgrimage might not be so universalisable a practice after all. At least, it surely isn't *so long as* we require pilgrims to be homogeneous in their beliefs, hopes, and desires in order to travel together toward shared, if differently understood, spiritual grace. This paper is a suggestion that we begin to think through the possibilities, and the limits, offered by the practice of pilgrimage as ecumenical act.

Insights arising from the experience and theorising of postmodernity³ might actually help orient us, and help us identify the possibilities and risks we face as spiritual ecumenists today. By "postmodernity", I mean that slippery cultural period that emerged after the World Wars as both challenge to and radicalisation of the set of modernist values known as the Enlightenment Project. Contention as to the whats and whens and wherefores of postmodernity has kept academics busy for decades; here's my sketch of the crux of the matter: postmodernity insists on the recognition of the irreducible diversities, pluralities, *differences* that coincide within our shared humanity. The "postmodern" refuses any facile, perhaps false, perhaps coercive, uniformity masquerading under an ostensible universality.⁴ It proclaims that even in the face of what we share, we are also ineluctably different, you and me individually, these and those corporately. The postmodern presses upon us the question: what shall we do about it? Postmodernity has also thrown out another, perhaps especially gracious challenge to the modernised world: it has put a figurative foot in the secularising door that modernity would close on the religious fullness of life. Postmodernity has rejected modernity's rejection of transcendence. But to be sure, when postmodernity engages transcendence, it often does so in novel – perhaps precarious – ways, embracing fluidity, pastiche and individuality over tradition, univocity and, less felicitously, also over community, bringing with it both new possibilities and new risks.

2. Pilgrimage and the "Spirituality Revolution"

The recent revitalization of pilgrimage as popular spiritual practice can be located within the wider context of the so-called 'Spirituality Revolution' of the mid-twentieth century,⁵ when 'spirituality' emerged as the apparently positive foil to, or even substitute for increasingly renounced 'religion'. Hence, the pervasive postmodern self-identifier: 'I am spiritual, but not religious,'⁶ used of course by those estranged from what is commonly referred to as 'organised' religion, but also among many adherents to explicitly (and quite organised) religious traditions to indicate a distancing from the negatives associated with "organisation," "institution," and overblown

or illegitimate authoritarianism within religious communities.⁷

As concrete performance of the spiritual-life-as-journey metaphor, contemporary walking pilgrimage might be considered a definitive postmodern spiritual practice: mobile, bricolé, idiosyncratic, sometimes *eccentric*. The current paradigmatic walking pilgrimage route, the Camino de Santiago de Compostela – or simply "the Camino" – winds from countless starting points, according to countless desires and understandings, toward the legendary resting place of St James the Greater in northwest Spain. The Camino resurfaced in scholarly and popular awareness exactly in the mid-century period of the 'Spirituality Revolution'.⁸ Stretching from the foothills of the French Pyrenees to the cathedral-shrine of Santiago, the most popular route, the Camino Francés, was way-marked by 1982 by Don Elias Valiña Sampedro, a Roman Catholic parish priest from Galicia, and from the mid-1980s till now, the pilgrim traffic arriving at Santiago increased virtually a hundredfold.⁹ It was named the first European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe in October 1987, and one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites in 1993. Today, pilgrims along the Way of St James hail literally from the four corners of the globe, span all age groups, and all ranges of religiosity, spirituality and secularity. The Pilgrims Office of the Cathedral at Santiago gives out its "compostela", the certificate attesting to arrival at Santiago after walking at least the last 100 km,¹⁰ in both "spiritual" and "non-spiritual" versions. Many pilgrims continue on from Santiago to Finisterre ("End of the World" in Spanish) on the Atlantic coast where they impute a natural-cosmic end to the pilgrimage, marked by the Milky Way and the literal "end of the earth". Many of these Finisterre pilgrims are secular, or SBNR, but one might also legitimately ascribe *Christian* meaning to the location as referencing Christ's gospel directive to "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation", that is, to the ends of the earth. (Mark 16.15)

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In the wake of the phenomenal success of the Camino itinerary, the number of walking pilgrimage routes worldwide are growing precipitously. Examples include re-pristinations

of St Olav's Way in Norway, which was retraced and signposted in the 1990s,¹¹ and of St Cuthbert's Way in the Scottish Borders, which opened in 1996.¹² The Two Saints Way between the cathedral cities of Chester and Lichfield in England, opened in 2012; future plans include incorporation of QR (Quick Response) codes on signposts to help navigation via mobile phones.¹³ Marking of the Clare Pilgrim Way in the west of Ireland began in August 2011 and was completed in 2012. The Clare Way designers allow plainly that their 'aim is to map a Clare style "Camino" with a Celtic spirituality theme'.¹⁴ As of its last update, in 2008, the webpage 'The Walking Pilgrim', maintained by Peter Robins of the Confraternity of Saint James, lists 305 European walking pilgrimage routes as currently open or under development.¹⁵

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Closer to home the Chemins des Sanctuaires between Montréal and Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, Québec was established in 1999. It is referred to as "Un Compostelle Québécois" on the welcome page of its official website.¹⁶ Likewise, Sentier Notre-Dame Kapatakan, aka the "little Compostela" inaugurated in 2009, from Notre-Dame-du-Saguenay in Rivière-Éternité to the sanctuary of Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes at the Ermitage St-Antoine in Lac-Bouchette, Québec.¹⁷ This of course does not even broach the question of pilgrims, "traditional" and "neo/re-traditional", who are walking routes in the Americas, Asia, and Australia.

In the spirit of the fluidity, plurality and pastiche of postmodernity, contemporary walking pilgrimage tends to be an eclectic patchwork of ancient and new, of traditional and personal, of revival and reinvention. Explicitly claiming this new/old configuration, the inaugural walk along the Two Saints Way was dubbed 'Forward to the Ancient Future'.¹⁸ These variously arduous (if often also well-equipped) journeys contravene and even collapse distinctions between sacred and secular, spiritual and material. Holistically-construed self-development via self-challenge becomes a key component in walking pilgrimage, reflecting the wider 'spirituality' culture.

3. Decentring in Contemporary (and Ancient) Pilgrimage

What becomes clear is that in contemporary walking pilgrimage *practice*, the classic *reading* of pilgrimage – as journey to a sacred centre – is being supplemented, even eclipsed by an intensified focus on the *journey as such* as the dynamic means of transformation, and on the *journeying self*

(and not some geographically-locatable destination) as the locus of sacred meaning. Pilgrimage becomes a *process* of physical and psychic discipline and trial, vectored toward a personal experience of self-transcendence, supported by a *communitas*¹⁹ of fellow pilgrims who share the road but not necessarily much else, and notably, not necessarily religious belief. This is amply documented in the rhetoric of those walking traditionally religious pilgrimage routes.²⁰ Here, the journey is not a *means* to a holy centre where a universally-understood transformational power is located. As disruptive, dispossessive, decentring catalyst for interior experience, it has *become the end in itself*. The journey's fulfillment is found more in a performance of personal discipline and identity-formation, through the experience of a radical, if temporary, detachment from quotidian life, and less in a localisable sacramental endpoint. Here, truly, the journey's the thing.

Pilgrimage as journey, as, in effect, *wandering*, is not original to postmodernity, however. It harkens back to very early forms of pilgrimage in Christian tradition. The words "pilgrim" and "pilgrimage" themselves carry the trace of this origin in their etymology: the Latin *peregrinus* signifies a foreigner, a stranger, a sojourner or guest in a strange land, an *exile*.²¹ For early Christians ascetics, including the famous (and sometimes infamous) *peregrini pro Christo* of early Celtic Christianity, the motif of open-ended journey into the unknown, of transformation through de-centring, dislocation and dispossession, enacted an acute witness to self-renunciation, and trusted reliance on God alone. The motif was put into practice in the centrifugal dynamism of *xeniteia* (from *xenos*: the Greek word roughly equivalent to the same knot of meanings as the Latin *peregrinus*), or monastic wandering. Such religious itinerancy was an important and not uncommon – though commonly criticised – part of monastic spirituality in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages.²² It resonated with scriptural themes of intentional homelessness, and was conceived as both imitative of wayfaring heroes in the Bible, and as ascetical practice. Monastic vocation expressed in self-alienating mobility is generally less well-known than the centring stability of place associated with the Rule of St Benedict, and it is certainly less well-investigated from within the perspectives of pilgrimage studies. Perhaps it gives us an opening through which we can understand the potential for inter-convictional sharing in contemporary walking pilgrimage.

