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The Minorities and the Marginalized in Modi's India

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Introduction

On September 28, 2015, a mob stormed into the house of 52-year-old Mohammad Akhlaq Saifi in Bisara village near Dadri in Uttar Pradesh (India), dragged him outside and lynched him. Some meat was found in the refrigerator of the house; the crowd accused Saifi of consuming beef, even though the family maintained it was mutton. The results of forensic studies revealed several weeks later that the meat kept in the house was indeed mutton.

The lynching was part of a series of violent acts targeting religious minorities since Narendra Modi became prime minister of India in May 2014. Because of the cow's traditional status as a respected creature in Hinduism, cow slaughter has long been a taboo topic in most of India. Most states in the country have laws prohibiting the slaughter of cows, and yet only in recent years has the ban on cow slaughter been enforced with renewed vigour, in the process unleashing a reign of terror among religious minorities and the Dalits for whom beef has traditionally been part of the staple diet. As B. R. Ambedkar wrote, "If beef-eating had remained a secular affair – a mere matter of individual taste – such a bar between those who ate beef and those who did not would not have arisen. Unfortunately beef-eating, instead of being treated as a purely secular matter, was made a matter of religion."[1]

This article will discuss recent changes in the interface between religion and society in India and the impact of these on religious minorities and the traditionally marginalized sections of the society. In particular, I will look at these changes from the perspective of the Christians, the Dalits, and the other minority and marginalized communities. This discussion will take place within the larger framework of the changing face of Hindu nationalism under the Modi administration and its implications for religious pluralism and tolerance in India.

Indian Secularism

Religion in modern India is integrally linked to the concept of secularism that provided an ideological

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framework for independent India. Nations and societies during the medieval period were mostly theocracies where the authority of one 'established religion' determined the law of citizenship and social structure. A theocracy gave "first class citizenship only to the adherents of the established religion; the others are legally restricted in their religious practices and discriminated adversely in social life and the provision of social opportunities."[2] The secular state, on the other hand, was understood as anti-theocratic as the state has no special relation to any one particular religion. The adherents of both the majority and the minority religions and even atheists and agnostics were understood to have equal rights in a secular state.

Secularism in modern India was integrally linked to the nationalist movement that led to independence and to the divergent forces that were active during that period. In particular, it can be mentioned that there were two major forces in India throughout the 20th century. One was the secular nationalism represented by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and others: the mainstream movement in the country that provided the leadership for the independence struggle against the British. Secondly, theocratic forces were also very much at play. V. D. Savarkar of the Hindu Mahasabha endorsed the idea of a Hindu nation, while M. S. Golvarkar's Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) opposed the division of India. Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Muslim League, on the other hand, stood for the two-nation theory, with a Pakistan separate from India for the Muslims. The fact that the Muslim League succeeded in dividing the nation into India and Pakistan further strengthened the nationalist religious groups on both sides and polarized them.

Yet the ideological divide in India was not between religion and secularism, but between exclusion and tolerance. Gandhi and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad were deeply steeped in their religions, but stood for a secular India. Jinnah and Savarkar, who were not particularly religious in their lives, led the politics in the name of their particular religions. It was in confrontation with both the Hindu and the Muslim nationalist tendencies that Gandhi and Nehru steered the course of the independent movement towards a firm secular path. Even as the country was involved in the struggle for freedom, Gandhi, Nehru, and the other leaders realized that secularism is the only concept that will unite the people across the religious-regional-linguistic divide and knit them together as one nation.

Critics have pointed out that the principle of secularism will not suit the specific situation of Indian society. Rajeev Bhargava outlines three such criticisms: (1) Secularism is unsuited for Indian conditions because it is steeped and framed in a highly Christian and Western context. It is incompatible with indigenous world views; (2) Secularism is insensitive to religious people. It forces people to think of religion as a private and personal matter; (3) While the secular state pretends to be neutral, in reality it is biased in favour of the non-believer or the minority religious groups. In the Indian context, while Hindus have often been compelled to view themselves as non-religious people, Muslims are encouraged to frame their identity in terms of their religion. Bhargava refutes these theories and argues that while the complete separation of the state and religious structures or the elimination of every single religious belief from political practice would be a non-starter in India, it is possible to argue for the separation of *some* religious and non-religious institutions. Since the division of electoral constituencies on religious grounds is likely to further polarize the communities, the elimination of such practices in a secular state is one such example.[3]

Secularism in the Indian context was historically a force that pushed for the renewal of religion. According to M. M. Thomas, one of the characteristics of Indian secularism is that while it recognized diverse cultural and social patterns of life among different people inhabiting the country, it also demanded their reform. Religion in the past had given spiritual sanction for injustices such as untouchability and the oppression and marginalization of women and the Indigenous people. "Thus Indian Secularism while opposing religious communalism in politics, encourages the religions to give material and social developments and the humanism behind them moral direction and spiritual foundation. In this sense, it protects, the prophetic social mission of religions."[4]

While the movement that stood for secularism succeeded, during the freedom struggle and in the few decades after that—in countering the forces of fundamentalism and sectarianism in India, in recent decades and especially since the demolition of the 400-year-old Babri Masjid in 1992—the Hindutva (Hindu nationalist) forces have gradually assumed a centre-stage role in the country. Such incidents not only highlighted the estranged relationship between the Hindu and Muslim communities, but also raised questions of whether people of diverse faith backgrounds can live together

in peace and harmony. In the years that followed the demolition of the Islamic structure of Babri Masjid, the Hindu nationalist sections steadily grew in the country. Narendra Modi's coming to power at the centre or federal government in 2014 needs to be seen within this larger context.

While the Hindutva forces are strong in India today and have been for a while, the principle of secularism has deep roots in the country that go back to pre-independence days. The majority of Hindus in India went along with the message of Gandhi and the other nationalist leaders who emphasized the secular and humanist content of religious spirituality. In most of the general elections since independence, political parties that upheld the values of secularism were elected and, even in cases where the Hindu nationalists came to power, they too worked within the framework of the Constitution that affirms secularism. Any discussion on religion and secularism in India, therefore, needs to recognize the reality that the majority of Indians, and the majority of Hindus in the country, stand for a secular society.

Minorities in India

Since around 80 percent of Indians are Hindus and the rest belong to several minority religious groups, integral to Indian secularism is the rights of the various minority communities in the nation. The roots of 'minority rights' in the country go a long way back to the independence movement and the Constitution of the Republic of India. In the Constituent Assembly there was considerable discussion on whether the freedom of religion clause should include the right for people to propagate their faith, especially as the propagation of religious faith is an integral element in Islam and Christianity. When the Christian representatives in the Assembly declared that the Indian Christian community had decided to forgo the communal electoral safeguards and give up 'communal' politics, the nationalist leaders applauded the decision. As a spontaneous response to this offer, "the Constituent Assembly took the initiative to include the right to 'propagate' religion as part of the fundamental human rights."[5]

While freedom of religion, including the right to propagate religion, is enshrined in the Indian Constitution, the decades that followed independence saw the steady erosion of these rights at various levels. In particular, several states passed legislation called 'Freedom of Religion Bills' that were aimed at preventing people from converting to another religion. Orissa passed a law, Orissa Freedom of Religion Act, 1967; this was followed by Madhya Pradesh in 1968 and Arunachal Pradesh in 1978. The Christians of the country protested this move, saying the laws were aimed primarily at curtailing their right to propagate their religion. The Supreme Court of India, however, supported these laws and argued that freedom of religion does not include the right to convert another person.[6] This judicial pronouncement, of course, ignored the fact that the Constitutional right to propagate religion logically implied the freedom of voluntary conversion. Religious conversion is a person's right and freedom. In a study of the laws regulating Christian conversion in India, a few scholars of Delhi University summed up the situation thus: "Conversion, it may be reiterated, involves a change of belief/identity freely chosen by individual/s and does not, therefore, amount to intolerance. On the other hand it is an act of intolerance to resist changes of belief in others."[7]

The attacks on minority communities have been particularly pronounced in the aftermath of the demolition of Babri Masjid. The argument raised by many Hindutva groups was that for over a thousand years, the temples of the Hindus in India were destroyed by the Muslim rulers; therefore, the demolition of an Islamic structure is merely correcting a historical error. Richard Eaton, who has studied the social and cultural history of pre-modern India (1000–1800), challenged this reading of history and argued that the destruction of the Hindu temples in the past centuries was minimal and needed to be seen against the political landscape of that period.[8] Pankaj Mishra, in his analysis of the situation, added a different note when he argued that India's reputation flourished during the long centuries when it was under Muslim rule. In his view, it was the encounter with the West that posed a serious challenge to the Hindu ethos and identity. "A range of esteemed scholars—from Sheldon Pollock to Jonardon Ganeri—have demonstrated beyond doubt that this period before British rule witnessed some of the greatest achievements in Indian philosophy, literature, music, painting and architecture. The psychic wounds … among semi-Westernized upper-caste Hindus actually date to the Indian elite's humiliating encounter with the geopolitical and cultural dominance first of Europe and then of America."[9]

Even as the Hindu nationalist forces have become increasingly intolerant towards Christians and Muslims, it can be argued that the minorities too have moved to the other extreme by invoking 'Minority rights' and

demanding special privileges for institutions run by them which, in turn, often cater to the elite among the minorities. In the case of both the majority and minority communities, the erosion of a larger vision of human rights has further fragmented the search for a coherent national identity.

