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INTERCULTURAL

AND

INTER-FAITH COMMUNICATION

Materials from the
International Seminar 2005

13

Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling
Interkulturelle Seelsorge und Beratung

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for *intercultural*
pastoral care
and counselling

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Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling

Nr. 13

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THE INTERCULTURAL SITUATION IN SWITZERLAND

Peter Kuster

Contradictory moods, impressions

I was asked to give an idea of the situation in Switzerland as multicultural and multi-faith society. This is due to the reputation Switzerland has for great achievements regarding the integration of people from different cultures. I will start with some everyday observations. They will give you an idea of the diverging tendencies in our country. I will then go on to give you a brief historical overview on the "humanitarian tradition of Switzerland - an example of handling foreign culture and immigrants". This will be followed by some statistical information. Then, I will give you some examples of current difficulties in our intercultural dialogue. Finally, I will delineate some institutional as well as individual efforts to bring different cultures together.

Switzerland - a role model?

Switzerland - a role model

I am sitting down with a colleague in a roadside cafe in the Metzgergasse in Zurich. We are served by a Tamil waiter. He speaks German fluently. Amazed we watch the crowds on promenade. People from all the countries of the globe. You notice the unusual garment, the tenure of skin, the language. Babylonian ... in a relaxed atmosphere. Sizzling , bubbling life.

I am leafing through the telephone directory in a fair-sized Swiss town. I find names which a deeply familiar, typically Swiss names, as Schnyder, Ackermann, Aebi, Baumgartner, Berger, Huber, Villiger etc.; next to them there are lots of names not originally Swiss: De Moulin, Conti, Bellardi, Dr. Tjöng, Thouvay, Dr. Tejero, and so on.

From the telephone directory one might redraw the waves of immigration and naturalization into our country: There came the Germans, the Austrians, the Italians, later the Spanish and Portuguese people, the Tamil then, people from Yougoslavia (who are without differentiation still perceived as a homogenous group), Albanians from Kosovo.

All this tunes will in with the heading: Switzerland, a role model. But is it true?

Switzerland, no role model

A few other impressions:

Swiss national holiday 2005: On the Ruetli (the legendary location of the very beginning of Swiss democracy), the president of the confederation gives the traditional address on August 1. Whenever he mentions integration, he is loudly interrupted by a numerous (alas) group of right wing radicals. Their appearance follows by now its own tradition of several years.

After a weekend of voting I check the results in the paper. I am looking for the results from Strohwilen, my rural community in eastern Switzerland. Just four people voted in favour of an initiative to facilitate the naturalization of foreigners (of those foreigners who live in Switzerland in their second generation!). All villagers (except those four) voted against. And everybody in the village knows the four dissidents: a young couple who moved here from Zurich, and the "pastors". All the other follow gamely the line of SVP, a right-wing political Swiss party, which builds largely on xenophobia.

The primary school in Grenchen considered a ban of the Muslim head scarf.

A paper from 21 Jan 2003 (things became rather worse since, not better!) read: "The commission on foreigners is concerned about the rough climate in the political discussion about migration." From an interview with Joerg Schild, police commissioner in Basel: "For me, it is at least equally important that immigrants do know ours rules and our social framework from the beginning. We must have the legal option to send people back as soon as possible to where they came from if they do not play by those rules. In the context of international migration we can not serve as collection tin for delinquents."

I could find you many such utterances. Some make you feel optimistic, even joyful towards intercultural efforts, others rather sombre. Ideal versus reality.

I have given you a view of Switzerland made up from isolated impressions. The country is torn between its own ideal and its everyday reality. Told with more kindness: a country oscillating between efforts to integrate and simple refusal.

The ideal: Switzerland as a role model for the whole world

The dream runs like this: Switzerland does serve as a blueprint for integration of people all over the world. This dream has some foundation in the history of Switzerland:

Multiplicity of languages: For generations we have used four languages in our country, namely German (in a further variety of dialects), French, Italian, and Rhaeto-Romanic (in fact, 2 dialects). These languages effectively mask a conflict between competing cultures. As Swiss, we are very proud of a viable solution towards a peaceful coexistence.

The **constitution** of **1848** was a pioneering achievement of the liberals, and in fact it broke the ground for our humanitarian approach. This constitu-

tion did serve in later years as a blueprint for the Young Turk state of Ataturk.

And it did so recently for Serbia: Lidija R. Basta Fleiner from Serbia tried to transfer the Swiss multi-language solution, so far without success however. Variety was to be encouraged, not just suffered or excepted. She tried to transform the consensus-state of Swtzerland for Serbia.

Many Swiss see themselves as role models for the rest of the globe. We are proud of our reputation to have integrated many cultures, many people, religions and confessions into our own way of life.

Reality check: outlook for Switzerland quite cold

Switzerland does not really have so much to boast about. A brief review:

Time and again we have seen nationalist and xenophobe grassroot initiatives (in the 1970ties, there were the Schwarzenbach-movements,

in the last few years the initiatives of the Swiss People's Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei, SVP). We used to have a special law considered disgraceful by many (Saisonierstatut), which allowed us to import (formerly desired) people for the working season from neighboring countries, and to send them back off again at the end of their term. A few years ago, a member of our national council (Bundesrat) declared without blushing: "We have no problem with unemployment. We export it."

A number of new laws concerning political asylum and immigration exhibit a creeping erosion of our humanitarian tradition.

Moreover, in Switzerland we find incumbent ghettos in certain neighborhoods: The Swiss move out, foreigners find themselves massed together along ethnic lines.

I happen to be in charge of mobbing complaints at Frauenfeld cantonal hospital. An female apprentice from the Balkans was victim of mobbing at her workplace. The rassist background to the mobbing was quite patent. I could encourage her to fight. Successfully, at least this time.

History: a brief overview.

Integration and multiculturalism as a Swiss trademark

The recent history of Switzerland could serve as a glowing example for the development of a multicultural society. There was, however, quite a to and fro between more integrative solutions and violent attempts. Switzerland is not only multicultural, but it is even religiously pluralistic. This pluralism developed over the centuries.

Rudolf Dellsperger, who teaches church history at Bern University, describes Switzerland in the latest edition of RGG as follows: *"The Swiss confederation (Confederatio Helvetica, CH) came to be in 1848, when a number of separate states united into one federal state. This state was to be governed by a federal, directly-democratic constitution... The four languages of this state, German, French, Italian, Rhaeto-Romanic, corresponded to four regions each with their own cultural identity."*

I will summarize Swiss history briefly under the aspect of cultural ruptures, and the prosecution of dissidents.

Helvetia was occupied by Roman troops in 15 BCE. ((Christians within the legions were killed.)) During the following centuries, Helvetia was Christianized. Another break occurred with the immigration of the Alemanns after the year 530 into the eastern parts of the country. They were Christianized, too, but somewhat later. Franco-irish missionaries - notably Gallus - made for an intellectual revival around 900 through the monasteries and parishes they founded. In the 14th and 15th century we find widespread prosecution of dissidents, of Jews, Beguins, Waldenses, and witches. Another notable rupture came about with Zwingli's Reformation in Zurich after 1522. There were prosecutions again, of Baptists this time. In addition, a deep cultural break appeared: The respective borders of the new confessions corresponded roughly with the borders of the CANTONS. The city-cantons, as Zurich, Bern, Basel, and later Geneva were "reformed", the rural KANTONS mostly catholic. The resulting conflicts were settled militarily, more often than not. Consequently, the Swiss saw some inner migration, often of it forced: the Baptists e.g. went into the Jura, or to Holland. Dellsperger comments: "This trench was FILLED IN to a large extent in the 18th century, It was again felt very acutely in the 19th century due to the ULTRAMONTANISM and the KULTURKAMPF. This wound took a hundred years to heal."(!).

In the course of the centuries, the Swiss confederation lived time and again through streams of fugitives, e.g. the Huguenottes which were expelled from France. These people brought our country enormous impulse, intellectually as well as economically. (Watch-making and textiles as boosters for our industrialization.)

Another deep cut into the fabric of Swiss society came from the French revolution. In Switzerland, we had a so-called Helvetian Republic. It was short-lived (1798-1803), but of interest insofar, that this republic garanteed freedom of creed, of conscience, and of worship. Thus baptists for example were again socially acceptable and rehabilitated. However, another military dispute broke out in the "Sonderbund"(seperate alliance)-war of 1847 between the liberal forces and the catholic cantons of central Switzerland. After the victory of the "Tagsatzungstruppen" (the liberal forces), the (catholic) Jesuits were expelled. So, sometimes the Swiss were quite willing to solve their problems by force.

The tendency towards a tolerant, liberal state continued in the 1848 constitution. Some elementary democratic rights were set down there. After the declaration of papal infallability and after the 1. Vatican council a rift apppeared within the Catholic church. This conflict was notably not solved militarily. The so-called "Kulturkampf" of 1872-75 was a stress-test for the relations between a neutral state and the Catholic church. The federal constitution was enlarged with articles of patently anti-catholic tendencies, so that,

e.g., Jesuits could no longer work in Switzerland, and new dioceses were prohibited. In 1874 finally the federal constitution termed the freedom of conscience and belief as inviolable. Thus, a founding stone was laid down in the legal system for the open, liberal attitude of Switzerland. The 19th century saw also a multitude of new christian denominations established, the Methodists, Pentecostals, a number of independent congregations, the "evangelical society", new Baptists, etc., the Salvation Army, and Lutheran and Anglican congregations of foreign residents.

Recent Developments

New boosts of industrial and cultural development were triggered through the heavy industry in the 20th century: the steel works of Roll, Brown Boveri and others, the watch-making industry , machine tools, textile machinery (Sulzer), all needed lots of manpower. This was "imported" from the neighboring countries: Italy, Spain, Portugal, later on Yougoslavia. Again, the integration of these people produced massive problems, and some averse reactions in the populace: we have seen some xenophobe oriented initiatives, eg. Schwarzenbach.

Switzerland is known for its strong humanitarian traditions. That makes the treatment of Jewish refugees during WWII even more disgraceful. Official politics were led by a slogan "The boat is full". Many Jews have been turned back at the Swiss border. They were turned back to be killed in a concentration camp. Our humanitarian tradition was sacrificed for the benefit of political adaptation and survival. Only a few courageous individuals managed some support for the refugees, so the pastor of the refugees, Paul Vogt.

Some of the latest developments may be interesting: The media have again and again proven the existence of a "Rösti"-trench: Very often the votes and published opinion come out differently from the Romansch (raeto-romanic) and from the Tessin versus the German part of Switzerland. The differences between the rural parts and the cities have augmented, and continue to grow: In 2003, more than 2/3 (73,2% or 5,3 mio.) of the population lived in or around cities, half of them in Basel, Bern, Geneva, Lausanne, and Zurich, of course. There is something like a fertile half-moon stretching from Geneva, along the Jura, (incl Basel) via Zurich, Winterthur, to St. Gallen: A region of booming economy and rapid changes of "Weltanschauung". In those cities there live more than double the number of people without church affiliation compared to the rural areas. In the francophone west of Switzerland this number of un-affiliated people is again higher than in the german-speaking part, or the Tessin. On the other hand, we find new religious groups emerging in Basel, Zurich, and the east of Switzerland. There are buddhist monasteries, muslim mosques, hindu temples, and educational centres of these groups. Jews are found mainly in Basel and Zurich. Conflicts between christian denominations have rather increased (the common Lord's supper). The cities are suffering more from criminal activities. Police commissioner Joerg Schild, Basel, answers the question why Basel attracts so many criminal tourists and delinquent asylum seekers from

other cantons: "This is a problem of every urban agglomeration. To make matters worse for us, potential delinquents find our frontier triangle (France Germany Switzerland) quite comfortable...." He accuses the others cantons of lack of solidarity.

Statistics

I want to give you some statistical material to illustrate recent changes.

In between 1850-1990, the Swiss population was divided as 60% Protestant, 40% Roman-Catholic. At the latest census of 2000, there were 33% protestant, 42% roman-catholic members. The increase in the roman-catholic numbers owes itself to immigration from predominantly catholic countries. So 25% of the Roman-Catholics are foreigners, among the protestants, only 3%. The Muslims even doubled their number from 1990 to 2000. The big protestant "Landeskirchen" (quasi national churches) lost roughly 12% during that period. And there is notable change within the Christian population. In 1980, there were about 5% of marriages between different denominations; in 1990, 25%, outlook is still rising. So we find a quite remarkable loss among the two denominations which encompassed the majority: From 95% their part fell to 79%. At the same time we find a growing plurality in the form of new religious groups. In the cities we find two times the number of church-less people as in the rural areas. Zurich alone knows more than 360 religious communities.

The religious life-style and the attachment to a particular creed is increasingly left to individual decision. The demographic structure is impressive, too: The young tend to be less attached to one of the large denominations; they turn to new religious groups. Religion is ingrained in the family context. Now, Christian families tend to live with less children than Muslim families. A detail to illustrate this: The list of newborns at the cantonal hospital Frauenfeld shows a majority(!) of non-genuinely Swiss names.

Practical problems

Practical problems surface at the focal points of everyday life, in schools, hospitals, at the workplace, in the neighbourhood.

The main barrier is generally language: the Swiss rarely speak the language of the immigrants, and few of the immigrants can communicate in German. Consequently, the children of these immigrants are slow to succeed in school. These children often do speak the language of the host country, but the parents do not. In turn, this deepens their isolation.

Some examples: Helen Stähli one of two small classes, where 20 out of 24 pupils are children of immigrants, only four are Swiss. In an interview, she points out: These children of immigrants do not speak their mother tongue correctly any more. They are tasked to deliver verbal communications with their surroundings. They are overtaxed as bridge layers. Around them, the larger family structure, the clan all are torn apart. The situation of the fathers changed dramatically when their families moved here behind them (they are no longer just providers, but suddenly

relevant educators again). Getting closer will not just happen overnight.

Boris Banga, municipal president of Grenchen, observes tendencies of secession: Serbs and Albanians from Kosovo demand that their children are spared from a common kindergarten. Girls with a head scarf have no chance of finding an apprenticeship. Their potential masters would understand the garment as an indicator of deficient integration.

Some diverse remarks: Parents with gifted children tend to take them out of the public schools. Muslim father do not respect female teachers. The parents know little about the Swiss education system. Children of immigrants end up in special classes for handicapped seven times more often than Swiss children. To sum it up: Against all repeated demands for integration, the children of immigrants are separated to a worrying extent. People from the Balkans tend to value peace less than, for example, Tamil people. A conflict of values is imminent between the liberal, law-based state versus the clan norms (codes of honour) of the Balkan people.

Even in hospitals cultural differences are painfully evident. The language barrier is crucial. Important information about diagnosis and therapy can barely be transmitted. A score of visitors tend to introduce stress into a HOSPITAL room. Additionally, people from the Balkans still suffer from lack of appreciation. Some years ago, we had to separate women in labour according to their Serb, Croatian, or Albanian ethnicity. Muslim men are not used to taking instruction from a woman.

Conversely, the nurse-midwives are shocked to realize that a Muslim father rejects his baby daughter. At another time we had a Muslima (assistant) doctor in the urology department at Frauenfeld canton hospital. This doctor wore a head scarf. One day, a 75-year old prostate patient told me: "You know, vicar, it is certainly strange to have a young girl with a turban inspecting my Pfifli (penis)."

Efforts towards integration: Hopes.

Let me turn towards the efforts made to help integrate immigrants. It is really surprising to realize how much is undertaken in that respect, by various institutions, groups, and individual citizens. The federal state, the cantons, the municipalities, and the central organizations of the churches engage intensively in that area. And the immigrants themselves are quite active.

State/Cantons/Communities

We have offices at state and canton level for the integration of foreigners, offices to counter racism; we have a task-force to fight racism, a federal commission for the matters of immigrants, plus a plethora of laws and regulations to channel and further the integration of foreigners: a mandate concerning the integration of foreigners, men and women; a regulation concerning the support of projects to sensitize for and protect human rights, as well as support of projects against anti-Semitism, racism, and xenophobia. The federal state and the cantons do a lot to train their employees for contact with people from different cultures (consciousness-raising programmes for civil employees).

An example: Zurich has established IKOM (=intercultural commission for integration). IKOM has to advise the city council in all matters relevant to the integration of foreigners. Please note the intercultural makeup of the IKOM personnel: one true Italian, one Italian with residence in Switzerland since birth, one woman from Ghana, who is married to a Swiss, one Kurd, one woman from Greece, one Muslima from Syria. This setup reflects nicely that integration is not something done by the Swiss for those foreigners, but a process we engage in together.

It has to be made clear in everyone's mind through all these different measures that integration is a perspective with no viable alternative. In 2001 a fund was set up with 14 millions SFr. per year to support "Projects against Racism, for Human Rights"; in 2005 a prize was awarded for the first time of SFr 30.000 to honour eminent Swiss projects for the integration of women immigrants.

You could find similar enthusiasm locally. My examples will be Rorschach (in eastern Switzerland) and Basel. Rorschach decided to develop a corporate identity. The task-force was comprised of 120 people, men and women, Swiss and immigrants. They proposed among other things: improve the language skill of male and female immigrants, support multicultural initiatives, participation of the local economy, voting rights for immigrants on a local level, a centre for multicultural exchange, an ethno festival. Kleinbasel puts the focus on the integration of mothers, how to encourage their social contacts, their self-reliance. Above all: Everything must be arranged according to the needs of the immigrants.

The education sector is busy, too: Lectures at various universities try to come to terms with this whole complex of questions, the personnel of the public sector is trained, in school we have undertaken complete projects and experiments, yet to further the intercultural dialogue among children and their parents, for example by means of the "Bureau of Ideas" of Biel. This intercultural consultancy offers "children to consult children."(!)

Among the efforts that the schools undertake there are offers of language courses for the parents along the lines "my child learns German - I 'll learn German too". Other efforts are aimed at improving the contacts with the parents. Hospitals also are focal points of intercultural encounters and conflicts. The hospitals support interpreters, offer courses, and prepare checklists and notes for intercultural discussions. The kitchens offer alternative menus (kosher, vegetarian, and so on). There are readings from the Qu'ran available on CD, there is room to follow specific rituals. Women are examined strictly by women.

The church

Church groups are engaged very noticeably in this area. There are many groups, events, offices for migration and integration, specially committed personnel for information, all documenting the seriousness of this issue. Again and again christian voices have stressed

the importance of building bridges for all (wo)men. Next to the somewhat theoretical utterances of politicians they lay stress on the interpersonal, real contact.

Some quotes. Madeleine Strub (Mission 21): "My starting point is the conviction that it is important to take a first step towards people from a different culture, and to listen to them... All the time I must be careful to have 'all my antennas' well tuned, so I can pick it up, when my question goes too far. These people are mostly quite insecure..."

Walter Büchi, leader of tecum at Karthause (Carthuse) Ittingen: "Unknown places will be explored - I hope interactively - through the encounter of friendly, interested, and unbiased people. This will work out best, however, if everybody knows about their own beliefs first of all."

Similarly Magdalena Zimmermann (Mission 21), Basel: "I have learned to appreciate my culture, my own identity even more through the interaction with different cultures... My religious belief has become more of a testimony in the course of inter-religious encounters, and to confess to my own belief is important to me precisely in the context of inter-religious discourse (even if my concept of religion is decidedly relativistic). So the inter-religious discourse turned into a discourse about the belief of each individual. I did learn this from Muslim men and women, who told me: 'Now, tell us something about your creed, not about your tolerance.'

A number of experiments targets integration and intercultural dialogue. One of these stems from the Mitenand-Congregation of Basel: We find a church community which is formed by indigenous and immigrants alike. Every Sunday they celebrate an elaborate service of many songs, a theatrical performance on a biblical text, then catechesis and intercession... Just there you need to listen, listen and again, listen.

Ruedi Dellsperger, teaching church history in Bern, gives us this view: "Interculturality is difficult, but it is feasible. It promises a rich treasure of experience... Beforehand, we need an open, unbiased perception." Briefly put: An appreciation of the own and of the foreign. Similarly Hans Küng (Swiss theologian): "To hope for a single, worldwide religion, is an illusion, - to fear it, is nonsense. The diversity of religions, confessions, denominations, religious sects, groups and movements in today's world is still dizzying. It is a melange, hardly conceivable, of concurring, opposing, and diverging moments, which can and should be not be subsumed."

Other Institutions and Groups

Switzerland enjoys numerous institutions, initiatives, groups, committees, which contribute a lot of specialized knowledge, time, and the necessary PR work. I can only name but a few: Helvetas, Swissaid, Brot für alle (Bread-for-all), Caritas, HEKS, the European Institute for intercultural und interreligious research. Some details: Swiss UNICEF is offering a prize of SFr 50.000 for projects working with children between 3 and 12 years, to empower the understanding between cultures. Hans Küng has founded in 1996 his donation World Ethos Switzerland for intercultural and

interreligious research, education and encounter. The interreligious workgroup IRAS attempts to bring together all organisations and institutions with religious or cultural aims based in or active in Switzerland, provided they respect the interreligious dialogue. IRAS sees itself as a bridge of understanding between majorities and minorities, between foreign and homespun religious communities, institutions, congregations, and organizations. IRAS demands dignified places of worship for all and the guaranteed opportunity to observe the holy days of one's own religion.

Experts point out that integration and encounter cannot be produced exclusively by the Swiss for the benefit of the immigrants, but that it must come from the foreign men and women themselves. There is some remarkable work done in that respect: At the top of popular acclaim are neighbourhood festivities like Turkish and Tamil cooking for the neighbours. In Basel most of the effort of integration is done by the immigrant's groups themselves. It gives food for thought, however, that all these immigrant's groups are self-reliant. At the same time, the bulk of official funding for integration goes to exclusively Swiss institutions.

Grassroot initiatives

Much more happens at the personal level than is publicly appreciated. Time and again people have answered my question with: "the one thing is to respect the other person." Madeleine Strub tells us: "It is important to seek contact with foreigners, and to listen to them." Step by step it is recognized that it is not enough to endorse "multikulti". We need real encounters, intensive contacts.

Madeleine Zimmermann (Mission 21): *"I do not idealize the coming together of different cultures... I discover more and more the importance of identity. Exposing myself to foreign cultures I have come to value my own culture and my own identity ever more. I do not appreciate a "multikulti" style that tries to gloss over the differences, all forms of the unknown. I learned to appreciate my homeland. So now I can begin to understand, what home means to others! Since I allowed myself to realize the strangeness of others, I can perhaps feel how strange things are here for people from a different background... It was also important for me to recognize my own limits. There are elements of foreign cultures which I can leave alone as strange. And then there are questions of values, where I find my tolerance ends, and I want it to end (e.g. the mutilation of girls, infringement of human rights, lack of religious freedom, no respect for the freedom of conscience, ...)*

Summa

Switzerland is known for its humanitarian tradition. This tradition is very much alive today in many parts of society. It is endangered through xenophobe moods and groups. An integration of people from different cultures is hindered by a lack of understanding (no common language), and through self-imposed isolation on the side of the Swiss or on the side of the men and women from abroad. For the time being, chances for an

intercultural encounter seem to be better in the cities rather than in the rural communities. On the whole there are quite a lot of promising approaches.

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A TRAVEL JOURNAL OF PASTORAL INVOLVEMENT in a South African Multi-Faith Community

Jan-Albert van den Berg / Arnold Smit

Sharmaine is an Indian woman orientated towards the Hindu faith. One day, her husband, who was still young, died unexpectedly while she was at work. Except for the fact that she and her children were shocked, her colleagues too were distressed by the events. From the reports I received, it was clear that she was totally overwhelmed by the events and that a visit to her house was the appropriate way of supporting her to come to terms with her husband's death. During the visit, the religious background of the family became apparent, amongst others, in the religious Hindu symbols that were visible. During the conversation, she talks about her loss and the fact that she is incapable of supporting the children in coping with their bereavement. She also talks about her struggle with God. With her permission, I pray for her and her children .

MAPPING THE JOURNEY . . .

The title of this contribution, as well as the narrative case study above, articulates a journey. The metaphor of a travel journal presupposes that we shall record, amongst others, aspects of the journey through a particular landscape. While we are aware of the reality of various maps and routes for this landscape, we shall take a bearing of religion and spirituality, as overlapping degrees of longitude and latitude, for an own mapping. The domain of religion presupposes "… a cultural codification of important spiritual metaphors, narratives, beliefs, rituals, social practices, and forms of community among a particular people… " (Griffith & Griffith 2002: 17). Spirituality, however, is mapped as "… the search for purpose and meaning in one's life" (Damianakis 2001: 23). The journey through this landscape is being articulated in the fluidity of step between narrative case studies (practice) of pseudonymous travellers, elucidated by perspectives from theoretical travel diaries (theory) with new accents on further determining the route (practice) (Browning 1991:84).

THE LANDSCAPE OF THE JOURNEY . . .

On journey through a teenager South African democratic disposition, the landscape is marked by a constitution, which leaves ample room for the optimal protection of religious rights (Du Plessis 2002:228). In contrast with the landscape that was left behind in 1994, 'The country and its government . . . [is] not 'Christian' any more . . . The public broadcaster is expected to reflect the religious plurality of the population . . . Even the educational system moved away from the vestiges of the 'Christian National' ideology' (Kritzinger 2000:99). This new map of South Africa, with the emphasis on a multi-religious understanding of the landscape, was born in this classroom. Western Christians formerly imposed their idea of a Christianised civilisation on the communities in the country, and education became the vehicle by which it was institutionalised (Van Niekerk 1982:104-109). In our opinion, this was one of the reasons why the debate on religious education in schools raged fiercely in the new South Africa for quite a while. It seemed as though education first had to be 'freed' from being dominated by Christianity.

While we are aware of the fact that religious plurality presupposes different institutes and organisations (Vos 2000:180), it remains given that the people of Africa is highly religious and that religion influences every sphere of African society. Moyo (2001:299) is correct in writing: 'It is a way of life in which the whole community is involved, and as such it is identical with life itself.' The consequences of this larger

transformation have led to the discovery that those who, snugly, were able to place themselves theologically with ease previously, now, were seekers with unknown destination who experience their existence as pilgrimage (Van der Meulen 2004:62). The significance of this for people orientated on the Christian faith was already articulated earlier from the American context by Gerkin (1986:16):

This means that Christian language for interpreting the meaning of things, evaluating human actions and attitudes, and formulating human purposes is now only one language among many and no longer can claim consensual legitimation.

As Christians, were are now starting to become aware of the fact that our own theological movement is in jeopardy if we do not reposition ourselves or, in terms of the metaphor, deliberately meet the other (religious) travellers along the route to our future. Except for the new South African religious landscape, the authorsø personal travel diaries are also being articulated differently. Both of them were fulltime ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church for a number of years, after which Jan-Albert became a lecturer at a Theological Faculty with a reformed ecumenical character. Arnold first worked as an ecumenical consultant for congregations, but, for the recent past, he has been working in the private sector as a human resource manager in a company with a very diverse composition of staff, representing all creeds and cultures of the South African community.

TRAVELLING . . .

As we are aware of the fragmentation of the old maps of a separate and marginalised world, we share the opinion of Browning (2000: 91) that theology "í in the future increasingly must express itself within a pluralistic society of diverse religio-cultural assumptions, differing cultural disciplines, and conflicting ethical patterns of life". In our opinion, one of the best possible routes to take in order to meet these requirements is to choose to describe practical theology as a narrative hermeneutical practical theology (Gerkin 1986: 20; Gerkin 1997: 111-113; Müller 2000: 17).

Among others, the journey is navigated by important paradigmatic shifts within the landscape of pastoral theorising. Louw (1999:21-27) points to the movement from an individual approach to taking account of contexts; from explaining problems in a one-sided fashion to a hermeneutical understanding; from kerugma to construing and storytelling, and from one-sided professional emphasis to collectively caring for each other.

When choosing the narrative hermeneutical practical theology, the landscape is couched in a postmodern tint within which there is room for variety and for the diversity of culture (Singh & Kotzé 2002:183). Early in the journey through South Africaøs new landscape, already, the õturn to relationshipsö (Grenz

2003:252) becomes an accent with particular significance. With the emphasis on relationships, the needle of the compass is on more than a mere meeting, but indeed on profound involvement with each other (Müller 1996:15). This theological itinerary acquires a further African nuance if the metaphorical nature of faith is strongly emphasised. "In Africa metaphors are deeply embedded in a culture determined by a spiritual world and a communal awareness of co-humanity (ubuntu)" (Louw 2004:32). We realise the journey in a post modern landscape by using social constructivism as a vehicle (Müller 2000:56-59). By this, we do not pretend that this is the only vehicle through this landscape, but that it is tailor made for our particular journey. It is our presupposition that this vehicle is exactly suitable for the terrain of hermeneutics and for understanding the human map-making as systemic in nature. Social constructivism is suitable for the journey because it promotes dialogue (Gergen 2002: 283) in the way in which it provides space for the õí challenge of communicating across the boundaries between different denominations and different religious communitiesö (Schweitzer 2002: 176). With this in mind, we set off on the journey on a double-track road through South Africa on which one of the tracks allows us to taste the dust of contextuality and the other leads us to the highway of a network(s) of relationships.

ON THE JOURNEY OF ENCOUNTERS THROUGH DIALOGUE - A POSSIBLE WAY OF TRAVELLING . . .?

In a first conversation with Donovan, an Indian man orientated on the Hindu faith, he told me the story of his marriage. He did not know why he was telling this to me, because he had never before discussed it with anybody else. This morning, we had had a second conversation. This time, it was about his daughter who is ill. A week ago, she upset them with sudden tantrums. He and his wife suspected that an evil spirit has taken possession of her, and had asked Hindu religious leaders to come and pray for her. Donovan also obtained a medical diagnosis, which indicated that the girl suffers from temporal epilepsy. It is clear that Donovanøs bondage to culture and religion places him on two tracks: on the one hand, the child needs to take the medicine regularly and, on the other hand, the evil spirit needs to be kept in check by prayers.

In my discussion with Donovan concerning the role of spirituality, I tried to explain that, in fact, it means that one has to be sensitive for the circumstances in which the illness and the concomitant behaviour can be managed optimally. I told him about our sonøs leukaemia and the treatment thereof over a period of three years. I explained that we did not move the responsibility to believe to him, but that we took it upon ourselves to be stewards of his potential to regain his health. The conversation took place while I was aware of Donovanøs orientation on the Hindu faith and while he was aware of my Christian orientation.

In a possible description of how, as a Christian, to start out on a journey with others in the multi-faith community in South Africa, as expressed by Donovan's story above, we develop an experimental theology

within which continuous dialogue between text and context are presupposed (Bosch 1991:427). In order to enter the space of intercultural and inter-religious communication, it is necessary that õí tolerance, mutual respect, and even appreciation of the otherö (Schweitzer 2002:176) be present. The co-ordinates of these concepts are being indicated for us in the Christian conceptualisation of hospitality:

Hospitality means inviting the stranger into our private space, whether that be the space of our own home or the space of our personal awareness and concern. And when we do so, some important transformations occurí Hospitality to the stranger gives us a chance to see our own lives afresh, through different eyes (Palmer 1992: 69).

In setting foot on this new terrain together with other conversation partners, we readily take our lead from Schweitzer (2002:177-178) and Griffith & Griffith (2002:30-46) who indicated certain markers on the route to conversation:

Listening to each otherøs story(s)

Central to the first beacon of a possible route to conversation is the significance of the narrative metaphor, which, amongst others, presupposes that our stories: are determining our lives, are determined by the context, are multi-levelled in nature with dominant and alternative descriptions, and that the narrator is the best guide of an own story (Griffith & Griffith 2002:83-84).

In listening to othersø stories, the real content thereof can only be heard if the conversation partners depart together in a communitas-commitment on a pilgrimage for new meaning (Griffith & Griffith 2002:23).

By using biographical and autobiographical material, the discourses of person and culture are being brought under discussion on a non-threatening manner. In retelling and listening to each otherø stories, different discourses and the role thereof are identified jointly between conversation partners (Freedman & Combs 1996:42-43; Burman & Kottler & Levette & Parker 1997:2). It is especially the restrictive nature of culturally determined discourses (Lester 1995: 137; De Lange 2004:38) that are being exposed in order to create space to develop a new understanding (Freedman & Combs 1996: xiv-xv; Griffith & Griffith 2002:75). Discovering a new understanding becomes clear in the conversation below in which a woman comments from particular presuppositions on the recent explosions in London. The pastoral therapist tries to enlarge her singularly dominant description of the Islam faith with alternative possibilities:

On July, 13, 2005, Susan walked into my office with a newspaper in her hand. Apparently, fundamentalist Muslims are responsible for the four explosions in London in which more than 50 people died. As a Christian, she is upset and wonders what type of religion it is that mobilises people to be suicide bombers? In a discussion in which, amongst others, the concept of stereotyping is explored, I discovered with her that other descriptions of people who adhere to the faith of Islam also exist. The conversation also helped Susan to reconstruct alternative descriptions for the word Christian.

Confirming each other in the conversation(s)

On the road of possible encounters, involvement with each other is important (Müller 1996:16). Involvement with each other is found in the relieves and contours of participation where õ. . . we see that ÷all othernessø becomes ÷oneø in relational processö (Gergen 2002:288). The character of this involvement is filled by the following: What one brings to a genuine encounter is not first and foremost an ensemble of communication techniques but oneø self and, to be more precise, the depth one has to share. The dept in one-self develops through a whole-hearted engagement with others, with life, with God (Pembroke 2002:13). It is in being involved with others that we come to discover that there is a difference between, on the one hand, being merely a spectator and, on the other hand, actively being part of the process of involvement and participation. Then we take seriously in our lives the potential of the stranger to be a teacher.

God uses the stranger to shake us from our conventional points of view, to remove the scales of worldly assumptions from our eyes. God is a stranger to us, and it is at the risk of missing Godø truth that we domesticate God, reduce God to the role of familiar friend (Palmer 1992: 59).

In this way, the character of our involvement with the other is formed not from a position of power or from an attitude of "knowing" but from being receptively, open-minded and teachable. Obviously, this does not mean that the pastoral therapist does not know anything (Freedman & Combs 1996:44) or does not have an own orientation of faith, which, for instance, from a commitment to the Christian faith, offers a perspective on the world (Bosch 1991:9). What it does mean, however, is that we choose for a particular mode of working in our involvement with others that afford the space for enhancing inquisitiveness, openness and amazement as our dominant emotions (Griffith & Griffith 2002:48). Amongst others, this leads to our trusting less in putting questions while trusting more in meticulously listening to others (Freedman & Combs 1996: 44-45).

Discovering a possible structure in conversation(s)

Francois enters my office. He received a message that the father of Miriam Letswayo, one of his team members, has died. She has not yet been informed about it and it is his task to break the news to her. He has never before handled something like this and is uncertain about what to do. I ask him to call one of her best friends immediately to help us. She will best know how to support Miriam. From previous experience, I

have learned that black people handle a death message differently from white people. They cry differently from us as westerners and they differ in helping one another. Francois and I witness a process whereby black friends and colleagues participate in Miriam's grief. By bodily contact and encouraging words, Miriam is calmed until she is able to talk about what has happened. Some white members of the staff also try to comfort Miriam, but in a more formal and more distanced way. I feel that we are treading on the holy ground of another culture. We have a great deal to learn...

We find the background to discovering a possible structure for conversation(s) in Palmer's (1992:46) distinction between, amongst others, "public space" and "public myth". "Public space" refers to spaces where people can become aware of the presence of strangers and can facilitate mutual involvement. "Public myth" refers to the worldview within which people find the opportunity to define their own situatedness. The metaphor of a "rainbow nation" endowed South Africa with such a myth. The challenge remains for the Christian churches and other religious groups to offer such situatedness to the inhabitants of South Africa in terms of which they will be able to understand their own context.

Within a Christian context, we think that merely acknowledging that we need to discover, through our involvement with each other, that "reality is a stranger and even more multi-layered than we could have imagined . . ." (Veldsman 2000:159) is already helping the process a great deal. In a multi-cultural South Africa, which also has the accent of a multi-faith orientation, we as pastoral therapists are focussing on democratising the structure of pastoral therapy in order to facilitate openness and respect (Griffith & Griffith 2002:36). The democratisation of the pastoral conversation is asking for a sensitivity regarding the balances of power in the conversation(s) in which it is not about changing the conversation partner, but rather about understanding the stories of others. This new space is entered, as was shown in the previous narrative case study when we continuously and conjointly look for the significance of, amongst others, metaphors and rituals in order to understand important life issues (Louw 2004: 38). This means that one conversation only can never be enough, but that the first, second, and tenth conversation always leads to the next discovery that asks to be explored and articulated.

Questioning the own position

It is only the conversational partner who dares to question own presuppositions when determining an own position that can dare to enter into conversation with the other. Questioning the own position creates the possibility to hear and understand the other from a position of "not-knowing" (Freedman & Combs 1996: 44; Morgan 2000: 2). In enquiring about taking an own position, we enquire about the influence of cultural values and norms, which again determine personal identity and self-image (Müller 2000:17-18). In determining an own philosophical position in life, insight into a pre-modern, modern, and post-modern disposition can be crucial for the conversation (Hendriks 2004:56). Given our history, it is precisely our greatest risk, i.e. that we do not want to abdicate power, but are merely trying to shift the terrain in which we are trying to exercise power. The Christian ethos does not allow this. Regarding the significance of this for the work of the pastoral therapist, it is proper to let Arnold articulate an own position:

As I am currently working, as a theologian, in the private sector, surrounded by the cultural and religious diversity of the South African society, I am often forced to reflect on my theological roots. I was taught to articulate and defend the Christian faith, to witness of that in which I believe. Also, I taught others this way while I was still a minister and was preaching. Now I am in that context about which I had so much advice for others (read Christians) and I realise that it deals with something totally different, namely, to minister mercy to others. This is the test for the question whether others will invite me to listen to their travelling journals. I suspect that I am not being consulted by 'others' because I know "the Way", but because I try to be a merciful travelling partner.

In reflecting about what it means to be such a merciful travelling partner for others, we wonder about Christ's message for multi-cultural and multi-religious environments. What can we deduce from the story of Christ regarding crossing borders, conduct towards strangers, providing hospitality and ministering mercy to others? Perhaps, metaphorically spoken and deriving from the image of the vine in John 15, it is the pain of intercultural and inter-religious pruning processes, i.e. that we are trying to bear fruit on the wrong rootstock if dogmatic orientation is determining our dealings with other cultures and religions. The rootstock we need is precisely to be able to live amongst others and to be able to create a living space in the style of Christ. For that, we have to be grafted into another rootstock, namely Christ. Perhaps the Christian life style is, in its best presuppositions and amidst other religions, an unexpectedly fit orientation with which to live within and to the advantage of diversity. That is why Forward (2000:252) can say:

I gained the belief that: pastoral theology is about God's providential care of all his creation, including me; that life is open to the impress of God's guidance of others and me; that religious faith and obedience are open-ended; that pluralism is dealing with the bewildering diversity of means and goals.

In this approach, we confirm that faith in God is precisely about overcoming brokenness and fragmentation by, amongst others, reconciliation with so called strangers (Palmer 1992:26). This is exactly what Paul tells of through his ancient carrying out of faith under the central theme of Godøs mercy (Acts 17:26) and where the Gospel becomes the space where people, with their plural experiences, are accepted by God (Vos 2000:181). For us, as Christians, this space is defined by õí a community of compassionö (Palmer 1992: 87) with the knowledge that õí we find our deep unity with others not by seeking to embrace them, but by letting God embrace us (Palmer 1992:109).

Together finding and creating a new horizon(s)

Indira, an Indian woman and a follower of the Dalai Lama, came to see me about being reprimanded at work for using the phone excessively. She experienced it as questioning her integrity. She talked freely about her religious devotion. She told me, amongst other things, about the spirituality centre that she visits over weekends, about the work they do in communities, and about her passion for people who suffer. Together, we considered strategies that can clear her motives by responsibly using the telephone at work. We thought about things that can enable her to convince others that she is a woman of integrity and that she is deserving of their trust. The conversation also led me to believe that she wants to become a contributor to the companyøs corporate social investment projects as well.

In the conversation, it is clear that both conversation partners can come to understand each otherøs distinctive worlds, presuppositions, and motives. However, this does not only lead to understanding one another better, but also opens new perspectives to a greater understanding of life.

In discovering newly fused horizons of understanding (Gerkin 1986:101), an experience of liminality is created, which leads to a õí transitional spaceø as a domain of experience that bridges the internal, subjective world of an individual with reality as it is experienced by the external, objective communityö (Griffith & Griffith 2002: 25).

ONCE AGAIN, CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

Navigating through multi-faith communities is often complicated by well-travelled routes that offer no new prospects and just lead to the further erosion of existing problem areas. The metaphors people can choose from to describe this journey is often becoming narrowing. Such a metaphor is the image of the mountain, which sees different religions merely as different roads leading to the top of the mountain. Perhaps, the possibility of new roots asks for the map to be turned in another direction in order to show that no map is showing only one mountain, but that õThey may, in fact, be ascending quite different mountainsí ö (Forward 2000: 252).

In the journey through the mountainous landscape of the new situation in South Africa, the stranger(s) is challenging our establish points of view (Palmer 1992:59) and leading us to the point where we as Christians do not have to focus only on the identity of others, but also on understanding ourselves. It is in reflecting on identity that Christians discover that õA demarcation line exists, but the focus is not on ømaintaining the boundaryø but ÷on reaffirming the centerø The center of a person who is a new creation in Christ is constituted by separation, but around the center there is space for othernessö (Volf 1997: 66).

Continuing the journey on the road of encounters through dialogue, we wonder whether this is not exactly the effect that Africa has on us? Not entering into a discourse with each other that is informed by only a western moulded discourse in which we struggle for the neat formulation of the truth, but an õubuntuö related discourse in which time and space exist for mutual influence. In this discourse there is space for stories, within which the wisdom is fed by what we perceive in others and around us (Moyo 2001:299).

For us, the abovementioned travel journal is an invitation, time and again, to go on a journey through the multi-faith landscape of South Africa to possibly discover õ. . . unique answers to contextual issues . . .ö (Smit 2001:10). Travelling, we are trying to make sense from the differing narratives fusing on a new horizon of understanding. In this fusion, we also find the significance of pastoral care with Gerkin (1986:64) when he writes: õThe purpose of practical theological thinking is always the facilitation of the transformation of life.ö

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LIVING IN MULTICULTURAL AND MULTIFAITH SOCIETIES: Remarks from Ghana

CHARLES K. KONADU

1.0. Introduction:

In this paper I plan to look at the general world's evolution into a global village. I shall focus on Wenchi District of Ghana where I have worked for almost 4 years and examine some of its cultural and religious situations. The state's attitude to culture will be touched on. A Christian response will be expressed and I shall give a brief comment on the two scenarios cited at the beginning of this introduction. I shall end the discourse with some general conclusions.

