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Spiritual
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of the Holy Spirit*

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Spiritan Horizons is a journal of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit, Pittsburgh. Published annually by the Center for Spiritan Studies at Duquesne University, the Journal combines scholarly articles on Spiritan history, spirituality and mission with others related to the praxis of the Spiritan charism in a wide variety of cultural and life settings.

Special attention is given in each issue to the ethos of Spiritan education (including service learning) and especially the interface of faith and reason in the setting of higher education. Past issues of the journal can be accessed online at the Spiritan Collection at <http://www.duq.edu/about/centers-and-institutes/spiritan-studies/spiritan-collection-information>.

The Center for Spiritan Studies is a collaborative venture between the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit. The Center was founded in 2005. Its purpose is to foster and disseminate research into Spiritan history, tradition, and spirituality. It serves the Congregation throughout the world and Duquesne University by making resources for the Spiritan charism available for ministry, learning, and teaching. It likewise serves all people who wish to benefit from the Spiritan charism in their various callings.

Introduction

Something is stirring among the three North American Spiritan Provinces (Canada, TransCanada and the United States). Representatives from these provinces met through August 14-19, 2016 in Granby, Canada to discern the “signs of the times” and where the Spirit is leading them. The superior general, **Very Rev. Fr. John Fogarty**, C.S.Sp., had his keynote address: “*Responding Creatively to the Needs of Evangelization of our Time*,” read to the assembly. Citing Carlos Mesters, he wrote: “We are challenged to bring the charism to rebirth at each historical moment. We are called to recreate, not to repeat.” **Phung Manh Tien**, C.S.Sp., is a Spiritan Brother doing theological studies in Manila, Philippines. His article, “*The Holy Spirit in Spiritan Life*,” won the 2016 Competition among Spiritans in formation worldwide (it has been somewhat retouched by the editor). Tien contends that to “wake up the world” (Pope Francis), religious must first be “awake.” Consecrated to the Holy Spirit, we Spiritans strive to “... live out our mission in willing obedience to the Holy Spirit, taking Mary as our model” (SRL 5). **Fr. William Cleary**, C.S.Sp., the 2016 Spiritan Scholar, worked on the recent history of the Congregation from Vatican II to 2012. His brief article, “*The Spiritans: A Third Founding Moment?*” posits that “GC XIII [the general chapter of 1968-69 after the Council] was the first step taken in that journey of renewal which, arguably, constitutes a third founding event of the twentieth century (after Poullart des Places in the eighteenth century and Libermann in the nineteenth century) when the Spiritan identity was re-discovered.” **Marielle Beusmans** is a Spiritan Lay Associate from the Netherlands. Her article, “*New Energy for the Congregation: Spiritan Lay Associates*,” a sequel to the radical reflection on Spiritan Brothers in *Spiritan Horizons* 12 (2016) 58-67, lays out, not only how Lay Spiritans live out their Spiritan vocation in the world, but also how their perspectives differ from, challenge, and complement those of professed Spiritans. To complete the cycle, a reflection on the charism of the ordained Spiritan in concert with these other Spiritan charisms is called for - an independent treatment occurs in the general council’s *Anima Una*, no. 64 (June 2012), *Spiritan Priests*. The *Horizons* feature, “Spiritans for Today,” lifts up Spiritans who have passed on but who opened up new avenues for Spiritan mission, Spiritan studies, holiness of life, *et cetera*. In the third instalment of this feature, **Fr. Tony Neves**, C.S.Sp., provincial of Portugal, spotlights “*Spiritans for Today: Manuel de Sousa Gonçalves, C.S.Sp.*” Manuel was general councilor, missionary to Angola, and the first Rector of the Catholic University of Angola.

The general council’s recent focus on community living is providential, seeing the current anxieties here in America and throughout Europe. The Center for Spiritan Studies 2016 lecture appropriately dealt with the topic of intercultural harmony. The article by **Fr. Anthony Gittins**, C.S.Sp., is the edited version of his well-received lecture, “*Beyond International and Multicultural: Intercultural Community Living*.” He insists that “intercultural community members are drawn from diverse cultural backgrounds but share an intentional commitment to fellowship, motivated not simply by pragmatic or commercial

considerations but by a shared religious conviction and common mission.” In “*A Response to Rev. Anthony Gittins*,” Prof **Ronald C. Arnett**, chair of the Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies, relates Gittins’ intercultural community to Friedman’s “community of otherness” which “assumes Buber’s emphasis on a ‘common center’ that pulls difference together.” **Rev. Gary Willingham-McLain** and Dr. **Laurel Willingham-McLain** in their “*Friendship Community Church: An Intercultural Faith Community*,” portray the riches and travails of a Christian community that has taken seriously the gospel mandate to love beyond all racial and other boundaries. The project consists in 3Rs: Reconciliation, Relocation, and Redistribution. Relocation consists in intentionally moving from the suburbs to live in and interact with poor and disadvantaged racial others. **Fr. William Headley**, C.S.Sp., brings the Soundings section to a close reflecting on “*Muslim-Christian Dialogue: A Challenge for North-American Spiritans?*” He argues that Spiritans, because they care for the poor and marginalized, might want to do something about Islamophobia in US and Europe which is “an exaggerated fear, hatred, and hostility toward Islam and Muslims that is perpetuated by negative stereotyping resulting in bias, discrimination, and the marginalization and exclusion of Muslims from social, political, and civil life.”

The boards of many Catholic universities and colleges often have to grapple with issues concerned with Catholic identity and the university mission. In “*Catholic Identity, University Mission, and Charism of the Founding Order*,” Dr. Galligan-Stierle and Jeffrey Gerlomes give expert advice on how emerging issues can be approached. **Marie Milie Jones**, Esq. just completed time as Board Chair at Duquesne after serving for eight years. Her piece, “*An Expression of Faith: Reflections on Service as a University Board Chair*,” allows an inner view of what it takes to imbue higher education with Catholic and Spiritan values.

Dr. **Fintan Sheerin** is a Spiritan Lay Associate who expresses the Spiritan charism in his profession and activities. In “*Engagement and Spirituality: Reflections from ‘Le Jungle’*,” he details why, as a Spiritan, he had to do something about the Syrian refugees in *Le Jungle* camp in Paris and Lesbos (Greece), for: “Bearing in mind our commitment as Spiritans to give preference to an apostolate that takes us,” ... to those oppressed and most disadvantaged, as a group or as individuals (SRL 12), I felt that to not engage with the people displaced by this crisis was not an option.”

This number of *Spiritans Horizons* ends with two reviews, both by **Fr. James Chukwuma Okoye**, C.S.Sp.: Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Inspiration and Truth of Sacred Scripture. The Word that Comes from God and Speaks of God for the Salvation of the World*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2014; and Michael J. Gorman, ed., *Scripture and Its Interpretation. A Global Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.

James Chukwuma Okoye, C.S.Sp., Editor



Center for Spiritan Studies



Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, USA Division of Mission and Identity

GOALS OF THE CENTER

- Prepare a new generation of experts in Spiritan history and spirituality.
- Encourage the inculturation of the Spiritan charism where the Congregation is rapidly expanding, particularly in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.
- Develop publications and other appropriate materials to train professed Spiritans and Spiritan Lay Associates for contemporary mission.
- Organize workshops and seminars to ensure the continuity of the Spiritan ethos in educational institutions founded by Spiritans.
- Promote Spiritan spirituality in the contemporary world.
- Disseminate Spiritan classics, by translation if necessary.

RESOURCES OF THE CENTER

- The Center, along with the Gumberg Library, created and continues to develop the online Spiritan Collection, a treasure of publications on Spiritan founders, history, and spirituality.
- The Ed Supple Room housed on the third floor of the Gumberg Library is a research space on campus and a mini Spiritan library.
- *Spiritan Horizons*, a scholarly annual journal, publishes articles that further research on Spiritan tradition and spirituality. Attention is given to the ethos of Spiritan education and pedagogy.
- Other publications of Spiritan or Duquesne interest.

PROGRAMS OF THE CENTER

- The Spiritan Scholar program is a year of research in Spiritan tradition and spirituality.
- International Essay Competitions for Spiritans in formation worldwide and others.
- Workshops for Spiritan formators worldwide.
- Roundtable meetings on Spiritan ethos of education.
- Conferences on Topics of Spiritan interest.
- Translation and/or Publication of seminal Spiritan Works.



History of the Center

The Center for Spiritan Studies was founded in 2005 as a collaborative venture of Duquesne University and the Congregation of the Holy Spirit to foster research on Spiritan history, tradition and spirituality, as well as to disseminate the results throughout the Congregation, the University and the general public.

The rich legacy of the Spiritan tradition lies at the very heart of Duquesne University and forms its guiding principles and practical ethos.

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SPIRITAN SCHOLAR PROGRAM

CENTER FOR SPIRITAN STUDIES

DIVISION OF MISSION AND IDENTITY
DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY, PITTSBURGH, USA

Purpose

The purpose of the program is to develop scholarly specialists in Spiritan Studies. Outcomes of the program will include lectures, colloquia and articles and books on topics such as:

- Spiritan Founders and Heroes
- Spiritan Rules, Constitutions and Chapters, especially since Vatican II
- Spiritan history, including the history of various missions or circumscriptions
- The French School of Spirituality and its times
- The Theology of the Holy Spirit
- The Holy Spirit in Spiritan Life and Mission
- Spiritan Mission, Yesterday and Today
- New Trends in World Mission
- Spiritan Pedagogy and Education
- Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC)
- Experiences in Interreligious dialogue

Eligibility

Eligible candidates include Spiritans, especially those in formation roles, who fulfill the academic requirements. Candidates must possess and demonstrate research ability, as well as language competency in English and French. Spiritan candidates are nominated by the general council and approved by their respective authorities.

Privileges and Support

Duquesne University provides library access and technology support. A faculty mentor is matched to each scholar. Spiritan scholars may reside on campus as a member of the Spiritan community.

Application Process

Required documentation includes a resume or Curriculum Vitae (C.V.) and a personal statement of 1,000 words or less outlining a proposed research project that conforms to the topics listed in the Purpose section. Candidates should also provide a letter of recommendation or support from their respective superior. Application deadline is March 1.

History

Launched in 2013 by Duquesne University and the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, the Spiritan Scholar Program provides an opportunity for selected individuals to conduct research on the Spiritan tradition with immersion in the extensive resources available at Duquesne University. These resources include the print and online resources of the Center for Spiritan Studies and the Gumberg Library. They also include access to academic courses and faculty expertise, the Spiritan community, and various other educational and religious organizations in the Pittsburgh area.

The program operates on an academic year calendar (nine months, September through May). At this time the program is open only to two qualified Spiritans per year.

Application Contact

Apply online to be the next Spiritan Scholar at Duquesne. Candidates may also print the application form and mail along with C.V. and personal statement to:

Director, Center for Spiritan Studies
Duquesne University
GM05 Libermann Hall
Pittsburgh, PA 15282

Documents may also be sent by e-mail to Fr. James Chukwuma Okoye at okoyej@duq.edu

*International Competition on the
Holy Spirit in Spiritan Life*

First place

Phung Manh Tien, C.S.Sp.

(House of Theology, Manila, Philippines)



Second place

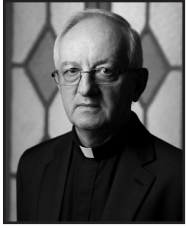
Charles Agwadike, C.S.Sp.

(Spiritan International School of Theology, Enugu, Nigeria)



James Chukwuma Okoye, C.S.Sp.

RESPONDING CREATIVELY TO THE NEEDS OF EVANGELIZATION OF OUR TIMES (SRL 2)



Fr. John Fogarty, C.S.Sp. Fr. Fogarty, C.S.Sp. of the Irish Province was ordained priest on 27 September 1981. He obtained a Licentiate in sacred theology from the University of Fribourg, Switzerland (1982). He did pastoral work on mission in Kumasi diocese, Ghana (1982-86), served on the provincial council of Ireland, before returning to Ghana as Rector of the Spiritan Institute of Philosophy in Ejisu (1990-1994). In 1994, he returned to Ireland as assistant provincial till 1998 when he was elected first assistant to the superior general in Rome. He became the first Director of the Center for Spiritan Studies (2005-2009), then Provincial of the US Province (2009-2012), and is currently the superior general of the Spiritan Congregation.

A Biblical Model

Twenty years ago, in May 1996, the much-respected Brazilian biblical scholar, Carlos Mesters, gave a seminal address at the annual meeting of SEDOS¹ in Rome. Although the specific title of his presentation was, “Religious Life and its Mission among the Poor, in the Light of the Word of God,”² Mesters addressed at length the difficult context in which many religious missionaries are called to live out their charism today—a loss of identity and privilege, a sense of powerlessness, a situation where previous paradigms have broken down, where traditional evangelization is no longer able to interpret the facts, and the symbols that have traditionally mediated and supported God’s presence in our midst have been taken from us. As a biblical scholar, he asked the question as to whether there were any precedents in biblical history to which we could look for inspiration and encouragement. He suggested that the period of the Babylonian captivity of Israel offered a key to interpreting our current experience and to providing a new direction forward. He claimed that the conditions in which we now live closely resemble the situation of the captivity: it was a major crisis in the history of God’s people; the crisis of faith was structural, not merely situational; everything was destroyed, they lost everything which supported their faith in God (land, Temple, cult, king, Jerusalem); their identity as a people was shattered, they were without power, privilege or direction.

Many committed Jews, understandably, lost all hope and prospects for the future. However, a small anonymous group of men, women, and children – the disciples of Isaiah – continued to believe that God was present and active in their midst and in the world around them, if only they had eyes to see. *Behold I am doing something new; it is emerging; can you not see it?* (Isa 43:18-19). They ultimately became the carriers of the hope of the people, responsible for the most hope-filled passages in Scripture (Isaiah 40—66), the source of a new birth and new understanding of mission, and a new departure in the history of the People of God. *These texts, said Mesters, are conspicuous for their courage and their openness to rethinking everything. They knew how to be creative. They went beyond the frontiers of the traditional, and, faithful to true tradition, dreamed of a new world.* Through a process of reflection, listening, and dialogue, this small group faced the perennial threefold challenge before all

committed Christian communities: to understand and experience the newness of God present in history; to put it into words and to transform it into good news for the poor; to incarnate it and express it in new forms of common life, in such a way that the people could understand its power for life. In so doing, they came to understand that some of their most precious faith concepts of the past were tied up with ideologies and needed purification and redemption and, most importantly, they came to realize that they had a new mission as a people – they were called to be a light to the nations, a Servant of God for all peoples, to carry the sufferings and the burdens of others - a role without privilege, recognition, or prestige. *The Order or Congregation to which we belong goes on being born every day*, concludes Mesters. *We are challenged to bring the charism to rebirth at each historical moment. We are called to recreate, not to repeat.*

*We are called to
recreate, not to repeat.*

The European Experience

Drawing largely on this inspirational text of Carlos Mesters, the general council in 2003 encouraged the provinces of Europe to begin a process of reflection on the future of Spiritan presence and mission on the continent. A number of these provinces had not seen any new entrants for several years; all were deeply conscious of ageing and diminishing resources (the membership of the Province of France, for example, dropped from around 1500 in 1969 to some 500 in 1999), and there was a widespread sense that the era of mission *ad gentes*, with which we had been so familiar, was coming to an end. The general council stressed the missionary challenge for the Congregation of contemporary Europe pointing to a context of growing secularization and an ever-increasing absence of the sense of the transcendent, the marginalization of youth from poorer backgrounds, the influx of immigrants often forced to live in precarious situations, and a general indifference in the population vis à vis the negative influence on developing countries of European and US foreign policies. The general council noted that any vision for future Spiritan mission on the Continent of Europe would clearly have to involve collaboration with the wider Congregation and, in particular, with Africa from which the majority of our vocations were emerging.

The provinces accepted the invitation of the general council and together set about identifying agreed criteria for future Spiritan mission in Europe: youth ministry, work with migrants and refugees, and JPIC ministry. They subsequently identified 14 projects across Europe in which they were currently engaged that corresponded with

*...a new hope for
the future...*

these criteria and which they believed should at all costs be continued into the future. Gradually there emerged the conviction that some organizational structure was necessary to underpin this collective view for future Spiritan mission and, in 2004, the concept of a new type of circumscription or entity was introduced into the *Spiritan Rule of Life* to cater specifically for this eventuality. Thus in 2006 the general council created Circumscription Europe, comprising initially the European Secretariat community in Brussels, the community in Rostock, and the European Novitiate in Chevilly, Paris. The mission of the new circumscription was “to ensure the continued presence of the Spiritan mission in Europe, particularly through the development and animation of missionary projects in Europe.” The circumscription, centered on Brussels, would continue as a structure of animation and collaboration, to be at the service of the existing provinces of Europe, and should be open to initiating new developments. It was noted that other circumscriptions could opt to integrate into Circumscription Europe, thus becoming a Region thereof. The provinces of Germany and Belgium did so in the years that immediately followed. Initially, consideration was given to placing all 14 projects in the different provinces of Europe under the jurisdiction of Circumscription Europe and its major superior, but this was ultimately deemed inappropriate as the presence of such projects within the existing circumscriptions had already begun to create a new missionary consciousness in the circumscriptions themselves and a new hope for the future with which all members both young and old could identify. The ten years that have followed the creation of Circumscription Europe have seen the emergence of a new missionary dynamism across the continent, including in provinces that had once resigned themselves to disappearance. Today Province Europe, the new designation for Circumscription Europe in the wake of the Bagamoyo Chapter, has 8 vibrant missionary projects (Rostock, Stuttgart, Molenbeek, Charleroi, Notel, Heiligen Geist Gymnasium, MaZ and the recently opened Antwerpen-Turnhout) three of which are entirely run by lay collaborators. Three essential dimensions characterize all present and future projects: international/intercultural community, collaboration with lay people, and response to the needs of the local church in the areas of first and new evangelization.

Interestingly, there has been a parallel development in a number of the other provinces of Europe which has brought new life to the circumscriptions concerned. Holland now has two projects at the service of immigrants and a third due

to open shortly. Britain now has several missionary projects in line with the original criteria elaborated by the European provincials at the outset of the reflection process. Italy has a non-parish-based project at the service of three different linguistic immigrant groups. Finally, Switzerland has recently received a request from the local church to assume pastoral responsibility for two multi-ethnic parishes in line with our charism. For the most part, these projects are either a collaborative venture between members of the province by origin and those by appointment, or alternatively are entirely run by members appointed to the province by other circumscriptions. As our circumscriptions become more and more intercultural and international, we are being invited to move away from a nationalistic understanding of Province or Group – where there are those who belong and those who have come to help - to the concept of international Spiritan presence and mission in a particular country, where every confrere feels at home and an equal partner in the life and mission of the circumscription. This is a much more inclusive notion from the point of view of creating a true sense of ownership of the Congregation's mission. It also presents a major challenge to the receiving circumscriptions, in terms of fostering a genuine sense of belonging for those who come from “outside” and in ensuring their inclusion in the decision-making processes of the circumscription, as well as to the confreres concerned in terms of identifying fully with the mission to which they have been appointed.

...where every confrere feels at home and an equal partner in the life and mission of the circumscription.

Strategic Planning for Mission

The Bagamoyo General Chapter, you may recall, requested a three-year strategic mission plan in keeping with our charism at the level of every circumscription (1.9); this is a challenge that to a large extent is yet to be addressed. Perhaps insistence on a three-year time span for such a plan was unrealistic but the intent of the directive remains vital to the future of Spiritan mission throughout the world. Among the concerns shared by the general council are the following.

- the risk of the “diocesization” of Spiritan mission in a number of countries, particularly where we have a lengthy history and tradition. The emphasis in an increasingly autonomous local church goes to responding to requests from bishops to staff parishes, sometimes to the detriment of community life, rather than to searching for new peripheries in accordance with our missionary charism;
- the tendency towards “nationalization,” especially but not uniquely in a number of some recently created circumscriptions, which though understandable

from the point of view of consolidation of the circumscription, is undermining our international character and witness;

- the difficulty of finding confreres with genuine leadership ability, especially in smaller circumscriptions, who are capable of fostering unity and imparting a missionary vision.
- congregational investment in inter-religious dialogue (1.13) remains an ongoing challenge, as does the call to protect and foster the integrity of creation (1.26) in the light of the recent Papal Encyclical, *Laudato Si*.

There are, of course, many encouraging signs of the presence of the Spirit in our midst, among them the inspiring daily witness of many of our members, the increasing demand for Spiritans at the service of immigrant communities in Europe. Other signs are, as we have seen, the growth of Spiritan vocations in Vietnam and India, now integrated into the Union of the Circumscriptions of Asia and Oceania, the current discussions here at Granby with regard to mission beyond borders, involving the provinces of Canada, TransCanada and the USA. All these developments present new challenges and new opportunities. In a sense, the Provinces of North America have taken the lead in a process that will ultimately have to involve the entire Congregation. We need to initiate serious research and reflection into the future of Spiritan mission on a continental basis, in the light of our charism and our resources, by way of preparation for the next general chapter. What is the future of Spiritan mission in Africa, in Latin America, in Asia? A failure to take responsibility for the future, despite its uncertainty, is ultimately a failure in leadership at all levels.

...many encouraging signs of the presence of the Spirit in our midst

Challenges for Spiritan Mission Today

We live in a time of crisis that touches various sectors of existence, not only the economy, finance, food security, or the environment, but also those involving the deeper meaning of life and the fundamental values that animate it.³

Three years ago, a thought-provoking presentation was given at the bi-annual meeting of the Union of Superiors General in Rome. Political theologian, Bartolomeo Sorge, S.J., addressing the topic, “The Service of Leadership in Religious Life Fifty Years after Vatican II,” referred to a structural crisis in contemporary society. We have seen the emergence today of a new globalized and technocratic civilization marked by the separation of culture from faith,

of politics and economics from ethics. This new civilization is pervaded by an exaggerated individualism, materialism, and subjectivism that again affect all of us, religious and non-religious alike. What is clear is that the models of evangelization of the past no longer work. We need to return to the originality and simplicity of the gospel, to the witness of lives transformed by an encounter with Christ. Fr. Sorge noted that each time the church becomes rich and powerful, weighed down by human privilege, each time diplomacy prevails over prophecy, when the Christian community falls back on its own internal problems and loses its missionary zeal, the Holy Spirit intervenes to purify and renew the church and bring it back to the purity of its origins.

The Quest for Meaning and Hope

...the models of evangelization of the past no longer work.

The men and women of our time need the secure light that illumines their path ... (Message for World Mission Day 2013). At a recent homily on the role of religious in the contemporary world, Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, outgoing superior general of the Society of Jesus, said he was convinced that the world today looked to Congregations like ours primarily for wisdom. He added that he had spent virtually all of his missionary life in Japan believing, like many, that wisdom was one of the essential values contributed to humanity by Asian spirituality rather than by the West. He was now persuaded that it was the single most important contribution that religious everywhere were called to give to a world that had lost direction and was desperately seeking meaning and hope.

...the world today looked to Congregations like ours primarily for wisdom.

“Can you live crushed under the weight of the present? Without a memory of the past and without the desire to look ahead to the future by building something, a future, a family?” asked Pope Francis in his dialogue with Eugenio Scalfari, atheist editor of the Italian newspaper, *Repubblica*.⁴ *“This, to me, is the most urgent problem that the church is facing.”* The fact that even non-believers look to the church for direction today was clear from Scalfari’s reaction:

The world is going through a period of deep crisis, not only economic but also social and spiritual... Even we, non-believers, feel this almost anthropological weight (of the present). That is why we want dialogue with believers and those who best represent them.

We are reminded of the prophetic words of Vatican II: *“The future of humanity lies in the hands of those who are strong enough to provide coming generations with reasons for hoping and living”* [*Gaudium et Spes*, 31].

*...even non-believers
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direction today...*

Mission and Powerlessness

The difficulty is, of course, that the church of recent years has lost much of its credibility as an authoritative source of hope and meaning for others. The financial scandals and internal political intrigues in the Vatican, the clerical sex abuse crisis across the globe, and the failure of church leadership to address the matter with often disastrous consequences for those involved, have all undermined the validity and effectiveness of the church's voice in contemporary society. At the Bagamoyo General Chapter there was a profound awareness of the need for us as a Congregation to bridge the gap between the words we speak and our lived reality. There was a collective consciousness of our own fragilities, our mistakes and failures, and a realization that, at the heart of our mission today is an internal call to conversion, to greater authenticity, integrity, and accountability. We heard a pressing invitation to relinquish a sense of mission based on strength and to embrace one rooted in fragility. The Holy Spirit has intervened to bring us back to the simplicity of the message of our founders, to the conviction that the mission to which we are called is God's mission not ours, and that our role is to be docile instruments at God's service. A sense of powerlessness, therefore, should not lead to paralysis but to a renewed conviction that God's power is most effective in our human frailty. In fact, as Timothy Radcliffe pointed out, a sense of our own powerlessness is actually an essential condition for credibility as a preacher of the Word of God today:

*...a pressing invitation
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To be a preacher is not just to tell people about God. It is to bear within our own lives that distance between the life of God and that which is furthest away, alienated and hurt. We have a word of hope only if we glimpse from within the pain and despair of those to whom we preach. We have no word of compassion unless, somehow, we know their failures and temptations as our own. We have no word which offers meaning to people's lives unless we have been touched by their doubts and glimpsed the abyss.⁵

Spiritana Mission and the Quest for Meaning

In the light of the above, it seems clear that the primary contribution we are called to make in the contemporary world as Spiritana missionaries pertains more to the quality of our own personal and community witness than to the nature or multiplicity of our activities. We are reminded of the

Your principal preaching consists in the holiness of your own life...⁶

If our conduct is not in line with the holiness of our ministry entrusted to us and does not transmit the teaching we have to impart, the people to whom we go will notice the difference. This will prevent them from benefitting from our words; they will say that we are (simply) doing our job – we are mere agents.⁷

In short, if there is a perceptible gap between what we preach and the way we live, the credibility of our way of life and the effectiveness of our ministry are seriously undermined. Unfortunately, this is a reality with which we are all too familiar of recent times.

...the primary contribution we are called to make in the contemporary world as Spiritan missionaries pertains more to the quality of our own personal and community witness than to the nature or multiplicity of our activities.

Personal Witness

A missionary, in the first instance, is a person who has found God in his or her own poverty, whose life has been utterly transformed by this experience, a person who has discovered joy, hope, and meaning in his or her own life and is able to put words on his or her experience for others.

The church – I repeat once again – is not a relief organization, an enterprise or an NGO, but a community of people, animated by the Holy Spirit, who have lived and are living the wonder of the encounter with Jesus Christ and want to share this experience of deep joy, the message of salvation that the Lord gave us.⁸

To use the imagery of Pope Francis, we are people on a pilgrimage with humanity in search of a God we have already found.

A missionary...is a person who has found God in his or her own poverty, whose life has been utterly transformed by this experience...

The work of the new evangelization consists in presenting once more the beauty and perennial newness of the encounter with Christ to the often distracted and confused heart of the men and women of our time, above all to ourselves.⁹

The touchstones of the new evangelization are a renewed encounter with Christ in contemplative prayer and in the faces of the poor:

The other symbol of authenticity of the new

evangelization has the face of the poor. Placing ourselves side by side with those who are wounded by life is not only a social exercise, but above all a spiritual act because it is Christ's face that shines in the face of the poor. (Ibid).

Community Witness

The 2009 CARA¹⁰ study in the USA, based on a survey of 4000 religious who had entered or made final profession over the course of the previous 16 years revealed that 85% had been attracted by the members of the particular community they joined, their sense of joy, commitment and zeal. The most important aspects for them were community life and prayer. Reflecting on the results of the study, the National Catholic Reporter (*NCR*) journalist, John J. Allen Jr., noted that “high-tension” communities are more attractive to new members today because they represent

...85% had been attracted by the members of the particular community they joined, their sense of joy, commitment and zeal.

a church full of passionate members; a community of people deeply involved in each other's lives and more willing than most to come to each other's aid; a peer group of knowledgeable souls who speak the same language (or languages), are moved by the same texts, and cherish the same dreams.¹¹

In a world marked by rootlessness and alienation, young people are searching today for places of inclusion, acceptance, and belonging - where gifts are recognized, affirmed and enabled to flourish.

There has been a growing realization in our Congregation of recent years that the increasingly international and intercultural character of our worldwide community is not simply an inevitable consequence of the geographical spread of our commitments but that it is integral to our mission as Spiritans in the contemporary world. In a world where conflict, racialism, and the cult of the individual are all too prevalent

...“high-tension” communities are more attractive to new members today...

by coming together from so many different places and cultures, we are saying to our brothers and sisters that the unity of the human race is not just an impossible dream. In this way, our community life is an integral part of our mission and a powerful witness of the Gospel” (Maynooth Chapter, 1998, p.117).

International community living is a “response to the call

of the Holy Spirit to all of us, to witness to a new quality of human solidarity, surpassing individualism, ethnocentrism and nationalism” [Torre d’Aguilha Chapter, 2005, 2.1].

...our community life is an integral part of our mission and a powerful witness of the Gospel.

Finally, a word about the ongoing mission of our retired and sick members. An over-identification of mission with activity and accomplishment often results in a sense of uselessness among those who for reasons of age or health can no longer function as they did in the past when they were younger and more active. In the contemporary world, where human beings tend to be measured and valued by their ability to produce and consume, and where the elderly are often isolated and forgotten, the importance of the witness of older and ill religious missionaries living in community and accepting their limitations and sufferings with joy, dignity, and grace cannot be overstated. Surely confreres who give such a wonderful testimony to people who serve in our retirement communities and people who visit them are among those who assure the future of humanity in providing others with reasons for living and hoping (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 31 above).

In the final analysis the credibility of our missionary activity today and even our right to engage therein are more than ever dependent on the extent to which we ourselves have been evangelized by the gospel we preach to others. Mission today is much more about who we are than what we do. To quote Meister Eckhart: “People should not worry so much about what they should do; rather they should worry about what they should be. If we and our ways are good, then what we do will be radiant.”¹²

Perhaps the most appropriate biblical model of Spiritan mission today can be taken from the Prophet Zechariah 8:23: “*in those days, ten men of every language will take a [Spiritan] by the sleeve and say, ‘We want to go with you, since we have learnt that God is with you.’*”

*Very Rev. Fr. John Fogarty, C.S.Sp.
Superior General, Rome*

...the extent to which we ourselves have been evangelized by the gospel we preach to others.

Endnotes

¹Service of Documentation and Study of Global Mission, Rome – an open forum for Institutes of Consecrated Life.

²*SEDOS Bulletin* 28 (1996) 171-179.

³Message of Pope Francis for World Mission Day, 2013, dated the Feast of Pentecost, May 19, 2013, and released on August 6, 2013, World Mission Day.

⁴The Italian version in *Repubblica*, July 13, 2014. Citation here from http://www.repubblica.it/cultura/2013/10/01/news/pope_s_

conversation_with_scalfari_english-67643118/ Translated from Italian to English by Kathryn Wallace.

⁵Radcliffe, *Sing a New Song: The Christian Vocation*. Springfield, Ill.: Templegate Publishers, 1999, 125.

⁶*Notes et Documents*, XIII, 143.

⁷*Provisional Rule of Father Libermann. Text and Commentary*. Pittsburgh: Center for Spiritan Studies, 2015, p. 50 (Part I, chap 1, art ix).

⁸Message for World Mission Day 2013.

⁹Final Message of the Synod of Bishops on New Evangelization for the “Year of Faith,” 2013.

¹⁰CARA stands for Center of Applied Research in the Apostolate. It is based in Georgetown University, Washington D.C.

¹¹“‘High tension’ and ‘low tension’ religious life,” *NCR*, August 14, 2009.

¹²Cited from Radcliffe, *Sing a New Song*, 125.



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In the Year of Consecrated life (2015), Pope Francis asked all Catholics to pray that religious priests, sisters, and brothers would “wake up the world” through their joyful witness of life. To fruitfully “wake up the world,” Spiritans must first be “awake” - we cannot give to others what we do not have. We must have personally experienced the transforming power of the Gospel, the wellspring of our words and actions, and then only are we able to bring God to others. Among the numerous and varied vocations in the church which the Holy Spirit inspires, we participate in the mission of Christ by evangelizing the poor. “We live out our mission in willing obedience to the Holy Spirit, taking Mary as our model” (SRL 5).

It is the Spirit of Pentecost who guides Spiritan life and mission. Spiritans are consecrated to the Holy Spirit, the author and source of the apostolic spirit, and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the most perfect participant in the life and mission of Jesus Christ and a perfect model of fidelity to the Holy Spirit.¹ In this paper, I first point out the workings of the Holy Spirit in the life and mission of our founders and the meaning of consecration to the Holy Spirit. Secondly, I discuss the role of the Spirit in Christian life and in the prophetic dimension of religious missionary life. Then, I highlight the work of the Holy Spirit in the context of the Vietnamese Church. Finally, I humbly give some indications for the renewal of Spiritan life and mission and for promoting availability to the Holy Spirit in the contemporary world.

The Holy Spirit in the Founders and the Spiritan Rule of Life

What does it mean for our Congregation to be consecrated to the Holy Spirit? From the very beginning, the Holy Spirit has had a central role in our spirituality and in our vision for mission. Poullart des Places and Libermann were driven by the same Spirit to make themselves available for the urgent needs of the poor and oppressed. At the time of Poullart des Places, there was a strong devotion to the Holy Spirit in his home province of Brittany, and he must have been influenced by this context of docility to the Holy Spirit. Des Places discovered the loving plan of God calling him to commit himself to a life of holiness through a progressive conversion to the gospel. To respond to God’s call to go further in his spiritual journey, he had to leave behind his social status, the mentality of family and culture, and a possible brilliant career in parliament.

In Poullart des Places’ time, there was great shortage of truly committed priests to serve the poor, the abandoned, and the marginalized. The clergy was seeking for wealth and honors and

What does it mean for our Congregation to be consecrated to the Holy Spirit?

many of them had not received good training. He wished to imitate Christ and allowed himself to be led by the Holy Spirit at the service of the church. "Being a priest was for them an evangelical availability in obedience to the Spirit for the service of the poor and abandoned in voluntary personal poverty."² This was the driving force that impelled Poullart des Places and his group to be ready and available to serve the poor wherever the needs were most urgent. By listening to the Holy Spirit, he recognized the emerging needs that required new responses. "As soon as he arrived in Paris, he found the places where he felt called to by the Spirit: the sick to be visited in hospital, the immigrant Savoyards and the poor students who needed help and encouragement."³

"...all the students will adore, in particular, the Holy Spirit to whom they are devoted."

Being conscious of God's mercy and goodness to him, he in turn responded to God's love by gathering poor seminarians and accompanying them in their vocation. On Pentecost Sunday 1703, the small group of students gathered in the side chapel of St. Etienne des Grès in Paris around Claude Poullart des Places and consecrated themselves to the Holy Spirit and to the Immaculate Virgin Mary conceived without sin. The Rule states that "all the students will adore, in particular, the Holy Spirit to whom they are devoted."

Father Libermann was the son of the Rabbi of Saverne who wanted him to succeed him as Rabbi. Before conversion to Christianity, Libermann went through a faith crisis. He fell "into a kind of religious indifference"⁴ which after a few months, developed into a total loss of belief. He was anxiously seeking the true religion and asked for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Illuminated by interior helps from the Holy Spirit, who penetrated his mind to see the truth, his heart to feel interior peace, his will accepted Jesus Christ as the way, the truth, and the life (cf. John 14:6). He told Fr. Gamon: "I was enlightened. I saw the truth and faith penetrated my mind and heart. Reading Lhomond, I had no trouble accepting everything he said about the life and death of Jesus Christ."⁵ With the help of the Holy Spirit, he was enlightened to go beyond reason and to open himself to the dimension of Mystery. He had to move beyond what his father's strongly-held conviction considered valuable and important to see the bigger picture of reality. For Libermann to be able to accept the mystery of Christ regardless of the severe friction and tension in dealing with his father, he had to listen to the Holy Spirit manifesting himself in the concrete situations of life. The Holy Spirit touched, opened, and turned his heart towards God - the Spirit who gives "joy and ease to everyone in assenting to the truth and believing it."⁶ In a letter to Jerome Schwindenhammer, Libermann confirmed that the Lord helped him to stand up to his father who wanted him to renounce faith and that he renounced his father rather than the faith.⁷

The Holy Spirit touched, opened, and turned his heart towards God...

For him, what counted was total trust in the providence of God and unconditional availability before God.

For him, what counted was total trust in the providence of God and unconditional availability before God. When he felt called by the Holy Spirit to dedicate himself to serving the Negro slaves, he was willing to give up his position as assistant novice master of the Eudists. We can see his openness to the Holy Spirit in his attitude toward the poor and neglected. When Libermann heard the cry of the poor, he founded his Congregation not only for the foreign missions, but also for social work.⁸ This was the genesis of that “Work for the Blacks” that took the members of his missionary band of the Holy Heart of Mary to Haiti, Reunion, Mauritius, and to West Africa.⁹ A few years later, in 1848, after discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit directing him and his followers, he gladly accepted as God’s will the merger of the Society of the Immaculate Heart of Mary with the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Years after that, Libermann “restored that Congregation to its original fervor in obedience to the Holy Spirit and evangelical availability.”¹⁰ Because he was flexible and docile to the Holy Spirit in all situations of life and saw everything in relation to God, his contemporaries “venerated him as a saint...a man animated by the Spirit of God.”¹¹ M. de Brandt said, “I cannot doubt that this holy man was animated by the divine Spirit.”¹²

Mary is the perfect model for us of faithful obedience to the Holy Spirit.