Religious Conversions

While Christian conversion is often understood as the turning of an individual to God, in India 80 to 90 percent of the Christians joined the church in mass movements. In conversion movements from the late eighteenth to the early 20th centuries, people in large numbers joined the Church – both Protestant and Catholic. In a study of the mass movements, J. W. Pickett found that "for many Indians, people movements constituted 'the most natural way of approach to Christ.'"[10] While Pickett's findings created a paradigm shift in Christian missionary work, not only in India but in other parts of the world as well, nationalist leaders including Mahatma Gandhi criticized the need for any religious conversions. Biswamoy Pati's study of conversions in Orissa in the nineteenth and 20th centuries points towards the integral link between the nationalist movement, conversions, and Hinduization during that period. He argued that both Hinduism and the process of conversion, along with other factors, prepared the background for the Gandhian movement. Even though Gandhi's ideas never questioned or confronted the issues affecting the outcastes, his approach created a dent in the rigidity of oppression and exploitation under the caste system and provided the space for the Dalits and the Adivasis (the Indigenous people, also called Tribals) to be treated with dignity: "one has to say that given the nuances and the complexities of Gandhian nationalism in Orissa it also reinforced both the Hinduisation and the conversion of the adivasis and outcastes, with its inclusive and 'integrative' character."[11]

We cannot speak of Christian conversions in India without acknowledging the central role the Dalits played in this process. While the Dalits constitute only 16.6 percent of the Indian population according to the Census of 2011, over 80 percent of Indian Christians come from the Dalit background.[12] It is estimated that there are 15 to 20 million Dalit Christians in India. The overwhelming majority of Muslims in India are also from the Dalit background.[13] Were these figures to be confirmed, the number of Dalits in India could exceed 300 million—or a quarter of the country's population of 1.2 billion people.[14]

The Dalits who were traditionally considered untouchables as a result of the Hindu concept of ritual pollution and purity joined the Indian church in large numbers, especially during the mass movements. The conversion of the Dalits to Christianity led not only to a numerical increase in the membership of the church, but to an inner transformation of the oppressed communities as well. The mass movements have come to be seen as liberation movements in which the power of the dispossessed to challenge the Hindu social order was affirmed.[15] In India, religious conversion has also been a means for the oppressed and marginalized communities to escape their lot. This larger context provided a new thrust for the conversion of the marginalized sections to Christianity, but it was also used by others. In ancient India, Buddhism and Jainism arose as protest movements against the dehumanization and anti-social tendencies inherent in Brahminic Hinduism. In the 20th century, B. R. Ambedkar's life-long study of the inseparable link between Hinduism and casteism led him to make the famous statement "Even though I was born as a Hindu I will not die as a Hindu." His last political act was the embracing of Neo-Buddhism along with 650,000 Dalits in 1956, just weeks before he died. Religious conversion continues to be an attractive option for the oppressed people of India.

Among all the topics associated with the interface between religion and society in India, one of the most explosive ones is religious conversion. While in Christianity conversion is generally seen as the turning of a person to God, in India these acts often lead to a radical break with a person's social and cultural past on the one hand and his or her identification with a new social community on the other. The wave of religious turmoil that followed the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 has added a new dimension to discussions on conversion and Christian mission. Since Narendra Modi came to power at the national level, there has been renewed vigour in enforcing the laws restricting religious conversions. One argument is that the high birth rate among the minorities, coupled with religious conversions, will eventually lead to a situation where the Muslims and Christians will grow in strength and the majority Hinduism will be marginalized. Studies based on the national census of 2011 have revealed that Indian Muslims have shown a 50 percent higher decline in growth rate than Hindus.[16] The Christian population in the country, on the other hand, has declined from 2.6 percent in 1971 to 2.3 percent in 2011.

If conversion has not led to a serious change in the demography of the religions in India, how do we account for the religious conflicts that occur there on a regular basis? Gabriele Dietrich and Bastiaan Wielenga, in their study of caste, patriarchy, and religion in India,[17] point towards a number of social and economic factors that contribute to religious tension. The rising economic strength of a section of Muslims and the growing number of Muslim proletariat in the country are perceived as an economic and political threat by a section of the Hindus, who traditionally held economic power. In places such as Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh, the work of Christian social activists among the marginalized sections has resulted in the Dalits and Adivasis shaking off their yoke of oppression and marginalization. While few conversions have been registered in such contexts, communal riots often occur there, not over 'religious' questions, but precipitated by upper-caste Hindus who are threatened with the loss of their traditional control over the subaltern people. Religions emerge in social contexts, grow in response to the social and economic factors around, and evolve structures and institutions that are also social. This is true in all contexts; all the more in India.

Ghar Wapsi (Homecoming)

Since it is generally believed that one needs to be born into the Hindu faith and cannot be converted into it, inter-religious conversion has historically been alien to the Hindu ethos. However, face to face with proselytizing religions like Islam and Christianity, conversion became a burning issue for Hinduism as well. To counter conversions and also to intimidate the minority communities, several Hindutva groups started a movement of reconversion called "ghar wapsi" (Homecoming), ignoring the fact that practically all the Christian conversions in recent centuries were among the Dalits and the Tribals, two indigenous groups that historically had an uneasy relationship with Brahminical Hinduism. With the systematic propaganda that the Dalits had been an integral part of Hinduism, the Hindutva groups recognized that the ghar wapsi program can be an opportunity to absorb the Dalits into the Hindu fold. Although it is a clear historical distortion, several Hindu organizations are involved in reconversion programs to drive home this ideology. The Dalits are caught up in a dilemma, between Hinduization and Dalitization, as to whether they should declare their solidarity with Hindus or with the Dalits.[18] Even though both Muslims and Christians are targeted by the Sangh Parivar (the family of Hindu nationalist organizations) in the reconversion program, the focus in recent years is more on the Christians, mainly because Islam does not have an active conversion practice. During 2014, about 8,000 people were brought back to Hinduism from Christianity in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana alone.

The roots of the ghar wapsi program go a long way back. It was Arya Samaj, a Hindu reform movement started by Dayandanda Saraswati, that first started conducting ceremonies to reconvert Christians and Muslims to Hinduism. Along with that, Arya Samaj also conducted 'purification' ceremonies of the Dalits, thus converting the subaltern sections to a Brahminical tradition and culture that was until then alien and forbidden to them. While the professed aim of this program was to 'elevate' the level of the outcastes in Hinduism, the end result was to consolidate the status of Brahminical religion as the only credible and legitimate form of Hinduism. In the words of Jenny Rowena, while most readings place Arya Samaj as a social movement that helped modernize the Hindu religion, seen from a Dalit-Bahujan perspective, Arya Samaj was a movement that worked to successfully maintain caste hegemony by reimagining Brahminical traditions as the 'Hindu' religion. "Through this they attempted to safeguard their caste hegemony by offering the lower castes a form of modernity based on this new religion, even as it placed the minorities, especially the Muslims, as the 'other' of this modernity, thereby evoking conflicts between these subaltern sections."[19]

Speaking in Chennai on February 23, 2015, Ninan Koshy argued that ghar wapsi was not a simple act of conversion or reconversion, but has a political ideological intent behind it. "The assumptions and claims of 'ghar wapsi' are wrong and questionable. Was Hinduism the house of these victims of 'ghar wapsi' at any time? What is the state of the house they are returning to? Where is their place in the house?"[20] The reference here was to the caste-based and other forms of discrimination that motivated many subaltern communities to leave Hinduism in the past, a situation that remains largely unchanged till today.

Some scholars have maintained that aggressive attempts at proselytization by some Christian groups in India have met with a backlash in the form of ghar wapsi. The growth of Hindu fundamentalism and communalism in India in recent years, however, needs to be seen not so much as a backlash but as an onslaught on

the secular character of the Indian society. As Dalits and Tribals converted into the Christian churches that were more welcoming of them, not only the marginalized people but also secular India recognized that religious conversion is a fundamental right that cannot be denied to any human being. As Kancha Ilaiah put it, "After B.R. Ambedkar opened the lock of conversion at Nagpur in 1956, to Buddhism, the right to convert to a religion that they find useful or even beneficial has become a respectable spiritual and democratic right."[21] The real issue is not conversion; every human being has the right to convert. The real issue is our attitude to the other, the stranger in our midst.

