

# **Renewing the Church in a Secular Age: Holistic Dialogue and Kenotic Vision**

*Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma  
March 4-5, 2015*

*A Joint International Conference*  
Pontificia Università Gregoriana  
Council for Research in Values and Philosophy  
*With the High Patronage of*  
Pontifical Council for Culture

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# Program

## MARCH 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015

14:30-15:30 – OPENING SESSION

- Welcome by R.P. **François-Xavier DUMORTIER SJ**, Rector of the *Pontificia Università Gregoriana*.
- Remarks by R.P. **George F. McLEAN OMI**, President of the *Council for Research in Values and Philosophy*.
- Opening Address by S.E. Card. **Gianfranco RAVASI**, President of the *Pontifical Council for Culture*.

**15:30-17:00 – *The Dynamics of Secularity in the West.***

MODERATORS – Archbishop **Thomas MENAMPARAMPIL SDB** (India) & **João J. VILA-CHÃ SJ** (*Pontificia Università Gregoriana*, Roma).

- **José CASANOVA** (*Georgetown University*, USA) – *A Catholic Church in a Global Secular World.*
- **Hans JOAS** (*Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin*, Germany) – *The Church in a World of Options.*

17:00-17:30 – PAUSE

**17:30-19:00 – *A LISTENING CHURCH: Implications of Science and Technology, Imagination and Subsidiarity.***

MODERATORS – **Nicolas de BREMOND D'ARS** (*Centre d'Études Interdisciplinaires des Faits Religieux [CEIFR]*, France) & **Richard ROUSE** (*Pontifical Council for Culture*, Roma).

- **Louis CARUANA SJ** (*Pontificia Università Gregoriana*, Roma) – *Nurturing the Human Face of Science.*
- **Leon DYCZEWSKI OFMConv** (*John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin*, Poland) – *New Technologies and Styles of Evangelization.*
- **Daniel DECKERS** (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Germany) – *Being Pope Francis.*

## MARCH 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015

**9:00-10:30 – *A DISCERNING CHURCH: the Gospel Experience, and Foundations in Secular Times for Renewed Hope.***

MODERATORS – **Philip J. ROSSI SJ** (*Marquette University*, USA) & **Pavel HOSEK** (*Charles University*, Czech Republic).

- **Tomáš HALÍK** (*Charles University, Czech Republic*) – *Discerning the Signs of the Times.*
- **Juan Carlos SCANNONE SJ** (*Colegio Máximo de San José, Argentina*) – *Iglesia y Discernimiento Espiritual en una Edad Secular y un Mundo Global.*
- **Massimo GRILLI** (*Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma*) – *Tutto è grazia. Ri-lettura dei macarismi/beatitudine oggi, nella Chiesa.*

10:30-11:00 – PAUSE

**11:00-12:30 – A WELCOMING CHURCH: Pluralism, Encounter and Dialogue.**

MODERATORS – **Helen ALFORD OP** (*Pontificia Università San Tommaso, Roma*) & **Taras DOBKO** (*Ukrainian Catholic University, Ukraine*).

- **Robert SCHREITER** CPPS (*Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, USA*) – *Spirituality as Platform and Forum for Encounter.*
- **Anthony J. CARROLL** (*Heythrop College, United Kingdom*) – *Dialogue with Sceptics.*
- **Adriano FABRIS** (*Università di Pisa, Italy*) – *Rethinking Universality for a True Interreligious Dialogue in a Pluralistic Age.*

13:00-14:30 – LUNCH BREAK

**15:00-16:30 – A SERVING CHURCH: Polarization, Participation and Peace.**

MODERATORS – **Staf HELLEMANS** (*Tilburg University, Netherlands*) & **James CORKERY SJ** (*Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma*).

- **Adela CORTINA** (*University of Valencia, España*) – *Religiones y Ética Cívica Transnacional en el Espacio Público: Un Camino hacia la Paz.*
- **Peter JONKERS** (*Tilburg University, Netherlands*) – *A Serving Church: Overcoming Polarization through Participation.*
- **William BARBIERI** (*Catholic University of America, USA*) – *Kenotic Ethics for a Servant Church.*

16:30-17:00 – PAUSE

**17:00-19:00 – LECTIO MAGISTRALIS**

MODERATORS – **Mary McALEESE** (*Former President of Ireland*) & **Michael-Paul GALLAGHER SJ** (*Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma*).

- **Charles TAYLOR** (*McGill University, Canada*) – *Authenticity: The Life of the Church in a Secular Age.*
- COMMENTATOR: **William DESMOND** (*Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium*).

**19:00-19:15 – CONCLUSION.**

## *Speakers and Abstracts*

### **BARBIERI Jr., William A. – *Kenotic Ethics for a Servant Church***

**ABSTRACT** – Fifty years after the promulgation of *Gaudium et Spes*, the Catholic Church is still in the process of reorienting itself within the context of secular modernity. At the same time, industrial and post-industrial societies from China to Europe are learning that the hunger for spiritual sustenance persists in the present *saeculum*. Against the backdrop of this conjuncture, the clerical sexual abuse crisis has at once wounded the Church and sounded a clarion call for repentance, recompense and renewal. As recent pontiffs have perceived, the way ahead requires a turn to humility and a kenotic ethic of service.

What does it mean to be a self-emptying church today? Kenosis is an ethic of self-sacrificial giving, emblemized by the “suffering servant.” On the one hand, it consists in a flowing out toward the other. This entails an engagement marked by deep *listening* and careful *discerning* in an attempt to know and learn from others: secularists, seekers, and religious alike. On the other hand, kenosis means hollowing out a space to make room for the other. This requires offering protection and aid by heartily *welcoming* and faithfully *servicing* others in need.

This stance has ready implications across the spectrum of the Church’s ethical concerns. It provides the basis for an ethic of hospitality, inclusion, justice, and developmental assistance in regard to human migration and poverty. It animates a commitment to ecological service and friendship that advances beyond the outmoded ideal of environmental stewardship. It sets the tone for an unadorned approach to intercultural dialogue marked by a spirit of genuine openness to the insights of other traditions as well as the nonreligious. Finally, and most centrally, it supports non-violence responses to injustice, vigorous peacemaking, and the essential work of forgiveness and reconciliation.

**CV** – **William A. BARBIERI Jr.** is Associate Professor of Theology and Religious Studies and a Fellow of the Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies at the Catholic University of America, where he also directs the Peace and Justice Studies Program. He is the editor of *At the Limits of the Secular: Reflections on Faith and Public Life* (2014), co-editor of *From Just War to Modern Peace Ethics* (2012; with Heinz-

Gerhard Justenhoven) and author of *Ethics of Citizenship: Immigration and Group Rights in Germany* (1998). His book *Constitutive Justice* will appear later in 2015.

**CARROLL, Anthony J. – *Dialogue With Sceptics***

**ABSTRACT** – This paper will investigate the dialogue between religious believers and those who are sceptical about such belief. It will consider some of the main issues involved in what today is one of the major partners in dialogue for religious believers in the western world.

**CV** – **Anthony J. CARROLL**, PhD., is a senior lecturer in philosophy and theology Heythrop College, University of London. He has published in the areas of philosophy, theology, and social science and is currently working together with a member of the humanist association on a book for Routledge on dialogue between religious believers and sceptics.

**CARUANA, Louis – *Nurturing the Human Face of Science***

**ABSTRACT** – For many decades, the Catholic Church has been consistently defending the compatibility between revealed truth and the truths discovered by the natural sciences, in line with *Gaudium et Spes* 58-62. It has also however been a critical voice on tendencies within the scientific mentality that undermine the dignity of the human person, because she is convinced that, if such a mentality goes unchecked, it can reduce culture to numbers, and persons to particles. Recent research in the deeper features of the scientific mentality has uncovered, however, some trends that can have a definitively positive effect on the person. It is therefore important that the Church start taking these newly identified features into consideration. Just as in its missionary outreach, regarding non-European cultures, the Church did not engage only in denouncing their limitations but also in identifying and nurturing the good she found therein, so also as regards the scientific mentality. She needs to do less denunciation of the problematic aspects and to start to do more as regards the identification and nurturing of the positive scientific virtues that can benefit the person as a person. This paper explores how this important attitudinal shift can be actualized better within the Church, and tries to identify what specific science-related virtue the Church can, and should, in the light of the Gospel, help to flourish for the betterment of humanity as a whole.

**CV** – **Louis CARUANA SJ**, is Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He joined the Jesuits in 1980, was ordained priest in 1991, and holds degrees from various European universities, with a PhD from the University of Cambridge. He teaches at the Gregorian University since 1996 but spent also seven years at Heythrop College, University of London, where he was appointed Rea-

der in 2012. Since 1995, he has been Adjunct Scholar at the Vatican Observatory. In his published books and research papers, he specializes in those features of the scientific mentality that can have an effect on major philosophical and theological issues. Apart from editing a collection of research papers entitled *Darwin and Catholicism: The Past and Present Dynamics of a Cultural Encounter* (2009), he is the author of the following monographs: *Holism and the Understanding of Science* (2000), *Science and Virtue* (2006), and *Nature: its conceptual architecture* (2015).

**CASANOVA, José – *A Catholic Church in a Global Secular World***

**ABSTRACT** – In retrospect, as we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conclusion of The Second Vatican Council, from a sociological perspective two fundamental dimensions of the Catholic renewal or *aggiornamento* stand out: the first was the definitive recognition of the legitimacy of the modern secular age and of the modern secular world; the second was the recognition that humankind was entering a new global age. Well before the concept had been coined, the gathered church fathers from all corners of the globe discerned emerging processes of globalization as a *sign of the times*.

**CV** – José CASANOVA is a scholar in the sociology of religion. He is a professor at the Department of Sociology at Georgetown University, and heads the Berkley Center's Program on *Globalization, Religion and the Secular*. He has published works in a broad range of subjects, including religion and globalization, migration and religious pluralism, transnational religions, and sociological theory. His best-known work, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (1994), has become a modern classic in the field and has been translated into five languages, including Arabic and Indonesian. In 2012, Casanova was awarded the Theology Prize from the Salzburger Hochschulwochen in recognition of life-long achievement in the field of theology.

**CORTINA, Adela – *Religiones y Ética Cívica Transnacional en el Espacio Público: Un Camino Hacia La Paz***

**ABSTRACT** – En los estudios sobre el espacio público, local y global, las religiones aparecen a menudo como obstáculos que es preciso superar para construir una paz duradera, porque se entiende que son fuente incesante de conflictos. Desgraciadamente, en la vida real hay ejemplos sobrados de ello. Sin embargo, una comprensión correcta de lo que las religiones pueden ofrecer muestra un camino distinto. El trabajo conjunto de las religiones y la ética cívica transnacional, que compartan la defensa de la dignidad de la persona – mujer y varón –, el valor de los animales y la sostenibilidad de la naturaleza, es indispensable en el espacio público para construir una sociedad en paz, basada en la justicia. El diálogo filosófico, potenciado por Jürgen Habermas, John Rawls y Charles

Taylor, entre muchos otros, debe ser prolongado, recogido en lo que yo llamaría una “ética de la razón cordial”, y, sobre todo, sus implicaciones deberían llevarse a la práctica.

**CV – Adela CORTINA** is Professor for Ethics and Political Philosophy at the School of Philosophy and Educational Sciences at the University of Valencia (Spain). She is author, among others, of the following books: *Dios en la filosofía trascendental de Kant*. Prólogo de José Gómez Caffarena. Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia, 1981; *Crítica y utopía: La Escuela de Frankfurt*. Prólogo de Javier Muguerza. Madrid: Cincel, 1985; *Razón comunicativa y responsabilidad solidaria*. Epílogo de Karl-Otto Apel. Salamanca: Sígueme, 1985; *Ética aplicada y democracia radical*. Madrid: Tecnos, 1993; *Ética civil y Religión*. Madrid: PPC, 1995; *Por una ética del consumo: La ciudadanía del consumidor en un mundo global*. 2.<sup>a</sup> ed. Madrid: Taurus, 2002; *Lo Justo como núcleo de las Ciencias Morales y Políticas: Una versión cordial de la Ética del Discurso*. Madrid: Real Academia de Ciencias Morales y Políticas, 2008; *Neuroética y neuropolítica*. 3.<sup>a</sup> ed. Madrid: Tecnos, 2012; *Justicia cordial*. Madrid: Trotta, 2010.

**DECKERS, Daniel – *Being Pope Francis***

**ABSTRACT** – Since March 13<sup>th</sup> 2013, the Secular Age is witnessing a Pope “from the end of the world” whose mindset is as fascinating as irritating. What are the key experiences which his life was shaped by? What are his key words? Where are the spiritual sources he is drawing on? Whom was and is he in dialogue with? Outlines of an archaeology of being Pope Francis – and prospects of a being a Catholic Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**CV – Daniel DECKERS**, born 1960 in Düsseldorf, grew up in Cologne. Studied Catholic Theology at the universities of Freiburg i.Ue. (Switzerland) and Bonn. 1985, diploma in Catholic Theology. 1985 to 1986, theological studies and social work in Bogotá, Colombia. 1987 to 1991, fellow of the FAZIT Foundation. 1991, Ph.D. in Catholic theology at the Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule Sankt Georgen with a thesis on the theory of justice in early-modern scholastic theology. 1991 to 1993, research fellow of the Swiss National Fund with a project centered on the history of social ethics in medieval and early-modern Europa. He has been writing as free-lancer for the cultural page of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) since 1988.

**DYCZEWSKI OFMConv, Leon – *New Technologies and Styles of Evangelization***

**ABSTRACT** – New technologies facilitate communication by collecting and accumulating data. They are being used for controlling and guiding

people. Thanks to them there is a cyberspace where we spend more and more time and in which the younger generation moves freely. In cyberspace it is possible to reach everywhere and everyone; to speak to an unlimited number of recipients, to give a lecture to a specific category of persons, to discuss in a closed group of people and with those who are territorially spread, in order to carry on the intimate conversation with the friend and stranger. Thanks to the modern technology and new media the Gospel can reach "to the ends of the earth" (Acts.1.8), to the innumerable number of people gathered in one place and individually to every person in his own place and at all times of the day and night.

Purpose of the Evangelization is to teach, reading and understand the Gospel, so as to show the way to God, to mold the style of a life with Jesus Christ, the art of living in the Christian community and cooperation with non-believers. All of those can be reached by forming a culture of converting and forgiving, of meeting and dialogue; a culture of silence, resignation, and tolerance of those who differ and acceptance of the person, based on faith and truth, Christian morality and the history of the Christ's Church. Among the attitudes that Evangelisation requires towards the needs of people are the following: openness and understanding; humility and affirmation of a clear Catholic identity; care of the poor without omitting the rich and the self-reliant. The language understood by contemporary humanity is less legal and doctrinal and more existential. We also defend that the new Evangelization requires the creation of new cultural products such as literature, music, film, dance, theater, different forms of the plastic arts, festivals and marches, new ways of bringing about education, witness to faith. As a result of new Evangelization a new culture with religious content and form is being shaped. Its basis is being constituted by well understood and deeply experienced truths of the faith and principles of the Christian life. If Christians do not create this new culture, they do not understand their own faith and so will not be able to experience it deeply.

**CV – Leon DYCZEWSKI** is Professor of Sociology and Media at the John Paul II Catholic University in Lublin. Among others he is member of the Scientific Society of the Catholic University of Lublin; the Polish Sociological Society; the Committee of the Problems of Labor and Social Policy by Polish Academy of Sciences; the Committee of Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences; the Scientific Council of the John Paul II Institute. He is the author of the following books: *The Family in a Transforming Society* (1999); *Values in the Polish Cultural Tradition*, ed. (2002); *Wyobrażenia młodzieży o małżeństwie i rodzinie. Pomiędzy tradycją a nowoczesnością* (2009); *Źródła wielkości, czyli o środowisku rodzinnym św. Maksymiliana Kolbego* (2011); *Kultura w całościowym planie rozwoju* (2011); *Obrońca godności i praw człowieka* (2012);

*Tożsamość w wielokulturowym kontekście*, ed. with K. Jurek (2013);  
*Rzeczywistość wielokulturowa*, ed. with K. Jurek (2013).

**FABRIS, Adriano – *Rethinking Universality for a True Interreligious Dialogue in a Pluralistic Age***

**ABSTRACT** – This paper is concerned with three aspects that concern and make possible the development of a *Welcoming Church*. First we shall deal with some aspects of today's religious life in the Western World. Three points will have to be underlined in this context: religious pluralism, fundamentalism and religious indifference. Secondly I shall also try to define the conditions of possibility of a true dialogue in the pluralistic situation we are experiencing now. For this task a precise concept of "identity", an "open" identity, has to be defined. Finally I will develop, from a philosophical viewpoint, an idea of universality which can support and give help to an interreligious dialogue. This idea must overcome the traditional, fixed notion of "universality" in the direction of a progressive "universalizability". The final thesis will be that a "welcoming Church", or an "open Church", can help define today's identity of our religious communities, to develop a true form of witness and of communication of faith and to build a common engagement against violence.

**CV** – **Adriano FABRIS** (Pisa, Italy) is Full Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Pisa, where he also teaches Philosophy of Religion and Communication Ethics. In Pisa he also directs the Interdisciplinary Center of Research and Services on Communication (CICo). He is Director of the publication "Teoria" and Responsible for the partnership between the University of Pisa and the Northwestern University (Evanston, Il). He also teaches Philosophy of Religion and Applied Ethics at the University of Lugano (Theological Faculty).

**GALLAGHER SJ, Michael – *Remembering Imagination and Narrative***

**ABSTRACT** – The presentation will evoke something of the evolution of Catholic Church positions since Vatican II on these three themes (pluralism, encounter, dialogue). It will then revisit some theological developments concerning "welcoming" as a key to the gospel vision. As a third horizon it will explore the centrality of imagination and narrative in any encounter or dialogue that wishes to go beyond the level of ideas.

**CV** – **Michael Paul GALLAGHER** is an Irish Jesuit priest. After ordination in 1972 he became a lecturer on English literature at University College, Dublin. He moved to Rome in 1990 to work in the Vatican's Council for Culture. In 1995 he became professor of fundamental theology at the Gregorian University and dean of the faculty from 2005 to 2008. Some of his special areas of research have been faith, culture, unbelief and imagination. He has published several articles on Newman,

Lonergan and Charles Taylor and is the author of the following books: *Free to Believe: Ten Steps to Faith*. Foreword by Jean Vanier. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1987; *Help My Unbelief*. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1988. *Struggles of Faith: Essays*. Dublin: Columba Press, 1991; *Where Is Your God?* London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1991; *What Are They Saying About Unbelief?* New York: Paulist Press, 1995; *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith and Culture*. Rev. and expanded ed. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2003; *Faith Maps: Ten Religious Explorers From Newman to Joseph Ratzinger*. New York: Paulist Press, 2010.

**GRILLI, Massimo – *Tutto è grazia: Rilettura dei macarismi/ beatitudini oggi, nella Chiesa***

**ABSTRACT** – Un discorso sulla Torah e sulla sua interpretazione (Mt 5-7) inizia con la beatitudine dei poveri, dei miti, dei misericordiosi... Questo avvio ripropone la *charis di Dio* come sorgente insondabile della vita cristiana e testimonia che esiste un Amore che previene e che guarda gli uomini non come una massa *perditionis* su cui la *libido domnandi* esercita il suo potere, ma con la gioiosa certezza che Dio agisce capovolgendo le sicurezze umane. La chiesa che – come diceva già san Bernardo – si è modellata spesso su Giustiniano piuttosto che su Gesù di Nazareth, è chiamata a riconoscere nelle pietre scartate dai costruttori la vera testata d'angolo! Il compasso del Vangelo, infatti, non è quello dei costruttori di questo mondo, ma il Regno di Dio che germoglia in una storia umana apparentemente dannata. Perché non esistono due storie, una sacra e una profana: esiste solo la storia dell'uomo reale e del mondo reale, che Dio è venuto a difendere contro tutti i suoi accusatori.

**CV** – **Massimo GRILLI** si è laureato in Scienze bibliche, nel Pontificio Istituto Biblico di Roma, dopo aver conseguito la licenza nello stesso Istituto. La sua tesi di dottorato, dal titolo *Comunità e missione: le direttive di Matteo. Indagine esegetica su Mt 9,35-11,1*. Ha svolto attività di docente nel Pontificio Collegio Leoniano di Anagni, nella Pontificia Università Urbaniana e attualmente è Professore stabile presso la Pontificia Università Gregoriana dove insegna *I Sinottici e Teologia biblica* e dirige numerose tesi di dottorato. Oltre alla propria tesi ha pubblicato numerosi libri e articoli, soprattutto in italiano, tedesco e spagnolo. Tra le pubblicazioni recenti: *Scritture, Alleanza e Popolo di Dio. Aspetti del dialogo ebraico-cristiano; Il diverso e lo straniero nella Bibbia ebraico-cristiana. Uno studio esegetico-teologico in chiave interculturale*.

**HALÍK, Tomáš – *Discerning the Signs of the Times***

**ABSTRACT** – Secularisation is not the end of Christianity, but rather an “*absorption*” of Christianity into modern culture. This absorption can be described as a success on its part, but that success has been offset by a loss of visibility. But that paradox only reveals the fundamental paradox

of Christianity that is inherent in the very *kenotic* character of the Gospel. In the future the Church will continue to operate within an increasingly pluralistic cultural milieu and will be characterised by greater internal pluralism. It would seem that in future there will emerge *more ways of being a Christian* than those we have become accustomed to. Many contemporaries are *simul fidelis et infidelis*. We should discern many different types of “nonbelievers”: agnostics, “apatheists”, militant “new atheists”, “atheists of pain” (wounded by the existence of evil in the world), new types of idolatry etc., and also spiritual seekers. The third path for the Church’s action in addition to classical pastoral or missionary activity is *accompanying seekers*, to travel part of the journey together in dialogue. But if accompanying and dialogue are to be appreciated as a fully-fledged service of the church, it presupposes a radical shift in ecclesiology.

**CV – Tomáš HALÍK** PhD, DD., Dr.h.c. Born in Prague (1948), graduated in sociology, philosophy and psychology from the Faculty of Philosophy of Charles University, Prague, Charles University (Ph.D. 1972). He studied theology clandestinely in Prague. Secretely ordained a priest in Erfurt (1978), worked in the “underground Church” where he was one of Cardinal Tomášek's closest associates. He closely cooperated with the future President, Václav Havel and after 1989 became one of his advisors. After the fall of Communism, he served as General Secretary to the Czech Conference of Bishops (1990-93). He is now he professor of sociology at Charles University, Prague, pastor of the Academic Parish, and President of the Czech Christian Academy (since 1990). He has also been visiting professor at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard and Notre Dame. His books have been published in 16 languages. He received home and abroad several awards including Cardinal König Prize (2003), Romano Guardini Prize (2010) and Templeton Prize (2014) and an honorary doctorate at the University of Erfurt. His book *Patience with God* received the prize for the best European Theological Book in 2009/10.

**JOAS, Hans – *The Church in a World of Options***

**ABSTRACT** – One of the crucial consequences of the rise of the secular option analysed by Charles Taylor is that faith itself has also become an option in the West. This means that faith today is necessarily permeated with the awareness that the secular option exists and is easily available. The Book *Faith as an Option* (Stanford University Press) tries to describe what this means for the future of Christianity, both sociologically and with regard to the intellectual challenges for believers. The talk will apply this line of thinking to the understanding of the Church. What is the model of the Church that could be attractive in this world in which an old orientation that sees the Church as a quasi-State is no longer plau-

sible? Is the only alternative the idea of a free voluntary association? What can we make today out of Ernst Troeltsch's idea of a new synthesis of “church”, “sect”, and “individual spirituality”?

**CV – Hans JOAS** is the Ernst Troeltsch Professor for the Sociology of Religion at the Theological Faculty of Humboldt University, Berlin, and Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago where he is also a member of the Committee on Social Thought. Recent publications: *Faith as an Option. Possible Futures for Christianity*, Stanford University Press 2014; *The Sacredness of the Person. A New Genealogy of Human Rights*, Georgetown University Press 2013; *The Axial Age and Its Consequences* (ed., with Robert Bellah), Harvard University Press 2012.

**JONKERS, Peter – *A Serving Church: Overcoming Polarization through Participation***

**ABSTRACT** – Since the sixties of last century, the Catholic Church in the Netherlands has been marked by a fierce polarization, dividing conservatives and liberals on the question how the Church should relate to the modern, secular world. Now, fifty years later, the costs of these two polarized options have become clear: retrenchment of the Church into a small defensive bulwark against modernity, and absorption of the Church by secular society. The overall result of both options is that the Church in the Netherlands is in a state of deep disjunction with contemporary society, which is demonstrated by the fact that it has lost its relevance in the eyes of many people.

On a more fundamental level, the above can be rephrased as a paradox, which is as old as Christian faith itself, namely that, according to the Gospel, Christians should be *in*, but not *of* the world. This means that the Church has to remain faithful to its true vocation, which is fundamentally an unworldly one, while it should, at the same time, open itself up to the world in a truthful way, because this essentially belongs to another aspect of its vocation, namely its missionary nature. In our times, one of the ways, in which the Church can realize this double vocation is by being a serving Church, in particular by participating in people's quest for meaning and orientation and sharing with them concrete examples of truthful life-orientations, which abound in the Christian tradition. This means that the Church should see the Christian tradition not so much as a doctrine, because this risks to overwhelm people with fixed, pre-given answers, but rather as an expression of wisdom, which essentially is a practical kind of knowledge and practice, assisting people in finding a truthful orientation in today's pluralist world, which seems to be simultaneously contingent and compelling. From their part, people can participate in the wisdom of the Church by learning from the manifold authentic ways of life, in which Christian faith has materialized itself in

the course of history, serving as examples of the good life. In sum, in order to be truly serving and participatory, the Church should put the cardinal virtue of prudence into practice in order to relate the principles of Christian wisdom to the concrete lives of humans in today's complex world.

**CV – Peter JONKERS** (Eindhoven, the Netherlands, 1954) studied philosophy at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, and received, in 1982, his doctoral degree with a dissertation on Hegel's philosophy. Currently, he is professor of philosophy at Tilburg University (School of Catholic Theology), the Netherlands. His research includes metaphysics, philosophy of culture, philosophy of religion and history of modern and contemporary (continental) philosophy

**SCANNONE, Juan Carlos – *Iglesia y Discernimiento Espiritual en una Edad Secular y un Mundo Global***

**ABSTRACT** – ¿Cómo la Iglesia puede hoy, en una edad secular y un mundo globalizado, acompañar y orientar, desde la experiencia kenótica del Evangelio, un discernimiento histórico de posibilidades reales de humanización, a fin de fundamentar una renovada esperanza? Ésta debe ser participable para todos, a fin de suscitarles una acción y pasión históricas humanizadoras. Para los cristianos sigue siendo válida la lectura evangélica de los “signos de los tiempos” según la tradición del “sentir” y discernir espirituales (Orígenes, Buenaventura, Ignacio de Loyola, el Papa Francisco...). Pero el núcleo radicalmente humano de esa experiencia puede ser compartido también por creyentes de otras religiones y por no creyentes de buena voluntad, ante todo, en diálogo entre ellos. En el paganismo lo enseñaba Aristóteles acerca del juicio prudente en ética y política, y hoy se puede replantear filosóficamente y, por consiguiente, en forma universal, en base a aportaciones de Ricoeur, Lonergan, etc.

Según Aristóteles el discernimiento en cuestiones prácticas supone el apetito recto, es decir, libre del desorden afectivo que obnubila el conocimiento. Lonergan asegura que, después de los maestros de la sospecha, se debe presuponer la conversión afectiva para el ejercicio eficaz del método en ciencias del “mundo del significado y del valor” (sobre psiquis, sociedad, cultura, historia, religión...). Además, es posible una recompreensión filosófica del discernimiento a partir de dos propuestas de Ricoeur, a saber, por un lado, considerar la situación y acción históricas como textos a interpretar, incluyendo también su momento pragmático, y, por otro lado, plantear el juicio crítico acerca del desorden de las pasiones a partir de una “imaginación de inocencia”. Pues se puede mostrar la correspondencia de tales enfoques filosóficos con el discernimiento evangélico e ignaciano de la acción y pasión históricas.

**CV – Juan Carlos SCANNONE SJ** natural de Buenos Aires (Argentina), es Doctor en Filosofía por la Universidad de Munich y Licenciado en Teología, por la Universidad de Innsbruck. Fue Presidente del Área San Miguel de la Universidad del Salvador (Argentina), allí fue dos veces Decano de Filosofía, es Profesor emérito y Director del Instituto de Investigaciones Filosóficas. Fue Profesor invitado en las Universidades de Francfort, Salzburgo, Viena, Pontificia Gregoriana (Roma), Ibero-americana (México), Hochschule für Philosophie (Munich), Instituto Lumen Vitae (Bruselas), etc.

**SCHREITER, Robert – *Spirituality as Platform and Forum for Encounter***

**ABSTRACT** – Although the West has appeared to become increasingly secular, a closer look reveals a good deal of religious sentiment that is not expressed through traditional institutional channels. This sentiment, expressed as a desire for transcendence, a re-enchantment of the world, a concern for authenticity and integrity among other things, has come to be understood by many under the rubric of “spirituality.”

For those who follow the practices of historical Christian traditions, spirituality has meant a disciplined set of values and practices that have been shaped and follow a specific path toward holiness and faithful discipleship laid out by trustworthy guides and years of lived experience. One can thus speak of Benedictine spirituality, Franciscan spirituality, Jesuit spirituality, Carmelite spirituality and the like. In contemporary secular discourse, however, spirituality has a more diffuse meaning, possibly referring to diverse practices and feelings that are assembled by individuals, drawing upon a wide variety of resources. Church people have at times been put off by what seems to be such casual and unreflective borrowings that rupture the integrity of more coherent and well-trodden spiritual pathways. This is especially the case when elements of Christian spiritual traditions are mixed with elements from other religious traditions as well as esoteric and even anti-religious and anti-Christian sources.

Rather than an automatic response of rejection of these efforts in secular society, the spiritual quest should be regarded as a platform upon which the Church can meet secular society at the level of values. Charles Taylor’s work has shown how secularity indeed shares many values with the Christian tradition. Upon that shared platform, a forum for encounter can be built that allows for a better understanding of these undertakings and be seen as a site for more focused and constructive critique of these spiritual efforts upon the part of secular people. Engaging in such a forum, however, brings with it another possibility. The spiritual traditions that have arisen in Christianity in the course of the centuries arose in specific cultural circumstances that not only shaped their beginnings,

but also caused them to engage distinctive concerns and issues as they developed. As the Church engages secular and post-secular societies, looking for those points of engagement may expand existing spiritual traditions in significant ways. This presentation will note some examples of such engagement and suggest that in this acknowledging of a platform and forum the Church is engaging in a helpful kenosis that might enable it to “put on the mind of Christ” in authentic ways to meet the spiritual quests of genuine seekers today. Thus, rather than seeing the constructed spiritualities of individual seekers in secular society as misguided, we may be able to see in their journeys signposts that point to genuine spiritual hungers that allow us to approach the rich spiritual traditions of Christianity in new and creative ways.

**CV – Robert SCHREITER**, C.P.P.S., is the Vatican Council II Professor of Theology at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, USA. He is past president of the American Society of Missiology and the Catholic Theological Society of America. He has published eighteen books on contextual theology, reconciliation, world mission, and globalization. He edited the volume, *Plural Spiritualities: North American Experiences*.

**TAYLOR, Charles – *Authenticity: The Life of the Church in a Secular Age***

**ABSTRACT** – First, some features of our situation in the West: (1) The understanding in our society, shared by people of all outlooks, is of an “immanent frame”. That is we see ourselves as in a universe governed by impersonal scientific laws, and in societies which have been created in historical time by political action, (ideally) governed by impersonal law. This replaces a previous understanding among our ancestors, who lived in an “enchanted” world, and whose societies were embedded in a meaningful cosmos. Secondly, (2) we have moved from societies where the vast majority belonged to a church, so that membership in church and state almost totally overlapped, to one in which different dimensions of belonging: political, spiritual, family, are no longer congruent. A host of different spiritual or metaphysical orientations are lived side by side. The “bundling” of different dimensions of belonging has been undone. At the same time, there has been an unbundling of another sort. Formerly, the different facets of religious life: liturgy, rites of passage, special devotions, caritative organizations, etc. were gathered together in the life of a church (locally, within the life of a parish); but this unity too has been “unbundled”, and people carry out these activities within different organizations and milieu. These “unbundlings” have been hastened in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century by the spread of an ethic of authenticity. But all this also means that the structures of “Christendom” have become less and less in evidence. We no longer live in a civilization where all aspects of life reflect Christian faith. Faithful Christians react differently to these changes. Some welcome the freedom and openness,

whereby one can follow one's spiritual path (as a "seeker"), alongside others who have taken up different options. Others regret the passing of an integrated Christian society. The great challenge for the Church is to unite believes of both orientations within our sacramental union.

**CV – Charles TAYLOR** (1931) is professor emeritus of Philosophy at McGill University, Montreal. He has taught at a number of other places, including the Université de Montréal, Oxford, Jerusalem, Frankfurt, Berkeley and North Western (Chicago). He has also been engaged in politics and public life. He has been a member of the Canadian New Democratic Party (social-democratic in orientation), and has run for the Canadian Parliament (unsuccessfully) on a number of occasions. More recently, he co-chaired (with Gérard Bouchard) the Quebec government Consultative Commission on issues of reasonable accommodation, particularly in relation to religious differences (2007-8). He has recently been involved in the public debate around the *Charte de la Laïcité* proposed by the Parti Québécois government, which (fortunately) went down to defeat last year. He is the author of the following books: *The Explanation of Behaviour*. London; New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Humanities Press, 1964. *Hegel*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975; *Hegel and Modern Society*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979; *Social Theory As Practice*. Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 1983; *Human Agency and Language*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985; *Philosophy and the Human Sciences*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985; *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989; *The Malaise of Modernity*. The Massey lectures series. Concord, Ont.: Anansi, 1991; *The Ethics of Authenticity*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992; *Reconciling the Solitudes: Essays on Canadian Federalism and Nationalism*. Edited by Guy Laforest. Montreal; Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993; *Philosophical Arguments*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995; *Varieties of Religion Today: William James Revisited*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002; *Modern Social Imaginaries*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004; *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007; *Dilemmas and Connections: Selected Essays*. Cambridge/Mass: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011.





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**Project on**

## **Faith in a Secular Age**

### **Disjunctions/Conjunctions**

### **Between Church and People in**

### **Global Times**

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# Project

This project was designed by Charles Taylor author of *A Secular Age* and José Casanova and carried out by the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy with some 15 teams of scholars in order to sound out cultural resources for living the faith in secular times. Each team has written a book which they have summarized here, beginning with their direct answer to two specific questions regarding: 1/ the distinctive characteristics of their national or regional cultures which shape the life of the faith in this secular age; 2/ the contributions and the difficulties which these raise for the process of Evangelization

## *Goals and Objectives*

(a) to support with professional scholarly insight the efforts of Pope Francis to reach out with the gospel message and action; (b) to reflect on the religious experiences of the diverse cultures of the many Western nations presented by the multiple research teams of the disjunction project, and (c) to summarize and draw out the significance of this experience for Evangelization in these secular and global times.

## *Topics*

(a) The secular cultures of our times as context for present efforts of Evangelization; (b) The specific challenges and especially the opportunities which cultures provide for the efforts of Pope Francis and the Church as people of God to share the gospel in our globalizing world; (c) Prospects of mutual religious enrichment East and West, North and South.

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## Report on the Project

# Faith in a Secular Age: Disjunctions/Conjunctions between Church and People

## I. INTRODUCTION

Rather than beginning with the long and rich history of the project on “Faith in a Secular Age” with its multiple facets in times of promise, crisis and renewal, it seemed more effective to begin from the recent period of Pope Francis. He seems to be putting things right by simple gestures in accord with both the life of the people and the gospel message. But rather than resting with these, it is our task to ask what is missing where a project of scholars might be of help.

Upon reflection one notes that Pope Francis is not going deeply into the secular culture in which all are raised, which is inescapable in daily life, and in terms of which all interpret present events and project their future.

Hence the goal of this project is to support Pope Francis in this regard with professional insight drawn by such various competencies as can be provided by the humanities and the social sciences, by philosophy and theology.

What then is the secularity of which we speak? Charles Taylor, in his now classical work *A Secular Age*, spoke of three senses of the term in order to focus on the third: (a) separation of Church and state, (b) decline in Church practice, and (c) the cultural conditions which today often make unbelief seem more easy, more natural and more viable than belief.

This has been exacerbated by sexual and financial scandals. Though these can be seen as tragic chances of timing, in fact they may be rather the inevitable results of structures which overstayed their age till finally they became unsustainable and all seemed to be collapsing.

In view of all this what then are the goals and objectives of this project; namely, what kind of vision is needed in order to contribute to the life of faith in these new and cultural conditions which have come to constitute this secular age? Two stand out, namely, an wholistic vision

achieved through dialogue and a kenotic vision in the image of Christ and indeed of the entire Trinity.

## **II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### *Wholistic Dialogue*

As cultural these conditions constitute what Pierre Hadot defined as an integral way of life, distinctive of each people and nation, and hence multiple and differentiated. As such, the response cannot be by the abstract approaches of scientific reason in which almost all are trained from their early school years. That proceeds precisely by leaving out all except the essences expressed in concepts which are thereby univocal and universal. This would omit all of Pope Francis' populous gospel gestures in which faith is actually lived. It would render rather the "buffered self" which indeed characterizes secularity. Only one team would then be required; more would be redundant and confusing.