4. Post-secular pilgrims?

Recently, I have been exploring the work of Canadian-born clinical researcher in psychology – and *wanderer!* – Greg Madison, whose notion of 'existential migration' is acutely resonant with much we can find in both the early Christian spiritual wanderers and in postmodern, post-Christian, post-secular 'pilgrims'. It seems to me that Madison is touching on something not only psychologically relevant but, to use his term, *existentially* crucial in the dynamic and ambiguous

condition of being human, something *shared* at a very basic level, our differences notwithstanding. According to Madison, there is (for some people at least) the powerful, even irresistible need to leave where they are, not *for* some concrete destination or goal, though reasons like work, education -- or indeed journey to a sacred centre²³ -- may provide the justification for the mobility. The existential migrant moves not so much to a new centre, as *away* from the comfort and familiarity of centeredness, trusting in the possibility, even promise, of meaning in and through human openness to the new, the unknown, the yet-to-be-fulfilled. This reflects closely the sentiments of many of those increasingly crowding pilgrimage routes today, and is clearly traceable in some of the words of and about the ancient Christian *peregrini*.

Might this sharing of a basic human -- and spiritual -- awareness of the need to detach, to move, to allow ourselves to be uncentred, uncertain, needy, be a ground for unity-in-difference that is ecumenical, inter-faith, inter-convictional in scope? This is not to ignore the "dark side" of (ostensibly) endless lifestyle choices of postmodernity and its addiction to novelty and stimulation; certainly these can lead to restless relativism, shallow spiritual tourism, even nihilism.²⁴ But perhaps that is the risk we have no choice but to take today if we seek truly inter-convictional communion not only with those like us, but with those who are truly different from us. And maybe this risk is, after all, nothing new at all. In his book *The End of Belonging*, Greg Madison quotes scholar of religion and analytical psychologist, Dariane Pictet; I think she could be speaking for the centrifugal mobility of premodern *peregrini* and postmodern pilgrims:

Is it a given of the human condition to experience a longing for something not quite within our grasp, call it home, God, the uncanny? A disclosing of Being, as an emerging into the light which brings us closer to other, the Other and ultimately ourselves...²⁵

¹ Macrina Wiederkehr, *Behold Your Life: A Pilgrimage Through Your Memories*, (Notre Dame IN: Ave Maria Press, 2000), 11.

² See for instance, Ian Bradley in *Pilgrimage: A Spiritual and Cultural Journey*, (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2009), 9. There is copious data to support the claim.

³ I should clarify briefly that I use the term "postmodern" to refer to those cultures that were shaped by the various European Enlightenment (modernisms), and which by the mid-twentieth century had both radicalised and challenged the so-called Enlightenment Project (postmodernisms). This implies, for the most part, what we commonly call "the West", "the developed world", "the North-Atlantic" and so on, none of which are ideal terms.

⁴ Consider Michel Foucault's work on the power-structures concealed within much modernist notions of universality

⁵ For explicit use of the expression, see Paul Heelas et al, *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), and David Tacey, *The Spirituality Revolution: The Emergence of Contemporary Spirituality*, (Sydney: HarperCollins, 2003.)

⁶ The abbreviation "SBNR" is used by an increasing, and increasingly organised, group of people: see for instance the "SBNR" website, < <http://www.sbnr.org/>>, visited 1 Oct 2014.

⁷ See young Evangelical Jefferson Bethke's book, *Jesus > Religion: Why He Is So Much Better Than Trying Harder, Doing More, and Being Good Enough* (Thomas Nelson, 2013), and the viral video that sparked his success, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IAhDGYlpqY>>. There is here perhaps an echo of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's "religionless Christianity"; see his letter to Eberhard Bethge of April, 1944 in *Letters and Papers from Prison* (ed. Eberhard Bethge, New York: Touchstone, 1997), 278-282.

⁸ For details of the mid-century revival of interest in the Camino, see the website of the Confraternity of St James: "2000 Years of the Camino de Santiago: Where Did It Come From? Where Is It Going?", available at: < <http://www.csj.org.uk/2000-years.htm>>, viewed 1 Oct 2014.

⁹ This indicates the increase in pilgrims receiving the "compostela" (the certificate confirming completion of at least the last 100 km of the Camino Francés) from the Cathedral of Santiago between 1982 and 2013. For precise statistics, see the website of the Confraternity of Saint James: <<http://www.csj.org.uk/present.htm>> and <<http://www.caminodesantiago.me/>>, both viewed 1 Oct 2014.

¹⁰ The certificate is also granted to cyclists and pilgrims on horseback who have traveled the last 200 kms to Santiago.

¹¹ "St Olav Ways": <<http://pilegrimsleden.no/en/>>, viewed 1 Oct 2014. The certificate is also granted to cyclists and pilgrims on horseback who have traveled the last 200 kms to Santiago.

¹² Roger Smith and Ron Shaw, *St Cuthbert's Way*, (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd., 1997, 2009), viii, and the website, "St Cuthbert's Way", <<http://stcuthbertsway.info/>>, viewed 1 Oct 2014.

¹³ "Two Saints Way": < <http://twosaintsaway.org.uk/>>, viewed 1 Oct 2014.

¹⁴ "Clare Pilgrim Way": <<http://clarepilgrimway.ie/firstcircuit/>>, viewed 1 Oct 2014.

¹⁵ "Walking Pilgrim": <http://pilgrim.peterrobins.co.uk/routes/list.html>, viewed 1 Oct 2014.

¹⁶ See the website at: < <http://www.chemindessanctuaire.org/>>, viewed 1 Oct 2014.

¹⁷ See: <<http://www.sentiernotredamekapatakan.org/index.php?lang=en>>, viewed 1 Oct 2014.

¹⁸ "Two Saints Way": <http://twosaintsaway.org.uk?p=741>, viewed 1 Oct 2014.

¹⁹ Here I use the term for the spontaneous fellow-feeling and relationships that arise among pilgrims travelling together as coined by Victor and Edith Turner in their seminal *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 250-255.

²⁰ See the many accounts of the meaning of pilgrim journey in Nancy L. Frey's *Pilgrim Stories: On and Off the Road to Santiago, Journeys Along an Ancient Way in Modern Spain*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998). See also Montreal filmmaker Matthew Anderson's documentary *Something Grand* (2011), shot on the Camino Francés; trailer available at: < <http://somethinggrand.ca/trailer-something-grand/>>

²¹ Late Latin *pelegrinus*, dissimilation from Latin *peregrinus* "foreigner"; from *peregre* "from abroad," from *per-* "beyond" + *agri, ager* "country".

²² Two recent and excellent in-depth studies of early Christian monastic wandering can be found in Maribel Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300-800*, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005) and Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002).

²³ I am responsible for that last category; Madison hardly mentions pilgrimage in his writing, though he seems unaware of the tradition of peregrinatio. See his *The End of Belonging: Untold Stories of Leaving Home and the Psychology of Global Relocation*, (London: Greg A. Madison, 2009).

²⁴ See Charles Taylor's article: "Spirituality of Life -- and its Shadow." *Compass* 15, no.1 (May/June 1996), 10-13.

²⁵ *The End of Belonging*, 26.

Reflection Ecumenism in Today's World

Cliff Baker Theological Studies Student, Concordia University

On October 25th I attended a conference entitled: “The Challenges of Ecumenism in Today's World.” Ecumenism, or Christian unity, strives to overcome differences and unite as one. Not as one world faith, but as one people in prayer and to discover where Jesus Christ is, in different churches.¹ It's about togetherness, not about separation. Jesus wanted the world to unite in one voice in praise of God, not to snipe at each other about things that are, in the end, insignificant.