The Return of the Sacred

The official patronage for the propagation of myths associated with ancient India has played an important role in the growth of the Hindutva forces in India in recent years. One aspect of this was the campaign to replace textbooks on history written by eminent scholars with literature that glorified the origin and nativity of Aryans from a Hindutva perspective of history. There was also a deliberate attempt to romanticize the myths around the two Hindu epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata. Scholars have long pointed towards the existence of different narratives, especially in non-Brahminical texts, on the story of Rama,[22] but the current attempt is to replace them with homogenous and mythological interpretations from a Brahminical perspective. Myths have also been spun and propagated about the period when the Mahabharata was written, even though historians like Romila Thapar have argued that this epic is a story of different periods.[23] Since several events in the Mahabharata depict the image of a clan-based society, scholars question the current efforts to locate the epic within a specific time frame.[24]

Equally important are the attempts of the present dispensation in India to promote the Sanskrit language, arguing that the language represents *the* Indian tradition and culture. Thapar has pointed out that "during ancient India, Sanskrit was a language of elites, not of the masses (including most of the women from elite families)."[25] Also, the focus on Sanskrit has led to the marginalization of other ancient Indian languages, many of which reflected, in a much more sensitive way, the lives of the ordinary people. While Subramania Bharati from Tamil Nadu wrote that the sacred texts of the past are but "figments of imagination meant to impart morals," and Vallalar Ramalinga Swamigal exclaimed, "let blind custom be buried in the earth,"[26] they reflected the discontentment of the rational minds against the Brahminical religion that had become the faith and lifestyle of the elite of the land.

The efforts of the Hindutva nationalist leaders and their intellectual apologists today is to attribute to Hinduism a unipolar and hegemonic interpretation by identifying the religion with a narrow stream of Brahmanism. It needs to be affirmed that polytheism is at the root of Hinduism and that the religion is not based on a single book, language, or leader but has many theologies, languages, and scriptures. As Kancha Ilaiah stated, a radical spiritual reform in Hinduism would require "a recodification of Hindu scriptures, particularly the Rig Veda and the Bhagavad Gita and formulating one Hindu book for constant reference. [The RSS's] so-called slogan of 'one culture' does not mean anything if there is no common scripture, which only talks about universal spiritual principles of God and human relationship, without alluring caste/varna to anyone."[27]

How do we account for the revival of religious extremism in India in recent years, and what is the way forward? At the beginning of this article, we saw that during the freedom struggle in the country, the advocates of secular nationalism prevailed over those of religion-based nationalism because Indian secularism affirmed the positive potential of religion; religion, in turn, provided the space for social reform. We also saw that this dialectical process between religion, secularism, and social change weakened in the decades following the national independence. In the aftermath of the demolition of the Babri Masjid, theologian and social thinker M. M. Thomas pointed towards an integral link between the slackening of the reform streams in Indian religions and the growth of religious extremism. In his words, "it is the strengthening of the closed secularism with this total privatisation of religion and the development of what may be called Dogmatic Secularism which rejects any relevance of religious values in the public domain, along with the slackening and marginalising of religious and social reform movements that have created the spiritual vacuum which is now sought to be filled by religious fundamentalism and communalism."[28] The renascent streams in Hinduism represented in the pre-independence period in India by reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Swami Vivekananda were carried over into the independence struggle and free India by Mahatma Gandhi, S. Radhakrishnan, and others. When Roy spoke up against the Sati practice (burning of wid-

ows at the funeral pyre of their dead husbands), when Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar fought to legalize the remarriage of widows, when Jotirao Phule opened schools for women and untouchables, they all stood for a religion that was open to change and reform. It is this process that has become dormant in recent decades, partly due to a stream of secularism that was deaf to the liberative potential of religion. This vacuum is today being filled by religious intolerance and violence. However, the renascent and liberative streams have slackened—not only in Hinduism, but also in minority religions like Islam, Christianity, and Sikhism. Religiosity and poverty continue to be the two abiding realities in India; therefore, the way forward would be for both the majority and the minority religious groups, along with the rich rationalist traditions of the country, to rekindle together the search for a just, sustainable, and secular society.

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The Primacy of Justice: Ted Scott, Social Justice, and the Anglican Church of Canada

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During the 1960s, Christian churches experienced the return of the social gospel.[1] Vatican II created openness among religions and promoted ecumenism,[2] which along with the influence of the liberation theology movement originating out of Latin American countries[3] encouraged the churches to view society from the perspective of the oppressed and engage in social activism. Although the churches differed "in regard to certain points of doctrine, they [stood] for the same social values and [adopted] common positions on matters of social justice."[4] In order to tackle social issues, Canadian churches needed leaders who were progressive and responsive to the social gospel, such as Ted Scott (1919–2004), who became tenth primate of the Anglican Church of Canada in 1971. This paper will explore how Scott's commitment to national and international social justice and ecumenicalism were the hallmarks of his primacy from 1971 to 1986, as demonstrated by his involvement and leadership in the ordination of women, support for Indigenous rights, and international development projects focused on justice and equality. Though often faced with criticism and controversy over policy changes, Scott played a key role in ushering in social justice policy reforms in the Anglican Church. In the face of change, some Anglican Church members—and others—questioned whether the Church should be involved in the politics of social justice issues. Gregory Baum explains that some Christians were opposed to social activism "because they [loved] their religion in the form in which they [had] inherited it."[5] Despite resistance, Scott was successful in engaging the Anglican Church in social justice projects. His legacy continues as the Anglican Church pursues projects and policies emphasizing social justice and equality today.

The Changing Role of the Church in the 1960s

After the Second World War, the Anglican Church experienced membership growth. However, this was short lived, as membership began to decline in the 1960s. Various factors caused this shift, including "declining birth rates, the changing face of immigration, the continuing secularization of Canadian society, and a growing sense that the Church was out of touch with contemporary realities."[6] During the 1963 Anglican Congress in Toronto, Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey's address entitled "A Church Which Lives to Itself Will Die by Itself" acknowledged the reality of the changing times. Ramsey called for a Church to "serve our neighbours … listen to what God says through others, work with other denominations and affirm the unity of the human race."[7]

Ramsey's vision resonated with Canadian Anglican leaders, who in turn sought to review Church policies. In 1963, the Anglican Church approached Pierre Berton, a famous Canadian journalist, writer, and television personality, to undertake this review. In *The Comfortable Pew*, Berton concluded that Anglicans and all Protestant denominations had to consider that unless these institutions were willing to make changes, there was a strong possibility that they would cease to exist by the next century.[8] He called for a radical change on major policies and positions, challenging Protestant views on sex, nuclear war, social justice, theology, and hierarchy. Not all agreed with Berton's arguments, but the Anglican Church did take seriously the need for policy changes, especially in regards to social justice. Baum explains that with the return of the social gospel, "Christians [were] asked to participate with other citizens in political action to remove the causes of oppression from society and transform the social order."[9] Many Christians responded to the interpretation that "God demanded justice in society."[10] According to Terrence Murphy, those involved "exchanged their former function, in which they defined and legitimated prevailing norms, for a prophetic role, in which they challenge the status quo and call[ed] on those in authority to be faithful to their avowed principles."[11]

It was in this context that Scott was elected. At his election in 1971, the General Synod participants felt "new hope and a sense of openness towards change."[12] Scott was by no means a perfect leader. He was repeatedly criticized for his inability to delegate. Two years into Scott's primacy, Hugh McCullum wrote that "maybe we should have listened to those stories from

Kootenay about him being too people-oriented to be a good chief executive or that he's almost compulsive about getting involved in everything."[13] Ten years into his primacy he was still criticized: "he is in constant demand and, if there is one aspect of his primacy that is most open to criticism, it has been that he has agreed to undertake too many tasks, or attend too many meetings without delegating these to others."[14] This inability to delegate had consequences on how his leadership was viewed. An editorial in *Canadian Churchman* in 1981 noted that "he is indifferent to power and the trappings of office, and rarely stands on ceremony. He lacks charisma, and has an unprepossessing appearance. He is an admittedly poor administrator."[15]

This may not have been a surprise, as Scott was reluctant to take the primacy in the first place; he did "not want to become restricted by the institutional Church."[16] His uncertainty in the institution can be traced back to his childhood. At age 12, while living in East Vancouver, Scott recalled his exposure to poverty: "I remember one Christmas when 64 percent of the congregation was on welfare."[17] He felt that the Church did little to help tackle poverty and that "there was a credibility gap about the Church as an institution."[18] Scott's father, Tom Scott, also influenced Scott's thinking on poverty.[19] Ted recalled that when he was a teenager, "Dad kept telling me to analyze the situation from the point of view of the poor, as Christ did, not from the point of view of the rich and the powerful, as did many of the clergy and businessmen."[20] Scott's reservations with institutionalism would shape his primacy. His leadership was not about perfection, but about listening to his community and adhering to his convictions, despite criticism.