Joyce, a 27 year old native of Wenchi is a secretary in one of the government's departments. She is a Methodist. She has been married for four years to Ali, a forty-five year old wealthy Muslim businessman. Ali is a Dagaati (one of the Northern Ghana tribes). He was born at Wenchi and had his elementary education in the Methodist School at Wenchi. Before marriage, when Joyce showed concern about religion and multiple wives, Ali gave his word that she would be given room to practise her religion and he would be monogamous. Joyce's family were divided over the marriage but the father who had two wives and some of the aunts who had enjoyed the favours of Ali strongly supported the marriage. Church leadership pointed to Joyce about the dangers in mixed marriages. She did not go through the church's pre-marriage programme before the marriage.

After four years in the marriage there was no issue. Recently Joyce has been dazed with the news that Ali is planning to marry a 23 year old lady he has had a child with. She is depressed most of the time. Some family members are surprised about her attitude since marrying two people should not be a problem if the man takes care of her. Some church members' attitude is; õit serves you rightö. She plans quitting her job at Wenchi to join a senior sister in Accra.

Clement, forty-five year old Catholic is a Frafra (one of the Northern Ghana tribes). He is a night watchman of an educational institution at Wenchi. He and the family live in a compound-house with five other families made up of other tribes (natives of Wenchi, Ashantis, Badus and others). The landlord is a rich Muslim who is half Dagomba (a Northern tribe) and half Bono (a tribe in the Brong Ahafo). The two basic religions in the compound-house are Christianity and Islam.

After the birth of their 5th child last year Clement's wife has been displaying some strange behaviours: deep depression and violence. She could remain in-doors for days without speaking to anyone, neither to husband nor children. During such times some of the women in the house would care for the children, especially the youngest. Other times she could be very violent: threaten people with sharp instruments and stones. She would talk incoherently and insult anybody in sight. She would often display unusual strength. About 60kg woman, she would block the doorway to the bedroom and would not let anybody in. Not even 3 men could pull her away.

The landlord became alarmed with some of these behaviours. He urged the husband to seek medical attention. When the husband displayed indifferent attitude, the landlord provided money for the medical help. Clement took the money but he could not take the wife to the Psychiatric hospital immediately until after some ten days. The wife discontinued taking the medicine given after two days.

The destructive behaviour continued. He took her next to a prayer camp but she refused to go after the second visit.

Clement believes that the solution to the wife's situation lies in taking her to the home town some 400km away from Wenchi, where they live.

Traditional consultation with soothsayers and rituals would solve the problem, he believes. The last time I heard about the issue the inmates have contributed money to support the trip home.

Other examples could be cited regarding living in multicultural and multifaith society. For example there is still a strong dislike in many Ghanaian families to allow sons and daughters to marry across ethnic and tribal lines. In Konadu's (1987) study: Perception of Ghanaian Christian College Students Regarding Marriage as Fundamental to Premarriage Programme, among these educated Ghanaians, only 27% of the men and 31% of the women strongly favoured cross-ethnic/tribal marriage. The rest either mildly favoured or opposed it.

The reasons for the aversion in inter-tribal or ethnic marriage include:

- Inheritance practices (e.g. matrilineal and patrilineal descent systems)
- Distances across tribal lines
- Child bearing and naming practices
- Mode of contracting marriage
- Language
- Funeral practices
- Ethnic/tribal stereotypes and others.

Ghana with 20 million people has about 50 languages. Of these languages, Akan is spoken by about 42% as first language, and a good percentage as a second language. Akan itself has several dialects. My wife and I speak Akan but we have different dialects. She speaks Kwahu and I speak Asante.

Our hometowns are about 120 km apart and we are both of matrilineal descent. We raised our 3 children wholly in Accra, the capital of Ghana, a completely heterogeneous community where the indigenous people speak the Ga language. Now our children are finding it difficult to tell where they come from. Fifty years ago, without hesitation, they would have said they come from their mother's hometown because of the matrilineal descent system.

Now, modernization, industrialization, urbanization, formal education, mixed marriages, migration and others are forcing people to examine their ethnic and religious backgrounds.

My son in the US is engaged to a Fanti lady also in the US. Fanti is another Akan dialect. Where would their children come from? If in the future one of their children marries a Nigerian also living in the US, where would their grandchildren come from?

2.0. Living in Multicultural and Multi-faith Societies Ë A Global Issue

It is said that the world today has become a global village. This statement can have several meanings and several interpretations. One of the meanings and interpretations can be that with the development of the efficient and effective communication network every part of the globe gets informed of what is happening at another part either simultaneously or within split seconds. The world gets smaller by that. On the other hand the efficient and easy means to travel has made many people with varied cultures and faiths to mix and live together at particular locations. Distance and location are no more a big barrier to sharing information and experiences.

Many societies across the world today are made up of people from different ethnic, religions, linguistic and geographical regions of the world. People moved and still move, carrying with them the culture and religion in which they were raised. The meeting of these cultures and religions in new social settings result in the situation requiring new living relationships. Human identities are shaped õdialogicallyö, through our relationships with others. If we live and learn about and from each other, particularly those that are different from us we will be more õtolerantö and õacceptingö, and õaccommodatingö.

A multicultural and multi-faith society is one in which people from various ethnic, cultural and religious origins are supposed to live together in harmony. But is that always the case?

The word õmulticulturalismö was coined in the 1960s to define the official government policy of the Canadian õmosaicö which encouraged immigrants to retain their cultural and ethnic diversity as a mark of identity. Somewhat the definition of multiculturalism has changed over the years and is now used and a bit more loosely wherever there is recognition of ethnic and cultural difference.

Multicultural and multiethnic living requires mutual tolerance and coexistence between the different ethnic groups and presupposes a low degree of prejudice and discrimination based on ethnic background or religious difference. Life in a multicultural and a multi faith society further requires a õdifference-blindnessö.

Multicultural and multi-faith societies are rooted on the basis that people are all free, equal and able to determine their own lifestyle that would lead to their good. Hence ethnic, cultural and religious differences should be respected and sustained. This basic assumption that all people are free and equal has its own challenges, and it is not easily shared by all ethnic and religious groups (in the same multicultural and multi faith settings).

3.0. Wenchi District/Wenchi Town Situation

The Wenchi District is one of the 19 Administrative Districts in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana (there are 10 Regions in Ghana). Wenchi District is part of the Forest-Savannah transition Zone. There are two main seasons with an average annual rainfall pattern of about 133 mm. The average temperature is about 32oc.

The population of the district is estimated at 173,000 with an annual growth rate of 2.6% from the 2000 population census. According to that census, the population of Wenchi town is 28,100. The main indigenous ethnic groups are the Bonos, Banda, Mo, Nafana and Nkoran. By migration other groups such as Wangaras, Mossis and Mandes (from the Sahelian regions) are in Wenchi town. The three main religious groups in the District in general and in Wenchi town in particular are Christians, Muslims and Traditional worshippers (respective percentages are 60%, 20% and 20%). The major occupation of the population is farming. The main crops grown are maize, yams, cassava, beans and vegetables.

Wenchi, the district capital has three banks with two insurance companies. The weekly market day is on Thursday.

The road network in the District is not the best. The untarred ones are many and during rainy seasons some of the roads are unmotorable. Wenchi and nine other small towns are the only towns connected to the national grid for electricity.

3.1. Wenchi, The Multi Ethnic/Multi-Religious Community

The population of Wenchi town is ethnically and religiously heterogeneous. As mentioned earlier, the three major religions are Christianity, Islam and Traditional worshippers. Ethnic groups in town are many: the Bonos, Bandas, Mo, Nafana Wangaras, Mossis and other northern tribes.

Other southern groups are the Ashantis, Fantes, Ewes and Akuapims. People have migrated to Wenchi for varied reasons. They include:

- Desire to learn a trade
- Earn a salary or have own business
- Quest for education for children
- Do farm work for others or for self
- Flee from witchcraft at home

People come with their baggage of culture and religion. In town some of these cultures interset. Others are dissonant. Others are diametrically and completely dissonant, for example, the respective descent systems of some Northern and Southern Ghana ethnic group with their respective patrilineal and matrilineal descent systems.

3.2. The General Nature of Religion in Wenchi

There is general nominalism in both Christianity and Islam. Most people will agree with Fr. John Kirby, a Catholic Missionary in Ghana (1976 – 1981) conclusions after studying the practical behaviour of people. His observations are similar to what is seen in Wenchi area. He observed that conversions to these two faiths is often superficial that many of the converts did not perceive their religion as relating in any way to their major life problems. He observed that when faced with common life problems many nominal converts seek to solve their problems by turning back to traditional remedies. One of the cases is cited in the introduction. However, Moslems are traditionally noted to help fellow-Muslims in times of need.

They are noted to demonstrate mutual loyalty and brotherly love. However the perception of people now is that many of them tend to be violent and destructive. People see them not to be development oriented. Others perceive Islam to be attractive because of the supposed power of amulets and prayers by their mallams. Some Christians are also seen not matching their faith with their deeds.

That with the 60% of the Wenchi population Christians should be able to transform the community morally and developmentally. He noted that many would abandon fetish except in time of special distress.

Of late the Moslems have set up a number of schools in the town. Though illiteracy is high among all ethnic groups, it is very high among the Islamic group. Girls' education is worse among them. Early marriage of Moslem girls is common. Polygamy is accepted in Islam and Traditional Religion.

In Islam marriage with Christian women is permitted. However Christians, by Islam tradition, are not permitted to marry Muslim women. They believe that the Christian man would not allow the Muslim woman to practices her faith and subsequently would turn to her husband's religion.

Some other clashes of Christianity versus Islam or traditional religion are:
- In Muslim and traditional life husband are superior to their wives
- Polygamy is allowed in both Muslim and traditional marriages
- In Islam the man has the sole right to pronounce divorce on the wife

- Children are required to follow the father's religion in Islam
- Non-Muslims do not inherit Muslims.

3.4. The General Nature of Cultures in Wenchi

Major differences come in the following areas of people's lives:

Marriage:

Ways of contracting marriage vary. Some pay huge bride prices, some minimal and others none. Often they are in the form of cows, service on the farm of the woman's father, cash, clothings, kola nuts and others.

In the choice of a partner some groups allow the young person to be involved in others the family picks for him.

All ethnic groups allow polygamous relationships but it is not presently common. Christianity, technically, does not allow it but there are some in the church who had more than one wife before joining the church.

Some ethnic groups allow very early marriages for girls.

Child bearing and naming practices:

Some ethnic groups practice both male and female circumcision though the latter is forbidden by law. Some groups allow tribal marks for identification on faces and parts of the body.

Death Rituals:

For some groups burial takes place within a day of death. Mortuary facilities in hospitals help to keep bodies for weeks and months before burial. Some ethnic groups would perform rituals to know causes of death before burial. Most ethnic groups bury their relatives in their home towns. Often funerals are attended by members of the community irrespective of ethnic background.

Inheritance Practices:

These vary among ethnic groups. Matrilineal and patrilineal descent systems make the difference. In some cases a man's brother or other close relative will inherit the man. In such a case he may marry or care for his widow, look after his children and take up other responsibilities.

Religious Influence in Wenchi

As mentioned earlier the Christian population in Wenchi is about 60%. The rest are mainly Moslems and traditional worshippers. Christianity has affected the development of the area in terms of education and health. The Methodist Mission brought education to the area in the early 1900s and about 40 years and 50 years respectively established a Secondary School and a Hospital. The Prime Minister of the Country's Second Republic was a native of Wenchi and attended the basic school at Wenchi. Other denominations such as the Catholic, Anglican and the Presbyterians have schools in town.

4.0. The State Attitude to Culture & Religion:

The Republic of Ghana recognises that the nation is made up of people of varied culture and faith. Hence in its 1992 Constitution room was made to take care of the cultures and religion in the country. For example, the Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms enshrined in our Constitution include the following:

õArticle 21 (1c) says that õAll persons shall have the right to freedom to practise any religion and to manifest such practice.ö

Article 26(1): õEvery person is entitled to enjoy, practise, profess, maintain and promote any culture, language, tradition or religion subject to the provision of this constitution.ö

Again, on cultural objectives of Ghana, the Directive Principle, Article 39(1) and (2) of the constitution specified the cultural objective of Ghana as follows:

39(1) õí í í .the state shall take steps to encourage the integration of appropriate customary values into the fabric of national life through formal and informal education and the conscious introduction of cultural dimensions to relevant aspects of national planning.ö

39(2): õthe state shall ensure that appropriate customary and cultural values are adopted and developed as an integral part of the growing needs of the society as a whole; and in particular that traditional practices which are injurious to the health and well-being of the person are abolished.ö

To make these constitutional provisions work, the State has set up The National Commission on Culture which is õthe statutory body established by law to manage from holistic perspective the cultural life of the country.ö

One of the core functions of the Commission is to õseek to promote an educational system that motivates, stimulates creatively and draws largely in Ghanaian traditional values.ö

The Rev. Dr. Abraham Akrong (Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana) in a paper Culture and Education, in a recent (May, 2005) National Conference on Culture and Education at Elmina Beach Resort, Ghana, organised by the National Commission on Culture in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, sees education as õan instrument of culture that preserves the values and ideals of the society through socialization.ö Akrong strongly believes that õwithout an educational system that preserves the continuity of culture in the collective memory of the society, culture and society will slowly die together.ö

This thought, I believe, has influenced the State to see education as one of the means of shaping peopleøs lives and promoting understanding in peopleøs culture and religion. Thus in basic schools and secondary schools pupils and students are taught culture and social studies.

For example in their book Cultural Studies for Junior Secondary Schools the authors have this to say:

õí í í í .we have barely introduced language, music and religion with specific reference to Ghana. We have managed to treat the languages, music and religions of the various communities in Ghana showing their similarities and differences.ö Their hope is that the child studying the material õwill be able to appreciate the common features in the cultures and religions.ö

Again, in the Ministry of Education book on Social Studies for Junior Secondary Schools the following is given as the rational for teaching Social Studies:

Social Studies is õCitizenship Education. The subject tries to prepare the individual to fit into society by equipping him/her with the kinds of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed for effective living within the society and for making constructive changes in the way of life of society.ö It concludes that õas pupils understand the Ghanaian society better, and are able to look at society with a critical and constructive mind, this society will be forced to develop a better and faster moving culture that will prop the nation to greater heights.ö

It is therefore seen that positive cultural values as an integral part of the education of our youth is a prudent way of shaping people and evolving a healthy and tolerant society.

5.0. Biblical/Church Response To Multi-Cultural and Multi-faith Societies

Acts 17:22-23 gives a beautiful response to our subject under discussion:

õPaul stood up in front of the city council and said, õI see that in every way you Athenians are very religious. For as I walked through your city and looked at the places where you worship, I found an altar on which is written, ÷To an Unknown Godø That which you worship, then even though you do not know it, is what I now proclaim to you. God, who made the world and everything in it, is Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples made by human hands. Not does he need anything that we can supply by working for him, since it is he himself who gives life and breath and everything else to everyone. From one human being he created all races on earth and made them live throughout the whole earth. He himself fixed beforehand the exact times and the limits of the places where they would live. He did this so that they would look for him, and perhaps find him as they felt about for him. Yet God is actually not far from any one of us; as someone has said,

÷In him we live and move and exist.ø It is as some of your poets have said, ÷We too are his children.ø

Since we are Godøs children, we should not suppose that his nature is anything like an image of gold or silver or stone, shaped by human art and skill. God has overlooked the times when people did not know him, but now he commands all of them everywhere to turn away from their evil ways. For he fixed a day in which he will judge the whole world with justice by

means of a man he has chosen. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising that man from death!ö (Acts 17:22-31, Good News Bible)

It is noted that ancient Athens was a centre of ethnic, cultural and religious pluralism, similar to many cities in both developed and developing countries today. Regarding religion Paul found them to be õvery religiousö. I completely agree with John Stottøs (1995) conclusion on his essay: The Multi-racial Dream in õDecisive Issues Facing Christians Todayö; using the above quoted passage, Acts 17:22-31, he draws out four affirmations, namely:

- The unity of the human race, or the God of Creation.
- The diversity of ethnic cultures, or the God of History.
- The Finality of Jesus Christ, or the God of Revelation, and
- The glory of the Christian Church, or the God of Redemption.

What Stott concludes about Multi-racial dream can easily be juxtaposed for multi-culture/multi-faith. He says:

õBecause of the unity of human kind we demand equal rights and equal respect for racial minorities. Because of the diversity of ethnic groups we renounce cultural imperialism and seek to preserve all those riches of inter-racial culture which are compatible with Christøs lordship. Because of the finality of Christ, we affirm that religious freedom includes the right to propagate the gospel. Because of the glory of the church, we must seek to rid ourselves of any lingering racism and strive to make it a model of harmony between races, in which the multiracial dream comes true.ö

In a multi-cultural and multi-faith societies Stottøs counsel is also timely, that, õí .we (the church) should seek to educate the public conscience to know and desire the will of God. The church should seek to be the conscience of the nation.ö Church history has proved that evangelism is the major instrument of social change. As Stott observes, the gospel changes people and changed people can change society.

On evangelism Rick Warren (1995) in õThe Purpose Driven Church talks about the diversity in human beings. He observes:

õSit in an airport terminal for half a day and it will become quite obvious that God loves diversity. He created an infinite variety of people with different interests, preference, background and personalities.ö He believes the church is not making much impact in the world because of õpeople blindnessö, i.e. we are unaware of the social and cultural difference between people. Hence for effective evangelism understanding of peopleøs culture, their life style and mind-set are crucial.

The Methodist Church Ghana, aware of the foregoing, has a holistic approach to its mission in general and to the multi-cultural and multi-faith issues in particular. Over the 170 years of the churchøs presence in Ghana peopleøs spiritual relationships with God has been a priority. In addition the church has committed itself to the Biblical and theological concept to help in the development of communities in areas such as education, health/sanitation, nutrition and others. To this end the church has built schools, hospitals and clinics in the country. These institutions are for the communities where these institutions are located. For example, at Wenchi, the Methodist Church has got a Senior Secondary School and a District Hospital. Interestingly, 30% of the students in the Secondary School are Moslems and at the Hospital, Moslems are the highest daily attendants, they are followed by Catholics and Methodists rate the third.

Through various organisations in the church the church has set itself up to inform, educate and raise the consciousness of women and children to the social, political and economic realities of todayøs world. They are helped to eradicate the nature, scope and effect of discrimination and prejudice against them.

The church also works to build supportive communities among women, they are engaged in activities and processes which give women of all ethnic, economic and religious groups opportunities in church and society.

6.0. Multicultural and Multi-faith Societies:

Observations and Remarks

From the two case studies in the introduction we learn the following:

- The 18 years age difference between Joyce and the husband is usually not a big issue in some marriages in Ghana. There are instances of child betrothal though such practices are dying off.

- Some churches have premarital preparation and counselling programme. Joyce flouted her churchøs directive on marriage preparation and thus denied herself of the opportunity to examine mixed marriages, infertility and other issues. For example, John Mbiti, the noted African theologian reminds us that marriage and procreation in African communities are a unity, for, õwithout procreation, marriage is incomplete.ö Thus, Ali saw himself incomplete without a child.

- Often an extended family in Ghana is mixed: varied religions and sometimes within one religion diverse denominations. For example a Methodist Bishop in Ghana has a cousin who is the head of the Ahmadiya Movement in Ghana. In the case of Joyce the decision about her marriage created division.

- In nominalism people are often concerned more about their own immediate satisfaction. Joyce was unwilling to adhere to her churchøs premarital preparation programme.

In the case of Clement and wife the following are obvious:

- Though a Roman Catholic he was willing to turn to traditional resources in their time of crisis.

- The landlord, a Moslem's generosity and concern are characteristic of the religion.
- The support given by the woman in the household is a distinctive Ghanaian characteristic.
- There is still the unanswered questions of the unusual strength demonstrated by the wife and why Clement delayed in taking action about the wife's situation.

Again, from the introduction, inter-ethnic marriages have left some individuals with complex ethnic backgrounds with no clear cultural heritage. Generation of children are facing this complexity. It's going to be worse in their children's generation. Thus multicultural and multi-faith societies could generate people who have no history, no distinctive ethnic background. Individuals are linked to their ethnic groups and societies and that ethnicity is a powerful influence in shaping people's identity. It's vital to take steps, in a fast changing society, to help people to be rooted in their history. We could continue to list challenges posed in living in multicultural and multi-party societies. The respective degree of effect on both young and old could be examined. The effect of formal education in shaping young people in a multicultural and multi-faith society could be painted. Foreign cultures and modernization and their effect on people could also be examined.

However, for time and the limitation at hand let me briefly touch on the challenge of HIV/AIDS in a multicultural and multi-faith society.

One of the world's most puzzling and urgent health issues is HIV/AIDS. In Ghana those who happen to know the facts and figures about the spread of HIV/AIDS are alarmed. However the strategy to slow down the spread or control it has been a challenge to both traditional and religious people. For example, almost all ethnic groups in the country are against premarital and extramarital sex. The two major religions in Ghana exhort their people concerning chastity and purity in both premarital and extramarital sex.

Powerful voices in the country and outside are calling on religious bodies and other social groups to come to terms with the grim religions of the times and support programmes for the youth in particular and the whole population in general in the fight against HIV/AIDS. One of the programmes that people are being called to support is condom use among unmarried youth. It's an eternal debate and in a culture and faith where chastity is advocated, what should be the response?

7.0. Conclusion

No one can deny that the world has become a global village, hence multi-faith and multicultural societies are real. Accepting such reality will help us to accept the challenges in these societies.

The clock of living is never going to turn back; people will continue to move to settle in known and unknown societies. As people move they leave behind some of their ethnic and cultural heritage and support systems. Traditionally the extended family has been a cushion for its family members. Church/faith based organizations must therefore position themselves to provide the support the traditional families would have provided. The conscious effort to do this is vital.

It should always be possible to maintain our identity and remain faithful to our faith in multi-faith and multicultural societies.

The church's education programmes are to be intensified. There needs to have clear policies to help members handle their life's choices.

Constant education should stress the need for accommodation, tolerance and respect.

The fight against HIV/AIDS has become a rallying point where religious leaders in Ghana are telling the whole nation and the world to show compassion to people living with the pandemic (symbolized by the following leaders in advertisement on HIV/AIDS in our national TV: General Secretary, Christian Council; National Chief Imam; leader, Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission; Chairman, Church of Pentecost).

Political system in Ghana, just as in other parts of the world, has also become an arena that provides a safe heaven for the co-existence of multi-faith and multicultural. For example in Ghana there has always been a conscious effort by political leaders regarding appointments. Often ethnic and religious affiliations are considered in national, regional and district appointments. The president is a Christian and his vice is a Muslim. At Wenchi, the District Chief Executive is a Muslim woman with her Co-ordinating Director a Christian.

People's faith should influence their daily living. Paul's attitude in living in a pluralistic society is noteworthy:

õFor though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I become as a Jew… . To those who are under the law, as under the law… to those who are without the law, as without law (not being under law towards Christ… To the weak I become as weak… I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.ö (1 Cor. 9:19-22)

The church has got a vital role to play in a multi-faith / multicultural societies. We have already cited John Stott's observation and it's repeated: õ… we (the church) should see to educated the public conscience to know and desire the will of God. The church should seek to be the conscience of the nation.ö

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LIVING IN MULTICULTURAL AND MULTI-FAITH SOCIETIES: a Brasilian Perspective

James Farris

There are few people in the world who do not live in multicultural and multi-faith societies. With the exception of a few isolated tribes and groups, modern Societies are composed of an almost infinite number of õsocietiesö. There are, for example õsocietiesö, or social groups, composed of the poor, middle class, wealthy, politically conservative, politically liberal, children, adolescents, adults, elderly, artists, shop owners, manual laborers, bankers, lawyers, politicians, doctors, professors, young mothers, young fathers, single mothers, single fathers, married, divorced, heterosexuals, homosexuals, lesbians, bisexuals, and so on. However, before going further it is important to define the terms õCultureö and õSocietyö. I will use a simple, but classic, description. In The Sacred Canopy:

Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion[1], Peter Berger describes Culture as the totality of manøs (sic) products. Society, for Berger, is the aspect of non-material culture that structures our ongoing relations and identity. In both cases, Culture and Society refer to what Berger calls õworld-building activityö. Culture and Society are expressions of how we construct and organize our world, and hence our identity. In common usage, the terms culture and society are basically interchangeable. What is important is that the term õsocietyö and the informal use of the term õcultureö refer to interpersonal relations and the creation of identity that

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[1] Peter Berger. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion.* New York, Anchor Books, 1969, p. 6-7.

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structure social relations. We are social beings. Our relations with others shape and guide our identity. I do not believe that we are õdeterminedö or õdefinedö by our relations, but much of our identity is profoundly influenced by our identification with social groups.

In Brasil, as in many other countries, there are shops that specialize in selling magazines and newspapers. Close to my home, in our local public market, there is such a shop. Recently, I did an informal survey of the number of different õsocietiesö, õidentitiesö, or õareas of interestö represented by magazines in the shop. I assumed that magazines represent the interests and identities of social groups. After fifteen minutes of standing in the shop trying to group the õsocietiesö represented by the various magazines, the shop owner began to show signs of concern. However, when I explained what I was doing he even helped me to organize the 113 different magazines on the shelves. I identified thirty seven different õsocietiesö, or interest groups, that included plants, cars, electronics, computers, sex (heterosexual, homosexual and lesbian), architecture, law, religion, puzzles, general games, home care, health care, beauty, child care, economics, literature, general news, travel, and video games. The diversity of interests and group identity is enormous. As best I can tell, people who are õmembersö of these õsocial groupsö are very tolerant of each other, and it is very common for persons to be õmembersö of various groups.

Though this analysis appears to be obvious, even superficial, it is still important. At the level of personal interests, social groups and identities do not carry great weight. They are important, but they rarely define social or personal identity. This type of multiculturalism is comfortable, and can sustain vast diversity. However, when our culture, or social identity, is identified with our deepest values, or our most revered beliefs, then multiculturalism becomes much more complex. This is often the case with religion.

Religion, and its related moral systems, often reflect or express our deepest values, hopes, dreams, desires, fears, longings, and beliefs. Religion is individual, but it also transcends personal belief systems and spiritualities. Religion is a social institution. It transmits and reinforces individual and social identity in a way that few, if any, other institution is capable. Religious beliefs, practices and moral systems are more than simply expressions of personal interest or curiosity that contribute to relatively transitory social functions. Religion organizes and expresses fundamental values and norms, and, at least theoretically, expresses what we believe to be the ultimate nature of the universe. It is relatively easy to be tolerant of other õculturesö or õsocietiesö when they are different from transitory personal interests, or preferences. It is much more difficult to be tolerant of others when their actions or beliefs conflict with that which we believe to be sacred, or appear to threaten our physical, emotional, spiritual or social survival.

Religious and social tolerance and intolerance have a complex history in Brasil. For approximately three hundred years, the Roman Catholic Church was effectively the only recognized Church. It was intimately connected to, and influential in all facets of life. While indigenous and African religions were present, and very influential in a quiet way, they were effectively limited to the poorer segments of society. They were effectively excluded from centers of power. The Roman Catholic Church dominated economic, social and political power. In the mid 1800øs, Protestant missionaries, predominantly from the United States, began to arrive. At first their presence was minimal. They were generally not well organized, poorly funded, and hardly noticed. However, in 1910 the Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland took the first steps toward organizing Protestant world missions, and a similar event in Panama, in 1916, further articulated the ideas and ideals discussed in Edinburgh, and focused on missionary activities in Latin America. One of the results of these Conferences was the organization and articulation of intentional missionary action in Latin America, in general, and specifically in Brasil. The Protestant Church began to make its presence known.

While still considered sects by the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant Churches were increasingly well organized and articulate. Until the 1930øs and 1940øs, Protestant Missionary Movements, or Churches, were generally regarded, by the Roman Catholic Church, in much the same way as Indigenous and African Religions. They were sects of little importance. They were tolerated. However, they were growing, and increasingly well organized. By the 1950øs, Protestant Churches were present in almost every town and city of importance in Brasil. It is important to note that by õProtestant Churchesö I refer not only to traditional denominations such as Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Lutheran, but also to the first wave of Pentecostal Churches, from the United States, and a variety of õBrasilian Protestant Denominationsö which evolved from Protestant Missionary Movements during this period.[2]

What is important to note is that until the 1930øs, these õsectsö, or Missionary Protestant Churches, were effectively ignored, or tolerated, by the Roman Catholic Church. They were not a threat. To this point, Missionary Protestant Churches were predominantly concerned with their own survival, ministry to Protestants living in Brasil, and the conversion of the non-churched, or persons on the fringes of the Roman Catholic Church. However, as they grew, Protestant Churches began to criticize and confront the Roman Catholic Church, and offer a viable religious alternative. The era of relative tolerance was coming to an end.

My wife, Lóide, and her father tell an interesting story about life in Araçatuba, a medium size city in a rural area of the state of São Paulo, Brasil. In the 1950øs, the central Roman Catholic Church was located in the middle of town, close to the railroad station. Across the street was the Methodist Church, where Lóide and her family were members. During a period

[2] This description is based on the following text: Antônio Gouvêa Mendonça and Prócoro Velasques Filho. *Introduçao ao Protestantismo no Brasil.* São Paulo, Edições Loyola, 1990.

of almost ten years there was an ongoing war between the two churches. The Roman Catholic Priest had a thirty minute radio show at 9:00 in the morning. The Methodist Pastor had a thirty minute radio show at 5:00 in the afternoon. Both used the time on the radio to attack each other, and their respective Churches. On Sundays it was not unusual to leave Mass, or Worship, and find your car, or motorcycle, covered with eggs thrown by the õCatholicsö, or the õMethodistsö. Catholics shopped at stores owned by Catholics. Methodists shopped at stores owned by Protestants.

Thankfully, the situation changed over time, and a certain mutual tolerance began to develop. Still, until today, most Protestant Churches avoid the use of crosses, candles, and vestments in worship services. They are considered to be õCatholicö. Protestant churches are generally simple in design, and avoid any similarity with the architecture of Roman Catholic churches. It would not be an overstatement to say that both architecture and liturgy in Protestant Churches are a reaction against õCatholicö influences. In many Protestant Churches, the term õEcumenicalö is unacceptable because it represents a threat to Protestant identity via some approximation to the Roman Catholic Church. Though much more subtle today, intolerance continues.

Living in multicultural and multi-faith societies is not simply a question of õtoleratingö different habits, or personal interests. It is a question of identity, power and perceived threat. It is much easier to õacceptö or õtolerateö the other when their beliefs or practices do not represent a threat. When they are perceived as a threat, then the other is no longer simply different, or a part of social richness and diversity. They can quickly become the enemy. The threat may be social, religious, economic or political. The key appears to be the depth of the perceived threat. Any threat that is perceived to be against survival needs or deep religious, or moral, beliefs is often interpreted in categorical terms. At the very least, it must be controlled. At worst, it must be stopped. It cannot be tolerated. It is not a difference in style, taste, or interest. It represents a different moral, or religious, universe, which has political, social and economic implications. Following the idea of Martin Buber, when the other is perceived as a deep, or moral, threat, relations are severed.[3] The other cannot be a Thou, they are an it.

This tension continues to exist in the moral, social and religious world of Brasil. There exists a certain religious ó social tolerance of the other. The religious and cultural landscape of Brasil is immensely complex. The Roman Catholic Church continues to be the dominant religious, and to a certain point social force in Brasil. Protestant Churches are an established presence, but are not growing. They are stable and respected, but still a minority that tends to react to other social and religious forces. African ó Brasilian religions continue to have a profound influence, but generally among the poorer classes, though this is not always the case. Because of their diversity and long history, they have a profound influence on religious life in Brasil, but their presence is often overlooked because they do not have a presence in the Media, specifically television, as do the Roman Catholic Church and various Pentecostal Churches.

To this point, this discussion has identified religious and social tolerance and intolerance in terms of perceived level of threat. Obviously, this is not the only factor that influences living in multicultural and multi-religious societies. However, in terms of religion, it identifies a key factor. As long as the other does not represent a real or perceived threat to the identity or survival of a group, it can be tolerated, or even accepted. However, when a threat is perceived, religious, or moral groups often react based on principles of Moral Conflicts and Moral Exclusion.

Moral conflicts occur when irreconcilable moral, or social, worlds collide. Because the social, or moral, worlds are different, the wants, beliefs and needs identified with these worlds are different. The same is true for actions based in different social, or moral, worlds. How individuals and groups deal with conflict is an integral part of a moral world. Consequently, when moral worlds collide they frequently do not share the same understanding of how to deal with conflict, or how to negotiate. The actions of one group are frequently interpreted by the other as being simplistic, wrong, or hostile.

Moral conflicts involve incompatible moral orders. In this sense, moral conflicts are more than differences in power, opinion, or competition for rights and resources. They are more than conflicts of opinion regarding the ordination of women, abortion, homosexuality, and so forth. Groups that occupy different moral worlds have fundamental differences with respect to life, knowledge and values.

A moral order, or world, is the theory that a group uses to understand experience and evaluate actions. It is a set of concepts and a system of rules that govern action. A moral order structures how truth is understood and expressed. Any action that is interpreted as threatening the basic concept of order within a tradition is almost automatically understood as an abomination, or a threat. Conflict between moral worlds often occurs because what is acceptable, or valued, within one tradition can be a fundamental violation of the norms of another group.

This concept of moral order can be understood as a belief system of "subjective certainty", that is the basis for what a group believes to be good and true. Such systems regulate how a group understands the nature of life, reality and meaning. Thus, to challenge a moral order is to threaten the basic identity and faith of a group. From a social constructionist perspective reality is social, and the moral order within which reality is constructed is the product of historical processes.[4] Consequently, knowledge is constructed within moral traditions. Moral order, daily practices, the stories that compose historical identity, and the nature of reality

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[3] Martin Buber. *I and Thou*. New York, Charles Scribnerøs Sons, 1958.

[4] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York, Doubleday, 1967.

are intertwined. Any threat to a part of the moral order represents a threat to life itself, chaos. Depending on the situation and level of perceived threat, tolerance is very difficult, if not impossible.

So as to not limit this discussion to moral questions related to religion, it is important to make clear that moral conflicts take place in a wide variety of contexts. For example, conflict between political parties may focus on economic policies, but the fundamental conflict may reflect different moral orders regarding the meaning and function of government. In his book The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Thomas Kuhn presents a convincing argument that while conflicts between scientific paradigms are superficially about the interpretation of data, the fundamental conflict is between different models of the meaning and interpretation of knowledge.[5]

Moral exclusion is one of the key elements involved in religious and social intolerance.[6] Moral exclusion is not a practice that is limited to religious contexts. However, when moral systems are closely associated, or identified with ultimate truth threats can be interpreted in ontological terms, and violence in defense of the faith can result.

Moral systems that understand their source as based in revealed truth can categorize those who do not have the same beliefs as radically different, or other. This means that persons and groups who do not have the same religious, or moral, beliefs are not necessarily included in the system of justice, or morality, of the group. Moral exclusion views the other as being outside the community in which the norms apply, and therefore as expendable, undeserving and potential targets for exploitation, aggression and violence. Those outside the moral, or religious, system can be viewed as relatively neutral or as a threat, evil, heretic, pervert, criminal or sinner. To a large degree, the interpretation of the other, by the moral community, determines how those outside the moral system should be treated. This interpretation is influenced by both the level of identification between the moral, or religious system and ultimate truth and the content of this truth. However, it is the interpretation of the moral or religious system regarding how it should act in relationship to others that is of fundamental importance. This is due to questions of how to communicate with others, and the type and intensity of power that will be applied to defend the group and its truths. In the extreme, physical violence can be a logical expression of the identity of the moral, or religious group. Such physical violence ranges from throwing eggs to consecrating human bombs, depending on the interpretation of the moral community.

It is important to note that moral exclusion and intolerance cannot be directly linked to what is often referred to as religious fundamentalism. In this context, fundamentalism is understood as the direct identification of moral and religious systems to values that define identity, to the ultimate context of reality, or to revealed truth. Fundamentalism is often associated with radically conservative groups, but this is not necessarily an accurate description of the phenomenon. Fundamentalism is not necessarily defined by political or theological position, but by an attitude that directly links moral and religious systems with truth. As such, there are conservative religious fundamentalisms as well as liberal religious fundamentalisms. In the context of the current discussion, the central question is how the religious, or moral, group interprets the relationship between political or theological systems and truth. With regard to the relationship between religion and tolerance, both conservative and liberal fundamentalisms are capable of acts of intolerance if certain conditions are met.

The key element appears to be decision-making processes in terms of how to treat those that fall outside the moral, or religious group. As previously noted, those outside of the group may be seen as somewhere on a continuum between neutral and evil. Where on this continuum the moral, or religious group places the other is a fundamental element in deciding how they should be treated in terms of communication and the application of power. This evaluation, understood as the elements that determine the disengagement of moral controls, appears to be key in the creation, or avoidance, of intolerance that has a basis in moral or religious identities.

At a very practical level, a basic question is "Why do some religious individuals and groups choose to understand their religious and moral contexts in ways that exclude others to such a degree that they may become subject to intolerance?" For example, why is it that the life of one Roman Catholic, or Protestant is dedicated to peace while another is prepared to attack, verbally or otherwise, those that are not within their circle of faith? What are the factors that influence how religious texts and traditions are chosen, read, interpreted and applied? There are no simple answers to such complex questions. Psychological theories of aggression and violence tend to point to modeling, social learning, and possible changes in brain structures due to physical and emotional abuse in early childhood.[7] In this sense, it is possible to suggest that intolerance linked to religious and moral systems is, in large part, learned. However, individual personality traits certainly enter at some point. How an individual, or group, understands and applies the religious beliefs, texts, traditions and identity of their community is almost certainly a mixture of individual personality, learning, and social identity.

It appears relatively clear that the identification, or labeling, of any religious tradition as inherently "intolerant" is unjustifiable. It is the interpretation of the

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[5] Thomas Kuhn. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970.

[6] Susan Opotow. "Aggression and Violence" in Morton Deutsch e Peter Coleman, eds. *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice.* San Francisco, Josey-Bass, 2000.

[7] M.D. Ainsworth. "The Effects of Maternal Deprivation: A Review of Findings and Controversy in the Context of Research Strategy". In: *Deprivation of Maternal Care: A Reassessment of its Effects.* Geneva, World Health Organization, 1962.

religious tradition by an individual, or group that can lead to moral exclusion, and hence to intolerance. It is highly doubtful that there exists any religious tradition that is completely free of intolerance, or moral exclusion. However, this is not due to the inherent nature of religion. How individuals and groups choose to interpret and express the existential nature of religious and social traditions is the key element in answering a fundamental question: "How then shall we live?"

Returning to the context in Brasil, it is interesting to note that there is considerable tolerance and flexibility in terms of Moral Communities. Moral Exclusion that leads to aggressive intolerance is relatively rare. This is probably due to a long history of õcultural invasionö. For approximately five hundred years, Brasil has õbeen invaded byö or õincorporatedö a huge diversity of religious and social influences. Such diversity has created a certain tolerance and flexibility. If such characteristics did not exist, Brasilian religious and social existence would be effectively impossible. However, such flexibility, or tolerance, has its price. The religious landscape in Brasil is so incredibly diversified, or fragmented, that it is difficult to establish õecumenicalö relationships of any kind. Religious groups tend to isolate themselves within their specific communities. This is also true, at least to some degree, of Brasilian social, or cultural, life. Social groups tend to be fairly isolated from each other. This may reflect the vast economic differences between the rich, the middle class and the poor, and the extreme difficulty of social-economic mobility. However, the deeper reality may be that both religious and social groups perceive themselves to be highly vulnerable to economic forces and the influences of the mass media which present a style of life based on North American, and to some degree European, standards and values.

To close, I want to tell a story. Last semester I taught a class on Religion and Sexuality at my Seminary, the Methodist School of Theology in Brasil. I assigned a book written by a Lutheran theologian that proposed a Gay Theology. In Brasilian religious contexts, Roman Catholic and Protestant, homosexuality is generally considered to be a sin and a pathology. Three students, from very conservative Pentecostal Churches, were very unhappy with and critical of my choice. They made their opposition and opinion known, and then waited to hear what I had to say. I explained why I chose the text, what the book had to say, and the importance of understanding perspectives and opinions that were different from our own. When I was done, they once again voiced their concern, citing various theological arguments and biblical texts, and then one of them said something very interesting. õWell. This is going to be interesting. I have never heard of Gay Theology.ö The next week, during the discussion, my three critics were the most interested and active. They did not agree with the perspective of the author, but they had obviously read, discussed, and thought about the text. They did not attack. They did not invoke Moral Exclusion. They were not necessarily õtolerantö, but they were curious. This reveals something of the Brasilian soul.

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II)
Intercultural Competence

Intercultural Competence

Elisabeth Rohr

At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century about 150 million people lived permanently outside their country of birth and homeland. They had either been persecuted and fled to get away from violence, terror, war, famine and misery or had more or less voluntarily migrated to find for themselves and their children better living conditions and a life in dignity.

Worldwide societies have experienced enormous changes, unknown up till now. Alone in the last 35 years the number of migrants has increased from 75 million to the above mentioned 150 million – that is more than double the amount. From this development neither Europe nor Germany have been exempted. Today there are almost 10 million migrants living in Germany, including migrants, who came in search of jobs or a husband, including also refugees, Jewish refugees and ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union, nationalized immigrants and unauthorized migration. This means that almost every 8th person, whom we meet, has not been born in Germany and does not own Germany nationality.

Looking at these figures from a mere statistical point of view, it doesn't seem possible anymore to avoid interculturality. Whereas this sounds rather negative, one also could formulate this in a more positive way:

Intercultural encounters are part of our daily living experience. They are not an exception anymore, have long lost their exotic touch, although not their peculiarity and their oddness.

But even though intercultural encounters have turned out to be a daily experience, it doesn't mean that we can handle such situations without strain, feeling relaxed, calm and self assured. This is not only true for private and personal situations, but true as well for professional fields, especially for our intercultural work in institutions and organizations.

What we therefore need is a specific form of competence: an intercultural competence. A lot has been written about this issue, especially in the English speaking world a lot of studies have been published to analyse what managers or experts of foreign aid need to know before they are send abroad to be able to do their job efficiently and stay productive. Concerning this field of work, there are six specifications considered to be vital as a constituency for intercultural competence.