The first speaker that I heard was Father Gilles Barrette, a member of *The White Fathers*, working in Africa. In his work, he had many encounters with Muslims and it was through these encounters that a sort of model for ecumenism can work. He spoke eloquently about how the Muslims he met were open and good hearted, never once speaking against him or his faith. Father Barrette said that he never heard any Muslim reproach him or his fellow missionaries for trying to help people.

The work was not about converting anyone, it was simply to help those in need and to spread the love of God, no matter to which faith one belonged. Father Barrette mentioned his personal “ten basic faith convictions as a Christian.”² All ten come down to the same basic themes. God is not a judge, He is all love. God is in all people and that Christ raised from the dead for everyone, not for a select elite few. God resides in all people, whatever and wherever they may be.

Sara Terreault, a professor at Concordia University was the next to speak. She spoke about pilgrimage, and questioned whether or not it could be a path towards ecumenism. Professor Terreault's presentation spent much time questioning the modern pilgrimage as something that has become no longer a religious experience as much as an experience in itself. She linked the modern rebirth and explosion of pilgrimages and pilgrimage roots to *post-modernism*, which sprang up in the middle of the twentieth century, along with the attitudes that came with the post-modernist movement. Post-modernism is “highly skeptical of explanations which claim to be valid for all groups, cultures, traditions, or races, and instead focuses on the relative truths of each person.” In other words, whatever works for you is fine and none of my business.

The final speaker of the day was Dr. Matthew Anderson, also a professor at Concordia University. Dr. Anderson did little speaking, instead screening his 2012 short documentary, *Something Grand*.⁴ The film follows a group of pilgrims, including Dr. Anderson and his son along *The Camino*, an 800km long trail through forests, towns and villages on a journey to Santiago de Compostela, Spain. We meet people from different parts of the world, of different ages and of both genders walking the path and each pilgrim has a reason for taking on the daunting task as varied as the people themselves.

Overall, the part of the conference that I attended was interesting. The speakers were articulate and showed a clear knowledge of each of their chosen themes. Father Barrette's presentation spoke of how it is possible for people to get along with each other, despite differences in religion and background. This was obviously a point that Father Barrette wanted understood. His personal ten basic faith convictions as a Christian is something that can be easily translated into all faiths, and into all denominations within each faith.

Father Barrette spoke clearly and with obvious personal meaning. He was not merely espousing an ideal that others should follow, he lived and continues to live it. Father Barrette truly feels that differences can be overcome and that the similarities are what is truly important. The idea that God is in all of us and that God is love, are tenants of each Christian denomination, as well as being tenants of all major religions on earth.

Sara Terreault adequately put forth the idea that spirituality in general and pilgrimage in particular have become secular to the point of being pointless. What was once an arduous journey meant to be an ascetic sacrifice for God, has become a tourist attraction. Much like Christmas has become commercialized to the point that Christ has been taken nearly completely out of it, existing in partial name only, pilgrimage has become about the journey itself, rather than about the reason for it.

Although Dr. Anderson said very little, opting instead to show his film, that was actually the most enjoyable presentation of the day for me. It was an interesting documentary, filmed well and told the intended story without being preachy. I found myself wondering if there was ever a day that it did not rain during the pilgrimage. It seemed that the path was wet all the time. It looked miserable, and yet the people on the journey did not. What stood out for me were the people on the pilgrimage. From different backgrounds and walks of life, they were all there looking for something. Some did not know what it was they were looking for, hoping for “the light bulbs will go on and say ‘oh, that’s why you’re here.’”⁵

Ecumenism can work in this world. Firstly, Jesus spoke of reconciliation. If people would learn to forgive each other as He forgave us, then all differences can be put aside. As it says in Matthew 6:14-15, “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Christians also should strive to live the life of Christ rather than just profess faith. One must follow Christ’s teachings in order to truly be a Christian, and that means that a particular denomination is unimportant. Dietrich Bonhoeffer called on all Christians to be disciples, and to him discipleship meant to carry the cross, to follow Jesus’ example. A disciple must be willing to stand up for those who cannot defend themselves. “The disciple’s answer is not a spoken confession of faith in Jesus. Instead, it is the obedient deed.”⁶ It means nothing if one says that they believe in Jesus Christ if they do not follow His teachings. Words are empty, it is actions that count, talk is cheap.

Christians of all denominations must also understand that Jesus did not incarnate, get persecuted, crucified, die, get buried and raised from the dead for them specifically. Jesus sacrificed Himself for all peoples. He did not preach on the mountain proclaiming that He had only come for Catholics, or only for Protestants, or only for the Orthodox, or even only for Christians. Jesus came for all, for everyone in all corners of the world. Jesus loved all people, and so should His followers.

Christians also need to work together for a greater good. Help out in a soup kitchen or with a clothing or toy drive. If one church is holding a charitable event, other churches, regardless of denomination, should lend a helping hand. If a member of one church needs help finding work and a

member of a different church can offer a job, they should do so. Through helping each other, a better understanding can be fostered. If there are families in need in their community, churches of all denominations should get together and help those families. Caring has no denomination.

Christians also need to stop concentrating on each other’s differences. Instead look upon the similarities and keep those close to heart. While each church may have different ways, all have the same goal in mind, to walk with God. It is not about the differences, it is about focussing on the similarities. I know I should not quote a cartoon, but I will anyway as it strives to make the same point. Bart Simpson once said, “It’s all Christianity, people. The little, stupid differences are nothing next to the big, stupid similarities.”⁷

¹ Adriana Bara, “Ecumenism” (lecture, Theology and Myth, Concordia University, Montreal, Oct. 30, 2014).

² Gilles Barrette, “TÉMOIN DU CHRIST DANS LA RENCONTRE DES MUSULMANS” (lecture, The Challenges of Ecumenism in Today’s World, Montreal, Oct. 25, 2014).

³ “Postmodernism,” PBS, accessed Nov. 12, 2014 <http://www.pbs.org/faithandreason/gengloss/postm-body.html>

⁴ Matthew Anderson, *Something Grand*, video, directed by Matthew Anderson (2012; Spain: Concordia University).

⁵ Matthew Anderson, *Something Grand*, video, directed by Matthew Anderson (2012; Spain: Concordia University).

⁶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, Trans. and Ed. Martin Kuske et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 57.

⁷ Mark Pinsky, “D’Oh! Top 10 (Plus One) Religious Episodes on The Simpsons,” *beliefnet.com*, accessed Nov. 12, 2014, <http://www.beliefnet.com/Entertainment/2008/09/D-Oh-Top-Ten-Plus-One-Religious-Episodes-on-The-Simpsons.aspx?p=2#>

Ecumenism – The Road to Brotherhood

Msgr Christian Lépine

Archbishop Lépine has had many years of experience as a pastor and teacher. Ordained a priest in 1983, at Saint-André-Apôtre Parish, he began his priestly ministry at Saint-Joseph-de-Mont-Royal before departing for Rome to study philosophy at the Pontifical Gregorian University from 1986 to 1989. Upon his return to Montreal, he was appointed parish assistant at Notre-Dame-des-Neiges and pastor of Saint-Joseph-de-Mont-Royal. He ministered there until 1996, when he became the director of Jean-Claude Cardinal Turcotte's secretariat. In 1998, he was called to Rome, where he worked for the Secretary of State and then for the Congregation for Divine Worship. In 2000, he returned to Montreal and was appointed director of the Grand Séminaire de Montréal, a mandate that he fulfilled up until 2006. From 2006 to 2012, he was pastor of Purification de la Bienheureuse-Vierge-Marie and Notre-Dame-des-Champs parishes. Throughout his various activities, Father Lépine taught philosophy and theology for some 20 years at the Grand Séminaire de Montréal. Ordained a bishop on September 10, 2011 by Jean-Claude Cardinal Turcotte, he was appointed Episcopal Vicar to Family and Youth as well as Director of the Pastoral Liturgy Service. Finally, on March 20, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI appointed him archbishop of Montreal. The Most Rev. Christian Lépine is the tenth bishop and eighth Catholic Archbishop of Montreal since the establishment of the diocese in 1836.

I am speaking to you from the point of view of a believer. I am someone who believes in Jesus Christ. For several decades, I have taken part in ecumenical prayer meetings, in information sessions, and in social gatherings with members of various churches. I would like to tell you about the impact of ecumenism on my life as a priest.