In that older style a single speaker, perhaps with one or two critics, corresponded to the abstract approach for which, as Descartes noted, a single author is most effective. The task then was precisely to strip away the cultural differences wherein the religious elements are to be found, so that the secular age followed necessarily and inescapably. To search for a living faith in a secular age requires a fundamentally different, even contrary, dialogic, interactive and mutually suggestive approach.

Further, as the secular condition is a culture, and hence an integral and differentiated way of life, relevant work must attend to the cumulative and creative experience of the many peoples and their distinct cultures. For this not one, but 16 teams have been at work on this project. Each team is writing its distinctive volume.

Thus the challenge of the present conference is to begin to bind these together in a complementary and coherent search for the wholeness and fullness of a religious life; to articulate the cross references between them; and by dialogue to point to what is seen, needing to be seen and faith which transcends all sight.

This requires then not only the work of one keynote speaker, but especially the lively interaction of the many teams of the distinct cultures in dialogue with one another. Indeed this was the new theme of the 2013 World Congress of Philosophy in Athens, Greece, where this Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) was awarded the "Global Dialogue Prize" for its contribution to this new mode of investigation as we enter upon these culturally differentiated and secular times.

### *Kenotic Vision*

The combination of the growing secular orientation of contemporary culture with the tragically timely scandals, which marked the over-extension of previous modes of Church thought and practice, call now for change and reform. In fact, this recalls and repeats the experience of Christ with the Jewish people of old. Then there was an intensive and enduring expectation of the Messiah. However, this expectation had come to be so popularly misinterpreted and misrepresented in human and worldly terms of power and prestige that when the Messiah came he was not recognized. In fact, what was needed of a Messiah was one who would save humanity from itself, that is, not more of human power, but less, or a veritable emptying (*kenosis*) of self.

As Paul pointed out classically in his epistle to the Philippians (2:6-11), it was not only that the Messiah put aside the form of God to take human form, but that he did so in the form of a servant; indeed of one who would surrender his human life in the most ignominious manner, namely, that of death on the cross. This was to be 'other' to the extent of being the very antithesis of human messianic expectations.

This set a totally different model for humanity: not that of master, but of the ultimate servant, indeed of a slave sacrificing his very life; not of one kingly master but as neighbor to all humankind and in all of its endeavors, whether of health and sustenance, of industry and finance, or of social and political interaction. In all this messiahship in terms of *kenosis* points to sacrifice and service for human fulfillment and wholeness in progressively inclusive physical, moral and social terms.

Moreover, as the secular perspective inverts the apex from the divine to the human, and even to the world in which we live, this kenotic outpouring is articulated not only with regard to humanity, but to physical nature as well. The power of the creator as recounted in Isaiah is not reserved to some overpowering phenomenon such as lightening or wind, but is found in the whisper of the breeze. Some refer to this as the small or weak god. In any case, it is the kenotic God or creator manifest in and by nature even at its weakest, most fallible and fickle.

Yet even this is not the entirety of the *kenosis*, for Christ promised to send the Spirit to explain his message, to enlighten minds and guide hearts. But where this might be expected to be booming, inescapable, imperative, in fact it is a weak voice which does not do away with, but enhances human freedom. Even here the *kenosis* continues, leaving to humanity and nature the responsibility -- and the struggle -- to work toward an ever emerging wholeness.

So whether it be the Father as Creator, the Son as Redeemer, or the Spirit as Guide, the life of the Trinity is marked by a *kenosis* quite beyond human expectations and comprehension. This assures that the

secular is not replaced but enhanced, or as expressed by John F. Kennedy: "In this world God's work is man's own."

### **III. INTERCHANGE BETWEEN TEAMS**

In order to initiate this dialogic interaction between the teams **Charles Taylor** proposed two principles:

1. The disjunction between, on the one hand, the 'seekers' which presupposes that they have not found their way and, on the other hand, the 'dwellers' doing what has been done better in the past suggests that faith be considered as a journey, meaning that faith is not fully understood and that we proceed by landmarks which give direction and guide our journey.

2. Pope Francis suggests engaging with all others in this spiritual journey in a constant and respectful interchange, and trying to understand what is held by others in a spiritual pluralism.

Both of these entail the need to get beyond the sense of possessing truth, and learning to live apostolically with others, whether as individual seekers or as the plural spiritualities of our day, in an attitude grounded in love.

This generated fruitful dialogue which related the participants around the following three themes: (1) the seekers as individuals, (2) plural spiritualities, and (3) the relation of truth and love. Some samples are described here, followed by a listing of the themes each of the participants suggested at the conclusion of these discussions.

#### *Individuals and Seekers*

- The secular inversion of contemporary concern from 'top-down' to 'bottom-up' has given strong impetus to the individual. This has a number of effects, both good and bad. It can enliven in the person a sense of possibility with corresponding far reaching vision and creativity. This is indicated in terms of authenticity, i.e. whether a person lives what he or she professes

On the one hand, this has been a special characteristic of the success of the pontificate of Pope Francis whose daily life continuously witnesses to the gospel injunction to live for the poor (imaged in his own simple living quarters and mode of transport), to reach out to the margins (to care for the immigrant rather than the rich), and even to think of the Church as a field hospital.

On the other hand, to focus too exclusively on the individual to the extent of judging all in terms of individual human success constitutes a

major challenge presented by secularization and the shift it entails from God to man. When understood exclusively in term of an individualism the implication is a competitive society. In some places this has been the strategy for nation building and hence defines as secular all economic, legal and political structures.

- The vast majority of the European teams chose to work on the disjunction between seekers and dweller. This could refer to the tension between two extreme positions. On the one hand, are the 'dwellers' who seek salvation in the exact repetition of past Church practices. On the other hand, are the 'seekers' who feel that they must dissociate themselves from set ritual practices in order to follow the interior inspiration of the Spirit in response to the present needs of society?

As constituting the context of life today the latter entails special difficulties for membership in communities both sacred and secular, in Church and civil society. For example:

a/ Too little attention is devoted to the creative appreciation and mobilization, to the responsibilities and even the opportunities, which are present in and characteristic of life in religious and secular communities.

b/ As a result the gospel message of love can be read too exclusively as an internal issue of Church service or of the private life of family; while too little attention is devoted to one's role in public life. That is left to a sense of self benefit and competition with others in zero plus terms. In this case, the transformative, enlightening and enlivening power of the Christian message is not sufficiently appreciated and applied. Too often this bespeaks the situation where the Catholic community is the majority. Elsewhere, the Church is often the minority, at times a very slender minority, and seeks only tolerance. But even in these situations should not the Christian approach be one of active – if cautious – service both to Church, e.g. in ecumenical efforts, and to public life both by its transformative social doctrine and active public services (e.g. in health and education).

### ***Plural Spiritualities***

Another disjunction is the present encounter with plural spiritualities. In the past, the Church in professing an absolute divine might have felt obliged to seek to impose on others its appreciation of this unique primacy. But what then of the present interactive universe where the need and opportunity is rather to learn from others and from nature, to invite rather than to impose – and this most particularly in the rich global situation of plural spiritualities? This issue was taken up by teams from Poland, Portugal and Chicago.

- It was suggested that one approach might be to ask what moves a people or peoples to look for a new spirituality. One element might be that in this increasingly active, changing and ever turbulent world there is a felt need for the deeper and more constant path of contemplation. This can be sought in alternate cultures with long traditions of contemplation. In turn this can generate a new respect for "the other" and a search for community with them.

- For Portugal which had a long history as a majoritarian Catholic country this entails coming to the realization today that not all are Catholic. Whereas in the past it was not necessary to articulate one's interest in religious life, that could now be important. And in a time when 'believing' but not 'belonging' to a religious community becomes more common this might be done through the various arts.

Related elements which emerged in the discussions were the need to encourage Catholics to speak out and articulate their motivation. Indeed this has been central to the transition of Jürgen Habermas from an earlier position in which only a secular language could be proper for public order, and all religious motivations would need to be translated into secular terms. More recently he has recognized that this placed a unique burden on the religious section of the population contrary to the prime liberal profession of equality for all.

- Today this may require not the comprehensive vision of a classical Catholic theology, but attention to its practical implications and to the more brief language that is required for specific projects in support of limited populations and their needs. This can be especially true if the student population of our times is less interested in the institutional and theoretical content of particular religious denominations than in the spiritual motivation to do good in the world.

- From here it was but a short step to the sociological studies often built on statistics regarding the practice of sacramental rituals. These tend to show dramatic decline, e.g., in attendance at mass or the practice of the sacrament of penance. However, this may be missing some other significant religious indices, namely, the practice of the gospel values in small Christian communities or in working toward such specific goals as peace, e.g., the peace building of the Saint Egidio community.

One might note as well that these seem especially fit for bridging the gap between spirituality and religion often cited in the claim to be 'spiritual' (as in deep interiority), but not 'religious' (as in institutional structures).

- A further consideration appears when one takes account of the psychological dynamics, for then the needs of very different personalities come into play. Many are not able to deal with doubt. Whereas for some doubt could be a reassuring sign that they are proceeding cauti-

ously and that the route taken, though limited, is sure. For others, however, doubt undermines their sense of security. They look for one in whom they can put complete and unquestioning trust. Indeed this latter position can be not only the situation of more simple people, but of earlier stages of a scholar's academic growth. In time, however, one finds that no thinker is always correct and that they themselves must take up their own responsibility for evaluating and sorting out what can be accepted and how this is complemented by other insights that over time become available from their own or other cultures.

### *Truth and Love*

- This is not to suggest that there is no truth, for that has no sense at all. Rather it is that truth is not fully understood: hence it is not that we possess truth, but that truth possesses us. Along with truth there is also emotion or feeling. We need a humble attitude because truth is being continuously created and hence remains beyond us in its fullness. As this can be destabilizing one must see oneself as being in the hands of God. This requires letting go of any possessive dynamic, which in turn implies the search for some common ground between seekers and dwellers. The same is true of the other disjunctions both within the self and in the world.

- Finally, truth and openness are possible in the broader context of love. There one's security is assured by the love of God and expressed in its extension to all one encounters on one's journey. Indeed Christians soon became identifiable precisely by "how they love one another."

This has a number of implications: 1/ that we need to have an open attitude both toward the past for its relevance to the present and to novelty in our changing times; 2/ that we need to work with others in order to have the benefit of their experiences and insights as life becomes ever more complex; 3/ that we gain confidence in ourselves and in our extended community as we move ahead on our journey; and 4/ that it is possible for a person to put greater stress either on holding to the tradition as the more assured path, or to belonging to a community of persons.

The latter gives less attention to issues of truth (as bonds between concepts), and more to the bonds of love between persons (that is to 'belonging' rather than to 'believing'). More probably however everyone finds their proper combination of the two as not mutually exclusive factors along with such others as their internal psychology and their external condition of life in the specific time and place.

- One implication is that gradually we slide toward smaller affinity groupings based on many factors. This is newly possible as transportation and communication are augmented so that geography need no longer be the determining or even the major factor in the organization of Christian parishes or other religious communities. To this must be added, however, the importance of diversity if a faith community is to avoid extremes and witness to the all englobing love of the Creator and Redeemer.

- Here the constant example of Pope Francis is significant with its emphases not on a closed community of believers, but on the openness of living alongside all with their multiple gifts and needs, their beliefs and unbeliefs. In these days the Church, and indeed all societies, are marked by challenging transformation.

- For a detailed treatment of the problematic of the four disjunctions between Church and people (1. seekers and dwellers, 2. the magisterium, 3. moral teaching and 4. plural spiritualities), see Charles Taylor, Jose Casanova and George F. McLean, eds. *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age* (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012) (available in full text on the web at <http://www.crvp.org/book/Series08/128710%20ChurchPeople.pdf>).

# Seekers and Dwellers

(Marquette University, Milwaukee, USA)

## REGIONAL CULTURES AND EVANGELIZATION IN USA

### **1. What distinctive characteristics of your national or regional culture shape the living of the faith by your people in this secular age?**

*Elements noted in the draft essays:*

- Emphases on instrumentalization and immediacy, fostered and exacerbated by the dynamics of a late capitalist economy
- “Us-them” mentalities manifest in a variety of socio-cultural polarizations
- Deeply embedded structural biases with respect to race, gender, economic status
- Attraction for many of various ways of “seeing our lives as a meaningful part of a larger whole”
- Persistence of various forms of aesthetic and contemplative sensibilities

*Other pertinent elements, not explicitly present in the draft essays:*

- Persistence of attitudes of American “exceptionalism,” both with respect to the framing both domestic and international politics; impact of a changing (diminished) future international/economic role of US
- Growth of the “nones” with respect to formal religious affiliations
- Shifting ethnic demographics of the US population and corresponding shifts in the US Catholic church
- Increasing marginalization of already powerless, particularly as driven by growing economic disparities
- New forms of concentration of economic/social/power in terms of technological skills/use of new communication/information media
- New forms of “populism”/“localism,” particularly as enabled by new communication/information media
- Changing attitudes with respect to gender/family dynamics [generational variables here?]
- Impact of the approachable style of Pope Francis

**2.&3. What contribution can these make for Evangelization?  
What difficulties do these entail for Evangelization?**

Many of them are “double-edged” in that the phenomena they manifest offer both challenges and opportunities, e.g., even as the dynamics of instrumentalism and immediacy marginalize practices of discernment, contemplation, aesthetic creation and appreciation, they also make it possible to locate and articulate the spaces of human meaning they would have us neglect and abandon – spaces which are precisely those the Spirit longs to fill with its life.

Among the most challenging of these phenomena may be ones that work to alter the configurations of social/economic/political power, particularly as a confrontational dynamic, unwilling to compromise or make concessions, functions as an engine in such shifting of power.

**SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT**

The initial focus of the team working from Marquette University in Milwaukee was on the disjunction that between “seekers” and “dwellers.” Conversations among the team members made it evident that, even as this first disjunction provided a starting point for engaging the more encompassing question of how does the Church speak to (as well as listen to) the world, it also provided initial coordinates for a grid upon which this disjunction intersected with important elements of the other three disjunctions. In consequence, even though the disjunction between seekers and dwellers has provided the initial frame of reference for the essays that have been drafted so far, the lines of analysis have moved along trajectories that, in a number of essays, also offered opportunities for a significant engagement with the other disjunctions. In addition, a number of the team members also considered it important to probe in greater detail the conceptual and phenomenological contours of the “seekers-dwellers” disjunction in order to test (and in some cases) contest the comprehensiveness, adequacy, and/or the nature of the contrast it depicts. Other members of the team have also used the grid of the four disjunctions as a vehicle for proposing complementary disjunctive modalities, as well as for enriching the understanding of Taylor’s proposed disjunctions in ways that open possibilities for mediating and/or overcoming them.

As of this writing (May 15, 2014) initial drafts of eight of the originally planned eleven essays have been completed. As a result of my being overseas on sabbatical for much of the 2013-14 academic year, there has not yet been an opportunity for the team members to meet as a group in order to discuss the drafts and thus to determine how to give the

collection an overarching thematic shape that provides appropriate space for engagement with the divergent views that are articulated in the individual essays. Also in need of discussion by the team is the possibility of bringing in at least one or two more interlocutors, particularly if some of the other three planned essays do not materialize. In consequence, a realistic timeline for a completed manuscript now appears to be the beginning of January 2015.

In terms of the current set of nine essays, the preliminary editorial arrangement I am proposing will group the current set of eight essays into pairs that suggest useful intersections in their engagement with the patterns of activity, belief, and life trajectory that the disjunction between seekers and dwellers attempts to delimit.

In the first pair of essays, **David McPherson**, in “**Seeking Re-Enchantment**,” explores “the predicament of the spiritual seeker today” by providing an account of the goal of that search in terms of the “normatively higher, more worthwhile, more meaningful mode of life” that Taylor designates as “fullness.” McPherson engages two non-theistic responses to this predicament that have been articulated by Anglo-American philosophers, the quietist position espoused by John McDowell, and the “non-theistic cosmic teleological views” that have been put forth by Mary Midgley and Thomas Nagel. McPherson argues that neither is adequate in comparison to a theistic response of the personalist kind advocated by Taylor for which a “telos of communion” forms a central component of human fullness. In contrast to McPherson, **James South**, in “**Seekers and Dwellers: Some Critical Reflections on Charles Taylor’s Account of Identity**” presses Taylor’s distinction between seekers and dwellers in terms of what South sees as its focus upon authenticity as a key element in identity and thus as central to a seeker’s search “for meaning in life.” South locates Taylor’s account within the interplay between Augustine’s inwardness and Montaigne’s perspectivalism in the human quest for identity; South then engages a number of American thinkers, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Stanley Cavell, to articulate, in contrast to what he sees as Taylor’s paradigm of “seeking” as a search for one’s essential identity, an account of seeking as a “never-ending search.” The upshot of South’s discussion is to draw a contrast between “the seeker who is a philosopher, who does not know where she will end up” and “the seeker is someone who does in fact know there is The Way but cannot seem to find it from where she currently is”—a contrast which he sees placing the second kind of seeker (which South takes to be Taylor’s “seeker”) in a fundamental alignment with the dweller in that that a space of “habitation” is ultimately the end point for both. For the second kind of seeker, however, the culmination of the questions seems to be not

“habitation,” but rather an “abandonment” which, as Cavell describes it, “the achievement of the human requires”; it is “not inhabitation and settlement but abandonment, leaving...[in which] you can treat the others there are as those to whom the inhabitation of the world can now be left..” South’s conclusion thus opens up an important dimension of the question of how the Church can be/become kenotic: it poses the challenge of what would the Church have to become in order for it to be “that to which a philosophical seeker can abandon herself.”

The **second pair of essays** by **Edwin Block** and Thomas **Hughson** attend in their turn less to the inner dynamics of seeking and dwelling; they focus more on analyses of some of the larger social contexts which both give—and, in important instances, also take away—intelligibility from both seeking and dwelling. In “**The Church and the World: A Response to Charles Taylor’s View of a Contemporary Disjunction,**” Block argues that there are larger conditions in the early twenty-first century that militate against both seekers and dwellers in their respective efforts to attain fullness. Chief among these conditions, in Block’s analysis, are the dynamics of the twenty-first century capitalism that places value on immediate material satisfaction that anesthetizes us into the condition that the Jesuit Superior General Adolfo Nicolás has characterized as the “globalization of superficiality.” Block sees this dynamic having a significant impact upon the understanding and exercise of authority, the field in which Taylor has located the second disjunction incapacitating the Church’s capacity to address the world. Drawing resources from Hans-Georg Gadamer and Blessed John Henry Newman, Block proposes the reconstruction of a “thick” account of authority in which mutual trust provides the deepest and most reliable motivation. Block further argues that the “unreflective instrumentalization of the self...which has resulted in what Taylor describes as the “buffered” self, inhibits the ability of the individual seeker or dweller to achieve fullness, wholeness.” Block concludes by suggesting that one important direction in which enact effective resistance to the instrumentalization and anesthetization that the ambient culture has brought to bear upon seeker and dweller alike is to recover and renew a range of individual and communal contemplative practices that enable us to be touched by the epiphanic and transformative nature of a lived human experience that has learned to attend to the transcendent call of the good, the true and the beautiful. **Thomas Hughson’s** essay, “**Kenotic Ecclesiology: Context, Orientations, Secularity,**” suggests that the context in which Taylor has discerned his four disjunction may itself be indicative of a larger disjunction of succumbing to an “us-them” mentality in which efforts to engage one another across any of the disjunctions become contentious struggles to make “them” conform to “our” way. Hughson sees such evidence for such a disjunction from data

that indicate a division between what he terms “social Catholicism” and “conventional Catholicism” that, within the Catholic Church in the United States, affects clergy and laity alike as a difference within the respective places in which they stand in the life of the church. Echoing Block, Hughson offers a number of reminders that, even as the Church is rightly faithful to Vatican II’s call to engage the world as the locus in which God’s grace is deeply operative – though often challenging to discern – that engagement must also be rightfully attentive to the eschatological character of the Church’s mission: In a world not yet fully redeemed, the Church is often also called to be “out of phase” with the world. Hughson offers an overview of some of the important debates in Vatican II that re-enforce this crucial theological point and forcefully argues that “the Church has a calling to exemplify social existence transformed by the power of Christ and in light of the gospel, not to be a fawning spaniel in the lap of late capitalism sunk into liberal-democratic nationalism.” Hughson concludes with an astute analysis of how a kenotic ecclesiology needs to be rooted in a theology attentive to the immanent kenotic dynamic of the Triune God in order to create the space needed for the Church’s concrete institutional freedom to be effective in its mission to the world.

**The third pair of essays** by **Theresa Tobin** and **Alan Madry** offer perspectives on two different issues that the authors argue pose particularly deep and complex challenges to the Catholic Church’s engagement with the cultures of contemporary secularity. Tobin’s essay, “Spiritual Violence, Gender, and Sexuality: Implications for Seeking and Dwelling Among Some Catholic Women and LGBT Catholics,” offers a descriptive and analytic account the phenomenon of “spiritual violence” as a locus in which there are crossings and re-crossings among the fissures between a number of the disjunctions that Taylor has typified. Tobin’s account focuses on “the experience of spiritual violence perpetrated... by their own faith tradition” against many America Catholic women and LBGT Catholics in order, first, to “examine spiritualities of seeking and dwelling through the experience of spiritual violence” and then “conversely [to] explore the experience of spiritual violence through the lenses of seeking and dwelling.” Her essay thus first explores “how one’s spiritual orientation as a seeker or dweller may influence her experience of and response to spiritual violence” and then proceeds to consider “how experiences of spiritual violence may impact shifts in an individual’s spiritual orientation from dwelling to seeking.” Though her account does not extensively engage the second and third of Taylor’s disjunctions (respectively, between models of authority and between natural law and experience in matters of morality), it does points in a direction that suggests the continuing efforts to engage this issue will likely bring to light a number of

important *loci* upon which there is deep convergence among the four disjunctions. The second essay in this pair, Alan Madry's essay "**Seekers, Comparative Spiritual Narratives, and the Authority of the Church**" sets forth in an issue within which he sees an intersection upon which the first (seekers and dwellers), second (modes of authority), and fourth (diverse spiritualities) disjunctions all converge. Pursuing a line of argument that resonates with James South's reservations about the centrality of a "authenticity identity" for characterizing the quest of the seeker, Madry proposes understanding the seeker who proposes the greatest challenge to Catholic authority as "a deeply questioning spiritual realist." By this he means someone who is "looking for... a more compelling and comprehensive [metaphysical and cosmological] account of the spiritual and practices that arise integrally out of that account and promise something more than a speculative reward after death for their labors." Madry thus offers a comparative account of the metaphysics and cosmology he finds operative in Catholic theology (as represented in the *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*) in contrast to the cosmology of Advaita Vedanta, the non-dualist metaphysics of Classical Hinduism. The method he employs in this comparison is "that of cumulative case reasoning/inference to the best explanation, the method, with empirical observation and induction, of empirical science, the law, and daily life." Madry acknowledges that there is little new in the criticism he offers of the paradoxical character of Catholic teaching with respect to the doctrines of God, the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the nature and destiny of the human soul, but the burden of his argument is not to so much to offer a new perspective on Catholic seeking, but rather to indicate why one might look "beyond the Catholic tradition to other accounts of the spiritual that may well go further in satisfying the demands of epistemic rigor...for discerning the nature of the transcendent world and its significance for us." To that end, he offers an overview of Advaita cosmology as he sees it addressing the paradoxes of the *Catechism's* cosmology and concludes with the hope that, in the manner of the Catholic mystic Bernadette Roberts, an engagement with this alternate cosmology might be of benefit to seekers by not only by making possible a "radical transformation of [the believer's] understanding of Jesus and Christ in the spirit" but also by "providing practices capable of leading the seeker to profound experiences of spiritual awakening."

The **fourth pair of essays**, by **Robert Doran**, and **Philip Rossi**, work to provide perspectives from which to gain an overview of the forms of contemporary cultures in which the various disjunctions operate and intersect. Doran, in "**Invisible Missions: The Grace that Heals Disjunctions**," suggests that Taylor's four disjunction operate within a larger category in which there is a "disjunction of the church

from the very work of God in the contemporary world, a work that I will argue *includes, encourages, and even demands, rather than forbids or laments, a great deal of secularization.*” Doran argues that this larger category provides the horizon for the kind of discernments that are necessary for the healing of disjunctions. This horizon is constituted by “the acknowledgment of the universal presence of divine healing and elevating grace in the world through the invisible missions of Word and Spirit, divine Truth and divine Love, both inside the church and beyond the explicit contours of ecclesial membership.” Working from a framework drawn from Bernard Lonergan and Thomas Aquinas, Doran argues for both a doctrinal and a theological continuity in the account his essay provides for understanding the affirmation made by Vatican II (*Gaudium et spes*, § 22) that “the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in this paschal mystery.” In particular, he emphasizes that there is need to be attentive discerning of grace at work in “the dispensation whereby the evils of the human race are transformed into the greater good of a new community through the loving and non-violent response that returns good for evil.” In consequence, Doran characterizes “the church’s responsibility in our age” as one that requires it “to discern the presence of such participation in Trinitarian life wherever it may be found, and then to foster it and join hands with it in working for the establishment of God’s reign in human affairs.” Within this context Doran sees religious and spiritual plurality, the focus of Taylor’s fourth disjunction, as a central theological locus for the processes and practices that will enable the healing of all disjunctions: “The data relevant for Christian theology become all the data on the religious living of men and women at every age, in every religion, and in every culture.” In “**Seekers, Dwellers, and the Contingencies of Grace: Hospitality, Otherness, and the Enactment of Human Wholeness,**” Philip Rossi also sees the religious plurality that Taylor sees at work in what he calls “the nova effect” as a central locus for the dynamic that opens up possibilities for the resolution of the various disjunctions in the dynamics of the cultures of secularity. He suggests that “the recognition, emergent in the aftermath of modernity, that the dynamic of plurality, which is rooted in the very relationality of human agency, is deeply consonant with a Christian account of the abundant operation of God’s grace manifest in the mysteries of Creation, the Incarnation of God’s Word, and the life giving outpouring of their Spirit.” Rossi argues that the dynamic of plurality manifest in the “nova effect” provides new and enlarged possibilities for recognizing and engaging the religious/spiritual “other” that already lies *within* the dynamics of both dwelling and seeking in the radical contingency of the world. On Rossi’s account the nova effect manifests – in ways that resonate with, yet also deeply challenge, the dynamics of the “immanent frame” of meaning consti-

tuted by secularity – the contingency and fragility of the otherness with which we all face both ourselves and one another in the workings of history and culture. An important marker of such shared contingency is found in what Taylor calls the “fragilization of belief,” which, for seeker and dweller alike, creates spaces of uncertain or occluded meaning that unsettle the closure that constitutes the buffered identity of modernity’s punctual self. Such fragilization thus brings with it the presence and the power of an “immanent otherness” that provides a sharp and stark reminder that a fundamental human project is finding ways, in the face of all the otherness we communally and individually bring with us, to dwell together in the contingencies of time with one another on the finite and fragile planet entrusted to us. Rossi thus concludes that the envisioning and the enacting of possibilities of welcoming one another—or, as George Steiner puts it, learning to be “guests of each other” and “guests of life on this crowded, polluted planet” – provides a fundamental modality in which we, seekers and dwellers alike, are all invited to be bearers of grace to one another. Such graced welcoming provides a space of possibilities enabling us to act, even as we ourselves are fractured, in ways that help one another in the work of healing the fractures of the world. In a space of graced hospitality, it becomes possible, whether we consider ourselves seekers or dwellers, to become “guests to one another” by enacting a full welcoming of the other – and full acceptance of our being welcomed as other – in mutual recognition of the shared fragility that marks our human finitude.

# **Plural Spiritualities: North American Experiences**

(Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, USA)

## **REGIONAL CULTURES AND EVANGELIZATION IN USA**

**What distinctive characteristics of our national or regional culture are relevant to this project on living faith in a secular age?**

The United States is less “secular” than most European countries; Canada conforms more closely to European patterns. Why the U.S. has not followed European patterns of secularity has multiple historical causes. There has never been an established Church in the United States in the sense of a church given priority status and financial support by the State. Consequently, support for churches has always had to come from congregants. This has resulted in a kind of religious “marketplace” where Christian churches and other religious forms have had to “compete” for members and support. At the same time, there is freedom of religion that is guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Moreover, as a country of immigrants, religion was often a significant part of immigrant communities’ identity and this has had an impact on the public sphere.

There is indeed secularity in the U.S., but there is also a kind of ‘civil religion’ (Robert Bellah) that allows, among other things, for a diffuse general public religiosity without clear denominational affiliation. The overwhelming majority of Americans claims to believe in God, claim to pray with some regularity, and say (ca. 70%) that they would not vote for an atheist for president. These generalized beliefs do not translate into regular church attendance (with about 40% claiming to attend at least once a month). At the same time, a growing number (ca. 20%) claim no religious belief. This appears strongest among adults under 35 years of age.

What may be more salient for this study is *pluralism* than secularity. There are hundreds of Christian denominations and thousands of non-affiliated congregations. All other religious traditions are also represented. Interestingly, some groups of atheists have organized themselves along churchly lines (Sunday gatherings, outreach programs, etc.; see Melody Layton McMahon’s contribution to the Chicago Group volume).

**What contributions can these make for Evangelization?**

The United States especially presents a context where a significant secularity is present, but also a public sphere where religiosity is also a salient feature. While this religiosity may be free-form and there may hold a bias against institutional religion, religious quests and public discussions of religion are not frowned upon and religion appears regularly in the general social media. Pope Francis has appeared on the cover of *Time Magazine* (a general news weekly) and on the cover of *Rolling Stone* (widely read by young adults). It is being debated how extensive the “Francis effect” is – especially in regard to whether it is bringing people back to Church.

**What difficulties do these entail for Evangelization?**

The highly individualized ethos of dominant U.S. culture and an enduring anti-institutional bias make commitments to communities beyond immediate face-to-face ones difficult to sustain. Religious quests will often seem to be principally concerned with therapeutic or self-realization schemes. For the Roman Catholic Church, the clergy sexual abuse scandals have had a negative impact on the image of the Church in some sectors, principally in the northeastern part of the country.

**SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT**

The exploration of plural spiritualities, the fourth of the Catholic disjunctions proposed by Charles Taylor, was taken by the “Chicago Group,” eleven scholars at Catholic Theological Union (CTU) at Chicago. Because CTU faculty are used to working on joint intellectual projects, and because regular meetings could be scheduled into the academic calendar, the Chicago Group was able to cohere into a team more rapidly than some of the other national and regional teams. This gave us an earlier start than the other teams. As a result, the team and design of the chapters were all pretty much in place by the autumn of 2012 (see the report of November 24, 2012 to the December 1-2, 2012 meeting at Catholic University of America). First drafts of nearly all the chapters were discussed over four meetings in the Spring of 2013, and revised chapters were discussed in five meetings over the Fall of that same year. The plan was to have the completed manuscript, “Plural Spiritualities: North American Experiences,” to the Council for Research in Values in Philosophy by April of 2014, but an extended illness of the general editor (Schreiter) prevented this from happening. At this point, delivery of the manuscript is scheduled for the end of July of this year.

The team relied on the work of Charles Taylor (especially his books *Sources of the Self*, *A Secular Age*, and *Dilemmas and Connections*) as well as the edited volume from the Vienna Conference *Church and*

*People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age* (CVRP, 2012). This is evident in the frequent references to those works in the chapters of the book.

The transition in the papacy occurred well into the drafting of the book, but authors were able to negotiate the shift in perspective that Francis' papacy has brought about, and to reorient the arguments made in the book as needed. His *Evangelii Gaudium* was taken into account by most authors in their final drafts. As a result, the interface between the Church and secular cultures is explored as much as potential *conjunctions* as *disjunctions*.

### **Title and Scope of the Book**

The book sets out to deal with the *plurality of spiritualities* that now mark Western secular societies, and especially their interaction with the Roman Catholic Church. What challenges do they place before the Church? How might the Church engage them? And what challenges may the Church place before these spiritualities and the general culture that is their home?

The responses to these questions in the book are qualified in a number of ways. First of all, they represent "North American Experiences." All of the authors are residing in North America and have worked there extensively, although four of them were born elsewhere (Barbour in France, Andraos in Lebanon, Sison in The Philippines, Nguyen in Vietnam). Moreover, many of the authors have experiences working outside North America, which helps them situate their outlooks and comments. So, from the beginning, it was felt important not to speak only of the dominant (White) secular culture, but to keep an intercultural perspective, situating secular manifestations within the plurality of cultures in the North American setting (See for example Barbour and Schreiter on U.S. Native Americans, and Andraos on Canadian Aborigines).

Second, the concrete examples informing the chapters were drawn not only from the United States, but from Uruguay (Sison), Canada (Andraos), Italy (Fragomeni) and Northern Europe (Ostdiek).

### **Defining "Spirituality"**

Taylor's understandings of spirituality as presented in *A Secular Age* formed the point of departure for a working understanding of spirituality. Three other resources were shared and discussed. The first two were sociological descriptions of spirituality, by Courtney Bender and Omar Roberts, and by Nancy Ammerman, respectively. The third was a more theological paper prepared by Mary Frohlich, one of the authors on the team. Gilbert Ostdiek, another author, provided an overview of a series of major authors in spirituality on the question of classification and definitions. (See references at the end of this paper.)

Bender and Roberts note two widespread assumptions about spirituality that need to be challenged. First of all, spirituality is not simply a weak form of religion; it is a social phenomenon that deserves to be studied in its own right. Second, while spirituality as found in secular cultures is often viewed as an individualistic phenomenon, it must be studied in its social forms as well.

They go on to urge that spirituality be studied (1) genealogically (in its developing and changing historical forms) and in the multiple discourses, practices, structures and imaginaries in which it is manifested; (2) in its spatial, social, and power-laden dimensions, and not just as something “ethereal”; (3) in both its popular and scholarly manifestations.

Ammerman’s study urged not to create a rigid binary between “spirituality” and “religion” and to respect the variety of approaches to spirituality within the U.S. population. Out of her empirical research, she identified four cultural “packages” that shape discourse on spirituality: (1) one that ties spirituality to personal deities; (2) one that locates spiritualities in various naturalistic discourses about transcendence; (3) one that is more ethically oriented in nature, focusing especially on compassion; and (4) one focusing upon (not) belonging, in the “spiritual but not religious” discourse.

Frohlich helped the Chicago group form a tripartite perspective on spirituality. Spirituality is first of all “lived spirituality,” which involves concrete instances of what individuals and groups self-identify as “spirituality.” Second, spirituality may refer to “cumulative traditions” which are agglomerations of practices, ideas, values, and outlooks. These can be formations within Christianity (such as, e.g., Franciscan or Pentecostal traditions) or in other religions (e.g., Native American traditions). Third, there is the scholarly study of spirituality, as a discipline within itself or as an interdisciplinary focus.

In subsequent discussion, a common denominator seen to be crossing all these considerations is a question for transcendence—however the transcendent object may be construed, either naturalistically (as in the “deep green” spiritualities explored by Frohlich in the book) or beyond the “immanent frame” and the “buffered self.” The authors in the book tried in the book to honor all of these considerations.

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### **Overview of the Content**

The first three chapters explore themes of plural spiritualities in three major areas of discourse that are sites for the Church's engagement with the secular world: the world of science, growing concerns about the environment, and the arts (here, cinema).

In the first chapter, Dawn Nothwehr examines the responses of over 1600 contemporary scientists (in the fields of biology, physics, chemistry, sociology, economics, psychology, and political science) to their spiritual beliefs. From this sample many identified themselves as "atheist," but a significant group saw themselves as engaged in "meaning making" through their scientific research – albeit often "meaning making without faith." Such meaning making bespeaks a kind of spiritual "seeking" on the part of these scientists. Nothwehr sees such "spiritual" scientists as potential dialogue partners for the Church: scientists concerned about meaning making in the face of the experience of an awe-inspiring universe; and Christian believers, working out of a relational ontology based upon a cosmology of an universe evolving toward a greater mutuality "set in place in the beginning by the Holy Spirit's inspiring and creative activity." Rather than seeing science and religion as adversaries, the Church has the opportunity to reach out to a group of seekers who share an awe for the created world, but may think in different categories. Such a reaching out can be a manifestation of the Church's catholicity. She ends by citing Pope Francis on what the Church's attitude should be toward contemporary science.

In Chapter II, Mary Frohlich asks whether the Church can find common ground with what has been characterized as "dark green" spirituality regarding the environment. "Light green" spirituality affirms

care for the earth and concern for ecological sustainability as religious responsibilities. “Dark green” spirituality sees the earth as sacred in a naturalistic sense. Dark green spirituality manifests itself in different forms: (1) as a general sense of sacredness of nature; (2) as a belief that spirits inhabit natural creatures and entities; (3) a belief in Gaia (affirmation of earth as a living organism); and (4) a more mystical conviction that earth bears divinity and spirit. She goes on to note that a growing number of people in the U.S. who identify religiously with one of these four dimensions, especially in pagan and witchcraft (Wicca) movements.

Frohlich then moves to a critique of the “nova effect” metaphor proposed by Taylor to present the explosion of forms of spirituality outside religious institutions. She sees this as in tune with postmodern sensibilities, but questions whether that leaves people as disconnected observers of a phenomenon. Such disengagement is potentially fatal when facing the challenges to the environment. In place of this postmodern reading, she suggests a postcolonial one, where the image would be one of “habitat” – an image that would recognize the overwhelming challenge yet also require agency and responsibility as a necessary response, even though those kind of responses will always be “local, contested, and in the midst of change.” She continues with the kind of critique that can be brought to bear on deep green spirituality as perhaps nostalgic for an imagined past. Her chapter concludes with how theology might engage deep green spirituality by how it negotiates the relationship between transcendence and immanence through the use of proposals from contemporary feminist thought (using here especially Elizabeth Johnson and Susan Abraham).

