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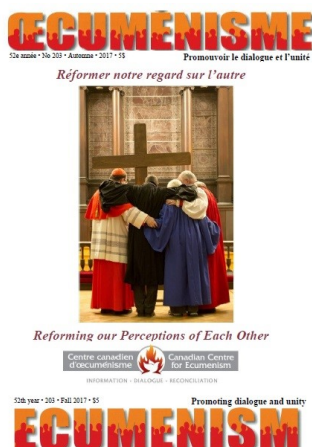
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Promoting dialogue and unity

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Éditorial

Réformer notre regard sur l'autre

Par Denitsa Tsvetkova

Chères lectrices, chers lecteurs,

À l'occasion du 500^e anniversaire de la Réforme, nous vous proposons un autre regard sur la Réforme et sur l'autre. Dans son texte, le **Rév. David Fines**, en tant qu'œcuméniste protestant, fait un survol historique des événements qui amènent à la division de l'Église. En réformant la vision traditionnelle, selon laquelle Luther a séparé l'Église, il nous rappelle que Luther voulait réformer son Église, donc l'améliorer. Son collègue, le **Rév. Dr. Isaiah Dada** va plus loin. Il voit la période depuis la Réforme non comme 500 ans de division, mais comme 500 ans d'œcuménisme. Il propose la thèse selon laquelle l'œcuménisme est nécessaire pour le dialogue interreligieux.

De son côté, la théologienne orthodoxe **Dr. Ann Bezzerides** nous invite à réformer notre rapport à la modernité pour permettre aux jeunes de s'approcher de l'Église. L'analyse de l'icône orthodoxe de la Résurrection offerte par le jeune théologien protestant **Jason Boudreault** est déjà en soi un acte réformateur qui renverse le stéréotype d'iconoclasme protestant. La création de l'icône du Jésus Pantocrator par la catholique **Marisel Zavagno** et sa lecture œcuménique est une réforme artistique qui a créé un nouveau artefact théologique. Nous constatons avec **Stefanos Singelakis** qu'avant de devenir l'expression universelle de la Sainte Trinité, l'icône d'André Roublev a réformé la représentation trinitaire. De même, ce ne serait pas exagéré à dire que le théologien orthodoxe **Fr. Dr. John McGuckin** voit les Pères de l'Église comme des réformateurs qui ont créé une nouvelle culture pour ancrer l'Évangile dans leur monde.

Si l'on constate avec **Joseph Stemberga** que finalement, le monde d'aujourd'hui n'est pas très différent du monde du 1^{er} siècle, nous devons nous rendre à l'évidence que d'une certaine façon nous sommes toutes et tous appelés à être des réformateurs.

D'une certaine façon, réformer fait partie de la Tradition. Notre relation avec l'autre est à réformer, dédramatiser et apaiser pour pouvoir le connaître et l'aimer. Notre lecture de l'histoire est à revisiter, reraconter, relire et réécrire pour fonder l'avenir. Notre rapport à la nature est à réformer, recycler et nettoyer pour pouvoir respirer... Mais la véritable Réforme commence par nous-mêmes, par nos efforts constants pour nous améliorer afin d'atteindre la ressemblance divine. La Réforme commence par des choix délibérés comme celui de penser à 500 ans d'œcuménisme plutôt qu'à 500 ans de division. Il nous faut apprendre à voir autrement l'œcuménisme sans oublier les divisions et les massacres, et à aller vers l'autre tout en restant soi-même.



Denitsa Tsvetkova est coordonnatrice des projets au Centre canadien d'œcuménisme et docteurante en théologie pratique à l'Université de Montréal.

Elle a une maîtrise en théologie et une maîtrise en sciences européennes et sciences sociales.

Elle travaille au Centre canadien d'œcuménisme depuis 2013, où, entre autres, elle est éditrice de l'Infolettre mensuelle.

Son mémoire de maîtrise porte sur « L'identité orthodoxe (chrétienne) et l'identité européenne culturelle ». Sa recherche doctorale, « Les communautés des immigrants orthodoxes d'origine d'Europe de l'Est à Montréal à la rencontre de la diversité culturelle », est une continuation de son désir d'explorer l'articulation entre les identités religieuses et le dialogue interculturel. Guidée par la volonté d'apporter une modeste contribution au « Bien vivre ensemble », elle se lance en tant que rédactrice en chef de la revue *Œcuménisme*



*Le 500^e anniversaire de la Réforme
Point de vue d'un œcuméniste protestant
Par Rev. David Fines*



En cette année du 500^e anniversaire de la Réforme, en regardant en arrière, les Églises du monde protestant peuvent se poser la question suivante : la division est-elle l'une des caractéristiques intrinsèques du protestantisme ?

En rendant publiques ses 95 thèses dénonçant le trafic des indulgences et les abus de l'Église de son temps, le 31 octobre 1517, Martin Luther ne se doutait pas de l'ouragan qu'il allait provoquer : partout en Europe une période de gigantesques transformations dans les domaines religieux, social, politique, économique et culturel.

Pourtant Martin Luther ne voulait pas créer de nouvelle Église. Ses adeptes se sont d'ailleurs appelés «évangéliques» avant qu'on les désigne comme «luthériens». Au début, Luther ne cherchait pas la division, il voulait réformer son Église, comme l'avaient tenté tant d'autres avant lui (Valdo, Wyclif, Hus, Savonarole...) et comme le désiraient avec lui tant de ses contemporains. Il se doutait que ses idées provoqueraient d'irrémediables divisions dans le monde chrétien.

Luther ne pouvait pas se douter non plus que ses successeurs engageraient la Réforme dans de multiples directions, et que cela engendrerait la naissance d'une multitude de dénominations. En 1530, nous lisons dans la *Confession d'Augsbourg*, rédigée par Philip Melancthon sous l'œil approbateur de Luther, comme une tentative de rétablir les ponts doctrinaux avec l'Église Romaine et de rétablir l'unité dans l'Empire germanique menacé par les forces centripètes : «L'Église est l'assemblée de tous les croyants auprès desquels l'Évangile est prêché purement et les saints sacrements administrés conformément à l'Église».

Mais malgré ce louable objectif et cette noble vision, la même question demeure : la division est-elle l'une des caractéristiques intrinsèques du protestantisme ?

Divisions précoces...

Avant même le début de la Réforme, en octobre 1517, divers courants de « protestation » avaient déjà vu le jour. Songeons aux vaudois, groupe dissident qui tire son nom de son fondateur Pierre Valdo de Lyon, et qui s'était réfugié, sous les persécutions, dans les hauteurs alpines du nord de l'Italie; songeons aussi aux hussites, les disciples du Bohémien Jan Hus qui avait prôné l'établissement d'une nouvelle forme de communauté de foi, la libre lecture assidue de la Bible, la communion sous les deux espèces et la simplicité du culte.

Ensuite, très, très vite du vivant même de Luther, comme l'explosion spectaculaire prévisible d'une supernova, c'est l'éclatement du protestantisme

David Fines

studied psychology and theology before being ordained as a minister in the United Church of Canada in 1991. He was a director of magazines: Aujourd'hui, Credo and the Ecumenism.

*Le 500^e anniversaire de la Réforme
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dans plusieurs directions. Sous l'inspiration principalement de Menno Simmons, la Réforme radicale produit le mouvement des anabaptistes-mennonites, pratiquant une piété rigoureuse, refusant le baptême des enfants et revendiquant la séparation des Églises, qui s'étend rapidement en Suisse, en Allemagne, en Autriche, en Hollande, puis en Ukraine, en Russie et aux États-Unis. Dans un autre champ du spectre de la nouvelle doctrine s'épanouit la mouvance réformée, à la suite de Zwingli et de Calvin, qui valorise l'étude intelligente de la Bible, et qui met l'emphasis sur la communauté et le rôle des laïcs dans la gestion de l'Église. Cette école de pensée engendrera aussi, par l'entremise de John Knox, le presbytérianisme. Il ne faut certes pas oublier le monde anglican, véritable accouplement réussi entre la tradition romaine séculaire et le renouveau réformé vivifiant, rêvé par Henri VII, entr'aperçu par Édouard VI et définitivement établi par Élisabeth 1^{re}, se parant des splendeurs de l'un et des innovations de l'autre.

Autre sauvageon du la Réforme radicale, l'unitarisme qui postule l'unité fondamentale des religions naît, avant la fin du premier siècle réformé, en Transylvanie et en Pologne. Quelque temps plus tard, au début du 17^e siècle, au confluent des courants réformé-presbytérien et anabaptiste, John Smyth, en exil à Amsterdam, élabore le baptisme durand; le baptisme trouvera une terre extrêmement fertile aux États-Unis où il se divise et se multiplie tout à la fois (Southern Baptist Convention, National Baptist Convention, National Baptist Convention of America, American Baptist Church USA, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Christian Right. Un habitant des États-Unis sur trois se dit baptiste.)

... qui se poursuivent

Et ce n'est pas fini. Moins de deux siècles plus tard, les méthodistes et leurs fondateurs charismatiques John Wesley et George Whitefield, influencés par les doctrines calvinistes, se sépareront de l'anglicanisme pour voler de leurs propres ailes. Les méthodistes n'auront pas de peine à se diviser. L'Armée du Salut est elle-même un organisme d'évangélisation et d'aide aux démunis fondé en 1865 par le pasteur méthodiste William Booth trouvant que son Église n'était pas assez proche des pauvres. À partir des années 1840, s'était développé au sein du méthodisme aux États-Unis un important mouvement de sanctification, dont la frange radicale se sépare cinquante ans plus tard. Insistant sur l'expérience concrète du baptême de l'Esprit et sur les manifestations visibles physiques et émotionnelles de celui-ci, ce mouvement rencontrera un grand succès aux États-Unis. Il donnera à son tour naissance en 1906 au pentecôtisme, dans la confluence de la spiritualité afro-américaine et d'éléments de spiritualité méthodiste et catholique. Plus tard en émergeront différents mouvements charismatiques qui insisteront sur la conversion personnelle et l'immédiateté de l'action divine.

*Martin Luther ne
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L'histoire des Assemblées de Dieu remonte aux débuts du pentecôtisme,

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mais ses racines se trouvent dans les groupes de chrétiens évangéliques anabaptistes du temps de la Réforme. Des mouvements réguliers de réveil ont marqué les Églises de la Pentecôte. En 1914, de nombreux ministres et laïcs sentent le besoin de protéger et de préserver les résultats du réveil en unissant le mouvement en une Communauté unie, ce qui se fait par la constitution de la Conférence Générale des Assemblées de Dieu aux États-Unis d'Amérique (General Council of the Assemblies of God in the United States of America).

Les Églises de la Sainteté sont elles aussi issues du méthodisme. Durant la seconde moitié du 19^e siècle, de nombreux chrétiens, surtout des méthodistes, se plaignent du formalisme de leurs églises, du manque de discipline qui y règne et surtout des vues modernistes de nombreux pasteurs. Ils se regroupent pour pratiquer une vie sainte et une religion du cœur, strictement fidèles à la Parole de Dieu centrée sur la purification des péchés, la guérison divine, le parler en langue et l'espérance profonde du proche retour du Seigneur.

Au milieu du 17^e siècle, apparaissent les Quakers (ou Société des Amis) plus près du courant anabaptiste mennonite (et le menant encore plus loin notamment sur le principe du ministère laïque) que du protestantisme à la Luther et Calvin. Apparaît à peu près à la même époque la communauté des Shakers qui, elle, trouve son origine dans le groupe huguenot des Camisards des Cévennes qui fuyait les persécutions des dragons du roi Louis XVI et qui avait développé, pensant que la fin du monde était proche, des visions millénaristes qui le faisait « s'agiter ».

Faut-il continuer ? Le *congrégationalisme* désigne les Églises indépendantes qui se sont formées dans le monde anglo-saxon (en Angleterre et en Amérique) dès le début du 17^e siècle, s'opposant aussi bien aux anglicans qu'aux presbytériens. Parmi les groupes congrégationalistes, on trouve l'Église chrétienne (Disciples du Christ), d'obédience calviniste, fondée au début du 19^e siècle et qui fait partie des principales églises protestantes d'Amérique du Nord. Toujours en Angleterre, d'autres assemblées dissidentes apparaissent dans les années 1820, les Plymouth Brethren, mais rapidement à la suite de querelles internes ce mouvement se scindera en Frères darbystes, « Frères étroites », et « Frères larges ». En outre, on regroupe sous l'appellation d'Églises libres les communautés évangéliques de l'époque du Réveil, au début du 19^e siècle qui se sont séparées tant des Églises réformées que des églises luthériennes établies.

Puis il y a l'Alliance chrétienne missionnaire, les Églises du Plein Évangile, le néo-pentecôtisme, l'Alliance Chrétienne et Missionnaire, les Nazaréens, les Églises Évangéliques Libres, les Églises Bibliques Indépendantes, les Puritains, les Adventistes, les Huttérites, les Amish. Non, vraiment depuis 500 ans les Églises protestantes n'ont pas été un modèle d'unité, malgré la proclamation de la

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Confession d'Augsbourg. On ne peut voir au fil des siècles ni signes ni marques de désir de dialogue, ou même de rapprochement, et encore moins de réconciliation.

Il faudra attendre en 1839 pour voir apparaître la première Union d'Églises alors que les seize consistoires de la Belgique se fédèrent sous le règne du souverain protestant Léopold 1^{er}. Cette union s'est enrichie avec le temps pour devenir en 1978 l'Église Protestante Unie de Belgique (EPUB).

Les unions d'Églises

Il faut maintenant sauter trois quarts de siècle pour que se déroulent deux autres unions simultanément en deux continents situés aux antipodes. Tout d'abord en Amérique de Nord. Les premières années du 20^e siècle sont une période d'importante immigration au Canada. Dans les petites villes naissantes des provinces de l'Ouest du pays, on retrouve jusqu'à six, sept, huit, églises différentes. Les grandes Églises institutionnelles s'inquiètent des immenses ressources matérielles, financières et humaines que cela exige. On commence donc à discuter à six : méthodistes, congrégationalistes, presbytériens, anglicans, baptistes, mennonites s'assoient autour de la même table. Mais les trois premières, auxquelles s'ajouteront les Églises d'Union non-dénominationnelles, veulent aller plus loin que de simples arrangements administratifs, et finalement en juin 1925, une loi du Gouvernement fédéral établit l'existence légale de l'Église Unie du Canada, à laquelle se joindra officiellement, en 1968, la Conférence canadienne de l'Église évangélique unie des Frères (The Canadian Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church).

Presque au même moment avait été fondée le 30 décembre 1924, l'Église unie du Nord de l'Inde (The United Church of Northern India), née de la fusion des Églises congrégationalistes et presbytériennes. L'Église du Sud de l'Inde (Church of South India), union des Églises congrégationalistes, presbytériennes et réformées, verra le jour en 1947. Même si ces premières fusions étaient en partie motivées par des questions bureaucratiques ou même politiques, il ne faut pas en sous-estimer la portée prophétique.

Un autre exemple significatif de fusion d'Églises nous vient des Philippines. Dans un pays à la population à grande majorité catholique, et qui s'égrène sur un chapelet de centaines d'îles, les Églises protestantes ont bien senti qu'elles ne pourraient proposer un témoignage valable qu'en s'unissant. Ainsi les Églises presbytérienne, congrégationaliste et les Frères unis en Christ (United Brethren in Christ) se sont fusionnés en mars 1929 pour former l'Église unie évangélique des Philippines (The United Evangelical ou mieux *Iglesia Evangelica Unida de Cristo*).

Non, vraiment, depuis 500 ans les Églises protestantes n'ont pas été un modèle d'unité, malgré la proclamation de la Confession d'Augsbourg. On ne peut guère voir au fil des siècles ni signes ni marques de désir de dialogue, ou même de rapprochement et encore moins de réconciliation.

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Depuis cinquante ans les unions d'Églises protestantes se sont multipliées. En voici quelques exemples provenant des quatre coins du globe :

1957 : Fondation de l'Église unie du Christ aux États-Unis (United Church of Christ) de l'union des Églises réformée, congrégationaliste et protestantes évangéliques.

1965 : Formation d'une Église unie en Jamaïque et aux Îles Caïmans ainsi qu'en Zambie.

1970 : Église unie du Christ au Mozambique.

1972 : Église unie du Christ aux Îles Marshall.

1977 : L'importante fusion des paroisses de l'Église méthodiste, du tiers des paroisses presbytériennes et de la quasi-totalité des paroisses congrégationalistes pour former l'Église unifiante en Australie (The Uniting Church in Australia).

1996: Fusion d'Églises aux Îles Salomon.

2011: Autre Église unifiante, cette fois-ci en Suède (fusion des Églises baptistes, méthodistes, et de l'Église de l'Alliance missionnaire).

Et finalement en 2012: l'Église protestante unie de France voit le jour, fruit de l'union de l'Église réformée de France et de l'Église évangélique luthérienne de France.

La CMÉR

Finalement, ce désir de se rassembler est bien illustré, dans un cadre plus large, par l'évolution des Églises réformées depuis 150 ans. Enraciné dans la Réforme du 16^e siècle et particulièrement fidèle à la doctrine et à la théologie de Jean Calvin, le réformateur de Genève, et de son prédécesseur le réformateur de Zurich, Ulrich Zwingli, un premier regroupement d'Églises réformées s'est structuré dès 1875. Cela se passe à Londres alors qu'est créée «l'Alliance des Églises réformées dans le monde ayant adopté le système presbytérien» qui regroupe 21 Églises presbytériennes d'Europe et d'Amérique du nord. Quelques années plus tard, en 1891, c'est au tour du Conseil congrégationaliste international de voir le jour, également à Londres.

À Nairobi, au Kenya, se déroule en 1970, une Assemblée de fondation durant laquelle ces deux organisations fusionnent pour former l'Alliance réformée mondiale qui rassemble alors 114 Églises réparties dans 70 pays sur tous les continents.

On voit aussi évoluer en parallèle le Conseil réformé mondial qui, créé en 1946, regroupait des Églises sans aucun autre lien œcuménique international qui prenaient l'engagement de se soutenir mutuellement et d'œuvrer conjointement dans une unité confessionnelle réformée. Le Conseil œcuménique réformé re-

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grouperait 41 Églises membres réparties dans 26 pays, en majorité en Asie et en Afrique.

Finalement, en 2010, dans la ville de Grand Rapids dans l'État du Michigan aux États-Unis, les deux organisations, l'Alliance réformée mondiale et le Conseil œcuménique réformé se fusionnent pour donner la nouvelle et imposante Communion mondiale des Églises réformées (CMÉR). La CMÉR rassemble plus de 80 millions de personnes membres de 225 Églises dans plus de 100 pays, des Églises congrégationalistes, presbytériennes, réformées, unies, unifiantes, en voie d'unification et vaudoises.

On ne peut qu'espérer, alors que débute le sixième siècle de la Réforme, un même élan ardent de rassemblement et de réconciliation de la part de nombreuses autres branches de la nébuleuse protestante.

Martin Luther pourrait certes ajouter, pour ses successeurs que nous sommes, une 96^e thèse à sa célèbre contestation du 31 octobre 1517 : «Avec leur esprit persistant de division et de morcellement, les Églises chrétiennes ne rendent certes pas un témoignage prophétique et ne sont certes pas fidèles au commandement du Christ d'être Un comme lui et son Père sont UN, et elles font plutôt œuvre du diable.»

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La peur comme puissant moteur de violence : un défi de l'œcuménisme au dialogue interreligieux

Par Rev. Dr. Isaiah Dada

En célébrant le 500e anniversaire du mouvement œcuménique, les Églises chrétiennes ont, d'une part, pris conscience que la catholicité et l'œcuménicité de l'Église sont indissociables et que l'unité dans le Christ n'est pas seulement un commandement à suivre en tant que chrétiens, mais qu'elle doit également façonner tous les propos et actions de l'Église. D'autre part, leur désir actuel d'un rapprochement œcuménique vers les autres religions en s'engageant au dialogue interreligieux est confronté à plusieurs défis. Dans cet article je vais discuter de la peur comme l'un de ces défis.

La peur détruit l'amour et accélère des sentiments aussi négatifs que l'anxiété, l'attachement, la possessivité, la domination, la jalousie. La peur est un puissant moteur de violence. Et la violence est définie comme une force exercée par une personne ou un groupe de personnes pour soumettre, contraindre quelqu'un ou pour obtenir quelque chose. *La peur ne consiste pas seulement dans l'emploi direct de la violence; car la violence indirecte supprime tout, aussi bien la liberté. Si l'engagement que j'ai arraché en menaçant quelqu'un de la mort est moralement et légalement nul, comment serait-il valable si, pour l'obtenir, j'ai profité d'une situation [...] qui mettait autrui dans la nécessité de me céder ou de mourir ?* (Durkheim, *Divis* 1893, 376). Dans un contexte multiculturel, comment le dialogue interreligieux peut-il contribuer à la réduction de la peur pour un meilleur vivre ensemble? Pour relever ce défi je recours à l'analyse théorique dans mon article.