Father Libermann used several images to describe this spiritual reality. In our *Spiritan Rule of Life*, there are over 40 references to the Holy Spirit in relation to our Spiritan life and mission in the contemporary world. “We who come from different cultures, continents and nations ... are brought together by the Spirit of Pentecost into one larger community, the Congregation” (SRL 37). As a special gift, the Spirit calls us to a life of chastity in the single state (SRL 60), of poverty (SRL 63) and of obedience (SRL 76) to follow Christ in order to witness to the kingdom of God in the service of the gospel.

Consecrated by the Holy Spirit (SRL 6) who is the author of all holiness, the source of our talents and gifts (SRL 43), of our apostolic zeal (SRL 9), we “live our mission in willing obedience to the Holy Spirit, taking Mary as our model” (SRL 5). Mary is the perfect model for us of faithful obedience to the Holy Spirit. In our community life, the Spirit who is the source of unity binds us together (SRL 42), calling us to continual conversion and shaping our personal and community lives (SRL 10; 95). Every day we put into practice the dynamic of prayer and apostolate. We ask the Spirit to give us his understanding to help us discern the will of the Father (SRL 76), through the church, our human environment, and the world in which we live (SRL 44.1). Thus we are invited to live every experience in the Spirit of God – our joys, our hardships and our pains, the works we undertake in our zeal, and even our failures (SRL 88).

The Meaning of the Congregation being Consecrated to the Holy Spirit.

All students will adore in a special way the Holy Spirit, to whom they have been specially consecrated. To this they will add a personal devotion to the Blessed Virgin, through whose protection they have been offered to the Holy Spirit. As their two principal feasts, they will choose Pentecost and the Immaculate Conception. The first they will celebrate to obtain from the Holy Spirit the fire of divine love, the second to obtain from the Blessed Virgin an angelic purity.¹³

*We are willing to
abandon entirely
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*The Holy Spirit
sets us apart for
mission,...*

The small community consecrated itself to the Holy Spirit under the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This means that Spiritans are totally willing to follow the way of the Holy Spirit, with the Blessed Virgin Mary as their model. We are to be in-dwelt and governed by the Holy Spirit who is “the source of [our] desires, impulses, inclinations, affections, feelings, attractions, insights, zealous energy, impressions, enthusiasm, intentions, sentiments, dispositions.”¹⁴ We are willing to abandon entirely our own will and satisfaction to follow his divine will. In a spirit of docility, we Spiritans offer our whole being to “belong to him by constant fidelity to his inspirations and to receive from him the fire of divine love.”¹⁵

At the same time, the Congregation also consecrates itself to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, who gives herself over totally to God, and manifests fidelity to the Spirit of holiness. We also want to obtain from her the gift of purity of heart and body through the action of the Holy Spirit. Renouncing our own wishes and affections, we let the Holy Spirit direct our senses and powers in every moment of our life. Faithful to and animated by the Spirit of holiness and Pentecost, and under the maternal protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, we can spread the fire of divine love and bear fruit in our apostolate. The Holy Spirit sets us apart for mission, molds us and makes us holy and God’s chosen instruments to “bring the good news to the poor” (Luke 4:18).

The Spirit in Christian Life and the Prophetic Dimension of Religious Missionary Life.

In the Nicene Creed, the church professes her faith in the Holy Spirit as “the Lord and Giver of life.” This life has its origin in the Father and we receive it through the Son. Through baptism, Christians are reborn as children of God and sharers of divine life by the Holy Spirit. “It is the Holy Spirit who constitutes the baptized as children of God and members

As the personal expression of God's love, the Holy Spirit becomes the source of sanctification and adoption as children of God.

of Christ's Body."¹⁶ Created in the image and likeness of God, humankind becomes a dwelling place of the Spirit raised to the dignity of divine adoption. As the personal expression of God's love, the Holy Spirit becomes the source of sanctification and adoption as children of God. He reveals to us what God wants us to do (1 John 2:27), enables us to respond to God's offer of divine life, draws us into God's life, and sends forth into our hearts the spirit of God's Son which cries out "Abba, Father!" (Gal 4:6).

As Jesus immersed himself in the depths of his Abba's life and love, so Christians have to immerse themselves in the life of the Trinity, so that they can share the life and love of the Triune God with others. "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). This love testifies to the presence of the Holy Spirit and makes believers visible instruments of the Spirit's unceasing activity. The Holy Spirit who dwells in the hearts of the faithful as in a temple (1 Cor 3:16), continuously encourages them to place their life at the service of the gospel so that his inspirations can well up like springs of living water (John 7:38). Those who allow themselves to be led by the Spirit produce fruits of "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22-23).

"The holy People of God shares in Christ's prophetic office" (*Lumen Gentium* 12). Jesus promised that the end of his life will not be the end of his Spirit-empowered work. That work will continue in his disciples in the power of the same Spirit. "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete to be with you always" (John 14: 16). As Counselor of the Christian life, he will teach us all things and bring to remembrance all that Jesus said and did (John 14:26). Pope John Paul II adds that the Holy Spirit who inspires Christians to proclaim the gospel will help people to understand the message of salvation and ensure that the church will always continue in the same truth in the midst of changing circumstances and situations.¹⁷

The Holy Spirit is the principle of unity and service in every Christian community. He brings about the "communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in Christ that he is the principle of the church's unity"¹⁸ and makes the church grow in communion as one body made up of different parts (Eph 4: 11-16). The presence and work of the Holy Spirit leads Christians to the mystery of Trinitarian communion and makes every member of the church participate in a community of sharing and fellowship, of solidarity and co-responsibility, of witness and service. This unity in loving service is made possible through the Spirit's manifold gifts and charisms (1 Cor 12:4). Gathering into unity different people with different cultures,

Phung Manh Tien, C.S.Sp. customs, resources, and abilities, the Spirit enables the church to be a sign of the communion of all humanity under Christ the Head.¹⁹

The Prophetic Dimension of Religious Missionary Life

God takes the initiative to call persons to become instruments of God's love and mercy. In every generation, the Holy Spirit always calls persons from among the People of God to be his witnesses in the world and to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ to build church and society. Like the prophets and the apostles, religious are set apart by God to become leaven in the world and fulfil their prophetic role in calling the attention of people in society to the importance of following Christ radically.²⁰ Religious life has a prophetic dimension that is communicated by the Holy Spirit and given to the church. Religious need to be faithful to this prophetic charism. They live their baptismal consecration more radically and intentionally follow Jesus in consecration through "the proclamation of the good news, the practice of the evangelical counsels, and a life in fraternal and praying community." (SRL 3)

Religious are specially chosen, not because of their talents or merits, but because of God's unconditional love, "It was not you who chose me, it was I who chose you to go forth and bear fruit" (John 15:16). We Spiritans are called to proclaim the Good News, especially to "those who have not yet heard the gospel message or who have scarcely heard it" (SRL 12). This consecrated vocation is "a special gift of the Holy Spirit, inviting us to give ourselves completely in the Congregation, in the service of the church" (SRL 51). Pope John Paul II expresses the importance of prophetic witness: "prophecy derives a particularly persuasive power from consistency between proclamation and life... Thus will they be able to enrich other faithful with the charismatic gifts they have received."²¹ They have important responsibility for involvement in social reality and transforming unjust social structures. On the other hand, through practice of the evangelical counsels, their lives shine with joy and passionate love for God and people. When willingly embracing the life of poverty, obedience, and chastity in a radical way, religious inspire the people of God and "constitute a closer imitation and an abiding re-enactment in the church of the form of life which the Son of God made his own when he came into the world to do the will of the Father."²² At the same time, authentic living of the counsels challenges the modern world that is facing a wave of hedonism, consumerism and individualism. Religious become like salt that adds flavor to the ordinary activities of daily life, the lamp put on a stand that sheds light in the darkest corners of conscience, and leaven in a world in great need of mercy and compassion.

...authentic living of the counsels challenges the modern world that is facing a wave of hedonism, consumerism and individualism.

*...fraternal life is a sign of
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God and his people.*

In order to make their prophetic witness authentic and credible, religious, guided by the Holy Spirit, have to become women and men of deep spirituality through their life of communion, prayer, and fidelity to the word of God. Religious dedicate themselves to evangelization, but it is the Holy Spirit who is “the principal agent of evangelization.”²³ To be women and men of communion is a credible sign of the presence of the Spirit; fraternal life is a sign of Trinitarian communion and unity.

Contextualization of the Topic in the Life and Mission of the Local Church

Since Christianity entered the Vietnamese soil, the Holy Spirit never ceased to give missionaries and people the courage and power to bear witness to the value of the gospel. In the context of persecution, the Holy Spirit empowers Christians to bear witness to their faith even at the cost of life. The church in Vietnam has about five hundred years of history, with Blessed Andrew Phu Yen as the first Vietnamese martyr and another hundred and seventeen martyr saints. They are just a small number among anonymous martyrs who shed their blood to attest to the strong faith of the Vietnamese Church. With the power of the Holy Spirit, many Christians have been following in the footsteps of the martyrs to bear witness to Jesus Christ in one way or another. The Spirit helps believers not only to understand and accept the gift of faith but also to live their faith in Jesus Christ, especially in severe circumstances.

Spiritans in Vietnam will never forget the witness of Fr. Brian Fulton, C.S.Sp. who arrived in Vietnam in 2002 to learn the difficult Vietnamese language and culture and who worked as an NGO representative. He decided to establish a Spiritan community in Saigon in 2005. His mission was brief; Brian suddenly passed away from heart attack on February 2nd 2006. The confreres did not abandon their efforts in God's mission, rather entrusted all projects into the hands of divine Providence. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, on 24th September 2007, Fr. Patrick Palmer from the Irish Province, Fr. Frédéric Rossignol from Belgium, and Fr. Antony Trinh who had joined the Spiritans in the US, arrived in Ho Chi Minh City to establish a Spiritan community and to look for vocations in this communist country.²⁴

Vocation is always from God's mercy and goodness calling some people to dedicate themselves to serving God and his people. In spite of facing challenges and difficulties, vocations to religious life and to the priesthood have been growing in significant numbers from different areas of the country. By God's favor and by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the first three Spiritan priests started their mission in this communist

Phung Manh Tien, C.S.Sp. country as witness of hope. So far, students from all parts of the country have joined the formation program to the tune of 35 persons.

They live a life of witness, proclaim the gospel in the heart of the nation, and make an active contribution to the reconstruction of the country and the building up of the church.

The primary call of the religious life is witness to love.

Like Jesus, who became flesh and lived among human beings in love and service, the Church in Vietnam follows the way of Jesus in difficult situations. In these circumstances, in the light of the gospel and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Church in Vietnam recognizes that her primary task is to establish and foster unity at the heart of the church as she faces the challenges and difficulties of the times. This unity is the inner strength from the Holy Spirit that helps the church overcome struggles and stand firm. Spiritans in Vietnam integrate into the life and mission of the local church. They live a life of witness, proclaim the gospel in the heart of the nation, and make an active contribution to the reconstruction of the country and the building up of the church.²⁵

In Vietnam, religious are taking up apostolates and committing to themselves the weakest, discriminated, and underprivileged in society, such as HIV victims, street children, and drug addicts. By their selfless service and authentic life, they can awake social structure, guide people in their crises, and lead them to conversion. They become a prophetic voice reminding people to be more involved in the social reality of the country. The Holy Spirit makes Christians today “more conscious of their own responsibility and inspires them to serve Christ and the church.”²⁶ Spiritans also became involved in social projects for poor families in the province of the south of the country, and projects for the education of poor Vietnamese children in the center. Through this unconditional commitment to the poor and marginalized they will be able to energize and empower people to be more responsible towards God and his people. True dialogue and sincere encounters with people are authentic signs and fruits of the active presence of the Holy Spirit. Gradually people appreciate the goodness and learn to be more open to one another to promote whatever leads to justice, harmony, and love. This reality is seen as sign of the Spirit who touches people’s life and leads them to the truth of the gospel in due time.

Renewal of Spiritan Life and Mission and Promoting Availability to the Holy Spirit in the contemporary World

In our modern world, there is great need to awaken awareness for the sacredness of human life. The primary call of the religious life is witness to love. There are other values in religious life, but love is the center and goal of all. To be sent out in love to others by Jesus is the very identity of Jesus’ disciples.

If mission means love, how do we encounter other people whose cultures and customs are different from ours? In the face of differences, we sometimes fall into the mentality reducing or creating the other according to our own image. Father Libermann gave us clear directives not to replace the local culture with that of ours:

Forget about Europe, its ways of thinking, its customs, its conventions. Be African with the Africans... Be a Negro with the Negro so as to form them ...according to their way of being. Relate to them as if you were their servants and they were your masters... and to raise them up from their oppressed state to become a people of God.²⁷

This demands that we be open to learn from the other, understand the social context and the needs of people we serve.

Spiritans need to be open to the world and “strive in every way for a fruitful coming together of local cultural and religious traditions with the gospel of Christ.” (SRL 16.1). This demands that we be open to learn from the other, understand the social context and the needs of people we serve. At the same time, we share our own values and beliefs. Our mission of the evangelization of the poor is not just a matter of doing things for people, but of being with people, listening to them, and sharing with them.

Nowadays people are thirsty for peace and harmony.

Our mission is to promote people’s participation in the paschal mystery in the cultures to whom we are sent. We need ask ourselves how we find the Paschal Mystery already present in those cultures. Even when we are unable to proclaim the gospel because of health or age, we need remember that we can partake of the Paschal Mystery through our prayers and through bearing our fragility for the sake of the kingdom of God. Forming “one heart and one soul” (Acts 4:32), we Spiritans “live out our mission in willing obedience to the Holy Spirit and taking Mary as our model.” (SRL no. 5), she who like the “the ones who, when they have heard, bear fruit through perseverance” (Luke 8:15). Our mission will be effective and bear much fruit to the extent that our hearts burn with the fire of divine love and the experience of Jesus Christ, for “a fire can only be lit by something that is itself on fire.”²⁸ And remember that “modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.”²⁹

Nowadays people are thirsty for peace and harmony. Christ “though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped but emptied himself” (Phil 2:6-11). Spiritans are invited to witness to Christ’s kenosis among their sisters and brothers. In order to live out the kenotic

Phung Manh Tien, C.S.Sp. spirit, we must be willing to live in simplicity and self-donation, dialoguing with others through kenotic behavior in openness, respect, collaboration, and humility.

Availability to the Holy Spirit in the contemporary World

Father Libermann taught us to be like a feather before the wind. The wind blows wherever it pleases (cf. John 3:8) and “the Holy Spirit is the wind and he blows on your will and your soul in the direction that God wants you to go.”³⁰ Spiritans are called to open themselves up to respond to new opportunities and challenges in the contemporary world. In some countries, human resources are remarkably deficient. The challenge is to create new spaces for new ways of mission and creative ministries. Are we willing to leave our comfort zones or places to which we have become too accustomed? Our availability in the Holy Spirit makes us “accept to free ourselves from an engagement in order to respond to new and different calls from local church or from the universal church” (SRL 25)

...the Spirit cannot be heard when we are in interior commotion.

To be available to the Holy Spirit in the concrete situation of life, we Spiritans have to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying through our interior life of union with God. The missionary is a contemplative in action.³¹ The source of power and effectiveness in the mission of Jesus was his communion with the Father through daily prayer. Spiritans follow in the footsteps of Libermann to “put into practice this dynamic of prayer and activity that is the heart of all Christian living, a ‘practical union’—a habitual disposition of fidelity to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.”³² For this, “Let your interior be in silence before him, the Spirit cannot be heard when we are in interior commotion.”³³

Conclusion

The superior general in his 2014 Pentecost Message, “When I am weak, then I am strong...” (2 Cor 12,10), reminded us that “the mission to which we are called is God’s mission, not ours, and that our role is simply to be docile instruments at God’s service.” A true Spiritan needs to place himself at God’s disposal and offer no resistance to the movement of the Holy Spirit. “Divine Spirit, I wish to be before you as a light feather, so that your breath may carry me off where it wishes and that I may never offer it the least resistance. For Spiritans, our mission necessarily means opening up to the Spirit in all situations of life, letting ourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit’s promptings. For

the more the Holy Spirit becomes the principle of the movements of our soul, the more he influences our sentiments and dispositions, the

more we follow him, the more perfect also will be life in us and so much more holy shall we be.³⁵

Our availability before God's love sharpens our availability towards people and the world. When someone encounters us, they ought to leave joyfully because they believe that they have just met a man of God. Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* wants all to be "missionary disciples."³⁶ Encountering and continually re-encountering Christ, we deepen our relationship with him and live a transformed life. From that discipleship we can emerge as missionaries and invite others to encounter Christ. Spiritans dedicate themselves to bring good news to people. However, we may not forget that mission starts in our communities and our work places. Every Spiritan should always keep in mind the last words of Father Libermann,

"above all charity...charity above all...charity in Jesus Christ. Charity through Jesus Christ...charity in the name of Jesus Christ; fervor...charity...union in Jesus Christ...the Spirit of sacrifice..." (SRL 38; N.D. XIII, 659-660).

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Endnotes

¹*Notes et Documents* (henceforth, N.D.), X, 586.

²Koren, Henry J., *Essays on Spiritan Charism and on Spiritan History*. Bethel Park, PA: Spiritus Press, 1990, 48-49.

³Savoie, Jean, *15 Days Prayer with Claude Poullart des Places*.

Translated by Marc Whelan. Dublin: The Columba Press, 2009, 82.

⁴*A Spiritan Anthology. Writings of Claude-François Poullart des Places (1679-1709) and François Marie-Paul Libermann (1802-1852)*.

Chosen and presented by Christian de Mare, C.S.Sp. Rome: Congregazione dello Spirito Santo, 2011, 56.

⁵*A Spiritan Anthology*, 66

⁶Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, no. 5

⁷Cf. *A Spiritan Anthology*, 73. Also N.D. VIII, 202-204.

⁸Koren, Henry J., *Essays*, 27.

⁹Eke, Casimir, C.S.Sp., "Re-Inventing The Spiritan Charism for Contemporary Mission," in *Spiritans Horizons*, no. 1 (Fall 2006), 40-46.

¹⁰Koren, Henry J., *Essays*, 12.

¹¹Malinowski, Francis X., "The Holy Spirit in Francis Libermann," *Spiritans Horizons* 10 (Fall 2015) 7-18, here 9, citing N.D.XIII, Appendix 20, testimony of Marie-Madelaine-Victoire de Bonnault d'Houet, foundress of the Faithful Companions of Jesus.

¹²See N.D. II, 425.

¹³Claude Poullart des Places, *Rules for the Community of the Holy Ghost*, Critical Edition. Rome: Spiritan Sources, 1991, articles 1-2.

¹⁴Malinowski, Francis X., "The Holy Spirit in Francis Libermann," 14.

¹⁵Gilbert Alphonse, "The Holy Spirit and Mary in the Spiritan Tradition," *Spiritan Papers*, no 22 (December 1988) 48-74, here 49.

¹⁶Saint Pope John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World *Christifideles Laici*. 30 December 1998, no. 11.

¹⁷Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Dominum et Vivificantem* On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World. 18 May 1986, no.4.

¹⁸Vatican Council II, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 2.

¹⁹Cf. Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, no. 13.

²⁰Francis Cardinal Arinze, *Radical Discipleship: Consecrated Life and the Call to Holiness*. Ignatius Press, 2015, 70.

²¹Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*. Nairobi: Pauline Publications, 1996, no. 85.

²²*Lumen Gentium*, no 4.

²³Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 75.

²⁴Cf. Brian McLaughlin C.S.Sp, "Spiritan Mission in South- East Asia – Ten Years On," *Spiritan Horizons*, no. 4 (Fall 2009) 66-76.

²⁵Catholic Bishops' Conference of Vietnam, Pastoral Letter, *Evangelization in the Heart of the Country*. Hanoi: Catholic Bishops' Conference of Vietnam, 1980, 9-10.

²⁶John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* Pasay City: Paulines Publishing House, 1999, 71-72

²⁷*A Spiritan Anthology*, 287. Letter to the Community in Dakar. N.D. IX, 330.

²⁸John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*. Pasay City: Paulines Publishing House, 1999, no 42.

²⁹Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 41.

³⁰*A Spiritan Anthology*, 197.

³¹Bishop Bui Tuan, "Missionary Spirituality," *LOR*, 20 May 1998, 11.

³²SRL no 88.

³³LS 1.294, Sept 1837 to M. Gamon, seminary director, N.D I.394.

³⁴Libermann's "Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John." *A Spiritan Anthology*, 120.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 116.

³⁶Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic Exhortation to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Faithful on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World. Pasay City: Paulines Publishing House, 2013, no. 120.



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SPIRITAN RENEWAL SINCE VATICAN II: A THIRD FOUNDING MOMENT?

Introduction

The history of any organization has pivotal moments when fundamental choices are made that give shape to its development. Spiritans have known many such moments at local, regional, and congregational level. Times of crisis are part of the Spiritan story and provide opportunity for greater fidelity to the Spiritan missionary vocation. Then there are identifiable “founding moments” in which the Congregation had its beginning, received new life, was preserved from extinction.

The first founding moment was in 1703 with the beginning of the Congregation as a community of poor students with Claude Poullart des Places, a seminarian, as its founder.¹ Its transition in 1734 from an informal residence and school for poor seminarians to a recognized seminary preparing priests for the French colonies put it on the national stage and gave it legal status. Providentially, it survived the French Revolution.

A second founding moment was in 1848 when Francis Libermann brought his youthful missionary society, the Holy Heart of Mary, into the Spiritan fold. Libermann's leadership rescued the Spiritan Congregation from possible extinction and widened the boundaries of Spiritan mission to embrace the poorest and most abandoned in the world: the freed slaves of the colonies and the peoples of Africa. That missionary thrust propelled the Congregation beyond France to many European countries, beginning with Ireland in 1859, in quest of vocations to complete its missionary work.

A third founding moment, proposed here, is the 1968 XIII General Chapter at which the Congregation rose to the challenge of embracing dramatic change in response to the Vatican II call to renewal. At that extraordinary chapter, described by one of the capitulants, Frans Timmermans, as “the failed coup” of Mgr. Lefebvre,² the first historic decisions were made in what would be a difficult period of adjustment and renewal.

In 2018 Spiritans celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of that moment which began a period of dramatic change. Does GC XIII and the time of renewal since Vatican II constitute a third founding moment for the Congregation? In this article, I explore how the Spiritan Congregation's renewal and adaptations taken in the light of Vatican II (1962-65) might be interpreted fifty years later. I leave it to the reader to decide

Vatican II...constituted a "paradigm shift" from a hierarchical, juridical, and triumphalist church to a pilgrim, pastoral, and servant church...

what lessons have been learned from that experience that helps the Congregation today to play its part in the *missio Dei*.

The Spiritans and Vatican II

Vatican II set a trajectory for the church in the third millennium. It constituted a "paradigm shift" from a hierarchical, juridical, and triumphalist church to a pilgrim, pastoral, and servant church heralding the kingdom of God for all peoples in all places. As part of this shift, the Council called for renewal in all religious institutes.

The Spiritans, as religious and as missionaries, were particularly challenged by the Council's thinking on the primacy of baptism and the Spirit at work among all the baptized, both individually and collectively in the building up of the church (*Lumen gentium* 12). If all members of the church through baptism were called to be holy, what was distinctive about a religious vocation? What was the role for a missionary institute in light of the Council's decree on missionary activity, *Ad gentes*, which recognized that the local church was the primary agent for mission and that all Christians by their baptism were missionary?

For some Spiritans, an existential life or death question needed to be asked of the Congregation. Did the Spiritan Congregation have a future? A special edition of the French journal, *Spiritus*, in preparation for GC XIII attempted an answer. In its editorial, Fr. Athanase Bouchard, C.S.Sp., feared that, given the changed circumstances since the General Chapter of 1962 which elected Mgr. Lefebvre, "it is very clear that a failure of this present chapter would have altogether more radical consequences for the Congregation than that of 1962." Bouchard urged the capitulants to have the courage to "see things as they are: it is certain that there is among us – especially among the young – an easy resignation to the eventuality of a dissolution of the Spiritans; they see no other future apart from this."³ He painted an "end game" scenario for the Congregation, giving GC XIII the ominous title of "*le chapitre de la dernière chance (a last opportunity chapter)*." As in 1848, the Congregation's very existence was in doubt. Could it survive the demand for renewal in a very changed world? The prospects seemed unlikely with Mgr. Marcel Lefebvre as Superior General.

At the Council, Mgr. Lefebvre was "opposed to episcopal collegiality, which he had already labelled in October 1963 as 'collectivism,' and found it impossible to reconcile the new ecclesiology of Vatican II with the ecclesiology heavily marked by an ultramontanist and hierarchical mentality"⁴ which he espoused. He had supported the "Catholic order"

*...saw Vatican II as
“the French revolution
in the church.”*

of the authoritarian French Vichy regime in the 1940s and saw Vatican II as “the French revolution in the church.”⁵ The theologian, Gerald O’Collins, S.J., made an incisive observation about archbishop Lefebvre and his rejection of the Council.

In support of his position, Lefebvre invoked “the tradition” (understood in the sense of what came from the sixteenth-century Council of Trent) and “the church” (understood in the sense of French Catholics who longed for the restoration of the monarchy), and avoided appealing to the gospels or invoking Jesus himself and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.⁶

O’Collins analyzed an interview given by Lefebvre to *Newsweek* (19 December 1977). In it, he noted, Lefebvre spoke about the “church” 13 times, about tradition(s) 3 times, and about “God” twice, but there was not a mention of Jesus or the gospels.

The General Chapter of 1968-69 [GC XIII]

In October 1967, Lefebvre formally convoked the special extraordinary chapter. The key question at the beginning of the chapter for some well-informed capitulants was, “who controlled the chapter?” Control had to be wrested from Lefebvre’s grip.⁷ He had reiterated the announcement made earlier in the year that he and his council would offer their resignations when a new superior general and council had been elected. However, Lefebvre took it that that up to that time he would, as superior general, preside over the chapter. But it was pointed out that once the chapter was in session, it was the supreme authority in the Congregation. What then was Lefebvre’s role in the chapter? The capitulants deliberated on whether, as superior general, he should chair the central commission and thus take control. A vote was taken (11 September) and it was decided by 63 votes to 40 votes that he should not.

Following that vote, Mgr. Lefebvre absented himself from GC XIII. His biographer records that on the following day he wrote to the Sacred Congregation for Religious informing them of what had happened. He contested that the vote removing his authority over the chapter was unconstitutional.⁸

Lefebvre returned on 28 September and addressed the capitulants. He explained that he went on retreat to Assisi to reflect on the writings of Fr. Libermann and had arrived at some conclusions. He presented the links between religious life, community life, and missionary activity that were the hallmark of Libermann’s teaching. And, he added, “the realization,

in practice of this community life and religious life, is the observance of the Rule under the vigilance of the superior.” He went on to say,

we must recognize in all humility that this religious life and this community life, such as they are essentially known by our Venerable Father, are no longer wanted by many of us. Why hide it? Already for a certain number of years, slowly, progressively, but irremediably a good many confreres have lost the esteem and the practice of true religious life and community life.⁹

...Spiritan vocation as an indissoluble unity of life, viewed as a whole, and in all its aspects, Spiritan and ecclesial, humanitarian and Christianizing, active and prayerful, missionary and religious...

He called on those, so inclined, “to look elsewhere for another society that may suit them or let them found a new one.” It was Lefebvre who left and, as we know, founded a seminary at Écône, Switzerland and the Society of Pius X that would put him on a “collision course” with the Vatican.

GC XIII continued its deliberations on the Congregation’s renewal and a consensus quickly formed around principles of subsidiarity, solidarity, and unity, and of the governance of the Congregation proceeding from “the bottom up.” That is, from the individual, to the local community, to the district/provincial community, to the general council. GC XIII succeeded in articulating a common vision of the Spiritan vocation as an

indissoluble unity of life, viewed as a whole, and in all its aspects, Spiritan and ecclesial, humanitarian and Christianizing, active and prayerful, missionary and religious, which we call the apostolic Spiritan life.¹⁰

Continuing the Journey of Renewal

The extent and depth of renewal within the life of the church authored at Vatican II had not been appreciated by Lefebvre and those who supported him. Those seeking reform wanted the Congregation to engage as fully as possible with the spirit of the Council and advocated radical change through an uncompromising identification of first evangelization as the specific end of the Congregation. This approach was based on the logic of *ressourcement* or return to the sources, claiming first evangelization as the founding intention of Libermann for his Congregation.¹¹ This was articulated in CDD (*Directives and Decisions*, 1969) 1: “to preach the gospel of Christ and to implant his church among peoples and groups who have not yet heard or have only scarcely heard the gospel message.”

...first evangelization as the founding intention of Libermann for his Congregation.

GC XIII elected Fr. Joseph Lecuyer as the 19th Superior

General. He called all Spiritans to “an examination of conscience” in 1970. Some confreres, he said, were “unsympathetic” to the call to renewal and he asked, “Are not some prejudiced against the decisions of the general chapter as though nothing good could come from it?”¹² How to implement change and, at the same time, maintain unity was a question that would pre-occupy him and his successor as superior general, Frans Timmermans, from 1969 to 1986 and on to GC XVI which approved the new Spiritan Rule of Life.

...“a new age of mission” characterized by the shift of its center of gravity, both in terms of numbers and vitality, to the southern hemisphere.

“...A new era has begun: that of mission by the Third World.”

GC XIV (1974) held at Chevilly-La-Rue refocused attention on the membership and the building up of community when it emphasised that “our Congregation is a fraternal community” (*Guidelines for Animation* 3). Community came first as true mission is achieved only from community well lived. The need to realize and be strengthened by a shared Spiritan identity grounded in the founding charism of the Congregation was recognized. A new structure, the Enlarged General Council, (EGC) to meet every two years, was proposed (GA 131-134). Its purpose “is to improve communication and co-operation between the different provinces, districts, and groups and to promote the unity of all with the generalate” (GA 131). The first meeting was held at the generalate in Rome on the day after the Ascension, 1976.¹³ On the Eve of Pentecost, the chapter voted in favor of three mission projects, Angola, Paraguay, and Pakistan. Three projects on three continents. Internationality had arrived! Internationality would benefit the Congregation which was still “too Western” and too much influenced by its colonial past. The growth of the Foundations in the “countries of the South” contrasted with a drop of vocations and an older membership in the “countries of the North.”

GC XV (1980) recognized “a new age of mission” characterized by the shift of its center of gravity, both in terms of numbers and vitality, to the southern hemisphere. It was influenced by new “missionary thinking” coming from many sources, such as the International Missionary Congress held in Manila in 1979 which stated, “We have reached a decisive turning-point in the history of mission in the Third World . . . A new era has begun: that of mission by the Third World.”¹⁴ It also recognized works for justice and peace as authentically Spiritan. GC XV marked the beginning of the process for revising the Rules and Constitutions. This took six years and involved the entire membership working through three drafts of new Rules and Constitutions.

GC XVI (1986) agreed the new *Spiritans Rule of Life*. This was a decisive moment for the Spiritan Congregation as it brought the *ad experimentum*” period to a conclusion and gave

definition to the Congregation's place in church and world after Vatican II. Much was achieved. The achievements can be summarized as follows.

- a deepening knowledge and love for the Spiritan charism;
- the building of bridges of communication within the Congregation;
- the broad redefining of the Spiritan apostolate;
- the understanding of authority as service;
- the emphasis on the dignity of each member and the spiritual renewal of each one that led to a better service to the *missio Dei* by the Congregation.

The Spiritan Charism Re-discovered

The Spiritan charism is a lived reality. Its progenitors, Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann, provide the standard and Spiritans both past, present, and to come, follow that standard with personal commitment and community solidarity in the evangelization of the poor. Each Spiritan responds to the call to follow Jesus and to announce the good news of God's kingdom in the world through creative fidelity to the Spiritan way marked by its rule. SRL "challenges us to discernment, in order to reproduce the spirit of the Founders in the conditions of our time."¹⁵

The charism of des Places and Libermann was the seed that germinated into a wonderful plant. The continuing narrative of God's Spirit at work in individuals coming together in religious community for mission to the poorest and most abandoned has extended far beyond the seedbed of France and grown into a truly international family. The diversification of membership and works since Vatican II is expressive of the Congregation's creative fidelity to its original inspiration in changing circumstances and new ideas. Henry Koren located SRL in the line of succession of the Congregation's charism from Poullart des Places and Libermann.

Always open to the Spirit, both Poullart des Places and Libermann remained ready for everything that living the gospel of Jesus appeared to demand of them and their followers in the changing course of history. It is in faithfulness to that Spirit that we update ourselves in our era.¹⁶

Understanding Spiritan Renewal since Vatican II

An analysis by a noted theologian and commentator on

SRL "challenges us to discernment, in order to reproduce the spirit of the Founders in the conditions of our time."

Vatican II, Massimo Faggioli, on the meaning of Vatican II from the opening of the Council in 1962 to its Fiftieth Anniversary in 2012 provides a helpful sequence in tracing the implementation of change in the church with identifiable parallel moments in the Spiritan Congregation's journey of renewal.¹⁷

- The first moment was that of the Council itself (1962-65). The parallel moment for the Congregation was the holding of the General Chapter of Renewal (1968-69).
- The second moment was a time for commentaries and the early implementation of the Council (1965-80). The parallel moment for the Congregation was the period of experimentation marked by two General Chapters, GC XIV 1974 and GC XV in 1980.
- The third moment, from 1980 to 1990, was marked by a re-assertion of the church's central authority over the process of implementation, which Faggioli associated with the early years of Pope St. John Paul II's papacy.¹⁸ The parallel moment for the Congregation was the conclusion of the period of experimentation marked by GC XVI in 1986, finalizing the text of the new rule of life and its approval in 1987. There was a gradual re-assertion of authority by the general administration at the Congregation's center.
- The fourth moment was characterized by scholarly interest and debate on the significance and meaning of the Council, with the publication of many histories on the Council (1990-2000).¹⁹ The parallel moment for the Congregation was the period of implementation of SRL marked by two General Chapters, GC XVII at Itaici, Brazil in 1992, and GC XVIII at Maynooth, Ireland, in 1998, and studies on the Congregation's heritage.
- The fifth moment (leading up to and following on from the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Council) was dominated by the revisionism of Joseph Ratzinger both as Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith and as Pope Benedict XVI. The interpretation of the Council as a paradigmatic event representing discontinuity with the past was questioned. Instead the Council is better interpreted in the context of the whole history of the church and in continuity with its past.²⁰ The parallel moment for the Congregation was the celebration of the Spiritan Jubilee Year 2002-2003 marking the three hundredth Anniversary of the founding of the Congregation

by Claude Poullart des Places in 1703 and the hundred and fiftieth Anniversary of the death of Francis Libermann in 1852. The General Chapter of this period, GC XIX, was held at Torre d'Aguilha, Portugal, in 2004 with the theme, "Faithful to the Gift entrusted to Us," by which the continuity of the Congregation's 300 years' history was acknowledged.

The writing of the Rules and Constitutions was likened at the time to an exodus experience for the Congregation. But this comparison came with a warning.

This is not to imply that there is some Promised Land called "Renewal" in which we can find rest. The Second Vatican Council has taught us that the church is a pilgrim people, the process of revision and renewal continues under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.²¹

*...the process of revision
and renewal continues
under the guidance of
the Holy Spirit.*

Spiritans continue the journey of mission to the poor in creative fidelity to their founding charism. GC XIII was the first step taken in that journey of renewal which, arguably, constitutes a third founding event of the twentieth century (after Poullart des Places in the eighteenth century and Libermann in the nineteenth century) when the Spiritan identity was re-discovered; the Congregation as a world-wide community was realized; and its mission widened to encompass the *oikoumene*, the whole wide world.

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Endnotes

¹The *Spiritans Rule of Life* (henceforth, SRL) affirmed not only that the Congregation had two founders but also, a "double charism," with Poullart des Places associated with an outreach to the poor (chimney sweeps and poor seminarians) and Libermann associated with the evangelisation of Africa. Jean Savoie C.S.Sp. has pointed out that the 11th General Chapter (1919) presided over by Bishop Le Roy had already recognized Poullart des Places as founder of the Congregation. This was due more to a legal requirement than an acknowledgment of his charism influencing the Congregation. 'In 1919, the General Chapter recognized Poullart des Places as the founder of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, and Libermann as "the second founder and spiritual father." In the words of Mgr. Le Roy: "Without one of them we would not have existed, without the other we would no longer be in existence." [Acts of the Spiritan General Chapter of 1919]. See Savoie, 'The Cause for the Beatification of the Servant of God Claude-François Poullart des Places' in *Spiritans Horizons*, 2 (2007) 2-10, here 5.

²Timmermans, Frans C.S.Sp., “A New Spring for the Congregation,” *Spiritan Horizons*, 3 (2008) 57-68, here 57.