I would describe ecumenism, first of all, as a path, a road. This implies moving toward something, following a course. Our destination is the unity of all Christians. To help look at things from this perspective, I will share with you a passage from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians which draws on that of our beginnings, that of Jesus Christ, that of salvation in Jesus Christ, ultimately that of all creatures gathered into God:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” (1:3-10)



Unity! The unity of all of us! The unity of all humanity in Jesus Christ in his eternal kingdom; this is already God's plan. So, when we walk the road of ecumenism, we answer the call of God. To walk the road of unity is to answer the call of God. There are many ways to speak about ecumenism in using older, more classical terminology such as “separated brethren”. Sometimes we emphasize “separated”, at other times, “brethren”, “brothers and sisters”. Given these

alternatives, I don't make a choice between separation and fraternity. The important thing is to walk *together* towards unity.

I was exposed to this early on in prayer groups. The first thing that strikes me when I find myself surrounded by Christians of other denominations as we pray to Jesus Christ together, is the spirit of fraternity and the mutual affection. It is the same each time and for this I am grateful. Despite the inherent difficulties of engaging in dialogue, just the fact of coming together to pray in an atmosphere of peace and affection seems to me to be a moment blessed by God. This makes me think that unity is first of all a work of God; then it is our work. What we can do here depends on God's primordial and essential grace. I believe I am not old enough to have known that time when we looked at other churches with hostility. When I heard it spoken of, it was in terms of historical references that had nothing to do with my own experiences. I remember a remark by Cardinal Ratzinger who noted that one of the blessings of God on the ecumenical movement was to have allowed for the extraction of the poison of hostility. We recognize that hostility is a subtle power that corrupts the surrounding environment. If we put a drop of poison in a glass of water, it doesn't stay isolated in one place, but penetrates the whole glassful. Similarly, if hostility enters into our hearts and our lives, it will infect our whole vision of reality and taint all our relations with others. Then, it is hard to rid ourselves of it. On the other hand, if we want to relate to other Christians, we will perceive God's blessing in the necessary drawing out of the poison of hostility. Truly, God is at work

For me, it is essential that we don't waste this gift of God. When I meet people from other denominations, I feel a sense of brotherhood and even affection as a gift of God. I say to myself: I mustn't waste this gift of God. On the contrary, I want to be nourished by this grace through my continued prayer for ecumenism. I want to get together with members of other denominations to pray with them and to talk with them so as not to lose the gift of God. This experience of God's gift opens us up to faith and invites our collaboration. I thank God that we are walking together on the road of ecumenism.

Of course, I hope to see the time when we can speak of real, deep, and complete unity. Just the same, I already know the joy of walking together along the way to unity. This joy is given to us today. We share the joy of meeting together right now. Let's not waste this chance of meeting each other, of praying together and sharing together which is offered to us by the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism. It is important to

take advantage of these opportunities when they occur. We even have to create such occasions. The gift of God becomes a call from God to walk the road of unity and to do our part.

This unity road assuredly becomes, by God's grace, a fraternity road in so far as the foundation and focal point is Jesus Christ, the only Son of the eternal Father. In his divinity, Jesus Christ has the power to make us children of God. We see this truth revealed in the prologue of the gospel of John. The apostle, Paul, also uses this expression in his letter to the Ephesians when he speaks of "the power to make us his adopted children". Yes, we are the adopted children of God the Father in Jesus Christ, by the grace of Jesus Christ. To walk the road of unity, to walk toward an even greater unity, is to go forward in a spirit of peace, in a spirit of brotherhood, it is to go forward in Jesus Christ. In this way, we can know fraternity in Jesus Christ, friendship in Jesus Christ, affection in Jesus Christ. So, all our undertakings, our discussions, our exchanges, our knowledge of history, everything we are benefiting from here and now in this Centre, are extremely important. This is even more of a treasure when we find at the centre the grace of Jesus Christ.

My experience in praying with Christians of other denominations and coming together with them around Jesus Christ has been an experience of stopping, of recollecting and of sharing. I am always moved to discover among other Christians, ways of praying that inspire me. I have updated my way of reading the Bible so as to know it better and to meditate on it more meaningfully. This renewed contact with the Bible has clarified my way of being a Catholic. I was also led to read the works of writers from various churches: Orthodox, Evangelical, Protestant, Anglican...

Each denomination has great authors and outstanding leaders to offer. Once I discovered them, I had to read them, to get to know them and to realize how much they enriched my own understanding of my Catholic faith. I see this discovery as a fruit of the action of walking together on the road of brotherhood and peace in Jesus Christ. For example, of the many great and noble translations of the Bible in the Protestant and Anglican traditions, it is the New King James Version that I go to most often and which enriches me the most. Regarding the Orthodox and Oriental churches, it is the depth and symbolism of the divine liturgy which I find most meaningful. All of this confirms my sense that in walking together as Christian brothers and sisters, we share one unique point of reference, Jesus Christ. We come together to pray the texts of the Bible in the name of Jesus Christ and this always strengthens my own belief and my own faith knowledge. Sometimes this poses questions and

often the diverse responses broaden my field of vision. Take the important question of generosity. We all know that we cannot be real Christians without doing something for those in need. We remember Jesus' statement that "Whatever you do to one of these little ones, it is to me that you do it". How often do we see, in our different Christian communities, evidences of sensitivity to and solidarity with the poorest of the poor? In each of our denominations, we have events, activities, organizations to take care of the poor. But, we still have a long way to go before we combine our various means so as to carry out these charitable acts together.

This unity road assuredly becomes, by God's grace, a fraternity road in so far as the foundation and focal point is Jesus Christ, the only Son of the eternal Father. In his divinity, Jesus Christ has the power to make us children of God.

Coming closer so as to walk together in discovering this grace given us by our Lord also becomes a testimony for our times. We live in a world already full of divisions which easily give rise to hostility. Even our simple differences can lead to hostility. As we are gathered here to reflect together, I'll share a more personal reflection with you: Am I really in so much of a hurry to see the arrival of Christian unity? As odd as it may seem to admit this: in keeping our differences, we can witness to the world that it is possible to live together in peace and in mutual appreciation with our differences. Our modern world needs this witness of a living peace without uniformity. Peace consists in knowing how to appreciate what each one can give to the other. This is something we can do now. Some may dream of a huge church made up of a mixture of unity and uniformity. While awaiting this immense union, we maintain the conviction that the church is the work of God and only he will bring it about at the time he chooses. I think of this prayer of St. Francis of Assisi: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace" Yes, we can be instruments of peace with our diversity, with our differences, and overall with what unites us in Jesus Christ. Together we will be instruments of peace. It is possible to have an ensemble of persons witnessing for peace, even if we are all different.

The challenge posed by this witness to peace doesn't seem reasonable. However, we are not obliged to destroy someone who doesn't agree with us. If the Lord, by his grace,

has drained off the poison of hostility from our relationships, we can pray him to extract this poison of hostility from all of humanity. As Christians, our witness must also be seen in actions; not in making a spectacle of ourselves, but in living our lives in all simplicity. As we form one people of God made up of members of different denominations united in Jesus Christ, we can live this witness in mutual affection on the way of peace in the Lord who brings us together. Answering this challenge seems to me to be a mission for today. Yes, this is possible now, today. In this context, today's meeting is important. This initiative of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism undertaken in collaboration with other denominations and organizations, reminds us of the social role we are called upon to play. All of society has become pluralistic and we speak of a pluralistic model for society. Secularism is a growing reality in today's world, the world in which we live. In fact, our society has become secular and pluralistic. This is the reality of our social environment. This secular and social pluralism has become our battlefield. Seen another way, this pluralism must become the place where we are mutually enriched. You see, we return to the road of ecumenism as a road of peace in Jesus Christ. It is a road of friendship and brotherhood in Jesus Christ who gives us the grace to witness to him. Our friendship and affection for each other in Jesus Christ renders witness to today's world. This grace is a gift and also a summons to a common mission.