Malgré les reformes œcuméniques, les œuvres, engagements religieux, littéraires, et scientifiques à notre disposition, il nous est difficile de vivre dans la bonté sans conflits. La question lancinante est de savoir si l'engagement du mouvement œcuménique au dialogue interreligieux peut aider à l'éducation à la paix et s'il nous est possible de vivre sans conflits, sans efforts, et sans être réduits à l'isolement, puisqu'il apparaît que, de la naissance à la mort, nous menons une lutte continue en vue d'un avenir meilleur dont la réalisation est décidément problématique.

Le dialogue est une conversation sur un sujet commun entre deux personnes ou plus avec des points de vue différents dont le but principal est que chaque participant apprenne de l'autre afin qu'il puisse changer et grandir (Swidler 1983, 26). L'un des objectifs du dialogue interreligieux selon Swidler est de se connaître toujours plus profondément, et d'enrichir et de compléter l'appréciation de sa propre tradition de foi. Alors que le conflit est inhérent à l'existence humaine du fait de nos contradictions intérieures qui s'expriment extérieurement dans la société. Ces contradictions relèvent des activités concomitantes du «>>» et du «moi», de nos ambitions personnelles et de nos angoisses. La peur est un



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est pasteur méthodiste du Nigeria, enseignant et conférencier. Il a été assistant de recherche à la Chaire de recherche du Canada Islam, pluralisme et globalisation, et chargé de cours à l'Université de Montréal. Intervenant en soins spirituel apte à appréhender les myriades d'émotions qui accompagnent la maladie et le deuil, il agit efficacement auprès de personnes de toutes confessions. Membre clinique de l'Association of Clinical Pastoral Education U.S.A., il est également membre de la société internationale de théologie pratique.

Docteur en sciences des religions à la Faculté de théologie et de sciences des religions de l'Université de Montréal, Québec, au Canada, sa recherche doctorale l'amène à proposer un programme éducatif sur le dialogue interreligieux destiné aux responsables religieux.

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puissant moteur de violence et au final un pur produit de la pensée elle-même réaction de la mémoire.

Notre esprit peut-il cesser de diviser, ne peut-il demeurer complètement avec ce qui est? Et dans la compréhension de ce qui est, subsiste-t-il un conflit quelconque? Selon notre esprit, la recherche de la liberté implique celle de l'existence même de la réalité. Cela aboutit finalement à un processus d'auto-isollement, ce qui est loin de constituer la vraie liberté. Le résultat net en est la fin de la peur donc de la souffrance et ainsi la compréhension de soi-même. Ce raisonnement est déraisonnable, car éluder la connaissance de soi ne libère ni de la souffrance ni de la peur. En effet, seul un esprit affranchi de la peur peut faire face à la réalité.

La pensée engendre deux sentiments aussi paradoxaux que la peur et le plaisir qui tous deux appartiennent au domaine du temps. C'est ainsi que la production de la pensée peut être assimilée à une pièce de monnaie dont un côté serait le plaisir et l'autre la souffrance et par conséquent la peur.

Jiddu Krisnamurti, philosophe indien, dans son livre *Le Vol de l'aigle*, affirme que «l'humanité ne peut vivre sans conflits.» Cette déclaration est un défi pour aboutir à un dialogue interreligieux. Cette affirmation s'articule autour de trois temps : en premier lieu, l'auteur prétend que le conflit existe en nous à cause de nos contradictions intérieures; en deuxième lieu, il déclare que la peur détruit l'amour et crée un conflit; et en dernier lieu la pensée est une réaction de la mémoire et qu'ainsi elle engendre la peur («Si seulement je pouvais mettre fin à la pensée, je vivrais une vie différente.» (Krisnamurti, 5). A la fin du texte, la position de l'auteur est bien claire sur l'idée qu'il défend quand il affirme: «[...] et ainsi il y a à la fin de la peur [...] seul un esprit affranchi de la peur peut faire face à la réalité.» (Krisnamurti, 6) Il touche à la spiritualité du lecteur en l'encourageant à se poser des questions pertinentes afin de faire comprendre sa position et son point de vue.

S'il est vrai que spirituellement l'auteur préconise des concepts, il ne mentionne nullement le monde naturel et l'effet du conflit naturel. Les catastrophes naturelles comme les tempêtes, les séismes, les inondations ou encore les tsunamis sont des facteurs générateurs de peurs immenses sur lesquelles la pensée n'exerce aucun contrôle. De plus, mettre fin à la pensée n'est-il pas une renonciation à notre être ? Un adage dit « le penser, c'est l'être », ce qui implique que tout être doit penser pour prouver qu'il est, et mettre fin à la pensée signifie une négation du vivant. L'esprit qui s'affranchit de la peur doit conserver ses capacités de penser, car il serait impossible d'éviter les causes de la peur et de s'en affranchir sans faire appel à la pensée. N'est-ce pas la pensée qui est à la base de l'évolution des conditions humaines? En considérant que d'autres auteurs esti-

En célébrant le 500eme anniversaire du mouvement œcuménique, les Églises chrétiennes ont, d'une part, pris conscience que la catholicité et l'œcuménicité de l'Église sont indissociables et que l'unité dans le Christ n'est pas seulement un commandement à suivre en tant que chrétiens, mais qu'elle doit également façonner tous les propos et actions de l'Église.

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ment que celui qui cesse de penser cesse de vivre, le conflit intérieur n'est-il donc pas inné ? De plus, le monde dans lequel nous vivons aujourd'hui est caractérisé par de grands bouleversements comme les accidents environnementaux naturels sur lesquelles l'humain n'a aucun contrôle. Alors même que la Terre se déchaîne sans prévenir, pourrions-nous vraiment vivre sans conflits ?

Pour relever ce défi, l'engagement œcuménique au dialogue interreligieux doit faciliter et encourager l'éducation à la paix. L'éducation à la paix en tant que nouveau concept ou culture est perçue comme moyen de réduction de violence dans la société. C'est ce que nous montre le dossier constitué de deux documents : le premier, intitulé *L'éducation à la paix, toute une culture !*, publié dans Pax Christi International, est un article de Monica Fernandes et Michèle Parente; le second, *Éducation à la paix neuve et imprécise*, paru dans le blog *Le conflit* publié par Paix en mouvement est de Gil. L'éducation à la paix peut-elle réduire la culture de violence et promouvoir une paix durable dans un monde de violence ? Nous chercherons à comprendre la nécessité de l'éducation à la paix, pour ensuite étudier le contenu de cette éducation à la paix et identifier les dispositifs pour la promotion de l'éducation à la paix.

Face à la fatalité de la guerre, de la terreur, de la violence et de la non-garantie de la paix en raison des « outillages » militaires, nous sommes aujourd'hui en face d'une culture de violence qui semble prendre le dessus au sein de nos sociétés. Cette situation pousse plusieurs acteurs de la société à chercher de meilleures approches qui fassent la promotion de la non-violence et favoriser une vie en sécurité. Malgré les mesures prises pour contrer la violence, l'éducation à la paix en relation avec la recherche pour la paix et l'action pour la paix offre plus de possibilités de mobilisation contre la violence structurelle en général et de promotion de la non-violence, d'où la nécessité de son adoption. Elle pourrait efficacement faire face aux germes de la violence ancrés dans nos relations interpersonnelles, dans nos familles et nos écoles, sur les lieux de travail, dans les rues et dans notre mode de vie quotidien qui n'épargne pas les pays meurtris par des conflits ou par la pauvreté.

L'éducation à la paix, qui vise à une transformation non-violente des comportements et des attitudes, promeut une communication qui permet de vivre dans la joie. Elle contient des valeurs humaines qui renforcent non seulement une culture de paix mais aussi un plan de développement économique et social solide. De plus, cette éducation véhicule des enseignements sur le respect des droits humains, l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes, et le développement de la compréhension, de la tolérance et de la solidarité. Cet enseignement développe la communication participative et la libre circulation de l'information et des connaissances, tout en promouvant un système d'amélioration de la paix et de la sécurité internationales. Il s'agit d'instaurer une culture de la paix qui soit en mesure de toucher notre foi intérieure, de se manifester dans notre entourage et d'influencer notre environnement. Les outils utilisés dans sa promotion seront la médiation, la résolution des conflits sans violence, la communication non-violente,

L'éducation à la paix qui vise à une transformation non-violente des comportements et des attitudes, promeut une communication qui permet de vivre dans la joie. Elle contient des valeurs humaines qui renforcent non seulement une culture de paix mais aussi un plan de développement économique et social solide.

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l'identification des stratégies négatives et la transformation de celles-ci en stratégies positives.

Il faudrait que les recherches et programmes œcuméniques sur le dialogue interreligieux et l'éducation à la paix ne soient pas élaborés seulement à partir des images que les gens s'en font, mais qu'ils le soient à travers une conscientisation et une pédagogie appropriées pour aboutir à la paix. Cette éducation ne sera réalisable que si les programmes qui visent la promotion de la paix prennent en compte les dispositions suivantes : premièrement que les connaissances théoriques et pratiques de la paix soient bien mises en pratique sur le terrain. Deuxièmement, les projets doivent viser la famille, l'école et la communauté. Troisièmement, les acteurs civils formés doivent être en mesure de multiplier les approches non-violentes dans la société. Il faut de plus que la culture de paix touche la foi intérieure de l'individu, qu'elle se manifeste dans son entourage et influence son environnement. En outre, dans l'enseignement des conditions de la paix, il faut que l'histoire de la conquête de la liberté, de la justice politique, de l'économie et du social qui met en relief les conditions d'établissement de la paix soit privilégiée; qu'un apprentissage de la vie en collectivité avec une manière pacifique de résoudre les conflits soit offert aux enfants et aux adolescents dans les milieux scolaires ou périscolaires; que la pédagogie de la paix qui se rapproche de la pédagogie populaire promue par une partie des institutions scolaires soit évitée à cause de sa tendance violente.

L'engagement œcuménique au dialogue interreligieux et à l'éducation à la paix peut réduire la culture de violence et promouvoir une paix durable dans un monde de violence dans nos sociétés. Bien que l'éducation à la paix soit en phase d'expérimentation, c'est une approche éducationnelle constructive avec des pédagogies impliquantes variées qui peuvent transformer la culture de violence grandissante en une culture de paix plus durable et permettre d'acquérir des compétences d'interaction non-violente surtout au sein de la jeunesse. Elle permet aussi à chacun de penser, de valoriser et de cultiver la paix à partir des informations reçues et des projets élaborés au niveau national et international.

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Saint Paul: Called or Converted? A Look at Acts 9:1-19

By Joseph Stemberga



Joseph Stemberga :

There have been many individuals who throughout history have proven to be larger than life. Spiritual journeys come when they are needed most, though some people start their journeys later than others. Looking through a diachronic lens, the known world in the 1st century was a complex atmosphere, which the Romans governed with an iron fist in order to spread the ideals of the Roman Empire—stability and peace. However, in the middle eastern region of the empire, things were far from stable and peaceful. Numerous Roman rulers over time that tried to sustain the disobedient populous failed to apply the new order that Caesar wished to impose. While most of the Jewish population remained loyal to their conquerors, some posed certain problems to the Roman order. One of the problems concerned the coming of the Messiah. The prophecy stated that a Messiah from the line of David would come and bring the Jews out from under the feet of their oppressors, making the Jews a nation once again, just as King David had done previously. However, the Emperor of Rome believed that *he* was the Messiah, having provided peace and stability (*Pax Romana*); the Emperor believed that he had united all the peoples of the known world under one banner. To counter this, the Jews from Palestine took sides, with most Jews siding with the Jewish authority in order to maintain and preserve their tradition, while a growing number of the populous decided to align themselves with this new Messiah and his new way of thinking. The Middle Eastern world was torn apart, with the Romans applying brutal force in order to sustain peace and stability and with Jesus' followers proclaiming him the Son of God. The idea of a poor carpenter's son being the prophesied Messiah was offensive, and Jesus would threaten all that the Jewish religious hierarchy and the Romans held dear. Since certain Jews could not endure the teachings of Jesus, he would have to be dealt with. Furthermore, with the death of Jesus, his chosen disciples would begin spreading the good news as instructed. While they were spreading Jesus' word, a man named Saul of Tarsus began persecuting believers in Jesus. Saul would travel far and wide to bring those who had turned their backs on what he thought was God, bringing them to justice. With the authority of the Temple Priests, Saul would begin his destiny while traveling on the road to Damascus. Luke, the author and historian, writes three different biblical narratives in the Acts of the Apostles of what Paul experienced on the journey. Paul, formally known as Saul, would speak about his encounter briefly with the risen Christ in his letters, Galatians 1:11-16, 1 Corinthians 9:1c; 15:8-10 and finally, Philippians 3:4-11. My focus is on the Christophany between Saul and the risen Christ in Acts 9:1-19.

The question stands, was the meeting with Paul (Saul) and the risen Christ a call or a conversion, or both? Many have argued on one side or another; however, I propose that this meeting was both a call and a conversion even though Christianity was not yet a formal religion. By looking through a synchronic lens of Acts 9:1-19, and using two different criticisms—narrative and a type of form

“Throughout my life I found that school was always an uphill battle, I had a hard time with school, but decided to grind through school and try my best. If it was not for my friends meeting in University during my 1st Bachelors in History and Religion, I probably would not have completed the program. However, since my new found friends helped me get better at writing papers, I not only completed the B.A in history and religion, but I would go on to do another B.A in theology, while obtaining the theological studies medal during my convocation. For my Masters in theology, it was not planned, but I said to myself why not try it out, as I was the first in my family to get accepted into the masters level. I owe everything to my friends from my first B. A, as well as one of my sisters Mary-Ann, who tirelessly helped me with my horrible papers become readable.

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called the call of a disciple—I will undoubtedly show that Paul was called, as well as converted by the risen Christ.

Providing a Historical Setting

In the 1st century, the world was not very different from today. The idea of conquest resonates today just as it always has. The Romans would build their empire and conquer most of the known world. While bringing order and stability to Rome itself as well to their new provinces, “one of their chief tasks of the empire in its civilizing mission was to spread the urban method of life in places that knew nothing until they were conquered by Rome” (1). With their new civilizing mission, the empire would bring innovation and structure to the lands by building new roads, bridges, and aqueducts, thereby facilitating daily life. This was due to the Roman’s belief that the new lands they conquered were inferior to their advanced architectural methods. They quickened the process for new architectural methods through “the governors of imperial or senatorial provinces,” who “were a mere superstructure added to self-governing communities throughout the empire” (2). With the control of the province, these governors were able to manage all projects, in order to improve daily life according to Roman standards. And with the establishing of Roman rule on foreign cities—for example, Jerusalem—the Romans began romanizing each territory as they saw fit. With Pax Romana (3) at hand, the states that had been conquered by the Romans began losing their own identity. By the regional takeover of the Romans, “the aristocracy (Roman), the ruling class, directed all the local life of the tribes, under the control of Roman governors, the emperor’s legates.” (4) The Romans would dominate the social scene, emigrating more Romans to new provinces, thus creating a new aristocracy and a new social class, as Rome had come to conquer and rule with an iron fist. However, with this change, the populous was in fact free but only as long as they respected the Roman social order, and the rules imposed on the people. This, in fact, turned the Jewish population into slaves before they could even realize it. The conquered cities were more populated with Roman citizens, and festivals that focused on polytheistic traditions became frequenter in order to satisfy Roman beliefs. For example, “and everywhere, side by side with the deity, we see the figure of Augustus. In his person religion and the state were combined. Roman citizens and provincials had long been accustomed to worship the divine power of the state under the form of the great goddess ‘Roma.’”(5) Under the force of rapid change, the inhabitants succumbed to various new traditions implemented by Rome. As daily life in the Middle East became Roman, all taxes were to be paid to Rome and their cause. In return, Roman soldiers were used as instruments in keeping the peace in such hostile environments.

In the 1st century the world was a not so much of a different place compared to today. The idea of conquest resonates loudly today just as it always has.

Another major change that came with the Roman Empire was the issue of

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religion. The Romans recognized that the Jewish religion was older, so they allowed the Jews to practice their religion. However, the Romans did not know that the Jews had a messianic prophecy, which in turn would create problems for Roman rulers. For the Romans, the Emperor was the messiah, albeit a self-proclaimed messiah. The reasoning for the self proclamation was that Augustus had not only brought peace and stability to the Italian peninsula but also to the known world and many different ethnic groups. For example, Rome had “the belief in a messiah—in the incarnation of divine power in a human form on earth, in order to save and regenerate perishing humanity” Such were the ideas brought up when Roman officials worked under the Emperor during the Roman civil wars. This notion of the Emperor of Rome being the messiah was held throughout the empire, due to the accomplishments of Rome’s emperors. However, the Jewish populous had their own messianic belief. A prophecy that had lingered in Jewish literature was that a Messiah from the line of David would free the Jewish people and restore Israel. Many believed that this Messiah would come in the form of a warrior or a political leader who would free the Jews from their conquerors. The belief in a Jewish Messiah violated Roman laws, because this belief would directly interfere with Roman affairs. Nevertheless, the Jewish people would be disappointed, since the messiah would not be what they thought he would be, seeing that Jesus contradicted the High Priests at almost every turn. Still, his followers would claim that he was the messiah they had been waiting for. Jesus threatened not only Jewish authorities but the Romans as well. To go against Roman ideology was to go against Rome itself. By disagreeing with both the Temple Priests and the Romans, Jesus created an unlikely partnership between the Jewish authorities and the current Roman authority—Pontius Pilate. In the end, Jesus—known as the messiah by his followers—would be introduced to one of the most heinous methods of death ever conceived: crucifixion. Yet Jesus’ followers did not disband, seeing that the event would be recounted by a number of authors throughout the New Testament. They would go forth and spread the word of Christ to Jews and gentiles alike. However, problems would arise when the ideology of the Temple Priests had gone to others in their footsteps, who took it upon themselves to persecute the followers of Christ. One of those men was named Saul of Tarsus, who would be employed by the Jewish authorities to bring Christians to “justice,” thereby hindering Christianity from spreading.

The belief of a Jewish Messiah was in direct violation of Roman laws because it would directly interfere with Roman affairs.

Who Saul of Tarsus was

The preaching of Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire, to Jews and gentiles alike. Some individuals like Saul of Tarsus believed that the Jews who began following Jesus’ ministry should be punished. However, before we immerse ourselves in the conflict, we must first explore who Saul was, including his background. While Paul the Apostle rarely speaks about his former life, many scholars conclude that Saul “was born around 8 C.E” (8). Saul was

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raised in the city of Tarsus, which was the capital of the Roman province, Cilicia, located in Asia Minor, under the province of Cappadocia. What is disputed among scholars was whether or not Saul was a Roman citizen. If he was, according to Roman law, his citizenship would have been passed down through his families' lineage. However, this fact is only mentioned by the author Luke in the Acts of the Apostles; it's not mentioned anywhere else in the biblical narrative, since Paul never discusses this part of his life, probably because it was not part of his overall message. Nevertheless, at a young age, Saul was educated and later studied under the tutelage a Pharisee named Gamaliel. In turn, "Paul (belonged) to an elite-committed group of Pharisaic Jews, who were known for their strict commitment to the law. This religious Jewish school had an interpretive oral tradition of the Torah, whose purpose was to make the law applicable and livable amid changing times and contexts." (9) While interpreting the oral traditions of the Torah, Saul seemed much more intent in keeping the traditions of his fathers' faith. The Romans did not pose a direct problem to Saul's faith; however, the followers of the way continued spreading Jesus' ministry to both Jews and gentiles. (10) It was also intriguing to think that the Messiah had come: "[Saul's] relations with the Christians gave him a new concept of the Messiah, a suffering and crucified Messiah. He loathes this idea, but his interest has been aroused. His soul is in chaos. Qualms of conscience seize him, and to free himself he begins a mad campaign of persecutions." (11)

The very thought of this new movement spreading made Saul angry. Jesus' ministry had begun spreading by oral tradition throughout the empire. It is not a surprise that Saul and many others did not believe that Jesus was the Messianic promise from God, since Jesus did not meet the criteria of the savior. Jesus' recruits were guilty of blasphemy, and someone had to do something about it. For instance, "to [Saul], Jesus of Nazareth was a blasphemer who was worthy of the death meted out to Him. His followers were as guilty as He. They were traitors and heretics, and in arresting such with a view to their imprisonment and death, he felt that he was doing a service acceptable to God." (12)

With his new found love for the law, Saul's theology was clear and he would go to any length to defend the name of God. However, one must understand why Saul thought that Jesus was actually a blasphemous traitor. According to his understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Messianic prophecy was foretold. As he saw it, the prophecy could be found in the book of Deuteronomy (21:22-23), which says that a person convicted of a serious crime would be executed under a tree (13), and this is exactly what happened to Jesus. However, for Saul and most of the Pharisaic order, that executed person was cursed by God and could not be the messiah. The Jewish authorities could not take down the Romans, yet they were strong enough to stand up against the followers of the way.