³Bouchard, Athanase, C.S.Sp. in *Spiritus, Supplément Spécial / Chapitre 1968*. 5.

⁴Faggioli, Massimo, *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning*. New York: Paulist Press, 2012, 31.

⁵Quoted in Faggioli (2012) 32-33. Lefebvre went on to support the military dictatorships in Spain, Portugal, Chile, and Argentina in the 1970s and the National Front, the French far-right party in the 1980s. He traced the changes in the church back to the Reformation in the sixteenth century, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, liberalism, socialism, and communism.

⁶O’Collins, *Living Vatican II*. New York: Paulist, 2006, 149-50.

⁷Lefebvre’s biographer wrote that Lefebvre had confided to close friends that he intended to resign as superior general as he was no longer listened to or wanted by the congregation. Tissier De Mallerais, *Bernard Marcel Lefebvre*, Kansas City: Angelus, 2002, 368.

⁸*Ibid.*, 371-72.

⁹*General Bulletin*, 741 (September-October, 1968) 175.

¹⁰*General Bulletin*, 742 (November–December 1968) 363. The vote accepting the document summarized by this formula was 85 for and 7 against.

¹¹It can be noted that no reference is made to the earlier tradition, beginning with the founding of the Congregation in 1703. The Spiritan story did not begin with Libermann but with Poullart des Places. A recognition of the fuller story might well have allowed for a more satisfying solution to the dualism of religious life and the apostolate.

¹²*General Bulletin*, 754 (November–December. 1970) 328-335.

¹³The first enlarged council meeting in 1976 comprised the general council, provincial superiors, and eight delegates from the districts, one each for South America, West Indies and Guyana, Portuguese-speaking Africa, English-speaking West Africa, English-Speaking East Africa, French-speaking Africa, Madagascar/Reunion/Mauritius and one representing African Spiritans (GA 134). Thinking on the role of an EGC developed over the years. In 2001, the general council thought it important to distinguish between a general chapter and an enlarged general council: “An enlarged council is not a general chapter. Its principal purpose is to provide a forum for progress reports on where we stand now, particularly in relation to the orientations of the last general chapter and where we are going in the future” *Spiritan News*, 138 (September/October 2001) 1.

¹⁴*Spiritan Life*, 104.

¹⁵General Council, “Our Spiritan Vocation,” *A Handbook for the Spiritan Rule of Life*. Rome: 1987, 9-15, here 12.

¹⁶Koren, Henry, C.S.Sp., “*The Spiritan Rule of Life in Light of Our Founders*,” page 2. Private circulation. Accessed from USA Spiritan

¹⁷Faggioli, *Vatican II*, 3-19.

¹⁸With the ending of the special period of experimentation mandated by *Ecclesiae Sanctae* II, many religious institutes dedicated to works of the apostolate were engaged in a review of their experience. With the approval of their revised constitutions and the coming into effect of the newly formulated Code of Canon Law in 1983, they were moving into a new phase of their history. At that point, they were challenged by Pope St. John Paul II to evaluate objectively and humbly the years of experimentation to recognize positive elements and deviations [Address to the International Union of Women Superiors General 1979; and to Major Superiors of Men and Women Religious in France, 1980]. This was the context for tension within religious Congregations between the two approaches, sometimes contrasted as “traditional” and “progressive.”

¹⁹Faggioli, *Vatican II*, 15 recognised Giuseppe Alberigo’s five-volume work, *History of Vatican II*, concluded in 2001 as “a major scholarly and historiographical exploration of the debate on Vatican II.”

²⁰The church is fundamentally a mystery, “whose nature is such that it always admits new and deeper exploring” [Blessed Pope Paul VI, *Opening Address for the Second Session of the Second Vatican Council*, (29, September, 1963: AAS 55 (1963) 848]. Vatican II changed much in the church’s thinking and practice, yet the church remains one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. Its identity, constituted in the mystery of God’s self-communication as Father, Son, and Spirit, is itself ever open to new and deeper understanding. One such exploration is the understanding of the church as communion, also the relationship between the local churches and the church universal. On this, see the “Ratzinger-Kasper Debate” in the Jesuit magazine, *America*, where then Bishop Kasper (Bishop of Rottenburg-Stuttgart) in April, 2001 took issue with a letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (28 May 1992) on “*Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*.” Cardinal Ratzinger replied to Bishop Kasper in the same magazine on 19 November, 2001.

²¹Farrelly, Thomas, C.S.Sp., “The Process of Revising the Rules and Constitutions,” *Spiritan Papers* 18 (October 1984) 7-18, here 18. Farrelly chaired the Constitution Commission which met at Carcavelos, Portugal from 20 December 1983 to 6 January 1984 to agree the second draft of the new Rules and Constitutions. The twenty-three members came from twelve countries on four continents (France, Ireland, Portugal, Holland, Germany, Nigeria, Cameroun, Tanzania, Canada, USA, Trinidad, and Brazil). Members were competent in different disciplines such as Scripture, theology, sociology.



Marielle Beusmans
Marielle Beusmans of the Netherlands received a Master's in mission theology from the University of Theology and Pastoral Work, Heerlen (1991). She did the Oversees Training Program in Tanzania (1987-1988) and worked on women pastoral development in Same diocese (1991-1995) and pastoral development among the Maasai communities, Tanzania (2003-2007). She became advisor in interreligious dialogue for religious leaders in Kenya (2008-2010). Back in the Netherlands, she functioned as part time member of the mission animation team and part time parish pastor (1995-2003); since 2010, she serves as chaplain on social affairs in the diocese of Roermond.

Is the movement of Lay Spiritans in your province "guided" or "accompanied?"

And that New Energy is Inspiring!

In 2015, 26 Lay Spiritans and nine professed Spiritans gathered in Dublin to discuss the theme, "A New Energy for the Congregation." I was happily surprised by the energy generated by this group of Lay Spiritans. This was my first European meeting ever since I bid farewell as European coordinator for Lay Spiritan Associates and for many years worked with the Spiritans in East Africa.

In preparing this meeting, we, the Lay Spiritan coordinators of the different European provinces, made known our wish to take as topic what inspires us, issues for which we feel great enthusiasm. In other words, we wished to work from the bottom up. The organizing question was, "what moves us?" All were asked to demonstrate in a creative way, with visual aids if possible, what they do in their own provinces. This time there will be no stories or theological discourses, only sharing in the "spirituality of the street." Earlier European meetings often stressed the differences between the provinces and tried, from the top down, to come to uniformity – and this never succeeded. That was more of a frustration for professed Spiritans than for us Lay Spiritans! Differences there were. The contexts of the countries differ greatly, just as the number of Lay Spiritans in particular provinces. There are many "older" people, but also some young folk are joining us. The following binary options point to some differences between the various European contexts.

Do you stress missionary engagement or emphasize reflection?

Are you closely associated with the church or living in a strongly secularized society?

Is the movement of Lay Spiritans in your province "guided" or "accompanied?"

The first European Lay Spiritan meeting was held towards the end of the 1990s. That means that we are still "young" compared with the Congregation which is more than 300 years old. The quality of youth defines who we are and how we are. We are a movement with great dynamism. A movement in which many different things are happening. A movement in which we inspire one another. A movement that is not yet ready for structures, rather needs space to grow and develop. Indeed, there is not yet a theoretically constructed "doctrine";

what there is continues to evolve gradually – life ever more deeply lived, practice ever better reflected upon, inspired and inspiring, and more strongly animated by the Spiritan charism and thinking.

Spirituality

All presentations during the Lay Spiritan meeting in Dublin spoke much about spirituality. Spirituality is about what moves you, that which is meaningful for your life, or for the group of Lay Spiritans, and it is about becoming conscious of that drive. All stressed in their presentations that something like this arises during meetings between lay and professed Spiritans. Call it the dynamics of spirituality. Stories and experiences of past generations are being heard and connected with the stories and experiences of the lay in the present. Lay Spiritans experience daily in their (volunteer) work that our society is under pressure. We are asking ourselves how we must and can encounter it. Those meetings with each other and with the professed Spiritans challenge us. At those moments, we learn how words from tradition, both the Spiritan and the Christian tradition at large, have meaning also in our present secularized society. In many presentations, I recognize values expressed in Catholic Social Teaching. Those fundamental values that have their origin in the first social encyclical, *Rerum novarum* of 1891, are also very topical for our present society and for our being and acting from Spiritan spirituality. Everybody talked about human dignity. The human person is at the core center, as individual and alike as member of a community. We start from a society in which it is good to live, in which people strengthen and affirm each other, in which solidarity is a core value, and care for each other the starting point. We want to promote the common well-being of every human being. And we do this from the point of view of subsidiarity. That is to say, we recognize that every human being is endowed with talents and can care for themselves under appropriate circumstances; any help given comes to supplement or extend innate abilities.

We do that by contributing to political and social life.

Listening is a primary aspect of our mission – we listen to persons.

The Gospel

It is a special task of Lay Spiritans to commit themselves in the spirit of the gospel to society, politics, and the economy. Catholic social thinking gives guidelines in this. We do that by contributing to political and social life. As real witnesses of the gospel, we collaborate from an inspired connection to peace and justice. We start from the human being, the origin, center, and aim of our endeavors. Listening is a primary aspect of our mission – we listen to persons.

If I ask you to listen to me and
you start to give me advice,
then you are not doing what I ask.

If I ask you to listen to me and
you start to tell me,
why I shouldn't feel something as I feel,
then you don't take my feelings seriously.

If I ask you to listen to me,
and you think that you must do something
to solve my problems,
then you let me down,
strange as it may seem.

So, please, listen just to me
and try to understand me.

And if you want to talk,
wait then for a moment and I promise you
that I for my part will listen to you.¹

Dialogue

During our European meetings, it is not always easy to communicate in spite of the efficiency of the interpreters. They are indispensable for us! Europe knows many different mother tongues and not everyone is so confident as to speak in one of the official languages used during international meetings. In spite of that big obstacle of lack of a common language, we still dialogue with each other. In that dialogue, everyone's experiences and possibilities receive expression and we try to discover how they may contribute to solidarity. We are curious about each other's thinking. During those dialogue sessions, we enter into conversation with each other, everyone is given space to speak. Everyone tells what they want to say from the perspective of their own situation. Everyone is attentively listening. Nobody is thinking for another or giving advice. We try to investigate what it is all about. In that open dialogue, mutual respect is palpable, we reach new insights. Saint Pope John Paul II wrote:

Dialogue does not originate from tactical concerns or self-interest, but is an activity with its own guiding principles, requirements and dignity. It is demanded by deep respect for everything that has been brought about in human beings by the Spirit who blows where he wills. Through dialogue, the church seeks to uncover the 'seeds of the Word,' a 'ray of

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that truth which enlightens all men'; these are found in individuals and in religious traditions of humankind. Dialogue is based on hope and love, and will bear fruit in the Spirit.²

Meeting is “Hanging Out Together”

European Lay Spiritans meet only once every four years. I always look forward to these meetings. And I do not speak for myself alone when I say that those three days of “hanging out together” are of great importance for my solidarity with the other European Lay Spiritans and the Congregation as a whole. In whatever country we meet, something happens to you. It is the Spirit that inspires. You exchange ideals and experiences that hold great importance for you in your life. It does not matter that you have not known some people long. We understand each other from the inside. Each recognizes something of themselves in the other and vice versa. For us, “meeting is daring to take the step, daring to show your true face, putting aside your fear and uncertainty, and putting your trust in somebody.”³

For us, “meeting is daring to take the step, daring to show your true face, putting aside your fear and uncertainty, and putting your trust in somebody.”

Relations with the Congregation

For a long time lay people were seen in the church as second-class Christians. Luckily that is not the case in our Congregation. During the European meeting in Dublin, Br. Marc Tyrant was present for the first time. His open way of speaking about the position and role of the lay in the Congregation appealed to all of us. He views his own role “as someone who hangs out with the Lay Spiritans.” He hopes to realize this especially by listening well, so that from inside and from the bottom up he can help to point the way for the lay movement of the Spiritans.

The general council, of which Marc is a member, has been given the task by the general chapter of Bagamoyo (2012) to formulate the guidelines of a lay movement in the Congregation. His approach is to do this from the bottom up and he hopes that in this way there will soon be a *Guide* in which the Lay Spiritans recognize themselves. This is not an easy task.

In this explanatory and exploratory phase, he will especially also hear lay Spiritans and tell them what his impressions of the first three years of his mandate have been. He starts from three questions. 1) How do professed and lay Spiritans complement each other? 2) What is the specific task of the professed and lay Spiritans? 3) How can professed Spiritans support the lay ones to engage themselves in society?

During the international meeting he used the image of a tree. A “Spiritans family tree” that shows this relation very well.

Marc identified his role with the Associates primarily as one of accompaniment. Emphasizing our different roles in church and society, our different life perspectives and our ability to “think outside the box,” he showed how Associates can add a new energy to the Congregation.



He also challenged us to move out of our comfort zone and to stretch the limits of our missionary commitment, entering into an enriching dialogue with others. His thought-provoking and inspiring input gave rise to the discussion of two questions:

- How do Associates integrate and respond to the “road map” from Bagamoyo, especially with regard to youth and migrants?
- Are there frontiers which we should now cross and go beyond?

Well did someone write, “as a leaf on a tree, inextricably bound up with all living creatures, I see the human being, who lives the life, bound up with each other in a breathing longing for somebody that gives life.”⁴

Every human being knows the longing for solidarity. We long to be known and loved by others. We long for real contact with them. For Lay Spiritans, the Spiritans family is also a place where solidarity is found. Precisely in these times that many people experience as confusing, is it necessary to have a sounding board somewhere. Lay Spiritans are doing soul searching. They tell stories to each other and the professed Spiritans who hang out with them. These are moments when we can test and accentuate our ideas, feelings, and experiences. In them, we learn to express how to interpret and go about the world around us. This hanging out together and listening to each other gives strength and inspiration to carry on life and work and make the right choices. A safe solidarity – which the Spiritans family gives us – plays an important role in this.

Another aspect of that solidarity is “a sense of belonging” to a group where ideals are shared. Lay and professed Spiritans in the different provinces feel close association with each other. They feel a bond with each other in many fields. They live and work in solidarity. Spiritans invest in many ways to support that solidarity. In every province, Lay Spiritans have an annual program with moments of encounter in order to strengthen the mutual solidarity with professed Spiritans and to grow in Spiritans missionary spirituality. We experience this support not only in our own provinces, but also in the Congregation

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For Lay Spiritans, the Spiritans family is also a place where solidarity is found.

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at large. For example, the Congregation makes possible these moments of encounter and international meeting.

Active and Alert

Solidarity inspires Lay Spiritans to be active and alert in the world. Two fundamental ideas that go with this are “being industrious,” and “being watchful.” Our fast-changing society has a huge impact on every one of us. At one time change is taking place in the social field, another time change touches you in the very depths of your soul. And there are changes in the financial field that greatly influence our well-being and behavior. Changes are often better supported when people share experiences and do not feel left alone to face them. Pope Francis exhorts all Christians to be active and alert. Pope Francis, as no one else, knows how to express, again and again, the social strength of the Christian faith. Every human being deserves to hear and experience it. Liberating words are constantly sounding from this Pope. He has eyes, ears, and heart for the most disadvantaged in our society. He exhorts us to be near to each other, but also to animals and the whole of God’s creation. The Encyclical, *Laudato si’*, testifies to this. In *Laudato si’* he uses the image of the common home – the earth is our common home. A great master plan alone cannot save us and the world. From the Christian point of view, it is all about a different relationship to things, namely a relationship in which everything and everyone is given the space to contribute to the good and to the common life in their own way and according to their own insight.

Missionary Commitment

During the European meeting of Lay Spiritans, we told each other how we shape our charism, in which ways we are active, and how that gives new energy to the Congregation.

Albertina America from Portugal in her presentation cited the Spiritan Rule of Life:

In some places people who are working with us wish to be associated with us. We welcome them with joy, inviting them to share our spirituality and our apostolic life. The conditions of their acceptance and their work are decided at the level of each circumscription. In every case there is a written agreement” (SRL 24.3).

The laity bring new energy to the Spiritan community and this comes from their presence in, and understanding of, the world” (Torre D’Aguilha, 2004, 11.1). The laity live

their mission in the world, inspired by such documents as *Evangelii nuntiandi* (1975) and *Christi fideles laici* (1988). We recognize that lay men and women are involved in a great variety of ministries in the church. Of great importance is our commitment with Spiritan mission. Aspects of Spiritan mission are missionary animation, communication, and sharing with local churches. We do this in a spirit of availability, confident waiting, and docility to the Holy Spirit, always ready to leave for where and what the Spirit indicates to us. We are present in the structures of the local churches in the areas of formation, youth, vocations ministry, and missionary animation. A huge amount of mission projects in our circumscriptions count on our commitment. Some of us are committed to working in a Spiritan mission project. Taking advantage of the old Spiritan Formation House (Fraião-Braga), Lay Spiritans have built up an institution, ANIMA UNA. Harnessing the skills of each one, they are providing services to the poorest - older people (Spiritan confreres and the local community). They are also involved in the training of local communities in the light of the Spiritan charism.

Irish Lay Spiritans told their story which they illustrated with a power point presentation, "Many Gifts, One Spirit." They

We are convinced that Lay Spiritans are a new branch of the Spiritan tree,...

envision a Congregation, united in heart and soul, of professed and lay Spiritans, with a spirit of openness and simplicity, all working together to build God's reign of love, justice and peace. Lay Spiritans are working or volunteering in the mission works of the Congregation. Some do chaplaincy work, others parish work, prison work, or counselling. Some are involved with youth and seniors, the Spiritan mission, or with Spirasi.⁵ We are convinced that Lay Spiritans are a new branch of the Spiritan tree, an old tree, but one regularly called upon to new growth.

Sylvestre Wozniak explains that in France they differentiate friends, members of fraternities, and lay associates.⁶ There is a big group of friends, with as many as 1000 members, who with great interest follow the work of the Spiritans and occasionally participate in Spiritan missionary activity. The fraternities, which are connected to one of the communities, count some 100 members. There are 15 lay associates and they are involved in missionary projects. In those missionary projects, simplicity and respect take center stage. As examples, he mentions Accueil St Joseph, the association Tobie et Raphaël, and Friends of the Congo. Three times a year these 15 Lay Associates come together. At the outset, new associates are assigned a

...prayer has an important place in our Spiritan consciousness.

It is clear what unites us: the same charism and the sentiment of being called for the mission by Christ.

companion. The role of such a companion is that of a “buddy,” someone with whom you can regularly and easily work. Rennes has an important place in the formation. That is the place to pass on the story of the founders, Poullart des Places and Father Libermann. And, of course, prayer has an important place in our Spiritan consciousness. Contacts with professed Spiritans in the local communities to which we belong are frequent and good; besides we participate in important Spiritan meetings.

Remedios Luna Pastor reported on Lay Spiritans in Spain.

In Spain our relation with those professed is smooth, natural and fraternal, with much respect and mutual interest. We feel that we are valued and listened to, while at the same time we perceive good will and interest in our life and circumstances. It is clear what unites us: the same charism and the sentiment of being called for the mission by Christ. Our relation with those professed is to share our responsibilities: mission animation, vocation, Justice and Peace and the Integrity of Creation, but also communications and administration.

She stressed “the importance of sharing the mission and living the same charism together.” Professed Spiritans, in Spain and wherever else lay Spiritans work with them, see the collaboration as enrichment.

Lyn Sutcliff of the English province talked about their spirituality, formation, and commitment by showing a YouTube video. In their commitment, solidarity with the life and work of the Spiritans is very important. They bring to bear their skills and talents in many ways, for example, by participating in Spiritan works and special study groups. At the outset, this was strange for professed Spiritans. But with time they appreciated the professional knowledge of lay Spiritans; the lay Spiritans themselves feel greatly valued. In the English province, people seeking to join the lay Spiritans pass through a whole year of formation to grow in their faith from a missionary and Spiritan perspective. In that formation year, they meet Spiritans active in England or who work on mission somewhere else but are back on holidays in their home province. The latter share about their work and life overseas. In the formation, many aspects of Spiritan Christian life are treated. The ideas of the founders are handed on and linked with mission today. Lyn summarizes the story of lay Spiritans in England by stating: “Together we create a unity that is much more powerful than if we walk alone or work apart.”

*Continuous formation,
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Marielle Beusmans spoke on behalf of the Dutch lay Spiritans. She explained that lay and professed Spiritans come together for reflection and a prayer service every month. Since most of us have been lay Spiritans Associates for long and no new members have joined, the thinking about formation does not play a part. Continuous formation, however, is important. It takes place during the annual weekends that we organize. In Spring, there is the pilgrimage weekend, in Autumn a cloister/reflection weekend. During these weekends, observations and experiences are exchanged about an annual theme chosen by the members. Spirituality is associated with one's experiences in daily life. We start the New Year with a special day of encounter. In the community of Gennep, where at the moment most of the Spiritans are living, there is, after the service, an exchange of experiences about the annual theme. This is a fascinating event for both lay and professed Spiritans.

In all presentations, we heard over and over again how small groups of lay Spiritans dedicate themselves to helping people. They do this as volunteers and as professionals. They contribute decisively to a society in which every human being counts and everyone is connected to everyone else. Lay Spiritans consciously do this from a Spiritan perspective. It is our experience that power for transforming society comes from Spiritan spirituality and commitment. The Spiritan perspective is also for us, lay Spiritans, a way of seeing and acting in the light of peace and justice.

In the Footsteps of the Founders

The founders of our Congregation, Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann, followed a path of life that was revolutionary and which makes itself felt until our time. They forwent a secure and safe career of personal comfort and looked out for the poor, brought them together, and set up a community. Besides, they pointed out to others the great need of the poor. The movement they started led outwards, to where the poor lived. The Spiritan Walk in the footsteps of our founders, which lay Spiritans took during the European meeting, was an important moment of formation. History, spirituality, charism, and commitment came together in it.

Spiritans trips are for the Dutch province – and probably also for other European provinces – an important tool to show ourselves and let young people experience who Spiritans are, where in the world they commit themselves, and in which way they do that. There have been many youth trips to places where Dutch Spiritans are working. Every year there would be a trip with ten young people to Cameroon, Tanzania, Ethiopia,

or Brazil. Those youth trips were formative and helped young people to discover their own place in the world. A number of those participants of a youth journey have searched how they can continue to draw from the source of spirituality and where they can find a sounding board to look at their existential questions from the perspective of solidarity and justice.

Talking about continuing formation, I would like to mention a special trip “in the footsteps of ...” In 2013, there was a Spiritan trip to let Dutch lay Spiritans see the context from which some young Nigerian Spiritans now working in the Netherlands originate. Just the intensive preparation by these young Nigerian Spiritans, all of them working in the Missionary Team of Eindhoven, was already a moment of missionary formation. Our experiences during our journey and stay in Nigeria added to our ongoing formation. The two Nigerian Spiritans who accompanied us showed how Spiritans in Nigeria interpret the Spiritan missionary thinking in their own way. We visited many mission stations, and every time we were given a warm welcome and there was an opportunity to talk with each other. Oftentimes the conversation revolved around “who are we?” and “how do we interpret the missionary task?” These were questions we asked each other as professed or lay Spiritans. The many discussions about interculturality and Spiritan commitment and vision were fascinating, even if we did not always agree with each other. I experienced anew that diversity can also be an enrichment. I am now 26 years a Lay Spiritan. What appeals to me is the dynamics of Spiritan spirituality and missionary commitment. It is a moving target, continuously evolving, depending on place and time, hence a great challenge. It is never ready or finished, always requiring a search, especially a searching together.

*Marielle Beusmans
Baexem, The Netherlands*

The two Nigerian Spiritans who accompanied us showed how Spiritans in Nigeria interpret the Spiritan missionary thinking in their own way.

What appeals to me is the dynamics of Spiritan spirituality and missionary commitment. It is a moving target, continuously evolving...

Endnotes

¹Leo Buscaglia, part of the poem “Listen” in ‘Loving each other’ (1993).

²Encyclical *Redemptoris missio* Vatican City, 1991, no. 56.

³Unable to identify the author of this often used quote.

⁴Poem written by Bert Hofstra for the contest “the poem in the parlor,” 2011 (2nd price).

⁵Spirasi (Spiritans Asylum Services Initiative) founded in 1999 in Dublin under the trusteeship of the Spiritan Congregation.

⁶This roughly corresponds to the distinctions made in the document on Lay Spiritans of the 2016 Enlarged Council. Editor.

SPIRITANS FOR TODAY: MANUEL DE SOUSA GONÇALVES, C.S.SP. MAN OF IMPOSSIBLE MISSIONS



Fr. Tony Neves, C.S.Sp. Fr. Tony Neves, C.S.Sp. is currently provincial superior of the Spiritan Province of Portugal and Editor of the Spiritan Provincial Newsletter, *Ação Missionária*. He was on mission in Angola during the civil war (1989-1994). He has a degree in Theology (1989) and Social Communication from the Catholic University of Portugal, Lisbon (1998). After post-graduate studies in the Science of Religions in Institut Catholique de Paris (1989), he with distinction defended his 2011 thesis, “Angola. Justiça e Paz nas intervenções da Igreja católica (1989-2002),” in the University for the Humanities and Technology, Lisbon. One time professor in Higher Education in Kuito, Huambo, Lisbon and Porto, he authored various books and articles, including “Missão em Angola” (1997), “Crónicas com Missão” (2005), “Reportagens com Missão” (2014), “Lusofonias com Missão” (2016).

Fr. Manuel Gonçalves, C.S.Sp., born 1935, ordained priest 19 December 1959, died July 29, 2013, left his mark on the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, especially in Portugal and Angola. In 1966 he obtained a License in Systematic Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. In 2004, he did a Masters in Mission Sciences in Canada. Manuel was a man of action who influenced people through his spoken word, his writings, his teaching, and his spirituality. The lusophone magazine, *Missão Espiritana*, dedicated a double edition to him in 2015 (Nos. 25/26). These contained tributes by personalities in Portugal and Angola. The opening tribute by the current archbishop of Luanda and president of the Angolan Bishop’s Conference, Msgr. Filomeno Vieira Dias, is particularly noteworthy. Bishop Dias was a student of Manuel and had worked with him in establishing the foundations for the Catholic University of Angola, of which Manuel became the first Rector. Many eulogies attested to his intelligence, persistence, and capacity to bring big projects to fruition. People hailed him as a missionary who had fully embodied the soul of the Angolan people and become one with them. His life’s journey moved from seminaries in Portugal (in all stages of formation and during diverse eras) to seminaries in Angola (Spiritan and diocesan), to the launching and administration of the Catholic University of Angola.

I have pleasure in joining this chorus, as Manuel was Rector when I studied theology at the Catholic University of Portugal in 1985/86 and we had an enduring friendship. Later, following his permanent return to Portugal in 2004, we lived in the same community (2005 and 2006), I working in communications and missionary animation, he as Provincial Archivist and Librarian.

The Formator

Manuel was professor, then director, of the Spiritan Scholasticate in Torre d’Aguilha (1968-1973). It was a troubled time when a significant part of the church was having difficulty accepting and integrating Vatican II which just ended in 1965. Religious life was in crisis everywhere, and any formator had to deal with this crisis in so far as it affected formation. In May 1968, students were rioting in Paris, a phenomenon replicated in academic establishments through the western world, including our major seminaries.

Returning to Portugal in 1982 from mission in Angola,

Tony Neves, C.S.Sp.

*Manuel was formator
par excellence.*

*...true science...
is a “permanent
revolution” of learning.*

Manuel became vice-provincial of Portugal with responsibility for formation. He became Rector at the House of Theology in Lisbon, a post he left when elected to the general council in 1986.

Manuel was formator par excellence. His principal preoccupation was integral formation - of Spiritans, the diocesan clergy, male and female religious, the laity. In Angola, the first priests ordained after independence passed through his hands, some of whom are bishops today: Gabriel Mbilingi C.S.Sp. (now archbishop and President of SECAM, Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar), Filomeno Vieira Dias (now archbishop), Mário Lukunde, Mateus Feliciano Tomás and Estanislau Chindecasse.

João Francisco, C.S.Sp. an Angolan Spiritan, was one of these students. He spoke of Manuel's dedication to the seminarians and his support of their families during the critical time of the civil war when everything was lacking. He found in Manuel a formative mind who respected the freedom of those he formed and who encouraged creativity on the part of each student, insisting very much on self-formation within the framework of the formation program. Archbishop Dias wrote:

What particularly struck us was his dedication to work, to study, to being always available to the students, always alert to the news, and to keeping himself informed. For his former students, his academic life remains an example of a teacher and exemplary researcher in the academy. The rigor which he applied to his research and lecture notes, allied with his knowledge and permanent and all-embracing sense of curiosity, whether in philosophy or theology, history or literature, reveals his enviable qualities. In addition to all the above, oddly enough, was his capacity for communication, his mastery of argumentation, the clarity of his ideas, and the objectivity of his language. It was difficult for a student not to become enchanted by such a brilliant mind, always available and always busy throughout the four corners of the old seminary. I remember the final paragraph of his lecture notes from the epistemology course and which concluded, in line with Karl Popper, that true science, more than just being a linear accumulation of knowledge, is a “permanent revolution” of learning.¹

Msgr. Abílio Ribas, C.S.Sp., Bishop Emeritus of S. Tomé and Príncipe, was the Rector of the Spiritan Major Seminary in Huambo when the car in which they were traveling hit a mine on June 1, 1980. Manuel was a colleague of his under the then system of radical Marxism-Leninism. Msgr Ribas noted Manuel's capacity for work, but above all his courage in facing difficulties and the wisdom with which he was able to prevent the compulsory drafting of seminarians into the military. He defined Manuel as a fighter and organizer who was practical and given to sacrifice for the good of all, and who inspired total confidence from those who worked with him.²

The Scholar

Manuel's leanings as a writer are obvious in the many articles he published, whether specialized or for a broader audience, and covering many decades, from the troubled years after Vatican II to the onset of his illness at the dawn of this third millennium. His first known article, "*Família Cristã gera Filhos Cristãos*" was written on mission in Malanje in 1976,³ a reflection on the importance of Christian family life in the creation of a more humane, just, fraternal and developed society. The context of the article is post-independence Angola and it was written on the basis of his experience as pastor of the cathedral parish in Malanje where he had the pastoral care of a big community of Christian citizens. He also published the following books: *Angola: Reconciliação e Paz*. Edição CEAST, Luanda, 1997; Manuel Goncalves, ed., *A Igreja em Angola entre a guerra e a paz. Documentos Episcopais (1974-1998)*. Edição CEAST, Luanda, 1998.⁵

...a fighter and organizer who was practical and given to sacrifice for the good of all,...

...his concern for mission, his zeal for proclaiming the gospel such that it reaches all people, his clear option for the "little ones" and the poor.

In these, he presented his principal theses, above all in the areas of theology, pastoral practice, and the sociology of religions. They demonstrate his concern for mission, his zeal for proclaiming the gospel such that it reaches all people, his clear option for the "little ones" and the poor. However, he did not exclude anyone, proof of this being the Catholic University of Angola project that, as a private University, would benefit particularly the better-off classes in the country.

In his concern for issues related to inter-religious dialogue as a means to peace, he wrote many reflections about the reasons for and the consequences of the 11th September 2001 attack on New York by Islamic fundamentalists. Question: "What is new about the attack in New York?" Answer: "It is a wake-up call - if that were still necessary - regarding the ongoing problems of intolerance, of recourse to violence, of religious and cultural arrogance, of an inter-cultural conflict, of the need to humanize humanity." On completion of his Master's degree on Mission Sciences in Canada in 2004, he

returned to Portugal where he wrote much about the Synod for Africa, the Encyclical, *God is Love*, of Pope Benedict XVI and the Pauline Year. He also wrote extensively on new forms of religiosity. I highlight one entitled, “What is Erroneous in the Da Vinci Code,” published in Lisbon by Editora Rei dos Livros in 2005.⁶

Archbishop Dias remembers him as a “grand master”:

Manuel Gonçalves, in that confined atmosphere in Huambo, formerly New Lisbon, far away from important cultural centers, from well-stocked libraries, without easy contact with the outside world, dedicated himself to an ingenious work of research and the production of lecture notes for the various philosophical and theological disciplines which he taught. As an option, without going around in circles or being superficial, he addressed the different philosophical and theological treatises, taking them as epistemological principle and hermeneutical key in terms of the denial of God and the theoretical presuppositions underpinning the uselessness of religion.⁷

Pastoral concern was central to Manuel's life.

...he helped out in ministry to the favela communities...

The Missionary

Manuel asked to be sent to one of the front lines for Portuguese Spiritans, Angola, which at that time was still a Portuguese colony. He arrived in Luanda in 1973, before the independence of this Portuguese-speaking country. There followed the 25th April, 1974 revolution in Portugal, which led to the independence, one by one, of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, St. Tomé e Príncipe, and East Timor. Manuel was pastor of the cathedral parish in Malanje in the interior of the country when independence came for Angola after 500 years of colonization. That was on November 11, 1975. Manuel asked the young people to ring the church bell!

Pastoral concern was central to Manuel's life. In Portugal, he worked in many parishes during the time he spent in formation. In Angola, he helped out in ministry to the favela communities confided to the Spiritans in the outskirts of Luanda even while coordinating the Pastoral Secretariat of the Bishop's Conference.

The life and mission of Fr. Manuel has a reference date – June 1, 1980. On that day, in a funeral cortege, on the outskirts of Huambo, Angola, a powerful anti-car mine was set off by the front right wheel and exploded. The car was luckily travelling

at walking pace, and as a result, the explosion impacted more on Frs. José Castro and Abílio Ribas who were in the front seats. Fr. Manuel, sitting in the back seat, felt his ears explode, was lifted off his seat, but was not hurt to the same extent as the two occupants of the front seats. These three Spiritans were responsible for the inter-diocesan major seminary in Huambo, the only major seminary that the Marxist-Leninist government did not confiscate. In their hands alone rested the responsibility to train clergy for the country. Following the immediate evacuation of Frs. Ribas and Castro to Portugal for treatment of their very serious injuries, the work of formation fell solely to Fr. Manuel, something he carried out heroically. This event had a lasting effect on him, as well as on Frs. José and Ribas, who were later to become Bishop of St. Tomé and Príncipe.

A compulsive worker with unusual intelligence and capacity for extraordinary work,...

He earned the sobriquet of “the man of impossible missions.”

Fr. Manuel dedicated himself to the program of studies: curriculum programs, teachers, the library, conferences, lecture notes, and bibliographies. He had the grave responsibility of taking care of the humanistic and academic formation of the first batch of priests in independent Angola. It was not an easy task, taking into account the new social, political, and cultural context in which he was asked to carry out this responsibility. It was clear to everyone that the program of studies, as well as seminary formation, needed reformulation. It had to be adapted to the demands of the time, to look upon the young (seminarians) with the awareness that man lives immersed in his own particular context. This was clear for Manuel Gonçalves and he rose to the task.

A compulsive worker with unusual intelligence and capacity for extraordinary work, Fr. Manuel managed to be a professor of various chairs of philosophy and theology, bursar of the major seminary, chaplain to a number of religious communities, preacher of retreats and recollections, writer of articles, and so on. His amazing capacity for work and communication was obvious. This is the only way one can understand how it was possible to run a major seminary in a time of war and help set up a Catholic University in the middle of so many difficulties and adversities of every kind.

Upon his return to Angola in 1993, after a stint as general councilor in Rome (1986-92), Manuel was appointed to Luanda as Director of the Pastoral Secretariat for the Episcopal Conference, where I met him again. Angola recognizes the important and decisive role which Fr. Manuel played in favor of that land, its people and church. He earned the sobriquet of “the man of impossible missions.” The Archbishop of Luanda made the following comment in the name of the Episcopal Conference.

*He was pastor, bishop's
adviser, teacher,
confessor, spiritual
director, preacher of
retreats...*

In Malanje, at the time of independence, [Fr. Manuel] helped with the sad, disorganized, and rushed departure of many, but he understood that, though remaining would be risky, it was the price to be paid by one who had dedicated himself to his Master and Lord, come what may. He understood that, in this new Angolan hour there would be numerous new paths to follow and challenges to overcome in terms of that new stage of mission. Thus, Fr. Manuel Gonçalves, a Portuguese Spiritan, along with that other figure of Spiritan mission in Angola, Fr. Cardona, standing up to winds and storms, became a stalwart in terms of doing what he could in that situation. He was pastor, bishop's adviser, teacher, confessor, spiritual director, preacher of retreats... from the mission house to the Malanje lyceum, he succeeded well in doing what he did, in great empathy with the people of Malanje, a sentiment that always remained even when he was appointed to other missionary locations.⁸

General Councilor in Rome

Manuel's election in 1986 as a general councilor opened a new era of his life and mission. He was in the Pierre Haas's team that supervised the editing of the new *Spiritan Rule of Life*, a result of the 1986 Paris general chapter. This rule was approved by Rome in 1987. The general council wrote a short commentary on the rule, *A Handbook for the Spiritan Rule of Life*, 1987. Manuel was responsible for chapter 2, "Our Mission," pages 16-28. He was a team player who brought spiritual considerations to bear upon even the most mundane decisions of council. One thing marked him especially – exquisite Christian courtesy.⁹ He made the official visitations to many countries where Spiritans work. Angola always remained dear to his heart and he continued to write much about this Portuguese-speaking country, to which he returned immediately following the completion of his mandate as a general councilor, in Rome.