Frohlich’s contribution here is exemplary in presenting the challenge of an important dimension of ecological thought, the challenges it raises to the Church, how that dimension might be critiqued, and what the Church will need to do in order to meet those challenges.

In Chapter III, Antonio Sison takes up how the medium of cinema can mediate a discourse of plural spiritualities and the Church. He does this via the genre known as “Third Cinema,” a theory of film making that began in Argentina and spread through other parts of the Global South. What characterizes it is not only its choices of theme – presenting the suffering of the poor from their perspective, but also its utilizing of cinematic practices to capture the perception of the victims. He focuses on a 2007 Uruguayan film, *El baño del Papa* (“The Pope’s Toilet”), directed by Cesar Charlone and Enrique Fernandez. The film tells the story of Pope John Paul II’s 1988 visit to Melo, Uruguay, an impoverished village near the Brazilian border. Unemployment is very high in Melo, and the inhabitants hope to cash in on the expected crush of visitors by providing them food and other items for sale. The visit turns

out to be a double disappointment. The turnout of people is much smaller than expected and those who do come bypass the offerings prepared by the people of Melo. Moreover, the Pope's message does not touch the reality of the village: the Pope talks of the importance of trade unions, when the problem in Melo is mass unemployment.

In the film, Beto devises the idea to provide a pay-toilet as one of the amenities to be offered to the visitors. He is a small-time smuggler, and ekes out a meager living for his family in the border region. He bicycles to Brazil to bring back a porcelain toilet. On the way back, he is waylaid by Meleyo, a corrupt customs officer, who confiscates his bicycle. He ends up carrying the toilet hoisted onto his shoulder, and arrives back in Melo as the Pope is concluding his address and the people are dispersing. His entry into Melo recalls Christ carrying his cross on the Via Dolorosa.

Sison reads this film – which has religion in its theme but is not in what would be considered a religious genre – through the image of the “crucified peoples” of Salvadoran theologians Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino, using Edward Schillebeeckx's theology of suffering as a theological frame. While a first glance this may seem to be distant from the themes of secularity and plural spiritualities, it is rather a poignant reminder that the majority of the world remains mired in poverty, and that the comfortable life that the secular West enjoys as the benefits of centuries of colonialism and now of globalization has its continuing repercussions upon the poor. Moreover, a Church negotiating with plural spiritualities must also deal with how its message is often mismatched with the circumstances of its presumed audience, as is so poignantly clear in what the Pope presented to the people of Melo. These are “disjunctions” that are often overlooked in our discourse about the secular Global North and the Church. Pope Francis, in his call for a “going forth,” a *kenosis*, of the Church, and his insistence that the Church become a Church of the poor and for the poor, reminds us of the larger horizon in which the plural spiritualities project has to be framed.

The next two chapters take up engagement with the Native Peoples of North America to explore two themes of spirituality: double belonging and coming to terms with a violent path through processes of reconciliation.

Chapter IV explores the phenomenon of double religious belonging, whereby individuals find various levels of self identification with two religious traditions. It is explored here by Claude-Marie Barbour and Robert Schreiter through the biographies of two men: a Lakota man who is an Anglican priest and a Lakota medicine man, and a Euro-American who is also an Anglican priest and has been a member of the Chiefs' Council of the Cheyenne since 1962. In interviews presented in the chapter, both share their spiritual journeys. For the first man, Francis

Whitelance, the two spiritual worlds coexist in him but are held separate; for the second, Peter John Powell, the two spiritual worlds are completely fused, especially in his liturgical action. While the Christian Church in general frowns on double belonging, it is something that happens extensively. Both men, as priests, operate in the two worlds with the knowledge and consent of their bishops. The authors go on to explore some of the themes that go with negotiating two spiritualities: the meaning of grace and the presence of God in all creation, the importance of action and doing rather than an exclusive focus on ideas and dogmas, and a special concern for dual religious belonging with Native traditions: the potential of yet another round of exploitation by White people of Native traditions when White people pick, choose, and refashion Native ways according to their own tastes, as well as the lack of respect for the integrity of those traditions. Double or multiple religious belonging is a fact in much of the world, and the Church needs to include consideration of it in its dealing with plural spiritualities today.

Chapter VI explores Canadian efforts to come to terms with the exploitation and destruction of Native culture and traditions through processes of truth-telling and reconciliation. Michel Andraos explores especially the *cercles de confiance* (circles of trust) that are used in the Province of Quebec to create safe spaces for presenting that past and coming to terms with it. These circles are ritualized spaces into which not only Native persons, but also immigrants to Canada (both descendants of past immigrants and more current ones) are invited to hear about the wounds Native peoples continue to carry from forced separation from their families, stolen land, broken promises, and continuing discrimination and racism. The work of reconciliation finds a home in many spiritual traditions. Andraos' presentation shows how ritual, story, and the healing power of truth-telling and recognition form a bridge between traditions. They all touch deeper aspects of a shared humanity. Two tasks emerge here for the Church vis-à-vis plural spiritualities: acknowledging and seeking pardon for sins of the past that continue to be toxic for the present, and finding those common sources of our humanity that are then articulated in forms of engagement such as the journey to reconciliation.

The next two chapters look at two significant populations with which the Church must engage regarding spiritualities: Pentecostal and charismatic Christians, and the Church's own laity and secularists.

Chapter VII takes up engagement with Pentecostal and charismatic Christians. The growth of Pentecostal faith in the past fifty years is perhaps the single most salient characteristic of late twentieth- and early twenty-first century Christianity. It is estimated that today Pentecostal and charismatic Christians may constitute as much as a quarter or even a

third of all Christians. Although there are a significant number of charismatics within Catholicism itself (and growing rapidly, especially in Latin America and in Africa), official Catholicism has been hesitant about this form of spirituality that gives preference to experience over dogma, and speaks of direct interventions of the Holy Spirit. Jeffrey Gros, long-time ecumenist and former president of the Society of Pentecostal Studies, gives a sympathetic view and a helpful roadmap of the Pentecostal movement from his many years of experience in those circles. Besides providing an inside view, he delineates a range of issues and steps the Catholic Church might take to engage better this most important form of Christian spirituality to have emerged over the past century. He delineates not only what the Catholic Church needs to do, but also what the Catholic Church has to offer Pentecostals, regarding a richer sense of history and tradition, a deeper sense of sacramentality, and a rich sense of relationality.

In Chapter VII, Melody Layton McMahon takes up what might first seem to be two disparate themes: how the Catholic Church relates to its own laity, and the engagement with a variety of secularist groups, particularly as found in the United States. But a little closer reading shows the link. McMahon sees the vocation or call from God of the laity, given in Baptism, as not sufficiently recognized and valued. The vocation of laypeople about which she is most interested is the work that laypeople do in their day-to-day lives – not as church ministers (or lay ecclesial ministry), but in the secular workplace. Here she connects with those groups of secularists who come together – even using the social forms of religionists – to work for a better, more human world. She finds a significant number of secularist groups who are open to dialogue and social engagement with religionists because of shared values and concerns about the quality of life. Her map of these different groups helps break up the atheist-agnostic monolith sometimes created in Church circles as “secularism.” Work, and work for a better world, is a place where the Church can engage the many spiritualities now part of civil society in a constructive manner. Here, what the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue calls the “dialogue of common social action” can come into play.

The final two chapters touch on two dimensions of spirituality that form potential bridges between spiritual traditions in the Church and the plural spiritualities of secular societies: ritual and story.

Chapter VIII looks at ritual from two perspectives. Richard Fragomeni, in the first part of the chapter, explores the relation between the officially sanctioned liturgical rites of the Church and the popular religious practices that have grown up alongside them. While the latter were often disdained by Church officials, they have had steady support from the people (and sometimes from local church leaders as well). He

uses as a case study the Good Friday rituals he witnessed some years ago in Gubbio, Italy. In his reflection upon them, Fragomeni draws out the different theologies of the death of Christ they represent, and how they come to complement each other. This is of genuine importance for understanding plural spiritualities, because what leads to multiple approaches of spirituality is not always something like postmodern fracturing, but the sheer complexity and polyvalence of the most profound experiences of life. Certainly death—and especially premature and violent death – is one of them.

In the second part of the chapter, Gilbert Ostdiek expands on this insight by looking at contemporary “disaster rituals” in Global North societies. Disaster rituals are understood here as rituals organized after unexpected, catastrophic disaster is visited upon a society, such as the death of key figures (the death of Princess Diana in 1997 would be an example) or of mass death (9/11 in the United States, or the Otoyaa massacre in Norway in 2011). Patterns can be discerned in how these rituals are devised, with the public construction of “shrines” at the site of the disaster, memorial services, and later the erection of monuments. Some of this is sometimes seen as a “tendency to sacrality” – a reaching toward the transcendent in a general but indecisive way that might be considered appropriate as a response in a pluralist, secular society. Sometimes religious rituals are drawn upon in the process. Disaster rituals, Ostdiek suggests, may be a form of corporate self-transcendence in the face of catastrophe. At any rate, what both authors show here is how participation in ritual – whether institutionally sanctioned, institutionally tolerated, or temporarily devised – can provide a form of social engagement that leads to comfort, solidarity, and the beginnings of new meaning making. Rather than having to choose one set of meanings in chaotic or polyvalent moments, rituals can encompass multiple meanings in their actions.

In the course of the book, a number of the authors have emphasized the importance of story and sharing stories is to the spiritual quest. Chapter IX offers the story of Jesus as proposed by Luke-Acts as one that can be engaged in by people of different times and places. VanThanh Nguyen suggests five themes that emerge from the Jesus story that can be points of connection to others: being spirit-filled, practices of prayer and reflection, the quest for social justice, the attitude of compassion, and the cluster joy-food-hospitality. These “perennial” (or one might say: classical) themes become points where people of other faiths and people of no particular faith might find connections or at least resonances with their own experience. The value of Nguyen’s presentation here is an example of a “cumulative tradition” of spirituality: what one might call a “Lucan tradition” of Jesus.

### **Conclusion**

All of what is presented in this volume is under the aegis of what Pope Francis has called a Church “going forth,” a kenotic Church that is not preoccupied with its own status, privileges and prerogatives. What these explorations in engagement with contemporary spiritualities seem to indicate is that, while disjunctions continue to be important and need to be examined and challenged, the conjunctions come to play a larger role. To be sure, the failings of the past must be dealt with. And the difference, the otherness that is always present in pluralism cannot be ignored or avoided. But another kind of ethos underlies seeking out the implications and intricacies of conjunctions. It is precisely the ethos of “mercy” that has come to be the watchword of this papacy. Mercy is not oblivious to wrongfulness and wrongdoing; but it is always able to see the beauty of God’s work beneath the wrongdoer. Nor is it naïve about the sedimentation of wrongs in the past always distorting the present. But it never allows what is wrong to be the determining frame for any perspective and any discussion.

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# **The Historicity of Morality: Reading the Signs of the Times**

(Washington DC, USA)

## **SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT**

The DC team, based at the Catholic University of America, has been assembled with a view to exploring questions about the historicity of morality as they bear on the disjunction between the Church and “the world it wants to speak to” (Charles Taylor). At issue is nothing less than the moral credibility of the Church in a secular age, at a time when Catholicism is widely perceived as being deeply at odds with emergent ethical perceptions regarding sexual orientation, gender relations, sexual ethics, and child abuse. If the moral teaching of the church is sometimes avowedly and deliberately “countercultural,” it is also clear that it often shifts and develops in response to historical and cultural impulses, even while it at times exerts an influence on those forces. And yet the Church has largely failed to develop a plausible and systematic means of understanding, affirming, and asserting its own agency in this process, even as the magisterium has significantly revised its views on usury, slavery, religious freedom, capital punishment, and human rights, to name just a few topics. The purpose of our group is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the implications of the historicity of morality for Catholic ethics.

The complex and multifaceted role of “experience” in the moral life – as highlighted by the experiential turn reflected in twentieth-century movements such as pragmatism, phenomenology, hermeneutics, liberation theology, and feminist ethics—affords us with an important bridge-concept for exploring the historical dimension of morality. Theologically, our team has taken as a touchstone the important but under-theorized and comparatively neglected Vatican II conception of “reading the signs of the times,” which we see as offering resources for a critical engagement of distinctively Christian ethical sources, such as scripture and church tradition, with other sources of moral insight associated with broad historical trends, social and religious currents, and “secular” scientific advancements.

Our project is now structured in two main sections. The four essays in the first section explore theoretical issues associated with the “signs of the times” methodology, the development of doctrine, historical consciousness and Catholic moral theory.

✚ **Drew Christiansen, S.J.** (Ethics and Global Development, Georgetown University) carefully traces the emergence in the Vatican II era and the central ecclesiological and epistemological features of the Signs of the Times approach in Catholic social thought. He then shows how this method has continued to inform official teaching in spite of papal opposition to its communitarian model of discernment and its embrace of historical consciousness. Finally, he proposes a theological anthropology to accompany the revival of the Signs of the Times method under Pope Francis.

✚ **Julie Clague** (Theology and Religious Studies, University of Glasgow) provides a historical overview and typology for understanding both the historicity of doctrine and the historicity of morality in the Catholic Church, while arguing that in recent decades a “moral confessionalism” has replaced the “doctrinal confessionalism” that was long characteristic of Catholic identity.

✚ **Gerard Mannion** (Theology, Georgetown) examines Friedrich Nietzsche’s epochal critique of the historicity of morals and assesses its impact on moral thought today. He then examines how “Nietzsche’s shadow” has exercised an influence on the Catholic institution of the magisterium.

✚ **William Werpehowski** (Theology, Georgetown) comments on the notion of “intrinsically evil acts” and explores its significance with respect to moral theology and the study of ethics in general.

The second section groups together essays on applied topics in Catholic ethics. The first trio of contributions focuses on those neuralgic issues of sex, gender, and family with respect to which the Church appears to be most “out of phase” (Taylor) with the modern culture.

✚ **José Casanova** (Sociology, Georgetown) issues a highly critical appraisal of the growing disjunction between societal and church morality in connection with three morally contested issues: the ordination of women, the official pronouncements of the Church hierarchy on issues of gender and sexual morality, and the societal moral outrage produced by the clerical sexual abuse of children.

✚ **Edward Vacek, S.J.** (Religious Studies, Loyola University New Orleans) argues that contrary to its conceit of offering a timeless doctrine of authentic sexual morality, the Church has in fact altered and improved its sexual teachings considerably over time, most recently by incorporating a strongly personalistic focus. Acknowledging the historical character of sexual morality would open Catholic sexual ethics to further development and enrichment.

✚ **John Langan, S.J.** (Philosophy, Georgetown) presents an analysis of Catholic teaching on homosexuality, arguing that it needs to come to terms with shifts in experience regarding human sexuality,

relationality, and dignity. He relates his analysis to debates over gay marriage.

The next two essays consider ways in which Catholic moral teaching on nonviolence and peacebuilding is able to function in a progressive manner, serving as a sort of historical leaven informing trends within the broader culture.

✚ **Drew Christiansen, S.J.** (Ethics and Global Development, Georgetown) **here** explores how the Church's endorsement of the principle of nonviolence has led to the eclipse of just war thinking and the development of a public peace ethic that has become influential in the wider world.

✚ **Maryann Cusimano Love** (Politics, Catholic University of America) describes the rise of the distinctive and highly effective practices of Catholic peacebuilding, highlighting the especially innovative way in which women at the grassroots level have contributed to this endeavor. However, she also explores the effects of efforts by the Church hierarchy to undermine and inhibit the ability of women to fill leadership roles in this field.

The final pair of essays charts areas where Catholic teaching is still coalescing against a background of rapid historical and technological change.

✚ **Lisa Cahill** (Theology, Boston College) surveys the field of bioethics, examining three disjunctions: that between traditional teaching and the new perspectives afforded by scientific insights; that between "faith-based" views of bioethics and the modern market economy; and that between first-world and developing-world ideas of what the central moral problems in this area are.

✚ **William Barbieri** (Theology and Religious Studies, Catholic University of America) probes problems and prospects for a Catholic ecological ethic. While the Church has in some respects heeded signs of the times regarding environmental concerns, it has not yet come to terms with the most challenging demands of a biocentric "earth ethic" that aspires to recast many of the basic components of Catholic moral thought, including notions such as human dignity, the natural law, and the common good.

**PRÉCIS: The Place of Signs of the Times in Catholic Teaching on Peace** by Drew Christiansen

Vatican II's approach to reading the Signs of the Times helps explain the evolution of Catholic social teaching from just war to nonviolence and peacemaking. Of particular importance has been the application of *theological standards* (Gospel values, etc.) for the evaluation of contemporary history and the *role activist groups* in providing advocacy, inspiration for the development of the teaching as well as subsequent dissemination. The *locus classicus* for the method may be found in *Octogesima adveniens* 4.

**Agents of Discernment.** The major controversy over the method has been *the locus of discernment*: the entire People of God, the magisterium, or the Pope alone. Under Pope John Paul II church communities were neglected or disparaged as centers of discernment. With Pope Francis, discernment is located once more in small communities close to local conditions.

**The Spirit and Circles of Discernment.** Areas of potential strain continue to exist within groups of different persuasion in the church, in social ecumenism and the dialogue with unbelievers. Nonetheless, the Pneumatology of the Council, Paul VI and Pope Francis insists on the presence of the Spirit and the potential for unity in these exchanges.

**Cognition, Affections and Drama.** Aside from the ecclesiology or agency of discernment (communities or hierarchy), the major question remains the conduct of group discernment and its validation. While the CST canon emphasizes certain *cognitive* element in discernment named in *OA 4*, the language of the Council and the teaching of John Paul II point to *affective* and *dramatic* components as of equal importance.

**Cognitive Elements.** The *cognitive elements* consist of 1) the "principles of reflection, norms of judgment and directives for action" found in Catholic social teaching, 2) the biblical (New Testament) hermeneutical keys (Gospel values) and other broad theological themes, and 3) the events and trends of sociological history on which the community is reflecting. (Gospel values cited in the teaching are: love of the poor, nonviolence, forgiveness and the protection of human life.)

**Induction and Pragmatic Test of Truth.** Despite the repetition of the "principles-norms-directives" formula in magisterial documents with its implication of deductive reasoning, Signs of the Times represents a shift from deduction to *a complex form of inductive deliberation*. This is appropriate, because unlike a straightforward moral argument, reading the Signs of the Times *aims at finding practical options* for meeting urgent needs. In this context, a *pragmatic test of truth, the fruitfulness* of the courses of action chosen by the group serve as a better test of the "truthfulness" of the deliberation than an abstract, rational standard.

**Religious Affections.** Deliberation for action demands a complex moral anthropology which includes both *affective* and *interactive* dimensions. The *affections* identify the religious dimensions of secular developments and trends. As such, affect is a source of *questioning* leading to discernment, and it also provides a *confirmation* of the successful conclusion of deliberation.

**Dramatic Components.** The *dramatic (interactive)* component, revealed in the teaching of John Paul II, points to the *agonistic* aspects of working to change history. It includes both *integrative* and *conative* elements. The integrating function is found in the commitment of talents and energies to the cause. The conative element directs persons and groups to strive for a chosen option over time and to persist in the struggle in the face of obstacles and distractions.

**Virtues for Discerning Communities.** The elaboration of the method by different popes has led to prescription of *a variety of virtues* needed to implement the method in a Christian manner. Pope Paul VI named mutual understanding, self-examination and charity. John Paul II added clarity, moderation, suffering and sacrifice; and Pope Francis has added acceptance of diversity and appreciation of the gifts of others, toleration for tension and conflict, resiliency in doing the good, readiness to find new solutions, trust in the work of the Spirit.

**Consensus and Communities of Discernment.** Consensus is the inter-subjective verification of an emergent group conclusion about the reforms to be undertaken. The preferred mode of decisionmaking in communities of discernment consists in prayerful, *spiritual discernment*. (Assessment questions are offered for spiritual discernment.) While the primary instance of this may be found in small groups, it can be found in larger groups, though *a majority vote* approaching consensus may also be used. But discernment is *not to be confused with simple majoritarianism*.

Spiritual discernment is less amenable to ecumenical deliberations, especially with *denominations given to democratic voting* procedures to establish their action programs. While the difficulty grows with *interfaith deliberations and cooperation with nonbelievers*, the Council and popes insist that common cause can be made based on *faith that the Spirit is at work in believers and unbelievers alike*.

**Unity in Diversity.** The tradition puts an emphasis on preserving “the bonds of charity” while accepting the diverse gifts of all. *Unity* within the community and *communion* with the wider Church are urged. In the modern world, however, after the human rights revolution and with cognizance of *the abuse of authority* and *bad faith* on the part of those who exercise authority we must acknowledge limits to *docility and obedience* in the ecclesial environment.

The requirement of consensus within the discerning community is also a barrier to *narcissistic leadership* at the grassroots level and to the development of a *cult-like mentality within the group*. Overall, we must acknowledge with Newman that Church fares better when there is “a conspiracy of bishops and people.”

# Seekers and Dwellers in Quebec, Canada

(St. Paul University, Ottawa, Canada)

## REGIONAL CULTURES AND EVANGELIZATION IN CANADA

### **1. What distinctive characteristics of your national or regional culture are relevant to this project on living faith in a secular age?**

The province of Quebec was historically characterized by the overwhelming presence and influence of the Catholic Church until the famous *Révolution tranquille* (Quiet revolution) of the sixties. Since then Quebec has been undergoing a massive and rapid secularization process, paradoxically marked by a cultural Catholicism. Indeed people were identifying themselves to the Catholic religion, baptizing their children in it, requesting funerals, but demonstrating a very massive drop of regular practice of their faith and a non-adherence to major articles in the Church's credo. However, according to a number of recent researches, since 2000, this cultural Catholicism is fading away. Young people are looking for authenticity in their religious quest or in their atheistic or agnostic options. We see organizations emerging, like the *Mouvement Laïque Québécois*, which request for a radical secularism (*laïcité fermée*) for the public spaces and government in anti-religious perspective. In 2013, the then governing Parti Québécois proposed a Charter of values to reinforce the secularity (*laïcité*) of the State and to provide guidelines for the reasonable accommodations. There was much controversy about the Charter, especially about the prohibition of public sector employees from wearing or displaying "conspicuous" religious symbols. This debate has radicalized positions.

### **2. What contribution can these make for Evangelization?**

In the context of Quebec, it is possible to conceive new ways of presenting the Catholic faith to young people who are in a religious quest. It could be more relevant to them as they have distanced themselves from the cultural Catholicism and are looking for new ways to live their faith. We think that the Catholic Church should rethink the whole project of Evangelization and adapt it to the new inescapable secularized society. Furthermore, if Church was perceived as more authentically preoccupied by the problems of social justice and engaged in a more efficient way in the resolution of issues related to poverty,

social exclusion and the environmental crisis, it would be perceived as more credible. People want to hear an eloquent testimony. They do not want moral lessons.

Evangelization starts with being authentically human in today's world. The challenge for the Church is to find a new theological paradigm, and a new pedagogical paradigm. The new teaching is being the kingdom of God. Theology should be viewed as a reflective practice based on this evangelical doing. Theology should be "walking with people, accompanying their spiritual questions", and not telling them what the right belief is.

### **3. What difficulties do these entail for Evangelization?**

Quebec is characterized by a rapid and almost brutal secularization process and a difficult relation with its religious past and Christian heritage. These two factors constitute major difficulties for Evangelization. We are facing difficulties that seem to take the form of prejudices against religion. People tend to look at religion as a phenomenon of the past, something that should be overcome by rationality in modern liberal societies. We can answer this difficulty by showing that religion can be compatible with the ideals of modernity (freedom and autonomy).

The scandals of pedophilia and the role of the Church in the assimilation of First Nations combined with the Church denial of moral responsibilities are big challenges that need to be addressed.

### **SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT**

Saint Paul University team will focus on the case of Quebec and more particularly on how is lived the disjunction between seekers and dwellers in Quebec. Our research will also approach the three other disjunctions, but in a less direct way than the first one. Quebec went through a quiet revolution (*Révolution tranquille*) that contributed to the process of secularization. This rupture with the Church, and more generally with Christianity, certainly leads to a drop in the church attendance, a phenomenon that is obviously not restricted to Quebec. However this does not mean that Quebecers did bring their existential and spiritual quest to an end. What has been called the "crisis of reasonable accommodations", following the Bouchard-Taylor *Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences*, raised the question of religion in the public space. A curious tension appeared between the refusal of ostentatious religious symbols in the public space, particularly those of religious minorities, and a will to

keep some religious symbols proper to Catholicism as a symbol of our cultural identity. There was indeed a debate, still raging, about keeping the crucifix in the National Assembly. This questioning is being pursued in the debate opposing two models of *laïcité*, one thought as “open” and the other as “close” (*laïcité ouverte et laïcité fermée*). This debate raises the issue of how to maintain the separation of State and religion while at the same time recognizing the claims of some religious minorities to special rights. Should the public space be open to religious symbols? This debate also raises the question of the place of Catholicism in today’s culture. Has it become only a cultural trait? These questions find a renewed interest as Quebec government proposed the Bill 60 for a Charter of Values.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS

**“Secularism, Religion and Human Flourishing” by Rajesh Shukla, Ph.D., professor Saint Paul University.** – In his book *A Secular Age* (2007), Charles Taylor argues that there are numerous social, economic and religious reasons that have contributed together to the rise of secularism in the modern world. On the one hand, Taylor contends that after 15<sup>th</sup> century there has been a consistent decline in the belief that God permeates the natural and social order of human life and universe. On the other hand, the above diminishing of divine presence in human life has led to a spiritual and moral “disenchantment”, and fuelled the secular drive in modern man. Displacement of God and disenchantment of human beings, taken together, poses serious questions pertaining to the meaning of human life and human flourishing in a secular age. In this paper, I examine the above questions in the context of Taylor’s work, situating them in our contemporary society and trying to resolve the religious and political issues that arise out of religiosity and secularism.

**Louis PERRON: *Beyond the religious/non religious option: for a common ground between the religious and the secular.*** – In order to initiate a dialogue between the Church and the secular world, a common space is needed. This shared space must be located in a region that stands beyond these two. This implies a different understanding of what Taylor means by ‘a secular age’. There is a need to look for an understanding of the secular as the default position proper to the modern western culture, an understanding that refers to a relation to the world as such, prior to the religious/secular divide.

In that perspective, ‘secular’ would mean something more radical than Taylor’s understanding of ‘Secular 3’ which means that belief has

become an option and points out to the conditions of belief in contemporary western societies. I would like to deepen this notion of conditions of belief by going backwards in order to reach a more fundamental level, which could be labelled 'secular 0'. This level must be understood as the transcendental space that allows for an experience of the world prior to the dichotomy religious/non religious. This space would be a shared pre-religious space that alludes to the horizon of the world in terms of realized truth and morality.

Meaning is prior to the religious: religion is a second degree interpretation that must be seen as one possibility to interpret meaning. There is no a priori religious dimension of human being, but a apriori dimension that bears to a more fundamental condition linked to a more fundamental choice. This fundamental condition is the quest for authenticity which implies a basic choice between authenticity and inauthenticity, between truth and falsity, the good and the bad, as both fundamental forms of life. It is the event that happens when existence becomes a question for itself and an issue related to human destiny. This level, which refers to the anthropological faith, is a religious neutral space based upon a transcendence in which the dimension of an ultimate and radical horizon appears. Human existence, understood as an existential challenge, can then be interpreted either in religious or non religious terms.

This space thus becomes the locus of a possible dialogue because both parties are engaged in a discussion as an ongoing process that relates to a becoming itself suspended to an unconditional horizon that escapes representation and totalization and alludes to the event which would reconcile the religious and the secular in a way that we cannot foresee but hope for.

**Marc De Kesel: *Faith, A Secular Symptom. On the Repressed Monotheist Paradigm of Contemporary Religiosity.*** – It is almost a banality to say that the emergence of Modernity went hand in hand with the fading away of religious faith. While faith was commonly shared in the Middle Ages, Modernity progressively diminished the impact of it and 'secularized' western society and its culture. Which is why, since Modernity, fighting for faith implies fighting against secularization.

But what if faith is not so much the opposite of secularization as its effect or, even, its symptom? What if faith *as we know it today* only dates from the time *after* the emergence of modernity? What if it is a phenomenon entirely subjected to the paradigms of modernity's secularization?

In his essay, Marc De Kesel elaborates on that hypothesis and shows that the kind of faith defining today's religion is not the 'faith' of

medieval tradition and even less the one of the older, general monotheist tradition; it is in fact an 'invention' of Modernity.

When De Kesel goes back to the origin of monotheist tradition, it is to show that, for that tradition, not so much 'faith' but 'criticism with regard to faith' is the central issue. Serving the monotheistic God is not so much a matter of believing, but of treating critically man's spontaneous belief, for in that religion it is all a matter of rejecting false gods and choosing the Only True One. Not whom you think to be God, is God: only God is God. This is the critical device of monotheism, central in the Biblical text as well as in the tradition of the three monotheist religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Seen from that perspective, there is not really an opposition or incompatibility between modernity and monotheist religion. The latter's 'critical' core mission can provide a welcome contribution to the culture of criticism that is central to the project of Modernity.

**Isaac NIZIGAMA: *Secularization and immigration in Canada: the contribution of African Lead Priests in Quebec.*** – Starting with a brief socio-historical analysis of the secularization of Canada in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Baum, 1995; Bibby, 1987, 2002, 2004; Marshall, 1992; Meunier & Warren, 2002), this paper explores the disjunction between "seekers" and "dwellers" (Taylor, Casanova & McLean, 2012). The "seekers" want to realize in their own lives an authentic way of being Christian or Catholic. The "dwellers", by contrast, think that everything in their religion is clear, they don't ask questions because everything must be followed assiduously (Taylor, *et al.*, 2012, p. 1). After analysing some articles from Quebec media regarding a number of Catholic immigrant priests of recent African origin, who became lead priests of parishes in Quebec, this paper attempts, theoretically, to apply this disjunction to the pastoral challenges experienced by these priests.

In effect, although they came to Quebec as missionaries, these priests came from African societies which have been subjected to a massive Christianisation since the period of colonialism. Hence, on the one hand, their original Churches seem to be made mainly by the "dwellers", taking Catholicism and Christianity for granted (Berger & Zijderveld, 2009, p. 19). On the other, the Parishioners who welcomed them in Quebec seem to be mainly the "seekers"; since they live in a world where Catholicism and Christianity are no longer taken for granted (Berger, *et al.*, 2010; Baum, 1995) and where the dominant social imaginary is devoid of any reference to the Supernatural (Taylor, 2007, p. 194). These priests are therefore confronted to the disjunction "seekers/dwellers" in a very dramatic way. In this context, it seems that these priests can contribute to the "New Evangelism" only by

understanding this disjunction and by adapting their pastoral strategy to it.

**Sophie CLOUTIER: “Hospitality: A Study for a New Leadership Model for Religious Congregations”.** – Religious congregations in Canada and Quebec are facing a difficult time, and it is especially the case for older congregations. They have less and less new members and they are striving to stay alive. In Quebec, many congregations need to close monastery and sell their property. Congregations used to have important social functions in education and health, but these roles changed after the “Révolution tranquille” as the province of Quebec went through a secularization process where education and health became a government competency. Now it seems like they have to redefine their social function and their mission.

As a case study, the case of the Daughters of Wisdom of Ottawa (Filles de la sagesse) will be used in order to explore the contemporary challenges of religious congregations in Quebec/Canada. We could say that they are living in a microcosm but they are facing the same challenges when it comes to being in a multicultural society than the Canadian society at large. The Daughters of Wisdom are experiencing a clash of generations as new members are younger and have a different culture than older members. Some problems arise as the older members are in position of authority and the new members have difficulty to find their place and develop new projects in an already existing structure they find rigid. Furthermore, the congregation is international and more and more members are from or living in Africa, Asia and South America. Although the number of non Western members tends to be more important, the authority and organization of the congregation continue to function in a Western base model.

We will also explore the fruitfulness of the notion of hospitality to rethink the leadership model of religious congregations. Hospitality can be defined as dialectic between guest and stranger, where both will be transformed in the encounter. It requires an openness and, to use Simone Weil’s concept, a *decreation* that is, an emptying of the self, some kind of kenotic process. The self must be emptied of culturally conditioned preconditions and biases. In this sense, hospitality can become a practice guiding a form of leadership that is open and dynamic and thus able to welcome new practices and learn from different cultures.

**Anthony OSUJI: *Shāmāh: The Listening Posture and the Relevance of the Church (Religion) in a Secularised Society.*** – The article argues that more than being prophetic by way of speaking and charting out dos and don’ts, the primary task of the church in the context of a secularised

society is that of listening. This argument is sustained by an analysis of an OT Hebrew concept, *shāmāh*, “to listen”. The first injunction given to the people of the Old Testament was that of listening, in the famous “*shāmāh* O Israel” (Deut. 6); and this became the classical prayer formula. When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, he quoted this commandment of listening. The major breakthroughs the church has made in history were when it listened to the society inside and outside its walls (the Second Vatican Council for example). What would constitute the posture of listening for the Church today in our secularised world in terms of her self-understanding, her power structure, her openness to existential questions instead of dolling out already-made answers; her attitude to the aspirations to those who feel marginalised in the Church, etc; all this discussed in particular reference to the situation of belief and disbelief in Quebec.

**Chantal BEAUVAIS:** *From the Red Sea to the “Blue Ocean”: How the Church can really reposition itself strategically in a seekers market.* –

The « Blue-Ocean » is the name of a business strategy proposed by W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne of the European Institute of Business Administration. As against the “red-ocean” strategy, it consists essentially more in creating new markets based on innovation (blue ocean) than investing oneself in snatching clients from the existing markets (small ocean swarmed over by hungry sharks). The actual Church’s language which consists essentially in speaking to “seekers of meaning” with the language of the “initiated” is no longer productive. Going by the blue ocean theory, the Church should instead create a demand, a desire for her message which is actually lacking in many circumstances. There is need for something new. It is essentially this radical newness that created the enthusiasm—at least initially—for the message of Jesus. The Church hopes to rejuvenate with the movement of “new evangelisation” that she initiated, but if we take the blue ocean strategy seriously, we are still far from that innovation which should bridge the gap between success by “an affordable price” (e.g. Cosco) of membership and a niche market (e.g. Porsche). The Christian message was meant to meet the masses (affordable cost), but unfortunately, it is presently tailored as a message for a niche market. This would entail nothing but a new Christian theology.

**Martin DAVID-BLAIS:** *On The Sovereign People Imaginary in Contemporary Quebec. The Dissociation Between Nationalism and Catholicism in Quebec in the Second Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.* – In this contribution I will explore the link between nationalism and Catholicism. More precisely, I will discuss the following question: how can

we explain that this link, which was so strong and necessary in the first half of the XX<sup>th</sup> century, had almost entirely vanished in the 1960s? I propose to address the issue from the perspective of Taylor's theory of modern social imaginaries (*Secular Age*, chapter IV). It is well documented that, in Quebec society of the 1960s, a brand new type of nationalism imposed itself on common thought and forced a dissociation between the fate of the nation and Catholic faith. This new version of nationalism proposed the following: 1) a new territorial frame for the nation (from French Canada across the country to Québec limited to the territory of the province). This had a huge impact as it allowed the possibility to envisioning politics in terms of Nation-State); 2) a new project (development in modernity instead of survival); 3) the use of the State as major tool for development. This new nationalism was somewhat ambivalent in regard to the question of the "essence" of the nation. On the one hand, it has accepted the idea of a nation made of free and equal citizens without any regard to their origin, conviction, allegiances), and on the other hand it was also motivated by the classical idea that a nation is made of a common background (tongue, culture, history) and a collective will to existence and development. How, in that context, can explain the brutal dissociation between the nation and the strong catholic component? Of course, social sciences have developed several explanations.

I propose to explore the analytical possibilities of the "Sovereign People imaginary" concept. For Taylor, this imaginary represents one the most potent and mobilizing political imaginaries in modernity. In a nutshell, it envisions history as the surge of a People (nation, people, *naród*) that takes charge entirely the public space and the process of institutions making. This imaginary establishes also the great modalities of the political life and 2) the ground of legitimacy. In modernity, Sovereign People imaginary opposes an older imaginary that sees the social order in strong and vertical relationship to a higher and grater order of metaphysical essence. In this chapter, I intend to explore the interest of this type of imaginary (i.e. Sovereign People imaginary) in regard to the evolution of contemporary Quebec nationalism. My focus will be to evaluate the possibility to develop an explanatory model out of Taylor's concepts and to compare this model to alternative strategies.

# **Kenotic Authority of the Catholic Church in the Contemporary World**

(Heythrop College, London, United Kingdom)

## **REGIONAL CULTURES AND EVANGELIZATION IN UNITED KINGDOM**

The role of religion and church in the public lives of British citizens is a topic of interest not only within academia, but also very much so among the general public. British popular media vividly discuss these issues. There are many questions about what religion and church might mean to the life of British citizens, but not a lot of agreed upon answers. On the one hand, British public life is full of ritual, spirituality, public service and charity, and a desire to contribute and belong to a community. On the other hand, there's a reluctance to follow anyone's authority or to commit to an ideology.

An illustration of this is the hugely successful Sunday Assembly, which started in London but has now expanded to New York and Sydney. The Sunday Assembly is a congregation of atheists who come together to sing, listen to talks and presentations and motivate one another to do good. Some would therefore refer to these get-togethers as 'the atheist church', but spokespeople of the Sunday Assembly reject this term, maintaining they are not a church, but a congregation of nonreligious people. Other slogans often heard are "I am spiritual, but not religious" (Woodhead and Heelas), "Believing without Belonging" (Davie), "only sheep need a shepherd", and even "the death of Christian Britain" (Brown).