As the race for religious supremacy... began, dark days would lead ahead as the fight for good and evil had begun.

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One of the ways that the Jewish hierarchy attempted to solve this problem was by authorizing Saul to arrest those who had left Judaism for Christianity. For example, “Paul’s persecution of the Church is rooted in his zeal for the law and the traditions of the fathers which collided with the confession of the early church that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified and died under Pontius Pilate, is the Messiah Son of God, whom God raised from the dead. This collision is what prompted his persecution of the Church.”(14) Because Saul had cherished the Judaic religion immensely, he took it personally when others decided to change their views. In Saul’s eyes, there was only one way to see and worship God, and that was through the law.

Winds of Change: the Road to Damascus

As Saul began his adventures of expansion for persecutions, he was given authority by the Temple Priests. However, something unique and unexpected happened on the road. Each chapter in Acts; 9, 22, 26, has a different twist on what happened to Saul. Therefore, for maintaining a constant flow of information we shall focus our attention solely on Acts 9:1-19. It should be noted that the title of “Paul’s conversion”, as seen in the biblical narrative, is a problematic title, because it carries a presupposition about “conversion” in how the word is used today, but this topic will be discussed later on. Nonetheless, the road to Damascus is an important experience for Saul. This one event changed his entire theology, altering his perception of Christians. For example, “as he traveled along, he happened to draw near to Damascus, and a light from the heavens suddenly flashed about him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? He asked, who are you, sir? [...] I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.”(15) Since Saul did not know the living Jesus or believe the message of Jesus’ disciples, Saul needed proof in order to come to the realization that Jesus was who he said he was. This interaction was the proof that Saul needed in order to believe, causing him to change his past mindset. The risen Christ would nevertheless temporarily blind Saul in order to convince him. For instance, “Saul got up from the ground, and thought he opened his eyes, he could see nothing. Leading him by hand, they brought him into Damascus. For three days he could not see, and he neither ate nor drank.”(16) This Christophany for Saul was an eye opener. Even though Saul was blind, his eyes were opened metaphorically; he now believed that Jesus was the Messiah. Note Saul’s experience with the risen Christ—his struggle, which was apparent within his mind. No doubt, Saul would need to grapple with what happened, while accepting that he was wrong about Jesus. During the three days Saul spent as a blind man in Damascus, he would re-evaluate his own life and theology. The reader of Luke’s narrative is shown with assurance that Jesus is indeed God’s chosen one—with the work of the spirit and the beginning of his ministry. However, one of the most important actions Jesus preformed for Saul and the world was his resurrection.(17) Paul the

What fueled Saul’s hatred for these followers was that because Saul had cherished the Judaic religion immensely, he had taken it personally when others had decided to change their views as easily as they did.

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Apostle would become the catalyst for bringing Christ's message to the world.

The Idea of Conversion

With this experience between Saul the persecutor and the risen Christ, there is debate among scholars concerning Paul's conversion. Acts 9:1-19 definitely shows that Saul was called by Christ—to be discussed later on. However, the idea of conversion is a sensitive issue. In the 1st century C.E, there were two kinds of people in the empire. First, there were those who believed in many Gods and Goddesses. According to them. Each god is assigned a specific element of the universe. This notion came from the Greeks but was stolen by the Romans. Nevertheless, the worship of many Gods and Goddesses is known today as polytheism (18), which is seen throughout the whole ancient world. Second, there were Jews, who believed in one God—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This form of worship is known today as monotheism. In light of this, it would be mistaken to say that Saul was converted, since at the time no other religions worshipped one God. However, if the term conversion is used differently, such as for explaining the opening of one's mind—like was the case with Saul—then conversion is entirely appropriate. According to Foakes Jackson, "Although Saul was restored to sight by the laying on of hands; it is significant that in early days baptism was called enlightenment." (20) At the end of Acts 19, Ananias is sent by the risen Christ to heal Saul from blindness. The metaphor here is that Saul could not see, but conversing with Annanias caused him to realize Jesus' identity and understand the significance of Jesus' ministry. While standing up in Judas' house, Saul's sight returns to him, but as a new man. He was no longer the bringer of pain and suffering to the perceived enemies of Judaism; he gained a new mission and became a new figure—he became Paul the Apostle. Conversion in Paul's case occurring with the opening of his eyes and not necessarily converting to a new religion. As J.C Macaulay states, "Thus it stood with Saul the day he met Christ, and was conquered. Conversion, in the evangelical sense, is always a miracle. There can be no true conversion without supernatural action."(21) Thus, the early Christian initiation ceremony of baptism, along with the concept of enlightenment, could arguably be a conversion.

To say that Saul was converted in that sense would be a mistake, due to the fact that there were no other religions concerning the worship of one God at that time. Although if the term conversion was used in a different way, for example, explaining the term as an opening of one's own mind...

Using a specific criticism

The call-of-the-disciple criticism can be seen in various other stories in the biblical narrative, including the Old Testament. In this form, the pattern is as follows: the master, the worker, and the invitation. In Acts 9:1-19, the master is the risen Christ and not the Jewish authority. Christ has more power, seeing that Luke describes him as eternal, like God. During his of the Christians, Saul plays the role of worker. In Acts 9:3, Christ temporarily blinds Saul and establishes communication. However, Jesus is not putting Saul in a position of peril; rather,

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he is giving him an invitation to spread Christ's message. At this point, the reader is aware that Christ came to save Saul from his actions and not to punish him, and in this we see the call. This form can be seen similarly throughout the biblical narrative, for example in 1 Kings 19:19-21.

This form criticism is a genre that describes how a disciple should respond to a master's call. At first the worker (Saul) is afraid and confused, due to the seriousness of the altercation. However, the worker eventually comes to his sense. For example, "Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength" (Acts 9:18, NRSV). Though it is not unmentioned, Saul realizes that it was in fact Christ that called him. In order to show Saul the light, Christ removed Saul's ability to see. Later, Ananias leads Saul to believe in Jesus by bringing back Saul's sight. Every call is different, since God works in mysterious ways. For instance, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:17, NRSV). The worker accepts God's invitation, since he is shown the truth.

It's also worth noting the purpose of this form in ancient times. If we look back, many stories came from the biblical narrative and were told in oral tradition. This oral tradition communicated a lesson for people to learn. These stories were written down much later, which facilitated the retention of details in a way not possible by word of mouth. With this genre applied to Jewish and Gentile familiarity with Jewish teachings, the audience understands how one should respond to Jesus' call. Saul's call is not only meant for the Jewish population of the empire, but also for the Gentiles. The reader knows that Saul's call would influence Christ's word, and all peoples would be saved through the word. The call that Saul experienced would relay the call of Christ to others. Since "Paul's Damascus road experience is part of his unique apostolic call and is not meant to be an example of a Christian conversion." (22) Note that the term "Christian" was first used derogatorily by the Romans to name the followers of "the way." Just as conversion, as we have seen, signifies enlightened, the call signifies conversion.

Narrative Criticism

Something spectacular happened to Paul, recounted only by Luke. Paul curiously reveals very little about his own experience with the risen Christ. Presumably, since Luke was a companion of Paul, the people that Paul had written to were already aware of the conversion story. Thus, Paul did not need to emphasize the whole story; instead, he uses segments as a reminder to those whom he had written (Corinthians, Philippians, Romans, etc.).

As every criticism has a purpose, form criticism is a genre describing how a disciple should respond to the call of his master.

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Another method to prove Saul's conversion and call is narrative criticism, which points to a message, usually needing a beginning, middle and an end. However, this form is not the same as biblical narrative; it merely points to a medium inside the narrative. To be specific, the narrative introduces the characters—the risen Christ, Saul, and Ananias. The narrative setting is hostile. In the narrative criticism formula, the subject versus the object, since the subject (Saul) remains disconnected from God and needs to find his way to God. Every character in this biblical story plays a role towards a final goal. The actantial scheme is that of sender, played originally by the High Priests. In Acts 9:1-2, Saul rampages at the idea of Jews turning their backs on Judaism. Fuelled with rage, Saul approaches the High Priests for papers, which would enable him to go to Damascus and bring back the blasphemers. In light of the helper in the actantial scheme, three different characters come to mind. Two of those characters accompany Saul on his voyage, helping him to Damascus due to his blindness. However, in relation to the story, the third helper is an important one. At first, Ananias is reluctant to help Saul, since he knows what Saul has done, finding Saul unworthy of Christ's forgiveness. Nevertheless, the risen Christ forces Ananias to help Saul. Finally, when Ananias sees Saul, he shows compassion. The receiver in the actantial scheme is Saul. Due to his call, conversion, and eventual baptism, Saul the persecutor becomes Paul the Apostle. Paul, however, is not the only receiver in Acts 9:1-19; both Jews and Gentiles eventually become receivers. The reader is what Paul's mission entails, through the hardships that he will have to overcome in order to prove himself to both Jews and Gentiles in showing them the word of Christ.

With every great story there is a villain. In this case, the villains are obvious. Firstly, Saul is originally a villain due to his hatred for the followers of Christ. However, he switches sides. The other villains are significant in Acts of the Apostles. They are the High Priests, who played a part in Jesus' crucifixion and in Saul's persecution of Christians. Nevertheless, their actions are understandable, seeing that Jesus and his followers threatened their community, and they wanted to preserve their Jewish legacy. The other villains not present in Acts 9:1-19 are the Romans. Throughout the New Testament, the Romans dominate every aspect of life. As long as they did not interfere with the Romans, the people were allowed to live their lives just as they had before. The object in every story can be different, from attaining knowledge, to freedom from a conqueror.

The object of the scheme demonstrates a particular message to the reader. The word of Christ (knowledge) is given to those who accept its words, and it is the responsibility of those who hear it to choose. This object is made valuable based on the people having the freedom to choose God or reject him.

Though the characters in this story play a small role, they can be seen in two

While conversion, as we have seen, was too be enlightened, as both gentiles and Jews alike were exposed to the truth and their eyes became opened just as Paul's had been, so could the concept of the call be applied to such a conversion.

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ways: either flat or round. They are differentiated by their various traits. For example, Saul is a round character. Being the central figure of this narrative, he is always in motion. At first, Saul approaches the High Priests with a specific purpose. However, throughout the biblical narrative, his actions reflect his encounter with the risen Christ. It is similar with Ananias, who at first argues with Christ but ultimately obeys him.

Flat characters are seen in, first, Saul's helpers. These men have a single trait throughout the story. Their purpose is to help Saul on his journey and persecute Christians. Eventually, the story changes and they help blind Saul into the city. Intriguingly, the risen Christ, who should be a rounded character—plays a small role in the narrative, making him somewhat of a flat character. His only role is to convince Saul of his mistakes. Through action, Christ persuades Saul. However, due to his limited role, the risen Christ is portrayed as a flat character, at least in this text.

All the stories in the biblical narrative provide the reader with a message. The last component of narrative criticism that I will explore is binary opposition. Binary opposition shows the reader how opposites are connected to character decisions. For example, a binary opposition in Acts 9:1-19 is Saul's two missions: the mission with the High Priests to persecute men and women and the mission with Jesus to save men and women. In the end, Saul chooses his mission, following his healing from blindness at the hands Ananias.

Conclusion

The Romans in the 1st century controlled all aspects of life. The populous of the conquered land had two choices; they could either accept their reality or rebel, leading to death. Despite their dominance, the Romans maintained respect for older traditions. For example, although the Jewish belief system was vastly different from theirs, the Romans respected Judaism and allowed Jews to practice their faith, with one condition: it could not interfere with Roman affairs. However, the Romans saw the prophecies relating to the Messiah as problematic and dangerous. For the Romans, there was no problem with Jews believing in one God and abstaining from Roman festivals. Yet, the belief in a coming Messiah hindered Jewish relations with the Romans. The Emperor of Rome (Augustus) was seen as the Messiah, since he unified the Italian peninsula and numerous ethnicities. As Roma saw it, Jewish messianic prophecies threatened the Empire's peace and stability. Eventually, a man from Galilee claimed to be the Messiah sent from God. This claim would split Judaism down the middle, with some believing in Jesus' messiahship and others opposing it. In the end, a union was formed between the Romans and the Jewish authorities, resulting in Jesus' death and leading to the promulgation of Christianity by Christ's disciples.

With every great story there has to be a villain. In this story, the villains are obvious... However, he switches sides...

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Among those who disagreed with Christianity was Saul of Tarsus, who had proven his zeal for the law. In Acts of the Apostles, Saul's persecution reveals his love for the law. In his own eyes, his actions were justified, until that one moment, while travelling to Damascus, he experienced a presence like no other. His encounter with Christ changed his life perspective. Though he fell as Saul the persecutor, he rose as Paul the Apostle.

Notes

- (1) M. Rostovtzeff, *Rome* (Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 216.
- (2) Ibid. 227.
- (3) *Pax Romana* refers to Roman peace.
- (4) Ibid, p. 219.
- (5) Ibid, p. 187.
- (6) Ibid, p. 186.
- (7) Ibid, p. 186.
- (8) Marcus J Borg and John Dominic Crossan, *The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary behind the Church's Conservative Icon* (Harper One Publishers, 2009), p. 60.
- (9) Johnny Awwad, *From Saul to Paul: The Conversion of Paul the Apostle*, (Near East School of Theology, 2011), p.5
- (10) The term gentile refers to a person or persons that are not of the Jewish faith.
- (11) Walenty Prokulski, *Conversion of St. Paul* (The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 19.4, 1957), p.454.
- (12) Everett Falconer Harrison, *The Evidential Value of Paul's Conversion and Ministry* (Bibliotheca Sacra, 1936), p. 187-188.
- (13) Ibid, p 6.
- (14) Ibid, p 6.
- (15) Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), p.418.
- (16) Ibid, p.418.
- (17) Don Jackson, *Luke and Paul: A Theology of one Spirit from two perspectives*, (journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 32.3, 1989), p. 336.
- (18) *Polytheism* is the worship of many Gods.
- (19) *Monotheism* is the worship of one God.
- (20) Foakes Jackson, *The Moffatt New Testament Commentary: The Acts of the Apostles*, (Hodder and Stoughton: London 1960), p. 82
- (21) J.C Macaulay, *Expository Commentary on Acts*, (Moody Press: Chicago, 1978), p.94-95.
- (22) Robert G. Hoerber, *Paul's Conversion/Call*, (*Concordia Journal* 22.2:1996), p.187.

All the stories in the biblical narrative are meant to provide the reader with some form of message. The last component of the narrative criticism which would be fit to mention is binary opposition. Binary opposition shows the reader or biblical scholar how opposites are connected to character decisions.

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*Peace and stability
was the motto of
the Roman Empire,
and the coming of
the Messianic
prophecy was in
direct violation of
their treaty
Persuasive, pro-
voking conversa-
tion.*



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There have been many individuals who throughout history have proven to be larger than life. Spiritual journeys come when they are needed most, though some people start their journeys later than others.



Christian Paideia As Culture-Building in Patristic Antiquity and in Contemporary Society *By Fr. John A. McGuckin, PhD*



1. Late Antiquity and the Patristic Mind.

There were very fixed methods of schooling in late Antiquity. The precise methods of education (or Paideia) were so well established that they not only amounted to an historical civilisation which we now call the classical era, but also instituted a system of education in schools that endured well through the middle ages and even into the dawn of the 20th century in Europe. The link between educational systems and a sense of larger civilisation and concomitant values is the key point I wish to reflect on, this morning. The ancients had established a pattern of civilised values based around the classical system of approaching science, law, politics and literature through the resolving lens of rhetorical study: a concept that translates as 'public discourse' today.

The ancient methods of schooling were predominantly based on textual transmission - a 'great books course' we might call it, along with a rehearsal of interpretive and recitative techniques. The interpretation skills allowed a class of teachers to emerge who would advocate a set of core textual narratives (such as Homer, and the Poetic and Philosophical canons) that summed up the civilisation that was admired in an idealized and summary form; and the recitative responses inculcated prepared the same intellectual class for political and social leadership roles. These people of the educated class were largely the same wealthy agents that constituted the body of political leaders that continued to support the values in which they had been formed, and in which they formed their successors by submitting them to the same educational process of enculturation they had received, along with the duty to sustain it.

The Christian Fathers from the late third century onwards deliberately 're-fitted' this model to more precise evangelical ends. They clearly valued Greek Paideia immensely, but wished to make changes in the ideal form of civilised values it often represented. Some examples of this can be briefly mentioned:

Origen of Alexandria describes philosophy as a handmaiden to theology – his curriculum is shown to us from the letter of his student St. Gregory Thaumaturgos. He saw education as an assertive and coherent movement from grammar, to literary analysis, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy and finally theology.

In the mid fourth century, St. Gregory Nazianzen railed against Emperor Julian the Apostate's edict *De Professoribus*, in which the emperor, trying to revitalize pagan cult, demanded that if Christian intellectuals did not believe in the gods about which Homer spoke, they ought not to be allowed to teach the material in schools. It was an attempt to ban all Christians from the intellectual profes-

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sions. Gregory saw at once that it was an illegitimate move to bar Christians from redefining society's civilised values. His response was to comment: "How foolish (alogos) it was of the man to think he could deprive us of our Logos." (Contra Julianum). The pun works here because Logos is not only the word for rationality but also the system of teaching and writing, as well as being the personal title of the Eternal Son of God. All his life, Gregory loved to read Homer. It was the one book of his library that he would never lend to his friends. To make sure that Julian's decree would have no effect were it sustained (it was not, in the end), St. Gregory rewrote the rules on proper writing in schools, using the biblical books as digests and examples for the schoolroom. Afterwards, his own poems and theological orations became standard material for literary analysis in the Byzantine world. His manuscripts were copied just a little less than the bible, and his works became the skeleton of the Medieval Greek curriculum.

Other examples from the same period can be readily found, such as the two Apollinarii, father and son, who also set out to rewrite the biblical texts in better Greek for schoolrooms. There is also St. Jerome, who was commissioned by Pope Damasus to revise the Itala Latin Bible and thoroughly recompose it in good Latin as the Vulgate.

We owe the very preservation of pagan literary, scientific, and philosophical culture to the Christian monks, who so carefully preserved and copied them through the ages. Consider also the manner in which Byzantine monks of the Stoudium monastery in 9th century Constantinople invented joined-up writing to transmit ancient and contemporary texts more quickly. Such examples abound as an investment in people-power and money-resources that the church, from the past to the present, has placed in educational enterprises. The church has been manifesting and working out its inherent love of culture, creating an enormous part of the civilized intellectual environment of the present Western world, which at times scornfully views the Church as a dead weight in cultural development. However, the Western world is often ignorant of its own past and its immense debt to the Christian tradition—a debt owed for the basic elements of its secular *grundschrift*. An example of this is the doctrine of human rights, which secular society took from the Church and de-racinated to such an extent that it is now a doctrine without philosophical foundation. But that is a story for another day.

The Fathers, in short, created a culture with which they launched the Gospel into the world. They would have strongly stood against the Protestant religious sensibility (seen in Barth for example) that sees human culture as detached from evangelical mission. The Fathers embedded their kerygma in the refinement of their Hellenistic culture and made something new: Christian Hellenism. While the early Fathers did this at a high educational level among the literati, other generations of monks, bishops, and theologians have continued the tradition across

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every diocese and parish, at a more common level—and this time addressed to all the faithful, in the form of setting new terms of heroic examples. By heroic examples, I am referring to the the Christians from early days enculturated in a world that venerated great warrior heroes (such as Ajax, Heracles, or Achilles), which were new models of story-telling that lifted up heroes who were humble, and merciful, and prayerful, and humorous—something the ancient greats could never be, because their pride forbade it. In short, the Christian educationalists created the genre of hagiography (lives and legends of the saints of Christ) to offer inspiring models to be read and preached, and which (certainly in the form of the Evergetinos, for example) came eventually to form the substrate of popular culture across the entire Christian East, alongside the more formal curricula of the schools.

In St. Basil's mind, such examples were his "Guide to the Education of the Young," which the Church must take to civilisation and the culture of the times, such as that adopted by the Israelites leaving Egypt, who were told to "despoil their oppressors." This Old Testament narrative resonated with the early church, of course, because the secular, imperial society had heavily penalized them in the previous centuries—but symbolically the Byzantines decided they would be like the Israelites who stole the Egyptian's gold as they fled into the desert—in the sense of taking Hellenistic culture and picking out for themselves what they wanted from it. This is the key, and the selective analysis of contemporary culture. St Gregory the theologian called it: "plucking the roses but clipping the thorns." They did not want all of it: they wanted the best bits—maybe the portable bits, considering they were off into the desert.

Now, let us move to Part Two, since we have never really left the state of being on a desert pilgrimage, in so far as we are Church. And today, still in a desert of sorts, perhaps an even more challenging one than the Sinai wilderness, we urgently need to check our luggage to see what can be adjusted in relation to the ecclesial and cultural items we want to carry with us on our backs.