I encourage you to continue to walk in hope on this road whatever may be the moment God chooses to carry out his plan of Christian unity. Today is the time to do something. God's grace is given to us today. Already today, we can see someone from another denomination as a gift given to us. I will give you one last example. It is about preaching. I have over one hundred books on preaching a homily because I feel a great need to learn more about this. About 98% of these books are not by Catholic authors. If Catholics have cultivated a significant tradition on preaching and on homilies, they have neglected to treat the tradition of the transmission and the art of the homily. I have, however, discovered extraordinary talents for preaching in an Anglican and in a Baptist. This is a beautiful example of the gift given me by the grace of God.

I will continue to keep this spiritual outlook. It is a perspective of faith that sustains my life.

Ecumenical News

International

The trilateral dialogue between Lutherans, Roman Catholics and Mennonites held its third meeting, February 9-13 at Elspeet, Netherlands on “Baptism: Communicating Grace and Faith. The most challenging issue the commission faces is the question of infant versus adult baptism. Lutherans and Catholics baptize infants; Mennonites baptize adults. At their meetings, commission members study the Bible together, helping to create an atmosphere of sharing and trust. The fourth session of the trilateral commission is scheduled for 28 February to 4 March 2016 in Colombia on the theme of “Discipleship: Living Out Baptism.” *Lutheran World Information*

Members of the Catholic-Muslim Forum, meeting in the Vatican, Nov. 11-13 2014, urged dialogue to promote greater respect and understanding and condemned all acts of violence committed in the name of religion. “It is never acceptable to use religion to justify such acts,” said the 12 Catholic and 12 Muslim delegates who were led by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, a professor of Islamic studies at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. The Catholic-Muslim Forum was established in 2008 after more than 100 Muslim scholars launched the Common Word initiative, asking the pope and other Christian leaders to support dialogue projects highlighting the values Christians and Muslims share. The Forum meets every three years to assess relations between the two faiths and look for ways to improve cooperation. *Prairie Messenger, America*

The sainthood cause of Rev. Paul Wattson, a leading advocate of Christian unity, was endorsed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops at their fall meeting in Baltimore. Father Paul founded the Church Unity Octave in 1908 which became the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity still celebrated every year in January. He also helped to found the Society of the Atonement at Graymoor in Garrison, N.Y. in 1898. This new religious order was formed in the tradition of the Franciscans with the mission of promoting Christian unity and working with the poor. The Franciscan Friars of the Atonement continue his work of fostering Christian unity on three continents. For more information about the friars visit: atonementfriars.org. *Prairie Messenger and USCCB*

The solid ecumenical developments between Catholics and Lutherans will be highlighted in an event in the fall of 2016, jointly hosted by the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting

Christian Unity. A common liturgical guide to be published in 2015 will enable churches all over the world to review the 500 years of the Reformation in preparation for the 2017 anniversary. The guide will transpose the 2013 dialogue document *From Conflict to Communion* into liturgical acts. The material will reflect this document’s triple form of penitence for the wounds mutually inflicted, joy at the insights and dimensions of the Reformation, and hope for unity. “On this occasion”, Pope Francis stated, “for the first time, Lutherans and Catholics will have the opportunity to share one ecumenical commemoration throughout the world, not in the form of a triumphalistic celebration, but as a profession of our common faith in the Triune God.” *Lutheran World Information*

The U.S. Muslim & Christian Coalition (MCC), meeting in January, decided to hold its first international conference, May 1-2, to expand membership and to reach out to minority groups of the Arab world. The MCC represents a diverse range of Muslim and Christian leaders, churches, mosques, Islamic centres and organizations who are putting their faith into action to protect Christians and other religious minorities in the Arab world and to further coexistence and peace. For Dr. Sayyid Syeed, National Director for Interfaith & Community Alliances for the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the Coalition specifically includes key Muslim and Christian leaders to provide the critical mass needed to address the violent acts of extremists. “Only with a coalition of solidarity among all players,” he notes, “will we be able to bring peace and understanding among people living in the sacred real estate of both our faiths.” *CAIR*

The 12th annual Celebration of Abraham was held, January 25th, at St. James Catholic Church in Davis, California on the theme of justice. About 20 local artists, part of Pottery for Peace, crafted 100 ceramic bowls sold at the event with proceeds going to organizations furthering justice and peace. Renee Dryfoos, a member of Congregation Bet Haverim/Jewish Fellowship, coordinated the Pottery for Peace project. She gathered together fellow artists who had often expressed the desire to do their craft with some kind of spiritual resonance. Receiving the Celebration of Abraham funds this year were “Seeds of Peace” and “re-Generation”, two interfaith groups who focus on building understanding between children and youths of historically enemy states in hopes of creating a different future in the Middle East. Sponsors of Celebration of Abraham include American Muslim Voice, the Christian Church, the Woodland Mosque, the Presbyterian Church, the Jewish Fellowship of Woodland, Lutheran, Methodist, Catholic, United, Episcopal,

Orthodox Coptic and Unitarian churches and the Davis Friends (Quaker) Meeting. The day included visits to kiosks of participating groups, panel discussions and music and concluded with a ritual of washing each other's hands and breaking a loaf of bread together as symbols of respect and connection. *The Davis Enterprise*

The Muslim Soup Kitchen was started in 2003 by a group of Muslim youth from Troy, New York who practiced their religion by feeding the hungry. Relationships have been created with local service organizations and supermarkets. Each month students, cooks, drivers and other volunteers prepare foods at home and drop off meals at sites in nearby towns. In Albany, they deliver to Mercy House, Homeless Action Committee, Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless, Marillac Shelter and have recently partnered with the City Mission of Schenectady. "These facilities do it every day," says MSKP coordinator Uzma Popal. "We do it once a month and on holidays like Christmas so they can take some time off." The vision is to provide food to the homeless and those in need, to engage Muslim youth in service and to provide a permanent connection with the larger community to fulfill their duty as neighbours. Prophet Mohammad is reported to have said, "He is not a Muslim who goes to bed satiated while his neighbour goes hungry." Popal commented, "We're trying to practice our faith the way it is meant to be." *Times Union*

The Rev. Canon John Gibaut, after serving for the past seven years in Geneva as director of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, took up his new post in March 2015 in London as director of Unity, Faith and Order of the Anglican Communion. He succeeds the Rev. Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan, also a Canadian, who has been in the position since 2009. The Unity, Faith and Order department is responsible for promoting and participating in dialogue with other denominations and in recent years has come to deal with some of the internal tensions within the Anglican Communion. Stressing the relationship between communion and unity, Gibaut said, "You and I can disagree sharply on an issue...but still, I am in communion with you. That is the witness that the world needs today." *Anglican Journal*

Two Canadian Anglicans will take their places as representatives of the Anglican Communion on two international ecumenical dialogues. The Rev. Dr. Tim Perry has been named to the Anglican-Reformed International Commission and Archdeacon Edward Simonton will serve on the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission. The two priests were appointed from a list of nominees submitted by provinces of the Anglican Communion, a family of churches in more than 165 countries. *Anglican Journal*

"The search for the full unity of Christians remains a priority for the Catholic Church and, therefore, it is one of my principal daily preoccupations," Pope Francis wrote in a text he handed to members of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity at their plenary meeting. He remarked on how the attitudes of Catholics toward Christians of other churches have changed in the years following Vatican Council II. The "hostility and indifference" of the past has disappeared, he said, and a process has begun of "healing, which allows us to welcome the other as a brother or sister in the profound unity born of baptism." He also noted the growing appreciation on the part of Catholics, "of what is good and true in the lives of Christians from every community." *Prairie Messenger*

On the eve of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP20), held December 1-12 2014 in Lima, Peru, hundreds of climate fasters met for a candlelight vigil of remembrance for those affected by climate impacts. Peruvian Minister for the Environment, Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, spoke movingly about the importance of faith groups in the climate change discussions. Members of Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Baha'i and other groups took part in the vigil and candlelight procession. Wael Hmaidan, director of the Climate Action Network, told the gathering, "We fast for the climate in solidarity with the victims of climate disasters and for our children's futures." The event began 365 days of fasting with a chain of fasters across the world building up to the crucial Paris 2015 climate change agreements. *Lutheran World Information*