The fact that the Sunday Assembly meetings attract large groups of people illustrates that there is a genuine and urgent need to transcend the contingent, competitive reality of British daily life. There is a willingness to explore shared values and a sensitivity to the transcendent, but a reluctance to rally around a flag or commit to ideologies or group identities. There is a willingness to use one's individual critical faculties in the pursuit of the good. British citizens therefore, don't identify with the image of sheep: they don't see themselves as belonging to a herd and they don't see themselves as being in need of a shepherd. The strongly individualist and even pugnacious character of the British is no doubt a major cultural background the rise of the so-called "New Atheists" such as Richard Dawkins and company.

This attitude also fits with the strong sense of independence and

cosmopolitanism so present in British society. The British view paternalism with suspicion. They are more at home in the position of the underdog, and enjoy a good battle: a match of cricket or football as well as a good battle of ideas. Encountering the British is often like meeting an opponent. Your offer will be met with a counter offer, your argument with a counter argument and so on. The European world offers kilometers? The British offer miles. The European Union offers the Euro? The British stick with the pound. You offer a Roman Catholic Church? The British already have their own Anglican Church. The British accept no arbiter in any of their battles. Europe won't tell the British what to do, nor will any other authoritarian body, Rome or Brussels!

The British adversarial culture forms challenges as well as opportunities for evangelisation. All hinges here on what we take evangelisation to mean. It is not obvious that the British are in need of a Roman Catholic evangelisation. Since the disagreement between Henry VIII and Rome, the Anglican Church has developed its own *via media* and this seems to fit the British character with varieties ranging from the very Catholic "High Anglican" wing to the currently much more popular "Low Church" of the evangelical wing. The Anglican Church now has a long and rich tradition, to which the British royal family belongs and although some talk of disestablishment has been mooted with the current popularity of the new generation of Royals it is difficult to see this happening for the foreseeable future. Whatever the Catholic Church brings to Britain in our days, it will bring it as a guest, not as the host. As such Catholic evangelical approaches need to behave politely as a guest and not presume a host status if effective evangelisation has any chance of flourishing in this context.

It is also of interest to note in this respect that the British seem to respect pluralism in a way rather different to many other European countries, and this together with the colonial history, might go some way to explaining the success of not only the Sunday Assembly, but also Evangelical minority churches and Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Bahai, Jewish, and Muslim religious communities. Perhaps the competitive spirit of the British plays a role here as competitors are politely welcomed on the playing field of religious beliefs and are respected as worthy alternatives. Whatever the case may be, there is respect for the voice of the underdog, and perhaps somewhat paradoxically, the British take this stance themselves in many a good battle and utilise this self-image in fostering the "British Civil Religion" of sport.

This is most present in popular culture today through the medium of football. If you turn on the television during our conference and catch an England game then you will hear the English fans singing the theme tune of the English team entitled "The Great Escape" which derives

from a classic film about a Second World War British escape from a German prisoner of war camp! Such a self-definition of the British is important for understanding the deep structure of British and certainly English culture. It reveals a certain suspicion of central planning, indeed planning of any kind as potentially ideological! Rather, spontaneous acts of courage against all the odds and against much stronger and better prepared opponents is considered the British way. British hagiography is littered with stories of humble, courageous, and often impossible acts of “escape” and valour which seem to speak to the soul of the British in a deeply felt emotional way.

This explains, perhaps, why Pope Francis' message of modesty and inclusion is so well received in Britain. With it, Pope Francis might bring hope that the church can offer an example of spiritual and moral leadership without posing itself as a shepherd to a herd of sheep. Such a humble approach embodies a culture of politeness, some would say civility, which still characterises the British culture of today and is perhaps quite uniquely a very British value. Building upon this is building upon rock in the British context. It is very much in this light that we have thought of the authority issue in a kenotic manner in our Heythrop contribution for the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.

This is why the work of many Catholic charitable agencies is so well received in Britain. It is seen as the humble church manifesting its mission of service and generosity to all in need. Such an understanding of evangelisation, a broad approach so well described by Pope Paul VI in his *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, is a positive way in which the Catholic Church can think its evangelical mission in Britain. Fostering works of charity, serving the gospel of justice and peace, and supporting a flourishing culture in the arts, sciences and humanities as the more long term deep evangelisation of culture is most probably the better way for the Catholic Church to heal the divisions between church and culture which have become so dramatic in recent times. Moralising, paternalism, superiority and sadly a “Catholic skulduggery” have been far too present and have blocked the deep dialogue of religious and secular traditions and promotion of human flourishing which all people of good will seek to promote.

No less important in evangelisation in the British context is to realise that as well as non-believers, British culture is very much defined by *other believers*; various religious traditions which provide a rich multi-faith context very different from that the United States and even many other European countries. Take Liverpool for an example. This Northern city, so famous for its shameful connection with the British slave trade, also has the oldest Mandarin-Chinese speaking community in Europe. Many of these settlers coming in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century from

the port city of Shanghai also brought with them their own cultural and religious traditions which are practiced to this day. Whilst some of these people are Chinese Christians the majority are not and find connections to spiritual realities in other forms than the typical Christian manner. Tai Chi, Shaolin Boxing and eating good healthy foods are just some of the ways that this community finds its entry points to transcendence.

In speaking about the cultural context of Britain for evangelisation it is also important to distinguish its own particular form of pluralism. For the British, inclusion of other cultures is not seen as a problem but rather as an enrichment so long as the socio-economic conditions are not imperilled by such inclusion (see UKIP!). That the national dish is now Chicken Tikka Masala rather than Fish and Chips is clear empirical evidence to support this claim. This fits in with the “under-dog” mentality which views other peoples and cultures as superior, although in the case of food this seems to be probably the case. Moreover, whilst philosophy and theology may not be very well developed in the British tradition what does seem to excel is humour. There are more stand-up comics in England per head of population than there are coffee bars in Spain according to a recent sociological survey. As such strategies of evangelisation must factor in humour as a significant performative force if the illocutionary content of the gospel is not to be lost.

## **SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT**

**Introduction: *The Exercise of Magisterial Authority in the Roman Catholic Church.***

### **Authority as a Blessing**

Few would doubt that our age is one of conflicting interpretations. Whether over questions of the human person, the purpose of society, or the natural environment radically different interpretations vie for dominance in a way that seems to characterise this period of history. In such a pluralistic age the appropriate understanding of the nature and extent of authority takes on a particularly important role. Understood as neither authoritarianism nor merely the aggregate of individual preferences an authority can provide guidance as to the better option, the choice which leads to flourishing rather than to diminishment.

Perhaps somewhat paradoxically, the exercise of authority understood in this sense is oriented towards the freedom of the other. Enabling the freedom of the other to choose what is really in their interests and not simply opting for a short-term solution which appears to be. Facilitating this choice is the role of authority, which helps to provide confidence and reassurance that we are not simply alone in making our

choices. There is a community of wisdom that is expressed in the exercise of magisterial authority and which accompanies us on the way of freedom. It is the exercise of this form of magisterial authority which is truly a blessing for the church. As such, it enables the resources of tradition and experience to shed light on contemporary challenges and also provides support and encouragement as we face a myriad of decisions which can bewilder even the most decisive amongst us.

The specific area of competence within which the magisterial authority of the church operates is that of faith and morals. In ensuring fidelity to the legitimate tradition of the church, the Magisterium guards what is sometimes called the “deposit of the faith”. That is, the core teachings which constitute the heart of belief in the gospel and in the loving God revealed in Jesus Christ. Gradually built up over centuries, the tradition of the church regulates the faith by defining orthodox belief. It removes the burden of having to work out what previous generations have already struggled to do. The heritage of the doctrinal beliefs developed during the councils of the church defines the parameters of legitimate belief. This does not foreclose new interpretations of doctrine but rather is meant to regulate it within parameters of legitimate possibility. These parameters are the results of former debate and discussion concerning the fundamental beliefs of the Christian community. To ignore them would be both irresponsible and disrespectful of a tradition which has developed over two thousand years of history. Understood in this way tradition is neither a straightjacket constraining individual freedom nor a definitive interpretation of God’s revelation but rather an ongoing reception of the self-communication of God in Jesus Christ to humanity. Each age must receive these events anew in the light of the Holy Spirit and with attention to the signs of the times. Since, whilst God has been revealed in Jesus Christ the working out of the historical implications of this Revelation will be ongoing until the end of time (John 16: 13).

The role of the Magisterium is to regulate interpretations of the deposit of faith in such a way that they are both faithful to the traditional teachings of the church and expressed in a manner which speaks to our times. The dynamic nature of the reception of Revelation is due to the continual workings of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all women and men of good will growing like a mustard seed in the often hidden soil of history (Matthew 13: 31-32; Mark 4: 30-32; Luke 13: 18-19). The Kingdom of God which grows in this way is intermingled with elements which diminish humanity and whilst inseparable from these elements in time, nevertheless, vigilance is required to guard against correctable corruption (Matthew 13: 24-43). The guarding of the integrity of the tradition by the Magisterium cannot thus be otherwise than also dynamic

lest the unfolding of the Kingdom of God be ignored in favour of closing off one's attention to the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking today. Conservation and innovation are in this way in a continual force field of dynamic relations as the deposit of faith is legitimately regulated by the Magisterium of the church. Avoiding both an idolatrous fixing of the faith in an idealised past and seduction by the current passing fashions of the day the continual reform of the church accompanies her pilgrim journey in history. The gradual historical purification of ideological elements in the church is a consequence of recognising faults and failings which have compromised fidelity to the gospel. Such a humble attitude of the Magisterium, expressed in several recent papal pronouncements, is characteristic of a true encounter with the Risen Lord and is an evangelical sign of God's presence in the church (Luke 18: 10-14). It demonstrates that the origin of the authority of the Magisterium is to be found not in itself but in the One from whom it is sent (Matthew 28: 19).

Such conviction arises out of being confirmed in the mission of the Lord which liberates the church from following its own agendas or of justifying itself. In a characteristically evangelical attitude the Magisterium, when it is true to itself, is not interested in itself, it is self-forgetful because its heart lies outside of itself in the One who has sent it. Such a blessing of generosity and charity is only made possible by a gift which no manner of effort can generate. It confers the blessing of humility and gratitude on the one who receives it as they realise the liberation from self which this inaugurates. As a consequence, the charismatic attraction of the Magisterium transcends the celebrity culture of film stars and politicians who have achieved their fame and status by their own efforts and the efforts of others. The evangelical witness of the Magisterium lies precisely in the realisation that it has been chosen, although unworthy, to serve in this way and as such a natural humility is associated with it when it is exercised authoritatively. So, beyond being an institution within the church which guards the deposit of the faith the Magisterium is also an evangelical sign of the presence of the Kingdom of God.

The love of the faithful for the hierarchy originates in the recognition of the vocation of the Magisterium to lead and to guide as much by example as by formal teaching (Philippians 2: 6). Such a kenotic style of leadership should characterise the church as it patterns the mind of the Lord in the institution and makes visible the face of the Lord in the Magisterium. Immediately recognisable as reflecting the presence of the Lord, the enthusiastic greeting of leaders of the church, such as the pope, echoes that of the encounter of Peter with the Risen Lord on the Sea of Tiberias (John 21: 1-19). In this way, the

Magisterium brings people to the Risen Lord by making Him visible in the kenotic witness of His living presence animating the church. This is why images of the pope kissing babies, or visiting prisoners, even forgiving those who have tried to kill him, are such a powerful sign of the gospel. They manifest the infinite love of God which each human heart has its own experience of, however wounded and darkened by life's struggles. In Christ, love has overcome even death and it is this joy which is echoed in simple but profound gestures of the Magisterium. The media interest in Pope Francis and images of his riding on the subway in Buenos Aires as Cardinal Bergoglio provoke this identification with the humble Christ who emptied himself in Jesus. Simple, ordinary, even banal images such as these carry significance far beyond their immediate reality. They point towards the self-emptying God in whom paradoxically divine transcendence and omnipotence are manifested in human immanence and powerlessness (2 Corinthians 12: 7-10).

Such authenticity conveys divine authority rather than the pseudo-authority of the scribes and doctors of the law who merely quoted from the scriptures and tradition rather than lived by them (Matthew 7: 29). The teaching authority of the Magisterium is truly a blessing for the church when it follows this divine pattern exemplified in Jesus as he taught the nature of true discipleship to the crowds (Matthew 7: 21-27). Moreover, only through such virtuous living can one have any real sense of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 5: 20). When theory and practice are so disunited that the truth spoken of is not lived then intellectual knowledge about God is substituted for knowledge of God. The union of both in the Magisterium makes statements of the church both credible and authoritative and of interest to people far beyond the official church. Understandably, the degree to which this authenticity is manifest by the Magisterium determines, for many people, the level of impact that statements from the church have and the seriousness with which the teachings of the church are taken. No matter how eloquent someone is and no matter how important a person is in an institution if there is a suspicion of hypocrisy severe damage can be done to the credibility of the message being communicated. In fact, amongst what one might call the credibility conditions for a message to be successfully heard in an 'age of authenticity' (Taylor) such as ours, where former conventions of deference and automatic acceptance of authority no longer hold, authenticity holds a privileged place as a necessary condition of communicative competence.

The current leadership of the Roman Catholic Church by Pope Francis is moving encouragingly in the direction of humility, simplicity, and authenticity. Whilst some have found little substantive change in his communications clearly the tone is different. And matters of tone are

significant. They announce by their style of delivery a certain attitude of openness and dialogue which the Second Vatican Council inaugurated. By all accounts there is much to do to spread this humble tone into the structures of the Vatican. But Pope Francis has made significant first steps in this renewal by his gestures and by his addresses. The rejection of the papal red cape trimmed with ermine during his papal inauguration spoke of the end to a 'sacral kingship' model of the papacy that Francis Oakley's paper has described. His recent remarks, such as those made on the return journey from Brazil to Rome, in which he emphasised the importance of not judging gay people and for the need for a more simple style of church life indicate that he desires to carry forward a reform agenda for the church. The translation of these gestures and sayings into policy and structure will clearly take time. Yet, there is a widespread yearning in the church for reform so that the true blessing which the Magisterium represents may really foster the positive development of the church and the wider society at large. This dynamic moment in the church's history may well be a time of special grace as the Holy Spirit renews the structures of the church.

The selection of the first ever pontiff from Latin America is in itself a sign that in order for the church to be truly catholic the whole planet needs to be represented. The former European dominance of the church is with all likelihood a thing of the past and the future will be increasingly characterised by greater representation and participation in the magisterial structures of the church by members of the church from the Southern Hemisphere. Viewed in this way, the church should be seen more as an unfinished project rather than an old institution creaking at the seams. It may well be that we are on the dawn of a truly catholic church as the universality which was initially envisioned begins to be translated into reality in the Third Millennium. The shift from a predominantly European Magisterium to a global one will take the church into new waters as the different experiences of the world begin to be translated into the governance of the church. The hope which this inspires is grounded in a faith that knows that however great the challenges which lie ahead we are not alone in striving for a church which mirrors ever more closely the Kingdom of God which it preaches.

### **The Need for Reform of the Magisterium**

Whilst it is clear that properly understood the Magisterium of the church is a real blessing it would be dishonest to see this as the current state of affairs. Since the sexual abuse crisis became known it is evident that there is a systematic dysfunction in the operations of the church. Concerned more with the preservation of its own image and power, the Magisterium has behaved in a way which negates its very essence. The characteristics of this failure are by now well-known. Less clear,

however, are the reasons for just how it was that the church could have slipped so deeply into disrepair. Clearly a culture of clericalism has dogged the church for a long while. The use of clerical power in this context has been part and parcel of a fundamental asymmetry between the magisterial structures of the church and the model of servant leadership that the gospels speak about (Matthew 20: 26; 23:11; Luke 22: 26). The ‘sacral-kingship’ model of the papacy that Francis Oakley refers to has coloured the way in which priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church has been perceived for generations. This focus on the importance of the ordained priesthood has often been counterbalanced by the stress on the vocation of the laity. But, whilst the rhetoric has been present since the Second Vatican Council the translation of this into representative structures in the church has been absent. Governance within the church is still carried out by clergy and appeals to the importance of lay people and the value of women in the church seem increasingly hollow in this context. The paternalistic attitude of the church looks increasingly out of step in the modern democratic world which values equality between the sexes and the inclusion of female voices at all levels of governance. This is not to presume that all is well in secular society. Systematic abuse of power and a lack of incorporation of women in civil institutions are by no means simply a problem of former times but are alive and well in an often patriarchal society. Nevertheless, the declaration by Pope John Paul II that discussion on women’s ordination is closed has left many with a sense that magisterial authority has slipped into ‘magisterial authoritarianism’ on this issue. There is clearly divided opinion on this matter and the decision to foreclose debate has short circuited the necessary consultation of the *sensus fidelium* that is required for these decisions to carry legitimacy.

Magisterial behaviour, such as in the debate over the ordination of women, reveals a wider issue concerning magisterial authority. It raises the issue of how the Magisterium comes to its declarations of what is and what is not consonant with the deposit of the faith. Given that certain issues have really not arisen before this is not simply a matter of checking whether examples of this have occurred in the past. New situations are arising for the church and whilst *Ressourcement* theology is an important tool to renew the church it may well be insufficient as a theological framework of church renewal today. The problem of the extent of the deposit of the faith is clearly at issue here. Is it part of the deposit of the faith that only men can be priests and that the structure of the church must remain a certain way? Or rather, is the deposit of the faith concerned with doctrines such as the Incarnation, the Trinity, and the Resurrection? Raising matters of church governance, though of importance, to the status of axiomatic beliefs seems to force issues such as debates over the ordination of women in a direction of unnecessary

confrontation. Once a pope, in this case John Paul II, has made a declaration on this it is very difficult for a successor to overturn it. As recent statements by Pope Francis have indicated it was Pope John Paul II who has closed the door on the issue of the ordination of women and attempting to open it again would be tantamount to heresy.

As a case study in the dysfunctional use of magisterial authority the ordination of women issue is instructive. It reveals a number of matters that go to the heart of the problem with the contemporary exercise of magisterial authority.

First, it shows an understanding of the papacy as somehow in a position to decide this without general consultation. The view that the pope has a “hotline to God” is, though clearly a caricature, nevertheless functionally operative in the decision to “end discussion” on the matter. It represents a legacy of absolutism that has roots in the later medieval era of the eleventh century and has continued into the modern church. The theological problem with this is that it runs in the face of the new form of authority spoken of in the New Testament and which is meant to mirror the way Christ exercises authority. This humble and servant model of authority breaks with the tradition of the Greco-Roman world within which Christianity as a religion was born. It scandalised the “authorities” of the time and represented a revolution in thinking about structures of power and authority. The turn towards an absolutist model of authority in the church is a move away from this New Testament model and towards the Greco-Roman traditions which preceded it. It mirrors the absolutist conception of God that became popular during the rise of Nominalism at the origins of Western modernity. Fundamentally, the problem with this understanding of authority is that it portrays an authoritarian image of God that is patterned in the structures of the Magisterium as authoritarianism.

Second, the position of the Magisterium with respect to the ordination of women results from it taking refuge in claims that the church does not have the authority to change this as God has made His will clear on the matter. As to why God only wants men to be priests this is less clear. None of the arguments presented stand the test of critical scrutiny and one is left with a sense that the Magisterium has utilised an outdated “God of the gaps” argument in declaring its position as against women priests. The fundamental problem with this approach is that as the Catholic Church claims to hold a mutual correlation between faith and reason and yet on such matters leaps of faith or submissive obedience seem to be required. The result is a contradiction between on the one hand the claim that faith and reason are correlated and on the other hand saying that this is God’s will and we simply have to obey it. This is not to deny that there are mysteries of the faith such as the

suffering of the innocent and so on which defy clear rational explanation. But to align the ban on the ordination of women with such mysteries of the faith is at best exaggerated and at worst ideological. It undermines a traditional Catholic understanding of the correlation of faith and reason and veers towards a more Protestant *fides aut ratio* conception.

Third, it indicates a culture of unhealthy silence by which much of the purported unanimity of the Catholic Church is actually held in place. Speaking openly and honestly becomes a drama in such a situation because it is neither allowed nor encouraged. A cognitive dissonance develops in those caught in this dilemma as silence becomes heroically sublimated into obedience of superiors and mortification of the will. But this creates an unhealthy culture in the church of people being afraid to speak out because it will threaten their own position to do so. Disagreement in this context is understood as disobedience and perhaps even heresy with possible personal and professional consequences. Such policing of opinion in the Catholic Church is more akin to the techniques of totalitarian regimes rather than a gospel centred community oriented towards freedom. This encourages an immature culture on both sides of this divide. On the side of the individuals who disagree with the church's teaching such silence can undermine all trust and confidence in the institution and encourage a culture of cynicism and irony which destroys the necessary trust required for healthy relations between the hierarchy and priests and people. Much like a politician defending a party line which they do not believe in, the results can be the undermining of one's own integrity. On the side of the hierarchy a focus on such issues can become obsessive and result in a frosting out of those who are seen to be dissenters, a making sure that such people do not take on positions of responsibility. In such a context neuralgic issues, such as the position taken on the ordination of women, become defining features of orthodoxy. Rather than the pastoral qualities and leadership potential of an individual it is their orthodoxy which is seen as central to who is chosen for positions of authority and who is not. Moreover, such focus on orthodoxy in the hierarchy can result in bullying behaviour as people known to hold opposing views become marginalised. The power differential between the hierarchy and the priests and people is abused in this situation and rather than encouraging open and frank discussion it closes it down.

Perhaps even more insidious in this culture of silence is the lack of courage which it fosters. It schools people in not speaking out against injustice and of rather fitting in and enjoying the comfort of institutional protection. Whilst the church may rightly foster this courage when it comes to speaking out against injustices in secular society it is often

blind to its own compromises on these issues. This abuse of loyalty undermines the church's credibility as people understand it to be no different than the compromises they are forced into in their own ordinary work situations and social contexts. But the claim for the church to be more than this highlights the disjunction even more acutely. Moreover, defending this position by saying that the church is not perfect is no justification for it. Rather, it reveals a deep cynicism and a lack of faith which is really oriented towards preserving one's own position in the institution. Such behaviour is clearly understandable but nevertheless it lacks credibility. It undermines the authority of the church as grounded in the freedom of the followers of Christ. Viewed in this way, the church becomes just like any other organisation with a particular agenda, which it is prepared to sacrifice its integrity for. But as has become clear in the sexual abuse crisis when the importance of the power and status of an institution replaces the service of the people, the praise and worship of God which should be at the core of the church is replaced by the idolatry of self – and institutional – worship.

### **Conclusion**

At a time of conflicting interpretations having an authority that one can trust is an unequivocal good. This is why rightly understood and properly practiced the exercise of magisterial authority should be a blessing for the church and for the wider society. Yet, what should be a blessing has sadly turned in significant areas into a curse. The need for reform has been known for some time now and the reform of the papacy is something that Pope John Paul II spoke of in his 1995 encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*. However, it is really only in the election of Pope Francis that reform of the Magisterium has taken on such urgency. Attempts to downplay the urgency and importance of this task merely compound the problem. Following the sexual abuse crisis confidence in the hierarchical church has been deeply and perhaps mortally damaged and some even ask whether it is too late to save the church (Küng, 2012). Whether the Catholic Church is able to reform may well determine the answer to that question. The hope of this collection of essays is that it still can.

### **INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT**

The Stoics took philosophy to be a form of therapy. Philosophers ought to not only tell, but also show people how to live a good life. Wittgenstein made this therapy metaphor even more explicit, arguing that a philosophical problem is some sort of illness, which the philosopher tries to cure. Not all twelve contributors to the volume are philosophers in the narrow contemporary academic sense, but the metaphor is

nevertheless apt. To be more precise, one might consider the Heythrop team as a group of twelve relationship therapists. The marriage between modern democracy and the church is troubled, and we want to fix that marriage.

Various methods are applied to convince the church that her partner, democracy, really hasn't that bad a character after all. One method is to show that democracy and church share a rich history, that they perhaps have more in common than the church might think, and that the sources the church values offer much that is indeed compatible with democracy's character. Another method is to make the church see that she can't do without democracy, and that she ought to be open to democracy's valid points in their arguments, because the church might learn something useful from them.

But a healthy relationship takes two. It takes giving and taking from both sides. The same therapeutic conversation can be had with democracy. He, too, will have to see that his values aren't essentially in conflict with the church's and that he might learn from the sources and history of the church as well.

One point of conflict in this marriage is their approach to authority. Democracy claims that the authority of the church is outdated, hierarchical, even arrogant and infused with unjust power play. He demands that the church let go of her authoritarianism. The church, however, refuses, arguing that there ought to be authority in order to avoid relativism. Democracy, the church bites back, loses sight on the good, and allows for self-centred instrumentalism among citizens, leading to a battle of interests rather than a battle for the common good.

These twelve relationship therapists each put forward their argument in favour of a synthesis of this conflict in the form of a kenotic understanding of authority. They argue on behalf of the children of this marriage: catholic democratic citizens, who aim to be as catholic in their citizenship as they are in their faith and as democratic in their church as they are in the public sphere.

### **Kenosis and authority in canon and tradition**

One narrative in this therapeutic project is a story of the church and its history and sources, a story about authority and the church in previous times, in the very history, tradition and Gospels the church considers constitutive of its identity. Six authors aim to revive conceptions of authority that seem almost forgotten in contemporary church discourse with an appeal to the Gospels, historical events, traditional practise or theological traditions.

*Sean Ryan* looks at the Gospel of Matthew for answers to the question whether the Matthean Jesus proposes a rejection of authority as

such, or whether a servant-model of authority and leadership ought to be envisaged as an alternative to a hierarchical model.

*Jonathan Norton* provides a counterbalance for the default view that Paul exposes an authoritarian, perhaps even arrogant, attitude in his letters. Rather, Paul can be seen as anxious, fearful of failing and burdened with a great responsibility, not only to his master, but also to the Gentiles.

*Gemma Simmonds* draws on the writing of J.H. Newman to argue that religious life as an authoritative voice is underrepresented in the current tendency of the church to put forward the magisterium as ultimate source of authority.

*Richard Price* shows, using a seventh-century example of a situation of crisis in the history of the church, that catholic tradition has not always been one in which hierarchic, top-down authority has been appealed to. Unity was achieved at the time by consulting all ranks and by taking tradition and history seriously.

*James Sweeney* revives the principle of human freedom that is found in the Gospels, and explores the implications of this ideal for a contemporary context, arguing that what is needed is a church that provides guidance on matters of practice—the ‘how’ - of moral conduct rather than on norms—the ‘what’ - of moral conduct.

*Paul Rout* reconstructs a conception of authority rooted in experience, based on the life of St. Francis of Assisi and the writings of St. Bonaventure. Authority, Rout argues, is not a matter of theory, but rather a matter of practice and experience, as was well understood in early Franciscan theology.

### **A Modern Church in a Modern Democracy**

The remaining six relationship therapists scrutinize the relationship of the church with modernity and/or democracy, arguing that harmony can be achieved if certain requirements can be met. But there is hope! It turns out, according to these authors, that religion and modern democracy have relevant values in common. They explore concepts like authority, faith, doubt, responsibility, assent and credibility as well as reflexivity, possible attitudes toward change and social recognition in a way that renders these concepts meaningful in a catholic context, and compatible with democratic attitudes and values.

*Tony Carroll* argues that the loss of credibility of the church follows from an inability to embrace change as an essential part of the journey of faith. Carroll explains this inability with reference to a particular metaphysical understanding of God and of faith. In order to avoid idolatry, Carroll argues, an alternative, kenotic understanding of

faith, in which change can be seen as constructive rather than merely destructive, is asked for.

*Staf Hellemans* provides a sociological-historical account of the development of Catholic authority throughout early modernity (1850-1960) and in advanced modernity (1960–present). He shows that while in early modernity the relation between magisterium and faithful responded well to the needs of the time, advanced modernity asks for an authority relation that is responsive to the changes and reflexivity that characterise this era. However, Hellemans argues, a mere liberal approach doesn't fare much better, since such an approach is at risk of being morally empty and thus unable to provide the guidance many people seek.

*Louis Caruana* suggests that a comparison of the pragmatics of belief, doubt and authority in science with the structures of authority in the church can provide valuable insights. He draws on pragmatist philosopher C.S. Pierce and 19<sup>th</sup> century theologian cardinal J.H. Newman to support his view that scientific enquiry and religious enquiry aren't incomparable enterprises after all.

*Marthe Kerkwijk* discusses two rivalling conceptions of authority, and argues that while recognition is a necessary condition of authority, this does neither lead to relativism, nor to secularism. Her take on authority, she argues, is essential for a healthy democracy as well as a healthy religion.

*Karen Kilby*, too, provides a conceptual analysis of a pair of concepts and their relation, namely 'responsible critical assent' and 'faith'. She argues that responsible critical assent does not require taking position outside a context of faith, but rather requires openness to the various questions that arise from faith.

*Michael Kirwan* critically discusses two important discourses in contemporary Catholic theology: Catholic Social Thought and the Theology of Liberation. Both have strengths and weaknesses. The theology of James Alison, Kirwan contends, transcends these discourses and argues instead for an 'open ended future'.

### **Conclusion**

The development of the relation between the church and contemporary society, characterised by modern democratic values, has not reached a conclusion. The twelve contributions to this project show twelve valid arguments, but above all, they all show that the discussion isn't settled yet and that the Catholic Church and modern democracy still have much to talk about and much to offer each other.



# **The Appeal of a Catholic Minority Church in a World of Seekers**

(Tilburg University, Tilburg, the Netherland)

## **REGIONAL CULTURES AND EVANGELIZATION IN THE NETHERLAND**

### **1. What distinctive characteristics of your national culture are relevant to this project on living faith in our secular age?**

According to the latest survey on 'Faith inside and outside the Churches' in the Netherlands (2013) the religious situation of North-Western Europe, including the Netherlands, is exceptional, because it is far more secularized than the rest of the world. The Netherlands has a low percentage of Church-members, but those who are member of a Church are quite active. Beneath this declining formal level of Church membership, the religiosity of the Dutch hardly differs from that of the rest of Europe. Secondly, the societal position of the Churches has weakened considerably over the last decades; this concerns its membership (and, consequently, its financial position), attendance of religious services, and the recruitment of priests and lay pastoral workers. Churches are generally considered as a kind of 'public utility companies', which one can utilize if necessary. In 2012 only 30% of the Dutch population was member to one of the Churches, and 10% goes to religious services on a regular basis (at least once a month). Thirdly, due to some recent scandals (in which several bishops were involved) the trust in the (Catholic) Church has received a serious blow. The Churches are no longer perceived as the only or even most important instances when it comes to questions about life orientation. Nevertheless, the Churches remain a factor of importance in Dutch society, especially on a local level, and with regard to their work in the fields of welfare and developmental work. The overall majority of Dutch youth does not belong to a Church, is hardly religiously educated, and does not pray. However, the (small) portion that is a Church member, is stricter in the observance of traditional religious and moral prescripts, has more confidence in the Church and its leadership etc. In sum, these findings show that religion does not coincide with the Church, although they are connected clearly with each other: as far as the content of their religious ideas and practices is concerned, people outside the Churches (still) dwell on what it offered by the (Christian) Churches. Furthermore, the link of the Dutch with the Churches is deteriorating much faster than

their commitment to religion, which is shown by the fact that app. 40 % of the population, not belonging to one of the Churches, defines itself as religious. All these issues are addressed in the papers of De Hart/Dekker (for the Dutch situation) and Halman (for a European perspective).

## **2. What contribution can these make for Evangelization?**

The rather high percentage of people defining themselves as religious or at least as interested in religious questions, which is comparable to the rest of Europe, may prove a fertile ground for Evangelization. Moreover, because Dutch society is becoming ever more plural (not only religiously, but also culturally, ethnically, economically etc.) it is losing its (traditional) points of reference. Against this background, Catholic faith, if it focuses on offering a plausible orientation in life, and on its rich spiritual tradition, can become attractive again for the seekers, both inside and outside the Church. This question is taken up by De Groot/Pieper, Merrigan, and Van Erp.

## **3. What difficulties do these entail for Evangelization?**

Although the Dutch are as religious as the rest of Europe, the (Catholic) Church is more and more distrusted. From the perspective of the Low Countries, this is the essence of the disjunction that the RVP wants to address. Moreover, the Church has to operate in a radically plural and competitive market, and has to convince individualized individuals, the majority of whom are nowadays completely out of touch with the essentials of Christian faith, of its value. Against this background, the major challenge for the Church is whether or not it will be able to somehow reinvent itself as regards its organizational structure, its personnel, the way in which it communicates and promotes its message and practices with people in a context of a growing 'ex-culturation' of religion. Hellemans, Jonkers, and Bucher deal with these questions.

## **SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT**

### **1. Content of the project**

**A world of seekers:** As Wuthnow<sup>1</sup> himself already suggests, there is no absolute separation between seekers and dwellers. One can state that, in our times, everyone is somehow a seeker. Dwellers are seekers

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<sup>1</sup> In his book, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s*, Wuthnow introduced the distinction between seekers and dwellers. Seekers are people who explore, from outside organized religion and in full awareness of their autonomy, the religious, spiritual, or life-orientating 'offer'. Dwellers are participants in the standard religion within the Churches.

within – more or less – the confines of a Church, while seekers, in the strict sense of the word, explore a wide variety of ideas and practices, some of which have a marginal relation with the established religions. Sometimes they even do not seem to know what exactly they are seeking. A comparison between outside-seekers and inside (the Church)-seekers (thus taking seeking within the Churches seriously) would be very welcome.

Secondly, it is important to note that not everyone is an active seeker to the same degree. One could divide the population into three broad categories: the active seekers, within and outside institutionalized religion; the non-active seekers, those who from time to time long for some sort of religion without eagerly pursuing their interest; the indifferent ones. Therefore, we think it necessary to conceptualize the disjunction between dwellers and seekers more broadly as one consisting of a process of estrangement between a Catholic Church, which becomes smaller and smaller, and the general public, i.e. the vast majority of active and not so active seekers, both within and outside the Church, looking for religious, spiritual, and moral enrichment and transformation of their lives. More work on conceptualizing seekers and the seeking process is needed.

What do the – active as well as less active – seekers seek? How do they shape their quest? What are their main sources? How do they would their sources into a format that is fitting for them? And where, if at all, do the main Churches come in?

### **1.2 The appeal of a Catholic Minority Church.**

It is no longer realistic to expect, as was still the case at the time of Vatican II that the majority of the population spontaneously wants to belong to the Catholic Church, even if the Church would find the right approach and carve out the right religious offer. For one thing, there is a great diversity of competing opinions regarding the concrete content of this ‘right’ approach and offer. Moreover, the Church has to face the reality of a far more radical religious pluralism and individualization than at the times of Vatican II. The current situation is one of individual seekers construing their (religious) ideas, practices and ways of life on the basis of a great number of rival religious offerings, which they take as equally worthwhile options. Moreover, contemporary society is marked by a predominant anti-institutional tendency, which also affects the Catholic Church.

This means that the investigation into the appeal of the Catholic Church to contemporary society has to start from the fact that she is becoming a minority Church in a society that, by and large, tends to be

indifferent or even hostile to the Catholic offer and the institutional nature of the Catholic Church.

### **1.3 A two-way process or the interplay between Church and society.**

In fact, the question of “the appeal of a Catholic minority Church in a world of seekers” consists of two questions. The first question is whether, how and under which conditions the Catholic Church will be able to appeal (again) to a significant part of the population. It focuses on the reactions of the Church to the changes in society. It has our primary attention. But the reverse question has to be examined as well, namely whether, how and under which conditions active and less active seekers are likely to respond to the appeal of the Catholic Church. Only when a two-way process gets started, will frequent meetings between seekers and Catholic Church occur.

The first question can be approached empirically by examining recent successful initiatives of the Church to gain the interest of large groups of active seekers outside the Church for her ‘offer’, e.g. the World Youth Days, pilgrimage, spiritual centers, the so-called new (spiritual) movements etc.

## **2. PARTICIPANTS, PROJECTS, AND PROCEDURE**

### **A. Empirical part:**

**Loek Halman** (Tilburg University, the Netherlands; European Values Study Group): *Religious trends in contemporary Europe. The decline of institutionalized religion and the rise of non-institutionalized religion.* – Aim of this chapter is to describe the European pattern of religious life and focus in particular on the similarities and varieties that may exist. Second, not only do we investigate the main differences between Europe and the United States, but also with Australia and Canada, two other highly advanced modern societies. Third, we investigate trends in the patterns of religious life in Europe. We address issues of where are changes largest and where modest? Finally, we focus on Catholics. This book is on a Catholic minority Church in a world of seekers. The word ‘Seekers’ assumes that people are still looking for spirituality and or religious world views. To what extent is the Catholic Church still appealing to people living in contemporary modern, individualized and above all secular Europe?

**Joep de Hart** (The Netherlands Institute for Social Research and Protestant Theological University, the Netherlands) and **Paul Dekker** (The Netherlands Institute for Social Research and Tilburg University, the Netherlands), *Floating believers. Dutch seekers and the Church.* – This

paper summarizes various sociological surveys, focused on the situation in the Netherlands. It includes the following sections: (1) From dwelling to seeking; (2) Seekers as gatherers, based on a survey from 2006; (3) Seekers as self-active combiners, based on a survey from 2012; (4) Seekers as inner searchers, based on a survey from 2009; (5) Seekers outside and inside the Church(es); (6) Re-enchantment?

**Kees de Groot** and **Jos Pieper** (both Tilburg University, the Netherlands): *The Church's quest for the seekers. The case of the Christian spirituality centers in the Netherlands.* – This chapter presents a case study of a number of Christian spiritual centers in the Netherlands. Although the origin of most centers is Christian, their presentation is quite often geared to contemporary spirituality. It downplays the ecclesial affiliation and uses the rhetoric of personal growth. In sum, these centers with a Christian background are trying to appeal to seekers. This branding strategy is perfectly understandable from a market perspective—regardless of the theological motives behind it. Participation in parish life and identification with the Christian faith have for decades now been declining in Western society. Present-day spiritual authors, trends, and movements exert a notable attraction, from people outside and inside the Church.

