



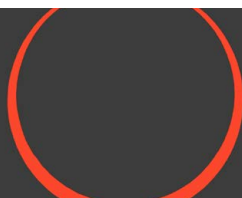


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# RELIGION AND COMMON GOOD

Principles and starting points of interfaith dialogue  
in the context of contemporary social and political shifts

Jarosław Pastuszak (ed.)



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## Difficult dialogue

Events occurring in the second decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century present a great dynamics of social, cultural, political, economic, functional and religious changes in the world. Their nature is so intricate and complex that even many experienced theorists and practitioners can define such mind and spirit movements only with difficulties. Structural changes of world society caused by the processes of globalization, unification, multiculturalism or by value and functional changes of present world result in profoundly important and far-reaching consequences. Many societies with different cultural and social grounds encountering (or meeting?) on the territories of liberal and democratic states uncover the fragility of democracy itself and show fatal consequences of discontinuity of European Christian tradition roots. Contemporary Western world which tries to define man on the grounds of atheistic humanism (contrasted clearly to Christian humanism) is repeatedly and desperately trapped in the character of lonely person. Jean-Paul Sartre asserts that hell are the others. On the contrary, Christianity opposes that hell is isolation and loneliness, the absence of relation; the space where dialogical love is not possible (the reflection of relational dialogical love inside the Trinity). The conflict, brought upon by French Revolution and strengthened by positivistic-materialistic Enlightenment, between the atheistic and Christian humanisms, reap its harvest now. It is a harvest time and the heads of children of revolution are falling down – while the revolution feeds on them, however without any big appetite today. The confrontation of groups with very strong religious-ideological identity, with the “fluid” identity of European mainstream, necessarily causes the fears for the future, multicultural ideas which are probably

utopian by now. However, not only the future of multiculturalism is at stake, but also the future of whole Europe and each person on its soil. A new possibility is born – to rediscover European spiritual roots. However a ghost is lurking too – of repeated collapse of very fragile and hardly gained (apparent) unity. Is Pierre Tehilhard de Chardin's vision of spiritual evolution, ended by repeated union in Omega point, going to come true or is the history of our world to be entered by malicious *genius malignus*?

This anthology is an attempt to answer given questions. Experts from *Old continent* and *New World* try, based on experience from their own countries, to offer the answer to be expected. In the context of Ukrainian-Russian conflict the Ukrainian perspective is worthless. The picture submitted by media is confronted here by live experience of eye witnesses of those events. Experience of experts from well-established democracies with multiculturalism and the influence of religion on common good is a precious evidence for the whole Middle European region, where those problems are only to be born. Main topics are reflected from the Christian perspective which we purposely submit as a free alternative. Key sphere is the definition of a man, his grounds and aims. Christian vision of eschatological hope does not afford us to fall into value and functional relativism in spite of real scepticism towards the possibility of “cure” of contemporary world. The experience of “empty grave” is still alive.

Let this anthology also encourage those, who are losing their hope.

Jarosław Pastuszak



# Autonomní a dialogická religiozita v ekumenickém dialogu s křesťanským Východem

Pavel Ambros

Konstantin Sigov, profesor filosofie na Kyjevské univerzitě Petra Mohyly a významný pravoslavný myslitel, ve svém manifestu z kyjevského Majdanu argumentuje *Evropou*, když říká: „Všichni jim [účastníkům Majdanu, *pozn. autora*] ukazují, že jsou neslyšitelní; snaží se je přesvědčit o jejich absurdnosti a slabosti. Dává se jim na srozuměnou, že Evropa, ta Evropa, pro kterou riskují život, už neexistuje. Že nebude žádná nová renesance. Když se ale zde v Kyjevě zavírají a bijí lidé, je raněna Evropa. A pokud Evropa trpí, pak ještě žije!“<sup>1</sup> Existují pozitivní kroky. Ale jsou spíše osamocené. Průlomové se stalo například společné prohlášení Ruské pravoslavné církve a Polské biskupské konference.<sup>2</sup> Zdá se, že polarita Východ – Západ narůstá.<sup>3</sup> Čtvrtstoletí po pádu železné opony – po počátečním optimismu – ani přesně nevíme, zda z Evropy zmizela vnitřní dělící politicko-geografická hranice.<sup>4</sup> Stále se však setkáváme s téměř nepřekročitelnými hranicemi, které existují mezi různými mentalitami. Konec studené války nevyléčil evropské

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<sup>1</sup> Majdan, srdce Evropy. Otevřený dopis filosofa Konstantina Sigova (19.2.2014) [online], in *Ústav filosofie a religionistiky FFUK*; dostupné z: <http://ufar.ff.cuni.cz/node/1806> (cit. 5.1.2015) (v překladu Lenky Karfíkové).

<sup>2</sup> Společné poselství národům Polska a Ruska, in SVATOŇ, R. (ed.), *Velehradské dialogy I*, Refugium, Olomouc 2013, s. 318–324.

<sup>3</sup> Srv. HILARION (ALFEJEV), Выпады униатов против России и Русской Церкви не содействуют диалогу между нашими Церквами [online], in *Русская Православная Церковь. Отдел внешних церковных связей*; dostupné z: <https://mospat.ru/ru/2014/06/26/news104593/> (cit. 5.1.2015).

<sup>4</sup> Srv. PALMIERI, A., Stato del dialogo teologico fra cattolici e ortodossi, in *L'Osservatore romano*, 160/14 (19.–20.1.2015), s. 5.

křesťanství z důsledků a dopadu rozdělení křesťanů. Rozpad komunistických režimů ve střední a východní Evropě sice přinesl konec pronásledování, které jen stěží mělo obdoby v dějinách těchto zemí, nicméně ani *ekumenismus mučedníků*<sup>5</sup> nepřinesl proměnu kulturních stereotypů, které spoluvytvářejí vztahy mezi křesťany západní a východní tradice.<sup>6</sup> Co je však základní překážkou rozhovoru Východu a Západu?

## Nová náboženská scéna – autonomní a dialogická religiozita

Zdá se, že priorita otevřenosti k dialogu musí být v ekumenickém hnutí nově objasněna. Nová podoba argumentace může být uvozena slovy Karla Rahnera: „Již zde není uzavřený Západ. Již neexistuje Západ, který může být považován za střed světových dějin a kultury. Tradiční náboženství na Západě není skutečností zcela zřejmé evidence, ale rozhodnutím víry. Zřetelně se ukazuje, že již neexistuje jediný typ religiozity. Náboženství se stalo okamžikem jedné z vlastních existenciálních situací v teorii i v praxi. V Evropě prožíváme změnu ve vnímání absolutního nároku křesťanství.“<sup>7</sup> Podobně předvídal již v roce 1964 Jean Daniélou vývoj ke globálnímu pohanství, když tvrdil: „Problémem zítřka není ateismus, nýbrž spíše nové, prosazující se pohanství. Ateismus je pouze přechodnou stanicí mezi včerejším pohanstvím venkovské kultury a zítřejším pohanstvím industrializované civilizace. Po-

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<sup>5</sup> JAN PAVEL II., *Tertio millennio adveniente*, 37; srv. *Ut unum sint*, 83–84; GIBBONS, R., *Persecution and Ecumenism*, in MURPHY, F.A. – ASPREY, CH., (ed.), *Ecumenism today. The universal church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Ashgate, Aldershot – Burlington, Vt. 2008, s. 213–220.

<sup>6</sup> Podrobněji k celému tématu shrnující stať RENÖCKL, H., *Kulturell-politische und religiöse Umbrüche in (Mittel-)Europa*, in BÖTTIGHEIMER, CH. – BRUCKMANN, F., (ed.), *Glaubensverantwortung im Horizont der „Zeichen der Zeit“*, Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau 2012, s. 31–37.

<sup>7</sup> RAHNER, K., *Das Christentum und die nichtchristlichen Religionen*, in TENTÝŽ, *Schriften zur Theologie. V. Neuere Schriften*, Benziger Verlag, Einsiedeln – Zürich – Köln 1962, s. 137–138.

hanství zítřka – to je základní náboženský problém moderního člověka. Církev musí najít odpověď na tento problém.“<sup>8</sup>

Řada sociologických výzkumů o této změně religiozity. Jsme svědky návratu novopohanství nebo nástupu detradicionalizované spirituality.<sup>9</sup> Tento posun vnímání náboženství jako spirituality je patrný nejen v alternativních náboženských skupinách, nýbrž i v církevních společenstvích. Rozhodující se stává to, jak spiritualita pozitivně propojuje intrapersonální dimenzi života (vnitřní hledání osobního smyslu) s dimenzí interpersonální (zacílení na vztahy mezi lidmi, prostředím a přírodou) a transcendentální (zaměření na nepoznané, nepoznatelné a převyšující). Negativním výměrem spirituality je projev takové duchovní tísně, která se rodí z neschopnosti člověka propojit vzájemně smysl a zaměření života v jeho celistvosti prostřednictvím harmonie lidského Já se sebou samým, s druhými, přírodou, uměním, vyšší silou, božstvem nebo Bohem.<sup>10</sup> Jednotlivé křesťanské církve dnes překračují konfesní *life of religion* (jak člověk přináleží k určitému institucionalizovanému náboženství a respektuje jeho autoritu) a jak prožívá *subjective-life spirituality* (niterné prožívání svého náboženského postoje). Z tohoto zorného úhlu můžeme dobře rozlišit *autonomní formy religiozity* od *dialogických forem religiozity*.<sup>11</sup> Pro první z nich je hlavním cílem nejprve na ničem nezávislý rozvoj a zároveň plné využívání vlastních

<sup>8</sup> DANIELLOU, J., Christianisme et religions non chrétiennes, in *Études*, 321 (1964), s. 333. Ch. Spretnak, aktivista spirituality New Age, požaduje svojí interpretací *pohana* jako *obyvatele přírody* vytoužený návrat k původnímu pohanství s ekologickým důrazem na přírodu (MYNAREK, H., *Ökologische Religion*, Goldmann, München 1986, s. 215): „Ekologickým náboženstvím se myslí koneckonců dovršení všech náboženství.“ Proti tradičnímu *městskému náboženství*, které v sobě zahrnuje církve, finanční a obchodní společnosti (SPRETNAK, CH., Die spirituelle Dimension grüner Politik, in CAPRA, F., *Green Politics*, Dutton, New York 1984, s. 311–316).

<sup>9</sup> Podrobněji srv. HEELAS, P. – WOODHEAD, L., aj., *The Spiritual Revolution. Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality*, Blackwell, Malden 2005.

<sup>10</sup> REED, P.G., An emerging paradigm for the investigation of spirituality in nursing, in *Research in Nursing & Health*, 15/5 (1992), s. 349–357.

<sup>11</sup> LUCKMANN, T., *The Invisible Religion. The Problem of Religion in Modern Society*, The MacMillan Company, New York 1967, s. 113. K problematice terminologie srv. ONDRAŠINOVÁ, M., Jak uchopit „neuchopitelné“: diskuse o detradicionalizované spiritualitě,

schopností a vloh, dále vlastní prožívání jednotlivce jako konkrétní a jedinečné osobnosti, popřípadě absolutizaci stanovených hodnot (osoba, nauka, komunita), pro druhý z nich je kritický odstup k vlastnímu zakoušení a hledání dialogu s transcendencí, totiž přesahem sebe sama směrem k tajemství, které oblažuje a zároveň klade nárok. Tento obecný kulturní rys prožívání náboženství v antinomii *autonomní a dialogické religiozity* proniká v různých podobách i do života církevních společenství.<sup>12</sup> Fundamentalismus a laicismus jsou dvěma tvářemi *autonomní* formy *religiozity*.<sup>13</sup>

Existuje základní rozdíl mezi osobním sebezdokonalením na základě víry v budoucí proměnu, která je nesena *autonomní religiozitou* (spiritualitou individuálního uzdravení) v té či oné podobě, a osvobuzujícím svobodným přilnutím člověka k Bohu Otci skrze přítomnost jeho Slova *dialogické religiozity*. Josef Ratzinger to vyjádřil výstižnými slovy: „Křesťanské pojetí nesmrtnosti vychází z pojmu Boha, a má proto dialogický charakter. (...) Vztah činí nesmrtným; otevřenost, ne uzavřenost.“<sup>14</sup> Rozporuplnost a neslučitelnost *autonomní a dialogické*

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in LUŽNÝ, D. – VÁCLAVÍK, D., aj., *Individualizace náboženství a identita. Poznámky k současné sociologii náboženství*, Malvern, Praha 2010, s. 118–142.

<sup>12</sup> V jiné terminologii, kterou přinesl Paul Wick (WICK, P., *Dwelling and Seeking in Late Adulthood*, in MCFADDEN, S.H. – BRENNAN, M. – PATRICK, J.H., /ed./, *New Directions in the Study of Late Life Religiousness and Spirituality*, Haworth Press, Binghamton 2003, s. 101–119), se hovoří o rozdílu mezi *zabydlenými* (*dwellers*) a *hledajícími* (*seekers*), případně o spiritualitě *modu obývání* (*dwelling*) nebo *modu hledání* (*seeking*); Roof hovoří o „hledání sebe sama skrze nějaký transformační režim s cílem dosáhnout svého největšího potenciálu“ (citováno dle srv. ONDRAŠINOVÁ, M., Jak uchopit „neuchopitelné“: diskuse o detradicionalizované spiritualitě, in LUŽNÝ, D. – VÁCLAVÍK, D., aj., *Individualizace náboženství a identita. Poznámky k současné sociologii náboženství*, Malvern, Praha 2010, s. 138); podrobněji HALÍK, T., Přednáška na UK při Templeton Day [online], in *Tomáš Halík*; dostupné z: <http://halik.cz/cs/tvorba/proslovy-kazani/clanek/201/> (cit. 5.1.2015).

<sup>13</sup> Srv. REDDIG, M., Die Radikalität des religiösen Fundamentalismus, in GÜNTHER, L.-S., aj., *Radikalität. Religiöse, politische und künstlerische Radikalismen in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. II. *Frühe Neuzeit und Moderne*, Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg 2013, s. 176–191.

<sup>14</sup> RATZINGER, J., *Eschatologie. Smrt a věčný život*, Barrister & Principal, Brno 1996, s. 95.

formy religiozity se projevují nejzřetelněji v rovině komunikace a ve způsobu užití symbolů a nauky v tradovaných textech. Z teologického hlediska se stává rozhodující povaha životního stylu (plody Ducha<sup>15</sup>), který zahrnuje dialog (svobodné přilnutí) do osobně zakoušené podoby vzkríšení člověka s jeho tělem, totiž dialog se zmrtvýchvstalým Kristem. *Autonomní* forma religiozity zakouší spirituální uzdravení jako projev neosobní síly v jednotlivci, s osobním Kristem se vlastně nesetkává. V pastorační teologii hovoříme o *ekleziálním ateismu*.

*Autonomní forma religiozity* jako kulturní fenomén doprovázející fragmentaci náboženské situace v Evropě je ohrožena ve svých kořenech *tradicí*, kterou můžeme definovat jako kritický odstup (autoritu) stále bdělosti rozlišující vztahovost nesenou slovem. Křesťanská tradice je takový kritický odstup, který je nesen rozlišením toho, jaká rozhodnutí člověka přináležející jeho svobodě mu dávají účast na životě Krista zmrtvýchvstalého. Tím se skrze vztah lásky člověk stává součástí jeho proměněného těla. Křesťanská tradice je souhrnem bdělosti nového člověka, která se projevuje rozlišováním (historicky) ve světě klasické řecké kultury a římské říše, ve světě germánské kultury a náboženství a v kulturních proměnách křesťanské společnosti (*christianitas*) a staví nás do situace *pastorálnosti*. Karel Skalický tento zorný úhel tradice nazývá *pastorálností* (nárok dějinnosti před eschatologickou věčností). Tato podoba tradice chrání společenství církve před *klerikalizací* (mocenskou idealizací věčnosti v dějinách)<sup>16</sup>. Tato společná inkulturace je přítomná v evropském křesťanství jako neustálá schopnost zaujímat postoj vůči gnosi (teosofii), elementární religiozitě, vlivu východních náboženství a pocitu eschatologického ohrožení. Tato ohniska rozlišování tvoří jádro společné tradice křesťanského Západu a Východu. Dynamická polarita Evropy je dynamikou společného sváru *autonomní a dialogické religiozity*. Jako kritérium k rozlišení může posloužit upřesnění v encyklice Jana

<sup>15</sup> Srv. KKC, 1830–1832.

<sup>16</sup> Podrobně srv. SKALICKÝ, K., „Skok vpřed“ v perspektivě revolucí nového tisíciletí. Před půl stoletím byl zahájen Druhý vatikánský koncil, in *Listy*, 42/3 (2012), s. 42–45.

Pavla II. o misijním poslání církve: „Partner dialogu musí vyhovovat vlastním tradicím a náboženským přesvědčením a být přístupný chápat druhé, a to jak bez zastírání, tak bez uzavřenosti do sebe, avšak v duchu pravdy, pokory a poctivosti, s vědomím, že dialog může každého obohatit. Nesmí být při tom žádná poddajnost, ani žádný irénismus. Je třeba oboustranného svědectví pro společný pokrok na cestě náboženského hledání a zkušenosti. Toto slouží zároveň k přemožení předsudků, nedorozumění a nesnášenlivosti. Dialog směřuje k vnitřnímu tříbení a obrácení, které bude duchovně plodné, bude-li vpravdě vedeno Duchem.“<sup>17</sup>

### Nová témata dialogu s ruskou pravoslavnou teologií?

Důvody, proč i katolická teologie může s užitekem reflektovat diskuzi v současném pravoslavném světě, pro nás inspirativně shrnuje Paul I. Gavrilyuk. Hovoří o nutnosti překročit polarizující příběh teologie ve 20. století, jak jej formuloval právě G. Florovskij. Tato teze představuje jistou shodu generace pravoslavných teologů, jako je Hilarion Alfejev, Antoine Arjakovskij, Matthew Baker, John Behr, Brandon Gallaher, Pantelis Kalaitzidis, Anatolij Čerňajev, Marcus Plested nebo Dorothea Wendebourgová. Gavrilyuk říká: „Pravoslavná teologie 21. století musí překročit Florovského co do obsahu i co do metody. Dále neopatrnické zaměření, třebaže má nadále značný vliv, stojí na počátku ztráty své nadvlády v současném pravoslavném myšlení. Teologické uvažování je naladěno na jiná, nově se objevující paradigmata, která více rezonují s podněty modernismu ruské náboženské renesance. Podobně pravoslavná teologie na Západě již není neznámým zbožím. Pravoslavný teolog, postavený do nové situace, je mnohem více připraven k tvořivému setkání se Západem. To podporoval do jisté míry i Florovskij. Ve změněných historických podmínkách může takovéto setkání zahrnout i pevnou angažovanost postmoderního světa. Tako-

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<sup>17</sup> JAN PAVEL II., *Redemptoris Missio*, 56.

véto setkání je možné a neznamená nutně jiný příklad *pseudomorfózy*, intelektuální kapitulaci vůči Západu. Konečně tento standardizovaný příběh stavějící ostře do protikladu teologii *renesance* generace *otců* vůči *neopatrstické teologii* generace jejich *dětí* je nyní vytrvale měněn a znovu diskutován. Proto současní pravoslavní teologové pokračují v hledání rovnováhy mezi věrností patrstické tradici a svobodou teologického bádání a tvořivostí. Je dnes zkoumána jako nové paradigma pravoslavné teologie, protože *návrat k otcům* zůstává a zůstane nenahraditelným orientačním bodem.<sup>18</sup>

Nesmíme však ani opomenout přetrvávající kulturní stereotypy, které jsou často „jen“ západní obdobou ruského *zpátečnictví* (*obscurantismu*), jež zejména v *hřeživé zbožnosti* neboli ve *filosofii srdce* hledá útočiště před obavami, které přináší kritické uvažování. Nemůžeme ani nereflektovat porovnání *evropského stesku* (jak řekl Dostojevskij) a zaslepenou zálibu ve všem východním. Podobně můžeme vnímat i „náboženský“ *příklon k národu* (народничество) a *nový nacionalismus* v Evropě. I v českém prostředí lze pozorovat analogické projevy neshálenlivosti, rusofilství nebo rusofobie, či fenomén české uzavřenosti (v novinářské zkratce nazývaný *čecháčkovstvím*). Z kulturního hlediska výrok „víme přece, že Rusko do Evropy nepatří,“ není výsledkem badatelské solidnosti, nýbrž předvědeckým vyjádřením kulturní identity, podobně jako je výrok, že je „třeba občas píchnout do vosího hnízda“, výrazem averzivního chování nebo frustrace. Emocionalita *studených konfliktů* je často součástí těchto kulturních stereotypů (a religiozity!).

Teologická opce pro dialog v Evropě má před sebou dvě základní výzvy: a) Učinit součástí tradice (tedy kritického rozlišení toho, *co ano a co ne* z hlediska normotvornosti) příběh evropského křesťanství, který je předáván i s vírou v něj. Součástí tradice je i kritický odstup od vlastních kulturních klišé, které formuluje soud v dějinách bez tázání se, jež nerespektuje dynamiku vznikající mezi poznávajícím a poznávaným a nebere v potaz metodologický rozdíl tří rovin vztahu mezi

<sup>18</sup> GAVRILYUK, P.L., *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014, s. 258.

vykládajícím subjektem a minulostí (cizost, sounáležitost a osmózu)<sup>19</sup>. Tím se tradice staví proti ahistorismu, ontologii moci, ideologické teologii a marginalizaci náboženské zkušenosti.<sup>20</sup> b) Nechat modernitu projít opětovným přečtením základních témat současné lidské zkušenosti tradicí, pokoušet se odpovědět trpělivou duchovní četbou dějin na spirituálně prožívané výzvy současného života. Jinak řečeno: rozvíjet tradici uvnitř společného vyznání víry nerozdělené církve takovým vyjádřením odpovědi víry, které překračují dobová vyjádření otců, a přece jsou součástí ortodoxie a ortopraxe.<sup>21</sup>

Tento návrat k podstatnému, který sám o sobě neznamena „překonání učení otců“ v rovině formálních definic, se vymezuje především teologickým jazykem reflektujícím modus kulturního vědomí (post-) moderny. Podřizuje se smyslu tázání, totiž takovému dotazování se dějinné paměti, skrze něž v člověku žijí dějinné události jako zakoušení času a jejich interpretace spolu s tím, s čím je člověk dnes konfrontován. Zde přítomnost konfrontuje vlastní tradici. Pro pravoslavnou zkušenost jsou to dějiny života v totalitarismu (teologie mučednictví), život v diaspoře a ekumenické hnutí. Pro západní křesťanství je to exkulturne křesťanství v sekulární společnosti, laicismus, globalizace a nové ideologie, jejichž jádrem je ekonomický obrat v kultuře života.

Budoucí opce pro teologický dialog v Evropě (Východ – Západ) je spojena s osobním uschopněním osvojit si společně intuice, které obě tradice formulují v požadavku obnovy teologie, a to na základě reflexe zkušenosti a zakoušení víry. Můžeme uvést tři ilustrace.

Prvním společným tématem je spojení tajemství života se zemí (Zemí). Člověk dnes prožívá bezmocnost tváří v tvář životu, který je

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<sup>19</sup> SV. LONERGAN, B., *Method in theology*, Herder and Herder, New York 1973, s. 175–196; MEZINÁRODNÍ TEOLOGICKÁ KOMISE, *Paměť a smíření. Církev a viny minulosti*, Katolický týdeník, Praha 2000, s. 32–33.

<sup>20</sup> Podrobněji AMBROS, P., *Živá tradice a zápas o ni*, in TĚNTÝŽ, *Svoboda k alternativám. Kontinuita a diskontinuita křesťanských tradic*, Refugium, Olomouc 2008–2009, s. 251–274.

<sup>21</sup> SCHMEMANN, A., *Russian Theology: 1920–1972. An Introductory Survey*, in *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 16 (1972), s. 172–194.



ponořen do hrozby svého biologického zániku. Život se dnes jeví ve své fyzické podobě zranitelný a člověk sám jako předmět manipulace, proto hledá své propojení se Zemí. Tato geografická a biologická nezakotvenost potřebuje své nové, teologicky odůvodněné ekologické zakotvení.

Druhým společným tématem je prázdnota a opuštěnost, jež jsou v ruské spiritualitě tematizovány jako poslání dávat život. Pociťované ohrožení očekávaného zhroucení se stává důvodem teologického křistocentrismu v jeho ústřední podobě: kráčet vstříc prázdnotě doprovázen Otcem (pascha). S tím je spojeno i vnímání *sobornosti* jako fyzické korporality církve, totiž proměněného těla Kristova, a následný požadavek *symfonie* světského a posvátného.

Třetím velkým tématem je otázka tajemství zakoušení ženství a krásy jako součásti antropologické pravdy o člověku. Téma otevírá pohled na člověka, jemuž je vlastní sdílení, vztahovost a tvořivost na základě lásky jako dovršený smysl stvoření člověka jako muže a ženy. Zúžení člověka na jeho sexualitu nebo popření jeho sexuality ukazuje na riziko pojetí člověka jako monády, ne jeho mužství a ženství v jejich úplnosti, totiž ne pouhou mechanicky aplikovanou rovnost a absolutní stejnost. Vzniklo tak nové paradigma reciprocity v rovnocennosti a různosti, dva rozměry jediné plnosti obnoveného Adama. Kultivace životního stylu člověka, jehož středem je společné vědomí mužství a ženství, se zdá být dnes jedním z nejnaléhavějších úkolů, když zvážíme prorocké slovo P. Evdokimova: „Avšak androkracijní, patriarchální nadvláda postupně nahradila uspořádání gynokratické, matriarchální, se symetricky protikladnou deformací. V minulosti uznávání teologové vážně diskutovali o tom, zda má žena duši, a byli proti možnosti přímého vztahu ženy s Bohem. Oslavovali *Theotokos*, ale prikazovali ženě, aby se k Bohu obracela skrze muže. Takováto mariologie zbavovala Bohorodičku všech znaků ženství a každou konkrétní ženu situovala do zlomu ontologických úrovní. Zredukována na své biologické funkce klesla služebnice Páně na pouhou služku poskytující rozptýlení nespočetným válečníkům, ponechanou svému nebezpečnému instinktu *líbit se*.“<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> EVDOKIMOV, P., *Žena a spása světa*, Refugium, Olomouc 2011, s. 308–309.

Již tato tematizace naznačuje možnost a nutnost dialogu živých křesťanských společenství. Vůči nebezpečí osamocení a odcizení, které jsou v Evropě přítomné jako nedostatek jakékoli naděje, je možné postavit společné svědectví lásky, která usiluje o to, co ještě není. Povolení právě k tomu je společné v duchu biblického výroku: „Předložil jsem ti život a smrt. Vyber si tedy život, abys byl živ ty i tvé potomstvo“ (Dt 30,19) pro větší slávu Boží.

# Religious diversity and multiculturalism in the UK

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Michael Barnes

The aim of this paper is to survey the experience of religious diversity in the United Kingdom and to consider some of the challenges it raises within the public sphere. I speak not as a sociologist or political commentator but as a theologian, one who has been involved in interreligious relations at various levels for a good many years. It's often taken for granted in post-Enlightenment societies such as the UK that 'religion' is intrinsically problematic, demanding some sort of State intervention if a humane and civil society is to be maintained. There is, however, another side to the story – one which in the last decade or so the British Government has come to recognise. Alongside what might be called the 'securitisation agenda' – the negative impact that some forms of radical religiosity can have on public order - is a growing recognition that religious communities can and do motivate efforts *for the common good*.

I cannot give an adequate overview of the British scene in a single paper; nor can I do more than raise some of the severely practical as well as more intractably theological questions. Instead I shall begin in one place with which I am familiar and sketch out some broadly based reflections on what it means for people of faith to live in a shared political space. I do not pretend there is some homogeneous British experience of religious diversity that provides a template by which to understand interreligious relations elsewhere. Nevertheless, the British experiment with multiculturalism does have its lessons. A couple of decades ago, diversity and difference were to be celebrated. Nowadays we are no longer so sure. The point I want to make is that interreligious relations can never be tucked away safely into the realm of the

private and personal. They are always political, demanding a careful discernment of the ragged edges where communities held together by sometimes strong and contrasting views of what makes for the common good come up against each other.

## Culture and history

I begin very deliberately '*in medias res*', 'in the middle of things', where analysis and critical reflection follow from exploration and description of life as it is lived. I take Southall in West London as a microcosm of the British experience. I once counted more than sixty places of worship within a mile radius of my house, including four mosques, three Hindu temples, a dozen Sikh gurdwaras, a Buddhist vihara and an assortment of Christian churches, chapels and meeting places. There's an extraordinary religious and cultural vitality in places like Southall. Here more than 30% of the population is Sikh; about 20% Muslim; rather less Hindu. Some communities are recognisably in the mainstream of the major religious traditions. Others make for unexpected variations on the normal rule. Southall Buddhists, for instance, follow the Ambedkarite tradition and another low caste group, the Valmiki Sabha, has a certain hybrid quality which makes it difficult to categorise.

No easy distinctions can be made between religion and culture; nor is it clear how ethnic and linguistic differences interact with those that are bound up with the particularities of religious commitment.<sup>1</sup> What holds the immigrant communities of Southall together is a degree of cultural if not religious homogeneity - the vast majority are Panjabi - but also a more recent memory of struggle and resistance. In April 1979, in the lead-up to a General Election, the town was targeted by the fascist National Front. In a violent confrontation property was

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<sup>1</sup> See BARNES, M., *Interreligious Learning: dialogue, spirituality and the Christian imagination*, Cambridge University Press, 2012; especially Chapter 4, 'Thresholds of Meaning'.

damaged, many demonstrators were injured, and one man was killed. Local people still talk about the event as a turning point in community relations. It roused a deep determination that nothing like it would happen again. A common experience of working together has created bonds that cross all sorts of jealously guarded boundaries. Not everything since then has been straightforward, but the National Front and their successors, the British National Party, have never been back.

Southall is usually described with the clichés reserved for multi-cultural enclaves – the romance of India, a glimpse of the mystic East, a vibrant mix of religious festivals, exotic sights and spicy smells. For those who actually live there the reality is rather more prosaic. One should not ignore the dark and dysfunctional side and a degree of tension between the powerful and the underprivileged – a problem exacerbated by complex caste issues. Like many immigrant areas in the UK, Southall is a tatty, under-resourced place, with its social problems, its drug-culture, its share of misfits and problem cases. Nevertheless, this remarkable concentration of religious communities in one relatively small area has made Southall a byword for inter-religious co-existence. Police recruits come from all over the UK to find out ‘how it is done’; gaggles of schoolchildren, worksheets in hand, are always to be seen in and out of places of worship. Like a few other such inner city areas in the UK, Southall has something of a reputation as a laboratory for interreligious relations. How Why does it work? In part it’s that element of a shared history, a folk-lore of resistance to aggression that has forged a remarkable local identity across religious divides. Partly too it’s the sheer diversity of shades of commitment in which no one religious group predominates that makes for a sense of harmony and relatively peaceful co-existence. There is, however, a further point – one brought out in a remarkable study by the cultural anthropologist Gerd Martin Baumann of the ‘dual discursive competence’ developed by young people in Southall.<sup>2</sup> According to Baumann people identify

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<sup>2</sup> BAUMANN, G., *Contesting Culture Discourses of identity in multi-ethnic London*, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

themselves through membership of a number of explicit and implicit different 'communities' of interest and are constantly renegotiating that identity through a variety of individual and communal relationships. Identity is not just inherited, let alone 'given', but is always being contested as local groups and communities run up against each other and learn how to find the need to confront and renegotiate apparent boundaries.

## Facts and figures

Communities of Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus and Buddhists are now a familiar part of a once purely Christian religious landscape. Somewhere in the UK it is possible to find adherents of almost all the major schools of the great religious traditions, from Ahmadiyya Muslims to Zoroastrians. However, the actual demographics of religious diversity and shifts in local interreligious configurations are difficult to pin down. In 2001 the decennial census contained for the first time a question about religion; it was optional, and therefore only broadly indicative of current trends. Against more than 70% of the population declaring themselves Christian, there were over one and a half million Muslims, some half a million Hindus, nearly 350,000 Sikhs, more than a quarter of a million Jews, and some 150,000 Buddhists.<sup>3</sup> Ten years later the number declaring as Christian was down to less than 60% of the total population – and the overall age profile much higher. The number of Muslims had increased to 5% (and the comparative age-profile much younger), while Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists have shown small proportionate increases. Meanwhile the number declaring 'No religion' increased dramatically to some 25% of the total population. That underlines how much the dominant religious climate of the nation is fast becoming post-Christian. It does not follow, however, that the shift is towards the secular, still less the atheistic. While many

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<sup>3</sup> The census returns 2001 are analysed in WELLER, P., *Religious Diversity in the UK*, Continuum, London 2008.

people are deeply suspicious of religion, especially when it moves out of its acceptably private form and assumes a more public and political profile, concepts such as ‘religious literacy’ and ‘spirituality’, all too vaguely defined, find a place in the media and the academic world as well as in the churches and centres of public conversation.<sup>4</sup> Places like Southall where religion seems to have a significance that many parts of the UK have lost nevertheless appear to exercise a genuine hold over the public imagination.

At the same time the rich romance of cultural diversity is stained with dark episodes which have raised serious questions about the place of religion within the polity of the nation. A major event was the infamous Rushdie Affair in 1989 which turned the spotlight from race to religion – and particularly Islam. Muslims were dismayed to find that Britain’s ancient blasphemy laws, originally invoked in the late 16<sup>th</sup> C to protect the Established Church of England from seditious Catholics, did not protect them from having their faith vilified in public. Race made an unwelcome return in the summer of 2001 when civil disturbances broke out in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley. The report which was subsequently published drew attention to the ‘parallel lives’ being led by various communities. Separate enclaves were springing up in many places, as the phenomenon of ‘white flight’ took hold. The horrors of 9/11 came as a nasty shock to the whole Western world, but it was the London bombings of July 2005 and the graphically public murder of an off-duty soldier outside his barracks in May 2013 that has brought home how fragmented British society has become. The perpetrators were all British citizens; so too, it would seem, is the ISIS jihadi who was seen within the last few months brutally executing Western journalists and aid workers.

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<sup>4</sup> For an up-to-date set of commentaries on the former see especially DINHAM, A. – FRANCIS, M. (eds), *Religious Literacy in Policy and Practice*, Policy Press, Bristol 2015. The latter is covered in a number of significant studies; see EG HEELAS, P. – WOODHEAD, L., *The Spiritual Revolution*, Blackwell, 2005; WOODHEAD, L. – CATTO, R., *Religion and Change in Modern Britain*, Routledge, Abingdon 2012.

Before the turn of the millennium politicians and civil servants steered clear of anything to do with religion. In recent years that has all changed. The reaction of government has been twofold: firstly the anti-terrorist measures which clearly have as their target radical Islam; secondly the social cohesion agenda with its origins in the policies of multiculturalism. There is, of course, a political tension between the two. Four years ago David Cameron launched into 'state multiculturalism', arguing that as a policy it had actually contributed to Islamist extremism. The UK needed a stronger sense of identity. The previous government's 'prevent strategy' which recognised the need to work through Muslim communities in order to touch the deeper causes of radicalisation was replaced by a much more hard-edged insistence that Muslims sign up to a set of 'British values'. Since then academic studies and polemical newspaper articles have intensified a sometimes heated debate. On the more negative side is the constant mantra, noted earlier, that religion is potentially destructive of any sort of civil society. On the other side is the perception that faith communities are an important element in the voluntary sector, releasing sources of energy and creativity which contribute to the common good. An illustration of this comes from a Gallup survey of interreligious attitudes. One of its findings was that, by and large, Muslims in this country feel more comfortable with many of the institutions of the State than the majority of the population – the media, the judiciary, the press, the police, government - even banks and financial institutions; (the one exception is the army). Asked what was necessary for 'integration' into British society, 84% of Muslims ticked 'celebrating national holidays'.<sup>5</sup>

Barely more than a decade ago government steered clear of anything to do with religion. In recent years that has all changed. The reaction of government has been twofold: firstly the anti-terrorist measures which clearly have as their target radical Islam; secondly the social cohesion

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<sup>5</sup> *The Gallup Coexist Index 2009: a Global Study of Interfaith Relations*, Gallup The Coexist Foundation, 2009; p 22ff.



agenda with its origins in the policies of multiculturalism. It's the latter with which I am most concerned here.

### The story of multiculturalism

How to make sense of this ambivalence towards 'religion', perhaps especially 'other' religions? Let me invoke the help of one of the UK's most perceptive religious commentators, Jonathan Sacks, until recently Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth. Sacks helpfully encapsulates a complex history of engagement between the majority culture and the growing number of minority immigrant communities in terms of three parables.<sup>6</sup> A hundred strangers wander around the countryside looking for a place to stay. The first place is a large country house where the lord of the manor graciously invites the travellers to use the empty rooms for which he has no occupants: 'you are my guests; stay as long as you like'. The second place is a hotel in the middle of a big city. The travellers unpack, settle in and enjoy the facilities the hotel has to offer – as long, of course, as they have the means to pay. The third place is a town where the mayor welcomes them with a gracious speech explaining that they have no houses or dwellings to spare – but they do have land. 'Come and stay with us and we'll build the houses you need together.'

Country house, hotel and home – what Sacks calls 'three ways of thinking about society and identity'. His point is that the first and second have severe limitations while the third opens up new possibilities. In the first people are always guests with no sense of ownership and belonging. With the second people are free to come and go but there is never any invitation to move beyond a temporary commitment. The third recognises that people are indeed different, and such differences are enormously significant, but that does not prevent them from working together for the common good. Indeed it is the distinction

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<sup>6</sup> SACKS, J., *The Home We Build Together*, Continuum, London 2007.

between a static and a dynamic concept of society on which Sacks's argument turns. 'What makes us different is what we *are*; what unites us is what we *do*.'<sup>7</sup> Hence the title of the book – *The Home We Build Together*. His point is that social cohesion can be created once people learn how to engage with each other in common projects which benefit the whole community, what he calls dialogue which is 'side by side'. This powerful image was taken up by government in a report which emerged a couple of years later. I will come to that in a moment. But first let me very briefly fill in a little more of the story which the three parables enable Sacks to tell.

The country-house model is all about the assimilation of minorities into the space dominated by the majority. At best, the other is tolerated and patronised; at worst, dismissed and excluded as occasional fits of xenophobia react against the foreigner in our midst. As described by Sacks this model was bound up with Empire and effectively came to an end in the post-war period as immigration from the Commonwealth gathered to a head, hitting a peak in the early 70s with the arrival of East African Asians. The country-house could no longer cope and the hotel took over – or, at any rate, a highly idealised hotel. Now everyone is a guest; there are no outsiders because there are no insiders. The concept of the dominant culture is put to one side in favour of the celebration of difference as a value in itself. This, of course, was a gradual process and it would be a lengthy and thankless task to chart the rise and fall of the hotel model. It is important, however, to note one or two points – if only because they remind us of aspects of the British experience of religious diversity which continue to be significant.

The term multiculturalism originated in Canada, being used in a government report of 1965 to refer to the existence of different ethnic groups within the state. Canada, of course, has a long and much more positive experience of immigration than the UK. As in the USA it was expected that prospective citizens would soon adapt and become part of the great national melting pot. How well does the term translate

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<sup>7</sup> SACKS, J., *op cit.* p 16.

into Britain? The background is the demographic shift brought about by immigration, but there are other issues at stake here, notably the growth of liberal egalitarianism in British society as a whole. Sacks talks about the mutation, as he puts it, between the 1960's and the 1990's of 'individual rights into group rights'.<sup>8</sup> Group identity – whether understood in terms of ethnicity, religion or culture – is to be regarded as a value which claims attention. That accords with the view of Tariq Modood for whom multiculturalism first gained currency in the 1960s as a celebration of difference against the discredited nationalisms of the pre-war period. 'It was a politics of identity: being true to one's nature or heritage and seeking with others of the same kind public recognition for one's collectivity.'<sup>9</sup> Multiculturalism was founded upon the genial optimism which assumed that human beings flourish best when left to their own devices. Authenticity and independence are the watchwords.

However, what has come to be known as identity politics brings its own problems. It is not that easy to separate diaspora religion from the world of its origins. The background of the sub-continent of India is, for instance, particularly important in understanding British Islam. The overwhelming majority of Muslims in the UK come from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh (nearly 75%). For these Muslims 'the other' is not Jewish or even Christian but Hindu and, more importantly, Sikh. The Sikh Khalsa was formed out of violent opposition to the Mughal Empire of 17<sup>th</sup> C north India. A degree of hostility and resentment continues between these communities. Some of it is due to economic disparities, but historical tensions are exacerbated by the memory of traumatic events. Older people remember the horrors of partition in 1947. Later generations hark back to the 1984 military Operation Bluestar against Sikh separatists in Amritsar or the 1992 destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya and the horrific massacres that followed in Gujarat. The bloody end to the civil war in Śri Lanka may have been confined to a few square miles in a jungle many

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<sup>8</sup> SACKS, J., p 201.

<sup>9</sup> MODOOD, T., *Multiculturalism*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2007, p 2.

thousands of miles away. In a place like Southall, however, it's all too real. The Catholic parish has a sizeable Tamil population; it also has one of the largest concentration of Pakistani Catholics in the UK. Both sub-communities are very much aware of traumatic events in their homelands.

The question is whether the liberal assumptions behind multiculturalism are robust enough to cope with the pressures of identity politics in an increasingly globalised world. Conversion and caste issues in India, bombings in Iraq, the festering wound that is Kashmir, the destruction of Gaza, the disaster that has followed the short-lived 'Arab Spring': the list is endless. Such conflicts have the potential to exacerbate local tensions and poison relationships painfully built up over decades. The information explosion has made traditional religious culture more accessible, feeding into the eclecticism of post-modernity. But it has also imported the global into the local and threatens to destabilise the fragile structures with which human beings seek to negotiate the space they share with each other.

### Face to face and side by side

The legacy of the colonial period which continues to be played out on the streets of British cities is not the only factor that has sullied the optimism of the 'hotel model'. In recent years a number of government reports and papers have struggled with the public face of religion. The most important is a response to a consultation held in 2007. Faith communities and inter-faith organisations were asked to contribute to a process which would 'support increased inter faith dialogue and social action'.<sup>10</sup> The document which emerged provides practical guidelines for co-operation between government, funding agencies and local faith communities. The title – *Face to Face and Side by Side* – takes us back to Sacks' distinction. Face to face dialogue, we

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<sup>10</sup> 'Face-to-Face and Side-by-Side' – a framework for inter faith dialogue and social action. Consultation published by the DCLG, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

are told, 'leads to people developing a better understanding of one another, including celebrating the values held in common as well as acknowledging distinctiveness' while side by side refers to 'collaborative social action which involves people working together to achieve real and positive change within their local community'.<sup>11</sup>

Sacks himself is clear that so much interreligious dialogue is elitist and utopian. Martin Buber's exploration of the 'interhuman', 'where one loneliness meets another and finds grace',<sup>12</sup> is admirable in itself but, says Sacks, needs to be supplemented or preceded by the small-scale practices of co-operation and negotiation in which individuals and groups bury their differences for the sake of addressing a common concern. He is, of course, entirely correct; the Southall experience of co-operation learned under duress is a salutary lesson. Face-to-face dialogue does not happen without people first getting to know and trust each other. It's this sort of understanding that the government document is seeking to achieve – and although there are traces of the romantic approach to multiculturalism, it does instance many examples of good practice in interreligious relations.

The language which is used is that of 'social capital', made popular through the work of the American sociologist Robert Putnam.<sup>13</sup> The 'core idea' is that social networks have value. 'Just as a screwdriver (physical capital) or a college education (human capital) can increase productivity .... so too social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups.'<sup>14</sup> A three-way distinction is often made between the 'bonding' form of social capital (the 'glue' which gives individuals a place within a particular group), the 'bridging' form (the 'oil' which smoothes out the rough edges of the interaction between local communities) and a 'linking' form which would include more distant organ-

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p 17.

<sup>12</sup> SACKS, J., p 174.

<sup>13</sup> PUTNAM, R., *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Simon and Schuster, New York 2000.

<sup>14</sup> *Bowling Alone*, pp 18–19.

isations and networks with distinct political power. The question, of course, is how to get the three different motivations for interaction to cohere harmoniously. It is not obvious how the terminology transfers from voluntary organisations, such as the bowling club which gives Putnam his title, to much more traditional forms of *religious* community which make up the major faith traditions in Britain today. The not so hidden assumption is that religions consist of groups of like-minded people who have made a conscious decision to join. In fact, of course, there are any number of reasons why people belong to communities of faith. For every one who joins out of intellectual conviction there are thousands for whom faith is bound up with cultural inheritance. No doubt faith helps people to 'bond' – to develop structures which ease relations within the community. The issue of 'bridging' and 'linking', however, is a lot more complex.

How to 'build a home together'? How can religious communities – some of them, as I have noted, separated by historical traumas which have bred years of suspicion – be encouraged to look beyond their own partisan interests and work with others for the sake of the common good? In addressing that question, policy-makers in the UK face a dilemma. Underlying the more hard-edged approach to multiculturalism of the present government is the perception that the lack of shared values in British society has acted as a breeding ground for versions of extremist Islamist ideology. In other words we are dealing not so much with multiculturalism but a fragmentation into a series of 'monoculturalisms', separate groups with no interest in or need for co-operation, let alone communication. How to respond? Does the well-intentioned support of 'religious partners' and 'stakeholders' risk alienating those who like their religion – if they like it at all – confined safely to the private arena of personal beliefs and feelings? More subtly, does not the 'bureaucratising' of religion, the co-opting of religious communities into acting as partners for the common good, turn faith into another useful commodity of the consumer culture (albeit one packaged in the plausible jargon of 'social capital')? In short, how should the state pay attention to issues of *religious* difference and plurality?

The suspicion remains that the civil servants and policy makers who produce such documents have a very limited idea of what religion is all about. In their concern to produce a framework within which local government can work with faith and inter-faith groups not enough attention is paid to the nexus between 'face-to-face' and 'side-by-side', between what interreligious practitioners like myself call the dialogue of theological exchange and the dialogue of common action, or – very simply – between what people believe and what they do. Our motivations differ – because our accounts of how God, the world and human living hang together, differ in significant ways. And that, to pick up on the point with which I began, is what government finds problematic. To be acceptable religion needs to be redefined as 'moderate' – by which policy-makers mean embodying 'best of British' values: tolerance, fair play, a sort of truculent conformity. What is demanded is a focus on points of continuity and convergence. Life on the ground, however, is far more complex than that. Communities are not going to work 'side by side', let alone speak 'face to face' just because government tells them to.

### **Finding the positive in difference and diversity**

In a post-Christian secular society religious diversity is often conceived as a 'problem' that threatens civic harmony. A cohesive democratic society depends on some sort of shared consensus about common values and matters of mutual concern. Since the various religions disagree, however, about what is true and holy and good, *ipso facto* they make social cohesion more difficult to achieve. The not too hidden assumption is that, left to themselves, religions will seek only to safeguard their particular vision of things; sooner or later the chauvinist pursuit of narrow self-interest is bound to breed resentment and even to break out in violence.

Does the problem lie with religion, which can of course be ambiguous, creative and destructive, or with a version of the 'public space'

which finds difference difficult to accommodate? Clearly there are elements of both. But if we take as our primary exemplar of 'religion' either a deracinated fundamentalism or some privatised 'spirituality' we get off on the wrong foot altogether. That there are elements of both in many traditions is clear, but religions as they exist are highly complex patterns of holiness which, if they are to be properly understood, must be set within appropriate historical, cultural and social parameters. Otherwise we risk reducing them to variations on some overarching intellectualist system – and do them violence. What holds the rich diversity of religions together is precisely *faith*. And at issue for so many people is how the integrity of faith, commitment to visions of truth, can be maintained in a sometimes strange and hostile world. Might it not be that the fragmentation of society which the critics of multiculturalism perceive is grounded not in the impossibility of separate communities living in a single harmonious society but in the sidelining of a significant aspect of the human condition – the relationship with whatever is taken to have ultimate or transcendent value? To invoke an insight of Michel de Certeau, if otherness is forgotten, suppressed, or ignored it will simply come back in another way.