An interreligious soccer match for peace was held on 1 September 2014 at the invitation of Pope Francis. The international sports stars, representing different religions, languages and nationalities, wanted to demonstrate their solidarity in favour of peace on all fronts. "We want to manifest our commitment to value, to realize, to promote and encourage, concretely and actively, peace and brotherhood between peoples ... fostering dialogue and a culture of getting to know each other, building bridges, creating a 'we' leading to a mutual enrichment through the diversity of nations, races, cultures and beliefs," expressed the Peace Manifesto signed by all the players. The soccer match raised 2.5 million Euros for two organizations working for the education and protection of children all over the world. *La vie est belle*

The results of a recent global online survey on ecotheology, climate justice and food security in theological education will be available from the Global Digital Library on Theology and Ecumenism (GlobeTheoLib) which hosted the survey. Information gathered from theological education institutions and from people in specialized ministries will help to prepare a handbook on green churches. GlobeTheoLib

is a joint project of the World Council of Churches and Globethics.net, a Geneva-based global ethics network. In cooperation with the WCC, Globethics.net published in September 2014, *Religions for Climate Justice*, a collection of international interfaith statements on climate change. WCC Press Centre

“The Vocation of Minority Churches Today” was the theme of a conference of the Anglican-Lutheran Society (ALS) held September 12-16 in Hungary. About sixty participants from all over the world attended lectures by Anglicans and Lutherans on Divided Communities, Diakonia, Involving the Laity, Ecumenism and Lutheran Spirituality in Central Eastern Europe. The results of small group exchanges were summarized in a closing panel discussion. The program included morning and evening prayers, a Sunday worship service, an excursion to the Benedictine Abbey of Tihany dating from 1055 and a Saturday night wine tasting serving cultural and gastronomical delights. A reception was attended by ecumenical guests such as the Roman Catholic Archbishop, the Chief Councillor of the Reformed Church, the Secretary of the Ecumenical Council and the local mayor. The Anglican-Lutheran Society was formed in 1984 to provide meeting opportunities for the two denominations and to promote Christian Unity. Lutheran World Federation

The first joint project of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) has been started in Al Mafraq, Jordan. Working with Syrian refugees and the Jordanian host community, the project conducts workshops to promote hygiene awareness and peace-building. “There is a competition for resources,” Dr Gideon Saad, LWF program manager says. “By combining these two very different things – sanitation and hygiene with conflict resolution, we address the problem from two sides: we help people to improve living conditions while resolving tensions.” Elhadi Abdalla Mohammed, director of IRW Jordan said, «The aim of the project is to increase the level of understanding between Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities regarding their living situation, mentality, values and culture”. After three months, 25 selected participants will follow a “Train the Trainer” workshop to conduct similar training sessions themselves. *Lutheran World Federation*

The 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp was commemorated on January 27 with a mass in Auschwitz’s ecumenical centre. During the Second World War, 1.2 million mostly Jewish prisoners were killed by the Nazis in this camp. The anniversary of the camp’s liberation by Soviet forces was attended by government representatives from 40 countries and included interfaith prayers at the nearby Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination centre and a wreath-laying at the

camp’s infamous Death Wall. Cardinal Reinhard Marx, president of the German Catholic bishops’ conference said Auschwitz ranked “among the fundamental experiences of mankind” where “the Germans systematically and industrially organized the destruction of European Jews.” He added that the death camp remained “an open wound on the body of humanity,” and it was important to ask “why the crimes of Auschwitz happened on a continent marked for at least a millennium by Christianity.” *Prairie Messenger*

One of American Orthodoxy’s most intellectually acute voices in the ecumenical arena, the Very Reverend Paul Schneirla, died on September 20, 2014. He served on the Board of the National Council of Churches and was a founding member of the Orthodox/Anglican, and the Orthodox/National Polish Catholic theological dialogues. He was also one of the founding members of the Eastern Orthodox/Roman Catholic Theological Consultation of North America. In the 1950’s it required considerable courage on the part of Orthodox, but especially Catholic, theologians to contemplate dialogue with one another in civility and respect. Those called to an embryonic Consultation at Fordham University met virtually in secret, lest the higher ecclesiastical powers hear of such meetings and squelch them. At a meeting of the current Consultation soon after Fr. Paul’s death, the Roman Catholic members who knew him were one in praise of the quality of Fr. Paul’s contributions to the dialogue for over half a century. *The Word*

National

A plan to hold a second joint assembly in 2019 has been approved in principle by the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. The first joint meeting of the two churches’ governing bodies was held in Ottawa in 2013 with the full communion partners meeting as one group except when required to meet and vote as separate legal entities. Meeting together, November 17-18, in Niagara Falls, Ontario, the Anglican House of Bishops and the Lutheran Conference of Bishops heard in a report from the Joint Anglican and Lutheran Commission that ministries where Anglican and Lutheran communities share clergy, facilities and programs, have grown from 32 to 82 in the last few years. For the majority of these ministries, the report emphasized, the choice to work together was made from “a position of strength for common witness,” not from a survivalist point of view. *Anglican Journal*

The Anglican-Lutheran Cycle of Prayer is designed for use in communities of the two churches. For each Sunday, there are intentions for specific dioceses, synods and groups. To view or download this document, please go to: elcic.ca/Documents/Anglican-LutheranCycleofPrayer2014-2015.pdf. *Canada Lutheran*

At the 6th annual Interfaith National Prayer Breakfast held December 2nd in Ottawa, Cardinal Thomas Collins, archbishop of Toronto, spoke to parliamentarians and religious leaders from across Canada on the importance of integrity and humility in public life. Humility “helps us all to transcend the crises we face,” he said. Faith gives us the perspective of humility, as we recognize “God is God, and I am not”, a most sane way of seeing things. “Different religious traditions have various ways of helping people to become grounded in humility – and humility literally means being in touch with the humus, with the earth. It means being down to earth,” he said. Collins assured the legislators of the prayers from all the faith communities represented at the breakfast, and added, “We are blessed to live in a country where we can enjoy freedom of religion, not freedom from religion.” *Catholic Register*

The national Roman Catholic-Evangelical Dialogue began in 2011 when the two faith communities found themselves with similar positions in presentations made to the Parliament of Canada and the Supreme Court on the dignity of human life, the definition of marriage and other issues. At the December 2014 meeting, Regina Catholic theologian and ecumenist, Dr. Brett Salkeld and David Guretzki of Briercrest Evangelical Seminary in Caronport, Saskatchewan presented papers explaining their faith traditions. Contrary to what might be expected, Salkeld’s paper explains Evangelicals to Catholics, and Guretzki’s explains Roman Catholicism to Evangelicals. The two worked together to make sure the papers are an accurate reflection of the two faith traditions. Both papers should be published together, but at what date and in what venue has not been decided. *Prairie Messenger*

The members of the Canadian Association of Catholic Periodicals voted unanimously at their October 2014 congress to change the name of this organization, founded in 1968, to the Association of Catholic and Ecumenical Medias. This broader appellation will allow those in communications media other than print to join the ranks of the current 84 members of the Association. *Auvidéc*

West

World Religion Day was held on January 18 at Beth Jacob Synagogue in Regina. “It’s getting bigger every year,” said Krishan Kapila, president of the Regina Multi-Faith Forum that organizes the event each year. World Religion Day brings together local representatives of religions who each present a short prayer or speech asking for peace and harmony. This year, 11 religions participated and 200 people attended. The service opened with the blowing of the sankh, a traditional symbol in Hindu and Buddhist rituals, and closed

with the blowing of the ram’s horn which is used in Jewish rituals and symbolizes the presence of God. As he greeted everyone on entering, Rabbi Jeremy Parnes referred to a tapestry containing symbols of various faith traditions and the four Hebrew letters that spell out God’s personal name. “It is unpronounceable,” he said, “But if it were it would sound like this,” and he gave out a deep breath. “It is the breath of life.” The care and health of the earth was the focus of several prayers. *Prairie Messenger*