**Staf Hellemans** (Tilburg University, the Netherlands): *After total membership. The new Catholic Church and 'her' public.* – The paper will first analyze the new context that accounts for the precarious situation the Catholic Church and the other main Churches find themselves in since the 1960's. To remain a major Church in this new environment, the Catholic Church will have to stop the relentless downward spiral it faces in the West since mid-20th century. In the second part, I will review several strands of the debate on 'Church growth and decline', with an eye to its potential bearing for the Catholic Church. The third part will be devoted to the Catholic Church and will explore briefly some of the opportunities opened up in advanced modernity for major multi-level Churches. Indeed, the Catholic Church is actively processing the new environment, making use of the opportunities as well as reacting to what are perceived as threats in advanced modernity. The result is its transformation into a new Church. Three opportunities/ demands and one, internal threat will be highlighted.

## **B. Philosophical and Theological Part:**

**Peter Jonkers** (Tilburg University, the Netherlands): *From rational doctrine to reasoned wisdom. An alternative response of the Church to today's seekers.* – In the first place, the paper will deal with the idea that faith is an expression of wisdom, which is able to orientate people towards living the good life and prepare them for the eternal life.

Second, I want to examine more closely the idea of a kenotic Church. In order to do so, I will start with contrasting them with two features of 19/20<sup>th</sup> century Catholicism. Then, I will give a short philosophical analysis of the world of the seekers, focusing on the self-centered character of postmodern individuals and their lack of plausible orientations in life. In the final section, I will explore the idea of Christian wisdom in more detail through an analysis of scriptural reasoning as the basis for interreligious dialogue and the idea of thinking biblically as a way to approach the philosophical question of God's existence in a hermeneutical way.

**Terrence Merrigan** (Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium): *The Exile of the Religious Subject. A Newmanian Perspective on Religion in Contemporary Society.* – The claim developed in this paper is that John Henry Newman's reflections on the religious subject resonate with and even illuminate the contemporary debate. I shall attempt to make the case for Newman as a worthy interlocutor of contemporary theorists by reflecting on the following themes: (i) his portrayal of the subject as defined by his capacity for 'inwardness', a Newmanian version of 'the turn to the subject' so cherished by theorists of modernity; (ii) his awareness of, and reflections on, the inevitability of the cultural shift we now characterize as secularization; and (iii) his analysis of the condition of the religious subject in such a context. As we shall see, in all three instances, Newman has something to offer the contemporary debate which, in its turn, throws light on Newman's nineteenth-century musings.

**Stephan van Erp** (Radboud University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands): *The Sacrament of Public Life.* – In this chapter, public life will be explored as a sacramental practice, in order to construct a theological framework that could serve as a proposal to reconnect the Church with the secular, and the dwellers with the seekers. Modern theology offers several starting points for viewing public life as a sacrament. In the Church, the concrete sacraments are considered signs and instruments of God's presence in the world, and as such they make the whole of human history visible as a sacrament of salvation. If it is indeed true that the presence of God's salvation is not limited to the concrete history of Jesus, but encompasses the whole of human history up to the present, then this could offer opportunities for further explorations into ways of viewing public life as sacramental.

**Rainer Bucher** (Graz University, Austria): *The Church: a fellowship of seekers on the path to God.* – The main focus of this chapter is to offer a perspective on future pastoral care. Faced with the reality of a liquid Church (Ward), the Church will not be able to avoid the risk of self-exposure at the situational pole of the pastoral triangle of action, nor a

wholly new and deepened dogmatic memory at its tradition pole. At its personnel pole, however, it will not be able to avoid recovering the lost sincerity of genuine life. Pastoral care is a place for the externalisation (kenosis) of God into the hands of those who turn to him; a place in which a defenceless God is at the mercy of his people's demand(s). Pastoral care is concerned with God's presence among people in risky processes of human actions in his name.



# **The Catholics and Their Church: Clashing Identities**

(France)

## **REGIONAL CULTURES AND EVANGELIZATION IN FRANCE**

**Q 1:** The French characteristics of Catholicism as presented in our study are the following: a/ The observant people: it's a group coming from the historical category of "uncompromising Catholicism", as Emile Poulat presented it. b/ The conciliar Catholics: they come from the renewal of spirituality in the 50's and 60's, when becoming "the yeast in the dough" in the midst of ordinary people was the great challenge. c/ The inspired: they issued from the 68's revolution: hedonism, self achievement, peace and quest for happiness. They represent a French hybridization of individualism and remain in the ecclesial matrix. d/ The emancipated: they are far away from the ecclesial matrix, and work in society as social militants.

These categories are valid for those with some interest in being more and less an active Catholic. But, we also have to take into account the gap between the small minority of churchgoers (3 to 5 %), and the majority of Catholics who aren't churchgoers (60 to 65%).

**Q2:** Evangelization cannot be a strategy that is planned, because groups of Catholics are heterogeneous. One can suppose that each category has its own way to refer to the founding texts—which are certainly Bible, but also catechism and theology. So, in front of them, nonbelievers will react to the presentations they will receive, and they will go towards the group with which they will have most affinities. So to say:

a/ Liturgy, piety, Eucharist. That means: all that can show the transcendence in personal life, and give a ascetic way outside of common life.

b/ Welcoming others, being non-judgmental and open to people, through tolerance, dialogue, communication, compassion, forgiveness and unconditional love.

c/ Enthusiasm, enjoyment, personal development; this includes proselytism confessing its faith and visible spiritual effects.

d/ Reform of oneself, active transformation of world by participating in social action and policies. Less cult and piety, militant asceticism.

For the second point, the gap between Catholics, we suppose that a transformation of the ecclesial structures and institutions – and, also, of some doctrines – is necessary. French Catholics could no longer afford clericalism.

**Q3:** the main difficulty lies in the lack of structures and doctrines to establish a regulation of conflicts, that is the management of diversity in Church.

### SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

A lot of public issues point out that Catholicism seems to be a minority religion in France. In fact, the churchgoers are less than 5 % in the metropolitan areas. But if the numbers actually show a decreasing trend in practicing religion, they also show that the French people maintain wide support of Catholicism. Polls as well as inquiries tell us that 65% declare themselves Catholics. The link between the two figures: churchgoers and non-churchgoers is significant. It places the problem somewhere else than in Modernity.

Certainly, a lot of inquiries and theoretical studies teach us that Modernity would have had devastating effects on religious practice, and we must accept this point of view. Medical Sciences, for example, transformed the relationship of everyone with its body. Sexuality has considerably changed after the invention of contraception. We could inventory a lot of domains where we could measure the influence of Modernity. However, the paradigm of secularization, which means a kind of loss in the relevance of religion in order to live its concrete life, pass next to the problem of the historical context and imaginary representations of the religious human subjects. How do French Catholics represent themselves in their religious membership? How do they represent the future of their Roman Catholic Church? Our inquiries tried to point to these representations, and replaced them in the context of church reorganization—dioceses, parishes, and religious actors. So, our hypothesis is that the institutional crisis of the Roman Church, in France, depends much more on the interpretation Catholics build of it than some worldwide trend, in spite of the fact that some social evolutions impact the concrete conditions for religion. At the end of the survey, we can prudently conclude that Catholicism is recomposing on the outside of the institutional and clerical frame.

In the **first chapter**, we present various perceptions of Catholic legitimacy by the Catholics. Further in social religious studies, one could have thought that progressives and traditionalists were the two main poles of interpretation of the Catholic positioning on the public scene.

We chose to reorganize the map of various catholic memberships from two main axis of understanding. The first one considers the modality of meeting God: either by inspiration (meditation, personal prayer, meeting of witnesses, bible studies, charity), or by cult and codified forms of devotion. On the second axis, we noted the modalities of implementation of faith, so to say devotion versus charity. The two axis build a graph where Catholics are situated. This graph allows distinguishing four large areas, or nebulas of attitudes, among the Catholics.

There is first of all an area of the inspired. Their faith was born in a personal and intense experience of encountering God. The main shape of their allegiance in the matrix of the faith is the perpetual quest for a deeper conversion.

There is then an area of the emancipated. Their faith has for matrix the charity to which Jesus invites. These emancipated Catholics have a big mistrust towards the parochial universe and more generally toward religious forms.

The third area is that of conciliar Catholics. Their faith has for matrix the malpractice of Jesus towards the Jewish social order. Their church must receive truth from profane world—that is, world produces even more and more marvels. They are religious because they are attached to the Sunday mass and to the parochial universe, but mass must be spontaneous and alive, not hierarchical.

Finally, the last group is that of the observants. Observants is characterized by a very great affection of the religious forms. But they also regret the lack of sacred meaning, the poverty of rites, and absence of meditation.

This graph invites us to consider interactions between all Catholics. They are neighbors for some ecclesial choices, and opponents in others.

It allows one to see that the Catholics who trust more in the future of the Church are also the ones who are the most pessimistic on the future of society. And this works also the other way around. The most skeptical Catholics towards the future of the Church are also those who are the most confident in the future of society. More finely, what emerges from investigations is that Catholics are distributed in four positions in regard to future of society and church:

The optimists share a broad trust in the future of Church, because they estimate that the world goes to its loss in refusing the truth which the Roman Catholic Church proposes.

There is then a nebula of the diligent. The current crisis of the Church is thus thought of as a moment of purification, an opportunity to returning to a more authentic Catholicism.

We reach then the nebula of the not committed. They hardly trust in the ecclesial system. They await nothing of the clergy, the bishops or the pope. They are thus for a redistribution of the powers held by the clergy to the laymen

Finally, we find the disenchanted. As regards their Church, they have faith in its message, are very attached to her, but consider that structural reforms of the institution are necessary.

In **chapter two**, we investigate the way all these Catholics build their positions in front of ecclesial (or ecclesiastical) institution. We are interested in the committed, but also in the non activists. They can be qualified as passengers because their relationship to the catholic institution is occasional. Multiple relationships to the catholic institution are thus possible. Some of them seem contradictory, and it shows a quite astonishing map of concrete modalities of membership in Catholicism.

**Chapter three** wonders about statuses and roles in the institution. Hearing the Catholics, priests are becoming strange people. Their financial status is so weak—most of them earn less than the national minimum wage—that they have lost a part of their legitimacy. The rule of consecrated celibacy, in a society which promotes sexual choice, is no longer understood. The priest is no longer a notable. Nevertheless, French Catholics still wait for “good priests”, but the definition of “good” depends on the further category they belong to. So, the priest must always invent his role, and faces competitors: deacons (ca 2,000) and laymen, who are more inserted in social life. While the paid or voluntary permanent employees are mostly women, priests don’t know or don’t want to make a better place for them in liturgy, and laymen don’t understand the monopolistic situation of clergy in that domain.

In **chapter four**, we review the answers brought by bishops and, more generally, clergy. Bishops are also caught in a pincer movement between the demands emanating from believers and their mission as guards of orthodoxy. Many bishops solve this tension by avoiding taking a stand. But believers (both churchgoers and non-churchgoers) consider this prudent posture as hypocrisy. Most laymen ask for a real possibility of debates in Church, on the government of Church. In the synods, their demand is much more a desire of gratitude and recognition by authorities of their religious and thus ecclesial skill.

One of the main responses to the lack of priests was a territorial reorganization – that means: parishes –, which is calibrated from now on for a limited number of priests. We examine two different models: the main one is based on maintaining clergy in command, the second one (diocese of Poitiers from 1996 till 2012) trying to promote a new

arrangement between providing baptismal symbolic goods (piety and sociality) and providing clerical symbolic goods (sacraments).

Bishops worked in quite easy conditions, because Catholics are afraid of dissensions which could weaken Church. All that can open a conflict is avoided by most of the Catholics. The protest moved as in a dream. Consequently, many Catholics continue to interiorize their criticisms because to carry them openly would be dishonesty, even a moral fault. That is the reason why most of them chose the Exit solution (Hirschmann).

For those reasons, **chapter five** explores the way Catholics exist in the public scene. Numerous Catholics are disrupted because the mediatization of Catholicism imposes on them a position according to problems which are not theirs and that they do not still master. The journalists, but also a part of the political class, handle the religions under the angle of prohibitions (food, clothing, sexual, moral) or with rites. Consequently, religions appear under the shape of closed communities and in opposition to the rest of the society. They seem at the same time strange and foreign to the common world. The Catholics do not master their public identity. But all the interviewees are unanimous on a point: for lack of a relevant presence in the media, Catholicism is «faceless». It's not astonishing that the media image of the Church divides Catholics. Discouragement gains before the gap between public image and real catholic life.

Four categories of believers emerge from the analysis. First, the so called «spirituals», who refuse a position with regard to the public image of the Church; for them, the future of Church depends exclusively on the personal testimony of Catholics. The moderates they consider that the image can be improved if bishops and other ecclesial authorities make the effort to take seriously rules of communication, and if the journalists agree to better understand religious phenomena. The defensive: they think that a hostility is organized against Church, which thus has to defend itself and develop such strategies as lobbying and legal procedures. The reformers: it is the Church which has to reform and to be modernized by releasing itself from a number of archaic traditions.

In **chapter six**, we extend the analysis towards the inner perception of Church. The question of ecclesial communion occurs to be the main difficulty nowadays. A quick historical survey on the past sixty years in France explains how Catholics saw their place in society modifying internal paradigms. 1960s and 2000s thus brought into conflict opposite configurations. Young clergymen of the 60's throw out soutane and try to trivialize their appearance. On the contrary, young clergymen of the 2000's put on at least a clerical collar. There is no longer internal regulation. With clergy being in the process of pronounced weakening, and

losing relevance, Catholicism divides into more and more autonomous subcultures. But the representation of Catholics in society plays a major role

Nowadays, it is then a question of breaking with the disappearance of the Catholicism. Consequently, the visibility of the most neo-classic fringes of the Catholicism increases, which contributes to hardening the polarization between the observant Catholics and the others. No structure allows the Catholics of different tendencies to meet and learn to know and to respect each other and itself. Therefore, the Catholics are isolated from each other in elective affinity networks.

Our **conclusion** is clear: elective affinities' groupings, eviction of isolated people, and consensual institution are thus three major characteristics of the catholic evolution in France. The question of conflict becomes hard to solve. How can Catholics (and especially those who are involved in church action) assume differences between the various conflicting groups in the case of the lack of clerical ministers, and thus the impotence of the clergy considered as social body. Tacit consensus is the only possible answer in a weakened situation.

But, some dynamics which emerge amongst the lay people allow us to think that agreement between clergy and baptized, could create an unknown future for Catholicism in France, provided the priests accept a letting go or transformation of the way they exert authority.

# Participation: Towards a New Theological Paradigm

Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule Vallendar  
(Vallendar, Germany)

## REGIONAL CULTURES AND EVANGELIZATION IN GERMANY

### 1. Characteristics of the relation of German culture and faith

- Traditionally, Christianity was the majority religion in Germany
- There are many areas in which religion still plays an important role
  - Importance of the reformation (ecumenism) – plurality within Christianity; emphasis on personal freedom; close cooperation between different Christian churches
  - Increasing significance of Islam
  - Increasing significance of “religious indifference”, agnosticism, atheism
  - Importance of the sciences and of philosophy (dialogue with Christian theology)
  - “Bridged” separation of church and state: Many privileges for the Catholic and the Protestant Church
  - Church taxes; state-funded Catholic and Protestant theology faculties; well funded private schools; well funded Christian social work, etc.

### 2. Its contribution to Evangelization

- The church is still an important voice in the public sphere and plays an important role in politics.
- The church is well funded (many privileges)
- There are many new “movimenti” / many very committed Christians.
  - Many local customs and traditions / strong “folk religion”
  - Criticism of narrow and one-sided perspectives on Christianity / the church
  - Relatively influential and powerful religious orders

### 3. It impediments to Evangelization

- The church is still an important voice in the public sphere and plays an important role in politics.
- The church is well funded (many privileges)

- Increasing gap between “officials” and lay people, between the teaching of the magisterium and the practices of the believers
- The church is no longer regarded a moral authority (clericalism; abuse crisis; financial crises)

### SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

We have just recently found a new focus after the initial idea (to focus on Berlin and the challenges of this particular urban context) is no longer possible or at least meaningful (until recently, we thought about the possibility of opening a second campus in Berlin; this is no longer our plan). This is why our work is still very much “work in progress”. The volume will be written in German and then be translated into English. The papers will be presented at a conference in Vallendar in the autumn of 2016.

**Heike BARANZKE: “Dignity of Creatures” and “Sanctity of Life”: Two Case Studies for Secular Stimulations for Theological Self-reflection.** – In 1992 a new legal expression “Würde der Kreatur” has been enshrined in the Swiss Constitution, which has been translated into “Dignity of Creature”. This legislative act drove law interpreters to ask theologians for support in order to conceive the concept’s meaning, especially with regard to its relation to human dignity. Do animals, plants, mushrooms and other organisms have dignity like the human being? The historical reconstruction of the motif leads back to the theological concept of the “goodness of creation” (Gen 1,31), which may stimulate a reflected theology of nature. For about five decades the phrase “sanctity-of-life” has had considerable influence in the Anglo-American bioethical discussion. It has generated the “sanctity vs. quality of life” debate, in which it has been understood as an expression for the prohibition of killing. But Christian and Jewish ethicists are wondering about this biological-medical meaning of the phrase, since they would never call physical human life holy, but only God. The conceptual reconstruction of the sanctity-of-life motif leads back to the early virtue ethical foundations of Jewish and Christian belief which lead far beyond biomedical application.

**Edward FRÖHLING: From Dionysius the Areopagite to ‘Stella Runaway’.** – This part of the PTHV-project will be a relecture of theories of transmission of faith in the context of “mystical theology”. Through centuries the mystical tradition of Christianity is dealing with the challenge to find an answer for the ongoing quest for “the unknown God” (cf. Acts 17,23) especially in contexts of urban society with an intense focus on theologically “illiterate” people. Based on the works of

(Pseudo-) Dionysius the Areopagite, Meister Eckhart, Vinzent Pallotti, Gottfried Bachl, Carola Moosbach and Uta Titz a theological concept is to be developed, that is concentrated on three main aspects: 1/ a “definition” of man as “hunger and thirst” for life and fulfilment; 2/ the conviction that the “answer” according to this fundamental “hunger” can be found in the experience of the “unknown God, being not far from every one of us, for in him we live, and move and have our being”.

God, “who gives to all life, and breath, and all things” (cf. Acts 17) is defined as “God-bread” (“Gottesbrot”; Bachl/Moosmann); 3/ a spirituality of “hierarchy” as a concept of transmission, communication and mediation which is the basis for a “magnetic field of apostolate” (Meister Eckhart) clustered round the metaphors of hunger, eating and feeding/nurturing.

**Margareta GRUBER: Noli me tangere.** – Resurrection occurs in the process of vanishing: “Do not hold on to me” (John 20,17); “were not our hearts burning within us?” (Luke 24,32). The body of the Risen eludes himself from being touched and at the same time gives himself over into the hands of his friends: “Reach out your hand and put it into my side” (John 20, 27); “he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them” (Luke 24,30). The empty tomb, on the other side, is a sign, not for absence, but for a new manner of presence of the Risen: “He is going ahead of you ...” (Mark 16,7). The Resurrection Narratives in the New Testament reveal themselves to and withdraw themselves from the reader in a similar way. They unsettle by an interplay of realistic narration and mysterious intimations of a presence which presents itself by vanishing. The presence of the Risen Christ is universal and no longer restricted to the coordinates of time and space like the historical Jesus was. This means also that the *Teilgabe* in this life shows itself in different forms of evidence and leads to different experiences. If we try to read the Resurrection Narratives like this we might discover in them a new nearness to the spiritual movement of the searchers today, who speak about their experience of God, not so much in terms of affirmation, but in terms of loss and of His being absent..

**Stefan LEY: Unity in Diversity. The Eucharistic Communion-Ecclesiology of Walter Kasper as a Model of the Church in a Secular Age.**

– The modern situation of the church in the secular age and the inquiries into the church since the time of reformation have generated the systematic reflection on the faith of the church by the Church herself. This ecclesiological reflection led to different models of the church (Avery Dulles), which can be found throughout the different Christian churches. In the Roman-Catholic Church, one of the influential models of the past decades is the so-called Communion-Ecclesiology, as it is described by authors like Josef Ratzinger, Walter Kasper and Yves

Congar, and which was declared to be the major ecclesiological idea of the Second Vatican Council by the World Bishops Synod of 1985. The article will focus on the concept of an Eucharistic Communio-Ecclesiology in the writings of Walter Kasper. As Kasper understands *Communio* in terms of participation, it is a concept which allows for different forms and levels of participation in the life of the church. Therefore it could be an ecclesiological answer to the disjunction of seekers and dwellers in the church, which seems not to be an absolute disjunction, but a difference in levels of participation. The article will consider this concept and try to show its chances as its problems.

**Doris NAUER: Loss of credibility? Why dwellers and seekers hesitate to participate in Christian Churches. Pastoral reflections about historical burdens and reclamation of credibility.** – The way in which human beings (Christians and Non-Christians) experience pastoral care is decisive about how, in the 21st century, Christian forms of community life are to be considered as credible. Dependent upon their experience, people find a home in the Church or (even as faithful Christians) distance themselves from the Church. It is therefore crucial to publicly confess wrong developments, to learn from mistakes, and to develop a credible form of pastoral care.

**Ingo PROFT: Individuation as a participatory process. On the importance of moral norms and individual responsibility in a (post) secular society.** – Society in Western Europe is currently in search of a solid cultural and ideological basis. In doing so, it has to face daunting challenges. But not only the content design and future development of a confederation of states which claims to be more than a fiscal union, indicates a search for orientation and binding standards. Where organisations and established social structures such as families, clubs and social milieus lose their binding force, the individual is also faced biographically with a normative homelessness. Not a loss of values, but a change of values or a re-evaluation of content and social standards defines the essence of a modern post-secular society. Religion and social norms are subject to a process of change similar to the design of individual life concepts. Socially, this results in the demand for an open life biography, which fashions the subject into a “director” of one's own life. However, the more the integrative function of organisations, social structures and norms diminishes in a pluralistic society, the character of a choice option assumes increasingly. The ability to make a responsible moral decision gains even more importance. The subject becomes aware of the development of an individual's life plan as one that oscillates between voluntary relationships and social obligations. This leads to a life-long process of personal self-development, which realises different forms and levels of participation in social and community implementa-

tion. In addition, such a life plan has to face great challenges with intense dynamics. The subject is referred to last essential liabilities in order to defend itself from the danger of becoming the measure of his own being. Our intention is to start from the first disjunction of Taylor, Casanova and McLean in *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age*.

**Wolfgang REUTER: Being and Becoming Christian in an Event-based Society. A Pastoral-Aesthetic View upon Christian Practices of Participation in Post-Secular Society.** – In defining postmodern forms of society as “event-based”, the discussion will turn around the context of the experience of “radical presence”. The conditions of being and becoming Christian change in such a context. That events focus on the present moment means that active participation in the Christian mission is based neither on the Jewish-Christian culture of memory nor on eschatological hope any longer. It now becomes concrete and practically relevant in the moment of transient presence. An analysis of the Easter event shows the present event character of Christianity. Participation is understood as praxis in transition and as generative of a new presence. We shall also ask if and to what extent the premises of the secularization hypothesis can be maintained vis-a-vis a practice that focuses on the present moment. It is clear that the differentiation between “seekers” and “dwellers” is no longer necessary/possible in a society that is based on events. In the relational context of an event-based Christianity, each person will play both “roles”.

**Sonja SAILER-PFISTER: To be part of and to participate in! Thinking about participation as a category of Christian social ethics.** – Participation is a much discussed topic in modern democratic societies. Participation in the decision-making processes of politics and civil society, as well as in professional and private life is very important for individual emboldened people. We want to be members of the communities and groups in which we are involved, with same rights and with the power to make decisions and the possibility to create new projects. We want to realize ourselves and to participate in important social decisions. Participation means that you have influence and your opinion is important, but it also means having the capabilities to influence social processes. However, in our success- and performance-oriented society there are a lot of excluded and marginalized people, e.g., unemployed, homeless, old and ill people... they cannot participate. They cannot enforce their rights and represent their interests. They do not have the skills to participate! The present essay, therefore, asks what participation actually means in a secular society: Is participation a category of Christian social thought and if so, what are the consequences for the churches? What is the difference between solidarity, justice and parti-

icipation? Is participation a modern form of solidarity? What does participatory justice mean? And what about the option for the poor, which Pope Francis demands? We shall confront the issues based on the capabilities approach developed by Martha Nußbaum and Amartya Sen. Moreover, we shall also discuss the approach known as the “pastoral care of the social environment” (*Sozialraumpastoral*), a practical model according to which Christian parishes are to be defined as “caring communities”, that is, as places of participation – as places of empowerment, and not of incapacitation.

**Joachim SCHMIEDL: Participation in Historical Perspective.** – Even in the Christian cosmos of the Middle Ages since Abelard, different ways of participation in Christian life were possible, in gradations and as a search movement. The emergence of Christian denominations in the 16th century made participation in Christian existence necessarily particularistic. The formation of socio-moral milieus (Catholic, Protestant and socialist) reinforced the importance of the new “dwellers” in the sense of conscious belonging to one of these large groups. Ideally, all areas of life would be influenced by the milieu; in reality, however, distinct grades can be shown. Until the mid-20th century, the majority of Catholics lived as “dwellers” in their milieu. However, up to half of these Catholics participated only occasionally and selectively. The Catholic milieu created by the means which offered him the modern society, understood itself as a part of modern society, but lived in opposition to the Church's teaching. Until the Second Vatican Council, Church and World/Society were considered two separate realms. However, with the declaration “*Dignitatis Humanae*” and the Pastoral Constitution “*Gaudium et Spes*”, the Council Fathers stepped towards a “world society” (Stefan Nacke). Since then, Popes have made clear that the future of the Church lies in models of “seekers” rather than of “dwellers”. The Church's duty in the XXI century leads it to seek opportunities for participation in the larger house of the world as well as to invite seekers into its own apartments.

**Holger ZABOROWSKI: “Participation” as a Fundamental Christian Category. Theological and Philosophical Explorations.** – This essay will provide an analysis of participation as a key concept of Christian theology and Christian life experience. It will look on biblical, liturgical, and doctrinal texts and discuss them from a philosophical/phenomenological perspective: What does it mean that Christians are “participants” and what are the implications of such an understanding of Christianity for our secular time and for the future of the Church? This theological and philosophical analysis helps to provide a foundation for the sociological seeker/dweller distinction.

# **Seekers in Contemporary Czech Society**

(Charles University, Prague, the Czech Republic)

## **REGIONAL CULTURES AND EVANGELIZATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

### **1. What distinctive characteristics of your national or regional culture are relevant to this project of living faith in our secular age?**

The troubled religious (Hussite) and political (Communist) history have left the country in a “grey zone”, i.e., most people distrust religious and other institutions and therefore the Czech society appears quite atheistic when read from a dwellers perspective.

### **2. What contribution can these make for Evangelization?**

Yet this attitude of human questioning is not unbefitting divine transcendence. This suggests a closer relation between the believer and the religiously indifferent and/or seeker and suggests the need to look perhaps less for “courtyards for gentiles” within the household of the faith than for identifying points of genuine open-minded dialogue with the secular world.

### **3. What difficulties do these entail for Evangelization?**

As the religious sensibility is thus covert and implicit it is necessary to look for the missionary possibility in the reverse side of rationalism, ideology, indifferentism or pessimism in relation to past and future, individualism and materialism, all of which can be left to continue as obstacles.

## **SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT**

**Chapter 1: Religion in Czech Society (Hošek)** – The Czech society is one of the most secular and least religious ones in the world. This chapter focuses on the reasons for the exceptionally high degree of secularity in the Czech Republic in comparison with all its neighbouring countries, not speaking about the rest of the world. A number of historical and sociological theories exist about why Czech people are so indifferent to religion, in particular towards organised religion. In this chapter I deal with the most important theories about the

historical and sociological causes of Czech secularity, and shortly describe the developing relationship between the majority of Czech society and the Church over the last two centuries, with special emphasis on the period of Austrian Habsburg empire, the post-First World War period, the forty years of state enforced Communism and the last two decades of Post-Communist history. The chapter will provide a detailed analysis of contemporary cultural situation in Czech society, especially general attitudes towards the Church, as they are monitored and interpreted by sociologists of religion in their specialised research projects. It will also discuss some of the most common explanations for the exceptionally high distrust towards the Church in the Czech context, accompanied, interestingly, by a growing interest and generally high degree of interest in alternative spiritualities. Finally, it will deal with the current (and recent) missiological activities of regional Christian churches, which somehow try to address and respond to the specific cultural situation in this country and especially to the extremely negative image of religious organisations and institutions in local cultural context.

### **Chapter 2: What is the Church offering the Seekers Today? (Halík)**

– As Charles Taylor clearly shows, we have to move from the traditional believers-nonbelievers paradigm to the new *seekers-dwellers paradigm*. Believers and nonbelievers are not two strictly separated groups. Contemporary Western person is often “simul fidelis et infidelis”. The number of those who fully identify themselves with the teaching and practice of institutional church is decreasing. The indefinite “grey zone” between traditional believers and convinced atheists is growing. This chapter focuses on this “grey zone” and on the ways the Church may respond to the needs of contemporary seekers.

The above mentioned “grey zone” is in fact very diverse and multifarious. It includes “apatheists” and “religious alphabets” (those who are indifferent towards religion), it also includes those who are attracted by various kinds of new spiritual options such as Westernized versions of Eastern religions or esoteric spirituality. Among both regular and less regular church goers (who are loyal church members though perhaps not completely satisfied with it) and people who call themselves spiritual but not religious and even among those who are radical critics of contemporary Christianity and call themselves atheists, we find seekers.

Those who focus on traditional believers and church goers tend to conclude that a society, where the number of people who identify with the churches is decreasing, is therefore becoming atheistic. But this erroneous conclusion is based on the understanding of believers as “dwellers”

The present chapter addresses the following questions: Should the church function as a comfortable home for dwellers or should it also become an open space for seekers? And if, so, how? Should its solidarity with people of our time which the church promised in the opening sentence of the constitution *Gaudium et spes* imply not only that it will be “crying with those who are crying and rejoicing with those who are rejoicing” but also seeking with those who are seeking? And if so, how?

A significant step towards a more open attitude of the church in relation to the seekers has been the new understanding of laicity (laïcité), secular humanism and modern atheism in the documents of the II Vatican council. It seemed that the II Vatican council may lead to a transition from catholicism to catholicity, a transition from catholicism as a “counterculture against modernity” towards an open-minded Christianity understood in an ecumenical and dynamic way.

During his visit in the Czech Republic in September 2009, Pope Benedict expressed his idea about the “courtyard for the nations”: the church should offer certain space for those who do not fully share its faith. The church, if it wants to avoid becoming a sect, must not care just about those “fully identified”, but it should open space also for those who do not fully share Christian faith, for seekers. The idea that the church needs to be in touch with people who believe in an “unknown God” or who just vaguely desire for “something beyond”, is very important. Yet it is not easy to resist the suspicion that behind the metaphor of the “courtyard of nations” there still operates a certain triumphalist understanding of the church. That is why in this chapter the following question shall be dealt with: Is the church today really in the position to open the “courtyard for gentiles” or is she rather sent out to humbly look for various “gentile courtyards” in order to try there to address the gentiles in their own language as for example Paul did on the Areopag? And if so, how?

Speaking about the pastoral initiatives of contemporary church we have to deal with the vision of new evangelisation. In what sense should this evangelisation really be *new* and to what extent does it also imply an openness of the church to seekers? Finally, the chapter will also consider the unique contribution of Pope Francis and the ways in which his activities and approaches may be an effective response to the needs raised by contemporary cultural situation.

**Chapter 3: A Postmodern Quest: Seeking God and Religious Language in a Postmodern Context (Kočí)** – The Church experiences difficulties in finding a new phase in the relationship to the world she wants to speak with. Charles Taylor points out that the phenomenon of seekers, and not only the phenomenon but their very presence, is rather

neglected. This chapter explores the identity of seekers and defines them as the *people of questions*. Further, the chapter deals with the following questions: What method should be applied in order to approach them? What language should be used to address them?

Firstly, I deal with the problem of language. I argue that the Church faces a double challenge in a secular postmodern context. The difficulty of communicating faith applies to both *ad extra* (in the public square) as well as *ad intra* (in the Church). I suggest that the language problems of the Church are caused by the wrong reading of the current situation through the so-called secular paradigm. An alternative reading can be found in theologians inspired by postmodern authors (e.g. Lieven Boeve).

Secondly, I examine postmodern impulses concerning the problem of religious language. I critically engage with *deconstruction* (Derrida, Caputo), *Hermeneutics* (Kearney), and *phenomenology* (Marion).

Thirdly, I turn to Rowan Williams and Tomáš Halík. After a close reading of these authors, I elaborate on the metaphor of *an unknown God* and I present it as a complementary suggestion to postmodern impulses. This results in the proposal of my own strategy in approaching seekers: the strategy *in medio*. In short, I suggest that seekers and dwellers are not polar-opposites but both share the space in the middle between belief and unbelief. Therefore, I argue for a porous identity of the Church. In conclusion, I apply this strategy on the phenomenon of seekers and argue that its use is for the benefit of both the Church and seekers.

**Chapter 4: An Unknown God of Paradox: Tomáš Halík on Faith in a Secular Age (Kočí, Roubík)** – The chapter deals with Tomáš Halík’s approach to religiosity in a postmodern context and the phenomenon of secularization. It presents Halík’s emphasis on the modern secular culture as a non-institutional, however, heterodox form of the Christian faith. Similarly to Gianni Vattimo, Halík finds secularization as a specific form of Christianity. The Church should not condemn but embrace secular culture and seriously engage with the experience of atheism and God’s silence. Following Vatican II, the Church has to “open its arms” and recontextualize its identity from *Catholicism* to *Catholicity*. The future of Europe depends on finding a dynamic compatibility between secular and traditional faces of Christianity.

From part two is paid attention to Halík’s philosophical and theological interpretation of contemporary religious situation. Inspired by Paul Tillich, Halík does not distinguish between believers and unbelievers. He prefers to talk about the groups of *open-minded* and *closed-minded* people, or more precisely, *seekers* and *dwellers*. The former remain open to Mystery, Love, and Hope. The latter make efforts

to have things, including spiritual things, under control. The faith of seekers is rather implicit and shy. This mode of faith is typical for the Czech religious situation. Archetypical figures of the Czech history (e.g. Václav Havel) were neither atheists, nor ordinary Church believers, but definitely seekers. Halík reminds us that even Pope Benedict XVI encourages an active engagement with the “twilight zone” of seekers. The Church is called to build “courtyards for nations;” i.e. places for those who are not fully identified with the Church as an institution. In search for the best fitting ecclesiological model to cope with the present situation, Halík turns to the ancient tradition of *Ecclesia communio viatorum*.

Part three deals with the figure of Zacchaeus in Halík’s interpretation. He reads this biblical story as a “parable” of the current (Czech) religious situation. Jesus of Nazareth blesses Zacchaeus and with him those *on the edges*. For Jesus, those on the edges become to be *in the centre*. Following Jesus’ example, the Church should call Zacchaeuses by name and bless them. Zacchaeuses disturb churching Christians from their religious dwelling. Zacchaeuses search, doubt and ask questions and thus shed a new perspective on faith. They teach us dwellers to see *faith* and *doubt* not as polar-opposites but as sisters. Faith and doubt need one another in order to balance one-sidedness. Confronted with Zacchaeuses, we all find ourselves *simul fidelis et infidelis*.

This brings to the phenomenon of atheism. Halík suggests his own typology of atheism. He differentiates atheism as *Weltanschauung* and atheism as a popular position. Many people say proudly: “I am an atheist!” and mean actually: “Faith is not my business.” For Halík, this is by no means atheism but *apatheism*. Atheism as a struggle with God’s silence is a religious experience *sui iuris*. It is a sort of faith but it remains incomplete. It gets stuck with Good Friday and the experience of God’s absence. For the Christian faith, atheism makes sense in the context of the Easter drama. But Christians are called to complete the story and talk about the mystery of resurrection. Atheism is not an arch-enemy of faith but rather of idolatry.

The current task of the Church is to search for a new Areopagus and the altar of the unknown God. The Church must dare to preach that God is *semper maior*. God dwells in questions. The question of God, however, was reduced to a problem in modernity. Halík favours postmodern perspectives in order to renew questioning God. He suggests that the Church should become a school of questioning based on faith, hope and love.

In an extensive conclusion, authors formulate critical remarks and suggest possible venues for further elaboration on Halík's original thought.

**Chapter 5: Kenotic Outreach to Contemporary Seekers. Missiological Considerations (Hošek)** – In this chapter the author offers a missiological perspective upon contemporary culture. In the first part, the most important cultural trends (in Czech and central European cultural contexts) of the last few decades are briefly summarized and interpreted from a missiological perspective, i.e. with an emphasis upon the changing attitudes of contemporary people towards spirituality and religion. In the following part, the most typical responses of the church are shortly presented and evaluated. In the next part of this chapter, an incarnational, kenotic theology of Christian outreach is briefly presented and its implications considered. In the following part, a missiological hermeneutics of contemporary cultural trends is proposed, based on the notion of reading the signs of the time. In subsequent paragraphs, the following features of contemporary culture (and corresponding attitudes of contemporary seekers) are shortly discussed and missiological implications suggested: in particular, the text deals with the post-rationalist, post-ideological, post-traditional, post-optimistic, post-individualist and post-materialist aspects of contemporary culture. In each section dealing with these six aspects of contemporary cultural situation, a balanced theological evaluation and corresponding missionological consequences are suggested.