That persons of faith have different ways of configuring faith is obvious. But the guarding of difference, that specificity of faith which confers a particular identity, is not in itself a problem. The problem arises when religion goes toxic, as it were, when the naturally inward-looking and conservative mind-set of any traditional creed is turned outward, demonising some threatening 'other'. The root of all conflicts, as René Girard points out, is not difference as such but *competition*, what he understands in terms of a mimetic rivalry between persons, countries, cultures. If that is correct, then attention needs to be paid to the conditions which create that mood of 'competition' and form – or *malform* – the public space.

This is to suggest not that multiculturalism has failed but that it has not been tried.

State-sponsored structures, whether relatively benign, such as local councils of faith, or more threatening, such as measures intended to



counter radicalisation, have their place. The danger, however, is that even the most subtle of external pressures can disturb the delicate fabric which makes up religious traditions. The issue is not how to create structures of control which allow religious communities to bury differences but how conditions are to be created within which sometimes very different accounts of the world can go on flourishing together. Only the religious communities themselves can address that issue. To begin with difference does not make communication impossible; just a little more time-consuming. It takes energy and effort for communities of faith to understand each other, let alone to be critically supportive of each other for the sake of the common good. Historically in the UK a fund of 'social capital' has been provided by the Church of England which, in its parochial structure, still takes responsibility for managing various aspects of social cohesion in local areas – not least in facilitating forums of faith. That responsibility is now more broadly shared. Bodies like the Inter Faith Network for the UK have been instrumental in promoting good interreligious relations for the last 25 years. As its name implies, the Network exists not to speak on behalf of faith communities but to facilitate contact and promote good practice. Its conferences and consultations provide an important forum for meeting and discussion. The same can be said for a number of agencies and organisations, forums and foundations, some based within religious communities, some dedicated to working between them that have sprung up in the last couple of decades. They bring their own resources of spiritual wisdom for achieving social cohesion in their locality. In more general terms, precisely by keeping alive ultimate questions about the nature of humanity and the good life, they act counter to the secular received wisdom about the intrinsic divisiveness of religion as well as challenging the power of the market and the State.

In conclusion, let me return to a point with which I began. I drew attention to a certain received wisdom that, left to themselves, religious groups will seek only to safeguard their particular vision of things, and therefore some 'third party' is always going to be necessary to mediate between 'the religious' and civil society. That has not been my experience.

There is nothing inevitable about strongly held opinions going toxic or humane values of empathy and generosity being overlaid by narrow-minded chauvinism. At their best the great spiritual traditions of the world are sources of renewal and energy, what I like to call 'schools of faith' where ancient wisdom is handed on and the virtues that build up the common good are learned. This is not to collude with the naiveté that ignores the propensity even in the best-intentioned of human beings for tragic self-deception – and corruption. Nor does it propose an easy short-cut to the sometimes painful negotiations that have to take place if the dark suspicions born of historical trauma are to be overcome. On the contrary, by starting with a particular place, and a particular set of relationships, I have tried to avoid a facile recourse to abstractions and stereotypes. The danger is always that interreligious relations are dominated by the disdainful 'us and them' binaries that set 'irrational' religion against the secular mind-set. The persons of faith, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jews and Muslims whom I have got to know in the UK these last forty years, are a lot more sophisticated and interesting than that.

# The situation of Christians in Iraq and Syria

Waldemar Cisło

## **The origins of the conflict**

The turn of the century is a very difficult time for the Middle East which is one of the most unstable regions in the world today<sup>1</sup>. This area is identified as the site of the emergence of many civilizations. The Middle East was the first place where the great monotheistic religions were created and developed: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. We know that the recent conflicts are not only domestic but affect such countries as the United States (the terrorists' attacks of September 11, 2001), France (2015), and Denmark (2015). It should be noted that in religious terms the contemporary Middle East is not a monolith. Two Muslim states prevail in this area but the history of Iraq and Syria proves that Muslims are divided into two main groups: the Sunni majority and Shiite minority. Tensions between these two groups have existed throughout history and have worsened in recent years and months. Also, the complicated political situation has much to do with these conflicts. The Arabic states of the region are dominated by Sunni Islam while Shiite Islam is the main representative of Iran. This country is perceived by the Arab states as a major competitor in this part of the world. Also, a very critical attitude towards that state has Israel and the United States. The division between Shiites and Sunnis is only a part of the whole religious division. There are other smaller groups include the Alawits and Druze.

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<sup>1</sup> See SZYMBORSKI, W., *Zatoka Perska: problemy stabilizacji*, Wers, Bydgoszcz 1999, p. 13-41.

## The political situation in Iraq

The modern system of Middle Eastern states was formed after the decline of Ottoman Empire. Almost all of the countries of the present Middle East are former British or French colonies, protectorates or mandated territories. Contemporary political map of the Middle East has been shaped in the 1920s and 1930s as a result of the above-mentioned activities of the European Powers. The determined boundaries not always coincide with a division of nationalities desired by the people on the ground. Sometimes there had been established artificial creations as Iraq. This state was assembled out of three wilayas (provinces): Mosul, Baghdad and Basra. The pieces were designed to make a political structure occupied by the Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds. While the artificial creation served Britain to better control the oil fields located in the area of Mesopotamia and Kurdistan, from the point of view of the Iraqi people it was the germ of conflicts and tensions that exist to this day<sup>2</sup>.

Iraq gained independence in 1932 and the republican form of government was introduced in 1958. After a period of upheavals and coup d'états, Saddam Hussein in 1979 rose to the presidency, the political scene was relatively calm. Saddam introduced a stable system of dictatorial rules which lasted until 2003. His fall was not caused by an internal opposition but by the invasion of American troops. While the victory in the war came to the U.S. and coalition forces relatively easy, the arrangement of the country turned out to be exceeding their capabilities. Iraq plunged into chaos after the fall of Saddam Hussein. Kidnappings, assaults, robberies and bombings became the elements of everyday life. Even today, Iraq's internal armed violence is a regular part of the situation. One of the major mistakes made by the United States was the "government change." While Sunnis during Saddam

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<sup>2</sup> PŁACZEK, A. – STEFANEK, K., *Irak na początku XXI wieku*, Wydawnictwo naukowe Ibidem, Łódź 2007, p. 63-72.

Hussein's regime spanned most of the relevant authorities, now the U.S. felt that greater weight should be given to Shiites who make up the majority of the Iraqi community. The American policy of bringing the Shiites to power turned out to be inaccurate because amongst them the fundamentalist groupings gained an advantage.

This is what we would define as the irony of history was the fact that the war waged against Saddam, which in the opinion of the Americans was to be the war against international terrorism, in practice became a part of the promotion of terrorism in Iraq and throughout the Middle East. Since 2004, Al-Qaeda intensifies its activities in Iraq. The leader of this organization was Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Iraq pulled off all the radical jihadists who wanted to fight against the U.S. and its allies. In 2011, the U.S. troops have left Iraq. The balance of the conflict is alarming<sup>3</sup>. Possible estimates on the number of casualties states 5 thousand military coalition deaths including 4.4 thousand of U.S. troops and 800 thousand Iraqis. During my recent visit to Iraq (05-10 February, 2015) I heard the following answer to the question addressed to one of Iraqi politicians about the meaning of military intervention: "Until today, we live in a country where there is no political stability, lack of medication, the electricity is turned off, and instead we were given the opportunity to go to the ballot box and vote - you can answer for yourself whether it was worth it."

Since the beginning of 2014, Iraq has attracted the world's attention again. This was done through the actions of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). This organization, after previous successes in Syria in 2013, where it took up his control of the central and eastern areas of the country, at the beginning of 2014 moved its activity in the area of Iraq. The message that ISIS mastered almost half of the territory of Iraq in a very short time turned out to be a huge surprise

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<sup>3</sup> See BRAŃKA, T. – LORENC, M. – OSIEWICZ, P. – POTYRAŁA, A., *Irak między wojną a pokojem*, Mado, Toruń 2010, p. 51-75.

for the international community. There was even a momentary threat to acquire Baghdad. ISIS is not a new political force. Its emergence and development is associated with the emergence in the late 90s of a number of new terrorist organizations in the Middle East. Their actions have religious motifs but are directed against the dominance of the United States. "The genesis of ISIS is associated with the activities of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. In 2004, a group operating in Iraq led by the Jordanian national al-Zarkawi adopted the name Organization of Monotheism and Jihad (Arabic: Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad), which was renamed Organization of Jihad's Base in Mesopotamia (literally: 'Two Rivers'; Arab. Tanzim Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn). This organization has become one of the most active militant groups in Iraq and was better known under the abbreviated name as al-Qaeda in Iraq. Fighting strategy adopted by al-Zarkawi assumed the destabilization of the internal situation in Iraq. Their actions were directed not only against the occupation forces."<sup>4</sup> The outbreak of civilian war in Syria in 2011, and in particular to support by countries like Saudi Arabia or Qatar armed fundamentalist groups operating in Syria, has led to



<sup>4</sup> BANIA, R., *Dlaczego „Państwo Islamskie” zwyciężyła w Iraku*, *Więź* 2014/4, p. 12-13.

a significant strengthen of the organization. It seems curious that according to unconfirmed information there are from tens to hundreds smaller or larger guerrilla groups in Syria which do not always share the views of ISIS. The reason for the split within the fundamentalist groups was ethnic cleansing of Alawites, Schiites, Yazidis, and Kurds as well as moderate Sunnis carried out by the ISIS.<sup>5</sup>

<b>Republic of Iraq</b>
<b>Population:</b> 30 399,572 (2011)
<b>Capital:</b> Baghdad (7 – 7,5 mln)
<b>Languages:</b> Arabic, Kurdish
<b>Religion:</b> Islam
<b>65% Shiites</b>
<b>32% Sunnis</b>
<b>3% Christians</b>
<b>Displaced:</b> 1,9 mln
<b>Refugees:</b> 2 mln
<b>to Syria:</b> 1,2 mln
<b>to Jordan:</b> 500,000-700,000

## The situation of Christians in Iraq

Since 2003, as a result of the Second Gulf War, according to the UNHCR (United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees), 1.6 million people have been driven from their homes, and 1.8 million have left the country. Our organization is engaged in the support of Chris-

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid p. 14.

tians<sup>6</sup>. We can talk now about the exodus of hundreds of thousands of civilians in Iraq to countries such as Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, although, this number is not as significant as in Syria. Christians live in refugee camps, and in the north of the country, as a result of internal migration they seek refuge in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, in churches and homes of private individuals. According to official numbers of Iraqi refugees about 1/3 are the Christians (600,000). The Christian population has significantly decreased, particularly in the areas of Nineveh (northern Iraq) with its capital in Mosul (the third largest city in Iraq), Baghdad, Kirkuk and Basra. The massive influx of Christian refugees to Baghdad, Basra, Mosul, Zakho, and many other cities began last year as a result of the escalation of fundamentalists and terrorists' aggression. The Catholic Bishop of Baghdad, Andreos Abouna, said that up to half of the Christians have left the country. Among mentioned above places the refugees have taken place shelter in the north of the country, mainly in Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. 25 churches have been destroyed since 2003.

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime there have been countless terrorist attacks in Iraq. Many of them are associated with bloody, ongoing for many years, power struggles between Shiites and Sunnis. Religious conflicts and bloodshed between Muslims seem to be unstoppable. The attacks occur especially during the Muslim religious festivals which regularly participate in a large number of faithful. Although the number of acts of terror slightly decreased in comparison with the first years of the war, the end of violence in Iraq is still not in sight<sup>7</sup>.

Iraqi Christians are experiencing constant trials of the reislamization of the Iraqi society. They have faced severe persecutions in recent years. Many Muslim organizations demand to pay the "jizya" or pro-

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<sup>6</sup> See CISOŁO, W. – CYFKA, R., *Prześladowani i zapomniani*, Wydawnictwo Duszpasterstwo Rolników, Włocławek 2013, p. 101-108.

<sup>7</sup> See BRAŃKA, T. – LORENC, M. – OSIEWICZ, P. – POTYRAŁA, A., *Irak między wojną a pokojem*, p. 103-109.



tection money as the non-Muslims subjects and some women being made to wear a headscarf, which is known as the hijab. According to Archdeacon Emmanuel Youkhana a lot of Iraqi Christian women started to wear a headscarf to feel safer on the streets due to social pressure. Many senior Muslim clerics call for a strict separation of women from men on college campuses. Department of Music at the University of Baghdad was closed because it was considered that playing a musical instrument is not incompatible with a fundamentalist interpretation of Sharia.



Situation in Baghdad

The text of the letter, reportedly written by the Islamic extremist group *Ansar al-Islam*, was published in Arabic on their website: “The Secretary General of the members of the Islamic Brigade decided to give the Christian crusader infidels of Baghdad and the other provinces the last warning, to leave Iraq immediately and permanently and join Benedict XVI and his followers, who have trampled on the greatest symbols of humanity and Islam.” (...)There’ll be no room in Iraq for

the Christian infidels from now on. (...) Those who remain will have their throats slit.”

According to the UNAMI (United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq) report, the number of civilian deaths from 1 January to 30 June 2006, was 14,338 people. The number of killed people in July was 3590 including 183 women and 23 children. In August 2009, 194 women and 24 children were killed. The total number of deaths in 2006 estimates 34,452 civilians and 36,685 injured. Most died from gunshot wounds. In other words: the executions. Who is doing this?



Sunnis from al-Qaeda, members of Baath party, Shiite militia - the Badr Brigade, the Mahdi Army and lacking ideals bandits and gangsters. Iran and Syria support their killers, Saudi Arabia theirs<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> See BRAŃKA, T. – LORENC, M. – OSIEWICZ, P. – POTYRAŁA, A., *Irak między wojną a pokojem*, p. 103-109.

Responsible for the killings is also ISF (Iraq Security Forces) as well as police and MNFI. Up to 90% of Christians have left Baghdad during the war.

### **Kurdish Autonomy**

Kurdish Autonomous District is located in the northeast of the country encompassing three provinces: Erbil, Dahuk and Sulaymaniyah and in addition to the Kurds control parts of governorates Ninawa, At-Tamim and Diyala. The Autonomy capital is Erbil (Arabic: *Arbil*; also known in Kurdish *Hewlêr*). The problems of the Chaldeo-Assyrian Christians in the north of Mosul are also associated with the activities of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) which ejects them from their houses, destroys everything and builds new settlements for Kurdish settlers. The Christian communities of Nineveh district: Telkepeh area (Baghdede), Hamdanija (Qaraqosh), Karamles, Bertallah, Botany, Telesqof, Alqush, Bashiqa Bahzani, Shaikhan are endangered by a new colonization. According to the Finance Minister of Kurdistan, Sarkis Aghajana, the government is building 30 new settlements / villages for 3,500 Christian families expelled from Mosul and Baghdad. This is an area where Christians fleeing from the south should expect safety and security. They take shelter in the churches, villages and camps around major cities.

Apostolic Nuncio to Jordan and Iraq, Archbishop Francis Assisi Chullikatt, received a letter from father Bashar M. Warda, C.Ss.R., in which he presented the real life problems of Christians:

1. Poor employment prospects for Christians.
2. Adopted employment policy based on prejudice prevents qualified Christians from equal access to public-sector jobs which are instead allocated to the people loyal to the party rulers. Christians are directly denied these job positions or are harassed at work which is aimed at forcing them to leave their positions or even abandon their profession. This was the case with stone and

- marble factories in Mosul which at the moment are empty because their Christian owners cannot manage them or sell them.
3. Christians are subject to social pressures imposed on them by their low social *status quo* of the current state of lawlessness, where there are those who have managed to solve their problems by force rather than in court.
  4. Christians are obliged to follow strict Islamic rules in the regions controlled by religious masters and rulers of the tribes.
  5. Criminal gangs using physical pressure force them to leave Iraq or looking for shelters in Kurdish Autonomy, a relatively safe region.
  6. The lack of any Christian political representation having a common vision and providing support to the Christians to defend their rights.
  7. Increasing feelings of hatred as a response to a certain activities of some Iraqi social sectors where Christians cooperate with the coalition forces with which they share the same Christian religious beliefs.
  8. Forcible evictions of Christians from their villages occupied afterwards by the Muslims as a result of Islamic clerics incitement. This takes place especially in Baghdad and Mosul because of the failure of government administration in the management of people's everyday lives.
  9. Institutions and cultural centers owed by Christian rightful owners and confiscated by previous governments are not recoverable.
  10. The restitution to rightful Christian owners property confiscated by the previous administrations is impossible.
  11. The destruction of Christian culture and historical places of Christian worship.

Hence the need to encourage church leaders to a unified vision and pastoral activities/work out positions that would help to establish appropriate relationships and strengthen our functioning as Christians. Cur-

rently, there is a consensus between the leaders of the churches referring to the obstacles with which Christianity has to be measured in Iraq.

Many Iraqi Christians have sought refuge in neighboring countries (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Turkey) where they live in terrible conditions, waiting for a visa to Western countries. As stated by the Syrian Catholic Archbishop of Mosul Georges Casmoussa, “80% of young people intend to leave the country or dreams about it.” Auxiliary Bishop Shlemon Warduni of the Chaldean Catholic Patriarchate of Baghdad adds: “Emigration is destroying our culture, our history, our faith and lives of our communities. It’s dangerous contagious disease which we are unable to deal with.”

Religious minorities in Iraq are forced to submit to Sharia law which in turn does not give Christians the same rights as their fellow Muslims. Moreover, Christians and members of other minorities are under-represented in the state institutions. In July 2010, a group of 76 activists, consisted of both Christians and representatives of other minorities (Yazidis, Sabians and others) announced an appeal, in which they demanded to allow refugees to return home, and on the other hand - the constitutional changes that would provide better protection of minority rights<sup>9</sup>.

Archbishop Casmoussa has made a long list of injustices against Christians. For example, the unacceptable practices in the field of education. The presence of one Muslim child in the class - a school is required by law to teach Islamic religion; the right to give Christian religious instructions is granted only when the class is at least of 51 percent of the students who profess this religion.

Better security situation in the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan in recent years allowed 12,000 Christian families from Baghdad, Mosul

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<sup>9</sup> See CISEO, W. – CYFKA, R., *Prześladowani i zapomniani*, p. 104- 106.

and other Iraqi cities settled in the Archdiocese of Erbil. “In Baghdad and other places people still do not know whether they will return home at night because they can become a victim of bombings, murders and kidnappings”, lamented Monsignor Ward.

This means that the Catholic communities in Baghdad and Mosul had to be closed because people emigrated while in Erbil had to be prepared tents because the churches were too small. “Although we do not have sufficient infrastructure to cope with the development of Catholic communities, people still come. In their parishes they were accustomed to participate in daily Mass and prayers, and catechesis. This is something they do not give up. Therefore, we need to build new churches as soon as possible to make more room to carry out catechesis and other events taking place in the community”, said Archbishop Casmoussa.

Archbishop described the situation in Iraq as a mixture of “historical, economic, social, religious and political problems” but the situation is too complex to be fully understood. “If we try to explain what’s going on, the next day the reality may be quite different,” he explained. He went on saying that “the war has divided society and made it onto the top of all the unresolved conflicts of the past.” The fact that Iraq is surrounded by countries facing numerous internal conflicts makes that it “often does not fight in its own wars”.

## **Kirkuk**

The city is a main center of the Kurdish identity and the area of the oil industry. As a result of Muslim aggression and war the Christian Chaldean Syrian community decreased to 12,000 people.

A Sunni group associated with Al-Qaeda was operating in this area. In November 2007, a suicide bomber blew himself up in Kirkuk, killing six people and injured Kurdish policeman.

“We have never witnessed anything like it before. A large city like Mosul plunged into chaos and at the mercy of the groups that have attacked it”. That is how Chaldean Archbishop Amel Shimon Nona of Mosul has described to ACN the tragic situation facing Iraq’s second city, which has been under siege now for almost two days.

According to the archbishop, the clashes began quite suddenly, on Thursday 5 June. However, initially they were limited to some of the suburbs in the western part of the city. “The army began bombarding the areas concerned, but then, in the night from yesterday to Monday, the army and the police simply abandoned Mosul, leaving it at the mercy of the attackers.” Over half the inhabitants of the city and the entire Christian community immediately fled towards the nearby plain of Niniveh. “Up till five o’clock yesterday morning we were taking in the fleeing families, and we tried to find them somewhere to stay, in the schools, in the catechism classrooms, in the abandoned houses”, explained Archbishop Nona, who himself is now in Tall Kayf, a village about 3 km to the north of Mosul.

It is believed that the attack is the work of the Al Qaeda-linked terrorist group Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), which is noted for the savage anti-Christian attacks it has carried out in Syria. However, Archbishop Nona believes that other groups may also be involved. “We do not yet know which groups are involved; some people are speaking of ISIS, while others think that there are other elements among them. We have to wait in order to better understand the actual situation. Undoubtedly there are extremists among them; many of them have been seen patrolling the streets.”

Obviously, the jihadist presence is a cause of real concern to the Christians, and in the last few hours in fact, news has already been coming in of attacks by ISIS on four churches and a monastery. “We have not received any threats”, the archbishop told ACN, “because by now all the Catholic faithful have abandoned the city. Who knows if

they will ever be able to return there?” In 2003 the Christian community in Mosul numbered around 35,000 souls. In the 11 years that followed the outbreak of war this number had tragically fallen to around 3,000. “Now, there is probably no one left there.”

“We are continuing to pray that our country may one day find peace”, insists Archbishop Nona, who in the last few days has been obliged once again to urge his faithful not to lose hope. “It is not easy after so many years of suffering, but we Iraqi Christians are strong in our faith and we have to retain our hope, even in persecution. It is an enormous challenge, above all after what has happened in these last few days.”

## Jordan

Jordan provides asylum for 100,000 Christian refugees from Iraq. Most of them are Assyrians (Chaldean Syrian Christians), mainly living in Amman (the capital city of Jordan). According to UNHCR report Jordan is the top six asylum receiving country. The standard of living of Christian refugees in Jordan is really impressive. Typical refugee family is composed of 5 to 7 people living in a single room, which cost them from 100 to 300 dollars a month. They are unemployed, because most often illegally in the kingdom. Children, of course, are not entitled to attend the public schools, health care and sanitation facilities do not exist. Some women are therefore forced into prostitution to support the family. Life goes on from day to day. The refugees are registered in Jordan as visitors, they need a visa or to be registered by the U.N. The visa is valid for one month, after the expiry, the refugee must pay \$ 2 a day to stay in Jordan. After a month they shall be treated as illegal newcomers who captured are sending back to Iraq, even if they are registered as refugees by the United Nations<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> PŁACZEK, A. – STEFANEK, K., *Irak na początku XXI wieku*, p. 81-82.



## **Lebanon**

Human Rights Watch called on the Lebanese authorities in December to grant the Iraqis a refugee status. They have no rights because they are not allowed to work, send their children to school, and live in fear of deportation to Iraq what it means for them actually a death sentence. In Lebanon, there are about 40,000 to 50,000 of the refugees of Iraqi nationality. In the period from 15 September to 30 November Lebanon deported 25,000 Iraqis.

## **Syria**

Archbishop Mario Zenari told Vatican radio on February 15 that “When you walk through the streets of Syrian cities, blood literally sticks to the soles of your shoes. There is no place to which that violence has not arrived.” He described in such a dramatic manner the situation in Syrian civil war.

### **Political background**

A few years ago, Syria was considered as a relatively stable and peaceful country in the The Middle East region. To better understand the origins of this conflict we should have a look at the recent history of this country. Since the fifties of the last century, Syria like many other countries in the region was ruled by a military dictatorship. The situation was not much different during the rule exercised by the Ba’ath parties that ruled Syria in the 60s. The main ideology was a combination of socialism, Arab ideology which seeks to unite the Arab world and ideas drawn from the Christian thinker Michel Aflaq. Soviet influence was very evident at that time as well as during the wars in 1967 and 1973.

During this period, as was the case in other countries in the region, e.g. in Iraq where dictatorship eliminated any extremisms, including Islamic, which resulted in a relatively stable situation for minorities,

including Christians. This situation is very briefly outlined but the political aspect of the conflict cannot escape our attention<sup>11</sup>.

### **Religious aspect**

We are dealing here with the religious conflict between two factions of Islam espoused by Saudi Arabia, the Sunnis and the Shiites, who have the backing of Iran. We also cannot forget the role of Turkey both before and during the conflict. This complex situation does not allow you to find a diplomatic solution, as the great “players” as Russia and the U.S. are not able to communicate over its interests in the region. In addition, we hear reports that many so-called “insurgents” are simply mercenaries paid by Saudi Arabia and other countries. Many of them were trained in Pakistan and Afghanistan, which tells us, with which “insurgents” we have to deal with.

### **The situation of Christians**

Christians in Syria, like in Iraq, respected legal authority, and acting were primarily minority trade without causing anxiety. Before the internal conflict they gave substantial assistance to the refugees from Iraq. When I visited Damascus three years ago I had the opportunity to see with our own eyes, how effectively this small group of people was helping refugees. Now they are in the same situation and are in need of our help!

Conversations with refugees living in Jordan showed a very disturbing picture. Presently, according to Church estimates about 3 million people were displaced within the country and one million emigrated from the country. Those who stay in the country are faced with many problems of insecurity because when they go out to get the most basic necessities of life they do not know who shoots at them, rebels or government army. One thing is clear that are killed innocent people, often Christians. As in any war, suffer the most vulnerable: women,

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<sup>11</sup> PŁACZEK, A. – STEFANEK, K., *Irak na początku XXI wieku*, p. 15-19.

children and old people. Lack of food, medicines, water and all necessary means to survive intensifies the feeling of fear. Moreover, they are often taken hostages by one or the other side of conflict. The rebels (though not all) try to portray Christians as supporters for the regime while the officials expect them to confirm how the government is taking care of them. Christians do not want to stand on either side of the conflict because as a minority (approx. 10%) expects they fundamental rights to freely profess their faith will be respected. I have also learnt from the conversations that those who managed to leave the country face many problems. One of the European Union embassies asked a family to describe how terrible persecutions they suffered from the government. When they refused to provide such information because that would be untrue, they were denied a visa. This fact illustrates just how complex and difficult is the situation of the Christians. In fact, the only institution to have their “ambassadors” on the spot is the Church. Both priests and sisters still reside in Syria and in neighboring countries, e.g. in Jordan, take a huge effort to bring help. During the meeting in the Nunciature we had a chance to see what kind of help they need to support their schools and hospitals. It seems that this aid will be really needed.

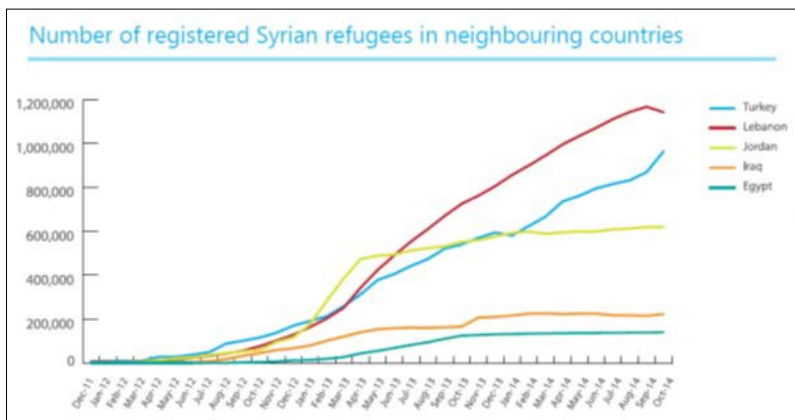
Settled in Syria Salafi Sheikh Yasir al-Ajlawni, a Jordanian of origin, issued a “legitimate fatwa” allowing for those Muslims fighting to topple secular president Bashar Assad to “capture and have sex with” all non-Sunni women. He added that “the capture and rape of Christian or Alawites women is not contrary to the Islam.” Such information which in recent days could be found on many Internet portals show the scale of the threat and the problem faced by Christians in the war-torn Syria.

For several years, our attention has been attracted by the dramatic messages that come from Syria, both official and private, from priests and sisters. The situation is complicated because you cannot see the good will to resolve the conflict. This applies to all sides of conflict. Let us trust that the civil war will not develop into a more serious conflict with the participation of other countries. There is also the prospect of the division of the country between the Sunni majority and Alawites

and Christian's minority. There is also a concern, as was the case in Iraq, that Christians leave the country forever. The situation in Syria is very dynamic. This is what gives us hope is the fact that the Western countries have not been involved military here due to the Christian patriarchs urgent appeal. They feared a recurrence of the situation in Iraq where today we have a worse situation than before the intervention of coalition troops!

There has been a compromise between international organizations and the regime how to safely dispose of the Syrian chemical weapons. The military situation is also very dynamic. Some cities are once controlled by the government, once by the insurgents. There is no doubt that radical Muslims want to "cleanse" the country of the Christians according to the slogan "Islam is the answer for every man." Those who do not accept this have to leave the country or will be submitted to different forms of repressions such as a special tax for Christians. Radical Islam has one goal - the whole world should become a Muslim and by all means to achieve this goal.

Syria today is certainly one of the worst places for Christians on Earth, no one can see the end of the nightmare. At the beginning it was not a war against Christians. We can even say that with the exception of Lebanon, which has a special status in the Middle East, Syria was certainly one of the best places to live for Christians in the region. But



it all ended three years ago. There was not a democracy in this country but it was a real economic prosperity (annual growth of 9%), and Christians were not discriminated. In fact, at the beginning of the crisis we have seen a few examples of the protection of Syrian Christians by Muslims. After some time when a huge number of foreign mercenaries, radical jihadists took active part in the conflict, the situation of Christians rapidly deteriorated. We hear disturbing evidence that radical Muslims from certain European countries “made their holidays in Syria” supporting the rebels.

Here are a few examples: in November last year, Sadat City, which lies near Homs and the population is mainly Syrian Orthodox, was taken over by Islamic rebels and according to the Syrian Orthodox archbishop became the scene of the “worst massacre of Christians, which took place in Syria in the past two and a half years.” 45 people, including children, were killed and thrown into mass graves and 1500 families were used by the rebels as human shields.

In early December, after the Christian city Maloula was conquered by the rebels, twelve Greek Orthodox nuns were abducted from the monastery. Three Christians were killed for refusing to renounce their faith. Melkite Patriarch Gregory III Laham compiled a list of Christian martyrs who died by the end of 2013. This list contains 215 names. Unfortunately, there is no indication that this list will be closed in the near future<sup>12</sup>.

It is needless to say that the whole Syrian population is suffering. The U.N. estimates that over 7 million people are internally displaced and 2.5 million have fled abroad. More than 120000 people were killed, including 10% of children. Several hundred children were killed by snipers in order to deprive parents of hope and the will to live making them more internally disruptive and easier to overcome. The neighboring countries of Syria host over one million refugees. It is said that every day 1,000 refugees are fleeing across the border into Lebanon. It should be noted that many of them tend not to officially

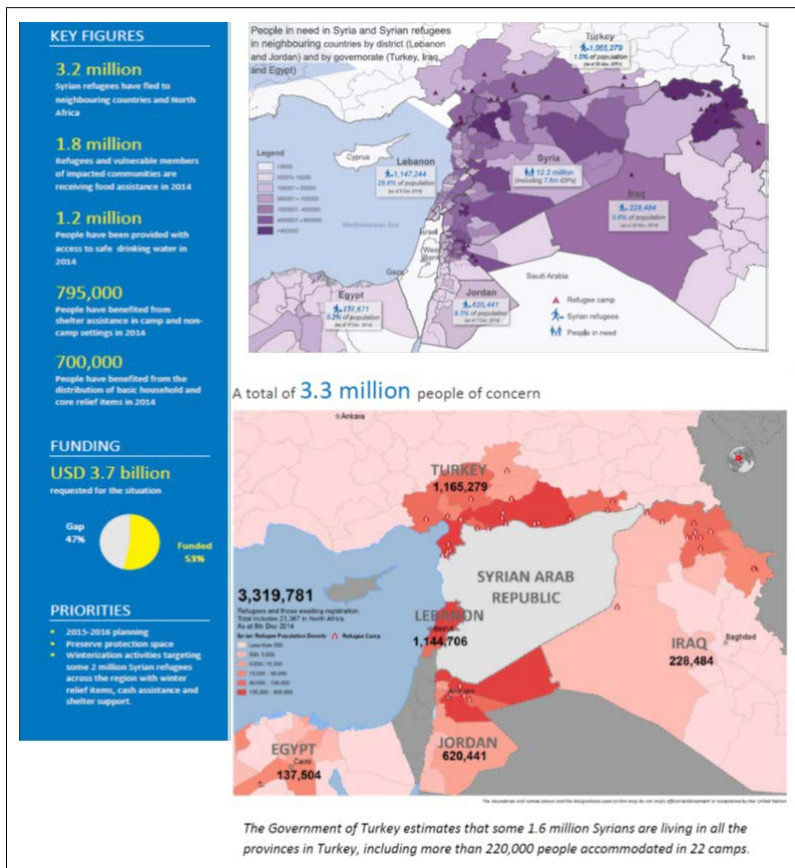
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<sup>12</sup> CISŁO, W. – CYFKA, R., *Prześladowani i zapomniani*, p. 168-172.

register as refugees fearing that this may result in unpleasant consequences for their families remaining in Syria.

“Every day approximately 100 people receive a medical treatment”, says Sister Hanah working in the hospital in Beirut, funded by the Poles through the Aid to the Church in Need.

Today, it is obvious that Christians are the targets of an ethno-religious “cleansing”. Shall we consider this as a repeat of the Iraq scenario? Whether it is an extended strategy intended to eradicate the entire presence of Christians in the Middle East? We have to take also into account such a future eventuality!



# **Intra-Christian Conflict in Ukraine: Historical Foundations and a Theological Proposal**

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Nicholas Denysenko

## **Introduction**

The potential perils of inaccurate historiography have resulted in a common misperception on the situation among Christians in Ukraine. This paper will focus on divisions amongst Orthodox groups in Ukraine and the role of the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church (UGCC). In the first part of this paper, I will refer to the origins of divisions in Ukraine, along with their motivations. In the second part, I will show how the collapse of the Soviet Union created an opportunity for marginalized Churches of Ukraine to establish their presence and lay claims to legitimacy among the people. In the third part, I will discuss how the ongoing process of constructing narratives and counternarratives is contributing to the deepening of division between Christians in their respective Churches and peoples in civil society. In my conclusion, I will reflect on the possibility of ecumenical reconciliation that would facilitate peace among the Churches and a potential model of concord for contemporary Ukrainian civil society.

## **Background**

The history of the Church in Ukraine is complex. History tells us that Saint Volodymyr established Christianity in Ukraine via baptism in 988. The people of the Kyivan city-state remained in communion with Constantinople until the late sixteenth-century, when the bishops of the Kyivan Metropolia agreed to reunion with the Roman Church

in 1596.<sup>1</sup> Historical assessments of this union vary. Ecumenical theologians view this reunion as a legitimate continuation of the attempt to reunite East and West at the council of Florence in 1439. Ecclesial historians depict the decision to reunite as one made by the bishops, many of whom were heavily influenced by the political climate, since the Kyivan Church was culturally influenced by their Polish rulers.

As we will see, the decision of the Orthodox bishops to re-enter communion with Rome in 1596 set a process of intra-Orthodox division in motion. The Catholic Church adjusted to the effects of the Reformation by permitting new aesthetical elements to shape Roman liturgy. For example, the use of polyphonic music became common. Because the Orthodox lived in community with their Polish neighbors and rulers, they adopted liturgical and educational models even though most of the Orthodox populace rejected the Union with Rome. After the re-establishment of an Orthodox hierarchy in Kyiv in 1620, the Orthodox adjusted to their situation by publishing new liturgical books, adopting Western elements in liturgical practice (including aesthetics and actual liturgical prayers), and reconfiguring Orthodox education after the Jesuit model.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The literature covering the history of the Union of Brest-Litovsk in 1596 is deep and varied. From the Ukrainian Orthodox perspective, select older historical works represent a common interpretation of the historical context, such as WLASOWSKY, I., *Outline History of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church*, vol. 1, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, South Bound Brook – NJ 1956), p. 156-265; idem, *Outline History of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church*, vol. 2, KOROWYTSKY, I. (Ed.), Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, South Bound Brook – New Jersey 1979 (trans. Mykola Haydak and Frank Estocin) p. 13-24. For a Russian perspective, see POSPIELOVSKY, D., *The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood – New York 1998, p. 90-100. Also see GUDZIAK, B., *Crisis and Reform: The Kyivan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Genesis of the Union of Brest*, Harvard Series in Ukrainian Studies, Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University Press, Cambridge – MA 2001; GROEN, B. (Ed.), *Four Hundred Years Union of Brest (1596-1996): A Critical Re-Evaluation, acts of the congress held at Hernen Castle, the Netherlands, in March 1996*, Peeters, Leuven 1998; and ROBERTI, J.C., *Les Uniates*, Cerf, Paris 1992.

<sup>2</sup> See SYSYN, F. E., *The Formation of Modern Ukrainian Religious Culture: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, in PLOKHY, S. – SYSYN, F. E. (Eds.), *Religion and Nation in Modern Ukraine*, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, Edmon-



The most important figure from this era was Metropolitan Petro Mohyla, a Moldovan by birth, whose reforms included the establishment of the Kyiv-Mohyla academy.<sup>3</sup> These initial episodes of religious evolution in Ukraine prefigure the contemporary religious environment. A group of bishops sought to renew communion with Rome in fidelity to the ecumenical aspirations of the early fifteenth century; the Orthodox who rejected union with Rome adapted to the situation by permitting the external layers of their identity to evolve to conform to the cultural patterns of their time and environment. The period of 1596 to 1654 is a crucial one in the history of Christianity in Ukraine, as it introduces two simultaneous and impactful phenomena: the impetus for ecclesial reunion between East and West with the union of Brest-Litovsk, and the adjustment on the part of the Orthodox, whose identity developed in their attempt to remain faithful adherents of the Orthodox Church. To underscore the significance of this second point, let us note that Metropolitan Peter Mohyla's reforms are frequently the primary inspiration for what Georges Florovsky referred to as the Western captivity of the Church and the pseudomorphosis of Orthodox theology.<sup>4</sup>

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ton – Toronto 2003, p. 13-16; SHEVZOV, V., *The Russian Tradition*, in CASIDAY, A., *The Orthodox Christian World*, Routledge, London – New York 2012, p. 20-23; and POSPIELOVSKY, p. 84-100.

<sup>3</sup> On this topic, see POPIVCHAK, R., *The Life and Times of Peter Mohyla, Metropolitan of Kiev*, Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies 43-45 (2004), p. 339-59; SYSYN, F. E., *The Formation of Modern Ukrainian Religious Culture*, in PLOKHY, S. – SYSYN, F. E. (Eds.), *Religion and Nation in Modern Ukraine*, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, Edmonton – Toronto 2003, p. 1-22; ŠEVČENKO, I., *The Many Worlds of Peter Mohyla*, Harvard Ukrainian Studies 8, nos. 1-2 (1984), p. 9-40 (this issue is devoted to the study of the Kyiv Mohyla Academy); GALADZA, P., *Seventeenth-century Liturgicons of the Kyivan Metropolia and Several Lessons for Today*, St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly 56, no. 1 (2012), p. 73-91; and MEYENDORFF, P., *The Liturgical Reforms of Peter Moghila: A New Look*, St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly 29, no. 2 (1985), p. 101-114. Mohyla was glorified as a saint in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in 1996.

<sup>4</sup> See FLOROVSKY, G., *Collected Works*, vol. 4: *Aspects of Church History*, Nordland Publishing Co., Belmont – MA 1975, p. 82; See Paul Gavrilyuk's analysis of Florovsky's discussion of pseudomorphosis in *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance*:

I have mentioned 1654 in this timeline because this is when the regions now known as Ukraine fell under the rule of the Russian empire with the Pereiaslav Agreement.<sup>5</sup> The openness of Ukrainian Christianity towards the West shifted during this time period, especially since Ukrainian ties with Moscow were strengthened. The sources of this strengthening varied: on the one hand, Moscow imported Ukrainian artists and intellectuals, which resulted in the introduction of new liturgical and theological traditions to Russia. The Ukrainian Cossacks also sought a political ally who could add a protective layer against the Poles. The 1654 Pereiaslav Agreement was designed to provide this layer, and it functioned to strengthen the bonds between Ukraine and Russia. By 1686, the ecclesial bond between Moscow and Kyiv was complete when the Constantinopolitan patriarchate relinquished the Kyivan Metropolia to Moscow. Ukrainian historians refer to this period as one of Russification, when traditions native to Kyiv were gradually subsumed under Moscow. The Russian Church's proclivity for uniformity was one source of Russification, and despite the diminishment of the Russian Church when Peter I established a Holy Synod to replace the Patriarchate, the impetus for uniformity manifested by Patriarch Nikon's correction of the liturgical books impacted Ukraine.<sup>6</sup>

Orthodox Ukrainians were acutely aware of the uniqueness of their native traditions. In the recent publication of the diary of a nineteenth-century Ukrainian priest's son, Heather Coleman exposes some of the tensions that existed between Ukrainian clergy and the path of the Moscow synod.<sup>7</sup> Ukrainian clergy had maintained some of the

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*Changing Paradigms in Historical and Systematic Theology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014, p. 172-91.

<sup>5</sup> See SUBTELNY, O., *Ukraine: A History*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1988; reprint 1991, p. 134-6.

<sup>6</sup> On liturgical uniformity, see MEYENDORFF, P., *Russia, Ritual, and Reform: The Liturgical Reforms of Nikon in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century*, St. Vladimir's Seminary press, Crestwood – New York, 1991.

<sup>7</sup> COLEMAN, H., *A Ukrainian Priest's Son Remembers his Father's Life and Ministry*, in COLEMAN, H. (Ed.) *Orthodox Christianity in Imperial Russia: A Source book on Lived Religion*, University of Indiana Press, Bloomington – IN 2014, p. 107-30.

older traditions contained in the 1646 Liturgicon of Peter Mohyla, which varied from the reformed versions issued by Moscow during the course of the Nikonian reforms.<sup>8</sup> Ivan Ohienko, a prominent historian of the Church in Ukraine who was later the Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Canada, bemoaned the Russification process which removed native Ukrainian liturgical traditions in favor of uniformity.<sup>9</sup> So the period of 1654-1917 was quite complex in Ukrainian church history, especially for the Orthodox. First, the Western elements adopted by Ukrainians in liturgy and aesthetics permeated Moscow and Russia through a process of migration. This process took a new turn in the nineteenth century, when intensified Russification of Ukraine included the appointment of ethnic Russians to many Orthodox eparchies in Ukraine. The attempts to promote uniformity in Russia did not eradicate the consciousness of Ukrainian religious identity; on the contrary, this identity lurked beneath the surface and needed only a flame to ignite it.

In the meantime, the Greek Catholics who remained in communion with Rome found themselves under multiple rulers.<sup>10</sup> They thrived under the Austro-Hungarian empire, but the large populations in the Western regions of the Russian empire suffered severe persecution and coerced conversion to Orthodoxy.<sup>11</sup> The Greek Catholics were marginalized within the Roman communion and became increasingly Westernized and Latinized.<sup>12</sup> Thousands of Greek Catholics journeyed to America in search of economic opportunity. Entire communities of Greek Catholics encountered hostility in their Roman Catholic hosts, epitomized by a famous but tragic episode in Minnesota between

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid p. 125-6.

<sup>9</sup> METROPOLITAN ILARION (OHLENKO); JARMUS, S. (Ed.), *Українська Церква: Нариси з Історії Української Православної Церкви*, 2 vols., Consistory of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada, Winnipeg 1982, p. 239-74.

<sup>10</sup> For an overview, see TAFT, R. F., *The Eastern Catholic "uniate" Churches*, Cambridge Histories Online, Cambridge 2008, p. 413-4.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> See ibid p. 423-5 and *passim*.

Alexis Toth and Roman archbishop John Ireland who dismissed the legitimacy of the Byzantine rite and the freedom of Greek Catholic priests to be married.<sup>13</sup> The conflict between Toth and Ireland resulted in an identity crisis for parish communities. In search of their roots, thousands of Greek Catholics in America returned to the Orthodox Church under the patronage of the Russian Orthodox Church. Ironically, the Greek Catholic return to Orthodoxy was temporary for many, and for those who remained Orthodox, an experience of another dose of Russification. The Greek Catholic experience discloses the tensions existing between Greek Catholics and Rome, and how the memory of ecclesial separation accompanied immigrants into their new host countries.

For the purposes of analysis, one might view the two situations as comparative parallels in the early twentieth century. The Orthodox Church of Russia was intensifying preparation for the long-planned council which would take up the question of ecclesial reforms.<sup>14</sup> Societal tensions included the muted but intense Ukrainian nationalism which had lingered beneath the surface over the course of some two-hundred years. Many of these tensions accompanied immigrants to America and Canada. The Revolution unleashed a situation of ecclesial chaos that resulted in several episodes of ecclesial collision in Russia, Ukraine, and America.

Because the Bolsheviks sought to undermine the Orthodox Church in Russia (its primary ideological threat), the leaders permitted the organization of an Orthodox Church in Ukraine independent from Moscow. The Revolution itself ignited the flame of Ukrainian religious identity and served as the primary impetus for Ukrainians to organize

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<sup>13</sup> For a magisterial account of this episode, see HERBEL, D. O., *Turning to Tradition: Converts and the Making of an American Orthodox Church*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014, p. 25-60.

<sup>14</sup> DESTIVELLE, H., *The Moscow Council (1917-1918): The Creation of the Conciliar Institutions of the Russian Orthodox Church*; PLEKON, M. – PERMIAKOV, V. (Eds.), University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame – IN 2015, (trans. Jerry Ryan, foreword by Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev).

a serious attempt at obtaining canonical autocephaly, largely under the leadership of Oleksander Lotocky.<sup>15</sup> A leadership vacuum in the Patriarchate of Constantinople complicated the process, as did the civil war raging in Ukraine. The Moscow Patriarchate granted Ukraine ecclesial autonomy, but this did not appease Ukrainians in favor of autocephaly, who began to celebrate liturgy in Ukrainian, which only fanned the flames of ecclesial tension. Furthermore, the Ukrainians continued to attempt to find bishops who supported their cause.

In 1921, under Bolshevik rule, the Ukrainians formed their own autocephalous body.<sup>16</sup> This Church elected a married man, Vasily Lypkivsky, to be its metropolitan. He was ordained bishop (and Metropolitan of Kyiv) when the presbyters gathered at the council laid their hands on him. Without the participation of local bishops and the absence of the traditional element of apostolic succession, the Ukrainian autocephalist body bore the undesirable mark of ecclesial illegitimacy. Furthermore, the council approved canons that were radical for

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<sup>15</sup> VORONYN, O., *Історичний шлях УАПЦ*, Voskresinnja Press, Kensington – MD 1992, p. 117-22. For a presentation on Lotocky's activity on behalf of Ukrainian autocephaly, see PARTYKEVICH, A., *Between Kyiv and Constantinople: Oleksander Lotocky and the Quest for Ukrainian Autocephaly*, Church Studies Program – Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Edmonton 1998.