Canada needs a more Christian approach to accepting homeless refugees fleeing war, oppression and starvation says Tom Denton, co-executive director of Winnipeg’s Hospitality House Refugee Ministry. Hospitality House is operated by the Catholic Archdiocese of Winnipeg and the Anglican Diocese of Rupertsland, both of which are recognized as refugee sponsors by the federal government. Hospitality House assists with the application process and arranges for adequate living accommodations and other services once the refugees arrive. Many refugees never make it here because of what Denton calls restrictive federal government policies. Canada was built “by waves of immigrants,” he said. “We are clearly not the compassionate Canada we once were.” *Prairie Messenger*

“A Place to Call Home” was the theme of a November 13 gathering in Edmonton City Hall to celebrate the interfaith housing initiative to end homelessness in the city. Four years ago, 23 leaders of faith and spiritual communities pledged their public support for this initiative. The program included speeches, musical entertainment and light refreshments. Year five highlights of Edmonton’s 10-year plan to end homelessness noted: 2,178 permanent homes were secured for 2,909 people who had been homeless; 84% of the people housed have retained their housing; 466 newly constructed units were completed; Welcome Home, a volunteer-based program that provides companionship and support to individuals and families, matched 85 community volunteers with 55 newly housed Edmontonians. *Edmonton Interfaith Centre and Canada Lutheran*

Leaders of the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths condemned violence and spoke for peace at Edmonton City Hall on December 6. The Voices of Peace from Abraham’s Children event was sponsored by the Phoenix Multi-Faith Society. The program for the fifth annual Phoenix celebration included the recitation of a poem in Arabic, a reading from the Bible and presentations from two children’s choirs. Representing Islam, Dr. Ameer Farook spoke in favour of dialogue with the broader community. “Our responsibility is to help one another,” he said. Rabbi Kliel Rose said “we just can’t sit” and wait for peace. Each person has an obligation to bring about peace. For Dr. Earle

Sharam, principal of St. Stephen's College, the vision of justice and peace deeply rooted in the Christian tradition is more than a human, political or economic effort to build a better society. "It's based on building better hearts – hearts that will be filled with the knowledge of God." *Western Catholic Reporter*

The third annual De Margerie Series on Christian Reconciliation and Unity was held in conjunction with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Saskatoon with Westerfield Tucker, a member of the international Methodist-Roman Catholic dialogue, as guest speaker. This year's program included a workshop on Christian unity in prayer and song, a session for clergy on baptism and Christian unity and the annual De Margerie lecture at St. Thomas More College. *Prairie Messenger*

We Acknowledge our Central Differences is the title of the second section of a common statement of faith by Evangelicals and Catholics discussed at a public meeting in December at St. Paul's Co-Cathedral in Saskatoon. An earlier discussion had treated the section of the statement by the 10 Catholics and 10 Evangelicals on common points of agreement. Differences exist on the Scriptures, on the essential nature of the church, on how God's authority is expressed within the Christian community, on the process of salvation, on baptism and Eucharist, on the role of Mary, and the communion of saints. The dialogue group recognizes that there may also be non-theological sources of division. Saskatoon Catholic bishop, Donald Bolen, noted, "We are looking at the differences in this section, but it is in the context of a strong statement about what we hold together, and will be followed by a strong statement about what we can do together in mission." *Prairie Messenger*

Ontario

"Called to Serve: an exhibit honouring Canada's military chaplains of all faiths" was held at Toronto's Anglican Cathedral Church of St. James, November 6-16, 2014. "While chaplaincy-focused museums exist in England and the United States, there had never before been an exhibit on chaplains in this country," said Nancy Mallett, archivist at St. James. The display saw war through the compassionate eyes of the chaplains who accompanied their country's troops to the front. "Unarmed with conventional weapons, they took the love of God into the heart of unbelievable evil," noted the Very Rev. Douglas Stoute, dean of Toronto and cathedral rector. The evolution of military chaplaincy was traced from its roots in ancient times to the current Royal Canadian Chaplain Service, a multi-faith ministry whose 350 members include chaplains from eight different Christian denominations, as well as three from the Muslim faith and two from the Jewish faith. *Anglican Journal*

A joint venture of St. John's Presbyterian, St. Michael the Archangel Anglican and Prince of Peace Catholic churches resulted in the November 29th Toronto production of "Bethlehem Alive – A Journey to reveal the Christmas story". The cost of admission was a toy for the toy mountain. *Catholic Register*

Five parishes in Peterborough faced with dwindling numbers, an aging population, and costly buildings, are forming new relationships, building unity and doing church differently. The Anglican parishes of All Saints, St. Barnabas, St. Luke and St. John together with Christ Lutheran have undertaken a journey to be a community of Christians in relationship with one another in the Anglican-Lutheran Covenant of Peterborough. A covenant council is made up of three or four people from each parish, but each parish maintains its autonomy and worships in its own buildings. Joint working groups, workshops, and a covenant choir have been formed. Clergy of the five parishes meet weekly for prayer and support. They are meeting the challenge of moving from a maintenance to a missional model of ministry. Forming the Anglican-Lutheran Covenant is leading to spiritual revitalization, new opportunities for discipleship, and a new sense of service to the community. *Canada Lutheran*

Modern Milestones in Catholic-Jewish Relations was the topic explored on the evening of February 5th at Scarboro Missions with guest speakers, Sr. Lucy Thorson, n.d.s. and Fredelle Brief. *Catholic Register*

Québec

The Irénée Beaubien Institute, launched by the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism at the end of October, 2014, presented a forum for ecumenical experts and practitioners, university professors and students, church leaders and members from various denominations to explore different aspects of ecumenism and interfaith relations, to exchange experiences and opinions and to sense the ongoing vitality of the ecumenical movement. Along with conferences, the ecumenical Institute also included visits to a synagogue, a mosque and an Orthodox church and several sessions where participants learned the technique of painting their own icons. Without the generous collaboration of the Catholic archdiocese, the Anglican diocese of Montreal, the Federal Government, of university professors, Orthodox, Anglican and Catholic bishops and clergy together with the dedicated staff of the Anglican diocese which hosted the event, such a successful outcome would not have been possible. A second Irénée Beaubien Institute is planned for the fall. "The Institute is there to facilitate exchanges between Christians, to stimulate reflection and to enrich our lives through our differences," said Dr. Adriana Bara, CCE executive director. *Auvidec, CCE*

The 2015 Green Church Conference, a bilingual ecumenical and ecological event, will be held on April 14 at St. Ignatius of Loyola Church in Quebec City on the theme of: Creating a Climate of Hope. Climatologist, Dr. Alan Betts, is the guest speaker. To register please go to: colloque.egliseverte.ca.

Hospitality as the essence of faith was the subject addressed by members of the Justice and Faith Centre on February 15 at the Faith & Spirituality Forum as invited guests of the InterFaith Dialogue Group. Mario Brisson, sj who is in charge of the sponsorship of refugees for the Jesuit Missions spoke on Welcoming the Other – Dialogue between Christians and Muslims. Mouloud Idir, a political scientist and coordinator of the Living Together section of the Justice and Faith Centre looked at the Rights of Migrants and the challenges and rewards of being more hospitable to them. *InterFaith*

Brother Émile of Taizé gave a conference on Brother Roger, the founder of the Taizé ecumenical community at a February 19 event organized by the Christian Cultural Centre of Montreal. The choir of the Benoît Lacroix Student Centre opened the evening with a few choral pieces. There were also meetings with Brother Émile at the Grand Seminary of Montreal on February 20 and 21. He spoke on what it means to be the salt of the earth and a short evening prayer was also held.

The joint declaration signed by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I and Pope Francis in Jerusalem in May, 2014 was read aloud by Dr. Adriana Bara, a member of the Romanian Orthodox Church together with Roman Catholic Fr. Alain Mongeau during the January 25th mass in St. John the Baptist Church in Montreal. In the document, the Patriarch and the Pope confirm their joint promotion of freedom of religion, of a just stewardship of the gift of creation and of dialogue with other religions.

Jewish-Christian Dialogue of Montreal held a conference on the Covenant and its meaning for Jews and Christians at the Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom on November 19. The topic was addressed by Rabbi Lisa Grushcow and Dr. Jean Duhaime. The presentations were followed by a period of discussion. On March 25, Dr. Adriana Bara and Dr. Victor Goldbloom speak on instances of religious diversity within Christianity and within Judaism.