# Seekers in Secular Times in Hungary

(Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest, Hungary)

## REGIONAL CULTURES AND EVANGELIZATION IN HUNGARY

### **1. What distinctive characteristics of your national or regional culture are relevant to this project on living faith in our secular age?**

Hungary as a part of Central and Eastern Europe has deep roots in the Christian heritage of Europe. After the WW II and the communist take over Catholics of the country and the Catholic Church lost their freedom and have had to learn to live outside of the public domain, discredited, discriminated and without all the former tools for pastoral care.

During the first and very hard time of persecution (1948-1956) the church saved the unity in faith and trust of the national magisterium and that of Rome. Catholics learned and demonstrated Evangelization through martyrdom. In the second wave of communist times (1956-1989), the church was no longer directly persecuted, but instrumentalised for communistic international aims. Parallel to the paradigmatical change in the Vatican as well regard the communist power, it tried to split the church into loyal and disloyal part. Church representatives and common Catholics had to learn in those times something like Catholic courage and to live with the experience of less trust and as well distrust inside the church. The fall of communistic power in 1989 brought for religion and the church real freedom in the new context of democracy and human rights and the possibility for free and not disturbed contact with the center of the Church, the Pope of Rome.

In the first stage of freedom the main aims were to stabilize church functionality in terms of law and finance and to rebuild former pastoral and missionary areas in society: public schools, media and health care. The church shared and supported governmental efforts for national sovereignty and autonomy. The experience of living in the real existing democracy made the church more cautious and sensible regarding the complexity of democracy and a free public. The freedom of different initiatives is still growing in the church and the whole church shows one multicolored face today. It is a huge challenge to find adequate ways and words in the contemporary pluralistic society and it requires intensive dialog with contemporary theology and social sciences and openness to

diverse cultural sources. The old answers of the faith are forgotten and the new questions are not yet understood.

## **2. Contribution to Evangelization**

The contemporary Catholic Church in Hungary is sure of the deep and strong resources of the Christian tradition and of the unity of the church. She holds the memoria of the Christian tradition and heritage of country's history. She feels herself responsible for a society that is post communist, liberal and consumerist. The main public statements of the CBC have more moral than societal topics. The leadership of the church seems to be less effective in Evangelization and in dialog with contemporary society than the growing number of catholic civil society initiatives and projects, inclusive in the fields of mental health. The main pastoral activities concentrate on parish life and sacraments. In some catholic parishes there is a vivid Christian life in smaller and bigger ecclesial communities, mostly in parishes where the parish priest is a member of one of the movements, like Foculari, Regnum Marianum, Catholic Charismatic Renewing, etc. Parishes offer people one sacred home in the individualistic society. In the media Catholic programs support the high culture and show the best practices for everyday lives. The church is structurally present in prisons, the army, hospitals, etc.

## **3. Difficulties for Evangelization**

Although all bureaucratic, technical and financial necessities are available for the Evangelization, there are some strong difficulties, which paralyze the missionary activities of the church, mainly on the area of attitudes and worldviews. The church was not yet accurately confronted her own history in the XX<sup>th</sup> century and the process of grieving is not yet successful. Therefore the level of the common trust in the church is rather lower than higher. Without one well-grounded clarification inside of the church no authentic Evangelization is possible. The public discourse of the church still underlines her victim status, which impedes one well-differentiated view for church and society. The other problem is clericalism, which blocks catholic initiatives from below. Clericalism in Hungary is not only the consequence of less knowledge of the ecclesiology proclaimed by the Second Vatican Council, but as well a feudal heritage. The last big problem is, that the church hierarchy lost her autonomy before nationalistic tendencies and politics. She is too close to right oriented political parties and shares their up and down.

## SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

### **Formations of Secularization: A Morphological Attempt to Prepare a Central-European Anti-communist Secularization Theory**

In the first part of the study we make a brief attempt to examine the presence of the secularization thesis in post-communist countries. Recently the relevance of this thesis, which states that secularization proceeds from an inner necessity of modernization, has lost ground. The modernization of the USA developed together with the strengthening of religion. Furthermore, since the speech of Habermas in 2001, the concept of post-secular society has been widely used. For many, it indicates the beginning of a new era, especially because sociologists who forecast the total disappearance of religion in the 1970s now tend to talk about the re-sacralization of the social world (Peter L. Berger and desecularization). This new era might give a public ground to religious beliefs, e.g. in the form of public debates.

Some people emphasize that religious belief has become an option among many (Charles Taylor), thus its epistemological value has changed, but this does not mean that just because of this we can talk about post-secular religious publicity straight away (Hans Joas). Parallel with this, the importance of religion in human society and history has attracted attention (Robert Bellah: *Religion in Human Evolution*, 2011).

The post-secularization thesis simply creates the myth of secularization in the past (because in the past religion was no more excluded from publicity than today), and under “post-secular” conditions the public communication of religious actors in public roles follows the secular pattern of argumentation, i.e. despite their religious self-definition, they do not argue on a religious basis, but along general national, historical, ethical, etc. lines.

The second part of the study is based on the above assumptions, trying to prepare an anti-communist secularization thesis in the hope that the eastern European experience can integrate into current discourses on the secularization thesis.

We discuss the questions of church publicity (E. Peterson, K. Rahner, J. B. Metz), the legitimate bias of existence (D. Wiederkehr, K. Barth, H. U. v. Balthasar) and the problems of political martyrdom (F. Wilfred, H. Maier, P. Ricoeur), apocalyptic and eschatological historical perspective (O. Fuchs, G. S. Oegema) and anamnestic culture (debates of J. B. Metz and J. Habermas). The study is built on the assumption that there can be no progress in the genesis of the secularization thesis without the integration of the experience caused by communism in people’s culture. (Ákos Kovács)

### **A Short Hungarian history of the Catholic Church (1945-1990)**

The study gives an overview of the history of the Hungarian catholic church between 1945-1990. Regarding the world political situation the study focuses on the relationship between the church and the one-party state. The 45 years of the past socialism are divided by this topic into two larger eras, and these two into shorter periods:

I. The first, active time of the church lasted from 1945-1956. These 11 years are marked by constant conflicts with the state. Through the establishment of the one-party state, working on owning and keeping all power, the communists eliminated all resistance in politics and in the society as well. With the church they encountered opposition on an ideological basis, so the aim was its total liquidation. At the beginning the catholic church refused any cooperation with the system, but after the elimination of the hierarchy (Mindenszenty, 1948 and Grösz process, 1951), they needed to make small compromises. The church was waiting, because the 11 years after the second world war entailed the chance of a political change. The Catholics trusted in a change of the world's political situation, and in the fall of the communist system (of East-Europe). This first era contains smaller periods: 1. elimination of democracy (1945-1948); stabilization of power (1948-1951); 3. total dictatorship (1951-1953-1956).

II. The passive era of the church lasted from 1956 to the 1990 change of the political system. The downfall of the revolution and freedom fights in 1956, had significant influence on the thinking of the church, about the one-party state, and the entire hungarian society. The conflict lasted only for some years, but meanwhile it changed the church policy of the system and the behavior of the catholic church. The church was more and more cooperative with the system while deep down it preserved some kind of weak and passive resistance. The one-party state also tried to decrease the conflicts (imprisonments, threats). Although the aim – the elimination of the church – did not change through the years, the way of how they did it changed and got softer. After the shock of 1956, the east policy (Ostpolitik) from the Vatican had an important role in the change of the situation as well. The sub-periods of the era are: 1. the continuation of the dictatorship (1956-1958-1961/62); 2. the Ostpolitik and its influence (1962-1971/72); 3. the period of “small steps” (1972-1989). (Csaba Szabó)

### **The perspective of “seekers” on the Church and the perspective of the Church on “seekers” in Hungary**

We consider individuals as seekers, on the one hand, if they regard themselves as such, and on the other hand, if they attempt to articulate the meaning of their lives with the help of religion, faith and spirituality.

These can be of two kinds: “*pilgrims*” and “*converts*” (Taylor, 2012). Today, a large proportion of the Hungarian society belongs to the former group, especially among young people. Desertion of the faith was accelerated by two process in society: modernization and communism.

*The perspective of the “Seekers” on the Church:*

1. Because of the absence of religious upbringing the majority lacks knowledge of religion and church which is replaced by prejudice. Our investigation confirmed that prejudice legitimated desertion of the faith. (e.g.: historical role: inquisition, traditionalism: priests giving sermons in Latin even today, etc.)

2. The unequivocal rejection of institutional expectations (rituals, code of conduct, etc) in the name of free will.

3. We can see a questioning of the world view offered by the Church, young people choose the laborious process of finding their own world view instead. They are open to any world view offered and they will choose the one that they consider authentic.

4. They yearn for a partnership with those who have a role within the Church in the name of equality and democracy.

5. Those social occasions are popular within the Church that answer to their most personal and individual issues (charismatic movements, heroic accomplishments of charismatic priests).

*The perspective of the Church on the “Seekers”:*

1. Lack of Prior knowledge of seekers is remedied by Bible classes since the change of regime in Hungary. Bible studies, theological learning.

2. Not many in the hierarchy can appreciate the seekers’ need for freedom.

3. They tend to view the seekers right to freedom of choice as licentiousness. It is seen as a negative process.

4. The desire to achieve a partnership is viewed as a threat to authority.

5. The Church, for the most part, finds it difficult to interpret the seeker’s attitude. Those personalities and movements in the Church that can develop a rapport with the seekers, can get stuck in the middle as on the one hand the seekers expect further achievements, while, on the other hand, the more conservative side of the Church would hold them back.

All in all, it can be asserted that there is a fault line between the seekers and the Church. Both parties are suspicious of each other. (Zsuzsanna Bögre)

### **Church, People and Media in Hungary**

The study the Hungarian media system presents first its legal regulations and the characteristics of hungarian public and commercial media. The article integrates two theories as a basic principle: the catholic typology of the french sociologist Hervieu-Leger (festive, patrimonial, narrative and normative catholicism) and the concept of the *numinous* as used by the american media theorist Stout. “The numinous is a broadly defined term whose application isn't restricted to the experiences of institutional religion or the supernatural... The numinous requires the following elements: deep feeling (affect), belief (cognition), ritual (behavior), and congregation (community). When all four are present in an experience with the media, audience members tend to describe it in religious terms; this is the numinous.” (Stout 2012: 6)

The author notes that the festive catholicism defined by Hervieu-Leger contains deep feeling, ritual and congregation; patrimonial catholicism contains ritual and congregation; narrative catholicism contains all the four elements; normative catholicism contains belief and congregation. The study then classifies the religious programs of the hungarian media both printed and electronic according to this extended typology.

The study, finally, deals with the question it media representation of catholicism in Hungary is more or less beneficial for the seekers or rather for the dwellers. (Mónika Andok)

### **The *pálferi* phenomenon**

Even though religious life and groups have flourished in the post-modern societies, there has been a lack of organized communities. A self-organizing movement has developed around the charismatic person of Father Ferenc Pál, with his weekly occasions attended by thousands of people from different denominational background. The lectures have started when “Pálferi” was moved from his parish and his catechism group asked him to continue with his lectures. He agreed on condition that someone from the group would take on the organizing of the events and that they be held at a neutral place, so as to allow non church-goers to feel more at ease. This has resulted in a group growing to a hundred and quickly expanding over the years. By 2010 it reached an estimated 25-30 thousand people who were familiar with his name.

There were other similar groups organized around religious leaders, but the most significant difference is the number of people belonging to the “pálferi” movement. The personal life-history made him an authentic speaker, mental health expert and religious leader and has contributed to the success of the group.

Research conducted in 2011 revealed that many assumptions about the group were incorrect. The assumption was that most of the people were young, atheist and more liberal, but the findings showed that 92% considers themselves religious, over half of these are religious according to the teaching of the church and the other half believes in their own way. The percentage of religious according to the teachings of the Church is much higher than the national average. The number of non-religious and atheist attendees are very low, however there is no significant difference when looking at the different denominations of Church, the highest proportion is Catholics. The country wide trend is that the religious population lives in smaller towns, has a lower social status and lower education. A recent trend reflected in the make up of the “palferi” events, is that the attendees are predominantly urban and more highly qualified. Two third of the attendees are female, the largest group being between the age of 25 and 34 and the second largest between 35 and 49; the largest proportion were more highly qualified and were employed. (Peter Török)



# **The Role of the Catholic Church in the Transformation of Polish Society**

(John Paul II Catholic University, Lublin, Poland)

## **REGIONAL CULTURES AND EVANGELIZATION IN POLAND**

### **1. What distinctive characteristics of your national or regional culture shape the living of the faith by your people in this secular age?**

1.1. There is a strong connection between Christianity and culture than is visible particularly in customs of religious, national and local holidays, as well as in situations of national threat.

1.2. There is a relatively strong transfer of faith in the family, with the important participation of grandparents—the oldest generation.

1.3. The religiousness has the strong emotional element.

1.4. An excess of form above contents is visible in the relatively low level of the religious knowledge and in the growing care about decorative, aesthetic elements in services. The process of aesthetization of liturgy is remarkable.

1.5. The development of religious movements and groups, the development of new forms of religiousness.

1.6. The shaping of a religious elite is seen, among other aspects, in the combination of religious beliefs with everyday life, increasing number of children in the family, stronger family bond, critical attitude towards consumption, developmental usage of the leisure time, in the concern for prayer, and in a deepening of religious knowledge.

1.7. Intensive involvement of Catholics in aid and charity activities.

1.8. A decrease of the regularity of religious observances among young people.

1.9. Selectiveness of dogmas and moral norms.

### **2. What contribution can these make for Evangelization?**

2. 1. The dissemination of the personal concept of man and social life.

2.2. The presentation of an axiology based on the essential triads of values: 1. Goodness, truth, beauty; 2. Faith, hope, love, 3. Dignity of the human being, social justice, solidarity.

2.3. Cohesion of beliefs and religious norms with the daily living: the Christian witness of life.

2.4. Portraying Christians as a happy and open to people and to world, linking novelties with the tradition.

2.5. Developing a language of dialogue and a culture of reconciliation.

2.6. Better usage of new media in propagating the Gospel.

2.7. Better inclusion of the laity into Evangelization.

2.8. Portraying the Church as an environment of freedom, dialogue and the creative action.

### **3. What difficulties do these entail for Evangelization?**

3.1. Hidden discrimination against Catholics by state institutions and mainstream media which is being manifested among others in blocking the access of Catholics to public main positions and mainstream media.

3.2. Lack of distinct authorities and a weakening or even destroying of Catholic authorities by mainstream media.

3.3. The strong consumer attitudes, that are being developed by a lifestyle of upper classes and by the media.

3.4. The concentration of interests on one's own career and satisfying individual needs.

3.5. Aggressive, confrontational secularization.

3.6. The popularization of the anti-clericalism; negative attitudes towards the Church.

## **SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT**

In European societies there are three characteristic phenomena related to religion: a/ the progressing of secularization in various forms and in different areas of life; b/ an increased interest in non-material values, the meaning of life, a renewal of religious life and new forms of religiosity, especially in the younger generation; c/ the formation of extra-religious spirituality.

The beginning of the 21st century is marked with a strong emphasis on rationalized, effective and empirical approach towards man and his activity, including the religious one. This is enhanced by the maximisation of multifaceted consumption, which is becoming more and more often the indicator of man's presence and development in the contemporary society. This way of perceiving man and his identity effectively drowns out spiritual needs and pushes them into the private sphere of

human life. Many contemporary people do not even make the effort to understand the truths of faith, accepted formerly, since these seem worthless when juxtaposed with materialism, obsession with numbers, and the expectation of immediate results. So, the presence of God in people's consciousness, the presence of religion and the Church in social consciousness and public space have become an existential and intellectual problem. Even more so the former than the latter as more people now live as if there was no God than those who are determined to reject God. For many, God still exists, but has "lost" power to influence their life choices. They achieve the goals set by themselves and judge their own actions, as well as those of other people, without referring to God. The widening gap between people's life in the individual and social dimension and the axio-normative system, based on God, is the deepest expression of the secularization of modern societies. It is becoming a difficult, or even impossible task to determine how many people function in this kind of "instability" in the particular societies of Europe, but their style of life, different from the Christian one, is a fact. Non-religiosity as a binding principle in politics and lawmaking has also been accepted by the European Union, which through constantly growing institutions exerts decisive influence on many areas of social and economic life of its member and candidate states. Liberal and non-religious politicians dominate the discussion on the shape of the future of Europe, determined to void it of values and erase all mentions of the Christian roots of European culture. Will this tendency result in making man happy? Historical experiences, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, cast doubts. Anti-Christian socialism and German national socialism did not bring about anything good, both have destroyed millions of human beings and a large part of the heritage of many generations.

Besides the secularization processes outlined above, in European societies of late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century there are symptoms of renewal and religious awakening; new forms of religiosity and spirituality are taking shape. These transformations occur with different intensity in different countries. Notions of God and attitudes towards Him are diversified, as are approaches to the religious community. Many young Christians make selections in the fundamental truths of their faith and interpret them in their own way. The selection also includes moral norms and Christian models of behaviour, which function only in the private sphere or only during meetings which are definitely religious.

Many people seek the possibility of satisfying their religious needs outside the Church, in para-religious or therapeutic groups, in lay institutions or in non-religious ways and by such means. More and more often there occurs some kind of sacralization of psychotherapeutic practices, artistic, political and economic activities and these things

become a nearly divine sphere, with unquestioned authority in everyday decisions.

New forms of religiosity in Europe are usually set in Christian tradition or a particular denomination within Christian religion. There are also forms whose core is from Christianity and combined it with elements of various religions and lay practices or are a typical compilation of beliefs and practices originating in different religions, traditions and cults, often connected with the philosophy of the Far East.

Religiosity today has many changing “faces”; comparatively uniform in the past, now it is being transformed into diversity. This is one of the most important features of the contemporary culture, based on the contemporary man’s sensitivity to spiritual matters, often reduced to intense experiences. In modern society spirituality has become an important social and cultural phenomenon and it usually has positive connotations, since it is associated with the effort of achieving a higher spiritual state, it is expressed in self-education and the development of personality, coping with suffering, striving to comprehend the world and find the meaning of life.

In the past all spirituality had exclusively religious character, now it is developed independently of any religion or even as an alternative to it, so one can be at the same time a spiritual and non-religious person. Religiosity is associated with a concrete religion, dogmas, moral norms, priests, churches, religious institutions and social organizations, with some traditional form of expression, and group practices. Conversely, spirituality is directly associated with experiencing the meaning of life and God, and with a lifestyle. Religiosity is often described as an objective and external reality, individual and social, while spirituality as something subjective, internal and exclusively individual.

The majority of people consider themselves to be both religious and spiritual, while the minority define themselves as spiritual, but not religious; for them spirituality means rejecting religion. Religiosity can be easily observed, defined, and attributed some qualities, whereas spirituality is quite difficult to define and identify. It is a new phenomenon; diverse and not much researched, but still characteristic of many individuals and social groups.

A confrontational and competitive approach to religiosity and spirituality has arisen in the culture promoting individualism, in which traditional authorities and cultural norms are questioned and rejected. In spite of the ubiquitous critique of religiosity, new religious groups and new forms of religiosity are gaining ever greater popularity while the existing ones continue. In turn, people who abandon traditional religiosity and look for something deeper than just satisfying their basic needs in a luxurious way, get involved in social activity, often share the

beliefs of believers, establish organizations which differ from the traditional religious ones only in being new.

Political, social, cultural and economic transformations which have occurred in the Polish society in the last 50 years on one hand are favourable to the secularization processes, but they take a slower and different course than in Western Europe. On the other hand, they are a challenge for religious people, who are open to a dimension of life deeper than different kinds of consumption, and seek the meaning of life. Religion in Polish society is still a widespread phenomenon, and the Catholic Church has its place there. These are the issues to which this volume is devoted to. However, it does not contain a description and comprehensive analysis of all Christian Churches and religious associations in Poland. In the first seven chapters reflection is focused on the situation of religion and spirituality in the contemporary Polish society. The authors try to find the answers to the following questions: is religion necessary for the contemporary man, can he live and develop himself without it? Do the modernization processes have to drive religion out of social life? How can religion cooperate with the so-called modernity? What are the prospects for religion in the modernizing society? (L. Dyczewski). What is the attitude of the Catholic Church towards new religious phenomena and new forms of spirituality (K. Klauza). After the chapters trying to answer these questions there is a statistical presentation of the Catholic Church in Poland as one possible positive answer (L. Dyczewski). Then, transformations in morality in Polish society are analysed, since morality is strongly related to religion, being a constitutive part. According to Christian religion God holds each person accountable, after their death, not for their beliefs (or their quality), but for how they have lived: whether or not their life conformed to religious truths and norms (M. Hułas). The next two chapters speak about the important role of a church (L. Dyczewski) and feasts (A. Sugier-Szerega) in shaping human religiosity and personality. It is also essential to observe new phenomena, which are a manifestation of a particular religiosity and spirituality in contemporary culture (M. Sławek Czochra, A. Zduniak).

The media have a very great impact on the situation of religion and Catholic Church in Poland. In the process of modernization they have developed instantaneously, becoming modernized and gaining diversity. Commercial, foreign capital media dominate the Polish media market; they are secular, mainly left-wing orientation. The Catholic press has only about 2% of the press market; it is even less in TV and radio.

What is the extent and in what form are religiosity and spirituality present in the media which create a new space for bi-directional information and communication: that is a question about the future

character of evangelism. In the apostolic times St. Paul appeared in Jewish synagogues, on the Greek agora, in Roman theatres and he proclaimed the Good News there. Today Christians have at their disposal tools of virtually global scope. They are open to such tools and use them effectively and religion, spirituality and Church issues appear not just in the so-called confessional media. Therefore, the next chapters deal with the presence of these topics in opinion-making secular press – the left-wing oriented one (J. Szulich-Kałuża), in social networks (J. Szegda), on the internet (K. Jurek, J. Kloch, M. Przybysz), in the cinema (Ł. Jasina) and in advertising (A. Duda).

The analyses presented in the present volume, completed with other papers concerning the transformations in Polish society, make it possible to formulate the following conclusions in relation to religion, in particular – to the Catholic Church and its role.

In the Polish society there is a strong connection between the Christian faith and culture, which is particularly noticeable in the customs and traditions of religious, national and local holidays, as well as in the situation of national or state threats. There is still a relatively strong transfer of faith in the family, with a large participation of the grandparents. Polish religiosity includes a strong emotional element, perceptible in elaborate forms of celebrations, which overshadow the content, which also finds its expression in a relatively low level of religious knowledge and growing concern about decorative (aesthetical) elements in religious services; an esthetization of liturgy can be observed. There is a marked development of religious movements and groups, new forms of religiosity, especially among the young generation. On this basis religious elites are formed, which is expressed in facts such as more conscious connection between religious beliefs and everyday life, the care about a higher quality of family life, a great number of children in the family, a stronger family bond, critical attitude towards consumerism, using free time for one's development, the care about prayer and broadening one's religious knowledge. There is an increasing awareness of the Catholics getting involved in charities and aid initiatives, in economic, political and cultural activities. Undesirable phenomena of Polish religiosity include: the decline in the regularity of religious practice among the young, a selective approach to dogmas and moral norms, a lack of consistence between one's behaviour and the professed moral norms.

The following tasks of Catholics in the Polish society can be considered fundamental: propagating the personalist concept of man and social life and interpreting it in a comprehensible way; propagating the axiology based on the fundamental value triads: 1. the good, truth and beauty; 2. faith, hope and love; 3. the dignity of human person, social

justice, solidarity; the care about a greater consistence between the beliefs and religious norms and everyday life, which means giving Christian witness; showing the Christian as a joyful person, open to people and the world, skilfully combining modernity with tradition; developing the language of dialogue and the culture of reconciliation; a more effective use of the new media in spreading the Good News; a fuller involvement of lay people in the Evangelization; showing the Church as the milieu of freedom, dialogue and creative activity.

The situation of the Catholic Church in Poland resembles in part the situation of other European Union countries. It is comprised of phenomena such as: a silent discrimination against Catholics by state institutions and mainstream media, manifested, for instance, in blocking the Catholic candidacies for important public posts and positions in the public media; the lack of definite Catholic authorities and weakening them through the application of the collective responsibility principle when individual cases of negative behaviours among the clergy are revealed; strong consumer attitudes, following the celebrities and media people lifestyle; focusing the efforts on one's career and the gratification of personal needs, mainly the basic ones; aggressive, confrontational laicism; propagating anticlericalism and negative attitudes towards the Church.

The tendencies outlined above, concerning the religiosity and spirituality, as well as the Catholic Church are still important, even though strongly criticised in the Polish society. They are difficult to associate unambiguously with an optimistic or pessimistic scenario for the shaping of Polish religiosity. In the historical and social perspective the Church, as well as the religious and cultural tradition related to it, seem to be one of the most long-lasting institutions. It firmly and consistently defends the moral order, the clear meaning of principles and an order based on lasting universal values. In the Evangelization perspective the fundament of religious awakening (which is often followed by pro-social and pro-citizen attitudes) is found in a spiritual experience of transformation effected by experiencing the sacrum. This is the goal of numerous activities, including those done in the new media, which reach mainly the younger generation of Poles. From the reflection of the authors of the present volume an image of religiosity and spirituality of Polish society emerges: that is diverse, multi-aspect and sometimes fragmentary. It creates a relatively good potential for further growth and brings hope that the roots of more than a thousand-year-old history of Christianity in Poland has not been definitively cut and that their life-bringing sap can, under the right conditions, stimulate the tree to bring fruit.



# The Spirit: The Cry of the World

by *Wacław Hryniewicz, Lublin, Poland*

1. Christian Churches undergo today a serious crisis as they face, on the one hand, a growing secularization of society, atheism gaining followers and, on the other, new types of religiosity and spirituality inspired often by non-Christian traditions. There also appear strong doubts about the institutional dimension of the faith and, at the same time, about institutional religiosity as such. But the crisis brings also new opportunities and chances. It compels us to a continuous conversion. Instead of speaking complacently about *being* Christians today, we have to humbly admit that we *become* Christians during our whole life.

In my book I am constantly returning to the biblical idea of Christ's kenosis, applied and extended also to the person of God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the kenotic Guide for a pilgrim people of God. Thus one can combine **the two leading insights of kenosis and epiclesis**. They are guidelines in my research and direct all the reflections as the **twofold central principle: the one kenotic, the other one epicletic**. Kenosis means self-limitation and self resignation. Epiclesis is the invocation of the Holy Spirit to come down and transform our life. Therefore it is the eloquent expression of **human cry for help, enlightenment and transfiguration**. The Christian hope finds in this way its support in the person of the divine *Paráklētos*, the Counselor and Comforter.

The faith in God has come again through a powerful philosophical criticism. It has to face more and more the challenges of modern times and of a new experience of the world by many people. The modern mentality has been strongly influenced by the Enlightenment period. How can we reasonably speak about God today? What does it mean to be in search for a vision of the kenotic God? It seems that until today theology has not been able to cope successfully with all the difficulties in confrontation with modern philosophy. Here lie also some deep roots of the present crisis of the faith in God. In the face of a "new atheism", a serious question arises concerning the possibility of a new thinking about God today.

2. **Our Christianity has to become more paschal, i.e. more modest and less triumphalistic, more kenotic and epicletic**. The paschal mystery of Christ is the very core of the Christian message of hope. The drama of the Cross is a drama of human freedom. The freedom of humans crucified Jesus. God respected that freedom, but has manifested himself victorious. The greatest crisis in the world's history has found its divine and unexpected solution. The history of human

freedom is dramatic. In spite of this God has proved to be stronger than all the forces of evil. For this reason Christianity will always be drawing strength and inspiration from its eschatological hope whose ultimate source is Christ's resurrection and the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Are we able to discern some main features of a more paschal and pentecostal Christianity? How to understand its truly paschal, kenotic and epicletic dimension? In the reflections of my book I try to outline **a vision of the church in search of the kenotic God, the kenotic Christ and the kenotic Spirit**. This is a vision of the church more sensitive to the kenotic, paschal and pentecostal ethos of Christianity—a vision of the Church more friendly to people, closer to the poor, open to dialogue also with those who do not believe. How to reach those now abandoning religion as something obsolete, delusive and harmful?

“The Poor” today are especially those who have lost hope and the meaning of their life. Who loses hope, deprives himself or herself of joy which gives us strength to live and work. The wisdom of the Bible reminds us of this: “Do not mourn or weep (...). Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Ne 8:9-10; NIV). The new Evangelization is addressed to everyone, but above all, however, to those who lack joy in faith, light of hope and feeling of the meaning of their life. For this purpose one has to reengage the lay people in the church, re-evaluate the role of women and of all able and willing to promote the work of the Spirit at the roots of the secular culture.

I share the view that the most sensitive and difficult aspect of present problem of faith in this secular age is the critical situation of the Church itself, to which I have devoted a large portion of my reflections. The serious work lies before us to become in the new situation more effective bearers of the Gospel message. We have to proceed with **search of the Spirit in his kenotic presence in the world**. This is the search of ways of his patient and hidden working in the hearts and minds of people. **God's Spirit with his creative inspiration is the great cry to be heard in the world**.

A human life, even in the state of fall and guilt, is an expectation of the divine Spirit, an invocation which manifests itself by an unaware longing for belonging, beauty, good, harmony and peace. Without presence of the Spirit human life easily becomes prematurely burnt out, wasted, confused and complicated. It finally destroys itself and casts its shadow on life of many other people.

**Our human life itself is a constant cry to God, an invocation of the Holy Spirit**, the Giver of Life. It is a universal cry of the whole world, of the entire creation. Although transcendent and sovereign, the Spirit is present in every human being. Transcendence and immanence do not exclude each other. There is no contradiction between them.

Through very existence, even if fallen and miserable, each person can constantly invoke the Creator, often without being aware of it. I am inclined to think that there exists a special sort of **ontological epiclesis**, i.e. voiceless and wordless invocation, but equally real one. As epicletic beings, the humans are able to call God's Spirit from the depths of their confusion and spiritual misery. A ruined life, the experience of emptiness and meaninglessness, lost hopes, suffering, disorder, and death can become such a dramatic calling. No human being can clearly identify the voice of this wordless and voiceless call. This is only the privilege of the Holy Spirit who penetrates the innermost recesses of the human heart and spirit. Each person's invocation is always accompanied by a call coming from within—the call which the Christian faith identifies with the voice of the Holy Spirit.

3. Some contemporary thinkers speak about the transformation of a "hot religion" of the beginnings into a "cold religion" of modern times. The apostle Paul expected a different, redeemed life. For him the Christian religion was a very hot question concerning the whole of human life. Then began the process of refrigeration. The original concrete world of faith was slowly explained in abstract, psychological, symbolical and ritualistic categories. The original belief in Jesus Christ, in redemption by his death and resurrection, in the descent of the Holy Spirit, and consequently also in the afterlife in God's Kingdom, was cooled down with the help of reason and to a large extent individualized. Very often God has been reduced to a harmless and indifferent reality.

A striking fact is that even today some Christians often avoid speaking about God as "person", but instead use such vague expressions as a "divine or blessing force". All said in my book presupposes that God is more than only force, power or energy. In fact, we have no better concept to describe God's nature than "person". This concept is much more complex than mere power and energy. Person remains in a dialogical relationship both with others and with oneself. As persons we humans develop, mature and have our own history of life. We can address ourselves, be in love, have compassion, forgive and correct ourselves.

Of course, in speaking about God as person we should not fall into a naïve and anthropomorphic projection. The concept of "person" is an image, but in matters of religion we have no other way than to think and speak using images. Without this image it would be impossible to discover in God such features which cannot be otherwise recognized. Saying that God is a personal reality is a necessary and wise anthropomorphism, which should not be dismissed in religious language. Christian hope for the resurrection and everlasting life is only then comprehensible when there exists the personal God. An impersonal

energy has no memory and can nothing promise. In our Christian vision God is faithful to his promises of salvation in the ultimate future.

This is possible only through belief in the personal God. Only such personal God can be in a kenotic way present in the world's history. He addresses his rational creatures and they can address him. The belief in him changes our existence from a solitary monologue into a living dialogue. I believe that also my life is a dialogue. I believe and try to answer honestly his call. Even in his silence one can patiently find out a delicate trace of his kenotic presence.

In our modern culture one has from time to time announced even the disappearance of religion, diluted by the secularization process. But secularization may be also a strong challenge, a chance of renewal and revival. When new atheists attack religion as delusion or superstition, Christians should not react aggressively against their polemics. A serious philosophical atheism is a real challenge to our search for God. Many open questions put today by unbelievers are also our own questions. Some wounds inflicted on faith cause a great deal of pain today too. Our believing self-consciousness has to be accompanied by patience and modesty. We know from our own experience that doubts are often a part of our personal faith as well. One has to learn from our mistakes committed in the past, and in our human weakness to give a wise and credible witness to the living God in words and actions.

4. In reality, the event of Jesus' death has proved that we have to do with **God who can retire and diminish himself**. It is not an intrusive and troublesome God who disturbs and annoys people, who is in constant rivalry with humans in the history of the world, depriving them of their freedom and dignity. Instead of commanding he invites to the relationship of reciprocity. In order to leave to us the space of freedom he confines his omnipotence. Not ceasing to be almighty, he is able to become, in a certain sense, also "all-weak".

This is one of the great paradoxes of the Christian faith. According to an outstanding Russian religious philosopher Nicholas Berdyaev, God is in some respect weaker than a policeman on the street. It is not God who overpowers people. Calling the world into existence, he exposed himself to the risk of freedom of choice on the part of his rational beings.

In this way we come back to the biblical idea of kenosis, applied above all to Christ's self-emptying and self-diminishing: *εαυτὸν ἐκένωσε* (Ph 2:7). This is an unusual intuition! It speaks about God not the language of perfection and fullness, but recurring to the category of emptiness, resignation, privation and self-belittlement. The divine fullness does not exclude the ability to become diminished and reduced for salvific purposes.

God does not order. He invites to a relationship of reciprocity. To leave the space of freedom, he limits his own omnipotence. In a sense, not ceasing to be all-powerful, he can become all-powerless. Here the words of St. Clement of Alexandria come true: “The Savior is polyphonic (*polyphónos*) and acting in many ways (*polýtropos*) for the salvation of people”.

In the majority of religions believers usually connect the concept of God with the idea of absolute fullness and perfection. The fullness excludes any lack, imperfection and weakness. On the contrary, the idea of a kenotic abasement and belittlement expresses a certain state or condition freely chosen. Christ has humiliated himself and deprived himself of the due divine glory, in order to be close to people and share a dramatic feeling of abandonment and nothingness.

Such interpretation of Christ’s kenosis discloses **an unusual depth of the divine intention** and plan of salvation. Indeed, the fullness implies richness, abundance and might. Instead the freely chosen condition of emptying oneself and diminishment expresses, in the case of Christ, his unconditional love and will to meet humans in their real life, the desire to be as people are. The work of redemption was carried out by Jesus in humility, weakness, love. The liberating love of God is a self-emptying love. The salvific *kenosis* of Jesus implies a negation of self-centeredness and self-interestedness. It means the disinterested dedication to the salvation of all.

There is a clear mystic touch in this approach. It means that God can transcend himself by the inverse movement towards humanity. This is not God in his absolute fullness and power who would overwhelm and amaze people by the greatness of his majesty. He becomes, so to speak, the humble and self-effacing God. The truly paschal God, able to expect our free answer! Remaining incomprehensible, he leaves thus a free space for human freedom. **His silence has a very profound meaning.** Being able to diminish himself, God can expect free answer of his creatures. Being incomprehensible in his goodness, he leaves free space to human freedom. His silence has also a deep salvific and pedagogical sense. The divine kenotic plan manifests itself in a paradoxical way.

One can discover here a certain continuity of similar thought in the Jewish idea of the divine *tzimtzum* developed in the mystical tradition of the medieval Kabala (*Kabbalah*). According to a Jewish mystic Isaac Luria, God the Creator “contracted” his infinite light to make room for the miracle of creation. In this symbolic story he filled huge glass vessels with the brilliance of divine light of existence. But the light was so brilliant and powerful that the vessels could not hold it. They shattered into innumerable fragments across the world. In gathering again the broken fragments consists the work of redemption.

Such is **the paradox of divine transcendence and vulnerability**. The mystery of redemption completed through Jesus Christ in humility, weakness, dedication and in full extent of love (cf. Jn 13:1), continues to be carried out without destruction of human freedom. It is not God full of glory and power, but the kenotic God diminishing himself who is the greatest appeal to our human freedom. This vision is a basic dimension of Christian paschal theology.

The liberating love of God is love able to assume a truly kenotic shape of humiliation and self-resignation. The salvific kenosis of Christ is a visible denial of self-concentration. In it manifests itself the greatest disinterestedness and dedication to the task of universal salvation. Only God who discretely participates in the history of the world and in human sufferings can be of much help to all of us. Iniquities, crimes and sufferings of humanity reach the very depths of God. The Father of Jesus Christ is no cold and indifferent deity, but a loving Person able to be compassionate and to initiate intimate relationship.

In the drama of self-humiliation, self-abasement and belittlement of Christ one can discover a reflected light of the beauty of God's nature, free of any narcissistic concentration on itself. The true beauty is inseparable from genuine love, outgoing concern and dedication to other people's good. The identity of Christ, resulting from his divine nature, was opposite to any rapacious possession of his own glory and dignity. He has retained the truly divine ability of self-limitation of his might and greatness—all this for the good and salvation of humankind. **The courage of God's self-effacing love is astonishing indeed!** The truly divine beauty of Christ's attitude had to pass in earthly time through the real drama of self-humiliation, weakness and silence. It is, however, the beauty which will in the end triumph.