- To think in a larger context and to cross disciplinary borders
- To bear and to balance paradoxical situations
- To be more concerned about processes than structures

- To search for individual and cultural experiences and recognition
- Not to avoid unexpected situations and surprises, but participate in change processes
- To be motivated for life long learning

But these specifications don't seem to me and I guess not to you either very typical for intercultural competence. I think, this is a very precise description of all those requirements that today are considered to be necessary for any working situation, no matter with whom and where we are working. Because is there anybody here who doesn't have to be flexible and often enough mobile? There is no doubt that nowadays, it is generally expected to be capable to think in a critical and differentiated manner about global contexts and additionally to be highly motivated for life long learning.

Similarly imprecise are also other specifications, trying to describe intercultural competence. For example they require knowledge about migratory cultures and knowledge about the different modes of psychosocial reactions and coping strategies concerning problems of integration and marginalization. In addition they require knowledge of causes and manifestations of prejudice and xenophobia. Also required are experiences abroad and knowledge of foreign languages.

But these descriptions are only making up a minority of 4 criterias in a listing of 13 criterias, all of them summing up to a complete list of specifications, trying to describe intercultural education. In my opinion this list is overwhelming and intimidating. Who knows all this and who is capable of performing in this way? How can all this knowledge ever be acquired? Beyond feelings of guilt and inferiority and pressure for achievement, I can't detect much of a motivation in the light of all these excessive e demands to get acquainted with and acquire intercultural competence.

Much more interesting I find another concept, developed specifically for managers, who were to be send abroad. Here the necessity of intercultural sensitivity is considered to be important, which is described as a general learning ability for new situations. Emphasized is also empathy, tolerance of ambiguity, coping strategies, flexibility in performing and a broad repertoire of modes of behaviour as well as the ability to negotiate rules of the game and to avoid premature attributions. Considered important is here the capacity to bear ambivalence, insecurity and uncertainty, avoiding premature action and to bring forth at the same time a high amount of patience and self reliance.

Even though I like this description of intercultural competence much better than the previous ones, because it seems more adequate, there still rests a question: What is typical of these specifications for intercultural competence? Because what is described here could as well be a general description of social and communicative competence. Is intercultural competence therefore not much more than a social and com-

municative competence in the intercultural field? Maybe, but maybe not. Intercultural competence has, in my opinion, more to do with feelings and emotions than f. e. social and communicative competence and additionally it has to do with difficult feelings, but sometimes also with fun, as well as with shame, with joy and with feelings of guilt, with desire, as well as with defence, with fascination and with fear.

Two Cases

Before I am going to dive even deeper into this issue, I would like to present two cases out of my own intercultural experiences, showing quite clearly the significance of feelings, providing at the same time insight not only into intercultural performances, but also into cultural and social influences of behaviour.

One of my most precious memories and experiences has to do with an intercultural working contract with a music and dance ensemble from Ecuador. Already during my long lasting stay in the USA I had started to get interested in issues of cultural diversity and my own cultural and social influences that shaped my personality. This of course didnøt happen very systematically and more or less sporadic, whenever discussions abut this issue would come up with friends. This changed with the beginning of my sociological studies and my fascination for ethno-psychoanalysis and finally my training as a group analyst in London. This intensified during my research in Ecuador and later then, in the beginnings of the 80th, when I accompanied this music and dance ensemble from Ecuador during their 2 month tour through Germany. This ensemble was financed and their tour was organized by the Society of the Protestant Youth Ministers of Germany to highlight the year of the missionary.

During the many and sometimes long lasting hours of our train journey we had reserved two compartments each with 6 seats for the 9 members of the ensemble, this way we always had plenty of space for all of us, including myself. As soon as the train would take off, the seats were pulled out and at least 6 of them would lie down, head to feet, for a restful sleep in one of the compartments. They were lying there like sardines and it seemed as if this physical contact and warmth produced such a pleasant feeling that all of them fell into a deep sleep immediately. They always would feel quite sorry for me, since I wasnøt able to relax during these journeys, much less being able to sleep in the midst of such a knot. As manager, translator, social worker, counsellor and therapist I felt in all these working relationships quite close to the ensemble and its members and had come to be involved in a lot of their intimacies. But in these moments in the train, I felt very much their remoteness, their strangeness and the feeling to be excluded was tangled with sensations of sadness and melancholia. At the same time I would feel especially close to them, because their capability to relax and calm down, was fascinating and touched me deeply and rose a huge desire inside of myself, to be able to relax as they did. Despite of all their well meant advice, this was simply not possible for me.

The intensity of the feelings rose out of a contradictory mix of deeply felt joy and happiness, being so close, on the one hand and a painful sensation to be so far away, on the other hand. Without any doubt, I had reached a cultural and individual barrier, that I couldnøt overcame and that stayed imprinted in my mind as something especially painful, but also as something especially enchanted and magical, something I never would be able to reach, but that touched me very deeply, despite of all its remoteness.

Even though this experience might be understood as an example of intercultural incompetence, these irritations that had developed, did help me later on to understand more about intercultural issues, because this experience had touched me so deeply and had produced such a deep feeling of lost self-reliance.

A second example

Recently I had taken part in an international conference in Norway. There I was introduced to an Israeli and my friend mentioned that we both could work together in the intercultural field of an international society, since we both had a strong interest in questions about interculturality. Since I had been introduced as a German I noticed immediately a closing up on his part, a mask fell over his face ó at least that was my impression ó and he was not able anymore to reach out and shake hands with me. We met quite often during the course of the conference, which lasted a whole week, but avoided any further contact. This was quite obvious to me and I felt embarrassed. At the last day of the conference I went to listen to a small sub-plenary session. The Israeli also took part in this session, but he was one of the persons, reading a paper. Four psychotherapists from Israel were talking about their experiences and their encounters with Palestinian psychotherapists in an effort to break through the wall of silence between Israelis and Palestinians and to contribute in this way to a more peaceful society. The accounts were quite personal, full of emotions, pain and sadness. It was difficult to bear these emotions. After the session I passed the Israeli, who had been introduced to me, and all of a sudden I heard myself say to him that his account had deeply touched me and had been very moving. While talking, I felt that I was only with great efforts able to withhold my tears. He noticed and heard it and looked into my eyes, but this time he looked at me as if he saw me for the first time. The mask had disappeared, he didnøt withdraw emotionally anymore, but reached out with his hand and grasped mine and said, we will talk.

This surely can be considered a successful intercultural encounter that began with a lot of defence and ended with a deep felt feeling of closeness and understanding. I think, this experience has a lot to do with intercultural competence. With a competence that cannot be rationally controlled, generated or learned through pure cognitive will power and which doesnøt depend upon research about prejudice and experiences abroad.

As different both cases might be, if we look at them closely, there is a strong similarity that unites both stories: Principally and both times it has to do with issues of feeling close and feeling distant. Intercultural competence therefore is performance, oscillating be-

tween feelings of closeness and remoteness. The German philosopher Waldenfels expressed this very similar, just in a more poetic way, when he wrote: õI am only able to get close to a stranger, if I am capable to bear his remotenessö. These words contain in my opinion, the most precise definition of intercultural competence, since they touch the core of the issue. Because only this is at stake: to get close to the foreigner, the migrant or the refugee, maybe also the colleague from Africa, if we are able to bear and to endure their distance, their difference, maybe even their strangeness. This doesnøt mean of course that knowledge of foreign languages, international experiences are not worthwhile, but these skills clearly refer to a different level of understanding as this attitude that Waldenfels meant to express with his words. This attitude I would like to define as a capacity to bear and endure feelings of intimacy and remoteness at the same time.

The desire to acquire this capacity of intimacy and remoteness in the encounter of strangers implies a big challenge, since it means to accept ones own and the barriers of others and to arrange oneself in an oscillating space in between intimacy and remoteness. This also signifies to accept the fact that this tolerance of intimacy and remoteness can only be acquired and finally understood as a dynamic and principally process orientated event that never ends and that never closes.

According to this way of thinking, certain consequences have to be taken into account: The notion that intercultural competence means the capacity to balance continuously intimacy and remoteness refers already to the potentiality of an inherent crisis, underlying this process. Many anthropologists, having to rely daily on their capacity to live in and shape this space of intimacy and remoteness have drawn attention to this conflictive potential of intercultural encounter. Some of them describe this process of learning how to tolerate intimacy and remoteness at the same time as a process of õsocial dyingö, because cultural influences and culturally specific forms of communication and even ones own identity are shaken and questioned. If the appropriation and practice of intercultural competence principally is to be understood as a process of õsocial dyingö, then it becomes clear, that this necessarily will produce heavy emotional and psychic upheavals. This means, the idea of õsocial dyingö cannot only be understood as an expression of a professional crisis, but must be understood at the same time as an expression of a social and cultural regression. As a result it will be impossible to keep up familiar forms of interaction and communication as well as internalised modes of behaviour. This regression, which always escorts intercultural encounters, is significant insofar as it pushes back rationality in favour of emotions. Under the condition of regression emotions play a dominant role, whereas rationality and cognitive processes of thinking are only functioning partially. This is quite familiar to us from a number of daily experiences. If we are excited or sad or maybe even cry, it is very difficult to think clearly. Therefore intercultural competence means ó and this might sound paradox ó not only to bear disorientation and a distortion of our perception, but to endure this

with sovereignty. This means not to repress, neutralize or consider the situation to be a mere banality and unimportant. Intercultural competence therefore means to bear an awful lot of incompetence. This will produce contact and it will diminish differences of social hierarchy and feelings of inferiority and thereby helps effectively to balance internalised but colonial and imperialistic relationships of power. Intercultural competence means therefore, to put it in simple words, to be able to handle ones own as well as the others individual and cultural weaknesses, regressive and sometimes aggressive impulses, to bear feelings of impotency, fear of failure, feelings of insufficiency and if possible to turn the crisis into something productive and creative. It is therefore important to look at the crisis, the feeling of lost security and helplessness as a new chance, a different approach and a different way of understanding. The aim would be to find ways to meet and forms to communicate that endure intimacy and remoteness, touching and defence, understanding and non-understanding.

õSocial dyingö and the resulting crisis within the intercultural encounter as well as the necessity of learning how to tolerate intimacy and remoteness do not only concern the experts in such an intercultural situation, but every person involved. Therefore intercultural competence also has to do with the capacity to stay on in a dialog and in case of upcoming disturbances not to cut off neither the dialog nor the relationship and if possible to talk about the disturbances. Out of this might develop an effort on both sides, aiming at revitalizing the mutual and common dialog again.

Intercultural competence therefore can basically be understood as a mutual and common process of learning in the sense of a reciprocal and self-reflective dialog. This reciprocity is quite significant, but is usually not mentioned in the issues about intercultural competence. Most of the time it is tacitly assumed that intercultural competence is only a competence to be acquired by experts. But strangely enough, the other side always seems to get lost, as if intercultural competence is a completely unilateral matter, almost like a monologue. Perhaps it is a completely misunderstood tolerance, which seduces to think that the others, the partners from abroad, the migrants, the refugees, the foreign colleagues should be protected, in the sense of not to ask or demand anything from them. But this definitely is not what it means to be politically correct, because it rather shows a patriarchal and colonial attitude towards partners from abroad, also towards migrants, refugees or colleagues from Africa, who are not taken serious as subjects and are not treated equal.

Out of this logic there canøt be any other way as to understand intercultural competence as a mutual and common process of learning, otherwise it wonøt be possible to hold up the notion of the equality of men.

This means that not only experts in the social, ecclesiastical and therapeutical institutions or workers in foreign companies need intercultural competence, but it is needed by migrants, refugees, small farmers in foreign aid project as well as by Chinese managers or colleagues in Africa, Asia or Latin-American. Because

without intercultural competence and without learning how to bear, endure and handle intimacy and remoteness at the same time, processes of integration will fail as well as political cooperation with developing countries or international economic cooperation and last but not least also interreligious dialog will fail. Only if a mutual and common process of learning will develop, creative resources will be set free for a new way of intercultural encounter, allowing new forms of mutual acknowledgment.

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RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE, AND YET AT THE OUT-SKIRTS Ë

On the road to intercultural competence in every day life.

Philipp Hauenstein

My personal approach

Let me start with my own biographical approach. I am a Protestant theologian and together with my family I have lived as a time-contract co-operator in the Lutheran Church of Papua-New-Guinea, coming ÷from the worldwide Churchø, so to speak as a ÷migrant workerø. Since 1992 I work and teach in the Institute for Studies of World Mission in the Division for World Mission of the Lutheran Church in Bavaria, Germany. For many years I have been preparing co-workers for living and working in a cultural context, alien to them.

What I want to convey in this essay derives from the reflection of my own experience as well as from preparing and accompanying our co-workers for their specials tasks overseas.

This background is somewhat similar to situations of working in international developmental organisations, but also to working and living conditions of people working in multinational companies. There are indeed very interesting ÷intersectionsø. Our peculiarity, however, is the context of the Christian Church and theology in an ecumenical horizon. Within this context I argue and state my ideas.

The experience of ÏforeignnessÐ

Women and men, who had asked to be sent out into a different country, and thus into another culture, encounter very ambivalent experiences.

On the one hand they experience hospitality, community and the challenge of being integrated into a meaningful task, i.e. in the Church as a Godøs own and cultures-transcending construction site. This experience almost never would have shown up for most of them if they would have stayed at home! So they are the ones who gain enormously!

At the same time these ecumenical co-operators are confronted with a high degree of ÷foreignnessø. Values and role concepts of the other culture may be ÷knownø on a cognitive level, but still their ÷foreignnessø persists. Even if integration succeeds mainly, even if you may form lots of friendships, you will not leave this status of a ÷guestø. So one may hear even long-time co-operators saying: õSometimes it really hits you realizing that you wonøt be ÷one of themø for all your life!ö After long years many of them feel as being õin the thick of it, and yet at the outskirtsö.

Whoever moves into another cultural context, will not only encounter ÷foreignø people whom they will not understand at first. They will ósurprisingly- experience that they will ÷becomeø foreigners. Among the people

of their new context of life, they will have the status of a foreigner. And this will make them vulnerable, even violable. Unlike the others they are reliant on granted hospitality and granted spaces for life and work. Whoever seriously gets involved into another culture dares a risk. Not knowing values, intrinsic values included, makes one vulnerable. You become dependent on help. You need people to "introduce" you. And if you rather meet the "wrong" people for that, you will be disappointed. Daring this risk includes risking one's faith in Jesus Christ! We risk our faith. The alien context makes us insecure. Quite often persons might perceive this as a borderline experiences. However, there is this other surprising experience too, that a "foreigner" might discover possibilities he/she would never have dared to dream of before. So I want to deliberate over these particular conditions.

Foreignness as charisma

The foreignness of a person who "came in from the outside" means powerlessness and vulnerability. But it also means a precious "outside-view-in" This culturally differing position opens up particular perspectives. To put forth this perspective into a given context is a great chance, when it originates from a vivid "Konvivenz" (conviviality) and aims at sharing the question of Christ's importance for our life and our actions.

Thus weakness may become strength, a desideratum may become a giftedness. Foreignness becomes a charisma – presupposed one does not get stuck in the position of "cultural shock"

If it is a gift granted by the Holy Spirit, then its target is quite clearly "the common benefit" (1 Cor 12.7). If so, then this gift of "foreignness" will be applied, just like any other charismata in the New Testament, to "built up the congregation" (1 Cor 14,26).

When comparing New Testament terminology I see a certain vicinity between the charisma of foreignness and the one of prophetic speech. St. Paul ascribes a high significance to "prophetic speech" (1 Cor 14.1 etc.). In my understanding St. Paul talks about prophecy when he refers to a proclamation of God's claim and positive assertion in Jesus Christ, related to a concrete worshipping congregation. Now the charisma of foreignness opens up a particular perspective, too, by which one may inquire about the significance of Jesus Christ in a concrete situation. Perhaps there is one more link and connotation, i.e. between the charisma of foreignness and the charisma "to distinguish the spirits" (1 Cor 12,10). The "culturally differing position" could enhance this! Perhaps foreignness also gives a very particular touch to all other charismata one could think of. In any case, this charisma is not an end in itself, but is serving to the "body of Christ" Persons who come "from outside in" may contribute with this specific gift. Whatever they will contribute and share, will keep being controversial. Whether their contribution will be of any use or not, - to decide about this is not up to them, but to the local community, respectively the local, indigenous Church. Their contribution is a ferment, nor more – no less also!

The charisma of foreignness is nothing without love – as all other charismata, too. Love is its internal frame of reference and its appropriate external framework, too (1. Cor 13). This love, by the way, never reduces to an apparitional being, it always becomes rather concrete in its gestalt. It's for good reasons that St. Paul says, we should strive for it being one of the "higher gifts" (1.Cor 21,31). When I am referring to love at this point of my deliberations, then I want to point out that this love here means the intensive and patient strive to understand "the other" Both aspects belong together: to be responsive and committed to the people of another culture on the one hand, but also to bring in one's own perspectives deriving from one's own foreignness, since they are a special task of people who come "from outside in"

Very deliberately I do not only term foreignness a special ability, but a charisma, that has to be woven into St. Paul's teachings about charismata otherwise. The framework for this specific charisma is the love Christ shared. So foreignness isn't automatically functioning in a constructive way. Withdrawals into one's own inner ghetto or mordant cynicism are possibilities we have to take seriously, and which belong to the schemes of human reaction formations we often encounter. We have to remind ourselves: it is possible to strand! The concept of charisma indicates that we are not just talking about a human quality that always has been there – more or less – and that just has to be cultivated. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit. It is targeting at "building the congregation" the final target of all charismata. For sure, this is not the only ability or the only charisma, in an anthropological nor in a theological sense, which ecumenical "companions on the road" live by their mere presence. But it is a specialty we should not miss out on! If we would conceive it to be an ethical imperative, then we would misunderstand its essence, and it would indeed become an excessive demand. Even if we may contribute this and that, it will still remain what it basically is: a gift of God. Our part is to ask for it, to hope for it, that God will grant it; and this is a part of "praxis pietatis" of one's ecumenical existence. Simultaneously the discovery of this charisma plays an eminent un-burdening role. Foreignness, even when initially experienced as a deficiency, still holds meaningful and never thought of chances!

The ecumenical model of being the Church presupposes, that there exists God's Mission ("missio dei") to this world – and that Church is just a part of this larger mission, and that it can only be integrated into this "movement" as a multi-voice-choir. Which role do ecumenical co-workers play in all this? By their presence one may experience the worldwide Church "in person" (ad personam) – and also: the worldwide Church may be experienced by them! They may become agents of fermenting in this process which strives to rediscover again and again the vitally important significance of Jesus Christ. When contributing their external perspective and their charisma of foreignness, they will provide major assets to concrete steps by which one may want to follow Jesus Christ.

One precondition, however, is needed that the churches concerned must feel up to accept a certain

amount of foreignness to be present among them. Otherwise great chances will stay unemployed.

Spirituality of the discipleship of Jesus when living abroad

Whenever one becomes a foreigner then a great challenge starts in regard to one's own physical and emotional/mental resources. We have to make great allowance to all this once we train ecumenical co-workers before their terms start, once we try to support them while working abroad, and also, once they return to their home countries. (I could give many remarks to all this.) Intercultural pastoral care and supervision may contribute very positively to these issues. Sometimes, however, it is just not easy to find modes and ways to put such a support into action. Right here I will set the focus a little differently: I want to point out how much our own spirituality is challenged in this situation. How can this 'spiritual life' ('praxis pietatis') be moulded and brought to life, even when being aware of the particular context of foreignness, where I meet 'foreigners' and where I become a 'foreigner' What are hallmarks of this type of spirituality, which links to following Jesus while being abroad, which prays and hopes that foreignness may become a charisma?

I want to outline some elements of such a 'praxis pietatis'. It won't be objective, nor exhaustive, but I hope it may be inspiring.

Contemplating Prayer

When outlining his pastoral theology the German theologian Manfred Josuttis, labelled the practice of pastors to be 'pastoral cross-border commuting'(4). 'Pastors lead across the border. They mediate between diverse groups, and they move in the somewhat 'electrifying' field between faith and science. They accompany persons in the borderline situations of life.' They have to relate to the Sacred – by profession (ex officio) – and they shall talk about it. They shuttle along borders. Does 'a spirituality of border-crossing' (6) exists which reacts to those aspects? His answer is: 'Since time immemorial religion provides a simple and yet very complicated tools for this 'great border traffic' The most fundamental act of such (verbal) border crossing is prayer!'

As we have seen above, ecumenical co-workers cross intercultural borders. Doing so they become vulnerable, but they may be granted the special charisma of foreignness. Also for this 'spirituality of intercultural border-crossing' it is prayer that provides the space, where one may learn, 'to mediate between people, to accompany in life-crises, to unblock inner blockades and to transcend one's every-day-world by means of speech'.

To pinpoint it down more detailed: it is 'contemplating prayer' that is helpful here. What does it mean? My personal approach to contemplating prayer has been deepened by the tradition of Christian meditation. As we all know meditation in a lot of faiths provides a way through which one is able to concentrate on what is really essential.

Manfred Seitz puts it this way: 'Instead of meditation one could also say contemplating prayer, since it is a way of gathering oneself before God, a way of silencing oneself onto God and a way of contemplating before his eyes'.

Yet contemplating prayer isn't a mode of monologue, but a dialogical sequence. Well, of course I am the one who has his say towards God. Very consciously I name my hopes, my joy, also my perplexity and my incapability before God. But more than all that do I expect and hope, that something vitally important 'crosses' my mind – here and now, at the particular place where I am between varying cultures, but coming from God.

Contemplating prayer isn't a way of withdrawal into my inner world. On the contrary: when concentrating on what is essentially important one will experience how a new understanding opens up, and foreignness may become a gift of grace, a present, a charisma, indeed. 'I start seeing now, I see the creation. I experience the Lord of creation. I sense the Spirit. Contemplation, meditation, deliberation about God's word all this opens up eyes. A Russian monk when he was about to die, once said: 'A Christ – just like the Cherubim – should become completely eye''.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry in his story 'The Little Prince' has the fox saying to the prince: 'This is my secret. It is very simple. It's only via your heart that you can see things clearly. The essential is not to be seen via your eyes'.

At the borderline of intercultural encounter contemplating prayers help to 'see via your heart' If we do not learn to 'see via our hearts' we will hardly understand a foreigner, - and consequently the foreignness as a chance will remain unemployed.

After all, if this is the goal, 'to see via one's heart', i.e. with our most inner core, which is not so easily accessible for most of us, it is quite clear that such a contemplating prayer and meditation needs instruction. This is a general rule. It is important to do the first steps under the guidance of an experienced mentor. This, of course, rarely can be done when living overseas. When living 'over there' then these resources have to be there, so that they can be employed. Their adaptation has to be accomplished beforehand.

Humour

In order to bear out an intercultural life situation you need a certain mental/emotional and intellectual mobility, which enhances learning. If one of them is lacking, or even worse, if both of them are lacking, an ecumenical co-worker very likely turns to become a 'lonely fighter', who probably will not be able to employ the charisma of foreignness. These persons will need all their energy just to survive. They become joyless contemporaries, with which any co-operation or communal living would be stressing, even when just living in the very own cultural context.

This last thought lead us to the last connotation, which I would like to take up in this last chapter of my deliberations about Christian spirituality when living abroad!

As a symbol for this mental/emotional mobility, but also as an expression of what I would claim to be the "protestant attitude towards life", which is needed when living "between" cultures, I will talk about a sound common sense of humour.

The issue is like this: whoever "moves" between differing cultures or in differing cultures, you will make mistakes. This is unavoidable. One will suddenly find oneself in situations, which must look grotesque and absurd to their own perceiving. You will even make embarrassing awful mistakes, without consciously being out for them!

This causes stress. Well, if one accomplishes not to take oneself too seriously and to start laughing about oneself, this will help him/her as well as the fellow people around.

Psychotherapist Juan Andrés Bernhardt comes up like this in his little "phenomenology of humour": "We observe that a humorous person perceives the world and him/herself in it in broadened optics, in a wider frame of reference. Us "ordinary neurotics", we tend to look at our lives, our problems and anxieties from a very narrow angle. So we overestimate them and their meaning. Compulsively we cling to this attitude, not realizing that a different way of looking at the problem from a point of view from above would solve the problem in a sudden burst. A humorous person is able to change the angle of looking at things, thus adopting a different position towards a specific situation".

With all this I point out to an anthropological possibility which generally spoken is there and accessible for every human being. The only difficulty seems to be how to reach this point of view from above.

I want to specify the "broadened optics" and the point of view from above more detailed in theological perspectives. The wider theological frame of reference is this: since God is taking each one of us very seriously, we do not need to take ourselves deadly serious. Since God grants us the right to live, our anxieties and worries appear in a new light. Surely, some of our problems will not vanish out of a sudden, even in this new light. In a foreign context obscure and ambivalent situations will not become non-ambiguous just by this. But me myself, I will be able to cope with them on a more relaxed basis. And this will create space needed for new perspectives.

Within a theological system humour ranges among the topics of eschatology. Humour, in a preliminary and tentative way, depicts the all-embracing shalom which God will create, and so Heaven and the New Earth cast their friendly shade on us, preliminarily. Humour gets its substantiation as regards content, in the event of the Easter. In times ago the Orthodox Church establishes a liturgical form for all this, a tradition called "risus paschalis", the Easter-Laughter. "When proclaiming the Gospel "HE is risen, HE is risen indeed" then the congregation starts roaring with laughter, since hell, death and devil have been overcome in the Easter events". Humour deriving from these sources thus is a particular form of paschal joy. This joy takes more serious what God has done in our favour through Jesus Christ than all what we may accomplish. This in no way is diminishing or disqualifying our human activities. This would be a bad misunderstanding. On the contrary – in particular since we live on the basis of "iustitia aliena" (granted justification) we may accept a more realistic assessment of our own possibilities. Of course it is quite right to see some closeness between this notion of a particular Christian humour and humbleness. There is a same line in Karl Barth's thinking when he names thankfulness, humbleness and humour to be our appropriate reactions to the honour, by which God has honoured us in Jesus Christ. "It cannot be other than that this human being, being honoured by God, finds himself (meaning: himself as being the object of this honouring) rather amazing". One could even go one step further and say: humour thus is a form of humbleness. This opens up an important dimension to us of a Christian virtue, that has been widely misunderstood and – for right or wrong - being discredited so often. Humour tells us, when understood as the ability to laugh about oneself, the humbleness may not be a convulsive and sullen attitude, but that it is comforting humans in the deepest sense.

Helmut Thielicke when reflecting about Christian humour quotes a fable that he regards to be a very exemplary story to depict Christian humour. And I adopt it here, because here one may find important aspects, that in a healthy way put into perspective the life and the work of ecumenical co-operators, and last but not least, also our own activities as a missionary society and one of the "sending agencies".

"In an old collection of fables there is a story telling about a bird that once lay on his back, very stiffly elongating his legs towards the sky. When another bird watched this rather weird position, he flew near and asked: "Why do you lie on your back elongating your legs so far away from you?" "Well", he answered, "you should know that I carry the sky by my legs. If I would tug up my legs and let loose, the whole firmament would tumble down!" He hardly had finished saying this when a little leave fell down from the tree nearby, landing rustlingly right next to him. The bird was so shocked that abruptly he forgot about his sublime and cosmic mission, and not only did he tug up his legs but flew away panicking. The sky still arched the earth".

Particularly in mission work and in Church developmental work we resemble this little bird ahich thinks he has to carry the firmament, very often in our activities. If a little leaf falls down rustlingly (you may think of your own "leaves"), also we might forget our "sublime mission" very rapidly! But if we would succeed to look at ourselves from the perspective of the fable, we would not only show our humour, - we would be real co-operators on God's mission!

Mockery, taunt, cynicism and sarcasm, they are far off from humour! They contain a certain aggressiveness which is unknown to humour. Whoever is able to laugh about oneself, he/she will be able to deal with others in a more merciful way. The gaze from a distance enables him/her, to discover the originality and uniqueness of the other. On the other hand it is true: whoever does not take oneself too seriously, he/she will be accepted by others more likely in a serious way!

This type of attitude isnøt always on our hands. If we would demand it, it wouldnøt work. It is for good reasons that humour is dealt with under õEschatologyö, i.e. the teachings about the ÷final thingsø. Humour presupposes a distance of a human being to his/her own concrete situation, a reflection from a point of view from above, which is not always and easily accessible, even if we can determine and label it quite well. This particularly applies, when we are in the midst of a difficult and awkward situation. Now eschatology is not just the teaching about the ÷final thingsø, it teaches in particular about those things that we can hope for. So this point of view from above is within our reach when hoping for the Holy Spirit. Promisingly St. Paul writes: õWhere there is the Spirit of the Lord, there is freedomö (2.Cor 3.17). The Spirit enables the distance that we need in order not to look at ourselves sullenly or even filled with bitterness. He opens up an inner freedom to be able to laugh about oneself.

Summing up

Our situation ÷between culturesø appears to us as being in right in the middle of all events and being a part of them ó one day. The very next day will confront us with old and new foreignness and we feel at the outside. This tension will remain. But foreignness is not just a burden. It can produce positive contributions, even become a charisma. The ability õto see via oneøs heartö and the inner freedom to laugh about oneself, these are important steps on the way to intercultural competency that we need when we are cross-border commuters between cultures.

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Through the Eyes of Another?

Intercultural reading of the Bible

Hans de Wit / Daniel S. Schipani

A tired man is sitting by himself near a well at the foot of the hills. It is hot. He is thirsty. He needs help. Water is available but he has no bucket and the well is deep. A woman is coming from the village to draw water, she is alone. We are not told what her name is. She is also thirsty. The man and the woman never met before. The things they share are their thirst and a common past. Beyond that there are vast differences. He is a man; she is a woman. They do not belong to the same people. The man crossed a border to get to the well; his people donøt usually come to the place where he is now sitting. Her people are despised by his people. The man addresses her and asks for water. She could help him quench his thirst since she brought a bucket with her. She doesnøt do it though. She asks him a question: õWhy are you talking to me? Your people do not talk with us!ö Then everything changes. A conversation begins: about thirst and water; about who they really are and the tradition that produced them; about salvation and healing. Something fundamental happens to both of them. He interrupts his journey, stays with her and her people; she changes her life; she no longer has to flee from her past; she begins to sow. They will never forget each other.

Introduction

Over the past 3 years hundreds of ordinary readers from more than 25 countries and the most varied communities of faith have been studying the scene of the encounter at the well, narrated in John 4. The title of the project in the framework of which they did this was: Through the eyes of Another. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time that a project with this presentation and scope has been implemented.

An international group of scholars have been processing the reading reports and many of them participated in the reading groups. The core question of the project was: what happens when Christians from radically different cultures and situations read the same

Bible story and start talking about it with each other? Can joint, intercultural reading of Bible stories result in a new method of reading the Bible and communication of faith that is a catalyst for new, trans-border types of dialogue and identity formation?

The participating scholars tied in developments and challenges that have come to light in the past decades in the broad field of theology. They share a great concern about the negative effects of globalisation and the increasing asymmetry in the world. They are convinced of the wealth of Bible reading practices of ordinary readers and of the fact that this is, in many aspects, a very neglected terrain that offers tremendous opportunities. They are very aware of the diversity in the world and of the necessity of establishing new interactions that contribute to consciousness-raising and change. It is not the search for the ultimate meaning of Bible texts that takes centre stage in all of this, but rather the development of a new perspective.

The scope of the project is broad. Certain objectives appeared feasible in the implementation and some hypotheses relevant and fertile; others faded into the background, turned out to be too diffuse and will have to be defined more precisely. Testing a number of assumptions from an empirical point of view was one of the project's objectives.

In what follows I would like to reflect briefly on some central aspects of the project. What was the background of the project and what were its objectives (1)? Which method for intercultural reading was used (2)? How did it work out, what were the results (3)? What are its implications and what has still to be deepened, polished, investigated when the project continues (4)?

Background

The project touches upon challenges and gaps in modern sciences such as science of literature, hermeneutics, philosophy, cultural studies, and, of course, theology, exegesis, and biblical hermeneutics.

Its direct background is constituted by the fact and experience of globalisation and its mostly not benign effects, the immense asymmetry in the world, the premature death of so many, and therefore the question about the human of humanity, and whether or not involving Scripture in all this can contribute to more peace, more understanding, less sorrow and grief. The disappearance of the cold war situation made space for a new awareness of an old fact, namely the existence of the many local conflicts groups and nations are dealing with. With respect to Europe, over the last decades a growing awareness emerged of being thrown into a situation of multiculturality, which is not felt anymore as only attractive and inspiring, but every time more as a burden, as a situation not sought for, not foreseen, and yet mirror of what is going on in this wide world of ours. The situation Christians have among themselves can be compared with the image the well known Dutch sociologist Geert Hofstede uses in opening his study on cultural differences. Twelve members of a jury are sitting together. The cultural differences are great; they have never met each other before, but they must arrive

together at solving the task imposed on them before they will be allowed to leave. 'Like the twelve members of the jury,' Hofstede writes, 'people, groups and nations are confronted with communal problems that can only be solved by co-operation' (Hofstede 1995: 13).

If I may speak for my own context: seldom in the history of our country 'others' have been so thoroughly scrutinized, investigated, objectified, brought down to statistics, discussed about, as the big group of Muslims in the Netherlands. Those who criticize Western philosophy for its grab for power by objectifying the other, always exercise power over him/her, considering alterity as a threat, certainly have a case here.

What, then, at a more scientific level, are the gaps and challenges the project wants to take up? Let me summarize the most important. From a mainly philosophical point of view, the project is directly attached to this post-war current of mainly Jewish philosophy and philosophers (Buber, Rosenzweig, Levinas, Derrida) which criticize heavily dominant philosophical currents of Enlightenment and modernity for the way 'the other' has been perceived, defined and incorporated into the system.

Multiplicity is not a flaw, as argued by those who like to use õthe standard of an epistemological rigidityö satisfied only in mathematics (and not even there); rather, exegetical pluralism is a product of and tribute to the pluralism constitutive of human society. Multiplicity is a reflection of lived ethics (italics mine), the pluralism of the face-to-face, on the one hand, as it is also a product of and tribute to that lived ethics, reflected in the essential pluralism (not õmereö or õunfortunateö ambiguity or equivocation) of textual meaning, on the other hand. What constitutes the fundamental truth of meaning, then, is not a common denominator, which would be reductive, but a unique service, the singularity of each one in the face of the other (italics mine).

The Revelation has a particular way of producing meaning, which lies in its calling upon the unique within me. It is as if a multiplicity of persons . . . as if each person, by virtue of his own uniqueness, were able to guarantee the revelation of one unique aspect of the truth, so that some of its facets would never have been revealed if certain people had been absent from mankind. . . I am suggesting that the totality of truth is made out of the contributions of a multiplicity of people: the uniqueness of each act of listening carries the secret of the text; the voice of Revelation, in precisely the inflection lent by each person's ear, is necessary for the truth of the Whole. í   The multiplicity of people, each one of them indispensable, is necessary to produce all the dimensions of meaning; the multiplicity of meanings is due to the multiplicity of people (E. Levinas, 'Revelation in Jewish Tradition' in the Levinas Reader p. 159).

According to Levinas 'truth itself, for its full expression as a living, ongoing revelation, requires multiple expressions.'

In the second place the project shares, also for several other reasons, these philosopher's emphasis and insistence on the need for combining criticism and

wisdom, reason and virtue, the critical mind and sensitivity. For Derrida, the particular, concrete text always reserves a surprise for the anatomy or physiology of a critique which might think it had mastered its game, surveying all its threads at once, thus deceiving itself into wishing to look at the text without touching it, without putting its hand to the ╾objectø, without venturing to add to it (1972b: 71).

Of Levinasøs four criteria for good reading the first is what he calls: Concrete and productive integrity of spirit and letter. If there is no integration, if there is no reading with the soul (Buber), reading can easily become a game (like in some postmodern deconstructivistic designs) and õcan give rise to an excessive and hence a falsely optimistic moralistic generosityö, to an õangelicö dreaminess inattentive and unattached to the historical situations and concrete motives of the human condition (Levinas). Reading the Bible is not only analyzing the text for itself, but is reading a text that pertains to a religious ethical tradition that wants to express itself about the humanity of the human. While interpretations are innumerable and inexhaustible, they are nonetheless rooted in past interpretations, in past texts, in texts that have a past, a past aiming at a future, in a tradition which in the case of Judaism is, in Levinasøs words, ╾as old as the world,ø that is to say, as old as the õhumanity of the human.ö For the project this implies resistance to all those efforts that want to come to the discovery of the final, the last, the ultimate significance of the text.

Over the last decades, through anthropology, sociology, and culture studies, we became well aware of the weight of context and culture in the construction of worldviews and in interpretation processes of religious fundamental texts. For hermeneutics and biblical studies this implies that, if we really want to become aware of those factors and be able to analyze them, then we have to be there where it happens: with ordinary, common readers, whose approach to Scripture is existential, and, sometimes more than at the level of scholarly approaches, filled with contextual and cultural elements: those who read Scripture as a letter addressed directly to themselves, to their own context, and culture.

From a mainly theological, hermeneutical, and, I would like to add, more ethical point of view, several other challenges constitute the background of this project. In the first place the disaster of the exclusion of the majority of readers of the Bible. If real meaning and truth need a multiplicity of readers and readings, and ╾if each reader is irreplaceable, just as each one is irreplaceable before the otherø (Cohen p.249s.), then it is hard to understand why the big majority of readers has been so systematically excluded in biblical scholarship. This project wants to respect hermeneutical principles as plenitude, confrontation with readings that will be considered strange, exotic, superficial, outrageous sometimes. This project wants therefore to have to do with ordinary readers. When authors from the Southern hemisphere - where over the last decades, more than ever in Europe, attention was asked for this large group - talk about ordinary readers they mean those many millions of people who live in situations of poverty, exclusion, persecution, illness and apartheid.... and read the Bible. This is reading with a wounded heart, reading from the experience and perspective of life itself. This concerns people who are desperate and still read the Bible. This project wants very much to include them, and considers them not as an odd, exegetically speaking illiterate group, but as a source of wisdom and new insights. To be sure, hermeneutically speaking, contextual reading of the Bible is no pollution, a contamination of the ╾originalø Later re-reading may enrich the meaning of the text, may even have an effect on it: Scripture grows with its readers (Gregory the Great). What does become clear in the process of contextual reading of the Bible is that the interpretation process is not limited to ╾restoring the source text all along this sequence or sequences of repeated actualisation, rather this process re-invents, re-figures, and re-orients the modelø (Ricoeur 1998: xi).

There is one element more I would like to emphasise. This project wants to consider this enormous group of ordinary readers as a group whose significance goes far beyond the particular hermeneutical design made up for them during the last decades. That brings us to a last hermeneutical issue. Over the last decades an ever growing amount of so called genitive hermeneutics was developed: Rastafari hermeneutics, Calypso, Gay, Black, Dalit, Feminist, Urban, Pentecostal, African cultural, Afro-Brasilian, Ayamara hermeneuticsí the list is endless. Reading the Bible from all these new particular perspectives has been a very rich event. But, and that is my problem, at the same time, this may be considered as a new search for totality, for closure, for congealing. Only one aspect of living persons is objectified and considered as the only valid key which distinguishes and defines them at the same time: blackness for the black, caste for the Dalits, social condition for the poor, womanhood for the women, etc. The problem is double: the poor are more than their poorness; poverty starts to function not only as a descriptive category, but as a hermeneutically established norm: the poor are the best interpreters of the Bible (Milton Schwantes). This is a new grab for power, a new totality.

Well now, this project wants to go a step further than being enchanted by an ever growing number of particular hermeneutics. Each act of listening to the text is unique and cannot be submerged, cannot and will not be exhausted by defining them according to imposed or constructed categories. And, we may add, this is exactly one of the results of the project: the poor read differently than the many hermeneutics of the poor suggest. No, what the project shows is a lot more in harmony with what Levinas writes about multiplicity, and was just quoted.

We could enumerate a many more factors the project wanted to take into account - the strength of narrative, the importance of communal or communitarian reading of the Bible, the question of cultural depth dimensions, - but what I have reflected upon so far, may suffice.

Objectives of the Project

Needless to say, we would want to change the world, have a little bit more justice and a little bit less tension. But that would have been very hard to accomplish. So we decided to be satisfied also, and for the time being, when we would be able to discover and propose a new, transforming way of Bible reading, not reducing differences to sameness, but considering them as a possibility for new insights, for new, peaceful attitudes to the other. Well, in order to do so, - to break down influences of bleached reading traditions, to escape from provincial or colonial blindness or near-sightedness -, we had to organise confrontation. Opportunities for broadening horizons or changing perspective must be felt out by involving new factors in the game. One of those factors is cultural diversity. Well then, this is exactly what is attempted in the Through the eye of Another project. Cultural diversity is introduced as a hermeneutic factor, confrontation is organised. The basic assumption of the project is that it can have added value when diversity is taken seriously in this manner.

And, in the spirit of the project as such, our initial and core question was an open one: -what happens when Christians from radically different cultures and situations read the same Bible story and start talking about it with each other? Can joint, intercultural reading of Bible stories result in a new method of reading the Bible and communication of faith that is a catalyst for new, trans-border types of dialogue and identity formation?

The process

The central text was John 4. John 4 is full of cultural depth dimensions, to use this term. A question of power is involved, a man-woman meeting, tradition versus radically new religious insights (the place of worship, for example), of social groups that Jesus and the Samaritan woman are involved with (disciples and village people), of social exclusion, ethnic differences and discrimination, of a difference in social status. The method we used was forged and polished through several international meetings and congresses.

Groups were recruited via regional co-ordinators. The continents were subdivided into regions and a central co-ordinator was proposed for each region. We decided not to set any requirements for groups other than the size (preferably no more than 15 or 20 participants). Every region was asked to have as great a diversity as possible with respect to the proportion of men-women, city-rural area, ethnic make-up, social status, church background, new-existing groups, literate-illiterate, geographic origin. Furthermore, groups had to be willing to participate in the entire process, which might stretch over a period of more than one year. Since not one certain set of group dynamics can apply to different socio-cultural situations and because reading methods themselves are already culturally determined, the groups had a great deal of freedom. The groups were permitted to read the text the way they were used to. Some basic principles for the group∅s own process, as well as for interaction with the partner group, were established: equality (the other has the same rights), freedom (the other is not an object) and reciprocity (communication focused on response). In each group two special roles, the ones of facilitator and reporter, were of great importance for reporting and for the group process. Therefore these are described extensively in the protocol, available for each group.

How were the groups linked to each other? This question was also pondered for a long time. Groups turned out to have so many characteristics that eventually forced links were abandoned. Ultimately, three negative criteria were used: not from the same church denomination, not from the same country, preferably also not from the same social context. It was decided not to link groups to a partner group until after the first phase was completed and until the report had been sent to the central co-ordination in Amsterdam. This way the fact that one was linked to this or that group would not have any effect on the reading process in the first phase. In establishing the links, the wishes of the relevant groups were taken into account as much as possible. We took stock four times per year in Amsterdam and groups were linked on the basis of reading reports that had been received.

