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Keeping the Faith? Tracing the Struggle to Amplify the Peace Witness of Canadian Churches[1]

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Canadian ecumenical coalitions focused on peacebuilding have, over the past four decades, effectively contributed to efforts to shape the Government of Canada's approach to peace issues, such as nuclear disarmament, foreign and defence policy, and military intervention. While there is much to be learned from this history of coalition work, we argue that substantial changes in the Canadian political context necessitate a re-examination of past advocacy strategies in order to make a positive impact on government policies going forward. Specifically, changes to the agenda regarding defense and peace initiatives by the current government, the new role of the Prime Minister's Office, and the evolution of the place of religion in public life mean that our peacebuilding coalitions need to adopt different strategies and tactics in their attempts to shape Canadian public policy.

A rich history of ecumenical collaboration

Canadian churches recently marked four decades of ecumenical coalition work for the pursuit of peace and justice. Commemorated in the spring of 2013 through a special worship service and day of events hosted by KAIROS Canada—an organization formed in 2000 when ten existing interchurch coalitions came together under one roof[2]—this 40th anniversary provided an opportunity to both reflect on and celebrate the rich history of diverse Canadian churches working together for social action.[3] While interchurch collaboration through the predecessors of the Canadian Council of Churches (est. 1944) dates back to the early 20th century, the late 1960s to the 1980s have been referred to as "an extraordinary period in the life of the Canadian churches."[4] Mobilized by a growing conviction that transforming unjust social structures was integral to their life and mission, churches began turning their attention to the ways in which Canadian government policy contributed to, or hindered, the building of a peaceable kingdom.[5] With this in mind, advocacy—analyzing and speaking to issues of concern in public policy—became an important

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vehicle for Christians of diverse traditions to live out their commitment to peace and justice.

Not only did individual Canadian churches and national church houses dedicate time and energy to the public policy agenda,[6] but new models of cooperation between Protestants and Catholics began to emerge through the work of ecumenical coalitions. While each had a different configuration of participants, these jointly sponsored groups typically brought together Roman Catholic (through the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the religious orders, and the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace)[7] with mainline (Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and United Church) and minority (Mennonite, Quaker, and Christian Reformed) Protestant churches. Addressing a wide range of domestic and foreign policy issues, these coalitions served as a "center of energy for the churches, around which they gathered from month to month to address a common agenda in a disciplined way."[8] Whether tackling poverty or Indigenous issues in Canada, apartheid in South Africa, human rights in Latin America, or international debt relief, ecumenical collaboration enabled Canadian Christians to analyze government policy, conduct sophisticated research, and launch organized advocacy campaigns that no single church could have considered on its own.

As advocacy practitioners working in the Ottawa Office of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada, we have witnessed the ways in which operating through (and even founding) coalitions[9] has been crucial for amplifying the voice of a relatively small church tradition attempting to influence public policy debates. An agency of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Churches in North America,[10] MCC not only carries out grassroots relief, development, and peacebuilding projects around the world, but engages in advocacy on issues arising out of this programming.[11] Drawing on our experience in Ottawa, this article will trace the evolution of ecumenical collaboration for peace over the past four decades. While there is much to be learned from this history, we will argue that substantial changes in the Canadian political context necessitate a re-examination of past advocacy strategies.[12] This history can be summed up under two points: i) what ecumenical collaboration was about and ii) how it influenced the churches' witness.

Advocacy strategies: more than influence

As the early ecumenical coalitions evolved and proliferated in the 1970s and 1980s, they cultivated a remarkable breadth of expertise and political savvy that enabled them to engage constructively in a variety of complex policy debates.[13] Advocacy strategies fell along a spectrum, from public engagement—i.e., raising awareness among constituencies and mobilizing the public to action—to political engagement—i.e., meeting directly with cabinet ministers, members of Parliament, and civil servants, or communicating to the government on specific issues through well-crafted statements, letters, and submissions. Some coalitions even engaged the private sector, speaking directly to corporations and financial institutions on responsible business and investment practices.[14] Most, of course, used strategies that crisscrossed the public–political engagement spectrum, depending upon what seemed most effective in any given moment.[15] Public engagement was considered by some, for instance, as "the tactic of groups experiencing little access or influence"[16] on those sitting around political decision-making tables.

Beyond tactical considerations of access or influence, however, there were other questions lingering behind the advocacy approaches of interchurch coalitions: Were they attempting to influence government policy as "insiders" or "outsiders"? Were they striving for incremental change within the political system, or providing an alternative—and more radical—vision altogether? In this regard, as Robert Matthews, a former political science professor and active participant in early coalition work, argued three decades ago, churches faced a "special dilemma" in determining what role they intended to play:

> If true to their beliefs, [churches] risk being largely ineffective; while to be influential they are in danger of compromising their values. Put in a slightly different way, the churches are faced with deciding whether they wish to function as effective lobbyists, pressuring the government to amend or alter, if only marginally, its policies in conformity with church views, or whether they wish to act as prophets, true to their beliefs but often alone, speaking into the wilderness.[17]

There was an internal debate among the churches as to whether they saw themselves as "prophets," "interest groups," or even "lobbyists with a difference."[18] Most coalitions worked across the continuum, assuming each of these roles, depending on the circumstances. However, they did so with varying degrees of comfort—their preferred approach depending, in part, upon

the makeup of participating churches, as well as on the immediate needs and theological perspectives of their global partners.[19]

Whatever the advocacy strategy, when contributing to public policy discussions these interchurch coalitions ultimately aimed to give voice to those who had the least say in the policy formulation process—that is, their diverse network of church partners in Canada as well as in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East who were struggling under the weight of war, injustice, and oppression. Their work, in other words, was motivated as much by a concern for the ethical validity of their positions as with the effectiveness of their interventions.

Amid the clamour of policy voices, it is nearly impossible to claim direct influence, as advocacy efforts are always spread across a multiplicity of organizations, initiatives, and political actors.[20] What we want to suggest, however, is that the significance of these ecumenical voices during the early decades of collaboration hinged not solely on the extent to which they were able to change political minds or government policies in any definitive sense, but *the degree to which their voices were heard at all*. From the 1960s to the 1990s, Canadian church coalitions had access to the tables around which policy was shaped and implemented. At these tables, the credibility of the churches' input rested on their moral commitments, the effectiveness of their analysis, and their position not only as an institutional voice representing Canadian Christians, but as a "network of people in solidarity" with communities around the world.[21]

Amplifying the peace witness of churches

Tracing decades of ecumenical collaboration for justice and peace in any comprehensive fashion is an impossible task in a few short pages. Even within the peacebuilding agenda more narrowly, beyond the particular concerns and actions of the historic peace churches, Canadian Christians across theological traditions have come together—speaking to and, arguably, shaping public policy discussions on issues such as nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament, Canadian military intervention and spending, the humanitarian impacts of landmines and cluster bombs, and the regulation of small arms. This ecumenical witness for peace is a part of a rich history of activism surrounding a diversity of issues, political moments, and strategies for engagement.[22]

To speak at all to the history of interchurch collaboration for peace in Canada necessitates highlighting the work of Project Ploughshares. Established in 1977 as a project of the Canadian Council of Churches,[23] Ploughshares emerged as *the* ecumenical voice on defence policy and disarmament at a time when such issues were not explicitly on the advocacy agenda of the Canadian churches. In its 36-year history to date, Ploughshares has developed a depth of expertise on nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, conventional arms control, weaponization of space, and the reduction of armed violence. Sought after by policy makers and civil society actors alike, Ploughshares' research has served as a focal point over the years for broader church participation on the peacebuilding agenda.[24] While there are many examples of this church participation over the decades to draw attention to, we will highlight three unique moments.

First, as part of the anti-nuclear movement of the 1980s, Canadian churches were at the forefront of shaping public policy debates on nonproliferation and disarmament.[25] Across denominations, the indiscriminate effects of nuclear weapons created "nuclear pacifists" as traditional just war arguments became irrelevant for understanding the limits of the "acceptable" use of force in a nuclear exchange. Within the context of deep public anxiety about the increasing militarization of global relations, in December of 1982 and 1983, Project Ploughshares led a church leaders' delegation to meet directly with Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau to articulate an ecumenical perspective on nuclear disarmament. Presenting Trudeau with a collection of written statements—made on behalf of five major denominations, and including an appendix of submissions from a range of other national church houses[26]—the delegation articulated an unqualified rejection of the moral validity of nuclear weapons and provided specific proposals aimed at reducing nuclear arsenals. These high-profile meetings provided diverse Canadian churches with the opportunity to present a constructive policy perspective on behalf of the millions of Canadians whom they represented. This kind of church engagement, in the words of Canada's current Governor General, David Johnston, "helped to move the idea of a freeze on nuclear weapons from the margins to the mainstream."[27]

This work of articulating a strong and principled ecumenical position on nuclear weapons carried over a few years later when the churches weighed in on public debates around Canada's foreign and defence policy. When the federal government—under the leadership of Progressive Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney—conducted a major foreign policy review in

1985, Parliament created a special Joint Committee on External Affairs and National Defence to gather input from Canadians on the values and objectives they believed to be important. After releasing a Green Paper to generate discussion, the Committee conducted dozens of public consultations across the country.[28] They heard from a large number of Canadians, including scores of ecumenical committees, activists, and even individual congregations.[29] As part of this process, the Canadian Council of Churches submitted a document of more than 100 pages offering more than 60 policy recommendations regarding Canada's role on the international stage.[30] Two years later, the Canadian government tabled its defence White Paper[31]—a document, Project Ploughshares' founder Ernie Regehr argued, that was viewed "by hawks and doves alike as an abject failure to offer any credible answers to Canadian peace and security questions."[32] The churches again offered a response through the leadership of Project Ploughshares.[33]

The government's foreign and defence policy during these years was broadly criticized for building Canada's national security around very limited (and self-interested) notions of economic competitiveness; solidarity with the United States; and a sense of "armed fortress security,"[34] or protection from external military threats. At the heart of the churches' response to this policy framework was the concept of "common security." This concept—championed by Project Ploughshares throughout the 1980s, particularly with regards to defence policy—proposed that the path to greater peace and security was not best achieved through increased militarization (fortifying the "fortress"), but by focusing collective energies on the root causes of insecurity, such as political, environmental, and economic injustice. As security paradigms shifted substantially at the end of the Cold War, in the 1990s the concept of "human security" began to take hold within the policies and programs of the Department of Foreign Affairs.[35] As this agenda became embedded at a bureaucratic level—thanks, in large part, to the work of then-Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy—church coalitions and other civil society actors were afforded funding channels for peacebuilding work as well as opportunities to engage the government through various annual and bi-annual consultations on issues like disarmament and peacebuilding, nuclear weapons, and small arms/light weapons.