2. What this Suggests to me in the Modern era.

By modern era, I mean "real modern era", that is the post post-modern era. I labour that sentence because it is time to say a large "No": a new Orthodox 'OHI day', to all that relativism of spirit that postmodernism brought into the intellectual culture of our lifetime, and which was seized upon by the many tendencies in the arts and popular culture, justifying a rather hopeless, directionless hedonism, as an allegedly smart response to humanity's seeming loss of direction. If all human sense of direction—*telos* as the Fathers would call it, following Aristotle and the Gospel—is humanly created, then any projected end or meaning is as good as any other. This is the great lie of post-modernity that has seeped into

...we have never really left the state of being on a desert pilgrimage in so far as we are Church. And today, still in a desert of sorts, perhaps an even more challenging one than the Sinai wilderness, we urgently need to check our luggage once more to see what we can adjust about the relation of ecclesial and cultural items we want to carry onwards on our backs.

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popular culture and reasserted its ever-present tendency to fight off all forms of asceticism.

But asceticism is critical for all forms of education. Imagine the human learning process without discipline—without discipline in the teacher student relationship; without discipline of practice and repeated endeavor, fighting against the grain at many times, to master the difficulties of learning and "advancing in age and wisdom." And we live in a society and an age which has little understanding of asceticism, seeing it only as a pathology or a challenge to happiness and never as a life-giving and fundamentally humanizing force of clarity and illumination for mind and soul.

This leads me to the point of the real crisis of culture in our modern era: our contemporary civilisation has come very close to losing all facility with the semantics of the tradition of faith—not just the traditions of asceticism and how asceticism can be a joyful manner of returning to humanity and a royal road to a simpler and happier lifestyle (less consumerist, more healthy and fundamentally more joyful). Contemporary civilization has actually lost even more foundational language for articulating humanity's place in the cosmos. Religion has lost its hold on the modern intellectual mindset. Once, in ancient times, we Christians shared a great religious framework with both Jews and Pagans. Now, the very foundations of religious language have become incomprehensible to immense sections of society. Vast numbers of people have never heard the Jesus story.

I shall tell you a true story, though you may not believe it. A priest friend told me how he stood in a line at a cheap jeweler's store in London in 1975. He wanted his watch strap replaced. In front of him were two young people, a boy and girl with an equally young man serving behind the glass counter. The young man was buying his girlfriend a gold necklace. "We would like a gold necklace of a cross please," he said. "Certainly Sir," said the assistant. "Would you like a plain one or one with a little man on it?" This was in no way meant as a joke. This young Londoner had no concept of what that once universal symbol meant.

You see, even our Christian children have heard more about Superheroes than Jesus. And would Jesus be attractive any more when Superheroes can do so much more in the modern myth-making workshop? Who wants the wounded healer when the blue and red Superman is a more masculine model of the god among us? So it is that the great mythmaking machine of popular media, especially fostered in recent decades by an influx of archaic Japanese mythologies of the gods, and vaguely-Buddhist philosophies of the superior self, have systematically replaced the Christian Gospel of a Humble and loving Kenosis in the pre-

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educational platform of kindergarten hagiography—a crucial stage of educational development.

When this stage gives way to formal curricular development, and the child leaves the creative play of the kindergarten, where base levels of hero-narrative have been established, and enters the formal school system, the child will find that the dimension of religious paideia is set aside from the real curriculum in a kind of silo. And this occurs even in those systems of schooling which do have a religious dimension (hardly a thing to be taken for granted anywhere in America). Well, where else could this child go? Into the parishes for some form of Sunday school? But here schooling is often handled by the very well meaning, but perhaps less professionally skilled, and there it is often mutated into the advancement of doctrinal and liturgical catechesis, which is certainly useful but does not fulfill the fundamental role of a paideia truly engaged in the whole curriculum. The exiling of Religion to the silo is an endemic part of the problem today. Its sub-text is that anyone maintaining religious ideas in a scientifically advanced world is akin to advocating a medievalist mindset and needs to be locked out of the school grounds as a bizarre cultist. That clarion call of America, the “separation of church and state” has been extended so far into the educational system that religion has become a bogey word within virtually any modern school. Less than two generations back, hardly any American would have imagined that this doctrine of separation could possibly mean the abolition of religion from the US school system. And yet we see, time after time, that having locked out the Christian dimension to human culture, a new set of philosophical, moral and even quasi-religious parallels are introduced into the curriculum almost by sleight of hand—mainly because they have not been called out or recognised, or brought into the light of day for the extensive value-systems they really are. St. Nicholas of Myra is barred at the school door. But Santa Claus riding Thor's sky chariot is more than welcome. The exalted Cross is banned at Pascha; but the Saxon Goddess of Spring, Yeostre (that is Easter), and her familiar spirit of the Hare is once more a familiar sight.

The exiling of Religion to the silo, is an endemic part of the problem today. Its sub-text is that anyone maintaining religious ideas in a scientifically advanced world is akin to advocating a medievalist mindset and needs to be locked out of the school grounds as some kind of bizarre cultist.

So let me conclude. We are faced, therefore, with two great challenges, if we are to rise up to the level of the great and wise fathers of our past heritage. They so masterfully set out to create a new civilised culture and system of education so that within three centuries of Jesus' death they had turned the world around from a pagan into a Christian imperium.

First, we must turn our attention to the serious level of Church reflection, great hierarchs, clergy, seminary professors, and teachers and stop worrying about how to refine and transmit the niceties of our traditions. And we should instead see how the ship has left the dock already. The issue is how we might res-

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cue some form of meaningful, Christian catechesis for the growing child—a catechesis that can be easily communicated to young parents, so as to engage their participation. We must also collaborate once more across multiple levels of the Church to be more welcoming to the notion of education as a life-long process—one involving openness, tolerance, wisdom, and above all, a willingness to listen.

Secondly, (and here I repeat the term collaborate—for we Orthodox are very guilty of having spent too much time maintaining our internally variegated silos, instead of collaborating on the pressing needs of the Church in the modern world) we must unite, joining resources to think out in this day and age how modern culture can be healed by the Orthodox Christian spirit, and how our religion can learn new semantic ways of communicating with contemporary culture, especially in the educational domain, instead of doing what we normally do—ignoring it, or making the Church a seemingly separated oasis in the larger sea of a hostile culture. No doubt, this is how our Orthodox faithful seem to be. But this sense of being a minority in a pagan, hedonistic culture is nothing new to the Church. It was, in fact, the quintessential context of the great Fathers of antiquity, and they turned to that culture and made out of it new systems of education—systems that resulted in the Western Christian Civilisation that is presently being eroded by a directionless form of hedonism and a deep rooted despair in the possibility of life having meaning. We in modern America especially, with its so many resources, cannot allow Orthodoxy to self-identify as a world-fleeing movement, an archaism that shrinks from contemporaneity and likes to dress itself in medieval garb in both its head and liturgical rites. We have to step up once more to the great challenge, which is the moral and philosophical challenge lying behind the crisis of dwindling church attendance and our loss of the young. That loss is typically explained in the oft-repeated statement of the young: "I cannot see the relevance of it. I cannot understand the language that is used there." Let me end with something that I have never forgotten—something I heard from a young believer many years ago, whom I had asked why they ceased going to church. It was a clarion call when they said: "The priest says a lot of things in the church, but it always comes across to me that he does not really believe what he is saying. He is just going through the motions of it." The young are convinced only from the heart. If the heart is not first there in the communicator, the mind will not follow.

...we need to get together and join resources to think out in this day and age how modern culture can be healed by the Orthodox Christian religious spirit, and how our religion can learn new semantic ways of communicating with contemporary culture...

If we were to be convinced, to truly believe that this issue of connecting with the education and formation of young believers in the present world-cultural context is a real crisis, demanding serious reflection and significant changes in missionary strategy and prioritisation of ecclesial resources, then we might be more motivated to rise up and address it with urgency. However, to do that well, we need each other's resources, and that, in turn, should signal to us that the end of living in small-horizoned Orthodox silos is long overdue, and that efforts for

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sustaining these silos are counter productive to the real mission of the Orthodox Church in the present age.

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Analysis of *The Anastasis* By Jason Boudreault



1. Introduction

Through the centuries, a particular art form with a particular artistic language has preserved itself despite the cataclysmic course of human history: iconography. (1) It survived the iconoclasm of the 8th and 9th centuries (2) and, following the Eastern Orthodox Church's relatively recent freedom from Ottoman influence, began a restoration of icon painting and its surrounding traditions. (3) With renewed vigour, icons and their meanings were studied throughout the 20th century. *The Descent of Christ into Hell (The Harrowing of Hell)*, otherwise known as *The Anastasis* or *The Resurrection* (see page XX) is one such icon and the object of study for this paper. In my analysis, I hope to provide a coherent interpretive meaning to this icon—albeit, from the perspective of someone outside the tradition itself. As an outsider looking in, I can hopefully offer a fresh and apropos theological analysis.

2. Traditional Norms and *The Anastasis*

The Anastasis is interesting in how it differs from icons depicting the same event that of 1 Peter 3:18-20: “He (Christ) was put to death in the body, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey ...” (NRSV, parenthesis mine). The death spoken of in the verse is that of the crucifixion, and the period in which this event occurs is during the three days Jesus' body rested in the tomb. In many depictions, Christ is not holding Eve's hand but is instead holding a scroll of the above passage while she prays. (4) It is also possible that Christ is holding the cross as a symbol of his victory over death. (5) A more interesting observation, however, is that Christ has no holes in his hands or his feet, which is actually in line with the above passage. Christ is alive in spirit only, and this is following the death of his body.

The lack of holes is likely meant to emphasize the similarity of Christ's descent into hell to that of everyone else, which occurred in spirit while his body remained in the tomb. The passage seemingly does not suggest a bodily assumption into Hell, and this particular icon seems to recognize that; yet the icon poses an interesting theological dilemma. According to John of Damascus, icon veneration is appropriate only insofar as it is the veneration (a lower “degree” of worship) of matter, vindicated by Christ's incarnation and subsequent act of redemption. (6) Andrew Louth labels this perspective “Christian materialism,” (7) and Leonid Ouspensky highlights the Seventh Ecumenical Council's disallowance for spiritual representations of God the Father. (8) Still, here we see God the Son, “in whom dwells the fullness of the Godhead”, (9) represented in his spiritual form. This demonstrates the full synthesis between God and man in the humble act of incarnation. It is “a complete union of humanity and divinity, of human will and divine will”.(10) In my view, this icon thus represents a more sophisticated theo-

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first entered the theology program at Concordia University as an independent student before moving on to full time studies in the program. His original intention was to pursue an English degree, but his interests soon shifted towards deepening his knowledge of the meta-narrative of Christianity - a meta-narrative that played itself out in actual history and in countless cultures. He is currently specializing in ancient Hebrew and Biblical studies with the hope of gaining a better understanding of the text that lies at the center of societies which, he hopes, will provide him with a better sense for cross-cultural interactions. For when the Israelites left Egypt to worship their God, “a mixed multitude went up also with them...”

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logical representation than its counterparts, which may have shied away from the text's implications in favour of the iconographical tradition. This iconographic representation accepts the text upon which it is based without sacrificing textual integrity while also communicating the full degree of Christ's abasement in becoming fully man. And as demonstrated by Ouspensky and Lossky, the descent into Hell does not represent the Son without his humanity being present in the spiritual realm; rather, Christ's descent is the lowest point at which God can be debased (11)—a katabasis. And yet Christ breaks onto the scene victorious, ready to save those in the clutches of death—a death that is powerless over him. Indeed, “The icon's role is not to bring us closer to what we see in nature, but to show us a body which perceives what usually escapes man's perception, i.e. the perception of the spiritual world”. (12) Moreover, the icon represents salvation as the salvation of the entirety of creation. With the theological controversy explained, it is time to examine the full meaning of this icon.

3. The New Universal Order

We will now examine a few similarities shared across the spectrum of representations. Jesus' victory over sin is not represented by a man nailed half-naked onto a cross; here, Jesus is rushing onto the scene after having broken down the gates of Hell. He is at the centre of the depiction, He is astride in a somewhat heroic pose, ready to rescue those in prison. Unlike other depictions where Christ is looking directly at those observing the icon, he is looking to his right, at those announcing his arrival, as if ready to rescue them, having removed Adam and Eve from Hell. Jesus is also graced by a halo, an outward expression of holiness, a witness to the light”, (13) and surrounded by the uncreated energies of God—the mandorla, arrayed with stars. Stars are often used on images of the theotokos (Mary, the mother of God) to symbolize her perpetual virginity (past, present, future), as well as the trinity. (14) The full array of stars in Christ's mandorla is perhaps meant to symbolize that in Christ “is the fullness of the Godhead”, (15) and that he is the timeless God. Alternatively, the stars are merely decorative, conveying the event's cosmic significance.

“The icon's role is not to bring us closer to what we see in nature, but to show us a body which perceives what usually escapes man's perception, i.e. the perception of the spiritual world”

Jesus is standing atop Hell's broken gates, which are now coloured gold. According to Egon Sendler, colours often exist in a dialectical relationship; that is, they can have both a positive and a negative meaning. (16) Gold and yellow can evoke both purity and glory (as we see in the kings' robes to the right of Jesus) as well as sadness. There is indeed much sadness behind the gates of death. The gates are also pillars of glory representing the old order of things, before Christ's katabasis and resurrection, when death was a fundamental reality. Certainly, Christ has broken down the gates of Hell and established a new order of resurrection from the dead, and beneath his feet is Satan, (17) tied and cast into an abyss filled with locks and chains. Ouspensky and Lossky understand this as the angels binding Hades, (18) but I believe this represents Christ breaking the chains of Hell's prisoners. Throughout the New Testament, saints are bound in chains for the sake of Christ (Eph. 6:20 and 2 Tim. 1:16, for example), with the

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most significant example occurring with Peter, who is set free by an angel after being imprisoned by Herod in Acts 12. These instances of imprisonment and miraculous escape seemingly mirror the event depicted in 1 Peter 3:19, where Jesus sets free the “spirits in prison” (NRSV).

Jesus is clothed in white, and, in line with Sendler's dialectic, so is Adam. White is both a representation of purity, innocence, and burial shrouds. (19) While Christ is clothed in white and victorious over death, Adam is fully covered by a white robe, perhaps a burial shroud. Paul in his letter to the Romans writes “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man (Adam), and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people . . . death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come” (Rom. 5:12-14, NRSV, parenthesis mine). Paul continues by describing the one to come, Christ, “For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19, NRSV). Moreover, Adam's robe is off-white and yellow. As previously mentioned, yellow symbolizes sadness and glory. Man is the glory and image of God (Gen. 1:27), and man fell from grace into the despair of death (Gen. 3:19), but Christ can save whoever calls upon him (Rom. 10:13).

Now, let us look closer at two people standing next to Christ. Genesis 1:27 states: “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (NRSV). The story then describes the first of God's image bearers, Adam and Eve. When Christ enters Hell, his first act is to rescue the fullness of the image of God, represented by both Adam and Eve. Unlike depictions where Christ is holding a cross or scroll while holding Adam, this depiction sees Christ holding both Adam and Eve, signifying the efficacy of Christ's salvation. In him “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28, NRSV). The only part of Adam that is not off-white—since even his beard is white—is his arm, covered in blue cloth. For Sendler, blue is the most spiritual of colours, being the colour of transcendence and the sky, where God abides. (20) All Adam can do in his situation is cry out to Jesus for salvation, in order to cooperate in God's salvific plan, and so perform an act that transcends death. In the same way that God could only become incarnate in Mary with mutual consent, (21) so God can only save those who cooperate with his plan of salvation but even this act of cooperation is significantly constrained. Christ holds Adam's wrist and not his hand, further emphasizing the limited role humankind plays in salvation. It is Christ who holds us. Also held by Christ is Eve, depicted as another arm covered in blue cloth.

While Christ is clothed in white and victorious over death, Adam is fully covered by a white robe, perhaps a burial shroud.

The mother of mankind is unique in *The Anastasis*. Ouspensky and Lossky point out that Eve is normally off to the side praying, (22) but here she is covered in a red robe and reaching out to Christ as he holds her. Referring back to Sendler's dialectic, red is a symbol of purification—like iron being heated and

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purified— and life. Red also symbolizes sin and evil, (23) making its occurrence significant, especially since Eve's red robe is covering her left hand. In Genesis 3, the serpent tempts Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. During this trial, Eve "took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate" (Gen. 3:6, NRSV). The fact that one hand is covered by the red robe symbolizes the tarnished state of God's image bearers, which is exemplified by Eve's taking the fruit and then giving it to her husband. But this also reveals how through Christ's obedience "the many will be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19, NRSV), and so we are covered by the life-giving blood of the lamb (Rev. 7:14), who purifies from all unrighteousness those who call out to him (1 John 1:9). And by reaching out, Eve—like her husband, Adam—is calling out to Christ, thereby cooperating with God's salvation plan. Now we move on to the background characters that are off-centre in this icon.

At this point, we will explore the background characters, seen off-centre in the icon. Further to Jesus' right are a group of men huddled together. Some of these men are watching the events unfolding in the centre, while others are looking back at the other men. The kings, according to Ouspensky and Lossky, are David and Solomon, and the man with the scraggly beard is John the Baptist wearing his signature brown and green robe (24). And if one looks closely, one notices that John is making the sign of Christ with his right hand, while pointing to Christ with his left. Also, his head is turned towards those behind him. Clearly, John is ministering to those in the grave about Christ's mission. Just as John was sent to "Prepare the way of the Lord" and "make his paths straight" on earth, (25) John died ahead of Christ (Mark 6:14-29) and preached in the underworld about the coming Saviour. John is also the embodiment of all the prophets, as Jesus said "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John came; and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come" (Matt. 11:13-14, NRSV). Another representative of the prophets, King David, is also looking towards the crowd. As it is written: "Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Since he was a prophet, he knew God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah . . ." (Acts 2:29-31, NRSV). David is prophesying about the anastasis of his descendant (Matt. 1:1-17, Lk. 3:23-38). Thus, we can confidently identify those on Jesus' right as the kings and prophets.

*It is Christ who
holds onto us, not
we to him.*

To Jesus' left, however, is something of an enigma. In their version of the icon, Ouspensky and Lossky highlight the figure to the left of Jesus—Moses, identified by the ten commandments in his hands and the patriarchs. (26) In our icon, there is no one that fits the description of Moses. Instead, there is a young shepherd holding a staff. Who could this be? Based on the context and on Ouspensky and Lossky's identification of the other men as the patriarchs, I believe that this young man is Abel, the righteous son of Adam and Eve. Seeing that Adam and Eve are in this icon, Abel's presence is appropriate. Moreover, it is Abel who offers the first of his flocks as a righteous sacrifice, atoning for his parents' sins (Gen. 4:4). Abel's brother Cain, however, offers the fruit of the ground, which is cursed by God to be worked by the sweat of man's brow (Gen.

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3:18-19, Gen. 4:3). Abel's offering foreshadows the Jewish sacrificial system and its eventual fulfillment in the Lamb of God—Christ. Abel's presence is even more appropriate since Christ is holding the wrists of his parents, emphasizing that humankind cannot be saved by their own cursed and rejected works. Salvation, by contrast, is only possible through cooperation in God's salvific plan.

The remaining patriarchs are behind Abel, and so—with each component examined—we will now read the icon in line with the tradition, i.e., from left to right: Christ is the fulfillment of all the law and the prophets, and while through Adam death came into the world, the second Adam—Jesus, the Christ—defeated and cast death into the abyss, thereby covering us by his blood, and so purifying us from all sin. Thus, it is not by works but by faith in the sacrifice foreshadowed by Abel and established throughout Israelite history in its sacrificial system that we, also, can experience the anastasis, fulfilling the oft-said Eastern Orthodox saying: “God became man so that man might become God”. (27)

4. Conclusion

It has been made clear to me that my interpretation of *The Anastasis* has a distinctly Protestant flair to it. I suppose I would have to agree, but I would also point out that these protestant teachings can easily work with these ancient traditions and symbolic languages. Now, I am not saying that a Protestant interpretation trumps that of an Orthodox, but in the sacred practice of iconography there is a timeless, ecumenical dimension similar to what is seen in Scripture and evident in the thousands of denominations that Scripture has created. Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J. (a Roman Catholic) writes that symbols are “. . . sign[s] pregnant with a plenitude of meaning which is evoked rather than explicitly stated. . . . Thanks to symbols, we can bring an indefinite number of diffuse memories and experiences into a kind of focus”. (28) In many ways, Dulles is searching the sacraments for revelation in the same way that revelation can be found in icons, while attempting to bridge the gap between different models of revelation, which he does by proposing his model of dialectical retrieval through symbolic mediation. Moreover, Mel Gibson (another Roman Catholic) in his hugely successful film, *The Passion of the Christ*, had a profound effect on American Protestantism in a film that, for S. Scott Bartchy, is “a major cultural event”. (29) Despite Gibson's insertions of Catholic tradition in the film, the now infamous Ted Haggard, the erstwhile president of the National Association of Evangelicals, lauded the film in his statement that “This film is probably the most accurate film historically – more than anything that's ever been made in the English world. . . . We were watching it for biblical accuracy, and we thought it was as close as you can get”. (30) While Mel Gibson's film is a far cry from the sacred symbolism in icons, it is nonetheless a visual medium practically worshiped by members of Western society, including but not limited to Protestants. Perhaps in an effort to create unity between disparate groups within the faith, iconography can play a substantial role

It has been made clear to me that my interpretation of the icon has a distinctly protestant flair to it... That is not to say that a protestant interpretation trumps an Orthodox one, but it is to say that in the sacred practice of iconography is a timeless, ecumenical dimension similar to that which is evoked by Scripture itself, evident in the thousands of denominations it is credited with creating.