The text was first read in the intimacy of the small group. Subsequently, contact was established with a partner group on the other side of the world, and the story was read again this time through the eyes of the partner group. Profound contact was created between some groups; people wrote letters to each other, sent gifts or photos. Other groups terminated the process prematurely. Reports were made of the group meetings. Nearly 3000 pages of text present how groups read the text: they are vernacular commentaries on John 4. The material is overwhelmingly rich. It provides a fascinating picture of what readers do with Bible texts and what Bible texts do to readers.

A report was made of every meeting. In addition to a presentation of the interpretation of the text, the reports also contain information about the group: the context of participants, personal information, the church background. Sometimes the reports contain attachments: photos of the group, videos of the meetings, pictures of the Samaritan woman or songs composed especially for the occasion. The reports were then sent to the central co-ordination in Amsterdam and translated. On the basis of reports that were received and a number of previously established criteria, groups were linked to a partner group. Reports were sent to partner groups. The interval between the first and second phases could be filled with a number of meetings of the group at which attention was focused on the context of the partner group, who they knew by then.

Next, the second phase began. The group read the story once again, now through the eyes of the partner group. What were the similarities, what were the differences? What role did culture play in the reading? Could anything be learned from the partner group; did people discover things in the text that had not been noticed at first; did a change of perspective take place? A report was also made of the second phase. The group

concluded the second phase with a response to the partner group, usually a letter.

In the third phase, the group responded to the responses of the partner group, looked back over the entire process and reflected on the question of whether they wished to have further contact.

Method of analysis: grounded theory.

The texts ó the reading reports - that constitute the basic materials of our project demand careful analysis. Since empirical hermeneutics is a new field of investigation, a new analytical instrument had to be designed. For more information I refer to the corresponding contributions in the volume Through the Eyes of Another. What we did was use a method of empirical research which leaves room for initial questions and hypotheses of the researcher, but is inductive, meaning by that that it would do justice to the material obtained. To this end, a number of insights and methods as developed by Glaser and Strauss and recorded in their Grounded Theory model were used. This inductive method is open to diversity and therefore fitted the theoretical assumptions of the project very well.

Documented results

More than 120 groups from more than 23 countries participated in the project, and more than 30 scholars/theologians were involved in the research. From the very beginning, the researchers were very aware of the transience of reading groups and reports. A group may assert something totally different the next day or it may consist of different participants. Reading reports were handed in in many different forms, sometimes verbatim, but sometimes, to the disappointment of partner groups, very brief and with no biographical information. Sometimes an almost eschatological expectation was required from reading groups. Sometimes a process took longer than 2 years, or stopped prematurely because a partner group ceased to exist. As is the case in all intercultural communication, the process involved disappointment, frustration, anger, miscommunication, prejudice and colonialism. Of the 120 groups, more than 90 completed the process, which, statistically speaking is a success.

The most surprising links could be established, South-South as well as North-South. Cuba was linked with Indonesia, Nigeria with Peru, Colombia with South Africa, Bolivia with the Netherlands, Salvador with South Africa, South Africa with USA, India with the Netherlands, Korea with Colombia, Hungary with Ghana, and Scotland with the Netherlands. Some European groups were disappointed when the found out that they were linked with another European group, as in the case of one of the Scottish groups and the Dutch group from Appingedam.

The project is abundantly ecumenical, in a broad meaning of the word. The participants come from more than 100 local churches which represent a multitude of denominations. The churches have the most beautiful names: Novia del Cordero (Bride of the Lamb), Basic community Santa María de la Esperanza (Holy Mary of Hope), Ethiopian Kush Church, Reform Zion Apostolic Church. In addition to a number of participants from the Presbyterian-reformed tradition, there are many Roman-Catholic participants (a considerable number of so-called basic communities, but also people from the charismatic Roman-Catholic revival movement), people of Pentecostal faith, Baptists, Anglicans, Lutherans, Quakers, members of independent and Zionist churches

There are womenøs groups, but also menøs groups, and of course many mixed groups. The youngest participantø is 4, the oldest belong to the 80+ category. The average age of Dutch participants is around 55, elsewhere the age is about 20 years less. In the Netherlands, the age variation per group is also considerably less than elsewhere.

From which layers of the population do the participants come and what do they do? We find widows, widowers, separated men and women (more women than men), married people and single people. Participants were asked to introduce themselves by means of a group portrait. The group portraits also contain indications about the social status and the professions of the participants. There were groups participating which described themselves as poor and powerless, - some Indian groups belong to the untouchables - but also groups saying they are among those in power and consider themselves as middle or upper class. There are participants who cannot read, many participants only have a few years of primary school. There are also academic students and very highly educated participants. Shoemakers and masons participated, truck drivers and concrete workers, theology teachers, preachers and priests, managers and cleaning personnel, secretaries and artists, nurses and musicians. There are also unemployed and retired participants. One of the Cuban groups reports participation by a number of deaf-mute people.

The project reflects the enormous asymmetry and inequality in the world. The ratio of poor to more prosperous participants in the project is about 70-30. The latter category obviously can be found mostly, but not only, among Western participants. There are groups which convene in stately houses or churches, in safe neighbourhoods and in villages where society is described as homogeneous and calm. There are also groups meeting in slum districts, must take youth gangs into account, cannot come due to the rain which paralyses traffic or have to make long and dangerous journeys.

The method

It is not only fascinating to see how different groups focus on the story (the response between the components of the story presented and the way the reader deals with this), but also how culturally determined the manner of meeting and reading is.

While some groups go into the mountains for a weekend to read John 4 and turn the meeting into a celebration, and take along symbolic objects for this, a Dutch group says: ‑During this first meeting, we notice that we actually donøt use any symbolic objects. No one thought about this in advance. We conclude from this that we arenøt very symbol-oriented people.....We

notice that what we bring along to such a meeting in the Netherlands does say something about our culture. Everyone has brought a pen, a notepad and an agenda along. The minutes are taken on the laptop. Apparently, we feel good with pragmatism and efficiency.ø

A clear distinction can be made between collective and more individualistic reading. Certain groups, e.g. from Central and South America and Africa, read collectively. This means that in the group discussion one does not go into the text so much, but rather goes into what the other people in the group mentioned, and endorses it, takes the line further. Western reading reports are often found to be very individualistic by non-western partners. They compare them with a chicken coop where people peck around themselves and one never arrives at a communal opinion or project. The reading reports demonstrate that communitarian Bible reading in a small group, in mutual trust and intimacy, creates a new culture, as it were. This process is delicate and fragile. People get to know each other in a different way. Counterstrategy is given a more profound meaning here and not only positions itself critically and complementarily with respect to the scholarly reading, but also with respect to congealed, bleached lectures from church traditions. Things come up that were not supposed to be said; people express things they were not allowed to think or feel; they doubt where they werenøt allowed to doubt. Here what Scott calls the hidden transcript, and which importance is so much emphasised by Gerald West e.a., becomes fully manifest.

The reading reports show us that in the safe space and intimacy of the small group, the conversation about the ÷dangerous memoryø of John 4 flows into the hope for a new future. ÷What we do here feeds our hopes. Making the decision to want to be an instrument of God and be on our way,ø says an Argentinean group.

The text

First phase. Leafing through the more than 3000 pages of reading reports, one is struck, indeed overwhelmed indeed by the infinity of possibilities a text offers to its readers. This is truth, and revelation for that matter, in its most complete, astonishing and complex form. One is discovering and overwhelmed by what Scripture really is and does with people. This looking into the face of the Other, this discovery of the face of the Other, far away, implies for a lot of groups an exercise in the art of compassion, in sensibility, in self-criticism. When we were analysing the reports, we started to speak about the mysticism of this project. So much spirituality evoked by one text! One senses a spirituality of reading in the reports. Groups celebrate, eat, sing, dance, pray, and commemorate together. Groups are concerned about what represses people and hurts them.

Of the factors operative in the process, culture is very important, and so social status, but even more church affiliation. Belonging to a Pentecostal church overrules in many cases poverty, so to speak.

Culture has an immediate impact on the interpretation of Bible stories. While some groups are struck by the unusual nature of the meeting between Jesus and the Samaritan woman - they are alone, at a strange time of the day, there is a man who addresses an unknown woman - others read without noticing this at all. Some groups dwell on the comment that the meeting takes place at the sixth hour. Others are barely aware of the fact that this verse is unusual. The perception of the Samaritan womanøs attitude is also determined culturally, just like that of Jesus and his disciples.

Groups not only reflect on totally different parts of the text, ignoring others, groups also differ fundamentally about the person of the Samaritan woman (prostitute, sinner, victim?), the attitude of Jesus (paternalistic, loving, strict?), about the function of the well (place of meeting, sanctuary?) and the time of the meeting (is the woman looking for a little adventure [and Jesus too?], does she want to avoid people?), the meaning of the question ÷Give Me a drink of waterø (You canøt refuse anybody waterø, or õJesus has no right to ask her for thisø?), the well of Jacobø (÷ancestorsø?), and the question ÷Go get your husbandø (÷she will have to tell the truth, only then she will be freeø or õJesus wants to tell her ÷..The one you are married to has not performed the marriage ritesøö).

Second phase: The interaction. There is more than differences. All groups discover the groundbreaking attitude of Jesus toward the woman, that cultural and religious differences can be broken down.

It is interesting to highlight what actually happened in terms of interaction between groups. Briefly some of our discoveries were as follows: People get to know each otherøs context (1), similarities are discovered (2), prejudices are adjusted (3) from longing to unity (4) and the situation of asymmetry is critically involved in the discussion (5). One tries to discover a structure and origin in the differences (6), puts them into perspective and searches for what can bind them (7). One looks critically at oneøs own context (8). Mechanisms of exclusion from the partner group are criticised (9).

From a theological and hermeneutic point of view, interaction sometimes leads to re-orientation of the groupøs own initial interpretation (1), to a broadening of horizons (2), to critical questions about the church the partner group belongs to (3) or the reading method: one wants to copy the one of the partner group; one blames the partner group for not involving their lives in the reading to a great enough extent; the partner group does not allow women to speak; one finds the partner report too superficial or too open (4); one adjusts the groupøs own attitude with respect to other local churches (5); one begins small, intercultural relations of friendship (6).

So far the examples are of ecumenical learning and interaction. When all these responses are added together, something happens here, in all multi-colouredness, at the micro level of this project, that has been described by Schreiter as the contours of a new catholicity:

A new catholicity, then, is marked by a wholeness of inclusion and fullness of faith in a pattern of intercultural exchange and communication. To the extent that this catholicity can be realized, it may provide a paradigm for what a universal theology might look like

today, able to encompass both sameness and difference, rooted in an ortho-praxis providing teloi for a globalized society (Schreiter 1997: 133)

Conclusions and ramifications

The implications of this project for mission, local churches, and the academy are enormous. What we discovered anew is as simple as crucial for our way of interpreting the Bible and teaching it to our students. The text is not an object over which we can exercise power, provided we have the adequate tools, no, the text is really a vehicle, and instrument, a given means that enables us to discover the face of the Other, and take our ethical responsibility. And, yes, the communitarian, intercultural reading of a fundamental text can be a catalyst in creative, profound and new forms of dialogue. The conditions for this are delineated in the project: openness, vulnerability, willingness to interact, willingness to take distance from one∫s owns religious insights and convictions, willingness to commit oneself to reflecting on the immense suffering of so many.

Of course many conversations with partner groups were momentarily, just a short encounter. But what was gained was that all participants were confronted with the richness of encounter with the other. All groups were confronted with the possibility of new life.

Outlook

Soon the project will enter in its second stage. Groups want to continue, new groups applied. Now we will have to focus more on how to enable groups to discover their own dialogical competence. What elements do groups have or should groups master in order to be able to really enter into dialogue? How will it be possible to really come to changes of perspective, wherever that seems necessary? At a more philosophical level how can infinity still lead to liberation and change?

What we want to do at a more practical level is use the already existing website to create a databank of texts as read by the groups. We also want to create some sort of a marketplace where groups can posit themselves or pick out a new partner group. We want to cluster participating scholars into three areas and ask scholars to accompany research of their colleagues, according to their field of interest and expertise. We want to make space for local implementations, where the international project can serve as an umbrella. We want to start with other texts, focussing mainly, for instance, on the question of empire.

While the project was developing, the world was dramatically confronted with something many had forgotten, namely that old texts in Holy Books may determine, to a considerable extent, the actions of people, for better or worse. In a paradoxical manner this emphasised a central goal of the project. How can a process that is liberating be achieved if people wish to draw Bible texts into the conversation about the future of the earth? Mieke Bal once expressed herself about the Bible in strong words:

> The Bible, of all books, is the most dangerous one, the one that has been endowed with the power to kill (Bal 1991:14)

Indeed, many readings of the old book have led to death, exclusion, colonialism, discrimination and slavery. But others have led to freedom, salvation, conversion and new life. Well then, what we intended to achieve with the project was to design a method for Bible reading that enables one to see differences: which readings are truly life-giving, and which ones lead to exclusion and sorrow (Riches 2000: 87). The contributions in this project make it clear if we are on the right path.

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Through the eyes of practical theology

Daniel S. Schipani

The last several decades have seen the development of a new disciplinary understanding of practical theology understood as a theory of action with descriptive-empirical, interpretive, normative, and pragmatic-strategic dimensions and tasks.[8] Indeed, the uniqueness of practical theology can be stated first of all in terms

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[8] For a comprehensive theory of practical theology, see Gerben Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains,* trans. Reinder Bruinsma (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999). Heitink defines practical theology as õthe empirically oriented theological theory of the mediation of Christian faith in the praxis of modern societyö (6).

of its contextual engagement, that is, its focus on the realities of concrete human beings in given historical and cultural situations. Second, practical theology is empirically grounded, involved in systematic observation of actual experiences of people, using tools normally associated with the behavioral and social sciences, such as survey and interview instruments. Third, practical theology is a hermeneutically constructed theological endeavor always necessitating interdisciplinary work, especially the careful interfacing of theological and human science perspectives and contributions. Finally, practical theology is strategically committed, in the sense of including open-ended guidelines in the form of õrules of artö[9] meant to help those who participate in or lead certain faith practices or ministry arts, such as reading the Bible and leading and teaching Bible study groups.

Practical theologians dream about participating in research that is inherently interdisciplinary, international in scope, ecumenical in character, and jointly sponsored by academic and ecclesial bodies. So several years ago, I welcomed the invitation to join a small number of practitioners and scholars to evaluate a recently completed program designed to foster intercontextual Bible reading and communication across cultures, and to explore the possibility of launching a much larger project.[10] I then became involved in the implementation of the Intercultural Reading of the Bible project as a consultant, regional coordinator, and researcher. The following observations stem from that participation.

Intercultural Bible reading in light of four practical-theological dimensions

In the following paragraphs, the practical theological nature of the project will become evident. I will thus illustrate those interrelated dimensions and tasks pertaining to the structure of practical theology viewed as a unique theological endeavor in its own right and aimed at constructing contextualized action-guiding theories of ecclesial and faith practices.

The empirical-descriptive dimension

As documented throughout the book Through the eyes of Another: Intercultural Reading of the Bible [11], the research was focused on the real life situation of numerous Bible reading groups in a variety of sociocultural contexts. Reporters and researchers, in consultation with the group members themselves, needed to engage in the task of describing as fully and accurately as possible the particular nature of those sociocultural contexts and the unique characteristics of the groups. They also needed to describe thoroughly what went on in each session (that is, not only the actual practices of reading, discussing, interpreting the text, and responding to the partner groupsø reading, but also the activities involved in gathering and dispersing, rituals and other faith practices, group dynamics and ways of relating and communicating, etc.). The more complete the observation and descriptionô the more detailed the response to the question: What is going on?öô the better founded the task of interpretation having to do with the question, Why is that going on? which is the focus of the task briefly discussed below.

The interpretive dimension

Local researchers were also in charge of doing a hermeneutical analysis of the groupsø readings of the John 4 text. The purpose was to situate the empirical research within a more comprehensive explanatory framework. It became apparent, however, that description and interpretation are a two-way street. The hermeneutical task interpreted the descriptions, yet those descriptions often opened up and even corrected the interpretations. The resulting reports included a rich variety of hermeneutical-theoretical analyses of the readings. Special attention was given to diverse sets of criteria, having to do with categories such as the following: (1) modes of reading with which the text was interpreted (through study, music, art, other?); (2) attention to the text itself and to the world behind the text (Were the groups aware of particular textual features? Which aspects of the text informed and shaped their reading?); (3) heuristic keys and codes and interpretation strategies (How did the groups link the text to present life and experience?); (4) strategies of imagination (How did the groups develop meaning from the text? How did they fill in the gaps in the narrative?); (5) interculturality and intertextuality (What features of the text were related to their local culture, and how? What other biblical texts played a role in their reading?); (6) overall reading attitude (Was it literalistic, pietistic, dogmatic, contemplative, psychologizing, liberating, other?); (7) self-awareness (Were partici-

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[9] The concept *rule of art* was introduced by Friedrich Schleiermacher in his original discussion of practical theology in *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology*, trans. Terrence Tice (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1966), par. 265ff.

[10] The meeting took place 3ó5 July 2000, at the Free University, Amsterdam (the Netherlands), and included fifteen participants. The main decision made was to hold a conference the following year in Utrecht, with representatives of five continents. In that conference, 28 Februaryó2 March 2001, the Intercultural Reading of the Bible project was unanimously endorsed and officially begun by a network of people and institutions who became the Intercultural Bible Collective.

[11] Hans de Wit, Louis Jonker, Marlene Kool, Daniel Schipani, eds. *Through the Eyes of Another. InterculturalReading of the Bible* (Elkhart/Amsterdam: Institute of Mennonite Studies/Vrije Universiteit, 2004). This book documents the unprecedented three-year research study discussed by Hans de Wit in this essay. Readers will find in this volume a unique testimony to the fascinating nature of intercultural Bible reading and its potential contribution to the life of faith communities and to the work of church agencies and scholars.

pants aware of their own interpretive contexts, and of the biases, ideologies, and power relationships that tend to influence Bible reading?); (8) praxeological effect (Did the groups seek to develop new forms of relating, acting, and serving in the larger society?).

The normative dimension

The tasks involved in this dimension of the practical theological work point to the question, What forms ought the practices of Bible reading, leading and teaching study groups, and intercultural communication take in each particular social context? So the primary focus is on the construction, affirmation, or revision of theological and ethical norms. This dimension is directly connected to the descriptive and interpretive tasks previously noted. Researchers needed to ponder a number of practical issues, such as how to identify and foster leadership and group dynamics more conducive to better ways of communicating and relating, and better ways of reading the Bible and interpreting other people's reading of the John 4 text. Again, practitioners and researchers alike were required to engage in a multiway conversation involving sources and contributions stemming from the Christian tradition (e.g., biblically grounded and theologically articulated guidelines, and established church practices), and those available in the human sciences and in the practical wisdom of the participants themselves, including the rich reservoirs of their own cultural settings.

It is worth noting that attention to this normative dimension did not simply follow from consideration of the empirical-descriptive and hermeneutical tasks. In fact, it was present from the beginning and contributed to shaping those tasks, even as it was in turn reshaped by the work of observation and interpretation. Further, normative considerations were also influenced by the pragmatic and strategic interests that normally inspire and guide practical theological endeavors.

The pragmatic-strategic dimension

As indicated earlier, one of the unique features of practical theology as a theological discipline is its strategic commitment and its orientation to action and change. For example, practical theology plays a crucial role in efforts to sponsor formation and transformation in the life of the faithful, to improve ministry practices and develop new ones, and to foster the integrity and effectiveness of the church's witness in the world. In the same manner, far from being a narrowly academic and scientific exercise, one that is supposedly neutrally conceived, this intercultural Bible reading project was designed with pragmatic and strategic considerations in mind. Researchers sought to identify factors as well as specific practices that would potentially encourage holistic growth in the life of faith on the part of individuals and communities. They were also interested in possible ramifications related to interchurch communication and collaboration, and to missiological concerns in particular.

Seen through the eyes of practical theology, therefore, the project appears as an integrated whole, whose four dimensions and tasks are closely interrelated and interdependent. Thus, pragmatic and strategic concerns

(stemming from the church, the academy, and development agencies) oriented the empirical research. Interpretive analyses of the actual experience of the Bible reading groups were influenced by theological and ethical norms and by empirical investigation, which in turn further shaped the tasks of interpretation. The circulation process thus continued and was eventually completed.

How intercultural Bible studies and practical theology can enrich each other

It is possible to summarize this discussion by pointing to a triple analogy at work. The unique structure of practical theology, with its fourfold pattern of dimensions and sets of tasks, has been replicated in a rich variety of contexts. That replication happened both in the multiple settings of Bible study groups around the world that participated in the project, and also in the overall design of the research project as such. Simply put, a special kind of inductive process took place, not unlike the well-known method of Bible reading popularized by Latin American Base Ecclesial Communities, involving seeing, judging, and acting.

Intercultural Bible study significantly enriches the discipline of practical theology, and this particular study has provided a wealth of experience and materials waiting to be mined. Not only is practical theology an inherently hermeneutical theological discipline, it also necessitates a strong biblical and hermeneutical foundation for its interdisciplinary work. In turn, practical theology can enrich intercultural Bible studies. A good example is the question of õperspective transformationö[12] as a possible result of reading the Bible intercontextually and interculturally. Practical theology can illumine the issue by integrating and applying resources from the human sciences (especially psychology of cognition and personality, social psychology, and anthropology) as well as from a number of biblical-theological sources, in order to identify conditions that make such transformation possible. Indeed, among other possibilities, practical theological analyses can help identify diverse ways of knowing and learning in intercultural Bible reading, and it is also

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[12] Understood holistically, *perspective transformation* denotes significant change in viewpoint and perception (sometimes even paradigm change) that happens together with attitudinal change and dispositions for certain kinds of actions. From a liberationist perspective, the notion of perspective transformation is analogous to the meaning of *conscientization* associated with Paulo Freire´s pedagogy and philosophy of education, that is, õa process of cultural action in which women and men are awakened to their sociocultural reality, move beyond the constraints and alienations to which they are subjected, and affirm themselves as conscious subjects and co-creators of their historical future.ö Daniel S. Schipani, *Religious Education Encounters Liberation Theology* (Birmingham, Ala.: Religious Education Press, 1988), 13.

indispensable for adequate processing of pertinent ecclesiological and other theological concerns.

I have experienced that kind of mutual enrichment on a professional and personal level in the context of theological education, and especially in collaborative work with my colleague Mary Schertz, as we teach a seminary course on teaching the Bible in the congregation. In the framework of the interdisciplinary and interdepartmental cooperation normally involved in that effort, our decision to make the Through the Eyes of Another project a significant part of the course agenda has sharpened our vision and enhanced our vocational horizon.

I have also experienced significant enrichment for my work in the area of pastoral care and counseling. That work includes the dimensions of actual practice of counseling, teaching, and research. The manifold contributions of the project have supplied further foundation material for that work. That has been the case especially because my recent study of wisdom as the master metaphor for pastoral counseling has demonstrated afresh the practical theological nature of pastoral counseling and, especially its inherently narrative and hermeneutical character as a unique ministry practice.[13] Further, my participation in the project Through the Eyes of Another has illumined further the crucial importance of intercultural and interfaith conversation and collaboration in spiritual care giving.

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[13] See Daniel S. Schipani, *The Way of Wisdom in Pastoral Counseling* (Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2003).

CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN SICKNESS AND HEALING:
The Domain of Caring in South African Traditional Cultures

Edwina Ward

Abstract

In this brief paper presented for SIPCC 2005, I develop a focus on the necessity to understand the meaning of sickness and healing in the South African context. This is necessary for pastoral counsellors to work successfully in an environment where the society is multicultural. Being a person dedicated to ministry does not automatically free us of our underlying biases. Integration is not achieved by Western counsellors just working with African people. Understanding and attitudinal changes are required.

The current HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa calls for many pastoral carers and counsellors to undergo training and to offer their services to those infected and affected.

This brings together the opportunity to bridge the gap between Western and African understandings of sickness and healing. Instead of blaming and denigrating the other, we are challenged to look at why we are afraid to be tested, and why we are denying that all South Africans are HIV positive. For when one member of the family is sick, the whole family is sick.

The stigma of being positive is underlined by the Church, as a sin of sex, and is emphasised by society as the problem of the poor. Yet it is all South Africans who are challenged to remain silent no longer, but to care for all who are suffering from HIV/AIDS. Those who do not have the HI virus are oft times lacking in an understanding of the infected persons fear of stigmatization, ostracisation, and condemnation. Scripture call us to care for and love our neighbour. Those trained in pastoral care and counselling are challenged to empower others to cope with personal crises and to make positive changes in their lifestyles. Many Western counsellors consider themselves to be lacking in the understanding of the African point of view and comprehension of sickness and healing.

In this short article I will address the concerns of cross-cultural experiences that most pastoral counsellors and Church workers experience in working in a climate of cultural diversity.

Understanding cultural differences

A growing concern for multicultural organisations, both in the Church and in the business world is that of dealing better with stereotyped prejudices and underlying biases.[14] The need for tolerance, a better understanding of cultural differences, and empathy is seen as a key factor in groups that wish to continue in the global village.

African Worldview

A person's perception of the world is basically his or her worldview. People have a way of accepting their culture as the best and right way of doing and looking at things. You look at the world from your ethnic centre – we are all ethnocentric. They way we understand our world is the frame from which we view our world. Because I live in KwaZulu-Natal, I will discuss the worldview of the Zulu, which is essentially religious.

It is not necessary to teach the Zulu how to pray but rather to focus on expanding the wonder and mystery of a gracious Divinity for those in our care. Nearly all Zulus come from a religious background and when they encounter difficulties, pray about them. When they come to a Christian pastoral counsellor to talk about these difficulties, we can but guide them to deepen their understanding of God as loving Father and Mother.[15]

As Westerners, we have a tendency to pray from "our heads" and give God a time slot and a space slot, whereas the Zulu African experiences God with and through the senses and prays only when there is an immediate need or when something happened which is significant or presents as a crisis. A Zulu is more likely to pray for what has happened than what will happen. For Africans time is both past and present; for Westerners time is in the future. When a person dies in Africa, they are said to have joined their ancestors, so there is a sense of their lives being controlled by those who have gone before them.

The past, what is tradition and the ancestors belong in a time that is past and this is part of the worldview of the Zulu.

Different mindsets of the Zulu and the Westerner

Our mindsets are very different in character. As Westerners we analyse, categorise and relate ideas to

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[14] D'Arcy Mary, 1989 The Challenge of Diversity. Horizon, Fall, Number 1. Page 3.

[15] O'Reilly M, 1990 Cross-Cultural Religious Formation. Human Development. Vol 11,No 1. Page 34.

reality to see if they work. Whereas the Zulu prefers to experience the situation and let it surround him or her and then lets it rest. If the experience is uncomfortable only then will assistance be sought from the ancestors, the community or the Church leaders. This gives insight to the fact that Zulu thought is basically relational thinking. Anything of significance is seen as personal and of the community. Many Africans see Westerners as knowing too much and feeling too little. Gestures are important in the Zulu culture and often stories are acted out for the full impact to be realised by the listeners. We need to understand that being different is not a negative but a potential enrichment. People often think that if you are different you are 'better than or worse than' me.

The problem of language

We tend to forget that most of our African Zulu clients are not working in their native language. We speak English too fast, use expressions and idioms which are unfamiliar, and fail to grasp that besides a different vocabulary each language has its own internal logic. In Zululand if one is to ask a person how far she or he has travelled to the clinic, the response may well be, 'five rand away' The distance is measured in terms of taxi fares rather than in kilometres. If as a white African I make no attempt to pick up the local expressions I will never fully communicate with my clients. It seems that although this is Africa, the Africans have to adjust far more than do the Westerners. There is a natural resistance to looking at diversity. We perceive differences as barriers, in fact research shows that persons usually are suspicious of others who differ from themselves.

I believe that the pandemic of HIV/AIDS is bringing together all the peoples of South Africa in their efforts to fight a common evil. We are caring for each other, counselling each other, comforting and consoling each other (Ward 2000 BCT).

Cross-cultural adjustment

There is more to enculturation than learning a new language. There are non-verbal behaviours, new values and unfamiliar customs. These can be around the use of relationships, food, time and hospitality. As we prepare ourselves to work across cultures we gradually become at home and more adjusted in the new culture. Slowly I have come to accept that Zulu people do not speak up loudly and audibly to me and this is in respect of my standing as a counsellor and a lecturer who is mature in age. I have realised that the Zulu men often speak with their hands over their mouths and this demonstrates that they are feeling unsure of communicating to me in a foreign language. The behavioural patterns differ and many physical postures and gestures have different nuances.

Eye Contact: For a Zulu to look me in the eye when in counselling is almost impossible. Many young Africans feel that it is disrespectful to look elders in the eye when talking to them. We may easily misinterpret this as a sign that they feel guilty about something.

Space: In a counselling session I would prefer to sit a certain distance away from my client, but here in KwaZulu-Natal I have come to realise that the acceptable distance between us is far closer than in many other cultures. When we keep the Western distance, we may be misinterpreted by Africans as not wanting to associate with them.

Hospitality: The Zulu people value hospitality highly. When visiting the visitors are treated as guests and given food and drink, long before the purpose of the visit is made known. When counselling a person in distress, the Zulu person likes to discuss all manner of things before the actual concern is raised. This is tiresome to the Westerner and yet I have realised that this 'warming up' gives both parties an opportunity to asses each other and come to trust the other.

Taboos: There are so many taboos in the Zulu culture. The greatest of these is the mention of the words HIV/AIDS. In a hospital, where I supervise a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) programme, almost 75% of patients are HIV positive. When reading the verbatim reports of the participants, I am totally surprised that only 20% acknowledge the presence of HIV and AIDS. Most of the patients are 'sick' and that is the extent of the disclosure of the illness. It is almost impossible to get a patient to discuss his or her impending death for fear of bringing down the anger of the ancestors. This talk of the future is not seen as a preparation for death, but a bringing down of bad fortune on the living.

I would advocate that we as counsellors spend more time in struggling to see people as individuals and not as types. That we learn to be more empathetic and to strive to stand in someone else's shoes and look at the world from their point of view. When we find ourselves in a struggle with someone of a different culture, race, or generation, pull back and try to search for the underlying values that cause the person to act or react in a different way. No one who has not experienced the stigmatization and the loneliness of having HIV/AIDS will ever comprehend the fear of dying out of favour of ones family, community or Church community.

Community verses individualism

Westerners tend to feel that counselling and problems are best worked out on a one-to-one basis. In my experience this is not the best approach with Africans. The Zulu people like to resolve issues in a community meeting where everyone has the opportunity to speak. In my own experiences of being in the Communicable Diseases Clinic (CDC) I am shocked at the lack of privacy and confidentiality when a person is found to be HIV positive. There are at least eight people who are privy to this information before the patient leaves the hospital, nurses, the doctor, the counsellor etc. If treatment is to continue the sufferer is bound to make his or her status known to a member of the family. This is to control the taking of medicine on a regular basis. This is the one time in the life of a Zulu that he or she does not want to share with the community for fear of being ostracised.

This brings us to the understanding of sickness and healing amongst the African people in South Africa. We now look at culture texts.

We need to look at culture as a meaning system made up of signs and codes which transmit messages

through culture texts.[16] As pastoral counsellors working in a multicultural environment we experience our very being called into question. õYou can turn back on the challenge and stay in your ethnocentric parochialism or you can open yourself to the process of struggle and change. You know that you will never be the same person againí   Let us struggle to go beyond what we know and understand in order to be enriched and gifted by what we donøt understand in those that are different to usö (DøArcy 1989:7). Looking at culture as a meaning system which is made up of signs and codes which transmit messages through culture texts introduces us to the semiotic approach to culture.[17] This involves some clear understanding of sign and symbol in the other personøs culture. A simple sign points to something else, for example, a Stop Sign tells us clearly to stop the car at a certain point in the road. Whereas symbol points to

something more, for example, Water as a symbol of baptism, cleansing, ritual purification, wealth for the crops and pleasing the ancestors.

Both signs and symbols offer power by the people of a culture. Often ritual has power to make a boy into a man, a non-believer into a Christian believer.

How do we as counsellors read and understand culture texts? To grasp the meaning of sickness and healing in the African Zulu context, we as Westerners must locate the signs with the message conveyed. The semiotic domain is the drawing together of culture texts which are linked to a theme of healing and sickness.

The domain of caring in sickness and healing

In this section I would like to present the semiotic domains of sickness and health in three cultural paradigms.[18] These are the Western culture, African traditional culture and African Initiated churches culture. All three have an effect on different groupings understanding of sickness and health. Through this analysis we see differing comprehensions of sickness and health and healing, as well as looking at their commonality. Pastoral counselling in South Africa needs to recognise that this multicultural society operates through cultural borrowing and counsellors should be open to accepting that cultural diversity is a gift.

Western culture

In the Western understanding of sickness and healing the language we use includes culture texts like, diagnosis of the disease, cure, medicine, surgery. There are further codes like clinical testing of medicines, clinical diagnosis and mechanisms of sickness and healing. If a person is sick the first step is to visit a doctor for a diagnosis of the sickness. This is achieved by looking at the symptoms, analysing them, using scientific methods and finally arriving at a clinical diagnosis. If an organ of the body is ±sickø then the patient may undergo medical intervention, surgical intervention or counselling if the sickness has an underlying pathology. Needless to say, there is still a certain stigma in receiving counselling from a psychologist or pastoral counsellor.

Sickness in the African traditional culture

Sickness is seen as a need for restoration in relationships. Restoring life is a human process which includes physical health and inter-relational harmony, giving a balance between body, mind and soul. In the Zulu culture text sickness is usually attributed to inter-relational causes. These non harmonious relationships may be caused by the ancestors, spirits, witchcraft or other people. The Zulu people consult the inyanga (herbalist) or the sangoma (traditional healer) for a remedy which usually includes the slaughtering or sacrifice of animals to appease the angered ancestors.

Healing in African Initiated churches

These churches have developed culture texts from other cultural sources. They believe that some forms of sickness can be cured by certain medicines. These would include stomach pains, pain in limbs, headaches, tension points and diarrhoea or constipation.

They emphasise the importance of dreams as a means of communication from the ancestors or spirits. Many a Zulu person has expressed fear at a certain dream which in counselling exploration has been unravelled as a personøs guilt or a sense of impending doom. They place great importance on the support coming from the group or community. If the community or family disapprove of a certain marriage union for example, there is little hope that the marriage will ever be successful. There would be too many members of the family on the side of the groom and the bride who would not wish the couple well for their future. This sector of the African church believes strongly in the role of touch, laying on of hands, music, dance in the healing process. These churches which emphasise healing are presently growing in huge numbers in South Africa.

It would seem as if the mainline churches would do well to recover their rituals of prayers for healing, laying on of hands, invoking the power of the Holy Spirit and blessing with Holy water. We have these rituals within the church, but do not emphasise them in the process of healing. Each of the mainline churches would do well to re-introduce healing services and all night vigils. In this crucial time where so many are dying of AIDS, the church has the ability to bring comfort to her believers.

The notion of Life

Life is central to the experience of the family community.[19] Life is health, being well, and harmony with people and the world. This harmony includes family

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[16] Bate S, 2002. Human Life is Cultural. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications. Page 46.
[17] Bate S, 2002. Human Life is Cultural. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications. Page 46.
[18] Dr Stuart Bate, OMI, a Professor at St. Augustineøs College in Johannesburg has recently written extensively on these areas. I acknowledge an unpublished paper of his as a resource in this area.
[19] Magesa, L. 1997. African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life. NY:Orbis

members, neighbours and with the world. Life is health and peace. A person who is not in peace with his or her surroundings will become sick. When a person is sick, the question for the counsellor is –who is the cause of this sicknessø or –what relationship is out of balanceø? To restore health and bring healing would mean to restore the relationship. Often the counsellor will have to accept the cultural diversity and listen to the story of the ancestor who has been offended.

Life is not an individual affair, but made up of communal relationships. The Zulu believe that –a person is a person through other peopleø (umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu). This clearly shows that someone is to blame when things go wrong, not something. For the Zulu person, his world can become infected and this problem arises out of the fact that the environment may have a quality of evil as a result of human and spirit activity. This is seen as the cause of suffering. Examples of this can include death, funerals and terminal sickness such as HIV/AIDS.

All sickness has a cause. What a pastoral counsellor has to do with the client is to determine the cause of the sickness. An ordinary sickness will be treated through herbs. More serious sickness is usually the result of an ill relationship. If there is friction in relationships which may be living or dead then peace must be restored for healing to take place. A diviner is usually called in to pin-point the responsible person. A person who causes social friction is considered to be one who breaks moral standards of living. If their fault is confessed the sickness can be healed with ritual appeasement to follow.

The notion of Healing

Medicine can be used in healing both as imithi, (medicinal) or symbolically. If used symbolically they can imitate the evil they are fighting, for example, a thorn will protect a person from being stabbed. Colours are used to symbolise fertility (red) or strength (white), as are certain roots which resemble a male, which can be given to women in order for them to produce a male baby.

To be a human being is to be a cultural person, and human life is cultural. Sickness and healing serve to indicate right and wrong relationships within the community of the living and the dead. The pastoral counsellor who works in a multicultural environment is challenged in many ways to understand that culture is complex and multi-layered. It is a combination of family and ethnic roots that shape our values, assumptions, opinions, self-image and that consciously or unconsciously govern our behaviour. It is the frame of reference that gives meaning to our environment and helps us to interact appropriately. Successful pastoral counselling and integration of Western and African values comes from integration and from using cultural diversity as a resource rather than a liability.

Becoming truly empathetic and stepping in the shoes of the other for a while and seeing the world from another point of view will prevent some of the prejudices and stereotypical thinking so apparent in our South African society. The Christian commitment is not to have token groups but to truly become multicultural groups.

HIV/AIDS is still climbing and we as counsellors have to learn new ways of caring for those who are infected and affected.

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INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN INDONESIAN CONTEXT

Edison Munthe

I. Introduction

I herewith thank the committee for giving me the opportunity to share about the intercultural competence in Indonesian context. It is my honour to be with you all in attending this SIPCC seminar.

You may have ever heard about Indonesia. For those of you who have ever heard about Bali and visited the island saying: is Indonesia in Bali? Or you may have inquired the information about Indonesia especially after the tragedy of Tsunami and the earthquake which destroyed Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam and the Nias island in the West part of Indonesia in December last year. In order to deepen our understanding about Indonesia, I herewith briefly share about Indonesia.

II. Indonesia in brief .

Indonesia is one of the biggest countries in the world with 200 million inhabitants. Indonesia itself consists of 13.000 islands, thatøs why people name Indonesia as an archipelago country, with 350 ethnic groups. Each ethnic group has its own characteristics, language, religion, food, dress, appearance. All of these factors have been building up each own identity and its own culture. It becomes the way of life for them. They utilize all of the above factors to develop themselves socially, economically and politically. With regard to religion, Indonesia has five recognized religions-Moslem, Christian, Catholic, Buddha and Hindu. Beside these, there are also some local religions, which are performed by the people in the peripheral region.

III. Inter-cultural encounter

Though there are more than 300 ethnic-groups in Indonesia with each own characteristics, the discussion on this paper will be taken only from some of the groups. The discussion based on some of their philosophical thought. Some of the ethnics groups are: Java, Simalungun, Toba, Karo.

Some of Javaøs sayings: **Ing ngarso sungtulodo, Ing madya mangunkarso , Tut wuri handayani. Ing ngarso manguntulodo** means someone who is in front line has to show a good life to be an example for others**. Ing madya mangunkarso** means someone who is along with the other has to be able to create a good motivation for new things to the other persons; **Tut wuri handayani** means the person behind can be a support to the other. This principle has been taken as the principle in the education to be performed by the teachers and the leaders as well in the society. This principle was issued by the one of the forerunners of the education in Indonesia in 1920s.

Saling asah, asih, asuh. Saling asah means to perform mutual learning; **saling asih**, to perform mutual love; **saling asuh** means to perform mutual care in the society. Actually, since long back, our people have been asked to avoid individualistic way of living (egoistic) and build up mutuality.

Mangan ora mangan pokok e ngumpul. Ora mangan means no food, pokok e ngumpul, means gathering. In short, it means it is building up family system or community system. It is good but on the other hand; it is also dangerous because without having food or without working hard the community will get into trouble and suffer.

Ngono ya ngono tapi ojo ngono lah. This is a kind of response to the strong critic, which is sometimes hurting, in order to persuade the critic giver not to repeat the same thing On the other hand it is a sign the critic receiver is unable being criticized, and in many ways could create conflict between the two.

Rambate ratah raya; gotong royong; ho lupis kuntul baris. Means Come and let us work together to achieve the goals. The problem later it is not only perform to achieve a good goals but also in doing bad things. That is why; collusion, corruption and nepotism are developed and ruins the nation politically, economically and socially.

Some of Tobaøs way of life: **Dalihan na tolu; elek marboru somba marhula-hula, manat mardongan tubu. Dalihan na tolu** , it is a family system in Toba, shows that a family has three angels in each family. That is the father and his brotherøs side (dongan tubu), motherøs brother side (hula-hula) and fatherøs sisters (boru). **Elek marboru** means gentle approach to daughters and aunties. **Somba marhula hula** means we have to honor the motherøs brothers. **Manat mardongan tubu,** always to be careful in building up the relationship to them. This system creates a harmony between the three parties.

Anakhonki do hamoraon di au. My children are my precious treasures. This is a kind of the spirit, which is owned by the parents to support their children in order to achieve the best goal in their life. They will do whatever they could in order to enhance their children-s life. On the other hand, there is a possibility for the children misinterpret and misuse that kind of spirit and get spoiled.

Suhar bona ni bulu ditait. It means a person is willing to do wrong things in order to achieve his needs and goals. It is a kind of greediness and unlawful thing.

One of the Karo∅s sayings: **Kuga-kuga adi teman kapiti**. It is a kind of subjectivity in defending friends. The positive side of this philosophy is the solidarity. One cares for another.

Simalungun sayings **Tolu saodoran, lima sahundulan**. It is a building up the family system among the Simalungun in five angels. It is more developed then in Toba∅s system (three angels).

Asok marsisungkunan ase ulang marsisolsolan, means be careful and aware before you do something. Firstly, discuss the matter with friends before making decision to do things. The negative side is the action could be late to be taken because there is a tendency for postponing to do things.

Palobei idilat bibir ase marsahap, means think before you speak. The person has to be careful in order not to hurt the other person by saying things. It is one way to avoid conflict.