The final moment we would like to note highlights the ways in which churches have not only engaged in direct advocacy to the Government of Canada through meetings and consultations, but have mobilized the Canadian public to action. In the lead-up to the 2003 Iraq invasion, the churches were very active in calling for Canada to stay out of the war. They reached out to the public—creating relevant worship materials, supporting ecumenical prayer vigils, and producing a half-page ad in a national newspaper with the words "Say NO to war in Iraq; say YES to building peace."[36] Moreover, they wrote letters to U.S. President George W. Bush and to Canada's Liberal Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien. Of particular note, in January of 2003, Project Ploughshares, the Canadian Council of Churches, and KAIROS wrote a joint statement to Prime Minister Chrétien entitled "Prepare for Peace in Iraq."[37] This statement—officially endorsed by some 40,000 Canadians—outlined a rationale for why Canada should not participate in the "coalition of the willing." While we suggested earlier that claiming direct impact in the advocacy world is nearly impossible, in a chance encounter with Prime Minister Chrétien after the war started, an Evangelical Lutheran Bishop was told by the prime minister that the vocal testimony of Canadian churches played an influential role in the Cabinet's decision to stay out of Iraq.[38]

The Changing Context

In celebrating the significant contributions of ecumenical collaboration for peace since the 1970s, we certainly do not wish to overstate the degree to which Canadian churches were able to influence political decisions. Indeed, as Robert Matthews argued more than two decades ago, "[churches] sit on the periphery of the policy process. While they have had reasonable success in gaining access to policy makers, their influence on actual government policy has been marginal."[39] While Matthews laments the churches' perceived ineffectiveness, his words point to the fact that they still had *access* to the policy-making realm. This is no longer the case in the current political context in which coalitions live and breathe. For the remainder of this article, we will focus on three changes in the Canadian political context that impact the operational realities for coalitions and other advocacy organizations.

(i) The government of the day has a very different policy agenda

Canada's foreign and defence policy changed direction in notable ways with the election of a Conservative government in 2006. Some argue that this has brought about a seismic shift in the political landscape, while others maintain that the changes have been incremen-

tal. Regardless of one's overall assessment, one thing beyond dispute is that Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who, as we write, is at the mid-point of his third term in office, has elevated the role, budget, and social prominence of the Canadian military. For example, he has overseen the embrace of combat roles in Afghanistan and Libya,[40] started implementing a 20-year plan to spend $490 billion in order to modernize the Canadian Forces,[41] and found myriad new ways to celebrate the past and present role of "our men and women in uniform."[42] The Conservative brand, and, by extension, the recent posture of Canada on the world stage, has left little room for projects instigated or embraced by previous Liberal governments such as United Nations peacekeeping operations or the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine.[43]

The current government's effort to, in its own words, reverse a "decade of darkness" experienced by the Canadian military,[44] has gone hand in hand with a more robust approach to foreign affairs more generally. Although Prime Minister Harper has been quoted as saying that "a handful of soldiers is better than a mouthful of arguments,"[45] he, along with his long-serving Minister of Foreign Affairs John Baird, has never been at a loss for undiplomatic rhetoric. In contrast to the "collective security" approach of the previous government, Canada's "principled approach to foreign policy" has meant that the government refuses to "go along in order to get along" with others,[46] as evident in, for example, the sudden closing of the Canadian embassy in Iran in 2012[47] and the boycott of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Sri Lanka in 2013.[48] A more subtle example is the way in which the lexicon of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development has been wiped clean of language that was commonplace in the 1990s, including terms such as "human security," "public diplomacy," and "good governance."[49]

All this is to emphasize the more general point that when the Canadian government of the day has a very different policy agenda than the proponents of peacebuilding, those proponents will face some acute challenges. Trying to move a government to do something it does not want to do is a fundamentally different kind of challenge than trying to get a government to do something that already has some resonance with its own priorities. This is not to say that previous governments were headed by pacifists—far from it! As noted already, churches clearly struggled to get their voices heard under Liberal and Progressive Conservative prime ministers alike. The anecdote of Prime Minister Chrétien's decision not to join the "coalition of the willing" in 2003 likely indicates that the churches provided him with political cover more than changed his mind. The same could be said for Prime Minister Trudeau's nuclear disarmament efforts. In contrast, it seems clear that some sort of conversion experience would have been necessary for Prime Minister Harper to make the same kind of decisions in similar circumstances.

(ii) The way governments work has changed

Not only have the foreign and defence policy priorities of the Canadian government changed in the past decade, but also the way the government develops and implements all of its policies has changed. In short, power has been centralized in the Prime Minister's Office to an unprecedented degree. Given this reality, the circle of those involved in making decisions within the government has become almost vanishingly small. As political scientist Donald Savoie put it, the circle of influence has been reduced to "the Prime Minister and his court" of a handful of cabinet ministers and advisors.[50] Any notion of the Cabinet as a whole—much less back-bench members of Parliament in the government's caucus—as having a role in setting the policy agenda has been lost. Although many have been eager to pin the credit (or blame) for this change on Prime Minister Harper, we would argue that it reflects a longer-term shift in the Canadian political landscape, if not an even broader shift. The centralization of power as reflected in the diminishing influence of elected legislatures and a preoccupation with message control can be found in many other Western democracies.

Closely related to this change, and even more troubling, is the extent to which the policy-making process—not simply the decision-making process—has been transformed in recent years. Government policy has always been ideologically driven, but the extent to which it has now become calibrated for partisan gain is striking. Thus, in Ottawa (as well as in Washington and London) it is increasingly common to refer to the shift in policy development from an "evidence-based decision-making process" to a "decision-based evidence-making process." In the words of Savoie, "it's not too much of an exaggeration to write that the policy advisory role of public servants in Anglo-American democracies has been turned on its head."[51] Or, as Andrew Griffith, a recently retired senior public servant, put it, this inversion "has resulted in a narrowing of public servant advice to

issues of implementation, rather than broader ones of policy direction."[52]

This has significant implications for those seeking to influence government policy. The kind of consultation process that the Canadian government embarked on in its major foreign policy review in the 1980s is now difficult to fathom. There is little need for (or political benefit to) generating public discussion through lengthy Green or White Papers when the policy direction has already been predetermined. Indeed, substantive White Papers have been replaced by sparse ministerial announcements or press releases. Not surprisingly then, in recent years there has been a steady erosion of the above-mentioned funding channels and consultations held by Foreign Affairs officials on issues of disarmament, peacebuilding, and human security.[53] When public consultations or parliamentary committee studies do happen, they seem intended to provide the appearance of consideration and analysis. Consequently, the expertise provided by church coalitions has become a product without a market in Ottawa. It is no wonder then that in the course of refusing to renew funding to KAIROS and other coalitions, the government dismissed them as "talk shops" that frittered away precious resources that could be put to better use directly supporting people in need.[54] Not only then has access to key decision makers diminished, given that the decision-making circle is so much smaller, but the opportunities to intervene in the policy development process have diminished.

(iii) Citizens also have a different agenda than they once did

The final contextual shift we will note is that the attitude of Canadians toward the political process has changed significantly since churches first began to collaborate on advocacy in the 1960s and 1970s. In short, we would argue that churches no longer speak with the same kind of authority in public policy debates. For starters, Canadian church membership and participation has declined significantly in the past three decades, and so individuals typically have less investment in, or ownership of, what church leaders say or do.[55] Beyond this, however, as the political scientist Neil Nevitte points out, there has been a general "decline of deference" to authority, which is evident in family, business, and politics, as well as other areas of life, such as religion.[56] Canadians do not trust leaders and experts of any kind as much as they used to, and so it should come as no surprise that the authority of institutional voices—including the church—continues to diminish. As such, churches cannot claim to provide a representational function for Canadian society as a whole or even for churchgoers more narrowly.

This is not to say that, as voter participation rates might suggest, Canadians are disengaged from politics. All other indications are that they are more interested in and have more direct access to information about political issues, and that as education levels continue to increase, they are better equipped to make their own judgments.[57]

This change helps explain why the government no longer treats coalition leaders with the kind of deference evident when they met face to face with the prime minister to discuss nuclear disarmament issues in the early 1980s. In our experience, the Prime Minister's Office, despite having a much larger roster of communications staff today, usually does not even bother to acknowledge a formal letter from the heads of churches or church coalitions. Given their access to polling data, for example, politicians today know what people in the pews really think—to a much greater extent than church leaders do—and thus can decide whether those leaders deserve any attention. Moreover, if the views of individual voters are what matter to the government, it would seem that the further removed a spokesperson is from these individuals, the less their input is valued—in other words, parishioners matter more than pastors and priests, who in turn matter more than denominational heads, who in turn matter more than coalition leaders.

Implications

We trust that by this point we have made two things clear: first, that Canadian churches have a remarkable history of collaborating with one another to promote a peace perspective or agenda within the Government of Canada's foreign and defence policies, and second, that Canadian churches now find themselves in a very different political context. To conclude on a more optimistic note, we want to suggest a few implications of this new context for coalitions seeking to effect policy change. We think there are flip sides or opportunities presented by each of the three explanations of why the things that used to work do not seem to work anymore.

First, while disconcerting, the dissonance between the agendas of the Canadian churches and federal government in recent years provides a compelling motivation for advocacy. It is clear that the pursuit of peace will require a significant effort in order to change the minds of government leaders. More than ever, it is also

clear that advocacy is long-term work; there can be no illusions that change will be easy or quick.[58] Perhaps coalitions have the freedom to once again step back and focus on shaping a larger counter-narrative, viewing themselves as performing an "enlightenment" function in setting the agenda for future policy actions, rather than acting as insiders engaged in short-term problem-solving or tweaking of government policies.[59] To borrow a phrase used by researchers in the field of policy influence, coalitions can embrace the role of being "norm entrepreneurs."[60]

Second, the centralization of power should not lead coalitions to overlook opportunities to impact policies and actions that fall outside the limelight set by the government's own priorities or the media. The Prime Minister's Office exerts an impressive level of control, but it is neither omnipotent nor omniscient; furthermore, it is preoccupied with messaging rather than programming. As such, some argue that more attention should be paid to what the government *does* rather than what it *says*, for there are times when coalitions can nurture or encourage government actions that do not align neatly with its own master narrative. After all, ministers still have some freedom to exert their own influence in the nooks and crannies of their departments—that is, in places that do not threaten to attract attention or cause the government grief.[61]

Finally, the decline of deference to authority figures means that individual voices matter more than ever. This provides a clear rationale for increased attention to public engagement efforts as an initial and primary mode of advocacy rather than a secondary complement to behind-the-scenes political engagement.[62] It also seems clear to us that, in a post-secular context, there is new space for people of faith in the public square.[63] While Canadians may distrust religious leaders more, they are also more open to being persuaded by moral arguments informed by faith convictions. Moreover, politicians may be bound by ideology and partisan calculation, and therefore difficult to persuade using facts or scientific data,[64] but they do respond to pressure from constituents.[65]

The struggle of Canadian churches collaborating to amplify their peace witness over the past four decades is a story that merits both celebration and further analysis. We hope that this rich history of ecumenical collaboration provides inspiration for those seeking to keep faith with that tradition in a rapidly changing political context.

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1 An earlier version of this article was presented at the Peace and Justice Studies Association (PJSA) annual conference on October 18, 2013. The conference was co-hosted by Wilfrid Laurier University's Department of Global Studies and Conrad Grebel University College's Peace and Conflict Studies Program in Waterloo, Ontario.