The truth contained in the kenotic vision of God has a lasting significance for the whole Christian existence. The drama of Christ's kenosis which took place in his total self-offering and dedication will remain till the end of time an imperative for the church, a spiritual challenge for every believer, and an urgent appeal for forgiveness and reconciliation. The kenotic attitude, understood as disinterested ability of self-resignation and self-limitation, judges our churches, all symptoms of ecclesiastical egoism and self-complacency, all our divisions and narcissist self-sufficiency.

5. I am well aware that so often can be heard the **unspoken cry and torturing question of many people: "Do you hear me, you silent God, you unknown and distant God?"** This cry arises above all in the situation, when God's silence and lack of his direct intervention in front of evil and affliction so easily become – for a distressed and suffering person – a cause of hopelessness and doubt about his existence and his

love towards humans. The history of humankind not rarely seems a long train of God's silence, felt as a sign of his absence among people, in spite of all the promises and consolations offered by religion.

Why does God keep silence? It is one of the loudest cries of all inhabitants of our planet. This is also one of the most difficult questions we ask during our life. It reminds above all of the dramatic cry of the crucified and dying Jesus himself: "**My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?**" (or: deserted me?"; Mt 27;46). This is **the loudest cry addressed to God in the human history**. It seems that these words express in the deepest way the mystery of the hiding God. A Jewish theologian Pinchas Lapide, who knows well the secrets of Jewish mysticism, has proposed a different translation of the cry of Jesus: "**My God, my God, to what [purpose] have you forsaken me?**" This translation differs significantly from all which are well known. In its light the cry of Jesus ceases to be a sign of despair and resignation. It becomes a prayer. It becomes a dramatic question of all people.

One should not forget that the experience of Jesus' forsakenness occurred, when the free human will had come to a negative and tragic decision about Jesus' destiny. *Fiat voluntas tua, homo!* Let your will be done, people! Jesus' cry in the solitude and darkness of the Golgotha will be heard by all generations of humanity. Cry, questions and confidence are inseparable.

Perhaps it is **in questions that are expressed our deepest and most fervent prayers**. There are indeed such good and pertinent questions that it is useless to spoil and invalidate them by hasty answers. Perhaps the deepest questions may become a prayer. In our theology we got used to offer too many overhasty answers, whereas it was rather time and place for questions and thoughtful meditation. Many of our answers seem to wait for becoming again questions. Are we ready to go on asking patiently such questions about God's silence and his hiding presence? Can **the silence of the hiding and self-emptying God** become for us an illuminating truth? Can it tell us something important, independently of our cultural and religious differences? These are some of my questions. I believe that it is possible that God does not speak to us only through his word, but also through his silence; not only through his closeness but through his distance and hiddenness as well.

It is precisely here that **mystics** can offer a valuable hermeneutic key which allows to understand the challenge of contemporary experience of God's silence. Mystics speak about "the dark nights" of the spirit on the road towards God. It is a very powerful symbol which could be applied not only to an individual human life, but also to the history of humankind and of the divided Christian Church. There are indeed periods of time when God seems to absent himself, to recede

from human perception and to keep silence in face of various historical dramas and tragedies. This experience can be understood as **a collective night of the spirit**. It comes close to the description of the time, which in Nietzsche's terminology was an epoch of the "death of God", an era of nihilism.

The silence of Holy Saturday may serve as a paradigmatic symbol for every situation of human hopelessness. However, the lesson of the mystics should not be forgotten. In spite of the state of forsakenness they remain confident that God speaks also in the darkness, in all personal and historical situations of crisis. **God's silence constitutes an integral part of His divine pedagogy**. God himself accompanies people through difficult experience of hopelessness, division and disunity. He gives a chance to grow, to purify our concepts, images and representations of Him. He remains close to every human being. Both personal and historical dark nights of His silence may become a difficult lesson of inner freedom and courageous confidence in His unfailing love. These may become the crucial moments of our spiritual maturation. One has to leave behind the world of infantile religious representations and external marks of religiosity. The process of transformation and maturation is painful. One must cope with pain and grief in a patient work on them (*Trauerarbeit* in S. Freud's terminology).

6. Also the **mission of the Spirit** has its divine kenotic plan, aiming at the salvation and transformation of the whole world. Such a mission, similar to the mission of the Son, presupposes the necessity of kenosis, because it is by its very nature a kenotic act, although realized in a different way in the case of the Son and the Spirit. The kenosis of the Holy Spirit has not been revealed to us with the same clarity as the kenosis of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless it results from the very fact of the Spirit's saving mission in the world, who reveals Christ, but himself remains always in the shadow. In my reflections I often refer to inspiring insights of a Russian Orthodox theologians.

**The kenosis of the Spirit consists in his self-limitation in front of a created freedom and its inertia.** "If love is also patience united with humility – wrote the Russian Orthodox theologian Sergii Bulgakov – then the Person of Love, **the Holy Spirit manifests himself here as Patience and Humility**". Using figurative biblical language one can say that his grace, although irresistible by its nature, stops and waits at the door of every human heart.

It is indeed a striking fact that Pentecost as the descent of the Holy Spirit is usually not considered as a new great event in the history of salvation. But in fact it was the promising beginning of a long process of transformation of the world, which will continue to the end of human history. Once begun, it continues in the world, tending towards its final

fulfillment. The continuing Pentecost leads the world beyond its empirical appearances to the eschatological fulfillment in the forthcoming age.

The kenosis of the Spirit – acceptance of non-fullness by the Fullness – is a reality hardly comprehensible for the created beings who experience only non-fullness, and see merely the process of becoming and growing. But it is the kenosis which characterizes the participation of the Spirit in the existence of creatures. So the boundlessness of the Spirit's Fullness has to be communicated in measure and kenotic limitedness proper to non-fullness, unavoidable on the part of a creature receiving the divine gift within its own process of growing. The kenotic way of the Spirit's communication with the world leads from his initial "hovering over the waters" (Gn 1:2) to "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rv 21:1), when God will say: "Now I am making the whole of creation new" (v. 5).

This is **one of the most striking sides of the Spirit's kenosis in the created world**, of his voluntary self-limitation adapted to the measure of openness on the part of rational creatures. The power of the Spirit finds no obstacle even in their sinful self-determination. They exist thanks to the Spirit-Creator and this gift will not be taken away from them. This applies to the devil and his angels as well. They will not be deprived of the grace of existence by the power of God's Spirit. This grace acts also in hell, even in the state of hellish Satanism, because hell is a special way of life and being, and not of non-being and absolute death. Here I touch already the eschatological dimension of the Spirit's kenosis and his transforming power.

**The end of the kenosis of the Spirit will be also the end of the kenosis of Christ** in human history. It will happen when the Kingdom of God will be accomplished in the whole creation, and God will "be all in all" (1 Co 15:28). Using various symbols, the prophetic texts of the Bible speak about the final victory of Christ and of the Spirit, about the universal transformation and renewal of the world (cf. Rv 21:1-5). The power of Pentecost in the world of nature and in humankind transcends limits of our temporal history and directs it towards life of the coming age. All has been done on the part of God to accomplish this great cosmic Passover.

Pentecost is an event with long-lasting consequences for the destiny of the world, but an event not yet fully accomplished. The Holy Spirit has no concrete human face or other visible image. His inspiration simply changes human life and continually directs it towards the Gospel of Christ. Human face touched by his grace manifests then in the best way his acting presence. The activity of the Spirit knows no boundaries. **The different modes of the kenosis of Christ and the Spirit are**

**intertwined** and connected with each other in bringing the reign of God nearer.

7. **The Church** lives by continually invoking the Holy Spirit. Doing this she admits her own weakness and poverty in the face of God. In this sense the epiclesis is **a constant cry of the Church and, through her intermediary, of the world**. For this reason one can speak about an epicletic dimension of the whole church existence.

To invoke the Holy Spirit is a sign of our total dependence on his transforming power. **The epiclesis is indeed a cry of the Church and the world in need**. This confirms also that human person is an epicletic being, able to invoke the Counselor and Comforter in order to save what is most valuable in our humanity. That is why the epiclesis and its role in the church is closely connected with the idea of her kenosis.

In his exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* pope Francis many times refers to the Holy Spirit and invokes him. The epiclesis is a central category of the whole existence of the church. She is by her nature epicletic and, at the same time kenotic, because of her total dependence on God's grace and mercy. **Epiclesis is a sign of kenosis**. The understanding of the church in the light of the epiclesis prompts to treat seriously her kenotic and ancillary form.

In his interview accorded to a Jesuit periodical "La Civiltà Cattolica" pope Francis said: "I see clearly, that the thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see **the church as a field hospital** after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. **Heal the wounds, heal the wounds**... And you have to start from the ground up."

There is an urgent need to return to the kenotic ethos in Christian theology and spirituality, especially in reference to the issue of papal primacy. In the exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* the Pope has struck a very personal tone in this respect: "Since I am called to put into practice what I ask of others, I too must think about a **conversion of the papacy**." He urges all of us to cross boundaries. One has to take into account **kenotic challenges of women in the church today**. Their cry continues to be heard.

8. The contemporary **ecological crisis** is a fact which threatens with the destruction of nature and life on earth. The technology of exploitation on the part of industrialized societies assumes terrifying dimensions. Life on great surfaces of nature is slowly dying out. Whereas forests die—rivers, lakes and seas are poisoned. A ruthless and arbitrary dominion of people over nature serves immediate interests of

human greed. We are already witnesses of a sad harvest of destruction of life. The progress becomes an instrument of death. Where should we seek rescue? Does the wisdom of the Bible inspired by God's Spirit have a sobering word to say in this situation?

The present state of nature arouses deep concern and sense of co-suffering with its destiny. Christians cannot remain indifferent to the work of its destruction. They feel prompted to do something not only out of general human motifs, but also because of some important religious reasons. After all, it is their firm belief that God is the Creator of heaven and earth, "maker of all things, visible and invisible". What we need is a profound *metánoia* in the very way of thinking and conduct towards natural environment. Selfish and destructive behavior is marked by sin and guilt. One has to recover **the lost sense of responsibility** for harm and injury inflicted on creatures by an irresponsible conduct.

Those who speak about **our collective amnesia** of the destinies of nature are right in this regard. We inhabitants of the small planet Earth do not realize that the whole of non-human life forms an integral part of our human community in pilgrimage to new creation. We are who we are, and who we will eventually become, thanks to the larger community of living creatures and to inanimate nature. This situation is a serious challenge to Christian churches and their theology. One must urgently **search for a new attitude towards the world of Nature**.

All the more one should appreciate many **ecumenical initiatives** launched in the last decades by the World Council of Churches (WCC). An urgent appeal of Christian churches to safeguard God's creation, although heard already during the fifth general assembly of the WCC in Nairobi (1975), assumed a concrete form during the sixth assembly in Vancouver (1983). The question of justice and peace was closely linked with care for the destiny of nature. This was the beginning of a long term conciliar process called *Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation* (JPIC).

The JPIC program found a large resonance in particular churches and became an object of ecumenical reflection and common action. In consequence the main issue dealt with during the 7th General Assembly of the WCC in Canberra (1991) was formulated in a truly Epicletic call: "**Come, the Holy Spirit, renew the whole creation**". The Giver of Life has to be continually invoked to help us to safeguard his creation. We should **not remain deaf to this dramatic cry of the whole nature**. In turn, Let us **allow nature to teach us humility!** The kenotic Spirit of God guides us towards rescuing the integrity of creation. The very idea of *kenosis* would mean in this context a real turning to the earth in sympathy and genuine *metánoia*. In consequence one has to recover neglected virtue of humility and allow nature itself to teach us a

necessary lesson. For this reason especially Orthodox theologians speak in deep intuition about the sacramental character of the world. The world of nature created by God is sacrament of his hidden presence. Only humans are able to receive from God the gift of creation consciously, with thanksgiving.

In this way we can come back to an old wisdom contained in **Christian pan-en-theism** (*pan-en-theo*—all in God), which should be clearly distinguished from pantheism (all is God). **Through his Spirit the Creator is continually present** in the deepest structures of matter and life of all creatures. Through his Spirit, the giver of life, he participates in their lot, co-suffers with them and rejoices over their welfare.

In this regard the words of St. Paul in Rm 8: 19-27 are among the most significant for theological reflection on the world of nature. Cosmological motifs are connected in this text with anthropological, soteriological and pneumatological views. The Apostle speaks not only about waiting of the creation for “the redemption of our bodies” (v. 23), but also about its subjection to “frustration” and “bondage to decay” (v. 20-21), and about **the “groans” of God’s Spirit himself** that words cannot express (v. 26). Because Christians hope for “the glory that will be revealed in us” (v. 18), they feel even more painfully the present sufferings.

This is a powerful stimulus to further reflections on the **kenosis and epiclesis of all creatures**. The Apostle does not interpret the passing away, frustration and vanity of the present shape of nature in metaphysical terms. He uses messianic, soteriological and eschatological categories. The One who subjected creation to frustration and vanity did it in hope that once it will be liberated from its bondage to decay.

What is common to the whole creation is **the kenotic state of enslavement and waiting for liberation**. In this respect there exists a full solidarity of humanity with the rest of creation. We, human beings, are able to suffer together with nature and hope for liberation.

In reflecting on the cosmic text of the apostle Paul about the whole creation in the state of kenosis I have tried to emphasize its pneumatological dimension. **God’s Spirit intercedes not only for people but also for all the creatures in their groaning and longing for deliverance**.

The enslavement of nature is its **voiceless cry amidst suffering**, nearing the one of humans. Solidarity in the expectation is solidarity in suffering, which is something that concerns also the Creator. God’s Spirit takes part in the suffering of his creatures. It is he who sustains

hope, longing and waiting of the whole creation by his own “groanings that words cannot express”.

The power of the Holy Spirit, however, cannot fully manifest itself in temporary history of the world, as long as **the kenosis of the Spirit still lasts in the whole creation**. There is a deep sense in thinking of cosmos in kenotic and pneumatological terms.

9. The entire cosmic evolution is open to a new reality in which death will be definitively overcome. God wants to gather together in unity his scattered children (cf. Jn 11:52) in the new world. Easter and Pentecost constitute a real beginning of the transfiguration of the whole cosmos. **The cry of the world has already been heard**. Yet the divine definitive answer is still to be expected. It will come unerringly and we all shall be greatly surprised and astonished. This World in Its Present Form Is Passing away.

Reflection on the *Parousía* cannot be limited to the person of Christ alone. It requires to be extended also to the Holy Spirit. Like the other events in the history of salvation, the *Parousía* is in fact the work of the whole divine Trinity. The second coming of Christ is its new revelation to the whole world.

It is certainly true that theology neglected to take into account this double character of the *Parousía*. The reason of this fact is that the Holy Spirit has no truly personal revelation in this world. In his divine discretion he vanishes, dissolves himself as it were, in his transparency, hides himself in the glory of the Father and the Son. Only in the *Parousía* he comes with the glory and in the glory of the Son. The biblical description of the *Parousía* is an image of hope. **God's Spirit will bring also human culture into the kingdom of heaven**. Every invocation of the Spirit becomes thus an eschatological epiclesis. That is why the Christian attitude is never an ascetical negation. It is an **eschatological affirmation**.

I am convinced that God's Spirit can raise a great amazement in honest people who seek truth and good. The verification and still greater wonder are left for later on in the Great Beyond. Now I can only become an echo of the ancient prayer already mentioned: “Let Thy Spirit come down on us and cleanse us!”

10. Reflecting on kenosis I have often referred above all to Jesus Christ who “emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave”. It was he who said to his disciples: “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” (Jn 14:6). So he is, by the power of the Holy Spirit, our Guide on the way of our Exodus into the unknown. Our faith, hope and love, as T. S. Eliot, the great poet of kenosis put it wisely in one of his poems, “**are all in the waiting**”. The *kenosis* of Christ and of the Holy Spirit has a

permanent significance for the whole Christian existence, for particular churches, individuals and for the work of reconciliation in the world. *Kenosis* understood as disinterestedness, self-limitation and confidence judges our churches, our separation, our ecclesiastical egoisms, our self-centeredness and self-satisfaction. Both christology and soteriology teach us that we are followers of Jesus Christ and belong to him, the Suffering Servant who emptied and diminished himself for us humans and for our salvation. The salvation and transfiguration of the world can be achieved at such a high price.

From religious point of view today's world is marked by plurality of faiths and truths. This fact is a serious challenge to Christian identity, stressing the central role of Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit to whom we owe the variety of historical experiences of God's presence and gifts in the history of humankind. Today we are more and more conscious that **all human truth is open for the ultimate, eschatological fulfillment.**

The idea of *kenosis* applied to the Holy Spirit may be difficult to accept and understand. If we feel obliged to be patient with God, **let us also be patient with his Spirit who on his part is infinitely patient with us.** His cry has so often been overlooked and neglected. The history of Christianity and humanity as a whole bears an eloquent witness to this.

The true Christian faith is inseparable from tragic moments, pain and uncertainty. To believe means to be on the road, to experience the times of weakness, crisis and silence of God as well. In this sense **our faith will always be a wounded one.** Quite often it is wounded also by the church itself with its resistance to the new insights, stubbornness and lack of understanding the signs of times.

**11.** A kenotic theology whose main features I tried to delineate in this book as the guiding principle should help us to regain a fresh look at our urgent tasks both in the church and in the world. The kenotic vision of the church requires at the same time the continuing invocation of the Holy Spirit. The necessity of invoking the Spirit of God results from our human situation marked by indifference, guilt, hatred, aggression, divisions and spiritual impoverishment.

Kenotic hope sustains us in the midst of present difficulties and especially in the loss of all possibilities. It gives energy enabling to survive. Hope for a transfigured existence requires imagination which refuses to accept the status quo as the only way to live. Both of them defend us against the despairing. They remind us that the Holy Spirit is on our side as "another *Paraklētos*", the divine Comforter, Counselor and Defender. There is no human cry in the world that would be alien to him.

Kenosis implies epiclesis. The Spirit is indeed the unceasing cry of the world. *Let us listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches* (Rv 2-3). He truly is the kenotic guide on our pilgrimage to the new world.



# **Dilemmas of the Church in Poland**

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## **REGIONAL CULTURES AND EVANGELIZATION IN POLAND**

**I)** Often the following characteristics are mentioned as distinctive features of Polish religiousness:

a) It is the religiousness of the folk type, revolving around ritualized and collective forms of religious practice. It is traditional and sentimental. The religious attitudes and beliefs of people are focused on religious experiences and emotions and not on rational reflection. The doctrine is less important than communal and individual experience.

b) Religion tends to be seen as automatic perpetuation of a family and community tradition. It is superimposed with powerful sense of unity existing in the community. Approximately 80% of Poles establish their view in the family environment and uphold it later in life. Religion is a cultural obligation, an element of a family ties and part of a family and community style of life.

c) The institutional authority of the Church among the people is a heritage of the past history. The Church has stood always together with the people in the heavy days and not with the political power. An essential component of society is trust. Religion and Church involve trust, because they are seen as honest and express in symbols and rituals the norms and values to which the society attribute the highest importance (for example the common good, freedom, justice).

d) The religiousness of Poles is linked to patriotism.

e) The individuals refer to God's will and not to God's wisdom

**II)** It seems that the mentioned characteristics of Polish religious culture are similar to the religions in some African countries where the Catholic Church is developing and to the countries of South America, where religion and folk Church of Pentacostals is becoming more popular.

Evangelization must be connected (tied) with solving of particular practical problems of regional communities- social, moral, economic and spiritual. Church must help to keep the people together and cooperate to achieve goals important to the people. Less important is adequate theological knowledge and dogmas. The people are more keen on learning about connections between faith and life.

**III)** Evangelization of the folk type religion is difficult to manage in the Western countries, where there are problems with families and communication in communities. The families have stopped transmitting of moral and religious values and rituals. Often in this context the idea of Church of choice is opposed to the folk Church. In the West this opposition explains to some degree the emerging phenomena of departure of believers from the Church- but not in Africa or America. Individualism and choice of religion may result not only in atheism or laicism, but also in taking up responsibility for oneself and other community members in a search for a suitable form of religiousness and sense of life in community. The problem is, how to revive the family life and sense of communal Christian culture?

#### **SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT**

We live in a world of unprecedented social, economic, political, cultural and religious changes. In some regions and countries changes accelerated more than in others in the last decades. In the region of Central and Eastern Europe they are particularly notable. The fall of the totalitarian system has caused the transformations of all spheres of collective and individual life in this region. But the transformation of religions has specific features. In the western countries the process of rapid secularization take place from 60 of XX.C. In Central-Eastern Europe in the first decades after the fall of communism the number of believers has gone up by a few or a few dozen percent. Increased political significance of religion and its presence in the public sphere has also been noted. Churches made attempts at regaining the social status from before communism. They aspired to make religious identity a constituent part of national identity. But in the last years there are phenomena, which weaken the traditional religions and their social and political position. The religious life in some societies in this region starts to resemble the religious life in western societies. Public and personal morality is detached from religious morality. The number of clerics studying in seminars is decreasing and the same is true of the number of priestly vocations. Political democratization and liberalization forces traditional churches to implement internal democratization; however, they are not always ready for this process.

Religion is most important in Poland, mainly owing to the Catholic church. More than 90% of Poles admit to still being Catholic and about 40% regularly attend Sunday services. Catholic church played the most fundamental role in the fight against communism. After the fall of communism the Church, aware of its social power and authority, started public activity and aimed at the introduction of the standards of religious

morality in public and political life. But the present situation of the Church in Poland is paradoxical. On the one hand the Church became the basic social institution, capable of exerting influence upon the society, government, and politics. It is a force based on tradition, customs and beliefs of people as well as on the doctrine and fidelity to principles. On the other hand the Church is weakening due to some external and internal factors. The former are in the sphere of public relations, and can be described as politicization and pluralisation. The strong position of the Church in the society is a temptation to use it for political purposes. The Church exerts influence on legislation and politics. In this spirit it campaigned against abortion, homosexual marriages, euthanasia, capital punishment, pornography, in vitro fertilization etc. But the people are against the involvement of Church in political life and imposing religious morality as the basis of legislation. The latter are internal in the Church and could be described as demoralization and lack of democracy. Believers now often reject not only Church political activity but also Church authority. They are critical of the hierarchy, its way of life (especially sexual scandals and materiality) and its authoritarian style of teaching. Privatization and individualization of beliefs are processes which are taking place within believers. Personal morality, and particularly sex life, is the sphere with most individualization. In Poland two-thirds of Catholics could be called as “unknowing or knowing heretics”, because they accept only some dogmas of the Church. In this sense they do not belong to the dwellers or seekers.

The volume contains nine articles about the actual and important religious issue. The authors present on the one hand the description of the religious' situation in Poland and in the world; on the other hand they try to formulate the issue and theses theoretically and normatively.

All articles refer in a way to the disjunctions stated by Charles Taylor. The first article presents the attitude the students to the Church on the basis of sociological research, as the model for the tendency present in the Polish society in general today. The next four papers concern the problem of dwellers and seekers and stress especially the need to find a new language, which opens the Church to the people and to dialogue in a time of accelerated cultural and scientific transformations. Three papers concerns the issues of the status of body and the sexual life in the Church's doctrine today and in the past. The last one analyzes the opportunities and obstacles in the ecumenical dialogue with non-Christian religions.

Maria Libiszowska-Żółtowska in the study “Why are they leaving? Students say ‘no’ to the Catholic Church. Analysis of Empirical Study Results” presents the opinions of students about the Church. She states, that increasing number of students are losing the emotional ties with the

Church and stop considering the Church as a community of faith. The aversion to the Church and priests is rising in recent years, but does not discourage the young people from God. The relationship with God, however, acquires a direct and individual dimension. It is a form of private faith which distances itself from the model of Church religiousness. The Church as institution and the clergy are gradually losing the confidence and authority for the young people. They search for spirituality outside the Church. What is more, young people become their own authorities on matters of faith and morality.

Rafał Nizinski's paper "Alternative Forms of Spirituality and the Role of the Catholic Church as Spiritual Guide" interpret their personal experiences being the active members of many social groups and movements. The Author notices a paradox – many famous artists in Poland are very sensitive towards problems of contemporary society and interpret them in terms of moral values and norms crucial for religious morality (love, justice, honesty, ethos), but are critical of Church and do not believe in God. The Church treats them as aliens. According to this author the Church should support these artists, because they preach moral goods to people who do not want to listen the Church. This way the Church could have a chance to offer society the moral teaching and this way to influence society. The Church should adopt a similar attitude to other unbelievers (philosophers, economists), if their views are somehow compatible with the general outlines of the Christian revelation. The paper describes the author's (as a monk) cooperation in the environmental movements, birdwatchers and sports. The activity of unbelievers represent their secular spirituality. It is a sign of God's influence, if they strive towards goodness, rightness and peace. Priests should contact them and cooperate to help honest lay people to reject their prejudices regarding to Church. In the context of these considerations the Author suggests that the gap between sacrum and profanum is not so wide as the institutional Church presupposes.

The fascination of the young people with eastern religions is explained in the paper as the means to escape from materialistic life and anonymity, which are also present in the Catholic Church. The Church should also practice in parishes the spirit of contemplation. Parish life should become more open for the honest people looking for the orientation in their life.

The paper explains the degradation of the moral authority of the Polish Church by mentioning two factors: hostility of the media and public reciprocal criticism between various factions within the Church. But the deeper reasons for this situation is a lack of democracy and internal dialogue inside the Church (between bishops, priests and lay people).

Jozef Majewski in his paper "The Church in the Media Age" describes the role of media in the process of the return of religion to the public sphere. The Catholic Church in Poland usually treats the media as a threat and in fact media have become the religion of our time and fulfill several typical roles of religion: interpreting the world, being the arbiter of importance and truthfulness of the news. They create the specific spirituality offering participation in the virtual lives of the heroes of television. The public media are critical of the Church and religion. They reduce traditional religion to entertainment or to obscurity. There is not place for the sublime, invisible, eternal, goodness. Democratic systems and present-day media contribute to the increased importance of individualism and subjectivism in the sphere of religion too. Religious spirituality commercializes and becomes eclectic and hybridized. Oftentimes the image of a transcendent God is rejected for the sake of Divine immanence.

But the Church should be conscious of the role played by media today. Mass media are not lifeless instruments, which could be used to communicate any news and available for both good and evil uses. Media and religion are two of the many sectors of culture, which incessantly overlap, interact and change. Today the language of media has a dominant impact on popular culture and religions must take it into account. Therefore the Church has to change the language to be open to problems, concerns and questions of the seekers and believers in the contemporary world. Living in the media age religion must adjust to the technical, stylistic and formal demands of media. The Church must accept the new conditions of its activity. In Poland the Church is going to be more and more conscious of this situation. The new Catholic media (television, radios, newspapers) are created, but they are still not sophisticated enough to compete with the laic or secular media.

Aleksander Gomola's paper "Conceptual Disjunctions as a Challenge for the Church: a Cognitive Linguist's Perspective" analyzes the language used in the liturgy and preaching suggesting that it plays the crucial role in affecting people's attitudes, especially of the seekers. The language used in the Church in Poland is out of fashion. The Christian thought is not able to present itself by means of conceptualizations that will correspond with the worldview of natural sciences and the individual and social experience of both believers and seekers. The author concentrates specially on the old conceptualization of God understood as Father. He explains that God as Father metaphor is a derivative of the patriarchal Jewish culture where father was seen as a live-giver, protector, and one who decide about life and death of the members of his family. Today this idea is alien to many cultures. Mother plays more important role than father in families. Therefore the conceptualization of

God as Mother loving the human beings is more familiar to common experience and more acceptable by people. This conceptualization was developed in the feminist movements. According to the Author it is justified in the Bible and Matthew Gospel (23,37).

Przemyslaw Strzyzynski in his paper "Problem of Authority of the Catholic Church in Poland" explores the crisis of the authority of the Church after the fall of communism in Poland, showing that it is not the same kind of crisis as in Western countries. Despite the collapse of some of the authorities in the last two decades, the Church has retained a considerable degree of social trust. The problem is whether this trust could be kept in the future. The author underlines that the Church should aim to improve the level of religious communication and education. The need to justify religious faith is particularly urgent, considering that the religiousness of the young generation will not be as strongly supported by the transmission of family traditions as before. Authority can no longer be constructed on the foundation of references to the martyrological history of the Polish nation and the myth of the Catholic Pole. Claims to holding an institutional or moral authority just because of being a priest may turn out to be ineffective. Reinforcing the authority calls for certain prerequisites: financial transparency, keeping the vow of poverty, sufficient response to sex scandals among priests as well as a reasonable media policy and a shift of focus from human faults to God's love. The future authority of the Church depends on the perception of the Church by contemporary young people. The parish should be the area of potentially meaningful contacts and informal relations creating identity. Priests however focus primary on the fulfillment of their obligations towards the Church as an institution instead of creating community, because they do not know how to attract believers and unbelievers. In seminaries there is no place for discussion and reflection, but authoritarianism prevails.

Tadeusz Buksinski in the article "Contemporary Moral Issues in the Light of Gospel Teaching" states, that in the Gospels normative ethics is relative to the moral consciousness of the people. Specially two kinds of ethics are mentioned: one for the followers of Jesus (more severe) and other for other people. He seeks to answer the questions if the contemporary proposals to change the moral doctrine of the Catholic Church (by accepting divorce, extramarital sex, homosexuality, paedophilia, abortion, euthanasia, in vitro fertilisation, women holding the positions of priests) could be justified in the light of ethics for the followers of Jesus. Jesus sees divorce as acceptable in the case of adultery or promiscuity of the spouse. But the term "porneia" is quite equivocal and its connotations are, to a certain extent, culturally motivated. Therefore there is an area of indeterminacy to this question. What is more, the

marriage requires some preconditions such as being adult person of sound mind, responsible for one's actions, having a reproductive capacity. If the preconditions are not fulfilled the marriage is not valid. Jesus never directly confronted the topic of homosexuality, however it can be surmised with good amount of confidence that he took negative view of homosexual marriage and regarded them as a serious violation of God's fundamental moral norms. Jesus provides the marriage with a metaphysical dimension and imposed on it the duty to continue the act of creation. It is evident that all other types of sexual relations (paedophilia, zoophilia) are also condemned. Jesus spoke very harshly about those who hurt or harm children.

The status of women deserves a separate review. Women did play a major role in Jesus' public life and teaching. They were always present among the followers of Jesus and travelled with him. Gospels do not contain any explicit arguments why woman should not enjoy equivalent status and hold similar positions to men in the community of believers, and hence in the contemporary Church.

The Gospels contain no direct references to abortion and euthanasia, and the position of Jesus on the two issues can be inferred from his general outlook on life and his principle "Do not kill" (me foneuses). Therefore suicide is a forbidden act. Abortion may be deemed acceptable or unacceptable depending on the definition of a human being and on establishing whether the embryo/foetus satisfies the defining criteria of a human being, and if so, at which moment during pregnancy this happens.

Dariusz Dobrzanski in his paper "Theology of the Body and Requirements imposed by Technicization of Human Corporeality" describes the status of the body and problems of human sexuality, especially homosexuality in Catholic Doctrine. He states that a full exposition of the issue is included in the Pastoral Constitution "Gaudium et Spes". Popes Paul VI and John Paul II repeated in their encyclicals the view recapitulated in the mentioned document. "The Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics (Persona Humana, 1975) and "Catehism of the Catholic Church" explain the problem of homosexuality more broadly. Homosexual practices are presented in them as a grave depravation and a sign of personality disorder, but they underline that people with homosexual tendencies must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. The author stresses that there is no unanimity among psychiatrists and scientists about the causes of homosexual orientation and possibility of reparative therapy. Most of the scientists do not believe in the therapy. Dobrzanski suggests that the sexual orientation is not a value in itself, and is not a factor determining salvation. Therefore the Church should direct to the homosexual

Catholic words of mercy and forgiveness and assure peace through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Łukasz Tischner in his article "Excarnation: A Rebuttal" refers to the idea of excarnation presented in Charles Taylor *A Secular Age* and in the poetry of Czesław Miłosz. The author accepts the idea, that in the past the concept of excarnation played the positive role in religious life, freeing the people from gods understanding according to human pattern of behavior, it means doing good and bad things. In the process of excarnation the spiritual life was disembodied and placed "in the head" and God was conceived as causing only goodness for man. But this tendency went too far in the history of religion and philosophy. As a result the role of the body was ignored. With this process the idea of God's incarnation became one-sided and was falsely interpreted. The author proposes to establish a new balance between the body and spirit, between excarnation and incarnation. Taylor proposes the concept of agape to reach this aim. Łukasz Tischner supplements the concept of agape with concept of hope. Jesus Christus as God who become flesh makes possible our lived experience based on love of particular persons in particular situations and hope, that this activity will be good without referring to universal ought (as some modern philosophers stress). The way the senses are represented directly in the sphere of the religious experience and could express the specific Church self-awareness.

Włodzimierz Wilowski's article "Problems of Ecumenical Dialogue between the Catholic Church and non-Christian religions" discusses the problems rising in the debate between Catholics and representatives of eastern religions, especially Zen-Buddhism. The author analyses the documents and instructions announced by the Holy Office. These admit from one side the will to unite all Christians and will to continue dialogue with non-Christian religions, and from other side points to the more or less urgent problems rising during the dialogue. If the focus of dialogue is solely on similarities, the discussion leads in the direction of accepting the thesis that all denominations and religions are a manifestation of one and the same faith. This approach could not be acceptable by Church because it infuses the Church with elements (symbols and signs) of other religions and creates the impression of equality of all denominations. This way it negates the message of the Christian Churches as the road to salvation. If the dialogue concentrates on the differences then the representatives of each religion demonstrate that their religion is universal, absolute or better than other religions. Therefore it should play the function of a common basis for many (or all) religions. They use their own religion to criticize the different elements of other religions. These theses in the article are justified by interpretations of the theological discussions held between Christians,

Buddhists and Taoists at the Kyoto Symposium in 1985. The experience of interreligious discussions and dialogues justify the opinion, that it is impossible to understand fully the other religion without its practice and giving up some essential elements of one's own faith. Therefore it is better to replace the word "dialogue" with "encounter" as Hans Waldenfels suggested.



# **The Romanian Culture and the Living of the Christian Faith in the Age of Secularisation**

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## **REGIONAL CULTURES AND EVANGELIZATION IN ROMANIA**

1) The Romanian culture has more than one feature. Seen from a larger perspective, as the assembly of various practices of living in common, the Romanian culture is a rural one. Until five decades ago, this type of culture was the dominant one. Now it controls the life of the Romanians in different proportions: to a very large extent the life of the Romanian villages, to a significant extent the life of the Romanian towns and cities, and in a lesser degree the life of those living in Bucharest. For me, Romania consists of three “Romanias”: the Romania of the villages, the Romania of towns and cities, and the Romania of Bucharest.

The rural world is made up of small communities which inter-act very little with one another and rely on practising an agricultural type of economy often at the level of subsistence. The village, and inside the village the family (the household), are autarchic units, within which all that is necessary for the maintenance of its members is provided. The pattern of these communities is imposed by the major agricultural cycles and by the tradition understood as a sum of practices learnt by each generation from the previous ones and dully repeated in a stereotype manner. This dependence on the major cycles of nature results in the presence of a certain degree of paganism or pre-Christian religiosity, impossible to eradicate as a whole and which, at best, could only be incorporated in the local forms of Christianity.

Because in the context of an agricultural type of life (exposed to dangers of all kinds: meteorological, entomological, epidemiological etc.) solidarity becomes vital, because of frequent international conflicts (Romania is located at the interference of several former great empires), because of the phenomenon of endogamy (due to which there are family ties established among most members of the village), integration in one's community cannot be but very deeply rooted. The most visible effects of this integration is the community character of religiousness. Their cult practices are in the first place practices (feasts or rituals) belonging to the whole community, with all the villagers taking part, as

the reiteration of these cultic rituals represents a guarantee for the stability of their world. Hence, two major features:

First, practising one's cult within the community allows a great uniformity among its members and, in the same time, emphasises more the exterior forms of the cult (mimetically divided), rather than one's interior faith. Therefore, the traditional Romanian religiosity is one eminently depending on the forms of cult and, consequently, a less internalised one. This explains why the Romanian context lacks a true problematising of the religious, with the exception of the interwar generations and of the more recent ones which are being influenced by the religious debates in the West.

The second aspect is related to the land conservatism particular to this type of faith: only the minute repetition of the cult rituals guarantees their efficiency, especially with the so-called "passage rituals" (Baptism, Wedding, Burial). This devotion towards the passage rituals explains, at least in part, the stability of the Romanian rural culture. Actually, after the surplus of rural population began to be absorbed by cities, those who left the rural medium (especially after 1948), having left behind their communities and the implicit obligation to observe all the rituals pertaining to these communities of their own, gradually developed a somehow shapeless type of religious identity. In only one generation, religious belief passed from the status of practice assumed within one's community to that of a subjective alternative option. At this stage, if possible, culture in its other meaning, that of written culture, aims to retrieve the spirit of religiousness from the outside, i.e. in an educated / intellectual manner.