<sup>16</sup> The most recent studies on the autocephalous Church in Ukraine are by PRELOVS'KA, I., especially *Джерела з Історії Української Автокефальної Православної Церкви (1921 - 1930) - Української Православної Церкви (1930 - 1939)*, Inst. Ukraïnskoï Archeohrafiï ta Džereloznavstva, Kyiv, in: M. S. Hruševskoho NAN Ukraïny, 2013). The classical study of the autocephalous Church in Ukraine is by BO-CIURKIW, B., *The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, 1920-1930: A Case Study in Religious Modernization*, in DUNN, D. J. (Ed.) *Religion and Modernization in the Soviet Union*, Boulder – CO 1977, p. 310-47. Also see SYSYN, F. E., *The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the traditions of the Kyiv Metropolitanate*, in PLOKHY, S. – SYSYN, F. E. (Ed.), *Religion and Nation in Modern Ukraine*, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Edmonton – Toronto 2003, p. 23-39, esp. notes 6 and 7. For a recent assessment in Russian, see METROPOLITAN FEDOSIJ PROTJUK, *Обособленческие движения в Православной церкви на Украине, 1917-1943*, Izdatelstvo Krutitskogo podvorja, Moscow 2004. The history of the UAOC is presented in great detail, including several reproductions of official UAOC documents, appeals, and letters from individual clergy in ZINKEWYCH, O. – VORONYN, O. (Eds.), *Мартирологія Українських Церков*, vol. 1, Smoloskyp Publishers, Baltimore 1987.

contemporary Orthodoxy, authorizing canons that permitted married bishops and establishing ecclesial structures that were indigenously Ukrainian. The self-identity of this first autocephalous Ukrainian Church was decidedly new, as expressed by its first archpastor, Metropolitan Vasily Lypkivsky.

In a homily on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, Lypkivsky raises the matter of grace and its presence in the Church. In the homily, Lypkivsky refers to the polemical battle between the “old Russian Church” and the “New Ukrainian church.”<sup>17</sup> He refers to the dynamic of ecclesial legitimacy located in the sacramental life of the Church and paraphrases the “old Russian” bishops as grounding their ecclesial legitimacy in apostolic succession, Baptism, marriage, and burial. He paraphrases the Russians as stating that only those who participate in legitimate sacraments will enter the kingdom of heaven, whereas those outside of sacramental grace are bound for hell. Lypkivsky stated that the Ukrainian Church had followed the path indicated by Christ by abandoning the old ways and taking up the new.<sup>18</sup> Lypkivsky interprets the historical event of Christ’s resurrection as authorizing a new path, with the assembly of the entire Church (and not just the bishops) the only legitimate means towards receiving this grace.

I have introduced this excerpt from Lypkivsky’s homily because it communicates an essential element of separation in the discourse on religion in Ukraine: ecclesial legitimacy. The autocephalous Church of 1921 was liquidated by 1937, but it continued to exist outside of Ukraine, since one of the bishops, John Theodorovich, was ordained and appointed to the United States in 1924. He served as the metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox in the United States until his death in 1971.

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<sup>17</sup> METROPOLITAN VASILY LYPKIVSKY, *Проповіді на Неділі й Свята, Слово Христове до Українського Народу*. New York, Ukrainian Orthodox Brotherhood of Metropolitan Vasily Lypkivsky 1988, p. 305-8. The homily has no date.

<sup>18</sup> His references include a dismissal of the authority of the monastic cell and the aristocratic bloodlines he attributes to the old Russian bishops.

In Ukraine, the liquidation of the autocephalous Church was short-lived; a second manifestation of an autocephalous Church appeared in 1941 under German rule, and this body observed the canonical rules of global Orthodoxy, meaning that its bishops had apostolic succession one could identify in the rites of ordination. This autocephalous Church existed alongside the larger Orthodox Church which remained under the jurisdiction of Moscow, but was autonomous. The religious atmosphere in Ukraine was, again, complex. On the one hand, many Ukrainians initially perceived the invading Germans as liberators from Soviet oppression and welcomed them. Ukraine experienced a strong resurgence of religious fervor, heightened by the memory of the millions of deaths caused by the Holodomor in 1932-33 and the fierce persecution and liquidation of the Church and her bishops, clergy, and intelligentsia. On the other hand, relations between the autocephalist and autonomous Orthodox Ukrainians were very tense. Unfortunately, the ravages of war interrupted the fledgling attempts of the Orthodox to unify into one Church body. After World War II, many of the clergy and laity of the autocephalous Ukrainian church fled to the West, where they joined a pre-existing body of Orthodox Ukrainians who belonged to the Church shepherded by Metropolitan John Theodorovich. This means that a church of ecclesial legitimacy merged with one that was perceived as illegitimate within global Orthodoxy, and relations between Orthodox Ukrainians and other Orthodox outside of Ukraine were complicated by questions of canonical legitimacy.

In the meanwhile, Greek Catholics had temporarily benefitted from the fruits of the ecumenical movement, where Roman Catholics began to study and appreciate the Churches of the East with greater commitment. The creation of the Pontifical Oriental Institute and the establishment of the hybrid monastic community at Chevetogné were symbols of an increasing desire among Roman Catholics to live in communion with their separated brothers and sisters of the East. Beginning in 1939, Western Ukraine became a contested region between the Germans and the Soviets. In 1945, West Ukraine became a part of the USSR as part of the Yalta agreement. Only one year later, in 1946,

the synod of the UGCC met and decided to liquidate the Church and return to the bosom of the Moscow Patriarchate.<sup>19</sup> It is widely known that this council was orchestrated by the Soviet government and that the Soviet officials coerced Greek Catholics into becoming Orthodox again. The UGCC existed outside of Ukraine and presented its case for re-establishment in Ukraine, a wish that was finally granted in 1989 under Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika. The legalization of the UGCC resulted in the return of millions of Greek Catholics to their native church. The re-emergence of the UGCC sparked new tensions with the Orthodox churches, with people laying claim to parishes and advocating for their return to the UGCC causing outbreaks of conflict and violence between the UGCC and the Orthodox.

The same freedom which permitted the UGCC to legally return to Ukraine facilitated the third manifestation of an autocephalous Church in Ukraine, in 1989. The autocephalous Orthodox elected Mstyslav Skrypnyk as their patriarch and enthroned him in 1990. Mstyslav was an influential bishop of the autocephalous church of the early 1940's and was the primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA at the time of his enthronement and election. In his capacity as primate of the American Church, Mstyslav had succeeded John Theodorovich, and was the inheritor of the questions surrounding the canonical legitimacy of his church.

This brief and complex historical overview yields several patterns which illuminate our understanding of the present religious situation in Ukraine. The following historical elements which originated in the sixteenth century continue to shape the present landscape of Ukraine and her churches:

- The establishment of communion with the Church of Rome in 1596 symbolized Ukraine's religious affiliation with the West and created friction with the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox

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<sup>19</sup> See the magisterial study of BOCIURKIW, B., *The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Soviet State, 1939-50*, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Edmonton 1996.



Church in Ukraine experienced intensified Westernization in its pastoral adjustment to the cultural and environmental conditions;

- The annexation of the Kyivan Metropolia to Moscow in 1686 established a pattern of its de-Ukrainianization and Russification in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Ambitions for ecclesial autocephaly and the restoration of a Ukrainian religious identity proliferated among some Ukrainian clergy and intelligentsia;
- The chaos caused by the revolution permitted the emergence of autocephalist Orthodox groups; the canonical path of the first autocephalist group of 1921 resulted in its designation within global Orthodoxy as self-consecrated, without grace, and schismatic, terms pointing to the common identity marker of religious illegitimacy;
- Tensions between autocephalist Orthodox and those within the Russian Church erupted on several other occasions in conjunction with opportunities afforded by religious freedoms in the vacuum of political leadership;
- In 1989, Ukraine's religious landscape was dramatically impacted by the restoration of the UGCC and the election of an autocephalist patriarch in 1990; in these instances, Ukrainian religious leaders who had presided over émigré communities outside of Ukraine significantly contributed to the reconfiguration of the religious landscape.

These historical patterns function as the current foundations for the intra-religious strife impacting Ukraine and her civil society. The reality of the West influencing the East, the attraction to Russia, the desire for independence from external rule, and the phenomenon of political chaos and civil war resulting in the emergence of new religious groups which challenge the status quo are all deeply embedded in Ukraine's historical foundation. The current battles in Ukraine are recurring instances of disagreements and attempt to thwart change which originated in the sixteenth century and developed in accordance with Ukraine's historical path which brought it under the simultaneous influence of West and East.

The point of this historical overview is to demonstrate that the current religious strife in Ukraine did not originate with the collapse of the USSR. Contemporary intra-Christian conflict in Ukraine is the continuing development of a much older story, and a consideration of the larger historical context capacitates a renewed perspective on the actual causes of the religious divide in Ukraine. This review leads me to make a significant assertion: the Orthodox schism in Ukraine did not begin in 1992, when Metropolitan Filaret left the Moscow Patriarchate and became the primary architect of the UOC-KP. Furthermore, it is neither responsible nor accurate to attribute the cause of the current war in Ukraine to the partisan antics of the UGCC and the UOC-KP. Attempts to explain the religious situation as political maneuvers motivated by nationalism are simplistic reductions. In reality, there are two more substantial values at stake in this discourse: the desire for union motivated by ecumenism and the attempt to retrieve authentic Ukrainian religious identity.

### **Narratives and Counternarratives**

A handful of religious leaders have the largest stake in the contemporary religious chaos in Ukraine. These leaders are Patriarch Kyrill, Metropolitan Hilarion, and Metropolitan Onufriy of the Moscow Patriarchate, Patriarch Filaret of the UOC-KP, and Archbishop Sviatoslav of the UGCC. One could argue that Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew also have much at stake on account of their respective roles as the first bishops in the Roman and Orthodox Churches, but I have identified the above leaders as bearing the most pastoral responsibility for two reasons. First, they are the most visible and influential leaders of churches with the largest populations of Christians in Ukraine. Second, they have made issued numerous statements forming narratives and counternarratives that endeavor to depict the religious situation in Ukraine with accuracy. An exhaustive analysis of all of their statements is outside the scope of this study. I will present excerpts from their statements that illustrate the prevalence of two disparate mes-

sages. The first message communicated by the Moscow Patriarchate claims that two Churches in particular, the UGCC and UOC-KP, have actively participated in and contributed to civil discord that is motivated by nationalism and seeks to eradicate the canonical Orthodox Church from Ukraine. The second message communicated by the UGCC and UOC-KP counters that a group of evil antagonists seeks to enslave Ukraine, and that the Churches have a responsibility to act in solidarity with the people to sustain hope for Ukraine to experience a resurrection in the present.

The narrative iterated by the Moscow Patriarchate represents the perspective of the largest Orthodox Church in Ukraine. When the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church elected and enthroned Metropolitan Kyrill Gundaev as the new Patriarch of Moscow after the death of Patriarch Alexii II in 2008, Kyrill devoted his energies to evangelizing constituencies in Russia and Ukraine that had been particularly devastated by Soviet persecution of the Church, especially Eastern Ukraine.<sup>20</sup> Two speeches of Patriarch Kyrill provide the basis for the formation of a Russian religious narrative that designated the Moscow Patriarchate as the church that unified diverse peoples who share a common spiritual basis. Patriarch Kyrill delivered these two speeches in 2009 and 2010, and they are now commonly known as the *Russkii Mir* initiative. I presented a detailed analysis of Ukrainian responses to this initiative in an article published in 2013 and refer you to this document for the necessary background.<sup>21</sup>

Kyrill elaborated the features of the *Russkii Mir* in a homily he delivered in the Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra (Sergiev Posad) on the 700<sup>th</sup>-

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<sup>20</sup> See TONOVAN, L. S., – Daniel PAYNE, D., *The Visit of Patriarch Kirill to Ukraine in 2009 and its Significance in Ukraine's Political and Religious Life*, Religion, State and Society 38, no. 3 (2010), p. 253-63.

<sup>21</sup> For an analysis of Kirill's speeches and their impact on Ukraine, see DE-NYSENKO, N., *Fractured Orthodoxy in Ukraine and Politics: The Impact of Patriarch Kyrill's "Russian World"*, in *Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 54, nos. 1-2 (2013) p. 33-68.

year anniversary of the birth of St. Sergius of Radonezh. In this homily, Kyrill endeavors to clarify the theological foundation of the *Ruskii Mir*. I will quote him at some length here given the significance of this passage from the homily to the thesis I am developing:<sup>22</sup>

When we say “holy Rus’,” what do we have in mind? There are some who view this as mythology, a particular idea imposed upon our people in the Middle Ages. Others attempt to find an incarnation of Holy Rus’ in this or some other historical period, and in referring to such a period say: now this was Holy Rus’. But these are inaccurate. Holy Rus’—this is not a myth, and Holy Rus’: this is a historical reality. Holy Rus’—this is what we call a meta reality, that which is beyond human reality. But if we use the word “reality,” this refers to that which is outside of our everyday life. It becomes clear that Holy Rus’ is the undying spiritual and moral ideal of our people, and the dominant expression of this ideal is holiness.

In the remainder of this homily, Kyrill refers to St. Sergius as a primary teacher of this way of holiness, a model to follow to actualize the spiritual and moral ideals of the *Russkii mir*. On the same day, Kyrill addressed those gathered for the occasion along with President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation. President Putin depicted St. Sergius as a figure holding the key to understanding Russia’s legacy of unity, truth, and justice, lingering on the issue of spiritual unity in his remarks. Kyrill then asserted that Russia is not a bellicose nation seeking to expand its borders and threaten the sovereignty of other nations with these words:

At this point, I will summarize the significance of the *Russkii Mir* and its elaboration in Patriarch Kyrill’s remarks the occasion of the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of St. Sergius of Radonezh:

- The contemporary Russkii Mir is the direct inheritor of Holy Rus’, which was a historical reality;

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<sup>22</sup> “Проповедь Святейшего Патриарха Кирилла в день памяти преподобного Сергия Радонежского в Троице-Сергиевой лавре,” July 18, 2014, Moscow Patriarchate Web Site, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3692183.html> (accessed December 8, 2014).

- The peoples of the *Russkii Mir* (especially Russia, Ukraine, Belarus', and Moldova) are spiritually united to one another because of their shared Orthodox faith;
- The *Russkii Mir* constitutes an ideal civilization because it preserves traditional cultural values and morals and promotes sanctity, grounded by the Moscow Patriarchate's Basis of the Social Concept document; in this vein, the *Russkii Mir* is a viable alternative to the phenomenon of globalization, which values cultural and moral pluralism.

I will now discuss the revision of the *Russkii Mir* narrative caused by the chaos in Ukraine through speeches and statements by Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev and Patriarch Kyrill.

### **Кто виноват? (Who is to blame?)**

The Maidan phenomenon and the ensuing annexation of Crimea and war inspired religious leaders to play the blame game. Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev has been the most vocal participant, serving as the official spokesperson for the Moscow Patriarchate on assessing blame for the war in Eastern Ukraine. A few citations from his statements illustrate the position of the Russian Orthodox Church on this matter. The first excerpt comes from Hilarion's greetings to the participants of the fourth European Orthodox-Catholic Forum (Minsk, June 2-6, 2014). Concerning the situation in Ukraine, Hilarion states:<sup>23</sup>

Sadly, the Greek Catholics have played a very destructive role in allowing this situation to develop. The words of their leading archbishop, hierarchs and clergy and an extremely politicized position have brought about the polarization of society and a worsening of the conflict which has already led to numerous victims. Unlike the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which has been able during these difficult months to unite people of various political persuasions, including those who have found themselves on both sides of the barricades, the Uniates have ostentatiously associated themselves with only

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<sup>23</sup> Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev), <https://mospat.ru/en/2014/06/03/news103524/>

one of the belligerent forces. The aggressive words of the Uniates, actions directed at undermining the canonical Orthodox Church, active contacts with schismatics and the striving to divide a single multinational Russian Orthodox Church have caused great damage not only to the Ukraine and her citizens, but also to the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue. All of this has put us back a great distance, reminding us of the times when the Orthodox and Catholics viewed each other not as friends but as rivals.

Allow me to use this platform to appeal to all our partners in the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue to do all that is possible to cool down the “hotheads” among the Uniates, to halt the actions of the Greek Catholics in making the crisis in the Ukraine worse.

Metropolitan Hilarion’s statement is pivotal to interpreting the Moscow Patriarchate’s identification of who is to blame in the midst of the Ukrainian crisis. The Maidan unleashed a fierce and bloody struggle for Ukraine’s identity, and the possibility of re-shaping Kyiv into a strong Ukrainian national identity posed a serious challenge to the Moscow patriarchate’s understanding of Ukraine’s role in the *Russkii Mir*, which is to disavow nationalism in favor of transnational unity. Notably, Metropolitan Hilarion mentioned Uniates and schismatics whose words and activities represent “an extremely politicized position” and result in the “polarization of society.” Hilarion’s assertion appears to be an implicit condemnation of the Maidan itself, since it was indeed the UGCC (“Uniates” in Hilarion’s speech) and UOC-KP (“schismatics” in Hilarion’s speech) who were the most active religious groups at the Maidan. Hilarion answers another rhetorical question (что делать—what is to be done?) when he asks the Catholic representatives to intervene and force the UGCC to cease their activities.

Hilarion continued to exert pressure on the Ukrainian Churches that support the cause of the Maidan by asking the Catholic bishops who were gathered for the Synod on the family in October 2014 to end the Uniate project and convince the UGCC to cease their activities in Ukraine. One of the most significant elements of Hilarion’s speech was his assertion that the Unia was and remains “a special project of the Catholic church aimed at undermining canonical Orthodoxy.”

This assertion is pivotal because it enhances the illegitimacy associated with Hilarion's explicit and deliberate use of the word "Uniate" in his appeal.

Patriarch Kyrill's letter to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on August 20, 2014 continued the pattern of defending the *Russkii Mir* initiative by blaming Greek Catholics and schismatics for promoting hostility in Ukraine, and requesting Patriarch Bartholomew's assistance, which amounts to a call to action.<sup>24</sup>

The religious narrative Kyrill and Hilarion crafted discloses their assessment of the implosion of their ideal civilization. For Kyrill and Hilarion, illegitimate religious communities caused a political upheaval at the Maidan which resulted in a protracted war, killed many innocent people, and threatened the existence of the legitimate Christian society by desecrating shrines and terrorizing clergy and laity. The reader or hearer of the appeal knows the identity of the legitimate Christian society because it is "canonical," and explicitly manifest in the "multi-national Russian orthodox Church" (Hilarion's speech). The juxtaposition of these two-dimensional societies—one bellicose, hateful, and tinged by religious illegitimacy—and the other legitimate, peaceful, and tolerant, forms the basis for a narrative that has implications for the pedestrian believer who wants to belong to the right Church.

The extant resistance to the narrative underpinning the *Russkii Mir* has established a foundation Ukrainian Church leaders could continue to build upon. Most Ukrainian churches had resisted the installation of the *Russkii Mir*, but the rejection of this idea increased in ferocity and polemic with the Maidan. A brief glance at Ukrainian responses to the Russian religious narrative unveils an alternative civilization Ukrainians are defining in their own words.

Part 3 begins with the first Ukrainian counternarrative, of the UOC-KP. In many ways, the UOC-KP employed the same argumenta-

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<sup>24</sup> Letter from patriarch Kyrill to Patriarch Bartholomew, translated and republished on Pravoslavie.ru, <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/print73059.htm> (accessed February 5, 2015).

tive style as the one used by Russian Church leaders by clearly identifying who is to blame for the problem (President Putin). The UOC-KP's position has a unique theological feature consistently posed to readers: the imminent day of judgment which will hold all accountable for their actions. In a letter written to the faithful of the Kyivan Patriarchate, Filaret states that Putin is the "new Cain." Accusing Putin of committing acts of murder and falsehood, Filaret placed the blame for the bloodshed and loss of life in Donbass squarely on Putin's shoulders. Filaret attempts to elucidate Putin's part in waging an informational war in the context of the *Russkii Mir*:<sup>25</sup>

I affirm that the greatest blame for all this lies on the abovementioned governor. In his will and power is to immediately stop the bloodshed and death, but it is for the sake of his pride he continues to multiply evil. He calls himself a brother to the Ukrainian people, but in fact according to his deeds, he really became the new Cain, shedding the brotherly blood and entangling the whole world with lies. His lie is misleading some people, and they think that in fact this ruler protects traditional spiritual and moral values from the ravages of globalization. But the fruit of his actions, which the Gospel calls us to evaluate, suggest otherwise.

At the end of his letter, Filaret refers the people to the promise of their liberation from Putin which will occur by the mighty hand of God, as promised by the narrative story of the book of Exodus. In this letter, Filaret uses familiar theological figures and places Putin in a community of antagonists including Cain and Pharaoh.

There is also evidence of a more recent pastoral initiative in the UOC-KP that is addressed inwardly, to build the body of Christ by excising sin from the body: corruption. A letter from the Synod of bishops to the Ukrainian people argues that corruption has manifested

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<sup>25</sup> ПАТРІАРХ ФІЛАРЕТ ЗАКЛИКАВ ВІРНИХ УКРАЇНИ МОЛИТИСЯ ЗА СПРАВЕДЛИВИЙ СУД НАД ПУТІНИМ – «НОВИМ КАЇНОМ» ("Patriarch Filaret called upon the Faithful of Ukrainian to Pray for a Righteous Trial on Putin, the 'New Cain'"), RISU Web site, [http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all\\_news/state/national\\_religious\\_question/57559/](http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all_news/state/national_religious_question/57559/) (accessed February 5, 2015).



itself in many ways in contemporary Ukraine and that those who are guilty of corruption have simultaneously violated the laws of humanity and God. After presenting a brief warning and exhortation about corruption, the Synod threatened those who commit acts of corruption with sacramental excommunication. The Synod explains its directive on denying communion to those who practice corruption in the context of Ukraine's experience of turbulence in the present:

The sin of corruption is particularly horrible in the current period, when hundreds of our fellow citizens have sacrificed and are sacrificing their lives for the freedom and independence of Ukraine, when tens of thousands are living in exile, hundreds of thousands are dwelling in cities where acts of war are occurring.... The one who even in these conditions permits himself to take part in corruption becomes like Judas Iscariot. Because Judas sold the Savior for money, and these betray their native land and fellow citizens for money and material goods. Their payment will be just as the one Judas (received): shame and eternal judgment.

The UOC-KP's Synod then appeals to their faithful to refrain from participating in acts of corruption and from protecting those who commit such acts. The consequence for failing to adhere to this directive is divine: God's judgment will ultimately hold everyone accountable for their actions. In these recent statements, the UOC-KP uses a somewhat different form of argumentation in disclosing their pastoral approach to their faithful. The Church participated in the blame game, holding President Putin responsible for the chaos in Ukraine. An untold number of opportunists are also held accountable for their corrupt activities in the synodal decree on corruption, which is written as an internal prognosis for their own faithful since the consequence one would experience is denial of the privilege to participate in holy communion.

The rhetoric the UOC-KP employs in these narratives is somewhat traditional and yet contradistinctive to that of the MP. The UOC-KP employs the familiar method of building a profile of an antagonist who is then compared unfavorably to a biblical figure: Putin is in the

company of Cain, Satan, and Pharaoh, and his bellicose actions are subject to divine judgment. For one who belongs to the *Russkii Mir*, the experience will be one of slavery, not sanctity, especially since the patrons are under the spell of the devil. Equally intriguing is the UOC-KP's decree on corruption. The decree elucidates a pastoral initiative to address one of the primary problems afflicting contemporary society, heightened by the conditions of war which exacerbate the problems of societal inequality. The synodal decree turns to a familiar strategy by threatening the removal of sacramental privilege for those who commit acts of corruption while belonging to the UOC-KP. Again, the guilty are actually in the company of familiar biblical antagonists such as Judas Iscariot, and concealing one's guilt will bring about a worse judgment than excommunication: shame and eternal condemnation. Let us dwell for a moment on the denial of communion to those who commit corruption. The directive denying communion sends a message about the integrity and dignity of the community of believers who belong to the UOC-KP as it attempts to illuminate the inherent sanctity of this church. By denying communion to those who would exploit multitudes of homeless and destitute people during a war for their own political and material gain, the UOC-KP identifies itself as a community that is the patron of the homeless, destitute, and at-risk population of Ukraine. The emerging picture of the UOC-KP in the Maidan was that of a patron for those caught in the crossfire. In other words, the UOC-KP is a communion of sanctity: belonging to this communion is a privilege that one may not purchase, and the communion is a preferential option for those who do not desire slavery. The UOC-KP reinforces their religious identity by drawing distinct lines dividing belonging from exclusion: those who care for the poor and needy and support peace belong to a holy communion. External figures who perpetrate war (such as Putin) are excluded because they succeed a long line of antagonists epitomized by biblical figures such as Cain, Pharaoh, and Judas Iscariot. Insiders who violate the moral precept of protecting the innocent are cast out of the holy communion when they are denied participation in the ritual act designating communion.

## The UGCC

The UGCC offers the final counternarrative to the *Russkii Mir* in this presentation. Like the examples presented above, I will depict the primary features of the UGCC's narrative in light of the Maidan phenomenon. These features emerge from grassroots actions, speeches, and synodal decrees and are grounded by a Paschal theology of death and resurrection and the model of the Church as the mother of the people.

The UGCC has remained resilient in sustaining its role as an active participant in shaping a new future for Ukraine. In a recent interview with religious scholar Yuriy Chernomoretz, the UGCC's Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk confirmed the UGCC's work in developing a legitimate Ukrainian world as a continuation of a project commenced earlier, symbolized by the dedication of Resurrection cathedral in Kyiv in September 2013.<sup>26</sup> Archbishop Sviatoslav's reference to the consecration of the UGCC cathedral in Kyiv as a central step in the development of a legitimate Ukrainian world is noteworthy here, as the statement symbolizes the UGCC's active participation in offering leadership in the process of building an authentically Ukrainian nation and state.

The activity of the UGCC on the Maidan and their continued support for promoting peace in Ukraine resulted in the unofficial recognition of Bishop Borys Gudziak's memorial to the Maidan martyrs. In a letter written to UGCC faithful and all people of good will on the eve of parliamentary elections in Ukraine, the UGCC bishops integrated the memory of the Maidan martyrs ("Небесна сотня, or

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<sup>26</sup> "His Beatitude Sviatoslav: Aggressive Stages of the Russian World are a reaction to the Construction of a Ukrainian World, which is occurring successfully," UGCC Web site, [http://news.ugcc.org.ua/interview/blazhenn%D1%96shiy\\_svyatoslav\\_agresivn%D1%96\\_kroki\\_russkogo\\_mira\\_%D1%96\\_ie\\_reakts%D1%96ieyu\\_na\\_bud%D1%96vnitstvo\\_ukrainskogo\\_sv%D1%96tu\\_yake\\_v%D1%96dbuvaietsya\\_du\\_zhe\\_aktivno\\_y\\_usp%D1%96shno\\_69870.html](http://news.ugcc.org.ua/interview/blazhenn%D1%96shiy_svyatoslav_agresivn%D1%96_kroki_russkogo_mira_%D1%96_ie_reakts%D1%96ieyu_na_bud%D1%96vnitstvo_ukrainskogo_sv%D1%96tu_yake_v%D1%96dbuvaietsya_du_zhe_aktivno_y_usp%D1%96shno_69870.html) (accessed March 28, 2014).

heavenly hundred”) by integrating them into their narrative.<sup>27</sup> The Synod called upon currently elected officials and candidates for office to exercise their political power responsibly and to remember the “sacrifice of the Heavenly hundred,” as well as the oblation of “thousands of fallen Ukrainian soldiers and civilians in the East.” The bishops conclude their letter by equating Ukraine’s journey with the recent past of the UGCC, specifically their resurrection from the forced liquidation caused by the 1946 pseudosobor in Lviv, and the pilgrimage of the Hebrew people led by Moses from captivity to Pharaoh to liberation. For our purposes, the employment of the metaphors of pilgrimage and liberation are central to this discussion: the bishops fused the primary figures symbolizing epic events of past and future, ancient Israel and contemporary Ukraine, Moses and the Heavenly Hundred, to exhort the faithful to stay the course, vote, and for the elected to exercise their offices responsibly.

The UGCC followed the same pattern we have discussed here in identifying who is to blame for the aggression in Eastern Ukraine: the northern neighbor, Russia. In identifying the assailant, the UGCC adopted a less personal approach; they also shifted the responsibility for ending the war beyond the borders of Ukraine, to the global community. In a synodal appeal titled “Ukraine sheds blood!”, the Synod stated that “this peaceful sovereign state has suffered from direct military intervention by the northern neighbor.”<sup>28</sup> The appeal identifies the world as the witness of the tragic events that occurred on Ukrainian soil, including the destruction of Malaysian Flight 117, which resulted

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<sup>27</sup> Synodal Letter to the Faithful of the UGCC and all People of good Will Regarding the Social and Political Situation in Ukraine on the Eve of Parliamentary Elections, UGCC News Web site, [http://news.ugcc.ua/en/articles/synodal\\_letter\\_to\\_the\\_faithful\\_of\\_the\\_ukrainian\\_greekcatholic\\_church\\_and\\_to\\_all\\_people\\_of\\_good\\_will\\_regarding\\_the\\_social\\_and\\_political\\_situation\\_in\\_ukraine\\_on\\_the\\_eve\\_of\\_parliamentary\\_elections\\_71520.html](http://news.ugcc.ua/en/articles/synodal_letter_to_the_faithful_of_the_ukrainian_greekcatholic_church_and_to_all_people_of_good_will_regarding_the_social_and_political_situation_in_ukraine_on_the_eve_of_parliamentary_elections_71520.html) (accessed February 5, 2015).

<sup>28</sup> “Ukraine Sheds Blood!” “Appeal of the Synod of Bishops of the UGCC,” UGCC News Web site, [http://news.ugcc.ua/documents/ukraina\\_splivaie\\_krovyu\\_zvernennya\\_sinodu\\_yepiskop%D1%96v\\_ukrainskoi\\_grekokatolitskoi\\_tserkvi\\_71466.html](http://news.ugcc.ua/documents/ukraina_splivaie_krovyu_zvernennya_sinodu_yepiskop%D1%96v_ukrainskoi_grekokatolitskoi_tserkvi_71466.html) (accessed February 5, 2015).

in the deaths of 298 people from ten countries. The UGCC then appealed to the global community to end the bloodshed in Ukraine:

We cry to the consciences of faithful people from different religions and faiths, we turn to all people of good will, leaders of states and members of the international community: “Stop the bloodshed in Ukraine!” Today silence or inaction, a lack of desire to recognize the whole dramatic situation which has developed in our country, can make everyone not just a dumb or indifferent witness, but an accomplice of the sin of murder, which cries to heaven for justice.

As an Eastern church belonging to the universal Catholic communion under Rome’s jurisdiction, the UGCC made a catholic appeal with the warning that all will be held accountable for the bloodshed in Ukraine. One can discern the emergence of the patterns we identified in the statements of the MP and UOC-KP. First, the UGCC speaks both externally and internally, and this appeal is made to the global community. Second, the appeal blames Ukraine’s “northern neighbor for the atrocities,” and like the statements of the UOC-KP, refers to the imminent divine judgment demanded by Abel’s blood on the ground.

The final aspect of the UGCC’s narrative of religious identity concerns their solidarity with the people. We have already explored the notion of solidarity expressed by the UOC-KP, and the UGCC’s narrative is similar in some ways, but different theologically. Archbishop Sviatoslav’s comments in response to Hilarion mentioned above clearly demonstrate the UGCC’s commitment to serving all, but of equal significance here is their definition of Ukraine. The UGCC is opposed to establishing barriers between Easterners and Westerners, and people who speak Ukrainian or Russian. The UGCC explains their position in Archbishop Sviatoslav’s letter to the faithful of the UGCC and the Ukrainian people on the occasion of Ukrainian Independence Day.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> “Appeal of His Beatitude Sviatoslav to the Faithful of the UGCC and all Ukrainians on the Occasion of Ukraine’s Independence Day,” [http://news.ugcc.ua/documents/zvernennya\\_blazhenn%D1%96shogo\\_svyatoslava\\_do\\_v%D1%96mih\\_ukrainskoi\\_gre-](http://news.ugcc.ua/documents/zvernennya_blazhenn%D1%96shogo_svyatoslava_do_v%D1%96mih_ukrainskoi_gre-)

The letter carries a theological quality as Sviatoslav reflects on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the legalization of the UGCC. It is a letter of thanksgiving for new life, which identifies the resurgence of the UGCC with the independence of Ukraine in the key of Paschal theology:

It is significant that in this difficult time our Church thanks the Lord God for the 25<sup>th</sup>-year anniversary of the gift of freedom on her native lands. The resurrection of the martyr church in the midst of the chaos of the communist regime, which collapsed before the eyes of the entire world, was a predictor of the good news about the forthcoming resurrection of Ukraine and the proclamation of her independence. With this jubilee the Lord again wishes to tell all of us that it is through his power and the action of the Holy Spirit that our church was able to rise up in the most difficult years of persecution, when it became apparent that life conquers death. Today we overwhelmingly hope that the life and development of our risen Church in Ukraine is a source of God's blessing and support for our people in its contemporary battle for its existence.

The UGCC's narrative is completed by this selection from the letter on the occasion of Independence Day. The UGCC aligned her own narrative as a church that was forcefully liquidated during Soviet persecution yet was able to return to her native land by divine power with that of contemporary Ukraine, which is also seeking the death of the communist past haunting her while seeking resurrection in freedom. The UGCC positions herself as the Church sharing the most solidarity with the Ukrainian citizenry as a people seeking a paschal liberation in this life because the recent history of the UGCC provides a credible witness to this possibility.

The narrative of the UGCC, then, has these qualities constituting its foundations: they are a patron of Ukraine and identify her citizenry as an image of the catholic nature of the church; they desire to participate actively in the construction of a new Ukraine through evangelization and social ministries; they link several historical events to communicate contemporary Ukraine as a nation on a dangerous

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kokatolitskoi\_tserkvi\_ta\_vs%D1%96h\_ukraints%D1%96v\_z\_nagodi\_dnya\_nezalezhnost%D1%96\_ukraini\_71289.html (accessed February 5, 2015).

pilgrimage of liberation from captivity from the evils of her recent past, with the northern neighbor posing a threat to deliverance; the UGCC has demonstrated her fidelity to Ukraine by standing with her on the Maidan and is a beacon of hope for her future, based on the UGCC's own unlikely resurrection from the dead through an act of God. The mark of martyrdom is a central feature in the UGCC's contemporary narrative. When one considers the sequence of events in the history of the UGCC, the martyrdom of the Soviet period functioned as a catalyst for the Church's resurrection. This martyrdom continues today as demonstrated by the Heavenly Hundred, and also serves as a significant identity marker: those who join the communion of the UGCC belong to the host of martyrs.

### **Conclusion: An ecumenical model of concord**

In this essay, I have surveyed the history of ecclesial development in Ukraine from the end of the sixteenth century to reveal a series of patterns. These patterns indicate multiple movements that have been mutually exclusive to date. The movements include the formidable influence of the West on the Kyivan Metropolia that was one factor motivating the Orthodox bishops to seek ecclesial reunion with Rome, along with the spirit of ecumenical rapprochement that has emerged at the Council of Florence in 1438-39. The laity's rejection of reunion with the West was the first division within Ukraine's Orthodox Church, and the separation of the two bodies (Greek Catholic and Orthodox) witnessed to a process of diverse journeys. The Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church deepened its bonds with the West while attempting to remain an Eastern Orthodox Church with a distinct Ukrainian religious identity. The Kyivan Metropolia strengthened its communion with the Orthodox Church of Russia while attempting to retain its distinctly Ukrainian religious identity.

The vicissitudes of history witness to the struggles of both the UGCC and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The UGCC suffered in its attempt to be an authentically Eastern Church in the Roman

communion, and found the challenge of cultivating its Ukrainian religious identity to be formidable. The UGCC's sojourn in the West resulted in Latinizations permeating the exterior appearance of its ecclesial identity, despite its attempts to keep the Ukrainian religious identity as its heart. The inscription of Western elements on a Church that bridges West and East and casts its lots with the West is inevitable, and impossible to prevent.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church had a similar experience with different results. The inscription of Western elements on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church occurred primarily in the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when Kyiv functioned as a conduit of Western cultural expressions and ideas that entered Russia. The adoption of Jesuit models of education and the creation of the Mohyla academy epitomized the inscription of Western elements on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. When this church cast its lots with Russia at the end of the seventeenth century, the process of the inscription of Russian identity on the Ukrainian Church commenced. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church evolved into a body that was increasingly Russian in identity, yet aware of its Ukrainian religious identity.

The disparate paths of the UGCC and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church find common ground in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when epic political events opened the possibility of the two Churches to reclaim their native religious identities. If we attempt to view the efforts to reclaim religious identity objectively—an admittedly formidable task—we can understand why the attempt to restore the native religious identity has been interpreted by others, particularly the Moscow Patriarchate, as an act of ecclesial aggression. The Moscow Patriarchate views the deroulement of Ukrainian ecclesial history as a natural process, one in which Kyiv deepened her natural bonds to her younger sister (Moscow). For Moscow, Kyiv is beloved and precious, and there is no need for a fraternal separation, because the two centers have engaged in an ongoing shared life of gift exchange. The inscription of Russian identity on the Ukrainian Church is natural because of the ecclesial life shared by the two churches.



When political and societal upheaval created an opportunity for the Ukrainian Church to claim its independence, the Russian Church responded by granting the Ukrainians ecclesial autonomy. From the Russian perspective, this canonical act honored the Ukrainian desire to capture and reclaim its native religious identity without severing the bonds that had been deepened between Russia and Ukraine since the late sixteenth century. When the autocephalist Ukrainians took autocephaly outside of the canonical parameters of global Orthodoxy, Russians viewed this act as hostile, which could only be motivated by nationalism, which was foreign to Orthodox theology. The Russian Church responded to the autocephalist movement by labelling it as both uncanonical and schismatic, employing canonical and sacramental terms drawn from the repository of ecclesial history. The Russian Church continued to offer the proverbial olive branch of ecclesial autonomy which would presumably permit the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to be simultaneously Ukrainian and Russian: an accurate characterization of this Church since it joined the Russian Church in 1686. Patriarch Kyryll's *Ruskii Mir* initiative identified Kyiv and Ukraine as making central contributions to a pastoral initiative of evangelization, another attempt to demonstrate Russian respect for Ukrainian religious identity. When we read the contemporary Russian narratives which pair the UGCC and UOC-KP as collaborating in a plot to eradicate the Orthodox Church, it is essential for us to see how Russians view the Ukrainian Church's hybrid identity as the result of a natural and voluntary process. For Russians, the possibility of cultivating genuine Ukrainian religious identity within the communion of the Moscow Patriarchate is reason enough for the UGCC to return to the Orthodox Church and engage ecumenical dialogue with Rome along with the rest of global Orthodoxy.

Obviously, the UGCC and the autocephalist Orthodox Ukrainians do not share the Russian view of ecclesial history. The autocephalist Orthodox Ukrainians believe that Russians have attempted to mute Ukrainian religious identity until it no longer exists. The process of restoring and reclaiming genuine Ukrainian religious identity can occur only under the aegis of complete ecclesial independence from Russia,

which would stop the process of coercive Russification. If the Russians view ecclesial autonomy and a privileged place in the *Russkii Mir* as an olive branch, the Ukrainians view it as the false promise of a tyrant who wishes to enslave his vassals. When identities collide in civil society and outbreaks of violence and conflict follow, the Church's leaders and people's see the battle for religious identity reflected in civil conflict.<sup>30</sup> As the leaders responsible for the people's spiritual well-being, Church leaders declare their solidarity with the people by fortifying and multiplying their strategies to reclaim and reintegrate authentic Ukrainian religious identity in their ecclesial life. Playing the proverbial "blame game" and finding new ways to use terms drawn from the canonical and sacramental tradition such as Uniates and schismatics as ways to depict the other as an external threat representing an illegitimate ecclesial body only exacerbates the religious chaos, dissonance, and conflict in Ukraine. The historical point I have presented in this paper demonstrates the absolute futility of constructing a narrative that uses ecclesial vocabulary as an epithet to delegitimize the "other." While the leaders of Churches in Ukraine continue to use this strategy, it is doomed to fail.

At this point, the reader might conclude that my presentation is excessively pessimistic and that there is no hope for ecclesial rapprochement in Ukraine. An honest assessment of the religious situation leads to the conclusion that this is not a mere matter of a misunderstanding that can be resolved easily. This conflict originated in the sixteenth century and the attempts to resolve it in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have failed.

I propose that it is possible to construct a proposal for ecclesial rapprochement in Ukraine that permits Ukrainians to recover and restore their authentic religious identity and pursue ecumenical aspirations within the global family of Churches. I will conclude by sketching the initial steps required to establish a new pattern that has the potential

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<sup>30</sup> The opposite is equally true: people view the battle for religious identity waged between the churches as a reflection of the collision of identities in civil society.

to make the seemingly impossible possible for contemporary Christianity in Ukraine.

Step 1: Accept all of the realities concerning the presence of Churches and the state of religious identity in Ukraine. Contemporary Christianity in Ukraine is plurivocal. While Orthodoxy retains the majority of religious adherents, the UGCC and other Christian communities will not simply disappear. The dream of the UGCC's return to the bosom of Orthodoxy held by many Orthodox, and proposed anew by Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev is an illusion. When the UGCC re-attained legal status in 1989, its adherents who had been Orthodox returned to the Greco-Catholic Church and reclaimed parishes that had been coerced into returning to Orthodoxy in 1946. The most significant point we can take from this phenomenon is that the clergy and faithful of the UGCC have embraced communion with Rome as a staple of their religious identity and are unwilling to relinquish it. The autocephalist Orthodox movement has also demonstrated its resilience. The autocephalists are a minority among Orthodox in Ukraine, but have grown rapidly, despite bearing the unfortunate label of ecclesial illegitimacy. Their rejection of ecclesial autonomy and a privileged role in the *Russkii mir* attests to their steadfast pursuit of ecclesial autocephaly. The honest and open acceptance of these realities as permanent fixtures on the Ukrainian religious landscape will open the door to more constructive discourse.

The status of Ukrainian religious identity also requires an objective assessment. The pursuit of native religious identity is an authentic endeavor, but it cannot be limited or reduced to the formative periods of religious identity, namely the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Contemporary Ukrainian religious identity depicts a mongrel: Ukrainian religious identity embraces Byzantine, Latin, Russian, Belarusian, Moldovan, and Polish qualities, among many others. The Russian element is particularly prominent among Orthodox, and not only on account of the large Russian minority in Ukraine or the prevalence of the Russian language. Ukrainians have embraced numerous Russian saints, teachers, and aspects of Russian theology, which have become staples

of contemporary Ukrainian religious identity. The task of restoring Ukrainian identity cannot be based on excising all Russian elements. The task must instead begin with permitting Ukrainian religious identity to emerge anew, even in its polyvalent, mongrel form. A product of fidelity to this task is the recognition and acceptance of the permanent inscription of Russian elements on Ukrainian identity, and the presence of Russians in Ukrainian churches. The commixture of Russians and Ukrainians in Ukraine is a reality Ukrainians must accept. A sign of progress in the process of acceptance would be the revision of the UOC-KP's provisions for patriarch: currently, the statute of the UOC-KP requires the patriarch to be a Ukrainian. Authentic ecclesial rapprochement would permit a worthy candidate of any ethnic origin to exercise the office of patriarch in an autocephalous Ukrainian church.

Step 2: the ceasing of employing canonical and sacramental terms as epithets delegitimizing the other. In this essay, I have referred to the Russian Church's employment of terms such as "schismatic" and "uniate" as examples of employing traditional terms designating canonical parameters of the Church. The outcome of employing such language is deepening of divisions and the furtherance of polarization in the Church and society. Furthermore, the use of such terms has the capacity to damage both the religious identity and the spiritual journey of adherents of those communions. The intent of employing these terms is not merely to illuminate the truth, but also to depict the other pejoratively and polemically.

The cessation of employing such terms amounts to an ecclesiastical cease-fire. Furthermore, a willingness to accept the other as a permanent fixture in Ukraine requires the cessation of employing negative terms aimed to harm and delegitimize. A cessation of polemical ecclesiastical warfare permits the emergence of a new possibility: liturgical sharing and the acceptance of the mysteries of the other. Scholars have attested to the realities of ecumenical liturgical sharing at the height of the Maidan crisis: the continued bloodshed throughout Ukraine should be reason enough for the Churches to rehearse putting aside their differences and attempting union for the sake of civil society.

Step 3: renew ecumenical dialogue. One of the most formidable obstacles to peace in the Ukrainian religious environment has been fear of the West. The specter of the godless West fanned the flames of xenophobia and anti-Western sentiment when Ukrainians fought for integration into the European Union. The UGCC's experience with the West and open acceptance of Rome, the traditional capital of Western Christianity, contributed to the perception that the West desired to lay claim to Ukraine as an aggressive move against Russia.

Contemporary Orthodox theologians have reflected on Orthodoxy's thorny relationship with the West. On the one hand, Georges Florovsky popularized the notion of a Western captivity of Orthodox theology, a sentiment continued and shared by many other Orthodox theologians (as Paul Gavrilyuk has recently and persuasively demonstrated).<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, numerous Orthodox theologians have engaged in a century's worth of earnest ecumenical dialogue with the West which has resulted in measurable progress. Such theologians have also commenced the process of revisiting the dismissal of the West as a threat to Orthodoxy and have invited theologians to entertain the possibility of reinvigorated dialogue that hopes for the restoration of communion.<sup>32</sup>

Ukraine's history of engagement with the West positions Ukraine to assume a leading role in renewing ecumenical dialogue. An honest assessment of the UGCC unveils a journey of struggles and challenges in attaining the West's acceptance. In this vein, the UGCC could prove to be a valuable ally to the Orthodox, as opposed to a threat, to obtaining the respect and veneration of the West that will remove obstacles to ecumenical dialogue. An alliance of Orthodox and Greek Catholics has the potential to accelerate ecumenical dialogue and take additional steps towards restoring the communion of the Churches which has

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<sup>31</sup> See GAVRILUK, *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance*, passim.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example DEMACPOULOS, G. – PAPANIKOLAOU, A. (Eds.), *Orthodox Constructions of the West*, Fordham University Press, New York 2013, and PLESTED, M., *Orthodox Readings of Aquinas*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2012.

proved to be fleeting in Christian history. All of these steps are possible if they are inspired by genuine Christian love and a spirit of repentance embraced by all religious groups in Ukraine. If the leaders and people of the Churches are willing to embark on a path of reconciliation, acceptance, and an ecclesial cease-fire, it is possible for the world to dream of peace in contemporary Ukraine. May it be so.

# **Anthropological paradigm of the Koran as a theme for European academic sphere**

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Jaroslav Franc

## **Introduction**

Modern Europe is a cultural area where the role of religion is newly discussed in connection with cultural pluralism. A special attention is paid to Islam which enters Europe with new challenges. None of contemporary world religions originated in Europe. Despite the fact it is the place where the role of religion in society has been discussed for several centuries. Especially the presence of three monotheistic religions with Abraham tradition asks many questions. Modern, culturally Christian Europe with Jewish, Roman and Greek roots asks the question whether it is necessary or even possible for religious dimension of man's life to appear in public administration. This contribution introduces a basic anthropological concept found in one of monotheistic religions present in Europe – in Islam. There are numerous approaches to study anthropology in Islam. Basic structure of this paper follows the Islam's sacred book and it will be completed by modern reflection and interpretation of Koranic grounds in Islam. This topic is very broad and in Koran it contains many constituent chapters (man-God relationship, man's duties, mankind's duties, relation of a man to society etc.). That is why this topic has to be defined. First we will characterize anthropological premises contained in the Koran and in the second section we will describe the relationship between these premises of the sacred text and contemporary discussion on functioning revealed Word in the world of Islam. The last section will help to define the direction how it is possible to discuss this theme in European academic sphere.