Itampul bulung sihupi iparsaong bulung sihala, ulang manosal ipudi sedo sipaingat na so ada. It is an advice to the friends, family and society, in order to be careful in making decision in order not to be regretful in the future.

Some of the sayings contents have a similar meaning with another saying in other ethnics, for instance **Rambate ratah raya (gotongroyong)** in Java is like **Haroan** in Batak. On the other side the sayings above are already inherent in certain ethnics. It also spread out within the pluralistic society and in some ways has gradually owned by other people/ethnics. It happens and grows because the people interact so quickly, due to the people mobility, and the developed communication.

We have acknowledged most of the sayings above are good in building up society- personally and communally. Those principles have asked the persons to have their own integrity and expressed it in their society. The integrity of the persons is very much needed to be expressed. There are facts and evidences showing the growth of integrity among the people. However, there is a left over question, why there are still extreme groups, which do violence to others, since they are also members of the society who have been grown up with those sayings. Moreover, these extreme groups are increased in number and the violence is becoming wider - locally, regionally, and internationally. In addition, the victims are growing in number included the innocent people. Do those good sayings are still meaningful nowadays in the inter-cultural encounter?

I am along with others are now facing this situation and need pastoral intervention. The pastoral intervention itself is performed beyond the traditional borders.

Though in some ways there are negative sides of the sayings, when it is thought positively it could lead people to do something useful. Each ethnics group can learn from the other∅s philosophy and broaden their discourse. This is to show that one group connected to the other in order to experience the togetherness.

Experiencing the togetherness, people can manage the conflict or crisis, which are aroused among the society. In addition, they are not easily getting provoked. It is because one group feels belong to the other group. They can link up inter-culturally.

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III)

Inter-faith

communication

A PERSPECTIVE OTHER THAN ONE᾽S OWN

Some remarks on experiences with a multicultural and a multireligious society

Ferdinand Schlingensiepen

The organisers have asked me to give you something tonight to the 10th anniversary of SIPCC , which I could not find in my dictionary, in German: *einen š Festvortragõ* (a speech for a ceremonial occasion). A *õFestvortragö* is a rather elaborate speech of considerable length. No wonder, the English language has no word for it. And I was requested, my speech must not exceed 30 minutes, for a *õFestvortragö* something quite unheard of. So let us swap the *õFestvortragö* for what we Germans call *š eine Plaudereiõ*, a friendly chat, which allows the speaker to say more or less what he likes, be it coherent or not.

While I go on, you may notice that my English has got a little rusty. For many years I needed it for my daily work, but now I hardly get an opportunity to practise it. However I remember a few jokes, with which I used to open my speeches; and the following one I got from Donald Coggan, the former Archbishop of Canterbury. (I always say that, because our American friends tend to find it a little out of place.) It goes like this: For a good speech and especially for a ser-

mon, you should always have three points. As long as you stick to those, nothing can go wrong. So in one of the English seminaries the principal thought it would be an excellent way of teaching his candidates, if he gave out texts and asked his pupils to find three good points for each of them. But he had one student who always knew his three points immediately, and that annoyed the principal. So one evening he took his bible in order to find a text that would teach that chap a lesson. In the early hours of the morning he came to a verse in Jeremiah: "Oh my bowels." That is it, he thought. But as soon as he had given out this tricky little text, up went the finger of the student. Well? said the principal; and the student suggested: (1) bowels — The inner life of man. (2) my bowels — the personal inner life of man. (3) Oh my bowels — something wrong!

I

Please allow me to adapt these ingenious three points to my **experiences with a multicultural and a multireligious society**. But though the great majority of people in the Western World think, that point 3 is of the utmost importance, because there must be "something wrong" with multiculturalism and religious differences as the very source of terrorism, I suggest, we simply skip that point.

My eldest daughter lives in London. She was travelling in the Underground, when five Muslims, all born in England, and all British by birth, destroyed themselves as well as trains, stations, and a bus with their bombs. Thanks to God our daughter was travelling in another train. During the following days 85.000 Londoners bought bicycles. They all leave them at home by now and take the Underground again. Cycling does not seem to be the solution to terrorism.

Many years ago I had to make a three months tour of South Africa. In Pretoria I met the Rev. Beyers Naudè, who became a friend of mine. He had been a prominent member of the Boorish establishment and yet he had become the principal fighter against apartheid. He gave me a very thorough picture of the situation, which seemed hopeless at that time. And then he said:

"All we can think of, all forms of peaceful steps that could lead to a solution, need lots of time; and the problem is, that there seems to be no time left."

I quote Beyers Naudè, because God gave them all the time they needed. In the end it came to that peaceful revolution, they had so brilliantly fought for. *And please take that as the most important remark of my chat to-night.* You in SIPCC have undertaken to do something, for which you will need more time, than most people think we have. *It is God, who can grant us the time we need.* If we allow others, and especially terrorists, to occupy our thoughts, we shall loose our future.

That is why I refuse even to consider that "Something is wrong" and go on to point two, which according to that ingenious English student is concerned with

II

my personal experiences with a multicultural, multiracial and multireligious society. Some 50 years ago a cousin of mine in our large family decided instead of starting with his studies, as we others did, he would first make a tour of the world. He left with hardly any money, but it worked. When he came back two years later, he told us — among many other stories — that he had met God in India, and God happened to be a wise old man in the mountains, whom his followers saw as a representative of the Deity. I still remember how I felt somewhat angry, because my cousin talked as if he himself had taken that man to be God.

Nowadays, having one daughter in London and one in Amsterdam — the latter place being an even more "secular city" than the English capital — I listen to such stories with interest instead of angry feelings . I observe how my daughters, who are very close to me, are becoming multicultural in their thinking and feeling. They each have a daughter, and the two grandchildren will go even further than their mothers.

Germany has a century old xenophobic tradition. If people came from an other principality, some 10 or 20 miles off, they were strangers, you could not trust, until you knew everything about them. People with another colour of skin were something you heard about on Mission Sunday, but you would never meet.

This was still the case, when our neighbours in Holland, to say nothing of Britain, were long used to people from other continents. In our German heart of hearts we still have a tendency to react in a somewhat xenophobic way.

However, we got to learn, and often in a very personal way. Take me for an example. My favourite nephew married Ludmilla, a Russian medical doctor and daughter of a colonel of the Red Army. Ludmilla was brought up with the idea, that religion and superstition were one and the same.

That nephew's brother, nephew Nr. 2, found his girl considerably further East. She is a lady professor from Outer Mongolia.

Nephew Nr. 3 (from another side of the family) married a Muslim lady from India. Their three boys are growing up as Muslims in the city of Regensburg. And as if that was not enough, our son has a sister-in-law who is a Muslim from Singapore. Her ten year old son Ibrahim, called Ibby, has adopted me as one of his very special friends. I must confess, my heart has become mutireligious not so much because of its own liking, but because of sheer necessity. That must be what they call learning not by doing but by being done.

Last week I visited that cousin, whom I told you about already, and when we discussed my subject for tonight, he recalled his visit with God in India. He told me, he had paid him two visits. During the first that Deity had been so awe-inspiring, that he had not even been able to speak. So he had made the rather long journey for a second time. And that time he had written down his questions beforehand. One was: Do I have to become a Hindu? And the Deity said: "Oh no! In the beginning Religion came down from the Hima-

layas, and as it flowed into the many valleys of the earth, it took on different forms. You must remain what you are, but learn to become a true follower of your form of religion. Then religion will truly inspire youö.

If we translate that into our šmodernõ way of speaking, it means: Be tolerant, but in order to become tolerant, you must first of all find a clear identity.

More and more people in the West tend to think, that tolerance is an attitude to cope with the night in which all cats are grey. As if that, what we believe was not really all that important. As if when we came to think of it, we could do just as well without faith. Nothing could be more off the point in the eyes of that Indian Deity. On the contrary, he would say, above all you have to find your religious identity, which has a lot to do with what we learnt from your parents, with your history and your culture.

My special friend among the many muticultural acquisitions of our large family is Ludmilla, the Russian doctor. She thought, becoming the wife of a Lutheran and the daughter-in-law of two very devout Lutheran Christians, she should at least know, what that religion was all about. And when her husband suggested, if it would not be nice to become a member of the Russian Orthodox Church, she said: Oh no. What I like is a well prepared Lutheran sermon. One day she came home and said she had asked the minister of their local parish in Berlin to baptise her. My friend Ibby on the other hand will one day be a grownup German Muslim. But as there will be many Christians among his special friends, I take it he will be a very tolerant, peace loving and knowledgeable Muslim; and we cannot have enough of those in the Germany of tomorrow.

III

I come to my last point and call it: **The multicultural and multireligious society is here to stay, which means, if we like it or not, we are its members.**

That sounds like the subject of a lengthy lecture. But as most of you may know a lot more about it than I do, let me tell you a story instead -that being the charming advantage of what we call š eine Plaudereiõ.

Not so long ago the professors, students and normal citizens of the university town of Göttingen discovered that they were living in a multiracial society with numerable problems, for which nobody seemed to have a solution. But there was a social worker, a lady from another continent, whom the authorities had employed. She went around and asked the different foreign groups, what it was, that they missed most. And all those groups had but one answer. šAt home we had gardensõ.

So the social worker talked the authorities into giving them a piece of land within the inner city. It was transformed into a multicultural garden with small plots for the various families. The neighbours in the next plots had to come from other countries; so the common language in the garden became German. The whole thing was such a hit, that the City of Göttingen allowed a lot more of its grounds to be transformed into that type of garden.

And as people from different countries, races, religions and cultures are cultivating their gardens next to each other, they even begin to enjoy their differences. When they celebrate together, which they often do, they celebrate their differences. They cook meals according to their traditions and offer what they have produced to their guests.

Am I right, when I take it, that you in SIPCC are trying to create spiritual gardens, in situations, in which people must try to find their identity and also learn to celebrate their differences? If so, what a wonderful and promising idea.

I have just finished a biography on Dietrich Bonhoeffer. While I wrote it, I discovered Bonhoeffer´s early interest in intercultural, interreligious, and interracial questions. It went far beyond that of any other Christian theologian of the first half of the 20th century, I knew.

This is how his friend Paul Lehmann described him for listeners of the BBC in 1960: He had a curiosity about the new and different. His unfailing humour, his capacity to see oneself and the world from a perspective other than oneøs own, always *turned* the incongruity between human aspirations and human failing... *away from* human hurt *to* the enrichment of comradeship.

It was this capacity to make friends, which helped the 26 year old Dietrich Bonhoeffer to become a member of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, while he was a student in New York. To quote Paul Lehmann once more: *What was so impressive was the way in which he pursued the understanding of the racial problem to itøs minutest detail ó through books and countless visits to Harlem through participation in their youth work, but even more through a remarkable kind of identity with the black community so that he was received there as though he had never been an outsider at all.*

This was long before the era of Rogers and Faber van der Shoot. And I think they would have been the first to agree that what Paul Lehmann here describes is the regal way to the souls of other people. So let me commend Bonhoeffer as one of the špatron saintsõ of your undertaking.

And may God grant us all sufficient time to plant botanical as well as spiritual gardens that will grow and flower and bear fruit.

Dr. Ferdinand Schlingensiepen is retired pastor of the Protestant Church in the Rhineland; he did his ministry for many years in London and later has been the director of the õDuakoniewerkö in Kaiserswerth. He has written several books, lastly a biography on Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER WAYS OF BELIEVING AND OTHER FAITHS

Reinhard Kirste

1) A new perspective of the meeting of faiths

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781): In this time the meeting of religions is already discussed in the context of Enlightenment. The parable of the ring (which goes back to Bocaccio and which Lessing dramatized in the famous play ÷Nathanø was quickly praised as a document of tolerance ó and was in reality often enough replaced by intolerant behaviour. After all what was being demanded in the play was nothing less than giving up prejudices, loving, peaceful competition in the meeting of religions for the best results ó in connection with gentleness and õ most devout trust in godö. Since the three monotheistic religions constitute in the final analysis, one family, the family argument must be urgently brought to an end, since none of them is better than the other.

> õMay every one bring his energies to bear
> on his love which is free of prejudices
> Each of you shall strive with the other
> To demonstrate the power in his ring.
> Assist this power with gentleness,
> With amiability, with good deeds
> And trust in God.
> And when the rings powers are there
> Among your children´s children,
> I´ll call them back to this seat
> in a thousandøs thousand years
> A wiser man than I will sit here then and speak justice,
> Now Go.ö
> G.E. Lessing, Nathan 3.act, 7th scene

Enlightenment developed an understanding of tolerance that was also critical of the churches. Lessing claims nothing less than that Christianity, Judaism and Islam are of an equal value and that the love of the most High has formed all of them. He also carries this idea further in view of the religions absolutist claims by saying: õThe real ring had probably been lost.ö

The developments begun in the Enlightenment could not be hindered so that states gradually began to õtolerateö the different faiths. But as the scholar of religions Gustav Mensching correctly qualifies this statement and says: õIt is clear that we are far away from that tolerance which includes a positive attitude towards other religions And nevertheless we can show that both ancient Christianity and academic discourse

offer strong reasons that demand this form of toleranceö.

2) Positions in the interfaith dialogue

It is especially sensible, when discussing the appropriate understanding of the term ÷toleranceø in a multicultural world, to elaborate on the three main positions in this dialogue, as they have become accepted in the English-speaking world: **exclusivism**, **inclusivism** and **pluralism**.

Up to the 20th century the only position in Christianity was the **exclusive** one (õthere is no salvation outside the churchö) which one can link to a Protestant version (õthere is no salvation outside of Christianityö). Partly this position is still used in the missionary context ó although not as openly in the post-colonial world. Gustav Mensching has pointed out that the claim to truth is falsified here õwhen the claim to absoluteness which is elementary and documents an intense relationship is apologetically proved and defended in that stage of life when reflection can take place. This means a shift from life to the teachings, from truth as reality to truth as being correctö.

The **inclusivist** positions claim ó put simply- that other ways of faith have a Christian understanding (as for instance Hans Küng and Walter J. Hollenweger do despite their openness to dialogue). Karl Rahnerøs comment about the anonymous Christians in other faiths is as famous as it is problematic. Christological arguments in the sense of being valid for other faiths seem to be the true difficulty of the inclusivist postion, which ó however concealed ó assumes that Christianity is worth more than other faiths, because otherwise the others would not require Christ, his cross and his resurrection as part of the concept of salvation.

The **pluralist** positions try to allow every faith its rights and to accept them as an independent way to salvation. õAll religions need another, not only in what they have in common, but specifically in their differences through which they complement each other. We should be guests in our own religion at home and in those of others, guests, rather than strangers.ö In this passage Paul Schwarzenau describes quite precisely, which aims the interfaith dialogue has, namely to reduce the sense of strangeness and to become more familiar with one another through meeting each other. Such meetings always occur between humans. Their behaviour in such encounters is a more precise indicator of their faith than their theology or philosophy. The more inflexible dogmatic positions are adhered to, the

more the peaceful meeting and unprejudiced interfaith dialogue is threatened.

Within the churches, theology and religious studies there are therefore intensive efforts to comprehensively encourage the idea of tolerance and reconciliation. The interreligious office in Nachrodt (Westfalia) INTRA describes itself in the following words: õmaintenance, deepening and encouragement of ones own religious identity and spirituality are the basis of an ongoing dialogue which asks what the religions have achieved for the reconciliation of the faiths, or what they can or want to achieve by exegesis and updating their sacred scriptures. We cannot conceal that certain religions have omitted to do certain things in this matter and what others have achieved in this area: This leads to further consequence:

Dialogue can only sensibly take place between equal partners.

Claims of absoluteness in religions (as for instance in Christianity) can only be related to the obligations of their own faith. That does not permit any, no matter how hidden, inclusive thinking that regards the other religious faiths as inferior in any way. It also does not permit any inclusive claiming of believers of other faiths for oneøs own (e.g. anonymous Christians, Muslims, Buddhists etc.).

The understanding of mission (especially in the Christian faith) is to be interpreted in the sense of a personal witness and involvement, without trying to convert others to oneøs own faith.

The different religions do not express a final truth. They are linguistic, ritual and spiritual approaches to the transcendent, a reality that transcends the conventional understandings. Their statements are human expressions and therefore provisional and require regular revision.

Religions are integrated into many different cultures and differing ways of thinking. Therefore they are to be understood as different paths to salvation. Something similar is true for all perceptions in which an understanding of mission is present that requires conversion to oneøs own faith in the sense of absolute truth.

3) Extending pluralist positions

Pluralist positions are by no means marginal theological positions, especially when representatives from many different religions are currently considering the consequences for their own multicultural surroundings. In september 2003 a conference of pluralist theologians under the leadership of John Hick unananimously demanded the following: õbasic principles of religious pluralism for an interfaith understanding among equalsö:

Interfaith dialogue and interfaith commitment should be the way religions behave to one another. Healing arguments between the religions is of overwhelming importance today.

The dialogue should concern itself with the urgent problems of our world, such as poverty, the destruction of the environment, the unfair treatment depending on your gender, the violation of human rights.

Absolute claims to truth can be easily exploited to incite religious hatred and religious violence.

The religions of this world confirm the existence of a last reality/truth that is conceptualized in different ways.

While the ultimate reality/truth lies beyond what can be completely grasped by human understanding, it has found many expressions in the worldøs religions.

The great world religions, with their manifold teachings and practices are authentic paths to the highest things.

The worldøs religions have many central values in common, as for example the values of love, compassion, equality, honesty and the ideal of treating others, as one would like to be treated oneself.

Everyone has freedom of conscience and the right to choose their own belief.

While mutual witness improves the respect for each other, a missionary zeal devalues the others religion.

One might object that nothing new is being said here. The expressions that were used in the groups preparing the document went a lot further. But we must remember that religious pluralists who themselves think in very different ways found a common, if more limited consensus.

4) Preconditions for convergences in the religions

When looking at the basic principles we must ask whether there are connections to other religions, whether there is a common foundation of all religions and whether any religion has ever developed far enough to do without additions and extensions. Here we face the question of complementarity of religions as a necessary motor for interfaith dialogue: õas equalsö. By this we would have gone beyond the ideas of respect and formal tolerance towards people of other faiths.

By stating this the differences between the religions should neither be levelled nor reduced. Nevertheless there are as a result a series of fundamental and converging statements, which are reflected in the understanding of the founder, his honorary title and the consequences for living and acting. Thus the theological discussion of the fundamental questions of the significance of life, God, redemption and salvation will have to be tested as to what the connotate and what are their cultural contexts.

You can only get involved in global ethics in the sense in which Hans Küng uses the word (World Ethos) or - following John Hicks - you can arrive at the idea of a reality which will transcend or cancel the common and existing reality. The spiritual experiences which are brought up my be conceived as personal transpersonal or in the sense of a mystical union.

Finally there are two patterns however different of understanding religions. One aims at convergence, the other at divergence.

There is a common foundation of all religions which is experienced as a divine or transcendent power in or outside of the individual. This experience is confirmed but not proved in the sense of western science.

The encounter of religions result in deeper harmony and transcendence towards what is finally the common and connecting, what manifests itself in different religions and requires principal equality of all their basic beliefs.

The different forms of expressions show the provisional character of all theological statements and make us aware of different ways of approaching the divine. In this sense religious pluralism enriches and completes the own belief in a sense of complementarity that is maybe already fundamental and perhaps has been present from the beginning. Simultaneously this õrelativityö leads to maintaining the provisional character of theological statements in view of ultimate values. By the way, Mensching seems to approach this idea, even though he makes a problematic distinction between prophetic and mystic religions, writing: õthe prerequisite on part of the human in the sensus numinis, the ability of experiencing the mystery, the sacred. This ability, which may be termed the religious apriori, responds to stimuli from outside, provocations in nature, in oneøs own fate or the fate of the people. The stimuli from the outside are points at which the already sensed holy power breaks through to the mind already sensitive to religion. Religion is not an explanation of the worlds, nor essentially an idea of conceptualised or invented Gods, but two things: experiencing encounter with holy powers and responding actions by people who are affected and determined by the holy.

If you reject the common foundations it is more difficult to emphasise what is common among religions. What separates easily turns up as the hermeneutic principle of understanding, to take seriously the other is different. Interfaith dialogue in this context is the possibility to seek different truths. There are necessarily new theological connections that interfaith dialogue is not reduced to parallel speaking or declaiming monologues, while the participants donøt discuss their claims of truth any longer.

If you assume a common foundation of all religions, you are able to develop ethics on the basis of belief and the understanding of revelation, truth and salvation (rather than only a minimal consensus), a basis on which all religions communicate and are able to solve the problems of this world together or at least could solve, if enough representative of these religions seriously wanted this.

5) The views of the churches

Facing the growing possibilities of interfaith dialogue it is useful to review the attitudes of the churches. The views of the 2nd Vatican Council are path breaking (for some of the Protestant churches as well), the Ecumenical councils cautiously partly agreeing to the idea of religious plurality, while the Catholic and Protestant churches in Germany tend to be either reserved or even totally reject the idea of religious plurality.

The 2nd Vatican Council and the (official) Catholic position

The theologian of the council, Karl Rahner, whose 100th birthday was remembered 2004, was important to preparing the Declaration of the relationship to the non-Christian religions (Nostra Aetate) which the council approved of on October 28th 1965

õThe catholic church does not reject any of those things held true and holy in other religions. With upright seriousness she regards those ways of acting and living, those prescription and teachings, which diverge in some matters from what she herself holds true and teaches, but which not rarely show a beam of that truth which illuminates all of humanity. Without cease she proclaims and must proclaim Christ who is õthe way, the truth and the lifeö (John 14, 6), in whom humans find the fullness of religious life, in which God has reconciled all with himself (see 2nd Cor. 5, 18-19).

For that reason she admonishes her sons that they acknowledge, maintain and encourage with wisdom and love, through dialogue and cooperation with the other religions as by their witness of the Christian faith and life those spiritual and moral goods and also the socia-cultural values, which are to be found amont them.ö

For the Catholic Church in Germany we can summarize the position as follows: she officially endorses the declarations of the 2nd Vatican Council and the positive assessment of other faiths. One took the view Karl Rahner suggested at the council, which is not to completely accept that other religions have powers of salvation but which in principal opens the possibility of salvation to other religions. The document cardinal Ratzinger initiated õDominus Jesusö does not change this, even though it tries to close the door to other religions that the Vatican had opened, for example with this statement that is practically exclusive, even though it has been couched in inclusive language: õIt is a part of the permanent teachings of the church and must be firmly believed, that Jesus Christ is the son of God, the lord and only saviour, through whose incarnation, death and resurrection, the story of salvation which finds its fullness and centre in him is brought to completion.ö

Developments in the Protestant Churches in Germany

Position a.: Religions, religiousness and Christian Faith

The Protestant Churches in Germany started discussing these issues in the study õReligions, religiousness and Christian faithö in 1991, though they have not gone as far as the 2nd Council and the Ecumenical Council. However we have a stated common position, although it is not one that has been approved of by all the Protestant churches.

I would like to emphasize that on the positive side there is a) an intense consideration of the connection between religions and religiousness and that b) new religious groups and special religious groups have been taken into consideration and that c) an interfaith existence can be regarded as an ongoing model of life that

can encourage others. Unfortunately a thorough and clarifying discussion of the phenomenon of syncretism as well as an orientation along the three patterns of dialogue (exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism) does not take place. Instead a model, originating in the Christian oikumene of living together is applied to the interfaith encounters (according the Theo Sundermaier, a theologian of mission).

The theologians and academics involved in religious studies, who have done a lot of ground work, are either ignored or their interfaith openness is understood in a limiting fashion (e.g. Paul Tillich). They do not mention such important pioneers or the meeting of religions in the German-speaking world such as Ulrich Mann, Paul Schwarzenau, Ulrich Schoen, Michael von Brück, Hans Bürkle, or the Swiss Richard Friedli. The authors also to a large extent ignore the international discussion. For instance the American Paul F. Knitter is thoroughly discussed and critiqued. John Hick (as a continuer of Winfried Cantwell Smithøs work) as one of the decisive systematic promoters of a theology of the religious pluralism (like Leonard Swiedler in regard to the judeo-christian dialogue) is ignored.

Despite all this: the authors of the German study have attempted a systematic clarification that interfaith can be understood as a continuing model of life and can encourage others: õDialogue is not a meaningless babble, but the engagement with the prejudgements of the believers of other faiths on the common way to truthö.

This brilliant phrase is immediately followed by qualifications, how a Christian is to conduct this dialogue (sic!). Though the inquiries coming from the other religions lead or at least should lead to a critical reflection and deepening of the own faith, they do not seem to be more than õtrue inquiriesö. They do not explain how the Christian instruction to proselytise is to be realised in the sense of a missio dei.

Position b: õChristian faith and nonchristian religions: theological guidelinesö

One could have expected the theological section of the Protestant churches in Germany to use the statement õreligions, religiousness and Christian faithö, as well as the guidelines of the WCC of 1979 when they published a fundamental declaration about interfaith dialogue in their guidelines of the summer 2003 (see below). A few remarks without going further into details here can be made. Ernst Jüngel stamped the document with a limited inclusive position with some exclusive comments in a theologically broad style. By this he raises the position of the early Karl Barth to the dogmatic õnon plus ultraö: Religions are the sinful human attempt to approach God, while the Christian faith confesses Godøs revelation from above to humanity below.

One might accept that all humans are called sinners in the face of Godøs greatness and require the grace of God. But it is worrisome to see this only under the conditions laid down in the gospel. The justification of the sinner is only authentically formulated in the light of the gospel. This means that all the other religions donøt have a genuine access to salvation, one must

even ask oneself whether they have access to any beams of truth. The guidelines for living with Muslims conceded this. Now Judaism in not spared but treated with old anti-Jewish patterns of thought. The arrogance with which other religions are depreciated is unsettling, because here not only a difference, but an opposition is being constructed.

õIt is clear in the way that other religions cannot acknowledge Jesus Christ in whom the salvation of the whole world took and takes place as an õevent of truthö because of their different religious experiences.ö This is pure exclusivism which is now turned against Judaism: õthe remaining painful fundamental form of this opposition is the rejection of Christ as a decisive event of truth who saves mankind within Judaism. That there are other religions which arose and arise, even in the time after Christ is also not only an expression of desirable religious variety. On the contrary they firmly deny that the Christian faith originates from an experience of truth deciding the fate of the world. One should not mislead oneself in oneøs efforts to reach an understanding between the Christian faith and the religions. í . If the truth in Jesus Christ is at stake, then the Christian faith cannot react to this situation by reducing the truth of Christianity to a partial truth. A bit of truth is no truth at all.ö

What even cardinal Ratzinger did not dare to write in õDominus Iesusö is said by the authors of the guidelines: õThe idea of a oikumene of religions similar to the Christian oikumene is to be regarded as erroneousö. With this phrase the emblems used for heretics are being prepared for there is only a small step from false doctrine to heretical teachings. Of course Christians cannot participate in the practices of a different religion. The freedom of Christians, which Paul so beautifully demonstrated in the discussion of eating meat from sacrifices to idols (1st Cor.8, verse 8) is transferred into its opposite a small minded exclusive dogmatic.

In the face of this dogmatic harshness all the well-meant calls to seek the interfaith dialogue with respect for the other can only be judged as a helpless attempt not to place oneself on the margins of a religiously plural society. But at the end of the text the use of the language changes, so that there seem to have been other authors (?) involved.

c. WCC and its guidelines: ecumenical considerations for Dialogue and relations with people of other faiths (2003)

The position of the WCC has differed from these narrowing orientations on interfaith matters for decades. During the 6th general assembly of the WCC in Vancouver/Canada in 1983 the the subgroup 1 õwitness in a divided worldö drew attention to the issue of witness among people of different faiths. The religious and ideological plurality of the world demands we rethink how to live together with neighbours of different faith traditions and to question the one way road of preaching and mission (in the sense of those preached to and missionarised). The subgroup distinguished

between the witness as an invitation to test the Christian faith as a meaningful pattern for living, and the dialogue as a common responsible stance in the face of the õultimate realityö.

The term õultimate realityö seems to be a common denominator which allows us to formulate different beliefs into a mutually understood language. Simultaneously those who really want dialogue cannot avoid the challenges which arise by the witness of a different religion. In everyday multi-religious life the transitions will therefore be in flux too. But where sympathy, respect for the other and an equality of partners that is taken for granted are combined, the interfaith dialogue has a real chance (see Stanley Samartha).

This chance was already put into words in 1979: Guidelines on Dialogue with People of living Faiths and Ideologies. In the new edition from 1990 (the fourth) the head of the interfaith department of the WCC, the Methodist Wesley Ariarajah wrote a preface, in which he not only regards the religiously plural situation in the world as an advantage, but also sees the necessity of a theology of religious pluralism.

In three parts the guidelines try to make statements about the religious communities and about the human community in a way that makes visible but does not mean that a general theology of religion must be the consequence. This serves as a clarification against the misunderstanding of syncretism that too easily can cast suspicion on and block unbiased attempts of dialogue and has often done so in the past.

Instead it in fact shows a line of development from the oikumene of the denominations to the oikumene of religions:

The partners in the dialogue should be free to define and outline their beliefs under the conditions and prerequisites important to them. This definition may not be ignored by the partner in the dialogue.

The necessary consequence is to try to inform oneøs own community about the other religions.

Everyday life is the criterion according to which the success of the dialogue is to be judged. Where things are done together, the dialogue advances.

Because of the own ideological and cultural bonds a revision of the religious behaviour is necessary in order to serve justice, liberation and peace in the sense of the sermon on the mount.

As Christians who are not apart from the world, they have to consciously take into account the multicultural and multireligious contexts both in thought and action because they are all children of this one world under the sign of Godøs reign.

How far communal festivals, services, meditations and prayers are possible and result logically from the previous efforts in the dialogue, may be considered if the inculturation of Christianity in different spheres of life is adequately meditated on.

Christians and churches should discover the different offers and possibilities of dialogue and not only take part but enlarge the interreligious encounters in contact with other organisations.

To summarise: interfaith dialogue opens minds and hearts towards others and so presses ahead with the õservice of reconciliationö (in the sense of the apostle Paul). Salvation and welfare of the world do not become contradictions, instead the world becomes the place of mutual responsibility of the different traditions of faith.

6) Shapes of equal religious encounters

The 2nd Vatican Council and the guidelines of the WCC pave a way for an increasing community between the believers of different faiths. Unfortunately all attempts in this direction since the 19th century seem to have never been particularly successful. The interfaith dialogue has gained more importance only through Hans Küngøs program of õworld ethosö in the world parliament of religions. In 1893 this event initially organised by Protestants first took place in Chicago. One hundred years later this world meeting was commemorated, again in Chicago. The number of participants had grown by 2000, when it took place in Capetown and by July 2004 10,000 people from practically all religious faiths were expected to attend in Barcelona. The World Congress of Faiths (WCF) which was founded by the English officer Sir Francis Younghusband in 1936 (see www.wcf.org) and the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) which came into being in Japan after World War Two developed less spectacularly. The latter institution is now represented all over the world and is gaining mass support. (www.wcrp.org)

Last remarks

It is worth looking back into history, in which the tendency to well-meaning acceptance of other religions was expressed. The most impressive example is the mystic Ibn ÷Arabi of Murcia (died 1248) who poetically describes following the religion of all religions that is the religion of love and summarises what is essential in truly practised faith and in authentically practised tolerance.

õNow all images and forms
may find a place in my heart
for my heart is a pasture for gazelles,
a monastery for monks,
a temple of the idols (or maybe gods)
a Kaaba of Tawaf (i.e. circling the Kaaba)
a slab of the Tora
and a book of the Koran
I belong to the religion of love and walk with firm
steps on her caravan road, for love is my faith and
my belief.

Ibn ÷Arabi: Løinterprète des désirs 1996, p. 117s. ó translation from the French by the author

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HAIFA IN ISRAEL

A town where five religions live peacefully one beside the other

Uri Bloch

1. Introduction:

In this paper I shall first describe the five religions, as they exist in Haifa. After that I shall give a short history of the town, mentioning mainly those facts that may be pertinent to the question I wish to discuss, namely why do members of five religions manage to live in Haifa peacefully together, or at least one beside the other, when in Jerusalem there is so much strife between them.

Unfortunately, I do not have a definitive answer to the question, but I shall come up with some thoughts on the subject.

Jerusalem is well known and appears in the news only too often. Haifa is less well known, so I shall give you first a short description of the town as it is today. The town lies at the southern tip of the only major bay in the eastern Mediterranean (at the Northern tip is Acre). Here Mount Carmel gets close to the sea, at the narrowest place there is between them just enough space for the four lane freeway and the railway line. Thus, as Haifa grew, it had to climb up the mountain. This juxtaposition of mountain and sea makes it one of the more beautiful towns in the world.

The town is not very large, a bit over a quarter of a million inhabitants, most of them Jews. In addition there are about thirty thousand Arabs, both Christians and Moslems, in town. It is the largest town in the North, in the whole country only Tel Aviv and Jerusalem have larger populations. Haifa has the largest harbour, and the largest hitech park in Israel. It has also the Technion, the major technical university of the country, plus Haifa University, one of the seven accredited universities of Israel, It is thus an active town, but has not become the playground of high society.

This easy going air made it possible for several religions to gain a foothold there and prosper. I shall describe both Haifa and the five religions that exist there in more detail in the following chapters.

2. The five religions in Haifa

I shall present the five religions, to the best of my ability (I am no theologian), in the order of the time of their appearance in the world.

a.   Judaism

In my talk in Kecskemet about the development of Judaism I have already shown, that Judaism was never as monolithic as some would have us believe. Ever since the Emancipation there was ó first in Germany ó a strong reform movement that culminated in the liberal Jewry, that is especially strong in the USA, and later in the conservative synagogues, that have taken the issue of equality for women to their hearts.

But even the orthodox mainstream of Judaism is not of one kind. There is a continuum from those ultra-orthodox who live with the sole purpose of fulfilling as many of the 613 commandments as possible, through orthodox who strive to the same goal but with less zeal, to mesorati Jews who will keep some of the commandments but have no intention of keeping all of them, right down to secular Jews, who will keep only those commandments that pertain to the relation between one person and another (and not all of these).

As a boy I was taught that the Jewish religion is a religion of law. He who fulfills the 613 Mitzvoth (not just the Ten Commandments) is a good Jew and it is upon each of us to strive to act according to these rules. These commands pertain to every moment in life, from the moment one wakes in the morning to when one goes to sleep, from birth to death. Judaism is not just a religion, it is a way of life.

In parallel there is the more messianic movement, which believes that all this is not enough, but that it is upon us to strive to bring the messiah in our life time. Together with this often goes a rather naive, not to say fundamentalistic, belief in the strange powers of dead rabbis who can intercede with the all powerful God. The more militant settlers, those who believe that Israelis have a god given right to the whole country hail from these quarters. Some have a curious kind of relationship with the Land, talking to it in physical terms.

Haifa has a large Jewish community, some 80% of the 280.000 inhabitants. Most of them are secular and live their lives just like typical non-practicing people in the Western world. There is a relatively small religious community (about 5%) many of them belonging to the ultra-orthodox, but since their number is small they do not have the impact of their equals in Jerusalem or even in Tel Aviv. Haifa is the only non-Arab town in Israel, where there is a regular bus service on the Shabbath.

b.   Christianity

Just like the Jews, the Christian community consists also of several different denominations. The largest in Haifa is the Greek-Catholic Church, the Melkite. This church belonged after the schism of 1054 to Eastern or Orthodox bloc, but in the 17th and 18th century joined the fold of the Catholic church. The other large communities are the Greek-Orthodox, who do not accept the pope's supremacy, the Latin Church, what you would call the Catholics, and the Maronites, a Middle Eastern Church with strong contingents in the Lebanon. In addition there are smaller groups like the Armenian Church. Among the Protestant churches, only the Anglican, or Episcopalian, congregation is of any size. There are also half a dozen evangelistic brethrenships [Bruderschaft], each with just a few dozen members.

Of all the above, only the Greek-Catholic Church has more than 10.000 members, the others number a few thousand each. The smaller ones only a few hundred. Since in Israel, each citizen must be registered as belonging to a religion, it is safe to say, that here, too, the majority are secular.

Practically all Christians were Arabs, today there are also Catholic communities from the Philippines and from Russia.

One more observation is relevant. Just as all over the Middle East, there is, in Israel, a continuous exodus of Christians who emigrate to the West. Thus, Christian towns like Nazareth have now a Moslem majority, even if formally the numbers are being juggled to obfuscate the issue. Also in Haifa, the Christian majority is dwindling. According to some sources there is already now an equality of numbers, others claim that there are still 22.000 Christians versus only 11.500 Moslems. In Haifa, too, it seems that nobody wants to know the true numbers.

c.   Islam (*www.mideastweb.org*)

The Islam is also not monolithic. Even before 660, less than 30 years after the death of Mohammed, there was the first schism, when the "Chavaraj" refused to accept neither Ali nor Mu'awiya as legitimate khalifs. In their view only a just and honest believer can become khalif, and he should be chosen by the community.

Most of you are aware of the deep schism between Sunnites and Shiites. The latter do not accept the Sunnah, the codex of laws that developed over the centuries, but stick only to the Koran and its exegeses. The deep gulf that separates between the two persuasions began with the question of who should lead the Moslems once Mohammed died (632 AD), .i.e. can only a descendent of the prophet be the khalif, or is this position open to any learned (and/or powerful) Moslem. The Shiites believe that only a descendent of Ali, who was the cousin of Mohammed and married the prophet's daughter, can properly lead the believers. This quarrel separates the two to this very day. The leader of the Sunnites was the khalif, a position that was abolished only in 1924 by Ataturk. The Shiites called their leader Imam, and they numbered them, just

like Popes are numbered by their name. Today, the imam is the leader of prayer in the mosque and he gives the sermon on the Friday (and holiday) noon prayer, the one that every Moslem should pray in congregation.

I mention all this, because of the twelfth Imam in the Shiite tradition. He was a small child (about five) when Hassan, his father, the eleventh Imam died. As a boy, he loved to roam in the countryside. As a nine year old, he went into a cave ó and was never seen again (878 AD). Thus began the story of the twelfth Imam, who never died, but is waiting to reappear as the Mahdi and teach the whole world the true Islam. [I will not go into all the ramifications of the little and big disappearance, of the 7th and 12th imam. etc] Does this not remind you of similar hopes in other religions?

The Shiites, perhaps because of their rather fundamentalistic view of the religion, gave rise to several religious movements, some remaining within the fold of the Moslem community (e.g. the Ismailis), some skirting the limits of religious doctrine (e.g. the Alawis, who live mainly in Syria but also in the village of Rajar) and some today clearly outside the Moslem commonwealth (e.g. the Bahais, the Ahmadis).

In Islam there are five major commands that every Moslem must adhere to (Shihada, Prayer, Charity, Fast, Hadj), but in addition there are so many laws and habits, that to the observant Moslem the Islam is also a way of life.

Even within the classical Sunnite Islam there are four different schools of thought, each with its own way how to develop the law and consequently with its own code of law.

Islam divides the world into two areas, Ard al Islam , that is territories where the Islam is the reigning religion and other religions are only tolerated and Ard el Harb (Territories of the Sword) where the Islam is yet to be successful, if necessary with the aid of the sword, i.e. Jihad, the holy war. Regions that were at one time under Islamic jurisdiction but have since fallen into the hands of infidels, such as Spain and the Balkans, are especially annoying, Israel, where the third most holy Islamic shrine is in the hands of Jews, being a particular affront.

In Haifa live about 11.500 Moslems, though the true number is probably higher. It is gradually increasing, as there is a constant movement from the villages in the Galilee and Wadi Ara into the large town. To the best of my knowledge, there is no Shiite community in all Israel and the accepted law is that of the Hanafi.

d.   The Bahai

We all like round numbers, like the number one thousand. Thus it comes as no surprise, that religious prophesies use that figure (e.g. in the Revelations of St.John the period of a thousand years is mentioned several times in Ch XX). The Shi'ites had great hopes that a thousand years after having vanished, the Twelfth Imam would reappear. That time arrived in 1844 (to the discerning mathematicians among you, the Moslem year goes according to the moon and is thus 11 days shorter than our solar year).

Among the Shiites there is the belief that God is so immense, that he cannot be conceived by humans. Thus we are only able to perceive him through the grandeur of this world. There is a need for a connecting something that connects between the two (in Jewish mysticism these would be the ten spheres) In the 19th century Kagem Washti proclaimed that there must be at least one Perfect Man, who is the connection between the Twelfth Imam and mankind. His followers believed that he was that person and when he died they went to look for the next Perfect Man. They found him in Tabriz (Persia). He was Ali Muhammad Shirazi an intuitive person with great oratory power. Soon he had a small following who believed that he was the Bab, the gate between the Twelfth Imam and mankind.

The authorities, corrupt as is so often the case, did not like his teachings and as the number of followers swelled they had him arrested and, later, executed. But the movement did not die, on the contrary, the Babists were a strong group that fought for its beliefs, but in the end the Persian powers prevailed and they began to persecute the Babists and later the Bahais. In fact, in Iran, this persecution continues to this very day. ([In Islam, the secular power bases itself, in principle, on the religion. Where that religion is questioned, it is the duty of the government to squelch the heresy, and vice versa, if the secular power is not accepted, this is an affront to the religion, as the secular power bases itself on it. It is this principle, that makes it so difficult for Moslems to embrace modern Western thought, where everything may be questioned).

The Bab designated Mirza Yijyeh as his heir, but it was his brother, Mirzah Hussein Ali, who became the cornerstone of the new religion. Nineteen years after the appearance of the Bab, he announced, that he was the Baha'ulla (=the Splendour of God). This time, the authorities had learned their lesson. Rather than make him a martyr, they exiled him to various places, until in the end he was incarcerated in the Citadel of Acre. His followers joined him in houses just outside the fortress. After about two years, he was permitted to leave the prison, as long as he remained in the vicinity. Thus he lived in various places in the surroundings, finally in a small mansion, a couple of miles outside the city and there he died and was buried.

In the eyes of the Baha'is, the Baha'ulla was a manifestation of God. Nevertheless, he was a human being, he had a wife and children, he taught his followers and he was a prolific writer, both in Farsi and in Arabic. Thus he became the founder/cornerstone of a new religion and the place of his interment its most holy place.

While living in Acre, he made several excursions to nearby Mount Carmel. On one of these he ordered Abdul Baha, his son and closest confident, to bring the remnants of the Bab and bury them here on that specific spot on Mount Carmel, close to three cypresses which are still standing there. Evidently, he was a visionary and also a man of wisdom. Like Herzl, he realized, that Haifa had the potential to become a centre that would eventually outstrip Acre.