Although Scott was reluctant to become primate, he explained that he was not afraid because of his faith. His commitment to his faith was clear; he explained that "the outcome of things is not dependent on people, or on situations. God brings order out of chaos. If I didn't believe that, I'd be scared silly. When I try to act with integrity, the thing that really determines is how deep and alive I can keep that kind of faith."[21] His faith and his ability to focus on the individual is part of what some thought made Scott unique as primate. One observer commented that he had a "deep interest and concern for the individual … his pastoral concern knows no geographic or religious boundaries … he is approachable."[22] Despite the criticisms levelled against him, Scott displayed clear strengths in his role, strengths he used to influence several key social issues, including the ordination of women, Aboriginal rights, and international social justice projects. His leadership on these key emerging social issues would shape the Church's policies and projects for decades to come.

The Ordination of Women

Although women in the Anglican Church of Canada had a rich history of involvement in church activities, they were unable to enter priesthood when Scott became primate. However, the women's liberation movement in the late 1960s impacted how the Anglican Church regarded gender roles. According to Wendy Fletcher, "a passion for a more fully integrated Church polity swept through certain quarters of Anglicanism, pushing the Church towards the inclusion of women as full and equal partners at all levels of ecclesiastical life."[23] In his first service as primate, Scott said, "The Church has competent women who have been excluded because of their sex. We have to break through into a new kind of freedom so all the abilities of the Church can be set free for ministry—not merely to maintain an institution but for service."[24]

The topic of the ordination of women into priesthood caused much debate. In June 1975 the General Synod authorized the ordination of women. In protest, a group of over 200 clergy signed a manifesto, declaring, "we must protest such ordinations, and we will not be able to accept the ministrations of women so ordained as priestly."[25] There was concern that members would leave the Anglican Church, and some did. Nonetheless, the following year, the Anglican Church ordained six women. Scott stood strong against the resistance, a stance that continued throughout his career. For example, in 1980 Scott spoke out about the Church of England's refusal to allow overseas women priests to officiate in England. He pointed to developments in Canada, where the Anglican Church had 36 women priests, and only three bishops opposing women ordination. Further, these changes had little impact on Church unity; "there have been no major breakaways … [n]o single parish has separated. Only seven priests have dissociated themselves, and four of those were not in parish work."[26] He emphasized that "our Church is richer because of the role women play in the presbyterate."[27]

Support to Aboriginal Rights

Scott was also instrumental in implementing policy changes around Aboriginal rights. At the 1969 General Synod, before Scott was elected primate, the Anglican Church pledged its support to the recommendations

of Charles E. Hendry's report, which recognized the Anglican Church's responsibility for its history of paternalism and racism towards Aboriginal people.[28] Scott was tasked with implementing the policy changes. This was done by supporting Indigenous rights by granting monetary assistance to Indigenous groups and communities, and exerting political pressure on the government by sending letters to political leaders, mainly the prime minister.[29]

Scott's knowledge of and support for Aboriginal issues was shaped by his early missionary experiences. During his schooling at the Anglican Theological College in Vancouver, he was required to participate in mission field work for two summers. He was based out of Prince Rupert, B.C., and sailed on the *Northern Cross* to isolated northern communities, including logging, fishing, and mining camps. During these trips, Scott developed a friendship with Frank Calder, who went on to become the Nisga'a Tribal Council President in 1957.[30] From his relationship with Calder, Scott learned about Indigenous spirituality, "the environment and the need for the regulation of natural resources in order to preserve and conserve."[31] With his background, Scott led the Anglican Church in supporting several important Indigenous rights issues, including Nisga'a land claims and the creation of Project North, an ecumenical committee that protested the building of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline.

Scott and the Anglican Church pledged support to help resolve Nisga'a land claims in 1971, where Calder was lead plaintiff in a court case that had started years before. In 1967, the Nisga'a of Nass Valley, B.C., who had never signed a treaty with the government, sued the British Columbia government "for a declaration that their Aboriginal or 'Indian' title has never been lawfully extinguished."[32] In line with its new approach to Aboriginal rights, the Anglican Church granted the Nisga'a a $10,000 grant to fund their legal counsel in 1971.[33] On January 31, 1973, Calder's claim was denied on a technicality; however, for the first time, the "Supreme Court of Canada recognized … that there were distinctive Aboriginal rights in land, and that these rights may not have been extinguished in part of Canada."[34] In 2000 the Nisga'a signed a treaty with the federal and provincial government, a first of its kind in British Columbia.[35] The Nisga'a recognized the Anglican Church's monetary and political support of its land claims in 1972 by adopting Scott and giving him the name Gott'hlleesims (Heart of the Nisga'a).[36] He was told that "while you have this name you will uphold the spirit of the Nisga'a nation." Scott replied, "I pledge to do all I can as a person to carry forward the spirit of the Nisga'a and to help them maintain their heritage."[37] Scott did his best to do just that while he was primate.

Scott also played a leading role in support of Aboriginal rights due to his leadership of Project North. With Scott at the helm of the project, the Anglican Church developed Project North in 1975 to manage northern development issues, many of which impacted Aboriginal people. Eventually, due to the ecumenical concern over the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Project, a project that would bring gas from Alaska to southern Canada and the United States, Project North expanded to include the United, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic Churches in 1975.[38] An inquiry, led by British Columbia Supreme Court Justice Thomas Berger, was launched to "examine the environmental, social and economic consequences and recommend to Ottawa the conditions that ought to be placed on the project."[39] Project North "successfully lobbied the Berger Inquiry to hold hearings across Southern Canada in 1976 [and] the Churches were responsible for organizing more than 25 per cent of the presentations."[40] The Berger Inquiry Report, *Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland*, was released and concluded that "no major energy project should be built for 10 years so there can be more planning, stricter regulation and, most significantly, settlement of Native land claims."[41] The Anglican Church agreed with Berger's findings at the 1977 Synod and reaffirmed its continued support of Aboriginal rights and the moratorium on development until land claims were settled.[42]

There was both church and political resistance to Project North's involvement with the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline. The members of Project North were "accused of being socialists, bent on influencing 'ignorant Natives' to oppose something that was good for all of Canada."[43] Businessmen, politicians, and the government were not accustomed to the Church speaking out against their wishes. In 1977 Scott stated, "as I see it, the Churches are going to have to take even more of a lead in calling both business and government to a much more open dialogue on socio-political matters."[44] As such, under Scott's leadership, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Anglican Church continued to support Aboriginal rights projects, despite resistance and challenges from both within and outside the Church. This legacy continues as the Anglican Church supports Aboriginal reconciliation efforts today.

International Activities

Scott's drive for justice and social rights extended beyond Canada and onto the international stage through his involvement in the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF), his tenure as moderator of the World Council of Churches from 1975 to 1983, and his commitment to ending apartheid in South Africa. The Primate's World Relief Fund was established in 1959 in reaction to the need to provide aid to those impacted by the 1958 coalmine explosion in Springhill, Nova Scotia.[45] It was changed to the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund in 1969 to reflect its greater focus on development. In 1980, the PWRDF explained that the fund gives priority "to those projects which address the cause rather than the symptoms of 'underdevelopment'—projects which increase the capacity of local communities to meet their basic needs and where the people are involved directly in the project."[46] Scott was involved with encouraging Anglicans to donate to the fund. In 1972, a PWRDF message from Scott explained that "while we in Canada have been enjoying increasing wealth, in other parts of the world the problems of poverty and over-population are getting bigger, not smaller."[47] During Scott's primacy, contributions funded development projects all over the world, including Canada.

Just as there was dissent about the Anglican Church's role in the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline project, some questioned whether the Church should be involved in politically controversial international development. For example, debate raged over the decision of the PWRDF to give $10,000 to the World Council of Churches' (WCC) controversial Special Fund to Combat Racism in 1971. In total, the WCC provided $120,000 to liberation movements in South Africa. Many protested this, citing that the funds would be used for military costs. The WCC maintained that the grants were made for non-violent purposes, such as for medical and humanitarian aid. The controversy of the Special Fund to Combat Racism occurred again in 1978, when the WCC contributed funds to the Patriotic Front in Zimbabwe.[48] Again the WCC maintained that the funds were for humanitarian efforts, but this did little to quell the criticism.

Scott was elected moderator of the Central Committee of the WCC in 1976, thereby bearing the brunt of the controversy over the donations. In particular, the CTV program *W5* aired a story about the donation controversy. The General Synod said the program was a "biased, distorted and erroneous account."[49] In reaction, Scott wrote an open letter to *Canadian Churchman* to address the situation. In the letter he explained that the Special Fund of the Program to Combat Racism was created so "grants would be made for humanitarian purposes to both racially oppressed groups and also to groups which supported people who were racially oppressed."[50] He explained that "the issues to be faced are deep, emotion-laden, and complex. In this process, asking questions, disagreements, and even critical reactions are a vital element, and will not be ignored."[51] Despite his attempt to rectify the situation, many Canadians questioned whether the Church belonged in controversial political issues.