## Anthropological premises of the Koran

Anthropology of the Koran is not an easy theme. It is not possible to quote two or three representative verses from the Koran and then interpret the anthropology of the text. The Koran is not a theological or philosophical reflection on the topic “Who is man?” The Koran does not contain the definition of man and does not ask the question on such a definition either. The Koran is to be understood as the book containing the commandments for man’s life – the existence of man and his definition is presupposed. That is why the definition of man is not the main topic of the Koran and it does not belong among any of the topics of this text. The main topics are questions and answers what man should do from birth to death in order to reach the promised paradise. In words of the Koran, the main Mohamed’s task was to bring to Arab world what was brought on him as “guidance distinguishing right from wrong” (2:185)<sup>1</sup>. Of course, the Koran is considered as the last and therefore perfect guidance and revelations brought on other prophets before it correspond to it to a certain degree. That is why preceding revelations are accepted only to such an extent as they agree with the Koran’s commandments. Consequently it means that anthropological conceptions, found in preceding revelations preserved by non-muslim religious traditions, must be in harmony with anthropological premises implicitly preserved in the Koran. For Islamic world the Koran remains, even face to face to culturally or religiously non-muslim world, the only source of knowledge of human nature and the sense of human existence and understanding of eschatological perspective.

At the beginning of human existence there is God-Creator and at the end there is God-Judge. According to the Koran man was created by God: “You people! Have fear of your Lord, who created you from a single soul. From that soul He created its spouse, and through them He bestrewed the earth with countless men and women.” (4:1) The first

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<sup>1</sup> *The Koran*. (Dawood, N. J.), Penguin Books, London 2014.



man is called Adam (arab. *adam*, 2:34) and is considered to be (fore) father of mankind; the first woman is created from the first man and is considered to be (fore)mother of mankind. Her name is not mentioned in the Koran; only later tradition, inspired by Jewish-Christian tradition, gave her the name Eva (comp. 4:1).<sup>2</sup>

The characteristics of the first man is mentioned at several places in the Koran. In the first place, there are several qualities which justify the need of guiding man. According to the Koran, man is created as a weak being. Human tendency for breaking the law and do wrong deeds – illegal and forbidden (arab. *haram*)<sup>3</sup> – is given to each human being from the moment of creation. That is why Adam's and the whole mankind's biggest challenge is from the very beginning to do everything to satisfy the Lord. According to the Koran man forgets about God very easily, or rather he forgets about the correct way of life and about the mission given by God through prophets (59:19). A tempter, described as Satan (arab. *shaytan*, 58:9), plays an important role for man in this dreary situation. Satan seduces man actively to forget and consequently to break the law. The Koran describes man's weakness in the story when Adam does not obey God for the first time (20:117-133). Disobedience of God's will is considered to be the biggest vice of human life. Human nature (arab. *fitra*) is not tainted by the Fall with all consequences known in the Christian tradition. Man is already created as weak, inconstant, unjust, unaware, forgetful (4:28, 30:54, 70:19, 90:4, 33:72).

Basic terms used for describing man characterize his inner structure or integrity. According to the Koran man is created as an individual without inner differentiation. Matter used for his creation is described

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<sup>2</sup> BARLAS, A., *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*, University of Texas Press, 2002, p 139. WADUD, A., *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*, Oxford University Press, New York 1999, p. 1-29.

<sup>3</sup> QARADAWI, Y. al-, *The lawful and the prohibited in Islam : al-Halal wal-haram fil Islam*, Salimiah, International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations, Kuwait, 1984.

as clay, mud, dust (15:26, 30:20) – it means his physical form is emphasized.

Man is also described by the word soul (arab. *nafs*). This word can have several expressions in the Koran. Mostly it designates man as a human being (3:54); it is possible to translate it as a person. In several cases it refers to God (5:116). In plural form it refers to human society (6:130). In one case it is used to describe a man's soul (6:93). *Nafs* has two roles in human life. A man's soul is attributed the tendencies to do good but it is also described as the seat of tendencies to evil or of desire to do evil.

For the sake of completeness we must add that the Koran connects man with a word spirit (arab. *ruh*). The spirit was breathed into man by creator, by infusion to Adam's body the first man was given life (15:29). In another context this spirit is sent to Mary who later gives birth to his son Ísa who is identified with Jesus Christ (21:91). Another usage in the phrase the Holy Spirit is a subtle theme which we can leave now. Generally, in the Koran this spirit is associated with God-Creator, this spirit belongs only to him and it is his creator's and life-giving power.

The important category, revealing the Koran's anthropological premises, is the relationship between man and God. According to the Koran the sense of man's creation is to worship God (51:56). So the Koran does not answer the question why man was created but it answers the question what is the purpose of his creation. The aim is to create a muslim – an etymologically defined being that submits to God and worships him. The purpose of human existence is to submit and serve God. That is why Islam reflects its own existence as the religion which is in harmony with human nature. From this point of view the Islam is natural religion, corresponding to human nature (arab. *fitra*), and also revealed religion, corresponding to God's final revelation in the Koran.

The way to salvation of man therefore goes through the knowledge of God's will revealed in the Koran. That is why a sinner or a wicked man is especially the man who does not know, which means ignorant of God's will regardless of the level of education. Time before revelation of the Koran or places where the Koran was not accepted as the source of knowledge are described by the word ignorance (arab.

*jahiliyyah*); this word is translated into European languages in various forms (3:154, 48:26 etc.).

In order to know better the mutual relationship between man and God, it is helpful to outline the titles which the Koran uses for God and man. Besides the titles mentioned above man is described in the Koran by words servant, slave (arab. *abd*) in the sense of God's servant and slave. There are numerous God's names and epithets derived from the Koran - they may be found for example in the collection of "the most beautiful God's names". Anyway, two names prevail. God is described by the word Allāh which is the personal name of the only God and is formed by an Arab definite article and a word divinity. In this way they get the expression *the-divinity*, i. e. the only God. The second prevailing term is Lord (arab. *rab*). This second expression is in harmony with the above mentioned name of man *abd*. A weak man is described as a servant or a slave who needs unequivocal Lord's leadership in order to reach his/her aim successfully. The best leadership for man is therefore the leadership brought down by Lord, Creator. God is a servant's master and at the same time man is Lord's slave.

The Koran's words form only a small part of religious practice realized in muslim religion. Mathematically speaking, 10 per cent of muslims' religious practice are formed by the Koran's words and after many centuries of the Koran's interpretation 90 per cent of muslims' practice are defined by the effort to understand the text and interpret it correctly in changing circumstances in the world. In the course of time a jurisprudence was created (arab. *fiq*) which forms a large sphere for discussing the correct way of man's life in pluralistic and mutually tolerant form of four main legal trends<sup>4</sup> The tradition of Islam practice is characteristic by including the whole life of man because God brought down leadership to all spheres of human life. The appeal given by tradition is based on the understanding of Koran's premises as the challenge for a clear definition of God's will in all spheres of human life. God's

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<sup>4</sup> HALLAQ, W. B., *A history of Islamic legal theories: an introduction to Sunnī uṣūl al-fiqh*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999.

servant needs an unequivocal command from God. Therefore there is a wide tradition of muslim law schools which are able to fulfil this need by issuing legal opinions on many issues of life. Anthropological paradigm of the Koran and the following law schools are applied to a smaller or greater degree up till now.

Finally we may say that in the Koran man is created in a certain inner tension because he is described as a being in “a most noble image” but at the same time as weak and changeable and is counted among the poorest (95:4-54). We may summarize anthropological premises of the Koran as follows: Man is created by God; he is created with the tendency to forget about God and break the law; his identity is not internally divided into soul and body although it is possible to discern them in him; his relationship with God is characterized by the polarity of terms slave-master or man-God; man is obliged to submit to God’s will and to obey it.

### **Traditional paradigm in reformatory thinking: Fazlur Rahman Malik**

Modern muslim authors try to reflect the impulses of changing society. One of the most important and most discussed muslim authors is Fazlur Rahman Malik (1919–1988). His academic trace in Pakistan but mainly in American Chicago is visible even today. Especially his publishing is very stimulating; his work is studied is the impulse for many discussions. Fazlur Rahmán Malik was born in Pakistan where he gained his education; later he studied at Oxford in England and his dissertation was about ibn Sín (Avicena). He gave lectures at many universities but at the end he lectured at Chicago University. He died in Illinois in 1988 and is buried here.

It is necessary to characterize briefly Rahmán’s acceptance of the Koran premises and his concept of social organization. Rahmán came from a traditional muslim family; his father was an expert on muslim law. Therefore young Rahmán inclined to a traditional organization of

public affairs in muslim communities in the concept of muslim law in which individual's conduct in society and administering society is determined by the allowed (arab. *halal*) and the forbidden (arab. *haram*) with corresponding categories between these two extremes.

His method is characteristic by emphasizing the study of sacred text which he completes with his own interpretation. His book *Major themes of the Quaran*<sup>5</sup> offers the grounds for his specific interpretation of law organizing public affairs. His specific approach is given by his conviction that at present it is necessary to read the Koran as the book typical for the time of its origin and to accept the fact that even Mohamed played a certain role in formulating the Koran: this is one of the ideas provoking the Islam world. Traditionally the Koran is considered the book of God without any human words. Inspired by Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938),<sup>6</sup> Rahmán accepted the idea of removing all historical impurities in Islam; Iqbal even asked for a radical dehellenization of Islam.<sup>7</sup> In his work Rahmán distinguished – or at least tried and appealed to his students – two currents in Islam: normative Islam and historical Islam. The reconstruction of the original relationship of Islam to main sources – the Koran and its representative Mohamed – is possible and also necessary in order to liberate modern Islam from historical deformations. Rahmán's study of the Koran was problematic in many ways and his contemporaries criticized him for certain selectiveness of interpretation.<sup>8</sup> Anyway, we can say that his study of the Koran and resulting interpretation is synthetic e. g. also in the work mentioned above. He submits key topics and presents his own reconstruction of the Koran as the source of Islam.<sup>9</sup> The structure of a book begins with the term God, then it is man as an individual, then man

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<sup>5</sup> RAHMAN, F., *Major themes of the Quran*, Bibliotheca Islamica, Minneapolis 1980.

<sup>6</sup> MAY, L. S., *Iqbal: his life & times, 1877-1938*, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore 1974.

<sup>7</sup> Especially in *Reconstruction of religious thought in Islam*, Milford, London 1934.

<sup>8</sup> RAHMAN, F., *Major themes of the Quran*, s. XIII.

<sup>9</sup> RAHMAN, F., *Islam & modernity: transformation of an intellectual tradition*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1982, p. 141.

in society, nature, prophets and revelation, eschatology, devil, evil, the origin of muslim community, religious situation of muslim community in Mekka, men of the book (monotheistic religions acknowledged by the Koran as legitimate); finally there is a plurality of religions.

The concept of organizing society and man's role in it is in Rahmán's work given in the polarity of two contradictory movements. First of all there is a tendency to deduce basic principles for human conduct and administering the world from the Koran and the sunna which is closely connected to prophet Mohamed's life. However according to Rahmán it is necessary to understand the Koran's commands in the context of social impulses which were at the basis of its origin. After that it is necessary to formulate laws for administering society and regulating human life.<sup>10</sup> According to him this can be performed in two steps. The first step proceeds from the specific to the general, which means that general rules are deduced from concrete cases. The second step proceeds from the general to the particular, which means that solutions in concrete situations are deduced from a general rule. That is why his theory is described as the theory of dual movement. His theory has been criticized for subjectivity and ambiguous terms definitions, especially the degree of refusing or preserving selected historical rules when applied to present situation.<sup>11</sup>

Let us put aside these specific problems of muslim world now and focus on the basis of his work – the Koran anthropological premises present in his work. Rahmán's interpretation of the relationship between God and man is given mainly in first three chapters of his *Major themes*. According to him and in harmony with orthodoxy God is considered the creator and preserver of all created. At the beginning of the first chapter he unambiguously denies all historical and modern misinterpretations of the term God in the Koran. Literally he says: "The immediate impression from a cursory reading of the Quran is that of

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<sup>10</sup> RAHMAN, F., *Islam & modernity: transformation of an intellectual tradition*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1982, p. 141.

<sup>11</sup> RAHMAN, F., *Interpreting the Quran*, in *Inquiry* 3(1986), p. 49.

the infinite majesty of God and His equally infinite mercy.”<sup>12</sup> He develops this basic thesis and uses the paradigm of weak man to whom God shows his will. In his interpretation God brings perfect guidance for all mankind.<sup>13</sup> It is not a theological problem to submit rational proofs of God’s existence and God’s truth to man but it is necessary to persuade man to accept God’s revelation as an obvious fact.<sup>14</sup> Therefore it is necessary to formulate the system of concrete admonitions which will remind man of God and his will.

In his interpretation man is a being as any other with the exception that God breathes in him his spirit (15:29 and others) but without any sign of dualism in man. Man is considered “weak”,<sup>15</sup> he was created this way and in relation to God he is weak especially in his own behaviour. God in relation to man guides man on right way (2:185)<sup>16</sup>. Rahmán denies determinism which could define man’s fate. However he defines God’s revelation in the Koran as the invitation to follow the right way or correct guidance. Whole universe is therefore considered as subordinate to God because it follows his guidance, i. e. laws. Similarly man is invited to follow the right journey of submitting to God, becoming muslim and fulfilling God’s will.<sup>17</sup> Man as the only one possess a free will which in combination with his weak nature enables him to depart from the right way, i. e. to break the law.

In the third chapter of the above mentioned book the individual is set into the social context. In the following we are quoting the initial part of the third chapter where we can find the definition of the relation between man and society and God.

“There is no doubt that a central aim of the Qur’an is to establish a viable social order on earth that will be just and ethically based.

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<sup>12</sup> RAHMAN, F., *Major themes of the Quran*, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 20.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

Whether ultimately it is the individual that is significant and society merely the necessary instrument for his creation or vice versa is academic, for individual and society appear to be correlates. There is no such thing as a societiless individual. Certainly, the concepts of human action we have discussed, particularly that of *taqwa*, are meaningful only within a social context. Even the idea of 'being unjust to oneself (*zulm al-nafs*),' so that individuals and particularly societies are eventually destroyed, really means destruction of the right to exist in a social and historical context. When the Qur'an talks about the death of individuals like Pharaoh or Korah, it is basically talking about the self-destructiveness of a way of life, of a society, of a type of civilization. Whenever there is more than one human being, God enters directly into the relationship between them and constitutes a third dimension which can be ignored by the two humans only at their own risk."<sup>18</sup>

In his interpretation of the Koran and tradition a proper social organization is totally in God's hands or rather it is submitted to God's will which is revealed in the Koran. Man cannot live outside society and therefore revealed God's will has to be implemented not only in man's life but also in life of the society. Social order and public administration is in harmony with God's will and in this case with Malik's interpretation of the Koran and tradition. An individual lives in relationship with the others and thus he forms the society. God enters this relationship to organize it. If his will is denied, then man's life is disturbed and the whole society is destroyed, as it is obvious from the text quoted above.

Fazlur Rahman Malik is considered an expert on Islam and a philosopher who was able to find new ways of interpreting the Koran in the context of modern times. It is possible to include his work into the jurisprudence tradition based on the anthropological paradigm based on the Koran's premises: it is necessary to remind man and the whole society of God's will.

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<sup>18</sup> RAHMAN, F., *Major themes of the Quran*, p. 23.



## Declaration of human rights in Islam

In practical realizing anthropological premises and consequent admonitions in the society it is very problematic to formulate generally accepted attitudes of Islam. Contemporary world of Islam does not represent one uniform whole of ideas and practice. In the Islamic world there is no single authority which would ideologically promoted and represented Islam. Despite the fact, we can find attempts to present muslim world cohesively expressed in written forms. Lately it is an important document *A Common World Between Us and You* published in 2007.<sup>19</sup> However we will pay our attention to another, older document.

Cairo declaration of human rights in Islam<sup>20</sup> is a document accepted by many traditionally muslim countries. This document is generally understood as the answer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was accepted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948 in Paris. The Declaration is not binding from legal point of view. The formulation of declaration of human rights in Islam is based on contribution of the Organization of Islamic co-operation (until 2011 the Organization of Islamic Conference) founded in 1969 in Džidda in Saudi Arabia. At present it includes 57 countries where Islam has a state-forming role. After issuing of this first declaration there were many others which followed the example of Cairo declaration and had a bigger or a smaller impact on Islamic world. Maurice Bormans in his texts performs a very good analysis of these problems. Cairo's declaration and subsequent texts are juridical texts and their formulations and intentions have to be interpreted in the light of juridical terminology and science.<sup>21</sup> Cairo's declaration refers

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<sup>19</sup> FRANC, J., *A common world - Equal word for you and us Introduction to the document and comments of translators*, in *Studia Theologica*, 3/2008, p. 68-70.

<sup>20</sup> AL-GAMAYA AL-AMA. *Alan al-qahira al-huquq al-insani fi al-islam*. Cairo 1992. (Fotokopie originálu <http://www.arabhumanrights.org/publications/regional/islamic/cairo-declaration-islam-93a.pdf>, 3.12.2014)

<sup>21</sup> BORRMANS, M., *Convergences et divergences entre la Déclaration Universelle des Droits de l'Homme de 1948 et les récentes Déclarations des Droits de l'Homme dans l'Islam*,

to a great degree to customary law šaría. However the law šaría is not a unified and codified collection of text with international validity. The law šaría is always an original product of local culture inspired by revelation contained in Islamic tradition. Therefore the interpretation of individual clauses is dependent on a concrete cultural context. Frequent references to šaría were criticized although in translations from original Arabic into English and French many references were adjusted and its terminology was reduced to language nearly irreligious.<sup>22</sup> Here we can mention only the tendency of authors of this text to apply the Koran's basic anthropological premises on the practice of society. In the Arabic original, which we are studying here, we can find introductory text which is much more extensive than it is in both officially published translations of the declaration. The declaration preamble introduces the vision of society and world. The world is described as the place where God created a perfect society of muslim world which is spread almost world-widely. God gave to this society a task to guide mankind that is not certain which course it should take. Therefore a muslim society is understood as a representative of the Koran's God on Earth. A basic parallel is formed by the relation between God (master) and man (slave) as it is given in the Koran and developed by juridical science *fiq* on one side and the relation between a muslim society (a guide) and non-muslim society (a guided) on the other. To describe the relation between muslim and non-muslim societies the declaration uses the term guidance and it is the same word root (*h-d-j*) as we find in the Koran when it describes the correct God's guidance of man. Cairo declaration of human rights contains basic anthropological principles of the Koran which it interprets in a similar way as the tradition of juridical science, i. e. as the attempt to implement God's will in the

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in *Diritti dell'uomo e dialogo interculturale nel Mediterraneo*, Università degli Studi di Teramo, Napoli 2009, p. 3-24.

<sup>22</sup> BORRMANS, M., *Convergences et divergences entre la Déclaration Universelle des Droits de l'Homme de 1948 et les récentes Déclarations des Droits de l'Homme dans l'Islam*, in *Diritti dell'uomo e dialogo interculturale nel Mediterraneo*, Università degli Studi di Teramo, Napoli 2009, p. 6.

world but in this case not only in life of an individual but in life of the whole society. The declaration indicates a sort of separation of God and society, or rather God's absolute transcendence. Man is a recipient of a message which he has to apply as a God's representative on Earth.

### **The role of academic sphere in the process of forming new Europe**

Since the World War II Europe has been inhabited more and more by immigrants who leave their homeland for various reasons and seek new home. Muslim communities coming from various parts of the world are one of the most discussed society. What attitude should be adopted by a society which have been building a certain form of Europe that has become an attractive place for living for many non-Europeans? An inspiring impulse for considering this theme in academic circles can be found in a lecture by the Pope emeritus Benedict XVI given on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2006 at German university in Regensburg. The topic of this lecture resonated also in work of his predecessor John Paul II – i. e. relation between reason and faith. John Paul II in his encyclical letter *Fides et ratio*<sup>23</sup> asserts that knowledge gained through faith does not contradict the knowledge gained through reason: “the two modes of knowledge lead to truth in all its fullness.”<sup>24</sup> At his lecture in Regensburg Benedict opened a topic which he illustrated by the context of contemporary Europe. It faces challenges of the dialogue among cultures. The title of his lecture *Faith, reason and university* symbolizes his effort to introduce such a cardinal topic to academics, i. e. his former colleagues from university sphere regardless fields and specializations. He presents the analysis of European thinking which is closely connected to Greek philosophy. European thinking is hellenised and is based on biblical faith in transcendental and immanent God. As an argument he

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<sup>23</sup> *Fides et ratio* : lettera enciclica del sommo pontifice Giovanni Paolo II : ai vescovi della chiesa cattolica circa i rapporti tra fede e ragione, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 1998.

<sup>24</sup> *Fides et ratio*, 34.

used a quotation by a Byzantine emperor Manuel II Palaiologos from Theodor Khoury's edition<sup>25</sup> and it caused such an extensive polemics that it was necessary to explain repeatedly the meaning of the lecture and cultural values of European academic sphere as well. Benedict XVI emphasized a constant and unflagging effort of European university to harmonize knowledge through faith and rational knowledge. According to him the hellenization of Christianity, i. e. the rationalization of Christianity, is historically such a fundamental fact that he considers it the crucial fact even in 21<sup>st</sup> century. In spite of dehellenization of European thinking in the Enlightenment era (Reformation and later liberal theology and now cultural pluralism) the rationality of European thinking is an integral part of culture together with emphasizing freedom inspired by biblical God. Therefore Benedict emphasizes the necessity of complete and free usage of reason which is in harmony with the knowledge by faith.

Benedict XVI draws attention to the concept of God or rather to the concept of relationship between God and man in the tradition of Islam in order to emphasize the topic which is necessary to be discussed in contemporary Europe. He points out the fact that for a long time the Islamic interpretation of God's revelation has been directed to promote God's will in the world. Islamic God is "his will is not bound up with any of our categories, even that of rationality",<sup>26</sup> Benedict XVI says. God of Jewish-Christian Revelation is God who is Word (Greek *logos*) and who is connected to human rationality. That is why Benedict XVI urges European newcomers as well as other Islam worshippers to engage in a dialogue on this specific topic. Europe is based on biblical faith and Greek thinking and despite the attempts to dehellenize it, Benedict considers European thinking to be a permanent

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<sup>25</sup> KHOURY, A. T., – GLEI, R. (Ed.), *Manuel II. Palaiologos, Dialoge mit einem Muslim*, Würzburg-Altenberge 1993-1996.

<sup>26</sup> Benedikt XVI. *Glaube, Vernunft und Universität: Erinnerungen und Reflexionen*, Regensburg 12. 9. 2006 ([http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20060912\\_university-regensburg\\_ge.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_ge.html), 3.12.2014)

effort to synthesize faith and reason. He describes the world of Islam as the world of promoting revealed God's will in lives of individual and society without using rationality. At the end of his lecture he quotes Manuel II Palaiologos: It is contradictory to God's nature not to act in accordance with reason, not to act in accordance with *logos*.<sup>27</sup> We can consider both the topic and the place of this lecture as a theologian's – and mainly the Pope's – invitation for European university to invite European newcomers to discuss the way of thinking and the way of understanding the society which is attractive not only for old but also for new Europeans.

## Conclusion

At the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century Europe is once again in a situation of embracing newcoming ethnic groups and religious ideas. Islam and its long tradition represent an important part of such migrants. The way of organizing world and the vision of world based of the Islamic text Koran is interpreted pluralistically. The Koran in its implicit anthropological premises presents man as a God's slave who is obliged to accept and promote God's will in the world, i. e. to submit to God and accept his guidance. The emphasis is laid on formulating commands and laws which reflect God's will and implement it practically – that is also the aim of juridical science – *fiq*. There are modern authors who belong to this process because they try to interpret newly the sacred text – sometimes in a provocative way. Despite the fact, there are, for example, in the text by Fazlur Rahmán Mákih, basic characteristics of the Koran's anthropology. European newcomers – Islam worshippers – are formed by this way of thinking and subsequently by this vision of organizing the world. The problem of the role of religion in public administration opens in Europe with a new intensity. It should be discussed in academic sphere as the problem of the role of rationality in defining religious truths.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

# Human Dignity in Interreligious Dialogue

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Tomáš Halík

Firstly, I would like to thank organizers for choosing such an important subject matter – religion and common good in interreligious dialogue. We are meeting in a country, where one of the greatest European religious wars began and where the battle for freedom and human rights against the inhuman communist dictatorship and its intolerant, military atheistic ideology was won victoriously twenty five years ago. Freedom, human rights and tolerance were and still are highly valued for many people in this country.

The present day world, which is threatened by violence – also by violence in the name of religion – defending the human rights and dignity of every living human being and life is one of the most important and urgent challenges. In a world, where various cultures, ethnicities, religions and value systems meet and interconnect more than ever in history, it is necessary to try hard to find a consensus in basic values, which are fundamental in living together in harmony and for the survival of the human race in general. In the secular population, which advocates the plurality of culture, the philosophy of human rights is exposed to criticism from the aspect of multiculturalism and ethical relativity. It is very important to seek “*minima moralia*” in the least – and to find them in the dialogue of various religious believers. The mutual defense of fundamental human rights – but also emphasis placed on human obligations – can become one of the most valuable and convincing service methods of believers in various religions for the good of human kind in the world today. Saint Francis of Assisi once prayed: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace!

In a critical reflection on history, the more we realize that religion was misused in the past – and in certain cases even today – in spreading violence, the more we should be capable of truly recognizing, understanding and condemning aloud these faults of the past, and to strive together to develop religion’s “capacity of peace” so that it may become the tool of peace today. The very effort to reach for justice and respect the rights and dignity of every human being are the main prerequisites for peace.

I would like to offer three main thoughts in my contribution:

1. The modern history of the theory of human rights began with enlightenment and climaxed with the acceptance of the UN’s declaration of human rights. However, this history has evolved from much older traditions: the main source is Biblical belief in one God, the Creator of all humankind (which is common in all monotheistic religions) and the idea of one humankind (equality for all people before God), which was brought by Christianity, primarily the universalism of Saint Paul.

2. Nevertheless, even though the idea of human rights and freedom had been enforced for a long time in the practice and in thinking of the Catholic Church – it did not become a constitutional part of Catholic teachings until the period of the second Vatican council. During the pontificate of John Paul II, it became the key concept of his political theology and the main source of inspiration in the Catholic Church’s involvement in the world.

3. Now, a number of Christian thinkers are trying to conceive and defend the idea of human rights in interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Regarding dialogue with secular liberalism, they are striving to complete the emphasis on human rights with a complementary emphasis on human obligations.

The theory of human rights was born from experience with the destructive forces of intolerance and violence in history – applying to both enlightenment, which followed the religious wars in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the period following the Second World War, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was established by the UN. Although, these documents merit great respect, it is necessary to add

that the theory itself does not have the strength to put a stop to the destructive powers in human events. During the French Revolution, which brought one of the first declarations of human rights and civil rights, bloody violence took place on the part of the Jacobins. It was the Jacobins, who enriched the political vocabulary and the history of European nations with the term *terror* – and this terror significantly contributed to the fact that many Christians refused to accept all concepts of enlightenment for a long period of time, including the human rights theory.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was then established on the very threshold of the Cold War, when part of Europe and the world was engulfed by Communism, which introduced regimes that robbed its citizens of freedom (and even the lives of many), and systematically violated basic human rights, primarily the rights to freedom of thought and religion. However, in confrontation with Communism during the eighties, the idea of human rights proved itself to be a fundamental idea – it became the common value of democratic dissidents in Eastern Europe, American foreign affairs (during the time of Carter and Reagan's presidency) and the political theology of Pope John Paul II. These three powers found a common language in the emphasis on human rights and this group then significantly contributed to the fall of Communism and the bipolar world and launched the new, modern day era of European history.

Enlightenment was primarily born in so-called “third powers” or “third ways” in Christianity, from the thinking of Christian intellectuals in Western Europe, who came to the opinion while face-to-face in wars between the Catholics and Protestants that both denominations have failed – and in seeking a way out from the conflict, and they underlined the elements of humanism in Christianity. If we were to search for the genealogy of Christian humanism, we would come to the account of the Hebrew Bible (the first book of Moses) on the creation of humankind (men and women) as a free partner of God. The dignity of every human being, resulting in the rights and freedom of human beings, is given by God, not by the state and therefore the state and



social institutions cannot deny anyone these rights, but rather respect them – this is the main theological argument in defending human rights. Everyone who believes in the one and only same God, the creator of humankind, thus mainly those who believe in the three great religions of Abraham, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, may profess this concept.

In many places of the Hebrew Bible we can find that God has a rather unusual love towards his chosen people and prefers them to other nations of the world, however he has a plan that includes everyone. Jesus continued the tradition of the prophets of Israel and the eschatological visions of Judaism of the time (which state that Jehovah will be the judge of all nations), when he sent his apostles “into the world, to all people.”

The idea of universalism, the idea of one humankind and equality of all before God, appeared most radically in history in the teachings of Saint Paul. According to Saint Paul, this equality and unity of humankind was gained through Christ, whose sacrifice for all humankind without exception and love to all, brought down walls which once divided the Jews and pagans, overcame – made relative – all of the thus existing barriers and inequalities, the inequalities among sexes, society and culture. Saint Paul then lead the young Christians from the boundaries of Judaism and introduced them to a much broader, universal context, when he taught them that “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus,” (Galatiens 3:28).

In the message of the “Acts of the Apostles” on the birth of the Church on the day of the Pentecost, we read that the apostles were able to address people of all nations and languages, from all corners of the latter-day world. The Church was to become “anti-Babylon,” the place where the wounds of disunity would be healed, which had been established during the erection of the tower of Babylon, the symbol of blasphemy.

One of the current theologians – French Jesuit Joseph Moingt – says that it is a great pity that in history, the Church seldom followed

the courageous path of Saint Paul, the way to all nations with the conviction that God is not just the “God of our fathers” but rather the God of all peoples. He says that the Church seldom managed to be the “new Israel,” to connect with the dynamics of Abraham, who left his home, the dynamics of the exodus (the departure from Egypt for the promised land of freedom) and the courage of Saint Paul, and that instead, it became the “second Israel,” another particular society, which jealously guarded its identity. Therefore, the idea of Saint Paul – his universalism and idea of equal values of all humankind – was not developed until the enlightenment, during the time when Christianity (the Church) was in conflict with political power.

However, prior to enlightenment, the foundations of the human rights theory were established – among Jesuit and Dominican theologians, who defended the human rights and dignity of natives (pagans) against the violence of the colonizers, primarily in South America (let us remember the name Bartolomeus de Las Casas for all). It is the very Christians with reference to the ethnic principles of their belief, who deserve to be merited for the elimination of slavery and who stood in the first rows of battles against racial discrimination (primarily black African Americans).

While European Catholicism was ruled by trauma from the Jacobin terror in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (which was understood as the fruit of enlightenment) and fear from the teachings of enlighteners, Christianity and enlightenment did not come into conflict in the Anglo-Saxon world (Britain and the United States). The experience of the Catholic Church with pluralism and democracy in America significantly contributed to the fact that the Catholic Church radically changed its course in the second Vatican council. Supporting human rights, the idea of individual values of each living being before God and supporting the freedom of thought and religion became a part of the official teachings of the Catholic Church.

Primarily in the encyclical of John XXIII. *Pacem in terris* (of 1963) this pope stated that the widespread belief that all individuals are equal in their value and dignity, became a “sign of the time,” a new phase in

human history – and that this spiritual evolution should lead to new political forms. The world is in need of a universal public authority, acting in the benefit of all of humankind, with persuasion, not force. Thus the pope expressed his support in the role of the UN and his appreciation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He regarded defending human rights as the principal mission of public authorities. However, he emphasized that it is not only necessary to define and proclaim human rights, but obligations as well.

These ideas did not just remain on paper, only in theory. Pope John Paul II, who closely experienced the violence of both secular dictatorships of the twentieth century, Nazism and Communism and their criminal offence against human rights, made human rights – and primarily religious freedom – the main subject of his social mission. The Solidarity movement was born from the atmosphere of his first visit to his birthplace, Poland. This movement fought for the rights of labourers and civil rights and was the first to defeat the monopoly of power in the Soviet empire. During the course of the twentieth century, the Catholic Church deserved merit for the peaceful transition from authoritarian regimes to democratic and civil societies – with the support to fight for human rights – in many places of the world – the Philippines, Chile, Poland etc.

Today, a live discussion is taking place on how much the concept of human rights, which was expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is closely tied to its roots in biblical religion, in Christianity and Judaism – and if it is connected with one cultural circle, then whether or not it can bear the demands on universal effectiveness. A concept on human rights does not stand or fall with ideas, which were developed in Western Christianity (which absorbed certain principles of Hellenism) – such as the presumption of universal human natural being and awareness of this naturalness – with common sense, belief in the differences in human natural being from other facts and a clear separation of an individual and society? Even though those who support radical post-modern pluralism and multiculturalism say that the human rights theory is too “western” and therefore, it cannot bear

the demands on universality, do they do not assume the rights themselves to a universally effective judgment?

In 2003, Professor Max Stackhouse of the University of Chicago Divinity School said: „Certainly we cannot say that all of Judaism or of Christianity has supported human rights; /.../ Nor can we say that even these traditions have been faithful to the implications of their own heritage at all times, and the horror stories of our pasts also have to be told to mitigate any temptation to triumphalism. Still, intellectual honesty demands recognition of the fact that what passes as “secular,” “western” principles of basic human rights developed nowhere else than out of key strands of the biblically-rooted religions. And while many scholars and leaders from other traditions have endorsed them, and found resources in their own traditions that point to quite similar principles, today these views are under suspicion both by some Asian leaders who appeal to Asian Values and by some communitarian and postmodern philosophers in the West who have challenged the very idea of human rights. The deepest threat comes from those intellectual leaders who have adopted anti-universalist, anti-principial perspectives. Those who doubt the validity of human rights do so on the ground that there neither is nor can be no universalistic moral theology, master narrative, or *jus naturale* to support the idea. That, of course, is a universalistic claim in itself, one that ironically presses toward a universal moral relativism.“<sup>1</sup>

In order to prevent the attempts to play down the theory of human rights by pointing to its origins in Western Christianity, it is necessary to adopt this theory as a subject of interreligious dialogue and to contemplate on it together.

In 2004, Professor Terry Muck said at the conference “Christianity and Human Rights” in Samfort University: „Interreligious dialogue is crucial to the human rights project. It is societies’ way of insuring that

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<sup>1</sup> STACKHOUSE, M., *Sources of Basic Human Rights Ideas: A Christian Perspective* (Monday, January 27, 2003) in: The PEW FORUM for Religion in Public Life, May 18, 2008.

human rights can be truly universal without imposing one culture's interests on another. It is the mode of choice in insuring that both universality and cultural specificity are honored. Interreligious dialogue also ensures that the common religious interest in the transcendent can be communicated to global secular culture without losing the specific interests of the different religions themselves. Dialogue is a means of allowing religious difference to positively inform the human rights discussion instead of making such differences the occasion for lessening the universality of the human rights agenda.

Interreligious dialogue does not replace other modes of action necessary to a successful human rights program. Cultures are still needed to implement specific human rights programs, cultures that operate through the power of honor, shame, and relationship. Political and legal systems are still needed to enforce the demands of human rights programs, systems that operate through the power of national and international law. Religion oversteps its role when it attempts to become overly involved in either implementation or enforcement. Revelation becomes demonic when it is reduced to the forms of the secular and the mundane.

But cultures and legal systems become equally demonic when they ignore the revelatory aspect that religions bring to human rights discussions.“



When tension in our world is too great and when frustrations and fear attains high levels among people and entire groups of people, ordinary everyday language and the language of secular politics is not powerful enough to express those emotions. People spontaneously reach for the language of religion. Political leaders – even in the so-called secular societies which have scrupulously striven to separate religion and politics – use the power of religious rhetoric and religious symbols. Once again the world is “bedeviled” and people are dehumanized. Political enemies are no longer perceived simply as people with different opinions and interests but as the army of the “Great Satan”. If religion

becomes a weapon in political conflicts it can truly have destructive powers. Nuclear weapons turn human settlements into dust and ruins. Religion, when used as a weapon, transforms the landscape of political conflicts into a battle scene in an apocalyptic cosmic war between Good and Evil.

For many societies it is natural to perceive the world in religious terms. Our western (and particularly European) civilization, which underestimated the strength and vitality of religion over the previous two centuries, has been caught off guard. Many are disconcerted when even political leaders of the democratic world borrow the language of those who propagate “holy wars”. However, long ago, Carl Schmitt asserted that all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts. In the West, religion and theology are a forgotten and often deliberately displaced dimension of politics that is unconscious and profound. Sometimes, precisely where people take for granted that “God is dead”, it is surprising how easy and quickly the old gods and demons of our culture’s “collective unconscious” can be revived.

Nowadays in the West, the “New Atheism” and militant secularism are not content to underestimate and ignore the importance of religion, as has been the trend of post-Enlightenment naivety hitherto. Now in many places they are attacking religion and seeking (without the capacity to differentiate) to reject, caricature and demonize all “religion” – the religion of “those others”, particularly Islam, and also the religious roots of their own civilization, particularly Christianity. However, such trends provoke and arouse those truly dangerous aspects of religious traditions and communities – fundamentalism and fanaticism.

The alternative is an honorable dialogue – a dialogue between religions (or between believers belonging to various religious communities and within them), and between religious believers and those who believe in secular humanism. If Christian theology is to become a competent instrument for dialog with other, it must inject into our understanding of the church, of truth and of the world a radical open-

ness, a sense of “eschatological differentiation” between what is available to us now and what is the object of our eschatological hope.

Christian tradition distinguishes three forms of the church. Firstly, there is the *ecclesia militans*, the church militant—Christians in this world. Secondly the *ecclesia patiens*, the suffering church—the souls in Purgatory. And thirdly the *ecclesia triumphans*, the church triumphant—the saints in heaven, i.e. the eschatological dimension of the church.

Whenever Christians forget the need for *eschatological differentiation* between the “church triumphant” in the absolute future and the “church militant” here and now, they start to regard themselves as a perfect society (*societas perfecta*), already possessing the knowledge of the entire truth, than Christian triumphalism comes into being with all its tragic consequences. The struggle of the *ecclesia militans* originally meant a struggle with one’s own temptations and sins—including the temptation of triumphalism. If the church forgets the need for patient and humble openness vis-a-vis its eschatological future *it gives rise to a militant religion and a militant church*, battling against *those others*, those who are different, who hold different beliefs—whether in the “external world” or in the church’s own ranks.<sup>2</sup>

We have said that Christian triumphalism occurs when the worldly form of the church (*ecclesia militans*) is confused with the *ecclesia triumphans* of the eschatological future. Triumphalism is actually a secularization of the church’s eschatological vision. An incapacity for “eschatological differentiation” gives rise to militant and intolerant religion. Often it is the expression of an unacknowledged loss of confidence in an eschatological future as such.

Jesus’s reference to an eschatological horizon is an invitation to patience and tolerance: those who are able to wait for the “time of harvest” will not pull up the wheat with the tares in a foolish endeavor to purify God’s field. Jesus warned his disciples against anticipating the

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<sup>2</sup> There is a striking resemblance here to the Islamic concept of “jihad”—here, too, the original concept of a moral struggle with one’s own failings becomes in certain circumstances a program of “holy war against infidels”.

eschatological task of the angels. Any attempt at playing the role of the angels at the Last Judgement, at wanting to divide one's neighbors into good and bad, turns people into angels of darkness. The zealotry of revolutionaries, inquisitors and religious terrorists is a sin against all three "divine virtues": hope, faith and love.

Something of the kind occurs in the lives of religious communities and the lives of individual believers. When believers lose the ability to endure patiently their own doubts stemming from the fact that here *we know only in part*, they start to project their shadow, their doubts, their lack of faith onto the those others – and only there are they able to contend with them. Intolerant, militant believers are often seeking simply to escape their own doubts and their own unbelief by shifting the battle with them out of their own minds and hearts to somewhere else. When they are unable to "make friends" of their doubts and turn their own doubts into a partner in dialogue with their faiths, they create enemies of "those others". When they are incapable of coming to terms with the fact that here *we see only as in a mirror*, others, those who are different, become a mirror of their own inability to learn, of their own ignorance, of their own unconsciousness. That's why they are so irritating.

In fact those others, those who are different from us, can be a useful mirror for us, in which we may recognize what we are generally unable or unwilling to see. When we start to be capable of seeing in those who provoke us on account of their difference our *own shadows*, the things that we deny and displace and yet are part of us, we can say to ourselves: that is me too. In this way we can contribute towards peace with others and a better understanding of ourselves. In place of naïve, immature, narcissistic notions about ourselves we can come to a better understanding of our own identity. None of us has seen our own face – all we see is its reflection in the mirror. We need others in order to discover and recognize our own identity.

Meeting others is a unique opportunity for us. The face of the other is the place where the face of God is most likely to be revealed to us, Emmanuel Levinas taught. We can squander the opportunity to meet



with the other and thus with God not only by rejecting the other, but also when we fail to acknowledge and respect their *difference* – when, with arrogant impatience or with the naiveté of “goodwill” we seek to blur the differences, homogenize the other, to make what is foreign our own. The other must never cease to be for us a riddle, a mystery.

Living with others is an invitation to permanent dialogue and a process of deeper and deeper understanding, which has no end in this life. It is now the sacred duty of Christians to proclaim that the house of the common Father of all people – both in heaven and on earth – has “many mansions”, and that all of us: Christians, Jews, Muslims, advocates of secular Humanism and many other spiritual paths have their place here and the right to seek freely their path to truth. If we Christians are a “*communio viatorum*”, a pilgrim community, then we must learn to respect and show solidarity to all other pilgrims and renounce all forms of violence and haughtiness toward them.

We have witnessed how the power of religious symbols can become a destructive force and source of violence when linked to political interests. Now it is necessary to ask: How can the power of faith be used to create a culture of mutual respect, a civilisation in which difference will not be perceived as a threat but as scope for mutual enrichment. What progress should occur in religion in order for us to enjoy a culture of sharing in place of the fear of clash of civilisations?

Christianity’s central message is that God is love and that the triune God is itself a community of sharing. Belief in a God who is love and community of sharing is a moral commitment with obvious cultural and political implications. It is a commitment *to accept the plurality of our world and to strive constantly to transform it into a culture of communication, sharing and mutual enrichment.*

# Struggling with the scandal of particularity in interfaith dialogue (with a special focus on the situation in contemporary Czech Republic)

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Pavel Hošek

## Introduction

Since the New Testament times, Christian missionary proclamation presupposes an universal horizon<sup>1</sup>. Yet this universal horizon is anchored in a series of quite particular, unique historical events (the story of the people of Israel, culminating in the Christ-event). Christian missionaries have always claimed that something as unique as a history of a particular (small) nation, leading up to a dramatic life-story of a particular Jewish rabbi has universal significance for spiritual well-being of all humankind.

Obviously, all the unique particularities of Christianity's historical origin seem to be in a serious tension with its monotheist universalism. This universalism is at the same time an intrinsic and non-negotiable part of Christianity's self-understanding and therefore of the inner logic of Christian proclamation. Christians believe that the One who called the people of Israel and who sent Jesus of Nazareth is *not* a tribal deity nor just one of multiple regional gods, but the Creator of heaven and earth and the Lord of history.

One of the ways Christian thinkers have articulated this tension is the telling phrase *scandal of particularity*. The scandal of Christian particularity claiming universal significance is of course especially apparent in the context of contemporary religious and cultural pluralism. In a globalized, pluralistic world, it is quite acceptable to cherish all

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. such biblical statements as "Go to all the world...", Matthew 28, 19-20, "Preach the Gospel to all creation..." Mark 16, 15 etc.

the precious particularities of one's religious and cultural background and identity. But it is often acceptable only in its tolerant – relativistic version<sup>2</sup>. What seems to constitute a serious problem for many contemporaries is to insist (as Christianity does) on universal significance of a particularly based message. Many people naturally ask: What does the spiritual well-being of all humankind have to do with the moving story of an executed Galilean carpenter many centuries ago?

In what follows I will briefly introduce the most common Christian responses to this question. These responses are not new. They appeared in different stages of church history as Christians reflected on their encounters with religious and cultural others<sup>3</sup>. At the same time, as we shall see, these classical responses still provide conceptual frameworks for Christians today (in the Czech Republic just as in other countries) as they try to conceptualize religious plurality and as they look for an appropriate approach to interfaith relations and dialogue.

### Traditional exclusivism and its Czech representatives

The oldest model of understanding the relation between Christianity and other religions starts from the unique content of biblical revelation (especially from the uniqueness and universal relevance of Christ and his work of atonement)<sup>4</sup>, and consequently views other religions as immersed in darkness and their adherents as “lost”. The monotheist universalist horizon of this model coincides with the horizon of missionary outreach (and of gradual growth of the church as the Gospel reaches all nations of the world). And negatively, the

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<sup>2</sup> Implying something like “Your truth is just as good as mine”.

<sup>3</sup> For a good summary of theological issues involved see KOVACS, A., *The Challenge of the Post-Christendom Era: The Relation of Christian Theology to World Religions*, in GOODWIN, S., (Ed), *World Christianity in Local Context*, Continuum, London 2009, p. 3ff.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. such biblical statements as “No one comes to the Father except through me” John 14, 6 or “There is no other name under heaven...” Acts 4, 12.

monotheist universalist horizon coincides with the universal scope of God's judgement at the end of history. According to the inner logic of this model, the universality of human sinfulness and God's judgement constitutes a very serious reason why Christians must not neglect their responsibility to preach the Gospel. It is imperative for all Christians to "save souls from eternal damnation". Within this model, interfaith dialogue is not really a priority. It is not necessarily rejected, but it is viewed as part of the missionary outreach of the church, i.e. as a way of coming to know the addressees of missionary proclamation. This is why it makes sense to build friendly relations with non-Christians and to engage in dialogue about the contents of their faith: a solid and detailed knowledge of non-Christian religions (attainable only through patient dialogue) is necessary if their adherents are to be effectively reached by the Gospel. In such dialogue there must be space for mutual witness and friendly addressing conflicting truth claims. Interfaith dialogue understood this way is actually a cultivated and peaceful continuation of more traditional forms of medieval interreligious polemics. Whatever justified criticisms of this model have been articulated by contemporary Christian theologians, it is often relatively well accepted by the adherents of other religions, since (unlike some other models such as inclusivism or pluralism), it takes their truth claims and their self-understanding seriously and approaches interfaith conversations as *honest* disagreement.

This model of understanding religious plurality and interreligious relations is still quite common among Evangelical Christians (both worldwide and in the Czech Republic)<sup>5</sup>. It may not be very common among academically educated Christians, but since the Evangelical movement is quite dynamic and growing (both worldwide and in the Czech Republic), exclusivism remains to be an important theological position, even though some of its most controversial aspects have been softened during the last several decades.

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. the website of the World Evangelical Alliance ([www.worldea.org](http://www.worldea.org)) and the Czech Evangelical Alliance ([www.ea.cz](http://www.ea.cz)).

Most Evangelical denominations in the Czech Republic (those who are members of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Czech Republic)<sup>6</sup> have a generally affirmative attitude towards interfaith dialogue, if it is granted that dialogue is not an obligatory substitute for Christian proclamation. Czech Evangelicals also see and affirm (like other Christians) the value and desirability of cooperation with adherents of other religions in areas of common concern<sup>7</sup>.

On the other hand, Pentecostal and Charismatic Evangelical churches and their representatives often express their serious reservations to overemphasizing dialogue and cooperation with religious others, pointing out that the primary responsibility of all Christians is to preach the Gospel to all people (which includes a necessarily confrontational element) and expressing serious concern in relation to the spiritual background of Christian encounter with other religions (in relation to spiritual forces operating within these religions)<sup>8</sup>. Some Czech Evangelical activists are actually engaged in public campaigns against the presence of Islam and Muslim immigrants in the Czech Republic, against permitting Muslims to build mosques etc<sup>9</sup>.