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by inviting members of different traditions to learn the language of icons and participate in reverence of the material world redeemed by Christ.



The Anastasis, 14th cent., Chora Church, Istanbul



Abel's offering foreshadows the Jewish sacrificial system and its eventual fulfilment in the Lamb of God—Christ.

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Notes:

- (1) Out of respect for the theological reservations of some concerning the artistic element of iconography, I hereby point out that I use the term “art” in the very specific sense in which local Montrealer and icon carver Jonathan Pageau uses it: “the arts can be a revealing of the Kingdom, the making present of the sacred – the visible, audible and tactile example of how Creation can become sacramental”. Jonathan Pageau, “The Recovery of the Arts”, *Orthodox Arts Journal* (June 4th, 2012), <http://www.orthodoxartsjournal.org/the-recovery-of-the-arts/>.
- (2) Adriana Bara, “The Iconoclastic Controversy”, *The Icon: Theology and Colour* (Concordia Coursepack: Fall 2016), 69.
- (3) Andrew Louth, “Tradition and the Icon”, *The Way*, 44/4 (October 2005), 153.
- (4) Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, “The Principal Festivals”, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1999, 188.
- (5) Ibid.
- (6) St. John Damascene, *On Holy Images*, trans. Mary H. Allies (London, Thomas Baker, 1898).
- (7) Andrew Louth, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology*, “Icons”, 114.
- (8) Ouspensky, *Theology of Icon*, vol 1 ch. 10 “The Meaning and Content of the Icon”, 154.
- (9) Ibid., 166
- (10) Ibid., 157
- (11) Ibid., 152, and Ouspensky and Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, 187-188
- (12) Ouspensky, *Theology of Icon*, 178
- (13) Ibid., 176.
- (14) Bara, *Icons of the Theotokos* (Concordia lecture: September 29th, 2016).
- (15) Ibid., 166.
- (16) Egon Sendler, *The Icon, Image of the Invisible* ch.8 “The Icon and the Laws of Perspective”, 153-164
- (17) Ouspensky and Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, 187-188.
- (18) Ibid.
- (19) Sendler. *The Icon, Image of the Invisible*, 154-155.
- (20) Ibid., 155-166.
- (21) Ouspensky and Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, 172-173.
- (22) Ibid., 187-188.
- (23) Sendler, *The Icon, Image of the Incisible*, 156-157.
- (24) Ouspensky and Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, 188.
- (25) Mark 1:3, *NRSV*.
- (26) Ouspensky and Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, 188.
- (27) Ouspensky, *Theology of Icon*, 152.
- (28) Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1983), 132.
- (29) S. Scott Bartchy, “Where is the History in Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*?” *Pastoral Psychology*, Vol. 53, No. 4, March 2005, 313-315.

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Chrysostom and CrossRoad: Lessons on Retrieving the Wisdom of St. John in the Formation of an Orthodox Youth Institute
By Ann Bezzerides, PhD

*16 April 2016, Fordham University,
Romanian Youth Symposium*



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The rationale behind this conference is inspiring. As articulated by His Grace, Bishop Ioan, the vision is to lessen the divide between the academy and the Church. It seems, then, that the best hope out of this conference is that the work of all the scholars here can have a significant impact on our youth and on our Orthodox-youth programming across North America. It is my hope that I can share something useful about the live intersection of scholarship and youth programs, and I really look forward to your questions, insights, and further conversation.

About 15 years ago, freshly out of an M.Div. at St. Vladimir's Seminary, I began doctoral work at Boston College with the *very* topic of this conference as my assumption: for youth religious education, we must retrieve the wisdom from the Christian tradition for our contemporary task of educating youth. In the Orthodox world, this claim may seem prosaic. But in the world of religious education, even Orthodox religious education, this really had not been a habit of educators. For various reasons, within the increasingly formalized field of religious education, there had rarely been an interest in retrieving wisdom from the depths of the Christian tradition for the contemporary educational task.

I won't review the reasons here (they are outlined in chapter 1 of my dissertation and also shared in shorter form in an OTSA paper, published by Anton Vrame in 2005, in *One Calling in Christ: the Laity in the Orthodox Church*). What I focused on for the bulk of my dissertation was the contours of what a lengthy "conversation" with a patristic homilist over the content and method of education could do by way of formation of the contemporary educator (the idea of "conversation" with the written word is informed by the work of Hans Georg Gadamer in his classic work, *Truth and Method*.) I focused on St. John Chrysostom, named a hermeneutic of retrieval for reading him, and highlighted what we learn from him on the relationship between biblical education and rhetorical art, the vocation of the educator, and the power of a persuasive invitation to learn.

Meanwhile, as I was having these conversations with Chrysostom, I simultaneously had a new job in youth religious education. I was hired in 2003 to direct a new Lilly Endowment grant to Hellenic College for "the theological exploration of vocation"; the grant included funding to start a summer program for Orthodox youth—high school juniors and seniors. A few weeks before I took my comprehensive exams in October 2003, I hired the first staff and began planning

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what became the CrossRoad Summer Institute—an academic summer program on the Hellenic College Holy Cross campus in Brookline, Massachusetts, for Orthodox high school juniors and seniors of all Orthodox jurisdictions. Participants study theology, explore the concept of Orthodox Christian vocation (where we define vocation broadly and holistically as our unique and ongoing response to Christ’s call to love God and neighbor), engage in service, and experience the joy of prayer and fellowship as a community. The very structure of that academic summer program was deeply formed by my conversations with St. John Chrysostom.

By God’s grace, CrossRoad ended up being a great “recipe” for youth religious education. The first summer session was in 2004. By 2007, we had twice the applicants we could accept for our 30 spots. So in 2008, we doubled the program size, offering two sessions of 30 students each. Today, we are finding ourselves in the same position; we have double the applicants that we can accept for 60 spots. Further growth of the program will depend on fundraising. But a short aside on fundraising: the Lilly Endowment funding expired in 2010, and for the four years prior to that, covered only half the cost of the programming of CrossRoad and the other initiatives started by the grant. But due to the high-impact nature of CrossRoad on our youth, we have been able to raise, through other grants, foundations, and private support, about 1.5 million over the last 8 or so years. Additionally, in our post-program family survey from last summer, 100% would recommend the program to other people, and 97% gave the program a 5 out of 5.

There are so many factors that lead to what the world might call the “success” of CrossRoad, but here I will focus on three simple points that are emphases of CrossRoad that were deeply influenced by years of reading Chrysostom.

1. Our youth programs should include patristic-worthy proclamation of the Gospel. This sounds like the most mundane point ever, but we cannot overemphasize the importance of persuasive, kerygmatic preaching and teaching of the gospel to youth and young adults. Preaching at its best, I believe, following my seminary professors, reconverts aspects in all of us, of any age, all the time. With youth, it is even more important, because they are at a life stage where they are asking life’s big questions and haven’t been socialized into having those questions become unspeakable, as most of us are in adulthood.

When young people are raised in a Church tradition, they often do not have the experience of hearing the message of the Good News of Christ in a way that is startling, persuasive, and provoking to conversation. And yet it’s deeply important, for makes our identity as Orthodox Christians not only something that is part of a family background but is a real lived decision. As such, it calls young people to become Christians themselves and then make life, career, and family

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decisions that are the result of a deep faith. Ideally, they will become people of peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self control. We pray that they will become world leaders in their fields and/or community builders here and abroad and/or great healers and/or great managers and/or great parents, thereby using whatever gifts God has given them to offer life and healing in a world that is hurting on so many levels. We exegete this vision from one of our favorite quotes by St. Justin Popovich:

“In the Lives of the saints there are very many marvelous examples of how a youth becomes a holy youth, a maiden becomes a holy maiden, an old man becomes a holy old man, how an old woman becomes a holy old woman, how a child becomes a holy child, how parents become holy parents, how a son becomes a holy son, how a daughter becomes a holy daughter, how a family becomes a holy family, how a community becomes a holy community, how a priest becomes a holy priest, how a bishop becomes a holy bishop, how a shepherd becomes a holy shepherd, how a peasant becomes a holy peasant, how an emperor becomes a holy emperor, how a cowherd becomes a holy cowherd, how a worker becomes a holy worker, how a judge becomes a holy judge, how a teacher becomes a holy teacher, how an instructor becomes a holy instructor, how a soldier becomes a holy soldier, how an officer becomes a holy officer, how a ruler becomes a holy ruler, how a scribe becomes a holy scribe, how a merchant becomes a holy merchant, how a monk becomes a holy monk, how an architect becomes a holy architect, how a doctor becomes a holy doctor, how a tax collector becomes a holy tax collector, how a pupil becomes a holy pupil, how an artisan becomes a holy artisan, how a philosopher becomes a holy philosopher, how a scientist becomes a holy scientist, how a statesman becomes a holy statesman, how a minister becomes a holy minister, how a poor man becomes a holy poor man, how a rich man becomes a holy rich man, how a slave becomes a holy slave, how a master becomes a holy master, how a married couple becomes a holy married couple, how an author becomes a holy author, how an artist becomes a holy artist.” (Blessed Father Justin Popovich, *Orthodox Faith and Life in Christ* (Belmont, MA: The Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Inc., 1997), 49-50.

Back in the fourth century, Chrysostom was preaching to a religiously plural community and teaching adults. He knew that he had to persuade his hearers to listen to him.

We want to exhort our young people to holiness, to life in Christ, with whatever gifts God has given them and in and through whatever life instance they find themselves. We know that holiness is an impossible goal unless we desire to know the gospel of Christ as just that—good news for our life.

Back in the fourth century, Chrysostom was preaching to a religiously plural community and teaching adults. He knew that he had to persuade his hearers to listen to him. You will rarely find him dive into a topic without some great effort persuading his congregation about why they need to learn, giving them tips for how to learn the message he was teaching. And so, CrossRoad leaders are

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coached to preach the whole gospel to our youth almost as if they have been unchurched. Of course, we do know that kids have been church-ed and most come from deeply religious families, but something amazing happens when kids are away from their families and hear the gospel together, as a group of teens figuring out what life is about. It is deeply formative. We assume nothing about what kids “should” believe, having been raised in the church. In truth, the kids come from a very wide background in their religious literacy. We also honor and take seriously (indeed, look for in their applications) their honest and most challenging questions about the faith. More than this, Chrysostom’s emphasis on persuading his congregation to hear, to take—in today’s terminology—the learning process seriously, was a good injunction to us to structure the program by keeping in mind that the program can’t be about leaders/staff demonstrating that they know stuff, but about the participants making meaning for themselves, so that it forms and shapes them.

What should we learn from this and share more broadly? In whatever youth religious education we’re doing, we are called to preach the gospel, and to preach it persuasively in a way that assumes nothing and honors honest questions, caring about student learning and being reminded that it’s good news.

2. Our youth programs should engage young people theologically

We know that the patristic teachers didn’t hesitate to preach scripture, theology and doctrine. I love what one commentator says about Chrysostom’s congregation—that they partook in an “intensely scriptural diet.” Patristic homilists were teaching adults content and this is remarkable especially when you consider that most of the adults were likely illiterate. Their expectation of what they wanted people to understand was very high.

Flash Forward: CrossRoad was not the only high school summer program that the Lilly Endowment funded. The Endowment funded Youth Theological Initiatives at around 50 institutions, most of which were theological schools or seminaries, while a few were colleges. This funding was the brainchild of Craig Dykstra, the Vice President of the Religion Division for the Lilly Endowment at the time, and the reason he saw youth theology programs as important came from his own experience.

In the words of an article in the *Christian Century*: Dykstra remembered reading Bonhoeffer with his minister when he was a teenager and engaging matters of faith in some depth. He worried that after the 1960s, youth ministry turned more to organizing water balloon fights and other kinds of fun and games, as if leaders were convinced that young people would be turned off by more serious activities.

Dykstra and others wanted to give youth a chance to become involved with theology, as well as to give a boost to the next generation of pastors.

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Dykstra and others wanted to give youth a chance to become involved with theology, as well as to give a boost to the next generation of pastors. Don Richter, the founding director of the program at Candler, saw a need to engage teens at a moment when they can "fall in love with theology." He thinks teens are ready for what Alfred North Whitehead called the romance stage of learning, the stage at which a person's passions ignite.(1)

CrossRoad, then, has a core emphasis on theological mini-courses, followed by break out small group discussions with a one-to-six student to staff ratio. These are taught by our best and most engaging Orthodox theologians and focus on the core areas of scripture, doctrine, and church history. The small group leaders, our program staff, are young men and women studying at HCHC—themselves passionate about learning their faith. As I explained it to someone recently, it's sort of like CrossRoad is Advanced Placement Orthodox Theology. It honors the intelligence and interest of our youth, and assumes that they can handle theological material at the same course-level as they might have for an advanced English or history class.

What should we learn from this and share more broadly? We look to find ways to engage youth in the depth of our faith. We seek out program staff who are appropriate to lead small group studies and cultivate their own gifts for the work, so that their enthusiasm might spill over to the youth, while their Christ-focused lives provide inspiration and hope to our young people.

3. Develop discernment skills among youth around culture AND Church

This third point I derive not directly from Chrysostom but from my reading of Chrysostom. And this point must come after the second point. The idea here is that we help youth develop discernment skills, seeing faith as not blind obedience or rote practice but an engaged response to Christ's call to love God and neighbor. The first, easiest level of discernment to develop in youth concerns contemporary culture. What does our culture say about who we are as a people? How does that compare to an Orthodox Christian vision of the human person? How does technology help and hurt us? What are ideal relationships according to the media and how do those contrast with ideal relationships in our faith tradition? The importance here is to pose real questions—questions that are so good that they can't help but grab students' attention.

CrossRoad asks youth to wrestle with aspects of contemporary culture, challenging them to think of these critically through a lens of a life-giving faith in Jesus Christ within the Orthodox tradition. During the school year, we also host a popular student program with our Hellenic College students called CoffeeTalk,

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where we post a question, written on our office wall, that is a broad general question that will interest youth—something like “Is there value in awards and trophies?”—and have them come and talk about it with staff who facilitate the conversation. This simple little program was picked up and adapted by one parish we know of – a young priest (a former CR alum and alumni staff member) gathers high school students to meet once a month at a local coffee shop to talk through such a question.

You can see why this discernment really needs the theological engagement to be a part of youth programming. If our young people aren’t introduced to our robust Orthodox theology, how are they going to have a framework for affirming what is life-giving and what is soul damaging?

And without the discernment skills around faith and culture, our youth will be drawn to one of two extremes—to what one scholar has called “secular effacement” on the one hand or “sectarian separation” on the other (2). I think most of us are generally worried about our kids leaving the Church and/or having little Christian identity internally—of secular effacement.

From my vantage point, now having seen close to 700 kids come through the CrossRoad summer institute, kids who self-select as wanting to spend 10 days in an Orthodox academic program: sectarian separation is also a real reality and temptation. It is very tempting for Orthodox youth, their zeal for their faith ignited, to want to be extreme in their practice, and in so doing, distort the faith to a set of legalisms, separating themselves so dramatically from the world that they no longer are a life-giving, loving, healing presence within it—in a world that so very badly needs them to be. It has actually been a bit heartbreaking to realize how important it is that our youth become discerning of our Orthodox sources themselves—and this is where we are just beginning to develop programming but we really need the support of programs across the Church (CrossRoad is only 10 days). Not all sources are created equal, and it is a temptation of zealous youth to take any “Orthodox” text at a kind of face-value as they read and apply it, without the work to understand the larger context of the text or the wider guidance to thoughtfully and ethically assess what is of value from ancient (and sometimes not so ancient) sources.

I spent some time on this when I was working on my dissertation, but I didn’t realize how important it was. On Chrysostom in particular, I was helped by the work of Robert Wilken’s book *John Chrysostom and the Jews*. Wilken focuses on text and reception. He aptly argues that religious works from antiquity have double lives—a life in the time in which they were first composed, read or preached, and a second life as they were read, studied, and used by later genera-

This should be to us today not only a stark warning about the rhetoric we use, but also serve a challenge to the simplistic application of Chrysostom’s homilies in our day.

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tions. The homilies on the Judaizers often appear in collections of John's work, and given Chrysostom's popularity across time, one might see these sermons as contributing to the formation of Christian attitudes towards Jews in times and places far removed from Ancient Antioch. And when they were read in medieval Europe, in Byzantium, or in Russia, they most likely took on quite a different meaning than was originally intended. This should be not only a stark warning about the rhetoric we use, but also a challenge to the simplistic application of Chrysostom's homilies in our day. Chrysostom has been quoted in the National Holocaust museum; we can still find his words being cited by anti-Semites. His works can be, in fact, dangerous texts.(3)

At the risk of sharing examples that could be polarizing, I will share trends that concern me on Facebook, as I observe how alumni of our programs utilize social media to convey their faith. This year I have seen young Greek Orthodox male alumni promote the practice of women covering their heads in Church. I will foreground my own reaction: I see this and am heartbroken. To read St. Paul's injunction to the Corinthian community and think we can and should replicate such an injunction today, and broadly over social media, seems to me to show a kind of reading of the Biblical texts that is gravely problematic. On the practice itself, I should be clear: when the women in a community have always traditionally covered their heads and still do today, I have always been taught that our attitude should be one of respect for a longstanding practice. But there is something very misplaced in today's America, if we feel the need to preach that women should cover their heads as an Orthodox rule. Trying to enforce a legalistic dress code misses the very spirit of the Gospel (a spirit which we are led to by a deep immersion in the entirety of Scripture, as well as our liturgical and theological traditions—why we so badly need theological literacy); it misses, even, St. Paul's intent with the Corinthian community.

This legalism can also be evident in social media posts I have seen recently that remind people to fast. Fasting is of course a practice that is one of the hallmarks and beautiful practices within Orthodoxy. But we have to be very careful. What are we doing when we fast? We are at risk of becoming pharisaical. On the other hand, a CrossRoad alum recently posted, "Saint John Chrysostom says, 'if you are fasting from meat and dairy and fish and oil and even bread and water and you condemn your brother, even if it is Holy Friday, go and eat the meat and fish and dairy products etc. and shut your mouth and don't condemn your brother. For eating your brother with criticism is far worse than breaking the fast that we hold so dear.'" And then I celebrate ... or in Chrysostom's words, I rejoice and leap with pleasure. For here Chrysostom's words teach us today in a way that is needed, and here we see the alum struggling to understand the spirit of the Gospel.

*Preach the gospel
and care about student learning!
Engage youth in theology!
Nurture discernment skills around both culture and Church!*

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Perhaps what both of these examples calls for is our need to do more to (a) raise awareness of how social media can be used to observe faith development in youth, and (b) WITH youth to address how to engage in public discourse, especially with regards to utilizing social media within the realm of faith and belief.

But my overall point/takeaway is here: Orthodox youth ARE going to refer to ancient sources, and as youth leaders who bridge the span between youth work and academia, we really must help them come up with tools for critically reading the tradition so that they can promote a faith that is indeed Good News—life-giving, profoundly marked by Christ’s love. CrossRoad is only ten days—too short a time to really help teenagers develop the discernment they will need for a robust life of faith. All of us who love and care about youth development in the Church must wrestle with this issue if we are going to have a healthy cadre of young adults for whom Orthodoxy is life-giving, healing, and truth for both them and their broader communities.

In summary, I offer three simple points for conversation:

*Preach the gospel and care about student learning
Engage youth in theology
Nurture discernment skills around both culture and Church*

A sub-point would be: how do all of our communities, archdiocese, etc., gain the funding to do this work well? For it will certainly take lives devoted to the kind of teaching and mentoring at the parish level – a labor of love that takes time that a single parish priest can usually not manage. But perhaps that can be the next paper.

Notes:

(1)<http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2010-11/seminary-teens>

(2)Mark A. Noll, "The Future of the Religious College: Looking Ahead by Looking Back," in *The Future of Religious Colleges: The Proceedings of the Harvard Conference on the Future of Religious Colleges*, October 6–7, 2000, ed. Paul John Dovere (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 91.

(3)For a treatment of the dark side of the art of persuasion as related to Augustine, see *Harmless, Augustine and the Catechumenate*.