Abdul Baha did indeed build this mausoleum and in 1909 the Bab's bones were finally laid to rest there.

When Abdul Baha died in 1921, he was buried in the same place. The mausoleum was a simple square building. Nearly forty years later, the Bahai community wished to add splendour to it. They added a white superstructure and crowned it with a golden dome. Because of its glorious command over the town it is not surprising that the Bahai Shrine has become the de facto symbol of Haifa.

The Bahai creed is a simple one. It accepts the previous religions as earlier manifestations of God (just like the Christian and the Moslem religion did in their time). But whereas previous religions had a 'chosen people', namely the community from which the religion emanated, the Baha'is believe in the equality of all people, without difference in colour, race, education, wealth or gender (though the Universal House of Justice, the highest administrative authority of the religion, is open only to men). They are encouraged to marry, but divorce is frowned upon. There is a strong plea to study, knowledge and wisdom being highly valued. There is no clergy and no houses of prayer. Each person is responsible for himself, to follow the teachings and edicts of the religion.

Like other groups that are not very numerous, there is a strong social cohesion. It is my impression that there is even social pressure, to follow the ways of the elders. Thus members of the religion pay a sizable tithe into the coffers of the community. The stupendous gardens recently opened around the Golden Dome were financed entirely by the Bahai community, as their religion forbids them to accept donations from sources outside the creed.

The Baha'ulla had forbidden proselytizing in the whole area (it is not clear to me, how far this area goes. It seemed to me to include the whole Middle East, possibly in order that the authorities would not persecute his followers). It certainly included the local area. This fitted nicely with the Israeli fear that other religions try to convert Jews, as had happened all through the 19th century. Thus the Bahais have always been welcome to Israel.

Actually, there is no Bahai community in Haifa, or elsewhere in Israel. Would an Israeli want to become a Bahai, he would have to emigrate, to where such a community exists. So how come we see so many Bahais in Haifa ? They are volunteers, who come for a limited time (usually less than a year , though for higher echelon duties the times are much longer, librarians may stay for five and top people even ten years and more). While here, they receive no proper wages, but merely pocket money. The community provides for lodging and ó I dare say ó sees also to their social needs. Bahais are well received in social circles, but because of the limited time real friendships do not develop often. The Bahai shrine and its extensive garden are a major factor to the tourism in Haifa, as many tourists, from Israel and from abroad, visit the place every year, this in addition to the thousands of Baha'i pilgrims.

e. The Ahmadiyya (*www.alislam.com*)

Like the Bahai faith, the Ahamdiyya developed out of the Islam, but whereas the Bahai declared them-

selves right from the beginning a new religion, the Ahmadis want to remain within the realm of Islam. But in September 1949 the Al As'har University in Cairo decided, that its beliefs put it outside the Islam and following this decision several countries, notably Pakistan, have begun to discriminate the followers. Thus the Ahmadiyya is today de facto a separate religion.

Hasrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad started the new movement in 1889 when he was 54 years old. Though other religions of India and the colonial government were strongly opposed, the movement prospered and when he died in 1908 it had already hundred thousands of followers all over India.

The movement is led by its spiritual leader, the Khalifa, who is elected by the members. He need not stem from the family of the founder (the schism between Shiites and Sunnites began over this question). It is claimed that there are some thirty million believers, in some 140 different countries, though that number seems to me to be a bit on the high side.

The Ahmadis believe that God sends his prophets to every people, always in order to correct the mistakes of that community. As mankind develops, it needs additional prophets who will guide the people through the new problems that arise. Ahmad was one of these prophets, his mission was to unite all people and all religions into one final religion ó the True and Real Islam. That Islam is quite different from the one proclaimed by today's Islamic clergy.

One major difference is the Ahmadi striving for peace. While they hope to make the Islam the one and only religion in the world, they want to achieve this peacefully, without any use of force. So what about the Jihad ? This holy war is fought by each person within his own heart, to overcome his negative ideas, thoughts, cravings. By cleaning his heart he enables himself to better society and to disseminate the true Koran all over the world.

These views are very different from those proclaimed by today's Islamic clergy. Thus it comes as no surprise to me that 'organized Islam' considered these views too heretic.

In the late twenties Ahmadi evangelists from India came to Damascus and were invited to come to the Arab village of Kababir near Haifa. Following this visit, families of the village began to join the new movement. In the end, practically the whole village had converted to this version of the faith. In fact, Kababir became the centre of the Ahmadiyya movement in the Middle East. In 1934 they built a mosque with an adjoining school and center of learning. In 1979 that mosque was replaced by a much bigger building, a stately mosque whose two towers can be seen from afar. Over the years, Haifa grew and incorporated the village, which is now an integral part of the town. Nevertheless, the community remains closely knit and they send their children to the Arab schools. There live at present some 1500 Ahmadis in Haifa. Because the community is so small, there is a certain probability of inbreeding. Actually, what happens is, that since Ahmadis consider themselves true Moslems, and have received an Arab education in school, they have little problem with marrying into mainstream Islam. In fact

some demographers predict that in the not too distant future, the Ahmadi community of Haifa will vanish. This would be a sad end to an interesting experiment in adapting Islam to the present.

f. The Druze religion

There is a sixth religion in the area. About ten miles outside Haifa are two large villages (who have recently combined into a small town) in which live mainly Druze Arabs. This religion developed out of the Isma'ili faction of Shi'ites, probably also in the wake of the Vanishing of the Imam. The story is that it all began in Egypt, yet Druze are found mainly in Lebanon, Israel and Syria. In the 19th century, there were some ugly scenes between Druze and Maronite Christians in the Lebanon and in the end many Druze fled into nearby Syria where the area is called to this day The Druze Mountain.

The religion itself was kept secret and the average Druze did not know much about it. Only the wise, the Ukal, were in the know. One aspect of the religion has become known.

The Druze believe that a person's fate is decided by God the moment he is born, including the time and way of his death. Thus there is little mourning because this would be a critique of God's will and foresight. They also believe that when a person dies his/her soul is immediately reincarnated in a newborn. Thus, Druze do not fear death, one reason why they are such ferocious fighters. The Druze have a strong sense of honour, including honour of the family. A few years ago, when a Druze killed his own sister who had gone astray, the whole village cheered as the murderer was led away by the police.

The Druze are fairly well integrated in the life of the country. They serve in the army, some in fairly high ranks, and are proud to do so. They are an integral part of the economy, lately they have started to participate in the tourist infrastructure. The occasional Druze may live in Haifa, the community as such lives in some 25 villages all over the Galilee, the two southernmost are some ten miles from the town

3. The History of Haifa

While Haifa existed, as a village, already in Talmudic times, the story of the town begins in 1761. Dahar al Omar, the Bedouin overlord of the whole Galilee and much of present day Israel, had made Acre the capital of his fiefdom. A brilliant warrior, he realized, that an enemy marching North along the sea shore could easily get to Acre, as there was no fortress or natural obstacle to stop that enemy. Thus he built a walled town on the narrow stretch between Mount Carmel and the Mediterranean, a rectangle about 500 by 250 meters, with a citadel half way up the Carmel overlooking the town. He forced the fisherman from the nearby Haifa village to move into the place, gave anyone living there special favours and in no time it became an active town. During the Napoleonic wars, Haifa was the staging place of the French army, the Carmelite monastery being the hospital for its troops .

Next came the Templers. They were a messianic group who had left (or been expelled from) the Evangelic Church of Germany. They built no churches, insisting that each person should make his heart a temple for God, but they did meet in their House of Assembly. They believed that as the second millennium was approaching, the more truly religious people would assemble in the Holy Land, the sooner the Messiah would come. Meanwhile, they came, settled the land, and brought modern technology to the area, over ten years before the Zionist movement made its first moves. Of the many innovations let me mention just one ó public transport. They organized regular wagon service between Haifa and Nazareth [dismantling the wheels], and later between Haifa and Jaffa.

Haifa at that time had just a few thousand inhabitants. The majority were Moslems, but there was a sizable Jewish community, there were several Christian churches and the Templers built their German Colony about a mile outside the city gates ó a fairly cosmopolitan setup with little strife between them. The German colonists were a boon to the economy of the town and the Jews were part and parcel of the trade. In fact, Mustafa Basha Khalil, the richest man in town, with excellent connections to the Turks ó and later to the British, gave them a corner of his vast mansion to conduct their prayers there.

When Kaiser Wilhelm the second, visited Palestine in 1898, Haifa was proud that he chose to land here and the Templers built a special jetty to receive the royal yacht. He was so impressed that he spent an extra day to visit the very first buildings on what is now the Central Carmel.

There may be some connection between this successful visit and the next step in the development of Haifa. As part of the German influence in the Ottoman Empire, German engineers built the Hijjas railway, connecting Istanbul with Medina in the Arab peninsula. While building it, they needed a staging post, to forward materials from a nearby port to the railway line. Looking at a map it is obvious that the easiest access is from Haifa going East through the Jezrael valley along the Yarmuk up to Damascus. In 1905 the line was opened. Having a railway connection was in the Middle East in those days something special and Haifa began to flourish. It was the staging point for importing and exporting goods into the area, a commercial centre where businessmen of every denomination cooperated. Jewish and Arab (and later British), merchants and entrepreneurs, congregated into the town. Many of these newcomers were not very religious, their interest was economic and they did not hesitate to work with men of a different persuasion, as long as it made economic sense. Thus Haifa is a town of the 20th century.

During World War I Haifa was not much in the news The final battles were fought some 40 km to the East in Megiddo (Armageddon). But the British, at that time still an empire and thinking in such terms, immediately realized the strategic situation of Haifa. They built a deep sea harbour, made Haifa the central workshop of the railway and created the largest industrial zone on the coastal plane north of the town. During the whole period of the British mandate, Haifa was given much attention and it showed - the town prospered and with it its inhabitants.

During all this time the Arab-Jewish relations were good. The Arab mayor (1927 ó 1942) was elected, together with a Jewish deputy mayor, also with the help of the Jewish vote. Only in 1942 was a Jewish mayor elected (this time with an Arab deputy mayor), but there wasn't much change. Both mayors were of Turkish origin and they had been close personal friends for a long time. Thus the good relations between the two communities continued. Only once, when Abd el Rahman el Hajj was mayor (1920 ó 1927), there were some ugly scenes when As a Din el Kassam was the imam of the Istiqlal mosque and preached some fiery sermons against the Jews, the British and even against moderate Moslems. But in the end he was replaced, became an active terrorist and was killed in battle (1935) by the British.

Then came the 29 November 1947, the day the UN decided to partition Palestine and create a Jewish and an Arab state side-by-side. For many Israelis this was the happiest day in their lives. I was only a lad then, but I remember how we all danced that night, -- after 2000 years, Jews would have their own country.

The next morning, a bus traveling from Natanya to Jerusalem was ambushed and six Jewish women were killed. In Jerusalem an angry crowd poured into the New Commercial Centre outside Jaffa Gate and burned down the whole complex. That was the beginning of what we call the War of Independence and historians prefer to call the civil war preceding the first Arab-Israeli war.

That war did not by-pass Haifa. There were clashes, snipers shot at pedestrians and nobody dared to sit on a veranda anymore. Yet things were not too bad, Jew and Arabs still worked together and there was still some communal feeling. But then, one day in the refineries, where Arabs, Jews and British worked together, the Arabs staged a raid and butchered all the Jews within the precinct of the plant. Thirty-nine Jews were killed and it was the end of any hope for a peaceful arrangement in Haifa. Jews who lived in mainly Arab quarters moved to one of the Jewish quarters and similarly Arabs who had bought a house in Jewish areas left for the Arab side.

Strategically, the Jewish side was in a better situation, as the Jewish quarters were on higher grounds, but there were Arab quarters at all the major exits of the town and travel became dangerous. The regular routes were sometimes abandoned and instead one followed tortuous roads to get from one place to another.

On 20 April 1948 the Hagana attacked the Arab forces who were situated around the harbour in the lower parts of town. These did not withstand the attack and fearful of what the Jews would do to them (it was just a fortnight after the Dir Yassin massacre) the Arab population began to flee. But there was still some communication between the two sides. Under British tutelage they met and the Hagana command begged the Arabs not to flee. They would guarantee the lives of all, only the foreign fighting forces would have to

leave. The Arab side asked until next morning before signing the agreement.

During the night Arab notables made several phone calls (presumably to Damascus or Jerusalem) but next morning they did not show up. They were told to leave, as in a fortnight or so, Arab forces would free all Palestine and then they could return. They were also warned, that staying would stain their name and after victory this could have 'consequences'.

Where once there had been over 60 000 Arabs there remained now some 3000. In the beginning they were concentrated in one area, Wadi Nissnass, and lived under military governance, but after some years this was abolished.

Life went on. Over the years the situation changed slowly and imperceptibly. Some refugees were permitted to return, in particular in order to unite families that had been separated by the flight. As people married and had children the living quarters in the Wadi, never sufficient, became much too small, and families began to move into nearby streets. From there they moved into the eastern side of Hadar HaCarmel, the major Jewish quarter up to the sixties. Today there is hardly an area in Haifa where there live not some Arab families, Dania, the posh garden quarter, has a goodly number living there.

But there are also some problems. There are some sectors that do not employ Arabs, notably the defence establishment. Arabs, like all minorities, congregate together, help each other and are a fairly closely knit community. They want to send their children to Arab schools. This alone 'forces' them to live close to the Arab community. Socially, I have not met many circles where Arabs and Jews meet regularly (apart from the celebrated Beth Hagefen and of course the university and the Arab teachers seminary), but where Arabs and Jews live in the same house or nearby, the neighbourly relations are good. Economically, the two communities work together and employ each other (E.g. the Maxim restaurant, that was blown up by a suicide bomberess, is owned together by an Arab and a Jew).

Then came October 2000. I won't go into the specifics of that grievous time, in our presentation in Kecskemet, we did a whole workshop on that. The shockwaves of that week still reverberate through the Israeli society, to this very day. Yet in Haifa, little happened. There was a wild demonstration (organized, the locals say, by forces from outside the town), Mitznah, the Jewish mayor, went immediately into Wadi Nissnass. He talked to the citizens, got the police to move back separating the two, saw to it that the persons arrested were released next morning, and the upheaval died, before it erupted. Haifa was about the only place with a sizable Arab community that had no violent demonstrations at that time. "Where there was no bloodshed and no one in prison, it was easy to relax and move on"

As I am writing this, Eden Nathan Sada, an unbalanced extremist of the right, shot four Arabs in a bus in Shfar Am. The angry local crowd lynched the murderer, even before the police could intervene. There were a couple of tense days, with the Prime Minister intervening personally with Arab notables, but in the end apart from a commercial strike there were no wild demonstrations. In Haifa, there was a commemorative service attended by people from all ways of life ó and naturally all religions ó organized by Beth Hagefen. Again, the community prevailed and in Haifa there was no bad blood.

4. The Arab-Jewish relationship in Haifa

Thus we come to the sticking point of this lecture, why have the Arab-Jewish relationships in Haifa always been better than elsewhere. Frankly, I do not have a good, clear answer, rather there is a mosaic of possible reasons, ideas. Notice, that in this question I have moved from relationships between religions to relationships between ethnic groups. I guess, this happened, because the real strife is between these.

Let me begin by repeating a remark of Professor Arnon Soffer. He noticed that ancient cities, like Cairo, Damascus, Jerusalem, have an old town that remained reasonably intact even as the city developed. The new city grew outside, around the old kernel that never had to adapt. On the other hand ancient Mediterranean harbour cities, like Cadiz, Genua, Haifa, Tunis, grew by supplanting the old town around the harbour with the new (business) quarters, because everybody wanted to be close to the port, where the action takes place. For four thousand years, the citizens of these towns, are facing the open sea, have contact with other cultures, have members of other cultures in their midst, in short they become more open minded. People who live in a multi-ethnic environment, who see constantly other minorities, who travel in the world or at least meet people who have travelled in the world, such people learn to accept the other, they become more pluralistic. Add to that the fact that Haifa has a relatively cool climate (because of the Carmel), and that there is plenty of greenery to sooth the eye, that the Carmel invites one to a walk and the sea to take a swim -- there is something relaxing in the town. As we are fond of saying: "In Haifa cars still stop for pedestrians at a zebra crossing"

Haifa was for a long time the industrial center of the country. To this very day the mayor comes from the ranks of the labour party. The percentage of religious people among Jews is much lower than the average. The same was true among the Arabs, but there things are changing. The Christian community is dwindling, both because of low birth rates and because of the constant exodus to countries overseas. But in the Moslem community, I suspect, the number of practicing Moslems is increasing, as these come to Haifa from the villages.

All sorts of Arab people migrate to Haifa. Poor people, who never 'made it' in their native village, decided to give it a try in the big town. Villagers, who had found work in a factory, found that the daily travel was too much bother and moved into town. Better situated people sometimes looked for a chance to materially improve their situation. Finally, the newly educated youngsters quickly realized that their village did not offer them much hope for a commensurate job.

Thus they, too, moved into town, i.e. Haifa, because it was (and is) the mixed town with the best social climate. Partly this is so because the Arabs of Haifa are far better educated, than the typical Arab population. The Christians have always been better educated, partly because of the well developed school system of the churches and the many university graduates who have come to town have also raised the educational standard of the town.

Be that as it may, the fact is that the Arab population grew over the fifty years eight fold (some say more than ten fold), In 1948 there were 3000 Arabs in town, now there are at least 23 000 and some claim as many as 33 000. The percentage of Arabs in Haifa increased from 5% in 1961 to nearly 15% in 1996. (It decreased since to just under 10%, not because Arabs left, but because of the Russian immigrants, who have since come to town.)

Then there is the beneficial influence of local politics. The man who conducted the unsuccessful talk with the Arab notables of Haifa during the Arab flight from the town, was Abba Houshi, who became mayor in 1951 (till 1968). He knew the Arab community, cared for them and after the first years worked hard to improve the atmosphere and integrate them into the life of the city. The mayors that came after him continued this policy. One arranged to free land on the Carmel slope near Stella Maris, to build a new quarter intended for Arabs who wanted to move out of the Wadi, but not too far away, so as to be close to the family, the schools, the community. I have already mentioned mayor Mitzna, (1993 ó 2003), who at the beginning of the October 2000 revolt went into the Wadi and squelched the demonstration right at the beginning. It shows, that where there were good neighbourly relations, things did not get out of hand. Arabs work in the city administration, and there is a special department that takes care of their problems.

The Arab community participated already at an early stage in the political life, though always as an opposition. In the first 20 or 30 years, the only Arab party of any consequence was the Communist Party (in those days it was, to some, the sixth religion of Haifa), which, though officially a workers party, got its vote mainly from Arab quarters. Its centre was in Haifa, and some of its representatives in the Knesset came from here. They were Christian intellectuals like Emil Habibi or Tufik Tubbi. That party was an additional bridge between the ethnic groups in Haifa, and even today it is represented in the town council by an Arab male and a Jewish women.

On the level of daily life, work, business etc there is regular contact, the typical Haifaite does not ask himself "does this shop belong to an Arab or a Jew", he will buy where most appropriate to his needs. On the social level there is limited contact, there are organizations that encourage/promote such meetings, but on the whole each congregation keeps to itself, including Christians and Moslems. Only on the political level there is a certain amount of animosity. Arabs complain that they are second class citizens and Jews do not always manage to keep a clear mind and see in an Arab

a terrorist, the more so since a fair number of suicide bombers have been aided by Israeli Arabs.

If we compare the situation in Haifa with that in Jerusalem, we notice a number of differences. Jerusalem is dominated by the religious. The Temple Mount with the adjacent Wailing Wall and the nearby Holy Sepulcher are constant reminders how central religion is to this city. There is on the one hand a large Moslem community and on the other a large orthodox Jewish community. Both are inward centered and do not readily meet with outside influences. In fact, for 19 years (1948-1967) they were enemies, as the Jews were part of Israel and the Moslems (and most Christians) were part of the West Bank and as such belonged to Jordan, a country at war with Israel in those days. But even since, neither part is trying hard to get to know the other.

In Haifa, on the other hand the contact between the two communities has always been a fairly close one. I mentioned the two mayors who had been friends, I have been told many stories of Jews and Arabs being in close contact in the days before 1948 (and not only in those days) Up to 1947, even interfaith marriages were not unheard of. Thus we read occasionally in the newspapers of a poor Jewish woman who languishes in an Arab refugee camp, since she had fled with her husband during the Naqba. This close contact continued all through the years (except in 1947-8, and the first years afterwards).

In Jerusalem, the two communities live completely segregated lives. Not a single Arab lives in the Jewish part of town, and the number of Jews living in an Arab neighbourhood is not large (and for security reasons, these keep carefully to themselves). In Haifa, on the other hand, there is close contact. Though there are quarters that are practically exclusively Arab, many Arabs live in Jewish quarters. I have been told many stories about the good relations between Jews and Arabs who live in the same house (or housing estate), the children play together, the grandmothers gossip together. True, there are cultural differences, but they do not hinder the relationships.

When in America the first black person moves into a white neighbourhood, real estate prices immediately begin to fall. Those who do not move out fast, sustain a considerable loss of money. Not so in Haifa. When an Arab family moves in, prices are not immediately affected. It is true, that over time, the quarter may become more and more Arab), but there is no flight, the incumbent owners do not sell in a hurry.

Thus in Jerusalem a person has scant chance to meet the other side. But in Haifa there is constant contact. He sees them all the time, gets used to them, gets to know their habits, their festivities, their culture, in short develops a pluralistic attitude.

5. The relationship between the religions

Towards the end, let's look once more at the religions.

The Bahai are not involved, as they keep to themselves and do not dabble in politics. But they are a

financial liability to the town hall, because as a church they do not pay local taxes on their extensive real estate holdings.

I have already mentioned, that the Ahmadi component is too small, to have a real impact on the relations. There remains to look at the relations between three religions: Jewish, Christian and Islamic. Three religions (Christians, Moslems and Ahmadis) have mainly Arab members. Thus there are cultural affinities and politically they appear often as one front. But there are also tensions between them. E.g. the Moslem community put heavy pressure onto the Christian school system, that it forgo its policy of uniform dress and allow Moslems to attend school in their traditional garb. So far schools have not acquiesced, but in private people express their uneasiness that this (and other) issues will resurface "at some time". [I noticed that both sides were careful not to be specific on these issues, as if they did not want to discuss it in front of a 'stranger'] This anxiety is one reason, for the continuous exodus of Christians. Socially, the two communities live fairly separate lives, though they do invite each other on special (family) occasions, like weddings, funerals etc.

On the other hand, there is quite a bit of social life between the various Christian churches. Marriages between members of different churches is a common thing, on "Maundy-Thursday" churches have open house and invite officials from another church to give the sermon. This contact is especially active between the three churches that accept the supremacy of Rome (Greek-Catholic, Roman-Catholic and Maronite).

The Jewish religion is the dominant one, some 80% of the inhabitants are Jewish, but the vast majority is non practicing. Still, the Jewish calendar dictates the holydays, and the Jewish culture is predominant. On the other hand, in Haifa the other religions have no problem in living their own culture, people love to see the town getting lit up as Christmas approaches, in fact, for the last few years during that period Haifa celebrates 'The Feast of Feasts", as Hanukkah, Christmas and Ramadan occur at about the same time.

Where there are tensions, they are of a political nature.

In summary, it is my impression, that the five religions live reasonably peaceful one beside the other. The reason for this, it seems to me, lies in the open, pluralistic atmosphere of the town, where religion is not a major issue, and people have always been in fairly close contact one with the other.

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IV)

New

Perspectives

for Pastoral Care

and counselling

NEW PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES FOR PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELING IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD

Emmanuel Y. Lartey

Because the practice of pastoral counseling is closely related to people's everyday life experiences, pastoral counselors have historically had to employ cultural analytical skills. The experiences we have and the interpretations we make of them are deeply informed by culture. Understandings of personhood, health, illness and appropriate forms of healing are all socially and culturally configured.

Pastoral care and counseling, therefore, are informed by culture at every point. Pastoral counselors face the challenges of exploring cultural realities today with the added realization of the particular challenges facing the multicultural and multi-faith world in which we live.

The world, of course, has always been multicultural and pluralistic. However, it is only now as a result of rapid technological developments and the realities of the movement of people across national and cultural borders, that we are able to face squarely the challenges and opportunities of this reality.

The world of today throws people of very different social, cultural, economic, religious and ethnic backgrounds into close proximity with each other in very many places. The challenges of communication across linguistic and cultural barriers face us more intensely now. We can no longer assume that our neighbors speak the same language or share the same beliefs with ourselves. Moreover, people of different cultures who are in contact with each other influence each other in subtle and at times overt ways. The power of the Media is considerable in this regard. The influence of a radio in a remote village community can be phenomenal. Political and even national revolutions have been traced to the power of the Media either in sowing seeds or else giving the oxygen of publicity to little known causes. We no longer live, anywhere in the world, in communities that are completely closed or impenetrable. Computer technology invades even the most inaccessible terrain. The pastoral care provider's task is made even more intractable by the dynamic nature of all cultures. Not only do we have to deal with varieties of experience, background, culture and faith, but also we are called upon to respond to these differences whilst they are in a baffling state of flux and change through interaction and influence.

How are we to proceed with pastoral counseling in this situation? What does Christian pastoral counseling mean in today's circumstances? How are Christian pastoral counselors to relate to Muslim or Sikh clients? What happens when the chaplain available in the hospital at the crucial moment of critical care is a Buddhist or Hindu and the patient Muslim or Christian? How do different religious faiths come into play in pastoral counseling? How are Christian pastoral counselors to counsel persons of Generation X or else the Millennials, for whom postmodernism is already beginning to be outdated? Pastoral counselors and care providers face immense challenges in our globalizing world.

THE REALITIES OF MULTIPLICITY AND PLURALITY

We live increasingly in contexts in which the premodern, modern and post-modern (and what is already beginning to be described as the post postmodern) are juxtaposed. These three are no longer historical epochs separable from each other. They exist together and are in constant interactive relationship.

The postmodern disillusionment with ambitious total explanations such as offered by science, religion, economic or political ideologies is already fracturing into extremism on the one hand and nihilism on the other. Violence against self and others born of religious fundamentalism and desperation, stalk the world. 'Cutting' and other forms of self-injury, suicide of teenagers and retreats into the fantasy world of drugs, altered states of consciousness and nihilistic self-absorption, are commonplace. At the same time, and often in the same neighborhoods it is possible to find people living with 'affluenza' (the intoxicating and debilitating effects of affluence) in close proximity with those suffering the effects of abject poverty and disease. While many have access to computers and the World Wide Web, others in our environment can barely read and write. Hurricane Katrina most recently exposed this reality in New Orleans, LA, USA to the whole world.

Varieties of religious faith and practice are now taken for granted in many places. Interfaith dialogue and respect were dealt a severe blow on Sept 11th 2001 in the US and March 11th 2003 in Europe. In some places 9/11 spurred efforts in interfaith dialogue on. In many other places interfaith dialogue has given way to mutual suspicions and recriminations. The philosophy of tolerance long maintained in Europe is under great strain. This is a very fragile and turbulent time for people who believe in peace, ecumenism, co-existence, and good neighborliness among people of different faiths. Atrocities committed against members of other religions in 'ethnic cleansing' operations are coming to light in Europe and other unexpected locations. Targeted killings of high profile persons who appear in the

eyes of some radical fundamentalists to have in some way violated their sacred faith are a chilling reminder of the lengths to which some will go in defense of their religious values.

Following widespread disenchantment with first civilian and then military regimes in various African and other so-called ÷Third worldø countries which promised independence, freedom, redemption, liberation, revolution, and progress, postcolonial discourses are increasingly critical of the neo-colonialist governments and societies that emerged. Civil society continues to be non-partisan if not completely a-political and deeply skeptical of calls for ÷democracyø and ÷freedomø, especially when they emanate from powerful, militaristic forces.

PERSPECTIVES ON ÏPASTORALÐ COUNSELING

The need for renewed forms of pastoral counseling which embody values of communal as well as personal wellbeing is clear. The characteristics of such new forms of pastoral counseling are contained in a description of pastoral care I first wrote in 1993 and revised slightly in 2003. The description is as follows:

÷Pastoral care consists of helping activities, participated in by people who recognize a transcendent dimension to human life, which, by the use of verbal and non-verbal, direct or indirect, literal or symbolic modes of communication aim at preventing stress, relieving anxiety or facilitating persons coping with anxieties. Pastoral care seeks to foster peopleøs growth as full human beings together with the development of ecologically and socio-politically holistic communities in which all persons may live humane lives.ø (See Lartey, 2003, pp 30 -31)

In my view, pastoral counseling, which in essence involves intensive psychotherapeutic and theological attention to individuals and small groups, needs to be set within a framework of pastoral care which is broad, inclusive and pluralistic. Pastoral counseling can be compared to surgical intervention whilst pastoral care functions as public or community health care. Pastoral counseling is an intensifying and focusing of the general skills and aims of pastoral care, upon an individual or small group of persons-in-relation. For pastoral counseling to be healthy it needs the framework and context of the wider ministry of pastoral care. Moreover, pastoral counseling is premised upon recognition of transcendence. This is a way of affirming that it has to do with spirituality, significance, structures of meaning and faith.

Pastoral counseling is a form of religious or spiritual practice. To further explore the challenges faced by this practice it is instructive to pay attention to different ways in which the adjective pastoral is used to qualify and illuminate the nature of the counseling that is on offer through pastoral counseling.

In spite of protests from practitioners and teachers, by far the most common understanding which seems to be evoked by the expression ÷pastoral counselingø is that it is counseling of or by ordained clergypersons. Here pastoral counseling means counseling of pastors or simply put, talking with pastors to help them with their problems (pastors also do have problems!).Along similar lines, pastoral counseling may be understood as counseling by pastors or simply as pastors talking with other people about their personal, family or relational problems. Howard Clinebell described pastoral counseling as ÷the utilization by clergy of counseling and psychotherapeutic methods to enable individuals, couples and families to handle their personal crises and problems in living constructively.ø (In Campbell, 1987, p.198). In this way of understanding pastoral counseling the focus is on the one who receives (recipient) or else gives the counseling ó (the agent) namely, the pastor. This ÷clericalø paradigm continues to shape the practice of pastoral counseling in many places.

Such pastoral counseling takes religious issues seriously. Exploring and analyzing faith development, taking religious histories, and gauging theological sensibilities are important features of it. For some pastoral counselors, religious verbiage indicates the pathological or transferential material that is the focus of therapeutic work. That is to say that religion has a place in the transference and counter-transference between counselor and client the exploration of which is crucial for effective therapy. For others faith talk when properly and directly attended to, can help the therapeutic process move forward in helpful ways. In either case, though in very different ways, issues of faith are not dismissed. Instead there is a serious engagement and attempt to integrate theology with psychology, both in diagnosis and treatment. However, religion is not only notoriously difficult to define, it is also hard to categorize. As such some, who would wish to retain the designation ÷pastoralø counseling as demarcating a religious interest, seek to include within it any matters of faith or ultimate concern and not merely religious affiliation. (e.g. Foskett & Jacobs, 1989). This approach seeks to address the fact that many who ÷believe do not belongø to any religious community. (See Grace Davie, 1994; Gordon Lynch, 2002). Moreover, various participants in communities of faith hold what may be described as unconventional or unorthodox beliefs. Pastoral counseling on these terms would include any and all matters of faith and ultimate concern or ÷spiritualityø however defined or described.

The clerical paradigm, nevertheless, has been criticized especially in western European circles as individualistic, patriarchal, encouraging magical thinking, promoting dependence, and having an intrinsic tendency towards the abuse of power. Theologically it is seen as allied to a monarchical view of God that can and has been associated with oppressive, paternalistic, imperialistic and colonial practices. Moreover, it is recognized that pastoral care is more often communally and unofficially ministered through the agency of unrecognized women and unlicensed lay people.

Another way of looking at pastoral counseling is to see it as arising out of and occurring within a community of faith. In this view pastoral counseling is communal counseling that is engaged in, by and within community. The whole community is the counselor and individual counselors see themselves as representatives of the community. Here team work and collabora-

tion is vital. Different persons have different forms of expertise within the community and they offer these skills in concert and with consultation. The critiques of the clerical and later the clinical-pastoral models, the rise of feminist, womanist and various forms of liberation theologies, and the advent of post-modernism have all contributed to the emergence of the communal-contextual paradigm. Practitioners employing this model seek to restore these disciplines to their roots within communities of faith.

It is communal because it challenges individualism and encourages communal and ecclesial formation and practice. The church as a relational and corporate community is both the base and the agent of care. Communities of faith are the loci of pastoral care and pastoral theology properly understood and practiced. The ÷clienteleø is also communal ó whole communities become the focus of pastoral strategies. It is contextual because it pays much more attention to the historical, social and cultural contexts of the communities that mediate pastoral care. It argues that attention needs to be paid to the wider social environment for effective care of persons to occur. Under girding this model are four interconnecting and mutually reinforcing core values that inform this model: first, the centrality of relationality and community; second, that human development is a relational process which occurs within a social context; third, individual differences and cultural diversity are highly valued; fourth, mutuality and reciprocity. (Scheib, 2002)

An ÷ecclesial-propheticø model has emerged as a further development of the communal contextual model. This model emphasizes the unique characteristics of ecclesial communities in which practices of care are rooted. The insights of recent developments in Trinitarian theology and ecclesiology are used to ground a vision of the church as a õweb of interwoven relationshipsö which is characterized by love, commitment, acceptance, forgiveness, and intimacy. This model also calls the church to fulfill its calling to be a prophetic, transformative, and healing community. (Scheib, 2004)

The intercultural paradigm, which extends the communal-contextual model into a global nexus and asks questions concerning issues of global justice specifically including matters of race, gender, class, sexuality and economics, is the most recently developed of the emerging theories. Its intercultual ethos expresses a ÷nonreductive, open, creative and tolerant hermeneuticsø which is democratic in a global sense and argues that wisdom does not belong only to one group, race, ideology or faith.(Mall, 2000, p.6). This approach is polylingual, polyphonic and polyperspectival. Many voices need to be spoken, listened to and respected in our quest for meaningful and effective living. On the intercultural route all totalizing structures and systems are critiqued and challenged in recognition of the complexity, plurality, fragmentation and pluriformity of our post-modern and postcolonial times. Interculturality stands for an attitude that rejects both extreme relativism and exclusive absolutism. It inhabits different cultures but also seeks to transcend their narrow limits. The intercultural paradigm is increasingly influencing the pastoral disciplines through many avenues, not

least encounters across cultures, social groups, religious faiths, gender and sexualities. For these newer models of pastoral care, the metaphor of the õthe living human webö has replaced the õliving human document,ö as the primary metaphor. (Miller-McLemore, 1996, 16)

Two other approaches to pastoral counseling seem to me to offer much of value to a faithful practice of pastoral counseling in the midst of the liminality, uncertainty and multiplicity of the globalizing world.

COUNSELING FOR WHOLE COMMUNITIES

In the first pastoral counseling is envisaged and practiced as counseling for the whole person-in-community. The passion of pastoral counselors who envision their practice in these terms is for what I call ÷relational holismø The aim of their practice is not the isolated, tough, self-directed, self-regulated individual of Enlightenment rationalism but rather ÷emotionally intelligentø (Goleman, 1997) persons, who are in touch with themselves, relate effectively and compassionately with others and seek the wellbeing of whole communities. The genius is leaning to relate well with self and others. These counselors do not work in isolation. They respectfully engage the expertise and practice of other health care professionals and expect in these teams to be treated in the same way. Matters of faith and belief are important to them not as impositions from without but as emanations from within persons in relation with a self-giving and responsive God. Matters of faith are not solely the preserve of active participants in communities of faith. Whoever wishes to ponder their life circumstances through lenses of significance may find help and support from pastoral counselors. The desire is to help persons find internal and inter-personal wholeness.

Many in this day and age seek such wholeness and do not find it because almost everyone is trying to sell them a product with their own stamp on it. Pastoral counseling that aims at promoting relational holism eschews any attempts to make people after our own image. Rather the skills acquired by the counselor enable her to accompany persons on their own journey in quest of personal wholeness.

Here an important distinction between ÷individualø and ÷personø may be helpful.

The term ÷individualø derives from the idea of there being a unit of life substance (e.g. previously believed to be and called, the atom) that cannot be further subdivided. The individual is the unit of society that cannot be broken down any further i.e. the smallest unit of society. ÷Personø on the other hand derives from relationship. The Zulu saying ÷A person is a person by reason of other personsø captures this sense beautifully. We become persons from before the time of our birth, through an interactive process with other persons. No one achieves holistic development without the challenges and joys of inter-personal interaction. As such the term person, unlike individual, is a relational term. Many pastoral counselors have found a combination of the psychodynamic Object Relations Theories, the

socially engaged theories of Family Systems therapies and the socio-historical ideas of Narrative Therapy useful in responding to realities and challenges of our social nature as persons.

Pastoral counseling which aims at facilitating the growth of whole communities does so through journeying with persons as they navigate the deep waters of internalized oppression, societal devaluing and cultural denigration. Pastoral counseling in quest of relational holism develops out of models not only of illness, disease and deprivation, but also from the wells of wisdom, strength and courage one finds in communities that have undergone trauma and hardship. Wholeness and holiness go together. There is an important shift taking place in psychotherapeutic and psychological studies from an exclusive focus on pathology to more study of human strengths and virtues. In the end there needs to be more balance so that we benefit from both. As Schipani has argued, –as providers of a special form of pastoral care, pastoral counselors are primarily concerned with helping people live more wisely in the light of God as they face life challenges and strugglesø (Schipani, 2003, p.29)

ÏWORLDLYÐPASTORAL COUNSELING

In Great Britain there is a decidedly secular usage of the term pastoral counseling which may seem strange to other nationals but which offers much in the climate we have been describing. The term is used within educational circles. Pastoral Care in schools in Britain has to do with the discipline, personal welfare and well-being, and academic achievement of students. It has the following four dimensions:

- Discipline and order
- Welfare and personal well-being
- Curriculum and academic achievement
- Administration and organization.

Pastoral care in educational circles in Britain though it may attend to –spiritualityø has nothing overt to do with religion or religious belief. Teachers, tutors, guidance and career counselors, academic advisors and supervisors all have, among other things, a õpastoralö responsibility towards their students. It is significant to me that the term –pastoralø has been retained. In this way –pastoralø has been reframed so that its essential functional referent is brought out. –Pastoraløhere is not so much about –who is doing itø as it is about –what is done and howø Pastoral counseling on this view is counseling that promotes or enables well-being, good order, disciplined living, and achieving of potential in a well structured environment.

Facing the challenges of a globalizing world

In the face of the plurality, liminality and uncertainty of our globalizing world I pose the following as characteristics of the art of pastoral counseling necessary to operate in this world.

First, the concerns of pastoral counseling need not be narrowly parochial. Pastoral counseling in this day and age needs to rise above being merely an inner dialogue between persons of the same faith or attempts to recruit along faith lines. It needs to be broader than that. Anyone, regardless of religious tradition or the lack of it should find some benefit from the careful, thoughtful practice of pastoral counseling. This means that pastoral counselors need a multi-faith orientation which is familiar with different faiths in a nonthreatening, non-defensive manner. Pastoral counselors need to be able to be respectful of all faiths no matter how different they may be from what they are familiar with. Security in oneøs own faith is a prerequisite, for where there is fear and insecurity dialogue and openness is difficult. Openness presupposes such inner security. Pastoral counselors need to serve communities beyond their faith group.

Second, pastoral Counseling in this globalizing context lends itself both to the sacred and the secular ó the unexpectedly sacred as well as the õholyö secular. Pastoral counseling in the current environment needs to be at home with and –recognize transcendenceø in various forms. An age of multiplicity needs the flexibility of a faith that recognizes God in unexpected spaces and places. Taking faith seriously requires attention to theology and how it has developed in particular peopleøs experience. It also means attention to unconventional and uncharted forms of religious experience ó and secular experience which is invested with sacred value. The expertise that pastoral counselors bring will be that of exploring the significance of conscious and unconscious ideas, images and relationships. These will include overtly religious symbols as well as nonreligious and secular ones.

Third, the forms of pastoral counseling that will be relevant in our current context will make respectful dialogue with and between a wide range of religious and non-religious persons possible. I have personally gained much through studying and living closely with persons of Islamic faith. The wisdom of mystics like Khalil Gibran, Rabindranath Tagore, the Dalai Lama, among others, have illuminated my own as well as many other Christiansø personal journeys. In the quest for wise living it must be acknowledged that persons from many different religious faiths have made very significant contributions. There is a rich and broad literature of wisdom of the ages drawn from many different religious faiths that could enrich the theory and practice of pastoral counseling, if the practitioners could rise above our exclusive weddedness to particular psychologies, theologies and traditions. Pastoral Counseling needs an interfaith orientation of respect and interaction. In this regard it is instructive that the gospels portray Jesus as having much to say in commendation of the faith of non Jews, even of despised Samaritans and Romans. (e.g. Matt 15: 21 -28, the Canaanite woman; Luke 7: 1 -10, the Roman centurion; Luke 17:15-19, the Samaritan leper who was the only one of the ten who returned thanks for his healing). Jesusø sharpest rebukes were reserved for those of his own faith (the Scribes and Pharisees) who refused to recognize God outside of their own narrow schemes.

Fourth, pastoral counseling now must continue to emphasize relationality above technique. Along with a theological re-discovery of the richness of the Doctrine

of the Trinity has gone a realization of the fact that a more adequate way of talking of the ‑Persons‑ of the Godhead is to talk of Relations. God the Blessed Trinity is a movement of relations that interpenetrate and interact within and among each other. The language of relations is very dear to the heart of pastoral counselors because so much of our practice has to do with exploring the impact of past and present significant relationships upon our emotional and psychological health and well-being today. There is thus much to be gained by exploring what is meant by relations within God to see what may be learned for relations among and within human beings created in the image of God.

A hallmark of pastoral counseling in the new circumstances in which we find ourselves must be a deeper and more thoughtful theological analysis. Pastoral counseling cannot and must not merely be a sprinkling of a psychological baby with cold theological water or the overlaying of a thin veneer of shallow theology upon a psychological product. In this regard Trinitarian relationalism could be a helpful model.

Fifth, pastoral counseling now has to be oriented towards a balance between a disease model and a health and strength model. So much of the discipline of pastoral counseling has followed the disease model embedded in medical practice. As with psychology the main interest has been in diagnosis and treatment of pathology. Whilst this has clearly been valuable and will continue to be so, there is a steady increase in recognition of the importance of the more ‑positive psychology‑ that studies strength, virtue and ability. The cultivation of virtues and strengths has long been a practice associated with spiritual direction. Spirituality has tended in the direction of the practices that empower and enhance strengthened relations with the divine. As Len Sperry has argued in Transforming Self and Community (2002) much of value could result from an integrative approach that draws together the practices of spiritual direction, moral education and pastoral counseling.