*...fluent in Portuguese,
Spanish, French,
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Greek)...*

Manuel Gonçalves, the Person

Many expressions describe Fr. Manuel; being a multi-tasking person is high on the list. He was an exquisitely cultured person, fluent in Portuguese, Spanish, French, English, and Italian, besides the classical languages (Latin and Greek), a man of encyclopedic knowledge, without being pedantic. Whether in a conversation, a conference or a homily, he always

An eloquent example of multi-tasking was exercising at the same time the positions of director, professor, bursar, and spiritual adviser.

He was motivated by a deep faith, a great sense of humanity, and a passion for the poorest and most abandoned...

Manuel's tremendous ability to structure his thoughts quickly, and with ease, to prepare a homily, a conference, a retreat, or a course.

enjoyed explaining the etymology of the most difficult words, irrespective of whether they had a Greek, Latin, Arabic or other root. At times, one would think he was making things up, but no, he really knew what he was saying and would express this with clarity and depth, skills which almost never go together. An eloquent example of multi-tasking was exercising at the same time the positions of director, professor, bursar, and spiritual adviser. He taught with mastery the various disciplines of philosophy and theology, offering his students pages of bibliography that he himself had typed and photocopied – there were as yet no computers and printers.

Manuel was much sought after for conferences on diverse subjects, from philosophy to theology, from spirituality to new religious movements, from liturgy to communications, from pastoral to social doctrine. Many also asked him to write articles for journals and magazines, and commentaries for TV and radio, invitations he never turned down. His advice and suggestions as spiritual director were also much sought after, to the point that he had to say “no” to many. He was frequently requested to give spiritual retreats, something he carried out with great competence and happiness.

Manuel was a man of vision who had the ability to see far and deep. He was motivated by a deep faith, a great sense of humanity, and a passion for the poorest and most abandoned along the lines of our Spiritan founders and the Spiritan missionary tradition. He had a great zeal for evangelization and availed of every opportunity to intervene in favor of people. Neighbors in his native village, near Porto, in Portugal tell of

a wise man, loving, calm, good, and simple. When the war began in Angola, he, always the attentive person, advised me to return to Portugal with my three children, as we were living in great danger, since my husband was a public security police and was not at home to protect us.¹⁰

Benjamin Costa was one of Manuel's seminarians in Huambo. He spoke of him as a man with a huge heart, “a man of a thousand trades: priest, teacher, musician, soccer coach, other functions that demanded his multifaceted presence and service.”

Bernard Ducrot, C.S.Sp. is a French Spiritan who worked in Angola for forty years and who lived and worked with Manuel in Huambo in the 1980s and in Luanda in the 1990s. He speaks of him as a “born teacher” who is always well prepared. He admired Manuel's tremendous ability to structure his thoughts quickly, and with ease, to prepare a homily, a

conference, a retreat, or a course.

His management of the Centre for Spiritan Spirituality in Barcelos (Portugal), as well as that of the Spiritan Provincial Archives in Lisbon, demonstrated two further aspects of his excellent service.

Many of us had the privilege of having him as teacher, director, and spiritual animator. We have the obligation of being worthy of the spiritual and human witness we have inherited from him, and the responsibility to put it to fruitful use in line with what the parable of the talents suggests and demands.

Reverse Mission

Manuel returned permanently from Angola in 2004. He became Director of the Centre of the Holy Spirit and Mission, in the seminary at Silva, Barcelos (2004-2005) and Provincial Archivist in Lisbon (2005-2006). It was there that he began to show early symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, and was moved to Torre d'Aguilha retirement house and later to the more specialized *Anima Una* retirement home in Braga (Fraião) where he passed away on 29th July, 2013, still concerned about the negative impact of certain new forms of piety that, in his opinion and academic evaluation, blur the essentials of faith. His unpublished texts speak about western esotericism and neo-Gnosticism. I was on the road leaving Luanda, on that 29th July, 2013 when I received the shocking news of his death. I was then Provincial of Portugal and visiting the confreres in Angola. I ended up participating in the memorial mass in the cathedral of Luanda, which would bring together various bishops (including Cardinal Nascimento and Msgr. Damião Franklin, archbishop of Luanda), male and female religious and lay people, all paying tribute to Fr. Manuel. I was asked to preach the homily, which I gratefully did.

Homage from the Angolan Bishops

I conclude with the words of Archbishop Dias.

Angola owes a huge debt to this son of Libermann who, in the modern era, wrote in letters of gold the word "mission" in Angola. We hope that many others may follow in the footprints which Fr. Manuel de Sousa Gonçalves left on the church and the world. In the name of CEAST, we are united in paying him this tribute which, for us, is neither a rite nor a convention. It's an obligation, in the knowledge that this gesture is shared by all

those, in Angola, who crossed paths with Fr. Manuel Gonçalves.¹¹

*Tony Neves, C.S.Sp.
Lisbon, Portugal*

¹*Missão Espiritana*, 25/26 (December 2015) 11-12.

²*Missão Espiritana*, 25/26 (December 2015) 20.

³“A Christian Family engenders Christian Children.” In *Ação Missionária*, 433 (January 1976).

⁴*Angola: Reconciliation and Peace*, Luanda, 1997.

⁵*The Church in Angola between War and Peace: Documents of the Episcopal Conference (1974-1998)*. Luanda, 1998.

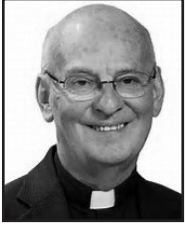
⁶See *Missão Espiritana*, 25/26 (December 2015) 98-100.

⁷*Missão Espiritana*, 25/26 (December 2015) 11.

⁸*Missão Espiritana*, 25/26 (December 2015) 9.

⁹Added by the editor who was a member of the same general council.

¹⁰*Missão Espiritana*, 25/26 (December 2015) 30.



Fr. Anthony J. Gittins,
C.S.Sp.

Anthony J. Gittins, C.S.Sp., is Professor Emeritus of Theology and Culture at the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. He earned an MA in Theoretical Linguistics, MA in Social Anthropology, and a PhD from the University of Edinburgh (1977). He spent eight years on mission in Sierra Leone. From 1980 to 1984 he was Formation Director in London, UK, and lectured at the Missionary Institute there. Between 1984 and 2011 he taught at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. Among his 16 books are most recently *Living Mission Interculturally: Faith, Culture and the Renewal of Praxis* (2015), and *The Way of Discipleship, The Way of Jesus* (2016), both from Liturgical Press.

...international religious communities like the Spiritans must become increasingly and intentionally intercultural,...

BEYOND INTERNATIONAL AND MULTICULTURAL: PREREQUISITES AND PROSPECTS FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITY LIVING

Stating the Thesis

From Atlanta to Accra, Boston to Buenos Aires, Columbus to Caracas -- and from Duquesne University to the Dominican Republic -- understandings and experiences of community and personal identity have changed significantly in a century. Geographical and social mobility have re-shaped local and international relations. With this in mind, I want to bring into relief both a general and a specific reality, and assess its implications. Having first identified the nature and purpose of *any* intercultural community, we will then consider how the notion of interculturality itself might pose a challenge and act as a stimulus both specifically, to international religious institutes, and more generally, to multicultural faith-communities, from parishes to voluntary associations to universities -- whose mission statements declare their commitment to forging moral and organic communities from the raw materials of their diverse ethnic, cultural and even religious membership.

The words international and multicultural are now common currency, but intercultural is less familiar or ambiguous. I believe *international* religious communities like the Spiritans must become increasingly and intentionally *intercultural*, and in an increasingly pluralistic world, parochialism must be countered and xenophobia or discrimination repudiated. Without a virtual tectonic shift from “international” to “intercultural,” there will simply be no viable future for international religious faith communities. To establish and defend this thesis in four steps, I will first explore some contested terminology, then identify theological implications. Third, I will clarify the challenge, and finally evaluate the prospects for achieving the tectonic shift itself.

From Monocultural to Intercultural: the Terminology

True communication depends on a high degree of mutual intelligibility; precision of language and a common vocabulary are prerequisites for our reflections today.

Monocultural and Bicultural

Historically, most non-nomads lived and died within a primary world of less than ten miles’ radius and among people of a common language and culture. Relatively speaking, very few human beings are truly bicultural. Exceptionally, climate

or hunger dictates a move, but usually a monocultural group is involved. Beyond “people like us” are “people not like us.”

However, children enculturated within a stable domestic arena where each parent speaks a different native language can – and do – become bicultural quite naturally. Socialized in a bilingual context, perhaps benefitting from moving physically between the primary cultures of each parent, a child finds it perfectly natural to shift between two languages (“code-switching”) and across geographical territories. But persons who grow up in one milieu and later encounter another culture and language may become bicultural only by deliberately learning each culture and language sufficiently for them to pass more or less freely between two worlds. Bicultural thus applies to someone living *simultaneously* in two cultural and linguistic worlds, as do many bilingual Mexican-Americans, Korean-Americans, and so on. But when a person deliberately leaves home more or less permanently, the appropriate term would be cross-cultural.

Cross-Cultural

Someone belonging originally to one culture (“culture A”) but later moving beyond its confines to reside for a number of years in another environment (his or her “culture B”), may become cross-cultural. Members of the host community are perfectly “at home” (living in their own “culture A”), but the interloper is “out of place,” not “at home,” an outsider or stranger¹ who, being now in his or her “culture B,” must therefore learn this new culture and its language. Moreover, to learn another culture is every bit as challenging as to learn another language. To assume that another culture can be informally “picked up” is naïve and dangerous, not to say arrogant and condescending.

The cross-cultural person will remain an outsider and cannot be fully assimilated culturally. But outsiders come in many shapes and forms, typically “participating” or “non-participating,”² and the former can be of great value to the insiders.³ But “non-participating outsiders” are at best culturally or morally irrelevant (like tourists), and at worst destructive (like invaders). Unsurprisingly, the host population will take its time, carefully scrutinizing incomers. This is necessary self-protection for local communities that often carry bad memories of previous ungracious and dangerous strangers. During this time, the incomer is expected to be learning the cultural rules, responsibilities and sanctions necessary for smooth day to day living. From the stranger’s perspective, this is neither simple nor painless: it is a process of liminality. Becoming truly cross-cultural therefore, depends as much on the response of the locals as on one’s own *bona fides*.⁴

Becoming truly cross-cultural therefore, depends as much on the response of the locals as on one’s own bona fides.

Any neighborhood, parish, university or country comprising people of many cultures is *de facto* multicultural. But this says nothing about *how* they actually relate; *that* is a measure of *interculturality*. Human responses in a multicultural context range from simple avoidance to rank hostility or conventional courtesies to deep friendship; and differences may be eliminated (by reactions from genocide to assimilation), tolerated (by attitudes from indifference to unconcern), or managed. “Separate development” or simple mutual apathy would be negative management, leaving everyone in a state of enduring *liminality*. But more positively, differences can be managed by mutual cooperation and the encouragement of diversity, as one might create an orchestra or chorus. Often though, multicultural communities can be appropriately characterized as merely “people living together, separately.”

Intercultural

From the 1950s as multinational companies and global commerce expanded, the study of cross-cultural contact was in vogue, as employment moved people away from home. Vocabulary was still unstable, and the words multicultural and intercultural were often used synonymously. Both theory and language derived largely from the social sciences of cultural anthropology, sociology, and psychology. Corporations were hiring people to travel and reside internationally, but also trying to provide needed skills for communicating with a variety of business partners. But today, and for decades now, such skills have been identified, widely taught, and acquired across the business world.

Christian missionaries had of course been exposed for centuries to cross-cultural living, and had accumulated much informal knowledge and experience. But as missions have increasingly operated as a two-way street and the reality of global Christianity has become clearer, the challenges posed by *de facto* multicultural faith communities and two-way cross-cultural living have become acute. Missiologists became increasingly aware of the cultural dynamics at work in mission situations, including “*reverse mission*” from Africa and Asia to Europe and America – that is, two-way cross-cultural living.

Social science is unconcerned with religious faith, but the subject of theology is, quite explicitly, God. So when theology *adopts* sociological language, it also *adapts* it, with the result that theologian and sociologist no longer speak quite the same language. Sociology used multicultural and intercultural as effectively synonymous – or else the *intercultural* focused on the social dynamics of international relations, while *multicultural*

intercultural community members ...share an intentional commitment to fellowship, motivated not simply by pragmatic or commercial considerations but by a shared religious conviction and common mission.

Intercultural living then, is a faith-based and lifelong process of conversion,...

...no one is born with culture;...

simply identified a social fact within neighborhoods or voluntary associations. But theologically, the word intercultural relates explicitly to God and/or to interpersonal relationships shaped and motivated by the faith commitment of the participants. Theologically speaking, intercultural community members are drawn from diverse cultural backgrounds but share an intentional commitment to fellowship, motivated not simply by pragmatic or commercial considerations but by a shared religious conviction and common mission.

Recently, many communities have seen the challenges posed by the cultural differences among their members. The near-bankruptcy of the standard assimilation model of recruitment to religious orders (“Come join us, and we will teach you to do things our way”) has been revealed, as the demands of true intercultural living and ministry have become increasingly clear. But many members of such communities remain unaware of, or struggle with the challenge (which is fast becoming a real imperative), while failing to profit from rich and hard-won gains from the social sciences.

Intercultural living then, is a faith-based and lifelong process of conversion, emerging as a requirement of members of intentional, international religious communities (and some intentional *multicultural* groups like large parishes).⁵ Healthy intercultural living depends on the level of commitment and support generated by the members. Individuals vary in adaptability and learning-levels, but each one generates positive or negative energy; and a small, resistant group can generate enough negative energy to thwart the wider community.

Before identifying the dynamics of intercultural living, we must address culture itself, since this is the context for lived faith; there is no person without culture, and faith can only be lived culturally. We do not live our faith in a vacuum or outside a specific cultural context. But inter-cultural living is multi-cultural rather than mono-cultural, and nobody can be expected to live their faith in and through an entirely alien culture, or the dominant culture of the majority.

Culture

Most people too readily assume they understand culture, which is actually subtle and elusive. Recognizable under many forms, culture is constitutive of every human person raised in a social world. Yet no one is *born* with culture; and, in different circumstances, anyone might have become enculturated differently. Babies born and raised in Beijing by Chinese parents become culturally Chinese; but a neonate flown to Pittsburgh and adopted by Euro-American parents will become a person of Euro-American culture. Environment and socialization

Babies born and raised in Beijing by Chinese parents become culturally Chinese; but a neonate flown to Pittsburgh and adopted by Euro-American parents will become a person of Euro-American culture.

are critically important, and everyone has a particular culture or constellation of cultural traits. But since faith can only be expressed culturally, an intercultural community should value each person's cultural identity as gift. Each one's lived faith constitutes an alternative and legitimate way of being: Christian, Jew, or Muslim. Yet everyone's different perspectives, habits and propensities pose challenges to harmonious community living. The ability to live with, and not simply despite, cultural differences is a hallmark of an intercultural community. Here are five descriptive definitions of culture, specifically chosen for their implications for intercultural living.

Culture is⁶ “the [hu]man-made part of the environment”: what social groups do to the worlds they inhabit. Universally, culture is *material* (artifacts, buildings); *institutional* (law and order, kinship and economic systems, and religion); *symbolic* (orality, perhaps writing, and words-objects-gestures that “say the unsayable”); and *moral* (values and virtues [and their opposites, vices]). These are the “social glue” of society.

Second, culture is “the form of social life”: the way a social group normally behaves, including rule-breaking behaviors. Standardized behavior must be interpreted through the underlying belief-and-thought system. But there is always a discrepancy between what people *say* they believe and what they actually do. Insiders (and appropriately informed outsiders) can interpret heroic or ignoble behavior. Every social system has both sin and grace, pathology and virtue, and needs effective sanctions.

Third, culture is “a meaning-making system”; supported by standards and rules, it makes intelligible communication possible. Theoretical linguistics distinguishes three helpful and contextual criteria for communication: *grammaticality* (strict and consistent conformity to the rules of grammar), *acceptability* (less formal, but appropriate and intelligible communicative interaction) and *meaningfulness* (simple, basic, but adequate information-transfer). People can communicate meaningfully, if not always with the perfect grammaticality of the pedant or perfectionist – something to remember in intercultural living. Again, linguistics explores the paradoxical “rule-governed creativity” that allows a virtually-infinite number of utterances to be produced *and understood* from a limited core of grammatical rules. Every speaker routinely produces utterances never before articulated identically in that specific word-sequence, yet immediately understood by people who have never before heard precisely the same sequence of words! Likewise, intercultural community members embody creative and novel – yet comprehensible and acceptable – ways of living, from their common stock of beliefs, convictions or virtues.

We may note that although the rules of chess are few, the moves are limitless, but without knowing the rules, we could watch players for decades and still be unable to play chess. Without a grasp of underlying rules and rationality, members of intercultural communities will never become as proficient as chess players.

Fourth, culture is analogous to skin. The skin is the human body's largest organ. Grafting it is difficult and sometimes impossible. If it is severely burned, death may be inevitable. And yet skin can tolerate multiple scars, blemishes, wrinkles and dermatological conditions. We cannot be literally in someone else's skin; and if ours were to be stripped or flayed, we would certainly die. Cultures, like skin, need not be perfect and can tolerate both wear and tear and trauma; but the overall integrity of the skin is as necessary for life as is the overall integrity of a culture and its members.

Culture is transmitted gradually over time, through the generations:...

Fifth, culture is "an enduring social reality." Cultures rise and fall, flourish and die, and none is static or immortal; implications for intercultural living should be obvious. Culture is transmitted gradually over time, through the generations: an ongoing process rather than a simple social fact. Some cultures, (termed "traditional") may appear to be in stasis or equilibrium, but every culture is in process of change, at varied speeds, and always "contested" by its members; and some are more resilient than others.

Reality (what people consider real) is socially constructed:⁷ people are born into a community that has already interpreted the world and determined the meaning of things, events, and relationships.

Reality (what people consider real) is socially constructed:⁷ people are born into a community that has already interpreted the world and determined the meaning of things, events, and relationships. Socialization or enculturation extends through the first decades of life, as a person is aggregated to the pre-existing world of meaning. Once adequately socialized, it is increasingly difficult to think our thoughts or ways are wrong.

With such understanding of culture, the challenge facing old and young alike is to identify and respond to the demands of intercultural living. The broader community must engage with the cultural identity of newer members and abandon the crude assimilation model as broken and unfit for the purpose. Individual members will respond to the challenge by embracing intercultural living wholeheartedly or halfheartedly, or by resisting and waiting for death. Everyone must stand and be counted: the future, viable or not, is at stake.

Identifying Theological Implications

Because every mature person is a person of culture, spirituality (or lived faith) can only flourish in a cultural context. But how do faith and culture coexist? St Jerome coined

Anthony J. Gittins, C.S.Sp.

St Jerome coined the word spirituality in the fifth century,...

the word spirituality in the fifth century, defining it explicitly as life in the Holy Spirit given at baptism to guide our faith-journey.⁸ It might be described as “a way of being in the world with God,” where every variable (way, being, world, God) is shaped by each individual’s experience. During a lifetime a person may embrace a number of possible ways (single, married, widowed, celibate and so on), experience different states of being (from youth to dotage, in sickness and health, safety or peril, as citizen or refugee and so on), live in several different worlds (rural, urban, tropical, arctic, peaceful or warring), and relate in different ways to God (Creator, Wisdom, Lord, Father, King, Warrior, Spirit – or the Jesus of Manger or Golgotha, miracle-worker or faith-healer).

Spirituality is not a set of formulated beliefs, but shapes and is shaped by how we relate to God and creation, pray and express our embodied selves, respond to suffering and well-being, and make life-choices. From different cultural environments and experiences, human beings have generated myriad legitimate expressions of Christian spirituality. People in a multi-cultural community, attempting, not just to live the faith, but to do so in an explicitly intercultural way, will encounter many opportunities and challenges, similarities and differences, with respect to liturgy, prayer, ritual, music, silence, privacy, conformity, and so on. Each person must discover a new *modus vivendi* amid cultural differences, learned behaviors and personal preferences. Some of the most contentious issues and initially unintelligible responses may prove – if approached sympathetically and creatively – to be mutually enriching.

Here are four areas of “contested” culturally shaped topics with particular salience for intercultural community members. Failure to learn from each other and adapt accordingly, can destroy the integrity of a community.

Our *social location* describes our enduring world and our place in it – from Pacific atoll to forest enclave, from isolated settlement to crowded high-rise, from tight-knit extended family system to free-wheeling independent citizen. Serious thought should be given to the formative power of each person’s social location, and to how much individual variety and preference is compatible with the demands of the broader community and its mission. Understanding others’ social geography, socialization, and social mobility is a prerequisite to appropriate responses. Sadly, some current community members know less about their brethren after decades than they do about movie stars or politicians.

Body tolerance describes the culturally diverse ways people treat and display their bodies and interact with others. It

...a relaxed and spontaneous ("Dionysian") attitude no more indicates immodesty than a controlled and disciplined ("Apollonian") posture indicates modesty;...

Intercultural living demands a radical rethinking of what is appropriate or demanded in justice, relative to each member personally and to their kin.

contrasts different people's comfort levels. But a relaxed and spontaneous ("Dionysian") attitude no more indicates immodesty than a controlled and disciplined ("Apollonian") posture indicates modesty; cultural differences in body tolerance cannot be grossly correlated with virtue or vice. But culturally diverse people in an intentional community must become mutually sensitive to what is appropriate dress and demeanor, interaction and affection. The "noble simplicity of the Roman Rite" may be revered, especially in colder climates, yet, people from the tropics may find it ill-suited to appropriate displays of temperament and affect, and constrained by too many rules and rubrics. Compare the image of a day-long open-air liturgical celebration under an African sun, and a hurried 40-minute Sunday Mass with a congregation that neither sings nor emotes -- and the difference between Dionysian exuberance and spontaneity and the clock-governed "Sunday obligation" of Apollonian discipline and control become obvious. In matters of common prayer, liturgy, music or silence, movement and stillness, different comfort-levels and tolerances, will constitute significant points of concern within an intercultural community.

Health and sickness are culturally coded. Many northern people with highly developed health systems rarely see a dead body, and serious sickness is understood to be a matter for hospital isolation for a medical or surgical solution before a rapid return to the community. But in many parts of the world, death and dying are constant visitors, sickness is attended domestically and medical/surgical solutions are rare. Rather than sickness isolating patient from family, it integrates them; and when death nears, family solidarity is critical, whatever the expense or distance involved. But many members of conventional religious communities had to make a real break with their families, had no further involvement with sick or dying relatives, and were prevented by distance, finances or rules from attending funerals or assisting with family needs. Intercultural living demands a radical rethinking of what is appropriate or demanded in justice, relative to each member personally and to their kin.

Finally, attitudes to *time and space* are so culturally variable that any group of diverse people will need to address them explicitly. We have all heard pejorative references -- by people enslaved by clock or watch -- to "African time" or "Mexican time"; but clock-watching can also produce hypertension, frustration and intolerance. Think again of those open-ended, timeless Sunday liturgies of African communities, compared to the clock-ruled, time-starved, and rushed liturgies in other areas. In many cultures, time is a gift, to be used freely without reference to chronology, while in others it is a scarce resource,

treated as a commodity and with the very same vocabulary as we use for commercial transactions: we say that time can be 'saved' or 'spent,' 'gained' or 'lost,' and even 'wasted'. When daily life is structured by the clock, there is little "time" left over for spontaneity, creativity, or simple availability. Intercultural living calls us to address the use (and abuse) of time. And as with time, so with space: attitudes to space – personal space, open-space, private space, common space, sacred space – are not simply whimsical but culturally shaped. In an intercultural community, space must be carefully negotiated, and not without some discomfort or pain, and certainly requiring compromise.

We are all ethnocentric, but with maturity and training we can identify this and act accordingly.

Clarifying the Challenge

Ethnocentrism is a fact of life: we see and interpret through culturally-conditioned eyes. It is immoral only when we inflict our own perspective on others, imagine it is the only true perspective, or act as if it were actually God's way of seeing the world. We are all ethnocentric, but with maturity and training we can identify this and act accordingly. An ethnocentric bias judges other people and worlds to be inferior reflections of one's own. The "other" then becomes the problem – to be avoided, demeaned, attacked or perhaps converted or assimilated. Intercultural living challenges our ethnocentrism -- which should gradually erode through our exposure to other ways of living. And since none of us is entirely free, each has work to do. The narrower our shared world of meaning, the more we will distinguish insiders ("us") from outsiders ("them"). The challenge then, is to create a new culture from the constituent cultures of each member, so that there is no longer an us/them opposition. But this lovely thought is undermined in practice by what I call the "cultural flaw" and some theologians call "original sin."

God's idea of a community – from the mythical Genesis story to the historical community of the first disciples, and down to our own day – is one of radical inclusion and radical equality, made explicit by Jesus.

God's idea of a community – from the mythical Genesis story to the historical community of the first disciples, and down to our own day – is one of radical inclusion and radical equality, made explicit by Jesus. But while God wants to unite, every culture is limited by a perverse tendency to stratify, separate, diminish and exclude; no human society is in fact radically inclusive or egalitarian. Every attempt to form an inclusive community of "we" – in Eden or in myriad subsequent Utopian communities – very soon results in alienation or the creation of hierarchy, or drives a wedge between people: an original inclusive community of "WE" thus becomes polarized into "US" and "THEM." It is precisely this situation that Jesus encountered. The Letter to the Ephesians describes humanity's self-inflicted wound and the Jesus solution. The author describes the polarized world of Jews ("us") and

Gentiles (“them”), and God’s plan to reconcile humanity to itself and to God as an *all-inclusive* “we.”

But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For *he* is the peace between us, and *he* has made the two into one and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, actually destroying in his own person the hostility between us (Eph 2:13-14).

Since the primary purpose of intercultural communities is greater commitment to the mission of Jesus, every member is called to kenotic living: self-emptying service of, and among, “the least” or “the other.”

This is a stunning articulation of Jesus’ radical plan for humanity. Pauline writings also declare three times that there is henceforth to be no moral *distinction* or political *division* erected on the obvious *differences* between men and women, Jew and Greek, slave and free (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11; 1Cor 12:13). This is the very vision that must be the foundation and justification for every attempt to build intercultural communities. Jesus chose to become a person of the margins, a sociological and biblical “stranger” rather than a person of power and influence. Influential people occupy central positions where power and authority lie. But Jesus chose the most effective way to encounter the people marginalized by circumstance and by society: outreach to society’s “them” or “other” -- whether by gender, ethnicity, religion, lifestyle, or social or moral standing. For him, margins and boundaries were points of engagement rather than marks of separation or discrimination. Since the primary purpose of intercultural communities is greater commitment to the mission of Jesus, every member is called to *kenotic* living: self-emptying service of, and among, “the least” or “the other.” The only effective way of doing this is Jesus’ own way, the Way of the Cross, the way of encountering those who live on the margins and walking with them. Given the strong cultural pressures to achievement, advancement and social recognition, intercultural living stands as a bold invitation to a faith-based countercultural lifestyle.

Good will alone is insufficient:...

Even if we address ethnocentrism and “downward mobility,” much remains to be done. Good will alone is insufficient: it has produced sin and scandal (from Crusades, slavery or burnings, to the marginalization and abuse of women, to excommunications, and to an odious lack of due process). Some would-be disciples of Jesus have been stumbling blocks rather than honest witnesses; good will must be complemented and shaped by ongoing conversion.

An “intercultural project” is not just a rational game-plan but a faith-driven and lifelong undertaking. Faith may or may not motivate multinational companies or volunteers, but it is the foundation of the life-project of every Christian disciple. Our aspirations reach beyond the reasonable or coldly rational;

and in the face of frustration and failure it may be our faith alone that sustains us and others. So, without mature faith-sharing, appropriate correction, reconciliation and mutual encouragement, the project will inevitably founder, as Pope Francis made explicit, excoriating the Curia at Christmas 2014. And we all know the corrosive effects of gossip and slander, or of the basic lack of encouragement from peers and leaders.

...even personal faith is insufficient unless supported by the actual fruit of people's good intentions: the ongoing commitment to acquiring appropriate skills and virtue.

And yet: even personal faith is insufficient unless supported by the actual fruit of people's good intentions: the ongoing commitment to acquiring appropriate skills and virtue. Not that everyone must become super-efficient, but everyone must persevere in the effort. In ministries that require a new language, the most effective are not always the most fluent or brilliant, but those most dedicated to the process of trying to learn a little and never giving up in the face of difficulty. So with learning the art of intercultural living: perseverance may be a better witness than expertise.

The constant challenge is to become virtuous. A virtue is moral good repeated until it becomes a habit (and vice is its opposite). Intercultural living demands a litany of virtues: the virtue of practical respect for personal and cultural differences; commitment to seek truth through dialogue: truth is not a commodity but a goal to be sought with others, and it will change us all. Then, because marginality and "downward mobility" constitute the apostolic strategy of Jesus, his disciples must strive for the same, lest we fail to encounter poor and forgotten people. Again, we are called to cultivate the virtue of being continuous learners – the actual meaning of the word "disciple." And we *must* learn from the best of theology and tradition: intercultural living is really as old as Christianity and we have a lot to learn from the past.

Evaluating the Prospects

Since intercultural living is not the mobilization of an international work-force but a faith-based commitment to the vision of Jesus, to "problematize" it is strategically and psychologically impoverished: rather it is an opportunity, a challenge and a grace. Not everyone need be young and active: the moral support of those who are less active is of incalculable value; but a polarized group is self-defeating. But intercultural living is not a "natural" arrangement, though it is possible in a *supernatural* context.⁹ Diplomacy, compromise, and a common vision must inspire a common effort and provide appropriate means to sustain it. Even for members of established international communities, it is something new: most of us remain rather mono-cultural even in multicultural or international environments. Intercultural living is necessary

but costly for viable international religious life, but obligatory if dry bones are to live. If successful, it will revolutionize our lives and the Christian mission. And in some form it challenges all in ministry to any “other,” by whatever criteria. Not everyone will accept the challenge to mission in intercultural communities, though it is open to everyone. And it does require a *critical mass* of committed supporters, lest the apathetic or resisters compromise its realization.

The future of international religious life – and collaborative ministries -- depends significantly on the ability of each community (local and institutional) to think and act interculturally.

As membership of international institutes continues to decline and age in the northern hemisphere, communities that do survive with integrity in the coming decades will do so through their international, culturally diverse, membership. They will be characterized by “fusion” or the integration of culturally diverse personnel. The opposite of fusion is “fission”: the fragmentation of international congregations so that they become no more than loose aggregations of culturally discrete groups. Thus they would remain international entities, but at the cost of their intercultural witness to the gospel. This happens through individualism, tribalism, factionalism, or the loss of the founding charism. The future of international religious life – and collaborative ministries -- depends significantly on the ability of each community (local and institutional) to think and act interculturally. Failure to do so in a global church will lead to terminal decline.

Conclusion: From Invitation to Radical Welcome

Intercultural living is a much more persuasive force than cheap rhetoric about loving one’s neighbor. But new wine cannot be put into old wineskins, and we cannot build such communities by recycling old material or uncritically employing obsolete ideas. The classical model for community-building was assimilation: new members were welcomed into a pre-existing and largely monocultural community with its established rules and expectations, standardized dress, food and forms of prayer. Those able to adjust accordingly might be admitted; others would soon leave; there were always plenty of aspirants. The unspoken message was “come join us and share our ways and religious tradition.” This cost the existing community very little; life could go on while potential newcomers were being formed, assessed, and then accepted or not. Potential incomers different from the norm were either marginalized or rejected by a community administration that held the initiative in all matters.

Since Vatican II and the increase of religious from the global church, this model has given way to a more inclusive approach by some long-established communities. Now the message is clearer: “come join our community and help us

Anthony J. Gittins, C.S.Sp.

Now the message is clearer: “come join our community and help us diversify internally and internationally.”

Such analysis would show whether the traditional decision-makers and privileged personnel have remained as before, or whether incoming members are treated as equals.

... “you repent, not by feeling bad but by thinking [and acting] differently.”

diversify internally and internationally.” This is a significant advance, indicating a desire not only to speak and teach but to listen and learn. But inclusion of “the other” simply does not go far enough. Unless customary behavior is changed, a marginal outsider merely becomes a marginal insider. Many cultural “others” still feel ineffective and invisible in their own communities. Without a careful power-analysis and self-analysis of the established community there will be no radical inclusion. Such analysis would show whether the traditional decision-makers and privileged personnel have remained as before, or whether incoming members are treated as equals. So intercultural communities must reject both “assimilation” and token “inclusion,” and develop an attitude of “radical welcome.” Then the message is “bring your cultural and religious values, your voice and autonomous self, and help us together to build a new community.” This facilitates the authentic incarnation of each member, which means that everyone will be affected by the cultural diversity, and called to an ongoing conversion to God, to each other, and to the cultural values which shape each life. Not that people will be able to hide behind their own cultural conventions, or play the “culture card.” Rather, each will need to examine cultural habits, bad and good, and learn to compromise some comfort for the sake of the “new” community. The cost will be spread vertically and laterally and not only borne by new or incoming members. But an authentic faith-based undertaking will survive.

Three principles might help us move forward. First, we are called to build a home: a home away from home it will be, since “we have here no abiding city,” but not a proliferation of mere “houses” where different individuals subsist under the same roof, that is, “living together separately,” not intercultural living. Second, integrated communities evolve gradually, organically, and not without pain. Therefore we must truly value difference, *because God created difference and saw that it was good.* The “cultural flaw” uses difference to justify discrimination and disrespect. That is sinful. And third, we must rethink the way we think. Rudy Wiebe says, “you repent, not by feeling bad but by thinking [and acting] differently.” This is the cost of conversion, and it is much more difficult to think differently than to feel bad and do nothing.

In a classical rabbinic story, the teacher asks the disciples: “When do you know it is dawn?” One says, ‘when you can distinguish a white thread from a black one.’ “No,” says the teacher. “When you can see the outline of a tree against the horizon,” ventures another. “No,” says the teacher -- to this and all other efforts to answer the question. Finally he says, “when you can look into the eyes of an “other,” a stranger, and see a brother or a sister, then it is dawn. Until then, it is still night.”

May we have the grace and good sense to look for, and to live in, the light of a new dawn!

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Endnotes

¹There is significant literature on the sociology and theology of the stranger. See Gittins, *A Presence That Disturbs: A Call to Radical Discipleship*. Liguori, 2002:143-162, and *Ministry at The Margins: Spirituality and Strategy for Mission*. Orbis, 2002:121-160.

²Gittins, *Presence*, 96-107.

³Gittins, *Ministry*, 135-41.

⁴See Gittins, *Ministry*, 121-60.

⁵Intercultural living constitutes a challenge and opportunity for many other people working and ministering among people of several or many languages and cultures. Though by no means all of these people can, or will learn the skills and virtues mentioned here, dedicated ministers will resonate with many aspects of intercultural living, and may find much insight into how to respond to the challenges they face.

⁶These descriptive components are gleaned from many sources.

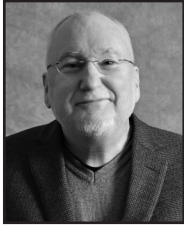
“Culture” is a topic that has generated a vast amount of easily accessible literature. I offer a simplified but multi-faceted description.

⁷We only need to consider the *reality* of witchcraft, Eucharistic Presence, Heaven, Resurrection, Metempsychosis or ghosts to take the point here: one person’s reality may be another’s fantasy.

⁸Jerome is credited with coining the word *spiritualitas*.

⁹[Jesus said] “For you it is impossible, but not for God. Everything is possible for God.” Mark 10:27.

A RESPONSE TO FR. ANTHONY GITTINS, C.S.SP.



Dr. Ronald C. Arnett
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...having at least two different "habits of the heart" assists in texturing individual discernment and communal direction.

I am pleased to be part of this lecture experience. Fr. Gittins brings to this community an extraordinary body of scholarship.¹ His ideas are important for the Spiritans, this university community, and the West in general; his thoughtful analysis offers a corrective for the West. Fr. Gittins moves us from singularity of commitment and locality into pragmatic admission that having at least two different "habits of the heart" assists in texturing individual discernment and communal direction.²

Fr. Gittins articulates the importance of geographical and social mobility; he frames a practical rationale for bicultural perspectives in community. He speaks otherwise than cosmopolitanism, the popular emphasis that invokes a modern sentiment of standing above and apart from the often problematic complexity of our human sociality. Fr. Gittins offers a practical embodied alternative—engaged bicultural understanding. He examines the challenge of singularity of perspective within religious communities with an emphasis on pragmatic bicultural insight. Fr. Gittins takes us into a world of embodied learning and comprehension via a stance of multiplicity. Fr. Gittin's enriched conception of community is akin to that of Maurice Friedman, who was the principal interpreter and biographer of Martin Buber. Friedman differentiated between a *community of otherness* and a *community of affinity*. For Friedman, a community of affinity is based on psychological liking whereas a community of otherness is centered on learning from others, even those we do not like. Friedman's understanding of a community of otherness assumes Buber's emphasis on a "common center" that pulls difference together. A commitment to a common center permits one to assist those with whom one is in disagreement. A community of otherness requires love for a communal common center that is greater than one's relational liking of persons within what Friedman termed a community of affinity.³ In a thoughtful and practical fashion, Fr. Gittins outlines how one can biculturally embrace and contribute to a community of otherness.