Demonstrating his commitment to equality and justice, Scott adamantly supported the end of apartheid in South Africa. Towards the end of his primacy, in 1985, he became a member of the ecumenical Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group, comprised of members of the British Commonwealth. He travelled to Africa with other members to meet with leaders of South Africa and the African National Congress. The group hoped to create dialogue that would help bring about the end of apartheid.[52] Following the trip, Scott told the *Ottawa Citizen* that he was "not disappointed, but sad"[53] that the group failed to open that dialogue. Scott urged the churches to remain involved in protesting apartheid and praised the Canadian government for its efforts to implement sanctions on the apartheid regime.[54] At Scott's funeral in 2004, former Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu delivered a sermon that spoke highly of Scott's commitment to ending apartheid: "It is such an incredible privilege to say on behalf of our people how deeply thankful we are for Ted's support."[55] Further, Nelson Mandela, in a letter read at the funeral, praised Scott's "intimate and incisive role [in ending apartheid], one that helped change the course of history."[56] Scott's commitment to social justice and equality, and the role of the Church in driving change, transcended Canadian borders and had international impact.

The Legacy of Ted Scott

Under Scott's leadership, the Anglican Church was part of the wider movement of Christians engaging in social activism. Although Christian churches involved in this work met resistance from those suspicious of social radicalism, many Christians engaged in meaningful social activism and created change. Scott's devotion to social justice rights and ecumenicalism on the national

and international stage enabled the Anglican Church of Canada to challenge previous social justice policies during his primacy. This is demonstrated by the introduction of progressive policies on the ordination of women and the Anglican Church's involvement in Aboriginal rights projects and international anti-racism efforts. The impact of Scott's legacy, and his commitment to social justice and equality, is evident in the Canadian Anglican Church today. On the 35th anniversary of the ordination of women in 2011, the *Anglican Journal* reported that almost 37 percent of clergy in Canada are female, with six female bishops.[57] Support to Aboriginal rights and rebuilding relationships with Indigenous peoples continues, as the Anglican Church, along with the Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and United churches, has pledged its support to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.[58] The Anglican Church's commitment to global and social justice and development projects continues, as the Public Witness for Social and Ecological Justice is dedicated to challenging injustice at both the local and global level, with a focus on creation matters, reconciliation, resource extraction, housing and homelessness, justice and corrections, peace and conflict, and human trafficking.[59]

The Anglican Church has been at the forefront of social justice issues for decades. Efforts to build on Scott's commitment to social justice issues, such as through promoting those with a strong justice bent who are not afraid to challenge difficult social issues, should continue to be a priority for the Church. Such leaders should continue to support women in leadership roles, which could perhaps lead to the election of a female primate. Also, such leaders need to consider what the Anglican Church's involvement in fostering reconciliation with Aboriginal communities will be now that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has ended. Church policy on contemporary social issues, such as the rights of gay and lesbian persons, would benefit from leaders who emulate Scott's compassion and commitment to equality. In 2003, Scott performed a blessing at Toronto's Church of the Holy Trinity for two Anglican lesbian deacons.[60] He believed that "homosexuality is given by God, just as is heterosexuality, and needs to be honoured the same way."[61] In addition, commitment to ecumenism at the national and international level, as was championed by Scott, could create strengthened interchurch relationships that may lead to new and dynamic ways to tackle the social justice issues of today. With these and other actions, Scott's legacy will likely continue to shape the policies of the Anglican Church of Canada.

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Justification by Grace and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Summary Report

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Justification by grace describes a transition that occurs in a person's life on the basis of what God has done for the world in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. From Christ, people receive a new status of being justified before God regardless of who they are, how they have been mistreated, or how they have sinned. Through justification by grace, people receive a new identity of being a child of God and are called to live this out. This transition that happens in justification by grace will be completed in the coming of the reign of God. In the course of this transition, justification leads to sanctification, which empowers people to work towards the coming of this future. Justification by grace presupposes the universality of sin; its goal is the "universality of salvation."[1] Therefore it has something to say to everybody. But it does not say the same thing to everyone. To the victims of society it can be a source of dignity. To perpetrators of sin it can be a message of forgiveness. For both it can be a basis for reconciliation. For all it can be a source of hope. As justification by grace involves a transition towards the all-encompassing future horizon of God's reign, its meaning must be related to social issues as well as personal concerns and unfolded in an emancipatory fashion that works to overcome the alienations and injustices of the present.

Residential schools have greatly damaged Indigenous peoples and helped create a rift between them and other Canadians. Through the persistent efforts of residential school survivors, the history of these schools has been recognized as a cultural trauma marking the identities of Aboriginal peoples. It also marks in a different way the identities of churches and Canadian federal governments that ran the schools, and the collective identity of Canada as a whole. Residential schools were part of a colonial program of cultural genocide that was predicated upon belief in the superiority of European cultures, values, and religion to those of Aboriginal peoples. These schools were both a colonizing endeavour of Canadian governments aimed at assimilating Aboriginal peoples and a mission of Christian love by churches and people, many of whom genuinely cared about Aboriginal peoples.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was established in 2008 as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. Its overarching mandate was to record, document, and publicize the history and legacy of residential schools and to initiate processes of truth telling and healing that would lead towards reconciliation within Aboriginal communities and between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians. The *Summary* of the Commission's final report was released in 2015.[2] The final report has since also been published. It has 94 calls to action that the Commission argues must be acted upon for reconciliation between Aboriginal and other Canadians to occur.[3] What follows will examine from a non-Indigenous perspective some ways in which justification by grace relates to the realities lifted up and the recommendations made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the *Summary* of its final report.

Guilt

The churches involved and the Canadian federal government have apologized for the roles they played in residential schools. These schools for the most part failed to provide safe and nurturing environments for their students. The students' diets were frequently poor and inadequate, they were often overworked to support the schools, many died of diseases such as tuberculosis, and many suffered denigration, physical and sexual abuse, and violent punishment. The *Summary* concludes that residential schools were "at best, institutionalized child neglect."[4] They generally failed to prepare their students for adult life and left many alienated from their homes and communities. The damage done spans generations of Aboriginal peoples and continues to have lingering effects.

As the injustice and damage done by residential schools has become publicly known, a sense of guilt and shame has entered into the identities of the churches involved and into the consciousness of many non-Aboriginal Canadians. In issuing their apologies, the churches and the Canadian federal government admitted their guilt for this history. The lives of present-day non-Aboriginal members of these churches are

inextricably intertwined with the cultural, political, and theological traditions and institutions that produced these schools. For them to repudiate these traditions and institutions would be to disavow their own identities.[5] Acknowledging this brings a sense of guilt for this past. As this comes from belonging to an institution or society that has committed an injustice, it has been called "political guilt."[6]

Guilt spoils a person's identity and undermines their self-respect. If unaddressed, it can lead to the transference of blame to others and treating them as scapegoats, or to a repression of the sinful nature of what has happened.[7] The *Summary* states that churches must demonstrate their commitment to reconciliation by "atoning for actions within the residential schools, respecting Indigenous spirituality and supporting Indigenous peoples' struggles for justice and equity."[8] Churches must certainly do the latter two, but nothing they do today can fully atone for the wrongs perpetrated in residential schools. Political guilt must be addressed by concrete acts of acknowledgement and repentance such as the *Summary* suggests. But the guilt experienced over these wrongs indicates a rupture in the churches' relationship to God that cannot be repaired by anything they can do. This rupture has become part of the identity and being of the churches and their members. The remembrance of the suffering caused by residential schools must be addressed by acts of repentance, but it cannot be erased by these. Those involved in the running of residential schools and their spiritual descendants "are wounded and marked"[9] by this guilt in a way that can only be healed by something greater than themselves.

Christian traditions proclaim that such healing is available through what God has done in Jesus Christ. The doctrine of justification by grace explains how this is so. It declares that although one's identity is spoiled by guilt, through Christ one's sin is forgiven. One is accepted by God and given a new, paradoxical identity of being righteous before God even though one's identity has been irrevocably spoiled. The justified sinner is accepted by God in spite of their sin. Justification by grace means that one does not have to try to make any ultimate atonement for one's guilt. God in Christ has already done that. But one can work for reconciliation with others because one has been enabled to do so by being accepted by Christ and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. While justification brings a sense of peace, it does not allow one to be at peace with a sinful world. Justification begins with forgiveness but leads into sanctification. Those who are declared righteous in Christ are called and empowered by God to live out their new identity. The reconciliation to God that a person experiences through justification seeks to find expression in their life through their working towards justice and reconciliation with others. In this way, justification by grace can inspire the commitment to working for reconciliation that the *Summary* argues churches must demonstrate.