A Congress on Light will take place in Quebec and in France during the 2015 international year of light proclaimed by UNESCO. The Montreal event, organized by Religions for Peace Quebec in collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism and other organisations, will take place from May 1-3 and will feature religious symbols, meditation workshops, conferences, prayer, chanting and other spiritual practices and outdoor activities to put participants in touch with nature. Religions for Peace France plans a 2-day congress to take place near All Saints Day. To learn more and to register, go to: <http://www.congreslumiere2015.com/>

Don't miss it!

The blog faithblender.com will acquaint you with Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz, Imam Dr. Zijad Delic and Father John Walsh who regularly post on very topical issues.

An iconostasis in a Catholic Cathedral

In December 2014 and January 2015, an **iconostasis was installed in a Roman rite Catholic Cathedral**, the Cathedral of Saint-Jérôme. The story began in 2006, when two Benedictine nuns from the Abbaye Sainte-Marie des Deux-Montagnes, in Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-lac, Quebec, started studying the art of the icon with Alexandre Sobolev, a master iconographer from Moscow now residing in



Sister Louise Lussier working on the icon Christ Pantocrator with Master Alexandre Sobolev

Montreal. When visiting the nuns, Bishop Pierre Morissette of Saint-Jérôme and Auxiliary Bishop Raymond Poisson admired their icons. Bishop Poisson, who was looking for a way to use five large panels in the sanctuary of the cathedral, had the inspiration of mounting five eight-foot high icons on



From left to right : Bishop Raymond Poisson, Sr Martine-Marie Roy, Bishop Pierre Morissette, Sr Louise Lussier, Master Alexandre Sobolev

them! The project was then put into operation. Bishop Jean-Cassien, the Romanian Orthodox bishop living in Quebec, said that he was very impressed by the boldness of this achievement, which brought Catholics and Orthodox even closer together. He planned to be present at the inaugural celebration, scheduled for March 15, 2015. Gazing upon the Faces of Pantocrator, the Holy Mother of God, the Precursor and Saints Peter and Paul, we experience what is no longer an image, but the Person represented, looking upon us with love.

Abbaye Sainte-Marie des Deux-Montagnes
 2803 chemin d'Oka, Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-lac
 (450) 473-7278 info@sm2m.ca www.sm2m.ca



The sisters working of the iconostasis



Beautiful final result

Week of prayer for Christian unity 2015

Sunday, January 18 Santa Cruz Church (Portuguese Mission) Montréal

“Give me a drink” (John 4:7)

Host : Father José Maria Cardoso

Leaders : Mgr Ioan Casian, Archbishop, Romanian Orthodox Church of America
Mgr Meghrig Parikian Bishop, Armenian Prelacy of Canada
Bishop Barry Clarke, Anglican Church



Choirs : Imani Family and Full Gospel Church, Directrice, Nancy Munroe-Ingram
Aeternal Ministry, Director, Daniel Gauvin
Santa Cruz Choir

Church representatives : Anglican, Roman Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran, Romanian Orthodox, Armenian, Ukrainian Orthodox, United Church, Presbyterian, Baptist, Salvation Army

Organizing committee: Adriana Bara, Canadian Centre for Ecumenism

Most Rev. Peter Hannen, Anglican Church

Rev. Stephen Petrie, Anglican Church

Annie Brechet & Marianne Issa, Focolari Association

Alison Ingram & Nancy Munroe-Ingram, Imani Family and Full Gospel Church

Rev. Brian Cordeiro, Catholic Archdiocese of Montreal

Daniel Garvin, St. Thomas at Becket (RC)
Rt. Rev. Dr. Ihor Kutash, Ukrainian Orthodox Church
Karen Snair, United Church
Fr. John Walsh, Roman Catholic
Marisel Zavagno, Catholic Church

2015 - Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Feedback

Some wonderful messages. Thank you!

I can't say it enough: what a wonderful worship service! For me, the highlights included the choir members and their songs (I wanted to keep on singing), the master of ceremonies, the clergy participation and the participation of the congregation!

So much warmth and love were expressed during this worship service, both throughout the service and at particular moments. During the song "In Christian Unity," which we sang holding hands, at the exchange of peace...the hugs...an intense moment that was filled with love. Thank you to the MC, Brian Cordeiro, for giving us the time to experience this moment. The presence of the Portuguese community added a very special touch. We felt Jesus' presence among us!

Thank you, Father Cardoso, for your warm welcome and for the lovely reception following the service.

*Thank you to everyone who took part in the service in one way or another. Let's remember these special moments and continue together what we have begun: **unity!***

In unity,

Marianne



May His peace and graces remain in our hearts today and forever!!

*On behalf of Æternal music ministry, I wish to thank everyone who attended the remarkable celebration of christian unity yesterday at Santa Cruz. In our short 15 years as a ministry, we have never witnessed such a large outpouring of love and unity. Names are far too many to mention individually, yet you know who you are for God has indeed called each of us by name. We look forward with much anticipation to the next time we have the honour of celebrating His name with all of you, individually or collectively. Until that time, we pray for the continued willingness of our churches to come together in unity to share in the multitude of gifts and blessings God has bestowed upon His people. Praised be His name forever and ever
Amen!!*

In humble humility we remain your servants & brothers,

*Daniel Garvin, Paul Despault, Mike Amelotte, Dieter Ferworn & Karl Schuler
-Æternal Music Ministry.*

Thank you everyone for a wonderful service. It was so beautiful. Every year it gets better and better. Thank you again for a wonderful event. Everyone has worked hard. God is so wonderful.

Karen

*I
t was a wonderful celebration of love and unity. Yes, the choirs were wonderful and it went very smoothly. Good feedback from the members of the Portuguese community (who appreciated that we had Portuguese content in the service) and others (around 450) who attended. Good fellowship after the service. Merci encore Père Cardoso et la communauté portugaise.*

All this was only possible through each of you doing with joy, love and hard work all that you have worked at in the past five months. Thank you so much.

Indeed the Holy Spirit was very evidently at work this afternoon.

Obrigado.

Brian Cordeiro

Yesterday's celebration to open the week of prayer for Christian unity was indeed a blessing for all in attendance! I know Jesus among us was smiling to see us all sharing His love, His joy, His peace! The participation of so many churches demonstrates that we are on the right track – and so much stronger together. Let us always remember this!

Thank you to everyone who worked so hard in preparation for this wonderful service – and a special thank you to Santa Cruz for its warm welcome – the feeling of family was truly evident.

Thank you for allowing us to be part of this beautiful demonstration of Christian Unity. God is good!

Yours in Christian love,

Nancy

Let me take advantage of Nancy's warm words to also express my happiness to participate along with the Nossa Fé group of this fantastic experience that for most of us (Brazilians) was completely new. By talking among us just after the event the feedback was that the event was really full of God's presence. Thank all of you for this wonderful experience that according to Daniel Garvin «it is the beginning of so many others»

God bless you all!!

Sebastiao Silva



Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, November 12-24, 2015

A bilingual pilgrimage to the Holy Land will be led by Deacon Brian Cordeiro from November 12-24, 2015. Organised by Spiritours with Thea van de Kraats as guide, this pilgrimage has as its theme *In the Footsteps of Jesus*.

We will visit Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Capernaum, Tiberius, Jerusalem and a number of other sites. This is a wonderful opportunity that will change your understanding of scripture forever as you walk in the land where Jesus walked. Daily mass at the Holy sites.

Our guide Thea has lived in the Holy Land for many years and knows the area well. Thea spends many months each year leading pilgrimages to the Holy Land. We do not travel to areas of danger and war.

For more information call Deacon Brian on 514-545-8709 or by email on brian.cordeiro89@gmail.com or call France Lavoie at Spiritours on 514-374-7965 ext. 200.

Information meeting by guide Thea on Tuesday, March 24, 2015 at 7.30pm at St. Luke's, 106 A boul. Anselme-Lavigne, DDO, H9A1N8.



Holy Land

In the footsteps of Jesus



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