Fr. Gittins calls for an intentional movement toward intercultural communities constituted in practical bicultural obligations. Again, in the language of Friedman, he provides a vision of a community of otherness constituted not in mystical demands, but in practical application of a twenty-first century faith. Fr. Gittin's conception of community brings both Friedman and Buber into the story with Buber's definition of community functioning as a contrast to psychological or

liking-based conceptions of community. A community of otherness gathered around a common center requires protection and promotion of a good that is performatively enacted in life together.⁴ Love of and commitment to the common center of a community requires giving part of one's life to the maintenance, duration, and prospering of what gathers a community of persons together, even when one would prefer the absence of particular members.

Cultural diversity begins within oneself, with a human being permitting different formative cultures to meet in interior dialogue...

Fr. Gittins reminds us of a practical common center for the individual as well as the community: a multiplicity of perspectives. He frames the importance of bicultural knowledge and practices within any given person; such practices permit a twenty-first century manifestation of Immanuel Kant's notion of self-dialogue.⁵ Kant discussed the necessity of internal dialogue in his conception of the first stage of decision making and judgment. Kant's ethical system of self-legislation necessitates an initial encounter of differing positions within oneself. Fr. Gittins's bicultural orientation assists self-dialogue and self-legislation; one's ideas and positions must pass the test of self-examination before bringing them into the public domain of a given community. Cultural diversity begins within oneself, with a human being permitting different formative cultures to meet in interior dialogue—the first dialogue is with oneself, and for Fr. Gittins, that dialogue is bicultural.

Fr. Gittins contends that becoming truly cross-cultural requires linguistic skill in another language and patience with the cultural "other" who might naturally be slow to offer welcome. It takes time to learn about another and his/her culture, let alone to begin to embody elements of a new cultural perspective. Time spent in meeting and interacting with others cannot be truncated; otherwise, we attempt to "overrun [the] reality" of social and cultural knowledge. Buber writes:

The real essence of community is to be found in the fact—manifest or otherwise—that it has a center. The real beginning of a community is when its members have a common relation to the center overriding all other relations: the circle is described by the radii, not the points along its circumference.⁶

Caution abides within a resistive impulse to overrun reality in the acquisition of bicultural acceptance.

Fr. Gittins reminds us that groups demanding immediate assimilation discover limited success; such demands can lead to communicative acts of seduction with a managed smile of insincerity and, at times, the imposition of what Buber

termed neurotic guilt. While access to the public goods of society requires the demand of law, communities depend upon sentiments of inclusion over time. Communities of assimilation are modern creatures of amalgamation. They represent modernity at its height because modernity offers processes and procedures that attempt to eliminate differences.

Uniting the insights of Sissela Bok and Buber's understanding of common center, the points of common connection within a community require minimalist agreement. By this continuum, a minimal common center permits change and a maximal common center moves to ideological rigidity. Abiding by Aristotle's description of the dangers of excess and deficiency, there are two extreme points of error. First, one can enact a willingness to discount the importance of a common center. Second, one can require maximal adherence to a center, a consistency that morphs into dangerous ideology. Bok's minimalist conception illuminates a performative "how" in the engagement of diversity in a postmodern world. Alasdair MacIntyre offers a portrait of a postmodern world⁷ as a place of constant tension between and among differing virtue and narrative structures. MacIntyre thus suggests a conception of community that embraces a minimalistic common center that is vitally robust and publicly announced in daily practices within a community.

MacIntyre reminds us that communities can bring together different cultures and at the same time unite them on common narrative grounds.

MacIntyre reminds us that communities can bring together different cultures and at the same time unite them on common narrative grounds.⁸ People require narrative ground, common practices, and a story that connects persons. Stanley Hauerwas makes this point in *Community of Character*, his analysis of Richard Adams's novel *Watership Down*.⁹ Similarly, Dietrich Bonhoeffer considered it immoral to destroy the narrative ground of another,¹⁰ a point that undergirds Charles Taylor's emphasis on narrative in *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*.¹¹ Modernity, on the other hand, undercuts narrative ground in numerous ways, to the point of losing an external standard for judgment, a loss which then leads to an increasingly popular mode of decision-making in the West that MacIntyre terms "emotivism"—decision-making based upon personal preference alone.¹²

A common center contends with emotivism; it functions as a third, as an external standard of evaluation that calls members to account. Emotivism, on the other hand, is a decision-making method in the West that emerges from what I term *the social disease of individualism*. Alexis De Tocqueville published warnings about this disease in *Democracy in America*; he examined early life in this country and warned against

the myth of individualism that assumes that one can stand above the constraints of family, church, and friendships.¹³ He stated a preference for selfishness over individualism because selfishness necessitates taking into account other people as we navigate the social environment, even for our own benefit. De Tocqueville contended that only religion could possibly temper individualism; he offered the insight that when religion lost its import, individualism would trump. I contend that individualism is winning; individualism is the central social sin of the West, the sin that we export globally.

*...a common center
must be nourished,
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Fr. Gittins's conception of community dwells at the heart of his faith and his love of community within the diversity of social orders in the church. He reminds us that faith lives within culture and the practices of social life, practices that generate meaning-making systems. Practices within a culture functionally shape social reality. Faith, for Gittins, is not challenged by differing cultural positions, but rather textured, nourished, and enhanced by multiplicity of perspectives. Differing cultural perspectives function as diverse communicative backgrounds that enrich conceptual understanding of interpretive engagements, framing foreground activity, ideas, and decision-making. My addition to the conversation thus far that centers on Buber, Bok, MacIntyre, and Taylor is a call to rethink what is background and foreground in a postmodern world of virtue and narrative contention. In such a moment, a common center of community can no longer be a taken-for-granted background; a common center must be nourished, supported, and witnessed to as a foreground public confession. Diverse cultural background engagements generate differences, as do the different understandings of multiple places, ideas, and communities. However, what gathers a single community is a publicly confessed common center that must remain at the foreground of attentiveness.

Fr. Gittins ties his work to the spirituality of St. Jerome in the fourth century (circa 342–384). St. Jerome traveled widely, studying with the best of teachers as he enhanced his reputation as a scholar of the Scriptures, but St. Jerome also called for active concern for those relegated to the margins of the human condition. Akin to St. Jerome, Gittins reminds us that spirituality is not a form of belief structured to the point of reification; instead, he calls for the embodiment of faithful selves who engage in practices that practically assist God's world. It is remembering the owner of existence that keeps our actions performed on behalf of something other than the self. Borrowing from the insights of Taylor, it is this demotion of the self that counters totalizing efforts to disenchant God's world.¹⁴ On a local note, this Spiritan campus of Duquesne University

of the Holy Spirit finds its performative identity within enchanted phrases, such as understanding this dwelling as a life-giving place, as a witness to the fact that the Spirit Gives Life. Such words are not mere slogans; they are performative practices, habits of the heart that infuse a place with a narrative common center—the Spirit that Gives Life.

...failure to learn from one another destroys the integrity of a community, and consistent with my earlier comments, failure to learn from one another obliterates the common center of community with a dismissiveness that fails to permit love to trump over liking.

Gittins points to inclusion based on difference...

Fr. Gittins offers a position on culture that is otherwise than convention. He contends that failure to learn from one another destroys the integrity of a community, and consistent with my earlier comments, failure to learn from one another obliterates the common center of community with a dismissiveness that fails to permit love to trump over liking. Gittins suggests that we must not only know about social locations but also recognize their formative power in our own lives and the lives of others, permitting learning to emerge from Same and Other. Gittins reminds us of a body of faith where acknowledgment of differences in physical and emotional activities underscores the reality of sickness and health as culturally coded. Learning requires attentiveness to a world occupied by the Other who deserves respect—without confusing him/her or me as the center of faith. We are part of God's community without being the sole focus; this perspective counters a therapeutic communication style in which the individual communicator becomes the sovereign propelled by emotivistic decision-making by personal preference. Gittins suggests that acknowledging contrasting attitudes toward issues of time and space wards off demands for a single manner of participation in God's world. Ethnocentrism, as Fr. Gittins states, however, is a fact of life; we must engage it by learning from differences with the constructive hope that we can thereby continue to assist the common center of a given community. Ethnocentrism void of such responsiveness to learning is, in Gittins's words, a cultural flaw or original sin; it is a utopia void of others. Gittins points to inclusion based on difference, reminding us that the way of the cross does not begin with the self, but with paths open to those in the margins.

An intercultural project attentive to nourishing an international religious community is a life-long project; Gittins suggests that such communities are an essential part of the faith within this century. A personal faith situated within good intentions is insufficient. The art of learning requires attentiveness to difference, otherness, and openness to novel insights ever propelled by tenacious hope. Neither truth nor community is a commodity—both are performative actions played out within an enchanted world that belongs to God, not to a single perspective. Fr. Gittins calls for a faith that challenges within a spirit of grace open to the unexpected.

The global church needs to be a place of inclusion without resorting to imposed assimilation, token inclusion, or radical takeovers.

... “home away from home.”

...receptiveness to difference and protection of a common center.

Gittins offers a practical solution that begins with an internal dialogue informed by multiple cultures.

Gittins asserts that answers in this century do not reside in the extremes of individualism or tribalism. From the vantage point of the West, I return to MacIntyre and his warning about individualism. He contends that the world has witnessed the dangers of imperialism and totalitarianism as these movements have devastated the globe; however, we have yet to understand what individualism is doing to the destruction of our social lives together. The tacit power of individualism is a performative exemplar of what Hannah Arendt called a “banality of evil.”¹⁵ Practically and socially, one must engage intercultural living as communal, eschewing the temptation of the monocultural. One must address the margins, even as one slowly works in the margins with the hope of gaining the trust of a different community home. The global church needs to be a place of inclusion without resorting to imposed assimilation, token inclusion, or radical takeovers. Such a faith invites a radical welcoming of new ideas, which can enhance, enrich, and assure an enduring common center for a community that is bigger than a provincial settler can encompass and more complex than surface observations of the novice.

Fr. Gittins concludes with three statements. First, those committed to bringing bicultural perspectives to community must build a home that is a “home away from home.” Second, one must remember that such integrated communities emerge organically, and one must engage such participation with patience. Third, the twenty-first century demands that we rethink how we think. Gittins cites material from Rudy Wiebe, who wrote a book on a fictional Mennonite community, *Peace Shall Destroy Many*.¹⁶ The novel illuminates Fr. Gittins’s thoughtful illustrations of the dangers of monoculturalism, ethnocentrism, and a refusal to learn from difference. Such actions destroy a common center and move the word “peace” into the terminological matrix of ideological oppression. For Gittins, faith within the twenty-first century begins with a commitment to bicultural formations.

Fr. Gittins ends with a discussion of good actions that testify to the reality of grace in a light of dawn that dwells within the eyes of another. Gittins calls for witnessing to an enchanted world that is beyond oneself and requires internal dialogue that seeks to enhance a given common center within a community. I suggest that as we engage such learning, there is a narrow ridge that we must walk¹⁷—receptiveness to difference and protection of a common center. Life nourished by individualism has singular direction, but community lived within the unity of contraries of burden and joy from learning—witnessing to the common center of the Spirit that gives Life—offers tenacious hope for this Spiritan campus

as a home for those who labor, work, pray, and learn. Such a place brings hope when it seems too distant, calling forth life in and for weary bones. Unlike the call to a cosmopolitan world, Gittins offers a practical solution that begins with an internal dialogue informed by multiple cultures. He guides us with a tenacious hope that lives within a faith that embraces learning while refusing to forget the power of a faith-filled community with a common center nourished by an enchanted phenomenological reminder—it is the Spirit that gives Life.

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Endnotes

¹Fr. Gittins is the author of 16 books, his most recent being, *Living Mission Interculturally: Faith, Culture, and the Renewal of Praxis*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2015 and *The Way of Discipleship, The Way of Jesus*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2016.

²Bellah, Robert N., Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. New York: Harper & Row, 1985.

³See Friedman, Maurice, *The Confirmation of Otherness, in Family, Community, and Society*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1983.

⁴Buber, Martin, *Paths in Utopia*. New York: First Syracuse University Press, 1950, 135. First published in 1949.

⁵Kant, Immanuel, “An Answer to the Question: What is the Enlightenment?” in *What is Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*. Ed. J. Schmidt, 58–64. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. First published in 1784.

⁶Buber, *Paths in Utopia*, 13.

⁷See Bok, Sissela, *Common Values*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1995.

⁸MacIntyre, Alasdair, *After Virtue*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.

⁹Adams, Richard, *Watership Down*. London: Rex Collings, 1972; Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Towards a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.

¹⁰Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Ethics*. New York: Harper & Row, 1954.

¹¹Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

¹²See MacIntyre, Alasdair, *After Virtue*, 3rd ed. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007, 14.

¹³See de Tocqueville, Alexis, *Democracy in America, Vol. 1*. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

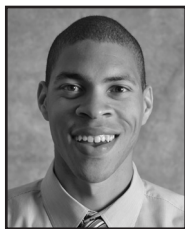
¹⁴See Taylor, *Sources of the Self*.

¹⁵Arendt, Hannah, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. 1963, Repr., New York: Penguin, 2006.

¹⁶Wiebe, Rudy, *Peace Shall Destroy Many*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972.

¹⁷See Buber, Martin, *Israel and the World*. New York: Schocken, 1948.

RACE AND HARMONY: AN AFRICAN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE



Jeffrie Mallory

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...can Race and Harmony co-exist in today's society?

Initially, I struggled with how to properly frame a discussion for this essay on Race and Harmony: An African-American Perspective. The subject is deep and complex with historical underpinnings. Our current political climate and divisive social dynamics are impacting racial harmony. From a quick glance at a national newspaper to a quick flip through a national news broadcast, you could wonder if race and harmony should even be placed in the same sentence. Recent and historical acts of violence against groups of certain races and national policy debates, would lead many people to question if it is possible to achieve and sustain racial harmony. The topic of this essay is very important and worthy of discussion. It challenged me to personally reflect on my life and experiences to articulate my perspective on this challenging topic. The idea of delivering thoughts to a wider forum is greatly appreciated, as it is a privilege to share such thoughts with others.

It is important to acknowledge that my perspective on Race and Harmony is no more valid than any other African-American. Our perspectives on race were shaped well before we were able to make decisions for ourselves. We are directly informed by our upbringing via influences from many intra-societal cultural norms learned during our early childhood. Furthermore, through many interactions and encounters in our youth, we developed a guide that referenced how we react and respond to the world we currently live in.

I did one simple thing as I began to gather and examine my thoughts on the topic of Race and Harmony. I picked up my phone and scanned a few saved pictures, reviewed my recent calls and my previous week's schedule at work. It was in this moment, that a smile quickly came to my face, but more importantly, I had a basis for examining and referencing my thoughts. What I viewed, was a wide variety of social and professional activities, people, places and things in my life, race was not the most prevalent, but all the harmony one could be privileged to have. This helped me focus on the essay question, can Race and Harmony co-exist in today's society? I am hopeful such a question will come to you as we continue to discuss this topic.

To gain more insight into Race and Harmony, I feel it is important to understand some of the "perceived differences" that divides races. Each of the major divisions of mankind have physical characteristics including differences in skin tone that are distinctive to their specific race. On a deeper level, the differences I view in people and their race, can be found through

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To know where we stand, goes well beyond what group we associate ourselves with. We have to understand our motivations, desires, and what we are willing to give and accept from society for personal fulfillment.

their nation of residence, community, or ethnic group. One of my examples of a community difference, can be taken from the city in which I was raised, Bedford, Virginia. Traditionally, residents resided in specific areas due to the color of their skin. While the socioeconomic status varied amongst all members of the community, it was typically assumed that you resided in certain areas according to your race. People tended to socialize and interacted, outside of the workplace, along specific color lines. To some degree, the division along color lines was recognized as a cultural norm that didn't draw too much criticism or attention from the people of the town.

Race and Harmony: It's Importance in Society

For today's society there are many areas where the racial divide is indeed prevalent. However, in an era of dwindling resources and higher demand, racial harmony may aid in the development and effectiveness of public policy. Policy makers could benefit from the ability to focus on actual constituency needs, absent divisive racially tinged political rhetoric. The divide seems to be growing as a result of a wide variety of influences that appear in subtle and direct acts. We are repeatedly encouraged to pick a side when it comes to certain issues in the many societies we live in. Perhaps, the act of picking a side on where you stand and who you support based on race has taken place in your life. As an extension and taken from recent examples at large, the picking of a side can literally take a physical presence but can also show through other means, such as voting in favor of an initiative that clearly or subtly chooses a preference of one race over another. At a minimum, the act of picking sides based on race can be quite problematic because effective public policy cannot be developed and implemented along racial lines. It may be more appropriate to suggest a best practices based alternative. Such an alternative I wish to provide is for each of us *to know where we stand*.

To know where we stand, goes well beyond what group we associate ourselves with. We have to understand our motivations, desires, and what we are willing to give and accept from society for personal fulfillment. This understanding will enable the proper framing for a productive discussion on Race and Harmony. In today's society, there is an overabundance of influences, including social media and other focused campaigns that purposely influence people's perceptions. Another primary question is, is it possible to make a decision in one's life without understanding and recognizing external influences and how they are guiding the decisions we make? Simply look at the topic of Race and Harmony. At this moment, you have some type of feeling towards the topic. As you truly reflect on the topic and where you stand, there may be a mix of feelings. Such

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a question should be challenging to think about and could even bring you to the point of being emotional, which is perfectly fine.

On the other hand, it is important to note that racial harmony is realized in a variety of ways in our current society. Harmony is found in certain themes and objectives that have crossed the racial and cultural barriers for the common good. For example, war can bring disparate races and cultures together and in the process ameliorate overt biases to defeat a common enemy. Another example is in our response to natural or man-made disasters. In such situations, people will commonly share shelter and food in an attempt to recover ravaged communities. Some groups, such as the American Red Cross, are very effective at collecting and distributing food equitably and without regard to race or cultural background. The aforementioned examples confirm that interracial and intercultural harmony can be obtained across a wide range of “different” individuals.

Race and Harmony: Youthful Experience

My perspective as an African-American is firmly attributed to the previously mentioned small, rural community of Bedford in Southwest Virginia. It is in this town of 7,000 people, that I captured many lessons learned. I recall early lessons taken from grandparents as they discussed the Jim Crow era and their time spent as employees at the local rubber plant, which served as a critical link to our region and family’s well-being. More importantly, I was made aware of the differences of races and understood that while equality was desired, oftentimes privileges and injustices were distributed along color lines. The elders endured and conditioned their children to survive and thrive under these conditions.

Through countless conversations and examples, the manner in which my family delivered the lessons and even exposed me to real-life lessons is something I am very thankful for. In retrospect, the residual impact of these lessons still impact me today. This impact is seen when we propose certain programs for students in our university community, it is viewed in our initial welcome to students we are privileged to serve and it is seen in our conversations with students who feel they have been mistreated in some way. We strive to ensure that our community is here to serve them as they learn and grow.

A seminal learning moment took place for me in the early 1990’s between my mother and a neighbor of another color, who resided a quarter mile away. On this particular day in the summer her car broke down at the end of our road. As my mother contemplated who should walk back to the house to inform our family, some half mile away, our neighbor pulled

The one caveat however, is that she would only be allowed to ride in the bed of the truck and not the cab, to which my mother kindly declined.

...the idea that another person could attempt to demonstrate their superiority over another person, is nothing short of troubling.

...it seemed as if African-Americans, in particular, were always lower on the totem pole than the majority of the White community...

up in his pickup truck to offer assistance. This neighbor, who at that time, had resided beside us for over 20 years offered to give my mother a ride back to the house. The one caveat however, is that she would only be allowed to ride in the bed of the truck and not the cab, to which my mother kindly declined. I could only assume that the neighbor saw this as a benevolent act of community friendship and, based on his experiences, thought it proper to insist that she ride in the bed of the pickup. Conversely, my mother knew it was demeaning and not a lesson that she wanted me to learn. Both parties, the neighbor and my mother, brought two different perspectives to this one incident. I was proud of my mother and can only hope that the neighbor had a moment to pause and reflect on why his act of benevolence was turned down.

The impact of this moment touched me deeply. The peaceful manner in which my mother explained and reflected on the situation was a lesson that I will never forget. At first glance, the idea that another person could attempt to demonstrate their superiority over another person, is nothing short of troubling. On the other hand, my mother's response in which she stressed the importance of helping someone in need, regardless of their race, is a lesson that far too many people do not hear or know. To this day, this experience, coupled with a few others, greatly solidified my desire to treat others, regardless of their race, color, and status with the highest dignity and respect possible.

As time progressed, I paid close attention to the lack of achievement in mobility and overall growth for African-Americans in my community. I watched the interactions of people in the community and workplace, which seemingly involved tension at every turn. In the end, it seemed as if African-Americans, in particular, were always lower on the totem pole than the majority of the White community. From positions of authority in the workplace, to leadership positions in community programs, the presence of African-Americans was not found.

During my youth I witnessed a devastating pattern, in which many African-American youth, who were once cherished by community members as school sports stars, were both shunned and not cared for when their time and careers had ceased. I simply could not understand why and how you would not want to help a child at perhaps one of the most critical moments of their development in life. The fact that it seemingly was repeated on a frequent basis, and no one ever challenged it also served a major lesson to me. It pointed to a system that was not designed to help and one in which little race and harmony co-existed outside of winning in a team sport for the glory of the community.

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Race and Harmony: Adult Experience

One major factor for my understanding of Race and Harmony, comes from the sport of basketball. From how I treat other individuals, assimilating in other cultures, and gaining respect for both, myself and others, the sport placed me directly in the path of many teachable moments. As a child, I experienced different cultures through participating on teams and in leagues with children of many different races. As a youth, the notion of playing with children who were different in such factors as race and religion never crossed my mind. In a sense, my interactions and relationships with other children was pure.

During my high school years, my perspective significantly changed. Through attending an affluent boarding school in a nearby community, I quickly noted the many differences between people. From overall amenities including robust food and nutrition options to the great care and concern exhibited by school officials, this experience was much different than anything I had experienced. As a student-athlete, I still had no perceived issues with race. I was thankful to be a member of the basketball team and school community. I would later revisit this situation, and learn that a few of my minority classmates struggled during their time in the school, both on and off the court. I suspect my feelings and positive experience were much different as a result of a positive mindset which was embedded in me as a child.

The sport of basketball continued to play a large part in my years beyond high school. After high school I was fortunate to gain a full scholarship as a student-athlete to Saint Vincent College, a small liberal arts college in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. Knowing little about the Greater Latrobe area, although I would quickly learn that the late Arnold Palmer was a cherished community member, I was focused on being the best teammate and student-athlete possible. Once again, I did not give much attention to the statistics that surrounded me including race, ethnicity and the socioeconomic status of my peers. At this point, I was grateful to be a part of a new and wonderful college community that would aid my academic pursuits and remove any financial barriers in the process.

It was in college, that like so many, my sphere of influence greatly expanded as I made friends with people from many different cultures and geographic areas. At its core, through many travels and interactions, I was a member of a team and community that had unifying desires. These desires were rooted in securing victories on the court and actively molding productive members of society in the many years ahead. As team members we took great pride in helping one another. We were quick to point out mistreatment caused to us by others and also did a

great job of holding each other accountable in the process. We openly discussed issues relating to race, politics and relationships. The discussion of race in particular was always productive, as we genuinely respected each other's races. Above all, we appreciated the situations we previously came from and cherished an ultimate goal, through the achievement of winning as a team and receiving a college degree

My most significant moment of cultural awareness and cross cultural experience occurred when I journeyed to Spain to play professional basketball. One of only two Americans on the team, I was quickly faced with a critical decision during my initial welcome. I could either sit in my apartment and not interact with others or I could immerse myself in the wonderful Spanish culture that surrounded us. I quickly chose the latter. As a result, I was welcomed with open arms into numerous situations. Overall, my time in Spain provided the opportunity to learn more about myself, with careful attention to the importance of relationships. In fact, I spent a considerable amount of time watching how people treated one another.

I observed open relationships that seemed to promote a more cordial atmosphere. I felt welcomed at every turn. It was affirmed in me that there is a genuine need to *Invest in People*. I believe that giving people your time and attention can create more harmonious situations. The act of investing in people is something that each of us has the ability to do and more importantly control. With respect to investing in people, the important question is, does an individual desire to invest great time in other individuals? This investment comes with the chance that nothing, monetarily or physically, may be gained as a result. As we reflect on the question, it is important to note how today's society operates and the impact on advancing race and harmony.

In our society, many of us are in a repetitive cycle to promote harmony. This cycle consists of coordinating countless meetings with individuals and groups from a wide variety of organizations. As we look back at the many meetings we have held, we should ask, what is the true reason for the meeting that took place? Did we solve a problem or move in a concrete direction? As we continue to reflect, we should consider the meeting topics, level of engagement and lessons learned beyond the professional roles we each agreed to fulfill?

If we adequately invest in people, we are announcing in a very large way that we truly care about another individual. By investing in one another, we are showing through mutual acknowledgement that we care well beyond any role that society has placed upon us. In doing so, we are not keeping track of

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Encompassed by my surroundings, seeing the genuine pleasure of treating others well and being curious, I assume that we all want to learn and know as much as humanly possible about other individuals.

Above and beyond my race, I can be viewed, as I hope another person would do, as an individual that possesses a genuine and caring disposition that provides clear intent to others.

how many hours we “spend” with someone, but we are enriching our spirits, knowledge and well-being through spending quality time with another individual, who has been gracious enough to unite in mutual association and share their thoughts, feelings and perspectives.

As previously stated, the ability to invest in people is at the core of who I am. From watching my grandparents, parents and other role models at an early age, I paid close attention to how they treated other people. Encompassed by my surroundings, seeing the genuine pleasure of treating others well and being curious, I assume that we all want to learn and know as much as humanly possible about other individuals. Ultimately, I feel one of the highest honors in life is for someone to share their time with another person.

I now understand that racial and cultural differences are a natural part of life and yet somewhat scripturally, “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was without effect.” (1 Cor 15:10). I saw differences amongst the people within the community that I lived and played in. I found that people have problems and that the Spanish children that I interacted with had career and life aspirations similar to the kids that I worked with in the United States.

A Final Perspective

As I conclude this reflection, I would like to shift the focus to my height. Literally, as someone who stands out in a crowd (I am 7 feet tall for those who may not know me!), I have thought about what it may be like to encounter someone, that is similar in size to me. A person of my height is hard to miss in a crowd and I realize that I am the center of attention when entering certain rooms or venues. Overall, I am proud of my unique height and perhaps more importantly of the spotlight that it affords me.

It is in this spotlight, I am able to serve many others. Let me explain. As a prism, I am graced with the opportunity to direct that light to illuminate more of the space in which I occupy. It is not about me but my ability to help others that God has so graciously placed in my life. Above and beyond my race, I can be viewed, as I hope another person would do, as an individual that possesses a genuine and caring disposition that provides clear intent to others. As the sages of the ages have always said to create more harmonious society you have to reach across the racial and cultural divide to treat others with respect and dignity. I have made it a personal effort to give more than I receive and assume noble intent in my interaction with others.

It is my everlasting hope that you have been touched

It is my ultimate hope that your meaning is one that encompasses love, compassion and concern for others.

beyond the mention of this essay's title. If true, I am hopeful that such moments will continue to take place in your life as we move forward. Beyond your race, I will simply say that you are a human being. Such words as Race and Harmony, are indeed words. The meaning that we give to these words is a privileged opportunity, given to each of us, that challenges us to determine it in a manner each sees fit. It is my ultimate hope that your meaning is one that encompasses love, compassion and concern for others.

*Jeff Mallory
Duquesne University*

Dr. Gary and
Dr. Laurel Willingham-
McLain

FRIENDSHIP COMMUNITY CHURCH - AN INTERCULTURAL FAITH COMMUNITY



Rev. Dr. Gary Willingham-
McLain

Rev. Dr. Gary Willingham-McLain spent his childhood in Burundi, Africa, as a missionary kid. Back in the U.S., he later received his PhD in English and Victorian Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington, and was faculty at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh for five years. Feeling called to pastoral ministry, he later earned his M Div from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and has now pastored Friendship Community Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, for 12 years.

*...the cultural meaning
of “white” overrode in
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her skin color...*

One day a few of us were helping a family in our neighborhood move out of their apartment. The kids were in the truck, the older sister pestering her brother, William, when suddenly he yelled at her, “You *whitey!*”

On another occasion, during youth club with largely African American participants, an eight-year-old named Michael leaned over and said something to his friend about one of the teachers, finishing with “and she’s white.” Kathy, another Caucasian adult youth club teacher, caught his eye. “Oh, Michael, you mean, white like me?” Looking her full in the face, Michael said, “No, Miss Kathy, *you’re* not white!”

These two verbal exchanges took place in the life of Friendship Community Presbyterian Church, a Christian community that for more than 60 years has been trying to live out their faith as an interracial church family. Michael’s confident statement of fact echoes in the memory, first, of course, because he was looking directly into the face of a white woman. As he looked up into her face, the moment in which the cultural meaning of “white” overrode in his mind the literal meaning designating her skin color illustrates how collective cultural experience can shape and reshape the meanings of words. Was the derogatory connotation implied in William’s “whitey” a meaning also in Michael’s mind, and the one behind Michael’s inability to see Miss Kathy as “white”? If so, in Michael’s word (and indeed, William’s “whitey”), we can feel decades of accrued associations passed down through families’ and neighbors’ accounts of white behavior toward African Americans.

Michael’s declaration to his youth club teacher could, on one level, be understandably felt as a moment that demonstrates effective intercultural Christian relationship. Michael could look right in his teacher’s white face and completely miss any association of her with the people intended by his other understanding of the word “white.” That that was his experience points most likely to good intercultural connection, not only by this particular youth club teacher, but by others in her faith community, both white and black. Michael’s “*you’re* not white” and moments like it function in our community in another way, too, and that is as an object of desire. We, especially white people in multiracial community, whether we admit it to ourselves or not, *desire* to be people who not only are not



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racist, but who are not even experienced by our black friends as “culturally white.” Though we know better, we still desire “post-racial” connection. We long to be “just people.”

We *are* white, of course – not only physically white, but also culturally white. So in this essay, we the authors locate ourselves as white, which is simply an acknowledgment of a limited perspective, our located and embedded lived experience. Even though in such a community we honestly try to see things also from the cultural perspective of the other, in the final analysis we rarely really transcend our limited perspectives. Although cultures *do* learn from one another, we as limited broken people usually only share what we know in the ways we’re used to, that is, from our own cultural vantage points. In describing our church, we would like to adopt Fr. Anthony Gittins’ phrase, “intercultural” community. To call Friendship Church intercultural, however, must be qualified. Often in practice we have only been what Gittins calls “cross-cultural,” or even in some ways only “multi-cultural”; but as a matter of conviction, and more deeply as a strong heart-felt desire, we think of ourselves as, and truly want to be, an *intercultural* faith community.² In this essay, we will present a picture of our church family life, viewing it largely through this lens of Fr. Gittins’ definition of an intercultural faith community. In sketching this picture of Friendship, with its good points and it’s not so good, we hope to present a study that will help to deepen our readers’ understanding and practice of intercultural, faith-based mission.

Roots of Today’s Friendship Community Church

One of Fr. Gittins’ primary criteria is that an intercultural community is made up of cultures in relationship and united in a common purpose. Our purpose and sense of mission as a church have a strong history. Friendship Community Church is a small, interracial community in Christ located in a little Pittsburgh neighborhood, sandwiched between the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in Oakland on one side, and the Hill District on the other side. Around 1990, at the height of its programming, Friendship had not only a thriving Christ-centered congregation, but also an after-school tutoring center, a housing nonprofit called Breachmenders that rehabbed houses and sold them to first-time homeowners, a school-to-career center orienting youth toward work, a daycare enabling single parents to hold down jobs, and a lively youth club that met in the nearby low-income housing community then called Terrace Village (now Oak Hill).

As a congregation gathering for worship services, Friendship began in the mid-1950s. By the 1970s it had dwindled to

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*...as a small church
living out intercultural
mission...*

a handful, but by the end of that decade, it experienced a rebirth which shaped the church character it has today. But our story as a small church living out intercultural mission in West Oakland, Pittsburgh, really begins well before the church was even born—and this beginning did not even take place in Pittsburgh. Friendship's roots reach down into 1930s and 40s rural Mississippi where a young African American boy was born, grew up, and chafed under the grinding poverty of his daily life.

His name was John Perkins. Early on, he became acutely aware of a stark division that seemed to decide everything. He came up against the absolute division between those (mostly white folks) who owned things – the farms, the wagons, and the means of production – and those (mostly black folks) who did not own much of anything, who had to ask for jobs from the hands of those who did. As a teenager, the young Perkins grew determined to escape from the racist, dehumanizing conditions that surrounded and shaped his life.

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He made his way to southern California, where he found a job and he rose, economically, into the middle class. Later, when his young son, Spencer Perkins, attended a Sunday school, John began noticing a dramatic change in his son. Spencer had committed his life to Jesus Christ, and the change in him made a strong impression on his father. John began going with him to church, and he in turn met Christ. John was welcomed into the church and disciplined one-on-one by a white brother.³ As he grew stronger in his faith and love for God, John began to feel a call to return—to go to the one place he deeply resisted—to his home in a rural poor area in Mississippi. God broke down his resistance, and his family did return—with a mission. John and his wife, Vera Mae Perkins, developed a model of doing ministry among the poor in which the church was at the center of an effort to develop and lift an entire community. Yes, they engaged deeply in the practices you would expect from a Protestant salvation-focused church at the time—committed preaching of the Bible, evangelistic efforts to lead individuals to Christ, Sunday School classes—but they also were teaching people how to read, working on finding them jobs, eventually trying to build economic vitality into their local community. They even found ways to own stuff, stuff that makes money—like the thrift store they developed. God was definitely moving through them and among their neighbors. In addition to literacy, biblical formation, and economic empowerment, the Perkins did their part in the freedom movement of the 1960s. John Perkins was one of the many heroes of the voter drives, and he suffered because of it, in one instance, in fact, jailed and beaten close to death by prison guards.

Perkins articulated what they were doing in community development by using what he called the “Three Rs.” The first *R*, *Reconciliation*, was grounded as a practice in 2 Corinthians 5.17-19:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them.

...racial reconciliation as a specific example of the horizontal, blacks and whites becoming one in Christ.

Reconciliation, for Perkins, was threefold. First, vertically between humanity and God. Second, horizontally, love between neighbors generally. Third, Perkins emphasized racial reconciliation as a specific example of the horizontal, blacks and whites becoming one in Christ. In partial contrast to many black empowerment voices of that day and ours, Perkins deeply believed that racial reconciliation was a necessary and key feature of effective ministry to the poor.

The second *R* of Christian community development as Perkins practiced it was *Relocation*. This call was grounded in Phil 2:5-8:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

...insisted on folks leaving the places of residence that their economic position might make possible, and “relocating” to live among the poor.

Just as Christ did not insist on his privileged location, but instead “relocated,” taking on the flesh and life of a human with and for us, John Perkins and the co-workers he led into this ministry, insisted on folks leaving the places of residence that their economic position might make possible, and “relocating” to live among the poor. Relocation enables middle class Christians to get to know what their brothers and sisters in poverty really face, to face it (to some extent) alongside them, to make the served community their own home, and to invest their lives alongside their new neighbors in at-risk neighborhoods. The poor are accustomed to charity from afar, or quick missions that disappear. One day a neighbor approached a white relocater at Friendship after he had lived on their street for 14 years, and said, “So, you’re going to stay then?”

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In the beginning, relocation was more the practice of *returners*, men and women indigenous to the community who had taken their first opportunity to get out, but later, like the Perkins, felt called to move back and be used by God to help build the community. The movement came to identify and correct two key misunderstandings of the word relocation. First, Native Americans responded strongly against the word because for them it evoked the imperialistic rounding up of their peoples and displacing them, repeatedly, into other locations. Second, relocation “can be interpreted as supporting a paternalistic approach to community development.” Rev. Wayne Gordon and Rev. John Perkins explain it as follows:

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and social capital,...*

Relocation as we want it to be understood is not about wealthy people from the suburbs going into poverty-stricken areas to save the day with their supposed expertise. It’s certainly not about white folks treating ethnic minorities like projects or problems to be solved. In fact . . . we believe that the people in the best position to propose and implement meaningful solutions to problems in a community are those who are struggling the most—regardless of what those coming from the outside might think.⁴

*...redistribution is done
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The third *R* in Perkins’ model of Christ-centered ministry to an at-risk neighborhood is *Redistribution*. From his early experience, Perkins knew that ministry must address the root causes of poverty and find ways to redistribute wealth, means of livelihood, and social capital, indeed all the forms of economic well-being that are so unequally distributed in our late modern society. Again, Gordon and Perkins clarify that redistribution, as the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA, www.ccda.org) defines and practices it, is not a political stance, supporting, for example, economic socialism imposed by a government. Instead, redistribution is done by Christians fully motivated by love and Christlike compassion to redistribute resources in order to empower those less fortunate than themselves.⁵

In addition to the Three *Rs*—Reconciliation, Relocation, and Redistribution, the CCDA puts front and center the following principles: leadership development, listening to the community, being church-based, a holistic approach, and empowerment. Today, the CCDA movement that began with the Perkins family in the mid-twentieth century is an international organization with hundreds of churches and nonprofits banding together to make a difference in at-risk neighborhoods. When people attend a CCDA international conference, they are struck by the fact that this larger Christian

community is deeply intercultural and diverse. It's not a Caucasian organization with small minority groups also in attendance. Visually, it looks like the church, surely, as the Lord intends it.