A loss of innocence

Colonializing attempts to civilize Indigenous populations have typically alienated colonizing cultures from their own ideals of freedom and justice and produced disillusionment concerning these.[10] The history of residential schools has had this effect. It has shown how the ideals of love, civilizing social uplift, and benevolence that inspired churches to run residential schools were distorted by religious, cultural, and racial arrogance. In 1932, United Church Moderator Edmund Oliver described the United Church's mission work with Aboriginal peoples, including residential schools, as "an ungrudging service of love and healing and enlightenment."[11] At the time there were protests against residential schools that disputed this.[12] Some students ran away from the schools. A few tried to burn them down. Many parents resisted them in various ways.[13] A few non-Aboriginal Canadians criticized what the schools were intended to accomplish and how they were attempting to do this.[14] But the majority of non-Aboriginal Christians who knew about residential schools while they were operating saw them as an expression of Christian love. The *Summary* partly agrees with this, noting that residential school staff were often motivated by religious ideals of service to God and others and that many "believed they were participating in a moral crusade."[15] Yet it concludes that through their involvement in residential schools, Christian churches "inflicted serious harms on Aboriginal children, their families, and communities … in fundamental contradiction to what they [the churches] purported to be their core beliefs."[16] How could this happen?

The United Church of Canada's 1986 *Apology to First Nations Peoples* explains this by saying "[w]e confused Western ways and cultures with the depth and breadth and length and height of the gospel of Christ."[17] This equating of Western culture with the gospel helped fuel the attempt to impose European religion, culture, and values on First Nations peoples. Many Western churches no longer confuse Western cultural values

with the gospel in the way they did when running residential schools. Yet a fusion of the two still happens. The mission goals of a church always represent some form of fusion between the horizons[18] of the gospel and the church's culture. Consequently, something of the culture in which a church is situated always enters into a church's understanding of the gospel and easily becomes confused with it. Though today most settler Christians' understanding of what it means to love First Nations peoples is very different from the understanding of this that gave rise to residential schools, it is still a mixture of contemporary settler culture and the gospel, just as Edmund Oliver's understanding of this was in 1932. Love has a history. It does not always mean the same thing in every age and place. Just as the face of evil can change from age to age,[19] so too can the understanding of what it means to love. As is the case with residential schools, yesterday's acts of love can appear today as colonial acts of oppression. Colonizing attempts like residential schools can become learning processes for the victims and the perpetrators that change how churches and cultures understand the meaning of love, so that they come to repudiate the colonial practices they once blessed. But the fusion of horizons that can lead to cultural values being confused with the gospel continues. This fusion can take different forms, depending on how a church relates to its surrounding culture. The Sojourners community in Washington, D.C., fuses the gospel with American culture in a very different way from the American Christian right. But some form of fusion between gospel and culture is happening in both cases. Such fusion is not always bad. It may lead to a deeper and better understanding of love. The fusing of the gospel with aspects of contemporary Western cultures that happened in Christian feminism led to the recognition of and struggle against bias against women and distortions of the gospel that have been present in Christian traditions for centuries.

Still, the values of every culture inevitably harbour some prejudices and oppress some people. Every culture's guiding notions of love and justice are distorted in some measure by an element of pretension, an "ideological taint" that denies the limited nature of the way in which they are conceived.[20] As these guiding notions become fused with the gospel, these distortions may enter into the ethical vision of a church with tragic results. There is always some obscurity in the lived moment.[21] No one ever understands themselves or their actions fully. As Ernst Bloch once said, "[I]n the citizen of the French Revolution the bourgeois was hidden: God have mercy on us, we cannot tell what may be hidden in the comrade."[22] The history of residential schools is an example of this. As the *Summary* observes, this history "is a sober reminder that taking action does not necessarily lead to positive results."[23] While the suffering caused by this history stemmed in large part from racial and cultural arrogance of non-Aboriginal Canadians, it is also indicative of the ambiguity attending all human action that Christian traditions recognize with the doctrine of original sin. The condition of original sin can manifest itself in wrongdoing, intentional or otherwise, or in the recognition that we are never able to fully live out the call to universal solidarity that we experience and uphold.[24] To be justified by grace means to recognize both one's concrete failings and one's entanglement in this more universal guilt. Thus while justification by grace involves a transition in one's status, it is also a permanent moment in the Christian life. We are always in need of justification by grace. One never passes from being justified by grace to being sanctified. One is always justified by grace and always in need of sanctification.

The history of residential schools has brought a loss of innocence to the churches that ran them. Some churches have responded to this by adopting a self-reflexive attitude towards their own theologies and practices. Justification by grace undergirds this attitude. It speaks to this loss of innocence, yet prevents it from giving rise to pessimism about the possibility of constructive action and work for reconciliation.[25] The faith that perceives that one is justified by Christ recognizes that God's grace is greater than the sin one has committed or is enmeshed in. To be justified by grace means to recognize that one has been renewed by God's Holy Spirit and enabled to do something for justice and reconciliation and to enter into community with others. From God's forgiveness and Christ's acceptance comes the courage to seek just relations[26] with the victims of one's church and society. Justification by grace enables one to be open to criticism and to be constructively self-critical of one's own traditions and institutions. Recognizing that actions done out of love with the best of intentions may not lead to positive results can lead to ethical paralysis if one's goal is to be self-righteous. As justification by grace brings with it the recognition that God's grace is ultimately greater than sin, it empowers one to recognize the ambiguity of the human condition and to still undertake responsible action, even though one knows that in doing so one may incur guilt.

Respect for Aboriginal peoples

Encounters between North Atlantic societies and other religions and cultures, through either immigration or the activism of Indigenous or subjugated peoples, have provoked defensive reactions on the part of some members of the dominant cultures in these societies. Others have learned through these encounters to relativize their ways of life and to lift up aspects of their culture and religion that can provide a basis for recognizing and respecting those who are culturally, religiously, or ethnically different from them.[27] The *Summary* argues that reconciliation requires a new attitude of respect for First Nations peoples on the part of other Canadians.[28] Attitudes cannot be legislated or demanded. They arise from the convictions at the heart of an individual's or community's faith. This means that for reconciliation to happen, members of the dominant cultures in Canada must respond to Aboriginal peoples through the second of these two approaches. Non-Aboriginal Canadians must find within their cultural and religious traditions a basis of respect for Aboriginal peoples.

Respect for others can arise from recognizing that they exemplify values that one admires. The performance of others—their accomplishments in sports, the arts, business, education, academics, or community life—can provide an immanent basis for respecting them. Achievements in these areas by members of marginalized and oppressed segments of Western societies have played important roles in undermining bigotry and chauvinism in dominant North Atlantic cultures. Respect for others can also come from a sense of shared collective identity. This collective identity can have a transcendent basis that is not dependent upon a person's performance. Justification by grace can provide this kind of transcendent basis for respect.

Justification by grace is based upon what God has done in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Scripture proclaims that the human situation was irrevocably changed by this event. Our relationship to God, each other, and ourselves is essentially determined by what happened here.[29] Through the death and resurrection of Christ, each and every person has been justified by God once and for all. Here the basis for respect lies not in a person's or peoples' performance, but in what God has done in bestowing a new status of being justified upon them. Justification by grace means that every person must be viewed and related to in light of what God has done for them in Christ. Those who receive this in faith know that they have been recognized and accepted by God as persons. As they experience this, they know that all others have been similarly recognized by God. Thus those "who live by the righteousness of God will see in every human being more than just a doer of deeds or misdeeds."[30] They will see them as someone who has been justified by God and who consequently deserves respect as a person with all the rights that this has come to entail. For Christians, this common identity of having been justified by God can help form a basis for the mutual respect among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians that the *Summary* argues is essential for reconciliation.

As justification by grace distinguishes between a person and their way of life,[31] it provides a basis for a general, non-differentiating respect of persons per se, regardless of who they are. In this way it can provide a religious basis for human rights and give the downtrodden a transcendent sense of dignity.[32] At the same time it can work to overcome the oppressors' lack of concern and respect for the oppressed. However, the strength of justification by grace as a basis of respect for others is also a limitation. The *Summary* calls for churches that were involved in running residential schools to demonstrate a specific respect for First Nations' spiritual traditions. It argues that these churches "bear a particular responsibility to formally recognize Indigenous spirituality as a valid form of worship."[33] As justification by grace distinguishes between a person and their way of life, it seems unable to provide a basis for this.

Yet if we shift attention from the status that justification bestows upon a person to what this status means for them, it can provide the basis for a more differentiating respect for particular spiritual and cultural traditions. The experience of justification by grace brings with it the recognition that God's grace is ultimately greater than sin, suffering, and death. As it does so it brings a sense of peace and the courage to do what one can for the coming of God's reign. Justification thus leads to sanctification.

As Christian faith seeks the sanctification of its adherents, it can provide a basis for respecting the sanctifying effects of other religions that parallel its own.[34] As a permanent moment in the Christian life, justification by grace distinguishes between a person and their work and thus provides a basis for a general respect for others. But as a transitional moment, justification is oriented towards sanctification. It has as its goal God's all-encompassing renewal of all things. As it mediates peace, the courage to do what is possible, and as it is

oriented towards sanctification, justification by grace provides a basis for respecting Aboriginal spiritual traditions as a valid form of worship in light of the similar positive sanctifying effects that they have for their adherents.