At the same time, Evangelical denominations in the Czech Republic and especially Pentecostal and Charismatic Evangelical churches have

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. [www.ekumenickarada.cz](http://www.ekumenickarada.cz)

<sup>7</sup> For example, several years ago (2005) Czech Jews, Christians and Muslims publicly declared (and communicated to Czech political leaders) their common view of euthanasia. Evangelical denominations participated in this common effort.

<sup>8</sup> For example, the representatives of the Czech Pentecostal denomination Apoštolská církev openly expressed their criticism of the ecumenical document *Charta Occumenica* (2001) because of its paragraph encouraging Christians to engage in friendly dialogue with Muslims.

<sup>9</sup> VOJTIŠEK, Z., *Český boj o mešity*. In MENDEL, M., – OSTRÁNSKÝ, B., – RATAJ, T., *Islám v srdci Evropy: Vlivy islámské civilizace na dějiny a současnost českých zemí*, Academia, Praha 2007, p. 392ff. A very popular speaker at the meetings of Czech anti-Islamic Christian activists is the Christian convert and former Muslim Lukáš Lhotan, see for example his book *Ježíš Kristus a islám*, Pstruží 2014. It should be added that the strongest (religiously motivated) anti-Islamic voice in the Czech Republic has come not from Evangelical Christians, but from Diamond Way Buddhists of Karma Kagyu Lineage, see [www.bdc.cz](http://www.bdc.cz).

typically very friendly attitudes towards Jews and most Czech Evangelicals are very supportive of the state of Israel (often along the lines of a Christian Zionist theology)<sup>10</sup>. In this sense, Czech Evangelicals, since they typically support the Jewish side of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, tend to have a proportionately negative attitude towards Muslims, who typically support the Palestinian side.

### Non-exclusivist particularism: Barthian Protestants and Jews

Most contemporary theologians are not comfortable with the pessimist soteriological conclusions of the exclusivist model (i.e. with the view that only a small minority of humankind will be saved), yet many are not willing to give up on the uniqueness of Christ and the universal significance of his work of atonement. Following the lead of Karl Barth, they hold an exclusive view of *revelation*, but at the same time propose a “broader” view of *salvation*. For example, the theologians of the “postliberal school” combine Barthian particularism with a cultural-linguistic understanding of religion<sup>11</sup>. They claim that religions have “idiomatic nature”<sup>12</sup>. Like languages (*not* like regional dialects of the same language), they are not different examples of the same species, nor various expressions of the same universal essence. They are irreducibly different, just as Chinese and Czech and English.

Yet for the proponents of non-exclusivist particularism, this does *not* imply that non-Christians are lost. There are good reasons for hope

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<sup>10</sup> Many Czech Evangelicals are involved in the activities of the Czech branch of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, see [www.icej.cz](http://www.icej.cz).

<sup>11</sup> Employing the conceptual tools of sociology and linguistic philosophy, i.e. some key insights of P. Berger (religion as a particular symbolic universe), C. Geertz (religion as a particular system of symbols), L. Wittgenstein (religion as a particular set of language games corresponding with particular forms of corporate life) and J. Austin (religion as a set of performative speech acts) they believe that religions are as irreducibly different as the languages they speak. See LINDBECK, G., *The Nature of Doctrine*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia 1984.

<sup>12</sup> LINDBECK, G., *The Nature of Doctrine*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia 1984, p. 40, 129.

that they are not. This hope is based on what Christians believe about God's grace, mercy and love towards all humankind.

This modification of the traditional (exclusivist) model of understanding religious plurality actually remains *particularist* in the area of religious epistemology, yet *inclusivist* in the area of soteriology. A strictly particularist epistemology may cause serious difficulties for mutually intelligible interfaith dialogue (comparable to a "dialogue" between Chinese and Czech and English people who all know only their native language). That is why the critics of this model suggest that it often leads to a virtual resignation on any trans-systemic criteria of truth and meaning or to an acceptance of a fragmentarized world of mutually isolated epistemological ghettos. Indeed, within the framework of this model, there seems to be little space for dealing with conflicting truth claims of various religious traditions. If religions are mutually "untranslatable", the "conflicting truth claims" are not really conflicting, their validity is strictly intra-systemic, since they cannot be trans-contextually compared, measured, evaluated etc. It sounds great that (many) non-Christians will (hopefully) be saved, but it seems that adherents of different religions have very little to talk about, except just preaching at each other.

Many proponents of non-exclusivist particularism do in fact express reservations towards interreligious dialogue, if such dialogue focuses on the inner contents of religious traditions and looks for some kind of "interreligious Esperanto"<sup>13</sup>. But they most emphatically support interfaith conversations about social and ethical concerns based on shared values. This focus on practical cooperation in areas of common concern (without compromising one's religious commitments) actually seems to be the most promising form and the most important area of interfaith dialogue over the last several decades, definitely so in the Czech Republic, as we shall see below.

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<sup>13</sup> SWIDLER, L., *Towards an Universal Theology of Religion*, Orbis, New York 1987, p. 20ff.

Since epistemological particularism combined with soteriological inclusivism has been the position of Karl Barth, who exercised a major influence on several generations of leading theologians and ministers of the Czech Brethren Protestant Church, this position and the corresponding approach to interfaith relations and dialogue is rather typical of many representatives of that largest Protestant denomination in the Czech Republic<sup>14</sup>.

Over the last two decades, it has also been the typical and most common attitude of Czech Jews, including the chief rabbi Karol Sidon. Remaining faithful to one's Jewish (covenantal) commitments yet cooperating with religious non-Jews of good will (whom rabbinic scholars call Noachites) in areas of shared concerns<sup>15</sup>, such as supporting the Czech Romani minority and defending Czech Romani people against racist and xenophobic attitudes has been the most typical form of Jewish involvement in interfaith activities in recent decades.

### Generous inclusivism: Roman Catholic perspective

Inclusivism, nowadays the most common model of Christian understanding of religious plurality (both worldwide and in the Czech Republic) shares the soteriological optimism of the previous model but does not share its epistemological pessimism. According to the proponents of this model the uniqueness of the Christ-event (*revelatio specialis*) does *not* imply that other religions and cultures are left completely in darkness. As some biblical passages clearly suggest, all people are exposed (at least to a certain degree) to universal divine revelation (*revelatio generalis*). There seems to be a solid exegetical evidence in favour of universal accessibility of God's revelation<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> See [www.e-cirkev.cz](http://www.e-cirkev.cz)

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Review of the Society of Jews and Christians*, No. 61 and 62/2009, p. 2-11.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. such biblical passages as Psalm 19, 1-5, Isaiah 19, 24-25, Amos 9, 7, Malachi 1, 11, John 1, 9, Acts 14, 16-17 and 17, 27-28, Romans 1, 19-20 and 2, 15 etc.



But if divine truth is universally accessible, why are there so many irreconcilable differences among religious traditions in their ultimate truth claims and convictions? And more specifically, how is it possible that we find no explicit reference to Christ and his work of atonement in non-Christian religions?

In response to this question, most inclusivists suggest that universal revelation reaches non-Christians on experiential, pre-reflective, pre-linguistic level. This revelation is (hopefully) sufficient for salvation. But it is *not* accompanied with adequate conceptual and verbal articulation, which is, as Christians believe, present in its fullness (only) in Christianity. This is why it still makes sense to send out Christian missionaries, regardless of the fact that those who have never heard the Gospel are (most likely) somehow included in God's plan of salvation. This is also why intelligibility and communicability of Christian message is essential. It must be possible to discuss conflicting truth claims. And this is also one of the important reasons why interfaith dialogue makes sense. And not just as a politically correct substitute for proclamation but rather as one of the forms of Christian witness.

So, most inclusivists consider interfaith dialogue to be a very important and highly desirable endeavor. They see it not only as a strategic effort aiming at peaceful coexistence and cooperation in areas of common concerns, but also as an opportunity for friendly interaction allowing participants to address the issue of conflicting truth claims.

Yet, as some critics point out, in actual interfaith dialogue, the particular claims of non-Christian religions, including their practitioners' self-understanding, tend to be politely "suspended". In Christian inclusivist's mind, the non-Christian's self-understanding is "replaced" by Christian understanding of that non-Christian's "real" spiritual condition, supposedly "more adequate" understanding than his or her own<sup>17</sup>. In other words, many inclusivists basically say that the Buddhist may

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. for example Karl Rahner's famous notion of "anonymous Christians" or Vladimír Boublík's notion of "anonymous catechumens", perceived by most non-Christians as an unwelcome "conquest by embrace", see BOUBLÍK, V., *Teologie mimokřesťanských náboženství*, Karmelitánské nakladatelství, Kostelní Vydří 2000.

think he is heading towards Nirvana, but we Christians know that he is actually heading towards New Jerusalem.

This criticism has been one of the reasons why some proponents of the inclusivist model came up with a paradigm of understanding religious plurality which may be called inclusivist pluralism or pluralist inclusivism<sup>18</sup>. They suggest that the trinitarian understanding of God may turn out to be the best conceptual model for understanding religious diversity of humankind and also for affirming *essential mutual relatedness* of world religions<sup>19</sup>. They suggest that different religions with their unique particularities are essentially *complementary*, in the sense that they relate to different aspects of the trinitarian divine Mystery. The trinitarian pattern of thinking about ultimate Reality may offer the most adequate and comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding religious plurality and also a respectful Christian theological view of other religions.

The obvious problem with all these generous attempts to develop an affirmative understanding of other religions lies in their tendency towards “conquest by embrace”, i.e. an inclination to “swallow” or “absorb” the otherness of religious others by assimilating them into just another (less perfect) case of the same. Or in Christian terms, in the tendency to “baptize” them against their will and/or without their consent. This is why even the most generous inclusivist perspective is sometimes perceived as covertly paternalizing and patronizing by religious others and in this sense it may sometimes constitute an obstacle for genuine interfaith dialogue.

In the Czech Republic, most Roman Catholic theologians and church representatives express some kind of the generous inclusivist

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<sup>18</sup> DUPUIS, J., *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*. New York, Orbis 2002, p. 87ff.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. the works of PANNIKAR, R., *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man*, Orbis, New York, 1973; DUPUIS, J., *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, Orbis, New York 1997; D' COSTA, G., *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, Orbis, New York 2000.

approach to religious diversity<sup>20</sup>. Their perspective remains clearly trinitarian and christocentric, yet open to perceive and appreciate traces of eternal truth, goodness and beauty in non-Christian religions. Generous inclusivism tends to be also the most common perspective among the theologians and representatives of the second largest Protestant denomination in the Czech Republic, the Czechoslovak Hussite Church<sup>21</sup> as well as among the non-Barthian theologians and ministers of the Czech Brethren Protestant Church<sup>22</sup>.

Like in other countries, Jewish participants in Jewish-Christian dialogue in the Czech Republic sometimes feel uncomfortable with Christian inclusivism, because they are irritated by its tendency towards “conquest by embrace”, as it became clear during the public discussions about the Latin Good Friday prayer (expressing the desire for “salvation of Jews”) in 2008. Czech Hindu and Buddhist participants of interfaith dialogue generally feel quite comfortable with Christian inclusivism, because their own (Buddhist and Hindu) understanding of religious plurality tends to be inclusivist as well<sup>23</sup>.

### Pluralist model: liberal Christians and spiritual seekers

Many critics of the inclusivist model like to point out that in a sense, it is just a softer version of religious imperialism. Some of

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<sup>20</sup> This tends to be the case in other countries as well, since generous inclusivism is generally understood to be the implicit position of the documents of the Second Vatican council (*Nostra Aetate*, *Lumen Gentium*, *Ad Gentes*) and the subsequent magisterial statements. For the most recent discussion of the (Czech) Roman Catholic perspective (and related issues) see ČERVENKOVÁ, D., *Náboženství jako teologický fenomén*, Mervart, Červený Kostelec 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. [www.ccsch.cz](http://www.ccsch.cz).

<sup>22</sup> Generous inclusivism is generally speaking the implicit theological position of the public statements of the World Council of Churches, cf. [www.oikoumene.org](http://www.oikoumene.org) (both the Czech Brethren Protestant Church and the Czechoslovak Hussite Church are members of the WCC).

<sup>23</sup> Hindu and Buddhist inclusivism is of course structurally different, it counts on multiple incarnations and gradual spiritual growth in proportion to the quality of one's individual karma. Cf. for example [www.harekrsna.cz](http://www.harekrsna.cz).

them suggest that in Christian conceptualizing religious plurality it is necessary to give up all claims to superiority.

Those who try to walk along this line propose a “Copernican revolution” in Christian thinking about religious plurality<sup>24</sup>. They are convinced that Christians have to “cross the Rubicon” from inclusivism to pluralism<sup>25</sup>, i.e. to accept the view that all religions are equally valid responses to ultimate Reality. The proposed “bridges across the Rubicon”<sup>26</sup> are three: a) a comparativist or anthropological understanding of all religions (including Christianity) as conditioned by particular historical circumstances of their origins and therefore more or less equally “true”, i.e. equally authentic expressions of generically human religious aspirations or needs or intuitions. Or, b) an experiential understanding of religion as primarily an universally human inner experience or encounter with Divine reality in the depth of human heart, which is consequently expressed in linguistic and conceptual forms taken from one’s cultural context. Or c) understanding religious traditions primarily as effective means of ethical transformation from self-centered to God-centered and/or other-centered existence<sup>27</sup>.

For most proponents of the pluralist model, Christianity should be understood as “one of the specific ways of being human”, next to the Jewish way, the Muslim way, the Hindu way or the Buddhist way<sup>28</sup>. Christology in the pluralist model is understood primarily in functional terms: Jesus is viewed as a manifestation of God (and of true humanity), not excluding other manifestations in other times

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<sup>24</sup> On this move, proposed by John Hick, see for example BARNES, J., *Christian Identity and Religious Pluralism*, Abingdon Press, Nashville 1992, p. 71ff.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. for example KNITTER, P., *Hans Küng’s theological Rubicon*, in SWIDLER, L., *Towards an Universal Theology of Religion*, Orbis, New York 1987, p. 228.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. HICK, J. – KNITTER, P., (Eds), *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, Orbis, New York 1987.

<sup>27</sup> Within the pluralist model, this ethical transformation is understood as taking place not just in one (Christian) religion but in all the living religious traditions.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. CANTWELL SMITH, W., *Toward a World Theology*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia 1981.

and places. Christian exclusivity in relation to Christ should therefore be understood as an exclusivity of personal commitment (such as in monogamous marriage). Similarly, the exclusive christological language of the New Testament documents should be interpreted in terms of the existential exclusivity of “love language”<sup>29</sup>.

The critics of the pluralist model point out that if all religious traditions are just alternative articulations of the same essence or experience or transformative process, there is not much space left for interfaith dialogue. The dialogue partners have essentially nothing to offer to each other. Moreover, as many critics say, within the pluralist model, Christian theological all-inclusive universalism (of both the exclusivist and the inclusivist models) seems to have been replaced not by genuine *pluralism* but rather by a sort of all-inclusive Enlightenment rationalist universalism.

Yet most proponents of the pluralist model, both worldwide and in the Czech Republic, are enthusiastic about interfaith dialogue, which they understand primarily as a welcome opportunity for mutually enriching exchange of insights and experiences. This is why they often support dialogue not just on conceptual/theological level, but also on experiential/spiritual level, i.e. they support and engage in common prayer, ritual, meditation, contemplation etc. In the Czech Republic most proponents of the pluralist model are in one way or another influenced by various elements of Eastern spirituality and New Age philosophy, sometimes combined with a very liberal understanding of Christianity.

### **The main purpose of interfaith dialogue today**

As we have seen, in the Czech Republic today, we find Christian exclusivists, non-exclusivist particularists, generous inclusivists and liberal pluralists. Exclusivists tend to see interfaith dialogue as a prepa-

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<sup>29</sup> As in statements such as “My mom is the best mom of the world”, cf. K. Stendahl, Notes for three Bible studies in G. ANDERSON, G., – STRANSKY, T., (Eds), *Christ's Lordship and Religious Pluralism*, Orbis, New York 1981, p. 14.

ration for (and a form of) proclamation, non-exclusivist particularists don't see much value in theological dialogue, but they engage in dialogue about common social, ethical, cultural and political concerns, inclusivists want to build interreligious friendship and mutual respect without closing the door towards mutual witness and addressing conflicting truth claims, pluralists don't really think there are any conflicting truth claims to address, but they are very supportive of dialogue on spiritual level.

But in recent years, a growing consensus seems to be emerging among Czech Christians who actively engage in interfaith encounters: the main purpose and most urgent task of interfaith dialogue does not really depend so much on whether one is an exclusivist, inclusivist or pluralist, i.e. on what sort of opinion one holds in relation to the Christian scandal of particularity. Why? Because the main purpose of interfaith dialogue seems to be very practical. As the world is progressively becoming a global village, interreligious relations (and tensions!) become one of the most significant social, political and cultural factors. It is also clearer today than ever before that humankind has only one common future, not a set of parallel isolated "futures"<sup>30</sup>. It seems therefore more and more obvious that all Christians (be they exclusivists, inclusivists or pluralists) have to do what they can to make sure "that our children inherit an inhabitable planet"<sup>31</sup>. Growing tensions and conflicts between people of different religious and cultural backgrounds are becoming a serious issue even in countries as secular as the Czech Republic. This is why besides conceptual-theological dialogue, which helps dialogue partners and their communities to get to know each other (and remove prejudices and stereotypes thereby), it seems that in the Czech Republic, like in many other countries, *practical dialogue* focused on common social and ethical concerns, which aims

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. MOLTSMANN, J., *Christianity and the world religions*, in HICK, J., – HEBBLEWHITE, B., (Eds), *Christianity and Other Religions*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1980, p. 191f.

<sup>31</sup> COBB, J., *Transforming Christianity and the World*, Orbis, New York 1999, p. 111.

at developing and cultivating a platform for peaceful coexistence and friendly cooperation on the basis of shared values is actually *by far the most important sort of interfaith dialogue* in the years to come.

In the words of Hans Küng, religions and their adherents are an important part of many serious problems of contemporary world. They must therefore become a part of solution as well. There is no peace among nations without peace among religions. Religious motivation is strong and ambiguous. It urges some believers to do the most noble things to other people and other believers to do the most horrible things to other people. At the same time, there is a significant and large agreement among religions in the area of ethical values, principles, standards and ideals, in fact a much greater agreement than in the area of theological claims and convictions<sup>32</sup>.

These key ideas of the so called “global ethic movement” (which Hans Küng and his colleagues initiated) set the agenda for the Czech branch of the *Global Ethic Foundation*, engaged in a number of educational activities and publishing projects<sup>33</sup>. A similar focus on practical cooperation on the basis of shared values is typical also of the Czech branch of the *International Council of Christians and Jews*<sup>34</sup>, as well as of the activist group called *The Common Voice of Jews, Christians and Muslims*<sup>35</sup>. Working towards peaceful coexistence and cooperation in areas of common concern by initiating interfaith encounters and cultivating interreligious relations is also one of the key agendas of the newly established Institute for dialogue under the umbrella of the *Czech Christian Academy*<sup>36</sup> and it remains one of the main emphases of the annual international conference *Forum 2000* taking place each fall in Prague<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. KÜNG, H., *Global Responsibility*, SCM Press, London 1991.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. [www.svetetos.cz](http://www.svetetos.cz).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. [www.krestane-zide.info](http://www.krestane-zide.info).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. [www.htf.cuni.cz](http://www.htf.cuni.cz).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. [www.krestanskaakademie.cz](http://www.krestanskaakademie.cz).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. [www.forum2000.cz](http://www.forum2000.cz).

This refocusing of interfaith dialogue from theological and/or religious themes to practical concerns and issues (peaceful coexistence of people coming from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, friendly cooperation in humanitarian projects, defending human rights etc.) has been criticized by some Christian theologians as a sort of resignation, as giving up on one's religious criteria, commitments and priorities and accepting instead a secular (religiously neutral) pragmaticist set of criteria. According to this sort of critique, interreligious dialogue has become a sort of crisis management, trying to pacify cultural conflicts and to address urgent social needs (locally and globally). In other words, inter-*religious* dialogue does not seem to be anything particularly *religious* any more. A Christian's engagement in this sort of activity does not seem to have anything to do with the specific content of Christian faith. In other words, there seems to be nothing particularly Christian about this sort of endeavor and - in fact - it is not clear why Christians should engage in it at the cost of neglecting their primary religious responsibilities.

I have to say that I agree wholeheartedly with those who say that this sort of criticism is completely *wrong*. Christian participants in interfaith dialogue focusing on practical issues such as peaceful coexistence and human rights violations are *not* betraying their Christian commitment in favour of some kind of pragmaticist ethics or syncretistic humanism. They are in fact enacting the deepest values of their Christian faith. In other words, they have profoundly *Christian* reasons for such an engagement. They are simply living out and implementing the *values and principles of God's kingdom* which is an essential part of Christian calling. Working towards peace and justice is a *sacred* activity, there is nothing secular about it. Joining forces with other people of good will, who are not Christians (including religious people who are not Christians) in working towards peace and justice by no means presupposes loosening or bracketing one's Christian commitment, compromising theologically or accepting a non-religious pragmaticist set of values and criteria. Christians are called to implement the values of God's kingdom and prepare thereby its eschatological coming – in



friendly cooperation with whoever wants to join the effort. This approach to religious plurality and interfaith cooperation may be called Kingdom-centered model<sup>38</sup>. It provides, I think, a solid *theological* justification for Christian engagement in interfaith dialogue, focusing primarily on practical concerns and issues.

In other words, since in today's world, interfaith dialogue (far from being an intellectual hobby for a few isolated enthusiasts) is gradually becoming a very important factor in social, cultural and political domain, it also becomes a shared *responsibility for all Christians*, called to live out and implement the qualities and values and principles of God's kingdom. And this is true both globally and locally, even in countries as secular as the Czech Republic.

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. DUPUIS, J., *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, Orbis, New York, 1997, p. 193n.

# **Media stance of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church during Euromaidan and the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine (November 2013 - February 2014)**

Archpriest George (Kovalenko Iurii)<sup>1</sup>

The stance of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Ukrainian media environment has developed for more than 20 years. Many statements made by the Church in the period of social and political crisis in Ukraine in autumn 2013 – winter 2014 were the result of theological conceptualization of social processes that originated in the 1990s and were tested by the political crisis of 2004-2005. The stance of the Church and its communication strategy was formed exclusively for pastoral reasons, and seeks to be adequate not only to the political situation in the country, but above all to the Gospel.

Let us try to reconstruct the chronology of events that were called the Euromaidan and the Revolution of Dignity, as well as an official response of the UOC to these events.

Political and social tensions in the country had evolved for several years prior to the Euromaidan. November 2013 was marked by students protests against the authorities' intention to postpone the signing of the Association between the EU and Ukraine. In those days,

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<sup>1</sup> Over the past 18 years the author of this article has actively participated in the creation of the electronic media of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Orthodoxy in Ukraine website, the official website of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the network of official websites of the UOC), general church information agencies (since 2001) and educational projects (e.g. Glas TV channel from 2005), as well as directly, as Chairman of the Synodal Information and Education Department of the UOC and press secretary to the Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Metropolitan Volodymyr of Kyiv and All Ukraine, in the formulation of principles and the formation of the information strategy of the UOC in Ukrainian media environment. Therefore, this article can be seen not only as an expert evaluation or research, but also as historical evidence of a direct participant in the ecclesial and social processes in Ukraine in the tenure of Metropolitan Volodymyr (Sabodan) of Kyiv and All Ukraine (+ 07.05.2014 ).

answering journalists' questions about the position of the Church regarding European integration of Ukraine, the following statement was formulated: "The Association Agreement with the EU and its possible signing for the Church is neither the Good Friday with its sufferings, nor the Easter with its joy. This issue is within the competence of the state leaders, experts and politicians."<sup>2</sup>

### **Last public statements by His Beatitude Metropolitan Volodymyr**

The developments of the night of November 29 to 30 led to radical changes of the situation and attitudes in society, which the authorities did not want to see, but the Church immediately responded to. On November 30, in the afternoon, His Beatitude Metropolitan Volodymyr made a statement on behalf of the UOC: "Due to the recent political developments in the country we bless... to lift prayers in all churches and monasteries for multiplication of love and eradication of all hatred and anger."

We urge clergymen and faithful, regardless of their political views, to pray together for peace, love, harmony, overcoming the divisions and hatred, prevention of violence and conflict resolution.

We remind all political leaders and statesmen who consider themselves believers and Christians, the biblical wisdom that "every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matt. 12, 25).

We remind you that we are all children of one God and citizens of one country. Therefore we have to do everything so that the political process did not go beyond the commandments of God and Christian morality, beyond the Constitution and laws of Ukraine."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://orthodoxy.org.ua/data/integrativis-ukrayini-v-ievropu-chi-ni-pro-poziciyu-cerkvi-divitsya-v-novomu-videoblozi-z.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://news.church.ua/2013/11/30/zayava-ukrajinskoji-pravoslavnoji-cerkvi-u-zvyazku-z-ostannimi-politichnimi-podiyami-v-krajini/>

The first statement articulates the key message to faithful – pray, and a call to politicians – conduct negotiations and come to a settlement without using force.

The last public video message of His Beatitude Metropolitan Volodymyr recorded on December 5, 2013, deserves a special mention. It was a direct speech, which was not specifically prepared. Just a couple of minutes, but the Metropolitan said the words that are still relevant: “I see the only way out of the situation that has developed – common dialogue, search for the ways that lead to mutual understanding, not hostility ... We all shall get together and remember our Christian virtues ...”<sup>4</sup> The Primate even offered the government and the opposition his residence as a place for potential negotiations<sup>5</sup>.

It was followed by a message of His Beatitude Metropolitan Volodymyr to the clergy and faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which was read out in all churches and monasteries, on December 19, and included numerous quotations from the Holy Scripture about the sense of Christian love, urging to strengthen fasting and prayer. This very message expressed the idea that reoccurred several times in official church documents and in numerous television and radio shows: “The Ukrainian Orthodox Church incorporates her faithful regardless of their political affiliation, region of residence and ethnic background.”<sup>6</sup>

This was followed by deterioration of health of the Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, he could no longer speak or sign documents. However, the Church did not remain speechless. Since then and until the election of the Locum Tenens of the Kyiv Metropolis the main speakers of the Church, who formed her official position and information strategy, had been Chief of Administrative Services of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Anthony (Pakanych)

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<sup>4</sup> <http://orthodoxy.org.ua/data/ievromaydan-vihodom-iz-situaciyi-shcho-stalasya-ya-bachu-iedine-spilniy-dialog-blazhennishiy>

<sup>5</sup> <http://orthodoxy.org.ua/data/ievromaydan-predstoyatel-upc-zaproponuvav-vladi-ta-opozyciyi-dlya-peregovoriv-svoyu-osobistu>

<sup>6</sup> <http://orthodoxy.org.ua/data/ievromaydan-predstoyatel-upc-zvernuvsya-doviryan-19-grudnya-tekst-zachitayut-v-usih-hramah>

and spokesman for the Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Chairman of the Synodal Information and Education Department of the UOC Archpriest George Kovalenko.

### **Our faithful on Maidan and beyond**

On December 1, about a million people took to the Maidan in downtown Kyiv. This was the beginning of the event, called “Euromaidan” at the moment, and later the Revolution of Dignity.

The situation changed daily and hourly. Decisions were made in real time and information messages were articulated online during live broadcasts.

On the first day, the Church called the faithful to prayer. But the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, unlike members of other religions, refused a formal offer of the opposition MPs to install their prayer tent on the Maidan (Kyiv central square), although, for example, the UOC installed its prayer tent on Khreshchatyk during Maidan-2004.

This was done for the same reason for which His Beatitude Volodymyr did not bless a prayer tent near the Parliament for representatives of the so-called “political orthodoxy,” protesting against the TINs, new passports, etc.

Moreover, the “political orthodoxy” was condemned by the Bishops’ Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in 2007<sup>7</sup>. The Church urged not to use church rhetoric and symbols in the political struggle and to refrain from political debate and political struggle within the church fence.

The Church did not bless religious processions of civic associations of the so-called “political orthodoxy”, neither did she bless the Euromaidan protests. For the Church as a religious organization it is not a matter of principle for which union a tent is standing or a demonstration is held. The sacred procession should not follow from a shrine

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<sup>7</sup> <http://orthodoxy.org.ua/data/nagaduiemo-politichne-pravoslavyya-zasudzhene-ukrayinskoyu-pravoslavnoyu-cerkvoyu.html>

to an administrative building, and the divine service shall be performed in churches and monasteries and not on the Maidan.

This is the inner motive of the decision made, but this decision had to be explained to the public and protesters, among whom the believers of the UOC were a majority.

Therefore, immediately on December 3, a public statement was made explaining “Why our priests are not present at the Euro-maidan”<sup>8</sup>, which stated: “First, our priests are present there, but as citizens having their position rather than political commissars or party organizers. Our Church does not seek publicity in political actions...”

And third, if the opinion of the Church is important for Maidan leaders, we are always ready to announce it and did it, among other things, in the first half of the day of that sad Saturday...”

Immediately, we gave the addresses of churches and monasteries adjoining the Maidan, where people could sleep, drink tea or warm up. For example, only in St. Michael's Church at Oleksandrivska Clinical Hospital more than 300 people received food, accommodation and medical assistance every day<sup>9</sup>.

Soon there was an opportunity to address the protesters from the Euromaidan scene.

## Commandments for Maidan

On Sunday, December 15, 2013, at one of the Popular Assemblies (Narodne Viche), which gathered several tens or hundreds of thousands of people, we were invited to address people from the Maidan's scene. The proposal was accepted and on the blessing of the Hierarchy Archpriest George Kovalenko spoke to the crowd in the main square

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<sup>8</sup> <http://orthodoxy.org.ua/data/publicznyy-otvet-pochemu-nashih-svyashchen-nikov-net-na-evromaydane.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://orthodoxy.org.ua/data/ievromaydan-ponad-300-osib-shchodnya-otrim-uyut-yizhu-nichlig-i-medichnu-dopomogu-v>

of the country on behalf of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church<sup>10</sup>. Then the main message to the Ukrainian society was articulated, which has been regularly voiced so far. We encouraged people to fulfill God's commandments and precepts translated them into the language of the current political situation in Ukraine. At that time four commandments sounded from the Maidan's scene.

1. "You shall not steal" means "No corruption"
2. "You shall not bear false witness" means "No lies and manipulation!"
3. "You shall not kill" means "No violence!"
4. "You shall not make for yourself an image," as a reminder that we should not blindly believe and place all our hopes on political leaders or political and geopolitical alliances.

It was both a sermon and assessment of the political situation in the biblical language at the same time. Indeed, in most cases, it is corruption, lies and violence that cause people's discontent. And the way out is overcoming these vices and sins. At the same time, it was stressed from the Maidan's scene that it concerns not only the authorities, but everyone of us.

## **All-Ukraine Council of Churches and Religious Organizations**

One of the main areas of formation and expression of a consolidated position of the religious community of Ukraine is the All-Ukraine Council of Churches and Religious Organizations, which represents more than 90% of religious communities in the country. In difficult times of autumn 2013 – winter 2014, it was the Ukrainian Orthodox Church that chaired the AUCCRO. In the most tense moments of confrontation, the AUCCRO mediated the talks between the government and the opposition, and, at a moment, between the opposition and the Maidan.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/article/25201404.html>

A consolidated position of the AUCCRO is explicated in the recently published book “Maidan and Church”<sup>11</sup>, as well as on the organisation’s website.<sup>12</sup>

### Three monks between Berkut and barricades

Talking about the violent confrontation in the downtown of Kyiv, one cannot but recall an example of a true Christian peacemaking on Hrushevskogo street, photos of which flew over the front pages of world news agencies.

On January 21 in the morning, at a dawn, on the third day of continuing violent confrontation, three hieromonks rose between Berkut riot police and barricades. As a result, the shooting and throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails, explosions of stun grenades ceased for 22 hours. Several priests and laymen of different political affiliation, who chose the Christian way of peacemaking, joined the monks.

After direct contact with the monks a commentary was voiced in the information environment: “I’ve just returned from Hrushevskoho street. First impression: God heard the prayers of hieromonks Melchizedek, Gabriel and Ephraim. Ukraine has been given a chance. But it’s up to the authorities, political leaders and people to take this chance.”<sup>13</sup>

Unfortunately, the chance was not taken and when violent confrontation resumed and peacekeepers began to be used as human shields, they left the neutral zone just the way they had come – in a procession. It can be perceived as a miracle that none of them sustained injuries,

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<sup>11</sup> Майдан і Церква. Хроніка подій та експертна оцінка / Українська асоціація релігієзнавців / За загальною редакцією д. філос. н. Филипович Л. О. і канд. філос. н. Горкуші О. В. – К.: Самміт-Книга, 2014. – 656 с.: іл..

<sup>12</sup> <http://vrciro.org.ua/ua/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://orthodoxy.org.ua/data/ievromaydan-komentar-z-vulgrushevskogo-bog-pochuv-molitvu-svyashchenikov-chenciv-chi>



but in the morning there were first dead among the protesters –Armenian Serhiy Nihoyan and Belarusian Mykhail Zhyznevsyy.

### **Church's attitude towards political activity of clergymen and faithful**

The Church faced the task to do her best so that the political division did not lead to divisions within the Church. At the same time the UOC felt responsible for maintaining the country's unity and offered her own internal model as a basis for such unity.

In this situation, initially a position has been declared that the Church does not divide the faithful on political, regional, linguistic and geopolitical grounds. But the Church does not prohibit her faithful and clergymen to have a political position. Moreover, it is guaranteed in the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations,<sup>14</sup> Article 5 whereof provides that “clergymen are entitled to participate in political life on an equal basis with all other citizens.”

In this regard, it is necessary to clarify once again the Church's attitude towards political activism and “political orthodoxy”.

In this difficult time of high level of politicization of Ukrainian society, it was stated that “there will be no church penalties for political actions and statements whether anyone likes it or not. While the Church has condemned ‘political orthodoxy,’ the Church does not impose canonical sanctions to clergymen and faithful who take part in the political processes. The main thing is that they should not present their private political opinion as the stance of the Church, should not create political organizations and movements ‘in the Church's name’ without the blessing of the Church should not deliberately oppose their opinion to official statements and documents of the Church.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/987-12>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.pravmir.ru/golos-cerkvi-v-usloviyax-politicheskogo-krizisa-i-silovogo-protivostoyaniya-v-ukraine/#ixzz3PT6QIUIW>

## “Heaven’s Hunderd”

The most dramatic moment of the Revolution of Dignity became the forceful dispersal of demonstrators near the Parliament on February 18, the assault on the Maidan on February 19, and the shooting of snipers at unarmed protesters on Institutska street on February 20, followed by the flight of President Yanukovych from the country.

The Church once again raised her voice on that tragic turning point of the recent history.

On February 18, Chief of the Administrative Services of the UOC Metropolitan Anthony said: “Violent confrontation, bloodshed, killings of people resumed on the streets of Kyiv once again. In these moments we hear disturbing reports about new collisions on the Maidan (Independence Square). In this difficult time, we once again strongly condemn bloodshed and call: Stop! Immediately stop violence and resume the dialogue!”<sup>16</sup>

On February 19, the AUCCRO set forth its consolidated position: “The All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations strongly condemns the violence, bloodshed and killings that took place on February 18, 2014 in Kyiv and have continued so far. We call again and again, we ask and plead the opposing sides to stop the use of force, and ask representatives of government and opposition to continue negotiations.”<sup>17</sup>

On February 20, when the criminal order to shoot at people was given, the official speaker of the Church to which President Yanukovych claimed to belong, stated unequivocally, first on his Facebook page, and then on air of the central channels: “I’m translating into plain language the statement by the AUCCRO, where the UOC is presiding now, saying: ‘The All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and religious organizations strongly condemns violence, bloodshed and

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.unian.ua/politics/886144-keruyuchiy-spravami-upts-mp-brattyay-sestri-ne-rozrivayte-ukrajinu.html>

<sup>17</sup> <http://vrciro.org.ua/ua/statements/370-statement-about-escalation-of-violence-in-kyiv>

murder.’ This means that there is no God’s blessing on those who shoot at people and give orders to shoot at people. God’s blessing is on peacemakers who are the ‘sons of God!’”<sup>18</sup>

No doubt, a consistent and unequivocal position of all the churches and religious organizations of Ukraine without exception contributed to ending of the bloodshed in the city center, disgraceful flight of the president and top government officials, adoption by the Parliament of all the decisions needed to run the government institutions.

On February 22, Saturday of Remembrance of the Departed Parents, a blessing was bestowed to “specially remember the victims and pray for the repose of their souls and the forgiveness of sins without differentiation on political or any other grounds. Before God there is neither right nor left; neither policeman nor protester. The Church prays for the repose of their souls, for the forgiveness of sins and God’s mercy to those who prematurely appeared before the Unhypocritical Judge and Merciful God.”<sup>19</sup>

Those days the center of the city, still black with smoke and soot, was strewn with fresh flowers, and the deceased participants of the Revolution of Dignity became known as the “Heaven’s Hundred”, and a traditional slogan of Ukrainian patriots “Heroes never die” acquired a passionate and paschal meaning.

At the same time, a tide of propagandist aggression and misunderstanding was raised by the media of the Russian Federation and by Russians in social networks. An emotional response to this was a post by the author of this article on Facebook, which was immediately picked up by the media and even quoted by the Ukrainian representative at the meeting with the UN Security Council: “Dear Russians, if you still have a tiny bit of love for us, Ukrainians, stop calling us ‘fascists’, ‘Banderovites’, ‘Nazis’ and ‘nationalists’ even in private conversations! These words kill! Remember the Savior’s words (Matt. 5: 21-22)!

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/kovalenkogeorgiy/posts/539911819440124>

<sup>19</sup> <http://orthodoxy.org.ua/data/cerkva-blagoslovila-22-lyutogo-osoblivo-pominiti-zagiblih-zaklikala-skasuvati-vsi-rozvagi-na>

You know what struck me most yesterday, when I looked from the Maidan's scene at the square in which there were people and coffins? This is that on the corner of Institutska and Khreshchatyk, where the bloody clashes took place, the banner advertising Sberbank stretched the entire height of the building, and there is a branch of Russian Sberbank in the building, and the barricades give into the absolutely intact glass windows...

We do not fight against Russians, Russian-speaking population or the canonical Church, as many of your media agencies claim. But I do not want to discuss your media.

I'm just asking all of you: if we are members of the one Orthodox Church, if you think Kyiv is the 'mother of Russian cities', do not provoke, but just pray for us and listen to us!"<sup>20</sup>

Unfortunately, only in a few days the annexation of Crimea began, followed by the war in eastern Ukraine.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/kovalenkogeorge/posts/728286520537186>

# Orthodoxy and America

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Dorian Llywelyn

A comprehensive study of the Orthodox Christianity in the United States would require not a paper but a series of conferences, and need the expertise of specialists from a wide range of disciplines. This introductory study will therefore suffer from inevitable lacunae and generalizations. With those caveats, I will however make a brave, if foolhardy attempt, to give a brief history of American Orthodox identity and consider the impact on it of some broad trends in American culture.

Eastern Christianity in the United States has always been fluid, an unsurprising situation for a large country consisting of communities of many different origins. An atlas of American Orthodoxy laconically describes its topic as an “internally diverse and complex family of Churches.”<sup>1</sup> Many churches there claim the title “Orthodox,” including Eastern Orthodox churches such as the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches, Oriental Orthodox such as the Armenian Church, along with bodies which are held to be schismatic by the main branches of Orthodoxy. Until recently, hard data has been hard to come by. Churches have tended to overestimate membership figures, and there has been no commonly agreed sociological differentiation between formal and active membership. The fullest inter-Orthodox survey ever undertaken in the United States suggests that in 2010 the US was home to just over 1,000,000 Orthodox adherents.<sup>2</sup> In other words, roughly one in every 300 Americans is Orthodox, and most

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<sup>1</sup> KRINDATCH, A., *Atlas of American Orthodox Christian Churches*, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline – MA, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> <http://hirr.hartsem.edu/research/orthodoxpaper.html>.

live in just five states: California, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Illinois. Of these, the Greeks constitute more than half of all Orthodox Christians in the US. The other portion consists of multiple, often numerically very small church bodies, differentiated largely by ethnic heritage.

Many Orthodox Christians have achieved prominence in public life. Yet the same cannot be said for the Churches considered as collective organizations. There are no Orthodox parallels, for example to the Catholic educational or medical systems. In comparison with their Protestant and Catholic counterparts, Orthodox communities in the United States have placed greater importance on preserving their distinct ethnic heritage. It is reasonable to conclude this emphasis which has contributed to their comparative cultural isolation and limited engagement with civic life. However individual Orthodox Christians of different generations may think of themselves in terms of nationality or identity, their churches have tended to operate in unity with their ancestral geographical roots. As a result, they have feet in both the countries of Eastern Europe and the Middle East, and the realities of contemporary American life.

The tensions of this bifurcated loyalty are, I think, of the very essence of the American Orthodox experience. This is a complex patrimony, one whose implications—pastoral, intellectual, practical, legal, psychological and spiritual—resist easy mapping. At heart lies the question of negotiating the relative importance of the components of identity: are Greek Orthodox in America primarily Greek or Orthodox? What is Romanian about the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America? The answers to such questions are difficult and often depend on context. Historian Mark Stokoe notes “that in externals, Orthodox Christians in North America resemble Roman Catholics. They share a similar sacramental view of life; liturgical forms of corporate worship; traditional forms of piety ... and generally ‘conservative’ positions on contemporary moral issues. In administration, the Orthodox in North America resemble Protestants, (being) splintered into distinct administrative ‘jurisdictions,’ divisions based on ethnic origin and politics,

both secular and ecclesiastical. In self-identity ... Orthodox Christians in North America are like Orthodox Jews; a people apart, unable and at times unwilling to separate the claims of race, religion, and politics: people for whom the Greek term 'diaspora' ('dispersion') has been an expression of enduring meaning."<sup>3</sup>

To those comparisons, I would like to add two more: American Orthodoxy exhibits both a practical Nestorianism and a psychological monophysitism.

### American Nestorianism

Nestorius, archbishop of Constantinople from 428-43, preached a view of Christ which was, according to his opponents, heretical. Nestorius envisaged the body of Jesus as a container for two persons, respectively divine and human, who had no essential link between them. How the relationship between the divine and the human in Jesus was construed was more than abstruse metaphysics. It also informed a series of analogous binaries that included belonging to Christ and being in the world, religious and secular loyalties, the role of bishops and the power of emperors, and canon law and state legislation.

A historical excursus is necessary at this point. In 1648, the Russian explorer Simeon Dezhnev established a trading post in the Bering Straits, which was effectively the landing point for Eastern Christianity in the western hemisphere. Over the succeeding generations, and largely through intermarriage, some of the native peoples converted to Orthodoxy. In 1794, ten missionaries from St. Petersburg arrived in Alaska, marking the first formal ecclesiastical presence and the raising of the first Orthodox church building in the Americas. By 1767, Greek traders from Asia Minor had arrived on the other coast in Florida, establishing another, but distinct, Orthodox presence. Presumably, neither

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<sup>3</sup> STOKOE, M. – KISHKOVSKY, L., *Orthodox Christians in North America (1794-1994)*, Orthodox Church in America, Oyster Bay Cove – NY 1994, p. 2.

community was aware of the other's existence. A significant step forward in solidifying Orthodoxy came in 1841, when the Russian Orthodox Church created the first diocese for the North American continent.

We should distinguish the presence of Orthodox Christians from the presence of the Orthodox Church *qua* church. Traders, after all, are traders, not missionaries. Gradually, Orthodox Christians began to settle, predominantly in the large ports of both seaboard. In the first new Orthodox parish established in 1862 in Galveston, Texas, Greeks, Russians, Serbs, and Syrian Orthodox worshipped together in a mix of Slavonic, Greek and English. The parish was formed in response for a desire a church to serve an already existent social community, a pattern that has typified the spread of Orthodoxy in the United States for most its history. Broadly speaking, this growth was the fruit neither of ecclesiastical enterprise nor of monastic expansion, but of lay-led initiatives.<sup>4</sup> Typically, Orthodox Christians from the same ethnic, linguistic, or regional group would organize themselves into a society, raise dues and locate a place to celebrate liturgy, writing to their home territory in Europe or the Middle East seeking a priest.

Some branches of Orthodoxy already possessed a historical experience of pastoral care for diasporic communities, and in theory had in place canonical structures to support it: the Greek and Armenian communities in the Ottoman *millets* come to mind. But the improvised circumstances and, more importantly, the worldview of the homeland churches, meant that the connections between Orthodox Christians in the New World with their churches of origin were limited. Internal and international communications were slow and haphazard, and relationships with supervising bishops were fluid and often canonically vague. Given the vast sizes of eparchies and dioceses and the fact that a bishop might well live in another continent, hierarchs for many Orthodox in the US were remote figures who had little connection with

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<sup>4</sup> FERENCZ, N., *American Orthodoxy and Parish Congregationalism*, Gorgias Press, Piscataway – NJ 2009, p. 168-172, finds the origins of lay leadership in American Orthodoxy in the lay brotherhoods of late medieval Russia.



the local realities of life. Geographical distance rendered frequent pastoral visits impossible, and many parishes were de facto independent of episcopal control in the financial and material realms, and sometimes in the spiritual domain too.

To return to American Nestorianism: among the essential, non-negotiable and totemic emblems of American identity are freedom and democracy. Liberty is understood as the right to self-determination and self-expression, and in that guise can be found in both the major sources of American thought, viz. Puritanism and the Enlightenment. The motto “No Taxation Without Representation” that expressed the grievances of the New England colonists inevitably found its way into the mindset of American Orthodoxy. As successive generations were educated in the American school system, they inevitably imbibed the ideals of American citizenship, embracing with political democracy a *Weltanschauung* that contrasted strongly with the monarchic, autocratic style of some priests and bishops. As Nicolas Ferencz points out, the peculiarities of history and ambient Protestant culture have not infrequently combined to form an American Orthodox ecclesiology which has been effectively Congregationalist, i.e., where each individual Christian community is self-responsible and self-governing, seeing itself as being a complete realization of Christ’s church.<sup>5</sup> The legacy of the Constitution of the United States, together with a long history of lay leadership have combined to form an instinct that the proper demesne of the hierarchy is the spiritual and the theological, while the material belongs to the laity. This distinction owes more than a little to the American separation of legislative, juridical and executive powers into a *trias politica*.

Another important factor that needs to be taken into account is the American doctrine of the “separation of church and state.” This phrase appears nowhere in the Constitution, but is a shorthand for the clauses of the First Amendment to the effect that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free

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<sup>5</sup> Ferencz, op. cit., *passim*.

exercise thereof.” The theologian Roger Williams (1603-83), founder of Rhode Island, availing himself of both scripture and Protestant theology, preached that government should remove itself from matters of religion, which was purely the responsibility of individual conscience. Thomas Jefferson championed the idea employing a political register: “I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should ‘make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,’ thus building a wall of separation between Church & State.”<sup>6</sup> Jefferson’s thought is indebted to the work of John Locke, who likewise argued for the free exercise of individual conscience.

How that principle operates remains a matter of lively and often bitter debate in the United States. In the most absolute version of this scheme, the only legitimate locus of religion is the home—the domestic family and the religious family of the church. The discomfort of the thinkers of the Enlightenment with religious ritual, along with their tendency to reduce faith to the sphere of the socially useful and the ethical, also flow into this general American construal of religion as consisting primarily of worship, individual conviction, and good works. The concept lends itself easily to a split between the personal and the public. “I am”, said John Kennedy famously, “the Democratic Party’s candidate for president, who happens also to be a Catholic ... Whatever issue may come before me as president, I will make my decision ... in accordance with what my conscience tells me to be the national interest, and without regard to outside religious pressures or dictates.”<sup>7</sup>

The Nestorian separation easily takes on psychological dimensions. Exiles and immigrants can be notoriously fickle in how they simultaneously yearn for the homeland and espouse the values of their new home. According to context, someone might feel variously Serbian or

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<sup>6</sup> Jefferson’s 1802 Letter to the Danbury Baptists, <http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.html>

<sup>7</sup> Transcript of Sept. 12, 1960, speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association; <http://www.jfklibrary.org/AssetViewer/ALL6YEBJMEKYGMCntnSCvg.aspx>

American. At home, at church, and in their own social organizations and gathering places, Eastern Christians in the US could feel strongly attached to their traditions. Yet at the same time, in the worlds of education, and public and professional life, they functioned as Americans. Thus in the lives of individuals and communities alike, the constitutional separation of church and state could easily become internalized as a division between the spiritual and the temporal.