2 Although the MoA to create Canadian Churches for Justice and Peace was signed in 2000, the name KAIROS was agreed to in 2001. The ten coalitions that came together included Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice (ECEJ) (previously known as GATT-Fly); Task Force on the Churches and Corporate Social Responsibility (TCCR); Inter-church Committee for Refugees (ICCR); Ten Days for World Development; Aboriginal Rights Coalition (ARC) (previously known as Project North); PLURA; Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America (ICCHRLA); Inter-Church Fund for International Development (ICFID); Inter-Church Coalition on Africa (ICCAF); and Canada Asia Working Group (CAWG). An eleventh coalition—Canada China Program (CCP)—is also considered part of this history. For various reasons, however, CCP did not really make KAIROS a formal institutional home in 2001.

3 While 1973 marks the formal establishment of three of KAIROS' predecessors (PLURA, Ten Days for World Development, and GATT-Fly), informal or ad hoc working groups were already underway in the late 1960s.

4 Christopher Lind and Joe Mihevc, *Coalitions for Justice: The Story of Canada's Interchurch Coalitions* (Ottawa: Novalis, 1994), 5.

5 While beyond the scope of this article, several authors have traced the rise of Canadian church involvement in justice work during the 1960s and 1970s. Christopher Lind, Joe Mihevc, Bonnie Greene, and John Williams all point to significant theological shifts taking place in the developing world (liberation or "contextual" theologies); a reawakening of the Social Gospel tradition in both Catholic and Protestant circles; a connection with progressive religious groups in the developing world through the World Council of Churches (WCC); and an emerging sense that Canadian governmental policies no longer reflected the values of the church.

6 Church leaders sometimes used the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) as the vehicle for speaking out. Other times, individual church houses used their general assemblies to declare themselves publicly on a specific issue of concern (Matthews and Pratt, *Church and State*, ix). As Matthews notes, when the CCC played a role it was not as a programmatic body but as a facilitator—bringing together relevant staff and coalition representatives to share information, evaluate their work, and develop joint strategies (Robert Matthews, *Lobbyist or Prophet: The Christian Churches and Canadian Foreign Policy in Human Rights* [Prepared for the CIIA Conference on Domestic Groups and Foreign Policy, Carleton University, June 1982], 16).

7 The Canadian Catholic Conference (1943) was renamed the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (or CCCB) in 1977. In 1967, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP) was founded—a development organization run by the laity and functioning independently of the CCCB.

8 Bonnie Greene, ed., *Canadian Churches and Foreign Policy* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1990), 2.

9 Of the early ecumenical coalitions that formed KAIROS, MCC participated in the Inter-Church Fund for International Development; Project North (later named the Aboriginal Rights Coalition); and Refugee Concerns (later named the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees).

10 MCC currently supports programs in 60 countries through the efforts of more than 1,000 workers, 14,000 volunteers, and 122,000 members of supporting churches.

11 While there are several places throughout MCC where advocacy takes place, offices in Washington (est. 1968), in Ottawa (est. 1975), and at

the United Nations in New York (est. 1991) are dedicated to full-time policy in analysis and political engagement.

12 Beyond the historical record of inter-church collaboration, we will be drawing from a growing pool of contextual analysis produced by think tanks, social change theorists, political scientists, and—a new breed of researcher—the political psychologist.

13 Many coalitions were initially ad hoc working groups with little thought given to their long-term direction (Lind and Mihevc, *Coalitions for Justice*, 5). Each had different models of consensus-building—some developing a careful policy base via consensus at a board level before making public statements; others making statements while recognizing that they did not necessarily formally reflect the positions of all sponsoring denominations (Christopher Lind, "What Are the Pros and Cons of Interchurch Coalitions? Coalitions Are the Best Way to Achieve Consensus among the Churches," *Compass: A Jesuit Journal* 9/5 [November/December 1991]: 32).

14 See Renate Pratt's "The Task Force on the Churches and Corporate Responsibility," in Lind and Mihevc, *Coalitions for Justice*: 63–83.

15 Matthews argued that while the churches did use public engagement strategies on occasion, for the most part they relied on direct political engagement with the government. This, he says, was because public engagement methods were more expensive and time-consuming, as churches felt it crucial to secure media interest at the same time they mobilized public support. As such, they often saved public engagement approaches for the context of an international conference, or when a particular issue was already on the international agenda (Matthews, *Lobbyist or Prophet: The Christian Churches and Canadian Foreign Policy in Human Rights*, 38).

16 Matthews, *Lobbyist or Prophet*, 38.

17 Matthews, *Lobbyist or Prophet*, 37.

18 Matthews and Pratt, *Church and State*, 21 and x.

19 The Catholic Church had more extensive connections with the global church in Latin America, where liberation theologies, which tended to favour more "outsider" approaches to political engagement, were thriving. Mainline Protestant churches in Canada were more comfortable with "insider" approaches to advocacy since they, like many Canadian politicians, were influenced by the Social Gospel movement.

20 For further exploration of this topic, see Paul Heidebrecht and Jennifer Wiebe's "Advocacy and Peacebuilding: Making Distinctions and Connections," *Intersections: MCC Theory & Practice Quarterly* 1/1 (Winter 2013): 9-12. See also John. H. Redekop's "The Role of Religious Pressure Groups in the Canadian Political System," an unpublished paper presented at the Canadian Political Science Association Annual Convention (1985).

21 Matthews and Pratt, *Church and State*, 21.

22 For example, responding to a call during its Eighth Assembly in 1999, the World Council of Churches (WCC) pledged to embark on a "Decade to Overcome Violence" in the years 2001–2010, and invited individuals, churches, and ecumenical groups to participate.

23 In 1976, Ploughshares had originally started as a "working group on militarism and under-development" (led by Ernie Regehr and Murray Thomson and co-sponsored by Canadian University Services Overseas, Canadian Friends Service Committee, and Conrad Grebel College). That same year, John Foster (of the United Church) had convened a working group through the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) called CANDA (Canadian Defence Alternatives) to explore the militarization of national security. These two groups officially came together in 1977 to form Project Ploughshares (see Ernie Regehr, "Project Ploughshares," in Lind and Mihevc, *Coalitions for Justice*, 189).

24 For an overview of Ploughshares' accomplishments, see http://ploughshares.ca/about-us/accomplishments/. These accomplishments are further evidenced by Ploughshares' co-founders, Murray Thomson and Ernie Regehr, winning such prestigious awards as the Pearson Peace Medal (2000 and 2010 respectively) and the Order of Canada (2001 and 2003 respectively).

25 Regehr notes that during this time, a network of Ploughshares groups across the country gave the organization "a strong profile in local communities and were able to multiply the impact of the research, publishing and advocacy work of the national office. Local groups also had an important hand in prompting local church communities to respond to the nuclear crisis" (Lind and Mihevc, *Coalitions for Justice*, 191).

26 The 1982 document entitled "Statement of Canadian Church Leaders on Canada's Nuclear Weapons Policies" was presented on December 14 by leaders from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops; Lutheran Church in America (Canada Section); Anglican Church of Canada; United Church of Canada; and Presbyterian Church in Canada; as well as the Canadian Council of Churches. The 1983 document entitled "Therefore Choose Life: Statement on Peace and Disarmament" was presented on December 17 by heads of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops; Anglican Church of Canada; United Church of Canada; Presbyterian Church in Canada; and Lutheran Church in America (Canada section); as well as the Canadian Council of Churches. (See "The Church and Nuclear Disarmament," Project Ploughshares Working Paper 84-1, pgs. 1–5, for further information.)

27 The Right Honourable David Johnston, Canada's governor general, in his speech presenting Ernie Regehr with the Pearson Peace Medal (January 21, 2011.)

28 This Green Paper was entitled "Competitiveness and Security: Directions for Canada's International Relations" (introduced by The Honourable Joe Clark, Minister of External Affairs, on May 14, 1985).

29 Via 30 panel discussions, the Committee received 1,232 written submissions, heard from 461 witnesses, and listened to 331 public participants. See Simon Rosenblum, "Uncommon Security: Appraising the Special Joint Committee Report on Canada's International Relations," *Peace Magazine* 2/5 (October–November 1986), 28.

30 Greene, *Canadian Churches and Foreign Policy*, 3. The CCC's submission was called "Canada's International Relations: An Alternative View" (submitted in November 1985) and represented an ecumenical "common ground" worked out between the churches. For excerpts of the submission, see Appendix I in *Canadian Churches and Foreign Policy*, 180–207.

31 This White Paper was entitled "Challenge and Commitment: A Defence Policy for Canada" (tabled by the Honourable Henry Perrin Beatty, Minister of National Defence, on June 5, 1987). It touted itself as being the first review in 16 years and providing a "modern and realistic mandate to the Canadian Forces and commits the Government to giving the Force the tools to do the job."

32 Lind and Mihevc, *Coalitions for Justice*, 193.

33 On February 1, 1988, eleven Canadian church leaders (through the leadership of Project Ploughshares) sent to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney a statement mapping out alternatives to the GoC's White Paper. See "The Church and Nuclear Disarmament," Project Ploughshares Working Paper 88-2: 1988. The leaders represented the Anglican Church of Canada; Armenian Church of Canada; Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops; Canadian Unitarian Council; Conference of Mennonites in Canada; Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Canada; Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada; Polish National Catholic Church; Presbyterian Church in Canada; Religious Society of Friends; and the United Church of Canada.

34 Lind and Mihevc, *Coalitions for Justice*, 186.

35 As per the federal budget of 2013, the former Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) have amalgamated to become Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development (DFATD).

36 This ran in the *Globe and Mail* on March 1, 2003.

37 Starting in 2002, there were several joint letters written on behalf of prominent church leaders to the prime minister and U.S. president, urging alternatives to military intervention (sent on September 25, 2002; December 20, 2002, February 28, 2003; and March 26, 2003; to name a few): see http://www.councilofchurches.ca/en/Social_Justice/peace-disarmament-iraq.cfm

The 2003 statement made seven recommendations, urging the Canadian government to reject further war on Iraq; persist in a vigorous strategy of containment to prevent Iraq's acquisition and/or retention of weapons of mass destruction; pursue diplomacy toward establishing the entire Middle East as a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction; end comprehensive economic sanctions; embark on diplomatic and political engagement, including support for civil society; reinvigorate diplomatic efforts with states of the region to address outstanding issues; and explore legal/judicial and other measures (for crimes against humanity).

38 Bishop Michael J. Pryse (Eastern Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada). (email exchange with Esther Epp-Tiessen, MCC Canada Public Engagement Coordinator)

39 As cited in Greene, *Canadian Churches and Foreign Policy*, 162.

40 Colin Robertson, "Harper's World View," *Policy Options* 32/9 (October 2011): 76–80.

41 Government of Canada, *Canada First Defence Strategy* (2008). The government's intention to develop our own "military-industrial complex" is evident in a more recent report it commissioned from Tom Jenkins: *Canada First: Leveraging Defence Procurement Through Key Industrial Capabilities* (Report of the Special Adviser to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, February 2013). Apart from growing expenditures on capital equipment, Canada's overall defence budget has increased dramatically in recent years; in fiscal year (FY) 2006–07 it stood at $17.1 billion (7.75% of total spending); at its peak in FY 2011–12 (after 13 years of continuous increases) it had risen to $23.4 billion (8.62% of total spending). See the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) database at http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database

42 The marking of the War of 1812 is but one example. See Ian McKay and Jamie Swift, *Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2012); Kai Nagata, "Why Harper Wants You to Know He Loves Hockey, and Tim's Coffee and the Military," *The Tyee* (October 6, 2011); and Noah Richler, *What We Talk About When We Talk About War* (Fredericton, NB: Goose Lane Editions, 2012).