From an institutional point of view, the Romanian State is secular. The first modern Constitution of Romania was adopted in 1866, being inspired by the Belgian Constitution from 1831. Since then, the State has guaranteed everyone's freedom to exercise their own faith. However, the Romanian Orthodox Church occupies a special place, being known as the "National Church". Despite various laws having a secularised character, Romanian morals did not become secularised. The vast majority of our population remained loyal to the religious discourse and symbols. At the present moment, the State doesn't have a secularising ideology, but rather a nationalistic one infused with religious values. The first systematic attempt to secularise the society took place during the communist period: numerous clergymen and lay faithful were persecuted, arrested and sent to prison, where some of them did not survive; religious symbols were forbidden in the public space; religion was no more taught in schools; the religious cults were marginalised (the Orthodox cult), tolerated (the Roman-Catholic cult), or forbidden (the new Protestant cults). Still the Romanian Orthodox Church has never

separated itself officially from the State. After 1989, this was a vigorous come back of the national ethnic religiousness within the public space. Religion is again taught in schools, where icons are freely displayed, especially Orthodox ones. Pilgrimages and public processions, with a large attendance on the part of the population, are organised in towns and cities or at famous monasteries and sanctuaries. The Romanian Orthodox Church feels that its presence in the public space is legitimate as long as it adheres to the ideology of the national State.

2) The relevance of these features in the realm of evangelisation could be summarised in the receptivity of the population to the religious discourse and to the Christian values and symbols. One can notice a certain spirit of religious tolerance in the Romanian culture, when compared to other neighbouring cultural spaces. Being the result of various ethnical and religious mixtures, the Romanian culture has a natural tendency towards synthesis and flexibility. If left uneducated, this tendency can favour the acceptance of altered moral principles, such as opportunism, chameleonism, cynicism etc. If the Romanian cultural features are fructified, evangelisation should in this case be open, liturgical, spiritual and personalised.

3) The gradual disappearing of the rural world is accompanied by an accelerated de-christianising of the Romanian society. At this point, two issues seem urgent: the first one is to find the proper way to a religiosity of an urban type (suggestion: diverse religious formation according to age and education); and the second would be to identify certain resistance strategies against the challenges of post-modernism (suggestion: exercising the fascination of the sacred, good and truth in the light of the Holy Scripture based on biblical figures). Other important aspects could be: how to protect the religious sphere and especially the Church from the influence and attraction of politics; how to purify the religious discourse of its ethnical connections; how to discourage the local spreading of superficiality in living one's religious identity; how to fight against the consumerist spirit (suggestion: liturgical catechesis, personal and within the community, and the generous practising of solidarity).

### **SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT**

During November 22-23, 2013, the Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology, University of Bucharest, with the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy from the Catholic University of Washington D.C., organized an International Conference on "Faith in a Secular Age".

Secularization is a complex spiritual, cultural and socio-political phenomenon, constantly expanding in some parts of the world through mass media and globalization. It involves a specific mentality and life style, with virtually no reference to Transcendence. To some, secularization is synonym with the “death of God“ announced by Nietzsche and other modern thinkers. To others, secularism is a banishment of faith, a radicalized freedom, where truth is rendered relative and material wealth praised, while the quality of human interaction is neglected and fundamental human values are degraded. In a secularized context God is no longer referenced in the public discourse of former Christian communities, and the inherited values of Church’s tradition are no longer important. Many Christians seek and improvise new ways of living, and authentic faith is no longer at hand. Some get scared and some even give up hope. Yet some regard secularization as a providential challenge to be dealt with optimistically and bravely, and seek new ways to bring their faith and scriptural values up to date.

Generally speaking, the approximately sixty participants in this conference focused their main attention on the sources of secularization: the political ideologies of the last two centuries, globalization, the Church’s self-secularization following the Second Vatican Council, liberation theology, the philosophy of resentment, etc. But seen from inside, the participants were divided in two parts: one part tried to explore fresh directions in conceptualizing faith as well as in living it in a secularized context, so that faith can cease to be further diluted and can be authentically and integrally experienced; the another part dedicated their contributions to the project “Disjunctions between Church and People“, a project initiated by Ch. Taylor, J. Casanova and G. McLean.

The papers discussed by the last group of scholars are included in this volume. The authors are eight professors working in different Universities, Churches and Christian communities of Romania. The volume is divided into two parts. The first starts with the presentation of the Disjunctions between Church and People within the Roman Catholic Church in Bucharest. In order to understand this spiritual and ecclesiastical challenge, another three papers introduce us to the Romanian religious context which is dominated by the influence of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The second part continues the discussion already initiated in the first part and conducts us on the ways of what “secularization” could mean within the Romanian religious construct. The volume ends with an epilogue. The author of this final paper tries to say in a personalistic way and according to the phenomenological method that the priest plays an important role regarding the relation between Church and People.

**Part I. Disjunctions between Catholic Church and People within the Romanian Orthodox Context**

Chapter I, “Wellness“ in Religion, a Way of Emptying Churches?, by Wilhelm Tauwinkl, helps us to jump directly into the Roman Catholic Church from Bucharest, and to gain an idea about the level of the disjunctions between Church and People from the local point of view. His contribution is based on interviewing 100 young people aged between 18-30, practicing Roman Catholics in the parishes of Bucharest, who were asked to answer questions regarding the frequency of religious practices, basic religious culture and catechetical knowledge, adhesion to the Church official teaching of faith, ethical views, attitude towards the Church, and the motivation of religious behavior. By analyzing the answers, he concludes that the group of practicing Catholic young people reveals the emerging buds of three types of disjunctions, which will probably manifest themselves in the future, if pastoral work will not succeed to take measures: disjunction between the present-day religious convictions and Tradition, disjunction between the clergy and the faithful, while the disjunction between the Catholics and the rest of the population is only partial and may disappear in time. The break with Tradition is already manifesting itself by the fact that the motivation of the young people’s religious behavior is, to a large extent, based on some sort of religious “wellness”: peace of mind, the nice feeling of being “OK”, taking interest in common activities with other young people. All these are good in themselves, but not specifically Christian. A motivation based on “feeling” can disappear any time, for instance, the moment the young people will be able to satisfy the same (spiritual) needs elsewhere than in their Catholic parishes, this would lead to an emptying of churches, wherein only those having strictly religious motivations, such as eternal salvation, will remain. For Wilhelm Tauwinkl a solution would be to reconnect catechesis and Christian formation to the Tradition of transmitting faith, based on Scripture and its interpretation by the Church Fathers and Doctors.

Chapter II, “Contradictory Sign of What is Missing: A Narrative of Romanian Postcommunist Religiosity”, by Violeta Barbu, starts with an analysis of the high level of religious practice among the Romanian people and the question about the “binding agent” of the present-day Romanian social, political and religious construct. From the outside, this construct seems to correspond to a pattern of post-secularization. Within the horizon of this pattern, the religiosity of Romanian Christian believers is shaped by the tradition and liturgy of the Romanian Orthodox Church, therefore we could speak about it in terms like “ethno-religion” (David Martin), neo-Durkheimian religiosity, “social

sacred” (Charles Taylor), or “vicarial religion” (Gracie Davis). From the inside, the Romanian post-secularization phenomenon has numerous advocates and few critics. The advocates differentiate between the level of the public life of the Romanian Orthodox Church as institution and the level of the individual beliefs and behavior. The critics underline that the Orthodox Church in Romania has had in the long run a history of difficult relationships with modernity and is responsible for the tardiness, the delay, the resistance or the passivity shown by Romanian society to modernity. So, the “binding agent” is the Romanian Orthodox Church that has passed unaltered through the transition from communism to democracy. After 1989 there was put into practice a new strategy meant to assure a re-enforcement and a stronger legitimization of the Orthodox Church within the public space. Finally, Violeta Barbu asks herself whether it could possibly constitute a wall against secularization. The history of Romanian transition shows that to be possible. In fact, in more than two decades the Romanian Orthodox Church succeeded in reshaping itself optimally according to the new democratic order, while retrieving and gradually consolidating its presence within the public space.

Chapter III, “Coming Back to Religion. The Imaginary Visit of a French Canadian to Today’s Romania“, by Gabriela Blebea Nicolae, challenges all of us with an important question: how was it possible to build or to re-build in Romania, after 1990, so many churches, monasteries and religious educational institutions? One church in 15 was built after 1990 and the number of new monasteries is equal to that of monasteries built between the 13th century and the beginning of communism. Even though the above data refer only to the Orthodox Church, the same holds true for the Roman Catholic and the Greek Catholic Churches. Following immediately after 1990, religion was introduced in primary and secondary education. Indeed, religious education (regardless of denomination) nowadays has faculties, seminaries, colleges and schools in an exponentially higher number than before the fall of communism. By all accounts, this is a picture of the “return to religion”. For Gabriela Blebea Nicolae this “coming back to religion” could be a “compensation” effect for the communist period during which churches used to be demolished, though many of them were “invaluable monuments”. Then some old churches were demolished and the construction of new churches was forbidden. But does the “return to religion” involve an authentic engagement of faith or it is just a compensatory effect of the communist restraints? Unfortunately, no “correct” answer can be given as long as *believer identity* is only determined from the inside. As external observers we can only judge if someone seems to be a good or not so good believer than our own standards dictate. The abundance of

pilgrimages to read "acatiste", to touch the relics of saints or to meet the *charismatic priests*, all goes to show that Romanians, especially Orthodox Romanians, put their trust in God. But except for these punctual moments, when the power of miracles seems to be the strongest conviction related to faith, the average Romanian's life does not seem to be cadenced by the rhythm of faith. However, the identity of a believer is something that Romanians hold dear. It is a valorizing identity, most likely deeply rooted in history. Because of this, the respect shown for the clergy was until recently beyond any criticism. In recent years, especially through the voices of sociologists and political analysts, priests have been removed from divine protection and their gestures have become a subject of public debate.

Chapter IV, "Becoming Secular? Dynamics of Teaching Religion and Ethics in Central and Eastern Europe: A Comparative Study Focusing on Romania", by Rodica Bigu, tries to explain how the fall of communism re-installed Religious Education (RE) into school curricula, and the secularization affecting Western Europe shaped the way in which religion was taught in Central and Eastern Europe in the last 20 years. While a complex puzzle of factors has to be taken into account when evaluating the different approaches concerning RE in Central and Eastern European countries, there has been a development, the paper argues, towards limiting RE in public schools, and thus the role of religion in public life. This trend can be seen both as a reflection of a West-imported secularism and of a more preeminent role assumed by local civic societies, developed in these states after the fall of communist regimes, in the debate concerning the place of RE in public schools. The paper identifies and discusses two features of that perceived trend in several former communist Central and Eastern European countries: the widespread optional character of teaching RE and the study of ethics as an alternative subject to religious instruction. Still, challenging this secularization trend, one can also notice signs of a different approach in an Orthodox-dominant country like Romania, where religion is taught in a confessional manner without offering an alternative subject. Rodica Bigu is thus concerned to place Romania into the broader Central and Eastern Europe context of teaching RE in public schools, while also analyzing the particular cultural, social and historical context that gave way to the specific formula adopted for religious instruction in public schools.

## **Part II. "Secularization" and Public Religious Life in Romania**

Chapter V, "Is Nationalism a Form of Secularization for Orthodoxy?", by Gelu Sabău, follows the hypothesis of French author

Olivier Clément, according to which nationalism is a form of secularization of Orthodoxy. But the starting point is the analysis of the three meanings of secularization proposed by Charles Taylor and the discord between Taylor's sense of the significance of secularization and Romanian religious realities. Two hypotheses regarding the impact which modernity had within the Romanian religious life are inquired into by Gelu Sabău: 1) given the way in which state and Church relations are built, once the modernization of the state begins, the Church becomes an instrument of consolidation of the national state; and 2) religious nationalism is stimulated in modern Romania, thus becoming an important ideological instrument and a vector of national identity. As introduction to the first hypothesis, Gelu Sabău has drawn a short history of the evolution of the relations between state and Church during three important periods for Romania's modern history: from Alexandu Ioan Cuza to the First World War, the interwar period, and the communist period. During Cuza's reign, the bases of relations between Church and state were established in modern Romania, but after the Union from 1918, a compromise was reached between the model of the relations between state and Church from the Old Kingdom, and the one from Transylvania. Regarding the second hypothesis, GS has looked into the relation between religious nationalism, Orthodox space and modernity, starting from the theory proposed by American political scholar Philip Barker. Although religious nationalism is not specific to the Orthodox space, Gelu Sabău has considered that in Romania's case religious nationalism became stronger during the modern era. This aspect means that for Romanian believers, the religious nationalism was, simultaneously, a paradoxical form of adaptation and resistance to modernity.

Chapter VI, "Secularization under Communism. Romanian Legislative Measures", by Marius Silveșan, focuses attention on the legislative measures taken by the communist regime in Romania (1948-1989), which minimized the role of faith in public life. M. Silveșan distinguishes "general legislation" which did not have specific religious environment applicability, from "particular legislation" which did. Specifically, in the first category he includes the three constitutions of the communist regime in Romania (1948, 1952, 1965), education law, the Criminal Code; in the second one, the general law of religious denominations, the religious denominations statutes drawn up under the supervision of the "guidance" of the State, the organization and functioning law of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Decree on organization and functioning of the Department of Religious Affairs, as well as other decisions unpublished in the Official Gazette or the Official Bulletin. The most important secularizing laws were the regulation of religious services in 1952, a decision aimed at reducing

religious service in evangelical or protestant denominations (Adventist, Baptist, Brethren, Pentecostal). No doubt the decisions regulating religious life, the assignation decision affected other churches too, not only evangelical churches known as neo-protestant, but M. Silveșan underlines their effects on the religious life of neo-protestant peoples.

Chapter VII, “The Impossible Secularization“, by Mihai Maci, sustains that in present-day Romania, secularization is impossible, because it is not ahead of us, but behind. But this spiritual and religious process is complex and two decades after the Revolution of 1989, Romania seems to be a secularized society as in the West. All surveys affirm the exaggerated trust that the population has in the Church, but neither the religious knowledge, nor the attendance at the services reflect this trust. The impression that the data generated is that people excessively exaggerate the value of the Church, as much as they draw away from it. In order to understand the way that the Romanians relate to the Church—particularly to the dominant one in number: the Orthodox Church – M. Maci considers a short history of the relationships between that and the State in the Communist time and in the decades that followed. After this historical analysis, he tries to offer a panoramic view of the evolution of Romanian society in the last century and to underline the impact of the related social mutations had over religiosity manifested in public life. In short, this paper gives an overview of the forms that secularization manifested in contemporary Romania. Its perspective is social in that elements of anthropology and sociology are combined with religion and psychology of peoples.

### **Epilogue**

“The Priest’s Temptations and the People’s Escape from Church“, by Wilhelm Dancă, offers a personal reflection on Disjunctions between Church and People, focused on the role played by the priest in relation to God and people. Following the phenomenological method, the paper starts with an overview of the local ecclesiastical context, where there emerge three important challenges: the problematic meaning of priestly ministry, a great importance given to the governing structures, and the materialistic pressure to reduce the role of the spiritual life. In this context, the Catholic priest is the preferred object of some old and new temptations. The old ones are known, but still relevant in our context: the temptation to minister in a way that serves his own interests, clericalism and democratism. The new ones are inspired by Pope Francis’ *Evangelii gaudium* of which three have special importance: relativisation of priestly identity, isolation from the people, and embracing a spiritual worldliness. In response, there are two ways: either

to resist through prayer, meditation, conversation, spiritual friendship, dialogue, or to escape from serving the Lord or from the people, and find refuge in political life, as very often happens. Behind the priest's escapes is the main root of all temptations: the neglect of a relationship with God. From the beginning to the end, the paper is intended to confront two figures of relationships with God: Jonah who ran away from the face of the Lord, and Job, who, after having himself revolted against God, came to peace with Him. The main goal of the paper is to propose to priests and their supporters to choose Job's style of life and his capacity to dialogue with friends, enemies, and God.

# **Commentary on Evangelization in the Ukrainian Context**

(Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv, Ukraine)

## **REGIONAL CULTURES AND EVANGELIZATION IN THE UKRAINE**

### **What distinctive characteristics of your national or regional culture shape this project on living faith in our secular age?**

Ukraine is a multi-religious country situated at the historical divide between Eastern and Western Christendom. Ukraine is also a post-communist and post-colonial country. With Ukraine's independence Church was compelled to start its rebuilding almost from scratch. All institutions, including theological and catechetical education, were destroyed in the Soviet time.

The rise of civic and religious freedoms was accompanied by some tensions in inter-denominational relations that stem from the unsolved problem of self-identification of religious communities. This identity problem has three interdependent dimensions: state, national and ecclesial.

Church still enjoys the highest level of public trust (against the background of radical distrust to most institutions). Thanks to its underground legacy the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) is still perceived as a liberating force in society. Church is generally well received by media, NGOs, leaders of public opinion, business people.

Catholic and Orthodox denominations suffer from clericalism in church matters. The lay movement is still in the nascent state. The education of many priests (especially, in villages) is still deficient to better understand the modern world and its challenges for Christian faith. Some of them are too much concerned with material gain. Many young priests and church leaders have little life experience

The inadequate level of original theological thinking, social consciousness and praxis of the Church. Church in Ukraine is young. The number of young priests and religious people is still growing. Lay people are limited in their ability to financially support the Church and thus to make it more independent from politics and government.

### **What contribution can these make for Evangelization?**

There is a great opportunity for the emergence of denominationalism as a pluralist system of peaceful interplay between various religious actors that do not aim at the monopoly at the religious market and repudiate the rules of zero-sum game in relations between each other.

In post-communist setting people are weary of ideological solutions and look for authentic lived experience in their convictions. In such a context, one can do a better job in offering Catholic culture, if one proceeds in a *methodological* rather than an *ideological* way.

Church has a potential to show leadership in social issues in the country where the society is disoriented and looks for authoritative public opinion makers. Church could become the school of democracy in Ukraine and offer a formula of “religious modernity” in the lands of Eastern Slavs (and thus to avoid the trap of radical secularism).

The liminal position between East and West makes the Ukrainian Church responsible for promoting ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, national reconciliation between Ukrainians of different historic allegiances, and between Ukrainians and their neighbors.

### **What difficulties do these entail for Evangelization?**

By putting excessive emphasis on the national and political affairs, some clergy and lay activists could undermine the authority of the Church and its credit of trust among the general population, divert the Church from its spiritual mission, and nourish the xenophobic attitudes towards others. There is a risk of too much “symphony” between Church and power and the resulting silencing of its critical public voice for justice. The passivity of the Church in social issues may result in hijacking of issues of women, social justice, etc. by radical movements and the following departure of young active people from the Church.

The emergence of the “besieged fortress” mentality in the Church may result in the reduction of the critical discourse within the Church itself and its ability for self-healing from its internal crises.

# **Remnant Church: A Patchwork of Spirituality**

**(Portuguese Catholic University, Lisbon, Portugal)**

## **REGIONAL CULTURES AND EVANGELIZATION IN PORTUGAL**

**What distinctive characteristics of your national or regional culture shape the living of the faith by your people in this secular age?**

It should be taken into account that Portuguese society experienced intense changes in the last 40 years, suffering the impact, in a very concentrated way, of various dynamics of modernization. In the 60s, Portugal presented, in some human development indicators, a sharp contrast with many North Atlantic countries. In many sectors, several changes promoted a strong «detraditionalization» of the Portuguese society. But this process was uneven, did not happen on a comparable pace in all dimensions of society (some social scientists talk therefore of an «unfinished modernity»).

From the results of a study conducted in 2011/12 on religious identities, Portugal can be seen as «one country, at the same time, secular, religious and catholic» (Steffen Dix). Catholic, because most believers continue to identify themselves in that way (80%), although there may have been a decrease in their number; and other denominations or religions present a strengthening of their presence; and that the number of non-believers and «non-belongers» has increased. Religious, because the overwhelming majority has a religious affiliation; because belief in God continues to have very high rate of adherence; because the percentages of participation in worship continue to show remarkable numbers (comparatively); because the overwhelming majority still enrolls their children in rites of Christian identity and an important part promotes their religious instruction. But also a secular country, because the relationship between belief and belonging shows signs of disarticulation, because religion is not topic of conversation for half of the Portuguese; because the most significant religious practice (prayer) occurs in the private sphere and individually; because religion does not influence decidedly civic participation; because it has no relation with work or (for example) with honesty in paying taxes. And yet, Portugal is a country which recognizes the weight of institutionalized religion (the Catholic Church in particular), especially in the social sphere – a country where

religious belief does not influence the civic options individually, but influences public sphere at the institutional level.

The results of this study don't prove an «exculturation» (Danièle Hervieu-Léger) of Catholicism in the Portuguese society. Following the expression of Jean-Paul Willaime, one should instead speak about a social process of «decolonization». Catholic institutions are not, in fact, the sacred canopy of a social structure. However, the Portuguese Catholicism is characterized by a strong cultural inscription of its institutions in the Portuguese society. It should be pointed, in particular, the presence of Catholic initiatives in vulnerable social contexts and the ability to structure the cycles of individual and family life (in ritual-symbolical terms). These places of strong enrollment suffer, however, renovations and they cannot be totally understood by a logic of mere reproduction. The Catholic Church is, in the Portuguese society, probably the institution with the strongest capacity to aggregate its population. But this condition coexists with the phenomenon of pluralization of the identities and positions towards religion. Social differentiation is, indeed, inside the Catholicism itself, favoring the rearrangement of the landscape of diverse religious affiliations—socially visible, but often invisible in the logics of pastoral actions of Catholic institutions.

#### **What contribution can these make for Evangelization?**

This situation allows us to say that Catholic institutions still have many occasions to make themselves present in the Portuguese society. Even knowing the erosion common to all institutions, the Catholic Church presents itself as the institution with greater trust capital, especially in its ability to welcome and accompany people in vulnerable situations. The «phenomenon of Fatima» is a decisive factor in terms of cultural inscription of Catholicism in Portuguese society (including diasporas).

#### **What difficulties do these entail for Evangelization?**

The persistence of a strong cultural penetration favors the possibility of a certain crystallization of Catholicism in Portugal (assuming a form of vicarious religion). According to Grace Davie, there are two religious economies in Europe: a religion of public utility (based on inherited religion) and a market religion (still incipient). Religiosity as a public utility is, according to the British sociologist, a «vicarious religion», in which a small group of people oversees, performs the rituals, or even believes by others. It is a common idea that the Church should be there for when you need it (in the view of Grace Davie, this applies not only to State Churches, but also to the majorities and to minorities long established in a given country).

This may help to understand why Portuguese Catholics, even the more engaged, have few skills to propose their faith. There seems to be learning to do.

In the field of pastoral action, there is still a huge investment in resources aimed at maintaining a «parochial Catholicism», with few instruments to account for the internal diversification of the Catholic «ecclesiospheres». If there are no strategies for recognition of these differences, some Catholic peripheries may enter a path of withdrawal.

### SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

#### TEAM MEMBERS:

**José Tolentino Mendonça** holds a Doctorate in Biblical Theology (Lisbon) and a degree in Biblical Studies from the Pontificum Institutum Biblicum (Rome). He is a Professor at the Portuguese Catholic University, where he is currently also Vice-Rector. He is a catholic priest, a poet and a translator. He was a Straus Fellow (NYU: 2011/12). He is also a consultant of the Pontifical Council for Culture (Vatican). His research focuses on the New Testament and on the interrelation between Christianity and Culture. He has published several theological and poetical works.

**Alfredo Teixeira** holds a Doctorate in Political Anthropology (ISCTE-IUL, Lisbon) and a Master in Theology (Lisbon). He is a Professor at the Portuguese Catholic University, where he directs the Graduate Institute of Religious Studies and coordinates the Center for the Study of Religions and Cultures. Currently he is researching about the theory of religion and about the anthropology and sociology of Catholic institutional habitat. He is also a musician and a composer.

**Mário Avelar** is a full Professor of English and American Studies at the Universidade Aberta (Lisbon). He was Vice-Rector from 2002 to 2006. He holds a PhD in American Literature from the University of Lisbon (1993: dissertation on Sylvia Plath's poetry). He is a member of the History Studies Centre (University of Lisbon) and member of the Lisbon Geographic Society ("Arts and Literature" section). He has been researching on the relation between poetry and visual culture (painting, movies, photography, sculpture, architecture). He has published several books and articles.

**Paulo Pires do Vale** holds a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Philosophy from the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas (Universidade Nova de Lisboa) and he is finishing the PhD in Philosophy with the thesis «The historical condition of personal identity in Paul Ricoeur». He is a lecturer at the Universidade Católica

Portuguesa and Escola Superior de Educadores de Infância – Maria Ulrich. He has written a book about Hegel (2006) and has participated in conferences and published essays on hermeneutics, the philosophy of culture, the philosophy of religion, and aesthetics. He has also written texts for the catalogues of group and solo exhibitions. As a curator, he organized several conferences and curated several exhibitions. He is a member of the AICA (Internacional Association of Art Critics). He was awarded an honourable mention in the Prize for Art Criticism 2009 – AICA. He was a member of the jury for the 2010 Prize for Visual Arts awarded by AICA-Ministério da Cultura and the Jury for the 2013 Prize for Essay and Critic of Art and Architecture AICA—Fundação Carmona e Costa.

**Inês Gil** is an expert on Cinema and Photography and a lecturer at the Universidade Lusófona (Lisboa) since 2007. She holds a PhD and a Master's degree from the Paris University 8 (2002; 2005). In 2010 she finished a first Postdoctoral research and is now working on a second research («The Emerging Sacred in Contemporary Cinema»). She coordinated the Photography Archive of the Portuguese Centre of Photography (1998-2001) and studied film and photography restoration and conservation at the Institut Français de Restauration des Oeuvres d'Art, in Paris (1989-1994). In 2014 she presented her first Documentary («Sangue na Guelra») is now working on her second documentary (about a Dominican Community in Lisbon).

**Domingos Terra** is a Jesuit. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Medicine (Coimbra 1982), Philosophy (Braga 1987), a Master in Theology (Berkeley, CA 1993) and a Doctorate in Theology (Sèvres, Paris 1998). Since 2003, he teaches Theology at the Portuguese Catholic University (Lisbon). He participated in the research project «The Public and Private» (2007/08). He has published several articles and book reviews.

**José Eduardo Borges de Pinho** holds a Doctorate in Theology from the Münster University. He is a Professor at the Portuguese Catholic University (Lisbon), was vice-rector (1996-2000) and is a member Faculty of Theology's board. He directed de scientific magazine *Didaskalia* (1995-1996), was a founding member of the Portuguese edition of the magazine *Communio* and worked as a journalist (1977-2010). He is a member of the Portuguese Committee on Religious Freedom since its creation (2004). He has published over one hundred titles, mostly in journals and collective works in Portugal and abroad.

**Steffen Dix** graduated in Science of Religions (specialization in religious phenomena in European literature), Portuguese Philology and Philosophy, and holds a PhD in Science of Religions from the

University of Tübingen. In recent years, he worked at the Institute of Social Sciences (ICS) at the University of Lisbon (modernism in Fernando Pessoa; theory of secularization). He organized several academic events in Portugal and abroad, participated in international and national projects, and published his research in prestigious international academic journals. He is a member of the Center for the Study of Communication and Culture (Portuguese Catholic University, Lisbon) where he develops projects related to the study of the Portuguese modernist. He is also organizing and coordinating the edition of the Complete Works of Fernando Pessoa in the German-speaking countries.

**Paulo Fontes** holds a Doctorate in History from de Portuguese Catholic University, where he is a lecturer. He is the Director of the Centre for the Study of Religious History. He specialized on the history of Portuguese society and Portuguese Catholicism in the contemporary era. He was one of the coordinators of the Dictionary of Religious History of Portugal (2000-2002).

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**Luísa Almendra** graduated in Theology (Lisbon) and in Biblical Studies at the Pontificium Institutum Biblicum (Rome). She holds a doctorate in Biblical Theology from the Portuguese Catholic University (Lisbon). She teaches at the Faculty of Theology (Lisbon) and is a member of the Center for Studies on Religions and Cultures. She is a member of the Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Rhétorique Biblique et Sémitique.

**Alexandre Palma** holds a Doctorate from the Gregorian University (Rome) and a Master in Theology from the Portuguese Catholic University (Lisbon), where he teaches.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### 1. All-Part

#### *Remnants of Religion*

An unusual category appears in Gauchet's work, "Le désenchantement du monde". In the course of expounding the dialectic between the decline of religion as a social function and its persistence at the personal level, the author speaks of "a conceivably inalienable remnant (or residue)". But it is above all the plural form which becomes an

expression which is particularly expressive of his thinking, even though the author chooses at once to list its uses as if taking the way it is used for granted. Marcel Gauchet describes three “Remnants of Religion” which, in his opinion, continue to function, either explicitly or implicitly, as a structural sub-stratum of experience:

- **The experience of the *nondifferentiated***

The dual pattern of the “I/Thou” relationship does not, of itself, produce faith, nor does it prolong the sacred, but it is the pattern which serves to support religious experience and which was thematised most by it. The truth is that this pattern continues to be absolutely vital for us, in the relationship with ourselves and in our way-of-being-in-the-world. The experience we have of reality is that it is unattainable and always moves us on to another reality. Our knowledge is always a part of the whole that it is possible to know. An elementary deduction from our contact with the real is the separation between what our eyes see and what is hidden from us, between the appearance and the truth, the perceptible and the intelligible, the immanent and the transcendent. Reality, both internal and external, unfolds over a multiplicity of planes, through a network of distinct objects, an accumulation of concrete differences. The need felt by human thought itself is to seek, beyond this, a unity and continuity defined by Gauchet as *nondifferentiated*.

- **The aesthetic experience**

And in the same way, we can say that the way we inhabit the real is not simply a neutral means of perceiving data. It is marked (and at times redeemed) by the virtuality of an aesthetic experience. For Marcel Gauchet, our capacity for emotion when confronted by the immense spectacle of things springs, in a fundamental and obscure way from having been inscribed in our being, and it is thanks to this that we communicate with what, for millennia, was the sense of the sacred. This, which can undoubtedly provoke an interminable debate, is, for him, synthesised in a luminal way: “art, Gauchet wrote, in the specific sense in which we moderns understand it, is the continuation of the sacred by other means”. And to demonstrate this kind of inherent *vestigia dei* he even has recourse to religious terminology in order to describe what is at stake in aesthetic experience: “it is the fracturing proximity of the invisible in the midst of the visible”. We can still see the notes of an earlier reverberation, precisely in this never-ending attempt to splinter the screen of the surface, in deducing an inner transcendence which survives over and above appearances, in the unceasing displaying of the world as other than oneself.

- **The experience of the problem that we are for ourselves**

If there is one thing that expresses the awareness we are gaining of ourselves, it is that we constitute, above all for ourselves, an enigmatic object of thought. We are a question which comes before the answers that existentially (and historically) we actually find. Gauchet himself declares that: “we pay for the disappearance of religion with the difficulty of being ourselves”. In his opinion, we are now much more exposed to trepidation and fragility. Our societies have become psychically exhausting for individuals, and there would seem to be a lack of support for the difficult eternal questions which appear with increasing frequency: “Why me?” “What to make of my life when I am alone in deciding?” “Shall I in fact come to be like others?” “Why has this – illness, accident, desertion – happened to me?” “What is the point of living if we are destined to disappear without leaving a trace, as if, in others’ eyes, we had never lived?”

It is up to each one to work out his or her own answers, conceivably in a greater ontological solitude than was the case in other periods in history. Thus, what we perceive in this human pain is a remnant of religion which is never completely expiated, the pain of the paradoxical condition of being.

***But Was Religion Not always a Remnant?***

In a curious essay on the future of Christianity, Marcel Gauchet recognised that the fracture that Modernity has inscribed in the religious phenomenon is certainly not a completely new problem. The world/transcendent, secular/spiritual, individual/institutional dialectic offers “a long history which is intermingled with that of Western Christianity itself”. But when it comes to citing examples, he does not go beyond the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, one of the most persistent criticisms of Gauchet’s work from the theological point of view was precisely that he had failed to provide a more complete dialogue with the Christian and biblical tradition. It was for this reason, too, that it seemed important to us to begin this present study at this point.

It is not the first time that the Jewish and Christian religions have been contrasted with the category of the *Remnant*. And better still, the question that needs to be asked, and that we do not wish to shirk, is whether at any time this has in fact ceased to be the case.

Fundamentally, where the religious is concerned, the great crisis of Modernity places us before a crisis of paradigms. One such paradigm that we try not to get rid of is the one which, in the Jewish and Christian tradition, makes the frontiers of the religious coincide with those of the nation (the Mosaic and Davidic ideal) or of the empire (the ideal of

Constantine and then of Christianity in its various regimes). This is a model which reaches for and gives a privileged place to homogeneity. But in the history of the biblical tradition, in the Jewish as well as in the Christian canon, this is very far from being the only paradigm for the construction of religious experience in history. What Marcel Gauchet says about contemporaneity can also be said about biblical territory in its key moments: Religion was always understood as Remnants of Religion.

## **2. Believing–Belonging**

a) While enrolled in a social process of «decolonization» (J.-P. Willaime), the Portuguese Catholicism is characterized by a strong cultural inscription of its institutions in society. In particular, by the presence of Catholic initiatives in instances of socialization and in situations of greater social vulnerability, and because it shows the ability to offer a ritual-symbolic context of the cycles of individual and family life. These places of strong enrollment suffer, however, renovations and they cannot be totally understood by a logic of mere reproduction. The Catholic Church is, in the Portuguese society, probably the institution with the strongest capacity to aggregate its population.

b) This capacity coexists with the phenomenon of pluralization of the identities and positions towards religion – area where we can see emerging dynamics of social change. The denominational pluralism is very concentrated in two regions of the country (the regions that suffer a greater impact of flows of population). The most relevant indicators of social differentiation are related to the increase in the number of those who declare not to have any kind of religious affiliation and to the internal pluralization of Catholicism itself (perceivable in the diversity of rhythms, places and manners of affirmation and recognition of Catholic identity in its interaction with various social dynamics, in both the ecclesial context as in the public sphere).

c) The evidence that people with «no religion» in Portugal are not necessarily non-believers poses new problems to social sciences and theology. Much of the interpretive categories were constructed in the context of a dualization of this issue: believers and non-believers. The emergence of a population that is subjectively believer, but declares not to have any religion, raises new questions. They represent only 4.6% of the Portuguese population, but they are the fastest growing category in the last 10 years; they are transversely distributed in Portuguese society; and they are about 30% among those who declare belonging to no religion. It becomes necessary to understand this new reality, distinguishing those who belong to the last outskirts of Catholicism from those who seem to be exploring new spiritual paths.

d) The persistence of a strong cultural penetration and limited experience of religious-denominational pluralism are conditions that make the Catholic Church in Portugal a quasi-public service of religion (close to what Grace Davie called «vicarious religion»). This figure corresponds to the social situation in which a small group of people cares and practices religious rituals, or even believe, by others. In this context, it is common the idea that the Church should be there for when you need it.

e) In the Church pastoral action, there is still a huge investment in maintaining a «parochial Catholicism», with few instruments to deal with the internal diversification of Catholic «eclesiospheres». We are facing a landscape of differentiated forms of religious affiliation, socially visible, but often invisible to Catholic institutions. If there are no strategies for a recognition of these differences, some Catholic peripheries may intensify their path of withdrawal. In this area, it seems very important to better understand the different contexts where one can find a reworking of the believer condition, out of the «vicarious Catholicism» frames – new communities and new ecclesial movements, ecumenical dynamics, new forms of pilgrimage, etc.

f) The theological vocabulary to name this diversity is still scarce. It is necessary to explore some open roads, now in a new context. The constitution *Lumen Gentium* states that «all men are called to the new people of God» (LG 13), explaining that to the Catholic unity of the People of God «belong to or are related to it in various ways, the Catholic faithful, all who believe in Christ, and indeed the whole of mankind, for all men are called by the grace of God to salvation» (LG 13). One discovers here a self-representation of the Church as a set of concentric circles, expression of various situations of relationship/proximity (in this sense, the Latin verbs used are significant: *incorporare* (LG 14), *coniungere* (LG 15), *ordinare* (LG 16). In this perspective, the category of «partial identification with the Church» must be understood negatively and positively – it describes a particular form of relationship of believers with religious communities from the point of view of approaching and distancing.

g) The ability to act pastorally seems to depend on new skills to manage new relationships between the individual pole and the collective/Church pole of the Christian faith. In a context of valuing uniqueness, experience and autonomy, communities become centers of reference and not a *habitat* of belonging. Identifying «by reference» means, on one hand, to keep a position of autonomy and, on the other, expressing the Christian experience in the context of a communitarian «detotalization». The sociological vocabulary speaks in this context of «grouping by reference».

### 3. New Spiritual Landscapes: «Topia? – Atopia? – Utopia?»

How does a «religious remnant» manifests itself in contemporary art? Does the sacred contemporary art continues its function as an inspiration for the Transcendent? There is a functional separation between the act of creating sacred art and its practical use. For example, sacred music should also be shared-sung-by the Christian community.

Is there a manifestation of spiritual remnants in aesthetic experience? (in Portuguese contemporary art). Is there an opposition between sacred art and secular art? Who makes sacred art? Are artists religious? In music, for example, composers create religious musical pieces that are not very different from other musical types; and it is not uncommon to see composers with no religious connection evoking religious themes (*Requiem, Magnificat*, etc.). Where is here the separation between sacred and secular?

In a secular age, faith is no longer required, but then it is more likely to be desirable (there is a tension between the necessary and desirable).

In cinema, the remnants of religion may take the form of a memory. Where and how is this memory of the religious in cinema? When the film leaves spiritual tracks in the memory of the viewer or when the film himself goes looking for remnants/traces of spiritual/religious to translate them in pictures and sounds.

For its part, literature (poetry in particular) has developed an insistent dialogue with works of art, in which the aesthetic experience emerges as «breaking proximity of the invisible in the heart of the visible» (Gauchet). Literature may, therefore, participate in the second part of the «remnant of Religion», mentioned by Gauchet. This remnant can be a starting point for a transformation and new growth.

We propose our reflection as laboratory on as these disjunctions, as they emerge in the Portuguese contemporary art scenario.

# The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

## PURPOSE

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Studies in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

## PROJECTS

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life*. Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and

look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development*. A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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