One manifestation of this separation was the adoption of American skepticism about established authority. During the Second World War, the British government enlisted the anthropologist Margaret Mead to help explain Americans to the British, following widespread resentment at the presence of American soldiers in Britain, summarized in the popular phrase that they were “overpaid, over-sexed and over here.”<sup>8</sup> Mead pointed out that the United States was founded by young men and mavericks, a country in which social competency was to unusual extent in the hands of children, who were more likely to be bilingual and bicultural than their parents, and who could therefore better negotiate the new realities.<sup>9</sup> Under these conditions, inherent deference to authority and seniority was less of a social value. In the churches, lay people largely administered parish life, including hiring and firing priests. Hierarchs whose experiences was rooted in the mind-sets of Eastern Europe and the Middle East, and who were accustomed to exercising a more monarchic style of priesthood could be surprised to find their American flocks feisty and not easily cowed. The Greek Orthodox community has removed more than one bishop due to leading laymen’s dissatisfaction with the style and direction of leadership. American society is famously prone to litigation. The history of American Orthodoxy includes many instances of lay Christians taking intra-ecclesial disputes, especially regarding property, to civil law courts.

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<sup>8</sup> GARDINER, J., *“Overpaid, Oversexed, and Over Here”: The American GI in World War II Britain*, Abbeville Press, New York 1992.

<sup>9</sup> MEAD, M., *The American Troops and the British Community: An Examination of the Relationship between the American Troops and the British*, Hutchinson, London 1944 and idem, *The Yank in Britain*, *Current Affairs* 64 (March 11, 1944), p. 4-16.

One of the more dramatic ways in which groups of Eastern Christians sought to preserve and their cultural and religious identity was through whole parishes and communities changing jurisdictions. The most dramatic example of this was the birth on American soil of two new uniquely American Orthodox Churches. The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese and the Orthodox Ukrainian Church of the USA Diaspora both emerged out of tensions between Eastern Catholics and the Roman Catholic hierarchy who did not understand or accept their valid traditions and particular needs.

This historic segmentation between an Old World identity closely associated with religious allegiance and an American identity molded by the mores of the New World is however likely to be both tempered and complicated by the presence of converts, who become religiously Orthodox but who are fully American in terms of culture. Changing one's religious affiliation is more common in America than in anywhere else in the Western world: one estimate suggests that some 40% of all Americans will shift their religious allegiance at least once in their lives.<sup>10</sup> The phenomenon of adult conversion seems to be a defining aspect of American Orthodoxy.<sup>11</sup> Just over half of the members of the Orthodox Church in America (the descendent of the first Russian diocese), have become Orthodox as adults. In the "spiritual marketplace" of America, where affiliation is regarded almost exclusively as an individual choice, the exotic appeal of Orthodoxy with its countercultural cherishing of tradition and its sumptuous liturgical aesthetics has particularly attracted clergy. Fully one third of America's Orthodox clergy are converts from Catholicism, Anglicanism and the evangelical churches. Prone to the zeal typical of new converts—and sometimes with limited capacity in the vernacular languages or the social realities of those churches—such

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<sup>10</sup> SHERKAT, D., *Changing Faith: The Dynamics and Consequences of Americans Shifting Religious Identities*, NYU Press, New York 2014.

<sup>11</sup> See SLAGLE, A., *The Eastern Church in the Spiritual Marketplace: American Conversions to Orthodox Christianity*, Illinois UP, DeKalb – IL 2011, and HERBEL, D. O., *Turning to Tradition: Converts and the Making of an American Orthodox Church*, Oxford University Press, New York 2014.

clergy may be tempted to emphasize the “non-American” aspects of Orthodoxy and be protective of tradition to such a degree as to alienate those of their parishioners whose generational roots are in ethnic Orthodoxy, but who are in all other respects culturally American. Interestingly, too, several evangelical groups have joined Orthodoxy as groups: notable among these are former members of the evangelical student movement Campus Crusade for Christ who eventually formed a dedicated mission under the aegis of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of America.<sup>12</sup>

Multi-ethnicity, at least in some sectors, is yet another of the characteristically American faces of Orthodoxy. Not surprisingly, the Churches which are the most multi-ethnic—the Orthodox Church in America and the Antiochian Orthodox—attract most converts. Under these circumstances, the Nestorian segmentation of life that has typified especially mono-ethnic churches will evolve and might lead us to expect its gradual waning. Yet the continuing arrival of new Orthodox immigrants will perpetuate the pattern. Among the newest groups to settle in large enough numbers to establish parishes are Egyptian Copts. Economic factors have led to the most dramatic recent percentage growth, which has occurred in the Romanian, Bulgarian, and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox churches. And given the chronic political instability of the Middle East, it seems likely that members of the ancient Orthodox communities there will continue to seek refuge and freedom in America.

### The Monophysite Option

If Nestorianism represents a split between religious and secular spheres, monophysitism represents its polar opposite: the fusion of the religious and the secular. Monophysite (“one nature”) Christology held a variety of positions about the relationship of the human and the divine dimensions of Jesus. Broadly speaking, all concurred that in

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<sup>12</sup> See GILQUIST, P. E., *Becoming Orthodox: A Journey to the Ancient Christian Faith*, Conciliar Press, Ben Lomond – CA, 1989.

the Incarnation, the internal human elements in Jesus (mind, soul, or will) were subsumed into his divinity, with the result that Jesus' human body was inhabited by a purely divine nature. The political analogues of this theology included theocracy and the Constantinian solidarity between church and empire, which translated the emperor's powers into the realm of the sacred.

The Christological disputes of the early church and the machinations of Byzantine statecraft are a long way from 21<sup>st</sup>-century America, and might seem abstruse. Their progeny is very much alive, however. What might be the more immediate causes of this American Orthodox fusion between cultural and religious identities? The single most salient experience is of course, immigration. The ancestors of many of today's Orthodox Americans were processed at Ellis Island in New York and other entry points during the surge of mass immigration that took place between 1890 and 1920. These immigrants' intentions and backgrounds varied: while some came in search of a better life, others sought to escape bitter experiences of repression, drawn by the prospect of "liberty and justice for all."<sup>13</sup> Some undertook the long journey with the hope of eventually returning home wealthy. Others came with the firm intention of settling and making a new life in the United States. Such differences naturally affected how people conceived of and experienced their religion and its relationship to their new place of residence. Where people came from, what experience of church they brought with them, when they crossed the Atlantic and where they made their new home all naturally affected how people conceived of and experienced their faith. To one degree or another, such historical factors continue to shape the churches of the East in the West. Over generations, immigrants' religion has molded how people understand themselves and others.<sup>14</sup>

Inevitably immigrants gather together and form social organizations for mutual support in the traumas of uprooting and re-settlement.

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<sup>13</sup> From the "Pledge of Allegiance."

<sup>14</sup> CONNOR, P., *Immigrant Faith: Patterns of Immigrant Religion in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe*, NYU Press, New York 2014; helps contextualize the Orthodox experience.

Prime among these organizations is the church, which could easily take on a central importance not only in the spiritual sphere, but also in the material realm. The immigrant found himself in the company of others who shared culture, language, history, and religious sensibilities, along with the experience of being uprooted and transplanted into a new, foreign soil: “absence from his ancestral home ... the threat of losing his nationality and dying in a strange caused [the immigrant] to embrace his religion with a fervor he never had ... He attended church because it reminded him of home.”<sup>15</sup> Under the testing experiences of immigration into a new and unknown land, each community would ineluctably look back at the motherland and think of it as its true spiritual home. An ethnic parish was an extension of the homeland in its sociological and psychological dimensions as well as its spiritual aspects. In immigrant Orthodox communities, “parish was synonymous with ghetto.”<sup>16</sup>

While the patterns of all immigration broadly conform in varying degrees to discernible patterns, I would argue that the Orthodox experience has a subtle and distinctive theological aspect. In that tradition, the Sunday liturgy is the place in which the community most clearly functions as community. Orthodox theology understands the “today” and “now” of liturgical texts and actions to be the continuation of what was originally the “there” of the history of the people of Israel, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and the life of the fledgling Christian community. Aleksander Gomola notes that “Christians of any era wishing to follow the principles of their religion have to identify on the constant basis with a specific geographical and historical reality from the past, making it present.”<sup>17</sup> At the same time as being united with events of time past, Christian worship also anticipates and is united

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<sup>15</sup> SALUTOS, T., *The Greeks in the United States*, Harvard UP, Cambridge – MA 1995, p. 122.

<sup>16</sup> MICHALOPULOS, G. C. – HAM, H., *The American Orthodox Church: A History of Its Beginnings*, Regina Orthodox Press, Salisbury – MA 2003, p. 49.

<sup>17</sup> GOMOLA, A., *Cognitive Mechanisms at Work and their Perlocutionary Effect in Catholic Preaching: A Case Study*, in KWIATKOWSKA, A. (Ed.), *Texts and Minds: Papers in Cognitive Poetics and Rhetoric*, Peter Lang, New York 2012, p. 287-299 at 292.

with the worship of the timeless life of heaven, “now and forever and unto the ages of ages.” In the words of the “Cherubic hymn,” in prayer and ritual, worshipers “mystically represent the cherubim,” not only standing in for (representing) the citizens of heaven, but re-presenting them. Sacred languages, iconography, chant and ritual engage the physically senses in the here-and-now and connect them to the spiritual sense of a reality which transcends time and place.

But ritual also performs and expresses other encounters and relationships: it has dimensions that that are horizontal as well as vertical, geographical as well as temporal, and secular as well as religious. Gomola goes on to observe that that “time/space compression stands at the centre of the Christian faith.”<sup>18</sup> The immigrant church is more than a location for exilic nostalgia: it re-presents the homeland to the exile and vice versa. In other words, as a sacrament of communal identity, churches provide connection with ancestral places of origin. In ritual, differing orders of existence, communities, places and times are brought and welded together: the distant history of first-century Palestine with immigrants’ historical place of origin, the new life in America with the purview of the everlasting life of heaven. This compression is more than a casual association. In ritual, these times and places become interpenetrated with each other, so that one cannot be understood or experienced without necessarily invoking all the dimensions of the other. In a process of consecration by contact, all the realities of the homeland, when warmed by distance and selective memory, easily become tinged with the transcendent. The homeland becomes a Holy Land, and the native tongue the language in which God speaks. Liturgy is the maximum intensity of this ontological porosity. Yet the social life of a church - its annual feasts and celebrations, its clubs and organizations - also performs this interpenetration. Indeed the church building itself makes an inseparably ethno-religious and political claim on public space: it says “we too are here in America.”

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<sup>18</sup> GOMOLA, A., *Cognitive Mechanisms at Work and their Perlocutionary Effect in Catholic Preaching: A Case Study*, in KWIATKOWSKA, A. (Ed.), *Texts and Minds: Papers in Cognitive Poetics and Rhetoric*, Peter Lang, New York 2012, p. 287-299 at 292.



The links between ethnic particularity, the sacramental life of Orthodox communities and collective identity are strong and close. Orthodoxy in America began formally as a Russian mission which then rapidly found itself in new and unfamiliar situation of ethnic complexity. The turn-of-the-century swell in the numbers of Orthodox immigrants now made it possible for them to re-segregate into a number of “we too are here” communities, in which the “we” was ethnic rather than Orthodox. The consolidation of substantial populations of Orthodox of the same ethnicity therefore brought about jurisdictional challenges and changes.

The venerable principle of “one territory, one state, one church and one bishop,” dates back to the “Apostolic Canons,” a collection of ecclesiastical decrees concerned with church governance and compiled probably in the fourth and fifth centuries C.E. Bishop Tikhon (1865-1925) of the Russian diocese—later Patriarch of Moscow and now Saint Tikhon—saw the oversight of all Orthodox in the United States as his responsibility and right. However, if in Russia, to be Russian was to be Orthodox, in America the reverse was not necessarily true. Holy Trinity in New York, the first designated Greek Orthodox parish in the United States, got its priests not from the Russian Bishop of Brooklyn, Tikhon’s vicar, but rather from the Holy Synod of Greece. Upon visiting Holy Trinity on Good Friday 1904, Bishop Tikhon was forcefully invited by the Greek trustees of the parish to leave, on the basis that as a Russian hierarch, he had no business officiating at a Greek liturgy and could have nothing to say to them. Fearing Russian ecclesiastical intrusion on what they understood to be their physical property—and the Russification or Anglicizing of their spiritual property, the Holy Liturgy—, Holy Trinity became privately incorporated under state law, under the supervision of a board of lay trustees. Theodore Saloutos holds that “neither a coercive government nor ecclesiastical decrees could have compelled these pioneers to maintain and administer their church communities with the turbulent aggressiveness that characterized them.”<sup>19</sup> Their actions suggested that the Greeks of Holy Trinity

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<sup>19</sup> Saloutos, 123.

parish considered themselves primarily to be Greeks in America rather than Orthodox in America, and Greek-Orthodox rather than Greeks and Orthodox. The ancient, Old World principle of coextensivity of territory and church was thus abrogated in the novel conditions and wide expanses of the New.

Despite the decree of the Synod of Constantinople of 1872 that forbade the establishment of two competing churches in the same place for ethnic or linguistic reasons, national partialities have ever made a significant mark on American Eastern Christianity.<sup>20</sup> If the hierarchs conceived of the Orthodox Church as being fundamentally one, the laity experience did not necessarily their faith as such. Cultural loyalties effectively trumped universal theological principles. As each national or ethnic group consolidated its collective presence in the United States, it appeared, as though by nature, that it required separate juridical provision for its spiritual life.

It is then, the monophysite unity of religious and cultural affiliations that makes “the internally diverse, and complex family of churches”<sup>21</sup> of American Orthodoxy highly complex and diverse and sometimes less than fraternal. As in all families, there are common ancestry and genetic similarities, but also family disputes, simmering sibling rivalries, and generational shifts. American Christians whose religious roots lie in one ancient Patriarchate may now be found not only in different parishes, but also in different and sometimes competing Churches. Given a certain conviction - sometimes enshrined in canon law - that diasporic Orthodox communities are still really part of the original territories from which they derive, a plethora of ecclesiastical jurisdictions may easily exist in the same place. Today, my hometown, Los Angeles, has resident bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, the Antiochian Orthodox Church, the Serbian Orthodox Church,

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<sup>20</sup> “Pan-Orthodoxy in North America: Towards a Local Church,” the 2012 Symposium of the Huffington Ecumenical Institute, Los Angeles, considered *inter alia* the role of ethnicity in Orthodoxy and Eastern Catholicism. See <http://bellarmine.lmu.edu/ecumenical/pan-orthodoxy.htm>

<sup>21</sup> See note 1.

the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch – one state, one territory, but many churches and many bishops.

### Faith and Culture

It is reasonable to guess that many Orthodox immigrants hoped to preserve at least some aspects of their way of life. Yet with the gradual Americanization brought about by inculturation, that culture could easily be lost by succeeding generations. In the context of church, particular ethno-religious identity could be fostered in liturgy, but also through youth movements, women's organizations, or by restricting mixed marriages; in the secular realm, cultural activities and philanthropic works easily complemented church life. Yet second and third-generation Americans tended to lose quickly even the demotic form of their ancestral languages. Liturgical Greek or Slavonic, which were markers of religious and cultural identity, rapidly became inaccessible to most parishioners.

Eastern Christian churches therefore took upon themselves the onus of cultural guardianship, a task which they had not had to do in the same manner in their countries of origin. While this endeavor can be sympathized with as a matter of expediency, it was a Trojan horse that concealed the danger of making the parish *primarily* a cultural and social unit. The late 2<sup>nd</sup>-century *Letter to Diognetus* famously states that Christians are “indistinguishable from other men either by nationality, language or customs. They do not inhabit separate cities of their own, or speak a strange dialect, or follow some outlandish way of life ... They pass their days upon earth, but they are citizens of heaven.”<sup>22</sup> In diasporas however, immigrant Christians may well be marked out by language and custom, and sometimes by their religious practice too. Such was the experience of many Orthodox communities.

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<sup>22</sup> *Letter to Diognetus*. In EHRMAN, B. D. (Ed. and trans), *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 2, Harvard UP, Cambridge 2003, p. 5-6.

Such distinctiveness can engender hostility from the mainstream. Since it is also a bulwark against that hostility, what distinguishes “us” from the mainstream can become a cherished patrimony. One highly negative result of the amalgamation of culture and faith has been preserving ethnic heritage at the expense of mission. American Orthodoxy has not, at least since its very early days, much sought to expand beyond its social seedbed. “Rare,” says Peter Bouteneff, “were the immigrants whose vision and priorities were such that linguistic and ethnic particulars were ... placed at the service of theological and spiritual content.”<sup>23</sup> The more homogeneous a church is in its composition, the less it is likely to gain new adherents from outside its own circle. This is particular egregious in the case of mono-ethnicity, for it is impossible for an outsider to convert fully to another ethnicity. Many parishes and dioceses have historically seen themselves as not being fully part of American society, or at least as holding dual citizenship. As a result, engagement with the American secular world and its problems *as a church* has been less pressing a concern than perpetuating bonds with their spiritual and geographical origins. The title of the Russian-affiliated Orthodox Church is “*in America*”, not “*of America*.” The choice of preposition indicates a certain understanding about the nature of the Orthodox Church, but it also expresses a fundamental tension in Christianity. Since we “here have no lasting city” (Heb 13:14), Christians “do not belong to the world” (Jn 17:14). At the same time, we worship a God who entered into human time and place, a reality which demands of us a discerning engagement with a world which can be variously revelatory, seductive, or hostile. Successive waves of “huddled masses yearning to be free”<sup>24</sup> have faced rejection and indifference as well as welcome and opportunity. Immigrants at Ellis Island frequently

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<sup>23</sup> BOUTENEFF, P. C., *Orthodoxy and Ethnicity: Making Sense of the North American Orthodox Landscape Today*. Unpublished keynote address, 2012 Huffington Ecumenical Symposium, Los Angeles. I am grateful to Dr. Bouteneff for the copy of his address.

<sup>24</sup> From the poem “The New Colossus,” by Emma Lazarus (1849-87), inscribed on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty.

had their names changed – or changed them; clothing from the old country was dropped in favor of American style dress. The rupture with the past could be brutal, the American dream an experience of disillusion and personal shipwreck.

In the processes of Americanization, the greatest influence on immigrant populations was education. As successive generations went through the school system, English rapidly became the language of success. The vernacular was gradually limited to home use, and then most frequently replaced by English. Two World Wars in which some Americans fought against countries from which their families originated emphasized the need for Americans of all heritages to be “*e pluribus unum*.”<sup>25</sup> The activities of the Un-American Activities Committee<sup>26</sup> - in tandem with the paranoid claims of Senator McCarthy of Soviet infiltration - could particularly make Orthodox of Slav heritage uncomfortable about their cultural origins, even if they had come to America to escape communism. Religious dimensions complicated the challenges of split patriotism.

With the social changes of the 1960s however, and particularly the civil rights movement, forms of identity politics and identity anxiety arose. In reaction against marginalization from power, successive groups re-adopted their ethnic heritage with pride and sought to forge new, different, identities to those of the Anglophone, Caucasian, dominant class. African-American, Mexican-Americans, Asian-Americans all became “hyphenated Americans.” Notably, in these new self-denominations, religious allegiance was not hyphenated: Irish Catholics were Irish-Americans, not Catholic-Americans.

The confluence of the experiences of immigration and the “American way of life” is a universal of American history, and its outlines, as I have suggested, are not hard to identify: the establishment of an immigrant ghetto where a unified ethno-religious identity can be

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<sup>25</sup> The phrase appears on the Great Seal of the United States.

<sup>26</sup> The *House Un-American Activities Committee* investigated individuals and organizations suspected of having ties with communism during the 1950s.

maintained, followed by the gradual dissolution of the religious and ethnic bond and the final assimilation into the cultural mainstream. Where religious faith is melded with ethnic particularity, the weakening of affective bonds with the community of origin can easily bring in its train the weakening of religious commitment. It is popularly said that in America, three easily identifiable factors signal immigrant identity: language, religious affiliation, and particular foods. Assimilation happens by the loss first of all of language, then religion, and finally family recipes. The many Greek food festivals organized by Greek Orthodox parishes may be seen in this light as a conscious attempt to sustain a static concept of culture in the form of reminiscences of an immigrant identity which is already *de facto* vitiated.

“May my tongue stick to my palate if I do not remember you, if I do not exalt Jerusalem beyond all my delights” (Ps 137:6): in exile, as the Israelites in Babylon knew, culture cannot be taken for granted. Since leaving one’s land and community threatens to dissolve the collective as well as the individual sense of self, “the diasporic memory tends to focus on a collective memory of a lost homeland, childhood, and cultural identity,”<sup>27</sup> a memory which may well be fossilized in an idealized, romantic past. It is useful to distinguish between two uses of the word “culture”: (1) an anthropological term broadly signifying the features of everyday existence of a particular group which are so woven into its life that they appear to be connatural to it, and (2) the distinctive, especially artistic, manifestation of the values and identity of a particular group. The distinction between these two senses of culture is also one of location. In the Orthodox homelands, faith and anthropological culture interpenetrate each other. Immigration introduces an unsettling element into the model, since faith must now engage with two cultures: the dominant ideas and practices of mainstream society, and the remembered ways of life and thinking of the homeland, which can now only be partially operative. The values of

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<sup>27</sup> CHIANG, CH.-Y., *Diasporic Theorizing Paradigm on Cultural Identity*, in *Inter-cultural Communication Studies* XIX, 1, 2010, p. 36.

each culture are absolute within its own milieu but their meeting can engender confusion or identity fragmentation. As successive generations move further into the mainstream, their sense of distinctive culture becomes more and more a matter of occasional performativity. In this new dispensation, Orthodox identity easily takes on a large cultural workload to the point of becoming *self-consciously* ethnic. The category of the ethnic, according to David Lloyd, has a “retrospective constitution.”<sup>28</sup> It emerges into focus only when it has been identified as a potentially indigestible trace element in the working-through of assimilation. Preservationism “celebrates” its own particularity by performing it – sometimes quite literally, as artistic performance – in a temporary re-enactment whose actors then return to being Americans rather than, say, Arab-Americans.

Monophysite religio-cultural fusion can realistically only ever be a holding operation for immigrants into a society which is religiously different from their country of origin. Yet its day is not yet fully over in American Orthodoxy, for the same reason that American Nestorianism is likely to continue. In 2014, 41,000,00 immigrants lived in America, representing some 13% of the US population.<sup>29</sup> To varying degrees, they and their descendants will also have to re-negotiate the relationship between their religious and cultural identities in their new home.

### **One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism. One Body?<sup>30</sup>**

Creating substantial, material unity between the various Orthodox Churches has been almost impossible. Indeed, there is Orthodox disunity about the very nature of Orthodox unity itself. A complex web

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<sup>28</sup> LLOYD, D., *Ethnic Cultures, Minority Discourses and the State*, chap. in Francis BAKER, F. – HULME, P. – IVERSON, M. (Eds.), *Colonial discourse/postcolonial theory*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1994, p. 222.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states>

<sup>30</sup> Eph 4: 4-5.

of factors - cultural, ecclesiastical, generational, political and linguistic - militates against any real consolidation of Orthodoxy in America. Some Orthodox communions are de facto self-governing; others are only branches of a church whose higher ecclesiastical authority resides in another continent. Some leaders are primarily focussed on the situation of their Church in America, while others look to Europe or the Middle East for leadership and are concerned about the often-imperiled state of the Church in their homeland where American dollars and political influence can be important.

In the matter of unity, history matters. The Russian case is illustrative: in the years immediately following the 1917 Revolution, the North American Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church severed ties with both Moscow and the "Karlovtzy Synod," (a group of bishops who would later become the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia), declaring itself to be the "Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America" (commonly referred to as the *Metropolia*), "temporarily separated" from Moscow. Over time, in response to its own increasing internal complexity, the *Metropolia* attempted to maintain unity by the creation of ethnic dioceses and parishes for Romanians, Bulgarians, and Albanians. Paradoxically, this arrangement also ended in even greater fragmentation, but now along political rather than ethnic lines. Relations with the mother churches affected all the jurisdictions originating in the countries of the Soviet bloc. The Bulgarian Diocese of America was established in 1938. In 1963, it placed itself under the supervision of the Bulgarian Orthodox Patriarchate. Ten parishes however, unwilling to be placed under the oversight of a Patriarchate which they suspected of collusion with the communist régime, chose to re-affiliate with the *Metropolia*.

Creating unity, even within the same jurisdiction, has also been rendered difficult by immigrants bringing with them the political and religious tensions of their homelands. The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America was formed in 1921, but for significant periods of the past 90 years, its members were politically divided between republicans and royalists, a division which inevitably found its way into church



life and destabilized the governance and integral unity of the Archdiocese.<sup>31</sup> The fall of Soviet communism, the emigration of Orthodox Christians from formerly Soviet territories, and the political resurgence of the Moscow Patriarchate all contribute to furthering the instability of the question of authority. In 1970, the Moscow Patriarchate reconciled with the *Metropolia*, and recognized its right to administrative self-governance - a dispensation that remains unaccepted by other Orthodox jurisdictions. According to Michael Plekon, "the disputes ... have everything to do with different conceptions of the role of the primatial see of Constantinople in granting autocephaly."<sup>32</sup>

So at the heart of intra-Orthodox disunity in the United States, at least at the official level, there lies not surprisingly, the question of authority - a characteristically American neuralgia. Splits such as the Bulgarian one illustrate a systemic tendency of American Orthodoxy to divide itself into warring factions. Who has the right to govern, relations with originating churches in Soviet bloc countries and ethnic heritage are not the only broad fault lines. Social and liturgical languages, the choice of liturgical calendars, the degree to which tradition may be adapted, along with the degree of connection with the original homeland can define not only which jurisdiction but also which specific parish people attend. In Los Angeles, some parishes of the Orthodox Church of America are Romanian or Bulgarian in culture. Recent Russian immigrants gather at churches directly under the care of the Moscow Patriarchate rather than of the bishop of the Orthodox Church of America who is in communion with the Patriarch of Moscow. Second, third and fourth-generation Russian-Americans, who may speak little or no Russian, go to OCA churches which use English as their only or main liturgical language. Tensions exist around claims and counter-claims of Russification or de-Russification. And despite the formal unification of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox

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<sup>31</sup> See MOSKOS, P. C., – MOSKOS CH. C., *Greek Americans: Struggle and Success*, Transaction Publishers, Piscataway – NJ 2013, p. 89-91.

<sup>32</sup> Plekon, op. cit.

Church in Exile, relations between their American offspring remain at least cold at least in the warm sunshine of Southern California.

Religious disunity not only derives from a certain cultural isolation but also reinforces it. Since intra-Orthodox unity is so much of a Sisyphean task, the Orthodox as a whole do not seem to be especially interested in co-operating in the broader religious landscape. In debates about public policy or in concerted social action, there is no Orthodox equivalent to say the impact of evangelical Christianity on the Republican Party, or the engagement of the Catholic bishops in fighting abortion or supporting immigration reform. In 1960, several Orthodox jurisdictions established the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America, a body that has been viewed variously as a toothless failure that has achieved merely creating more meetings to talk about consensus or an efficacious step towards greater unity. It was replaced 50 years later by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America, a body which aims to “deepen the ties of brotherhood among the bishops, give them a common and united voice, and create a greater unity of action among all the Orthodox faithful of North America.”<sup>33</sup> The aims are noble, but the likelihood of substantial success questionable.

Unity involves dogma and doctrine: the Orthodox Churches are in one respect one church, since they largely agree on matters. Yet unity is also a grassroots reality. Not a few Orthodox of, say, Antiochian tradition may end up worshipping at a Romanian parish. There also exists a practical pan-Orthodoxy that is more that is more than the result of mere location or congeniality. Yet it is hard to overstate the depth of cultural allegiances. Plekon notes an inherent American resistance to pan-Orthodoxy: “(In) pan-Orthodox initiatives, conferences, gatherings, (and) study groups, people meet, work, often contributing and gaining a great deal—only to return to their respective ethnic Churches.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.assemblyofbishops.org>

<sup>34</sup> Plekon, *op. cit.*

## *Orthodox Americans and Orthodox Americans*

The history of American Orthodoxy is one of in constant evolution. Recent surveys identify new cultural trends shifts that will change its face as it navigates the currents of American culture. A small group of Orthodox women theologians are calling for greater involvement of women in both liturgy and governance,<sup>35</sup> and there is something of a grassroots movement for pan-Orthodox unity.<sup>36</sup> Among the oft-voiced concerns of Orthodox laity are the accountability of Bishops and clergy, and church administration.<sup>37</sup> There are also calls for married bishops and women deacons,<sup>38</sup> significant lay participation in the appointment of hierarchs,<sup>39</sup> along with a growing conviction that the churches must become more engaged in active civic participation and in active social service beyond the people of the parish.<sup>40</sup>

Most Orthodox parishes in America were established before 1940, and the last twenty years has shown a decline in the rate of establishment of new parishes.<sup>41</sup> While most parishes are still urban, their members now drive over thirty minutes to get there, a statistic which suggests that memories of old ethnic neighborhoods still perdure. In some 25% of churches, liturgy is served primarily in a language other than English, a practice that has significant implications for younger generations. Second, third and fourth-generation Orthodox are richer and more educated and mobile than past generations. They are also far more likely to enter into mixed marriages and not to raise the

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<sup>35</sup> See <http://bellarmine.lmu.edu/ecumenical/pastevents/2010huffingtonecumenicalsymposiumwomenchurcheastwest>

<sup>36</sup> [http://hrr.hartsem.edu/research/quick\\_question15.html](http://hrr.hartsem.edu/research/quick_question15.html)

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.ocanews.org>

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.saintcatherinesvision.com>

<sup>39</sup> MATSOUKAS, G. – SFEKAS, S. J., *Project for Orthodox Renewal: Seven Studies of Key Issues Facing Orthodox Christians in America*, Orthodox Christian Laity, Chicago 1993.

<sup>40</sup> <http://focusnorthamerica.org>

<sup>41</sup> <http://faithcommunitiestoday.org/>

children of these marriages as Orthodox. Conversions to Orthodoxy are countered by conversions out of it. The culturally approachable style of Evangelicalism, with its emphasis on informality, its emotional response, its use of the vernacular and technology, and especially its contemporary music, has attracted not a few Orthodox.

Yet the biggest challenge may be the abandonment of any real religious commitment. Following his 1830-31 visit to America, Alexis de Tocqueville noted that Christianity as a political institution sustained democracy, proclaiming that “there is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America; and there can be no greater proof of its utility and of its conformity to human nature than that its influence is powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth.”<sup>42</sup> Many of Tocqueville’s insights continue to be valid and illuminating, but the bond between America’s social and religious cultures has changed and shows every sign of becoming unglued. The United States is, according to various polls, still among the more religious countries in the world. Despite the separation of church and state, religious factors play into politics to a notable degree. Yet the proportion of church attendees continues to fall and the number those professing no religious affiliation (the “spiritual but not religious” category) rises.<sup>43</sup> Religious identification does not necessarily mean that people are actively involved with the religious community: while 73% of Americans claim to be Christian,<sup>44</sup> a fewer than a quarter of these are to be found in church on any given Sunday.<sup>45</sup> Nothing suggests that Orthodox Christianity is immunized against these long-term seismic changes.

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<sup>42</sup> TOCQUEVILLE, de A., *Democracy in America*, Dearborn and Co., New York 1838, vol. 1, ch. 17, accessed on [http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/DETOC/religion/ch1\\_17.htm](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/DETOC/religion/ch1_17.htm)

<sup>43</sup> See BARNA, G. – KINNAMAN, D. (Eds.), *Churchless: Understanding Today’s Unchurched and How to Connect with Them*, Tyndale Momentum, Carol Stream – IL 2014.

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>

<sup>45</sup> OLSON, D. T., *The American Church in Crisis*, Zondervan, Nashville – TN 2008.

## Epilogue

The seminal essay of Robert Bellah, “Civil Religion in America,” described the cult of American nationhood as a religion with “its own prophets and its own martyrs, its own sacred events and sacred places, its own solemn rituals and symbols.”<sup>46</sup> Epcot, part of Walt Disney World, Florida, is a theme park dedicated to human achievement. It contains eleven large pavilions representing specific countries. The American pavilion presents a multimedia entertainment which narrates American history. The performance is in many ways a “civil liturgy.” Christianity makes no explicit appearance there, but its songs and script are sustained by biblical patterns of thought.

Statues called “The Spirits of America” line the auditorium of this pantheon. Twelve characteristically American virtues are portrayed as iconic archetypes. Four female figures represent variously Knowledge (a teacher), Heritage (a Native American), Compassion (a doctor), Tomorrow (a mother and child), while eight male statues embody Individualism (a cowboy), Discovery (a mountain man), Independence (a colonial soldier), Freedom (a Pilgrim Father), Self-Reliance (a farmer), Adventure (a sailor), Innovation (a scientist), and Pioneering (an aviator). Some of these national *penates* no doubt played a part in bringing Orthodox Christians to America—Freedom, for example. Some, such as Compassion and Heritage, clearly would find a home on an iconostasis of Orthodox virtues. Others—Self-reliance, Pioneering, Innovation, Independence, and especially Individualism—are less easily integrated. The challenge for the “Tomorrow” of American Orthodox Christians is to find, between being *in* America and being *of* America, an authentic place.

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<sup>46</sup> BELLAH, R., *Civil Religion in America*, Daedalus, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Winter 1967, vol. 96, (1), p. 1-21 at 15.

# Anthropological Basis of a Dialogue Christian Perspective

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Jarosław Pastuszak

Our aim is to define principal anthropological basis of a dialogue (Christian perspective) for the sphere of religion and culture – its performing and consequences for further theological clarification of inter-religious dialogue itself. We assume that the very fact of inter-religious dialogue is in the context of present religious efforts such a highly appreciated cultural value that, generally speaking, it becomes determinative for the whole global future of human civilization. From a teleological point of view it is obvious that the phenomenology of a dialogue among religions, aiming at tolerance as one of the highest cultural values, asks Christians new questions how to preserve the contents of faith concerning salvation and the Revelation arising from Christ and a missionary commitment of Church. We have still a vivid memory of the discussion conducted in the Roman Curia itself which was motivated by the Pope Jan Pavel II's inviting the representatives of all world religions to common prayers in Assisi.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An initiative of John Paul II regarding the Day of Prayer for Peace, which was first held on 27 October 1986 and most recently on 24 January 2002 as a direct response to the tragic attacks of 11 September 2001. In connection with this the Pope says: "Since then the new spirit - often called, 'the spirit of Assisi' - brings back the interreligious dialogue and inseparably connects it with the effort for justice, for preserving the environment and peace. Because each religious group will pray in different place according to its own faith, its language, its traditions, but they all will respect fully the others. All participants will be connected by the conviction that peace is a gift from God. Each believer is called to become a peacemaker. On this basis, men and women of various religious may not only co-operate, but they must also increasingly strive to defend and develop effective respecting of human rights, which is a necessary condition for authentic (genuine) and lasting peace. Facing the violence, which is at present raging in

Obvious and culturally shared value of the encounter, communication and celebration require a theological clarification and an explanation of the dialogue and a sort of “cult” expressing of the inter-religious dialogue phenomenon.

## Man as a person

It is a necessary grounds of the interpretation of a man in modern scientific methodology. René Descartes's methodological doubt had such a consequence that the only undeniable default fact is the reality of “I” in man's consciousness (Cogito, ergo sum). However this fact marks the beginning of complications with defining the term “I”. That is why “I”, characteristic for man's consciousness, is connected with the interpretation of a man as a person, especially in his Christian conception. A man is this fact which undergoes a reflection both in relation to himself/herself, a surrounding world, and in relation to everything what is beyond him/her. The result of such a reflection is the encounter with a religious experience which raises the reflection to self-transcendence. That is why it is important to approach the concept of “man” in its relational terms. The most fundamental manifestation of those relations is the man's relation to a person. A man is a relational, that is personal, reality.

A Latin concept *persona* comes from a Greek concept of *πρόσωπον* which in ancient Greece meant a mask that was used by actors in dramas. *Persona* is a reality which is hidden behind a mask. That is why it is ambiguous because a mask in ancient dramas had either a tragic or a comic form but spectators did not know the appearance of a man

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many regions of the Holy Land, they feel the need to show that religion is a factor of solidarity, and consequently they can isolate and convict those who abuse the name of God for goals or methods that actually offend him.” (JAN PAVEL II., *Mír v dnešním světě. Modlitba před promluvou Anděle Páně dne 20. ledna 2002*, in <http://www.christnet.cz/magazin/clanek.asp?clanek=1157>).

hidden behind *πρόσωπον*. That is why a person is a reality which is to be discovered, which is to be examined and got to know.

For long centuries Boëthius's definition of a person as "the individual substance of reasonable nature"<sup>2</sup> dominated in Christian philosophical and theological milieu. Concept of a person conceived this way is necessarily connected with the person of Christ and it contains in itself a dialogical-trinitary dimension. That is why a person is dialogical and epiphanic. This epiphanicity aims at the revelation of God's love of man and the image of this love is a man as a person who bears within him/herself the image of personal God. God is personal because he is dialogical and he is dialogical because he is unitary. Dialogicity presupposes the unity in love. The highest realization of a person is freedom in love, freedom of love. Only in love and through love a man is able to get to know himself as a person. Love is the condition of personal knowledge. I cannot get to know the other (Other) as a person without love. In such a case rational knowledge of a person will be only partial and, based in the concept of a person itself, imperfect. The acceptance of a person means to be freely open to dialogical love. The fulfillment of a person is bound to the unconditional openness towards all-embracing and redeeming Love.<sup>3</sup>

Man as a person has in his/her ontic structure the openness towards personal "you" and towards a final "You", personal Absolute.<sup>4</sup> That is why we can say that the form of human being is conditioned by the equation "to be-you-for-the others" and in the eschatological perspective "to be-for-you". Consequently we can also say that a human being

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<sup>2</sup> See MACHAN, R., *Křesťanské pojetí osoby*, in *Studijní texty ze spirituální teologie II. Osoba – osobnost – osobitost*, Refugium, Olomouc 2004, p. 194-203.

<sup>3</sup> See RUPNIK, M. I., *Vybrané otázky z antropologie. Člověk a vzkříšení*, Refugium, Olomouc 2003, p. 60-112; see also *Studijní texty ze spirituální teologie II. Osoba – osobnost – osobitost*, Refugium, Olomouc 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Rahner says: "In spite of the finiteness of his system, man has always himself within himself as a whole." See RAHNER, K., *Základy křesťanské víry*, Trinitas, Svitavy 2004, p. 73.



is a religious being because it is a being whose existence and dynamics of knowledge is conditioned by the Absolute Person.<sup>5</sup>

The context of personal life is in a strict sense bound on a transcendent being who a human being participates on.<sup>6</sup> This participation appears from the beginning as a determining factor, its existence accompanies a human being for his/her whole life and is present in the last moment, too. Religion of a man is therefore his/her relativeness to divinity (personal God). A man is able to reflect on his/her life only through the participation in the “life” of God. A materialistic-nihilistic concept of a man prevents realization of life and its fulfilling by transcendental sense. The conscience of man’s relativeness to transcendental reality determines the shape of society, culture and civilization (probably mainly civilization). Religious contents of life and the form of its fulfillment, determined by such a contents, forms specific features of social and cultural life.

In the context of historical development we can say that a religious dimension in a man (understood either in broad or strict sense) is his/her inherent part. It determines the shape, purpose and aim of life. Human cultural works are influenced by a religious context of human life to a great degree.

### Man in a cultural context

During the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century Euroamerican culture experiences the crisis of value and ethic systems.<sup>7</sup> We speak about the crisis of a family, relations, personal conscience, religion, Christianity

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<sup>5</sup> See ARGYLE, M., *Religious behavior*, Routledge – Kegan Paul, London 1958, passim; see also KŁOCZOWSKI, J. A., *Wiecej niż mit. Leszka Kołakowskiego spory o religię*. Kraków, Znak 1994, passim.

<sup>6</sup> See WARD, K., *Religion and Community*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2000, passim.

<sup>7</sup> See COLLECTIVE OF AUHTORS, *Liberální ekonomie. Kořeny euroamerické civilizace*, Prostor, Praha 1993, passim.

(and many other crisis ...).<sup>8</sup> A common denominator of those crises is probably the lack and inability of the compact and unified denomination of the essence of a man. An unambiguous differentiation between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, made by René Descartes and the whole Enlightenment tradition after him, is probably behind the causes of this situation. Dividing material and spiritual spheres means interrupting of continuation of European spiritual and intellectual traditions. According to many experts the problem is that the given established system (represented by Christian tradition) was not replaced by any new corresponding system.<sup>9</sup>

Post-modernism, which brought the relativization of all existing basic securities, took away a solid ground under a man's feet and left him/her to his/her own individualism and subjectivism. That is why we find an extreme form of religious pluralism within the Euroamerican civilization owing to which basic principles of individual religions (especially Christianity) are negated.<sup>10</sup>

During last decades Europe has been experiencing basic changes. The fall of communism and the following process of expanding European Union influenced the whole society and the concerns of its individuals. Several last years the Euroamerican scene has been experiencing a conflict – often described as civilizational or cultural – with terrorist groups raising from fundamentalistic circles, most often from muslim countries. The engagement of many countries in *the war on*

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<sup>8</sup> See HOUSEKNECHT, S. K. – PANKHURST, J. G. (Ed.), *Family, Religion, and Social Change in Diverse Societies*, Oxford University Press, New York – Oxford 2000, p. 43-79.

<sup>9</sup> See CUPITT, D., *Mysticism After Modernity*, MA – Blackwell, Oxford – Malden 1998, passim.

<sup>10</sup> See WAINWRIGHT, W. J., *Philosophy of Religion*, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee 1999, p. 206-214; also see SWIDLER, L., MOJZES, P., *The Study of Religion in an Age of Global Dialogue*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia 2000, passim; MELLVILLE, S. Y., *Philosophy of Religion. An Anthology of Contemporary Views*, Jones and Bartlett Publishers, Boston – London – Singapore 1996, p. 713-743; HICK, J., *God Has Many Names: Britain's New Religious Pluralism*, John Knox Press, Westminster 1997; HICK, J. – KNITTER, P. F. (Ed.), *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, SCM Press Ltd., London 1988.

*terrorism* is connected with transferring the part of national capital to military or anti-terrorist actions. Characteristic openness of Euroamerican civilization towards immigrants from other countries is undergoing a basic change which is the result of the facts given above. Liberal-democratic system must often defend itself by “non-democratic” means and measures. In the name of national and individual security the freedoms of citizens are limited and we find consequences in laws and constitutions of individual states.<sup>11</sup>

From the characteristics mentioned above it follows that in the Euroamerican civilization and culture we can find the transfer of accentuations to things that are substantial in the eyes of society. It is obvious that if the importance of such accents are based on materialistic grounds, the highest value of such a system will be freedom and welfare of a man in this life. The concerns, rising from the conscience of transcendental overlap, are transferred to the secondary sphere. This is the reason why the importance of religious culture is losing its position in the conscience of an individual and society and is replaced by the culture (religion) of the country.

Christopher Dawson, a well-known historian and cultural theorist, defines culture as follows: “... it is a social and organized way of life based on common tradition and determined by common background. That is why this term is not identical with the term ‘civilization’ which implies a high level of conscious submission to reason. This term is not identical with the term ‘society’ either, because a culture usually contains a certain number of independent social individuals.”<sup>12</sup> According to this British scientist the key to history, and through it to man too, is religion.<sup>13</sup> It is not possible to grasp the inner form of society before understanding its religion. We cannot understand the meaning

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<sup>11</sup> Here we have in mind e. g. a ban on the wearing of religious symbols in state schools in France, or the strengthening of CCTV in the UK; we can also mention the need to get through a process of fingerprinting on the border of the United States and so on.

<sup>12</sup> DAWSON, Ch., *Religion and Culture*, Meridian Books, New York 1948, p. 54.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid p. 57.

of culture until we understand religious forms. In all centuries the first cultural pieces of work are the results of religious inspiration and man's heading towards a religious aim.<sup>14</sup>

Cultural processes come under dynamic changes. Each material change, changing external conditions of life, changes culture simultaneously and thus forms a new basis for religion. At the same time, the whole spiritual change, changing a man's view of reality, aims at changing the way of life and in this way creates a new cultural form.<sup>15</sup>

A cultural form depends on human understanding the sense with relation to time and space. It is determined by religion which at the same time influences reflecting the sense and a cultural form. In various historical and geographical contexts the cultural forms differ. Symbolically however, they are connected by the dimension of the desire for transcendental overlap which is materialized in churches' spires (they always have a vertical shape).

Therefore, culture is a reality created by a man and his personal experience and activities (as individuals and whole societies, too). Basic human activity is the desire for knowledge from which a concrete form of culture follows.<sup>16</sup>

Marcello de Carvalho Azevedo characterizes culture as follows: "It is the key to revealing human social group and understanding it. On one side, it is the culture which gives a sense of life to a given human group. On the other side, if they did not have the key for understanding the sense of this group's life, would the people from the outside have been able to understand such a group? Each person on the world understands the sense of world through culture and at the same time he/she acts in such a way so that he/she can humanize the world. This is the reason why regarding their own culture, people are both active and passive. Furthermore, cultures being different, nobody can pretend that he/she can exhaust the whole contents of humanity. Culture is

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<sup>14</sup> DAWSON, Ch., *Religion and Culture*, Meridian Books, New York 1948, p. 58.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid p. 68.

<sup>16</sup> See DAWSON, Ch., *Progress and Religion*, Seed – Ward, London 1928, passim.

therefore both wealth and poverty, both confirmation and negation, both value and limitation. Culture is particular and universal the same time.”<sup>17</sup>

A council pastoral constitution about the Church in contemporary world “*Gaudium et spes*” speaks about the need of correlation between material and spiritual cultures: “It is true that contemporary progress in scientific and technical spheres, which through their methods cannot penetrate the very core of things, can be beneficial for any kind of phenomenon and agnosticism when their scientific method is wrongly raised to be the highest rule for seeking the whole truth. There is even danger that a man, relying on modern inventions too much, begins to consider him/herself self-sufficient and will not seek anything higher.”<sup>18</sup> And more: “... culture should contribute to general perfection of human person, to the welfare of the whole human society.”<sup>19</sup>

Personalistic-worldly culture arises from materialistic-humanist principles and is correlated to earth (matter earth) as a correlative point (“divinity”). Non-religious person seeks his/her anchoring in the place he raised from – in the Earth. That is why the Earth becomes some kind of religion. Transcendentally sacred space in man resonates the need of self-overlap (albeit he would be bound only to the reality of this world).

A man, for whom the life on Earth is correlated to the last reality and who participates on creating the culture, has an existential necessity (prophetic duty) to announce and reveal transcendental determination of a man in cultural works. That is why religious culture becomes an integral part of man’s thinking and it determines the way of his acting and realizing the culture. In certain sense religion determines a man in his ways of realizing the culture. There is a certain paradox when an individual “must” submit to religious culture (become “unfree”) so that

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<sup>17</sup> AZEVEDO de CARVALHO, M., *Inkulturační a požadavky modernosti*, Refugium, Velehrad 2000, p. 28.