A greater sharing of identity space

The *Summary* notes that the colonial process of cultural genocide that residential schools were part of attempted to strip Aboriginal peoples of their collective identities and assimilate them into another based on European beliefs and values.[35] These European values were divided between the version predominating in francophone Canada, centred in Quebec, and anglophone versions predominating elsewhere in Canada. The co-existence of these two different cultures within Canada have made it a site of shared identity space. Shared identity space occurs when two or more cultural groups live under the same democratic governance but with fundamental differences in their understandings of the community that they form together, and when each group is determined to contribute its understanding of this to the collective identity they share.[36] While francophones and anglophones in Canada have lived in tension with each other, they have both tried to assimilate Aboriginal peoples to their own cultural identities.

The *Summary* argues that the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and Treaty of Niagara of 1764 established mutual recognition and respect as the basis for relations between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal Canadians.[37] Residential schools are a glaring example of how this basis was subsequently disregarded. The *Summary* argues that for reconciliation to happen, the colonial vision that led to this disregard must be replaced "with a new vision for Canada; one that fully embraces Aboriginal peoples' rights to self-determination within, and a viable partnership with, a viable Canadian sovereignty."[38] The report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1996 reached a similar conclusion. In 2007, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*[39] laid out a similar position. The struggle of residential school survivors for reparations and apologies that led to the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been part of a much broader struggle of Aboriginal peoples in Canada to achieve the self-determination that is fundamental to their dignity and human rights as Indigenous peoples.[40] Yet the *Summary* points out that at the time it went to press, the Canadian federal government had yet to recognize this and act on it.[41] For non-Aboriginal Canadians to fully embrace the rights of Aboriginal peoples to self-determination will involve a much greater recognition and acceptance of what they are entitled to contribute to Canada's collective identity and self-definition. This will mean a significant deepening of the sharing of identity space in Canada.

The new vision that the *Summary* calls for will require non-Aboriginal Canadians to make room in the decision making and practices that form Canada's collective identity for the specific contributions and rights of Aboriginal peoples. This will require a fundamental change in the assumptions and understandings that have guided much of Canadian culture, politics, and economics to date. Non-Aboriginal Canadians will have to make a much greater "decolonizing space" for Aboriginal peoples.[42] This will necessitate a pattern of behaviour on the part of non-Aboriginal Canadians that can be described as free, creative self-withdrawal on behalf of the other.

The teachings of Jesus recorded in the Synoptic gospels frequently call for this pattern of behaviour and characterize it as required of those who would enter the reign of God.[43] The gospels recognize that this can be difficult and costly, and can have a significant impact on a person's life. Free, creative self-withdrawal for the sake of the other frequently means a loss of power and a lessening of one's ability to autonomously shape and determine one's life. Such a withdrawal runs counter to a spirit found in Western societies that typically aims at establishing structures of domination that work to subjugate alternatives to itself,[44] a spirit that helped motivated colonial endeavours.

Justification by grace can be a basis for this free, creative self-withdrawal for the sake of the other. It puts one into an overarching community with others that spans the divides of culture, class, race, and gender. It gives one an identity that does not depend on self-assertion. It can help one accept one's finitude and the relativization of one's own way of life, which is what embracing Aboriginal peoples' rights to self-determination will mean for non-Aboriginal Canadians. As justification by grace relativizes particular identities within an overarching community without demolishing them, it provides a basis for shared identity space. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has issued 94 Calls to Action that are necessary for reconciliation between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal Canadians. These effectively call for a much greater sharing of identity space with Aboriginal peoples. Justification by grace

can help non-Aboriginal Canadian Christians respond to these in a positive and creative way.

Conclusion

Justification by grace is not the only Christian doctrine that is relevant to the work that non-Aboriginal Christians must undertake to achieve reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples. But it can be an important resource for this work. Non-Aboriginal Canadians and Aboriginal peoples have to find ways to live together. As Chief Justice Lamer said, "we are all here to stay."[45] Justification by grace can help Christians live with themselves and the parts of their past that they have repented of, and live with those who are different. This is part of its saving significance for this time.

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1 Jürgen Moltmann, *History and the Triune God* (London: SCM Press, 1991), 44.

2 *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (n.p.: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

3 Ibid., 319–37.

4 Ibid., 43.

5 Jürgen Habermas, *The New Conservatism* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989), 233.

6 The term "political guilt" comes from Karl Jaspers and was used by Quebec theologian Jean Richard to describe how the history of colonial oppression inflicted on Aboriginal peoples marks the identities of Canadian churches involved in this and the identities of non-Aboriginal Canadians in general; Gregory Baum, *Truth and Relevance: Catholic Theology in French Quebec since the Quiet Revolution* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 195–96.

7 Moltmann, *History and the Triune God*, 49.

8 *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, 21.

9 Stan McKay, "Expanding the Dialogue on Truth and Reconciliation – In a Good Way," *From Truth to Reconciliation*, produced by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2008), 107.

10 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1994/2004), 123.

11 Edmund Oliver, *His Dominion of Canada* (Toronto: Board of Home Missions and The Woman's Missionary Society of The United Church of Canada, 1932), 264.

12 I thank my colleague Dr. Lynn Caldwell for reminding me of this.

13 *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, 114–21.

14 John Milloy, *A National Crime* (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1999), 28.

15 *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future,* 122.

16 Ibid., 220.

17 Ibid., 378.

18 Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Continuum, 1989), 302–7.

19 Gregory Baum, *Religion and Alienation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 189.

20 Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man,* Vol. I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941/1964), 182.

21 Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope,* Vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1986), 295. This obscurity or darkness can conceal utopian potential as well as danger and injustice.

22 Quoted from Jürgen Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), 28.

23 *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, 210.

24 Baum, *Truth and Relevance*, 196.

25 Moltmann, *History and the Triune God*, 45.

26 Serene Jones, *Feminist Theory and Christian Theologies: Cartographies of Grace* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 112.

27 Habermas, *The New Conservatism*, 258.

28 *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, 185.

29 Hans Küng, *Justification*, 40th anniversary ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1964/2004), 231.

30 Eberhard Jüngel, *Justification* (New York: T & T Clark, 2001), 269.

31 Miroslav Volf, *Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 119–20.

32 Elsa Tamez, *The Amnesty of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 27.

33 *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, 226–27.

34 Volf, *Flourishing*, 124.

35 *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, 49–50.

36 Charles Taylor, "Sharing Identity Space," in *Québec – Canada: What is the Path Ahead?*, eds. John Trent, Robert Young and Guy Lachapelle (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1996), 121–22.

37 *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, 196–99.

38 Ibid., 187.

39 United Nations General Assembly, "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," adopted by the General Assembly October 2, 2007; http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf.

40 Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 223.

41 *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, 187.

42 Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within*, 6.

43 Michael Welker, *God the Revealed* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), 224.

44 Michael Welker, *God the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 281–82.

45 Quoted from Robert Andrew Joseph, "A Jade Door: Reconciliatory Justice as a Way Forward Citing New Zealand Experience," *From Truth to Reconciliation*, produced by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2008), 212.

An Indictment of Dominant Canadian Culture

Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

N.p.: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015. vi + 528 pp.

The first boarding school for First Nations children in what is now known as Canada opened in the seventeenth century. In the mid-1800s, Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries began operating a number of residential schools. The federal government began funding these in the 1880s. In the 1970s, it began closing them down. Some were taken over by First Nations communities. The last federally funded residential schools in southern Canada closed in the late 1990s. While the federal government funded these schools, the Roman Catholic, Anglican, United, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches ran them. One hundred and thirty-nine schools and residences operated at one time or another, and about 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children passed through their doors.

In the 1990s, former students began to speak out about the suffering and abuse they had experienced at these schools. By October 2001, over 8,500 people had filed lawsuits against the parties that ran them. The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) was established in 2006 to settle these claims. It received court approval in 2007. In 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued an apology for the federal government's involvement in these schools.

The IRSSA mandated five principal actions: a Common Experience payment for former students; an Independent Assessment Process for those filing suit for abuses; support for the Aboriginal Health Foundation; support for residential school commemoration; and the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The first three people appointed to lead this Commission resigned. By 2009, they had been replaced by the Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair (chair), Chief Wilton Littlechild, and Dr. Marie Wilson. The Commission operated for six years, holding seven national events, two regional events, and local hearings in 77 communities. It heard from over 6,000 witnesses, most of whom were residential school survivors. It was an unprecedented event in Canadian history.

This book summarizes the Commission's final report. In careful but unyielding prose, it documents a program of cultural genocide that harmed many First Nations individuals and communities and created a deep rift between them and Christian churches, the federal government, and Canada's settler population. The *Summary* begins with an introduction to the issues the Commission addressed and an overview of its activities. Its short history of residential schools commences not with facts and dates, but with narrative accounts of how the residential school experiences of several students began. The *Summary* takes a sympathetic view towards residential school survivors, stressing the importance of hearing their testimony and the service they have performed for Canadians through their struggle to have this injustice and their suffering publicly acknowledged. It surveys the mostly disastrous legacy of these schools and the challenges involved in achieving reconciliation between First Nations peoples and the rest of Canada. The residential school experiences of Métis children are also noted. The *Summary* lists 94 Calls to Action—most directed to the federal government, some to churches, some to citizens—that must be heeded for reconciliation to occur. It includes valuable appendices listing the residential schools involved, the names of those charged with abusing students, and the apologies issued by various churches and the federal government. It concludes with an extensive bibliography and footnotes.