43 Former Liberal Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy initiated the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) that led to the development of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine adopted by the United Nations in 2005. Former Liberal Party of Canada and Official Opposition Leader Michael Ignatieff was a member of the ICISS.

44 Conservative Party of Canada, "Here for Canada: Stephen Harper's Low-Tax Plan for Jobs and Economic Growth" (2011).

45 The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, "Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada While in Trapani, Italy" (September 1, 2011).

46 The Honourable John Baird, "Address by Minister Baird at Montreal Council on Foreign Relations Luncheon" (September 14, 2012).

47 The Honourable John Baird, "Canada Closes Embassy in Iran, Expels Iranian Diplomats from Canada" (September 7, 2012).

48 The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, "Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada" (October 7, 2013).

49 Jeff Davis, "Liberal Era Diplomatic Language Killed Off," *Embassy* (July 1, 2009). In addition, peacebuilding ceased to be one of the pillars of the Canadian International Development Agency's programming soon after the Conservative government was elected in 2006.

Other more subtle examples include Canada's interpretation of international agreements such as the Cluster Munitions Convention and the Arms Trade Treaty.

50 Donald Savoie, *Whatever Happened to the Music Teacher? How Government Decides and Why* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), 88–90. See also Bruce G. Doern and Christopher Stoney, eds., *How Ottawa Spends, 2012–2013: The Harper Majority, Budget Cuts, and the New Opposition* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 58.

51 Savoie, *Whatever Happened to the Music Teacher?* 117.

52 Andrew Griffith, *Policy Arrogance or Innocent Bias? Resetting Citizenship and Immigration* (Anar Press, 2013). For insight into a similar pattern in the Department of National Defence, see Douglas L. Bland and Richard Shimooka, *Let Sleeping Dogs Lie: The Influence of External Studies and Reports on National Defence Policy – 2000 to 2006*, Claxton Papers Series No. 15 (Queen's University, 2011).

53 The final meeting that included civil society groups in Canada's national committee on small arms and light weapons was held in 2006. DFAIT held its final annual "human security consultation" with CSOs/NGOs in 2007. That same year, DFAIT effectively ended its annual CSO/NGO consultation on nuclear issues and CIDA ended funding the Peacebuilding and the Small Arms Working Group.

54 Kenneth Whyte, "In Conversation: Stephen Harper," *Maclean's* (July 5, 2011). The long collaboration between the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and KAIROS ended abruptly in December 2009, although the controversy surrounding this decision lingered for years afterward when it was discovered that the Minister of International Cooperation, Bev Oda, had overruled a recommendation from her department to continue funding KAIROS. In June 2010, CIDA also ended its long collaboration with the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC), a coalition that brings together almost one hundred non-profit organizations working to end global poverty.

The Harper government's downplaying of the importance of policy work and advocacy was also evident in new reporting requirements introduced in 2013 by the Canada Revenue Agency for registered charities involved in political activities.

55 The latest information on religion in Canada from Statistics Canada is available at http://www.statcan.gc.ca/search-recherche/bb/info/3000017-eng.htm. See also Reginald Bibby, *Beyond the Gods and Back: Religion's Demise and Rise and Why it Matters* (Lethbridge, AB: Reginald Bibby, 2011).

56 Neil Nevitte, *The Decline of Deference: Canadian Value Change in Cross National Perspective* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) and "The Decline of Deference Revisited: Evidence After 25 Years" (unpublished paper presented at "Mapping and Tracking Global Value Change: A Festschrift Conference for Ronald Inglehart," University of California, Irvine, March 11, 2011). See also Lind, "What are the Pros and Cons of Interchurch Coalitions?"

57 Heather Bastedo, Wayne Chu, Jane Hilderman, and André Turcotte, *The Real Outsiders: Politically Disengaged Views on Politics and Democracy*, Samara Democracy Reports (December 7, 2011); Michael Adams, "The Youth Vote Is Key for Today's Trudeaus." *The Globe and Mail* (August 26, 2013); and Nevitte, *Decline of Deference*.

The government has clearly recognized this shift, and has adjusted accordingly. As journalist Susan Delacourt laments, this has led to growing sophistication in political marketing, reducing campaigning and governing to "lowbrow pandering rather than persuading." See *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2013). Alex Himelfarb points to Benjamin Demott's description of "the rise of junk politics, with its hyper-partisanship, where everything is personal, evidence and expertise are devalued, and political cooperation is off the table." See "Taking Back Our Democracy: Bridging the Generational Divide," *Alex's Blog* (July 3, 2013).

58 Proponents of theoretical models of coalitions such as the Advocacy Coalition Framework underline this point, insisting on a time horizon of at least a decade to measure policy change. See Paul A. Sabatier and Hank C. Jenkins-Smith, eds., *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993); and Duane Bratt, *Canada, The Provinces, and the Global Nuclear Revival: Advocacy Coalitions in Action* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012).

59 Carol H. Weiss, "Research for Policy's Sake: The Enlightenment Function of Social Research," *Policy Analysis* 3/4 (Fall 1977), 533 34. As Weiss puts it:

> The enlightenment model of research use does not make such assumptions. It does not consider value consensus a prerequisite for useful research. It sees a role for research as social criticism. It finds a place for research based on variant theoretical premises. It implies that research need not necessarily be geared to the operating feasibilities of today, but that research provides the intellectual background of concepts, orientations, and empirical generalizations that inform policy. As new concepts and data emerge, their gradual cumulative effect can be to change the conventions policymakers abide by and to reorder the goals and priorities of the practical policy world.

60 Warren Clarke, "Transnational Advocacy Coalitions and Human Security Initiatives: Explaining Success and Failure," *Hertie School of Governance Working Papers* No. 35 (July 2008). See also Fred Carden, *Knowledge to Policy: Making the Most of Development Research* (Ottawa: IDRC, 2009); Evert A. Lindquist, "Discerning Policy Influence: Framework for a Strategic Evaluation of IDRC-Supported Research" (International Development Research Centre, 2001); and Jared Raynor, "What Makes an Effective Coalition? Evidence-Based Indicators of Success," TCC Group (March 2011).

No doubt there are challenges here, too, given that government departments also devote considerable resources to shaping larger narratives. See John Geddes, "The Price of Persuasion," *Maclean's* (October 29, 2012): 22.

61 As Ron Graham notes in *Born in the Burbs: Stephen Harper Explained* (Toronto: The Walrus, 2013):

> In the early years of the PM's regime, a political consultant I know was invited to come up with strategic advice for a particular department. The first question put to the new minister was "What do you want to leave as your legacy?" The response was speechless bewilderment. The novice minister's primary ambition, it seemed, was to avoid doing anything that might incur the ire of the prime minister.

The centralization of power also means that there are tremendous opportunities for significant impact if an opportunity for influence is found. In cases where coalitions have found this "sweet spot," change has been unexpectedly rapid. Examples include the success of the Canadian Coalition for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health—composed of Plan Canada, Care Canada, Save the Children Canada, Results Canada, UNICEF and World Vision Canada—in getting the government to embrace child and maternal health as their signature development initiative as the host of the 2010 G8/G20 meetings in Toronto; and the success of the Resource Revenue Transparency Working Group—composed of Mining Association of Canada, Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada, Publish What You Pay-Canada, and Revenue Watch Institute—in getting the government to commit to introducing the mandatory reporting of payments from resource extraction companies to domestic and foreign governments at the 2013 G8/G20 meetings in London. Might it be worth investing significant energy in trying to reach the few individuals who may actually have the ear of the Prime Minister and his court, rather than "preaching to the choir" that only has the ear of the usual suspects?

62 Daniel Goodwin, "The Changing Face of Public Affairs and What It Means for You," *Hill Times* (August 8, 2011).

63 The groundswell of criticism over the Quebec government's proposed "secular charter" underlines this point. We are using the expression "post-secular" in the same way that philosopher James K.A. Smith does, meaning that religion now has a place in the public square in a way that modern theories of secularization cannot account for. See, for example, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy: Mapping a Post-Secular Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004).

Like Smith, we are persuaded by Charles Taylor's thick account of the secular age, which distinguishes three facets of secularity: (1) the retreat of religion in public life; (2) the decline in belief and practice; and (3) the change in the conditions of belief. Taylor's description of what he terms "secularity 3" is an apt description of the post-secular: "Religious belief now exists in a field of choices which include various forms of demurral and rejection," which highlights the contestability of belief, but also the potential "for recompositions of spiritual life in new forms." See *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007), 437. For a brief summary of Taylor, see David Brooks, "The Secular Society," *New York Times* (July 8, 2013).

We recognize that others are less confident that the kind of legitimacy Taylor and Smith presume for religious voices has broad recognition—see, for example, Steven D. Smith, *The Disenchantment of Secular Discourse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); and Jonathan Malesic, *Secret Faith in the Public Square: An Argument for the Concealment of Christian Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009).

64 See, for example, W.T. Stanbury, "Facts Don't Have Power to Change Minds All the Time," *Hill Times* (August 15, 2011) and "Political Partisans Differ in Responding to Facts," *Hill Times* (August 22, 2011). Stanbury points to a broad range of research by political scientists and political psychologists in the U.S. that highlights the extent to which conservative convictions are immune to what liberals or progressives view as reasonable or rational arguments—see E.J. Dionne, *Our Divided Political Heart: The Battle for the American Idea in an Age of Discontent* (Bloomsbury, 2012); Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2012); Dan M. Kahan, Ellen Peters, Erica Cantrell Dawson, and Paul Slovic, "Mediated Numeracy and Enlightened Self-Government," *The Cultural Cognition Project (at Yale Law School) Working Paper* No. 116 (September 3, 2013); Chris Mooney, *The Republican Brain: The Science of Why They Deny Science—and Reality* (Wiley, 2012).

65 George Lakey, "Should We Bother Trying to Change Our Opponents' Hearts?" *Waging Nonviolence Blog* (June 4, 2013); C.B. Pearson and Aaron Eske, "Pressure vs. Persuasion: The Overlooked Secret to Winning Your Advocacy Campaign," M+R Strategic Services (May 2012).

Religion and the Occupy Movement

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All too often, social scientists ignore the role of religion and spirituality in social movement activism.[2] When religion does receive attention, it is usually to focus on religion as a conservative, if not reactionary, force or a threat to social order. Seldom is religion viewed as a progressive force against what is commonly termed "neoliberal globalization" or corporate globalization. By neoliberalism, I mean an elite political project that "proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade."[3] That religion is too often ignored as a progressive source of resistance to neoliberal globalization is particularly true of analyses of the Occupy movement that made headlines in 2011. For example, an examination of the Occupy Research website, an international network of over 300 scholars studying the Occupy movement, reveals scant mention of religion. In brief, religion's role in resisting neoliberal globalization has either been ignored by social scientists or has been met with skepticism. At least in terms of Occupy Wall Street (OWS), this is empirically wrong and poor social science.