<sup>18</sup> GS 57.

<sup>19</sup> GS 59.

he could become free. Religious culture liberates towards the eschatic reality. The vision of eschatic reality determines the religious culture itself and through it the culture of a man, his way of acting and the resulting nature of society.

Constitution *Gaudium et spes* speaks about the participation of Christians on creating religious culture as follows: "Christians as pilgrims to the heavenly city must seek that what is from the above (compare Gn 1:28); this is the reason why the importance of their task does not decrease but the other way round – it increases: they thrive together with other people for creating more human world. The secret of Christian faith gives them excellent impulses and helps them to fulfill this task with greater passion and most of all to discover the full sense of such an activity which could ensure the culture the outstanding place in the man's overall mission."<sup>20</sup>

In the figurative sense we can generally apply the council's words to the image of religious culture. It should prepare a man for the openness towards the sacredness and for the change of human existence here to the form of transcendental reality.

If the culture is creating values which develop human life and give it sense, it presupposes a hierarchy of values. This process is always bound to accepting a concrete world-view or a specific ideology.

That is why there is a close relation between culture and the accepted world-view.<sup>21</sup> There is not any culture without a certain type of widely accepted opinion about the whole reality and especially without deeper grasping and understanding the secret of a man.

A man as self-reflecting being always faces the problem of his/her own existence. He/she is forced to determine his/her as a human being his/her attitude to basic issues and questions of his/her own life. And

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<sup>20</sup> See FITZGERALD, T., *The Ideology of religious Studies*, Oxford University Press, New York – Oxford 2000, p. 221-253.

<sup>21</sup> See MITCHELL, J. – MARRIAGE, S. (Ed.), *Mediating Religion. Conversations in Media, Religion and Culture*, T & T Clark, London – New York, 2003, passim; also see ORFIELD, G. – LEBOWITZ, H. J. (Ed.), *Religion, Race, and Justice in a Changing America*, The Century Foundation Press, New York 1999.

here we find an ontological necessity to define his/her own attitude to reality other than empirical – to transcendental reality (God) and religion. These facts contain the general theory of world and man.

Each religion includes certain world-view, determines a specific scale of values including the highest value (we can understand it as *sacrum*; in Christianity a personal relation of man's love of personal Absolute). According to well-known philosophers of culture, Kroner and Fromm, a man can develop healthily only when he aims at realization of values higher than those which he himself represents, when his aim is beyond him/her and is transcendental to him/her.<sup>22</sup> Culture, in which the only relational point is a man, becomes inhuman culture because it threatens a man him/herself with not elevating him/her higher. To refuse the highest value (*sacrum*) means threatening all other values.

Religion offers a man a different than worldly reality. Historically, it is an inseparable part of human culture. Culture based on religious contents is the culture elevating the purpose of a man because it poses a man higher than he/she is possible to be placed only on the basis on material reflection of the world.

### Man in the context of dialogue

Dialogue is at the basis of knowledge and reversely knowledge creates a dialogue. The most essential basis of a dialogue is the dialogue on the level "I-I", "I-you", "I-we", "I-they", "we-you", etc. The relation of a man to him/herself on the level of self-knowledge creates the inner space of dialogue. I get to know in order to act and I act in order to enter a relation.

Dialogue is the condition of development (understood either in material or spiritual meaning). The development of mankind is based on the dialogue among people. Spiritual development of a man raises from the dialogue with God.

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<sup>22</sup> See ZDYBICKA, Z. J., *Człowiek i religia*, KUL, Lublin 1993, p. 371.

Relatedness, which is present on all levels of interpersonal (and not only interpersonal) relations, is determined by the ability of a man to engage in a dialogue. A dialogue was a basic form of interpersonal knowledge and knowledge itself already in the ancient philosophy (see Platon's dialogues). A dialogue is at the basis of culture, religion, civilization (but after all also in less important relations such as in partners' or family's communications). All human activities is based on the need of a dialogue and it is its consequence. Simply said there is not any man without a dialogue, there is not any world without a man, there is no world without a dialogue (technically speaking, if it were not the God's dialogue with a man, there is no man). The determination of all forms of human conduct by the dialogue shows its importance. The level of a dialogue corresponds to the level of knowledge. In the widest sense a dialogue is the relation of two.

Culture is based on dialogical relations. At the same time it shows the level of advancement of civilizational or social communication. Culture, which is the sign of man's transcendental ability and the consequence of his/her metaphysical dialogue, is at the same time the testimony of the presence of spiritual dimension in a man. A cathedral can be built only when its building is preceded by a dialogue. Relations among architects, constructors, bricklayers, workers and clergy must be dialogical (otherwise the construction would never be built). An ideological conception, preceding the construction of a cathedral, is the consequence of a metaphysical dialogue (God's with a man and consequently man's with God).

External forms of culture refer to the form and level of a metaphysical dialogue. If a metaphysical element is suppressed in external forms of culture, then it is the proof that transcendental self-reflection of a man is abandoned and there is a sort of pseudodialogue in its place.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> An example of such pseudo-dialogue in media culture may a phenomenon of reality- show. It is a manifestation of man's desperate desire to create a dialogue that goes beyond himself. As a result, we can get a pitiful view of a man who, "stripped" of all before everybody, desperately calls for a "rescue". The result, however, is an animalistic



Culture is the consequence of a dialogical relation. Logos is present in a dialogue. It enters the relation between the two. It capacitates and determines the relation. If a dialogue is not “logical”, then it is “illogical”, which means it is deprived of the inner constituting principle. Dialogical culture is related to Logos and it is at the same time transcendental (because Logos is transcendence itself), spiritual and consequently religious. Each real dialogue, raising from dialogicality, is consequently religious and each culture built on the basis of such a dialogue is religious. Therefore culture is the form of seeking the answer to the question of the sense of human existence in the world and such an answer will necessarily lead to the dialogue with God.

In connection with later development, great monotheistic religions face responsibility and the task to offer an alternative view and the image of a man who is the image of God on Earth and who aims to reach him together with time and history. Religion and theological reflection cannot and must not become the means of concerns of “masters of this world” but it has to show the reality “beyond this world”. One of the most difficult task will be to connect these two spheres. God created “this world”, incarnated into “this world”, redeemed “this world”, wants to accept all from “this world” into “the other world”. One of the connecting elements can be sensitivity to suffering of other people independently of their religious and world-view conviction. This fact is probably the most binding and uniting criterion of the co-existence of various cultures and religions.<sup>24</sup>

“Faith which did not become culture was not fully accepted, thoroughly considered, truly experienced.”<sup>25</sup> Probably there is an equation which can serve as the basic paradigm of the inter-religious dialogue. Dialogue (encounter) – culture (communication) – cult (celebration).

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“gratification” of silent witnesses of such a “dialogue”, which is however deprived of reciprocity and becomes a pseudo-dialogue.

<sup>24</sup> See HRYNIEWICZ, W., *Chrześcijaństwo nadziei*, Znak, Kraków 2002, p. 27-28.

<sup>25</sup> JOHN PAUL II., *Fin dall'inizio del mio pontefico* (The letter form 19. 5. 1982, established Pontifical Council for Culture); AAS 74 (1982) 685; EV 8, 177.

The aim of the dialogue is a common celebration. The dialogue is determined by the encounter the consequence of which is the communication which gives basis to the culture. Only on the commonly created cultural ground it is possible for the members of various religions to celebrate together.<sup>26</sup> It is necessary to understand precisely individual differences between the context of universality of salvation and self-efficiency of the phenomenon of church community and a safe calculus of “Salvation”. Both have to be subordinate to God’s sovereignty, to “God in Christ in church” who relativizes all human in church community itself. Religion, which is the form of the dialogue of God and a man and a man and God, enables mankind to continual raising towards the transcendental fulfillment. Although the means of reflection of such a fulfillment are various, this remain the same: desire for (transcendental) fulfillment and for the sense of one’s existence. The secret of human existence, accompanying the whole history, is essentially projected to the secret of religion. Religion is not only the attempt to interpret the (transcendental) phenomenon of a man, but it also offers the ways of its realization.<sup>27</sup>

The principle of a dialogue between a man and a man is to seek the answer to the question of the sense of things and on the highest level the question of human existence itself. A man enters the relation with the other in hope to reveal the piece of the secret “to give” and “to accept” the sense. After all it is also a motivating cause of man’s desire for knowledge. All epistemologies, based on material, empirical, philosophical or spiritual principles, aim at revealing the secret of a man and his/her existence in the world. Religion which consciously refers to that secret (based on the mystic dialogue of God and a man) offers – often in accordance (but not always) with rational empirical theories of knowledge – the answer to the question of absolute aiming

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<sup>26</sup> This is not the kind of “para-liturgy” but a joint celebration of God that can happen according to the models of respective religious traditions.

<sup>27</sup> See JOST, W. – OLMSTED, W. (Ed.), *Rhetorical Invention and Religious Inquiry. New Perspectives*, University Press, New Haven – London – Yale 2000 p. 37.

of a man.<sup>28</sup> Precisely this dimension of asking the Absolute, overlapping, referring to oneself (often through oneself) is that integration principle. Religions can reciprocally enrich themselves with their traditions and the experience of communion with the truth. Human experience, recorded in religious tradition, is one of the most precious treasure of mankind because it contains a passionate movement towards the divine which creates a man as a transcendental being, but at the same time as a being deformed by the passion of relation between the identity (who I am) and the contradiction (who the other is), between the brightest day and the darkest night of experiencing.

It is difficult to formulate very concrete principles of the dialogue without general standards and grounds. In this respect our contribution considers rather general standards than concrete individual phases of a dialogue. Dialogue on the inter-religious level has to emerge from the dialogue internally religious and from the interiorizing general standards in question. It implies the relation which is characterized by thinking, being the contradiction to only pure (logical) thinking as *dialogos*. On the other hand it shows *logos* itself (truth spoken “through” someone). Dialogue refers to *logos* in all things – it enables the activity of *Logos* itself (that who organizes everything).

### Christian in the service for dialogue

A Christian is called to a dialogue. It would be problematic, maybe impossible to grasp the essence of a man; dialogical approach is necessary based on the experience of the Absolute’s failure to deduce in reciprocal knowledge of people.<sup>29</sup> It is impossible to relate human conduct to anything without a teleological approach, i. e. the demand to relate to that is “above us” as the authority of the revelation of God’s

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<sup>28</sup> See PALMER, H., *Analogy. A Study of Qualification and Argument in Theology*, Macmillan, London 1973, passim.

<sup>29</sup> See KULISZ, J., *Wprowadzenie do teologii fundamentalnej*, WAM, Kraków 1995, p. 9-20.

love. Without it the dialogue would immediately become a selfish individualization. “I” without the relation to “you” would become primary. It is only the concept of mutual relation to the aim that enables to enter the relationship. God, who descends to a man in order to raise him/her to himself, shows the way for creating a dialogue relatedness. A Christian, who becomes similar to God through following him, must be aware of this dimension of a dialogue. To enter a dialogue relationship with the other means to accept his/her dissimilarity, contradiction or even “strangeness”. If God is present through his deed of incarnation in every human being (a man is created as the image of God), then a Christian in a dialogue encounter with the other meets God himself and, as the case may be, he himself. We have already said, knowing oneself is the biggest problem of a man. We are well aware of moving in the theology of disturbed world seen from the point of view of Salvation, when the analogy between God and Creation appears nearly as the contradiction between the lie and the truth of God abundant in the Epiphany of Father through *Logos* and illuminating this contradiction with a lively light, and between the theology of redeeming in full realism of this disturbed world, theology based in *Logos* itself because in Him all contradictions of continuation and succession of Creation are “the only life”. That is why a Christian is a servant for a dialogue as an antinomy. Knowledge is related to conduct, conduct brings to the aim. This basic equation enables a Christian to accept the secrets of the other, his/her infinity, his/her face.<sup>30</sup> Religion as the way to knowledge can be a unifying principle of a dialogue. Christianity which demands universality, catholicity, is in its essence “dependent” on the dialogue with the others (missionary aim of the Church) because God in Trinity is a dialogue. To serve the other (in dialogue relationship) means to put at the mercy of the other, to be to his/her disposal, to listen to him/her and to be able to act according to his/her wishes. The service for a dialogue does not mean the loss of identity or questioning one’s

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<sup>30</sup> See LÉVINAS, E., *Totalita a nekonečno*, Oikoymenh, Praha 1997, passim.

own basic positions either, but it is the opening towards a different way of knowing the other.

The keystone of Christian perfection is love and love should be the main guide of a dialogue.<sup>31</sup> In dialog relationship of God and a man God's love of a man is the only possible answer to the reason of Incarnation and Redeeming through the death. It may be the biggest secret and the biggest antinomy of God's Revelation at the same time. We all are "bathed" in the blood of Christ who shed it because he loved us. There is no bigger reason for a dialogue than the dialogue of love.

The ability to see the relationship and lineage of Christianity to other religions as incomprehensible and inexplicable mystery of deep dissimilarity is possible to develop only in connection with the human dimension of the tragedy of sin and divine secret of constant quest. Moreover we can apprehend the differences of religious experience (the phenomenon of various religions) as a challenging unreadability – be it something attractive or repulsive – which was and is based in the experience of complementary antipole, i. e. dialogue as a regular part of encounters of both "different worlds". One unreadability, as it were, is not enough. Then it is the undifferentiation, dailiness of social, institutional religious life, in which a Christian, a buddhist, a Jew, a muslim is as if "under a spell". Life inside one unreadability, insensitivity, incomprehension of live reality of historical form of religious faith and view of their complementarity only from the outside are also little fruitful. Other religious experience can appear to a Christian as a caricature scheme or a schematic utopia and the same holds true for a non-Christian and his experience with the reality and phenomenology of Christianity. Both unreadabilities – Christian and non-Christian – begin to make visible and interpret mutually when it is possible to overcome an exclusive internal existence and an exclusive distance of the view from the outside, when there are transitions in both directions and when a man becomes a participating spectator in both complementary worlds.

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<sup>31</sup> See 1. Cor 13.

Here we can find the roots of contemporary Christian effort to a dialogue, however we are well aware that the conflict of hermeneutics can be overcome only by encountering as the form of relationship and love. It is not a principle characteristic for some invincible limitation but a challenge to voluntary self-limitation (in the sense: let us stop to invest so much into the effort to explain, understand, define, determine at any cost) because it is worth “not to know” and admit that we do not fully understand this religious differentiation. Here the dialogue can bring undreamed wealth. This principle is not descriptive and prescriptive either, but heuristic which can change mutual misapprehension and estrangement into the geysers of interpretations.

Viewed by religious culture based on dialogue, we can say: If God is the creator of a man (every man – including that one who profess a different religion), then let us believe God himself that he has reasons why people of various religions celebrate him in various ways. If God is able to love “variety”, let us try to do the same (Ef 2, 5).

# **Kirdi Traditional Religion and the Common Good**

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Jarosław Róžański

Among the most often used criteria for integrating two or more groups of people into one culture are geographical territory, a common history, language, and religion, and an organized society, together with economic and government structures. On the basis of this criteria a place can be made for the culture of the Kirdi tribes living in northern Cameroon. The name “Kirdi” was given to them by Islamic invaders and has been more or less universally accepted in European literature. After Cameroon gained independence there began an interesting process of the birth of a new Kirdi awareness, which crossed ethnic divisions. Traditional African religions fulfill for the Kirdi an important function of integrating and sanctioning the organization of societies based on blood ties, as well as societies based on inhabited territory. The significance of these religions stems also from the particular role that religion plays in general in a culture, permeating its various segments. In Kirdi cultures its role was notably confined to the boundaries set by the concrete tribal society and village.

## **The Extended Family as the Basic Societal Structure (The Tribe)**

The traditional societal structure permeates all areas of life. Its foundation is the extended family, based on blood ties. A person does not classify himself by his profession or his place of origin, but rather by familial relationship. The understanding of kinship, however, as well as of the nuclear family, in traditional Kirdi society is fundamentally

different from the European model. The family is made up of a father, mother or mothers, and their unmarried children.

In common with all of Africa, there is also an attitude of the family for procreation. We can safely say that the family in the understanding of the Kirdi, is more a community of father and mother, than of husband and wife. Children are a great gift, and not having them is seen as a curse. One who died childless was not deserving of a proper funeral. For children were the assurance of the continuation of family and of tribe; an insurance for the future, whether in terms of protection or of work. Even girls whose fate it was to leave the tribe upon marriage brought material compensation to the family in the form of marriage gifts. Thus it was that in this region there was not a concept of "orphans" in the sense of a child without guardians. Orphans were never abandoned but rather someone could always be found to take care of them.<sup>1</sup>

In many local languages, for "family," a term identified with "homestead" (*sare*) is used, where a group of people related by blood or marriage live together. The type of homestead reflects the familial structure. Most typically was the "village,"<sup>2</sup> generally made up of many scattered neighborhoods. Their size usually depended on the shape of the local terrain and formed a kind of geographic whole especially to be seen in mountain areas; less so on the open savannah. A neighborhood is made up of a certain number of *sare*.

Many ethnic groups also took on building schemes typical of Muslim societies. As a rule these were family homesteads surrounded by high clay walls. Also incorporated in many places, mainly under European influence, were rectangular-shaped structures covered by corrugated metal. This type of building is perceived everywhere as a sign of wealth and modernity.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. VERGIAT, A. M., *Mœurs et coutumes des Manjas*, Paris 1981, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Many local languages do not have a term for "village" in the European understanding; it refers here rather to the spread-out character of a settlement or also a territorial community.



The father remains the unquestioned authority and traditional head of the family. He has the deciding voice and everyone owes him unconditional obedience. Woman clearly feels her inferiority, countenanced as it is by everyone and affirmed in dozens of daily, traditional rules of life. The hierarchy of the extended family has also been inscribed into the community of wives within polygamous marriages. A clear hierarchy can be seen as well among the children, depending on their sex and age, and which is also expressed in the names they are given. It is manifested in daily life in the form of many customs and activities such as the seating, serving order, and group divisions at meals, how treats are portioned out among the children, the division of work, and so on. It is not unusual, either, for children and wives to use expressions and posture, when addressing themselves to the father of the family, of the greatest respect such as is due to a ruler.

### **The Structure of Tribal and Village Authority**

The father holds the highest position in the hierarchy of the family and on the tribal level, the oldest descendant of the founder of the tribe. Both enjoy unquestioned authority over the community subservient to them.

The tribes had a clearly segmental character, in which each line or village formed an independent unit. When threatened, they infrequently combined into larger units. In these units there reigned a mostly democratic structure of authority. Numerous writers observe and acknowledge a basic pre-eminence of the chief in the tribal structure. In the tribe the authority of the eldest was obeyed; he functioned as political and religious chief. An altar was situated near his hut upon which were placed offerings to ancestors. This is certainly the most original form of authority among the Kirdi tribes. Accompanying it was respect for the older members of the tribe, known as the elders, who were seen not only as having achieved a certain age of wisdom, but also having passed through essential stages of societal life such as

initiation, marriage, and having children. There was also a universal custom of children and youth taking council from all the adults when making important decisions. The blessing of the elders was important, and their curse awoke fear because it could cause illness, death, infertility, and other misfortunes.

In each village the story of its founder's arrival is preserved through oral tradition. In Kirdi tradition a chief descended from his lineage was primarily known as the chief of the land. He also usually held a religious function. These chiefs cultivated the land and had a lifestyle similar to everyone else. They were more priests and guardians of tradition than leaders in the political sense. Their advisory body were the elders of the respective lineages, among whom the oldest held a privileged position. The chief would not make decisions without listening to their opinions. Conflicts between individuals or families were usually arbitrated in the presence of the chief and the elders. Thus it was a particular form of democracy. Besides all this, in many groups there was also an institution of choosing a village chief in time of war or strife. This was usually a man especially skilled in the art of war.

Every rural community striving for self-sufficiency in the organization and functioning of its society, also forms other, essential, functionaries who did not however become a distinct profession or class. These were usually farmers exactly like everyone else. Their election and authority had varied, individualized roots.

One functionary who enjoyed great prestige was the "rain chief" or the "rainmaker." In areas where the first rain of the season was significantly late it boded a poor harvest and promised famine in the time preceding the harvest, so calling down rain had an essential significance. The "rain chief" (*Bai van* among the Daba, *Magi vung* for the Gisiga, *M'z buna* for the Gidar) was most often descended from an old lineage long established in a given territory.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> HALLAIRE, A., op.cit., p. 13. Cf. the role of the priest and the rain chief descending from the tribe of the village founder in MAGNAT, J. -P., *Du grand prêtre au roi: les origines religieuses des États anciens du Tchad*, in *L'invention religieuse en Afrique. Histoire et religion en Afrique noire*, Paris 1993, p. 171-172.

Another function important to the rural community was filled by the fortune teller (*mipi da'as* – in the Gisiga language; *mbidla* in Mofaw; *we-mbadi* – Manja; *ata-we-mon* – Gbaya). Villagers go to him for advice in various life circumstances or uncertainties. He uses various articles in his divinations such as stones or grass, from which a *seko* is made. Very often he will use a chicken, making a small cut in its neck allowing some blood to escape. The chicken is then released, tossed down and marking the ground with its blood. The fortune teller then reads events from the arrangement of the chicken's feet and head. Like the other villagers, fortune tellers are farmers. It is only in some societies that this function can be filled exclusively by blacksmiths. They take on fortunetelling only when the need arises.<sup>4</sup>

Another unusually useful and indispensable function is the healing of the sick. It demands firstly the ability to find the causes of sicknesses, and then to cure them. The first task belongs to the fortune teller, the second, to the healer. The boundary between these two persons and functions, however, is often clouded. There is a tendency to define these functions with the description: "a person who has..." The function of healer may be inherited from one's father, who sometimes continues to give advice as a predecessor, but it is also possible to gain the necessary knowledge from some other *nganga*.

The medicine man (in the Gidar language *mutfiya*; Mofaw – *ma-dang*; Gbaya – *widowa*) is called in by people in sickness or misfortune. Among the many Kirdi tribes his activity is expressed in categories of "eating." He "eats" spirits, bonds of fraternity or friendship, he wastes away, bears sexual impotence, giving of his life force.<sup>5</sup>

The charge of witchcraft is a very serious threat since the accused can find himself exiled from the community or even confronted with death. Formerly such people were sometimes buried alive. The accuser

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. VINCENT, J. F., *Divination et possession chez les Mofu, montagnards du Nord-Cameroun*, JSA (1971) nr 1, p. 71-132; ADLER, A. – ZEMPLÉNI, A., *Le bâton de l'aveugle, divination, maladie et pouvoir chez les Moundang du Tchad*, Paris 1972.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. EGGEN, W., *Peuple d'autrui*, Bruxelles 1976, p. 54c.

is also in danger, for if his accusation is shown to be unfounded, the fate meant for the accused may become his own.

### The Extended Family as the Basis of the Economy

The extended family forms the basis for determining land ownership and its inheritance. The family was also the economic foundation, for it is in her bosom that production and consumption balance out. Tribes as a rule strove for self-sufficiency. They did not have societal or professional classes, with the exception of blacksmith tribes. In the process of production and distribution of goods, the elder of the tribe took the primary position, and his field was the first to be attended to. He decided about ownership and cultivation for the other members of the family. He also supervised all the granaries in the compound and had the right to go into them. Despite the existence of individual forms of production of goods within the family circle, there was as a rule a common right to using them, under the supervision of the father of the family. From this flows also the precept of providing assistance and solidarity in family groups. Egoism and the breaking of these obligations are condemned in the instruction of children, and punished in adult life.

Land ownership from the Mandara mountains to the savannah had a community character. The community divided the land and ensured that needs were met. Work was done in groups and was linked to religion. It is apparent from this that there were clear distinctions separating men's work from women's work. The distribution of goods and the fruits of labor also had the characteristic of preserving the community *per se*.<sup>6</sup>

Business activity for the Kirdi peoples was adapted to climactic and geographical conditions. It was centered first of all on the cultiva-

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. GOSSELIN, G., *op. cit.*, p. 239; ZOCTIZOUM, Y., *Histoire de la Centrafrique. T. 1 (1879-1959). Violence du développement, domination et inégalités*, Paris 1983, p. 33.

tion of the land and bound to the rainy seasons as well as—to a lesser extent—to raising livestock, produce picking, fishing, hunting, and handicrafts. In traditional farming importance was given to raising poultry, cattle, goats, donkeys, and also to beekeeping. The basis for animal husbandry and also a sign of wealth became the breeding of the zebu species of cattle.

Gathering produce was a basic element of local farming. Traditionally gathering was done by women. Hunting was reserved for men. Fishing developed on the rivers and lakes. Basket weaving, tanning, beer making, and weaving were also important areas of farm life.

The communal character of work and of the distribution of goods, as well as community bonds were strengthened by agrarian rituals. Kirdi agrarian rituals, as in other African farming tribes, are annual, that is to say, seasonal customs. They involve the sowing, growth, and maturation of the crops, as well as the harvest.<sup>7</sup> These rituals have a community character and are conducted in close union with ancestors.<sup>8</sup>

In tribes where hunting and fishing is prevalent, fishing and hunting rituals may also be found.<sup>9</sup>

## The Extended Family as a Determinant of Law and Morality

The segmentary Kirdi societies, like all human societies organized in some degree, have their own moral and legal codes. These are trans-

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. ZIMONÍ, H., *Afrykańskie rytuały agrarne na przykładzie ludu Konkomba*, Warszawa 1992, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> More on agrarian rituals: JAOUEN, R., *Le Ngayda ou fête des récoltes chez les Guiziga de Midjiwin*, in SCHALLER, Y. (Ed.), *Les Kirdi du Nord-Cameroun*, Strasbourg 1973, p. 81-87; ADLER, A., *Les Moundang*, in *Les Kirdi du Nord-Cameroun*, op.cit., p. 114-117; KUREK, A., *Wierzenia i obrzędy Gidarów. Studium historyczno-hermeneutyczne*, Warszawa 1988, p. 367-369; HALLAIRE, A., op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *La chasse chez les Mbaidoba*, in *Univers religieux africain et foi en Jésus Christ. Stage pastoral, Fort Archambault*, 21 Juin – 11 Juillet 1972, Sahr 1972, p. 21-23; *La pêche chez les Banda de R.C.A.*, in *Univers religieux africain et foi en Jésus Christ. Stage pastoral, Fort Archambault*, 21 Juin – 11 Juillet 1972, Sahr 1972, p. 23-24.

mitted to children and youth in a long formational process which includes more elements of a nature more practical than discursive. Such a morals-oriented societal basis gives greater attention to what the individual does, rather than to who he is. That which he does usually has a societal dimension and does not remain indifferent to the community. Therefore both evil and good deeds are connected to the concrete familial community as well as the village community. Therefore also, this morality is considered more as a breaking of the community's law than as sin, in other words, in the common understanding, an individual's offence against God.

Moral precepts are contained not only in the practical witness of the conduct of those around, but also in numerous oral directives, especially proverbs. These also express prohibitions and taboos, forming an unwritten societal code. Through them is addressed the art of life and wisdom, handed down from forefathers. Therefore these prohibitions have a juridical character.

Bans on the theme of nutrition addressed to children, were not so much connected with their age, as with their level of maturity. The first of them most often concerned when to stop breast feeding, the eating of eggs, and so on. In regards to women, such bans gave special attention to times of pregnancy. Young men had extensive prohibitions during the period of initiation as well as the time of bachelorhood. And everyone was obliged by a prohibition against eating plants or animals which had been treated as totemic in the family or in the tribe, under pain of incurring the wrath of ancestors.

Prohibitions connected with societal life included also relations to the world of forefathers, treated as a real part of the society living on earth. On the horizontal plane they regulated the behavior of children towards adults and vice versa, of youth, of the elderly, and so on. Many of them were connected to concern for and care of sexual purity. Many prohibitions also were connected to people seen as abnormal whether from birth or from illness.

Each prohibition was associated with one or even many sanctions. Breaking a prohibition awoke the anger of the ancestors and was linked

to a physical or psychological punishment. By these punishments, not only was the individual affected; there were consequences on the life of the whole community. To prevent this, a purification rite was necessary which protected the individual from the progress of illness or misfortune and stopped it from advancing to the rest of the community. Therapeutic rituals thus strengthened both the individual and the community. They were conducted within the familial, tribal, or village sphere. In any case, they always applied to the whole familial group. Besides therapeutic rituals, numerous means of prevention were also used, both for individuals and communities. These included, among others, various kinds of amulets worn around the neck or fastened to clothing. Often they consisted of pulverized animal bones, tree bark, grain millet, herbs, metal, and so on. Another means of deterrent was spell-casting.

The causes of illness or misfortune were not always however the breaking of a taboo. Their source might also lie in a disordered relationship within a family, the tribe, or the village connected to the rural community, or also with the world of ancestors. There also could be a natural physical cause, or it could be the effect of a sorcerer or of the casting of a hex. All of this demanded thorough investigation.

It was always a popular and controversial thing to make an accusation of sorcery as the cause of an illness or misfortune. This reality survives even in contemporary African towns. Accusations of sorcery most often arise in times of tension in the community, very often even within the bosom of a family or tribe. With these accusations is always joined fear and dread since they strike at the very foundations of the community, with its broad understanding of solidarity rather wantonly opposed to individualism. Sorcery thus without doubt filled a socializing function, combating avarice, favoring good relations among neighbors, and suppressing unchecked ambition.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *La chasse chez les Mbaïdoba*, in *Univers religieux africain et foi en Jésus Christ. Stage pastoral, Fort Archambault, 21 Juin – 11 Juillet 1972*, Sahr 1972, p. 21-23; *La pêche chez les Banda de R.C.A.*, in *Univers religieux africain et foi en Jésus Christ. Stage pastoral, Fort Archambault, 21 Juin – 11 Juillet 1972*, Sahr 1972, p. 51d.

## Transition Rituals as Consolidating Familial and Tribal Bonds

Rights of passage were one of the basic elements integrating the community. They were a celebration of bonds with the familial and territorial community, of submitting one's will to its law, commands, and prohibitions, of respecting the community's values and all its rules of life. Therefore each ritual was connected with acquiring appropriate rights and accepting the obligations stemming from them. They included birth, initiation, marriage, and also funeral rites, by which a member of the community crosses over to the members of his family dwelling beyond the visible world. A characteristic trait of transition rituals was their multiple stages. They did not consist of a one-time act, but a happening prepared for and celebrated with gestures, symbols, words, and events.

The birth of a child as an act sealing and strengthening the marriage union was an event experienced not only by the extended family but of the whole tribe. It had a deep connection to a religious experience since children are treated as a gift from God. In birth celebrations are differentiated the periods of pregnancy, birth in the biological sense, and birth in the cultural sense. The first stage begins at the moment of the pregnancy's being diagnosed and can be equated to being disconnected from the original condition.<sup>11</sup>

Just as the name-giving is a child's reception into the community, so initiation is an essential stage of incorporation into the adult community. Though these rites vary greatly among the Kirdi, they are obligatory for all boys, and in some places for girls. As a rule the initiation rites address themselves to a goal of societal, sexual, and religious initiation. They combine many initiation tests, although not always

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. JAOUEN, R., *Le rituel de la naissance au Nord-Cameroun et au Tchad. Session d'anthropologie, Garoua*, 27 juin – 1 juillet 1977, in *Session d'anthropologie, Garoua*, 27 juin – 1 juillet 1977, MS Garoua 1977, p. 1-21. Cf. ZIELEND, K., *Wspólnototwórczy charakter tradycyjnych religii kirdyjskich*, op.cit., p. 174; DRAMAN, O. L., *Symbolisme religieux dans l'ethnie Ngambay. Approche culturelle de la religion*, MS, Ottawa 1975, p. 20-24.



circumcision. They are reserved only for members of the tribe and clothed in secrecy that is not revealed to outsiders.

Kirdi marriage, like marriage in all of sub-Saharan Africa, are not as a rule the decision of the young, but of their parents and also the elders. It is a contract between two families and so the family has a significant influence on the choice of the spouse. Among the Kirdi tribes can be distinguished four basic types of marriage:

- a) with a full ceremony, concluded with the payment of the final installment of the marriage gift
- b) a marriage where the payment has not yet been fully made
- c) marriage by abducting a girl
- d) and ensuring succession to widows in levirate marriage

Despite the prevalence of polygamous marriage, in many tribal traditions the rituals strongly emphasize the fact that in truth the marriage union includes only the first wife.

Just as initiation is a solemn celebration of coming into the adult community, so funeral rites are a celebration of entering the community of the ancestors, a type of salvation. Without the funeral ritual the deceased is liable to wander about in the afterlife, during which he may harm the living, and especially those of his own family. In order to get into the community, the deceased needs the celebration of the funeral ritual, just as he also needs what may be called a worthy death, usually determined by an advanced age, having descendants, and a death of natural causes. The experience of death strengthens the community's solidarity and tightens the bonds with forefathers.

## Ancestors

It would seem that the word *ancestor* (*Ka* in the Ngambay language) in the languages of the Kirdi does not exist without a demonstrative pronoun: it is always my ancestor (*Ka'm*), or our ancestor (*Ka'si*). This shows the strong bond between the family and its forebears, whose blood and also names, are present in the daily life of the earthbound

community. By various meetings and family feasts, as for example during initiations, the head of the tribe or family lists their genealogy in a speech. The earthly community is indebted to their ancestors for the orderliness of their society and religion. For this reason also, they do not refer to a concept of nationhood or social or professional classes, but to their forefathers.

The ancestors are neither dead, nor spirits. They are beings treated as a living, active society. Their strength and influence are much more powerful than any means possessed by the earthly community, which thus calls upon the community of ancestors in its organization and life. The ancestors are mediators between the Creator, spirits, and those living on earth, winning favor for them from the invisible world. For the earthly community, ancestors:

- a) restore order when individuals upset the balance,
- b) ensure length of life in the tribe, and its continuation,
- c) awaken fertility in the earth during agrarian rituals,
- d) increase and maintain contact between their community and the earthly community,
- e) meet the spiritual and material needs of the members of their tribe with rich harvests, health, safety, harmony, and peace in the tribe and in the village.

After death ancestors dwell in a closeby, unspecified place called *Ja-bao* – “village of the ancestors” (Ngambay), in *tēda*, literally, in the “land of happiness,” which is a place for chosen men and women who were upright in life, working and living honestly, loving their family and leaving children (Gidar), these are *Mbeli gni kwa hedi* – “people from the other side of the world” (Kapsiki). But from there, they participate uninterruptedly in the life of the whole community, “from that side of the world.”

## The Spirit World

The world of beings beyond the natural is, in traditional African religions, unusually rich and varied. The ordering of the hierarchic of

preternatural beings is often very difficult to verify and tell apart, the more so when considering the plurality of individual Kirdi religious traditions and the still limited knowledge about them. On the basis of observations and research made up to the present time, it is however possible to confirm a more general rule of African religions, that says that the world is overflowing with the presence of personified spiritual powers not coming, however, with clear links of relationship to the Supreme Being. More close to them are ancestors, or also tribal heroes. Sometimes the spirits are personifications of the powers of nature.

For the Ngambay, *mag* is the equivalent of a guardian spirit. The activity of the *Mag-Li* (snake spirit), and *Mag-Bed* (monkey spirit) includes primarily cultivated fields, and is linked to various illnesses. These spirits guard fields and granaries against thieves. The work of *Mag-Bisi* (dog spirit) or *Mag-Bur Bisi* (lizard-dog spirit) is to protect the compound and all the goods within it. *Mag-Yo-G-MV* (death in the bush spirit) and *Mag-Tanji* (guinea hen spirit) hold in their control everything found beyond the confines of the village. *Mag-Be* (village spirit) takes care of the village, and *Ang* (water spirit) watches over the waters.<sup>12</sup>

The appearance of animal spirits may be attributable to the fact that their fate is very closely linked to that of man, whether in terms of shelter or food. There is much oral tradition about them, too, especially animal stories.<sup>13</sup>

## Deities

Henryk Zimoń, speaking about deities in traditional African religions, counts in this category „spiritual beings of relatively high status in the preternatural pantheon, having a large measure of autonomy and sometimes related to the Supreme Being. Often they personify

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. DRAMAN, O. L., op. cit., p. 84-85.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. RÓŻAŃSKI, J., *W kręgu większych form narracyjnych u ludów Północnego Kamerunu*, Literatura Ludowa (1992) no. 4-5, p. 3-22.

important attributes, specific spheres of activity, and functions of the Supreme God as well as manifestations of natural phenomenon.<sup>14</sup> The world and everyday activities, crammed with spiritual presence, cannot run down to only one manifestation of the Most High God. Therefore the concept of God is also complex, although not the same as polytheism. For example the Gbaya term *Sô*, which denotes the Most High God, assumes many other meanings as well. It also means sovereign ruler, owner of something invisible. Hence also *Sô-ndong* – *God of the Spring*; *Sô-kombo* – *God of the Forest*; *Sô-bèlé* – *God of the Bush*. All of these refer to God, who returns to claim his rights over something which he owns. Speaking of the activity of God, they cite many elements, for example, hand- and footprints etched onto the rocks of springwaters, the enormous length and width of the river, the origin of the wind, the changing seasons of the year, etc.<sup>15</sup>

Wanto, the hero of Gbaya, is also called *Sô*. From the time it first appeared Gbaya has known many of his good works. He is for Gbaya a hero of civilization, who taught the people everything they know. There is however no form of cult for Wanto, although he is often extolled in tales, from generation to generation.<sup>16</sup>

## The Concept of God

Over the whole visible human and material earth, over the whole invisible spiritual world which is joined to it, in traditional African religions there decidedly dominates a Supreme Being. The system of beliefs connected with him are however quite varied. Their arrangement is further hindered by the character of African thought patterns, which are more concrete than abstract.

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<sup>14</sup> ZIMOŃ, H., *Religie ludów pierwotnych*, in ZIMOŃ, H. (Ed.), *Religia w świecie współczesnym. Zarys problematyki religiologicznej*, Lublin 2001, p. 220-221.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. M'BIKA, G. –E., *La connaissance de Dieu chez les Gbaya de Berbérati*, À l'Écoute de l'Église de Berbérati (1993) no. 1, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

Bartrand Lembezat, citing the array of names for God in the tribes of northern Cameroon, states that in Mofu *Erlam* means also “heaven”, *Zigile* in Matakam, *Bâ* in Tupuri mean “father”, *Boui Mulvung* in Gisiga means “Chief of the Spirits.” He concludes from this that God is seen as the Creator of all things. For Massa and Tupuri he is “Un-created Creator, who made the earth and man, and all that exists,” for Gisiga “the Highest Being, God the Creator, difficult to approach,” for Mundang “God the Creator, all powerful master of everything, inherent, who comes ‘on high,’” for Mbum “Creator, uncreated, all powerful master of Nature, and in a particular way of fire, rain, and the vault of the heavens.”<sup>17</sup> For Mafa *Jigile-Mbiya* is the Great Uncreated Spirit, one, even though *Jigile* indicates plural. *Jigile-hi* are created gods of limited rule. *Jigile-Mbiya* is a spiritual being, who is not presented as anthropomorphic, even in stories. Neither is he placed in a certain location, because he is everywhere. God does not have origins. He is the one creator. He is good. The origins of evil, however, are not clarified. Not much interest is shown in the question as to why God created man.<sup>18</sup> In researching the experience of God in the religious life of the Gidar community in northern Cameroon, Antoni Kurek emphasized faith in the existence of God, a God unique and transcendental.<sup>19</sup> J. F. Vincent also wrote on the monotheism of the mountain Kirdi, having conducted years of research in the terrain of the Mandara mountains, as have many other researchers and missionaries.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. LEMBEZAT, B., *Les populations païennes du Nord-Cameroun et de l'Adamawa*, Paris 1961, p. 101-214; LEMBEZAT, B., *Mukulehe – un clan montagnard du Nord-Cameroun. Coutumes. Rites. Croyances*, Paris 1952, p. 206.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. MORISOTTE, C., *Essai sur la pénétration chrétienne chez les Mafa du Nord Cameroun*, MS, Paris 1966, p. 54-78.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. KUREK, A., *Wierzenia i obrzędy Gidarów*, op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>20</sup> VINCENT, J. F., *La fête du taureau ou Maray chez les Mofu*, in *Les Kirdi du Nord-Cameroun*, op. cit., p. 66; VINCENT, J. F., *Dieu chez les Mofous-Diamaré*, Paris 1986, p. 15; AURENCHE, C., *Tokombéré, au pays des Grands Prêtres*, Paris 1996, p. 19, 22. Their views are representatively quoted and collected in ZIELEND, K., *Wspólnotwórczy charakter tradycyjnych religii kirdyjskich*, op. cit., p. 47-50.

Among the names for God in the north Cameroon territory one that comes up often is his basic attribute—Creator of the world and of man. *Ylingu* (Banda), *Gale* (Mandja) – are primarily Creator of the earth and of man. From Him come all plants and animals.<sup>21</sup>

In representations of God his second basic attribute also appears, which is his separateness from man. God lives in heaven and interests himself little in people and their lives. There is a widely-known myth about the departure of God, which expresses this. In the Gisiga version it goes like this: “Once upon a time, in the beginning, Heaven was close to earth. *Bumbulung* lived together with the people. Heaven was even so close, people had to go around bent over. For all that, however, they did not worry about food. It was enough to reach up and tear away a bit of heaven in order to have something to eat. One day the chief’s young daughter, *Mukuwang*, instead of eating as the others, found some grains on the ground. She made herself a mortar and pestle in order to grind the grain she had found. She worked kneeling on the ground, but each time she raised the pestle, she struck *Bumbulung* directly in the face. Since this hampered her work, she said, ‘*Bumbulung*, wouldn’t you like to move back?’ Heaven withdrew a bit and the girl could straighten herself. She continued to work, but every time she raised the pestle higher and higher. In the end she renewed her request and Heaven withdrew some more. But then she began to fling her pestle upwards. On the third request, an offended Heaven went quite far off, to where it is now to be found. From that time, no one ever saw *Bumbulung*. People could walk straightened out, but they could no longer feed on the shreds of heaven. They began then to live on millet. From that time God never showed himself to people, as he had done in earlier times., when each evening he would come and soothe their conflicts. Now people are alone, alone with their problems. It is a time of war.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. VERGIAT, A. M., *Les rites secrets des primitifs de l'Oubangui*, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 18-19. Translated in ZIELEND, K., *Wspólnotowórczy charakter tradycyjnych religii kirdyjskich*, op. cit., p. 52-53. Also see KUREK, A., *Wierzenia i obrzędy*

## Indirect and Direct Worship of God

Neither the central position of man or the cult of ancestors conflicted with the conviction that religion reaches its peak in God, seen as the source of life or rather the source of the life force.<sup>23</sup> Describing the co-creative character of Kirdi religion, Krzysztof Zielenda presented indirect and direct worship of God. He treated what is called the cult of ancestors—according to the model accepted today—as an indirect worship of God, since in accordance with the place in which ancestors have a system of religious beliefs, they are not the subjects of worship, but simply intercessors with God. This cult has a regular character, possessing defined, cyclic holy days for the veneration of ancestors, and also spontaneous ones in cases of experiencing misfortune or suffering. The regular cult has a community character while the spontaneous is more individual. The regular cult of the Mofu (Mandara mountains) takes place during the *Maray* feast, which is organized every four years. The Muktele, neighbors of the Mofu, it takes place every three or even every ten years, and in the low-lying communities of northern Cameroon, usually every year. The individual cult is usually preceded by consultation with the fortune teller, who indicates to whom of the ancestors an offering needs to be made. Both forms of cult are accompanied by prayer directed to God and to ancestors, as well as blood or non-blood offerings.<sup>24</sup>

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*Gidarów*, op. cit., p. 224; THOMAS, L. V. – LUNEAU, R., *La terre africaine et ses religions*, Paris 1986, p. 136; THOMAS, L. V., *Les sages dépossédés. Univers magiques d'Afrique du Nord*, Paris 1977, p. 147-149; JAOUEN, R., *Le mythe de la retraite de Bumbulung chez les Gizigas du Nord-Cameroun*, *Afrique et Parole* (1971) no. 33-34, p. 56-57. This same myth in a similar version exists also among the peoples of Chad and of the Central African Republic; Cf. THOMAS, L. V. – LUNEAU, R. – DONEUX, J. L., *Les religions d'Afrique noire*, Paris 1969, p. 91-96; VERGIAT, A. M., *Les rites secrets des primitifs de l'Oubangui*, op. cit., p. 43. And in other regions of Africa: Cf. PIŁASZEWICZ, S., *Afrykańska Księga Rodzaju. Mity i legendy ludów Afryki Zachodniej*, Warszawa 1978.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. URBAN, J., *Doświadczenie Boga u ludów Bantu*, Warszawa 1987, p. 79-80.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. ZIELEND, K., *Wspólnototwórczy charakter tradycyjnych religii kirdyjskich*, op. cit., p. 150-170.

Most often the offerings to ancestors are laid on home altars. In the mountains of northern Cameroon many heads of families possess a pitcher which represents the father or grandfather. Often this pitcher is called *Baba*, thus, the same as the living father. There are no graves there, or skulls, but it remains a pure symbol. And on the broad expanses of the savannah the Kirdi conduct the cult of ancestors on home altars, which are to be found in every compound.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand prayer rarely takes a collective form, unless during the annual agrarian feast. Usually it has an individual, spontaneous dimension depending on the situation.

Among the Kirdi peoples can be observed numerous examples of offerings and prayers to spirits as well as to gods. Taking into consideration the place that such beings hold in the traditional religious system, they can be acknowledged to efface to a greater or lesser extent, the indirect worship of God.

Among the Gidar of northern Cameroon is the polysemous term *Tuya*, which often means higher power, spirit, or even a secondary god. This spirit can do both good and evil. *Tuya* can live in the mountains, the bush, or in water. No one passes through *ma tuya*—the place where the *tuya* dwells—with sandals on his feet. This place is inviolable. Every *tuya* has a different level of wisdom and power. Offerings are also made to the *tuya*. During the well-known feast Maray of the Mofu of the Mandara mountains, in the *mbolom* ritual, it can be clearly noted that *mbolom*, perceived as the spirit of an edifice, neighborhood, or compound—also receives offerings in the form of hens or even lambs or goats. There is also a prayer right before the offering: “We come to you, as our *mbolom*, to place an offering. You have asked us through the mediation of the fortune teller for this beer and lamb. We want to offer it to you with a good heart,” or during the offering of the beer,

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. ELA, J. M., *Les ancêtres et la foi chrétienne. Une question africaine*, Concilium (1977) no. 122, p. 49 [French language version]; VIDAL, P., *Garçon et Filles*, op. cit., p. 69.



„Spirit of the mountains, spirit of Ngewedey,<sup>26</sup> we have come and we are disturbing you. Thank you for the past four years. We offer this to you, take this offering for our village and leave it in health and in peace. May the needed rain return! May the one who wants to wrong another, fall on his head! Preserve us in peace!”<sup>27</sup>

Antoni Kurek, describing the beliefs and rituals of the Gidar, describes the direct cult of God conducted during the several days of the *uzlra na walangla*, the “village feast.” The day the feast begins is indicated by the fortune teller of Kong-Kong. Three days later the ancestor cult is conducted in the individual families. The next day in the village of the religious chief the *uda Mangelva*—feast for the praise of God—commences. Offerings are made under the holy tree. The one making the offering improvises a short prayer to God. In the evening of that same day is begun the beer brewing and when morning comes, the celebration of the *uzga dogzoyo* – exorcisms with the help of torches. After the feast in Kong-Kong begin village feasts in other locations. These do not however make offerings. Song, dance, and beer-drinking dominate.<sup>28</sup> A few other examples of the direct cult of God in the Mandara mountains are also cited by Krzysztof Zielenda.<sup>29</sup>

Other than the community worship of God it is possible to find individual forms of cult, conducted usually in situations of great danger in which an individual may find himself. Most often such worship consists of prayer difficult to observe, sometimes prayer and an offering.