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Jesus Pantocrator in Ecumenism *By Marisel Segui Zavagno*

Technique: decoupage, painting, embroidery, crochet

Materials: paper, fabrics, threads, acrylics

Author: Marisel Segui Zavagno



Marisel Segui Zavagno with her husband and three children moved to Canada from Argentina several years ago. She earned a degree in Speech-language and Audiology in Universidad del Salvador, in Buenos Aires. Later in her career, she specialized in oral and interpersonal communications, delivering teaching seminars in many countries.

Marisel is currently enrolled as an independent student at Concordia University, in Religious Studies and Theology. She is an active member of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Montreal and the week of Prayer for Christian Unity Committee. Marisel is fluent in Spanish, English, French and Portuguese.

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DESCRIPTION

This interpretation of Jesus Pantocrator combines elements from the churches that comprise the Ecumenical Movement. Jesus' face and hands respect the shape presented in iconography of the Eastern Orthodox Church; the silk and embroidered garments represent the Catholic Church where it is customary to dress religious figures in these materials; the open Bible represents the Reformed churches whose motto is "sola scripture, sola fide, sola gratia"; and the verse on the Bible (John 3:16) represents the Evangelical Churches.

Introduction

In the academic world of the early 1900s, professors would teach from a podium, generally standing next to a big blackboard with some pieces of white chalk, and would rarely make use of images.

Now, in the present internet era, things have changed. We now observe that in the majority of university lectures, we use PowerPoint presentations or videos. Sometimes, it seems images might be more important than words when it comes to communicating. Ever since Macintosh computers were introduced in 1984, icons have been the way we identify files on computers, as icons are a visual representation of something on your computer. For example, the icon of a blue "e" on your screen most likely represents Internet Explorer. Also, the term icon is used in popular culture with the general sense of symbolizing a person that is considered socially significant, or representing certain qualities. For instance, Mother Theresa is considered an icon of humanity.

These examples show that with computers and in present popular culture, icons are used with the same intention as that of the first Christians—to communicate. Christians first used icons to communicate "the truth" in a precise way using visual form, complementing the narratives of the Bible. (MARTIN p. 2). Like Linette Martin said "it is time to acknowledge the power of visual communication: it is time to look at icons."

This paper has the intention of explaining how icons were and could still be useful in terms of communication. In order for icons to be a prevailing tool for teaching we need to first recover their "raison d'être." In fact, icons are intended for the proclamation of the Gospels in the form of teachings. They are also a form of spiritual inspiration using colours and shapes. My analysis will concentrate on the icon of Jesus Pantocrator and how first Christians "read" from the Jesus Pantocrator icon (that God became man in Jesus; that Jesus is a God triune—three persons, only one God; and that his serene regard tells us that Jesus came to the earth for the salvation of all humanity). I think that this icon symboli-

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cally represents all Christians as it depicts in a very accurate way how Jesus is the centre of Christianity. It also complements well, in a visual way, the teachings from the Gospels. From an ecumenical point of view, I think that the icon of Jesus Pantocrator represents the Ecumenical Movement, portraying aspects that unite all Christians.

Artistic Expressions of Christianity

Christian symbols describe or relate to events and themes from both the Old and New Testaments, namely the Good Shepherd, the multiplication of breads, or the resurrection. All this imagery has an educational value; it was, and still is, a tool to teach the doctrine of the Christian Church. By the fourth century, after the arrival of Constantine to power and the Edict of Milan, art came out of the catacombs and began to appear on the buildings and paintings outdoors; it was no longer in private homes but also in public places like basilicas. Thus, Christian art became official and took on elements of imperial art, known as Byzantine Art, whose origin is Hellenism, meaning Christianity and also had elements of the East (Umaña p. 36-37).

From the earliest days of the Christian experience, believers have searched for ways to express their faith. Our ancestors did this through images, literature, rituals, music, and art. (Pearson p. 59)

An icon is a specific expression of belief; it is an artistic, spiritual, and liturgical unit, and cannot be separated from faith, prayer, and the liturgical life of the Church (MARTIN p. 233).

Icons in the Religious World

There is a general misconception that icons are decorative religious art. However, icons are much more than art, since their purpose is to reveal and proclaim the word of God and his divine truth.

An icon intends to teach the greatness of the Kingdom of God; they are designed to be bridges between people and God. Icons seem to speak to us in a foreign language, a pictorial language that communicates precisely in a visual form. We can say also that an icon is “theology in color.” It is important to highlight that as much as icons are a visual language, they are not as rigid as language. Icons have developed over the years but are still recognizable to the eye.

This is the case for the Jesus Pantocrator icon. At the beginning, the icon showed an image of Jesus with a severe look and the Book of Sacred Scriptures was closed. Over time, it developed into a softer image, portraying Jesus with a

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warm look and holding an open Bible. This message of the icon is telling us to read the bible as it is facing us.

Furthermore, the word “icon” is found in the Old and New Testaments. In the Scriptures, it is first found in Genesis 1:27, when it is mentioned that God created human beings in his own image. This concept of humans as created in God’s image proved to be important for the development of the theology of the icon. In the New Testament (Col 1:15), there is a text in which “icon” refers to Jesus Christ as the image of the invisible God. Also, a Jewish saying says that thousands of angels go before every human being crying, “Make way, make way for the image of God.”

“... the icon is the real equivalent to, and venerated with the same honor as, the Gospel. The one communicates religious through words, the other through visible forms and symbols. Both equally are modes of revelation”. (GENDLE)
We could say that icons are a means by which believers and God can live with a sense of communion.

Icons are also great tools for explaining the Gospel. During periods when education was not available for all people in society, these icons constituted great instruments for reaching people.

Today, since images often come before words, could icons come back as a tool to reach all Christians? Could all Christians recognize an icon like Jesus Pantocrator as well as the Internet Explorer icon is recognized?

The icon of Jesus Pantocrator

"Pantocrator" is the Greek translation of the Hebrew title El Shaddai, meaning "all powerful". Other translations include "Ruler of all" and "Sustainer of all." This attribution to Jesus was important given the Christological controversies that the early church suffered. The Christ Pantocrator icons were symbols of the Nicene verdict that Christ was co-equal and co-eternal to God.

The Christ Pantocrator icon is also called Christ the Teacher. In both icons Jesus is holding a book, sometimes open. Jesus is also making a gesture: sometimes this is a gesture of blessing, and in others it is an oratorical motion, as if He was preaching. Christ the Teacher icons have the book open, generally showing a text from either the gospels or Saint John's Revelation.

There are two features of the icon that are not always understood by the modern viewer. First, in some of the Christ Pantocrator icons the eyes of Christ are asymmetrical, representing both the humanity and divinity of Jesus. The speculation is

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that the two different eyes represent Jesus' dual perspective, finite and infinite. The eyes focus on two different worlds: the Seen and Unseen

Second, the hand gesture is exaggerated because Jesus is making the symbol of four letters with the right hand: "IC and XC". These letters spell out Christ's monogram. Specifically, "Jesus Christ" spelled in Greek is:

IHCOYC XPICTOC

The monogram is formed by taking the first and last letters of each name, and is also often written in the halo of Jesus. Alpha and omega, the first and last letters of Greek) alphabet, beginning and end which brings a sense of eternity. "I am the Alpha and the Omega - says the Lord God - who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty "(The Revelation to John 1, 8)

Jesus Pantocrator is always dressed in red and blue, and in Imperial clothes, as these two colours represent the divinity (blue) and the humanity (red representing blood); a fringe of yellow represents his role as teacher.

In my opinion, the message of Jesus Pantocrator relevant for all Christians, past, present, and future. For this reason, as we move to the future, I could see how this image of Jesus at the center of Christianity could be a symbol for the Ecumenical Movement, and become a symbol of unity.

Ecumenism: Movement for unity of all Christians

The word is derived from Greek οἰκουμένη (oikoumene), which means "the whole inhabited world." The term "ecumenism" refers to the idea of a Christian unity in the literal meaning: that there should be a single Church. Ecumenism is used predominantly by and with reference to Christian denominations and Christian Churches separated by doctrine, history, and practice. It also refers to initiatives aimed at greater Christian unity or cooperation. It could be said that the first step for the ecumenical movement was found in the World Missionary Conference, or the Edinburgh Missionary Conference, held in 1910. This movement is composed of three groups of Christian churches: the Apostolic Churches (Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican Apostolic); the Reformed Churches (Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian); and the Evangelical Churches (Pentecostal, Salvation Army, United Churches and others). The objective of ecumenism is to seek the visible unity of Christians who profess a common faith in the Triune God revealed by Jesus Christ.

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Conclusion

The first representations of Jesus that Christian artists created reflected the image of Jesus as oppressed and persecuted, similar to the first Christians. However, by the time the Jesus Pantocrator image was developed, Christians were doing better in society and this Jesus reflected more of a majestic image, dressed more like a King.

At the same time, this figure was impregnated with signs and symbols that were helping to convey the message of Jesus Christ, the son of God. I would like to regain that figure, this icon Jesus Pantocrator, and with him the spirit of first Christians who lived in unity impregnated by the love of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Through this paper, I have had the great opportunity to discover the power of images in the religious world. With the following prayer I would like to encompass how I see the Jesus Pantocrator as an ecumenical agent of change.

Jesus Pantocrator

**Seeing you we want to remember
that you are a man and you are God.**

**That you are triune,
which are the beginning and the end,
your light gives us hope for eternal life and
your serene look in your eyes gives us peace.
Your hand holding the word teaches us to know and love.**

Jesus Pantocrator:

**Help us achieve unity of Christians
from teaching us to respect our differences
and to fight for those things that unite us.
Help us protect our planet that is our home,
to fight for social justice and build peace in the world.**

Amen!

*That you are
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which are the be-
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your light gives us
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Your hand holding
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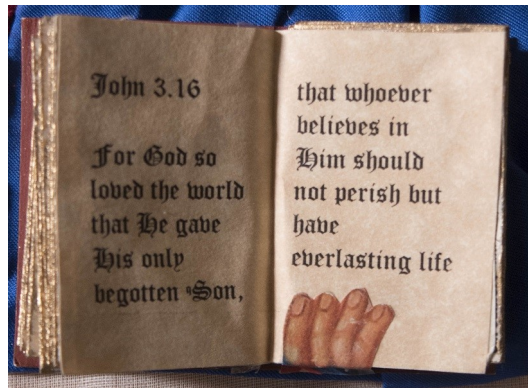
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“In conceptual art the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work. When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art.”

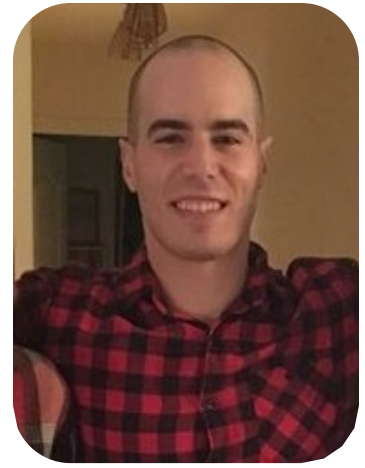
Sol

LeWitt, Paragraphs on Conceptual Art, Artforum, June 1967



Andrei Rublev's Holy Trinity

By Stefanos Singelakis



Stefanos Singelakis is a student at Concordia University. He is finishing undergraduate studies in the department of Religions and Cultures. In January, he will be entering the graduate program to pursue an MA in 'religions and cultures.' His primary focus is on Christianity and Judaism. He also has an interest in ancient Roman and Greek history and modern Western history and social issues.

It is arguable that Andrei Rublev's portrayal of the Holy Trinity is one of the greatest icons depicting the Trinity of all time and certainly prominent amongst the broad tradition of Russian iconography. This research essay will undertake a close analysis of Rublev's Trinity in its entirety to explore the breadth of its depth and meaning. This essay shall first present the biblical passage from which the icon draws its setting and consider the historical development of this particular theme in iconography. Secondly, this essay will offer an explanation as to what exactly is being presented in the icon and consider the icon's connection to the festival of Pentecost. Thirdly, this essay will consider the many functions of the icon. Afterwards, this essay shall examine the symbolism behind that which is presented in the icon and how Rublev's spirituality influenced his depiction of the Trinity. Finally, the symbolic meaning and relevance of the colors of the icon will be considered, followed by an analysis of the geometric features and their theological meaning.

Rublev, not unlike many other iconographers drew on the images presented in Genesis 18 as a traditional setting in which to depict the Holy Trinity. In Genesis 18 Abraham and Sarah receive three lords at their home:

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." (Gen. 18:1-5) (NRSV)

The significance of this biblical passage for iconographers and for theologians is that Abraham refers to the three lords who are understood to be angels in the singular "My lord" (Gen 18:3). This is an essential feature of this passage that allows Christian theologians and iconography to connect this scene to a representation of the Trinity.

Rublev's icon of the Holy Trinity was painted for a monastery known as the Trinity and St. Sergius most likely sometime between the years 1408 and 1425 AD. (1) Wilson Yates explains that the story in Genesis 18 was rooted in the church's understanding of the Trinity as far back as the 4th century and that it was in Constantinople that this iconographic development of the Trinity would reach full maturity. (2) This iconographic representation of the Trinity came to be the standard image of the Trinity for the Orthodox Church in both its theological and liturgical formulations. The story in Genesis 18 is meant to be understood as

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a prefiguration of the Trinity at Pentecost and the liturgical commentary identifies Abraham as the individual seeing God in the three lords who he received hospitably. (3)

Guy Freeland, relying on the scholarship of Gabriel Bunge, states that this specific representation of the Trinity has three stages of development in iconography.(4) The first stage consists of plain depictions of the three lords who are presented as young men and most probably assumed to be angels. This initial stage is followed by a development in the scene, which assumes both a Christological and Trinitarian interpretation of Genesis 18. This iconographic evolution finally attains maturity in a third stage, with the icon of the Holy Trinity by Rublev and the icons of the iconographers who came after.(5)

Bogdan G Bucur states that it is near the end of the first millennium AD that the icon depicting the three angels from Genesis 18 received the title of “The Holy Trinity.” It is at this point that these icons of Genesis 18 and their emphasis on Christological characteristics were shifting towards a more dominating focus on a Trinitarian theme. (6) This prompted iconographers to make bolder attempts to see to it that the icon corresponds more closely with its present more pronounced Trinitarian nature. Bucur maintains that it is only about midway through the second millennium that the focus from the icon’s Christological theme to its purely Trinitarian association is brought to completion; Rublev’s Trinity is a perfect example of this final phase of transition. (7)

The fact that this icon uses Genesis 18 to present a symbolic representation of the Holy Trinity is connected to an important theological. Christine Chaillot states that this particular image communicates to observers a “symbolic representation of a Trinitarian model”, which is intimately connected to the Holy Trinity. (8) Chaillot quotes Grigoriy Krug when trying to explain the significance of Rublev’s Trinity and places special emphasis on how the Trinity cannot be depicted literally. For him, Rublev’s Trinity is undoubtedly the most profound symbolic expression of the Trinity. (9)

Leonid Ouspensky offers a neat explanation as to why a literal depiction of the Trinity is impossible. He does this by referring to the decisions made by the Seventh Ecumenical Council. The Seventh Ecumenical Council decreed that the Son of God can be depicted because He made Himself visibly known to humanity. However, it is impossible to depict the Father, because He has never been seen and so remains visually unknowable. Therefore, God cannot be justifiably depicted in an icon.(10) Ouspensky expounds that due to the creativity of the human mind a person can attempt to paint an image of the Father, but that such an attempt is wrong because many aspects of God are beyond human com-

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prehension. It is this incomprehensibility that forbids iconographers from depicting the Father. Moreover, Ouspensky emphasises that there is only one means by which a person can know the Holy Trinity. The only legitimate way of knowing the Father is through the Son who is Himself only knowable by means of the Holy Spirit.(11)

The scene that Rublev depicts in his icon of the Holy Trinity is also closely linked to the festival of Pentecost.(12) The need to explain in detail the dogma of the Trinity is the primary theological task connected to the festival of Pentecost. The Orthodox Church has selected the iconographic depiction of the Trinity in Genesis 18 to express the Holy Trinity. The church maintains that this image in particular, which is connected to biblical history, signals “the beginning of the promise of redemption.”(13) The Orthodox Church maintains that this particular iconographic theme connects the initial promise of redemption with the day of Pentecost, on which the definitive disclosure regarding the Holy Trinity is provided. Ouspensky and Lossky conclude that this depiction of the Holy Trinity acts as a point of connection between what they describe as the “Old Testament Church” and the creation of the “New Testament Church.”(14)

Rublev's Trinity goes beyond its close connection to the festival of Pentecost, and like all icons, it is multi-functional. Andrew Louth illustrates the diverse functions of the icon by first stating that an icon reminds the individual that the dividing line separating the mundane from the heavenly realm is quite narrow. (15) Louth maintains that icons serve as a means by which a believer can access that which is heavenly, stating that the essence of the icon is imbued with a special holiness. He emphasizes that it is precisely because the icon depicts a spiritual reality that it is capable of providing the viewer with an experience of holiness.(16) Above all of its other functions, the icon at its most practical is an object of devotion, serving as an aid for those engaged in the act of prayer.(17) Inarguably, these principles are applicable to Rublev's Trinity, which is revered for its spiritual beauty and held in high regard by many Christians. Moreover, Ouspensky illustrates that the quality of the icon is to be found in its “beauty-holiness”, which is the source of its exquisiteness. It is this aspect of the icon that always takes precedence over its aesthetic features.(18)

The only legitimate way of knowing the Father is through the Son who is Himself only knowable by means of the Holy Spirit.

Rublev's Icon of the Holy Trinity features three angels sitting at a table. The one on the left represents the Father; the one in the center symbolizes the Son; and the one on the right represents the Holy Spirit.(19) The angels are seated at a low table and are closely grouped together; this intimacy offers the impression of harmony and peace.(20) The scene depicted in the icon is centered on the chalice, which all the angels are engaged in the act of blessing. The postu-

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re of the center angel is symbolic of Christ's readiness to sacrifice Himself for humanity; this symbolic posturing is further complemented by the angel's blessing of the chalice. The angel on the left displays sadness. The icon seeks to capture God's deep love for humanity which is confirmed in His commitment to sacrifice His Son. This can be seen in the subtle signs of the angel representing the father, by means of the angel's body language. Rublev is able to capture all these elements and impress upon the viewer the Son's submission.(21) Furthermore, the icon invites the viewer to join the three angels at the table. This signifies God's offer of salvation and humanity's contact with the Divine.

In the background, the two most notable features are to be found behind the angel representing the Father and the angel representing the Son. Elizabeth A. Johnson states that behind the Father is Abraham and Sarah's home, depicted as a temple and connected to the dwelling place of God. (22) The second and perhaps most prominent feature of the background is the oak of Mamre, situated behind the center angel, which symbolizes the tree of life.(23) Michael J. Marx explains that the tree of life in Christian tradition is connected to the Cross and that Christ is the fruit bringing immortality to the faithful. Moreover, Marx highlights that St. John Damascene states that the tree of life in the Garden of Eden prefigured the Cross. For Christians, the tree of life symbolizes the union between Christ and believers. Apparently, once having been baptized, a Christian is connected Christ, not unlike a fruit bearing branch on a vine.(24)

This symbolic depiction of the Holy Trinity contains few details of the biblical setting of Genesis 18, and Abraham and Sarah are wholly missing from the scene. Icons created before Rublev's Trinity and icons in the centuries following Rublev's time do depict the Trinity in relation to Genesis 18, by often incorporating Abraham and Sarah in the image. Moreover, sometimes the icons would feature additional details such as the servant who prepares the calf for the angels.(25) According to Yates, this is no coincidence. He maintains that Rublev's icon reflects his own Orthodox spirituality, which was influenced by his use of the Philokalia. This form of prayer emphasizes the qualities of stillness, peacefulness and gratitude, which center on the desire to express love manifested through kindness. (26)

According to Yates, Rublev intended to communicate these spiritual qualities, influencing him in his painting of the Trinity, which was simpler than previous depictions and kept its exclusive focus on the divine presence. Yates argues that Rublev's Trinity is comparable to "Hesychastic" prayer, because it has the ability to calm the person's spirit, while focusing their inner self and simultaneously establishing a sense of connectivity with the Divine.(27)

Every aspect of an icon is created with a specific intent, including the deeply symbolic colouring. Yates describes the color gold as symbolizing eterna-

The angels are seated at a low table and are closely grouped together; this intimacy offers the impression of a sense of harmony and peace.