This article argues to the contrary that, indeed, there was a significant relationship between religion, spirituality, and the Occupy movement. The focus will be primarily on Occupy Wall Street, where the movement began. Focusing on OWS is an obvious choice, given that Wall Street can be said to be "a metonym for global financial capital … a symbol of injustice."[4] OWS was a locally grounded response to a global economic failure.[5]

Prior to examining the role of religion in OWS, the article considers the secularization thesis. The article next defines religion in such a way that it helps overcome the dualistic conceptualization of the religious and the secular: for example, the public versus private spheres in which they have been placed. Finally, as our understanding of religion escapes these dualisms, we can see it as relevant to politics, public life, capitalism, and justice. This leads to a brief discussion of the role religion has played historically in American political life. The latter sets the stage for the discussion of the contribution of religion, faith groups, and spirituality to the Occupy movement, in particular, OWS. I draw upon the work of Hannah Arendt and social movement theory in my analysis. Methodologically, I draw upon interviews with religious activists, website data analysis, and library sources.

Secularization, Politics, Religion, and Capitalism

One of the reasons that social scientists have neglected the role of religion in social movements is that most have accepted the secularization thesis. According to Shah and Philpott, secularization has a variety of meanings, many of which "claim that as the juggernaut of modernity advances through science, economic progress, free inquiry, technological progress, political liberalization, democratization and biblical criticism, religion will recede and eventually disappear."[6] It is argued that "religion … is on the way out."[7] In particular, social scientists accepted the modernist perspective that religion had become separated from the secular sphere and subordinate to the state.

Figure 1. The Dualistic Conception of the Secular and the Sacred

Secular	Sacred
Public	Private
Immanent	Transcendent
Rational	Irrational-Spiritual
Ideational	Institutional
Communal	Individual
Modern	Pre-modern

According to this perspective, the secular and the religious are radically divided, not mutually relational in any way, with religion subordinate to the secular and public. These dualisms play out in a number of ways. For example, many people imagine that to be secular is to be rational, while they associate religion with the irrational and the emotional and see it as a source of violence and a danger to the political sphere.[8]

Evidence suggests, however, that once our gaze is turned away from a secularized Europe, for example, and to the entire world, we see a "religious resurgence" with a strong presence of both religion and religious-political movements. Whereas secular western Europe was seen as the harbinger of things to come, it "now becomes the exception."[9] As a result of this globalized perspective, social scientists have begun to overcome their dualistic thinking about religion. They now see it as relevant to politics, public life, capitalism, and global justice, and thus worthy of study. The fact that the boundary between religion and politics and other spheres of the social world has never been fixed requires a definition of religion that overcomes dualistic thinking. Erin Wilson's definition is appropriate in this regard. According to Wilson, religion is "an internally logical set of ideas and beliefs about the nature of existential reality (encompassing the immanent as well as the transcendent) that shapes and is shaped by both individual and community, identity and action, and which *may* be facilitated and practiced through institutional arrangements, rituals and/or symbols."[10]

Religion in American Political Life

Of course, religious involvement in public life is very much a part of American history, playing an important role in the formation of American political identity and political culture since the arrival of Puritan settlers. From the American Revolution, to the works of Alex de Tocqueville, to the Abolitionist movement, to Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights movement, religion's involvement in American public life has long been recognized. Lately, progressive religious movements such as the Civil Rights movement have become eclipsed by the rise of the New Christian Right, defined predominantly by Evangelical Protestantism.[11] There are sharp differences between Evangelical and mainline Protestant churches when it comes to economic issues and the role of the market in society. Evangelicals, Steensland and Schrank argue, tend to emphasize individual responsibility and view markets positively, while mainline Protestants see "unrestrained free markets as a threat to Christian values and the public good."[12] It is this cleavage between mainline and evangelical Protestants on the role of the market in society that is evident in religious activism at OWS.

Preliminary Theoretical Concerns

Many social movements protesting neoliberal globalization operate on a global scale. Those engaged in the Occupy movement, on the other hand, operated on the local scale and were fuelled by populist anger from the global financial collapse brought on by practices and policies encouraged by Wall Street. Unlike those who claim that the Occupy movement was global in scale, I argue that, in fact, it was decidedly regional, centred primarily in the United States and Europe. Using online blog data, the *Guardian* mapped the Occupy protests of October 11, 2011.[13] While the protests took place in 951 cities in 82 countries around the world, they were overwhelmingly focused in the U.S. and Europe.

For my theoretical framework, I draw upon social movement literature and Hannah Arendt's analysis of the public sphere. In terms of social movement theory, the paper stresses the political opportunities, the mobilizing resources, and framing perspectives. In terms of the first, according to Hein-Anton van der Heijden, the "political opportunity structure [POS] refers to the specific features of a political system ... that can explain the different action repertoires, organizational forms and impacts of social movements, and social movement organizations in that specific country."[14]

Under the influence of neoliberalism, the formally open opportunity structures of representative democracies are closing, shifting the loci of political power. Markets increasingly replace states as allocators of societal values and are viewed as the best means of improving the lives of most people. Within the state, power concentrates in the executive branch of government, and government in general becomes increasingly insulated from democratic politics. As a result, Nancy Fraser argues, the spaces formerly created and maintained by the state have closed to the masses of the population, but remain open to the wealthy and the powerful.[15] Consequently, social movement actors have been forced to create their own political spaces. Here the work of Hannah Arendt is insightful. Arendt stressed that political spaces do not have to centre on the state. Politics and public spaces are not necessarily tied to any particular place, territory, or set of institutions; they can be instantiated in a variety of social spaces and places. While Arendt was concerned that public spaces were disappearing, she also believed the potential for political processes to create new public spaces always exists.[16] This includes the creation of new public spaces and the (re)politicizing and (re)publicizing of issues that had previously been ignored, depoliticized, and depicted as bureaucratic, administrative, and technical. Arendt also viewed politics as a cultural phenomenon, as a realm of

appearance, performance, and drama. Through performance and communication, we attract the attention of spectators with the purpose of communicating something about our common world. As Arendt observes, "no one in his right mind would ever put on a spectacle without being sure of having spectators to watch it."[17]

The mobilizing and cultural framing perspectives can be described more succinctly. In terms of resource mobilization, any successful movement requires means, that is, resources. In terms of OWS, these included, for example, material resources—food and shelter. They also included leadership and the ability to recruit members as well as space to meet, but also protected space to discuss political action. Given that grievances and claims cannot be taken for granted, framing is critical to the success of any social movement. Frames provide meaning and the symbolic construction of collective identity for social movements; they articulate the nature of a problem and call for action. Framing the issue of income inequality and wealth as one of the 1% versus the 99% served as a convincing frame to unify opposition to the concentration of corporate wealth and power in the United States and as a means of motivating greater participation in the movement.

Religious Activism at Occupy Wall Street

The participation of religious activists in OWS challenges the dualistic notion that religion has been relegated to the private sphere. Here the article is informed by interviews in July 2012 of twelve religious activists engaged with OWS from a variety of faith backgrounds—Protestant, Catholic, Judaic, Muslim, and Buddhist—with Protestants comprising the largest number. These activists were associated with three main religious entities engaged with OWS:

1) Occupy Faith—an interfaith coalition of mainline Protestant, Jewish, Buddhist, Catholic, and Muslim activists formed to provide support to the Occupy movement, primarily OWS and Occupy Oakland.
2) Protest Chaplains—a group consisting primarily of seminarians. The group originated in Boston, but soon spread to other cities, including New York. Their primary purpose was to provide for the spiritual needs of the protestors.
3) Religious activists who decided they wanted to make particular statements about the relationship of their faith to Occupy. Prominent here are Occupy Judaism and Occupy Catholics.

Religious activists were engaged in OWS for many of the same reasons as non-religious activists. Here, two concepts of justice are of particular significance: political, and economic or redistributive. In terms of political justice, Fraser refers to the issue of representation, that is, questions of who is included and able to participate in political arenas in the making of justice claims. Today, those most effectively represented in political arenas consist of the economic and political elite. Economic justice is a component of social justice focused on the welfare of the citizens of a society and the creation of an economy that works for everyone, including a fair distribution of wealth. The latter was a primary concern of OWS.

Excluded from the governing process, activists in New York City touched off the widespread Occupy movement by occupying Zuccotti Park, located in the Wall Street financial district, and turning it into "Liberty Square." The emphasis on a failed democratic system and growing economic and social injustice struck a chord with many religious leaders. In particular, there was a shared sense of how corrupt the American political system had become. As one black church leader put it, "And the corporations did just that, they went and corrupted the politicians and that is why we are in the condition we are in right now and that is because our government has been bought and paid for ...."[18]

Among other religious figures expressing concerns about the closing of American political spaces was Reverend Michael Ellick of Judson Memorial Church in lower Manhattan. Ellick not only participated at OWS, but also became a catalyst in the founding of what became known as Occupy Faith. According to Ellick, the Gospel required his intervention and that of his church in OWS:

> To us, this is a justice issue that's not about partisan politics. This is about the morality of our country no longer being a democracy. This is the fact that we all know and can say … that we're a plutocracy. We're a government entirely hijacked by a certain system that does not favor the regular person. So, to me, this goes right out of the gospel.[19]

For emphasis, Ellick adds, "there is no public square in America." OWS, according to Ellick, "was a creation of a public space."

All interviewees made it clear that their religious and spiritual beliefs dictated their support of OWS. That is, religion had to be immanent, not transcendent and aloof,

in the world of power and address issues important to people. Ellick argued that "either religion is something that incarnates into our real world and affects our real issues, or it's not. If it's not, it's over."[20] Rabbi Michael Feinberg of the Greater New York Labor–Religion Coalition argued that it was a necessity for religion to be in the public square and that "if religion isn't engaged in the public square, it's some kind of fossil, it should be put into a museum."[21] In response to the suggestion that faith groups should stay out of the public square, a leader of a black church and member of Occupy Faith replied, "That is insanity, that is absolutely wrong. What these churches are doing by staying in their four walls [is that] they are violating their Great Commission and their mandate."[22] For an American Theravada Buddhist monk, "religion is concerned with social order, justice, mutual respect, preservation of the natural order" and "must enter into public discussions."[23]

The creation of OWS as a public space was thus taken as an important opportunity for religious activists. According to one, it opened up a public square "to address the issues of the day."[24] For Reverend Ellick, the critical question was "How do you create big faith organizing?" Ellick, in particular, recognized the importance of reimagining politics, of creating public spaces of diversity and drawing people to them. Arendt would have agreed with him. He stressed the significance of spectacle at the heart of the performative configuration of Occupy as street theatre, poetry, and symbolism, which he saw as necessary to attract an audience. Ellick and his church helped organize and lead an interfaith march from Judson Memorial Church to Zuccotti Park, where an interfaith service was to be held. At the centre of the march was the golden calf, a symbol of idolatry in the Muslim, Christian, and Jewish traditions.