When these young couples learned that Friendship Church was in danger of closing, they felt called by God to relocate, to buy houses in the neighborhood, and commit their lives to this calling.

Taking up again the Pittsburgh story of Friendship Church, we note that in the 1970s a group of young evangelical Christians moved into the neighborhood, including five couples who still live there to this day (four white couples and one black). Through their leader, the Rev. Dana Shaw, they had gotten to know of John Perkins' work, and some of them visited Mendenhall, Mississippi to meet John and Vera Mae and experience their model of ministry for themselves. When these young couples learned that Friendship Church was in danger of closing, they felt called by God to *relocate*, to buy houses in the neighborhood, and commit their lives to this calling. The group they came alongside of—a small number of deeply committed African American members of Friendship—welcomed them as partners in ministry.

Some Indications of Interculturality at Friendship

For forty years now Friendship has embraced the CCDA model of ministry as the main purpose drawing its two primary cultures together. Recent demographic changes to the immediate neighborhood around the church threaten to make this purpose obsolete: 1) an aging African American resident population, 2) these older residents selling their houses to speculators who then pack university students into them (often breaking zoning laws), and 3) rising prices of real estate in the area, which increases taxes and prices poorer residents out. Under the cover of market forces, the poor are being moved out. Yet the church is holding onto its historic mission, in part because in the mixed-income housing community nearby, there still resides a large number of people living at poverty level and struggling with some of the issues we have felt called to help address.⁶

Is Friendship intercultural? Fr. Gittins, as we have noted above, defines intercultural faith community as one that has at least two cultures, that is united in a common purpose, that develops genuine relationships with each other across cultural lines, that finds both cultures submitting to their God-given purpose—and both submitting to being transformed by the God who gives them that purpose. In what follows, we will give snapshots of Friendship life as “evidence” to put on the table for interculturality.

The first image that arises is our Sunday morning “greeting time” during worship. People turn to those close by to hug and greet them warmly. They tend to start conversations, as if they

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This friendly greeting time is so lively (almost unruly) that the leaders have to use an energetic worship song to bring us back to the pews.

With a 60:40 ratio of white to black, there is also diversity of age,...

were meeting at the beginning of a meal together. Many walk all the way across the sanctuary, greeting and hugging someone on the opposite side.⁷ There are little “every Sunday” encounters that you are sure to see; for example, a certain young white woman always goes to two black senior ladies—these three always greet. In fact, there are several of these cross-generational groupings during greeting time. But as we said, people move around the entire sanctuary, and toward visitors as well (though this has been known to scare the visitors). The salient identifying feature of visitors to Friendship Church is that they are the two or three people standing still in one place, doubtless wondering what in the world is going on. This friendly greeting time is so lively (almost unruly) that the leaders have to use an energetic worship song to bring us back to the pews. Even then you can hear people talking well into the song. At Friendship, people like each other. It’s unmistakable: surely this connection across lines of four generations, across lines of race, across lines of economic class is something that cannot be faked. And it is something that changes you, after you have been a part of the community for a time.⁸

Our diversity, for such a small church, is striking. With a 60:40 ratio of white to black, there is also diversity of age, spanning generations. Until just recently we had a 100-plus year old. We have seniors, middle-aged and young adults, teens, children, toddlers and infants. This range of ages is notable for a church of our small size (about 100 members on the books). We have as members two visually impaired couples who, especially in recent months, are active and visible in ministry. We have interracial married couples, and a new senior interracial couple has just started attending because, as they put it, our church is the only one where they are made to feel comfortable.

We delight in humor at Friendship, a kind of humor that often surprises with the pleasing flavor of a culture not your own. Again, sometimes edging into the category of the unruly, laughter often occurs during the worship service. Somehow we have been able to keep a worshipful tone and continuity through all this joy in being together. We even dare at times to laugh at our cultural differences, related to how warm the sanctuary needs to be and the dishes we’ll be serving at church events.

Beyond the Sunday morning worship, individuals from across our cultures work together in leading the church, meet for fellowship and fitness activities, and study Scripture and pray together in small Bible study groups, mostly in people’s homes. As with any church, strong personal relationships exist that the leaders may not even know about, but here are some examples of close, ongoing, intercultural friendships.

...part of what black people learn and experience is the full humanity of white folks, that, for example, despite the way it can sometimes look, “not all white folks have it going on...they need help, too.”

...“the spirit of a church that creates the atmosphere in which a woman will feel free to state out loud in the group that she just got out of the penitentiary—that spirit is the hallmark of Friendship.”

Families who gather each year for Christmas brunch, women who host family celebrations together, friends who care for each other by grocery shopping and providing transportation to doctors' appointments, friends committed to praying regularly for one another, professional women who meet on their lunch hour, friends who stay in close contact even after some of them have left Friendship, two women who have found strength in each other for thirty years, two men in recovery who phone each other every single day, and another pair of men, one of them having been incarcerated, who have been strongly connected for many years, often watching sports together. There are others.

The stories of how people come to Friendship also shed light on our interculturality. One African American leader relates how in the 1960s his mother first brought him to the church. A visionary during the civil rights movement, she had decided she wanted to learn more about white people, so she brought her family here to worship. The same leader will tell you now that part of what black people learn and experience is the full humanity of white folks, that, for example, despite the way it can sometimes look, “not all white folks have it going on...they need help, too.” Another point of entry is that often evangelical Christians who feel a call to social justice and who come to Pittsburgh to do university study, discover Friendship to be a place with a deep spiritual attraction for them. They feel called here.

Others connect with us from a place of urgent need. We have a time of open prayer requests and praise reports during Sunday morning worship. Several times a visitor has said something like the following: “I want to share that I just got out of the penitentiary, and I am so happy!” This is an actual quotation. Or, “Today I am one year sober.” At which point the entire congregation erupts in applause and joy for them. People will also report that a family member, a cousin, or a friend of a friend, was shot and killed in street violence. The silence after these moments is palpable with fellow feeling, in the presence of God. One African American church leader has repeatedly asserted, “the spirit of a church that creates the atmosphere in which a woman will feel free to state out loud in the group that she just got out of the penitentiary—that spirit is the hallmark of Friendship.”

Struggle

Just as the positive signs of intercultural faith community

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Perhaps these struggles themselves are also positive indications of our interculturality as a congregation, showing that in our interpersonal relationships we are fighting against the current,...

“Friendship is a place where everyone can feel uncomfortable!”

give us intense joy, other dynamics among us cause intense sadness. In this journey in God’s grace that is the Christian life, we regularly struggle with the sin that each of us, as broken brothers and sisters in Christ, must address. Everyone struggles with their own individual sin, and every society also has structural sin. Because we are intercultural at Friendship, though, we must also struggle with structural sin, *in us*, personally. We bear in our personal relationships at our church the burden of America’s history of racism. This country’s legacy—indeed the recent condoning of racial violence—makes living in interracial community very difficult. Perhaps these struggles themselves are also positive indications of our interculturality as a congregation, showing that in our interpersonal relationships we are fighting against the current, dealing with things people in racially homogeneous groups rarely have to face.

As with the positive indications, we will share some snapshots of our struggles. The struggle to which we refer is not mere awkwardness at being in close relation to a culture different from your own; one leader playfully brags, “Friendship is a place where *everyone* can feel uncomfortable!” It goes beyond that. *Relocation* itself, understood and expressed in a certain way, can be felt as an insult. A neighbor once told us that she never wants to hear again about a white person “sacrificing” to live in West Oakland. Understood. Undeniable, too, is that some relocators—black and white—have actually given up something to live here. And black parishioners often pay a cultural price to attend Friendship Church, sometimes being called “oreos” (implying that inside they are not culturally black) and being asked why they attend a “white church.”

The perception from outside that Friendship is a white church is not without some basis. Some members have noted, vulnerably, the reality of “white bossiness” on the one hand, and on the other hand a hesitation at times by African Americans to stand toe to toe with other leaders. Even though our rules of governance require proportional representation, the real distribution of influence and power can be uneven. This results in part from an inequity in formal education that can give white leaders’ voices more weight than even they themselves consciously intend. That is less so today because several additional black leaders have joined Friendship in recent years. This dynamic will remain, however, because our mission is precisely to people in our geographical area who are struggling, many of whom are African American. Many have not been encouraged (or they have been actively discouraged) to take advantage of formal educational opportunities. To address this power imbalance, we have tried with modest success to establish discussion practices on the board of elders that bring all voices

Coming not only from different racial backgrounds, then, we also run up against different understandings of how a church is governed and where authority is located.

A major outcome of the last session was that our church needs to be more intentional about leadership development at all levels.

more fully to the table. Also, equity in leadership at Friendship is complicated by the difference between Presbyterian Church polity and that of many African American Baptist churches. Black Baptist churches, at least historically, have strong senior pastors able to carry out what they want without much elected opposition or debate. Presbyterian Church polity, on the other hand, requires strong lay leadership—government by a group of “ruling elders.” Coming not only from different racial backgrounds, then, we also run up against different understandings of how a church is governed and where authority is located.

Twice in the last ten years, we have had church-wide “racial reconciliation” discussions. During one of these, we divided into racially homogeneous groups to make sure each culture’s voices had a space to express their experience of our life together freely and safely. Someone in each group took notes, and then we reported to the larger group what we had shared (without names). We are told that these discussions, for the most part, felt empowering to black folks, and deeply disturbing to white folks. A major outcome of the last session was that our church needs to be more intentional about leadership development at all levels.

One snapshot from the middle of these racial reconciliation talks is particularly beautiful. During the homogeneous groups, some African Americans apparently expressed some real feeling about racially inflected bias they felt at Friendship. One woman, a strong and beloved personality for many decades at Friendship, was having trouble, herself, listening to this talk of unfairness. She stormed out of the room, angry. She may not have understood that the purpose of the separate discussions was to work toward unity, not to divide. But the strength of her feeling against a discussion that she perceived as divisive is a wonderful Friendship moment. In fact, this woman who died just this past year, has been revealed to the rest of us by her dearest friends in her funeral, *to have adopted Friendship Church*. She was tireless and consistent in representing to all her family and friends that Friendship Church was *her family*. Some already knew, but many of us only fully realized at her funeral the extent to which she had made us fully *hers*.

In addition to intercultural difficulties, Friendship also experienced institutional loss. Particularly poignant was the closing of our nonprofit, called Breachmenders, due to the shrinking of the funding environment and an embezzlement by an outsider brought in to provide accounting services. From those ashes, however, we have created a new community center called The Corner. It has developed into a place where community members design and lead their own activities,

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where the neighborhood block club meets, where many forms of local Pittsburgh artistic expression find a venue (jazz, spoken word, dance, poetry, visual art), where we have had social justice discussions (Black Lives Matter, “the new Jim Crow”—mass incarceration, bullying in school, etc.), where we have a small coffee shop, and artistic activities for young and adult alike. Additionally, outreach efforts now include: 1) regular biannual trips to the same village in rural Haiti, establishing a similar intercultural relationship with their church, 2) ministry to a local women’s shelter, 3) ministry to young men who play basketball, 4) a new support and recovery group, and 5) a new ministry to young women in the church and neighborhood. Friendship has hired two African American fulltime staff: a Youth Ministry Coordinator and an Executive Director of the Corner. These two women have contributed significant new energy, vision, and capacity in outreach ministry.

Prospects

We as writers remind you of our own cultural location as white. We are aware that this material might sound very different in the voice of even some of our closest African American friends at Friendship. They would likely introduce dimensions of our Christian life together of which we ourselves are not at all, or only dimly aware. We share, vulnerably, these moments and dimensions of our church family experience because, much like a strong marriage going through tough times, we try to face these moments and learn from them.

The exercise of writing this essay and looking at Friendship Church through the lens of interculturality has been encouraging. Friendship has felt a rich joy and been used by God to create new life: we still do so in our small groups, in our personal relationships, and in our Sunday morning worship services. One of our leaders always stressed that none of this is possible without the saving sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, who brings together both our cultural groups in gratitude for forgiveness and grace. Gittins points to this central condition for intercultural Christian mission when he features, from Ephesians chapter 2, the Christ whose blood has brought us “near,” the Christ who “in his person is actually destroying the hostility between us.” Christ makes it possible, and in Christ we are resolved to continue on this road together. In describing how intercultural ministry requires a new form of communication, Fr. Gittins once again looks down the road that is ours at Friendship in a way that gives tremendous hope when he writes:

In ministries that require a new language,
the most effective are not always the most

fluent or brilliant, but those most dedicated to the process of trying to learn a little and never giving up in the face of difficulty. So with learning the art of intercultural living: perseverance may be a better witness than expertise.⁹

...perseverance may be a better witness than expertise.

*Rev. Dr. Gary Willingham-McLain, Pittsburgh
Dr. Laurel Willingham-McLain, Duquesne University*

Endnotes

¹Gittins, Anthony, *Living Mission Interculturally. Faith, Culture, and the Renewal of Praxis*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2015.

²Anthony Gittins distinguishes 1) **monocultural and bicultural**: bicultural being the experience of someone so truly at home in two cultures behaviorally and linguistically that she can go easily back and forth; 2) **cross-cultural**: someone who “crosses over” into a foreign culture and remains there as the minority, an outsider, neither fully assimilated, nor in a culturally mutual relationship; 3) **multicultural**: people from different cultures “equally at home but separately rather than together,” not really entering into deep relationships or mutually enriching interactive influence; “differences may be eliminated...tolerated...or managed” (page 19); and 4) **intercultural**: “an intercultural community shares intentional commitment to the common life, motivated not by pragmatic considerations alone, but by a shared religious conviction and common purpose.” It is a faith-based and lifelong process of conversion with the goal of creating “a *new culture* in which all can live fruitfully” (page 22).

³Referring to Perkins’ brother in Christ as a “white brother” may sound odd. This essay will often designate a person’s skin color (and cultural marker) which could even feel offensive to some, but we do it precisely because we are looking primarily at Friendship’s intercultural life. Our purpose is to talk about how the cultures relate, with some specifics. In our daily church life and interaction, of course, we don’t actually refer to each other in this way—always attaching a racial or cultural label.

⁴Gordon, Wayne, and John M. Perkins, *Making Neighborhoods Whole: A Handbook for Christian Community Development*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013. 47-48.

⁵Gordon and Perkins, 75-76.

⁶This essay focuses primarily on the intercultural character of the church fellowship, and not as much on its specific missional outreach efforts to the poor.

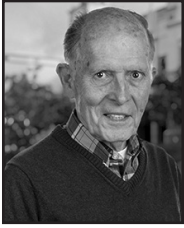
⁷The sanctuary is shaped “in the round,” with the central altar and pulpit area forming a thrust stage surrounded by three sections of pews.

⁸Recently, a young woman reported that while visiting her home church, she reached out during their greeting time and began to hug someone nearby. When she encountered a surprised and less

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than cooperative response from the other, she suddenly realized:
“Friendship Church has really changed me.”

⁹Gittins in the article above, "Beyond International and Multicultural"
(here p. 70).



Fr. William R. Headley,
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William R. Headley, C.S.Sp., of the US Spiritan Province, was founding Dean (August 2007) and currently Professor of Interreligious Peace Studies at the Kroc School of Peace Studies, University of San Diego, as also Adjunct Special Professional, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame, Indiana. After doctorate in sociology (New York University, 1974), he did post-doctoral work at Harvard Divinity School and George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (1991-92). He served as the first Spiritan JPIC officer (Rome, 1987-91). He established a graduate program in Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA (July 1993). Provincial Superior of the USA Eastern Province (1979-85), he was the first President of the Africa Faith and Justice Network/USA (1982-85).

MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE: A CHALLENGE FOR NORTH-AMERICAN SPIRITANS?

“No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion.”¹

Introduction

Between August 14-19, 2016, representatives from the three North American Spiritan Provinces of Canada, TransCanada and the United States met in Granby, Canada. They prayed and planned together for the future of their Congregation in North America. An informal summary of the event noted, “We came to share our histories, our hopes, and to forge a path towards a more collaborative future.”² A synthesis of the gathering conveys a touch of urgency: “Where is the Spirit leading us in North America as we look to the future?”³

As a contribution to this reflection process, Fr. John Fogarty, C.S.Sp., the Spiritan superior general, sent the gathering a wide-ranging paper entitled, “Responding Creatively to the Needs of Evangelization of Our Times” (published in this number of *Spiritan Horizons*). A section of Fr. Fogarty's document seemed particularly relevant to the Granby assembly. It is entitled, “Strategic Planning for Mission.” In this segment of his paper, he recalls the three-year planning process asked of the various Spiritan circumscriptions by the 2012 general chapter held in Bagamoyo, Tanzania. He underscores the “many encouraging signs of the presence of the Spirit.” Fogarty also writes of concerns: diocesanization; nationalization; and difficulty finding confreres for leadership. Fr. Fogarty ends this list of concerns by mentioning that “congregational investment in inter-religious dialogue remains an ongoing challenge...”

In his reference to interreligious dialogue, I find several possible understandings. As he was addressing representatives of the Spiritan jurisdictions of North America, was Fogarty simply completing his list of major concerns? Or, was he sharing the “big picture” of needs for the Congregation? Perhaps, he was raising this challenge for consideration of this form of mission by a self-selected Spiritan body, whose aspirations and intent were to reach “Beyond (current) Spiritan Borders?”

Let me declare my bias regarding these various readings. As a Spiritan sociologist who has spent more than two decades in an inter-religious peacebuilding ministry, I find here, however deliberate on our superior general's part, a haunting challenge for Spiritans in North America, particularly the United States, to take up mission as dialogue. My question is: can Muslim-

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Christian dialogue be a ministry for Spiritans working in North America? In this article, I address directly only those working in the Spiritan Provinces of the United States, Canada and TransCanada; other Spiritan circumscriptions may want to reflect on how this applies to them.

Mission as Dialogue: Early Traces

I am indebted to Olaf Derenthal⁴ for tracing indications of Muslim-Christian encounters in the work of Spiritan founders, Claude Francois Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann. This author comments even-handedly on his sparse but intriguing finding: “[Our founders] cannot give responses to questions that their contemporaries never asked them” (ibid., 55). Given the times, circumstances, and focus of his ministry, des Places’ life showed “no explicit” encounter with Muslims. More than a century later Francis Libermann sent his early missionaries to evangelize areas of Africa, where Islam was well-entrenched. Derenthal sketches a picture of Libermann and some of his early missionaries as trying to reconcile a deep belief in their own Catholicism, as understood in their native France at the time, with the warm and inquisitive welcome and fresh challenges they received from Islamic leaders in Africa (ibid., 58-59).

It is a grand historical leap from the times, sentiments, and interreligious actions of Libermann and his early missionaries to the 1980s and the publication of the *Spiritans Rule of Life* (henceforth SRL) in 1987. That time gap and, especially, the development of missiological practice during the intervening years is best captured in two Spiritan gatherings of those working in Muslim-Christian dialogue and one meeting directed more broadly to those in non-Christian dialogue (ibid., 59). A deeper look at the post-Libermann encounter with Islam by Spiritans and their wisdom about dialogical ministry is beyond the scope of this article. It must be left to researchers closer to historical resources. What is more available are the calls to mission as dialogue found in two pivotal general chapters, that is, 1987 and 2012. When the SRL was published thirty years ago, it urged Spiritans to “take as our own the points that the church is currently stressing in mission” (SRL 13.1). Among the five areas highlighted for our apostolic focus was, “Mission as Dialogue” (ibid.). SRL did not specify or elaborate on what form of dialogue should be undertaken. But, even at the time, some Spiritans were deeply engaged with peoples of other world faith traditions as well as local traditional religions. As our community expanded its outreach into Asia and non-Christian majority sectors of African countries, our experience of religious dialogue deepened.

... “interreligious dialogue is among today’s greatest challenges.”

... “serious and on-going formation through reading and study...”

In its discussion of mission, the 2012 Bagamoyo General Chapter drew attention to four forms of mission: Mission of Evangelization of the Poor; Mission of Interreligious Dialogue; Mission as Promotion of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC); and Mission as Education.⁵ In its commentary on Mission as Dialogue, the chapter document noted: “interreligious dialogue is among today’s greatest challenges.”⁶ The 2012 Chapter gave expression to the seriousness with which it wanted this form of mission to be taken. It called for adaptations along the entire continuum of Spiritan life and training, to better enable us to respond to this challenge as a community. The chapter gave specific guidance as follows. 1) This ministry is seen as ideal for what is called overseas training program (“stage”), part of the initial formation experience; 2) greater importance will be given to placing new Spiritans in an apostolate of dialogue; and 3) “serious and on-going formation through reading and study is encouraged. We will set up ... libraries and resources which enable understanding the realities among those we work.”⁷

Intending to be illustrative rather than all-inclusive, the Spiritan International Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation office in Rome listed those countries where service amid Muslim communities is a significant part of Spiritan ministry today: Algeria, Mauritania, Pakistan, the Philippines, Senegal, Tanzania and Nigeria.⁸ One may add that many if not most Western countries express concern about both increased Islamic presence and the concomitant rise of indigenous Islamophobia.

Mission as Dialogue: Why Us?

American Spiritans looking at the fourfold range of calls to mission by the 2012 Chapter see themselves or members of their province in three of these four guides: service to the poor; the cause of justice, peace and integrity of creation; and, certainly, education. In contrast, Mission as Dialogue seems distant from our customary ministries. In the following pages, I will argue that Mission as Dialogue is a ministry much closer to the US Province, and, possibly, North American Spiritans, than we think. The Granby gathering of August 2016 did not have the status of a provincial or trans-provincial chapter. Still, leadership of the three North American provinces convened the meeting. It arose from a “felt need for a deeper insight into our Spiritan charism and to find new ways of living it.”⁹ When the assembly turned its attention to the service of others, there was a clear resonance with the 2012 Chapter: “those on the peripheries, the poor, the refugees, the immigrants, the marginalized and those living in communion with all creation.” (ibid.).

The Bagamoyo Chapter began its discussion of future mission for Spiritans by reflecting on the globalized world in which we live. In our present human context, it drew our attention to new forms of poverty. Service to those in economic poverty is neither denied nor abandoned, but, placed by its side in the chapter document, are the “new poor” defined as: “young people in difficulty, migrants, people who are discriminated against and oppressed, and those marginalized by the phenomenon of globalization” (Bagamoyo 1.3).

It does not take a very great stretch of credibility to apply such identity qualifiers to the Muslim community in the United States. As a demographic group, Muslims worldwide have the youngest median age of any religious group.¹⁰ How some of these young Muslims living in the United States become radicalized to serve militant causes is a significant concern to our society. Most (63 %) of the 3.3 million Muslims in the U.S. are immigrants.¹¹ Islamophobia, the particular brand of marginalization Muslims living here suffer, is

an exaggerated fear, hatred and hostility toward Islam and Muslims that is perpetuated by negative stereotyping resulting in bias, discrimination and the marginalization and exclusion of Muslims from social, political and civil life.¹²

The 2012 Chapter calls for new approaches to evangelization in response to globalization’s fresh challenges. This urge is clearly directed to “first evangelization” and “new evangelization.” A strikingly new addition, however, that also demands approaches that we must develop, is added: “... working with and promoting reconciliation among groups of people who are marginalized with a view to their integral human development.” (1.7). And Muslims in the US seem to fit this description.

Reflecting on interreligious dialogue in the future of the American Catholic Church, John Allen at once complimented Catholics on how far they have come in their relationship with Jews and how far they have to go in building equitable relations with “assertive Muslims.” He writes,

A church whose primary interreligious relationship for the last forty years has been with Judaism finds itself struggling to come to terms with a newly assertive Islam not only in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, but in its own European backyard.¹³

*...working with
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with a view to their
integral human
development.”*

The Work Ahead

One might add Catholics in the United States as being in need of interreligious relationship building with Muslims, if a person takes seriously the findings of a September 2016, Georgetown University study.¹⁴ While it can be dangerous to give one study too much weight, the Prince Alwaleed Bin Center is reputable, though its findings are sobering to anyone interested in the reconciliation of peoples. Here are some of the findings.

...half of the time the word “Islamic” is used in reference to the Islamic State terrorist group.

...people who mingle freely and fully with members of other faiths improve their images of people from other faiths.

...people who interact with persons of other faiths strengthen their hold on their own faith.

- Nearly half of Catholics cannot name any similarities between Catholicism and Islam.
- When asked their overall impression of Muslims, three in ten Catholics admit to having unfavorable views.
- Catholics are less likely than the general American public to know a Muslim personally.
- A majority of Catholics correctly identifies prayer and fasting as important parts of Muslim life, but also incorrectly believes that Muslims worship the Prophet Muhammad.
- Those surveyed who consume content from Catholic media outlets have more unfavorable views of Muslims than those who don't.
- In prominent Catholic outlets, half of the time the word “Islamic” is used in reference to the Islamic State terrorist group.
- Often the words, gestures, and activities of Pope Francis frame discussions of Islam in Catholic outlets.
- Catholics who know a Muslim personally or have participated in dialogue or community service with Muslims often have different views about Islam and interfaith dialogue than those who have not interacted with Muslims.”

I take up the last item for deeper reflection. Dr. William Vendley, International President of Religions for Peace (RfP), offers a sense of how positive change occurs in such relationship building situations. He notes that this is based on his organization's study.¹⁵ Vendley contends that people who mingle freely and fully with members of other faiths improve their images of people from other faiths. In turn, they strengthen their desire to cooperate with those different from themselves. He reports, strikingly, that people who interact with persons of other faiths strengthen their hold on their own faith. His theory stretches to institutions such as mosques, synagogues and churches. When such centers of different faith expressions

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As a result of one's formation, the Spiritan would be attuned to ethnic and religious sensitivities, tensions and indigenous leadership's willingness to collaborate.

interact with some regularity, they begin to change their collective attitudes toward a more positive understanding of the ecclesial institutions of other faiths. Though intriguing and, in part, self-evident, this theory requires more rigorous study for validation. Yet, observation of such relationship building, when it does happen, seems to collaborate this. A mosque in southern California, for example, is notable for its interreligious collaborative engagement with a number of Christian churches to house the homeless in the winter. A humanitarian Sufi¹⁶ organization readily welcomes its Christian neighbors to its *iftars* (*iftar* is the dinner eaten by devout Muslims after sunset during Ramadan) and, in turn, is often invited to address Christian audiences. As one reflects on tensions with Islamic people in the United States and American Catholic ignorance of Muslim life and religious practice, social distance and lack of acceptance of Muslims stand as a haunting summons of Spiritans to an apostolate of Muslim-Christian reconciliation.

Spiritan Assets for Muslim-Christian Dialogue

While quite new to interreligious dialogue here in the United States, Spiritan priests and Lay Associates can engage in Muslim-Christian dialogue with strong assets. Some of these advantages for Mission as Dialogue are limited to priests, but well-placed and alert Spiritan Associates share many of them.

The Spiritan is rooted in a given “neighborhood.” As a member of a local community and serving in a parish, school or service center, our colleague will know the local environment. As a result of one’s formation, the Spiritan would be attuned to ethnic and religious sensitivities, tensions and indigenous leadership’s willingness to collaborate. Our Spiritan tradition of international service and recent trans-province emphasis on intercultural living and mission should equip us to bring a certain finesse to inter-faith and intercultural settings.¹⁷

A Spiritan priest typically gains a certain authority and respect as a religious actor in his locality. This comes from his own community to which he is in service but, also, from people of other faiths who offer deference to a “person of the cloth.” While the strength and luster of this asset has dulled with the increase of secularism and the shame of social improprieties such as child abuse by Catholic clergy, the civil and larger public service sector of Americans still affords the religious actor space to speak, intervene, and heal. This can be enhanced, and may take on the quality of a personal attribute, if the priest or Lay Spiritan lives a simple, caring, and compassionate life. One potentially important expression of this authority is the “bully pulpit.” This refers to the multiple settings and circumstances in which the priest or Associate addresses believers and others

who might be in attendance in a religious or public gathering. Often, this takes the form of the written word. Pastoral letters posted at national, diocesan, parish or school-wide levels can be powerful disseminators. Bishops and priests often commission such works to well-informed lay persons. Again, examples help.

The church has rites, rituals, prayers and other religious instrumentality that can sooth a troubled institution or community and help to put troubles and hostility in perspective.

- I have seen Cardinal Charles Bo of Yangon, Myanmar and Cardinal John Onaiyekan of Abuja, Nigeria speak and write with force and directness about ethnic tensions and against violent militancy.
- Some years ago, a Spiritan priest used the occasion of a prominent Spiritan activist's funeral in Haiti to chastise the government for alleged injustices. High government officials were in the congregation.
- I was on-site when the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops was about to vote on their 1983 Peace Pastoral, "The Challenge of Peace." The bishops received an impassioned note from the President of the United States urging them not to issue it, because of some views that were at odds with government policy. The pastoral passed.

As a "person of religion," the Spiritan can more easily call upon and effectively use the "soft power" of concepts such as peace, justice, equality, compassion, *et cetera*. One remembers Archbishop Tutu's fabled role in the Republic of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Sessions that he facilitated began with a prayer. He did not hesitate to use the softer language of prayer?

The church has rites, rituals, prayers and other religious instrumentality that can sooth a troubled institution or community and help to put troubles and hostility in perspective. One hears at times the macabre comment that Catholic churches know how to "do a good funeral."¹⁸ The cumulative effect of these assets, if well-employed in Muslim-Christian dialogue, is to make the Spiritan an apt candidate for inter-faith dialogue with a given local community of Muslims. It is important to comment that most of the assets described here can be equally put to use by a local Imam, Muslim educator serving in a Muslim school, and other Islamic leadership persons.

Dialogue in Practices

Throughout this work, I invite Spiritan from North America to take up Mission as Dialogue through Muslim-Christian interreligious peacebuilding. It would be wrong to suggest that this is an entirely new ministry. In fact, throughout this article, I mention a number of examples. It

*...doctoral program,
where a candidate already
schooled in one faith
tradition enters a select
doctoral program that
focuses on a different and
additional faith tradition.*

might be conducive to Spiritan involvement to highlight several additional cutting-edge examples from different settings.

- Theology Department and Dialogue. The theology departments of some Catholic universities in the United States include a religious studies' unit. This enables them to teach other than Catholic or Christian theology. Georgetown's theology department, for example, has a unique doctoral program, where a candidate already schooled in one faith tradition enters a select doctoral program that focuses on a different and additional faith tradition.
- Dialogue for Religious Leaders. "Bridging Communities" is a forty-four hour Interreligious Peacebuilding Certificate program initiated by the Kroc School of Peace Studies, University of San Diego, California. The program creates neutral space for local Islamic and Christian leaders to interact closely. Participants gain a strong grasp of a faith not their own, acquire conflict resolution skills, and build trans-religious relationships. One-third of the seminars is in the community, visiting alternate faith centers. The program aims to empower participants to promote interreligious dialogue in their communities.
- Top Down Dialogue. A civil war began in the Central Africa Republic in 2012. Violence and tension continue to trouble this country. A number of reconciliation efforts have been attempted. One of these initiatives is led by an interfaith team of religious leaders. This Interfaith Peace Platform of Islamic, Protestant, and Catholic actors has fostered interreligious dialogue. They have achieved some notable successes at home and helped bring the conflict to the attention of the international community including America. Members of the team are: Imam Omar Kabine Layama, Archbishop (now Cardinal) Dieudonné Nzapalainga, C.S.Sp. and Rev. Nicolas Guérékoyame Gbangou.
- Bottom Up Dialogue. Catholic Relief Service (CRS), a large United States-based relief, development and Justice and Peace organization, has been championing interreligious dialogue-action for more than twenty years. The major focus of its efforts is local, religiously diverse communities, where there is tension and often violence. A number of dialogue-action models have been developed with local collaboration. The models are monitored by CRS staff, and both shared and critiqued across the agency. Six of these models from

When someone asks me, “What do you do for a living?” I respond, “I teach peace studies.”

Religion: Missing Dimension of Peacebuilding

When someone asks me, “What do you do for a living?” I respond, “I teach peace studies.” Inevitably, I have to repeat myself. The inquirer hears me, but the person does not expect to hear “peace” as an academic discipline. If nudged to be more specific, I say that I work in the area of interreligious peacebuilding. Given this post-9/11 era in which we live, there is an immediate recognition that “someone ought” to be looking at the intersection of peace and religion.

Historians fuss over the origins of interreligious (inter-faith) peacebuilding. Scott Appleby, a noted peace scholar, pinpoints this discipline’s start with the 1994 publication of *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*.²⁰ Appleby captures well the purpose of this groundbreaking book: “... [It is] a lament that a counter-productive strain of secular myopia had excluded expertise in religion from foreign policy circles, and a clarion call to analytical arms, so to speak, by senior policy advisors ...who had ‘gotten religion...’” (ibid.).

The training wheels fell from the emerging sub-discipline of interreligious peacebuilding in the first decade of this century. Catholic, Mennonite, Muslim, and non-affiliated religious peacebuilders made their intellectual contributions. It is Appleby again who, in staccato fashion, puts forth the argument that religious peacebuilding is an established field: 1) it has its own journal and placement at major academic conferences; 2) the field has its own “mother and father” founders; 3) dissertations have been written in the field; 4) and, though debated, the field has been sufficiently conceptualized (ibid.). As I have taught and researched in interreligious peacebuilding, a widely used framework has frequently surfaced. It is found both in the works of Catholic authors²¹ and other Christian writers.²² And, it is recommended to religious leaders without a great deal of training in the discipline. For the alert religious actor, its value is easily grasped.

I was pleased to see that the Bagamoyo Chapter in its treatment of Mission as Dialogue (1.11) cites the “four levels of dialogue” which have become common in church mission documents: dialogue of everyday life, dialogue of collaborating in common projects, spiritual dialogue, and theological dialogue. Using Thomas Thangaraj’s formulation in somewhat different words, I will treat each of these elements or levels both to give a fuller understanding of them and to illustrate by examples. With each expression of the model, I offer examples drawn largely from international contexts.

“The *dialogue of life* is where people strive to live in an open and neighborly spirit, sharing their joys and sorrows, their human problems and preoccupations.”

- Father Peter Pham, a Vietnamese-American Georgetown University theology professor, took his devotedly Catholic mother to Vietnam for a visit. She lighted candles in a Buddhist temple for friends in Washington, D.C. where she lived. Asked why, she explained that her Vietnamese Buddhist neighbors were most considerate in providing her transport. When they heard that she was returning to their home country, they asked her for this favor. She obliged.
- “The *dialogue of action* is where persons of all religions collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people.”
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS) faced one of its greatest humanitarian challenges in responding as a Catholic service agency when the Asiatic tsunami occurred on December 26, 2004. Banda Ache, the disaster’s epicenter, was an almost totally Muslim community. For the first time, local people experienced the assistance of Christian aid groups. At one point, CRS asked local people what they most wanted. They answered: “copies of the Koran, prayer rugs, and coverings for the women.” This proved awkward for CRS. Its leadership wondered how pious Catholic CRS donors might receive news of such assistance. The wish was fulfilled.
- “The *dialogue of religious experience* is where persons, rooted in their own religious traditions, share their spiritual riches, for instance with regard to prayer and contemplation, faith, and ways of searching for God or the Absolute.”
- The yearning of Father Thomas Merton, the famed American Trappist monk, to interact with monks of other faiths in Asia is portrayed in the new film, *The Many Storys and Last Days of Thomas Merton*. The customary habitat for such a monk is his cloistered monastery living with co-religionists. Merton died from an electrical accident in Thailand while fulfilling his dream.
- “The *dialogue of theological exchange* is where specialists seek to deepen their understanding of their respective religious heritages, and to appreciate each other’s spiritual values.”
- A focus of San Diego’s bishop, Most Rev. Robert

McElroy, is Christian-Muslim dialogue. In 2015, he drew together scholars and practitioners of the two faiths at the School of Peace Studies, University of San Diego, for the first Christian-Muslim National Dialogue. The deliberations were restricted to a select few specialists.

The Bagamoyo Chapter closed the discussion of these peacebuilding levels with the remark: “These different levels help to establish genuine peace between believers in true mutual trust and in the refusal to become prisoners of our own fears.” (Bagamoyo 1.11).

Muslim-Christian Dialogue for American Spiritans: Suggestions for a Modest Beginning

This article does not urge American Spiritans to abandon or diminish the mission orientations which we have traditionally served, namely, Evangelization of the Poor, Promotion of Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation, and Education. It does, however, urge that we enlarge our outreach to include Muslim-Christian dialogue. Some suggested actions would both attend to the Bagamoyo Chapter recommendations and accommodate to the North-American context.