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lity and holiness. Rublev's Trinity has an abundance of gold, seen on the wings of the angels and in their halos; it is also the color of the chairs and pedestals. Gold surrounds the three angels and distinguishes them from the mundane.(28) Ouspensky and Lossky believe that the indefinite color on the angel representing the Father—a mixture of “a pale pink . . . with brown and blue-green lights”—is expressive of the impossibility of depicting the Father.(29) The centre angel's clothing consists of typical colors usually assigned to the Son of God. This angel is wearing a purple chiton and a blue cloak.(30) Chaillot explains that “red” and “blue” emphasizes Christ's humanity and divinity.(31) The main color found on the third angel is green. St. Dionysius the Areopagite states that green symbolizes youth and the fullness of powers. These properties relate to the Holy Spirit, since it is the Holy Spirit who infuses everything with life, revitalizing all of creation.(32)

The gestures and placement of the characters and the objects in the icon, as well as the choice of colors are not the only characteristics of Rublev's Trinity imbued with meaning. There is also a geometric design within the image that is of a theological importance. Alexander V. Voloshinov states that within the icon there is a circular design, which has significant implications. If one were to draw a perfect circle onto the icon, all three angels would be placed within the circle, and Voloshinov believes that this signifies their “Triunity.”(33) Voloshinov argues that the angel seated in the middle is positioned somewhat higher than the other two, and yet within the circle all three are equal.(34) Chaillot states that Rublev intentionally portrayed the angels in “a circular motion”, signifying the fundamental unity of the Trinity.(35) Similarly, Chaillot argues that the perfect circle relates to the divine, eternal nature of God, and the perfect equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.(36) Yates suggests that the circle encompassing the three angels is given more attention by the many curves present in the icon. There is curving in both the angels' bodies, heads, and halos. The mountain behind the angel symbolizes the Holy Spirit, and is also curved, along with the tree splayed above the center angel. According to Yates, these curves add to the circular aspect of the icon, highlighting the “unity that lies at the heart of the Trinity.”(37) Ouspensky and Lossky believe that the manner in which the angels to the left and right lean towards the central angel suggests that all three are bound together. Moreover, they draw our attention to St. Dionysius the Areopagite's belief that “circular movement signifies that God remains identical with Himself.”(38) Clearly, St. Dionysius the Areopagite believes that a circle is capable of communicating something about the character of God. Considering the theological symbolism of geometry within iconography, it should be evident that Rublev's use of the circle in his representation of the Trinity is not coincidental.

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Rublev's depiction of the Holy Trinity—which is grounded in a theological interpretation of Genesis 18—is connected to a tradition that long preceded him. Moreover, this image has been part of the Orthodox Church for ages. Rublev's version is arguably the greatest ever created and none will ever attain its perfection. This icon is intimately connected to the festival of Pentecost, and, like all icons, it acts as a means of communication with a spiritual reality, serving as an aid in prayer. Every aspect of the icon is infused with symbolism and significance, whether one considers the gestures and postures of the angels, the position of the chalice, the colors and their meanings or the geometric patterns that underlie the general design. Rublev was an exceptionally talented iconographer and a religious man. Inarguably, Rublev painted his Trinity in keeping with the traditions of icon painting, and he was doing so in deep contemplation and devotion to God.

Rublev's depiction of the Holy Trinity which is grounded in a theological interpretation of Genesis 18 is connected to a tradition that long preceded him... This icon is intimately connected to the festival of Pentecost and like all icons, it acts as a means of communication with a spiritual reality and above all else serves as an aid in prayer.



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*Andrei Rublev,
The Holy Trinity, ca.
1410. Tretyakov Gallery,
Moscow, Russia*

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Notes:

- (1) Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1999), 201.
- (2) Wilson Yates, "Andrei Rublev and The Holy Trinity," *ARTS* 22, no. 2 (2010): 13, accessed October 24, 2016, <http://0-web.b.ebscohost.com/mercury.concordia.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=c9839632-b57b-41e8-a4f8-ff5ef7051215%40sessionmgr105&vid=1&hid=102>.
- (3) Ibid.
- (4) Guy Freeland, review of *The Rublev Trinity: the icon of the Trinity*, by Gabriel Bunge, *Phronema* 23, (2008): 88, accessed October 24, 2016, <http://0-web.b.ebscohost.com/mercury.concordia.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=43c2ee01-b989-4758-aab2-dfd39242ec7f%40sessionmgr102&vid=1&hid=102>.
- (5) Ibid.
- (6) Bogdan G Bucur, "The Early Christian Reception of Genesis 18: From Theophany to Trinitarian Symbolism," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 23, no. 2 (summer 2015): 263, accessed October 29, 2016, <http://0-search.proquest.com/mercury.concordia.ca/docview/1689630510/fulltextPDF/AB819A2B6DE24DE9PQ/1?accountid=10246>.
- (7) Ibid.
- (8) Christine Chaillot, "Contemplating Rublev's icon: the authority of the Trinity and the community of women and men in the church," *The Ecumenical Review* 60, no. 1-2 (Jan-Apr 2008): 138, accessed October 24, 2016, <http://0-web.b.ebscohost.com/mercury.concordia.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=84bd14f7-44b6-45c1-9817-74f837e930c1%40sessionmgr107&vid=1&hid=102>.
- (9) Ibid.
- (10) Leonid Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, vol. 1 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992), 154.
- (11) Ibid., 154-55.
- (12) Ouspensky and Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, 200.
- (13) Ibid.
- (14) Ibid.
- (15) Andrew Louth, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 117.
- (16) Ibid., 115-16.
- (17) Ibid., 113.
- (18) Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, 184-85.
- (19) Yates, "Andrei Rublev and The Holy Trinity," 14.
- (20) UNESCO, *Russian Icons* (New York: The American Library of World Literature, 1962), 20.
- (21) Ibid.
- (22) Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Trinity: To Let the Symbol Sing Again," *Theology Today* 54, no. 3 (Oct 1997): 299, accessed October 29, 2016, <http://0-web.a.ebscohost.com/mercury.concordia.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=6ecf6855-cf99-4b25-a106-f7c1f505f320%40sessionmgr4006&vid=1&hid=4001>.
- (23) Ibid.
- (24) Michael J Marx, "The Tree of Life," *Worship* 27, no. 4 (Mar 1953): 185-86, accessed October 29, 2016, <http://0-web.a.ebscohost.com/mercury.concordia.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=94c3b708-fa60-4101-91b1-819b6259b864%40sessionmgr4009&vid=2&hid=4001>.
- (25) Yates, "Andrei Rublev and The Holy Trinity," 14.
- (26) Ibid.
- (27) Ibid.

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- (28)Ibid.
- (29)Ouspensky and Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, 202.
- (30)Ibid.
- (31) Chaillot, "Contemplating Rublev's icon," 139.
- (32)Ouspensky and Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, 202.
- (33)Alexander V. Voloshinov, "The Old Testament Trinity of Andrey Rublyov: geometry and philosophy," *Leonardo* 32, no. 2 (1999): 106, accessed October 24, 2016, <http://0-web.b.ebscohost.com.mercury.concordia.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=f73e53e6-21f3-4fe3-a57e-581716c0e113%40sessionmgr105&vid=1&hid=102>.
- (34)Ibid
- (35)Chaillot, "Contemplating Rublev's icon," 138.
- (36)Ibid.
- (37)Yates, "Andrei Rublev and The Holy Trinity," 14.
- (38)Ouspensky and Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, 202.

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**Icon of the Holy Trinity
from the Holy Trinity
Church on Kaysarovo
ruchye in Vologda
(demolished in the
1940s) between 1550
and 1575 ; Vologda His-
tory Architecture and
Art Museum**



**« De la Réforme à la Re-formation
de l'unité chrétienne » :
Compte rendu par Denitsa Tsvetkova**

**Compte rendu de la table ronde From
Reformation to Re-formation of Christian
Unity, 20 novembre 2017, Montréal**

Le 20 novembre 2017, une cinquantaine de personnes se sont rassemblées au Centre-ville de Montréal, dans une salle du Centre Newman, pour prier pour l'unité et réfléchir sur l'œcuménisme et sur la pluralité des Réformes, selon les mots de bienvenue de Dr. Cecil Chabot.

L'événement s'est déroulé en anglais et a été organisé par l'Institut Newman, en collaboration avec Montreal Christian Faculty Fellowship, le Centre canadien d'œcuménisme, The Montreal School of Theology, Cardus, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, The Newman Catholic Students Society, The Protestant Chaplaincy of McGill, et The McGill Office of Religious and Spiritual Life. La table ronde "That They May Be One" (« Qu'ils soient un ») From Reformation to Re-formation of Christian Unity (De la Réforme à la re-formation de l'unité chrétienne) a suivi une prière œcuménique.

Dr. Adriana Bara, directrice du Centre canadien d'œcuménisme, a animé la discussion.

Ray Pennings, fondateur de *Cadmus*, qui a fait des études en histoire à McMaster University et a obtenu une maîtrise en arts et religions à Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, a soulevé quelques points importants à propos de l'œcuménisme. Selon lui, l'herméneutique et les dogmes ont toujours leur place dans le dialogue œcuménique et les institutions ecclésiales sont des voix nécessaires pour l'unité chrétienne. La vie de tous les jours nous offre des possibilités d'événements et de réflexions œcuméniques et ecclésiales, qui sont nécessaires non seulement pour les croyants, mais aussi pour l'ensemble de la société. En titre d'exemple, il a donné la théologie de la justice sociale. Les célébrations sont aussi très importantes pour faire avancer l'œcuménisme qui est loin d'être achevé.

Ensuite Rev. **Angelica Piché**, théologienne d'Allemagne, a pris la parole. Elle a travaillé au Centre canadien d'œcuménisme et a continué sa formation à la *Montreal School of Theology* pour être ordonnée par l'Église Unie de Canada. Elle a une maîtrise en études avancées en œcuménisme de l'*Institut Bossey*. Portant l'œcuménisme dans ses gènes, parce que sa grand-mère était issue d'un mariage mixte, elle constate aujourd'hui que le dialogue officiel avance à très petits pas. Selon elle, il y a 500 ans, dans l'optique d'une seule vérité les personnes se sont entretenues. Aujourd'hui prédomine la compréhension que la croyance est

*« La vie de tous les jours nous offre des possibilités pour des événements et réflexions œcuméniques et ecclésiales, qui sont nécessaires non seulement pour les croyants, mais aussi pour l'ensemble de la société. »
Ray Pennings*

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personnelle et que peut-être il y a plusieurs vérités et que probablement certaines font partie d'une grande vérité, Dieu. En citant le Cardinal Kurt Koch, elle a montré qu'il y avait différentes façons de souligner le 500e anniversaire de la Réforme : nous ne pouvons pas être joyeux, vu que des milliers de personnes ont été tuées à cause des conflits entre les catholiques et les protestants; malgré cela, nous pouvons nous réjouir du chemin parcouru et finalement, nous devons avoir espoir en l'avenir.

À son tour, Dr. John Zucchi a raconté quelques anecdotes pour montrer la douleur de la séparation entre les catholiques et les protestants. Professeur au Département d'histoire et d'études classiques de l'Université McGill, il travaille sur la question de la migration et de l'ethnicité au Canada aux 19e et 20e siècles. Très impliqué dans la communauté catholique anglophone canadienne, il a présenté la séparation comme un divorce douloureux, puisque nous sommes les enfants de cette séparation de la Réforme et que nous avons un besoin profond d'unité. Parlant du drame de l'impossibilité de communier ensemble, il a mentionné aussi les divisions linguistiques et confessionnelles entre francophones et anglophones; entre protestants et catholiques. Racontant comment, à l'époque, quand il y avait un mariage dans l'Église catholique, les anglicans qui étaient à côté restaient devant la porte de leur Église à regarder, il a souligné que les catholiques avaient besoin des protestants, que les protestants avaient besoin des catholiques et que les protestants avaient besoin des protestants. À quoi plus tard Dre Adriana Bara a ajouté que les catholiques et les protestants avaient besoin des orthodoxes. Elle a ramené la bonne humeur dans la salle en disant que le divorce peut être parfois même joyeux. Une meilleure option de coexistence paisible, quand le vivre ensemble est impossible et douloureux. Parfois les deux parents peuvent bien d'occuper des enfants, dans la compréhension et le respect mutuel.

La dernière intervention était celle de Dr. Chris Barrigar, pasteur de l'Église anglicane à Montréal, St-Pierre, docteur en philosophie théologique de l'Université McGill. Il a travaillé dans différentes institutions théologiques, surtout en Inde. Il est coordonnateur de *Montreal Christian Faculty Fellowship* qui rassemble des professeurs catholiques, protestants et orthodoxes en prière commune et en réflexion intellectuelle dans un contexte académique de plus en plus hostile à la religion. Chris Barrigar a grandi dans une famille protestante, il a fréquenté une école catholique à Ottawa où l'un de ses professeurs l'a conduit vers sa foi chrétienne. Il a vécu la tristesse de ne pas pouvoir communier avec ses amis catholiques. Il a aussi donné quelques exemples de collaboration fructueuse entre les protestants et les catholiques à l'échelle paroissiale comme le parrainage des réfugiés. Il a terminé son intervention en disant qu'il faut changer notre habitude d'être concentrés sur les divisions. Porter la Croix signifie rester avec ceux qui souffrent et travailler ensemble pour l'objectif commun en empathie.

*« Il faut reformer nos habitudes d'être fixé sur les divisions. Porter la Croix, signifie de rester avec ceux qui souffrent et de travailler ensemble pour l'objectif commun en empathie. »
Chris Barrigar*

**« De la Réforme à la Re-formation
de l'unité chrétienne » :
Compte rendu par Denitsa Tsvetkova**

Plusieurs questions ont enrichi la réflexion : L'ethnicité et le nationalisme ont-ils un impact sur les divisions confessionnelles ? Comment être en unité avec des dénominations qui adoptent facilement des nouvelles postures et se sont éloignées du Christianisme originel ? L'unité des Églises est bien prononcée par exemple en Égypte, où il y a des persécutions. Face à cet « œcuménisme des martyrs », peut-on conclure que les persécutions sont bonnes pour l'Église ? Comment avancer le dialogue avec des dénominations qui n'ont pas de structures permettant une représentativité ? Est-ce que le post-modernisme est opportun pour l'Église ?

En conclusion, les panelistes se sont rendus à l'évidence que la voie de l'Unité est la voix de la Croix, mais qu'il s'agit non seulement d'un cheminement douloureux et triste, mais aussi joyeux.

Interpellée par les interventions, je me demande si la façon de parler d'un œcuménisme nécessaire face à la sécularisation en Occident et face à des persécutions dans les zones de conflits ne nous amène pas sur une pente glissante, vers la construction d'un ennemi commun et de nouvelles divisions.

À part le constat des difficultés réelles à franchir pour « qu'ils soient un », la barrière linguistique ajoute un obstacle au dialogue œcuménique. La prière de fermeture du Notre Père prononcée en anglais m'a permis de ressentir ce clivage linguistique au niveau profond et spirituel. Néanmoins, je suis convaincue que le temps est venu d'avoir davantage d'échanges entre les Chrétiens anglophones et francophones.

*La voie de l'Unité
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Parution de livres

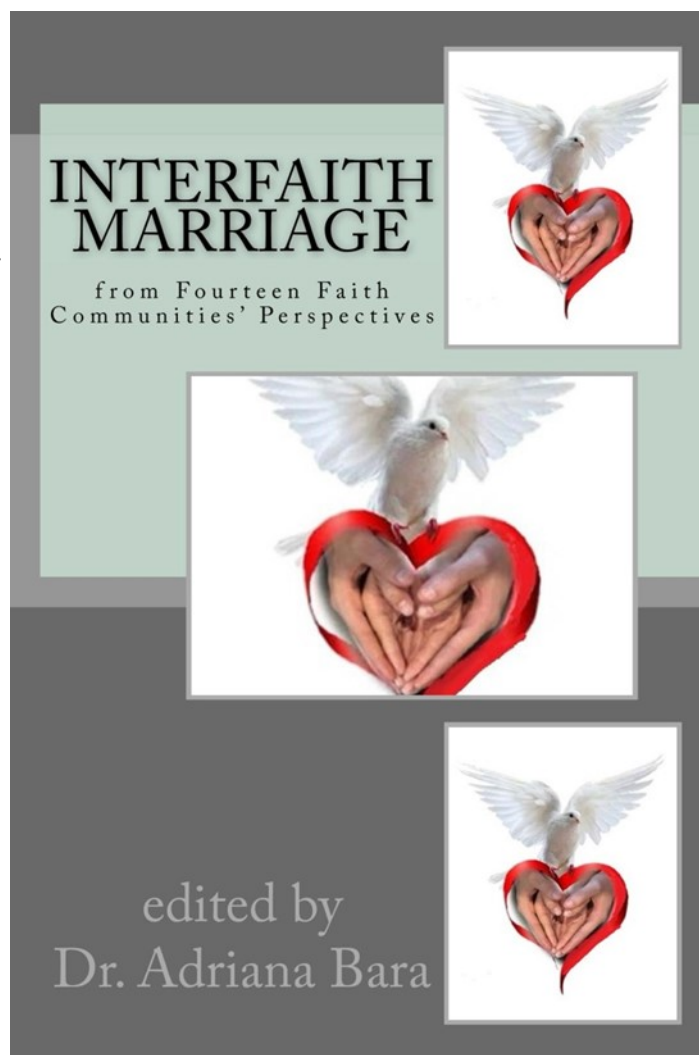
Book review

**Recueil de quatorze textes
sur des mariages interreligieux
sous la direction de Dre Adriana Bara
(en anglais)**



Avec le soutien financier de KAICIID, la directrice du Centre canadien d'œcuménisme, Dre Adriana Bara propose un recueil d'articles sur les mariages interreligieux. « Aujourd'hui, en général dans le monde, et au Canada, en particulier, nous nous retrouvons souvent avec nos enfants prêts à marier avec quelqu'un d'une autre foi. Il n'est pas donc pas étonnant que de nombreuses communautés religieuses se posent la question : « Comment être relié à une autre personne et comment nous positionner par rapport au mariage interreligieux? ». Ainsi annoncée dans l'éditorial, le thème est exploré sous quatorze angles différents.

Les auteurs, Rev. Dr. George A. Leylegian, de l'Église apostolique arménienne; Diacre Brian Cordeiro, de l'Église catholique romaine; Rev. Dr. Nicolas Kazarian et Rev. Dr. Dragos Andrei Giulea, de l'Église orthodoxe; Rev. Nicholas Pang, de l'Église anglicane; Rev. JoAnne Lam, de l'Église luthérienne; Rev. Rosemary Lambie, de l'Église Unie; Dr. David Guretzki, de l'Église évangélique; Rabbén Boris Dolin, juif; Nuruddeen Lemu, musulman; Dr. Swati Chakraborty, hindou et Ven. Sangharakshita Bikkhu, bouddhist, partagent leur vision sur les mariages interreligieux à partir de leurs traditions religieuses.



Parution de livres

Book review

Écologie Spirituelle Le cri de la Terre

*Un recueil d'essais
édité par Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee*



La crise écologique actuelle est le plus grand désastre causé par l'être humain que cette planète ait jamais vécu – accélération des changements climatiques, disparition des espèces, pollution et acidification des océans.

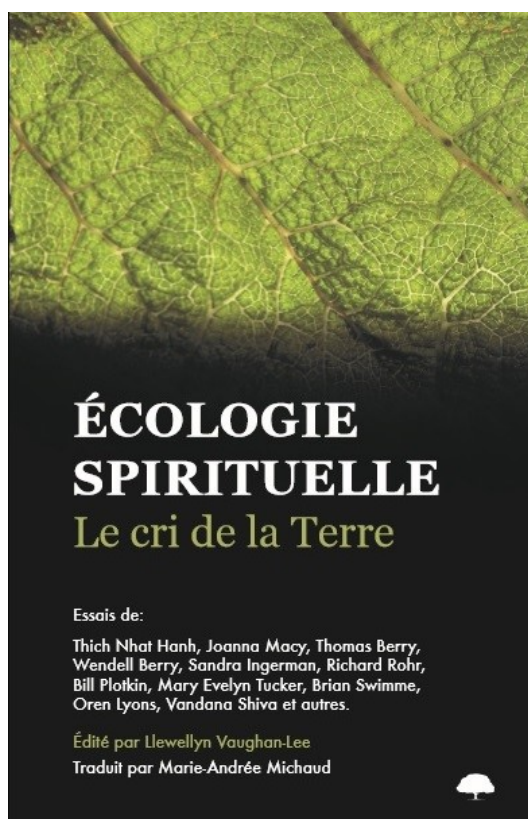
Un aspect central mais rarement abordé de cette crise est notre oubli de la nature sacrée de la Création, et la manière dont il affecte notre relation à l'environnement. Il y a un besoin pressant d'apporter une réponse spirituelle à cette crise écologique. C'est vital et nécessaire si nous voulons aider à remettre le monde, en tant que Tout vivant, en équilibre.

Il est difficile d'imaginer trouver un groupe d'humains plus sages que les auteurs représentés ici. Ils sont tous à la fois des penseurs et des acteurs au cœur du plus grand combat jamais mené par les humains. Un recueil épique !

Bill McKibben, fondateur de 350.org et auteur de *La nature assassinée*

Dans les temps anciens, les oracles étaient consultés afin de traduire les vents des dieux en de sages conseils pour les vivants à venir. Cette réunion d'anciens venus du monde entier, rassemblée par Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee dans *Écologie spirituelle*, n'est rien de moins qu'un oracle moderne dont les voix traduisent la sagesse de la Terre dont nous devons prendre soin. Quelle que soit votre passion ou votre travail, lisez ce livre pour mieux connaître le sol irremplaçable dont nous dépendons tous.