The calf resembles and reframes the image of the Wall Street bull, typically portrayed as the power and strength of Wall Street. However, here it represents the idolatry of greed of the 1%. The symbolism worked. The presence of the golden calf at OWS was a media image that went viral on the Internet, framing for many what Occupy was all about and giving rise to the creation of networked interfaith Occupy Faith groups across the United States.[25]

In the interfaith march, many religious leaders made a point of wearing recognizably religious garb to signify the presence of faith in the movement. They also hoped to show that there was a progressive alternative to the conservative religions so dominant in the mass media. According to a Protest Chaplain, one reason for the symbolism was that "the religious right in this country has been such a large part of everything that Occupy Wall Street protested against. So part of it was to counter that religious messaging."[26]

Those participating in Occupy Faith also wanted to ensure that they were symbolically present at OWS as members of faith groups. Muslim leaders "invited Muslim Americans from across New York City to come and have a Friday prayer where we tarped the floor in a big portion of Zuccotti Park." The sermon of a leading imam "focused on social justice and what Islam says about standing for justice and what Islam says about corporate greed."[27] In addition, there were carefully orchestrated interfaith services that expressed religious support for OWS. In an interfaith service on November 13, 2011, in Zuccotti Park, theologian Traci West spoke directly to those women neglected by the existing economic system by asking them to identify with Mary, the mother of Jesus: "If you are a poor single mother on welfare, if you cannot feed your family no matter how many part-time jobs you have, you feel lowly and defeated and no greedy, corrupt politician cares, listen to the radical Christian gospel of economic equality from a poor, unwed, pregnant prophet of God."[28]

Occupy Judaism organized its presence at OWS around Jewish religious dates, including Sukkot in September 2011, an act of solidarity in which hundreds were present. According to Dan Sieradski, the organizer of Occupy Judaism NYC: "There is no better place to celebrate the festival of Sukkot this year than right here at Occupy Wall Street. We stand in solidarity with all those who are challenging the inequitable distribution of resources in our country, who dare to dream of a more just and compassionate society."[29]

What inspired many religious activists was Occupy's emphasis on social and economic justice, in particular the latter. As a movement, Occupy was framed around the issue of redistributive justice evident in the image of the 99% excluded from the global circuits of financial and political power facing increasing concentrations of wealth of the 1%.

The sense of injustice at OWS was palpable and was supported by various faith groups: Muslim, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and Buddhist. According to Rabbi Feinberg, Muslims, Jews, and Christians have a similar mandate for economic and social justice. For one Muslim leader, it was Muslims' opposition to corporate greed and corruption that led them to participate

in OWS. He said, "You didn't really have to convince Muslims that corporate greed is wrong and that foreclosing on people's homes and taking their homes away from them was a wrong thing."[30]

Significantly as well, a sense of spirituality motivated many religious participants at OWS. One Buddhist monk viewed spirituality in a collective sense, "as a vehicle for awakening or liberation," that is, as a means of motivating people to create a more just society.[31] One Protest Chaplain described being part of OWS as a "spiritual experience" in which he "felt a kind of connectedness between people that I don't experience that often, particularly in this city."[32]

The faith groups present at OWS in support of the cause of justice clearly represented a minority of faith-based organizations in New York City, and their members were always a minority of participants. However, they were a presence, and they performed support functions crucial to any social movement, particularly in terms of resource mobilization. Many churches and Muslim organizations supplied shelter and resources—food, tents, showers, and social media support. When OWS was raided by police, a number of churches took in the displaced. Churches helped mobilize congregations to march to Liberty Square. Other churches provided space for activists to meet and organize. Faith groups also provided leadership. Reverend Ellick, for example, was a commonly referenced leader. Several interviewees reported using their experiences at OWS to explain to their more conservative congregations what the Occupy Movement was all about.

While OWS faith groups tried to play down differences with non-religious actors, some differences did exist. One key difference centred on the organizing model of OWS, which was organized by means of social media. These crowds of individuals could disperse as quickly as they could congregate. While mobilization was quick, this meant many activists were new and inexperienced, lacking in appreciation of the overall global context of issues, and it was a challenge to instill a common sense of purpose and identity. This, combined with the movement's emphasis on horizontal consensus decision making, created some problems. According to one religious participant, the making of decisions through consensus building was "one of the reasons why things did not get done."[33]

The overemphasis on occupying physical space and the lack of structure proved to be a limitation of ongoing organizing and mobilizing particularly. According to one religious leader, the emphasis on physical space meant it was incapable of bringing Occupy to the "masses and neighborhoods."[34] According to this religious leader, to be successful outside of Zuccotti Park meant you had to get out into the communities, in particular into black communities, and gain experience with people and their particular issues.

Doubts about Occupy in the black (and brown) community may have contributed to what many observed was an overwhelming white presence in OWS. According to Rabbi Feinberg, "the people sitting there did not mirror the people walking by in the streets of New York City in terms of diversity."[35] In fact, the OWS General Assembly recognized this lack of diversity and on October 1, 2011, created the People of Color Working Group with the mandate "to build a racially conscious and inclusive movement" by reaching out to "communities of color."[36] Occupy Faith also attempted to rectify the problem by organizing a march to Liberty Square by black congregations in Brooklyn on October 30, 2011.

Conclusion

All the religious activists I interviewed were strongly supportive of OWS. Yet it was acknowledged that OWS was a space of tensions, "a grimy, earthly place," increasingly full of the homeless, drug dealers, and others dropped off by the police.[37] Despite these misgivings about OWS, religious activists believed OWS had opened public space and legitimized political conversations about issues that had been neglected by mainstream media and politicians. Religion belonged, activists argued, in the public square. Participating in OWS was what they should be doing. The suggestion that there should be dividing lines between the public and the private, the secular and the religious, did not make sense to those I interviewed. As one Protest Chaplain observed, "what's happening in the public sphere is always deeply meaningful to us because it's affecting every aspect of our lives."[38] In sum, OWS and the broader Occupy movement spawned considerable religious activism which, while reduced, has not faded away. Many activists reported they were still politically engaged in the issues raised by the Occupy movement. For example, Occupy Faith NYC, an interfaith group, has continued to meet, organize, and participate in direct action.

In conclusion, the Occupy Movement and OWS form part of a global movement against capitalist excess. This

resistance can be seen as forming part of what economic historian Karl Polanyi (1886–1964) described as a countermovement. Whenever the market has tried to separate itself from the fabric of society, society's natural response was resistance. Religion has historically played a key role in this resistance—for example, the Social Gospel Movement in the U.S. and Canada—and shows every sign that it will continue to do so.

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1 The author would like to thank Union Theological Seminary, Auburn College, and Columbia University for providing me with the opportunity to participate as a Coolidge Fellow in the 2012 CrossCurrents Research Colloquium.

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Towards a More Indigenous African Catholicism: Insights from Lonergan's Notion of Culture

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Drawing from examples from sub-Saharan Africa and especially from Christian missionary enterprises there, this paper suggests ways and means of developing a more indigenous Catholicism in the light of Bernard Lonergan's notion of culture. Religion becomes relevant to the development of a people by adapting to their environment. This is true for indigenous religions as well as for transnational religions like Christianity, to which people are converted through various forms of cultural contact. Evangelization of peoples begins by openness to and respect for cultures as the seedbed of human dignity, meaning, and purpose. Just as Christianity emerges in a Hellenic and Jewish context and develops according to the circumstances of non-Jewish converts, so too today it is always autochthonous wherever it is found.

This conscious effort of Christianity to dialogue with cultures is not without its challenges, especially as Western Christianity both adopted Eurocentric cultural forms and has spread to various parts of the world. I argue that Lonergan's notion of culture, through its emphasis of the transition from classical to an empirical (that is, concrete as opposed to abstract or ideal) notion of culture, explains not only the imperative of cultural pluralism as constitutive of humanity but also presents the appreciation of diverse cultures as the way of being church. Unlike the classical notion of culture, which ignores differences among people and expects everyone to think alike, the empirical notion of culture acknowledges the fact that people (and nations) with different histories cannot think and act the same way or adapt to environment the same way. This way the richness of Lonergan's notion of culture has the potential to solve the recurring problems of cultural identity in the world church.

Approaches to Culture

The various approaches to the study of culture prior to Vatican II could be narrowed down to an idea of culture with a capital 'C', used often with regard to so-called high cultures, and an idea of culture with a small 'c', referring to supposedly less reflective, sophisticated, or successful cultures. The former were considered civilized, while the latter, often associated with popular traditional lifestyles, were considered savage. In this approach, indigenous cultures that differed from the high culture of empires were understood as nothing but an early stage in the process of civilization, a process controlled and spread by people of the high culture. This conception of culture, especially western European culture, as civilization justified several imperialist missions in which Christian missionary activities played a collaborative role.

Appraisal of Missionary Enterprise in Africa

One must begin any appraisal of missionary activities in Africa by appreciating the heroism of the missionaries who responded to God's call "with ardent apostolic zeal, [and] came to share the joy of revelation."[1] The fruit of their work is evident: millions of Africans have converted and are converting to Christianity. However, the nineteenth-century missionaries' classical conception of culture as European civilization became the Achilles' heel of African Christianity. Their paternalism bred dependency and attached Africans to the apron strings of Western Christianity. Their condemnation of indigenous African cultures as savage and heathen continues to negatively impact Christianity in Africa today.

For example, Bede Jagoe, a Dominican priest working in Nigeria in the 1960s, mentions that prior to Vatican II, it was not customary for missionaries to learn anything about traditional practices, which were condemned as evil and as coming from the devil. He gives examples of how "some former missionaries forbade a festival to give thanks to God for the harvest of yams since there was no blessing for this in the Roman Ritual."[2] Not only has such condemnation of African cultures given rise to syncretism, with Africans having a dual allegiance to Christianity and their traditional religions, the lack of integration of Christian faith with African cultural and religious values has given rise to Africans regarding Christianity as strange. The result has been the emergence of homegrown African Independent Churches on the one hand and the African anthropological crisis, that

is, the new experience of domination by external cultural forces—including religious forces—when compelled to be Christians in a manner defined by foreign cultures.

Another example, drawn from Fr. Alex Chima's experience in Malawi, equally corroborates the anthropological crisis among African Christians, one often manifested in the tensions and contradictions in their spiritual lives. Although the people attended the Mass over which he presided, they also rushed away to participate, at the behest of their chief, in a rain sacrifice at the foot of a hill about 4 miles away. This practice, which is all too common in Africa, testifies to the need to make Christian faith and worship relevant to the people by responding to their real needs rather than on faithfulness to liturgical laws.[3]

Examples of how this might be done can be grasped from other missionary experiences, such as Ronald Allen's short experience as a missionary in China (1895 to 1900 and later in 1902) and Vincent Donovan's unique missionary experience in the Masai Kingdom, East Africa (1955 to 1973). Their practices, methods, and suggestions offer positive insight into measures toward new evangelization in Africa and other contexts and also highlight the flaws of traditional missionary enterprises. Allen realized that indigenizing Christianity was functionally efficient for the spread of the faith. He suggests that evangelization accompany the establishment of self-propagating, self-supporting, self-governing churches able to evangelize their neighbours without depending on foreign missionaries for leadership or financial support. Allen asserts:

> If the Church is to be indigenous it must spring up in the soil from the very first seeds planted. One or two little groups of Christians organized as Churches, with their bishops and priests, could spread all over an empire. They would be obviously and without question Native Churches. But if we establish Missions rather than Churches, two evil consequences, which we now see in greater or less degree everywhere, sterility and antagonism, inevitably arise.[4]

Spontaneous expansion of the church was hindered also by the missionary insistence on Christian morals, which of course meant the European customs they accepted as civilized and believed must be inculcated to the new converts to Christianity.[5] Such demands not only disrupted the social order of most communities, they exposed converts to Christianity to ridicule and at times to rejection by their families. Civilizing the natives, taking them away from their ways of life and cutting them off from their kith and kin, was the standard procedure for evangelization in situations where to be Christian meant to be like the missionaries. Instead of seeking to make Europeans of African converts, Allen suggests spontaneous expansion of the church whereby African converts to Christianity freely share the Christian faith with their neighbours, thus becoming missionaries to one another. This of course presupposes respect for the culture and the patterns of life of the indigenous peoples.