- Engage the experience already gained by North-American Spiritans working abroad interreligiously.
- When blessed with new priestly, brother, or lay vocations, encourage entry of such individuals into this ministry.
- Service in this area can become part of the formation process and placement of new Spiritans as they become available.
- When receiving international Spiritans from other provinces for service in the North-American provinces, request those with experience in this ministry, thereby enriching our personnel resources.
- Lay Associates with expertise in Islam, religious dialogue, reconciliation or related fields could be attracted to us as we gain experience in mission as dialogue and our interest becomes known.
- As we have done with other areas of human and spiritual development, we can attend to our ongoing formation through the instrumentality of retreats, workshops, topics for regional meetings, social media, website, addresses by experts, *et cetera*.
- It may happen that (a) confrere(s) will develop expertise and leadership in service to Muslim-

When receiving international Spiritans from other provinces for service in the North-American provinces, request those with experience in this ministry, thereby enriching our personnel resources.

...we can attend to our ongoing formation through the instrumentality of retreats, workshops, topics for regional meetings, social media, website, addresses by experts, et cetera.

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Christian dialogue as a full-time ministry. More likely, as our sensitization to this form of dialogue grows, we will take on the task of reforming Catholic parishes, schools, and service center constituencies to inter-faith exchange, respect, and reverence.

- There is the simple recommendation, made both by the Georgetown University Bridging Initiative and Dr. Vendley of Religions for Peace, cited above: Make friends with Muslims. Visit mosques or Islamic schools. Invite Muslims to visit our churches, schools, and centers. Share feasts such as an *iftar* or parish appreciation nights with festive meals, presentations, and social time together.

Suppose I was quite wrong and Fr. Fogarty never intended to urge North-American Spiritans gathered at Granby in August 2016 to take up mission as dialogue. Still, a Spirit-filled reading of the “signs of the times” will bring us Spiritans working in America to take up mission as dialogue with Islamic peoples living as our neighbors. They may be part of the “new poor” of which Bagamoyo speaks. The challenge to find new approaches to reconciliation within Muslim-Christian dialogue is ours.

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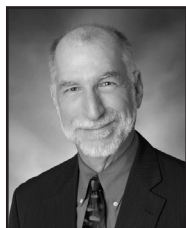
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Officer Handbook: Volumes I &
II* and *Student Life In Catholic
Higher Education: Advancing
Good Practice*.

*At first, we may be
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CATHOLIC IDENTITY, UNIVERSITY MISSION, AND CHARISM OF THE FOUNDING ORDER

Introduction

Since 1878, Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit has offered a Catholic education in the Spiritan tradition from a campus in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Within one long day’s drive, one could set out from Duquesne to visit Carlow University, Saint Vincent College, La Roche College, Wheeling Jesuit University, and the Franciscan University of Steubenville – very different institutions but Catholic universities all. Given their differences, what is it that unites these (or any) Catholic colleges and universities?

At first, we may be inclined to use “mission” and “identity” as nearly interchangeable terms when we discuss Catholic higher education, but a recent series of essays in *Commonweal* illustrated the tension that the two ideas often appear to present in practice. John Garvey and Mark Roche stress the role of an unambiguously Catholic institutional identity, especially in hiring faculty, in shaping a university’s mission. “Building a Catholic faculty is not tribalism,” writes Garvey, “It is a recognition that, in order to create a distinctly Catholic intellectual culture, we need to build an intellectual community governed by a Catholic worldview.”¹ Hiring Catholic faculty can thus be the key to advancing a Catholic institutional ethos while embracing full academic freedom.² David O’Brien argues in response that it is the university’s mission – the questions it seeks to answer and the causes it seeks to address – that should determine its identity as a community of scholars.³ To set Garvey and Roche’s denominational concept of identity as the starting point for advancing a sense of mission would be, in O’Brien’s view, a “return to clericalism and lay irresponsibility,” in that it would allow clergy and bishops to define the mission and identity of the church without the insight of academic leaders.⁴ Both views raise important questions. If Catholic universities should emphasize hiring Catholic faculty, then who sets the standards of their Catholicity? If a self-identified mission guides the formation of the university community, then what does a Catholic university offer the academy that a non-Catholic peer institution might not?

The purpose of this article is to propose an interdependent view of Catholic identity, university mission, *and* charism that accounts for the vibrant variation of form in Catholic higher education. First, we will consider the mission of a university, and its historic relationship to the Christian search for wisdom. Then we will explore what “essential characteristics” might indicate an institution’s Catholic identity. Then we will reflect



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...the notion of the intellectual life as one possible occasion of communion with Christ...

on how three different Catholic universities might discern where their mission, identity, and respective charisms call them in one otherwise similar hypothetical moment wherein each institution needs to hire a new professor. One key concept throughout will be that of an *institutional vocation*. There is a broad and beautiful awareness in today's church that each individual has a unique calling informed by natural talents, a baptismal call, and spiritual gifts. It may serve Catholic organizations well to approach their corporate life through a similar frame of reference. Just as different individuals contribute different gifts to the Body of Christ, so too do different institutions.

University Mission: Christianity and the Search for Wisdom

While universities as we understand them would not arise until the second millennium, the notion of the intellectual life as one possible occasion of communion with Christ is deeply rooted in the Gospels. John's prologue memorably envisions the divine *Logos* "through whom all things were made" assuming a human nature. God's truth, goodness, and beauty are revealed through the whole of creation, perfectly if mysteriously so in the incarnation. To study the truth is to study Christ and to encounter Christ is to encounter, as Pope Francis put it to the Congregation for Catholic Education, "the meaning of life, the cosmos and history."⁵ Likewise, Matthew's Gospel recounts Jesus, just before the ascension, commissioning the apostles, "going therefore, teach ye all nations."⁶ This is the educational mandate that comes from the heart of the Christian calling: both to practice Christ's way of love and to carry his good news to everyone.

What had always been an opportunity in the Christian life has been articulated more formally over time. One of the more comprehensive treatments comes to us in St. John Paul II's 1998 encyclical *Fides et Ratio*. Therein, the pope and sometime philosophy professor likens faith and reason to "two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth."⁷ He goes on to argue that the two ways of knowing are inseparable in the search for wisdom: reason absent faith becomes nihilistic and faith absent reason becomes superstitious.⁸ This sort of view suggests another, more explicit, way of conceiving the relationship between a Catholic identity and some sort of intellectual calling. Nihilism and superstition oppress people, but, in a profound work of mercy, the wisdom that faith and reason mutually illuminate frees them. This can be true both internally, as when Tennyson's poetry frees someone from the regrets that come with looking back on life's changes, or externally, as when biological research frees the developmentally challenged and their families from social

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exclusion.

Intellectual pursuits can be taken up in a variety of settings, but the one that has emerged most prominently in the Western context is that of the university. Cardinal Newman offers perhaps the best exposition of that mission in the lectures later collected as his *Idea of a University*. For Newman, the constitutive element of any university is ultimately its faculty, because the university has no reason to exist absent its intellectual mission.⁹ The faculty’s autonomy most importantly preserves their freedom of inquiry, which in turn keeps the university a place of continual learning for both students and their instructors. As Newman puts it, knowledge is best acquired through the “collision of mind with mind.”¹⁰ The very mission of a university is to be a community collaboratively engaged in the search for wisdom, wisdom consisting both of the knowledge acquired and of the personal ethical formation that it entails.

Catholic Identity: Structures and Goals

The *Idea* set out a vision as Newman was founding the Catholic University of Ireland, much of it informed by his experiences and critiques of Oxford, which is not only not a Catholic university, but also a university where Catholics were prohibited from teaching for quite some time. Yet Newman considers the theology faculty an indispensable part of realizing the mission of a university, Catholic or not,¹¹ because theology lends all other disciplines an encompassing sense of meaning. If it is so that any university in the fullest sense of the word should maintain a department of theology, then perhaps a Catholic institution is that much more likely to realize the fullness of the university mission. In 1967, a group of clerical academics from the larger Catholic research universities in North America gathered at Land O’ Lakes, Wisconsin, made precisely that claim. Instead of constraining the mission of a university, the Land O’ Lakes statement insists that a Catholic identity reinforces and indeed enhances that mission.¹²

Evoking Newman, the statement’s vision of both a broader academic freedom and of a role for universities as the “critical reflective intelligence”¹³ of the societies they inhabit are mutually enriching. Scholars at Catholic universities, that is, must have the kind of academic freedom and autonomy that Newman envisioned so that the universities can better accomplish their mission precisely for the benefit of the universal church. To have a Catholic identity is to be a part of the Body of Christ, and universities can play the indispensable role of that body’s intellectual parts.

The Land O' Lakes statement also closely coincided with the emergence in earnest of lay leaders in Catholic higher education, especially in these early stages through the formation of lay boards of trustees. With the laity's more prominent role has come the further opportunity to define what constitutes and advances a university's Catholic identity beyond having priests, brothers, or sisters on the faculty and in the administration. The fullest attempt to address the issue comes to us in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, in which St. John Paul II sets communion with the local bishop as the definitive marker of Catholic identity, but also lists four essential characteristics in which that identity is made manifest:

*...a Christian
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individuals but of the
university community
as such;...*

1. a Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such;
2. a continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research;
3. fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the church;
4. an institutional commitment to the service of the People of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life.¹⁴

Each of these characteristics is plainly observable throughout the existing tradition of the Catholic university and any of them can be realized just as effectively by a group of committed laity as by a community of professed religious. What their codification offers is an authoritative framework of what really makes a university Catholic, an idea based less on easily measurable externals and more on a deeper sense of animating purpose.

There are, of course, more concrete structures that may be helpful to universities that embrace a Catholic identity. In Duquesne's case, a predominantly lay (and not exclusively Catholic) Board of Directors handles most major areas of governance, but certain key powers are reserved to a seven-member "Corporation" which consists entirely of religious of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Similar arrangements exist around the country and, when the "tiers" of the board maintain open and respectful relationships, they solidify a special relationship between the university and the church

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organization out of which it originated. Duquesne is also one of many universities with a mission and identity officer, a senior university leader with dedicated responsibility for finding and implementing the best strategies for how the university's Catholic identity and particular charism inform all aspects of its work.¹⁵ Many mission officers are members of their institutions' founding communities, but most are qualified academics or pastoral professionals who have assumed the task of becoming resident experts and visionaries both for the general characteristics that mark the institution's Catholic identity *and* for the special projects, practices, and programs that embody its charism within that tradition.

So there are clear requirements for what can be considered a Catholic university. Without them, one could make variously entertaining arguments that Texas A&M University (on account of its large population of Catholic students), the University of Southern California (on account of its well-organized cohort of academics engaged with the Catholic intellectual tradition), or the College of William & Mary (on account of its long tradition of graduates entering non-profit service) are Catholic institutions. Yet even with this shared set of essential characteristics and this shared mission of a collaborative search for formative wisdom, Catholic universities come in a veritable kaleidoscope of style. This variation occurs by way of the different charisms that the People of God have received.

Charism: Ever Ancient, Ever New

In the higher education context, we typically use *charism* in reference to one of the many rich traditions of Catholic religious life, but it could also refer to any gift that the Holy Spirit bestows on individuals and groups in order to advance the work of the church in a particular time and place. Sharp as this distinction may at first seem, the more formal notion of charism is always an outgrowth of the less formal one. For an early example, the hallmarks of the Benedictine charism – stability, discipline, the practice of *lectio divina*, etc. – grew out of the specific social needs that the early Western monastic tradition sought to address in the aftermath of the Roman Empire's collapse. Subsequent moments of social change have necessitated new rounds of spiritual renewal and with them come new ways of understanding how to exercise the Holy Spirit's gifts.

As such, the history of the Catholic university is really the history of Catholic religious life. The Crusades, the Medieval Warm Period, and various technological advances would have far-reaching implications for the structure of European society. Fuller networks of trade and movement prompted the now-

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internationalized groups of scholars in Bologna, Paris, and Oxford to organize themselves into the first true universities. In the same way came the twelfth century establishment of mendicant religious orders. The Dominican charism of encountering God through study in some sense presupposes universities, and St. Dominic deliberately set up his earliest large priories near cities that had become such centers of learning, sending out his friars both to deepen their own understanding of the Christian faith in light of the ancient wisdom rediscovered in the Islamic world and to instruct the general public. Though their own rich intellectual tradition was not an immediate development, Franciscan educational ministries also maintain a charism and spirituality borne distinctly of this historical moment. St. Francis and his followers famously eschewed Benedictine stability in order to better serve the poor along the margins of an urbanizing society and to reclaim the simplicity of life that cities seemed to obstruct.

On the eve of the Protestant Reformation, nearly all of the small coterie of universities in Europe were explicitly church-affiliated. With the seemingly inextricable series of events that brought forth the Reformation, along with the printing press and the Society of Jesus, came something like an explosion of the university project. By 1762, Jesuits had established nearly 700 colleges or universities. In 1789, during the suppression period, John Carroll founded the first Catholic institution of higher learning in the United States at Georgetown. Jesuit universities would prove to be a bold expression of the Ignatian spiritual aspiration “that in all things God may be glorified.” Moreover, the radical freedom of inquiry that – not without occasional controversy – continues to characterize Jesuit education is as much an organic outgrowth of St. Ignatius’s Catholic response to the Reformation as are his *Spiritual Exercises*.

The multitude of new religious communities that arose in Europe during the Industrial Revolution and went on to establish universities in the United States reflect a whole array of spiritual responses to economic and political modernity, each of them important in an era when so many different ways of life were simultaneously possible and dependent upon each other. The character of the institutions they founded would continue to reflect their own distinctly modern origins. Priests of the Congregation of Holy Cross established the first Catholic professional school at an American university (Notre Dame Law School) in 1869 and School Sisters of Notre Dame established America’s first Catholic women’s college (now Notre Dame University of Maryland) in 1873. Neither would the

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Each Catholic university, like each baptized Christian, must at some point confront the question of what precise call God has given it the opportunity to answer.

capacity to read the signs of the times and the Spirit's calling be limited to the ranks of professed religious: The bishops of the United States founded the country's first true Catholic research university (The Catholic University of America) in 1887.

Since the Second Vatican Council, the most salient trend in the relationship between religious life and higher education has not been in the establishment of new communities, but in the formation of laypeople to carry on the charisms that have already helped build institutions. Nearly all of the *new* Catholic universities founded in the United States since the Council have been the work of independently organized laypeople, often working in partnership with leaders from the business community. When Bishop Walter Curtis founded Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut in 1963, he was utterly clear that the new institution would be, inspired by the Council's renewed embrace of the universal call to holiness, independent of the Diocese of Bridgeport and governed entirely by laity. In an even more innovative approach, Domino's Pizza magnate Thomas Monaghan founded Ave Maria University in 2007 on the notion that the laity were just as capable of advancing a robust, even provocative Catholic identity as were clergy and religious.

All of these institutions through the centuries have shared the mission of a university and a distinctly Catholic identity. They take a variety of shapes and forms, however, because their founders took that common mission and that common identity and, imbued with the charisms that made them the irreplaceable disciples they were, responded to the unique circumstances that they were positioned to address. It was not the identity that guided changes in the mission, nor the mission that demanded changes in the identity. Rather it was the identity, the mission, and these charisms that helped these institutions' many founders discern the special historical vocation of the one institution that they were founding.

Institutional Vocation: A Faculty-Hiring Scenario

In addition to *The Idea of a University* and his incisive academic theology, Cardinal Newman has also graced the People of God with a profound body of spiritual writings. One idea that he frequently revisits is that of God's mysterious, personal call to each believer. "God has created me to do him some definite service; he has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another," Newman writes in an 1848 meditation on God as Creator, "I never may know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next."¹⁶ Each Catholic university, like each baptized Christian, must at some point confront the question of what precise call God has given it the

opportunity to answer. To examine how different charisms may shape the vocations of institutions that share a Catholic identity and a university mission, let us consider the hypothetical case of three Catholic colleges near the southern shore of Lake Erie that are all looking to fill a tenure-track position in the diplomatic history of the United States. Whatever their differences, each institution has a robust mission office and a healthy relationship between the administration and the founding community. Accordingly, each institution makes a considerably different hire, not because of some lack of commitment to mission or identity, but because of a keen sense of how they are called to embody their mission and identity in the context of their own institutional vocation.

The first institution, Great Lakes Catholic College, has around 1,500 undergraduates with small master's programs in philosophy and theology. Since its founding in 1965, Great Lakes has maintained a special relationship with a lay movement that emphasizes "total reliance on God," and students, who are almost all Catholic, agree to a strict code of conduct. Though blessed with a number of wealthy benefactors who attended other universities, Great Lakes is perhaps best known for the many high-quality catechists, lay ministers, high school theology teachers, priests, and sisters among its graduates. When the time comes to fill the spot on the history faculty, plenty of the college's stakeholders have rather conservative expectations, but the university mission demands the hiring of a genuine scholar who will engage students in a mature journey of discovery. The historian hired is the Catholic granddaughter of Cuban exiles who recently completed her PhD. at Baylor University. Though her rather heroic interpretation of American anti-communism during the Cold War might prove controversial on a secular campus, her teaching and research are impeccably serious. During the interview process, she also relates her enthusiasm about participating actively in the vibrant Catholic culture at Great Lakes.

Meanwhile, Stella Maris University has roughly 1,200 traditional undergraduates, plus 400 adult learners and part-time commuter students, and another 200 MBA and MEd. students. Catholic symbolism and ritual are hard to miss in the university's branding and campus environment, but actively practicing Catholics probably make up around 30 percent of the racially and economically diverse student body and half of the faculty. The Sisters who founded Stella Maris as a women's college in 1925 are still represented through the Board of Fellows and the full-time mission officer, but the president is a former senior student affairs officer from a larger Jesuit university on the East Coast. A major guiding principle

Dr. Michael Galligan-
Stierle and
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Stella Maris instead hires a young black woman who is both deeply versed in the under-represented cultural narratives of the poor and minority communities that the university seeks to serve and, while indicating no religious affiliation of her own, respectful of the university's identity.

The historian that Columbus hires is a Mormon assistant professor at a public university in California...

in the Sisters' charism is the idea of "helping the poor to help themselves." One finalist for the history position is an ex-Catholic scholar who openly condemns not only the United States but also the Catholic Church as colonial oppressors. Stella Maris instead hires a young black woman who is both deeply versed in the under-represented cultural narratives of the poor and minority communities that the university seeks to serve and, while indicating no religious affiliation of her own, respectful of the university's identity. During the interview process, she recalls how impressed she was with her Catholic colleagues in PhD. studies at the University of Toronto and expresses interest in engaging with the Catholic intellectual and social traditions as an exciting new dimension of her work.

Finally, Columbus University has more than 4,000 undergraduates, of whom more than 70 percent are at least casually practicing Catholics. Columbus has an R3 Carnegie classification (it grants doctoral degrees and engages in "moderate research activity" RI grants doctoral degrees and engages in highest research activity) with a more diverse group of faculty and graduate students and is the home of a basketball team noted for a recent, unexpected Sweet Sixteen appearance. Founded in 1892, Columbus has a regional reputation both for preparing Catholics for careers in fields like business, medicine, and law and for forming community leaders of all backgrounds in a moral vision based on the dignity of the human person. A young, dynamic president from the founding order of missionary priests has recently emphasized building Columbus's global presence and has spearheaded the creation of several specialized centers and institutes. The historian that Columbus hires is a Mormon assistant professor at a public university in California whose publications on European involvement with the Civil War have garnered significant and positive scholarly attention in the few years since he finished his PhD. at Brown University. During the interview process, he mentions how excited he would be both to work in an environment that "takes faith seriously" and to study with other experts at Columbus's new Center for Religion and Politics.

Considered together with the "open source" elements of university mission and Catholic identity, each of these hypothetical institutions maintains a distinct perspective. The lay movement's charism indicates an institutional vocation of forming students for work on the proverbial frontlines of parish life. The Sisters' charism indicates an institutional vocation of working with marginalized communities so that they might take ownership of their freedom and dignity. The missionaries' charism indicates an institutional vocation of bringing the Catholic ethos to bear on all the contingent pieces of an American research university. This faculty-hiring decision was

just one of countless decisions that each college had to make, guided by the interdependent considerations of university mission, Catholic identity, and particular charism. In this way, each institution, while hard to mistake for either of the others, is a Catholic university in the fullest sense.

A university mission is the collaborative search for knowledge and ethical formation.

...two ideal-typical concepts of what a university is: a place of “dialogue” and a place of “witness.”

Discussion

A university mission is the collaborative search for knowledge and ethical formation. A Catholic identity is an identity in communion with the Body of Christ. The mission enriches the identity with a space to carry out Christ’s educational mandate and the identity enriches the mission with the cumulative body of Catholic intellectual, social, and spiritual traditions. The charisms by which the People of God respond to the needs and circumstances of a particular time and place inform countless ways of integrating that mission and that identity, and so we see the whole variety of institutional vocations.

“Catholic academic institutions,” Pope Francis told the Vatican’s Congregation for Catholic Education in 2014, “cannot isolate themselves from the world, they must know how to enter bravely into the areopagus of current culture and open dialogue, conscious of the gift that they can offer to everyone.”¹⁷ Elaborating on the Pope’s remarks, John Cavadini poses two ideal-typical concepts of what a university is: a place of “dialogue” and a place of “witness.” In Cavadini’s estimation, the successful Catholic university is not so much the one that strikes a “balance” between dialogue and witness but the one that finds some way to fully embrace both roles.¹⁸ If Catholics have been commissioned to go and teach *all* people the good news of Christ, then it stands to reason that this project will take a variety of different forms. In any event, it is neither a self-determined mission that should define identity nor a prior identity that guarantees some purity of mission. Catholic identity and university mission are two distinct and essential projects that Christian educators should be eager to take up and that, along with a keen sense of the Holy Spirit’s peculiar gifts in a given time and place, indicate just what kind of holy endeavor God has called this irreplaceable university to be. To know that calling is to have the surest lodestar for the university’s decisions.

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Endnotes

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AN EXPRESSION OF FAITH REFLECTIONS ON SERVICE AS A UNIVERSITY BOARD CHAIR

There was something special about Duquesne University¹ that drew me in. The academic environment was solid. It was a Catholic institution. It was not too big and not too small. It had an isolated, yet comforting, atmosphere atop the Bluff above the city of Pittsburgh. The chapel at the corner of campus was inviting. There was something special about the place that made me say “Yes,” that this would be where I would go to college. While not clear about it in those early days, I came to learn that it was the spirit (with a small “s”) of this University, as well as the Spirit (emphasis on the capital “S”) that drew me in.

After six years of education at Duquesne University, including an undergraduate degree and a law degree, followed by becoming involved in the Alumni Association and, at one point, serving as its President, after serving on the Board of Directors of the University for more than fourteen years, and after eight years as Chair of the Board of Directors, I can now reflect on what makes Duquesne so special and why I spent countless hours to play a role that now makes me grateful I was a part of that spirit.

Much has been said and written about the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (the Spiritans) who own and lead Duquesne. They are an intellectual group, who serve throughout the world, using their talents to minister to the poor, to educate in places where structured learning is lacking, evangelizing about the church and the gospel, and fostering the Holy Spirit’s wisdom and grace. They tend to be quieter souls, who themselves admit that they “keep their light under a bushel.” But they act in ways that speak volumes and draws people in to serve beside them.

The values of the Spiritan Fathers and Brothers, the principles guiding their mission, are exemplified in the educational construct which is Duquesne University. The Mission Statement of the University perfectly outlines those Spiritan values in this academic institution of higher learning:

Duquesne serves God by serving students through a commitment to excellence in liberal and professional education, a profound concern for moral and spiritual values, maintaining an ecumenical atmosphere open to diversity, in service to the church, the community, the nation and the world and through attentiveness to global concerns.

...a commitment to quality education with a clear vision of Spiritan values is an expression of how the Congregation fulfills its objectives for evangelization, promotion of justice and service and liberation of the poor.

Volunteering for the university through serving on the Board of Directors and working with the administration and Spiritan leaders in support of the university's mission allows one to appreciate the importance of the Spiritan values in action. These values are alive in the university setting in a variety of ways, demonstrated through academic excellence and outcomes, moral discipline, community outreach and programs, appropriate design of curricula, the professionalism of faculty and administration, and even through sports programs, which reflect the energy and spirit of the university. The current Provincial of the U.S. Province of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, Fr. Jeff Duaine, C.S.Sp., writes about the import of Spiritan values in the educational construct, positing that a commitment to quality education with a clear vision of Spiritan values is an expression of how the Congregation fulfills its objectives for evangelization, promotion of justice and service and liberation of the poor.² So, just as the Spiritans themselves live their mission through their work at their principal Spiritan institution of higher education of Duquesne University, persons chosen for service on the Board also commit to support these values.

Like many before me, serving the university as a board member was borne out of a personal positive experience as a student. For me, it was also consistent with a personal history of involvement with the church. Brought up in an Italian-American Catholic household, with a father who went to daily mass for years, and where priests visited our home from when I was a young girl, attending Duquesne where priests were regularly seen on campus was natural, if not comforting. My academic and social experience at Duquesne was certainly positive. Not losing sight of my faithful upbringing, the presence of religious expression and the Spiritan charism made the other Duquesne experiences even more favorable. In some ways, they were life altering.

I can remember attending mass and participating, at least in small ways, in campus ministry while a student at Duquesne. But the impact of the Spirit on campus for me is best exemplified in the story of attending mass one weekday in the chapel during my freshman year. I had met a tall, handsome, thoughtful man, a few weeks earlier. Planning to attend mass one winter day, I asked this young man if he wanted to join me. He smiled and said "Yes" and walked into the chapel with me. Partway through mass, after realizing that he was not kneeling or standing at exactly the 'right' time, I leaned over to him to ask if he was even Catholic. He smiled and shook his head "No," but continued to quietly observe the rituals of mass. After years of dating and experiencing Duquesne together, that young man became my husband. Not only did the Spirit move me to

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Duquesne appreciates diversity, knowing that can be a challenge to achieve,...

come to Duquesne, and move that young man to be there as well, the Spirit moved both of us to appreciate that going to mass that day would be important. Hence, as people have heard me say many times, I love Duquesne because it is where I found Cameron, my husband of nearly thirty years and the love of my life.

So, from such a positive experience as a student, and having lasting impressions from my time at Duquesne, wanting to give back to the university was natural. Although a busy young lawyer in the early years of my practice, I was drawn to spend time volunteering for Duquesne and serving in its Alumni Association, rising to the role of President. Certainly, I enjoyed the opportunity to be on campus and to spend time with outstanding professionals at the university. I made the most of those early years and built relationships which would lead to a desire to continue to serve in a greater role. While my position as President of the Alumni Association allowed me to have a seat on the Board of Directors, it was a finite period of service. Following the completion of that term, I maintained contact with the then-Chair, John Connelly, and was ultimately invited to come back to the Board as a regular member. That began a fourteen year stint of service, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Serving as a board member was a privilege; taking on the role of Chair then became a true honor, and one I wanted to ensure I performed effectively. I was humbled to be chosen for this role, and pleased to be the first woman in that seat. Duquesne appreciates diversity, knowing that can be a challenge to achieve, and this selection celebrated their commitment in this area. Many have said that I put a great deal of time into the position of Chair, and that is true. But, like anything, one gets out of a role what one puts into it. So, my approach in all matters, both business and personal, is to dive in and actively engage in the process. In fact, active engagement was a theme I expressed as Chair and attempted to foster for the entire board. Believing that an engaged board would be a more effective board, I decided to spend whatever time was needed to be effective and to foster an atmosphere where success could be achieved by the university during my tenure. So, with support from my husband for the time commitment this role would take, and support from my law firm to ensure my professional work did not suffer, I “engaged”.

Around the time I became Chair, I had also become more active in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, due to a close relationship with the bishop. Through involvement in diocesan projects, after traveling on a pilgrimage to Israel with the bishop and fellow Catholics and members of the Jewish community locally, and through service on the Board of Regents of St. Vincent

Seminary, which does God's work in training priests, I came to have a greater appreciation for my faith and the role I could play as a Catholic business leader. This fitted perfectly with the role as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Duquesne University. So, I considered my service to Duquesne to be another expression of my faith.

The intellectual interaction and selfless generosity of time, talent, and treasure by the board is a hidden jewel of Duquesne.

The selection of board members is a critical role for the Chair. Some of the criteria for board membership relates to motivation for service in conjunction with the talents available to the institution from a particular member. To a person, the board members with whom I have worked love Duquesne University. For many, this stems from their status as alumni; it is also true of those who did not attend the institution though have come to appreciate its unique character and critical role in the region and beyond. Therefore, with pride, I confidently report that each person I had the pleasure of inviting to sit on the board looked to enhance the institution at every turn. These members of the board are truly remarkable individuals, with serious credentials, who made every collaboration a worthwhile encounter. The intellectual interaction and selfless generosity of time, talent, and treasure by the board is a hidden jewel of Duquesne. The institution has been blessed by these servants.

When I became the Chair, Dr. Charles J. Dougherty was the President of the University, having served in that role for a number of years already. When Charlie was elected to the position, I was serving on the Board as the Alumni Association president. I had served on the search committee for that process and vividly recall the final meeting of the board to select the next President. I was sitting next to Bishop David Zubik, an alumnus of Duquesne who sat on the board to represent the Diocese of Pittsburgh. When the votes were tallied and Charlie secured the job, Bishop commented to me that he knew the Holy Spirit was there in that room during the selection process, in essence confirming on that very first day, that Charlie was the right choice at that time.

Charlie had a successful presidency. Throughout his term, he was particularly focused on the mission of Duquesne, using it to guide his decision-making. The academic needs of the university were addressed and improved exponentially, resulting in significant achievements and much-improved national rankings. He worked to ensure that the financial house was in order and strengthened the viability of Duquesne, likely for generations to come. He raised the bar when it came to the substantive experience the university provided for students, and he beautified campus. It would be fair to say he was more internally focused than externally focused, but that is what Duquesne needed at the time.

While my theme as Chair was not to micromanage, and I tried to pass that message on to board members in general, I remained available and supportive of Charlie throughout his tenure. The relationship between a University President and the Chair of its Board of Directors is crucial. The two must be able to have open and honest dialogue. I took the position that the Chair “had to have the President’s back” so he did not feel undermined or intimidated to make the significant decisions he would need to make. This was not a difficult task because I believed in what Charlie was doing. Charlie’s style was intellectual and mission-driven and it worked.

...I was a visible Chair. If there were five events on campus in a particular week, I was at three of them.

Granted, there were times when it was necessary for me as Chair to take on an issue, or play a more public role on a point so as to bolster the President’s ability to achieve a particular objective. Despite the above-identified theme of not micro-managing, and given that I have an outward-focused personality, I was a visible Chair. If there were five events on campus in a particular week, I was at three of them. But that visibility was only intended to show my support of the University and the President and my belief in the goals sought to be achieved. I think we struck the right balance.

...I endeavored to follow a Spiritan-like path by being candid and honest with my views, particularly in discussions with the President or with the Spiritan leaders.

In this capacity, I endeavored to follow a Spiritan-like path by being candid and honest with my views, particularly in discussions with the President or with the Spiritan leaders. I was not intimidated and provided my honest opinion when asked, even if I knew it might be at odds with a stated position being taken. As a lawyer, I was trained to evaluate both sides of an issue and to be prepared to attack weaknesses and advocate strengths. This methodology allowed for thoughtful discernment, something Spiritans do in their sleep! Even if an approach was not one that I may have originally suggested or the means to an end suggested may have differed with my own ideas, I could support the ultimate decision made, as none ever required any moral or ethical capitulation.

The relationship between the Spiritans, (particularly through the members of the Corporation of the Holy Spirit who played active roles on the board), the President, and the Board was often jokingly referred to as a triumvirate. During my time on the Board, the ability of these three to cooperate and concentrate on the mission and desired success of the university made for not just effective leadership but true accomplishment. The university was not always so fiscally sound or academically regarded as it is today. The laser-focus of these three allowed achievement to find fertile ground. The quiet strength of the Spiritans likely permitted this structure to work since personalities or, I dare say, egos, of lay leaders can be hurdles to success. The lesson of collaboration is learned from

The thought process for the presidential search required an evaluation of the Spiritan mission, an honest assessment of the university, and then the crafting of a prospectus for the role...

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this triangulated method of governing at this institution.

The time commitment for service as Chair was a challenge, as I have always had an active law practice and played many roles in professional business groups during the same time that I served Duquesne. In the later years of my tenure as Chair, we had a significant matter to address which I knew would ramp up that time commitment. Perhaps no task is more important for the board of directors of an institution of higher learning than the selection of its president. When Charlie Dougherty announced his intention to retire, I knew this would be a critical point for the University, for our Board and, frankly, for me as its Chair. But I dove in, head first, chairing the Presidential Search Committee to ensure that the process for and selection of the new President of Duquesne University would be successful. Candidly, this felt like a second Duquesne job in addition to the job as Chair and my “real” job. But, this was that important. While I was already thinking about the fact that it might be time for me to step down as Chair, I knew stepping down would have to wait. So, I committed to the process for the selection of the next President, and agreed to stay on as Chair once that process was completed for at least some period of transition.

The thought process for the presidential search required an evaluation of the Spiritan mission, an honest assessment of the university, and then the crafting of a prospectus for the role that would identify how Duquesne University could continue its trajectory to the next level. There is no doubt in my mind that the Holy Spirit guided that process, just like Bishop Zubik remarked to me so many years earlier. The Presidential Search Committee focused on what a Spiritan Catholic institution is, what it needs, and proceeded to identify a person who would fit within this construct. There was actually a concerted effort that this be accomplished, not through pronouncements about the Spiritan Catholic identity of Duquesne per se, but, rather, through the infiltration of those values at the university and how they differentiate Duquesne. The next president would need to implement the important pillars of Spiritan Catholic intellectual thought which makes the institution so unique. For example, while the committee felt it was necessary to have a practicing Catholic in the role, it was equally important to ensure that the individual had a student-centered focus and appreciated the academic excellence of Duquesne through an ethical filter. Those attributes, however, are not necessarily Catholic but are an expression of Spiritan values as interpreted in the world of higher education.

Praise God, the process went well, and we have been blessed with a new president in Kenneth G. Gormley, the former dean

of the University's School of Law and a nationally recognized scholar and author. His level of energy and engagement in his early days as president makes the theme of engagement I had been living as Chair seem low key! That effort has already served the university well, through some reinvigoration of his executive team to maximize outreach to and contributions from internal constituencies and with external resources, which has resulted in some early significant success in fundraising. Like his predecessor, he was open to, and frankly invited, candid dialogue with the Chair, and we enjoy a valued and honest relationship. His decision-making is imbued with a student-centered approach that subtly channels those Spiritan values. I am confident that he will ultimately come to be known as one of the university's most outstanding leaders.

“Adjust, adapt, overcome” – that saying from an old movie about soldiers in training – was a lesson learned when it came to certain facets of university life.

While it is likely obvious that I enjoyed the role of Chair, it was not without challenges. The business world is different from academia. Many board members including myself had to admit that the processes and atmosphere in the university setting differed at times from life in the private business sector. That is not to say one was right or another was wrong but it required an appreciation by me and others of the milieu and how to operate therein to be effective. Administrators had to educate the non-academics who were challenged at times, with the concept of faculty tenure, with the pace when change may be in order. Issues dealing with changes to the Faculty Handbook, or addressing personnel matters as this employment lawyer might prefer, were challenging. Personally, I need to work at times to be more patient in life so I had to be open-minded when I favored a more aggressive approach to an issue that was not felt to be the most appropriate tactic in this setting of higher education. “Adjust, adapt, overcome” – that saying from an old movie about soldiers in training – was a lesson learned when it came to certain facets of university life.

I took great pride in carrying the Duquesne flag as the Chair of the Board of Directors. To represent my alma mater in this fashion was humbling. I believed (and still do) in what the institution and its founders stand for so, for a woman who advocates for a living, spreading the good news was simple. Responding to criticism about Duquesne, which of course existed on some points with students or faculty members, was not necessarily difficult though. If enough factual information was available to address the point, because I had confidence in the motivation for those making decisions, I addressed complaints or questions knowing the right rationale likely existed in the background. It was not as though a student did not achieve a grade or degree because of a fraudulent assessment by a faculty member, or that enforcing a rule on campus was not motivated by safety or security reasons. Humans do make

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errors; such errors were handled though with the right level of discipline and in a humane manner. While obviously not aware of all day-to-day decisions that might cause reaction, no handling of matters that rose to the board level caused concern that the mission of the University was in jeopardy of not being considered and followed. So while wearing the hat of Chair, I never felt I had to compromise my faith in the values that are quintessential Duquesne.

So while wearing the hat of Chair, I never felt I had to compromise my faith in the values that are quintessential Duquesne.

Many have asked what I will do with all the time I should have now that my time as Chair has ended. If my husband is asked, he smiles and says, he will enjoy seeing me more! And my law partner says he is happy to know our clients will have even more access to me. For me, I sense other projects will fill my hours, but I plan to be sure family and friends get a little more of me. I could not be happier for what was accomplished at Duquesne during my tenure, even knowing there is so much more to be come. The commitment to the Spiritan traditions of liberation of the human spirit, high academic standards, personal development, and concern for those in need, among others, are alive and well at Duquesne. Having played a role for a period in ensuring these values unfold and fostered has been rewarding to say the least. My service to Duquesne has made me to be a better alumna, a better Catholic and, frankly, a better person. And I am grateful for it.