Sixth, Pastoral counseling as argued above increasingly draws upon a rich and varied theological heritage. Pastoral counseling needs to be theologically astute in attempting consciously and unconsciously to mirror God‑s presence in the world, which is framed in Christian understanding as self-giving (kenotic), self-effacing, unobtrusive, non-threatening and life-giving. ‑Secular‑ pastoral counseling in particular holds potential for such mirroring. In recognition of the God who though self-disclosing, invites all humans to ‑search for him and perhaps grope for him in the hope that they might find him ó though indeed he is not far from each of us‑ (Acts 17: 27), pastoral counseling may by its very activity engage in such invitational practice. God‑s presence in the world is subtle and most often unrecognized or celebrated. Similarly the most effective forms of care and counseling are unannounced. It seems to be the way of the Holy Spirit to woo and lure rather than to overwhelm and compel. The God ‑in whom we live, move and have our being‑ (Acts 17: 28) does not seem anxious to constantly make her presence felt overtly. In Christ God gives God‑s self to humanity in faith and trust that the divine self-giving will eventually be discovered. Pastoral counseling mirrors such self-giving love.

Seventh, Pastoral counseling needs now more than ever before to pay close attention to persons-in-context. As we learn just how much we are impacted by the contexts in which we live and grow, we recognize the need for pastoral counselors to be cultural analysts if our practice is to be of any significance for the persons and communities in which we practice. It is as pastoral counselors become aware of and sensitive to the changing cultural circumstances which are at work within and around our clients that we become more able to be authentically present with them. This contextual analysis is inclusive of the historical, social, political and economic dimensions of communal life. The world, as it were, is closing in on us in the global village. As the West has influenced others with language and cultural products so are we now subject to the influences that exist and arise from different regions of the world. Potentially we are humanized by empathic relations with all humankind no matter how different culturally and ethnically. We are called upon to be faithful and reflective practitioners of care by paying close attention to a world in flux.

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PARADIGM SHIFTS AND NEW PERSPECTIVES ON ANTHROPOLOGY IN PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELLING: *CURA ANIMARUM* AS *CURA VITAE*

Daniel J. Louw

Abstract

In terms of the basic assumption that anthropology in care and counselling is the fundamental area which determines the categories for theory formation regarding healing in pastoral therapy, a paradigmatic shift from the traditional cura animarum to cura terrae and cura vitae is proposed. A systemic and hermeneutical understanding of care implies that a dualistic and reductionistic approach should make room for an integral and holistic approach. In terms of new demands in postmodernity and processes of globalization, the rediscovery of the notion of spirituality for a qualitative and theological understanding of pastoral ministry, is argued. Due to the impact of media and electronical communication (computeralisation of life) on our being human, the concept of cyber-spirituality is introduced in order to meet spiritual needs created by virtual reality.

Anthropology in pastoral care and counselling determines the character of healing and therapy. How one views the human being plays a fundamental role in all of the communication and caring models. Dunn (1998: 51), in his book on the õanthropology of Paulö, even asserts that Pauløs theology of grace cannot be understood properly unless one understands his anthropology.[20]

The question about the nature of the human person, whether approached from the perspective of psychology in terms of personhood or behaviour, or from the perspective of theology in terms of sin, creation or recreation, no model on care and counselling can avoid the question about the nature of õsoulö or õselfö. Some scholars in anthropology and psychology will accept without question that we are merely what can be seen and touched, perceived, weighed and measured (the phenomenological approach). Others will insist that we are more than our bodies and assert that this õmoreö is spirit or soul. How valid these approaches might be,

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[20] õPauløs anthropology is not a form of individualism; persons are social beings, defined as persons by their relations. In Pauline perspective, human beings are as they are by virtue of their relationship to God and his world.ö Dunn 1998:53.

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the two classical models: namely, materialism and dualism do not suffice and open the scientific debate and discussion about an adequate understanding of the doctrine of the human being or self. (See McKeithen Jr 2004: 98).

For quite a long time, within protestant and re-formed circles, cura animarum, the care of the human souls, was mainly a kerygmatic and personal, individual endeavour.[21] In 1975 H Tacke wrote a book: Glau-benssshilfe als Lebenshilfe in which he tried to address new problems and options for care and counselling. His intention was to liberate care from its ecclesial, official and hierarchical captivity (1975:9). Together with Josuttis (1980[2]) their intention was to move from the dialectic and kerygmatic model with its emphasis on proclamation, to a more contextual model with the emphasis on life and social issues. Instead of a reduc-tionist approach, i. e. to reduce pastoral care either to theology or to psychology, or even to a total dualism, theory formation in pastoral theology became aware of the dynamic and enriching dynamics between Word and life. In this regard Heitink (1977) introduced in the seventies a bipolar model.

Within European circles, secularization brought about a radical change within the traditional paradigms of care and counselling. The Dutch, pastoral theologi-an, D Tieleman, wrote in 1995[2] a book about the crisis in pastoral care. He advocated for a new rediscovery of spirituality.[22] This emphasis on spirituality implied that care should be more than the sum total of psychologi-cal functions. Care should rather focus on issues of human dignity as related to our quest for meaning and the awareness of the ultimate within daily life (Tiele-man 1995[2]:124). Even in more evangelical circles, a consensus gradually developed namely that Christian spirituality should be rediscovered and introduced in pastoral counselling. In the USA there was a growing consensus that evangelicals failed to take the pressures and realities of Christian living in the modern period seriously enough to devise spiritual strategies to allow new and struggling Christians to cope with them (Mc Grath 1994:13).

At the end of the twentieth century pastoral care became more exposed to the concept of spirituality. Cura animarum was more and more interpreted and understood as spiritual care and spiritual direction. Already in the eighties K Leech emphasised the im-portance of spirituality for pastoral care. In his book Spirituality and Pastoral Care (1986a) he advocated for both a Christian spirituality with the emphasis on ma-turity (1986a:6), as well as a social spirituality (see also 1986(b):9). The focus fell on transcendence and the mystical component of our being human. It was argued that all human existence has a spiritual aspect. (Leech 1986(a): xxvi). In this regard spiritual care linked with a very old tradition in Christianity ó the so called desert fathers and their quest for God (Leech 1985:130). This rediscovery of the realm of interiority and transcend-ence (Thayer 1985:25) coincides with a discovery of the value of symbolic structures and religious experi-ence (Thayer 1985:29).[23] Due to the notion of spiritual-ity the emphasis is less on self ó actualization, behav-iouristic theories and the classical psychoanalytic theo-ries of humanistic psychology (Thayer 1985: 41-42), and more on the interconnectedness between life and transcendence, human existence and God. Spirituality became a search for ‑meta ó egoicø experience (Leech 1987[8].)

In stead of the Western dualism and distinction be-tween spirit and matter, spirituality became since the nineties and the beginning of the 21st century, the standard formula for the theory and practice of õlife in the Spiritö and discipleship (Sheldrake 1995: 514). Spirituality started to emphasize emotive expressions of intimacy with God within many acts of public wor-ship and service (Drishill 1999:8).

Due to globalization and technology with its õcom-pression of timeö, a need for spiritual leadership devel-oped. Secularization created a spiritual vacuum (Blackcaby 2001: 5-11) It is therefore no surprise why H Cox, the author of the Secular City (1965), revised his own theory on secularism. In his book, Fire from heaven (1995), he acknowledged that his projection in the sixties proofed to be wrong. Instead of secularism who is endangering spirituality it is rather spirituality[24] who is destroying secularism. õToday it is a secularity, not spirituality, that may be headed for extinctionö (Cox 1995: xv)

The rediscovery of the value of spirituality within therapy and counselling helped pastoral care to get rid of the domination of psychotherapy. Depending on different schools of interpretation, pastoral care was either merely a variant of proclamation (a sort of homi-letic procedure or liturgical gesture/prayer) or a variant of the culture of self-actualization. Gerkin (1997:49) referred to the latter as the õculture of the selfö.

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[21] A classic example in this regard is E Thurneysenøs model which stood in the tradition of Biblical or Word counsel-ling. See 1957[2], 1968. Meiburgh (1990:122) in his article on cura animarum in the Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counselling pointed out how pietismøs preoccupation with the welfare of the individual soul became the seedbed for the growth of popular psychology. Due to the influence of psychology pastoral care moved from salvation to self-realization under God.

[22] Even in spirituality, the focus became life. See Richards 1987:50. õChristian spirituality is living a human life in this world in union with God.ö

[23] About the interplay between faith and experience within a theology of spirituality, see Ruhbach 1987: 23-25; sola ex-perientia facit theologum.

[24] To my mind, the most extensive research on spirituality has been done by Waaijman (2003[4]). He explains the com-plexity of the concept in its relationship to nous and pneu-ma, as well as to the biblical concepts of devotion (euse-beia), holiness, mercy/charity, and perfection (2003[4]: 314 ó 332). (See also Endres 2002: 143 ó 155). According to Waaijman, spirituality is an exponent of the French spirit-ualite (Laten: spiritualitas) with roots in the Biblical field of meaning: ruach/pneuma (2003[4]: 359). Spirituality repre-sents both the divine perspective as well as the human spir-it. It includes ascetic and mystical experiences as related to both the Biblical tradition (ruach) and Hellenistic intuition and knowledge (nous). At stake is the relationship between the divine Spirit/Pneuma and the human spirit/soul within the reality of life.

However, the notion of spirituality opens up new avenues for soul care. It challenges pastoral care to reframe its view on soul as a substantial entity separated from body and life to soul as a vital ingredient of all of human, social and environmental relationships.[25] Spirituality underlines anew the interrelatedness between faith and life, care and communal and social issues.

The aim of this article is to discuss the following question: what is the impact of this new emphasis on spirituality, meaning and life for the traditional understanding of anthropology within cura animarum, as well as on the methodology of pastoral care as a theological discipline? What are the paradigm shifts which took place during the twentieth century and what are the impact of these shifts on care and counselling within the global culture of the twenty first century?

I   PARADIGM SHIFTS WITHIN CARE AND COUNSELLING

With paradigms[5] are meant conceptual frameworks and schemata of interpretation reflecting philosophical worldviews, cultural constructs and various theological stances and perspectives. Capps (1984:51) describes paradigms as conceptual models for understanding texts and their meaning.

The most important paradigm shifts to be identified are the following:

The shift from individual conversion and personal self-actualization towards a systems approach

Within the tradition of cura animarum, soul care was mostly a pietistic, individualistic and private endeavour (see Mc Neill 1951). The emphasis nowadays is much more on a psycho‑systemic approach[26]. õThe nature of the human personality is understood in contextual rather than individualistic termsö (Graham 1992:19). Botman (1995: 10-11) calls such an emphasis a õsocio ó theological constructionist approachö.

With a systems approach is meant an understanding of our being within the dynamic networking of relationships. This dynamics refers to the importance of attitude, space, value, meaning, and experience. In the words of Friedman (1985:24), the emphasis is on position rather than personality. Problems are therefore not necessarily located in the symptomatic patient but often in the structure of the system (1985:19). In a nutshell: õThe components do not function according to their õnatureö but according to their position in the networkö (Friedman 1985:15).

The advantage of a systems approach is that it promotes the concept of a wholistic model in care and counseling. It brings about an understanding of interrelatedness within an interdisciplinary approach. Wholeness, in the words of Allen (1995:10), refers to health as a total integration between mind, body and spirit; between the individual and others, and between the individual, nature and God. It refers to a maximum quality of life, integrity and integration.

The shift from psychoanalyses to a narrative approach ô storytelling

The shift from psychoanalyses with its emphasis on past experiences as suppressed in the unconscious, towards a larger perspective was already argued by Gerkin (1997:51). This shift implied a movement away from õthe culture of the self ö (1997:49), and the õprivatization of religious life (1997:48), as well as the predominant õpsychotherapeutic pastoral model (1997:98), towards telling the stories of our lives within the framework of the Christian story (1997:97-99). A communal model of care is proposed (1997:104) together with a cultural ô linguistic[27] model.

The narrative approach work with the proposition: õ I perform, therefore I am,ö rather than the rationalist stance: õI think, therefore I amö (Aldridge 2000:13). Meaning is therefore acted out in life patterns as reflected in relationships. õSymptoms are signs that have to be both observed and interpreted in their performance. Stories give a sense of pattern, a way of speaking, perceiving and existing, whereas concepts tend to nominalize õ(Aldridge 2000:14).

Storytelling refers to narrative conversations as embedded within the broader social context of the stories by which we live our lives. (Morgan 2000:3-9)

Narrative therapy operates with the following basic assumption: the person is not the problem, nor is the problem the problem, but the personøs relationship with the problem is the problem. Narrative counsellors therefore engage in externalizing conversations (see Roth & Epston 1996:5-12) whereby they separate the problem from the person and give it a name. Through a process of deconstruction a person is invited to examine the cultural content and context of the dominant stories and to consider the possibility that things could be different. The emphasis in a narrative approach shifts from systems as such, to the embeddedness of stories within social constructions i.e. beliefs, values, institutions, customs, labels, laws, divisions of labour, and the like that make up our social realities, constructed by the members of a culture as they interact with one another from generation to generation and day to day (Freedman & Combs 1996:16).

From substantial and metaphysical thinking to hermeneutical thinking

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[25] For the emphasis on human relationships, the social as well as the political dimensions in Catholic spirituality, see Costello 2002: 1-31. Nowadays within protestant circles, there is even a reference to spiritual care giving as a secular sacrament. Anderson 2003, 11-25.

[26] Individualism, a core feature of American culture, breeds self-preoccupation with self-fulfillment and narcissism, which is incompatible with a communal, perspective (Sperry 2002:1).

[27] õThe cultural-linguistic model of doing theology is the most fundamental model by which a community can care for individuals and families. It has the unique ability to provide people with a storied context of ultimate meaning for their livesö (Gerkin 1997:110).

Currently, the hermeneutical model is influencing methodology in the discipline of pastoral theology. In a substantial model the õwhat?ö ô question dominates our thinking. In terms of metaphysics it is an attempt to reason back towards a possible cause or explanation. Within theology this model can be called a propositionalist model.

Within traditional orthodoxy there was the attempt to propose informative propositions, explanatory principles or objectivistic truth claims about the essence of things (for example of God and the human soul). The model describes what is and is often in opposition to a model that speaks about God or ultimate reality in metaphoric or poetic language (Gerkin 1997:106).

In a pastoral hermeneutics the focus is becoming rather on the meaning of the dynamic encounter between God and human beings than on the origin of things and humans. Within religious and spiritual experiences there is a certain grammar, a way of speaking, an interpretive schema that structures oneøs understanding of oneself and oneøs world. The role of the pastor and counselor is then to dialogue between life stories and the Christian story. The role of the pastor is to become more an interpretive guide (Gerkin 1997:113). õIn short, I mean the role of interpretive guidance as it relates to facilitating the dialogical process between life stories and the Christian story of how life is to be livedö (Gerkin 1997:114).

To conclude: the new emphasis on a hermeneutical model; the attempt to interpret stories and to connect life to spiritual issues; the value of metaphors and symbols and there relatedness to meaning and the ultimate; the value of understanding life events in terms of systems and dynamic social networks and constructions, all of these point to a new assessment of cura animarum and faith care in close connection to life care (cura vitae). How does such a paradigm shift influence anthroplogy and our understanding of õsoulö?

II   SOUL AS SUBSTANCE: SOME Ì Í THINGÎ ?

Towards a holistic approach within a pastoral anthropology

The question to be discussed is whether a substantial understanding of soul (human beings õhaveö a soul) and a quantative understanding of soul (the function and characteristics of soul as expressed in statistics through exact phenomenological observation and description) can still be maintained within a systems and hermeneutical approach.

There exists a deep seated conviction that soul refers to the inner world or the inward part of our being. It represents consciousness and subconsciousness, and refers to a spiritual realm within the body.

The word for psyche (psuché) is derived from a root which means breath, or to breathe. The Hebrew word for soul, néfésh (Gen 2:7) means breath, exhalation, the principle of life (Seidl 1999:751, Brown 1778: 679 ó 680) Néfésh denotes a principle of life which makes a body, whether human or beast, into a living being. When néfésh is translated as psyché, it signifies

that which is vital in a human being in the broader sense. In combination with heart (kardia) and mind (nous), soul in the New Testament describes the seat of life or even life itself. It represents the person in the broadest sense and indicates the quality of life experiences. Soul therefore does not refer in the first place to a different anthropological category, but to a different mode of being (Harder in Brown 1978:684).

The use of the term soul in Scripture, refers to wholeness and not to a different substance as in the case of Hellenism. Plato for example provides us with the idea that a soul can be deprived of its body; that it does not come fully into its own until it has been separated from the body, and that it is immortal. The body is therefore merely clothing for the soul, a kind of prison from which it should escape and be liberated.

Besides this dualism, the soul was also viewed in Greek philosophy as an inspiring force. For Aristotle soul indicates movement within the human being and operates as a vapour of warmth.

Both Plato and Aristotle estimated the soul as having unique qualities. Without the soul as the foundation, sophia (wisdom) and nous (understanding), would have no change to develop (Plato). Aristotle regarded the soul as divided into nourishment, perception and thought.

For the Greeks, the soul can be trained, according to its various capabilities. The most important thing, however, as Socrates teaches, is to cultivate or take care of (epimeleisthai) the soul, rather than to attain wealth or happiness. õOne could say that here for the first time we find the concept of the care of soulsö (Harder in Brown 1978:678). Socrates is not concerned with speculation about the soul, its life before and after its time in the body. Soul acquires a completely new meaning. Since it is a spirit capable of thought and reason, as well as moral awareness, the care of the soul is service of God (Harder in Brown 1978:678). The soul is part of cosmos, it is a life reality and should be lived in harmony with the events of life.

What we can gather from the ancient world, is that soul is a dynamic principle within our existence. It should be viewed in close connection to feelings and the cognitive principle in being. Due to its capability for wisdom, soul is linked to morality and virtues. Both competence (epitédeumata) and deeds (praxeis) determine the functions of soul. The quality of these functions were linked to the principle of justice (dikaiosyné) and the capability of discernment (phronesis).[28]

As assessed by Malina & Neyrey (1996:24), happenstances of life are directly related to the accom-

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[28] %Accomplishments (epitédeumata) and deeds (praxcis) looked to body, soul and the happenstances of life. Considerations of the body (kata soma) included beauty, strength, agility, might and health; those of the soul (kata psychên) looked to justice (dikaiosynê), wisdom (phronêsis), moderation rooted in a sense of shame (sôphrosynê), manly courage (andreia), and respect for those who control oneøs existence (pistis, eusebeia). Happenstances of life, that is, fate or fortune (kata tychên), treated power (dynasteria), wealth (ploutos), friends (philoi), children, their number and beauty, as well as fame and fortune, length of life, happy deathö (Malina & Neyrey 1996:24).

plishments and deeds of both the body and the soul. One can therefore conclude that soul is indeed an inherent part of a human person's existence and the daily occurrences in life. "Nephesh does not say what a person has, but who the person is who receives life" (Anderson 2003:30).

The question now to be posed is: can these perspectives be incorporated within a Biblical understanding of soul?

Our interpretation of both nèfèsh and psychè should reckon with the fact that the worldview of the Old and the New Testament functioned within a total different context and paradigm. When we read Scripture we are bound to our own cultural context. It is therefore obvious that a different schemata of interpretation will play a role in our findings.

For our discussion it is important to mention that both nèfèsh and psychè in Scripture refer to life and its quality (Seidl 1999:751) (see Mt 16:25, Joh 15:13).[29]

According to Acts 2:41 soul refers to the whole of our human existence. To understand néfésj as an enfleshed principle for purposeful life, as an embodiment of a life force, can be very near to the original intention of the authors of the Bible.

In some places in the New Testament soul is connected to spirit (pneuma). For Paul there is an interconnectedness between soul and spirit.[30] In some texts the meaning is actually more or less the same. When Paul indeed refers to spirit/pneuma he wants to describe a very unique relationship between God and human beings. With reference to Christology, soul then becomes an indication and expression of a very specific state of being due to justification (salvation). One can say that pneuma indicates the condition of the new person in Christ over against the condition of the old person, captured by death and sin.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:23 Paul speaks about the trichotomy of spirit, soul and body. The implication however is not a threefold division, but different perspectives within a unity. The text should not be exploited and misused for a philosophical or psychological speculation about three different entities and anthropological categories. Paul's remarks should be read within his eschatological understanding of the kingdom of God and its implication for the new life in Christ.

A Biblical perspective should always think along the lines of a holistic approach. Each part of the body, whether it is soul, spirit, mind or kidney, presupposes the whole as a functioning unit. Whether soul or body, each part is connected to another as a systemic psycho-physical and social unit consisting of processes of interactive networking.

The Bible does not view the human person as an isolated individual. Due to a corporative understanding of our being human, the human person is viewed as a "corporate personality" with a "corporate identity". It is the group within a cultural context which determines the characteristics of the individual.[31]

In conclusion one can say that "soul" refers to a collective identity within the corporate structures of life, i.e. marriage, family, life as a whole, ie to clan and society. Soul reflects a network of social systems and spiritual forces and designates a qualitative stance in life.

II.1. Different perspectives on cura animarum as cura vitae (life care)

Our discussion so far reveals how difficult [32] it is to describe what is meant by soul. Even in Scripture both n f sj and kardia is used in different texts and contexts so that one meaning cannot be derived. Our best option is to work with different perspectives on our being human.

An existential perspective

In terms of our personal existence and being, soul indicates the principle of decision-making and subjective self-understanding. The human being is responsible for his/her life and should therefore be regarded as an ethical being. It is an integral part of our vocation to make important decisions in the light of existing norms and values.

Life is determined by both the quest for meaning (Heidegger: Sorge) and the experience of a deeply seated anxiety for death. Thus the threat of nothingness and meaninglessness. Within an existential perspective, soul refers to a moral sense of vocation and an anticipation of significance which should be enfleshed in attitude (habitus) and aptitude (a subjective and individual self-understanding, the qualitative condition of being).

A personal perspective

"Soul" signifies identity (who one is) and self-consciousness. It is linked to uniqueness and represents a vivid consciousness regarding the ultimate; i.e. an awareness that there is more in life that one can see, experience and perceive. Within both the conscious dimension as well as the subconscious dimension, human beings function according to a definitive self-understanding. Self-understanding correlates with self-

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[29] For the connection between soul and life, see Naurath 2003:100. "Seele bezeichnet das Lebendigsein, die Vitalität und die Lebensenergie des Menschen, die gerade auch in Schmerz und Verzweiflung das Eigentliche des Menschen ausmacht. Der Mensch besitzt nicht eine Seele sondern er ist seine Seele. Die Seele konstituiert den Menschen in seinem Personsein, das von Gottesbeziehung her bestimmt ist". Naurath 2003:100.

[30] To speculate about a psychology of personhood by Paul, is to overestimate his use of the concept. See Malina & Neyrey 1996:14-15).

[31] "Our hypothesis is that first century Mediterranean persons were strongly group-embedded collectivist persons. Since they were group-orientated, they were "socially"-minded as opposed to "psychologically"-minded. They were attuned to the values, attitudes and beliefs of their in-group, with fate due to generation and geography". (Malina & Neyrey 1996:16)

[32] The conviction of KR Popper (19822:273) is that our being human is more complicated than we think. He favours duality over against a fixed monism. For him a human being is the embodiment of an I, a self and spirit. He poses the following question: "Aber kann man die Beziehung zwischen den Leib (dem physischen Zustand) verstehen?" (1982:274).

esteem and is expressed in individual self-consciousness (subjectivity) and personhood.

A psycho-social and relational perspective

Soul is related to mind (the cognitive component); feelings (the affective component); intention and motivation; will (conative component); and body (the component of neurology and embodiment). Within all these dynamic components soul reflects the human I (ego) in terms of the capability to make decisions about purposefulness.

Soul is part of the dynamics between the self and the ego as expressed within the dynamics of relationships.

In this regard, CG Jung (1946:588) distinguishes between soul (anima) and psyche. Soul is then viewed as a functional complex which can be described as personality.[33]

For Jung personality is not a fixed entity within a person. Personality is variable and changes according to circumstances. He refers to the expression ÷angel abroad, and ÷devil at homeø as an indication of the phenomenon of character-splitting derived from everyday experience (1946:589). õA definite milieu demands a definite attitudeö (1946:589).

The soulfulness of soul also refers to space and position. Jung calls it a õmilieu-attitudeö (1946:589). Space and position demarcate the identification of the ego within a very specific cultural and social environment. Within this milieu-orientation (social conditions and necessities) oneøs soul develops either a social sensitivity or a social apathy.

Due to social role functions, soul is like a persona ó the õmaskö people put on which they know will correspond with his/her conscious intentions, while it also meets with the requirements and opinions of his/her environment. For Jung personality is therefore an attitude appropriate to, and in correspondence with, personal intention and contextual demands. Personality, and in terms of our own argument pertaining the human soul, is therefore a õfunction-complex of the personaö which is exclusively concerned with the relation to the object (Jung 1946:591). This relationship is embodied in both an õinner attitudeö and an õouter attitudeö.

What we gather from Jungøs argument is that whether one calls it soul or persona, this unique dimension of existential positioning, is a function ó complex as enfleshed in a system of relationships and embodied in attitudes and aptitudes (positions).

A religious and Christian perspective

From a spiritual and religious perspective, soul should be viewed as the competence of human beings to pose the meaning question and to relate the human quest for meaning to the ultimate and a transcendent factor. Human beings imply more than a perceived and experienced I (the phenomenological perspective). A phenomenology of the soul is not appropriate to describe a spiritual hermeneutics of soul. Attached to soul is the spiritual dimension of our being human as expressed in an awareness of í (God); life as being more than í (transcendency).

Within religion transcendency is linked to our search for, and understanding of, God. It indicates our stance before God. Soul as linked to transcendency reflects how we represent God within the dynamics of relationships. In this regard, from a Christian perspective soul indicates a condition of being as determined by cross and resurrection (salvation / heil).

A qualitative description of oneøs position in life is not an attempt to pin our being human down to either experience, being functions, behaviour or even spirituality. What we have in mind is wholeness and unity. **A human being is an embodiment of soul as well as an ensoulment of body. One does not have a soul, one is oneøs soul in terms of mind, will, emotion and body within the dynamics of relationships and cultural contexts.** The religious dynamics in this embodiment and ensoulment is spirituality as expressed in our directedness towards transcendence (the divine and the ultimate) and enfleshed within all the realms of life.

Our argument for soul as embodiment, and as an indication of the quality of happenstances in life within the processes of networking (soulfulness), does not deny the notion of the uniqueness of the individual, nor the experience of autonomy as a unique way of being human; i.e. the experience of mine (Meininger 2001:17)

Due to the Christian belief that humans are made in the image of God, [34] our individuality implies a representation of the character of God (love/grace). The further implication is that we are geared towards the future posing the meaning question in life.

However, one cannot ignore totally a õsubstantialö approach. õSubstantialö then refers to authenticity and the stance of the individual before God. Substantiality depicts a state of being and a qualitative condition as determined by grace. On the other hand, a relational approach helps one to understand authenticity within the dynamics of networking. One should therefore opt for an inclusive anthropology which operates with both the mutuality of relationships (relatio) as well as the identity of being qualities (substantia) rather than merely with the predominance of substantia (see Meininger 2001:20).

The outcome of my argument is an inclusive and normative anthropology. Anthropology determines healing due to the fact that the questions õhow do I see myselfö? and õWho is the other?ö determine oneøs approach to life as well as the processes of positioning. Our care and support to one another are interpretative activities and influenced by perceptions and prejudice. That is why a hermeneutical competence can be seen

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[33] õBy the psyche I understand the totality of all psychic processes, both conscious as well as unconsciousness; whereas by soul, I understand a definitely demarcated function-complex that is best characterized as a ÷personalityøö. Jung 1946:588.

[34] %The word translated by ÷imageø, is the Hebrew *tselem*. It appears sixteen times in the Old Testament, five of which refer to man as created in Godøs image. In most of the other cases, *tselem* refers to an idol. The root sense is that of a representation or resemblanceö (Sullivan 2003:13).

as the basic skill of caregivers (see Meininger 2001:24).

II.2 A hermeneutical and systemic approach to cura vitae

Cura vitae implies in pastoral care and counselling the following anthropological assumptions.

Soul (néfésh) is a systemic issue. It should be assessed and interpreted within the (néfésh) dynamics of interactive life relationships (networking).

Soul is a qualitative concept. It indicates a mode of being (attitude, aptitude, habitus, position) and should be interpreted within processes of meaning-giving and meaning-receiving.

Soul is viewed in terms of the happenstances of life. It describes a specific stance within life events. It connects with choices and reveals character (epitêdeumata). It also connects with acts which express intention and motivation/driving forces (praxeis). Soul indicates habitus, it is flexible, but not inconsistent and precarious.

Soul designates a systemic network of functional positions which describe the mechanics of the human person. Within these positions, soul signifies vocation and a sense of directedness and significance. In relationship with God it signifies our understanding of God as enfleshed in behavior and social interaction (spirituality). As such it creates a space which reveals either nearness (intimacy); distance (separation and rejection) or neutrality (indifference).

The previous outline represents a very specific approach. The choice for a functional approach is an attempt to describe cura vitae as a pastoral endeavour embedded in spirituality and interactive processes of networking.

According to Philippians 2:5, wisdom or attitude plays a decisive role within the being functions of Christians. õYour attitude should (phronésis) be the same as that of Christ Jesus, Who, being in the very nature of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man He humbled himself and became obedient to the death ó even the death on a cross.ö

The word for attitude (phron sis) is related to the Old Testamentøs understanding of wisdom (Goetzman: 1976:616). The Hebrew equivalents are hakom and bîn with their respective derivations. What is of significant importance is the fact that phron sis is related to Godøs position. It denotes a creative understanding of God wherein wisdom (sophia), together with the notion of Christøs incarnation, plays a fundamental role.

The human soul represents an appropriate, ethical stance in life and is expressed in virtues. With virtue (arête) is meant: õthe specific quality appropriate to an object or a personö (H-G Link, A Ringwald 1978: 925).

According to Plato the four basic virtues are: wisdom (sophia); courage (andreia); prudence (sophrosyn); and justice (diakaiosyn). Virtue denotes

a permanent pattern of behavior (hexis), determined by being qualities and decision-making.

According to II Peter 1:3 virtues are manifestations of the power of God. It leads to devotion (eusebeia), self-discipline, passion and mutual love. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22) can be viewed as a Christian equivalent to general human virtues; virtues are õactions of Godøs new creationö (Link, Ringewald 1978:927).

T Moore (1992:ix) can be quoted in this regard: õSoul is revealed in attachment, love, and community, as well as in retreat on behalf of inner communing and intimacyö. For soul one needs aesthetics, the creative imagination of visioning the divine within the realm of relationships. Aesthetics as soulfulness of soul, is wisdom enacted as the beauty of love, reconciliation and justice.

Soul strives for growth and wholeness. Thus the reason why T Moore (1992:4) does not view the care of the soul as primarily a method for problem-solving. õIts goal is not to make life problem-free, but to give ordinary life the depth and value that comes with soulfulnessö (1992:4).

Our argument can be summed up in the following quotation: õ¢Souløis not a thing, but a quality or a dimension of experiencing life and ourselves. It has to do with depth, values, relatedness, heart and personal substanceö (Moore 1992:5).

A qualitative and systemic understanding of soul implies the following:

There exists a close relationship between our being human and culture. Soul cannot be assessed separate from interculturality. N f sh implies ethos and ethics which are embedded in a cultural context. What are the predominant driving forces in 21st culture?

Soul and life includes a fundamental relatedness to environment and nature. Spirituality therefore cannot be assessed without taking ecology into consideration. Could ecology be included within Christian Spirituality?

Schemata of interpretation colours the character of soul so that pastoral care must always reckon with dominant, existing philosophical, conceptual frameworks in every pastoral assessment or diagnosis. What are some of the features of our postmodern thinking and ectronical communication?

How then will interculturality, ecology and the philosophical schemata of interpretation of twenty first thinking influence spirituality in cura vitae?

III TOWARDS A POSSIBLE EXPANSION OF CURA VITAE?

Inculturalisation, cura terrae and cyber-spiritaulity

The undergirding presupposition of the article is that currently we are predominantly being influenced by what many call today: globalization (Waters 1995). Couture and Hester (1995:49-52) refer to the economic creed of a market driven economy and its influence on pastoral care and our understanding of God. Globalisa-

tion, capitalistic economics and the internationalization of human values are indissolubly intertwined with digitalization and the electronics of a technological era. While secularization was the big issue in the twentieth century, I want to argue that the complexity of life in the twenty first century will be determined by the powers of a technocratic and market driven globalization.

Bauman (1997:10) refers to modernity as the way of life in which order-making consists of the dismantling of the õtraditionalö, inherited and received, order. Rationality and a positivistic stance to life issues played a decisive role. In this regard the epistemology of the Enlightenment determined the shape of knowledge and processes of thinking. In postmodernity, however, objectivity and the õgrand storyö of the past is making place for relativity, plurality and contextuality. (See Brueggemann 1993:6-12). Wilber (2001:11) calls this stance:pluralistic relativism. In globalization the social landscape of human life is reshaped by a technological revolution, centered around information technologies which is forming the material basis of society. (Castells 1996[4]: 2-30). The global policy of networking and the tendency to mould human beings into a mode of sameness[35] beyond local culturality are some of the characteristics of globalisation. Technological determinism and informalism are structuring societies increasingly õ around a bipolar opposition between the Net and the Selfö (Castells 1996[4]:3).

The implication of postmodernity and globalisation on the spirituality of people living within the so called global village, is that our human aptitude and mode of living are fundamentally being influenced by film, media and tele-communication. The digitalisation of life and the awareness of virtual reality within cyberspace, is influencing constantly our understanding of spirituality in the 21st century.

What is the possible impact of these influential factors on cura animarum interpreted and expanded as cura vitae?

Interculturality and Communality

Despite the value of contextualization (how to relate with to relevant contextual, social ô political and community issues) and the advantages of a hermeneutical approach in pastoral care (the interpretation of faith within the metaphors symbols and world view of a specific culture)(see Bate 1995:16-19), life and our being human is constantly being exposed to interculturalisation, i.e how different cultures influence one another, affect one another and enrich one another. Anthropology is no longer one- dimensional but multi-dimensional.

In the past, the focus in many pastoral models for care was merely on cross-cultural communication, i.e. the art how to cross different cultures with the gospel. In this regard Augsburger (1986:29) refers to interpathy[15]. Nowadays a cross-cultural approach is supplemented by an intercultural approach. In Interculturalisation one culture is not inferior to another (Mulvaney

2004:227). Interculturality helps pastoral care to understand human interaction in terms of cultural mutuality and communal reciprocity. In this regard, an understanding of African spirituality can be most helpful.

Within an African understanding of life, the dynamics of life is less individualised and more communal. For example, TM Byamungu (2002:124) refers to the fact that the human body in African thinking is viewed as a living organism which serves relationships. The Kpelle tribe in Lyberia uses the word Kponoo for body which means: the instrument by which human beings relate to others (2002:125).

Another example is the ubuntu principle in African spirituality: a human being is only a person through others. Identity is linked to a spiritual realm of ancestors and the customs of the tribe or group. Without relationships, one is deprived of oneøs identity and human dignity.

One is aware of the fact that an African spirituality and worldview does not represent one general African worldview. Due to cultural differentiation within African spirituality, one cannot generalize. One should also not romantisize over the quest for human dignity (ubuntu) within the African continent. War, struggles between different tribes and suspicion certainly played a role and influenced the ubuntu-principle negatively. Due to globalisation and urbanisation the ubuntu-principle is declining. However, the African culture underlines the importance of position within a systemic network of relationships. The worldview of African spirituality in this regard is not far removed from the corporate worldview of the Old Testament. Within the gathering of Godøs covenantal people (the Qahal Jahw) corporativeness determined the identity of the individual. The human person functioned within the corporativeness of a systemic body of interconnectedness.

The basic principle at stake which can be derived from African spirituality in order to design a cura vitae, is the principle of communality, mutuality and communion as well as a sense of corporate belongingness in order to foster interpathy and intercultural exchange.

Towards an eco-spirituality: cura terrae.

If it is possible to understand néfésh (soul) in terms of a hermeneutics of life events (happenstances), and systems (a qualitative approach), one should immediately reckons with the fact that human and life issues in a Christian spirituality cannot be separated from notions such as creation, õearthö and õlandö.

The relationship between a pastoral theology and creation is not new. Clinebelløs growth model (1979) and his argument for an eco-spirituality was an attempt to incorporate Aristotleøs view of the cosmos. It operated with the assumption: ÷In all living things there is an inherent striving toward fulfilling their possibilities. Every acorn has a õneedö to become an oakø(1979:45). His growth model was linked to a holistic interpretation of spirituality:

According to Clinebell the spiritual dimension of our lives consists of the ways in which we satisfy seven interrelated spiritual needs: the need for a viable philosophy of life, for creative values, for a relationship

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[35] According to Giddens (2002:7)globalisation has something to do with the thesis that we now all live in one world.

with a loving God, for developing our higher self, for a sense of trustful belonging in the universe, for renewing moments of transcendence and for a caring community that nurtures spiritual growth (1979:106).

Clinebell sees healing and liberation as a broad concepts, which encompasse life in all its fullness. ‑It (liberation) is life in all its fullness   to increasing caring and competence, and creative livingø (1984:30). Pastoral careøs task is thus to free nature from humankindøs dominance and exploitation. ‑The fourth dimension of pastoral care and counseling is liberating our relationship with the biosphere by increasing our ecological awareness, communion and caringø (1984:32). Healing in pastoral care therefore implies: developing and cherishing a nurturing interaction with our great mother   Mother Nature.[36]

In an article, ‑Salvation as healing and humanization,øDe Gruchy (1989:38) advocates for a rediscovery of a holistic paradigm in theology, based on the biblical term, shalom which includes ecological issues. Spiritual therapy and healing therefore include the physical and natural dimensions.

The Biblical sense of corporate responsibility is extended to the creation as a whole, and therefore demands husbandry of the earth and its resources. Thus, human well-being, or shalom, is about not only the physical and psychic (including spiritual) health of the individual, but with the health of the social and political order, and the vital balance of nature (De Gruchy 1989:40).

Healing cannot be separated in a dualistic way from nature. At stake in healing is our humanity, and humanity and creation are inseparable concepts. ‑Health is that which enables us to be fully human in relation to ourselves, our society and our environmentø (De Gruchy 1989:43).

Clearly, the relation between God and creation should be interpreted from a metaphorical perspective. McFagueøs model is helpful here. She sees the whole world as the body of God (1987:69). She does not assume that creation gives us a direct description of God, but employs an as-if mode of theologizing (1987:70).

The description of the world as the body of God, describes the immanence of God in terms of his identification with the cosmos. McFague (1987:72) calls this panentheism: ÷.. that is, it is a view of the God-world relationship in which all things have their origin in God and nothing exists outside God, though this does not mean that God is reduced to things.ø God has an empathetic, intimate and sympathetic knowledge of the world which implies that ‑the action of God in the world is similarly interior and caringø (1987:73).

McFagueøs model should not be regarded as an ontological model which assesses concepts in terms of matter. Her metaphorical model maintains both the transcendence and the immanence of God for an organic understanding of the cosmos.

In his book on creation, Link (1991:391) reveals how the commission to subject the earth has been misunderstood (Dominium terrae). This has led to the exploitation of the earth. Genesis 1:28 was not written to promote technological progress and scientific achievement. Humankind was created to present God in creation and to nurture it. Whenever we separate dominion from our responsibility to God, exploitation and destructive power emerge (1991:397). According to Link, creation is our home to be enjoyed, not the scrap-yard for our technological trash.

Brueggemann; (1984:26) supports the notion of creation as a well-structured network of integrated relations. The Psalms of creation reflect orientation and indicate that the cosmos is an ordered entity. ‑These psalms in various ways are expressions of creation faith. They affirm that the world is a well-ordered, reliable, and life-giving system, because God has ordained it that way and continues to preside effectively over the process.øCreation is not a chaotic mass, but an image and sign. Gilkey (1994:127) describes Godøs creation as a sign of His glory: õIn this context, image is taken to mean a sign, symbol or sacrament of the divine, disclosing through itself the divine glory. By image, then, I will mean that nature manifests or reveals certain unmistakable signs of the divine, namely power, life, order and redemptive unity be stowed on it by Godö.

An ecological theology should consider the close association between Christ and the cosmos (Rm 8:18-25). Christology; and cosmology should not be separated. Such an approach opens up the possibility of an eco-spirituality. ‑Christian eco-spirituality attempts to integrate redemption-centered and creation-centered spiritualities by focusing on the new creation inaugurated by Christ in his redemptive incarnation, passion and resurrectionø(Cummings 1991:106). Van Leeuwen (1991:65-70) attempts to combine resurrection with cosmology. ‑If Christ in his death, wiped out evil and death, in his resurrection he vindicated the goodness of creation, its renewal and transformation; into a new creationø(1991:61).

The theological principle which can be derived from an eco-spirituality in order to design cura vitae as cura terrae is the principle of panentheism. i.e. the pneumathological understanding of God in creation.

Care to õnetizensö: towards a cyber ó spirituality?

Throughout our argument, it became clear that a qualitative and systems approach to cura vitae is in principle a plea for a holistic approach which encompasses all spheres of life. Due to the media and international, technological communication (digitalization) a new reality emerged: the so called virtual reality.

Virtual reality is creating a new challenge to pastoral care and counseling: pastoral care to the living human web (the õteleö ó soul of cyberspace), (see Louw 2002:347). People in the global village are forced to adapt a tele ó mentality. This tele ó mentality is creating people who are living their entire lives in the õnetö. Waters (1995:164) refers to them as cyberpunks.

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[36] For the relationship between God and creation and the role of the spirit (pneumatology) see Rebel 1981:44, Van Ruler 1974[2]: 47-55.

A cyberpunk could be described as a person who pretends to be somebody else with the aid of virtual reality. A cyberspace is created through the simulation of a virtual space/through information technology. By the click of a mouse one can live out a dream by creating virtual images which bears no necessary relationship to physical space and is limited only by the computer one uses.

One can indeed understand when religious and spiritual communication start to make use of cyberspace. The mode of communication as well as the language one uses, is changing on a rapid scale. The language and writing on the internet are busy to mould internet and email users into a new aptitude. Thus the reason why outhers refer to a new form of spirituality which they call õcyber religionö, i.e a form of post-modern religiosity which views cyberspace as a sacred space through which a metaphysics of virtual reality, immortality and disembodiment, are created. (Karaflogka 2002:196). Without any hierarchy, the internet create a fascinating, new environment for ˜netizensø (Karaflogha 2002:192) to live in.