Vincent Donovan, a missionary priest to the Masai, was very much influenced by Allen's work. Writing several decades later about the limitations of missionary work, he urges starting afresh:

> There is no mistaking the fact that missionary work is in shambles. Born in slavery, disoriented by the school system, startled by independence, and smothered in nation building—mission in East Africa has never had the chance to be true to itself. To make any sense out of mission, out of the meaning and purpose of missionary work, one has to start all over again—at the beginning.[6]

Starting afresh for Donovan is starting evangelization with deep respect for the cultures of peoples and appreciating that people have a culture from which their lives derive meaning. Recognizing a people's culture implies that missionaries must not substitute that culture with any other.

Donovan found that the very concept of mission has to change. Missionaries, he says, are not sent to plant a church or to preach the church but to tell the good news of God's universal salvation in Christ. The Eurocentric response to the good news is not the only response to the Gospel, and each community must respond in accordance with its own culture. Thus the new evangelization, characterized by the preaching of the Gospel to the poor and a dialogue with the cultures of peoples informed by profound respect for these cultures as vehicles for the Good News, is one of the most important achievements of the Second Vatican Council.

The Vatican II Stance on Culture

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) links culture to human dignity, calls for human freedom to realize the dignity of the human person, and recognizes the plurality of cultures.[7] It delves into the problems of continuity and change, that is, the preservation of traditional cultures arising from

"the increased exchanges between cultures," especially those caused by modernization. The relationship of faith and cultures is expected to promote integral salvation, that is, the Gospel instruction to Christians to be agents of social transformation by participation in the humanization of their world through culture. *Gaudium et Spes* recognizes the cultural and hence contextual nature of divine revelation "where God's progressive self-communication adapted itself to the culture of different ages."[8]

Vatican II's stance is very significant for the church's relationship to culture. First, culture is seen as fundamental to what it means to be human. To disregard, deny, or disparage a people's culture is to dehumanize and insult them. Each people must be free to live by the intendments of its culture, to express its unique identity. Culture, however, is not static but dynamic; it develops and is amenable to various forms of influences both internal and external. Africans have distinct cultures that integrally harmonize their lives religiously, sociopolitically, economically, etc. Evangelization must have such cultures as its starting point. Second, the recognition of plurality of cultural forms and the equality of all cultures is a paradigm shift from the classicist idea of culture to one conscious of history and the importance of particular cultures for evangelization. It reflects the Council fathers' rejection of the rigid traditionalism of the preparatory documents and their option for genuine *aggiornamento*.[9] Third, that Jesus was born and raised a Jew implies that the divine revelation took flesh in a particular human culture. His mission and ministry took place within the linguistic, historical, and cultural ambient of the Hellenistic Jews of his time influenced by Hellenistic philosophy. In fact, Jesus' Jewishness is of an entirely different order from the post-Temple Judaism of most Jewish communities today. When Christianity eventually spread to the Greeks, it formally adopted the Greek and Hellenistic philosophy and religious cultural superstructure. As is evident from the influence of Western-oriented Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa, the Gospel equally became westernized when it spread to the West. Susan Ross writes, "As Christianity spread across Europe, and especially as it spread into the lands that we now call England, Scotland, and Ireland, it developed its own unique regional characteristics, as it did everywhere it took root."[10] The Western Christian missionaries, mostly from some of the countries listed above, bequeathed to the Africans their own interpretation of the Gospel in the light of their cultures. Meanwhile, it is more important to note that Christianity spread first to what is now considered North Africa and the Middle East. St. Augustine, for example, was a Romanized African.[11] His mother, Monica, practised indigenous local African traditions. As the Gospel spreads to Asia, the Americas, and sub-Saharan Africa, it must take unto itself the Asian as well as indigenous American and African cultural, religious, and philosophical superstructures. As transcultural, the Good News must become African in Africa as it did in the case of the North African churches of the early period. This becomes the foundation for the incarnation or inculturation of Christian faith in African cultures.

Church and Culture after Vatican II

The post–Vatican II church obviously supports the appropriation of the Christian faith in the light of the cultures of each people. Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) acknowledges this to be the case in the first two millennia of Christian faith as people have accepted the Christian faith, allowed it to grow in their own lives, and passed it on in the language of their own culture.[12] Pope Paul VI first used the term "African Christianity" while addressing the first Pan-African meeting of Roman Catholic Bishops at Gaba, Uganda, in 1969. Paul VI reminded the African bishops of the role of their cultures in evangelization with words that reflect Vatican II's acknowledgement of the plurality of cultural forms for the expression of Christian faith:

> The expression, that is, the language and mode of manifesting this one Faith may be manifold, hence it may be original, suited to the tongue, the style, the character, the genius and the culture of the one who professes this one Faith. From this point of view, a certain pluralism is not only legitimate, but desirable.[13]

Similarly, Pope John Paul II reiterated the church's respect for cultures during his apostolic visit to Nigeria in 1982: "The Church comes to bring Christ; she does not come to bring the culture of another race. Evangelization aims at penetrating and elevating culture by the power of the Gospel."[14] John Paul II founded the Pontifical Council for Culture to promote the study of Gospel and culture as well as the relation of Christianity to non-Christian religions.[15]

Lonergan's Notion of Culture

Culture, for Lonergan, emanates within the meaning-making process constitutive of each community that

commonly experiences, understands, judges, and decides.[16] Lonergan recognizes the shift from the classical control of meaning to the modern, empirical notion of culture based on appreciation of experience and history. He argues that the classicist concept of culture is static, universalistic, monolithic, univocal, restrictive, exclusive, nature-oriented, and totalistic. The empirical notion of culture, on the contrary, is dynamic, particular and local, concrete, pluralistic, polymorphic, inclusive, other-focused, and historically minded. Among his many attempts to explain the differences between these two notions of culture, I find his distinction in the paper titled "The Future of Christianity" the most explicit:

> While classicist culture conceived itself normatively and abstractly, modern culture conceives itself empirically and concretely. It is the culture that recognizes cultural variation, difference, development, breakdown, that investigates each of the many cultures of mankind, that studies their histories, that seeks to understand what the classicist would tend to write off as strange or uncultivated or barbaric. Instead of thinking of man in terms of a nature common to all men, whether awake or asleep, geniuses or morons, saints or sinners, it attends to men in their concrete living. If it can discern common and invariant structures in human operations, it refuses to take flight from the particular to the universal, and it endeavors to meet the challenge of knowing people in all their diversity and mutability.[17]

Obviously, therefore, the European missionaries' attitude to indigenous cultures is explained by the classicist culture under which they were raised and trained. Their condemnation of cultures they knew nothing about, their dismissal of those whom they had come to evangelize as uncultured "savages," and hence their mission to give "barbarians" culture can be understood as a result of the ignorance embedded in the classicist notion of culture.[18]

Lonergan's most significant contribution lies in the recognition of the shift from classicist to empirical notion of culture as well as its implications that it demands a methodological shift of attitude for religion and theology's engagement with cultures. Lonergan asserts:

> Just as theology has to enter into the context of modern philosophy and science, so religion has to retain its identity yet penetrate into the cultures of mankind, into the manifold fabric of everyday meaning and feeling that directs and propels the lives of men. It has to know the uses of symbol and story, the resources of its arts and of literature, the potentialities of the old and the new media of communications, the various motivations on which in any given area it can rely, the themes that in a given culture and class provide a carrying wave for the message.[19]

The modern notion of culture's appreciation of the place of history and the diversity of cultural ambient is threatening to the status quo of traditional ecclesiological and theological approaches to culture that generally tend to be classicist. The change in attitude that the shift to the empirical notion of culture demands is akin to the great epochal changes in history and culture like Vatican II (1962–65). For example, the concept of theology is shifting from the one universal theology that is methodologically deductive to a notion of plurality of theologies that is inductive and respectful of the differences varying historical circumstances bring about in the lives of human beings in various cultural settings.[20] In the modern notion of culture, the church is concerned not only with ecumenism but also with its relation to other non-Christian religions and variants of atheism that negate religion altogether. While such shifts have been ongoing for over a century, according to Lonergan, "the massive breakthrough took place at the Second Vatican Council."[21] Concerted efforts at implementing the shift from the classicist to the modern (empirical) notion of culture in both church and theology officially achieved at the Second Vatican Council lead to the emergence of truly indigenous Catholicism brewed in African cultures.

African Catholicism and Inculturation After Vatican II

The post-conciliar ecclesiology emphasizes the inculturation of Christian faith in indigenous cultures. In the period following the African march to political independence from colonialism up to the gradual appreciation and maturity of African theology, inculturation theology has been making inroads into African Christianity and changing the perception of Christianity as foreign. Many aspects of the faith are now understood and communicated in the light of African cultures. For example, Eugene Uzukwu's research work in some West African countries specifies how people of the West African region understand the Trinitarian doctrine through their traditional cultural religions. Earlier, Vincent Mulago, Charles Nyamiti, and Efoé Julien Pénoukou laboured

at developing a comprehensive inculturated systematic theological treatise using primarily some variation of African metaphysics based on the theory of life as vital participation.[22] Not only have there been changes in forms of worship, liturgical vestments, and liturgical language, there have been efforts in various parts of Africa to adapt and inculturate the liturgy in various aspects of African socio-religious celebrations. For instance, specific rites like the Zairean rite have received official approval from the Vatican.[23] A field research conducted simultaneously in 2002 in three east African countries–Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda–organized by Laurenti Magesa offer more clues to the practice of inculturation in Africa. In Kenya, respondents point to elements like singing, clapping, dancing, using of drums, etc., as evidence of the incorporation of aspects of African custom and spirituality into liturgical celebration. They note that the shape of such Christian symbols like the crucifix, altars, and tabernacles are taking a much more African cultural outlook. In Tanzania and Uganda, respondents understand inculturation as taking popular spirituality seriously: that is, living the message of Jesus Christ or the Gospel using specific cultural elements like the drums, proverbs in liturgy, and moral teaching.[24]

The Challenges to Inculturation

Amidst the achievements, myriad problems beset the inculturation of Christian faith in African cultures. Primarily, the challenges have been attitudinal, that is, the suspicion that inculturation represents a paganization of Christianity and the inability at times to link inculturation to the African quest for integral development as it responds to the challenges of modern nationhood. These concerns are not totally without merit. Uncritical adoption of African cultural values really can lead to the 'paganization' of Christianity, with the risk of Christianity being substituted with African traditional religions. No human culture is perfect, and so inculturation is a give-and-take process between Christian faith and cultures that encourages critical study of African cultures so as to avoid the danger of culturalism. At the same time, this critical study of Christian faith must be in tandem with the 'de-Westernization' of the African Christian mindset. Although advances have been made in this regard, the info-technological globalization has opened up multiple vistas of meaning often dominated by Western cultures, which appears to be reversing the gains. Many African peoples are attached to the Western products, lifestyles, and values spread through these modern means of communication. African cultural values are increasingly seen as too traditional and as impediments to progress and development. Various African governments are also not helping matters by neglecting rural areas; this neglect fuels urban migration, which promotes individualistic and consumerist mentalities drawn from the Western mindset. At the other extreme are educated Africans who throw away the Christian faith as foreign because the form of Christianity they are familiar with is Western. Consequently, the practice of inculturation remains critical for the future of Christianity in Africa.