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Endnotes

¹The Congregation of the Holy Spirit owns Duquesne University, and the governing body of the Congregation is the Members of the Corporation, consisting of a limited leadership group from the Congregation, some of whom are also voting members of the Board of Directors. Full authority to manage the business and affairs of the University is vested in the Board of Directors of the Corporation, who work with the President of the University, subject to certain reserved powers of the Members.

²Duaine et al., "The Heartbeat of Spiritan Education in the U.S.," *Spiritan Horizons* 8 (Fall 2013) 101-114.



Dr. Fintan Sheerin

Dr. Sheerin is a Spiritan Lay Associate who identifies strongly with the Spiritan charism and apostolate. He expresses his Spiritan belonging in his teaching and in serving the local Augustinian parish, in development work in Malawi, and through volunteering with people displaced by war and terror. Fellow of the European Academy of Nursing Sciences, Fintan is lecturer in intellectual disability nursing at Trinity College, Dublin where he teaches primarily on human rights, value systems, anti-oppressive practice, and social justice. He has a keen interest in the interface between theology and social justice. Dr. Fintan earned his doctorate in 2006 from the University of Ulster with a thesis on "Describing the Unique Interventions of Intellectual Disability Nursing."

...I felt that to not engage with the people displaced by this crisis was not an option.

Introduction

Unrest in North Africa and the Middle East has resulted in a movement of people that is almost biblical in terms of the numbers of people migrating for reasons of refuge or economics. Many of those who are fleeing war, totalitarianism, or fundamentalism are seeking shelter and the possibility of a new life in Europe, a union of nations founded on principles of equality, cooperation and human rights. The arrival of historically large numbers has posed a significant challenge to the European Union at a number of levels, but it is perhaps perspectives on the cultural and religious impact which is causing most concerns as many are Muslims, a faith so negatively contextualized through Islamophobic and Islamist stereotypes, many of which grounded in 1500 years of conflict between the Christian West and the Muslim East.

Bearing in mind our commitment as Spiritans to "give preference to an apostolate that takes us ... to those oppressed and most disadvantaged, as a group or as individuals" (SRL 12), I felt that to not engage with the people displaced by this crisis was not an option. Indeed, Libermann has been described as a "friend to the oppressed...voice on their behalf" (Kelly 13). In this paper, I explore the current refugee/migrant crisis, drawing on recent experiences volunteering as a nurse in 'Le Jungle' Camp (France) and Lesbos (Greece). I also consider the role of disengagement in the dehumanization of those seeking refuge. Finally, I explore how engagement can redress such dehumanization, and suggest that this humanizing outcome can be considered as evidence of a spirituality grounded in Spiritan values and in the liberation of those who are oppressed.

Disengagement and Dehumanization

Throughout history there has been a focus on sameness and otherness which has underpinned the characterization of some groups of people as deviants (Fanon 1967; Little 1999; Cunningham-Parmeter 2011). Typically, such characterization is based on a specific trait or set of traits and allows for the stereotypic congregation and consideration of these people as being different from "the norm." This, in turn, may lead to a consideration that they are so different as to constitute a deviation from humanity, with the resultant possibility that a power imbalance is created and they are treated in dehumanizing ways.

The effect of such a description is that it creates distance between those in the valued mainstream of society and

those who must be kept apart and controlled. The process of distancing is not only associated with dehumanization and colonialism. Ivan Illich (1977) and Eliot Freidson (1986) describe the manner in which distance has become embedded in the professional roles which dominate Western society at so many levels, disempowering the populous and supporting the growth and overarching power of commercial interests. The creation of such divisions based on power and distance facilitates a dichotomous process whereby increasing power and valuing are invested in a minority of humanity to the detriment of others, with the latter amassing multiple deviations from the values norms and thus multiple jeopardies.

...those experiencing poverty may be called “hobos” and contextualized as “drug addicts” and “beggars”;...

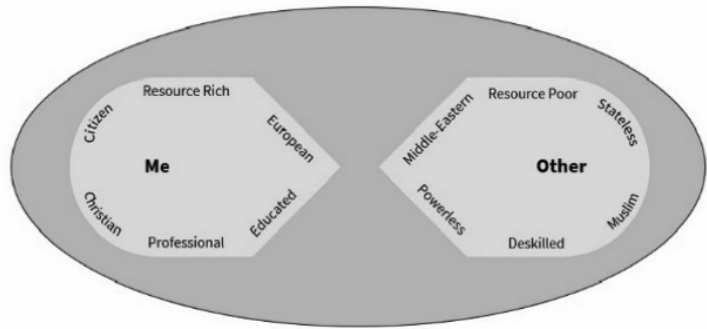


Figure 1. The valued-devalued dichotomy (based on ideas from Wolfensberger 1972)

Iris Young suggests that privilege and power are premised on the existence of a corresponding group who experience lack of privilege and disempowerment. She describes these people as “oppressed” and notes, crucially, that such experiences are often not due to any tyrannical power but rather “because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned liberal society” (Young 1990: 41). The effects of such oppression have been described in respect of people with intellectual disabilities (Wolfensberger 1972), people experiencing poverty (Sobrinho 2008: 22-28) as well as in colonial (Memmi 1990: 156-184) and post-colonial settings (Fanon 1967:27-84). In each of these cases, there has been the assignment of negative labels and stereotypes. Thus, people with intellectual disabilities have been called “retards” and it has been suggested that they cannot love; those experiencing poverty may be called “hobos” and contextualized as “drug addicts” and “beggars”; the colonized and post-colonized may be considered to be lazy, indolent thieves, and terrorists. Similarly, the current refugee crisis which has affected many parts of northern Africa and the Middle East has seen stereotypic and dehumanizing characterization of those people who are attempting to escape from the conflict zones. This is evident in the words of the populist United Kingdom

journalist, Kate Hopkins:

...the consequence that the protective norms of human rights have no relevance, because these “people” are no longer viewed through the lens of humanization...

“Make no mistake, these migrants are like cockroaches. They might look a bit ‘Bob Geldof’s Ethiopia circa 1984,’ but they are built to survive a nuclear bomb. They are survivors.” (Jones 2015)

The use of such terms is particularly insidious, as it evokes the rhetoric of 1940s Germany and 1990s Rwanda.

What emerges from the various theoretical discourses referred to above is a repeating process of dehumanization (figure 2) with the consequence that the protective norms of human rights have no relevance, because these “people” are no longer viewed through the lens of humanization (Sheerin 2011). Thus, violence can be employed in order to achieve compliance and control. The achievement of obedience marks the removal of voice and the instilling of the voice of the oppressor (Freire 1993). Denial of voice in these people results in a situation whereby true and dialogic engagement is no longer possible.

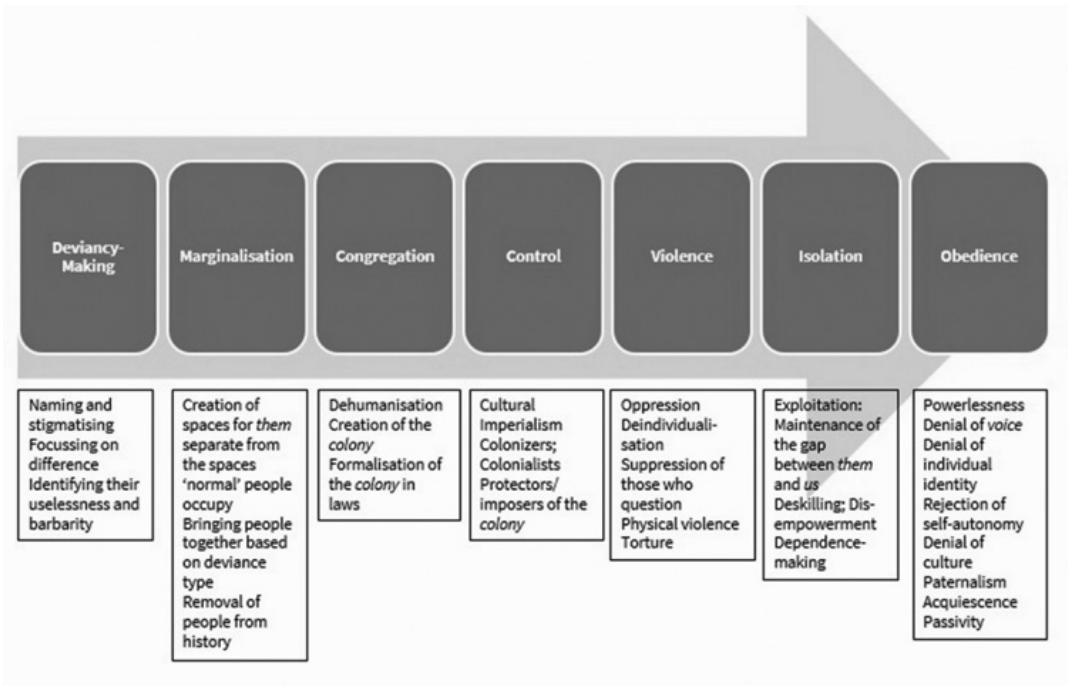


Figure 2. The process of dehumanization (based on ideas from Wolfensberger 1972; Young 1990).

The disengagement associated with creation of otherness...

The disengagement associated with creation of otherness is also evident in the professional and commercial spheres which predominate in most of the Global North societies.

...stating that she had heard that “three out of four of them” were infiltrating terrorists, and that “those Syrians” were going to come over to Ireland and “kill us all.”

Over a five day period, we treated more than 1200 people for a variety of medical complaints:...

Associated with this is the categorizing of people into groups for the purposes of controlling choices and available options. The role of professions in the formalization of practices which were arguably key to the maintenance of community, midwifery, nursing, and funeral rituals for example, is well documented elsewhere (Illich 1977) as is the manner in which the profession-led creation of need has resulted in global commercialization which wields significant control over economic realities (Sobrinho 2008) and contributes to the maintenance of a significant economic divide between peoples and regions of the world, further fueling dehumanization.

I witnessed these processes in action, shortly prior to visiting *Le Jungle* refugee camp in Calais. It happened during a discussion I had with a pharmacist in the context of the refugee/migrant crisis within stereotypic conceptualizations of Islamophobia, terrorist threats and economic migrancy. I had visited the pharmacy accompanied by an academic colleague from Canada - a man of Iranian birth. The pharmacist, who did not realize that we were associated, proceeded to ask my opinions on the refugee/migrant crisis stating that she had heard that “three out of four of them” were infiltrating terrorists, and that “those Syrians” were going to come over to Ireland and “kill us all.” She noted my colleague and, looking back at me, made a gesture urging me to look around. When she realized that he was with me she whispered “I thought he was one of those Syrians”!

Such perspectives feed into the processes of disengagement and encourage the avoidance of any understanding or acknowledgement of the realities of others. On the other hand, engagement can facilitate humanization and it is within this that knowing of the other’s reality can take place.

Engagement and Humanization

The publication, in September 2015, of a picture of a three year old Syrian boy, Aylan Kurdi, washed up on a beach in Turkey, brought home to many people a reality which had remained distant and disconnected. As such, it led to the possibility for engagement to be initiated as it connected with the emotional sensitivities of many people. Many people mobilized and sought a meaningful way to respond to what they were becoming aware of. One such response was the organization of an Irish convoy to *Le Jungle*. In early October 2015, I travelled to Calais, along with fifty-two others, leading the health team in their efforts to address some of the medical needs of the camp’s 4000 residents. Over a five day period, we treated more than 1200 people for a variety of medical complaints: some population health issues; some injuries caused

by prolonged walking or by falls from trucks; and other injuries inflicted by police. I travelled to Lesbos the following month and returned to Calais in February 2016.

Perspectives on Le Jungle

...“the globalization of indifference makes us all ‘unnamed,’ responsible, yet nameless and faceless.”

As I reflect on my recent visits, I do so with a lingering sense of anger at the terrible injustice being inflicted upon our fellow humans, these “children of Adam and Eve,” (to quote a camp resident), and realize now that I have spent too much time disengaged from the realities of others, focused, individualistically, on myself and my own world. Indeed, Pope Francis, during his visit to Lampedusa Island in 2013, pointed to humanity’s loss of direction and indifference to others’ suffering when, drawing on the creation story, he asked, “Where is your brother”? and “Where is the blood of your brother which cries out to me”? (Pope Francis 2013a). He concluded that “the globalization of indifference makes us all ‘unnamed,’ responsible, yet nameless and faceless.”

...Freire wrote of the need to come to knowledge of the other through dialogue and engagement.

The margins that exist on the edge of our blinkered consciousness are vast spaces, populated by those whose diversity is often considered by others to be so different from ours such as to be deviant (Sheerin 2011). Such deviancy from our perspective of normality promotes the development of a chasm between us and them, a chasm which separates us from their realities. Too often, these realities represent places where qualitatively different things happen and where the shared values of our society are not applied: parallel realities. As we entered Calais, late at night, I saw young men moving in groups towards the Channel Tunnel and the possibility of escape to the United Kingdom. They moved silently past the French houses, stopping to rest under the motorway bridges...moving in a world parallel to that of the native French, existing, not as part of their reality, but rather as part of another which was in constant movement, seeking inclusion and respite.

Visiting the refugee “camp” was not my first entry into others’ realities; I have engaged in those of people with disabilities, of people in rural parts of Africa and in city slums. It was, however, my first entry into a situation such as this, and one which gave me some small understanding of the realities of the people living there. As previously noted, Freire wrote of the need to come to knowledge of the other through dialogue and engagement. He argued that this was the way to becoming solidary with the other and, thus, to achieving true solidarity. I feel that I have come to know something of the reality of these other people and it is in this knowledge that my anger is grounded; an anger which commits me to journey alongside these, my fellow humans.

Realities of People in the Camp

Le Jungle is described as a “camp” but I use this word guardedly, for it is no camp! My idea of a camp is of a bounded space, with structure, order and facilities. The only boundary I noticed here was that created by the ever-attendant riot police (*Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité*) who form something of a ring around it. There is no order or structure outside of that which has been developed by the people themselves and this is under constant threat of demolition. There are scant sanitary facilities, no clean water, little safety and significant public health issues. On the most recent visit, I was told that one has to queue for up to four hours to access a shower, and this is often in freezing or wet weather. That this exists in a rich twenty-first century European country which prides itself on the values of its Republic - liberty, equality and fraternity – lends credence to the idea that different realities can exist, side by side, and be grounded in very different value systems. It is also an indictment on Europe, that it has stood by and accepted the emergence of such spaces, making excuses which have dehumanized these people in its citizens’ eyes and justified their exclusion from the values upon which the European “project” was founded.

There are scant sanitary facilities, no clean water, little safety and significant public health issues.

... “They [ISIS] tortured me and treated me as an animal.”...

... “In Europe, they do not torture me, but they still treat me like an animal.”

...they had thirteen children. I saw only six children in the tent and asked where the others were. The father answered “they are in the water.”

I am reminded of the many stories which were relayed to me by people within the camp. During my first visit, an older man from Iraq told me of the torture he had endured when held for a month by the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). As he showed me the marks that the hot poker made on his ankles, and described the daily threat of having his throat cut, he explained: “They [ISIS] tortured me and treated me as an animal.” Describing his current predicament, he noted that “In Europe, they do not torture me, but they still treat me like an animal.” I was to see the effects of torture again, during my recent visit, when an Afghan man asked to see me alone. As he struggled to remove his blood-stained t-shirt, eight circular wounds were revealed; two rows of four, each of about 2cm diameter, each weeping. These were the result of Taliban torture one month before. In Ezekiel 34:16 Yahweh tells us that he will bandage the wounded and make the weak strong. I dressed this man’s skin wounds but his real wounds were much deeper; all I could do was to hold him and cry with him. Another family told me of their journey across the Mediterranean Sea; they had thirteen children. I saw only six children in the tent and asked where the others were. The father answered “they are in the water.” The horror and pain of these people’s realities is palpable and sometimes all we could do was to cry in solidarity. I did not witness the anger and resentment which I felt should have accompanied such experiences and the reality that human rights in Europe are protected only for a valued section of humanity.

Despite their situation, I was humbled to experience the warmth and humanity that the people of the camp afforded me;...

Paulo Freire suggests that the oppressors themselves become dehumanized and that humanization can only come from those who have been oppressed.

Spiritual engagement has also been found to be associated with relationships, love and participation with others (Penman et al. 2009). It is also central to our Spiritan heritage within the union of heart and mind.

Jon Sobrino (1988: 33) writes that “The poor and impoverished of this world bring the human being face to face either with hope or with despair, resignation or cynicism.” He includes “hope” as a possible component of a lived spirituality of liberation which has as its focus the possibility of humanization. Despite their situation, I was humbled to experience the warmth and humanity that the people of the camp afforded me; the welcome, the generosity and the tolerance. It brings to mind the values inherent in the dying words of Francis Libermann, when he spoke of “fervor, charity, and union in Jesus Christ” (N.D. XIII 659). The question as to who is really dehumanized in situations of oppression such as this is a pertinent one! Paulo Freire suggests that the oppressors themselves become dehumanized and that humanization can only come from those who have been oppressed. Indeed, it was in my engagements with these human beings that I felt my own humanity welling up and challenging me to respond. Whereas such engagements occurred in the routine interactions whilst providing health care, I also encountered religious spaces within which I experienced the intense presence of spirituality and of God; living spaces of hope, acceptance and humanization. Among the spaces I visited was a tented mosque and an Ethiopian Orthodox Church constructed from tarpaulin and wooden laths. I was again moved to tears at the creation of such prayerful spaces in the midst of suffering. In both, I was welcomed as a brother and advised that all were welcome irrespective of faith, ethnicity or gender. As the Eritrean elder of the Orthodox Church put it “we are all humans; all are welcome.” Such acceptance of the other speaks not to a religious fundamentalism but rather to fundamentally spiritual awareness which offers the possibility of current realities being transformed into ones that are humanizing.

The Relationship between Engagement and Spirituality

Whereas *disengagement* is an important concept in maintaining distance between people, its corollary, *engagement*, is arguably central to interpersonal interactions and is found in the dialogic nature of such interactions. It is in engagement that knowledge of reality is ascertained (Sobrino 1988) and this “orientation toward the other” is suggested by some to be a characteristic of spirituality (Walton 2012) serving to redress the otherness of disengagement. Spiritual engagement has also been found to be associated with relationships, love and participation with others (Penman *et al.* 2009). It is also central to our Spiritan heritage within the union of heart and mind. The widespread nature of this relational aspect of spirituality is highlighted by Donal Dorr (2004: 37) who identifies twelve “ingredients” of spirituality:

...“each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society.”

1. Ecological wisdom
2. Option for the poor
3. The struggle for liberation and structural justice
4. Reconciliation and peacemaking
5. Respect for cultural differences
6. Leisure, celebration, and contemplation
7. Integration of sexuality
8. Community-building through collaboration
9. Interpersonal respect and love
10. Personal qualities, virtues, and attitudes
11. Vulnerability
12. Openness to enrichment and challenge.

The struggle for liberation and justice is at the center of Christianity, with *Evangelii Gaudium* no. 187 reminding us that “each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society.” This direction towards liberation from oppression and poverty is taken up by Sobrino (1988) in his treatise on a spirituality of liberation. He defines spirituality as “the spirit of a subject – an individual or a group – in its relationship with the whole of reality” (Sobrino 1988: 13). This “relating to reality” is vitally important in the context of those who experience oppression and Sobrino (*ibid.*) identifies four main aspects in this regard:

1) Honesty about reality, recognizing things “as they actually are”; 2) faithfulness to this reality, despite the pain that this may bring; 3) openness to being “swept along” by the possibilities that faithfulness to reality brings, and 4) the experience of a relationship with God.

These provide useful pointers to understanding the relationship between engagement and spirituality in the context of my experiences in Calais.

Honesty about Reality

The spirituality which underlies human engagement is one which is grounded in realities; the lived realities of human beings (Shedrake 1998). As such, it is somewhat phenomenological in nature but, rather than being focused on the experience of *one person* it is actually grounded in the shared experiences of *all persons* who are the participants in the engagement. This is an important concept as the solidarity that is inherent in spirituality precludes the possibility of individualism (Gutiérrez 2005). Thus, there must be an unfettered and honest recognition and acceptance of reality as it actually is (Sobrino 1988). Such considerations harmonize closely with Freire’s (1993) thoughts on dialogic engagement for he proposes that true solidarity can only take place when

people move away from abstract perspectives and enter into the honest recognition of the other's reality. The knowledge which derives from such an engagement leads to an uncovering also of the historicity of this reality and of one's role in its genesis or maintenance. Sobrino (1988: 16) proposes that in the face of such reality spirituality demands "that form of love for which the greater part of reality calls out: justice."

Faithfulness to this Reality

Achieving a level of honesty about reality is often a painful process, as it calls all partners to a situation of vulnerability, a *nakedness*, which exposes partners' actions and inactions, activity and passivity in bringing about or maintaining that reality. Roles must be recognized; partners must be identified for the persons they are and not as members of some abstract category; injustice, deprivation of voice, exploitation and lies must be acknowledged; and pious, sentimental and individualistic gestures must be discontinued (Freire 1993). The call for justice arises from this and this further demands action in solidarity and in participation with the other (Sheerin 2011). It is clear, though, that those who stand with oppressed people often find themselves entering into their reality and experiencing the abuses that they have been subject to (Front Line Defenders 2013). Despite this, one is called to be faithful to that reality, to its transformation and to the hope of an alternative possibility. This is in the knowledge that "very often the obstacles we meet make us lose all we had gained and start anew" (Gutiérrez 2001: 194). I have struggled with this each time I left these situations, seeking to achieve balance in my life, yet recognizing the need to remain faithful to my suffering brothers and sisters.

Following my first visit to Calais, I felt "driven" to continue my work and travelled to Lesbos in Greece, to assist those people who were landing after their treacherous journey across the Aegean Sea. Again, after that, I felt compelled to return to Calais. This is, I believe, part of our vocation as Christians and Spiritans: called "to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives...to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favor" (Luke 4:18-19). I have been privileged to be allowed to engage in relationships with other human beings who have experienced trauma, personal/material loss, dehumanization and who seek the opportunity to reclaim their humanity in Europe. The pain of these people has become internalized in me to the extent that I don't know how I cannot assist them in their plight. Coming to this situation with a set of values rooted in the basic principle of *caritas*, love and sharing with others (Sheerin 2013), and derived from a Christian upbringing, I feel the need to remain faithful to the

...one is called to be faithful to that reality, to its transformation and to the hope of an alternative possibility.

The pain of these people has become internalized in me to the extent that I don't know how I cannot assist them in their plight.

reality that I have been privy to. To disengage would, I think, be hypocritical and unfaithful.

Openness to Possibilities

An inherent possibility of being faithful to the reality is that one will be opened to the possibility of extending one's actions of justice to others and that the spirituality of liberation will become the underpinning driver for "doing good." Sobrino (1988) writes of a developing conviction that the realities of those who are oppressed can change and that new realities can be achieved. This is consistent with the utopian basis of such a spirituality which is central to the writings of fellow practitioner of liberation spirituality, Ignacio Ellacuría (1989: 1078) who wrote that

Only utopianism and hope will enable us to believe, and give us strength to try – together with all the world's poor and oppressed people – to reverse history, to subvert it, and to move it in a different direction.

It is also in keeping with a growing conviction that I have, that a world of social justice and humanization is achievable, but only if people who share in this vision, in this alternate reality, in this spirituality, work to make it happen (Freire 1994). This is the possibility that can be striven for.

Experience of God

This openness, honesty and fidelity is a basis for the possibility of relationship – a spiritual experience – with God; one that is achieved through historical revelation. Sobrino (1988: 21) posits that "the question of spirituality is purely and simply the question of a correspondence to God's revelation in real history," the lived history and realities of others. This is the "spirituality of presence" that David Smith refers to when discussing Libermann's *practical union*; presence with God, through prayer and presence to others through apostolic works (Smith 2008: 1). The union is also manifested in Jesus' entrance into the reality of the human state and his humanization of those with whom he engaged and those who sought to engage with him: tax collectors (Mark 2:15-17); sinners (John 8:3-11); and those with illness (Luke 5:12-14). My experience is that engagement with others forms part of a spiritual encounter in which God is revealed. This was particularly pertinent for me in the touching of wounds of torture and of anguish which reminded me of Jesus' revelation to Thomas in John's Gospel (20:27-28).

This is the "spirituality of presence" that David Smith refers to when discussing Libermann's practical union; presence with God, through prayer and presence to others through apostolic works...

Conclusions

This paper has considered the spirituality underpinning my experiences engaging with people who are seeking refuge from wars and other difficulties in their home countries. I have proposed that these activities are consistent with an apostolate which is Christian and Spiritan in nature, and that they counter the disengagement which is often seen in the responses to those who are perceived to be “different.” As such, they act to redress the dehumanization which is inherent to disengagement: they humanize through engagement (presence). It is clear to me that there is a coherent spirituality underpinning this work and that this is best described in terms of the spirituality of liberation put forward by Sobrino and Gutiérrez. The main tenets harmonize with those set out in the “Methodology of Spiritan JPIC Animation” (*Spiritan Justice, Peace and Integrity in Creation Ministry*: 41-49) which speaks of 1) compassion and response; 2) identification of root causes of injustice and provocation to action; 3) humility in the service of the poor and oppressed and in turn self-discovery and conversion; and 4) solidarity which is manifested in journeying with those oppressed, at their side, much as Jesus took human form to journey with humanity. Such a spirituality may provide a useful basis for understanding similar work being carried out where oppression and marginalization are features of people’s realities.

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PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION,

THE INSPIRATION AND TRUTH OF SACRED SCRIPTURE. THE WORD THAT COMES FROM GOD AND SPEAKS OF GOD FOR THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD. COLLEGEVILLE: LITURGICAL PRESS, 2014

ISBN: 978-0-8146-4903-9. \$19.95

At the 2008 Synod of Bishops on the Word of God, there was much debate on the inspiration and truth of sacred Scripture. The question was how to understand *Dei Verbum* 11 and 12 in view of apparent contradictions and even unethical behaviors in certain passages of the Bible. Belief in the inspiration and truth of Scripture is foundational, but has never been formally defined. Of the Propositions the bishops handed the pope at the end of the Synod, Proposition 12 asked to clarify the matter. The pope turned the question over to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which tasked the Pontifical Biblical Commission (a body of 20 biblical scholars appointed by the pope from across the church, the president of which is the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) to begin study in 2009. The result is the above document. The Foreword by Cardinal Müller states that this is neither a declaration from the magisterium nor meant to be a complete doctrine regarding the inspiration and truth of Scripture. The authors affirm not to intend to formulate a doctrine of inspiration in competition with what is usual in the manuals of theology, but to search out how Scripture itself points to the divine provenance of its assertions (no. 137), also to suggest possible ways to interpret difficult passages within the framework of the faith (no. 150). The document has three Parts.

Part I, *The Testimony of the biblical Writings on their Origin from God*. Inspiration concerns the divine activity both on the authors and on the writings themselves. It differs from revelation, which is the act by which God communicates who he is and the mystery of his will (no. 7). The human authors constantly affirm personal faith in God and obedience to the various forms of divine revelation. The authors illustrate this with select Old Testament and New Testament texts, the prophetic word and its “thus says the Lord” being the clearest model. Jesus is “the culmination of the revelation of God the Father” (Ben XVI, *Verbum Domini*, 20). The writings of the New Testament attest to the inspiration of the Old Testament and interpret it Christologically (no. 54).

Part II, *The Testimony of the biblical Writings to their Truth*. *Dei Verbum* 11 avoided the term, inerrancy, which might suggest lack of error of any kind in the Bible (no. 63). The truth affirmed is that which God wanted put into the sacred writings *for the sake of our salvation*, hence restricting it to “divine revelation which concerns God himself and the salvation of the human race” (no. 105). Christ is the truth (John 14:6), the fullness of truth being manifested in his person and kingdom. Reading for truth, the creation story (Genesis 1), for example, does not tell us *how* the world came into being, but *why* and *for what purpose* it is as it is (no. 67). Not all texts of the Bible explicitly focus on God and his will for salvation. For example, the Song of Songs celebrates human marital love. But in the faith tradition, it received *additional* meanings in terms of the passionate love of God for his people and for humanity (no. 77). The Book of Revelation portrays the fierce struggle between the “structure of Christ” and the “earthly structure” that ushers in the kingdom of God within the human realm (no. 96). The authors call for a canonical approach to Scripture: “the canon of Scripture is the adequate interpretive context for each of the traditions of which it is composed” (no. 103).

Part III, *The Interpretation of the Word of God and its Challenges*. There are historical problems and ethical and social problems. Divergences in the Infancy Narratives and the Resurrection stories, for example, serve to highlight the agreements in each case – the relationship of Jesus with God, his virginal conception, and his role as Savior of humankind. “The purely historical elements have a subordinate function” (no. 123). The church removed certain passages from public reading in the Liturgy, yet that does not gainsay their charism of inspiration (no. 125). The law of retaliation (“an eye for an eye”) is a reasonable means of furthering the common good – equal proportion between crime and punishment – which many legal systems have adopted. The ban exterminating whole populations during the Conquest requires a nonliteral interpretation as in the command to cut off one’s hand or pluck out one’s eye in Matt 5:29. In fact, since the Canaanites are seen by God as guilty of very serious crimes and the victories are consistently attributed to the Lord, the law is “a duty of justice similar to the prosecution, condemnation, and execution of a criminal guilty of a capital crime” (no. 127). Prayers calling for vengeance are merely metaphors. “Smash their children against the rock means to annihilate, without the possibility of their reproducing in the future, the malignant forces which destroy life” (no. 129). Ultimately, it is the same as “deliver us from Evil.” The injunctions against women in parts of the Pauline literature do not agree with Gal 3:28 (no longer male nor female). Teaching and governance were at that time reserved for men. Paul “invites the interiorization of relationships or social roles considered stable and enduring at a certain period,” though “we can still regret that Paul in these letters did not clearly assert equality of social status for believing spouses” (no. 132). Every single biblical passage does not necessarily contain the full revelation of God or the perfect revelation of morality. “Single passages of Scripture, therefore, must not be isolated or absolutized but must be understood and evaluated in their relationship with the fullness of revelation in the person and work of Jesus and in the framework of a canonical reading of Sacred Scripture” (no. 136). Christ is the center which sheds light on the whole of Scripture (no. 147). The aim in this last part especially has been to show both how to overcome fundamentalism and avoid skepticism (no. 4). For, “we cannot...ignore demands of our time and interpret the texts of the Bible outside their historical context; we must read them in our time, with and for our contemporaries” (no. 136).

James Chukwuma Okoye, C.S.Sp.

MICHAEL J. GORMAN, ED., *SCRIPTURE AND ITS INTERPRETATION. A GLOBAL, ECUMENICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE*. GRAND RAPIDS: BAKER ACADEMIC, 2017. XXIII + 400 PAGES; GLOSSARY, SCRIPTURE INDEX, AND SUBJECT AND AUTHOR INDEX, PAGES 401-441. ISBN: 978-0801098390. \$34.99.

Twenty-three Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Pentecostal specialists in the field participated in this ecumenical volume. The book has three Parts.

Part 1, *The Bible*, has seven chapters: “The Bible. A Book, a Library, a Story, an Invitation” (Paul Zilonka and Michael Gorman); “The Setting: Biblical Geography, History, and Archaeology” (Karen Wenell); “The Scriptures of Israel (The Christian Old Testament)” (Claire McGinnis); “The Writings of the New Covenant (The New Testament)” (Michael Gorman); “Significant Noncanonical Writings” (Christopher Skinner, who briefly treats the Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, the Nag Hammadi Library; the Gospel of Thomas, NT Apocrypha, and the Apostolic Fathers); “From Books to Library: The Formation of the Biblical Canons (Michael Holmes; note the plural, “Canons”); “From There to Here: The Transmission and Translation of the Bible (Michael Barré).

Part 2, *The Interpretation of the Bible in Various Traditions and Cultures*, has twelve chapters: “The Reception of the Bible and its Significance” (Christine Joynes); “Premodern Interpretation of the Bible” (Carole Monica Burnett); “Modern and Postmodern Methods of Biblical Interpretation” (Joel B. Green); “Theological Interpretation of the Bible” (Stephen Fowl); “Protestant Biblical Interpretation” (Michael Gorman); “Roman Catholic Biblical Interpretation” (Ronald Witherup); “Orthodox Interpretation of Scripture” (Edith Humphrey); “Pentecostal Biblical Interpretation” (Craig Keener); “African Biblical Interpretation” (Bungishabaku Katho); “Latino/Latina Biblical Interpretation” (M. Daniel Carroll); “Asian and Asian-American Biblical Interpretation” (K. K. Yeo). Feminist and Marxist (Liberationist) Interpretation is merely recalled on pp. 210-211.

Part 3, *The Bible and Contemporary Christian Existence*, has five chapters: “The Bible and Spirituality” (Patricia Fosarelli and Michael Gorman); “Scripture and Christian Ethics: Embodying Pentecost” (Brent Laytham); “The Bible and Politics” (Christopher Rowland); “Scripture and Christian Community” (Jonathan Wilson-Hargrove); and “The Bible and Christian Mission” (N. T. Wright).

Each chapter is furnished with Questions for Reflection and Discussion and an up-to-date bibliography. Forty-seven illustrations call in the help of visual art, like the theatre at Ephesus (p. 88) and the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles (p. 271). Catholics will value Witherup’s Table of Key Catholic Documents on Interpretation, p. 242. Some of the chapters appeared in an earlier book also edited by Gorman, *Scripture: An Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible and its Interpretation*, Baker Academic, 2005, but those essays have all been revised and updated in this volume.

The reader learns the difference between papyrus, parchment, and codex (p. 5) and the implications for the formation and interpretation of the Bible. The tables of the Scriptures of the various Christian denominations occur pages 12-15. Because this is a Christian perspective,

chapter 3 is titled, “The Scriptures of Israel (The Christian Old Testament),” but Claire McGinnis insists that “neither Testament is fully intelligible apart from the other” (p. 46), and Paul Zilonka and Michael Gorman suggest rewording Augustine’s formula to read: “in the Shared Testament, the rabbinic texts and the Christian Testament find their perpetual foundations; in the Christian Testament, the Shared Testament is intensely read anew in Christ” (p.11). There is a brief treatment of early Jewish exegesis and its influence on Christian interpretation, pp. 109-110.

The dominance of historical criticism has been broken in favor of giving priority to theological concerns and the Rule of Faith. A passage may have several meanings within its literal sense. For example, Isa 7:14 (behold a maiden is with child) had meaning in the eighth century BCE, but also a new literal sense when read by Matthew as “behold a virgin is with child” (already in LXX) and applied to the virgin birth of Jesus (p. 214). Pentecostal hermeneutics is Spirit hermeneutics. Keener gives four succinct typical features (p. 274): continuationist reading (God who acted in the world in the past still acts in the present); biblical narrative has theological import and is to be read missiologically; reading Scripture with emphasis on the Spirit and his action as in Acts 2; and Scripture as nourishing hope and courage, especially for the marginalized. Asian Christians find in Revelation a message of hope that is illuminating to those living in sociopolitical uncertainty and hardship. 1 and 2 Kings are read in South Korea to critique the prosperity gospel in that country. Asians love the wisdom literature (Proverbs, James) for practical teaching in moral, religious, and communal life. They prefer Isaiah’s vision of inclusive love for the world and find the Joshua and Judges narratives to be parochial and unhelpful (pp. 328, 329, 330).

Orthodoxy resists systematization; Orthodox interpretation is based on the fathers of the church and is responsive to the contemporary world. The icon is a visual Bible for the faithful. Of the eight Orthodox hermeneutical principles, pp. 261-62, three are emphases upon a shared Christian theme: “Word of God” refers in the first place to the Son, the personal Logos; Scripture is theandric, both human and divine; and Scripture is to be interpreted within a life of prayer in the church - the Scriptures lead up (*ana-goge*) to God, induce transformation. In the service of this, both allegory and typology may be used in inter-relation as was the practice of the fathers of the church (p. 264). The Orthodox profess a *prima Scriptura* (not *sola Scriptura*, as the Reformation) – Scripture has a symbiotic relationship to creed, but Scripture is primary and central. Mission is the story of Scripture focused on Jesus as seen from the point of view of those who hear Jesus’ call (N. T. Wright). It is not something added on to “biblical theology.” It consists not in rescuing people *from* the world, but in rescuing humans *for* the world; it means summoning people to Jesus himself, executing the charge of bringing creation to full flowering (p. 397).

Although each article is self-standing, there is a certain logic to the sequence of chapters. The pedagogical treatment makes the rich information accessible to all. There is no way such a rich fare can be summarized in a few pages, so I sought to alert readers to the inner flavor (*sfumatura*) of these articles. More than worth it for the average interested reader, this valued vademecum for the student and pastor easily doubles as a textbook that makes the work of professors teaching biblical interpretation that much easier.

James Chukwuma Okoye, C.S.Sp.

Spiritan Horizons seeks to further research into the history, spirituality, and tradition of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. In line with the aims of the Center for Spiritan Studies at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, its overall goal is to promote creative fidelity to the Spiritan charism in the contemporary world. The journal includes articles of a scholarly nature as well as others related to the praxis of the Spiritan charism in a wide variety of cultural contexts. Special attention is given in each issue to the Spiritan education ethos, in view of the university setting in which the journal is published.

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