The *Summary* argues that residential schools were a form of institutionalized child neglect. They typically made their students vulnerable to disease, violent punishment, denigration, and sexual abuse. In some schools, much of the students' time and energy was devoted to performing menial tasks to lower the operating expenses. Students were often fed an inadequate diet. Their death rates were always much higher than those of the general Canadian population. While some staff were talented and highly motivated, and some northern schools had academic success, most schools failed as educational institutions. Worse, their intended goal of stripping students of their inherited culture and indoctrinating them into a Euro-Christian ethos was fundamentally unjust. These schools were integral to a

policy of colonialism and cultural genocide based on the assumption that European civilization and Christianity were superior to Aboriginal cultures and religions. This continued until the 1960s, when Canadian churches began to change their mission goals towards First Nations peoples, from dispensing charity and indoctrination to seeking to be in solidarity with First Nations peoples in their struggles for justice. The churches have now apologized for their involvement in residential schools; they have pledged themselves to listen to the survivors and First Nations peoples and to seek reconciliation with them. Yet as the residential school system began to wind down, the 1960s story of Aboriginal children being taken into foster care began. To this day, Canada's child welfare system has continued an assimilation program, apprehending numerous Aboriginal children, yet failing to protect many of them.

The *Summary* pays attention to regional differences in the residential school system. Aboriginal people form the majority of the population in two northern territories. Residential schools existed until recently there. It notes that as a result, the impact of residential schools, good and bad, is more strongly felt there than in much of the rest of Canada.

The *Summary* defines the goal of reconciliation as "establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people" in Canada (6). It repeatedly stresses that respect on the part of the rest of Canada for the cultures and right to self-determination of First Nations peoples is key to reconciliation. The United Nations' *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* is lifted up as providing a framework by which reconciliation might be achieved.

The *Summary* offers some grounds for hope. Despite the great harm that colonial policies have done to First Nations peoples, these peoples are still here and have maintained their identities. They have refused to assimilate and they continue to vigorously press their demands for the recognition of their treaty rights and sovereignty. The apologies of churches, the IRSSA and the federal government's apology are important first steps towards reconciliation. Yet since the federal government's apology, with Stephen Harper as prime minister, relations between the federal government and First Nations peoples have deteriorated. The process of reconciliation has begun. The question is whether non-Aboriginal Canadians will sustain it. The *Summary* argues that the United, Anglican, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic churches that were parties to the IRSSA have a special responsibility here. These churches must continue to support survivors, their families, and communities in their long-term healing and in their attempts to overcome the impacts residential schools have had on their religious, social, and economic well-being.

A key element in sustaining reconciliation will be the way Canadian history is taught in public schools and celebrated in public events. School curricula must teach the history of residential schools as the history of an injustice that must not be repeated. All Canadians need to know about this. The history of residential schools is not over. Their long-term effects continue in the lives and communities of many First Nations peoples. The underlying assumption of Euro-Christian superiority that helped legitimate residential schools must give way to an attitude of respect on the part of other Canadians towards First Nations peoples.

The *Summary* is part of a painful but genuine moment of self-transcendence for Canadian society and the Canadian churches involved. Using Canada's own legal system and the public media, residential school survivors, First Nations organizations, and their allies have led Canadian churches and the federal government to rise above their immediate self-interests and ethnocentric biases by making public apologies and funding the documentation of this great injustice that they perpetrated.

Reading the *Summary* was an unsettling experience for me as a Caucasian Canadian who belongs to the United Church. The *Summary* is an indictment of my culture. It reinforces the articulation of sins committed by my church in the apologies my church has made to First Nations peoples and residential school survivors. The *Summary*'s 94 Calls to Action enjoin all Canadians to work for the transformation of Canada's dominant cultural ethos and its underlying racist assumptions. This requires that I be transformed myself. The burden of guilt and the demands of these Calls to Action are heavy. Yet the *Summary* is fundamentally good news. It calls Canadians to an exodus from a Canada spoiled by colonial attitudes and practices, to a Canada in which Indigenous people and newcomers live together in mutual respect, justice, and peace. It is written in the belief that the struggles and testimony of residential school survivors have not been in vain. The future can be different.

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African Catholicism: Culture, Development, and Theology

Joseph Ogbonnaya. *African Catholicism and Hermeneutics of Culture: Essays in the Light of African Synod II*
Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014. xxii + 250 pp.

The Second African Synod (2009) remains a milestone event in the history of African Catholicism. This Synodal assembly focused on the mission of the Church in Africa as the family of God in service of reconciliation, justice, and peace. Some five years later, many theologians have continued to discern the significance of this Synod for African Catholicism. Joseph Ogbonnaya's book is such an attempt, with a focus on the dialogue between theology, the hermeneutics of culture, and integral development, in light of Pope Benedict XVI's post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Africae Munus* (*AM*). Appropriating Bernard Lonergan's anthropological and cultural presuppositions, Ogbonnaya opens a new trajectory by exploring the role of theology in mediating integral human development in the context of Africa's contemporary socio-economic, political, cultural, and religious evolution. He presents his reflections in ten interconnected essays that integrate both the dynamics of inculturation and liberation theology as they relate to sub-Saharan Africa.

Ogbonnaya begins his book with an overview of *Africae Munus* and the hermeneutics of culture he adopts in analyzing Africa's milieu. He chronicles how African social history was informed by traditional cultural value systems, including sense of community, sacredness, hospitality, fraternity, compassion, solidarity, language, proverbs, and respect for elders. These cultural values defined to a great extent African self-identity, personhood, community, moral principles, and social life. Given the discontent of Africans in the face of multifaceted dehumanizing forms of poverty, injustices, and underdevelopment, Ogbonnaya acknowledges that reclaiming African cultural heritage is fundamental for deepening the roots of Christianity and transforming the African social context. Such changes could reverse Africa's decline and empower Africans to relate the Christian faith to daily living in order to become their own agents of social change in a globalized world. Ogbonnaya connects Lonergan's vision of the cosmopolis and contemporary development theories to Catholic social teaching. He argues that Africa's social change requires holistic conversion, promotion of the common good and human good, formation of personality and consciences, prioritization of integral development, and integral scales of values. Realizing these goals requires mutual exchange between African Catholicism and other elements of Africa's social order.

Drawing on the Nigerian experience, Ogbonnaya shows how Africa's religious constructs have both contributed to and detracted from the authentic development of Africa. He contends that while there are faith-based groups committed to social charity and progress, there exist challenges of religious fundamentalism and related conflicts in Africa. Ogbonnaya explicates the role of religion, particularly Catholicism, in the integral development and social transformation of the continent. He affirms that the task of African Catholicism is to integrate Christian social responsibility with a liberative spirituality in order to mediate genuine conversion and re-evaluation of human scales of values for Africa. As well, African Catholicism should witness the faith in a way that promotes authentic human development and sustainable social transformation. This demands that African Catholicism appreciate a religiously pluralistic Africa, engage in interfaith dialogue to foster peaceful coexistence, and promote the common heritage of Africans.

Conclusively, Ogbonnaya critiques the clericalized and hierarchical ecclesiology of African Catholicism, which contradicts Vatican II ecclesiology and impedes the progress of Christian social responsibility. To realize the mission of reconciliation, justice, and peace as articulated in *Africae Munus*, he argues, African Catholicism must live out the vision of the Church in Africa as family of God. Only by combining this mission with a contextualized praxis-oriented spirituality focusing on religious values, reconciliation, and education can African Catholicism truly become an agent of integral development and social transformation for Africa.

Ogbonnaya's book is a response to Pope Benedict XVI's call to African theologians to develop a transformative theology in line with concrete pastoral ministry to meet the myriad issues confronting faith and life in Africa (*AM* #10). However, in his essays Ogbonnaya

seems to have omitted elaborating on the contemporary ecological crisis, except for a few passing references discussing the African social condition and globalization. The present-day ecological crisis adversely impacts Africa and Africans in terms of climate change, pollution, depletion of resources, species extinction, eco-waste, loss of biodiversity, and erosion of values regarding the integrity of creation. Pope Benedict XVI commissioned the Church in Africa to speak out for the integrity of creation (*AM* #80). Thus, promoting Christian ecological responsibility must form an integral dimension of the task of African Catholicism.

Despite this shortcoming, Ogbonnaya's book has demonstrated the indispensability of cultural hermeneutics in constructing a transformative theology and social praxis for integral African development. Scholars and graduate students of African theology will find this book valuable. Ogbonnaya has succeeded in contouring a liberative African social spirituality that is relevant to the peculiarities of sub-Saharan Africa in light of *Africae Munus.*

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