The grounding of Christian faith in the culture of a people and in the authentic national identity and patriotic spirit it creates indirectly promotes the human good. Inculturation removes the dichotomy between faith and life. Thus it contributes to the emergence of authentic human beings able to hold in tension the limitation and transcendence of culture and Christian faith, of inherited constitutive meanings and the Gospel values updating and refining one's cultural values. It also has the potential to reconcile theologians who argue for liberation theology without engaging inculturation theology and those who argue for inculturation without liberation. Theological differences arise in Africa when theologians engaged in the various issues of culture, class, racial exploitation, oppression, and poverty reduce theology to their own specialization without relating the various issues of culture together.[25] Thus inculturation theology, African liberation theology, African women's theology, and Black theology often seem to be engaged in an unnecessary and unproductive tug of war.[26]

Understanding the intrinsic connection between inculturation and development or liberation correctly places inculturation where it can heal the "anthropological poverty"—that is, the crisis of identity arising from being mentally uprooted from their cultures that disorients Africans. Caught between two cultures, neither of which they recognize as fully theirs, African Christians become involved in syncretism religiously and fail to commit to national or social development. However, if inculturation succeeds in making Christianity part of ordinary life, the Christian faith will no longer be seen as foreign. Simultaneously, the liberation and salvation in Christ will cease to be merely spiritual but will have social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions as well. Not only will the crisis of identity of African Christians be healed by appreciation of their cultural values, Christian love will bring about changes in the

peoples' relationship with one another and to their cultures and communities in such a way that they will become willing to promote social justice, demand good governance, participate in national development, and effect social transformation.

The Way Forward

Africans need to adopt an attitudinal change toward their cultures and the Christian faith. The liberation of African Christianity from unnecessary foreign elements will focus on Christ as the Good News and not on its foreign garment as modelled by the missionaries. Thus Christianity will be seen for what it is: a transcultural movement that inaugurates the kingdom of God.

A fundamental reorientation is required to disabuse Africans of the negative attitude toward African traditional religions, which many still consider evil and devilish. The first step is to study African traditional religion. This study will be difficult, as people suspect anyone, especially a Christian, associated with traditional religion. The awkward situation here can be traced back to the ambivalent attitude that African Christians have towards traditional religion. They fear, respect, and consult it in private but disparage it in public as evil. One needs a lot of courage to begin such a study from a disinterested perspective, especially because the study of African traditional religions is most often done from a Christian perspective to point out how the religion is the *preparatio evangelica*, that is, the nurturing ground for Christianity. Such study does not allow the traditional religions to emerge and to speak for themselves.

One way to divest the African mind from its phobia toward African traditional religions is to de-Westernize the African clergy, both Catholic priests and ministers of the Reformed tradition, especially Pentecostals. Most Catholic priests are trained in seminaries that offer a Western-based curriculum with only a very limited place for African traditional religions and values. For this reason, most African Catholic priests are not predisposed to positive attitudes toward their cultures. While some Protestant clergy are more positively disposed toward African traditional religions and have actually undertaken foundational scholarship on them,[27] a good number of their clergy, notably Pentecostal ministers, dismiss African traditional religion as evil.[28] They are averse towards inculturation or any form of indigenization, which they interpret as the attempt of the devil to destroy the work of the missionaries and return Africa to the enemy of humankind. Pentecostalism, which is very influential in Africa today, is not able to distinguish the Christian faith from the Western garb in which it is clothed. Most Pentecostal ministers reject traditional music, dances, festivities, etc., as pagan, sinful, and devilish. Thus the African cultures, religions, and spiritualities to which the people are accustomed are jettisoned in favour of what is considered Christian, dressed as it is in Western cultural forms. This continues to make Christianity a foreign religion in the consciousness of Africans, although often accepted because it makes one look "civilized." The consequence is the dual allegiance Africans pay to Christianity and to their traditional African religio-cultural spiritualities.

The changes in outlook toward inculturation must begin with changes to the curriculum in seminaries, houses of formation, schools, and colleges. If and where the church is unable to effect wholesale changes, it must at least change the curricula of seminaries and houses of religious formation to reflect and appreciate African religions and cultures. When this is done, the positive values of African traditional religions and cultures will enrich the Christian faith, and the Christian faith will enrich the African religions and cultures. Africans can then express their Christian faith using African images, symbols, arts, etc., without the guilt of worshipping idols. This would be an authentic incarnation of the Christian faith. Thus will Africans be truly and fully African and Christian at the same time.

Conclusion

Although it now seems obvious, the recognition of cultural pluralism and the respect expected for the integrity of world cultures is a great moral achievement emanating from the shift from the classicist to the empirical notion of culture. Our awareness of the mistakes of Christian missionary activities arising from the classicist notion of culture and the attendant anthropological crisis they engendered allows us to appreciate the significance of this shift for the success of mission and the mutual coexistence of peoples. However, this shift presents us with two challenges. First, we must promote widespread awareness of this shift and protect it against backsliding to the classicist mentality that inspires people to live in the modern world with a superannuated ideal of cultural superiority. Second, we must overcome fears of the implications of the historical mindedness inherent in empirical notions of culture and become open to possible changes in horizon. The promotion of a more indigenous Catholicism demands perseverance in

the implementation of the Vatican II notion of culture, which not only recognizes cultural pluralism but also, through other post-conciliar documents and institutions, teaches the benefits of the empirical notion of culture.

The dialogue of faith and culture stands to benefit from creative appropriation of the giant strides made at Vatican II. Local churches need to embrace the shift from classicist to modern notions of culture and look at their cultures, which have been demonized, in new ways as God's gifts containing unfathomable spiritual wealth that they may use to respond to the Gospel. Local churches should not only critically study their cultures in order to promote inculturation of the Good News into all aspects of their lives, but should also advance these cultures in the light of Gospel values. African theology cannot but mediate, to use Lonergan's words, "between [African] cultural matrix and the significance and role of [Christianity] in that matrix."[29]

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1 Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus* n. 113, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20111119_africae-munus_en.html.

2 Bede Jagoe, "Vatican II Comes to Africa," *Worship*, (2005) 79.6: 544–554: 550.

3 Alex B. Chima, "Africanizing the Liturgy – Where Are We Twenty Years after Vatican II?" *AFER*, 25 (1983): 280–292 at 282.

4 Ronald Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church: And the Causes that Hinder It* (Kindle Edition, Jawbone Digital, 2012), loc. 30.

5 Augustine S.O. Okwu, "The Weak Foundations of Missionary Evangelization in Precolonial Africa: The Case of the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria 1857–1900," *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. VIII, No. I, January, 1980, 31–50 at 32.

6 Vincent J. Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered: An Epistle from the Massai* (London: SCM Press, 1982), Kindle Edition, Loc. 477–485.

7 Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Guild Press, 1966). *Gaudium et Spes* n. 52-62 is devoted to culture as well as its relationship to the faith, revelation, and the Gospel.

8 Michael Paul Gallagher, SJ, *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith and Culture* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2003), 46.

9 Donald R. Campion, "The Church Today," in Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed., *The Documents of Vatican II*, 183–198.

10 Susan A. Ross, *Anthropology: Seeking Light and Beauty* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 32.

11 Philip Jenkins' book *The Lost History of Christianity* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008) chronicles the thousand-year golden age of the church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia—and how it died.

12 Pope Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 116. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html. Karl Rahner interpreted such appropriation as the condition for the existence of a World Church. Cf. Karl Rahner, "Towards a Fundamental Theological Interpretation of Vatican II," *Theological Studies*, 40, 4 (December 1979): 718, 724.

13 Paul VI, "Eucharistic Celebration at the Conclusion of the Symposium Organized by the Bishops of Africa," n. 2. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/homilies/1969/documents/hf_p-vi_hom_19690731_en.html. See also *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 20 on the distinctness of the Gospel and culture and the imperative of the Gospel not being incompatible with culture of each people.

14 John Paul II, "Address of John Paul II to the Bishops of Nigeria. Lagos, Monday, 15 February, 1982, n. 3. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1982/february/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19820215_vescovi-nigeria_en.html.

15 The Pontifical Council for Culture, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/cultr/documents/rc_pc_cultr_pro_06061999_en.html.

16 Bernard Lonergan, "Dimensions of Meaning," Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, eds., *Collection* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 234.

17 Bernard Lonergan, "The Future of Christianity," William F. J. Ryan, S.J. and Bernard J. Tyrrell, S.J., eds., *A Second Collection: Papers by J. F. Lonergan, S.J.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 161. Writing in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Lonergan used exclusivist language in the original.

18 Lonergan, in another article, "Theology and Man's Future," observes that classicist culture "set[s] up its own [culture] as the ideal and generously offered to instruct others in its own ways." Bernard Lonergan, "Theology and Man's Future," William F. J. Ryan, S.J. and Bernard J. Tyrrell, S.J., eds., *A Second Collection: Papers by J. F. Lonergan, S.J*., 141.

19 Lonergan, "Theology and Man's Future," 141.

20 Lonergan, "Theology and Man's Future," 138–139.

21 Lonergan, "The Future of Christianity," 160.

22 The theory of vital participation holds that God is the vital principle of life, and that human beings and the cosmos derive their force from communion of life and being with God. See James C. Okoye, CSSP., "Inculturation and Theology in Africa," *Mission Studies*, Vol. XIV, No. 1 (1997): 74–75.

23 Elochukwu E. Uzukwu, "Inculturation and the Liturgy (Eucharist)," in Rosino Gibellini, ed., *Paths of African Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 99.

24 Laurenti Magesa, *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 5–76.

25 See Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz, *African Narrative Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 21.

26 See Emmanuel Martey, *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993).

27 Examples include John S. Mbiti, an Anglican clergy from Kenya, whose foundational works were *African Religions and Philosophy* (Heinemann, 2nd revised and enlarged edition, 1990) and *Introduction to African Religion* (Heinemann, 2nd edition, 1991), as well as Bolaji Idowu, a Nigerian Methodist pastor who was the third indigenous leader of the Methodist Church Nigeria from 1972 to 1984. His pioneering work in African traditional religion includes *African Traditional Religion* (Norwich: SCM-Canterbury Press Ltd., 1974) and *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (New York: Frederick A. Preager, First Edition 1963; Ibadan: Wazobia, 1994).

28 See Kwabena J. Darkwa Amanor's article "Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in Ghana and the African Culture: Confrontation or Compromise?" *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18 (2009), 123–140.

29 Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, loc. 146.

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