To generalize, the following schema of prayer and offering in traditional religions of the Kirdi can be presented:

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<sup>26</sup> *Ngevedey* – the place of the altar to *mbolom*, the spirit of the neighborhood.

<sup>27</sup> DENGUEZ, D., *Le Maray, sacrifice traditionnel chez les Mofou et l'Eucharistie. Memoire de fin de cycle de theologie*, MS, Maroua 1997, p. 34.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. KUREK, A., *Wierzenia i obrzędy Gidarów*, op. cit., p. 229-239.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. ZIELEND, K., *Wspólnototwórczy charakter tradycyjnych religii kirdyjskich*, op. cit., p. 151-158.

INTENTION	PETITIONER			
	Individual	Family		Tribe or Village
<i>For granting more favor.</i>	<i>Before starting a trip, going fishing, etc.</i>	<i>The annual memorial of ancestors, during the sowing and the harvest</i>		<i>The annual vil- lage holy day, the harvest festival</i>
<i>To stop mis- fortune from happening</i>	<i>Illness, unsucces- ful hunting or fishing</i>	<i>Illness in the family, infertil- ity, bad harvests, etc.</i>		<i>Lengthening the lack of rain dur- ing the planting season</i>
<i>Gaining powers for good or even for evil (magic)</i>	<i>Needful success, jealousy</i>			
MAKING THE OFFERING	Individual	Family Head		Priest or Land Chief
OFFERING	Blood: <i>chicken, goat, sheep, ox</i> ; manner of offering: <i>smother- ing, cutting the throat, destroying</i>			
	Unbloody: <i>food, millet beer</i> ; manner of offering: <i>pouring out, scattering</i>			
PRAYER	Individual	Family Head		Chaplain or Land Chief
RECIPIENT OF PRAYERS AND OFFER- INGS	INDIRECT WORSHIP	Ancestors	Spirits	Gods
	DIRECT WORSHIP	The One God		
ULTIMATE RECIPIENT OF PRAYERS AND OFFERINGS		THE ONE GOD		

# Catholic-Muslim Dialogue in the United States and Europe: Public Space, Private Education, and the Common Good

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Vilhelmus Pim Valkenberg

First of all, thank you for welcoming me to this conference on *Religion and Common Good* in Olomouc, Czech Republic. I have never travelled to your country before, so I'm a bit hesitant to give a lecture rather than to sit and listen. But that is not what you expect from me. Let me then use my expertise in interreligious dialogue between Christians, more specifically Catholics, and Muslims in hopes of contributing something to the general theme of your conference. More specifically, being born in the Netherlands and working in the United States, I would like to compare the situation or the state of this specific dialogue between these specific groups in northwestern Europe and in the United States. I will try to be as specific as possible about these contexts and about my own religious background, since I think that works better than presenting a rather general theory. So, consequently I will begin by talking about some of the backgrounds of the Roman Catholic approach to interreligious dialogue, and how it has changed in the past half century. Next, I will discuss the situation of dialogue between Muslims and Catholics in the Netherlands, which is the country where I was born and worked until 2006. I will characterize this situation as a lack of compartmentalization in which there is hardly any contact between politicians, church leaders, and theologians. One of the consequences of this is that a small group of theologians have developed a dialogue policy with Muslims that was unrelated to the very different approaches of politicians while at the same time it did not influence official church politics regarding Islam. I will argue that the lack of contact between these three groups is one of the reasons for the absence of any common view on Islam in Northwestern Europe.

The lack of mediation by Christian voices might be one of the factors explaining the widening gap between the values of many Muslims and the so-called “European” values.<sup>1</sup>

In the third part of my lecture, I will talk about the dialogue between Catholics and Muslims in the United States as a dialogue with an institutional framework. I will describe this framework and concentrate on three particular topics that merit attention in the context of this conference: the relation between Church and State; the situation of private education, and finally conceptions of the common good, human dignity and the value of life. In that way, I hope to do justice both to the specifics of my experience and to the overarching theme of this conference.

## The Catholic Church and Its New Approach to Dialogue

The complicated origins of the document *Nostra Aetate* have been told many times, but recently John Connelly, a historian of the University of California at Berkeley has added a new chapter to the investigation into these origins.<sup>2</sup> The direct origin of the document was a visit of the French Jewish historian Jules Isaac to Pope John XXIII in the early summer of 1960. Isaac, who had made a name in France and the rest of Europe with his book on Jesus and Israel in 1948, was one of the developers of a number of theses accepted at the second meet-

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<sup>1</sup> The most important publication in this respect (in Dutch): POORTHUIS en THEO SALEMINK, M., *Van Harem tot Fitna: Beeldvorming van de Islam in Nederland 1848-2010*, Valkhof, Nijmegen 2011. One of the contributions of this book is that it juxtaposes approaches to Islam in the world of politics and approaches to Islam in the world of the churches, so that the confluences between the two and the later divergences between the two (or the three, if one reckons the world of theology as a separate approach) become visible. NB I write the first part of this text just a few days after the attacks in Paris on the editorial staff of *Charlie Hebdo* magazine and on a *kosher* supermarket in January 2015. These events of course influence my own thoughts about the relation between Islam and Europe.

<sup>2</sup> CONNELLY, J., *From Enemy to Brother: The Revolution in Catholic Teaching on the Jews 1933-1965*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge – London 2011.

ing of the International Council of Christians and Jews in Seelisberg, Switzerland, in 1947.<sup>3</sup> But Isaac was not on his own; behind him was a group of Catholics, almost all of them converts from either Judaism or Protestantism, who wanted the Church to speak out on behalf of the relationship with Judaism, after the atrocious experiences of the Holocaust. Some of them had started this re-thinking of the relations between the Catholic Church and the Jewish People already before the National Socialist regime, like for instance the group *Amici Israel* (friends of Israel) in 1928. It is interesting to know that the first condemnation of anti-Semitism by Pope Pius XI in 1928 was a sort of compensation for banning this group from the Church.<sup>4</sup> As Connelly makes clear, the awareness that the Church needed to re-think its relation with the Jewish people was mainly emphasized by a group of middle-European converts among whom Dietrich von Hildebrand, Johannes Oesterreicher and Karl Thieme were the most important ones.

The immediate pre-history of the document *Nostra Aetate* begins with pope John XXIII who was willing to include a statement about the Jews in the documents to be written in preparation of the Second Vatican Council. As John Oesterreicher makes clear, the pope had already ordered to change the infamous prayer *pro perfidis Iudaeis* in the liturgy for Good Friday in 1959, and so the visit from Jules Isaac is a catalyst rather than an absolute beginning for the pope's involvement.<sup>5</sup> So the pope asked the newly instituted Secretariat for Christian Unity in September 1960 to prepare a document about the relationship between the Church and the Jewish people. This was a decision with far-reaching consequences since it built a theological bridge between ecumenism and what we now call interreligious dialogue at a time when this dialogue was not yet envisaged as a real possibility.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid p. 176-78.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid p. 97.

<sup>5</sup> See OESTERREICHER, J., "Kommentierende Einleitung," in *Das zweite Vatikanische Konzil: Konstitutionen, Dekrete und Erklärungen Lateinisch und Deutsch, Kommentare II* (Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, 13), Herder, Freiburg 1967, p. 406-478.

Because of the position of the Jewish faith in the Christian history of salvation, and because he trusted his friend, the German Jesuit scholar Augustin Bea, rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, pope John decided to entrust this new secretariat with the task of developing this document.<sup>6</sup> So it might be true of pope John XXIII what has been said about pope John Paul II as well: that his engagement in interreligious dialogue originated in a personal feeling of connectedness with Jewish friends. This explains the spontaneous words that the Pope directed to a number of American Jews who visited him in October 1960: *Son io, Giuseppe, il fratello vostro*; “I, Joseph (his proper name) am your brother.”<sup>7</sup> But Oesterreicher mentions a number of other sources for this document as well, for instance the request by the pontifical biblical institute to explicitly refute anti-Semitism.<sup>8</sup> Also, some bishops from the United States and some institutes for Christian-Jewish dialogue in Europe wanted the Council to talk about its relationship with the Jews, mainly because they thought that it was necessary for the Church to openly distance itself from the tradition of blaming the Jews for the death of Jesus and consequently determining their dispersion and their near-extinction as a penalty from God.

Of course I have no time to discuss the entire pre-history of *Nostra Aetate* with you today. Let me limit myself to two points. First, there have been at least four different versions in different contexts and written by different committees. One of the changes was that some of the bishops from the Middle East did not want a document to be published about Judaism only as this would seem to endorse the politics of the State of Israel – especially since there was a powerful Jewish lobby at work at the council. So they wanted to include a paragraph on Islam as well, but then bishops from Asia argued that the religions

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<sup>6</sup> OESTERREICHER, J., “Kommentierende Einleitung,” in *Das zweite Vatikanische Konzil: Konstitutionen, Dekrete und Erklärungen Lateinisch und Deutsch, Kommentare II* (Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, 13), Herder, Freiburg 1967, p. 406.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid p. 408.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid p. 409.

forming the majority in the countries where they worked should be included as well. So this explains why the original document *De Iudaeis* came to include all major world religions.

In the second place, the process of drafting *Nostra Aetate* went together with another process, that of institutionalizing the relations with other religions as an important part of the institution of the Roman Catholic Church. At first, it was the Secretariat for Christian Unity that was founded to take care for the ecumenical relationships during the Council but needed to take care for the relationships with the Jews as well. But when Pope Paul VI succeeded Pope John XXIII in 1963, he did two things that are very important for the place of interreligious dialogue in the Roman Catholic Church. He announced the establishment of the Secretariat for non-Christians in a message on Pentecost, May 17, 1964.<sup>9</sup> As the goal of this secretariat, the Pope established a means by which to arrive at a sincere and respectful dialogue with those who “still believe in God and worship him”.<sup>10</sup> So we can see how the notion of dialogue is central here right from the beginning, and this is confirmed by the important role it plays in the Pope’s encyclical that was published a couple of months later, in August 1964, so before the debate about the declaration *De Iudaeis et de non-Christianis* during the third session of the Council in September 1964. This encyclical (dated August 6, 1964) has a section on dialogue in which the Pope says: “The Church should enter into dialogue with the world in which she exists and labors.”<sup>11</sup> (ES 67 in Gioia, p. 72). Dialogue should be the characteristic of the Church in all of its communication with the world. But it seems to be clear that the Pope mainly thinks about the message that the church has to offer to the world, less about her listening to the world.

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<sup>9</sup> See GIOIA, F. (Ed.), *Interreligious Dialogue: the official teaching of the Catholic Church from the Second Vatican Council to John Paul II (1963-2005)*, Paulist Publications, Mahwah N.J. 2006, no. 194, p. 161.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid no. 196.

<sup>11</sup> *Ecclesiam Suam* 67; GIOIA, p. 72.

An interesting theological foundation comes in no. 72 of the same encyclical in which the Pope says: "The transcendent origin of the dialogue ... is found in the very plan of God."<sup>12</sup> He sketches the history of salvation as a dialogue between God and human beings, initiated by God, culminating in the incarnation, but interrupted by human sinfulness. He talks about the dialogue of salvation that is ultimately grounded in the love of the Trinitarian God. Further on, and more concretely, the encyclical talks about dialogue as the method of accomplishing the apostolic mission of the church.<sup>13</sup> Clarity, Meekness, Trust and Prudence are characteristics of this dialogue. But preaching remains important as well. Finally, the encyclical discusses: dialogue with whom, and it distinguishes a number of concentric circles, an approach that we find in *Nostra Aetate* as well.<sup>14</sup> Dialogue with the entire humankind as first circle; dialogue with those who believe in God as second circle. Here the encyclical says that there is but one religion, the religion of Christianity, but that the church recognizes and respects the moral and spiritual values of the non-Christian religions, and that it wishes to join with them "in promoting common ideals of religious liberty, human brotherhood, good culture, social welfare, and civil order".<sup>15</sup>

Thus far I have concentrated on the contents of the document, but there is a structural aspect as well which shows most clearly the differences between how the Catholic Church has traditionally looked at other religions, how it changed its outlook during the Second Vatican Council, but more importantly how it continued changing after that. In a time in which members of other religions were considered as unbelievers, the Church's task was to bring them to faith and therefore they would be addressed in an endeavor to promote the Christian faith,

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<sup>12</sup> *Ecclesiam Suam* 72; GIOIA, p. 74.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid* p. 83; GIOIA, p. 76.

<sup>14</sup> See *Ecclesiam Suam* 100.

<sup>15</sup> *Ecclesiam Suam* 111-12; GIOIA p. 84-85.



as was the objective of the *sacra congregatio de propaganda fide* between 1622 and 1988. Since then, the congregation is renamed *congregatio pro gentium evangelisatione*. Even though its aim is still the proclamation of the Gospel, the distinction between faith and unbelief is no longer that stark.

As I have stated before, during the second Vatican Council, a separate organization for relations with non-Christians was formed by Pope Paul VI in May 1964, the *secretariatus pro non-Christianis* following the establishment of a secretariat for Christian Unity by Pope John XX-III at the dawn of the Second Vatican Council, in 1960.<sup>16</sup> The term “non-Christians” can be seen as neutral in the sense that it does not denote others as unbelievers but as other than Christians, but it still is a negative denotation. This changed when the secretariat received its new name, *pontificium consilium pro dialogo inter religiones* (Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue) by Pope John Paul II in 1988. This time, the common term is “religions,” and dialogue between them is what the pontifical council is supposed to promote.

This new name also signals that our cultural context is already different from the Second Vatican Council 50 years ago since the Council certainly did something new by issuing a declaration about other religions, but it did so in ecclesiological terms and in negative terminology: *declaratio de Ecclesiae habitudine ad religiones non-Christianas* (“Declaration about the relation between the Church and non-Christian religions”). Consequently, the document that was named *De Iudaeis* for years since it was to concentrate on Christian-Jewish relationships, ended up being named *De non-Christianis* which gives a considerably broader range but a negative terminology as well. As Gerald O’Col-

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<sup>16</sup> The events leading to the establishments of these secretariats, and their accomplishments can be followed in the diaries of some of the bishops and theologians working for these secretariats. Among them are Johannes Willebrands and Yves Congar. See SALEMINK, T., *You Will be Called Repairer of the Breach: the Diary of J.G.M. Willebrands 1958-1961*, Peeters, Leuven 2009; DECLERCK, L., *Les agendas conciliaires de Mgr. J. Willebrands, secrétaire du secretariat pour l'unité des Chrétiens*, Traduction française annotée, Peeters, Leuven 2009; CONGAR, Y., *My Journal of the Council*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville MN 2012 (orig. *Mon journal du Concile*, Paris 2002).

lins remarks in his recent book, *The Second Vatican Council on Other Religions*, when the declaration would have been written thirty years later, the title would have been different.<sup>17</sup>

So let us look at what this new Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue did. It produced two important documents that further specified what Paul VI's encyclical had said about dialogue, but it brought this into the broader context of the missionary purpose of the Church – as the Second Vatican Council had done as well, mainly in its documents *Lumen Gentium* about the Church, and *Ad Gentes* about its missionary purpose.

The first document was published in 1984 and it is known as “dialogue and mission.” The official title of the document is: *The Attitude of the Church toward Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission*.<sup>18</sup> It was published by the then-secretariat for non-Christians in 1984, twenty years after the encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*. It basically reflects on the relationship between Mission (part 1) and Dialogue (part 2). So it first talks about mission as the basic task of the Church. In no. 13 (820) the document talks about five principal elements of mission: presence; commitment; liturgical life; dialogue; announcement and catechesis. The part on dialogue repeats the main theological lines of *Ecclesiam suam*, gives the Trinitarian dimensions (nos. 22-24) and adds paragraphs on the Seeds of the Word (no. 26) and ends with the four forms of dialogue (nos. 28-35) that have become quite famous: the dialogue of living together (characterized as grassroots dialogue); the dialogue of common purpose for a better society (dialogue of hands); the dialogue of experts (dialogue of heads) and finally the dialogue of religious experience (dialogue of hearts). The third and final part of the document is about the relationship between dialogue and mission. If there is a difference between this document and the later *Dialogue and Proclamation*, it is

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<sup>17</sup> O'COLLINS, G., *The Second Vatican Council on Other Religions*, Oxford University, Oxford Press 2013, p. 84.

<sup>18</sup> See GIOIA, *Interreligious Dialogue*, numbers 808-851 on pages 1116-29.

in the stress on mutuality that is to my mind unique for this Vatican document. It starts with the forms of dialogue: in the dialogue of experts, the partners come to a mutual understanding (no. 34) and the dialogue of religious experience “can be a mutual enrichment and fruitful cooperation for promoting and preserving the highest values and spiritual ideals.” (no. 35). This comes back in the third part: In no. 40: “In dialogue.. the Christian normally nourishes in his heart the desire of sharing his experience of Christ... on the other hand, it is natural that another believer would similarly desire to share his faith.” So dialogue as mutual proclamation. Even stronger in no. 43: “Dialogue thus becomes a source of hope and a factor of communion in mutual transformation.” Mutual transformation! So the Christian can expect to be transformed as well. Finally no. 44 talks about how the dialogue can bring mutual enrichment.<sup>19</sup>

As usual, we will concentrate on the dialogue of experts but it is important to remark that this type of dialogue should remain connected with the other three types of dialogue. In a moment we will see how the Catholic bishops of the United States have tried to enact these guidelines in their dialogues with Muslims, with Hindus and Sikhs (next to dialogues with Jews, and ecumenical dialogues in which I am not personally involved). But first about the much more difficult situation of interreligious dialogue and more specifically Christian-Muslim dialogue in Europe.

### Catholic – Muslim Dialogue in Northwestern Europe

This part of my talk will be narrative: I will talk about some experiences of interreligious dialogue from the period between 1990 and

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<sup>19</sup> For a more theological discussion of this document, see DUPUIS, J., *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, chapter 14. For a more concrete adaptation to Catholic-Muslim dialogue, see the document *Guidelines for Dialogue between Christians and Muslims*, by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, published in French in 1981 and translated into English in 1990.

2006 when I became active in dialogue with Muslims in the Netherlands. This narrative will serve to show two things: first, how the nature of the Muslim immigrants determines the limits of interreligious dialogue: before the year 2000 there not many Muslims interested in dialogue; after that, when they became interested, the atmosphere changed in such a way that their contribution became more and more contested. Second, it will show the relative absence of the Roman Catholic Church or other Christian churches as dialogue partners. Even though the Christian churches did allocate one or two persons to work in dialogue with Muslims, it did not really form a part of the agenda of these churches. Therefore, there is a strange asymmetry in dialogue between Christians and Muslims in the Netherlands: before 2000, Churches were willing to engage in dialogue but Muslims were not ready for it; after 2000, when Muslims became more visible as public spokespersons of their religion, the Churches withdrew to their “core business” and had less interest in dialogue, as Dutch society in general became wary of the so-called political correctness of multiculturalism. Nowadays, Muslims are victimized daily by politicians, but the Church is largely invisible in public affairs.<sup>20</sup>

In 1990 the university where I worked at that time in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, started a new program with interreligious dialogue at its core. Because of my double background in Christian theology and the comparative study of religions, I was asked to coordinate this new program. It soon began to attract more students than the classical study of Christian theology and later developed into a separate Department of Religious Studies.<sup>21</sup>

At that time I lived in the city of Utrecht, which has a sizeable Muslim population. In the footsteps of my wife, who worked as a pastoral life director in one of the Roman Catholic parishes, I tried to engage

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<sup>20</sup> The broadest survey of these developments can be found in the book *Van Harem tot Fitna: Beeldvorming van de Islam in Nederland 1848-2010*, Valkhof, Nijmegen 2011.

<sup>21</sup> Materials in this part of my text have been copied from the first chapter of a book manuscript soon to be published with CUA Press in Washington D.C.: *Renewing Islam by Service: A Christian View of Fethullah Gülen and the Hizmet Movement*.

in dialogue with Muslims at the local level in hopes of generating experiences that could help me in teaching about interreligious dialogue. While the project in which she participated succeeded in bringing together Dutch women and women of guest-worker families in order to teach the Dutch language in a homely setting, I was able to reach out to some of the Moroccan Muslims in the neighborhood. We even tried to form a small group but failed because of a lack of continuity in Muslim participants: they were manual workers who were not really used to telling stories about their religion, let alone to sharing these stories with religious others.

I met a new group of Muslims at the beginning of the new millennium when the journal *Begrip Moslims-Christenen* ("Understanding between Muslims and Christians") celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary with a symposium that attracted a good number of Muslims. I was excited when I found out that these Muslims were not only young and bright but that they actually wanted to talk about their own faith with religious others. They were members of a new group that called itself "Islam and Dialogue." Unfortunately, this group was mainly active in the western part of the country (Rotterdam and Amsterdam) and it did not have a local branch in Utrecht or Nijmegen, the cities where I lived and worked. Yet such local branches would soon be developed so that I received, shortly after the dreadful events of September 11, 2001, an invitation for an iftar dinner. This dinner has a specific social function in the tradition of Islam, since in many Muslim countries it is customary to break the fasting (saum) during the month of Ramadan with a communal dinner. Modern Muslim groups like to include Christians and other believers especially during the month of Ramadan. The SEMA Foundation in Nijmegen, an institution that runs a boarding school where children of Turkish provenance can do their homework and live together under supervision, extended an invitation for an iftar dinner to my wife, who worked in one of the Roman Catholic churches, and I was happy to be able to accompany her. During the iftar meal, one of the Turkish hosts introduced himself to me as Emrullah Erdem, a freelance interpreter and the coordinator

of the local branch of “Islam and Dialog” Foundation. We decided to collaborate on a number of projects, one of them being a public event celebrating Abraham (Ibrāhīm) as the forefather of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. I invited a group of students and faculty of the religious studies program at our university to join this collaboration, and after some time we extended the invitation to one of my Jewish colleagues, Tzvi Marx, who brought along the great resources of his Folkertsma Foundation for Talmudic Studies. The venue of the event was Museum Park Orientalis in the city of Groesbeek near Nijmegen. This museum was originally founded to enable visitors who could not afford to travel to the Middle East an impression of the life of Jesus in its original setting. Later, the board of directors of the museum tried to develop a new policy that would give more attention to the multicultural character of the Middle East, but the Roman Catholic bishop of ’s-Hertogenbosch who had the authority to steer the course of the museum as a canonical institution, was opposed to highlighting other cultures and religions since—as he argued—the museum was originally meant to underscore the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. Whereas the bishop used an exclusivist theological argumentation to defend his canonical rights, the board of directors argued in favor of the policy of multiculturalism that was sponsored by the Dutch government in the 1990s. The Islam and Dialogue Foundation had its own reasons to organize an event focusing on Abraham, and these were neither exclusivist nor multicultural, but based on texts from the Qur’an that remind Muslims that God has created differences so that we might know one another.

This is just a small example and I cannot give too many details here, but my point here is that I have worked quite a few years with Muslims in the setting of a University and of local churches. These churches were usually favorable towards dialogue and there were some church officials who supported dialogue initiatives, however, it was not an official part of the church agenda. The Dutch Council of Churches – of which the Roman Catholic Church in that country is a member – does have a group that promotes better relationships with other religions

but, as I said before, the fact that most non-Christian citizens recently arrived as guest workers caused them not to pay much attention to these dialogue initiatives.<sup>22</sup> When the younger generation of immigrant Muslims began to take initiatives in the field of interreligious dialogue, the Church generally had only a lukewarm interest. This means that initiatives toward interreligious dialogues largely remained at the personal and local level without being supported by the Christian churches.

I have been working as a member of the editorial board of the periodical that focuses on relations between Muslims and Christians in the Netherlands between 1999 and 2006. The name of the publication was *Begrip Moslims – Christenen* which can be translated as “Understanding between Muslims and Christians” (after the French original). The editorial board was ecumenical and international; it consisted of representatives of the academic world together with the functionaries working with Muslims for the Dutch and Belgian Roman Catholic bishops, and the Protestant Dutch churches. Even though we did have some contact with the bishops and other church authorities and sometimes organized events together with them, I cannot say that there was a strong mutual relationship; maybe this was an effect of the more general lack of trust between bishops and theologians in the Netherlands. So we were left with the feeling that we were working for an important cause, certainly after 9/11 – I remember vividly talking with a Muslim theologian about an article she would contribute immediately after hearing the news – but we also had the feeling that we had to do so in isolation. The Dutch churches found our work important but there was a lack of commitment, partly because many churches find the relations with the Jews more important and it is hard to work with a “double loyalty” as we found out after a delegation of the Dutch Council of Churches met with a delegation of the Middle East Council

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<sup>22</sup> A good inventory of the situation in the late 1990s can be found in the booklet *Begaanbare wegen: Christologie en dialoog*, written on the occasion of the Kerkendag (*Kirchentag*) 1998 of the Dutch Council of Churches, Published Kampen – Kok 1998.

of Churches in 1999 in Jordan after immersion trips in the Lebanon and the Gaza strip. Also, the catholic bishops did not feel comfortable working with theologians after the long history of mutual antagonism that has marked the reception of the Second Vatican Council in the Netherlands since 1985. This is a long story in itself – but it was one of the factors contributing to the quick erosion of public trust in the Dutch Catholic Church, even before the scandals with sexual abuse came to light. So the final result is – in my view – an almost total lack of plausibility. I know that some of the Dutch bishops do their best to proclaim the message, for instance on the sanctity of life and the integrity of the human person. But almost no one listens, not in the political world, and certainly not in academia.

Let me finish with a recent example of what the lack of institutional presence of Christian churches means. As you know, a Malaysian airplane, flight MH17 from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur was shot above east-Ukrainian territory on July 17, 2014 killing almost 200 Dutch passengers. I happened to be in Europe in that period, and I watched the arrival of the first coffins with human remains, and their transport to a place where they would be identified. It was a moment of absolute silence and seriousness. The king and queen and the national government was there – but I did not see any representatives of Dutch churches or other religious leaders. That would have been plainly unthinkable twenty years before, so it got me thinking about the absence of religion in the public realm. This also is a good moment to contrast the European situation with the United States.

### **Catholic-Muslim Dialogue in the United States**

In 2006 I started teaching as a Christian theologian with interest in Islam at Loyola University Maryland. After five years I transferred to my present job at the Catholic University of America where I teach in the area of Religion and Culture with a focus on interreligious dialogue and Christian-Muslim relations in particular. Of course I needed to orient myself to this new environment but since there are not many



theologians who approach Islam explicitly in the way I do: as a religion first and foremost, it did not take long before I was able to meet some of the most important scholars in this field. I was pleasantly surprised when I was invited to join one of the regional dialogues between Catholics and Muslims quite soon after I arrived since I had never received such an invitation in the Netherlands even though I had worked there in the field for more than ten years.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has engaged in a number of ecumenical and interreligious dialogues since the Second Vatican Council. Since I am to concentrate on Catholic-Muslim dialogues, I will give a very short history of these dialogues and after that I will continue in the last part of my lecture with some of the basic issues raised in these dialogues in a comparative perspective looking back at the situation in Europe.<sup>23</sup> The first initiative that I can trace on the USCCB website is a national dialogue between Catholics and Muslims in 1991 on the topic of mission and *da'wa*. It was a two-day event that brought together ten Catholic and ten Muslim religious leaders for a two-day retreat, concluded by a common statement.<sup>24</sup> However, this event did not lead to a long-standing form of dialogue since it was rather difficult to get people together at the national level; that is why the dialogue partners decided to continue on a regional level.

The first of the regional dialogues is the Midwest Dialogue which started in 1996 and has Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) as co-chair together with bishop Francis Reiss of Detroit, the area with the greatest concentration of Muslims in the United States. This dialogue has convened annually, usually in the Indianapolis area (the headquarters of ISNA is in Plainfield, Indiana). The dialogue partners come from places where they have worked

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<sup>23</sup> A short survey of the Catholic – Muslim dialogues in the United States by one of the originators: John Borelli, “Recent Muslim – Catholic Dialogue in the USA,” in: FITZGERALD, M. L., – BORELLI, J., *Interfaith Dialogue – A Catholic View*, Orbis books, London, SPCK – Maryknoll NY 2006, p. 97-108.

<sup>24</sup> See <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/interreligious/islam/upload/isla.pdf>

together for some time, and so there are delegations from Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, and other places. Another distinct characteristic is that they come together for a little over 24 hours, so that includes time for worship, common dinners and social time. This is the way in which long-standing partnerships develop. I have been able to be present at a meeting of this dialogue in Plainfield in 2004 when I was on a sabbatical leave at the University of Notre Dame, and again in Cleveland Ohio last year (2014). This dialogue produced a booklet about revelation from Catholic and Muslim perspectives, and also a document about Catholics and Muslims in the public square. I will come back to this theme.

The regional Mid-Atlantic dialogue had the Islamic Circle of North-America as partner of the bishops' conference. This dialogue started soon after the Midwest Dialogue and produced, among others, a document on Marriage, and a guide for Catholic and Muslim educators on teaching about the religious other.<sup>25</sup> Like other dialogues, this dialogue comes together for 24-48 hours, usually in the New York / New Jersey region where ICNA has its headquarters, or in Washington D.C. where USCCB has its offices. One of the important things is that representatives in this dialogue – and I am one of them – commit themselves for a period of at least five years, so that there is some continuity and representatives have the time to get to know each other somewhat better. Again, this gives the opportunity for interreligious friendships to develop, and maybe these friendships are among the most important long-term developments in Catholic – Muslim dialogues. The third regional dialogue is a bit less formal than the others since it does not issue statements – at least these statements are not visible on the USCCB website. It is situated in Orange County, California, and tends to deal with spiritual dialogue more than

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<sup>25</sup> See the document "Understanding Islam: A Guide for Catholic Educators" on the USCCB website: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/interreligious/upload/2013-Understanding-Islam-Guide-for-Catholic-Educators-Final-Version-09112013.pdf>. The website of ICNA has a similar document for Muslim educators, even though it is more difficult to find.

other dialogues. It issued a statement about “Friends not adversaries: A Catholic-Muslim Spiritual Journey.”

The three regional dialogues came together for a first plenary session in Chicago (Catholic Theological Union) in October 2012. The title of that session was “Living Our Faith Together” and the keynote addresses of that plenary can be found on the USCCB website.<sup>26</sup> Finally I should mention that the next plenary will be in May 2015 in the context of a celebration of 50 years of dialogue with Jews and Muslims since *Nostra Aetate*.<sup>27</sup>

Thus far this talk has mainly concentrated on structures and formal dialogues. In the second part I would like to concentrate on three fields addressed in the American dialogues that can show how the dialogue there is different from the situation in Europe. It will also give us the opportunity to discuss where Catholics and Muslims can work together for the sake of the common good. The first two fields will mainly address differences: the relations between church and state, and the situation of private education. The third and final field will address a common good: human dignity and the value of life.

## Different relations between religion and public space

One of the conditions that determine the possibilities for interreligious dialogue is the specific relation between one of more religions and the public space in a cultural setting.<sup>28</sup> In Europe, for instance, the United Kingdom, Germany and France offer three different models of

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/interreligious/islam/national-catholic-muslim-plenary.cfm>

<sup>27</sup> For the program, see [http://www.cuatoday.com/s/817/internal.aspx?sid=817&pgid=2904&gid=1&cid=5552&ceid=5552&post\\_id=0](http://www.cuatoday.com/s/817/internal.aspx?sid=817&pgid=2904&gid=1&cid=5552&ceid=5552&post_id=0)

<sup>28</sup> This section has been inspired by D’COSTA, D., *Theology in the Public Square*. Blackwell, Malden MA – Oxford 2005, and part III of his book *Christianity and World Religions*. Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester 2009) and the sources on which he bases his analysis, Alasdair MacIntyre and William Cavanaugh.

relationships between what is commonly called “church” and “state.” These specific relationships are determined by historical situations, such as the role of the Church of England in the British culture, the Westphalian Peace agreement (1648) in Germany, and the French Revolution against the *ancient regime* in France. Since I assume that you are more or less familiar with these European differences and with the consequences for the place of Islam in these societies, I want to concentrate here more on the situation in the United States.

Ever since I have arrived in the United States I have been amazed at the influence of the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution dating from 1789. There is even a special class of lawyers who are dealing daily with this first amendment. The text goes as follows: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” The first amendment addresses quite a few situations, and the famous freedom of speech is among them, but religion is mentioned in the beginning as well. Exegetes of this first amendment say that it meant in two directions: freedom of religion (so congress shall make no law prohibiting free exercise of religion) but also freedom from religion (no religion shall determine the laws of the nation). Originally this article was of course related to the situation in England where the Church of England was able to determine or influence laws concerning religion. So on the one hand there is an aversion against what is called “sectarian religion,” meaning for instance that it is not allowed to specifically invoke one deity (Jesus Christ) while praying on the occasion of a public meeting such as a session of Parliament. You cannot allow sectarian prayers, but you can allow non-sectarian prayers. On the other hand, in practice there is a much greater openness for religion and religious utterances in the public square. In order not to get too general, let me focus on what that means for Muslims in the USA. The most remarkable thing is that they definitely feel themselves American citizens, and I have never met the tension between “being muslim” and “being European

citizen” that I have so often met in Europe.<sup>29</sup> Muslims feel accepted as citizens and have the feeling that they have the same freedom of expression as others. In the public square they are equals. This is at least what I hear from all my Muslim dialogue partners, and it is also what transpires from polls that measure the wellbeing of Muslims in the United States when compared to other countries.<sup>30</sup> Part of the explanation is that most of the Muslim immigrants did not come as guest workers but as specialized workers in health care, engineering, and other technical jobs. Consequently, the average income of Muslims in the USA is higher than the average national income.

### Private and Public Education

The second difference between the situation in Europe and the situation in the United States that I want to address is the situation of private education. In many countries in Europe, there is the possibility of private education that is state-funded and therefore has to follow the curriculum guidelines by the state. In the United States, possibilities for private education are greater but it is not state funded and therefore often quite expensive. The Catholic Church in particular has a wide network of Catholic schools that are often seen as one of the best possible alternatives even for children who are not from Catholic families. Therefore the Catholic Church in the U.S. has a long history of using private education to build up cohorts of students, not so much specifically with religious education – even though that is usually included – but more generally with a sense of identity and of community in its schools. At this point of history quite some Muslim communities are building their own forms of private education and are trying to learn from the lessons that the building up of Catholic education has taught. I have some experience with Muslim schools in the USA and

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<sup>29</sup> This tension seems to be the background of Tariq Ramadan’s books on the situation of Muslims in Europe.

<sup>30</sup> Sources to be completed.

some of them are academically very good while others are struggling. Yet recent events have heightened the suspicion of a minority that is quite loud on the internet, namely that these Muslim schools are in fact breeding places of radicalism, Islamism, and even terrorism. On the day on which I write these lines, the Washington Post brings a story about four universities in North Carolina, all involved in some form of struggle around the presence of Muslim students on their campuses.<sup>31</sup>

The importance of private education is one of the reasons why the mid-Atlantic dialogue between Catholics and Muslims has devoted a number of sessions to the idea of “educating about religious others”: while most other subjects are regulated by state curricula, the curriculum for religion is not regulated in this way, so that is a matter that needs to be addressed by the religious groups themselves.

### **The Common Good for Catholics and Muslims in the USA**

In the final part of my presentation, I want to focus on one particular subject matter that may be used by Catholics and Muslims in the United States in their common approach to the “common good”. Even though one may think differently on the specifics of the defense of human dignity and life by the Catholic bishops in the United States, it is certainly characteristic of their quite self-conscious upholding of Catholic values vis-à-vis the state. In this they are followed, albeit more hesitantly, by most Muslim organizations, and it has been the focus of a number of dialogue meetings in the recent past.

Although Catholics and Muslims may differ on specifics of these questions, each tradition values life as a precious gift from God, and sees the preservation of this gift as the duty of a believer. Pope Benedict XVI has seen this shared attitude towards the value of human life

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<sup>31</sup> Elaborate if there is time: the Call to Prayer at Duke University; three Muslim students murdered at the University of North Carolina; alumnus threatens to withdraw funding because of allegations that Muslim student chaplain would support the cause of Islamic radicalism at Wake Forest University.

as one of the most important elements of Christian-Muslim dialogue, and has promoted efforts for Catholics and Muslims to work together to affirm these convictions.

Following the creation by a panel of Muslim scholars and religious leaders of *A Common Word Between Us and You*, a declaration of the shared commitment of Muslims and Christians towards peace and dialogue, Pope Benedict initiated a new forum for Catholic-Muslim dialogue. This forum, entitled the Christian-Muslim Forum, was organized by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue along with a group of the Muslim signatories from *A Common Word*. First meeting in November 2008, the forum included twenty four participants and five advisors from each religion. The Forum chose as its theme “Love of God, Love of Neighbor,” and explored this topic through the themes of “Theological and Spiritual Foundations” and “Human Dignity and Mutual Respect.”<sup>32</sup> Pope Benedict lauded the event’s theme, noting that it was itself taken from *A Common Word*, “which presents love of God and love of neighbor as the heart of Islam and Christianity itself.”<sup>33</sup> He further called for the “recognition of the centrality of the person and the dignity of each human being, respecting and defending alike, which is the gift of God, and is thus sacred for Christians and Muslims alike.”<sup>34</sup>

At the conclusion of the three-day seminar, the Forum issued a joint declaration reflecting the mutual call to preserve human life and dignity shared by Muslims and Catholics, stating: “Human life is a most precious gift of God to each person. It should therefore be preserved and honored in all its stages.”<sup>35</sup> This declaration further binds the need to protect human dignity with the divine gift of life, stating as its third article: “Human dignity is derived from the fact that every

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<sup>32</sup> “Final Statement of the Catholic-Muslim Forum,” *Zenit News Agency*, <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/final-statement-of-catholic-muslim-forum>

<sup>33</sup> “Pope Addresses Catholic – Muslim Forum in Rome,” *Catholic Online*, [http://www.catholic.org/international/international\\_story.php?id=30449](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=30449)

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> “Final Statement of the Catholic-Muslim Forum”

human person is created by a loving God out of love.” According to the Forum, this love must be reflected through our actions with one another, particularly in regards to promoting protection of the vulnerable, promoting gender equality and the rights of religious minorities and respecting one another’s religious convictions and practices. The Forum also stated the responsibilities of the faithful, declaring that “Catholics and Muslims are called to be instruments of love and harmony between believers, and for humanity as a whole, renouncing any oppression, aggressive violence and terrorism, especially that committed in the name of religion, and upholding the principle of justice for all.”<sup>36</sup>

The Christian-Muslim forum also calls upon Catholics and Muslims to promote the sanctity of life and dignity through bearing witness “to the transcendent dimension of life, through a spirituality nourished by prayer, in a world which is becoming more and more secularized and materialistic.”<sup>37</sup> This call includes the duty to “provide a sound education in human, civic, religious and moral values”<sup>38</sup> for each tradition’s respective members, particularly youth.

A second seminar of the Catholic-Muslim Forum, held in November, 2011, reiterated the call to recognize shared responsibilities of respect and preserving dignity. Held at the Baptism Site of Jesus Christ in Jordan and hosted by the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, the seminar issued another brief statement listing its agreed-upon points. These points include one which declares that “the God-given dignity of human beings must be respected by all and protected by law.”<sup>39</sup>

Catholics and Muslims in the United States have also joined together in commitment to affirming the inviolability of human life

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<sup>36</sup> “Final Statement of the Catholic-Muslim Forum”

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> “Final Declaration of the Second Seminar of the Catholic-Muslim Forum,” <http://www.acommonword.com/the-2nd-muslim-catholic-forum/>



and dignity, both in response to *A Common Word* and to emergent questions of religious freedom. In a September, 2008 meeting of the Muslim-Christian Dialogue Center of the University of St. Thomas, Cardinal Theodore McCarrick was joined by Malaysian Islamic scholars Ibrahim Mohamed Zein and Abdullah Al-Ahsan, along with Stephen B. Young of the Caux Round Table, an organization which promotes ethical international business practices. The dialogue's Statement of Concern and Common Understanding affirmed the purpose of humanity and of individuals, who "share in the powers and hopes of the Creator specially endowed to live by the loving gift of His spirit within them, that each person has a profound association with dignity, an association that cannot be expunged or terminated."<sup>40</sup>

Just as Catholics and Muslims are joined in their call to preserve the gift of life, they have also shared in the recent difficulties of balancing changing secular laws with religious beliefs. In the United States, this has included the controversial Health and Human Services mandate requiring employers to provide contraceptive care within their employees' health insurance plans. Although Muslims and Catholics share slightly differing attitudes regarding the start of life during gestation, both have expressed their concern over how to ensure respect of their religious beliefs during implementation of this new program.

As a result of these concerns, a number of interfaith panels have been convened to demonstrate shared commitment towards preservation of religious liberty. The first such panel, organized by Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod President Rev. Matthew Harrison, met in February of 2012. Participants included Catholic leaders such as Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Baltimore Archbishop William Lori, and Archbishop Robert Carlson of St. Louis along with a number of Jewish and Muslim figures. Concerned with the free practice of religion, the panel's members stated "as religious leaders from a variety of perspec-

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<sup>40</sup> "Statement of Concern and Common Understanding," <http://www.stthomas.edu/mcdc/jointcatholic-muslim/statement-of-concern.html>.

tives and communities, we are compelled to make known our protest against the incursion... into the realm of religious liberty.”<sup>41</sup>

Another interfaith declaration was issued by the Interfaith Conference (IFC) of Metropolitan Washington, an interfaith group including Catholic, Muslim, Jewish and other religious representatives. In its June 5, 2012 statement, the IFC declared its concern that religious freedoms were at stake as a result of the mandate. While reflecting the need for affordable health care, the IFC called for policies which would both ensure equal provision of the health care act and preserve religious liberties. Although such debates have centered upon a certain topic, they reflect the concern of protection of human life common to both Catholics and Muslims.

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<sup>41</sup> “Free Exercise of Religion: Putting Beliefs into Practice,” <http://www.lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=1486>.

## List of the participants

### **Michael Barnes SJ**

*Professor at Heythrop College, London, Great Britain.*

Studied classical Indology, Sanskrit and Palia at Oxford. He was in charge of founding the (with A O'Mahony) the Centre for Interreligious Dialogue at Heythrop in 2001.

Currently he focuses on theology of Jewish-Christian Relations, theology of religions and interreligious relations, Hinduism, Indian philosophy and religion, philosophical and hermeneutical issues in the history and theology of religions, relationship between Christianity and other religions.

### **Wilhelmus (Pim) Valkenberg**

*Professor at Catholic University of America, Washington DC, United States.*

He focuses on Christian-Muslim relations , world religions, phenomenology of religion, monotheism and the doctrine of God, contemporary christologies, theologies of interreligious dialogue, theological hermeneutics in intercultural and interreligious perspective, mission in various religious traditions, comparative mysticism, Christology and interreligious dialogue, medieval theology, peace ethics, and the mysteries of the life of Christ in theology and music.

### **George Kovalenko, archpriest**

*Head of the Synodal Enlighten Deptment of Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kiev, Ukraine.*

Founder and Chief Editor the first orthodox internet-site in Ukraine "Orthodoxy in Ukraine" (1998), press-secretary of Primate of Ukrainian Orthodox Church and official speaker of UOC (until September 2014).

### **Nicholas E. Denysenko**

*Assistant Professor of Theological Studies, Department of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, United States.*

Currently researching Byzantine rite of Chrismation for a forthcoming book. Developing new research on contemporary Orthodox architecture in America. Ongoing research projects include an analysis of the ecclesiological situation of Orthodoxy in Ukraine; a case study of contemporary Russian Orthodox piety; a historical study of the confessions of faith in the Byzantine rite of episcopal ordination; and the history of the Byzantine Christmas and Lenten Liturgical cycles.

**Dorian Llywelyn SJ**

*Associate Professor of Theological Studies, Director of Catholic Studies at Department of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, United States.*

Currently he focuses on Marian devotion and patriotism; ethnicity, nationality and theology; faith and culture, landscape art, politics and theology.

**Pavel Hošek**

*Associate Professor at Protestant Theological Faculty, Director of Department of Religious Studies, Charles University, Prague, Czech republic.*

Currently he focuses on interreligious dialogue, theology of religions, theological hermeneutics.

**Tomáš Halík**

*Professor at Faculty of Arts, Charles University, President of The Czech Christian Academy, Prague, Czech republic.*

He focuses on a spiritual diagnosis of our times and the dialogue between faith and atheism. His book *Patience with God* received the prize for the best European Theological Book 2009/10 by the decision of European Society for Catholic Theology, and in the USA it was announced book of the month in July 2010. His book *Nachtsgedanken eines Beichtvaters* was announced the best theological book of July 2012 in Germany and his book “*Berühre die Wunden*” was announced the best theological book of May 2013.

Pope John Paul II appointed him advisor to the Pontifical Council for Dialogue with Non-Believers and in 2009.

In 2010 he was awarded the The Romano Guardini Prize for outstanding merits in interpreting contemporary society, Germany.

In 2014 he was awarded Templeton Prize for Progress Toward Research or Discoveries about Spiritual Realities.

**Pavel Ambros SJ**

*Professor at Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology, Director of Institute of Interreligious, Intercultural and Ecumenical Dialogue and Research, Olomouc, Czech republic.*

In his publishing he deals with the relationship between faith and culture of contemporary man in Europe and with interreligious and ecumenical dialogues. His texts reflect both Eastern and Western traditions. He deals with spiritual and pastoral issues, evangelization, inculturation and other Church's activities in contemporary world including its ecumenical dimension. He is

professionally concerned with the issues of continuity and discontinuity of Christian tradition; he studies Christian East, Konstantin's and Methodius's tradition and Russian religious thinking. Besides other things he is a member of Theological Commission of Czech Bishop Conference, a member of Academic Council of Palacky University in Olomouc, Academic Council of Charles University and a member of Theological Faculty of Charles University and Theological Faculty of Jihoceska University.

### **Jarosław Różański OMI**

*Professor at Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, Member of Committee of Polish Bishops Episcopate for Dialogue with Non-Christian Religions, Warsaw, Poland.*

He focuses on missiology, missiological anthropology, missions in Africa, cultures of Central Sudan, inculturation.

### **Waldemar Cisło**

*Assistant Professor at Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, Director of Polish Section of Aid to the Church in Need, Warsaw, Poland.*

Currently he focuses on religious studies, critics of religions, fundamental theology, interreligious dialogue, the Enlightenment.

### **Jaroslav Franc**

*Assistant Professor at Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology, Institute of Interreligious, Intercultural and Ecumenical Dialogue and Research, Olomouc, Czech Republic.*

Currently he focuses on religious studies, interreligious dialogue, especially with Islam, dialogue with Christian East and Christian West, especially with Coptic tradition.

### **Jarosław Pastuszak**

*Assistant Professor at Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology, Institute of Interreligious, Intercultural and Ecumenical Dialogue and Research, Olomouc, Czech Republic.*

He specializes in theology of art and culture, spirituality of art, theological hermeneutics of contemporary arts, phenomenology of religious dialogue, anthropology. The aim of his research is to explore the possibilities, principles, foundations and targets of intercultural and interreligious encounter and the dialogue in interdisciplinary field of study.

## **Pictorial supplement**



*Mons. Jan Graubner*



*Pavel Ambros*



*Michael Barnes*



*Wilhelmus Valkenberg, Michael Barnes, Jan Regner*





*Wilhelmus Valkenberg*



*George Kovalenko*



*Nicholas E. Denysenko*



*Dorian Llywelyn*



*Pavel Hošek*



*Tomáš Halík*



*Tomáš Halík*



*Auditorium*



*Waldemar Cisto*



*Panel discussion*





*Pavel Ambros, Waldemar Cisto, Jarosław Róžański, Jan Regner*



*Šimon Marínčák, Dorian Llywelyn, Waldemar Cisto*



*Jaroslav Franc*



*Jarosław Pastuszek*

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