Mark Nepo, auteur de *L'art de l'écoute*, à la rencontre du sacré et
Le livre de l'éveil



La Communion mondiale d'Églises réformées rejoint la Déclaration commune sur la Justification

Dans un processus qui cherche à surmonter les divisions théologiques du temps de la Réforme, la Communion mondiale des Églises réformées (CMER) a rejoint la Déclaration commune sur la doctrine de la justification qui a été signée en 1999 par le Conseil pontifical pour la promotion de l'unité des chrétiens et la Fédération luthérienne mondiale. En 2006, le Conseil méthodiste mondial a également signé ce document de consensus théologique concernant le salut et la justification par la foi. La Communion mondiale des Églises réformées s'est associée officiellement à la déclaration sur la justification lors d'un culte le 5 juillet 2017 à l'église de Wittenberg, avec des responsables des Églises catholiques, luthériennes et méthodistes. A cette occasion, les Églises luthériennes et réformées au niveau mondial ont souligné leur désir de travailler ensemble pour l'unité visible en signant « le Témoignage de Wittenberg ».

Un texte commun avait été signé entre catholiques et luthériens en 1999 à Augsbourg, également en Allemagne. Ils s'étaient accordés sur cette formulation : *« Nous confessons ensemble que la personne humaine est, pour son salut, entièrement dépendante de la grâce salvatrice de Dieu. »* Cette phrase avait mis fin à un contentieux théologique vieux de près de cinq siècles entre luthériens et catholiques, mais le monde protestant était resté divisé quant à ce rapprochement avec l'Église catholique.

Les méthodistes s'étaient déjà associés à cette déclaration sept ans plus tard, en 2006. L'intégration cette année de la Communion mondiale d'Églises réformées marque une nouvelle étape très importante pour l'unité des chrétiens, puisqu'elle constitue l'une des entités les plus importantes du monde protestant : cette organisation rassemble environ 80 millions de fidèles. *« La doctrine sur la justification par la grâce à travers la foi est au centre de l'Évangile »,* précise le Conseil pontifical pour la promotion de l'Unité des chrétiens dans un communiqué rendu public ce lundi 3 juillet. *« L'accord sur l'interprétation de la façon dont le salut apporté par le Christ opère réellement dans le pécheur est d'une extrême importance pour le progrès œcuménique. Les Églises réformées affirmeront maintenant que le consensus sur les vérités fondamentales de la doctrine de la justification est conforme à la doctrine réformée. Une des questions cruciales qui avait déclenché la division entre les réformateurs et les autorités de l'Église catholique au XVI^e siècle a été désamorcée et résolue, et ceci permet de progresser vers une meilleure communion spirituelle et ecclésiale entre protestants et catholiques. »*

Dans le cadre d'une liturgie œcuménique, les responsables de la Communion mondiale d'Églises réformées adhéreront officiellement à la Déclaration conjointe sur la Doctrine de la Justification, en présence de délégués des Églises luthérienne, méthodiste et catholique. Le Conseil pontifical pour la promotion de l'Unité des chrétiens sera représenté par le Secrétaire, Mgr Brian Farrell, et par le père Avelino Gonzalez, officiel de la Section occidentale du dicastère.

Au sujet du consensus œcuménique sur cette doctrine fondamentale, les Églises réformées soulignent l'importance particulière du rapport entre la justification et l'engagement en faveur de la justice dans le monde. La grâce comporte et exige des *« œuvres bonnes »* dans la construction du Royaume de Dieu, qui est un royaume de justice, de paix et de réconciliation.

La justification conduit à la solidarité avec les victimes de la marginalisation sociale et à l'opposition aux systèmes d'injustice sociale et économique. Dans la façon de comprendre d'une façon commune cet impératif chrétien, catholiques, luthériens, méthodistes et réformés peuvent trouver des modalités plus amples et plus intenses de collaboration au service de l'humanité souffrante.

Dans ce sens, les progrès œcuméniques dans le dialogue ne sont pas seulement un effort académique d'experts dans ce domaine, mais ont un impact positif et concret sur la façon dont les chrétiens de confessions diverses vivent et travaillent ensemble d'une façon solidaire et offrent un témoignage commun de l'Évangile dans la société d'aujourd'hui.

sources: La croix; Radio Vaticana



*Signature de l'association à la DJDJ à Wittenberg
(Allemagne) / COE/WCC*

Dr. Bara reçoit son diplôme de KAICIID



Le 2 novembre 2017, Vienne : 44 professeurs des religions bouddhiste, chrétienne, hindoue, juive et musulmane ont présenté les projets qu'ils ont élaborés et mis en place pendant la formation d'un an à l'International Fellows Program, initiative instaurée en 2015 par le Centre international de dialogue, basé à Vienne. Pendant la dernière année, les participants à la formation ont implanté des projets sous la supervision des experts de KAICIID.

À la cérémonie de la graduation, qui a lieu le 2 novembre, au siège du Centre à Vienne, en Autriche, le directeur général du KAICIID, Fahad Abualnaser a décrit ainsi la vision du programme de formation :

« Quand nous avons commencé le Programme de formation, notre objectif était de mettre en contact les professeurs et de les encourager à bâtir des ponts de dialogue, d'abord dans leur propre communauté, mais aussi avec d'autres communautés. Les professeurs de religions ont eu très peu d'opportunités de se rencontrer et d'apprendre de leurs parcours. » Le programme éducatif de KAICIID fournit un support de transformation, un réseautage et une formation des communautés au niveau international des autorités impliquées en construction de la paix, pour créer un changement positif dans leurs institutions et leurs communautés. La demande de participation au programme de formation est ouverte à tout le monde, sans distinction de nationalité et de religion. Les participants sont sélectionnés par un processus concurrentiel à plusieurs niveaux. Le programme d'éducation vise à fournir des possibilités de dialogue et de réseautage des institutions pour que le dialogue interreligieux devienne l'avenir commun de chaque programme religieux. En plus de la formation au dialogue, à la médiation et à construction de la paix, les participants ont la possibilité de concevoir des projets dans leurs communautés et de promouvoir le dialogue parmi les participants de différentes religions. Pour ce faire, ils reçoivent des fonds et du mentorat de la part de KAICIID. Environ 100 projets ont été mis en œuvre partout dans le monde.



À ce jour, 112 participants ont gradué du programme. À partir de 2016, KAICIID a lancé aussi des programmes de formation régionaux, en commençant par le programme de formation d'Asie du Sud-Est en 2016, et un programme de la région arabe, en 2017. coéquipiers d'autres religions et d'autres pays. C'était l'écart que nous espérions combler.``

Le programme de formation est peut-être terminé avec la graduation, mais le réseau des participants est censé poursuivre après la graduation, par la plateforme en ligne et en créant des projets et des conférences pour les participants.

Nouvelles News

Appel œcuménique et interreligieux en réponse à la famine au Soudan

Le 7 juin dernier, la **Conférence des évêques catholiques du Canada** (CECC) a coordonné et lancé un [appel œcuménique et interreligieux](#) en réponse à la famine au Soudan du Sud et à la pénurie alimentaire extrême au Yémen, dans le nord-est du Nigéria et en Somalie. Pour faciliter la collecte de fonds, la campagne, intitulée « **Priez, Donnez, Parlez-en** », a rassemblé trois agences d'aide et de développement catholiques canadiennes : l'Organisation canadienne catholique pour le développement et la paix - Caritas Canada, l'Aide à l'Eglise en détresse Canada, et *Canadian Jesuits International*. Cet appel coïncidait avec le programme de collecte de fonds du gouvernement du Canada dans le cadre du « Fonds de secours contre la famine », alors qu'il s'est engagé à verser un dollar pour chaque dollar remis à un organisme de bienfaisance canadien enregistré entre le 17 mars et le 30 juin.



Réunion du Conseil des Patriarches catholiques d'Orient

Le Conseil des Patriarches catholiques d'Orient s'est réuni en août 2017 à Di-mane, résidence d'été du Patriarcat maronite, pour faire le point sur la situation complexe des communautés catholiques autochtones du Moyen-Orient. Ces dernières années, l'organisme, qui regroupe les primats des Églises orientales catholiques de la région, n'avait pu se réunir, en raison des conflits en Irak et en Syrie.

Les travaux du Conseil devraient se concentrer essentiellement sur les problèmes pastoraux ainsi que sur les urgences politiques et sociales que rencontrent les communautés catholiques locales, lesquelles ont vu le nombre de leur fidèles considérablement diminuer depuis quelques années.

source: Presse catholique africaine; Liban (RV)
(MA avec Osservatore Romano)



Le message du Pape pour un rassemblement interreligieux au Japon

Toutes les religions doivent «prier et travailler ensemble pour la paix», en cherchant à reconstruire «l'harmonie des nombreuses parties du monde déchirées par la guerre» et par le terrorisme. Le Pape a lancé un appel à promouvoir dans tous les camps des «relations justes» et aussi une «solidarité fraternelle», dans une lettre au vénérable Koei Morikawa, grand prêtre du bouddhisme Tendai, à l'occasion de la 30e rencontre de prière pour la paix ouverte le jeudi 3 août sur le mont Hiei, à Kyoto, au Japon.

L'envoyé personnel du Pape était le cardinal John Tong Hon, évêque émérite de Hong Kong. Le cardinal chinois était accompagné par le nonce apostolique au Japon, Mgr Joseph Chennot, par Mgr Miguel Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, secrétaire du Conseil pontifical pour le Dialogue interreligieux, et par le sous-secrétaire de ce dicastère, Mgr Indunil Janakaratne Kodithuwakku Kankanamalage. «Je suis heureux d'envoyer des saluts cordiaux, et aux représentants des différentes traditions religieuses qui participent», a écrit le Pape dans sa lettre au leader bouddhiste, assurant avant tout de sa «proximité spirituelle» et s'unissant à tous «dans la prière pour une floraison renouvelée de la concorde et de l'harmonie dans de nombreuses parties du monde déchirées par la guerre».



Le Pape avec les leaders religieux à Assise, le 20 septembre 2016.

*Églises orthodoxes : des pas courageux
vers la pleine communion
Message à la Communauté de Bose*



XXIVe Colloque œcuménique international de spiritualité orthodoxe © monasterodibose.it

« Tandis que nous cheminons ensemble vers le Royaume », que « nous soyons poussés à entreprendre des pas plus courageux et concrets vers la pleine communion » : c'est le vœu que formule le pape François dans son message daté du 18 août 2017 et adressé au fondateur de la Communauté de Bose, le Frère Enzo Bianchi, à l'occasion de l'ouverture des travaux du XXVIème Congrès œcuménique international de spiritualité orthodoxe.

Organisé par la Communauté monastique de Bose en collaboration avec les Églises orthodoxes du 6 au 9 septembre 2017, au Monastère de Bose (Italie), le congrès est intitulé « le don de l'hospitalité ». S'inscrivant dans ce thème, le pape a souhaité que « grandissent toujours plus les sentiments fraternels » et que « mûrisse une authentique "hospitalité du cœur" ».

Voici la traduction de Zenit, faite par **Hélène Ginabat** du message du pape François.

À l'attention de Frère Enzo Bianchi

À l'occasion de l'ouverture du XXVIème congrès œcuménique international de spiritualité orthodoxe, je désire vous adresser à tous, organisateurs et participants, mes salutations cordiales. En particulier, je voudrais offrir un chaleureux baiser de paix à Sa Sainteté le patriarche œcuménique, mon très cher frère Bartholomée, ainsi qu'à Sa Béatitude Theodoros, patriarche d'Alexandrie : votre présence importante honore les 25 ans du Congrès que le Monastère de Bose organise en collaboration avec les Églises orthodoxes et confirme leur contribution au chemin commun vers la pleine unité.

Le thème de cette année, « le don de l'hospitalité », est suggestif et actuel. C'est vrai, l'hospitalité est un don, un don que nous avons avant tout reçu : nous sommes les hôtes d'un monde créé pour nous et qui doit être gardé, mais nous sommes aussi de passage ici-bas, étrangers sur la terre, parce que des hôtes invités et attendus dans les cieux, où est notre citoyenneté (cf. Ph 3,20)

Entretiens, en tant que disciples en chemin, nous sommes appelés à fixer le regard sur ce qui ne passe pas, sur la charité qui n'aura

jamais de fin (cf. 1 Cor 13,8), à nous accueillir les uns les autres comme des dons du Seigneur, à favoriser la sollicitude et l'affection réciproques, à « avoir compassion, à prendre part à la douleur de ceux qui souffrent, à considérer comme un mal pour nous-mêmes les mésaventures des autres » (N. Cabasilas, *La vie dans le Christ*, VI,8). Je vous souhaite que cet appel soit ravivé par l'écoute humble et sincère et par les réflexions de ces journées, pour que grandissent toujours plus les sentiments fraternels et que mûrisse une authentique « hospitalité du cœur » de sorte que, tandis que nous cheminons ensemble vers le Royaume, nous soyons poussés à entreprendre des pas plus courageux et concrets vers la pleine communion.



La relique de saint Nicolas de Bari (Italie) en Russie:

résultat d'un accord œcuménique

La relique de saint Nicolas est arrivée de Bari (Italie), conservée depuis plus de 900 ans – sans jamais en sortir – dans la basilique construite à son intention entre 1087 et 1197. Devenant très vite un haut lieu de pèlerinage, tant pour les catholiques que pour les orthodoxes d'Europe de l'Est. Son transfert de Bari à Moscou, et son exposition, est le fruit d'un accord conclu entre le patriarche orthodoxe de Moscou et de toutes les Russies Kirill et le pape François, lors de leur rencontre historique à la Havane en 2016. « Dès cette année, les sanctuaires de l'Église orthodoxe russe seront ouverts aux pèlerins catholiques (...) et les reliques de nos Églises respectives voyageront entre l'occident et la Russie », avait annoncé le métropolite de Volokolamsk Hilarion, président du département chargé des affaires extérieures au sein Patriarcat de Moscou, en présentant l'une des premières conséquences concrètes de cette rencontre entre Cyrille et François.

source: Isabelle Cousturié, Aletea

La Basilique St-Nicolas à Bari, Italie:

1. L'autel orthodoxe
2. Préparation d'une liturgie orthodoxe à la Crypte avec les reliques de St-Nicolas
3. Fresques à la crypte
4. L'autel orthodoxe et l'autel catholique à la Basilique

Photos:

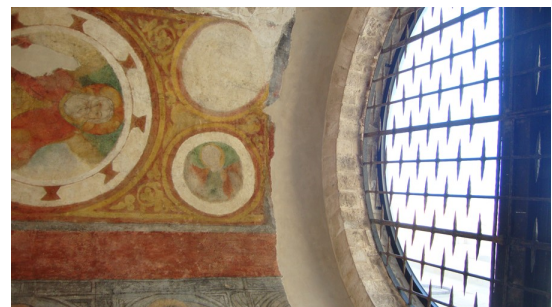
Denitsa Tsvetkova



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1.

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Nouvelles

News

Joint LWF - PCPCU statement on Reformation Day 2017

Equipping youth as interfaith messengers of peace

Young people from Christian and Muslim backgrounds around the world who took part in a training on peace building skills and practice in Jerusalem, say they are going back home inspired that youth can actively engage in promoting conflict resolution and global peace. ([Read More](#))



New Material for Ecumenical and Partnership Activity

Today the German National Committee of The Lutheran World Federation released two new pocket guides for use in international relations. The aim of the publications is to explain the basic theological foundations of Lutheranism in Germany and the structure of Protestant churches in Germany. ([Read More](#))

Déclaration commune de la Fédération luthérienne mondiale et du Conseil pontifical pour la promotion de l'unité des chrétiens sur la conclusion de l'année de commémoration conjointe de la Réforme

En ce 31 octobre 2017, dernier jour de l'année de commémoration œcuménique commune de la Réforme, nous rendons grâces pour les dons spirituels et théologiques reçus à travers la Réforme, une commémoration que nous avons vécue ensemble et avec nos partenaires œcuméniques dans le monde entier. De même, nous avons demandé pardon pour nos échecs et pour la manière dont les chrétiens ont blessé le Corps du Seigneur et se sont offensés mutuellement pendant les cinq cents ans qui se sont écoulés entre le début de la Réforme jusqu'à aujourd'hui. ([Lire plus](#))



Pope Francis received the Secretary General of the World Islamic League (LIM), Muhammad al-Issa, at the Vatican, at 9 am on September 20, 2017, before the Holy Father's Wednesday general audience of Wednesday.

The audience was attended by, among others, the President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, French Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran; and Bishop Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, number two of this dicastery; the Pope's private secretary Francois, Msgr. Yoannis Lahzi Gaid; and interpreters.

The LIM stated its willingness to promote the fight against terrorism. The audience, which was also the occasion of an exchange of gifts, did not this evening the subject of a specific communiqué of the Vatican.

Muhammad Al-Issa, Ligue Islamique Mondiale,
Sept. 20, 2017 © L'Osservatore Romano
(JF source: Zenit)



Nouvelles News

Liberating Ecumenism

Within Conciliar Ecumenism, Protestants have read the Ecumenical Patriarch's encyclical of January 1920, which called for a league of churches, similar to the League of Nations, as a major stimulus to Orthodox participation in ecumenical institutions. Less well known is a 1933 essay by Georges Florovsky which sets out a 'canonical' and 'charismatic' Orthodox ecclesiology. ([Read more](#)) (source: Public Orthodoxy, Graham Mc Geoch)

Pope Francis on October 23, 2017, received Beatitude Theophilos III, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem.

The Holy Father took the occasion to renew his closeness to those suffering from conflicts in the Holy Land, noting: "The uncertainty of the situation and the lack of understanding between the parties continue to create insecurity, the restriction of fundamental rights, and the flight of many people from their land."

The Pope asked for God's help so that "all those involved to intensify their efforts to achieve a stable peace based on justice and recognition of the rights of all." (source: Zenit)



Interfaith dialogue educational resources – free online

Principles and guidelines for interfaith dialogue: This compendium of concise and handy resources provides insight into the interfaith movement and its treasure chest of wisdom and learning opportunities. This collection explores the goals, types and stages of dialogue and touches on issues such as interfaith etiquette, listening, peace-building, hospitality, respectful presence and dialogue-versus-debate. These principles and guidelines are useful for those who are new to interfaith as well as for veterans of interfaith work: <http://www.scarboromissions.ca/interfaith-dialogue/principles-and-guidelines-for-interfaith-dialogue>

Interfaith curriculum and educational resources: Includes online courses, toolkits, best practices, do-it-yourself workshops, activities, multifaith prayer services, how-to-manuals, guidelines, games, starter kits, meditations, slideshows, etc.: <https://www.scarboromissions.ca/interfaith-dialogue/curriculum-resources>
Golden Rule education resources: This comprehensive listing features interactive resources, meditation exercises, videos, multilingual posters, art activities, do-it-yourself workshops, slide programs, discussion questions, Golden Rule websites, books, toolkits, best practices, and school & youth group curricula <https://www.scarboromissions.ca/golden-rule/educational-resources>

(source: Scarboro Mission)



Speech of His Holiness Aram I at the 2nd Athens International Conference on Religious and Cultural Pluralism and Peaceful Coexistence in the Middle East

The Middle East has been the birth place of three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It has also been the homeland of so many cultures, ethnicities and civilizations. These diversities that have characterized the history of the region have often generated tensions, polarizations and conflicts. Religion sometime has been used for non-religious purposes. The affirmation of ethnicity has caused estrangement, and religious extremism has, in its turn, become a major factor in provoking persecution, massacres and wars.

A realistic assessment of the present landscape of the Middle East will not display a different image of the region. In fact, the forceful resurgence of religious extremism, the growing fear of disintegration, and the increasing penetration of global powers in the regional politics, and in addition to these major concerns, the question of refugees and internally displaced persons with their socio-economic implications have furthered destabilized the region. Hence, one may safely assert that the Middle East is actually at the most crucial juncture of its modern history.

As religious and political leaders we have a common role to play. We are challenged to be proactive. Let me briefly identify five areas of common concern which require common action and firm commitment by religious leaders.-

- 1) Protecting life*
- 2) Affirming diversity*
- 3) Rejecting extremism*
- 4) Overcoming violence*
- 5) Striving for peace with justice*

source: ARAM I
CATHOLICOS OF CILICIA
29 October 2017
Antelias, Lebanon



Semaine de la prière pour unite chrétienne
Week of prayer for Christian Unity

SEMAINE DE PRIÈRE
2018 POUR L'UNITÉ DES CHRÉTIENS

Ressources en Français:

<https://www.weekofprayer.ca/fr/ressources>

WEEK OF PRAYER
FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2018

Resources in English:

<https://www.weekofprayer.ca/resources>



La Grande célébration œcuménique à Montréal

Le 21 janvier 2018, 14h30 à Union Church

3007 Rue Delisle, Montréal, QC H4C 1M8

Célébration œcuménique avec la participation d'autorités religieuses de plusieurs confessions chrétiennes

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