The spirituality of cyberspace opens up new channels for religious imagination. The õmediatedö expression of spirituality creates new power games: õIn the beginning was the Web?ö (Karaflogha 2002:199).

The mode in which we are going to communicate with people within this new sacred space, put a real challenge to spiritual communication. A new spiritual language should be employed in order to address the õvirtual needsö of tele-souls, i.e life within cyberspace.

The pastoral issue at stake within cyber-spirituality is: õcyberpathyö, i.e. the sensitivity to the needs of cyberpunks as well as the creativity how to use human imagination in order to enter into the realm of virtual reality. The objective of cyberpathy is to understand the world of cyberspace and to discover how to use the Net and Web as a space for spiritual communication.

Conclusion

The paradigm shift towards a systemic, hermeneutical and qualitative understanding of cura animarum as cura vitae implies that a reductionist and dualistic approach should make room for a systemic and holistic approach. Soul care must therefore shift from merely an individualistic/personalistic approach to a more corporative and communal understanding of our being human. Spirituality should focus on the totality of life which justifies the expansion of cura animarum to both cura terrae and cura vitae.

Faith care as life care encompasses new developments which includes care for the environment and land (eco ó spirituality). Every pastoral assessment or diagnosis should be sensitive to processes of intercultarality. It must always take into consideration the realm of a local communal spirituality. When dealing with spiritual matters, care and counselling in a gloabal village should be aware of new challenges put forth by tele-communication and the mass media. Cyberspace is creating a cyber -spirituality by means of a virtual reality which forces care and counselling to introduce a new concept in pastoral therapy, namely cyberpathy besides merely empathy and interpathy.

The fundamental question for cura animarum is: how can we enhance and develop human dignity within an existential, ecological, systemic and holistic understanding of life? The theological and spiritual question at stake in a pastoral anthropology is: how can the pastoral ministry communicate the presence of God and address our human quest for meaning, within the realm of an eco-spirituality as well as a cyber-spirituality?

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A POSTFOUNDATIONALIST APPROACH TO PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELLING

Julian C. Müller

The only space in which any determinations can be made í is in the moment of praxis (always local, embodied, and situated).[37]

The approach to pastoral care and counseling that I try to develop in this paper is neither foundational, nor non-foundational. It is post-foundational. It cannot be described with the metaphor of a foundation, nor with the metaphor of non-foundation, or anti-foundation. It has moved beyond the restrictions and õinsular comfortö of theological foundationalism, but at the same time is not to be found within the sphere of relativism and the arbitrariness of antifoundationalism (Van Huyssteen 1997: 43).

Local wisdom in pastoral care and counselling

It will be argued that pastoral care and counselling, as enlightened by the postfoundationalist ideas of Calvin Schrag and Wentzel van Huyssteen, should be approached from a very specific and concrete moment of praxis.

According to Van Huyssteen (Lez Eyzies Symposium, May 2004), the postfoundationalist kind of theological reflection revolves around three moves:

First, as theologians we should acknowledge the radical contextuality of all our intellectual work, the epistemically crucial role of interpreted experience, and the way that disciplinary traditions shape the values that inform our reflection about God and what we believe to be God's presence in the world. Second, a

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[37] A phrase from a lecture by Anthony H Jones, with reference to Calvin Schrag.

postfoundationalist notion of rationality should open our eyes to an epistemic obligation that points beyond the boundaries of our own discipline, our local communities, groups, or cultures, toward plausible forms of interdisciplinary dialogue (cf. van Huyssteen1999). Against this background I have argued for distinct and important differences between reasoning strategies used by theologians and scientists. I have also, argued, however, that some important shared rational resources may actually be identified for these very different cognitive domains of our mental lives (cf. van Huyssteen 2006, forthcoming). Thirdly, it is precisely these shared rational resources that enable interdisciplinary dialogue, and are expressed most clearly by the notion of transversal rationality. In the dialogue between theology and other disciplines, transversal reasoning promotes different but equally legitimate ways of viewing specific topics, problems, traditions, or disciplines, and creates the kind of space where different voices need not always be in contradiction, or in danger of assimilating one another, but are in fact dynamically interactive with one another. This notion of transversality thus provides a philosophical window to our wider world of communication through thought and action (cf. Schrag 1992:148ff.; Welsch 1996:764ff.), and teaches us to respect the disciplinary integrity of reasoning strategies as different as theology and the sciences.

This way of thinking is always concrete, local, and contextual, but at the same time reaches beyond local contexts to transdisciplinary concerns. It is contextual, but at the same time in acknowledgement of the way in which our epistemologies are shaped by tradition. Van Huyssteen (Gifford Lectures-Book, 9) refers to the postfoundationalist notion as õa form of compelling knowledgeö, which is a way of seeking a balance between õthe way our beliefs are anchored in interpreted experience, and the broader networks of beliefs in which our rationally compelling experiences are already embedded.ö

On the basis of the argumentation thus far, I would then like to formulate the minimum requirements for a pastoral counseling session:
- **locally contextual**
- **socially constructed**
- **directed by tradition**
- **exploring interdisciplinary meaning**
- **pointing beyond the local**

The local and the specific as points of departure

Pastoral care and counseling cannot function in a general context. It is always local, concrete and specific (Cfc. Willows, D. and Swinton, J. (eds.) 2000:42). The moment it moves away from the concrete specific context, it regresses into either ethical advice or homiletics.

The following anecdote of a little interaction between Hiltner, the pastoral theologian and Tillich, the systematic theologian, perhaps illustrates this position of pastoral theology at its best:

> Tillich: Let us say that there was a certain man í .
> Hiltner (interrupting): What was his name?
> Tillich: Oh, í err í let us say John. So, there was this man named John and í .
> Hiltner (interrupting): Was he married?
> Tillich: Let us say he was. So. There was this married man, John, who í .
> Hiltner (interrupting again): What was his wifeøs name? Did they both work?
> Tillich (with exasperation): Professor Hiltner, wonøt you please let me finish? What is the meaning of all your questions?
> Hiltner: To speak of just any man is to speak of no man at all.
>
> (Childs 1998:193)

A Social-constructionist movement

Van Huyssteen (Gifford Lectures-Book 14) does not use the terminology of social-constructionism, but clearly uses a similar line of thought when arguing for postfoundationalist rationality. He refers to Schrag who have moved ggressively yond the restrictions of Sartreøs subject centered consciousness to transversality as an achievement of communicative praxis (cf. Schrag 1992:153ff). Talk about the human subject is now revisioned by resituating the human subject in the space of communicative praxis. Thus the notion of transversal rationality opens up the possibility to focus on patterns of discourse and action as they happen in our communicative practices, rather than focussing only on the structure of the self, ego, or subject.

In social-constructionism there is a deep-rooted belief that we, with our rationality, are socially constructed. Van Huyssteen also argues for a construction of rationality/identity based on õown experienceö, which is also capable of reaching beyond.

The idea of socially constructed interpretations and meaning is clearly part of the postfoundationalist approach. Van Huyssteen (Gifford Lectures-Book 1:12-13) writes: õí we relate to our world epistemically only through the mediation of interpreted experience, The concept of õreceived interpretationsö, as far as I understand it, puts emphasis on tradition, on culture and on cultural discourses, all of which contribute to interpretations. Therefore, although we sometimes may have the illusion of a unique understanding of reality, it is always received. Therefore not constructed in an individual and subjective sense, but co- or socially constructed.

The step by step development of a Postfoundationalist approach to pastoral care and counselling.

In the right hand column of the table below, I have õtranslatedö Van Huyssteenøs (1997:4) description and summary of Postfoundationalist Theology (left hand column) into counselling concepts.

POSTFOUNDATIONALIST THEOLOGY	POSTFOUNDATIONALIST PASTORAL COUN-SELLING
í a postfoudationalist theology wants to make **two moves**. First, it fully acknowledges **contextuality**, the epistemically crucial role of **interpreted experience**, and the way that **tradition** shapes the epistemic and nonepistemic **values** that inform our reflection about God and what some of us believe to be **Godøs presence** in this world. At the same time, however, a postfou[n]dationalist notion of rationality in theological reflection claims to **point creatively beyond the confines of the local** community, group, or culture towards a plausible form of **interdisciplinary conversation**. (Van Huyssteen 1997: 4) **(Some phrases written in bold by JM)**	**The context & interpreted experience** 1. Participants are invited to describe a specific context. 2. In-context experiences (stories) are listened to and in detail described. 3. Interpretations of experiences are asked for and co-developed. **Traditions of interpretation** 4. Discourse-questions are asked: Questions exploring the ways in which we are influenced by our taken-for-granted beliefs and practices **Godøs presence** 5. A reflection on experiences of Godøs presence in certain situations. **Thickened through interdisciplinary investigation** 6. A thick description is developed. Alternative perspectives from various theories are entertained. 7. Alternative understandings/interpretations (stories) are explored. **Point beyond the local community** 8. Questions are asked about the implications of these new, alternative narratives for the their relations with the systems/communities in which they are involved

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THE THEOLOGY OF PROSPERITY, RELIGION, MAGIC AND MENTAL HEALTH

James Farris

The relationship between religion, magic and mental health is complex. In Brazil, where I live and work, this relationship is further complicated due to the diversity of religions and religious movements, and specifically due to the growth of what is known as The Theology of Prosperity, or Religions of Prosperity. In a quick survey of churches within a one mile radius of my house, in a middle class neighborhood in São Bernardo do Campo, I discovered: Two Universal Reign of God Churches, One Methodist Church, One Presbyterian Church, Five Independent Pentecostal Churches, One Umbanda Center and One Roman Catholic Church. The Universal Reign of God Church is what is called, in Brazil, a Neo-Pentecostal Church. This means that is has discarded many of the traditional doctrines of Pentecostal Churches, such as speaking in tongues and other gifts of the Spirit, and emphasizes The Theology of Prosperity. The five Independent Pentecostal Churches also emphasize the Theology of Prosperity. The Umbanda Center is an Indigenous Religion that mixes African and Brazilian religious elements that have strong magical and healing themes. The Methodist and Presbyterian churches are quite traditional. The Roman Catholic Church is at the center of our town square, and is quite conservative.

I have attended worship at both of the Universal Reign of God Churches, one of the Independent Pentecostal Churches, the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church and the Roman Catholic Church. Based on a very rough estimate I would say that during any given week there are three times as many persons attending the Universal Reign of God and Independent Pentecostal Churches, combined, than in all the other congregations. What this quick survey suggests to me is that Churches valuing the Theology of Prosperity are very popular. These Churches are clearly growing in Brazil. Though I do not have reliable statistics, Churches that follow some version of the Theology of Prosperity also appear to be increasingly popular in the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe.

The crucial element in this discussion is the presence and influence of The Theology of Prosperity. In general, this "theology" is not as well elaborated, or academic, as more traditional, or historical, theologies. In short, The Theology of Prosperity is probably not yet a theology in the classic sense of being a well-elaborated expression of how a community understands its relations to God. It is still quite young, and has had little time to mature.

This "theology" appears to have begun in the United States, where one of its best-known proponents is Kenneth Hagin.[38] The central belief of this "theology" is that as children of God all believers are due, or owed, the full blessing of God. In this sense, the believer has a certain authority in their relationship with God. This blessing is generally understood in terms of

[38] See, for example: Hagin, Kenneth. *How You Can Know the Will of God.* Los Angeles, Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1983; *The Believer's Authority.* Los Angeles, Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1981; *How You Can Be Led by the Spirit of God.* Los Angeles, Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1989.

economic and social success, physical health, and happiness. However, receiving, or claiming, this blessing depends totally on the faith and actions of the believer. When such blessings are not forthcoming, it is due to the lack of faith and action of the believer, and not to the failure of God to provide such blessings. In other words, economic success and good health are blessings that are immediately available to the true believer if they have enough of the right kind of faith. One implication of this is that God is truly personal, present and active. The Theology of Prosperity does not offer a distant and "academic" God. God is an all-powerful friend who wants to help, and is waiting for the believer to respond. This creates a very joyful and supportive environment in these Churches. Worship is never dull. It is truly a celebration of being a child of God. God is a Father who truly cares, wants the very best for his children, celebrates their successes, and mourns when they stumble.

There are a wide variety of rituals that are used to focus, or make evident, the faith of the believer. These vary from anointing with oil the thing desired, be that money, a new house or employment with a certain company, to carrying blessed objects, to surrounding your house with sand from the Holy Land to ward off evil. Such practices give this "theology" a very concrete feel. It is not an abstract faith. By its very nature it promotes an active life of faith. While this is a very short summary of this religious perspective, it does present some of the central tenets and typical practices of this "theology".

There are two important implications for mental health that this "theology" raises. One has to do with guilt. The other has to do with magic.

GUILT

Traditional, or historical, religions such as Roman Catholicism and Protestantism have typically used guilt to reinforce, or enforce, certain types of relationships between persons and God. In Protestant Churches this typically has to do with sexual behavior and general ethical norms. In the Roman Catholic Church this traditionally has to do with violating the norms, dogmas and doctrines of the Church. However, the two are very similar in that guilt is seen as a relatively healthy emotional response to violating relationships that are seen as the most adequate response to the love of God. Further, "sin" is frequently understood as being both individual, where a person harms their relationship with God, and social, where a group or community acts in such ways that relationships with God are damaged. These Churches also offer a variety of ways to alleviate sin and guilt through practical and symbolic means.

In The Theology of Prosperity, financial and health problems are directly linked to individual sin. In this sense, poverty and illness are caused by sin, or lack of faith. This often makes people feel guilty. This belief can lead to the idea that "I am not receiving God's blessing of prosperity because I do not have enough faith". As such, persons are totally responsible for their problems, economic and physical, and there is little or no recognition of the social conditions that

create poverty and illness. This puts the responsibility for not being a "success" entirely on the individual, and can create high levels of guilt.

In terms of mental health, it would appear that Traditional Churches tend to at least offer well-elaborated and contextual understandings of sin and guilt, as well as the means to symbolically and practically deal with these. The Theology of Prosperity would appear to understand and use sin and guilt in ways that effectively trap believers in an individual model that almost ensures high levels of guilt, and offers few symbolic or practical means to alleviate such guilt. With few realistic means to achieve "success", or reduce and realistically interpret personal responsibility, guilt levels almost inevitably increase. On the other hand, this "theology" understands God as being immediately present in the world, and in the lives of believers. As such, God is often much more present and personal than in many Traditional Religions, which, at times, have a tendency to make God into a distant and formal idea, or concept. In the Theology of Prosperity, God does not "care from afar", but is immediately present in the life of believers. In this sense, the Theology of Prosperity presents a God who is profoundly personal.

There is little doubt that Traditional Religions have, and continue to, nurture beliefs and practices which are capable of generating neurotic guilt. However, it would appear that they generally offer basic belief structures that are capable of generating healthy, or realistic, guilt, and the means to alleviate such feelings. In a sense, Traditional Religions are more likely to err in the opposite sense. Traditional Religions have a tendency to produce neurotic guilt through excessive repression and obedience to external authority, as opposed to excessive individual responsibility. A fundamental difference here is that while the basic structures of Traditional Religions have the potential for generating excessive, or neurotic, guilt, the basic belief structure of The Theology of Prosperity would at least appear to almost guarantee some degree of neurotic guilt.

MAGIC

In terms of the relationship between magic and mental health The Theology of Prosperity raises a variety of challenging questions. To begin with, it must be pointed out that the relationship between magic and religion is very vague. A simple definition of magic is that it is the occult art or science of using invisible powers to obtain visible ends.[39] Put in more theological language, magic is the art of coercing God.[40] Ideas, rites, ceremonies and liturgies often have the specific purpose of achieving specific and concrete ends. Magic is one way people try to make their wishes come true. One of the classical sociological definitions of magic is the following:

As a belief, it is the recognition of the existence of occult power, impersonal or only vaguely person, mystically dangerous and not lightly to be approached, but capable of being channeled, controlled, and directed by man. As a practice, magic is the utilization of this power for public or private ends, which are good or bad, orthodox or heterodox, licit or illicit, according to the value placed upon them by a particular society at a particular time.[41]

This definition points out two important qualities in magic. First, that the occult powers are impersonal, or minimally personal. Second, these powers can be controlled and directed by human beings.

There are many possible definitions of religion. However, one possibility is the following:

A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden - beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.[42]

This definition points to several interesting ideas. First, a religion is a unified system of beliefs and values. The important word here is –unifiedø Second, religions deal explicitly with the sacred. Human realities are clearly important, but the beginning point is the sacred, and not the human. Third, a religion expresses itself in a unified moral community called a Church.

Magic and religion are, at many points, almost indistinguishable. Magic and religion are composed of beliefs and rites, have myths and dogmas, and make use of ceremonies, liturgies, sacrifices, prayers, chants and dances. Further:

The being that the magician invokes and the forces which he throws in play are not merely of the same nature as the forces and beings to which religion addresses itself; very frequently, they are identically the same.[43]

The crucial difference between magic and religion relates to attitude, intent and concept of the relationship between human beings and the sacred, but these are not easily distinguished. In day-to-day life there is a profound mixture of the two. The fundamental difference in attitude and intent between magic and religion is that magic assumes that human beings can control or influence the sacred. Religion, as classically defined, views the God-Human relationship in such a way that Godøs response to our prayers, rites and rituals is unknown.

This is the crucial difference between Traditional Religions and The Theology of Prosperity, or Religions of Prosperity. The function of Religions of Prosperity appears to be informing and enabling the believer to "coerce" or "convince" God that he or she has the true faith that merits heavenly blessings. The critical assumption is that understanding and applying the correct behaviors, words and liturgies will "oblige" God to respond with the appropriate blessing. The believer, thus, has an element of control and power over the actions of God.

There is little doubt that many persons who participate in Traditional Religions believe, at some level, that their pious behavior, gifts to the church and pres-

[39] João Ribeiro Junior, *O que é Magia*, Brasiliense, São Paulo, 1982.
[40] Max Weber, *Economia e Sociedade*, Brasília, UnB, 1991.
[41] Hutton Webster, *Magic: A Sociological Study*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1948, p. 55.
[42] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, New York, The Free Press, 1965, p. 62.
[43] Ibid, p. 57.

ence in worship will have the effect of gaining God's blessings. It would not be an overstatement to say that all religious behavior is goal directed. The goal of religion is, at least to some degree, to "gain" salvation, heaven on earth, or a place in eternity. The crucial difference is the attitude that the believer brings to religious behavior. It is one thing to hope that we can maintain and nourish a relationship with the Mysterium Tremendum et Fascinans[44], or the Sacred, that will ultimately result in our salvation and another to believe that we can make God act according to our wishes. Reverence, power and control are most probably always mixed together in religious behavior, but the predominance of one or another element greatly influences the nature of what it means to be religious. The question is one of intention.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In terms of mental health, this discussion of the difference between magic and religion points to questions of power and control. In general terms, Religions of Prosperity often appeal to persons and groups who are economically poor, disadvantaged or vulnerable. Religions of Prosperity appeal to those who are not prosperous, those who are on the periphery of economic and social success, or who are vulnerable in light of the failure of social, or medical, systems to provide solutions to complex problems. As such, questions of power and control in this context are less those of power "over" than they are of power "to". They are questions of power and control generated by despair and vulnerability. The question at hand it to what degree such religious behaviors can contribute to mental health.

This is obviously a complex question that deserves much more attention than can be given in this short article. However, it would appear doubtful that magical solutions to practical problems reflect or engender greater levels of mental health in terms of personal integration, the ability to solve problems, or social integration. As such, serious questions must be raised regarding the health of religious systems that overtly engender and reinforce magical beliefs and practices.

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[44] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, London, Oxford University Press, 1923.

EMOTIONAL UPHEAVAL AND RELATIONAL REFUGEISM IN CONTEMPORARY INDIAN EXPEREINCE:

an intercultural exploration and proposal for pastoral therapy

Joseph George

Introduction

The SIPCC's 18th International Seminar on Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling focuses on Intercultural and Interfaith Communication in Pastoral Practice with a view to encourage new models and to learn from each other new directions in therapeutic endeavours in different cultural contexts. The therapeutic community in the recent times, including pastoral counsellors, recognizes the significance of contextual realities in responding to personal and interpersonal stress, dysfunctional traits, and demoralizing human experiences. The difficulty is, in my opinion, how pastoral counsellors discern the issues in a culturally sensitive manner, identify indigenous insights and tools, and respond pastorally and clinically to these issues and concerns without losing their professional integrity as analytically oriented clinical pastoral counsellors and informed theologians. The title of the paper suggests emotional upheaval and relational inequality that are significant concerns for all care professionals. The term ÷relational refugeismø is employed to show the depth of emotional upheaval or bankruptcy and unequal relational equations visible at all levels of living.

The focus of this paper is to highlight a few of the contemporary challenges and their impact on personal and relational experience in the context of doing pastoral counselling in mufti-faith, multi-ethnic, mufti-[45]

linguistic and multi-cultural India. It has been a struggle for me to coin a name to the type of clinical pastoral approach that I have developed over the years for practicing pastoral counselling in India. The primary focus of this approach is to bring the totality of human experience within the purview of pastoral psychotherapeutic practice while employing the tools and insights of the analytically oriented therapies. I am convinced that pastoral counsellors are not mere ÷expertsø of intrapsychic processes but ÷enablersø who deal with issues, concerns, and challenges that have personal, functional, and relational impact. Though there is a theoretical acceptance of this insight among pastoral theologians, little change is noticeable in the modes of pastoral practice. Hence, I am proposing a Strategic Analytical Pastoral approach that allows the therapists to be cultural sensitive, strategic in addressing issues and concerns, analytical in method, and pastoral in therapeutic mission and spiritual direction. This is in line with what the SIPCC proposes to achieve through the interactions and learning experiences during the Intercultural Seminars as it seeks to enhance a mutual holistic learning process among the participants, to strengthen personal skills in intercultural interactions, and to advance their skills in providing professional pastoral counselling in a culturally sensitive (empathy) manner. The SIPCC statement says:

- "The International Seminars want to enhance a mutual holistic learning process among the participants:
- the participants encounter people from other cultures and exchange various cultural experiences
- they give and receive new impulses for new lifestyles
- they give and receive new impulses for their spiritual and communal living
- they reflect on cultural, social, political, economical and religious contexts of people

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45 This section is quoted from the SIPCC's "General Learning Goals". The section is well formulated and indicates the commitment of SIPCC to encourage persons in therapy to develop culturally sensitive insights and to acquire skills in dealing with personal and interpersonal issues in therapy. I am not aware of any other care providing professional organization that has an intentional agenda to discuss and to develop cultural competence in therapeutic practice.

- they challenge their own cultural and religious assumptions and presuppositions
- they present their practice in care and counselling and reflect upon them from various
- perspectives
- they extend their professional knowledge in dealing with the theme of the seminar,
- they enter into a process of theory-building of Intercultural Pastoral Care and
- Counselling "

Contextual Issues and Therapeutic Concerns in India

In formulating adequate theoretical framework and developing contextually relevant skills one needs to be culturally sensitive and discerning. There are numerous factors that could be highlighted in the discussion of contextual realities in India, demanding some sort of intercultural dialogue, learning, and action - personal, social and political levels. For this presentation I focus on four different major areas within which one could also trace specific concerns and issues.

Politics, Religion, Community, Violence

There is a general agreement among social scientists on the influence of political processes on religion and the influence of religion on politics and community experience, though they may disagree on the nature and the degree in which this impact could be measured. The recent political trends in India, both at the national and regional levels, vividly indicate the ways in which political processes influence religious thought and interactions in India. It is also true that religion influence political processes. In the recent decades it has become difficult for a single political party to gain power at the National level, and in most of the States in India, besides the national parties, there are innumerable regional parties who are officially or unofficially sponsored by religious or ethnic groups. The regional parties are brought into the coalition governments in order to maintain a majority in the Houses. These regional parties with their religious affiliations continue to have a major role in Indian politics. Each of these regional parties represents specific cultural, religious or ethnic identities and they demand the fulfillment of their political expectations. In the given situation, then, the political process in India today is an encounter of different cultures, each one waiting to benefit from their political bargaining. What is to be noted in this bargaining is the emotional upheaval, identity crisis, personal and collective insecurity, and relational disturbance. The impact of such confusing and disturbing process could be seen at all levels - from the elected leaders to the common people in the villages. Further, at the personal and interpersonal level such processes thrive to create either relational dependency and refugeism or dominating the other in political relationships, hindering healthy political process. This could also be true of other nations where coalition governments are formed (what about Germany after this election?).

Religious groups that support regional political parties also gain by exerting their influence and power in administration and policy-making. For example, the previous national government in India, lead by the Bharatiya Janatha Party (BJP), was supported by other political parties with religious affiliation. Hence, religious groups advocating cultural and national integration under ÷one culture∅ formulae deeply influenced the government and justified whatever happened during this time in politics. The 2003 Gujarat violence and mass killing and large scale destruction of public and private property was/is justified as their right to do in order to protect India and its culture. The majority community brought tremendous amount of pain and agony on the minority community in this instance. Such experiences at the grass-root level create fear, pain, insecurity, and rejection of the other because the other is different and not to be trusted.

Alongside, one also needs to recognize the emergence of fundamentalist organizations of political nature with confused religious agenda, such as cultural integration or national integration. Even there are fundamentalist approaches from the Christian communities that deeply disturb social ethos and harmonious living. For example, the independent churches who focus on converting people of other faith as they see "Jesus as the only Saviour."

The history of India indicates the high tolerance among the Indians to ÷tolerate∅ the other that made the multicultural existence possible without forcing social, emotional, and physical termination of the other. However, the India-Pakistan divide and the events immediate before and after, point to intolerance and aggression towards the other, which still exists. Further, what has happened during the last two decades is highly disappointing and painful in terms of intercultural existence and interaction. The series of violence sanctioned by religious communities or their political organizations in different parts of the country brought widespread destruction, loss of lives, and long-lasting pain on persons, families, and groups. We encounter the victims of such experiences in therapy who have undergone deep pain and live with suspicion and fear of the other. Such situations also lead to social and psychological level distancing - isolation and withdrawal - hindering the fullness of life and the meaning of living together. What does these religio-political events and dynamics mean for the intercultural discussions at the SIPCC?

Diminishing Presence of Nurturing Communities

The long historical traditions in India - including the structure of family, kinship, village communities, and religious groups - indicate the presence of structures or agencies that had nurturing and therapeutic functions, irrespective of ethnic, cultural or faith background. For example, in an extended family set up (earlier to this was joint-family system) there is a larger network of people, led by the eldest male, who were responsible for decision making and implementing. Hence, there was a feeling of support and guidance even at the most difficult decision-making process and in encountering the unknown and the unexpected. Whenever there was a personal or relational difficulty, there were ÷resource personsø within the set up, in a hierarchical order, to handle the issues and find a solution. There was a wisdom-sharing group that guided the thoughts and actions of its community members. Edward P. Wimberly, Professor and Dean at the Interdenominational Theological Centre, Atlanta, laments the loss of nurturing communities resulting in the development and domination of therapeutic communities in the West[46]. He was quite impressed with the sharing of wisdom and enlivening life in the African communities in Zimbabwe, as against the narrow individualism and related practices that he noticed and encountered in the United States. Elevation of individualism led to the death of caring institutions.

India is considered as one of the countries that still keep some of its traditional family and cultural features. However, this is not true in every situation of life. The influence of living in a technologically advanced world has touched not only the urban Indian communities but also the rural. There is a growing individualism that propagates personal freedom, competition, and excellence. Right from childhood, persons are initiated, directed, and motivated to be successful in that competitive world in order to be ÷somebodyø. This trend is noticeable in the areas of education, career choice, financial management, and interpersonal relationships. In a world of freedom, competition, and excellence many accomplish their dreams and ideals without even taking care of their own personal needs and psychic nourishment, resulting in emotional disruption and relational bankruptcy. Those who fail to reach their goals continue to live in bitterness blaming themselves and others for what has happened to them. Hence, personal experience in highly success-oriented urban Indian communities

creates emotional upheaval and relational disturbance, whether one is an achiever or non-achiever.

In the context of such emotional turmoil and displacement in relational experiences, the nurturing institutions have a natural place in caring and sustaining. However, the disappearance of such institutions leaves the people in turmoil without any genuine assistance. Emotional disturbance, relational dependence, and relational deprivation hinder the development of fully functioning persons. Does it in some way point to the need of intercultural openness and learning? The old and the new, urban and rural; indigenous and foreign, advanced and the non-advanced features of culture continue to be a point of friction and anxiety. What kind of intercultural dialogue is possible in this context?

Globalization and Globalization - intercultural conversion?

The process of globalization has led to major changes in socio-economic and cultural situations influencing life-styles, gender relations, attitudes, belief systems and practices, primary relationships, and specific behavioral patterns. Globalization is encounter of cultures and in many ways a complex process. At the surface level, the encounter is between the cultures of the developed, developing, and underdeveloped countries in the areas of trade, employment, and financial transactions. One of the leading sociologists in India, Professor Yogendra Singh highlights the five features of globalization and their direct or indirect impact on the community[47]: (1) Revolution in communication technology and the widespread use of it even by the non-professionals (2) Circulation of financial capital demanding large scale modernization in technology and demand in labour market (3) Homogenization of consumer products luring the common people to become the consumers - causing a change in life-style, behavior, and world views (4) Enlargement of the scope of the electronic media in communication that has changed the pattern of knowing, relationship, and informed action (5) Large scale circulation of professionally trained persons in the world market, changing the very concept of employment in India. The large-scale geographical mobility - of persons coming to India and Indians going to other countries on a short or long term basis - force intercultural exposure demanding response or reaction. This mobility influence not only the one's moving but also the people around them, both in home country and the in the new destination.

However, the encounters go much deeper than what is visible at the surface level - causing personality change and encouraging life-styles that are not

46 Edward P. Wimberly. Relational Refugees: Alienation and Reincorporation in African American Churches and Communities. Nashville: Abingdon, 2000, p. 16.

47 Yogendra Singh, Cultural Change in India: Identity and Globalization, p. 71-72.

genuinely one's own. Even one's view and practice of primary interpersonal relationships undergo noticeable changes resulting in a new emotional environment. There are demands and expectations that would make one competent in the job market. They do not have a choice of the nature of work, schedule, and life-style. Even the name is changed in some employment contexts in order to make them suit for the job.[48] Yogendra Singh notes the link between the globalizing process, market economy, career opportunities and the intellectual and emotional process that has impacted the world community, especially the developing nations. He remarks:

It seems that a massive ideological transition is slowly taking place in our society. There is a manifest pull towards values of achievement and entrepreneur adventure. With increased global networking of economy, modes of consumption and cultural styles, a new resurgence of aspirations is taking place. It affects the career preferences of people and their perception of the life-world.[49]

The trends of globalization deeply influence local communities in their life-styles values, attitudes, and patterns of relationships. This is the globalization. The wide range impact of globalization on local communities is widely discussed by professionals in every field. This is an area of interest to pastoral counsellors too in order to discern what is happening in the life of persons and their communities and to plan adequate methods of reaching them. Even theologians and theological communities have given thought in formulating the impact of such process on the lives of the people and their relationships. Further, what is the task of pastoral theologians and counsellors in dealing with issues arising from the intercultural interactions between specific communities around the world. While discussing the trends of globalization and its impact on the local communities, J. Jayakiran Sebastian, a professor of systematic theology at the United Theological College, points out the trend of transformation globally and locally. He remarks:[50]

At this point we need to recognize that in many ways, those of us who are partners in this discourse on globalization are in many ways the Glocalized beneficiaries of the õrewards" that are on offer. In terms of our social and economic location and status, our clothing, our means of transformation, our access to communication facilities, our admittance to systems of knowledge, are reflected in what we have become.... we should not try to locate the "glocal" outside ourselves but honestly and realistically interrogate ourselves in trying to understand how best we can continue to allow ourselves to be transformed... and what this transformation is doing to us in terms of what we believe and practice."

Alienation in the midst of Globalization and Economic Development is an aspect of human experience that none can disregard. The non-inclusion of the less advantaged people to benefit from the economic development is a serious intercultural mistake. This trend can only create relational refugees and emotional death. Alienation of the Poor and the Marginalized cannot lead to developing communities with justice. How do we bring our intercultural learning in understanding and discerning the issues in this context?

Tsunami, Katrina, Rita, who is next... ?

Several unexpected and painful events in the last years have increased the amount of tension and feeling of insecurity all over the world, especially in the Western world. Are we safe in your ‑fortified citiesø? Natural disasters and unnatural disasters (human made calamities) have deeply disturbed the global community in its experience of handling suffering, disorientation, loss, and helplessness many experienced due to natural calamities: Tsunami, Katrina, Rita, who is next? The Tsunami has totally destroyed coastal communities in many parts of Asia. The wellmeaning people everywhere, East and the West, responded immediately with assistance. Yet, at some point of time there was discussion indicating the technologically advanced country could have provided adequate warning in order to control the destruction and loss. For millions in Asia, such discussions did not mean anything as they were in the process of grieving, counting the loss, dealing with injuries, adjusting to temporary shelters, and

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48 The people hired for Call Centres (BPO) managed by the MNCs undergo a period of rigorous training in personal appearance, communication, voice, and the skills of understanding `the other' who is in the USA or UK They are also `given' a name that would make them suit to the taste of the customers in the West. For example, one of my counsellees has undergone such a name change in order to increase her professional competence. Of course, this process comes under inter-cultural competence! Sharmila Damedaran became Sheila in doing business with the company's target population. What does this change mean to the person is not a matter of concern for anyone?

49 Yogendra Singh, Cultural Change in India: Identity and Globalization, p. 251

50 J. Jayakiran Sebastian, "Security, Risk and the Consequences of Grace. Reading a Letter of Cyprian of Carthage in Today's Glocalized World," in Joseph George (ed.) The God of All Grace: Essays in honour of Origen Vasantha Jathanna. Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation and United Theological College, 2405, p. 220-21.

eagerly waiting for further help. The way in which Katrina created havoc in the United States indicates a different picture altogether. Whether you have the information or not, whether you are prepared or not, you are touched by the hand of ꞌthe unexpectedꞌ. Of course, there was a better preparation for Rita! What does alt these mean? Even in the most secured places, with all advanced technologies, we are not safe as we have not attained the mastery over controlling the nature, though at times one it is comforting to imagine (illusory world) that we are in control of everything.

Since September 11, there is a global interest in tracking and tackling violence and terrorism. Does that mean there were no violence and disturbing scenes before September 11? Even if there were, the global community (including the mental health professionals) have not given due attention! Asian community has witnessed and experienced violence and terrorism in different ways. India has been pleading with the world community the depth of its suffering due to religious fundamentalism, violence, and terrorism. During 1995 - 2001, there were over a dozen school related violence in the United States (I was in the US during this period) resulting loss of lives and creating panicky situation in the schools and the communities around. Did the world community listen? Did the mental health professional and pastoral counsellors listen? I doubt it very much! Violence is always disturbing and need to be addressed using the insights from depth psychologies. How can we address the issues of aggression, violence, and terrorism without genuine intercultural dialogue, respectful learning, and action with discernment?

India had series of natural disasters in the last decade causing destruction and damage to persons, communities, and the State. In the same manner suffered much from violence and terrorism. One of the contextual issues in discussion is providing professional care in the midst of destruction and death. Whether it is helping process in the context of a natural disaster or taking care persons victimized by violence and terrorism, there is a level of inter-cultural engagement, sharing, and relating. Healing and strengthening the emotionally disturbed, sustaining the lesser advantaged, and incorporating the relational refugees into the mainstream life are unavoidable therapeutic objectives, especially from the Indian scenario. It is in this context I share with you the following thoughts regarding the pastoral counselling approach.

Exploring Pastoral Therapeutic Paradigms in India

The pastoral counselling practices in India have been highly influenced by the Western Clinical Pastoral Education and Pastoral Counselling approaches. In my view various factors contributed this Western influence among the pastoral professionals in India. Western missionaries with specialization in counselling not only practiced but also trained pastoral counsellors in India, certainly within the purview of their own cultural context and training. The Indians who have benefited from advanced level of pastoral training practices from the Western context come back with what they have learned ꞌnewꞌ without adequate tools to discern the validity of what they have learned for understanding Indian realities. The literature used in pastoral clinical training and counselling practices in India are mostly of Western origin. Hence, the therapeutic trend in the West has influenced the Indian pastoral practitioners. Given this context, let me also highlight various trends and paradigms existing among pastoral counsellors, professionally trained or not. This is very similar to tracing the historical paradigms in pastoral counselling in the West.

While discussing culturally informed practices in pastoral counselling, Professor Emmanuel Y. Lartey of the Emory University makes a historical review of different paradigms that impacted the pastoral counselling profession. He details four different paradigms, based on the works of John Patton and Nancy J. Ramsay, that seem to cover the theoretical and clinical domains in pastoral psychotherapeutic practice. These are classical-clerical, clinical-pastoral, communal-contextual, and intercultural.[51]

The **classical-clerical paradigm** reflects the traditional theological understanding and practice of pastoral therapy, primarily focused around the ordained persons who are the care providers. In this approach the caregivers and care-receivers view the process as primarily a religious - a religious context, religious practitioners, and religious resources. It seems to promote the idea that religious experiences can lead to therapeutic process, This approach is found among the trained and untrained professionals in therapeutic enterprise. The Roman Catholic, the Orthodox, a section of the mainline Churches, and the independent Churches adhere to such practices. Spiritual regeneration, salvific experience, and mental health are all interrelated in this approach. Though at times it focuses on community experience, mostly this approach is individual and 'spiritually' oriented, thus lacking focus in contextual realities and in adequate approach to ꞌnon-religiousꞌ issues in life.

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51 Emmanuel Y. Lartey, "Widening the Scope, increasing the depth: Developing culturally informed practices of pastoral care and counseling." A paper presented at the 8th Asia Pacific Congress on Pastoral Care and Counselling, Hong Kong, August 200. pp. 8-12

The **clinical - pastoral paradigm** is primarily influenced by modern psychological theories (mostly individual) and therapeutic practices. Lartey rightly points out that this model that has widely influenced the Western pastoral psychotherapy.[52] The influence of this model is predominantly seen in clinical pastoral education, pastoral counselling training, and practices. In this approach an attempt is made to integrate psychology and theology, but one partner overcoming the other. The psychological influence is much greater than theological insights in such approaches. This resulted in an over identification with psychology while losing the ground of theology and missing the resources of the faith community in care and counselling. The counselling centres, church or institution sponsored, made their presence in India almost following the same line of clinical-pastoral paradigm. Such approaches are highly individual oriented with a view to strengthen the person. Hence, the approach is highly intrapsychic and less concerned about external realities in which the person live and others who are suffering with this person.

The **communal-contextual paradigm** emerges as a reaction against the clericalization, clinicalization, and individualization[53] in pastoral counselling with a focus to bring community dimension to care and counselling. The approach not only recognizes that community is the context in which pastoral services are practiced and received but also gives primary attention to cultural, economic, political, and social environment and its impact on the suffering persons. While this approach proposes a radical shift in care and counselling, it fails to see the dynamics of human experience in its totality. This approach also lacks the universal global perspective in understanding issues and practical wisdom integrating human growth, community experience, and the insights of depth psychology. This is evident in the formulation of a number of ‑new theologiesø in India, including liberation theology. There is no space for integrating the classical - pastoral features into therapeutic actions. What hinders the progress of such ideologies to become truly experiential is a matter of question for all professionals, especially for pastoral counsellors.

The **intercultural paradigm** while making use of the communal-contextual paradigm it goes beyond the immediate community in order to address issues of the global community. This perspective addresses concerns relating to race, gender, caste, class, poverty, and minority struggles. It criticizes the therapeutic enterprise for being on the side of the privileged and being silent on the issues of minorities, women, and the outcastes. Like the earlier paradigm, it analyzes the social, economic, and political structures with a view to advocate justice for all. While focusing on the global community issues, the approach fails to see the strengths of earlier approaches and their appeal among the masses, especially the classical-clerical model.

Though historically traceable, each paradigm is prevalent in one form or another even today. Each of these paradigms has salient features that could help the professionally trained pastoral counsellors. The trend of adopting one and rejecting others is a rejection of people adhering to those trends. There is a need for integration - an integration that would bring tradition and modernity, lay and the ordained, religious and non-religious, local and global, professional and non-professional, faithful and the non-faithful, and developed and lesser developed into order to develop a sound approach to pastoral practice. A truly intercultural is learning from all in order to enrich and to minister the people of God - facilitating healing, sustaining, guiding, reconciling, nurturing, and empowering the people of God in all communities and faith orientations. It is in this context that I propose the Strategic Analytical Pastoral Therapy to deal with contextual and intercultural issues and concerns. We are different in many ways: tradition, language, faith, food, dress, values, attitudes, behavior, and relationship patterns. In many respects we are not same and not equals. We are so strong and rigid that we do not want to change drastically what we believe as good, ideal, and the ultimate. Though quite often we talk about "unity in diversity" we practice diversity in diversity without recognizing the value and strength of diversities. Diversities and differentness can be our strength and resource. Will our intercultural explorations encourage each other and the human communities at large to come in terms with and fully utilize the strength of "diversity" in our diversities? What we need today in our therapeutic endeavours is a strategic analytical pastoral therapeutic approach in which there is respectful interaction and learning from each other and strive together to make life better in the global community - individual, community, and diverse groups.

From Therapeutic Community to Communities of Care

While maintaining the integrity and professionalism in pastoral counselling, the pastoral caregivers must extend the professionalism to cover the needs of families, groups, and the community at large. Hence, the pastoral care and counselling actions must reach out beyond the therapy room, mostly with individual psychotherapy sessions. The contextual realities, group dynamics, ideological process, personality formation call the pastoral pro-

52 Ibid., p. 10

53 Ibid.

fessionals to not only reach out to individuals in stress (intrapsychic or intrapsychic) but also communities, religious groups, and the society at large. The programmes and processes that would lead to the wellbeing of all should be a burden of the caring communities and its professionals. This is an area of great importance to enhance the vitality of the faith communities and to experience the fullness of God as revealed in the cultural experiences of everyone, discerning what is life-giving and what is life-destroying.

It is in this context, in my opinion, that we should be considering a shift from ÷therapeutic communitiesø to ÷communities who careø How will that experience emerge unless we pastoral counsellors engage in intercultural interaction and dialogue. How can that come true unless the pastoral profes-sionals engage in dialogue with what they have learned from their therapy training and what is going on in the lives of the people - bringing the culture of people in dialogue with the therapeutic culture. Commitment to dialogue, learning, and action should make us think of becoming a different sort of therapists - moving away from "feel good" therapeutic agenda to the real needs of the community at large.

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